

Disability in the press: How disability and people with disabilities are depicted in print media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia in 2006

A discussion paper



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Date of publication: 15 June 2008, Belgrade Serbia

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Discussion Paper has been realised thanks to the financial support of

The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)* and Handicap International

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“People with disabilities mainly depend on another person’s help and there are many things they cannot do by themselves. Especially, not those 3,500 people who live without certain body parts.”
Vecernje novosti, “WE ARE NOT INVISIBLE” (NISMO MI NEVIDLJIVI), 22.10.06

This kind of depiction of people with disabilities in the press as dependent, incapable and dehumanized is not uncommon throughout the region. It is without a doubt, condescending, derogatory and filled with stereotypes that are perpetuated by such irresponsible journalism. A democratic media informs and empowers all members of society and enhances democratic values. It is based on tolerance and should advance human rights as well as respect for diversity. This kind of discrimination in the media helps perpetuate discriminatory values in society as well.

The time for media professionals to be more responsible in their reporting is now. It is also society’s responsibility to demand a more democratic media and members of civil society have a duty to get their message to the press so that their voices can be heard accurately. As disability advocates are working hard to promote the rights of people with disabilities and put an end to institutional discrimination, this kind of negative portrayal of people with disabilities dismantles their work in an instant. Media’s distortion of disability contributes significantly to the discriminatory practices and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities.

This survey is an attempt to look at major trends in disability reporting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia to uncover some of the main problems in media depictions of disability issues and people with disabilities themselves.

The first major finding is that in all three countries there is an inconsistent use of disability terminology. Most of the time, journalists are using inappropriate language and at times, highly offensive terms to depict people with disabilities. What is also evident is that the complete lack of consistency on terminology indicates that media professionals as well as other actors interviewed in the press are unclear on what terminology is appropriate or preferred by the disability community.

Secondly, there are many actors journalists go to for sources of news on disability stories including government elite, professionals and disability advocates and parents. However, when the article was on a disability topic of political importance such as legislative reform, government elite and/or professionals were the main sources of news. Disability advocates were sources of news as well but mainly in articles related to activities of their organisations. What was definitively clear is that journalists do not go to people with disabilities themselves when reporting and they are rarely interviewed or quoted in articles and therefore, the voices of people with disabilities are almost absent in the press.

Another major finding is that disability reporting is, for the most part, framed in the medical model wherein disability is presented as a social welfare issue. There are a large number of articles on disability benefits and what they cost the state referring to people with disabilities in categories based on their impairment. Apart from being dehumanizing, the emphasis in many of these articles is on specialized services and programs run by professionals perpetuating the myth that people with disabilities are dependent and should not be part of mainstream society.

What is most troubling is that people with disabilities are often depicted as ‘other’ through the use of stereotypes in the press. The stereotypes are discriminatory and they dehumanize people with disabilities. These stigmatizing images are repeated in the media enabling negative opinions about people with disabilities to continue.

However, there are some examples of disability reporting that break away from these trends. There are articles that look at disability from a social model perspective using proper terminology and staying away from stereotyping. In these cases, the journalist goes to disability activists in the community as a source of news. Many times, the more empowering articles are written by disability advocates who have successfully worked with media professionals to get their message across in the press. These articles challenge the predominant stereotypes used in the media and shed a new light on disability issues. The work is not done however and much more needs to be done to support the disability movement in working with the media to

change the way in which disability issues and people with disabilities are depicted. This paper will attempt to illustrate the common trends in media practices when reporting on disability in order to facilitate debate between disability advocates and media professionals in finding the best ways to work together to change media coverage on disability shifting from negative portrayals that stigmatize people with disabilities to reporting that normalizes disability issues in a positive way.

GLOSSARY

Broadcasting is the distribution of audio and/or video signals which transmit programs to an audience. The audience may be the general public or a relatively large sub-audience, such as children or young adults¹

Broadsheet: A newspaper printed on a large sheet of paper (approx.400 X 560 mm for *The Sydney Morning Herald*). Broadsheets are often considered to have a greater depth of reporting²

Copy editor: Editorial work to make formatting changes and prepare text for publication

Disabled People's Organisation (DPO): A term commonly used to consider organisations of people with disabilities. The main characteristic of DPOs is that the leaders of the organisations (in the "driving seat" of the organisation) have to be people with disabilities. In addition, the organisations' mission should be oriented toward the representation of people with disabilities and the promotion of their rights.

Editor: A journalist who edits and corrects reporter's stories³

Editor in Chief: Top level editor

Editorial: Article expressing the opinion of an editor⁴

Feature: A story in which the interest lies in some factor other than news value

Headline: Title of a news story⁵

Managing Editor: The editor who directs the daily gathering and editing of the news⁶

Sub-editor: Highest ranked copy editor

Social model of disability: The social model demands that people with disabilities are not disabled by their impairment but it is social, cultural, economic and environmental barriers that prevent them from participating on an equal ground with others. This paradigm no longer sees disability as an individual medical problem but rather a social one. This framework implies a different set of policy priorities mainly grounded in a removal of barriers and an emphasis on human and civil rights.⁷

Stereotype – widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person.⁸

Tabloid: A newspaper size roughly equivalent to a folded broadsheet⁹

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadcast>

² <http://www.classcoop.sunherald.com.au/terminology.asp>

³ <http://www.classcoop.sunherald.com.au/terminology.asp>

⁴ <http://special.thetimesnews.com/nie/terms.php>

⁵ <http://special.thetimesnews.com/nie/terms.php>

⁶ <http://special.thetimesnews.com/nie/terms.php>

⁷ Bill Albert, "Briefing note: The Social Model of Disability, Human Rights and Development", (Disability KaR Research Project: 2004):3.

⁸ Cooke, Caroline; Daone, Liz; Morris, Gwilym, "Stop Press: How the Press Portrays Disabled People" (Scope: London, 2000): 42.

⁹ <http://www.classcoop.sunherald.com.au/terminology.asp>

I. INTRODUCTION

Media plays a pivotal role in today's culture and it is where much of the public get their information that forms their opinions and values. Mass media such as television, radio, newspapers and tabloids have incredible significance in influencing how people form their opinions and views about various issues and groups of people. As media scholar Todd Gitlin explains, "The mass media are, to say the least, a significant social force in the forming and delimiting of public assumptions, attitudes, and moods -- of ideology, in short."¹⁰ When it comes to media representation of disability, again, the media plays a strong role in influencing how the public thinks about the issue and how they view people with disabilities. This is particularly significant when taking into consideration the fact that in many parts of the world, people with disabilities are largely invisible as they face large institutional, architectural, occupational and attitudinal barriers that make participating in society and public life more challenging. Therefore, media portrayals of disability in print media play a significant role in forming or swaying the public's opinion about disability issues and influence cultural representations of people with disabilities. This is certainly the case in South East Europe where people with disabilities face many large barriers restricting them from being a part of the community.

Media portrayals of disability in South East Europe are plagued by discriminatory stereotyping, framing disability in reporting as a medical or welfare issue and a severe under representation of people with disabilities themselves in reporting. Stories depicting people with disabilities are often inflammatory and overly sentimental portraying them as incapable, vulnerable and to be pitied. On the other hand, many times journalists play on an overly sentimental tone describing a person with disabilities as almost superhuman for achieving a normal life such as getting a job or going to school. However, there are some signs that the disability rights agenda is beginning to make its way into print media thanks to the work of disability advocates.

As the disability movement strengthens in South East Europe consolidating around a demand for equal opportunities and full participation, there is a shift in viewing disability as a human rights issue. Many disability advocates in the region are now calling on the public to move away from viewing disability as a medical and welfare issue but rather as a social issue that demands an end to discriminatory practices and cultural changes to make society more inclusive. Internationally, the disability community along with a growing number of professionals and policy makers, particularly with the recent adoption of the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities, maintain that it is not an 'impairment' - individually based functional limitations whether physical, sensory, intellectual or hidden -which prevents people from achieving a desirable lifestyle but restrictive environments and disabling barriers. Thus, 'disability' refers to a complex system of social constraints imposed on people with disabilities by a highly discriminatory society.¹¹

This shift of disability paradigm known as the social model of disability is jeopardized however, by discriminatory media representation of disability in print media.

This study seeks to make an overview of how disability and people with disabilities are represented in print media in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Montenegro and Serbia in 2006 to the beginning of 2007. The research was undertaken by analyzing media content in national print media. The project does not pretend to make a definitive assessment of the role media plays in portraying disability. Instead, it is intended to make a snapshot of the ways in which disability is covered over a limited period to better understand the trends of current media practices and to illustrate the stereotypes that are repeated in the media when representing people with disabilities. The paper will also point out examples of good practice that show signs of shifting from the standard portrayals of disability.

Objective of the study

The paper seeks to understand what is being presented in print media about disability, what kind of language is used related to disability, who is providing information on the issues and what kinds of topics are discussed. In addition, the study tries to make an assessment of the types of disability models or paradigms presented by the media to better comprehend trends in disability media coverage. The study is divided into five sections seeking to answer the following questions:

¹⁰ As quoted in Beth Hellar, "News Coverage of Disability Issues: Final Report for The Centre for an Accessible Society" from: Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*. (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1980): 9.

¹¹ Colin Barnes, "Disabling Imagery and the Media: An Exploration of the Principles for Media Representations of Disabled People" for the British Council of Disabled People (Rynborn Publishing: Halifax, 1992): 2.

Terminology: What terminology is being used by the press and what are the problems with the current terminology practices?

Sources of news: Who is the main source of news when it comes to disability issues: government and other elites, professionals, persons with disabilities or their representative organisations?

How disability issues are framed by the press: What topics do the press associate with disability and what are the main subject areas that receive coverage by the press when it comes to writing about disability?

What disability models prevail in the press: Do journalists write about disability within a specific paradigm and if so, which models are most common?

How people with disabilities are portrayed by the press and what are the prevailing stereotypes: Does media perpetuate stereotypes and if so, how?

Survey methodology

The paper is based on a survey of press clippings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia for 2006. For Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia we were able to use a database of press archives to search all press clips related to disability throughout 2006. For Montenegro, we tracked the media in three major print dailies from March 2006 to January 2007 collecting paper press clips for analysis. In the UN administered province of Kosovo we were limited to a small sample of press clippings from December 2006 to March 2007 which did not yield sufficient evidence for making an analysis. Furthermore, the articles that were collected were comprised of a large number of press clips from a newspaper insert on the rights of people with disabilities and did not reflect the overall press coverage of disability in UN administered province of Kosovo. Therefore, we were not able to identify any trends or patterns from such a small and limited sample. Finally, there was no electronic data base of press cuts available for the UN administered province of Kosovo or Montenegro at the time this survey was conducted.

There are several limitations to the study. Firstly, for each country, we had different ways of collecting press clips depending on the whether or not we had access to press archiving services. Moreover, each archiving service was different in the way and which one can search for articles so it made it impossible to make quantitative comparisons between the countries (i.e. the number of articles related to disability in one country vs. another). Secondly, this survey did not look at local press coverage but only at national newspapers. Thirdly, the articles that were analysed after begin translated into English which undoubtedly means that some nuances and tones were lost.

Methodology for collecting press clips in BiH

The data base used for Bosnia and Herzegovina is INFOBIRO, an archive of print media and other relevant items, operating from the Sarajevo Media Centre. The database contains articles from the leading dailies, weeklies and periodicals including: Dnevni avaz, Oslobođenje, Dnevni list, Nezavisne novine, Dani, Slobodna Bosna, Start, Novi Reporter, Ljiljan, Banke BiH, ZIPS, Poslovne novine, Business info, Sarajevske Sveske, Naši Dani, ONASA News Agency (general and economy service) from 2004 onwards. Some 70 % of the content of these print media are included in the digital archive on a daily basis. The data base provides the articles in scanned format as they appear on the print page. It contains approximately 100,000 articles for 2006. The HI press survey at hand covered the period from January 1 to December 31, 2006. Total number of press cuts in the INFOBIRO database for 2006 is approximately 100,000, while the total number of disability related articles is approximately 1,097.

Methodology for collecting press clips in Serbia

The database used in Serbia is EBART media documentation archive, which collects and preserves press cuts since 2003 (the electronic media also has been monitored since 2005). The leading electronic and print media outlets in Serbia are subscribed to EBART which also provides training to the journalist on how to operate the electronic database. Collecting from 15 leading dailies and weeklies, EBART has so far stored a total of 800,000 articles, some 190,000 in 2006. The database is easy to search, and it is possible to fine tune search criteria. Also, some readymade pre-defined categories are at hand, as to topic, institution, political party, geographical unit, person, etc. The fact that disability has been included as one of the general topics since 2007 also speaks of the level of disability awareness.

Methodology for collecting press clips in Montenegro

In Montenegro, the print media monitored for the purpose of this survey were the three largest dailies, Dan, Vijesti, and Pobjeda from March 2006 to January 2007. The total number of articles collected was 89 which were collected in the traditional paper press clipping method. Newspapers were literally groomed for any article relating to disability and the articles were clipped and collected for analysis.

II. TERMINOLOGY

Why is terminology important?

The language used in media plays an essential role in shaping social attitudes about people with disabilities. Terminology employed to depict people with disabilities is integral, not only to shaping social attitudes but to creating and reinforcing stereotypes. The main finding in this study on terminology is that there is a complete lack of consistency of terms used by journalists. Very often one term will be used interchangeably to mean different things such as children with special needs referring, on the one hand, only to children with intellectual disabilities and on the other, to a wider group of all people with disabilities. The term 'people with disabilities', meant to include people with all types of disabilities, is often used to connote only people with physical impairments. While other times the term is used correctly to refer to a diverse group of people. Even more confusing is the use of different terms within one article. It is not uncommon to find as many as five different terms used in one article to depict people with disabilities sending a confusing message to the public as to proper disability terminology.

There are still a large number of offensive terms used by journalists despite a growing use of the term people with disabilities which is widely supported and used by the disability movement in the region. Highly offensive terms such as handicapped, cripple, retarded and spastic and other inflammatory labeling manage to make it into the press. There is also widespread use of the terms 'mental retardation' and 'people who are mentally insufficiently developed'. There is also a tendency in the countries studied to call people 'the disabled', 'the blind', 'the deaf' and to use terminology related to impairments such as 'the paraplegics' and 'the muscular dystrophy people'. Using an adjective as a noun in this way is outdated and has long been deemed offensive in relation to people of different ethnic groups (it would not be appropriate, for example, to use the term 'the blacks').¹² Unfortunately, offensive and pejorative language seems to be the norm as they are commonly found in articles related to disability. Such common use of offensive terminology could be an indication that journalists and the public are not even aware that such language is insulting.

According to Michael Nally, a senior lecturer in the Department of Journalism at the University of Central Lancashire, the journalist should be aware that the use of discriminatory or loaded language may offend some of their readers, listeners and viewers: "The journalist has a duty – no less than that – to try to avoid the words and phrases that might offend disabled people."¹³ Codes of conduct and up-dated stylebooks can help to encourage journalists to use non-inflammatory or offensive terms. For example, in clause 10 of the, UK National Union of the Journalists' code of practice, similar to the Press Council code for Bosnia, it states: 'A journalist shall mention a person's age, sex, race, colour, creed, illegitimacy, disability, marital status or sexual orientation only if this information is strictly relevant. A journalist shall neither originate nor process material which encourages discrimination, ridicule, prejudice or hatred on any of the abovementioned grounds. Clause 13 of the Press Complaints Commission's echoes that: "1) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to a person's race, colour, religion, sex or sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability. 2) It must avoid publishing details of a person's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability unless these are directly relevant to the story."¹⁴ Still, even with these non-discrimination codes in place in the UK, stigmatizing terminology makes its way into the press and even into high-profile national media outlets such as the Guardian, the Times, the Economist and the BBC.¹⁵

¹² Cooke, Caroline; Daone, Liz; Morris, Gwilym, "Stop Press: How the Press Portrays Disabled People" (Scope: London, 2000): 3.

¹³ Cooke, Caroline; Daone, Liz; Morris, Gwilym, *ibid*: 24-26.

¹⁴ *Ibid*: 26.

¹⁵ This is according to research conducted by students of journalism at the University of Central Lancashire.

Several English journalists were asked why this is the case and here is what they had to say:

- Improper language and overly-emotive headlines continue to be used when covering a story on a person with a disability because this has been the formula for so long (Jackie Logue, journalist and editor).
- There is great ignorance over disability both for media professionals and in society in general in not seeing a person with a disability as a person first who happen to have a disability (Jackie Logue, journalist and editor).¹⁶
- Journalists are trained to use simple language and easily understood copy so a term like 'half sighted' is readily accepted versus a heavy phrase like visually impaired (Michael Nally, journalist and lecturer).¹⁷

However, journalists have a difficult task given the fact that many people being interviewed use various forms of terminology making a mosaic of words that can be confusing for media representatives to follow. Professionals working in the field of disability, parents, government representatives and even people with disabilities use various forms of terminology including stigmatizing terms and this makes it challenging for a journalist to know what is appropriate. It can also be challenging for a journalist to find appropriate terminology that is also easily understood by the public. Trainee journalists as well as senior journalists need to be made aware of disability issues and editors and sub-editors need to be trained too to ensure a good understanding of disability. It is an easy shift to make yet using the right language in the press will help to disseminate the message to the public on the appropriate terms to be used.

In general, the most frequently used term in the press is 'the disabled' (invalidi).

The term 'invalidi' (Bosnian and Serbian), a noun, is in much use all over the region. Several disability advocates in the region agree that it properly translates to English as 'the disabled'. While some news outlets use neutral terms such as 'people with disabilities', there is still a large number of journalists using depersonalized terms such as, 'the disabled' or 'the handicapped' which many find offensive because these terms, as Colin Barnes explains, "...rob disabled people of their humanity, and so reduce them to objects."¹⁸ Throughout the region, this term is too often found in large print of the very titles of articles. Thus, both dailies and weeklies, quality press and tabloids, seem to in fact prefer disabling language, 'the disabled' already in the titles and by-lines of their articles, and no doubt this very much influences public attitude. However, the term 'people with disabilities' which is the preferred terminology by the majority of the disability movement, is beginning to be used more widely the press except in the headlines where it appears only as an exception¹⁹.

The term 'the disabled' (invalidi), in Serbian and Bosnian is somewhat problematic when trying to translate it into English given that the root of the word is invalid. Here is what Gordana Rajkov of the Centre for Independent Living of Serbia has to say about it: 'The term 'invalid' appeared in our language [Serbian] after the World War I, and was used predominantly for the disabled war veterans [ratni vojni invalidi]. Back then it signified precisely the persons with impairment, who is therefore not equal with the others, but it also connoted a certain dignity as it was used to refer to people who had fought and sacrificed for their country. It persisted in the language since then [...] and it never had a pejorative meaning. Needless to say, it was never translated to our language, that is, was never used in its translated meaning, rather always in the English original (which is often the case). That is why it is my opinion that the rules that apply to other languages, such as English, cannot hold completely in other languages, as the term 'invalid' has exactly the connotation that 'the disabled' has in English, even though the words are not directly translatable²⁰.

Use of terminology in the headlines

For 2006, **'the disabled' ('invalidi') is the most common disability terminology used in the headlines in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro.** In many cases, even with 'the disabled' in the headline, within, the terminology in the body of the article is mixed and may use the term 'the disabled' along with a range of other terms.

¹⁶ Jackie Logue, news reporter and editor, as quoted in: Cooke, Caroline; Daone, Liz; Morris, Gwilym, *ibid*: 24.

¹⁷ Cooke, Caroline; Daone, Liz; Morris, Gwilym, *ibid*: 25.

¹⁸ Colin Barnes, "Disabling Imagery and the Media: An Exploration of the Principles for Media Representation of Disabled People", (Halifax: The British Council of Disabled People and Rynburn Publishing) 1992: 8.

¹⁹ Barnes, "Disabling Imagery and the Media: An Exploration of the Principles for Media Representation of Disabled People", (Halifax: The British Council of Disabled People and Rynburn Publishing) 1992: 10.

²⁰ Gordana Rajkov, Centre for Independent Living, *Some thoughts about disability language*, 2003, Belgrade.

Looking at the Bosnian press, in the article titled, "The disabled on the margins of society", (*Invalidi na margini društva*) in *Dnevni Avaz* on 08.10.06, the text of the article uses the terms: disabled people, the disabled and the blind while 'the disabled' is used for the title. Or in "Local companies against the employment of the disabled" (*Domaće tvrtke protiv zapošljavanja invalida*) in *Dnevni List*, 16.06.06, the journalist uses: the disabled, disabled persons and people with disabilities interchangeably. In another article called "Protest gathering: do the disabled have the right to a normal life?" from *Oslobođenje* on 09.06.06, although the term "the disabled" is used in the headline, within the body of the article, the terms: totally disabled, disabled war veteran, 100% disabled and people with difficulties in movement are all used.

Apart from the headlines frequently making a preference in terminology for "the disabled", **the headlines themselves are quite inflammatory in nature**. Some examples of headlines using the term 'the disabled' (*invalidi*) include:

- *"The disabled ate up all of the children's cash benefits"; (Invalidi pojeli djeciji doplatak), Oslobođenje, 22.07.06*
- *"No place for the disabled"; (Nema mjesta za invalide), Dnevni List, 01.06.06*
- *"Thousands of disabled need help"; (Hiljadama Invalida Neophodna Pomoc), Nezavisne Novine, 03.12.06*
- *"The blind are banging into the steel posts of billboards"; (Slijepi udaraju u zeljezo od panoa), Nezavisne Novine, 02.10.06*
- *"The disabled: The state injured us more than the war"; (Država nas ranjava gore od rata), Dnevni List, 30.06.06*
- *"Protest gathering: Do the disabled have the right to a normal life?" (Protestni skup, imaju li invalidi pravo na normalan život), Oslobođenje 09.06.06*
- *"The disabled are discriminated on all levels"; (Invalidi diskriminirani na svim novoima), Oslobođenje, 30.06.06*
- *"We are fed up with these profiteers: A protest of disabled war veterans in front of the government building of Tuzla canton; The government is ignoring the disabled"; (Dosta nam je profitera: Protest RVI pred zgradom Vlade Tuzlanskog kantona; Vlada ignorise invalide), Oslobođenje, 28.09.06*
- *"The forgotten Travnik soldiers: You cannot survive on words"; (Zaboravljeni travnicki vojnici: Ne zivi se od rijeci), Oslobođenje, 29.09.06*
- *"A disabled war veteran demolished a municipal building in Sapna"; (Ratni vojni invalid demolirao zgradu Općine Sapna), Oslobođenje, 20.07.06*

However, in general, the majority of articles used the term 'invalidi' and it is clearly the most dominant terminology appearing in the press. The other term used with a high frequency in the BIH press is 'ratni vojni invalidi', disabled war veterans followed by 'civilne zrtve rata' civil victims of war and 'neratni invalidi', non-war disabled. This is a specific finding for Bosnia and Herzegovina as the on-going debate over the status of disability benefits for disabled war veterans and civilian victims of war is a major political issue. The number of disabled war veterans increased dramatically in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war and subsequently, so did the number of beneficiaries of the disabled war veteran pension. In addition to become a large expenditure for the state, there is another critical issue in that there is a large discrepancy between benefits disabled war veterans receive and benefits all other people with disabilities are entitled to. The issue of disability status in relation to disability benefits is a political issue being debated currently in Bosnia and Herzegovina and it is likely that this is why it receives a good deal of attention in the press.

