



HOW TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH THE MASS MEDIA?

A GUIDE FOR VULNERBLE GROUPS
AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH THE MASS MEDIA?

A GUIDE FOR VULNERBLE
GROUPS AND RELATED
ORGANIZATIONS

Commissioned by the Media 4 Change

Any enquiries regarding this publication
should be made to the Media 4 Change
Gediminas avenue 21,
01103 Vilnius, Lithuania
Tel.: +370 65263085
Email: info@media4change.co
Website: media4change.co

Editorial board:
Neringa Jurčiukonytė, Goda Jurevičiūtė

Designer Vilija Avižinytė-Bernotienė

This document is a part of a project “The Address
of Human Rights – Journalism” and co-funded
by the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship
Programme of the European Council.

The views expressed herein are those of the
publishers and can therefore in no way be
taken to reflect of the official opinion of the
European Community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank to our “The Address of Human Rights – Journalism” partners for their contribution to this methodology and their consistent and kind cooperation.

We would especially like to thank to Gintarė Laurinavičiūtė for her contribution to methodologic information collection and idea generation processes; and to longevous journalist and director of “World of Colour Productions” Joy Francis for her benevolent comments regarding this methodology.



THIS PROJECT IS CO-FUNDED
BY THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS
AND CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

CONTENT

About us	8
Introduction	10
1. Can vulnerable society groups have an impact on the mass media?	14
2. How to communicate with the media	20
2.1 The starting point – list of journalists	21
2.2 Means of communication with the mass media	23
2.2.1 Contacting mass media representatives	23
2.2.2 How to prepare press release?	24
2.2.3 Press conference	32
2.2.4 Newsmaking	38
2.2.5 Writing commentary articles	42
2.2.6 Letters to the editorial office	46
2.2.7 Interview: what is necessary to know?	47
2.2.8 Newsletter	51
2.2.9 Social media	54
2. 3 Management of crisis situation	58
3. Appendix. For successful start	64

ABOUT US

8



Media4change is a powerful international movement for highest standards in journalism. Our slogan "Journalism – the Home of Human Rights" means that there are journalists who discover space for journalism ethics and human rights in their works.

We not only discuss with professionals and experts on what is important, but also we create – one of our main goals that are, together with independent journalists and editors, to examine problems that are outside of the media agenda. We believe that the co-

operation between NGOs, media and experts is the key to a better representation of socially vulnerable groups.

The movement was initiated by the project "Address of Human Rights – Journalism". This is the official name of Media4Change activities. Our goal is that, in prospect of continuity of the activities of this project, Media4Change would continue to be a strong movement for higher standards of journalism, the movement will be complemented by new ideas and projects of members of the movement.

OUR GOALS:

We believe that media is a powerful weapon to protect the public interest. At the same time, we strive to create the society with no forgotten people. Therefore, our goals are as follows:

- Development of the cooperation network of journalists, human rights and media experts;
- Requirement to journalists of ethically and aesthetically talking to the public about problems of socially vulnerable groups;
- Cooperation with journalists and experts in carrying out large-scale journalistic researches;
- Provision of conditions for socially vulnerable groups to speak out about their problems and to be heard;
- Cooperation with editors in creating contents on socially vulnerable groups;
- In future perspective, provision of conditions for the society to show confidence in journalists they like and to support their brave ideas.

Media4change on a regular basis holds discussions, workshops, seminars, formal and informal meetings with journalists, human rights experts, representatives of socially vulnerable groups and other NGOs.

Media4change is implemented by a professional team, the members of which came from five European countries. The Coordination Centre is in Lithuania (National Institute for Social Integration). It regularly employs three professionals. They are assisted by the initiative group, consisting of journalists, editors, media and human rights experts.

National Institute for Social Integration has been hosting the Young journalists' development programme since 2009. The organization brings together experts from Journalism, Human Rights and numerous of other fields to work on mutual projects. The investigations carried out by young journalists are published widely across different media channels in Europe.

9

media4change.co



INTRODUCTION



NERINGA JURČIUKONYTĖ,
director of National
Institute for Social
Integration, initiator
and supervisor of the
Media4Change,
Anti-stigma campaign
coordinator and laureate.

10

The analysis of the peculiarities of the depiction of stigmatized groups in the mass media shows the tendency to label these groups as an extremeness, usually a negative one. Here the representatives of these groups are rarely seen, they