In Serbia, there is a similar pattern wherein the term '**the disabled**' dominates the headlines but within the body of the article, there is an inconsistent mix of terminology:

- *"Discussions about future convention: Belgrade hosting the meetings of the disabled"; (Razgovor o Budućoj Konvenciji: Beograd domaćin skupa o invalidima), Politika, 21.03.2006*
- *"Employment fair for the disabled" (Sajam zapošljavanja invalida), Danas 21.10.06*
- *"Even the Disabled like Sports" (I invalidi vole atletiku), Blic 27.05.06*
- *"Even the Disabled can access the Inquiry Desk" (I invalidi mogu da priđu šalteru), Blic, 27.05.06*
- *"Employment and not charity: How to solve the life problems of the disabled" (Zaposlenje, a ne milostinja: Kako rešiti životni problem invalida), Politika, 21.10.2006*
- *"Three gatherings about the problems of the disabled" (Tri skupa o problemima invalida), Politika, 02.03.2006*

Similar to BiH, many times **the headlines are inflammatory** in nature:

- *"The handicapped in the parliament?" (Hendikepirani u Parlamentu?), Blic, 03.12.06*
- *"Lonely children on the side track" (Usamljena deca: Na sporednom koloseku), Politika, 16.10.2006*
- *"Life on the edge of survival: A round table in the parliament of Serbia" (Život na ivici egzistencije: Okrugli sto u Narodnoj Skupštini Srbije), Politika, 18.10.2006*
- *"Even the disabled can also access the inquiry desk" (I invalidi mogu da priđu šalteru), Blic, 27.05.06)*
- *"Even The Disabled Like Athletics" (I invalidi vole atletiku), Blic 17.05.06*

However, there is greater use of the term 'people with disabilities' (osobe sa invaliditetom) in the press in Serbia, even within the headlines, particularly in the newspaper Politika. For example, "The Protection of Persons with Disabilities" (Zaštita osoba sa invaliditetom) Politika, 05.01.2006 is consistent in its use of the term people with disabilities throughout the text. Similarly, in the article, "An Incentive for an independent life: The position of people with disabilities" (Podstrek za samostalni život: Položaj osoba sa invaliditetom) in Politika on 11.10.2006 the headline and the body of the text use only the term 'people with disabilities'. The article, "With business to fight against prejudices" (Firmom protiv predrasuda), Politika 18.01.2007, on employment is another example of consistent use of proper terminology. Likewise, the article "Waiting for 20 signatures: finalisation of the convention on the rights of people with disabilities" (Čekajući 20 potpisa: Završena Konvencija UN o Pravima Osoba sa Invaliditetom), Politika, 18.09.2006 is consistent in using people with disabilities throughout the article.

The following are examples of **articles in Politika that use the term 'people with disabilities'**:

- *"Inaccessible Right: Conference of People with Disabilities", (Nepristupačno pravo: Konferencija osoba sa invaliditetom), Politika, 23.02.2006*
- *"Protection of People with Disabilities", (Zaštita osoba sa invaliditetom), Politika, 05.01.2006*
- *"Incentive for an independent life: Position of people with disabilities" (Podstrek za samostalni život: Položaj osoba sa invaliditetom), Politika, 11.10.2006*
- *"Medical check-ups for people with disabilities: Health centre 'Dr. Milutin Ivković'" (Pregledi osoba sa hendikepom: Dom Zdravlja Dr Milutin Ivković), Politika, 05.12.2006*
- *"Alert siren: people with disabilities in statistics" (Zvono za uzbunu: Osobe sa invaliditetom u statistici), Politika, 06.04.2006*

Consistency of terminology

In general in BiH, one of the largest problems in the press is **a lack of consistency on terms** so in one article, you may have 5 or 6 different terms used for people with disabilities. A common practice is that within the same article, various kinds of terms are used suggesting that there is confusion over which terms to use. In addition to being inconsistent, highly offensive terms are used with some degree of frequency including: 'people with mental retardation', 'mentally insufficiently developed persons', 'the hard of hearing', 'children that are psycho-physically disturbed' and 'mentally handicapped'.

In an article from Dnevni Avaz, 06.05.06, titled "A job instead of charity" (Posao umjesto milostinje), a short 300 word editorial, uses the terms: the disabled, disabled persons, physically or mentally handicapped persons and citizens with physical or mental limitations all in the same article. In another article called "No place for the disabled" from Dnevni List, 01.06.06, (Nema mjesta za invalide), there is a large number of different terms used in the same article including: persons with difficulties in moving, war and civil disabled, disabled war veterans, disabled in wheelchairs, amputees, other disabled with difficulties in moving, and finally, the disabled. An article, "Derelict building of Prijedor geriatric hospital, shelter for 80 persons, forgotten by everybody" (Oronula zgrada prijedorske Gerijatrije utočište za 80 lica Zaboravljeni od svih) from Nezavisne Novine, 05/12/2006, the terms, crippled, the disabled, immobile persons and totally immobile people are all used by the journalist. In another case, the terms: the disabled, children disturbed in their psycho-physical development, civil war disabled, non-war disabled, disabled war veterans are all used in the same article ["The disabled ate up all of the children's cash benefits" (Invalidi pojeli djeciji doplatak), Oslobođenje, 22.07.06]. In the article, "Protest gathering: do the disabled have the right to a normal life?" (Protestni skup, imaju li invalidi pravo na normalan život?) Oslobođenje 09.06.06, within the body of the article, the journalist uses the following terms: totally disabled, disabled war veteran, 100% disabled and people with difficulties in movement.

Yet, despite the frequent use of offensive terminology in the Bosnian press, **there are some examples within articles on DPO activities where the journalist uses the more favored term 'people with disabilities'** such as in the article, "The association of amputees (UDAS) campaign on the rights of people with disabilities (Udruženje amputiraca (UDAS) kampanja za prava osoba s invaliditetom) in Nezavisne

Novine, 30.05.06. Likewise, in the article, "The realization of rights and prevention of discrimination" (Ostvarivanje prava i sprecavanje diskriminacije) in Oslobođenje, 31.10.06, on a training program of local DPOs, people with disabilities is used throughout the text. However, even when a DPO issue or activity is being covered, there is still a mixed use of terms. So, for example, in an article on a round table for the establishment of a national disability council, "Inception conference took place with the aim of establishing the national council for people with disabilities in BiH: the discrimination of the disabled still persists" (Održana inicijalna konferencija s ciljem uspostave državnog vijeća za osobe sa invaliditetom U BiH i dalje prisutna diskriminacija invalida), the terms: the disabled, people with disabilities, people with mental retardation and mentally insufficiently developed persons are all used in the article. Similarly, in the article, "Little Care for the Blind: Tomorrow is the International Day of the White Cane" (Malo brige za slijepe: Sutra Medjunarodni dan bijelog stapa), Oslobođenje, 14.10.06, the blind, the disabled and the handicapped is used by the journalist. Even in an article on a DPO program for employment of people with disabilities, despite the spokesperson from civil society consistently using 'people with disabilities' in the interview, the journalist still uses 'the disabled' intermittently throughout the text in "Employment of the disabled: Centres for re-training" (Zapošljavanje invalida: Centri za prekvalifikaciju) in Oslobođenje 06.10.06. It is clear from the analysis that disability advocates need to work hard to get their message across to the media on the use of correct terminology. It is clear the disability community itself is not unified on a preferred terminology as they use a wide range of terms varying from offensive to empowering. There is a need, therefore, to unify around a favored term that can be used consistently by disability lobbyists to help prevent further confusion by the media. On the other hand, the press needs to develop better communication with civil society to ensure proper use of language on disability issues.

In the Serbian press, there is a similar situation in the press where many different terms are used within the same article often times including offensive and out-dated terms. In the article, 'The Year of Equal Opportunities: Parliament of Serbia on the ban to discriminate the disabled' (Godina jednakih mogućnosti: Skupština Srbije o zabrani diskriminacije invalida), Politika, 04.04.2006, the terms: the handicapped, physical and psychological impairments, damaged people, people with disabilities and the disabled are all used within the same text. In the article, "Removal of street barriers for the disabled" (Uklanjanje uličnih barijera za invalide), Danas, 04.12.06, the journalist uses two different types of terminology in the same sentence: "He is approving the State decision on increasing the disability allowance for the *disabled* to 70% of the average salary in Serbia, as well as allowing *people with disabilities* to import cars without paying the customs tax". Even in an article on employment, "Employment fair for the disabled" (Sajam zaposljavanja invalida) Danas, 21.10.06, the journalist uses the terms 'the disabled' and 'people with disabilities' interchangeably. In the article, "Life on the edge of existence: A round table at the Serbian parliament" (Život na ivici egzistencije: Okrugli sto u Narodnoj Skupštini Srbije), Politika, 18.10.2006, 'the handicapped', 'the disabled' and 'the impaired' are used throughout the text interchangeably. Even more glaring is the article, "The Year of Equal Opportunities: Parliament of Serbia on the ban to discriminate the disabled" (Godina jednakih mogućnosti: Skupština Srbije o zabrani diskriminacije invalida), Politika, 04.04.2006 which speaks of anti-discrimination and equal opportunities but uses the following derogatory terminology to do so: the handicapped, the disabled, physical and psychological impairments, damaged people as well as people with disabilities. Within the article a government official is quoted saying, "If the state does not provide them [people with disabilities] with access to education equal to others, these damaged people will stay handicapped and marginalized." Not only is this statement demeaning and condescending, the government official himself clearly does not have a grasp on disability issues from a human rights perspective especially when he uses such inappropriate terminology.

In spite of the fact that there is a greater use of the term 'people with disabilities' in the headlines in Serbia, many of the articles still lack consistency on terminology in the body of the text which includes offensive terms. For example, in the article 'Care between 2 and 15 days: First centre for short-term accommodation for persons with disabilities in Vojvodina' (Nega od dva do 15 dana: Prvi objekat za kratkotrajni smeštaj osoba sa invaliditetom u Vojvodini), Politika 13.09.2006, the journalist uses a mix of the following terms: people disturbed in their mental development, people with disabilities, people with a handicap. Likewise, in the article, "Packing their bags only when they must: people with disabilities as tourists" (Pakuju kofere samo kad moraju: Osobe sa invaliditetom kao turisti), Politika, 22.08.2006 uses a mix of terms including people with mental and physical handicaps. So, despite the use of the term 'people with disabilities' in the title, the lack of consistency on terminology still persists in the body of the article.

Yet, within articles related to DPO activities in Serbia, the journalist tends to use 'people with disabilities' in the title and in the text such as, "An Inaccessible Right: A Conference of People with Disabilities" (Nepristupačno pravo: Konferencija osoba sa invaliditetom) in Politika on 23.02.2006. Similarly, in the article "At the Doctor after Two Decades: What Personal Assistance Services Bring" (Kod lekara posle dve decenije: Šta donosi služba personalnih asistenata) on a project spear-headed by a DPO, in Politika on 04.01.2006, the journalist is consistent in the use of terminology. Another good example of consistent terminology is the article, "Inaccessible universities: The position of students with disabilities" (Nedostupni

Fakulteti: Položaj Studenata s Hendikepom) in Politika on 07.06.2006 which is a feature on research undertaken by a DPO on access to higher education for students with disabilities. The more frequent use of proper terminology when covering DPO activities suggests that when there is good communication between media and civil society, there is a better use of the more favored terminology 'people with disabilities'.

There is also use of the term 'people with a handicap' (osobe sa hendikepom) in the press which is a term preferred by some members of the disability movement as it does not use the word 'invaliditet' with the root being the word 'invalid'. Goran Pavlovic of the Association of Students with Disabilities(ADS) of Serbia explains why they prefer the term 'people with a handicap' (osobe sa hendikepom).

The Association of Students with Disabilities (ADS) has 9 national media campaigns behind them. In all of them they targeted all the media and always used the same terminology. The Executive Director, Goran Pavlovic, is very prominent in the media, making relatively frequent media appearances, and according to him, uses every opportunity to explain the terminology.

"Both terms 'persons with disabilities' and 'persons with a handicap' are correct as they both stress the 'person', and the handicap or disability are not accentuated. Rather, the person comes first, the human being with a set of personal characteristics and traits.

The term which is not recommended at all is 'the disabled/invalid', which is defined as 'invalid, unusable, of no use'.

Why handicap? Because while 'disability' signals a partial or complete lack of a function, the term 'handicap' signifies a condition that a person is in, due to disability only amongst other factors. Put in such a way the focus is on human rights, on equalization of opportunities and on inclusion. We also feel that this term, persons with handicap, puts more stress on the social model, hints more directly at its social aspect, while the term 'persons with disabilities' stresses a more personal aspect of our situation.

(A parallel Goran Pavlovic commonly uses to get the point about human rights and equalization of opportunities understood by the general public. The first included the basketball player Vladi Divac: we both have a handicap: I cannot change a light bulb without the help of a chair, but he cannot get into a PEGLICA (a small sized car) and drive around comfortably.

The word handicap originated in the 17th century, at horse races. The younger, sturdier horses would be matched with heavier jockeys, while the older, weaker ones were considered to have a handicap, and were ridden by the jockeys of lighter weight. The purpose was equalization of opportunities at the betting offices. Thus somebody with a handicap primarily does not have equal opportunities, and not only physically speaking.

As to media representations, my constant struggle is to get a more positive reporting on disability issues. The way we have it now, most often news reports use the medical model, stressing the impairment, the shortcomings and limitations, what we cannot have, while criticizing the others for not ensuring that we have our needs met. Instead, there should be more affirmative stories, about what we achieved, what I can do, things or places where I make or made a difference.

In Montenegro, similar to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, the majority of the headlines also use the term 'the disabled' (invalidi) such as in the article "Access constructed for the disabled" (Uradjen prilaz za invalide) in Dan, 16.12.06. In addition to a widespread use of the term 'the disabled' in the headlines, not unlike Serbia and BiH, the terms within the articles are inconsistent. For example, "The Government does not hear the problems of the deaf" (Vlast ne cuje probleme gluvih) in Dan, 09.26.06, the journalist uses the terms: persons with hearing impairments, deaf persons as well as the deaf and hard of hearing. In another article "A ramp installed for people in wheelchairs"(Postavljena rampa za osobe sa kolicima), Pobjeda, 10.11.06, the journalist compares "typical students" to "students with special needs". In "The State should take more care: A seminar held for persons with disabilities" (Država da povede više računa: Održano predavanje za osobe sa invaliditetom), Dan, 21.11.06, despite the fact that people with disabilities is used in the headline and that the interviewees in the article use the same terminology, the journalist also uses people with special needs, and people with stunted psycho-physical development throughout the text.

Similar to BiH and Serbia, the headlines are often bombastic and inflammatory treating people with disabilities as objects:

- “Boka cruise for 260 disabled”, (*Krstarenje Bokom za 260 invalida*) *Vijesti*, 11/04/200
- “Video beam for the handicapped”, (*Video bim za hendikepirane*) *Pobjeda*, 28/07/200
- “The disabled started a hunger strike”, (*Invalidi počeli štrajk glađu*) *Vijesti*, 31/03/200
- “Less tax if a disabled is hired”, *Vijesti*, (*Manji porez ako se zaposli invalid*) 07/04/200
- “The deafmute make greeting cards”, (*Gluvonemi prave čestitke Dan*), 16/11/2006
- “The disabled make souvenirs”, (*Invalidi prave suvenire*), *Dan*, 14/06/200
- “In three years 40 labour invalids died”, (*Za tri godine umrlo 40 invalida rada*), *Dan*, 22/04/2006

In Montenegro, however, there was a higher presence of medical terminology used in the press such as: ‘patients’ and ‘pupils in the institutions’ and terms like ‘disorders’ are used to describe impairments. For example, in the article on inclusive education “Kindergarten for All” (*Obdaniste za sve*) in *Dan* on 20.01.06, the defectologist she describes the process of transitioning to a regular classroom as ‘treatment’ to be delivered by ‘a defectologist, speech therapist and psychologist’. In another article on inclusive education, a national expert on this issue explains that there are four ‘disorders’ to be evaluated and identified for inclusion in the education system and they are: *blindness, deafness, mental and intellectual handicap*.

Children with disabilities: Confusion over terms

In all three countries, there is great confusion over terms related to children with disabilities, particularly when it comes to writing about children with intellectual disabilities. To further illustrate this confusion, the list of terms most frequently used is long and varied and consists of:

- Children with special educational needs
- Children impeded in psycho-physical development
- Children with developmental difficulties
- Children with shortcomings and disorders
- Children with (milder) impediments in mental development
- Children and youth with difficulties in development
- Children with deficiencies and disturbances

A major finding in BiH regarding terminology is the high frequency of the term “children with special needs”. The term is used most often in articles on education and inclusive education reforms or in articles on the day care centres. When referring to children with disabilities, there is a tendency to use instead, the term “children with special needs”. Another tendency is to use the term children with special needs to refer to children with intellectual disabilities. In several articles, the term is used in conjunction with terminology such as, developmental difficulties and mentally insufficiently developed persons. In the article, “The first kindergarten for children with special needs” (*Prvi vrtić za djecu s posebnim potrebama*), *Nezavisne novine*, 09.09.06, children with special needs and mentally insufficiently developed persons are used interchangeably throughout the text. In another article on a kindergarten for children with disabilities, “The Kindergarten Marija Mazar is empty” (*Vrtić Marija Mazar prazan*), *Nezavisne novine*, 12.10.06, uses the terms little ones with special needs, children with special needs and children with developmental difficulties. In another article, “Who really needs that?” (*Kome to odista treba?*), *Oslobođenje*, 29.10.06 on inclusive education, the terminology is quite mixed and includes: children with special needs, children with learning difficulties, children with certain difficulties, children with a certain level of capacity and children with difficulties in development and learning.

However, there seems to be some confusion over the term as it is unclear how this term is used and to whom it refers. For example, in an article on inclusive education, “We do a responsible but rewarding job” (*Radimo odgovoran ali i prekrasan posao*), in the *Reporter*, 27.09.06 while on the one hand, it is clear the term “children with special needs” in this article refers to children with learning difficulties, the teacher who is interviewed explains that children with special needs include children with speech impairments and deaf children. Although in most articles the term implies children with special needs are children with learning difficulties, it is never made clear if the term is applied to all children with disabilities or strictly to children with intellectual disabilities.

Similarly, in an article titled “Help to families”, (*Pomoc obiteljima*), from *Dnevni Avaz*, 29.10.06, the terms Autism, complex development disturbances and children with developmental difficulties are all used in the same article. In the article, “A special room for children with Autism” (*Specijalna soba za decu sa Autizmom*), *Blic*, 17.02.08, many different terms are used in a very short piece including: children with

disabilities, disabled children, children with special needs, children with difficulties in development. In the article, "Lonely children on the side tracks" (Usamljena deca: Na sporednom koloseku), Politika, 16.10.2006, the article uses all of the following terms: children disturbed in their development, children with handicaps, child with multiple disturbances in their development and healthy children. Similarly, in the article "Alert siren: people with disabilities in statistics" (Zvono za uzbunu: Osobe sa invaliditetom u statistici), Politika, 06.04.2006, the terms: children that are psycho-physically disturbed and children with damaged mental functions are used to describe children with intellectual disabilities.

In terms of children with intellectual disabilities in Serbia, the terminology is quite mixed and there is no consistent term used by the press. In addition, the terminology employed by journalists is quite derogatory. Terms such as mental retardation, mentally insufficiently developed persons, and complex development disturbances are used by journalists as well as professionals, authorities and even parents interviewed by the press. For example, in the article "Lonely Children on the Side tracks" (Usamljena deca: Na sporednom koloseku) in Politika on 16.10.2006, a mother of a child with intellectual disabilities is quoted using the terms: a child disturbed in their development and a child with multiple disturbances in their development. Or in the article "For the entry of defectologists into schools: From parliament sub-committee for the rights of children" (Za ulazak defektologa u škole: Sa skupštinskog pododbora za prava deteta) all of the following terms are used: children with disturbed development, persons with special needs, children with a handicap, the disabled, children with normal needs, children with disturbances in their behavior, children with slight disturbances in their development and children with disturbances in their behavior.

There is also great confusion over terms for children with intellectual disabilities in the Montenegrin press as well. In the 89 articles surveyed, there are a wide number of terms being used by journalists to describe children with intellectual disabilities and you can often find several different terms even within the same article. For example, in the article, "Seminar for Parents too" (Predavanja i za roditelje), Vijesti, 30.10.06, children with difficulties in development, children with special needs and children with deficiencies and disturbances are used interchangeably in this short article. Similarly, in the article "Integration of Children with Special Needs" (Integracija djece sa posebnim potrebama) in Pobjeda, 03.06.06, the text mixes children with special needs, children with lessened intellectual and physical abilities, children with difficulties in development.

There is also a tendency in the press in Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro **to compare people with disabilities to "healthy persons" or "normal people"**. Terms such as 'the disabled' and 'the healthy population' are often used in conjunction with one another. For example, in an article from Bosnia entitled "You play for your homeland" (Za domovinu se igra), a transcript of a radio interview in Dani on 08.07.05, with members of the Bosnian national sitting volley ball team, the journalist asks one of the players: "Are you normal regular people? Do you have wives, families, and friends?" She then goes on to ask, "If you could do it, could other healthy persons do it, those without a handicap?" Some texts describe the relationship between the "healthy population" and the "non-healthy" population such as in the article from Serbia, "The Disabled in the Parliament?" (Hendikepirana u Parlamentu?), in Blic on 03.12.06. In this article the journalist describes a school for children with disabilities: "In Belgrade for example, there is only one school open for supporting blind or immobile children offering them the opportunity to spend their childhood socializing with completely healthy children. For them, this is the only opportunity to feel equal in the future, which is the foundation of a healthy social life." Or in the article "Lonely children on the side tracks" (Usamljena deca: Na sporednom koloseku) in Politika on 16.10.2006, the author writes: "Life with a child with a handicap is extremely difficult...this child is likely to throw all objects that come in his way and create uncontrolled mess. A lively and active healthy child is one story but the hyperactivity of the child multiply disturbed in their development is quite a different story." Another illustrative example is found in the article, "A Lack of Understanding of Parents: More Roma and Children with Special Needs in Kindergarten" (Nerazumevanje roditelja: Više Roma i deca sa posebnim potrebama u vrtićima), Politika, 24.08.2006 in which the director of an NGO working on an inclusive education initiative describes children with disabilities in school alongside "totally healthy children". She then goes on to explain that it is necessary for children with disabilities to be in their own classroom because they are so aggressive and should only socialize with their "healthy peers" for one hour a day.

In other cases, people with disabilities are referred to within an article as 'those people'. There is also use of other impersonal terms like 'a 100% disabled' or 'a 60% disabled' to refer to an individual or group. This is the case in the article titled "A 100% disabled trains police to dive" (Stopostotni invalid obučava i policijske ronioce) in Dnevni Avaz from 04.09.06. In addition to being highly impersonal, this terminology suggests a very medical approach to disability as this is how people with disabilities are classified according to a medical commission assessing their work capacity and subsequent entitlements to benefits.

In all three countries there is clearly a lack of consistency on disability terminology used in the press but the term "the disabled" is used more often than others, particularly in the headlines of articles. While some news

outlets use neutral terms such as 'people with disabilities', there is still a large number of journalists using depersonalized terms such as, 'the disabled' or 'the handicapped'. As headlines are more widely viewed, this practice can help to perpetuate the use of this term in the media and by the general public. The high proportion of offensive or de-personalizing terminology signals a need for journalists to be made aware of appropriate disability language. More concerning, however, is the overall lack of consistency on terms speaking to an obvious confusion over disability language and a lack of public consensus on appropriate terminology.

Changing the language used by the media

There are several good examples of articles that use consistent terminology. The good practices are usually stories written by disability advocates or those in which members of the disability movement are being interviewed or when the journalist has an overall awareness about disability issues from a social model perspective. The disability advocates in the region have a great responsibility to tell the media what language they want to be used and to insist that it is used consistently. In this way, they will help to make long-term changes in the way disability terminology is used in the press. On the other hand, it is clear that journalists, editors, sub-editors and other media professionals are in need of disability language training to know what the correct terminology is. The development of a tool kit targeting media professionals would be a wise solution. In addition to this, there is an investment needed in the training of "media spokespersons" within the disability movement to ensure proper terminology is used.

Below is a look at several good practices in using correct terminology consistently:

"FOR FREE MOVEMENT AND INDEPENDENCE" (ZA SLOBODNO KRETANJE I SAMOSTALNOST), Danas, 16.10.06

The "White Cane"- Association of Blind and Visually Impaired people organized an event on Saturday entitled "Let's walk together" with the aim of promoting equal rights to free movement and independence. The initiative was organized on the occasion of International Day of White Cane in order to underline the importance of integrating people with disabilities into the broader social community. The president of „White cane“ association Vesna Nestorović said to the press that the motive of this activity is to point out the partnership between people with disabilities and the State in solving the problems of people with disabilities. Nestorović said that the event "Let's walk together" wants to call attention to the omissions that occurred when reconstructing Nemanjina Street in Belgrade. She emphasized that associations of people with disabilities tried to explain how the sidewalks and pathways for blind people should have been done so that they would be useful for this population, but no one paid attention and because of those oversights people with disabilities cannot use this street to move independently. She also accentuated another problem blind and visually impaired people face – that is the lack of personnel who would assist in training people for independent movement – Orientation and Mobility Instructors. She also stated that a proposition has been made for organizing a training of local personnel in Croatia. The event started on Slavija square where roughly 50 persons with disabilities gathered. In front of the Student Cultural Centre in Belgrade they organized a simulation of crossing the street with blindfolded eyes and with a white cane, independent walking on the pathway for blind and visually impaired people and crossing the street in a wheelchair.

"IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE GOOD WILL OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES" (SVE ZAVISI OD DOBRE VOLJE LOKALNE VLASTI), Danas, 25.10.06.

Motivation for the Employment and Self-employment of People with Disabilities

Education of people with disabilities is mainly directed towards special schools where the curriculum is not the same as the one applied in regular schools. Most schools and faculties do not have ramps for people with disabilities, which additionally complicates the possibility for inclusion of people with disabilities into the educational system, so when employing those people the unequal level of education becomes a problem.

This is one of the conclusions of the "Motivation for Employment and Self-employment of People with Disabilities Survey", which was conducted by the Centre for Developing of Inclusive Society, the Centre for Monitoring and Evaluation and Handicap International while waiting for the Law on Employment of People with Disabilities.

According to Marko Savić from the Centre for Monitoring and Evaluation, the State does not have a system-wide solution for this problem so it all depends on the good will of local authorities. On the territory of Serbia, according to data obtained from the National Employment Bureau, there are 25.744 persons with disabilities registered.

- Our State has not yet defined the most basic issue which is the definition of a person with a disability. Numerous laws in this field are still waiting to be adopted and those existing, such as the Law Prohibiting Discrimination of People with Disabilities, are not followed. In Great Britain blind persons can carry out 93 jobs while in our country that number is only two – Savić stated yesterday, at a press conference organized on the completion of the survey and the issuing of the publication "Motivation for Employment and Self-employment of People with Disabilities."

In the article below from Montenegro, there is good use of the terms 'blind people' and 'people with visual impairments' even though 'the blind' is used in the headline. However, despite the consistent use of appropriate terminology, at the end of the article the journalist makes a box called: "Blind People are Especially Brave" which is regrettable as it is rather condescending, painting a picture that blind people should be considered courageous for leaving their homes.

***"OUT OF 198 BLIND ONLY 15 CAN MOVE INDEPENDENTLY" (OD 198 SLIJEPIH SAMO SE 15 KRECE SAMOSTALNO), DAN, 08.07.06
PODGORICA – CITY OF BARRIERS***

There is no organized training for walking with a white cane, and only one person from Serbia is a certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, says Bozidar Denda

Public areas, streets, parks and bridges are not adjusted for independent moving of blind people. Angled ramps should be at least two centimeters above the road and by no means merged with the road, as it is in most cases. When using a walking stick in such cases, it is very difficult to conclude where the line between the sidewalk and the road is. Irregularly parked cars on the sidewalks are big obstacles as well as cases of non respected traffic regulations. Despite all announcements, there are no audible signals yet and wide-open manholes are dangerous even for those who have excellent sight. The sidewalks on the bridges are also too narrow.

It is a devastating fact that out of 198 blind people only 15 can move with the help of a white cane.

- About 60% of the membership is 55 years of age and older. For them it is most difficult to learn to move. The number of visually impaired children is very low, somewhat lower than 5% and the remaining blind population in Podgorica is between 20 to 40 years old – said Bozidar Denda from the Association of blind people in Podgorica.

They seldom move independently to remote destinations and when they do, it is mostly with the help of friends or family, Denda said. He pointed out that the non existence of organized training for moving with the help of a white cane is a serious problem, and only one person from Serbia is a certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (a person who trains blind people to move using a white cane and teaches them how to orient themselves).

In order to organize orientation and mobility trainings in using a white cane, support from the Ministry of Education and Science is necessary, Milos Vujicic, the Director of the Institute for training and professional rehabilitation of disabled children and youth at Zabjela stated.

- We do not have organized mobility training in using a white cane for neither children nor adults and this course does not exist at the Institute. As this is necessary for everyday life of our beneficiaries, we try to organize a three-month course every year. In Montenegro there is no one who is qualified for lecturing this subject – Vujicic said.

He estimated that the yard at the Institute is safe for courses in orientation but that the streets are unsafe.

Radenko Lacmanovic, journalist, believes that the Management Board of the Republic Union of the blind and the City Administration are responsible for barriers that hinder movement for blind people. In the capital nothing has been done to facilitate the mobility of people without sight, on the contrary, it seems that walking along the city streets on a daily basis is impossible in fact. The barriers are numerous, there are no audible signals, the problem of parking lots has not been adequately solved, moving on the sidewalks is difficult even for those who can see, let alone us who are blind – Lacmanovic said.

In Podgorica there are no possibilities for blind people to get trained dogs that would help them move around.

Self taught Orientation and Mobility Trainers

In every training process, young people tend to learn more easily, while older people find it difficult to move using a white cane. Fear is a big problem that hinders visually impaired people. In the beginning we organize the training program in a safe environment and then, gradually, we practice on more challenging territory. In the city centre, the most dangerous crossroad is the one next to hotel Montenegro. We had a series of preparatory trainings and techniques so that our students become a bit bolder and start to move independently – said Igor Tomic, teacher of physical education and self taught Orientation and Mobility Trainer who trains blind people in mobility and orientation.

Blind people are exceptionally brave

Lacmanovic said that it is most difficult during summer when open –air restaurant owners install tables and chairs on the sidewalks.

– You must then “battle” your way through tables, chairs and guests. Parked cars on the sidewalks are also a problem. Independent movement is a result of personal courage and the fact that there is no alternative – Lacmanovic stated.

III. SOURCES OF NEWS

In this section of the paper, we ask the question: where are journalists getting their news from in articles related to disability?

Why sources of news are important?

In this study, it was clear that:

- Most of the news sources related to disability come from government officials and local authorities.
- Second to this are professionals working in the field of social protection such as defectologists, teachers and social workers.
- Officials from disability organisations are next in line and do make up a significant part of news sources and are quoted more and more regularly in articles.

According to past research on media, mass media prefers sources of news that come from government and other elite sources.²¹ In the US, with the case of the Americans with Disabilities Act, journalists and mass media outlets knew so little about disability they had to begin to develop sources from the disability community itself.²² The same is true in the Balkans. As many disability issues in the region are tied to government and disability legislation, sources from the government and other officials is expected on disability-related stories. However, looking to the disability community for news is not the only issue. Journalists, in general, are not sensitized to the issue of disability and without perhaps meaning to, view disability from a pejorative perspective. In fact, according to communication theorist, Pamela Shoemaker, when reporting on a marginalized group leads to labelling; the journalist is acting as surrogate judge placing normative judgements of deviance before his or her audience.²³

When disability is reported by non-disabled people, then there is a tendency to write about disability and disabled people as ‘other’. “There is an inherent assumption that this is the only way in which readers will access the story. They are not expected to see their own experiences reflected in the accounts of a disabled person. Focusing on the experience of family, friends or professionals and their responses to a disabled person is felt to be closer to the experience of the average reader and therefore they will feel more comfortable with this ‘peer’ reportage.”²⁴

When covering a story, talk to as many people with disabilities as possible is the best approach according to Wailim Wong, a Social Affairs Correspondent in the UK. As he explains, “Patronising stories about ‘brave

²¹ Beth Hellar, “News Coverage of Disability Issues: Final Report for The Centre for an Accessible Society”: 4.

²² Hellar, *Ibid*: 4.

²³ Pamela Shoemaker, “The Communication of Deviance” in B. Dervin (Ed.) *Progress in Communication Science* (Norwood, NJ: Albex, 1987): 172.

²⁴ Scope, *Ibid*: 6.

handicapped' people overcoming these diseases against the odds are still cropping up in the press." In order to change this, he suggests, the disability community needs to communicate to journalists how they want disability issues to be covered. However, he adds, journalists need to talk to as many people with disabilities as possible keeping in mind the fact that it is not a uniform group of people. There are diverse issues and diverse opinions on what is offensive and what is not.²⁵

Main trends identified:

There is a mix in terms of sources and in the study it is shown that journalists get their news from three main sources: government, DPOs and professionals. In BiH it is evident that in many of the articles related to disability, the journalist uses a mix of sources. The article, "The Disabled: The state has injured us more than the war" (Invalidi: Država nas ranjava gore od rata) from Dnevni List, 30.06.2006, multiple sources are quoted in the text including members of a disabled war veterans union along with government officials. In "Local companies opposed to employing the disabled" (Domaće tvrtke protiv zapošljavanja invalida) Dnevni List, 16.06.06, on employment legislation, both members of the association of employers and various DPO representatives are quoted in the article. Likewise, in "Including 407 children with special needs" (Uključeno 407 djece s posebnim potrebama) in Nezavisne Novine on 19.10.06, the director of a special school is interviewed as well as a ministry official.

When legal reforms or government strategies related to disability are being covered, government representatives are the main sources of news. So, for example, in an article on social benefits legislation, "Implementation of the law on civil disabled and war disabled" from (Implementacija zakona o civilnim invalidima i zrtvama rata) Dnevni Avaz 14.09.06, only government sources are quoted in the text. Similarly, in the article "The disabled in RS have had their rights violated" (Invalidii u RS obespravljani) in Nezavisne Novine on 11.10.06, the journalist uses sources from the ministry as well as the republic employment bureau but no one from civil society is quoted in the text. In an article on city legal obligations regarding accessibility, the city architect and a ministry representative are the only sources of news and no one from the disability community is quoted in the text.

The situation is similar in Serbia when it comes to covering news on legal reforms. In an article on the adoption of a national disability strategy, "Creating the framework for equal living: the strategy for the improvement of people with disabilities (Stvaranje okvira za ravnopravan život: Strategija za unapređenje položaja osoba sa invaliditetom) ministry officials are the main source of the news. Likewise, in the "Year of Equal Opportunities: Parliament of Serbia on the ban to discriminate the disabled" (Godina jednakih mogućnosti: skupština srbije o zabrani diskriminacije invalida), Politika, 04.04.2006, an overview of recent legislative reforms to facilitate greater equality, the government is the sole source of news as only a minister and members of parliament are quoted speaking about the importance of anti-discrimination legislation. Ironically, despite the theme of the article, one government official is quoted using quite pejorative language: "If the state does not provide them [people with disabilities] with access to education equal to the others, these damaged people will stay handicapped and marginalized."

For articles in which a DPO is conducting an event or a campaign and has contacted the press, they are represented in the article as the main source of news. For example, the article "Using business to fight against prejudices" (Firmom protiv predrasuda), Politika, 18.01.2007, about a DPO that opened a print shop to employ people with disabilities, tells the story from the perspective of the organisation. The article clearly articulates the DPO's perspective on equal opportunities and advancement of human rights. In another example, we have an article written from the perspective of disability advocates on accessible tourism in "Packing their bags only when they must: people with disabilities as tourists" (Pakuju kofere samo kad moraju: Osobe sa invaliditetom kao turisti), Politika, 22.08.2006. The article is based on an event held by a DPO on accessible tourism and has a clear advocacy tone on the barriers people with disabilities face. In "Achieving independence of the disabled: premiere of a film in the cultural centre" (Osamostaljivanje invalida: Premijera filma u kulturnom centru), Politika, 07.12.06, an article on a film premiere organized by a DPO to commemorate December 3rd, the journalist quotes the DPO representative who organized the event and ministry officials who attend it. They speak about the importance of personal assistance services for achieving independent living. For the most part, when DPOs are the source of news, it tends to be when they have organized an event that gets press coverage. In Serbia, many DPOs have managed to communicate a wider disability rights agenda when journalists are covering their events.

This is not always the case in BiH when DPOs are the main source of news. For example, in an article on the 3rd of December, "Thousands of disabled need help" (Hiljadama invalida neophodna pomoć), Nezavisne Novine, 03.12.06, the journalist interviews several DPOs who explain that people with disabilities are in need of assistance in BiH. In this article the journalist also quotes an individual with a disability who speaks about

²⁵ Cooke, Caroline; Daone, Liz; Morris, Gwilym, "Stop Press: How the Press Portrays Disabled People" (Scope: London, 2000): 28.

a life achievement. In, "The division among them brought them to an even more difficult position" (Podjele ih dovele u još teži položaj), Oslobođenje, 03.12.06, two DPOs are interviewed on the 3rd of December to explain the importance of creating an umbrella organisation in BiH. Both articles are rather neutral in their tone and neither mention empowerment, equality or other issues on the human rights agenda.

However, there are some examples of DPOs being covered by the press from a more human rights perspective. In the article, "The rights of disabled women are endangered in BiH" (Ugrožena prava hendikepiranih žena u BiH), Nezavisne Novine, 25.11.04, a DPO representative is interviewed and clearly articulates the double discrimination women face as she is quoted saying: "Women and girls with disabilities...an urgent message was sent to the ministries to end the violence against these women in the families and to make gynecological clinics accessible as soon as possible so that all women with disabilities can go for check ups." In "Kampanja zagovaranja prava osoba s mentalnom retardacijom u FBiH" an article covering a media campaign run by a DPO, the disability advocate being interviewed clearly outlines a human rights perspective on employment of people with intellectual disabilities. In, "Poor Care for the Blind: Tomorrow is the International Day of the White Cane" (Malo brige za slijepce; Sutra je Medjunarodni Dan Bijelog Stapa, the DPO interviewed discusses the barriers a blind person faces in having a sustainable income. The journalist quotes the representative saying: "Disabled and handicapped persons are the most endangered category of the population in BiH because their basic human rights and liberties are broken on a daily basis and this is happening to them at the top of the government. The first step should be the equalisation of rights and cash benefits based on social protection on the entire territory of BiH."

In Montenegro, DPO representatives are sought as a source of news but generally related to an event or a project they are undertaking. There were notably fewer articles in Montenegro that used DPOs as a source of news. In, the article, "The State to take better care" (Država da povede više računa), Dan, 21.11.06, on a local initiative to create services and support to people with disabilities. In the article the NGO that is spearheading the project is quoted alongside a representative from an international organisation involved in the project. On the international day of the white cane, a person with a disability is the main source of the story on the barriers blind people and people with visual impairments face in "Out of 198 blind only 15 can move independently" (Od 198 slijepih samo se 15 kreće samostalno), Dan, 08.07.06. However, in another article on DPO activities, the frame of the article is in the medical model: "Activities decrease the darkness" (Aktivnosti "smanjuju mrak), Dan, 20.06.06. Aside from the overly emotional title people with visual impairments are presented as pitiable: "Certainly, as someone said before, our society is still late with the flash of humanity towards these disabled people". The general trend is that DPOs are the main source of an article for an event or project they are running or for international days of commemoration such as the 3rd of December or the day of the White Cane.

In articles on inclusive education as well as special schooling, there is a clear pattern here where experts such as defectologists, teachers or school principals are the main actors that are interviewed and quoted. For example, in the article "Love brings out the best in children" (Ljubavlju izvlace najbolje iz dece) in Blic on 13.06.06, about a special school, only the defectologists working in the school are interviewed and quoted in the article. This trend also holds true in BiH. In an article about the difficulties in implementing inclusive education, "Parents are filing a suit against the Minister" (Roditelji podnose krivičnu prijavu protiv ministra Turkušića), Oslobođenje, 14.10.06, the main voices debating the issue of inclusive education come from: the director of a special school, the manager of a special school, a psychologist and several teachers. Only one parent is quoted at the end of the article and no children with disabilities or disability advocates are interviewed; it is solely written from the standpoint of professionals. This elitism is echoed by a derogatory quote from the director of a special school: "It would be better that all children are healthy but the situation is not even close to the one they want [the government] to present." Even in a thorough article on inclusive education reform in Montenegro, the story is told strictly through the perspective of a national expert on inclusive education and the donor. There are no members of the disability community included in the article.

The individual voices of people with disabilities are rarely used as a source of news. The voices of people with disabilities are recorded in features profiling the life of a particular person with a disability. As will be shown later in the paper, these generally tend to be stereotypical portraits depicting a person with disabilities as either pitiable or as superhuman. In Montenegro, only 7 of the 89 articles the journalist interviewed individual people with disabilities (not including DPO representatives) but each story was a feature about a life achievement and none of the articles related to news. The same trend is somewhat the same for Serbia. However, there were several articles where a person with a disability was quoted as a source of news but it was not mentioned that they were disabled. For example, in the article, "How to solve the life problems of the disabled", a person with a disability is quoted in the article but rather than mentioning he is disabled, he is named as a legal expert. Again, in "Protection of Persons with Disabilities" (Zaštita osoba sa invaliditetom) Politika, 05.01.2006, a person with a disability is quoted but their disability is not

highlighted rather they are referred to by their profession only. To many this is a refreshing find since it may not always be relevant to mention someone's disability just as it may not be relevant to name a person's skin colour or ethnicity.

The press in BiH seems to have developed a discipline in looking for a person with disabilities as a source of news. This is especially true when it comes to disabled war veterans, who give almost a quarter of the quotes (a comment on an issue or an event, giving space to an individual voice) for the press. As a rule, the main source from the civil society sector is a high official of a union or an association (i.e. a president or a secretary general), who usually calls attention to an issue. In the *Nezavisne novine* article, 'Filing 750 Legal Complaints against the Federal Government', (*Podneseno 750 tuzbi protiv Federalne Vlade*) the President of the Federal Union of the Disabled threatens: "We will continue filing these complaints to the Federal Government. With every negative reply to the request for disability pension, we will prepare a new legal complaint." Or, in the same article, the Secretary General of Federal Union of the Paraplegics and Polio Afflicted, calls attention to the issue as she is quoted saying: "Disabled war veterans are favoured in comparison to the non-war disabled, and there is also a geographical discrimination." In "Increased number of pensioners who obtained their entitlement on the basis of disability: in BiH, one in four pensions, is disability pension", (*Povecan broj penzionera koji su prava ostvarili na osnovu invalidnosti: U BiH svaka cetvrta invalidska penzija*) on disability pension reform, the journalist speaks to pensioners and pension officials. Similarly, in the article "The Disabled are discriminated on all levels" (*Invalidi diskrimisani na svim nivoima*), *Nezavisne Novine*, 29.10.06, the journalist interviews and quotes three different DPO representatives along with a member of government on the issue of social benefits reform.

There are many articles in Serbia that combine sources where the journalists go to government representatives, DPO representatives and other relevant actors to get multiple perspectives on an issue. There is evidence that a number of articles are taking the voice of disability advocates into account and they are being included in reporting which is a good sign. In an article on employment, "Employment and not charity: "How to solve the life problems of the disabled" (*Zaposlenje, a ne milostinja: Kako rešiti životni problem invalida*), *Politika*, 21.10.2006, the journalist interviews several different actors in a sort of investigative report to get a more complete picture on the issue. The journalist begins the article with an interview with two different DPO representatives. She then goes on to explore current government initiatives for employment of people with disabilities and ends the article by interviewing a legal expert who was involved in a government supported feasibility study on employment of people with disabilities who is a disabled person but without mentioning this in the article. Similarly, in an article on a poverty reduction round-table, both government members, international donor agencies and members of civil society are quoted including an advocate from the disability movement ("Life on the edge of survival: A round table in the parliament of Serbia", (*Život na ivici egzistencije: Okrugli sto u Narodnoj Skupštini Srbije*), *Politika*, 18.10.2006). Although the journalist goes to different sources for the news piece, the disability advocate is misquoted.

In Montenegro, there were fewer examples of a multi-stakeholder approach to reporting on disability. However, in an article on discrimination, "Discrimination of the handicapped at the airport" (*Diskriminacija hendikepiranih na aerodromima*), *Pobjeda*, 27.12.06, several representatives from the association of youth with disabilities is the main source of news but the journalist also contacts the official airline carrier for a reaction. The result; the journalist takes an in-depth look at the problems people with disabilities face while travelling while addressing the current discriminatory practices in airline travel for people with disabilities.

It is clear from looking at the different ways journalists use sources that **the best way to a wider perspective on disability issues is for journalists to talk to as many people with disabilities as possible**. Getting perspectives from people with disabilities themselves helps media professionals to understand disability issues and to get a clearer message from disability advocates. However, this is not always the case as many times the journalist may interview a DPO representative or a person with a disability for a story but chose to interpret their words differently. A case in point comes from Goran Pavlovic, the former Executive Director of ADS in Serbia. He explains that when he was interviewed by a journalist discussing the issue of empowerment, instead of taking his photo, the journalist wanted to photograph someone in a wheelchair with a flat tire. Instead of capturing the essence of Goran's message, the journalist wanted a dramatic photo showing a person with disabilities in a vulnerable position. Therefore, it is crucial for disability advocates to continue to be vigilant in getting their message across to the media and ensuring it is interpreted and reported correctly.

In articles where the focus is on the perspective of government, parents, professionals or care givers and not on people with disabilities, these stories are not really about disability but about how non-disabled people deal with disability issues. Where a person with disabilities is the key player in the story there is usually a non-disabled person included too, as if to offer validation. It is encouraging, however to see a growing

number of articles written from the perspective of disability advocates. Still, there is a lot of work to be done to get the voices of people with disabilities fully represented in the press.

Below is an example of good practice in terms of using multiple sources:

“BOBIĆ: CLARIFY LEGAL OBLIGATIONS” (BOBIĆ: POJASNITI ZAKONSKE OBAVEZE), Danas, 22.11.06

The Department for Social and Child Protection and the City Architect search for solutions for overcoming the barriers impeding the movement of people with disabilities.

The problems people with disabilities face in moving about day to day when walking on sidewalks, through underpasses, taking public transportation or when accessing institutions that are lacking ramps and elevators, will all soon be surpassed.

- The barriers that people with disabilities have in their daily activities and when accessing institutions must be removed in the upcoming period, and in so doing, facilitate their basic right to equally participate in life. We will design action plans in cooperation with associations of people with disabilities which will define priorities and map out the institutions that need to improve their accessibility. The city will begin to install ramps and elevators in buildings that are under its jurisdiction, but cooperation with the Republic that is overseeing administrative institutions will be necessary - Ljiljana Lučić, City Secretary for Social and Child Protection announced.

She added that agreements were reached with some public utility companies and that during 2007, 17 health care centres will be adapted to be accessible for people with disabilities; GSP (the City Public Transportation Company) when buying new vehicles will purchase only low-floor vehicles, and „Parking service“ is already facilitating parking for people with disabilities.

The City Architect Đorđe Bobić says that when designing new buildings, there is the good will to include needs of people with disabilities into the plans, but also mentioned that the referent regulations are not strong enough and do not stipulate sanctions.

- In order for one project to obtain construction and utilization permits there are 42 other permits that ought to be obtained from the „Parking service“ and public utilities companies etc, but it is not written anywhere that the permit must be approved by a social protection department or some other body that would represent the needs of people with disabilities.

There are certain funds in the city budget for the purpose of overcoming barriers but adequate activities must be undertaken – Bobić points out.

When reconstructing thoroughfares and building new buildings these issues are mainly taken into consideration, Bobić says, but the problem occurs with old buildings and streets where no reconstruction projects are planned. According to his words, adequate ramps and elevators must be installed there, curbs must be lowered to the level of pedestrian crossings and audible signals ought to be put in place.

On behalf of the Union of People with Muscular Dystrophy, Ivanka Jovanović emphasizes that the rights of people with disabilities are currently regulated only by one law - the one on prohibition of discrimination on grounds of disability, and that this should change as well.

- In the area of education there are also accessibility problems in schools and faculties which will have to be resolved soon - Vesna Mirović-Pjevač, Deputy Secretary for Education, and the representatives of students with disabilities jointly concluded.

Visually impaired and blind are forgotten by everyone

Tihomir Nikolić, one of our fellow citizens who is visually impaired, reminded us that when people speak of persons with disabilities they usually think in terms of physical impairments and tend to forget the blind. He says that there are problems in everyday mobility - such as finding the bus station or entering some institution, finding the pedestrian crossing or the underpass entrance, and all this because of the non-existence of pathways for blind and better audio signalization.”

IV. HOW DISABILITY IS FRAMED BY THE PRESS

To a large extent, disability is viewed in the press as a social welfare issue requiring legal reforms, overprotective services and changes in social protection benefits. However, disability is rarely discussed by the print media from the perspective of people with disabilities themselves on issues that are of interest to them. It is most often a look at disability through the lens of the non-disabled population viewing disability as 'other'. So, for example, it is rare to find an article about a general life issue the whole population faces told through the perspective of a person with a disability (i.e. human interest stories, sports, culture, arts etc...).

Why the choice of topics matters?

Examining the specific topics journalists choose to cover when reporting on disability issues is important for understanding how disability is framed for public consumption. Whether journalists write about disability pensions and social benefits needed for people with disabilities or choose to report on the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities and the accomplishments made by the disability movement can make a big difference in how the public perceives disability. As Beth A. Haller writes, "How the attributes of news stories about disability are played in the news media can sway public opinion about disability issues and toward the cultural representations of people with disabilities in general."²⁶ In other words, the way disability is framed by journalists is integral to telling audiences how to think about certain issues. In fact, some media analysts believe that the way the journalist frames an issue and the topics they choose to write about when addressing this issue are connected to agenda setting: "Both the selection of topics for the news agenda and the selection of frames for stories about those topics are powerful agenda setting roles and awesome ethical responsibilities."²⁷

The focus of disability related articles in the three countries is on:

- Disability benefits
- Legal reforms (e.g. legal amendments related to social protection, disability pension, employment and anti-discrimination)
- Inclusive education, special schooling and day care centres
- DPO activities
- Humanitarian aid

Which disability models are used by the press?

Medical or social welfare model

"Persons with disabilities need not only medical quarantine but the opportunities to be a part of society."

- DPO leader quoted in "Employment and not charity: How to solve the life problems of the disabled" (Zaposlenje, a ne milostinja: Kako rešiti životni problem invalida), Politika, 21.10.2006

The overwhelming majority of articles in all three countries are framed in the medical or social welfare model calling for special services to care for people with disabilities such as residential institutions and special schools or a preoccupation with disability benefits. There are a significant number of articles appearing in the press on day care centres and inclusive education but they are mainly seen through the lens of the charity model wherein professionals and local authorities describe children with disabilities as needy beneficiaries of one-off charitable initiatives. You can find in the press, some examples of social model but they generally tend to come from DPOs and other civil society actors.

In the three countries, **disability is largely discussed in the press as a social protection issue** with the majority of articles covering pension, disability benefits and the revision of social protection legislation. Articles like, "120 requests in a month: Import of vehicles for persons with disabilities" (Za mesec dana 120

²⁶ Beth Haller, *ibid*: 2.

²⁷ As quoted by Beth Haller, Maxwell McCombs, "Explorers and surveyors: Expanding strategies for agenda-setting research," 69:4, *Journalism Quarterly*, (1992): 813-824.

zahteva: uvoz automobila za osobe sa invaliditetom), Politika, 12.03.2006 in which the journalist describes the process for getting customs tax exemptions for certain categories of people with disabilities on imported cars, clearly illustrate this trend. In the text, the journalist uses highly medical terms such as, 'people with physical impairments from 70-100%' and the 'heaviest category of disabilities'.

The disability issue that gets the largest coverage in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the debate over disability pension and benefits to disabled war veterans and people with disabilities who do not fall under this category (termed 'non-war disabled' in the local context).

The article "Implementation of the law on civil disabled and war disabled" from (Implementacija zakona o civilnim invalidima i zrtvama rata) Dnevni Avaz 14.09.06, is a good example of the heavy focus on disability benefits that make it into the press as a news piece. The article is presented from the perspective of the government and begins with a quote from the Minister from the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs explaining that there are many more beneficiaries qualifying for disability benefits than anticipated. The article goes on to explain how the medical commissions work to assess the percentage of impairment an individual has to determine the disability benefits they are entitled to. The language used in the text to describe the issue is highly medical including terms such as: medical commissions composed of doctors, assessment of invalids and impairments. The message from the Minister is that this increase in number of beneficiaries will impact the budget. There are no other stakeholders quoted in the article and the journalist is representing only the government's perspective on the issue.

In Serbia you also have a significant number of articles focusing on social protection reform from a medial model perspective. "They manipulate the tender for medical devices" (Namestaju tender za medicinska pomagala), 15.02.06, Blic covers the debate over tenders for assistive devices through the Republic Health Insurance Institute. Similarly, in "Darkness is even darker: the rights of the blind and sight impaired refugees" (Mrak još mračniji: Prava slepih i slabovidih izbeglih lica), Politika, 29.01.06, the journalist covers how a disabled refugee cannot access disability benefits. Both articles present the issues from a social welfare perspective using medical terminology such as categorization and percentages of impairment and reinforcing the idea that people with disabilities are reliant on benefits. However, in Serbia, there were more articles on legislative reform, particularly on the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation and the drafting of a national disability strategy which both took place in 2006.

There are similar articles in Montenegro such as, "Work capacity assessed according to medical criteria" (Ocjena radne sposobnosti po medicinskim kriterijumima), Pobjeda, 14.01.06, in which the article describes how the assessment bodies in charge of work capacity have completely medical approach during their assessment. The interviewee says that these Commissions strictly pay attention to medical criteria as much as possible when assessing what work capacity a person with disabilities has. The language in the text uses medical terms including "60% disabled" and "100% disabled".

Disability as cost

These articles evoke a clear message that disability is a cost or a burden to the state. It perpetuates the stereotype that people with disabilities are incapable of participating in everyday life and are in need of special care or income replacements. It does not recognize that with appropriate support, people with disabilities can achieve autonomy and independence but focuses instead on the draining of state resources. The article "Thousands of disabled in need of help" (Hiljadama invalida neophodna pomoc) Nezavisne Novine, 03.12.2006 is a perfect example of this stereotyping as it describes people with disabilities as completely dependent on the state. In a similar article, "Social protection in the federation: The elderly and frail are the obligation of the canton" (Socijalna zaštita u Federaciji: Stari i iznemogli su obaveza kantona), Oslobođenje, 13.01.07 about the right to entitlements for people who are "60% impaired". In many of these articles, disability and people with disabilities are presented as a burden to the state or as a cost to society. There are many examples of articles where the issue of disability is associated with a certain cost to the state and to tax payers such as disability benefits. To illustrate this paradigm many of the headlines below clearly articulate disability as a cost:

- "The state owes the disabled 180 million dinars" (Država duguje invalidima 180 miliona dinara), Danas, 04.10.06
- "For the disabled 180 million dinars" (Za invalide 180 miliona dinara), Danas, 23/06/200
- "To transform institutions 1,6 million EUR", (Za transformaciju ustanova 1,6 miliona evra), Danas, 20.06.06
- "Smaller disability pensions because the state spent resources" (Manje invalidske penzije zato što je država potrošila sredstva), Oslobođene, 06.06.06
- "Parliamentarians robbing the disabled for their own pocket money", (Parlamentarci opljačkali džeparac invalida), Glas Javnosti, 25.06.06

- “The disabled ate up all the benefits for children”(*Invalidi pojeli dječiji doplatak*) Oslobođenje, 22.07.06

In the article, “The number of requests for benefits is increasing: Implementation of the law on civilian disabled and those injured at war” (Povećava se broj zahtjeva za priznavanje prava: Implementacija zakona o civilnim invalidima i žrtvama rata), in *Dnevni Avaz*, 14.09.06, the focus of the article is on increasing number of beneficiaries of disability pension and how this will impact the state budget. The article is told from the point of view of the government who emphasizes that the increase in the number of disability pension beneficiaries will have a negative impact on the budget. Within this article there is a box listing the numbers of disability pension beneficiaries and the direct impact they will have on the federal budget. Likewise, the article, “120 requests in a month: Import of vehicles for persons with disabilities”, *Za mesec dana 120 zahteva: Uvoz automobila za osobe sa invaliditetom*, *Politika*, 12.03.2006, is a clear example of how the disability is seen as a social welfare issue wherein people with disabilities are classified by not only their impairment but by the percentage they are impaired. The article clearly depicts the amount of tax relief a person is entitled to according to the type and percentage of their impairment using language such as, people with physical impairments from 70-100%, war disabled, civilian victims of war, blind persons, people suffering from muscular dystrophy, parents of multiply impaired children and the heaviest disability.

In the article “Obstructing the disabled” (*Opstrukcija invalida*) in *Oslobođenje*, 12.01.07, a DPO representative explains that disability benefits are not being distributed evenly between disabled war veterans vs. ‘non-war disabled’ or people with disabilities who do not fall under these categories. The journalist presents the amount government invests in entitlements for these two groups quoting the following figures:

- 60 million KM was planned for disabled war veterans
- 30 million KM was spent in full to cover needs of 12,000 non-war disabled which were officially registered last year
- The Institute for Medical Assessments processed 16,000 requests
- 42,000 requests for the assessment are waiting in the institute for medical assessments and centres for social work

The focus of the article is clearly on the uneven distribution of benefits but by listing the government expenditures and numbers of beneficiaries, the underlying message is that disability is associated with a cost.

Disabled war veteran protests often get coverage in the press such as in the article, “Protest gathering: do the disabled have the right to a normal life?” (*Protestni skup: imaju li invalidi pravo na normalan život?*) in *Oslobođenje*, 09.06.06 which covers matter-of-factly a protest organized by disabled war veterans demanding their benefits. Similarly, in the article, “Former fighters for a government that is not there: too many armchairs, too many candidates!” (*Bivši borci o vlasti koje nema: Fotelja malo, kandidata previše!*) in *Oslobođenje*, 25.12.06, the president of the union of disabled soldiers and various members of the union of disabled war veterans including members of the blind fighters of the Bosnian army are quoted in the article discussing disability benefits and corruption complaining that they have not received their entitlements. The tone of the article is accusatory and one union representative is quoted saying “Because politicians are not interested at all that there is a possibility that the disabled will not get their benefits and the reason they are not interested is because they have their big fat accounts in their banks. When I see them and what they do, I remember this folk proverb: *it is sweeter to have a gram of power than an ounce of gold.*”

Many articles quote figures on how much people with disabilities cost the state in terms of benefits and/or unemployment. For example, in the article “For full disability: 13, 900 dinars” (*Puna invalidska penzija 13,900 dinara*) in *Politika*, it states, “In Serbia there are 100,000 persons with disabilities, but only 5-10% of this are expected to have the right to this increase in benefit, as the basic criteria is that a person must be 100% disabled.”

Or in another article, “Obstructing the disabled” (*Opstrukcija invalida*) *Oslobođenje*, 12.01.07, the journalist lists the costs of disability benefits using figures:

- 60 million KM was planned for disabled war veterans
- 30 million KM was spent in full to cover needs of 12,000 non-war disabled which were officially registered last year

With such a high number of articles focusing on the economic cost of disability, it is easy for the public to get the message that disability is a financial burden. Furthermore, this notion only perpetuates the stereotype that people with disabilities are incapable of being productive members of society and are, therefore, in need of state benefits. Finally, as people with disabilities are depicted by numbers and figures, it gives them a very passive role in the debate as objects of state budget planning.

Education

One topic that gets wide coverage in the press is education of children with disabilities and in particular, the debate over inclusive education. What is clear from the findings is that there is still an over-protective approach to education. Even when actors are discussing inclusive education, there is confusion over what it means and how it will be implemented with a tendency to come back to the need for special classrooms and special schools with a preoccupation over how professionals are needed to care for children with disabilities.

This trend is clearly illustrated, in the article, "With their love - they bring out the best in children" (Ljubavlju izvlace najbolje iz dece), Blic, 13.06.06, the director of a special school explains how their school works: "About ten kids have not yet developed basic cultural-hygiene habits, and our medical nurses take care of them daily... There are 17 defectologists, one psychologist, one special pedagogue, one speech therapist, two professors of physical education and three medical nurses working with the children in the school... We bring out the best in every child." The journalist quotes one of the teachers describing a child in their school: "A little over ten years ago seven year old Vule from the Home in Zvečanska Street enrolled our school. After the categorization it was decided to send him to the Home for disabled children and youth in Sremcica due to a specific type of autism. There was something in the eyes of this child that assured me that he has a chance if he stays in our school."

In the same article, there is a sub-heading "*Vule in a plastic bag*" where the journalist writes: "The older teachers still retell the story about little Vule in the plastic bag left by the trash-can who successfully completed primary school at Anton Skala... Vule never met his parents, at the age of seven he had already changed seven foster families and paid no attention to the world around him whatsoever. He was unceasingly hungry, stuffing bread into his shirt and pockets and acting like a little animal. By the end of his second year in school he started to speak, and he managed to learn the entire multiplication table in two days." Apart from having a highly medical approach, the tone of the article emphasizes the idea that professionals know what is best and that they are able to 'treat' or 'tame' a person with a disability to make them less of a beast and more 'normal'.

In "Parents are filing a suit against Minister Turkušić" (Roditelji podnose krivičnu prijavu protiv ministra Turkušića), Oslobođenje, 14.10.06 despite being an article on inclusive education, a psychologist, defectologist and director of a special school are the only people interviewed to discuss the difficulties in implementing "this strange situation called inclusion" as said by one of the defectologists. Another defectologist is quoted saying "...it seems this inclusion is too big of a bite for us..."

It is clear in the article that there is confusion over what inclusive education means and the issue is still viewed through the lens of an over-protectionist medical approach. This confusion over inclusive education is echoed in the article, "We have a responsible but beautiful job" (Radimo odgovoran ali i prekrasan posao) in the Reporter, 27/09/2006. The journalist interviews two teachers from a school that is part of a program on inclusion where children are in a special classroom within a mainstream school. On inclusion one of the teachers says: "This is a double-edged sword, this I am telling you as a person who has been working in a special class for 20 years. You have to choose well which child can get involved into inclusive education."

There is also a number of articles on day care centres that have a medical or over-protectionist point of view. "A new building for people with special needs" (*Novi objekat za osobe s posebnim potrebama*) *Nezavisne Novine*, 30.09.06, is an article about plans to build a special kindergarten for children with disabilities separate from the mainstream elementary school. The mayor of Brčko is shown distributing gifts to the children that were identified as in need of this special centre. "*Nega od dva do 15 dana: Prvi objekat za kratkotrajni smeštaj osoba sa invaliditetom u Vojvodini*", *Politika*, is an article about the opening of a day care centre to be used when families with a member who is disabled go on vacation so that they can leave this family member at the centre. The journalist begins the article saying: "Families from Bačka Topola whose members are people with disabilities, and who need daily care, will finally be able to think about vacation too." In the article, "Special room for children with Autism" (*Specijalna soba za decu sa Autizmom*), Blic, 17.02.06, professionals speak about the importance of creating a special day centre for children with autism. Again, the emphasis is on what professionals think and why specialized measures are important without mention of the possibility of inclusion.

There are some good examples however on inclusive education. For instance, in "How to get a school that suits every child: meeting on inclusive education" (*Kako do škole po meri deteta: Skup o inkluzivnom obrazovanju*), *Politika*, 24.05.2006, covering a round table on inclusive education, the journalists takes a wide perspective on the issue. The article touches upon resistance to inclusion as a professor at the event warns of negative attitudes of other professionals such as teachers, psychologists and defectologists who are against reform. Unfortunately, no one from the disability community is quoted in the text. The same is true of the article, "Disability is a reason for attention and not for isolation" (*Hendikep je razlog za paznju, a*

ne izolaciju), Pobjeda, 13.08.06. While it is a thorough look into the inclusive education reform in Montenegro, only educational professionals and experts are quoted in the text and there is no look into what disability advocates have to say on the issue.

In Montenegro, there was markedly more coverage over inclusive education and there is a positive tone about the reform of the educational system. Articles such as, "Djeca sa hendikepom dobijaju nastavnike" (Children with disabilities receive teachers), Dan, 16.09.06 speak positively about the educational reforms in Montenegro and the journalist takes a wide look at the issues. Similarly, in "Child rights should be the most important" (Djecija prava neka budu najvaznija, Pobjeda, 25.08.06, the journalist discusses inclusive education in the framework of child rights. In, "Diversity as wealth, not a disability" (Razlicitost kao bogatstvo, a ne hendikep), Pobjeda, 21.11.06, the article discusses the importance of inclusive education in Montenegro in reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Another example comes from the article, "Integration of children with special needs" (Integracija djece sa posebnim potrebama), Pobjeda, 03.06.06, on inclusive education reforms but the journalist uses offensive terminology and only quotes educational professionals as opposed to people from the disability movement.

Children with disabilities as a burden

Very often in the press in articles related to children with disabilities, **the child or family member with a disability is depicted as a burden**. There are common metaphors used to describe how the family is burdened by this member and chastised by the community. For example, in an article about a mother of a child with a disability, "Lonely children on the sidelines" (Usamljena deca: Na sporednom koloseku), Politika, 16.10.2006, tells the story of a mother who is burdened by her child. In the article, the mother is quoted saying, "Life with a child disturbed in their development is tough work ...I have a child with multiple disturbances in their development, do you think anybody cares? No, it is only the problem of me and my family. That is how it is in practice. I have the feeling that it is a burden that only my family and I have to carry." She goes on to say, "Families with children with a handicap are always on the sidelines...it is like a destiny or fate that follows them daily and never leaves them alone... They [families] are marginalized and their troubles follow them and don't give them respite or peace." The journalist is then quoted saying: Life with a child with a handicap is extremely difficult...this child is likely to throw all objects that come in his path and create an uncontrolled mess. A lively and active healthy child is one story but it is quite a different story with the hyperactivity of the child multiply disturbed in their development." Likewise, in the article "The first kindergarten for children with special needs" (Prvi vrtić za djecu s posebnim potrebama), Nezavisne Novine, 03.07.06, all actors that are interviewed including a parent of a child with disabilities, underline the importance of this kindergarten to relieve parents of their "burden". This theme is echoed in "From non-acceptance to integration" (Od neprihvatanja do integrisanja), the Reporter, 07.06.06 covering the association for youth and children with special needs. Although the president of the association talks about the importance of integration, he is quoted saying: "If you have a child with special needs, you need to dedicate at least 3 times as much funds as you would for a healthy child so all financial support is welcome." These stories like many others related to parenting a child with a disability highlights disability as a burden for a family and depicts the marginalization families feel from their communities.

Charity model

There are a significant number of **articles written from the perspective of the charity model mainly evoking people's sympathy** and good will to donate money or assistance to help people with disabilities. For example, "Presents are small but love is immense" (Darovi mali, ali ljubav neizmerna) Danas, 06.01.06 describes a political party giving presents to people living in a residential institution. At the end of the article, the political party representative is quoted saying:

"The aid parcels consist of items that are most necessary for the lives of beneficiaries in this institution...The presents are modest but the love is immense. These gatherings before Christmas have already become a tradition. The objective of this activity is to inform the public on the relatively poor situation of children in the residential institution - and at the same time it is a plea to all kind-hearted people who are in the position to help..."

Similarly, in "Building of the disabled institution near Travnik, money lasted only to make a foundation" (Izgradnja doma invalida u Turbetu kod Travnika Novac trajao samo do prve ploče), Oslobođenje, 20.02.06, a member of a local association is asking for money to finish building a residential institution. The head of the association building the institution is asking for money from donors and uses an overly emotional tone to draw out sympathy from the readers.

In another article, "The disabled have no accommodation" (Invalidi nemaju smjestaj) in Oslobođenje²⁸ the head of a DPO is quoted saying:

"I am hoping that there are people out there with big hearts and good souls who are going to help us to resolve the problems we are facing because by finding the solution for our children we would fulfill our life mission and our mission is to create the environment and conditions in which those children are going to live during their parents lifetime but mostly after they have died."

In Montenegro there were a particularly large number of articles that focused on donations and acts of charity when writing about disability. The article, "A ramp installed for people in wheelchairs" (Postavljena rampa za osobe sa kolicima) Pobjeda, 10.11.06, covers the installation of a ramp to commemorate the Day of Equality. In this article, it could be argued whether or not it takes a charity approach. However, the tone of the article shows the building of a ramp as an act of charity.

Each story below depicts some kind of donation to organisations of people with disabilities:

- "They received two computers" (Dobili dva kompjutera), Dan, 22.08.06
- "For citizens with special needs 82.000 euro" (Za gradjane s posebnim potrebama 82.000 Eura), Dan, 27.12.06
- "Promonte donated one thousand Euros" (Promonte poklonio hiljadu Eura), Pobjeda, 17.01.06
- "Clothes as a gift to residents (Odjeca na poklon sticenicima), Pobjeda, 19.03.06
- "Tennis table as a gift" (Sto za tenis na poklon), Pobjeda, 01.03.06.

The idea of disability as a charity issue being perpetuated in the press is problematic. The emphasis in all of these articles is on pity and drawing the reader's attention by overly emotional tones. The message in all of the articles is that people with disabilities need help.

Social model

The good news is that there are examples of disability being presented in the press as a human rights issue through the lens of the social model. This is usually due to the hard work of disability advocates in getting their message to the media.

The general trend is that articles that present disability from a human rights perspective are written by disability advocates. The article, "Against prejudices" (Protiv Diskriminacije) by Gordana Rajkov in Blic, 04.12.06, is an excellent example of an article that illuminates a disability issue from a social model perspective challenging the stereotype that people with disabilities are dependent:

"It is a widespread opinion and prejudice that persons with disabilities cannot lead an independent life and that they require assistance from others...All of us depend on other people to do certain things and jobs for us. To lead an independent life, therefore, does not mean living by yourself and doing all the chores on your own, but instead it means making independent decisions about when and how much assistance you need and how it is provided to you... Therefore it is important for a state to develop a sustainable social policy that would promote the potentials of persons with disabilities and create conditions for fulfilling those potentials, and appropriate support services that take into consideration individual needs of users are among key preconditions in this process."

In, "We are not charity collectors" (Reagovanja: Nismo sakupljaci milostinje), a letter to an editor written by a representative of a DPO, the author states: We don't use this terminology "handicapped" but people with disabilities. It is not true that every handful of assistance is wealth and fortune. We are not beggars and collectors of charity but persons with rights."

The article, "For the population of Deaf and hard of hearing, Podgorica is a city of barriers" illuminates the issues the deaf community is facing, "Due to the lack of sign language interpreters the deaf people feel isolated and lonesome because they are not understood in their own town...it is necessary to draft a law on sign language in order to stop the isolation of deaf people that has been ongoing for decades."

In the article, "Incentive for independent living: Status of persons with disabilities" (Podstrek za samostalni život: Položaj osoba sa invaliditetom), Politika, the article not only exhibits respectful terminology in the headline, it discusses the legislative reforms needed to prevent discrimination.

²⁸ Date not available

Below is an article that illustrates how an organisation can deliver a message in the press about disability from a human rights perspective:

***“Better Days Arriving in About 15 Years” Interview with Goran Pavlović, Executive Director, the Association of Students with Disabilities
Danas, 06.11.2006***

Not a single university faculty is accessible for students with disabilities in the entire territory of Serbia. This doesn't mean that they are completely inaccessible. Some faculties have made ramps, somewhere you can find accessible toilettes, but nowhere can you find both. The Faculty of Law in Belgrade has perhaps done the most. There is a lift which makes the majority of the building accessible but is too small for certain types of wheelchairs, so all students can't use it after all. The Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences installed a ramp which is too steep and thus practically unusable. This shows that there was a good intent but inadequate awareness about the issue. According to the reconstruction project of Nemanjina Street in Belgrade, it was foreseen to achieve complete accessibility for people with disabilities, yet, now once finished, it is useless. There is an absurd situation, for example, at the Technical Faculty in Belgrade – there is a ramp that will take you to the central hall, but from there, no other part of the building is accessible to you – says Goran Pavlović, Executive Director of the Association of Students with Disabilities for the daily newspaper Danas.

Is there anything the Association can do to bring together good will and intentions to lead to concrete results?

- We have started an initiative to be implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Belgrade University and the Faculty of Architecture, to complete an initial assessment of the existing situation in university facilities in Serbia, and in the second phase of the project, an accessibility initiative should be prepared, which would plan in greater details all that needs to be done, in order for the faculties to become accessible for all. After this phase it would be possible to estimate expenses as well. This is a comprehensive undertaking –the assessment alone will take about three years and afterwards, fundraising would follow applying both locally and on the international level. We believe that it would be realistic to expect such a project to be completed in about 10 to 15 years, when at last, all faculties would truly be completely accessible for all students and whereby equal opportunities in education would be facilitated for everyone.

How much does the local legislation serve people with disabilities?

- The practice throughout the world, and even here in Serbia has shown that the easiest step is to adopt adequate laws, but the challenging part is still waiting for us – to achieve this in practice. Several laws have been passed in the field of education– the Law on Higher Education for the first time in Serbia considers persons with disabilities – which means that State school facilities are obliged to provide equal opportunities for students with disabilities. The Law on Preventing Discrimination bans discrimination in the field of education, and it is necessary to adopt more laws, to print textbooks in adequate formats so that even literature becomes accessible for people with disabilities.

Does it mean that by adopting these laws the attitude of the State towards people with disabilities has changed in a way?

- Somehow the fact that our association began working six years ago coincided with the changes in Serbia occurred as well. We believe that we have contributed a lot to bring about concrete changes, at least in the area related to education of people with disabilities. There are changes in the relation to the State's attitude towards people with disability – we have become partners in bringing forth some strategies, and we are included in various commissions and other counselling bodies with state institutions and the Association is directly involved in drafting some laws.

What is the attitude of colleagues and professors towards students with disabilities?

- Last year we conducted a survey on the situation of students with disabilities within the project of Promoting Inclusive Education in South East Europe, where we dealt with the problem of accessibility of faculties as well as students' and professors' attitude towards persons with disabilities. The conclusion is – it all depends from case to case. Generally there are no problems in relationships with colleagues or professors. A slightly more negative attitude can be observed in the fact that very few colleagues are willing to provide assistance to persons with disabilities in any area outside of education.

Another good example of news reporting on disability from the stand point of rights and anti-discrimination is the article below. It is a good example of news coverage on a disability issue outside of the medical or charity paradigms.

NOT A SINGLE CHARGE FILED FOR THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE DISABLED

Eight months after its adoption the Law has remained just words on paper.

Glas Javnosti, 06.12.2006

The Law is still not widely implemented because the public as well as persons with disabilities don't know in which cases they can turn to the courts and what are considered "discriminatory situations".

BELGRADE – Even though seven months have passed since the adoption of the Law on the prevention of discrimination of persons with disabilities, not a single criminal charge has been filed based on this law. The Law is still not widely applied in practice because, according to Violeta Kočić, a lawyer from the non-governmental organization Iz Kruga (Out of the Circle), whose aim is to help persons with disabilities and the public who don't know in which cases they can turn to the court and what are considered "discriminatory situations".

- In the course of the next year we will be visiting all the associations of disabled persons to explain the regulations of this law and explain all the situations that can be considered to be acts of discrimination. In practice, direct discrimination is very rare, and indirect discrimination is much more frequent but it is difficult to prove in a court of law. In the cases where it has been established that an illegal act of discrimination has been committed against a person with disabilities, there are fines foreseen by the law from 5,000 to 50,000 dinars for individuals and from 10,000 to 500,000 dinars for legal entities, Kočić said.

The Law on the prevention of discrimination of persons with disabilities regulates the prohibition of discrimination, the protection of disabled persons, sanctions for offenders, the respecting of human rights, and it also increases the inclusion of disabled persons in decision-making processes.

- There are about 800,000 disabled persons in Serbia and, on average, every fourth person is indirectly or directly affected by this condition. Persons with disabilities are not in positions where their fate and their rights are being decided, disabled persons are the poorest of the poor, they don't go to school and don't have conditions for being included in education and, therefore, find it difficult to get employed. The schools are obliged to provide curriculum in Braille or teach in Sign language. There are architectural obstacles everywhere, buildings are inaccessible, the disabled are more frequently victims than persons without a disability...All this tells us that something has to be done urgently – said Lepojka Carević-Mitanovski from the non-governmental organization Iz Kruga.

While it is good to see positive examples of the social model being presented in the press, it is clear that there needs to be more done to get articles like these circulated in the media. although the disability movement has more work to do to get their messages to the media, journalists and media professionals need to look for stories like this to cover rather than the traditional disability benefits reporting that was found to be so prevalent in the press.

V. HOW PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE PORTRAYED IN THE PRESS

For this section of the paper, we asked the question: how does the press portray people with disabilities? The answer to this is first to point out that people with disabilities are, for the most part, not represented as individuals in the press; usually they are grouped together into categories and stereotyped. In fact, very often people with disabilities are identified in the press by their impairment. This is also the case in Sweden according to media researcher Karin Ljuslinder who maintains in her paper "From Close-up Nobody is Normal" that, as she explains, "The journalistic method of portraying the different and the abnormal has a negative impact on people with disabilities...They are identified by their impairment, their disability, their

divergent body and incapacity, rather than as mothers of small children, passengers, taxpayers or consumers.”²⁹

The stereotypes that are used in the media often perpetuate this notion of abnormality and difference. According to Colin Barnes, “Stereotype assumptions about disabled people are based on superstition, myths and beliefs from earlier less enlightened times. They are inherent to our culture and persist partly because they are constantly reproduced through the communications media.”³⁰ The continued use of stereotypes by the press keeps people with disabilities in an inequitable position and perpetuates discriminatory labelling.

The paper does not pretend to make a thorough analysis of all of the different types of stereotypes that exist in the press related to disability. Instead, the report tries to show some of the major stereotypes that reappear in the press. Some of the major stereotypes emerging in the press are not dissimilar from those found in Western media outlets and they include:

- Persons with disabilities as incapable or as a burden
- Persons with disabilities as pitiable
- Super Crip – the person with disability as a super hero

Persons with disabilities as pitiable:

This stereotype, Colin Barnes explains, encourages the public to feel pity for people with disabilities often times depicting them as in need of the non-disabled population’s help.

In the article, “Dilapidated building of Prijedor geriatric hospital, refuge for 80 persons: Forgotten by all” (Oronula zgrada prijedorske Gerijatrije utočište za 80 lica Zaboravljeni od svih ih) Nezavisne Novine, 05.12.06, the journalist uses an overly sentimental tone to describe the residents living in an institution. The journalist does interview the residents directly but the emphasis of the interview is to evoke pity. A resident of the institution is quoted saying, “Nobody is taking pity on us and nobody is looking at us – they don’t want to look at a crippled person. We cripples are dying here slowly.” Another resident from the institution is quoted saying, “Nobody wants us...especially the society. All is full of grief and trouble and pain...”

Or the journalist uses a pathetic tone when depicting a person with a disability that is overly emotional such as in the article, “Wherever you turn – darkness” (Gde god se okreneš – mrak) in Večernje novosti: “Man does not see with his eyes but with his heart. This is what they say in the Association of blind and visually impaired “White cane”, which is one of the organizations gathering 12.000 people who cannot see in Serbia. But it is difficult to see with your heart when there are obstacles on every step.”

Super Crip:

This stereotype, as Colin Barnes explains, portrays a person with a disability as having superhuman or magical qualities in an effort to elicit respect from the public and often portrays a person with a disability as a superhero for accomplishing everyday things such as finishing university, getting a job or having a family.³¹ Very often the story is told by the journalist and not from the perspective of the individual or individuals who are being featured. Often times the texts are overly emotional and condescending in nature.

Some examples include:

“It is harder to obtain a diploma when you are in a wheelchair” (“Teže do diplome kad si u kolicima) in Blic, 04.07.06, an article that portrays people with disabilities as brave for attempting to get an education depicts students with disabilities as almost superhuman for attempting to complete university as the journalist writes: “Brave students, who don’t allow their disability to prevent them in achieving their dreams, face numerous barriers every day”.

In the article, “A 100% disabled trains police divers as well” in DNEVNI AVAZ, 04.09.06 is an article about how a disabled man trains police to scuba dive. The man is depicted as an oddity and one who has achieved the impossible; being able to scuba dive with a disability and to train non-disabled people. In another article, “Talent in the realm of silence” (Talenat u carstvu tišine), Vecernje Novosti, 05.11.06 the journalist depicts two deaf women as exceptional for attending drawing classes alongside non-disabled students:

²⁹ Karin Ljuslinder as quoted in “People with Disabilities: As Depicted by the Media” (Swedish Disability Federation: Stockholm): 9.

³⁰ Colin Barnes, *ibid*: 5.

³¹ Colin Barnes, 12.

“Ana [] and Maja [] are the only students with special needs who attend regular classes in the school of Engineering and Artistic Trades “Tehnoart”. In spite their great disability and life in silence, these two deaf-mute girls got the chance to learn and develop drawing techniques together with their peers. They share a school desk and communicate with others by “lip-reading”.”

In an article about two members of a national sitting volleyball team, “You play for your country you play straight from the heart” (Za domovinu se igra) Dani, 08.07.06, the journalist asks the interviewees: “Are you normal people? With wives, children, family, home friends etc...?” She then goes on to ask them: “How is it that you had the idea to become gold medal boys for years now, while the “healthy” hide behind excuses such as impossible living conditions?”

In the article below, “The fashion is future of the queen of silence” (Modest home of the queen of silence) (Moda je budućnost kraljice tišine” (“Skroman dom kraljice tišine)) Vijesti, 24.07.06, the journalist uses a condescending tone to depict the winner of the Miss World contest for the title of most beautiful deaf woman. The contestant winner is quoted at the beginning of the article by her full name but throughout the text she is referred to only by first name. Her achievements as a good student with a talent for fashion design are glorified throughout the text as something extraordinary and the journalist take an overly-emotional tone when telling her life story.

IVANA NOVELJIĆ AFTER WINNING THE BEAUTY CONTEST IN PRAGUE SPENDS THE SUMMER WITH HER FAMILY IN SUTOMORE

Sutomore – A one-story family house of the Noveljićs’ in Mirošica colony no. 1 is recently the home to the first Miss World from Bar municipality. Ivana Noveljić (17), protégé of the Institute for education of persons with hearing and speech impairments in Kotor, won the title of the most beautiful deaf girl in the world among 30 contesters in “Top Hotel” in Prague. During yesterday’s visit of the Vijesti newspapers’ crew, her younger sister Sara, who assists in the communication, was on the beach, so her uncle Darko and Grandmother Branka Noveljić helped us out.

- Nothing significant has changed in my life. Ahead is the fourth year of schooling, I still don’t know what to do after I finish school. I would like to become a model and I hope I will get a chance to try that – we understood each other with this charming Brunette.

Her sibling Sara, an 8th grade pupil of primary school “Kekec” in Sutomore, is the only one in this modest four member family Noveljić who speaks: mother Ljubinka and father Dragan are both impaired in speech and hearing and are former protégés of the Kotor Institute.

- I prepared myself for one month for the Prague appearance, practicing a special ethno-style choreography which lasted one and a half minute and was prepared by my professor of physical education. In the Czech Republic I preferred the old town, walking around Prague. We were welcome everywhere – Ivana continues in sign language, adding that after graduation she would like to become a clothing designer. The interest in the fashion world is surely an influence from her mother who is a dressmaker. With a big smile Ljubinka shows that she is very happy her daughter became Miss World.

- Ivana is such a good child, very intelligent – uncle Darko translates Ljubinka’s words as she hugs her favourite girl. What could be concluded from this short visit is that the eyes are the most striking way of understanding each other in this family, untouched by the summer crowd of Sutomore. There are no words that could describe the pride and love for Ivana flowing from Ljubinka’s eyes while they were posing for our photographer.

Dragan and Ljubinka have a harmonious life and there is a strong bond between Sara and Ivana. She immediately learned to communicate with her parents and sister. Dragan worked for “Rumijatrans” and has received his disability pension. He is presently working as an upholsterer. He is very devoted to his family and is a hard worker - someone always has something that needs to be repaired and Ljubinka always has some work to do – says Dragan’s mother Branka, whose family originates from Podgorica but has lived in Sutomore for half a century already.

While spending the summer holidays and enjoying the school vacation and everyday swimming with her friends, Ivana does not loose touch with her great love – fashion, she was among the invited guests at the IX International Fashion Show in Kotor on Thursday evening. She does not give up acting either which she has tried with success, playing the title role in the play “Magic of silence” set up by the Kotor Institute Drama section.

- We are preparing a new play at school for November. I have performed twice already with the Drama section, once in Italy and once in Switzerland. I am preparing to appear again at the beauty contest – says the most beautiful girl of the world of silence, who was warmly welcomed last week in Mirošica.

Upon her arrival from Prague a small party was organized for Ivana with a big cake and on that occasion all neighbors gathered sincerely enthusiastic about her great success.

Pride of her parents and teachers

- Ivana is an excellent student, she has been at the Institute since she was five years old and it is difficult to say whether she is better in extracurricular or school activities. We are all happy and proud of this result which is also the success of her parents and all teachers and tutors that took part in developing her personality. We will continue to give our students as much as we can, said the director of the Kotor Institute Borislav Kascelan, commenting the success of the biggest promoter of this unique institution in Montenegro, which was established 60 years ago.

In another example, this article clearly illustrates the 'super cripp' stereotype as the person being interviewed is described as almost super-human. The journalist uses terms such as 'brave' and 'courageous' throughout the article writing in an almost myth like manner about this individual employing an overly-entotional tone and common to this kind of 'super cripp' story.

“Unusual endeavours: From Prilep to Beijing in a wheelchair Courageous Mile Stojkoski intends to be present at the Olympic Games in the Chinese metropolis 2008”, Oslobodjenje, 15.12.06

*Willpower is often stronger than the disability itself; no matter how big and severe it might be. This was proven two years ago by **Mile Stojkoski**. In his wheelchair, he travelled more than 700 kilometres from Prilep in Eastern Macedonia, to Athens only to be present at the Olympic Games in Greece on 13 August, 2004. This time he is preparing a greater and far more dangerous endeavour. In his wheelchair, starting again from Prilep, he intends to take a long and uncertain journey all the way to China, to be present at the opening of the 29th Summer Olympic Games in Beijing on 8 August 2008.*

Carried by his life story, but as well by bad experience that people with disabilities, like himself, must face, Mile Stojkoski intends to alert both the local and world wide public and point out the rights and the situation of people with special needs. With this unusual endeavour he hopes he will become the first Macedonian to travel such a long and dangerous road in a wheelchair, adequate enough for the Guinness book of world records.

However, for this 40- year old citizen of Prilep, neither the Guinness book of world records nor fame are not the main objectives; instead he intends to collect enough money for a very expensive and complex operation available in Stuttgart to have an electro stimulator implanted. He hopes this device will enable him to stand on his own feet again. Ten years ago Stojkoski was in a severe traffic accident that tied him to the wheelchair. Despite this, Mile didn't give in. Willpower defeated the handicap. He began to engage in sports and is today one of the successful table tennis players among the disabled in Macedonia.

Two years ago he managed to arrive on time to the Olympic Games in Athens, but his wish to donate his wheelchair to the richest man in the world, Bill Gates, didn't come to fruition. He will try to do this in Beijing.

On his journey to China, Stojkoski should set off by the end of February next year. Rolling the wheels of his wheelchair with his hands, he will have to cover 16 000 kilometres and pass through 36 countries, Afghanistan included, in order to fulfil his dream.

“My journey will also be some kind of peace mission, as I will plant a tree every 100 kilometres, as a symbol of peace. This will be my plea for peace in the world”, Stojkoski said.

Institutions from all countries this courageous man from Prilep will be passing through are to donate tree which they will take care of later on to preserve the memory of the triumph made by a man who defeated his handicap with willpower.

To prevent what happened to him two years ago in Athens, when he had to watch the opening ceremony from a restaurant due to organizational problems, this time the Organizational Olympic Committee in Beijing has already been informed of his mission and objectives.

“With this journey of mine, my wish is to initiate the building of rehabilitation centres, hospitals and even entire settlements for the re-socialization of people with special needs”, Mile says.

He hopes that he will succeed in his venture to reach China as he is immensely supported by his wife and teenage daughter. After returning from Beijing, Mile will travel to Germany where this complicated surgery is planned to take place.

In making the survey, there are some examples of features about the lives of people with disabilities that break away from this stereotype. Below are extracts from a feature profiling the lives of various people with disabilities and it is a good example of reporting that does not use 'super-crip' stereotyping to depict their achievements. Quite the opposite of 'super crip' portrayals, these individuals are not described as heroes or as superhuman. Instead, each person uses their own words to describe their lives. While the terminology is not always consistent and the tone is at times overly emotional, it is a good contrast to the wide use of the 'super crip' model.

***Will power moves mountains (Volja pokreće planine), Nezavisne novine
10.03.2004***

SUCCESSFUL POSTGRADUATE: *Sasa Grbić from Karanovac near Banja Luka is blind since birth. This 24 years old young man is today a postgraduate student of Literature science in Banja Luka... "Some professors couldn't believe that it is possible for a blind person to study literature. However, I didn't hesitate, I knew that in time it would all fall into place", Sasa says. During the first two years of his studies Sasa shared his schooling obligations with his father who is his strongest support. Namely, his father was the one to read the books and Sasa recorded everything as he did the lectures as well. The difficulties in traveling from Karanovac to Banja Luka were also soon surmounted. "My father drove me to my lectures in the beginning since the buses came very rarely, and I needed some time to get to know the city streets. But soon I could manage on my own ", Sasa says. As one of the top-five students in his generation, Sasa explains that persistence is crucial for success. "I knew that I had to put great effort if I wanted to achieve something. But I had the support from my family and friend and I didn't give up ", Sasa proudly says. After successful studies he decides to enroll postgraduate studies. An adjusted computer with specialized audio/speech programs made his studies much easier. Sasa's friends say that he has a strong personality and that he is very communicative and popular amongst colleagues. Sasa hopes to successfully complete his master studies and perhaps a doctoral dissertation could be next in line.*

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WILLPOWER MOVES MOUNTAINS: *Olivera Mastikosa, M.A. in technology science, suffers from muscular dystrophy, and is presently the Executive Director of the humanitarian organization "Partner". Set your objectives straight, plug in to the rhythm of life, she says, that is the key to overcoming the handicap. To lock yourself behind four walls is not a solution. "It is easier to withdraw and bottle up than to wrestle with life itself. Many people simply give up on the pretext that the handicap prevents them from fulfilling their dreams. But the problem is the personality, not the handicap", Olivera believes... Namely, after a post-delivery operation her illness progressed. Yet it didn't prevent her from becoming active and found a humanitarian organization that deals with various needs of disabled people but also single mothers with children. "We are currently launching a Info-Centre for young people with disabilities, as well as a service of personal assistants in cooperation with the Institute for Dystrophics and the Centre for Social Work. There is a variety of seminars; we are active in the areas of social protection, health and education. All this with good will and a smile", Olivera says proudly. She has achieved a lot in the past and has great plans for the future. "A person with strong willpower, strong personality and persistence can move any mountain. There is no handicap that can stop this", Olivera Mastikosa is determined.*

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TRAGEDY AS MOTIVATION: *Faruk Sabanović, advanced university student on Fine Arts Academy in Sarajevo, says that he doesn't view his handicap as a limitation and that he does not divide his life before and after the wheelchair. "I was 18 years old when a sniper hit me, just at the very end of the war. Ever since, I became bound to the wheelchair. I didn't take that tragic event as the end of the world; the tragedy even gave me strength and motivation to put more effort into life. Until the wounding I was a carefree boy under the wings of my parents – the wounding shook me up and gave me wings ", says Sabanović, 27 years old who has already received many awards for graphic design works*

VI. TIPS FROM THE FIELD FOR SUCCESSFUL MEDIA COVERAGE

In this section of the report, disability advocates give their perspectives on how they carried out successful media campaigns and what is important in terms of working with the media.

Interview with InfoPart, Banja Luka, Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

InfoPart is an association of youth with disabilities in Banja Luka, Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina working on equal opportunities for youth with disabilities in education and employment. Established in 2005 as the youth branch of the humanitarian organisation HO Partner, InfoPart has solid experience in working with the media and in conducting media campaigns.

Vanja Čolić, Vice President and Public Relations Coordinator for InfoPart, gives a few tips on how they were able to work with the media to get good coverage in the press:

- ⇒ In order to get covered by the press, it is important to establish a strong reputation for your organisation in the community in order to grab the media's attention.
- ⇒ Organize press conferences and use them as an opportunity to present your organization's achievements as well as your plans for future activities.
- ⇒ It is extremely helpful to have a dedicated Public Relations Coordinator within the organisation to build up communication with the media and monitor disability issues in the press.
- ⇒ In order to sustain media activities, we make promotional messages ourselves and strive to get free air time on both the radio and television in most of the cases.
- ⇒ A successful media campaign idea: As part of a campaign called "I am not standing, but I am thinking, therefore existing" to raise money for personal assistance services, HO Partner aired a TV program in which there was a dedicated phone hotline for viewers to call if they wanted to contribute. From the hotline, they managed to raise 7,500 KM (3,750 Euros).
- ⇒ During an awareness raising campaign, add to the media campaign promotional messages on radio and television. It can also be helpful to publish features in the press depicting life stories to keep the public interested and remind them about the campaign.

"Where are my rights?" campaign carried out by Sumero, the Union of People with Mental Retardation of the Federation of BiH

The Union of the Association for Aid to Mentally Retarded Persons of the Federation of BiH, "Sumero", carried out a large media campaign to raise public awareness as well as informing decision makers on the rights of people with intellectual disabilities. The project was carried out in 2004 with a grant from the Share-SEE program within Handicap International South East Europe alongside the other Donors and sponsors. The project lasted for 8 months with the objective of informing the public on the services and reforms needed to better support people with intellectual disabilities and to promote inclusion. As part of the project, Sumero implemented a well planned media campaign sending regular press releases to all major media houses including print media, television and radio.

In an interview with a representative from Sumero, Mrs. Indira Spiljak, she explained the keys to the campaign's success:

- ⇒ Begin a media campaign by establishing contacts with media outlets that are willing to participate in the project and to broadcast their message.
- ⇒ Personal contacts with journalists are very important. Once you have established them, it is good if the journalist that covers your events is always the same so that they are familiar with the topic and they know the story.
- ⇒ Build a database of existing media contacts and up-date it regularly.
- ⇒ Select the type of media you want to target such as specific television programs or radio stations or newspapers. Then choose choosing the most appropriate form of media that corresponds to the

type of project you are running. Usually it is easier to get local media coverage as you have to have a large event to attract national media outlets.

- ⇒ For television, the practice is to call the station in the morning and invite them to your event.
- ⇒ For print media, invite the journalists by email or press release and then try to get a particular journalist who covers your events to follow the issue.
- ⇒ You can initiate contact by writing a letter explaining who you are and what your project is about and invite journalists or editors for a face to face meeting. The best thing is if you manage to establish personal contact and raise interest in one particular journalist from each media house who then becomes an “expert” on that issue.
- ⇒ It is important to schedule your events on a day which is not already loaded with other types of activities that might take the journalist’s attention away from project.
- ⇒ It is important to make the title of the event sound attractive to draw the journalist’s attention and invitations are generally hand delivered or sent by email. Then follow up on the invitation by phone to see if they have received it.
- ⇒ The invitation letter is similar to a press release: It contains the most important information and all the names and titles of the people participating. After the event, the journalist usually takes the opportunity to ask some questions and we send photos and press releases electronically to press agencies.
- ⇒ Paramount for getting good media coverage is to have a strong reputation and to be known in the community for the work you do.
- ⇒ Always train your staff on media relations and involve new employees or volunteers in media relations activities.
- ⇒ Encourage getting the voices of your members heard in the media by getting journalists to come to your premises or workshops and interview them rather than relying solely on statements made by the head of the organization.
- ⇒ When journalists come to Sumero, they encourage the journalists to take statements from children with disabilities themselves.
- ⇒ There is always a need to train journalists and sensitize them on issues related to people with disabilities.

Interview with Božidar Denda, Editor and Director of the radio program “Zvukom do Svijetlosti” in Montenegro

For five years now, **Božidar Denda**, has been editing the radio program called “Zvukom do svijetlosti”, “With sound to light” covering disability topics in general and more specifically, issues related to people with visual impairments. The radio program is broadcast on a private radio station serving a large part of Montenegro called “Antena M” every Saturday from 2-3 PM.

The initiative for this show came from the Union of Blind People of Montenegro. Initially they approached the state owned radio station “Radio Montenegro” to support their radio show but at that time, the station did not have the resources to execute the idea. Instead, the Union made an agreement with “Antena M” which covers approximately 90% of Montenegro. The broadcasting of their radio program began in February 2003 and it is edited and managed by Božidar Denda who is a trained journalist.

The financial costs for the production of the show are covered by the Union and the honorarium payment for Božidar Denda’s voluntary work was covered by “Antena M” for the first year of broadcasting. This was not the radio station’s obligation but proved to be an act of good will in support of the show. After the first year of the program, the Union took over all expenses for the program including honorarium for Denda.

The main idea of the Union was to create a radio program that could inform a wide audience about their activities, the scope of their work, their achievements and also about the problems their members are facing. The program consists of several parts, each one lasting approximately 5 to 6 minutes and the various themes include:

- **Current events** – disability related news and a short overview of disability events
- **Information** on the current work of the Union from a national level and an overview of the activities of the Balkan Consultative Committee, the World Union of the Blind, the European Union and local associations of blind people. The program gives information about other DPOs, especially when numerous events are taking place
- **Science and technology** – information and news on medicine, especially ophthalmology, and information on tephrotechnical devices (devices for people with sight impairments) and the latest technical advances
- **Culture and education** – news from these areas
- **Sports and chess** – updates on sporting events

- **Blind people through history**

Each program that falls at the end of the month is dedicated to a guest and this show is called "Personality Portrait". The guest is usually a person with a disability who is living successfully in the community and as Denda emphasized, it is not necessary that the potential guest has made a big achievement such as winning an award or medal. The main criterion is that this person has succeeded in being included in society. The guest could be a person with a disability or even someone who is involved in disability issues such as an expert in social welfare.

Concerning broadcast sustainability and how long the radio program is going to last, Denda indicated that the Union has a strong interest in continuing the show. On the other hand, it is important to be realistic and bear in mind that the program is subject to being cut by the radio station in the future. Still, in Montenegro, as well as in other countries in the region, the Law on Information stipulates an obligation of all electronic media to dedicate a certain number of hours to disability issues. For example, Radio Television Montenegro has a disability program that is broadcast once a month. Additionally, Radio Montenegro broadcasts one once a week as well as several local radio stations (e.g. radio Herceg Novi, Budva, Bar, etc.).

In any case, the Union of Blind People in Montenegro has the will and the motivation to continue broadcasting the radio program "Zvukom do svijetlosti" on "Antena M". The Union receives the financial resources for the show from funding for information and communication given by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Media. They use this budget to provide accessible information to their members as well as to fund the radio show.

Interview with Vesna Nestorović founder and president of Beli Stap, Serbia

The organisation Beli Stap (White Cane) was founded in 2003 as a DPO with three main priority areas: to promote opportunities for blind and visually impaired persons to be trained to be more mobile to achieve greater freedom of movement; education on disability issues or awareness raising; and influencing the media.

Regarding media, the first project they undertook was to create a television program in cooperation with ANEM, the Association of Independent Electronic Media. ANEM is comprised of 28 radio stations and 16 television stations which strive for the highest quality of professionalism. ANEM's mission is to establish politically independent legal framework for electronic media and the improvement of professional standards in the media industry to meet public interests in a proper way.³² The television program called "Edukacija sire drustvene zajednice putem TV emisija "upoznajte nas bolje" and began in 2003 and is still running. It airs once a week on local television stations through the ANEM network in the evening and the aim of the show is to raise awareness on visual impairments and other disability issues as well on a local level. The show also tries to break down prejudices about blind people or people with visual impairments by showing that they are capable of making a good television program. Thus, all of the presenters on the show are blind. The show focuses on three major themes:

- The work of local DPOs
- Personal stories about people living with a disability
- The work of state institutions dealing with disability issues

The show is funded by the Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Affairs and ANEM. The Ministry pays for half of the programming and ANEM covers the other 50% of the costs. In total the show is broadcast in 24 different municipalities within the ANEM network. Originally, they were asked by ANEM to set up a disability channel but they refused as to them, this kind of specialized programming was a form of segregation. According to Vesna Nestorović, the Director of Beli Stap, she believes that there should be specific programs on disability on mainstream channels but that disability programs should not be segregated into their own channel. She feels that specific shows on disability are needed as long as disability is not mainstreamed into television programming in general. Beli Stap is planning to take the show to national networks in June and they are currently negotiating with several television stations for support.³³

According to Beli Stap, there is significant interest in the show. In fact, viewers have asked for certain programs to be re-aired and many people responded to the show with questions and comments. As a result of this interest, Beli Stap set up an email list for subscribers in order to continue discussions and answer viewer questions.

³² ANEM website: <http://www.anem.org.yu/cms/item/oanemu/en/O+nama.html>

³³ Beli Stap also had a radio show on disability issues which ran from 2004 to 2006 on the radio station Beograd 202. The show was targeted to parents of children with disabilities and aired at night in hopes of capturing this audience. The Ministry of Culture financed 10 broadcasts per year and the radio station covered the rest of the costs.

Changes in media coverage on disability

As a trained journalist, Vesna is quite familiar with the media and in her opinion, she finds that the climate today makes it possible to discuss disability in a better way on television and radio. She finds that you can begin to find examples of disability being discussed from the social model perspective and in terms of human rights on television and radio. Ten years ago, she feels that this wasn't the case and you could only find examples of disability being depicted from a medical or charity perspective. Nowadays you can begin to see the social model or a human rights perspective being used by journalists but the press is more problematic. According to Vesna, there are a lot more prejudices being perpetuated and problematic things being said by journalists in the press. So, there is a lot of work to be done to change the way in which the press writes about disability.

Getting visibility

As an organization, they have organized media and PR trainings for all of their members. They have a specific team working on media so this helps to ensure that they have good visibility in the media. Plus, Vesna's experience as a journalist gave her good contacts with editors and journalists.

According to Beli Stap, the keys to getting good visibility in the media are a number of factors:

- ⇒ You have to make your organisation and your work interesting to the media.
- ⇒ You need to use fixed occasions such as the 3rd December or the 1st of May or the 15th of October (the day of the white cane) when there will be media coverage and organize events around these days.
- ⇒ Be inclusive in the sense that you should always invite different actors to be a part of your activities. So, for example, when they organized a blind simulation day for sighted persons it was a good way for them to get lots of people interested in the event including government members and media representatives.
- ⇒ If they organize a round table or seminar, they try to provide not only a look at problems but also at solutions and this is something the media likes to cover.
- ⇒ It is very important to not only have contacts with journalists but with Editors in Chief and Beli Stap has tried to establish a network of both journalists and editors.

Their experience in influencing the media

As soon as their organisation finds a strange portrayal of a person with disabilities in the press they send a letter to the editor. They start off by thanking them for writing about disability but explaining why or how parts of their article were offensive and how they can change this in the future. For example, they would tell the editor not to use the term cripple but person with disabilities explaining that using the correct terminology will help people to understand disability from a different perspective. The key, according to Vesna, is not to approach the media with anger but to try and work with them in a supportive way. It is important not to make the media feel stupid or chastised but to try and be supportive with your criticism.

They have also formulated a template letter to send to media houses on how to make their websites accessible. When they find a website inaccessible they simply sign and send the letter to the editor. They sent letters to Studio B (a national television station), B92 (a national television station) and PTT (the state telecommunications company) and as a result, studio B is making their website accessible along with PTT.

When it comes to changing the disability message or the disability model in the media, it is tough for organisations to know how to do this. Organisations may have experience in getting coverage of their events but to actually change the way in which disability is presented by journalists is a great challenge. Therefore, Vesna finds it very important to have media trainings on how to communicate your message to the media and how to get the media's attention.

Her advice is to really try to get to know the journalists and editors personally so that you can personalize invitations, get their attention and get them to come to your events. To create a partnership with press representatives is crucial so that you are remembered. She contacts her network frequently with up-dates on their work, news and information, not only relying on press releases when they have an event.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After looking at the general trends of media reporting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, there are many things that can be done to change damaging depictions of people with disabilities in the press. Both media professionals and disability advocates have a role in changing the way in which disability is covered moving away from stigmatizing stereotypes to empowering reporting.

People with disabilities need to be recruited to work in mainstream media. Degrading imagery, offensive terminology and out-dated paradigms will disappear faster when more people with disabilities are working in media.

Media actors must have Disability Equality Training³⁴ in which the social model and human rights approach are introduced. This will help to raise awareness on negative portrayals of people with disabilities.

Language and terminology training - All media personnel must be aware of the disabling impact of language and avoid using inappropriate terminology.

Disability organizations need to get the names of their expert sources into the hands of TV news producers and prominent print journalists so that they can be used as a source of news. Often times, journalists and producers don't even know the names of national disability groups or national disability experts.³⁵

Media professionals should ensure that media is made in formats that are accessible to all including Sign language or sub-titles for people with hearing impairments and Braille or audio formats for people with sight impairments.

Complaints should be filed to editors when disrespectful reporting is found in the press. Call attention to editors on negative portrayals of people with disabilities and demand they make corrections when inappropriate terminology is used.

Disability advocates need to stick to the slogan on the disability rights poster: "Nothing about us, without us" and make sure their voices are in disability related stories and that their message is presented accurately.

Journalists need to go to people with disabilities and disability advocates as sources of news to ensure that the "disability side" of the story is told.

Disability organisations need to be more pro-active in getting disability topics on the news agenda and to pitch disability stories to journalists and editors.

What is clear is that more needs to be invested in training media professionals on respectful disability reporting. Trainings are critical to help journalists, editors and producers understand disability from a different perspective and give them the tools they need such as correct terminology and an understanding of the social model, to cover disability issues in an empowering way.

Training disability advocates on public relations and working with the media is also widely needed to ensure members of the disability movement are well equipped to get their message to the press effectively. Knowing how to work with the media is essential for ensuring disability topics are on the media agenda and that they are covered from the perspective of people with disabilities themselves.

When carrying out this analysis, it was apparent that more research on disability and media in the region needs to be conducted to truly monitor the changes in how disability and people with disabilities are depicted in the media. It will be extremely useful to have quantitative and qualitative studies on media and disability in order to target the major issues and monitor changes in media practices. In order to do this effectively, there should be more electronic press clip archives established in areas where they don't currently exist (i.e. Montenegro and the UN administered province of Kosovo).

³⁴ Disability Equality Training model: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Gillespie-Sells/dis%20equality%20training.pdf>

³⁵ Haller, *ibid*: 32.

Now more than ever, disability advocates need the media as an ally in the promotion of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. It is critical, therefore, for these two groups to work together going forward to end negative reporting and endorse empowering coverage of disability issues and dignified portrayals of people with disabilities

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ANNEX I: RESOURCES FOR RESPONSIBLE REPORTING ON DISABILITY AND RESPECTFUL COVERAGE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PRESS

The appendix is intended to help media professionals as well as disability advocates in changing the way disability and people with disabilities are portrayed by the press. The information comes from various sources and is intended to be a guide for further investigation for those interested in truly changing the way media presents disability. All of us have the power to make a change and with a few practical tools, it makes carrying out the task more feasible.

Finding the right language:

Language plays a huge role in influencing how we think and in defining our system of values. Changing the words we use can make a big impact on how people with disabilities are viewed and can help to change the way in which society thinks about disability. Below is a list of terms to avoid and suggestions to replace offensive terminology. This list is intended to help journalists move away from using passive terms that frame people with disabilities as victims and offer words that respect people with disabilities. The list of terms comes from the disability community in the UK as a part of a study on media and disability carried out by Scope, a national disability organisation, called “Stop Press! How the Press Portrays Disabled People”.³⁶

Avoid	Use Instead
(the) handicapped	disabled people or people with disabilities
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of	has... (the condition or impairment)
confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user
mentally handicapped, mentally retarded, mentally insufficiently developed	Person with a learning disability or person with intellectual disabilities
cripple, invalid	disabled person or person with a disability
the disabled	disabled people
A spastic	person who has cerebral palsy
able-bodied	non-disabled
The blind, the deaf, hard of hearing	Blind people, deaf people, people with sight impairments, people with hearing impairments

The Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN) from the UK created a practical guide on media and disability for media professionals themselves to use in their everyday work. The guide is primarily intended for television and film broadcasting but can still be helpful for journalists and other media professionals working in various forms of media including print media.

³⁶ Cooke, Caroline, Daone, Liz, Morris, Gwilym, “Stop Press! How the Press Portrays Disabled People” (Scope: London) 2000: 35-41.

Guide on media & disability

Who Created This Guide?

This guide is written by the Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN) based in London, United Kingdom. It is taken from the collective experience of the Network and its members who have been working together to try and improve matters for disabled people in broadcasting, film and advertising for the past decade.

The BCIDN was formed by the UK's leading broadcasters, film and television producers, and audio-visual industry organisations to increase the inclusion of disabled people in their work. Although competing for audiences, these organisations jointly funded the Network to make it easier for them to share and deliver best practice across the industry, and to engage with disabled people as fellow broadcasters, programme-makers, potential employees, viewers and stakeholders.

In a Manifesto published in 2002 the Network's member organisations (BBC, ITV, C4, Five, BSkyB, Discovery Networks Europe, Turner Broadcasting System, the UK Film Council, Producers' Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT), and the Central Office of Information (COI)) all committed to:

- Increase the presence of disabled people on-air and on-screen.
- Increase the number of disabled people in all areas of the workforce.
- Increase access to services on and off-air.
- Ensure access to all buildings.
- Produce and make public an action plan, endorsed at board level, which detailed how these commitments would be implemented.

The Broadcasters' and Creative Industries' Disability Network is a specialist network of the Employers' Forum on Disability: www.employers-forum.co.uk

Who Is This Guide For?

This website guide is intended for all broadcasters and producers, including those of you who work in mainstream programme areas, from news to light entertainment and from drama to documentary. It is not just for programme makers working on specialist disability output. Although we use the term "programme" makers, much of the guide is also relevant to people working on other audio-visual content such as feature films, advertising commercials, non-broadcast videos, pop promos, and interactive multimedia products. Some of the guide is also relevant to commissioning editors, human resource managers, technical staff and staff working directly with listeners and viewers.

Why Do You Need To Use This Guide?

The guide is designed to help you think about how to be more inclusive in your programme-making. Some of the information also relates to how your organisation can become more disability confident.

People with disabilities are a significant part of your audience - whether they are listeners, viewers or web users. Yet they are almost invisible in programmes and significantly under-represented in the industry's workforce. Improving this is first and foremost a challenge for senior managers in the sector as well as for all producers. The way you report and portray people with disabilities will affect society's attitude to disability. More fundamentally, the best way of ensuring that people with disabilities are reflected on-screen and on-air is that they are adequately reflected in the programme-making workforce. To neglect this almost certainly means that you are missing out on a group of talented colleagues who are also disabled.

Please read and use this guide, which reflects the combined experience of many broadcasters and programme-makers. It is full of positive, realistic, practical and empowering advice to help you make your own contribution to ensuring that your programmes reflect the importance of people with disabilities to both the audio-visual industries and to our society. People with disabilities are individuals with their own stories to tell and their own perspective on life that will enrich your programmes. Without doubt, you will also enrich your own experience. There is a great deal that an individual producer can do.

How to Use this Guide

This guide has 6 main sections of information:

- Opening Introduction including law
- Disabled people participating in programmes
- Employing disabled people as programme-makers
- Disabled access to broadcast services
- Adjustments and aids for people with specific disabilities
- Communicating with disabled people

The guide has been divided into a number of smaller sections in order that you can move from one to another, according to your current needs and interest. The information is provided as a range of suggestions for you to choose from, and implement in ways most appropriate to your own productions. There is a certain amount of repetition between sections for clarity and, although you may not need to read the entire guide at one time, you are advised to cross reference the sections.

The ideas in this guide come from film and programme makers in news, entertainment, factual, drama and documentary. They are aimed at all programme makers, not just those working on specialist disability output.

Many broadcasters and producers have already improved the way they portray or employ disabled people. As one senior programme producer put it: "Don't worry about being politically correct, just do it, and you can see that you CAN make a difference!"

Law on Disability

All European countries now have their own laws on disability. Although these laws are based on the EC legislation, they may differ somewhat in what they cover. In the UK for example, the Disability Discrimination Act covers employment, physical access, goods and services, training and education. However there is also additional legislation, the Communications Act 2003, which controls broadcasting. This includes requirements for making access to services for disabled people (for example, making provision for certain percentages of programmes to be sub-titled or audio-described). Both acts are enforced by two separate organisations – the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Government Office of Communications (Ofcom). Obviously if legislation is not enforced it has limited effect.

Portrayal

Stereotypes and Getting it Right

Do you remember the last time you saw or heard a disabled person on television or radio? If you can think of someone at all, the chances are they were on a programme about disability. It is difficult to calculate exactly how many disabled people feature in our mainstream programmes, particularly when the disability is invisible. However, many producers would acknowledge that they have never even considered casting a disabled actor, looking out for a disabled "expert" or contributor, filming an interview in the street with a disabled member of the public, or deliberately widening the composition of a studio audience. Broadcasters are now very conscious of the importance of ensuring a mix of gender and race on-air and on-screen. So why not ensure that your programme adequately reflects society as a whole?

It's easy to pigeonhole people to save time and explanation in your programmes. But this puts you at risk of reinforcing existing stereotypes, so that disabled people, when they feature at all, continue to be all too often portrayed as either remarkable and heroic, or dependent victims. In the early 1990s, a researcher surveyed the portrayal of disabled people on television and found that they fell into one of 11 different categories, 10 of which were negative. These included the disabled person as "pitable and pathetic", as "incapable", as "a burden". Disabled men aged between 25 and 40 were much more likely to be represented than other disabled people, despite the fact that disabled women outnumber disabled men.

Some disabilities receive particularly poor representation. Mental illness has all too frequently (and disproportionately) been linked in programmes with violent crime, even though there is no evidence to support this mis-portrayal.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation asks its producers to ask themselves four questions about the portrayal of disabled people on-screen:

- Does the portrayal **patronise** the disabled person?
- Does the portrayal **victimise** the disabled person?
- Does the portrayal **demonise** the disabled person?

Or, instead,

- Does the portrayal **normalise** the disabled person, that is, does it regard disabled people in the same way as everyone else?

Many lifestyle/features and daytime series feature members of the public as contributors. Consider including more disabled people in order that your programme features a good cross-section of society. However in order to do this it is often necessary to actively seek out disabled people. Don't forget that men and women, people of different races, religions, ages and sexual orientation will also be disabled.

- Don't be too precious or too politically correct – being super sensitive to the right and wrong language and depictions of disabled people will stop you doing anything. All images can play in important role is raising visibility – even so-called negative ones.
- Consider disabled characters in scenarios that might be commonplace for a non-disabled person. For example, showing a disabled person being fired for negligence or incompetence would be a positive depiction precisely because it would challenge an employer's often quoted reason for not hiring disabled people in the first place – the assumption that you can't fire disabled people without getting into legal trouble for discrimination.
- Consider disabled characters as rounded individuals, with good and bad qualities. Showing a disabled person as being mean, or nasty might be a challenge, but how many non-disabled people are "nice" all the time? A disabled character might get angry, bitter, depressed at times but could also be witty, sexy and the life of the party. Maybe a disabled mother gets angry with her child for refusing to brush its teeth, but this is about motherhood, not disability. Framing the context clearly enables you to do this. Often it is non-disabled people who are more sensitive about these issues than people with disabilities.
- Walk-on roles offer a huge opportunity to feature disabled people in better roles. You may feel it is inappropriate to cast a disabled character in your lead role, but don't automatically rule out a disabled person in a role where they are featured as a secondary or passing character. This would be better than just an "extra" role and may provide an opportunity to feature a disabled person in a situation or role that has nothing to do with disability. Showing disabled people in walk-on parts as competent fellow managers and work colleagues, for example, would indicate real inclusion.
- Don't just think of wheelchair users when you think disability. It is convenient, because it is a known and visible disability, but it becomes a cliché. Less than 8% of disabled people use wheelchairs, so consider featuring another disability.
- Be wary of depicting disabled people in disempowered or "victim" roles. While it is true that some people are disabled by accidents, acts of terrorism or war, there are many more disabled people who do not consider themselves victims at all. They want the same respect that is given to anybody, not pity.
- Similarly avoid the other extreme of the "hero" - constantly showing disabled high achievers. A gold medal disabled athlete is no more representative of disabled people than footballer David Beckham is of non-disabled people. Extraordinary people exist in all walks of life, but heroic achievement can mask the everyday reality for disabled people, allowing the viewer to see the achievement as compensating for the disability. It evokes the idea that the person has "conquered" their impairment and has no need of further consideration.
- It is also patronising to consider disabled people to be heroes because they are disabled, so avoid references to disabled people being "brave" in coping with their impairments.
- Consider showing everyday situations that include disabled people, rather than situations associated with disability. It gives a more positive image of integration to show disabled people interacting with non-disabled people. Showing disabled people on their own or isolated can imply they are separated from the rest of society.
- There is no need to be afraid of showing disabled people doing things differently to non-disabled people, but show disabled people as equals. Let them speak for themselves, give them good lines and let them demonstrate their empowerment.

Consulting Disability Organisations

When seeking disabled programme contributors you may decide to consult a specialist disability organisation for help. Consultation is important, and it is always advisable to talk to more than one organisation if you can in order to get a broad picture. A wide range of disability organisations have grown up over the years. Usually these specialise in a specific impairment and cater for different viewpoints. They may have different aims. Such organisations can include those which provide charitable support, advice and information, and those that are politically involved, and who actively lobby to change the status quo. It is also worth noting that some organisations representing disabled people are managed by non-disabled people, and may not always accurately reflect the views of disabled people themselves.

When consulting with different groups, you might have to tease out some of the conflicting messages or information as well as the external and internal politics. You'll miss useful people, interesting stories and surprising viewpoints if you only work with the biggest and best known organisations, and if you limit yourself to working only through such agencies.

Some groups may be more interested in promoting their cause than fitting into the editorial specification of your programme. Be clear to them about what you are trying to achieve from the beginning. Try to bring organisations in at an early stage, carry them with you and don't forget them when the programme is delivered. Make sure they know the transmission dates, and encourage feedback from their members or beneficiaries after the programme has been broadcast.

Respect for human dignity and treatment of minorities

Viewers have a right to expect that broadcasters and programme-makers will reflect their responsibility to preserve human dignity, as far as possible, in respect of both individuals, and individuals as members of groups. Individuals should not be patronized, or exploited needlessly or caused unnecessary distress, nor should the audience be made to feel mere voyeurs of others' distress. In particular, consideration should be given to the treatment of vulnerable minorities, bearing in mind the likely effects of both misrepresentation and under-representation.

Humour

Humour is an area which has been hotly debated, but it can be very powerful at normalizing issues. Whereas once any humorous reference to disability might have caused offence to either disabled or non-disabled people, there are now more comedians who are keen to actively exploit the comic potential of disability in their acts. This has been largely made possible by an increase in the number of disabled comedians who themselves have presented ground-breaking work that challenges traditional attitudes using sharp, satirical and sometimes deliberately shocking material. There is a long tradition of humour based on oppression and inequality. It should be possible for people with disabilities to be included in programmes of all kinds, particularly where the humour means laughing with people, rather than laughing at them.

Communicating with Disabled People

Communication skills are vital in developing relationships with disabled and non-disabled audiences and employees alike.

Common sense and courtesy tells us:

- Be patient and listen attentively
- Use a normal tone of voice when extending a welcome
- Do not attempt to speak, or finish a sentence, for the person you are speaking to
- Never ask "what happened to you?" Restrain your curiosity.
- Address a disabled person by their first name only if you are addressing everyone else with the same familiarity.
- Speak directly to a disabled person, even if they are accompanied by an interpreter or companion.
- Never make assumptions about what anyone can do (or cannot do!).

People are increasingly sensitive to the way in which "the language of disability" can inadvertently reinforce negative stereotypes. Certain words and phrases may give offence. Although there are no concrete rules, it

is helpful to understand why some terms are preferred to others. And preferences vary, so if in any doubt be prepared to ask the individual.

Most people who see disability as an equality issue strongly prefer the term “disabled people” since this best reflects the view that people with impairments or medical conditions are disabled by a society that fails to remove unnecessary obstacles. Some disabled people prefer the term “people with disabilities” because it puts the person first. Other disabled people may not see themselves as disabled at all, even though they may be defined as such legally – including those who are deaf from birth and use Sign Language, those with a long-term medical condition or those who have experienced mental illness.

A few general pointers:

- A disabled person is not defined by his or her impairment. Nobody wants to be given a medical label.
- Labels say nothing about the person; they simply reinforce the stereotype that disabled people are “sick” and dependent on the medical profession.
- References such as “an epileptic” or “a diabetic” are dehumanizing. If you need to refer to a person’s condition, say a person who has epilepsy or diabetes.
- Do not be embarrassed about using common expressions that could relate to someone’s impairment, for example, “See you later” or “I’ll lend you a hand.”
- Avoid using language that suggests disabled people are always frail or dependent on others, or which could make disabled people objects of pity, such as “sufferers from” or “a victim of”.
- Do not use collective nouns such as “the disabled”, “the blind” or “the disfigured”. These terms imply people are part of a uniform group that is somehow separate from society.

Disability Etiquette

- One universal rule is never to assume you know what assistance, if any, a disabled person requires. Ask if, and what, assistance may be needed.
- Treat a disabled person in the same manner and with the same respect and courtesy you would anyone else.
- Treat adults as adults.
- Do not make assumptions about the existence or absence of a disability; many people have disabilities that are not visible or immediately apparent.
- Use appropriate physical contact, such as a handshake, as you would with anyone else.
- A disabled individual may not introduce a personal assistant or human aid to communications (for example an interpreter). Take your lead from the person using their services.
- Assistance dogs (with a hearing or visually impaired person, a wheelchair user, or someone with epilepsy) are working dogs. They should not be treated as pets. They will, however, need water and somewhere to use as a toilet.
- Know where accessible (and other) toilets, drinking fountains, water coolers, and telephones are located.

Meeting People who are Blind or Visually Impaired

- Identify yourself clearly and introduce any other people present. Clearly indicate where people are located. (In work situations it’s important to do this at the start of a meeting.)
- If speaking in a group it is helpful to identify the name of the person you are speaking to. People should introduce themselves before speaking.
- To shake hands, say “Shall we shake hands?”
- Before offering assistance, ask the individual how you may help. If the person asks for assistance, ask, “May I offer you an arm?” rather than taking an arm. This enables you to guide, rather than “propel” the person.
- Remember that most people with impaired vision do have some residual sight.
- If you are guiding someone, tell them when steps, stairs, ramps or other obstacles occur, and whether they are up or down.
- When you are offering a seat, guide the person’s hand to the back or arm of the seat, and say this is what you are going to do.
- If leaving someone with a visual impairment in an area unfamiliar to them, inform the person you are leaving and connect them with someone else.
- When entering an unfamiliar area, give a brief description of the layout.

- Where someone might normally take notes, ask if they would like to tape the meeting or conversation.
- Provide written communication in an accessible format and, if possible, in the person's preferred format, such as floppy disk, in large print, on audio-cassette or in Braille.
- Papers for meetings should be available in advance, including minutes and any papers to be tabled. (These can be emailed if the person concerned uses a computer which has speech related text or is linked to a Braille printer.)

Meeting People who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired

There are many different degrees and types of deafness and different ways for deaf people or those with hearing impairments to communicate. Some people who are profoundly deaf (usually from birth) use Sign Language as their first language.

- Try not to feel uncomfortable about communicating with a deaf or hearing impaired person, even if the communication feels awkward at first.
- If you do not understand what someone has said, ask him or her to repeat the sentence. Do not pretend you have understood when you have not.
- Ask the person to tell you how they prefer to communicate.
- Speak one at a time at meetings or gatherings. This enables lip-reading or interpreter communication.
- Written notes may help you present complicated information.
- Make sure a deaf person is looking at you before you begin speaking as he or she may need to lip-read. A gentle touch on the shoulder or arm will capture their attention.
- Keep background noise as low as possible.
- Check regularly that you have been understood.
- Stick to the agenda.
- Book interpreters or other support in advance.
- For interviews and meetings use a qualified Sign Language interpreter.
- If a sign language interpreter is present, speak to the deaf person, not the interpreter.
- Use an induction loop, enabling hearing impaired people to tune in their hearing aids directly to speakers and minimise background noise

Meeting People who Lip-Read

Many people reinforce what they hear with lip-reading. A few deaf people with no hearing at all use this alone. This is a demanding and tiring skill.

- Look directly at the person you are speaking to.
- Do not speak with your back to a light source as this will put your lips in shadow.
- Make sure you are visible and in good lighting when talking.
- Speak clearly and at an even pace, but do not distort or exaggerate your lip movements.
- Stop talking if you must turn away.
- Do not use exaggerated gestures.
- Do not block your mouth with your hands, cigarettes or food.

Meeting People who are Deafblind

While deafblindness is a combination of hearing and sight impairments, remember that deafblind people are not always completely deaf or blind. In fact, most deafblind people do have some residual hearing or sight or both. The advice provided in the sections on people with impaired vision or hearing may, therefore, also apply.

- A deafblind person may speak to you but may not hear your voice. Let the person know you are there. Approach from the front and touch the person lightly on the arm or shoulder to attract their attention.
- Many deafblind people need to be guided. Individuals will have their particular preference as to how they wish to be guided. Some deafblind people experience poor balance.
- A deafblind person may be supported by a communicator-guide, or interpreter. Remember to speak to the individual rather than their assistant.

- Do not grab or “propel” a person. Let them know you are offering to escort them by guiding their hand to your elbow.

Meeting People with Speech Difficulties

- Be attentive, encouraging and patient, but not patronizing.
- Slowness or impaired speech does not reflect a person’s intelligence.
- Refrain from correcting or speaking for the person. Wait quietly while the person speaks and resist the temptation to finish sentences for them.
- If you need more information, break down your questions to deal with individual points that require short answers.
- If you do not understand what someone has said, ask the individual to say it again. Never pretend to understand when you do not.

Meeting People with Mobility Impairments

- Do not lean on a wheelchair. A wheelchair is a user’s personal space.
- If you are talking for more than a few moments to someone in a wheelchair, try to position yourself so you are at the same level, or at least ask the person if they would like you to sit down.
- Be aware of your manner when you kneel or crouch to speak with the person. Do not alter your treatment of the individual. Treat adults like adults.
- If there is a high desk or counter, move to the front.
- Never touch or move crutches, canes, or push a wheelchair without the user’s consent.
- Offer a seat to as someone who does not bring their own.
- Speak directly to a wheelchair user, not to their companion.
- Unless you know it is easy to move around your building in a wheelchair, offer to help. Heavy doors or deep-pile carpets are just some of the hazards to watch for. Do not assume ramps solve everything; they may be too steep or slippery.
- Do not be offended if your offer of help is refused. Many wheelchair users prefer to travel independently whenever possible.

Meeting People with Learning Difficulties

Many people born with learning difficulties, those in the early stages or dementia or people who acquire a brain injury, live full and independent lives in the community. Most can make their own choices, with varying levels of support. The following may apply to any of these individuals:

- Begin by assuming the person will understand you.
- Speak to the person as you would anyone else. Do not assume you can predict from your initial impression what the person will or will not understand.
- Keep all communication simple. Avoid jargon.
- Consider putting information in writing, including your name and phone number.
- Provide straightforward summaries of written information.
- You could offer the person an appropriate record of a conversation (for example, an electronic version, or “easy to read” notes) so they can consider it again later and keep a record.

Meeting People with Mental Health Problems

Someone experiencing the emotional distress and confusion associated with mental health problems may find everyday activities very hard. Often the most significant disability people with mental health problems experience is created by the attitudes of others.

- Be patient and non-judgmental.
- Give the person time to make decisions.
- Provide clear and timely information with the aim of ensuring people arrive at a meeting as unstressed as possible.
- Remove any sources of stress and confusion, for example, noise, flashing lights.
- A person may require an advocate to help access information, or attend meetings or interviews.

Meeting People with a Facial Disfigurement

Some people are born with a disfigurement and others acquire it through accident or illness. Disfigurement is usually only skin deep, but it can be associated with facial paralysis and other impairments such as speech difficulties. Like any disability, it does not mean the person is any different and certainly does not affect his or her intelligence. Most of the difficulties, indeed discrimination, people with facial disfigurement experience, stem from other people's behaviour.

- Make eye contact, as you would with anyone else. Do not stare. Smile if you would for someone else.
- Listen carefully, and do not let the person's appearance distract you.

Interviews

- When preparing to interview a disabled person, you may need to adjust your usual arrangements. Do not assume you know what will be needed. Ask the individual.
- Every candidate should be asked if they have any particular requirements in connection with the interview, if they are to do well.
- Although you should be prepared to make adjustments, do not make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do. Disabled people often develop their own creative solutions to work-based challenges.
- Focus on the main task and requirements of the job and the person's skills.
- Do not be distracted by issues which are not related to work, such as gender, age, disability or ethnic origin.
- Restrict questions about the effect of the person's disability to those that potentially affect their ability to do the job.
- One might be, "How can we help you be successful in this job?"
- Only ask about the person's life outside work if you would ask such questions of every other candidate.
- Do not ask, "What happened to you?"

Adjustments for Interviews

Examples of adjustments you might make at an interview include:

- Changing the venue to a more accessible interview room for a wheelchair user.
- Re-arranging the seating or lighting so that a deaf person can lip-read more easily.
- Arranging for an appropriate person to help you communicate, such as a sign language interpreter.
- Allowing the individual to bring an assistant or companion to the interview. They might not want them to come in, so a waiting place nearby may be needed.

Meetings and Events

When planning a meeting or event remember that "access" refers to facilities as well as buildings. It covers approaches, entrances, floor surfaces, lifts, speaker platforms, lecterns, catering and toilets, as well as providing extra time, interpreters and communications support, notes in Braille or on audio cassette, large print programmes and auxiliary aids such as hearing loops.

- If you think there may be access problems, either give advance warning of the problem, or preferably, find a better venue.
- Advertise that the venue is fully accessible, providing relevant detail, or disabled people may not risk coming.
- Make sure reception staff know you are expecting disabled people. Ask them to read this guide and tell them about any particular requests.
- Ensure there is room for people with visual or mobility impairments to move about easily, both at the meeting and when taking refreshments.
- Make sure help, and some seats and tables, are available. It is difficult to sign with a glass of champagne in your hand!
- Reduce or remove any background noise.

- Offer clipboards to wheelchair users.
- Make sure parking arrangements are adequate. Provide directions and, if necessary, valet parking.
- Clearly sign accessible toilet facilities, and ensure that staff are aware of their location.
- Staff should be aware of the evacuation plan, including refuge point and evacuation procedure.
- Ideally, the building should be equipped with a “deaf-alert” (that is, a visual) fire alarm.

Visually impaired and Deaf Interviewees

- With a visually impaired interviewee, decide before the interview how you or your interviewer will use body language as a cue. In radio, a hand on the shoulder is an effective way to signal the need to finish an answer.
- If you are interviewing a deaf person, find out in advance which type of communication they prefer (sign language, lipreading, normal speech with the use of a hearing aid etc).
- If you are interviewing a deaf person through a sign language interpreter, speak to the person as you would to anyone else. The interpreter will then use sign language to put your question to the deaf person. The deaf person will respond directly to you and the interpreter will offer a simultaneous voice over (so ensure the interpreter has a microphone too).
- When interviewing a deaf person who lip-reads, address them directly and they will reply to you. Speak in a clear and steady manner and don't look away. It is also important that your back isn't against a bright light or window. Lip-reading is tiring so schedule regular breaks if possible.
- If you are interviewing a hearing aid user, a radio system is the answer in a one-to-one situation. Radio systems are also good for people with cochlear implants. A radio system sends sound on a set regulated frequency via a radio transmitter to a special radio receiver worn discretely by the user, who is able to hear his/her own voice as well as the voice of the other person.

Casting Actors

There are two key issues for producers of drama to consider. The first concerns the use of disabled people for roles that have a disability, rather than using non-disabled actors. Casting directors and producers should always consider performers with disabilities first for all parts specially written as disabled. (After all it is no longer considered acceptable to use “blacked-up” actors to play black characters such as Shakespeare's Othello.) Having said that, the best actor for the part should be the one to get the job.

Frances Higson, Producer, Antonine Films, UK

“One of our lead characters in our feature film Orphans had cerebral palsy. We decided to find someone with the condition to play the role rather than get an actress to pretend... we contacted disability groups and community centres throughout Scotland... it was an extremely rewarding experience and what ended up on the screen was credible. I think that if producers have a character with a disability they should explore the option of working with a disabled person. The benefits can certainly outweigh the difficulties.”

The second issue is about integrated casting, that is, using disabled actors for roles that have no mention of a disability. In its policy statement on the under-representation of disabled performers in the entertainment industry, Equity (the UK actors' union) advocates that the casting of artists should be on the basis of their individual abilities as artists, regardless of their disability. This standpoint, which has also been applied to casting irrespective of race, has not yet received much attention.

Not all of this, of course, is the responsibility of the script writer. When casting a part why assume that every part has to be played by a non-disabled actor? Why not consider giving a character a disability without worrying about integrating the disability into the script? Why not make sure that your extras sometimes include people with visible impairments?

Increasing Visibility

In broadcasting, visibly disabled people generally make up less than 1% of the on-screen total television population. In drama, real disabled actors (especially playing a part which does not call for a disability) are rarely seen. Light Entertainment does even less well, despite the fashion for ‘reality’ television.

Commissioning Editors and Producers have a vital role to play in changing this picture and finding and hiring disabled talent, whether it is professional performers such as actors or other contributors such as game show participants or routine interviewees.

In the UK there have been several pieces of research that shows that audiences want to see more disabled people on screen, and in a wider variety of roles, for example, newsreader. This section gives some ideas on how you can achieve this.

What You Can Do...

- Think about disability early in your campaign planning, so you can integrate it into your message rather than try to fit around it.
- Incorporate images of disability as the norm, in the same way you would reflect gender and ethnicity.
- If you're concerned that an image of disability may overwhelm your ad, remember it can actually amplify your message.
- Make sure you let your colleagues know how they can incorporate images of disability into their marketing proposals and campaign pitches.
- Try not to worry about offending anyone by using an image of disability. Research shows disabled people would prefer to see some portrayal of disability rather than none at all.
- Remember, it's often attitudes towards disabled people that create barriers for them rather than the impairment itself. So try to think of ways you can help promote the benefits of social diversity.
- Get support from disabled people and their organisations. Discuss your issues and creative ideas with them.
- Use disabled actors in your campaigns.

With thanks to the Images of Disability Steering Group www.imagesofdisability.gov.uk

Specialist Disability Programmes

In many cases production teams do include disabled people when making specialist programmes on disability issues. This can be a good place to develop people with disabilities as programme makers. Specialist disability programmes also have a role to play, for example, in keeping disabled people connected to the world around them. Such programmes also inform (and entertain) other non-disabled listeners or viewers. A BBC radio programme called "In Touch", aimed at visually impaired audiences, is extremely popular because of the way its stories fulfill this function. Similarly, a drama aimed at deaf people where every character uses sign language, may prove popular with deaf audiences.

However the more integrated disability can be in mainstream programming, the more accurately it reflects our society. Most disabled programme-makers would not want to be limited solely to working on specialist disability programmes, but would welcome the opportunity to work in other genres. The more disabled people are employed in mainstream programming, the greater the chance of accurate portrayal.

Employing Disabled People in Programme-Making Roles

The Aim of This Section of the Guide

The aim of this section of the guide is to provide you with some ideas and practical ways so that you can be more successful at finding and working with disabled people as colleagues, that is, as fellow programme-makers. We need to encourage many more disabled people into the industry, by offering them work placements and training opportunities, by including more disabled people on-screen to act as role models and by ensuring that the recruitment processes we use do not discriminate against disabled people.

What Stops You from Working with Disabled People?

Disabled people can and do work in our industry. They are as productive and as safe and reliable as any other employees. (In fact the evidence from a number of surveys of managers from a range of businesses showed that the attendance record and job performance of disabled people was at least the same, or better, than that of other employees.) However, there are plenty of good people out there who haven't had a chance to show their skills. Problem solving is the one of the main tasks of programme-making. Both producers and disabled people are used to making things happen despite any number of problems, so together, with a

positive outlook, any challenge can be met. Surveys also consistently conclude that organisations that successfully employ disabled people are keen to employ more.

There are also the legal considerations. When recruiting staff you should ensure that your employment procedures comply with disability discrimination legislation, and that you do not exclude or discriminate against disabled people.

Finally there can be no moral justification for excluding such a significant and substantial section of the population from access to work, and from portrayal on-screen and on-air. In this respect, disability is no different from gender or race. It should be possible for people with disabilities to be employed in every aspect and at every level of programme-making in the industry, and to be thoroughly integrated throughout the production process. Broadcasters such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) now employ significant numbers of disabled people in a wide variety of production and non- production jobs.

Senior editors and programme commissioners are critical gatekeepers to improving the representation of disabled people on-screen. They are uniquely placed to encourage producers to make more effort to employ disabled people as reporters, presenters, crew and so on.

It is worth asking yourself whether you are denying yourself access to the full range of talent, ideas and experience available.

Recruiting Staff for Programme-Making Roles

Many jobs in the audio-visual industries, especially those in production, are filled through word of mouth. Unfortunately, this does not encourage equality of opportunity and fair employment. Clearly, if your company or the broadcaster for whom you are working becomes known as being disability-friendly it will help you to attract disabled applicants.

If you are serious about recruiting disabled people to work alongside non-disabled people there are a number of things you can do:

- Don't just rely on word of mouth recruitment. Recognise the effects of the casualised marketplace and expand the methods you use to advertise vacancies. Rely more on advertising in mainstream media and make it clear that you encourage applications from people with disabilities. You might also consider using the disability press if it exists in your country.
- Review your recruitment processes to ensure they do not discriminate against disabled applicants. There is specific guidance on this in this section.
- Beware of e-recruitment processes, which may exclude disabled people if the websites used are inaccessible or badly designed.
- Conduct research with your Human Resources Manager into why disabled people may not be applying for jobs, and consider how you might better target disabled people in your advertising.
- Set recruitment targets (for example, to employ one disabled film maker by next year).
- Promote through on-screen or on-air announcements and through your websites that you are actively seeking disabled applicants and they are welcome to apply.
- Offer application forms in alternative formats. Make it possible for disabled people to apply for jobs by making reasonable adjustments. This is in any case a European legal requirement but it is always safest to work to best practice regardless of the law.
- Encourage all producers to consider disabled people for their production team, not just those making specialist disability programming. Ask other producers, including those with experience of working on disability output, for suggestions.
- Identify organisations that might be able to help increase the supply of disabled applicants for jobs and send them details of all vacancies.
- Get specialist advice on adapting your offices to be more accessible. This could benefit everyone.
- Keep an eye out for talented disabled people in exactly the same way as you talent-spot for non-disabled people. Make a point of collecting names and details of such people and start a database.
- Increase employment by nurturing a group of disabled people in the industry through training schemes, work experience placements and mentoring, so you have suitable candidates who could be considered.
- Guarantee a job interview for all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the job (and to hire them on their merits). Some countries have quotas for employing disabled people

and, where this is so, the law must be followed. However, bear in mind that quotas can limit the way disabled people are perceived. They may exclude some disabilities, and may also contribute to an old fashioned view of disabled people as needing charity or protection. Disabled people want to be employed on their merits and capabilities. They don't want special treatment; they want fair and equal treatment.

- Be prepared to make adjustments if needed for new recruits. This might be something quite small (such as a modification to a work station or flexibility about working hours) or it might be something more major (such as a new piece of IT software or IT equipment, or a support worker such as a sign language interpreter.) One of the best ways of knowing what adjustments might be needed (and many disabled employees need nothing at all), is simply to ASK the employee what will be needed to help them do their job successfully. (See also additional information in the section Adjustments and Aids.)
- Make adjustments to retain existing employees who may become disabled. Retaining valued staff is far more effective than having to recruit and train new people.
- Consult existing disabled employees regularly to see how you can improve your services to disabled people – whether as viewers and listeners, employees or contributors.
- Raise awareness and knowledge of disability across your organization at every level.
- Check progress each year and plan for the future.

Presenters

Very few disabled people currently front a programme that is not about disability. Yet the qualifications a disabled person needs to become a presenter are exactly the same as for any other person - a strong personality, a core of self-belief, and the ability to communicate well with participants and audiences.

The industry has made significant progress when it comes to putting women and (in some European countries) people of ethnic minority backgrounds on screen. Yet employing a capable disabled person as a programme anchor or reporter would not just be innovative - it could do a great deal to change attitudes towards disability. It isn't that disabled people lack the talent, but more that producers have not given them the chance to demonstrate it. Don't get bogged down worrying about the disability - think about the entertainment value of the show.

Mat Fraser

Disabled Actor and Presenter (UK)

"The inclusion of a disabled person on the production team can hugely broaden the base of experience in the team. It might give the producer a previously unconsidered angle on a film or series. If the programme is specifically dealing with disability issues then the disabled team member is invaluable in terms of contacts within the community and in understanding the viewpoints of both contributors and audiences."

Helen Smith

TV Reporter, UK

"I have been partially deaf since the age of six and can only hear in one ear. I worked as a camera operator and editor for two years and am now a producer/director. I discovered a new radio aid system that allows me to directly change the stereo digital sound into mono; not only that but I can also directly connect the hi-fi sound into my hearing aid."

Disabled Access to Broadcast Services

As a broadcaster you need to consider how disabled people can access the whole range of your services, not just your programmes. There are now a number of broadcasters who use some or all of the following ways to ensure that disabled people can fully access their services:

- If you use voice-mail or any other automated response unit systems (such as telephone lines with messages that require the user to select specific buttons to get different pieces of information) you will need to provide an alternative method for disabled people who cannot use systems like this.
- You should consider setting up a dedicated helpline with fully trained staff to answer the calls.
- Make sure that your programme-related websites are fully accessible and meet international access standards.
- Consider using a dedicated email address to receive feedback from disabled customers.
- You should provide a textphone service to make it easier for deaf, hearing impaired and speech impaired customers to contact you. This could be via their mobile phones or a relay service.

- Establish a fully accessible website with up-to-date listings of subtitled, signed and audio described programmes and technical advice for customers wanting to access subtitles and audio description on their televisions.
- Text to speech output for Electronic Programme Guides.
- A magazine in audio format for visually impaired customers.
- Also provide letters and information in large print formats.
- Advertise and market to disabled people to ensure that access services are well publicized.
- Ensure disability organizations are sent information and promotional material.
- Organise some special traveling exhibitions or road shows to publicize your disability access services.

Programme Support

Listeners and viewers are regularly invited to telephone for fact-sheets, further information, advice, and merchandise. They're also often signposted to web sites associated with specific programmes. Broadcasters need to ensure that all such programme support features are fully accessible to disabled people.

If you're promoting a telephone number, then highlight any fax and text-phone numbers for people with communication difficulties, or sensory impairments. You should offer support materials in alternative formats (such as audiotapes, or electronic or large print versions of any leaflets or literature). You don't have to provide exactly the format requested. For example, a visually impaired listener might request a fact-sheet in Braille, but on discussion the listener might agree that an audiotape would be a reasonable alternative, or a computer disc that they can put into their own computer, which will be read by screen reader with a synthetic speech software.

Access to Programmes

Watching television can be very difficult for many viewers who are deaf or have partial hearing, and for viewers who are blind or partially sighted. The numbers of people with sight or hearing impairments is increasing as population's age, so a high percentage of your audience would welcome additional services, even if they do not consider themselves disabled. There are 3 types of access services that can make viewing both possible and enjoyable. These are:

- Audio Description
- Signing
- Sub-titling

Audio Description

Audio description is an additional narration that describes visual appearance and action, enabling blind or partially sighted people to enjoy visual art, TV, film, theatre or other live events.

The audio description is carefully interspersed around the soundtrack/main narrative so as not to interfere with dialogue. It is added on after the film is completed. This is easy in the case of DVDs, but for videos a separate audio described video needs to be produced.

Even if you are not involved in the audio description of your programme, it is good practice to think about the visually impaired members of your audience when putting the programme together. Try to avoid or minimise the use of captions on screen with no voice-over, and where possible ensure both subtitles and voice-over for foreign language contributors.

If you've never experienced audio description you can try it at:
www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/closep/audiodescription_guideto.shtml

Signing

Viewers who are Deaf or have partial hearing and who use Sign Language to communicate can access certain TV programmes in which a sign language interpreter appears on screen (usually in a box in part of the screen) and explains what is being said.

Sub-titling

Sub-titling is where the text of speech appears on the TV screen. This is commonly used for foreign language productions, but when provided for deaf and hearing impaired viewers sub-titles might also include a description of sound effects or brief details of music tracks.

Websites

All websites need to be accessible for disabled people but unfortunately the majority of websites are not. It is not just disabled people who find web access difficult. Computer users can set their own preferences on Web browsers for size of text, colour of screen and typeface. To avoid making this necessary for disabled audiences, website designers should follow principles of clear print design and in addition:

- Avoid busy, confusing flashing or moving graphics.
- Provide an option to view an unformatted, text only, version so that audiences can download and use a voice synthesizer, or print out in Braille or otherwise resize or reformat.
- Facilitate audience feedback by providing an e-mail link and by encouraging comments on accessibility

For the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Accessibility Guidelines see www.cast.org

For further information on producing other accessible information including websites, the Employers Forum on Disability publishes various guides:

www.employers-forum.co.uk

See also PAS 78:2006 Guide to good practice in commissioning accessible websites available from the DRC website:

<http://www.drc.gov.uk>

Making a Difference

Another helpful tool from the report "Stop Press! How the Press Portrays Disabled People" is a guide to how we as journalists, media professionals citizens and advocates can do something to change offensive or disabling portrayals of people with disabilities.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR JOURNALISTS AND EDITORS:

The following ten suggestions are practical steps by which editors can improve their coverage of disability issues.

- Wake up to the fact that disabled people are your readers. One in four of your papers end up in a household with a disabled person.
- Update your stylebook – rule against outmoded over-negative words like 'cripple', 'sufferer', 'useless', 'helpless'. Regular reviews will ensure accuracy of reporting.
- Examine the context – would you detail this person's ethnicity or gender in the same context? Is it integral to the story to talk about a person's impairment?
- Arm your sub-editors with a good-practice style-guide for writing headlines and photo captions.
- Stop and think when you report personal stories about disability. Do you have to accent negativity and loss?
- Is all that medical detail necessary to the story? There's nothing wrong with talking about what a person finds difficult but try to avoid the sensationalist approach – why not accent the solution to the impairment rather than using words like 'impossible', 'incapable', 'dependant', etc.
- Be accurate and don't assume that your assessment of a person's impairment is right. Ask the person.
- Include disability access information in entertainment reviews, listings and features on travel or eating out.
- Don't forget the people behind the politics – policy gossip makes good headlines but don't forget the way disabled people's everyday lives can be changed by the policies in the news.
- Value disability stories – remember one in four of your readers have a personal interest.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR THE PRESS INDUSTRY

- To establish training units on disability reporting within industry qualifications.
- To establish mid-career training for staff reporters, freelancers and subs.

- To establish and approve 'fast-track' journalism training for disabled graduates (similar to those run for minority ethnic groups in the past).
- To train editors in issues around employing disabled people informing them of government support available and good recruitment practices.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR PRESS OFFICERS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS

- Take account of this report and use the same guidance for journalists when preparing copy or press releases.
- Always seek and include quotes from disabled people when they are the subject of your work.

There are several ways **you** can help change the way the press covers disability and disabled people. The first and easiest action is to write a letter of complaint. It does not always work but you would be surprised how many times people respond to constructive criticism. You may need to write more than once. Get other people involved if nothing changes and start a local campaign. If none of this works then you might like to take your complaint to a Press Complaints Commission.

Step 1

If you read an article that discriminates against disabled people then the first thing to do is to write to the editor of the paper. In your letter explain why you thought the article was inappropriate and what could be done to rectify the situation. Try, if possible, to suggest an alternative way of approaching that particular subject. Include somewhere in your letter the date of publication of any article. If the paper regularly uses a negative word, such as 'handicap' it is important that you direct the editor to positive alternatives. You might like to send them a copy of appropriate terminology.

Clearly mark your letter 'for publication' and include your address. If you do not wish for your address to be published then write next to it ('Do not publish address'). Most newspapers will not publish anonymous letters but they all will respect your right to have your address withheld. Photocopy the letter before sending it off so you have a reference copy. You can find the address where you should write to the editor somewhere inside the newspaper. A good place to start looking for this is on the letters page. This is usually near the centre of the paper.

Things to remember about writing letters to editors:

1. Keep it as brief and to the point as possible
2. Write the letter as soon as you can
3. Try to be positive about some aspect of the newspaper
4. If your letter is not published, write again and ask for a reply

Example 1

The Westchester Chronicle includes a story about the town's amateur dramatic society's new play. One of the stars of the production, Mr T Jones, is a learning disabled person who the paper refers to as being 'mentally handicapped'. They include quotes from other cast members about acting alongside a disabled person but do not include anything from Mr Jones.

Your letter could look like:

Dear Editor,
 Although I was interested to read the story about Westchester Amateur Dramatic Society's new play (published 11/4/99), I was very disappointed that you did not include a quote from Mr Jones who was one of the stars of the performance. I am sure your readers would have been as interested in his experiences as those of the other actors.
 You also referred to Mr Jones as being 'mentally handicapped', a term which very many disabled people find offensive. A more appropriate expression would have been 'a learning disabled person'. I look forward to your paper responding positively to this constructive criticism.
 Yours faithfully

Example 2

The British Paralympics team wins more medals than the non-disabled Olympic team yet your regular national newspaper, the Daily Planet, does not cover this achievement.

Your letter could look like:

Dear Editor,

I was very surprised that the Daily Planet did not mention the stunning achievement by the British Paralympic team. Last week they won more gold medals than the non-disabled team won medals of any kind. As a paper so respected for its broad sports coverage, I feel it is a shame you did not have space to cover the success of these British athletes.

I also hope that the example given by these athletes might encourage you to reassess your coverage of disabled people and sport.

Yours faithfully

Step 2

Your letter might be printed and the editor may look at changing the way disabled people's issues are covered. He or she might even ask you if you would like to contribute to the paper in the future.

Step 3

Of course the editor may ignore you. If this happens then you could try to organise a local campaign. This does not have to be very complicated. If you belong to a group of people, such as a church group or trade union, then consider asking them to write to the editor in support of your complaint. The more people you get the better. Find out if local dignitaries such as the MP or mayor will join your campaign.

Step 4

The next step, if you are not successful, would be to consider asking the group to boycott the paper. Again get everyone to write to the editor, this time also contact owners of the paper telling them why you are making this stand.

Step 5

By now you may well have been successful, but if you are not there is one last option. You can complain to a Press Complaints Commission.³⁷

Helpful links on media and disability:

[http://www.media-diversity.org/downloaded%20articles/Greater%20London%20Action%20on%20Disability%20\(GLAD\).htm](http://www.media-diversity.org/downloaded%20articles/Greater%20London%20Action%20on%20Disability%20(GLAD).htm)

http://www.media-diversity.org/articles_publications/Tips%20for%20Journalist_Interviewing%20People%20with%20Disabilities.htm

<http://www.mediaanddisability.org/guide.htm>

³⁷ This guide comes from: Cooke, Caroline, Daone, Liz, Morris, Gwilym, "Stop Press! How the Press Portrays Disabled People" (Scope: London) 2000: 35-41.

ANNEX II: OVERALL MEDIA CLIMATE IN SURVEYED COUNTIES

Media climate in Bosnia and Herzegovina

BiH still remains a very specific country with multiple levels of governance that is difficult to compare to other states not only in the field of media but in general. Due to heavy pressure from the Office of the High Representative, there are a good deal of laws regulating media that look good on paper but in practice, are not always implemented. BiH was one of the first countries in the region to adopt a defamation law allowing for civil cases to go to trial. However, for journalists, defamation and libel have been decriminalized but the law stipulates for heavy fines.³⁸ Interpretation of the law however has been controversial particularly for print media. Print media in BiH is self-regulated while broadcast media is under close scrutiny of the Communication Regulation Agency. As self-regulation has not worked well so far in the country, print media has been left to do what it wants and the most striking example of irresponsible behavior comes from the 2002 October elections when a great deal of hate language resurfaced in print media across the country. A Freedom of Information Act was adopted in 2004 but implementation of the act has been rudimentary thus far. BiH is, however, the first country in the region to establish a Press Council and article 4, on Discrimination in the Press Council states explicitly that: 'Newspapers and periodicals must avoid prejudicial or insulting references to a person's ethnic group, nationality, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability. References to a person's ethnic group, nationality, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or physical or mental illness or disability shall be made only when directly relevant to the event being reported.'³⁹

In terms of the promotion of freedom of speech, the most important role in this area belongs to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. Bosnia and Herzegovina is unique in the region as it has two Helsinki Committees, one with a seat in Sarajevo and the other one in Bijeljina. The work of some other organizations in this area is also important, such as that of the Transparency International BiH, Media Plan Institute, Mediacentar Sarajevo, the Centre for Free Access to Information, and Open Society Fund B&H.⁴⁰

There are 7 daily papers and at least 5 significant weekly and bi-weekly magazines in BiH. The circulation numbers for all daily newspapers is estimated at about 80,000 copies sold per day for a population of about 3.8 million people. Reasons for such low circulation numbers are meagre purchasing power as well as strong competition from neighbouring Serbia and Croatia, who both distribute 13 daily newspapers in BiH. "A little bog with a lot of crocodiles" could be the accurate description of the Bosnian print-media market according to panellists from the IREX Media and Sustainability Index (MSI) for BiH in 2006/2007. Aside from the two major dailies, the competition is enhanced by newspapers from neighbouring Serbia and Croatia. There are 13 daily newspapers from those countries and more than 60 weekly and monthly magazines that circulate in Bosnia. According to the IREX Media Sustainability Index (MSI) for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2006/2007, the most discouraging aspect of the media industry was the underdeveloped market due to the population's limited purchasing power, fragmentation along ethnic lines and the large number of media outlets competing in a limited market.⁴¹ However, the panelists all agreed that notable progress has been made in terms of journalistic professionalism largely due to salaries being paid more regularly. Finally, the panelists concluded that the large number of media outlets does not reflect a diversity of voices and opinions. In fact, they pointed out that there is limited coverage of different minority groups in BiH.

Media climate Serbia

According to the IREX Media and Sustainability Index (MSI) Serbia for 2006/2007 conducted by panelists from various local media organisations, the panelists felt that there is a lot of work to be done before a broad spectrum of social interests is reflected in the press. In general, media regulations in Serbia are current with European standards but are not implemented in practice. In 2006, panelists found a renewed pressure on media's independence and professionalism due to strong influence from the ruling coalitions. The media climate is plagued by heavy political pressure influencing freedom of speech as well as broadcast licensing.

³⁸ One was adopted in Republika Srpska in 2001 and one in the Federation in 2002.

³⁹ ANEM legal department and Zivkovic and Samardzic Law Office, ANEM and IREX "Overview of Media Regulations in South East Europe from 2003-2005 (Media Plan Institute: Sarajevo, 2005): 14.

⁴⁰ Ibid: http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2006/bh.asp

⁴¹ IREX, Media and Sustainability Index for Bosnia, 2006/2007: http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2006/bh.asp

In terms of journalism panelists agreed that reporting is generally not fair or objective and that in a number of media houses, there are numerous cases of unethical behavior. Finally, panelists found that state or public media outlets do not reflect a broad political spectrum and that often times does not represent the public interest of minority groups or civil society. In fact, the panelists point out that there are good laws on coverage of minority issues but they are poorly implemented. They suggest that the problem lies in the fact that media and government have little interest in minority problems and, therefore, they get limited coverage.⁴²

In terms of legislation, libel and defamation have been decriminalized but similar to both Bosnia and Montenegro, journalists are subject to heavy fines. In 2004, the Serbian parliament adopted the Free Access to Information of Public Importance law giving both journalists and members of the public access to information from state bodies through information officers. A guidebook to the law was prepared by an expert team consisting of 10 of the most influential non-governmental organisations in Serbia with the intention of making implementation more effective.⁴³ Within the law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, article 5 stipulates that the state along with autonomous entities and local self-government are obliged to provide part of the resources or conditions for the right to access public information of people with disabilities including the freedom to receive ideas, information and opinions. According to this law, people who are incorrectly represented in the media have the right to file a complaint to the editor responsible for the misrepresentation and can even file a suit against the media outlet if the problem is not rendered. In the law on public information, article 47 guarantees that the person whose right or interest could be affected by broadcasting certain information has the right to request a response from the editor wherein it should be explained that the information that was broadcast was incomplete or was incorrect. If the Editor in Chief does not issue a response, without an objective reason, or if the response is announced in inappropriate way, the person could press charges in court.⁴⁴

In the Law on Radio Broadcasting, article 78 obliges all public radio broadcasters to produce programs dedicated to all sectors of society taking into account specific social groups such as children and youth, minority and ethnic groups, people with disabilities, socially vulnerable, and deaf-mute (with an obligation to broadcast parallel written text which describes audio segments of action and dialogue). This article also guarantees that public service broadcasters should provide appropriate time for broadcasting information related to the activities and type of work undertaken by civil society as well as religious communities.⁴⁵

Media climate in Montenegro

In 2006, Montenegro became an independent state after a statehood referendum voted in favour of independence. As could be expected, this issue took up a majority of the media's attention but the political atmosphere in the new state cooled after independence was granted and media returned to covering issues pertaining to democratic and economic development of Montenegro. According to the IREX Media Sustainability Index (MSI) for Montenegro 2006/2007, panellists found that the media legislation is up-to-date with European standards but the problem lies in implementation. As the information assistant to the US embassy noted in the IREX report the unresolved cases of attacks on journalists, are "casting a shadow on the media environment in Montenegro ... It is obvious that freedom of speech is not protected sufficiently, and we are facing hard work ahead." MSI panellists noted that judicial bodies are reacting quite softly to the sanctioning of hate speech in the press. However, panellists were pleased by the adoption of a Freedom of Information Act in 2005 and there was a general progress toward a media law more in line with European standards but they noted that implementation of such laws is crucial for free speech and responsible journalism.

Panellists agreed that while journalism has not reach a desired level of professionalism complicit with the Code of Ethics, they did find that there was a growing trend to respect the rules of the trade. As far as relations between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media sector are concerned, the general view of the panellists was that there is quality communication between the two and the media is ready to cover NGO activities that are of importance for the wider public. However, Dino Ramović, Editor in Chief of Albanian television, TV Teuta – Ulcinj, explained that the state is not providing the adequate required financial support to programs intended for minorities. He explains, "Private media that promote the public interest in the area of minorities' rights do not enjoy support for their media projects. This is telling us about shortcomings in legal regulation when it comes to media treatment of minorities in Montenegro. Furthermore, commercial private media are brought to an unfavourable position, compared to politically favor local public services."⁴⁶

⁴² IREX, Media and Sustainability Index (MSI) Serbia 2006/2007, http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2006/serbia.asp

⁴³ ANEM legal department and Zivkovic and Samardzic Law Office, ANEM and IREX "Overview of Media Regulations in South East Europe from 2003-2005 (Media Plan Institute: Sarajevo, 2005): 70.

⁴⁴ "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", no. 43/03, 61/05

⁴⁵ "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", no. 42/02, 97/04, 76/05

⁴⁶ IREX, Media and Sustainability Index (MSI) Montenegro 2006/2007: http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2006/montenegro.asp

In 2002, three laws regulating media were adopted by Parliament in Montenegro including: the Media Law, the Broadcasting Law and the Law on Transformation of State Television into a Public Service Television which were prepared with the assistance of the OSCE. Acts of libel and defamation were decriminalized according to EU standards however journalists can still face huge fines. According to the ANEM report, in 2005, there were 13 cases pending against journalists and all of the cases were for print media. A freedom of information act was being drafted in 2004 by a working group of various actors but was submitted to the Ministry of Culture who changed the draft failing to include key measures for ensuring protection of free press abuses.⁴⁷

In the Law on Media, article 3 establishes the obligation of the Republic to provide part of the financial means for all citizens to enjoy the right to information without discrimination which is guaranteed by the Constitution. The law stipulates that the state should provide the means for programs that contribute to the development of science and education and which foster the culture of and provide information to people with visual and hearing impairments. In terms of one's legal right to file a complaint against media misrepresentation, article 26 of this law guarantees the right of each individual or legal entity to demand a correction of information by the media if their Constitutional or legal right has been violated. If the media does not give a response in a timely manner, meaning 30 days, the violated party has the right to press charges in court.⁴⁸

The Law on Radio Diffusion, similar to the Serbian Law, regulates the obligations of public radio broadcasters to produce and broadcast programs that are devoted to all segments of society without discrimination especially taking into account specific social groups such as children and youth, minority and ethnic groups, people with disabilities, socially vulnerable and deaf-mute people (with obligation to broadcast parallel written text which describes audio segments of action and dialogue).⁴⁹ Article 100, in accordance with article 3 of the Montenegrin Law on Media, says that the Republican or local authorities' budgets provide part of the financial means for ensuring the constitutional right of citizens to information without discrimination especially for programs that are of great importance for the development of science and education as well as those which foster the culture of and provide information to people with visual and hearing impairments. The conditions for providing financial means for such programs should not affect the editors' independence and the independence of public radio broadcasting services.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ ANEM legal department and Zivkovic and Samardzic Law Office, ANEM and IREX "Overview of Media Regulations in South East Europe from 2003-2005 (Media Plan Institute: Sarajevo, 2005): 55.

⁴⁸ Law on Media ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro", no. 51/02)

⁴⁹ Article 95 of the Law on Radio Diffusion ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro", no. 51/02)

⁵⁰ Article 100 of the Law on Radio Diffusion ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro", no. 51/02)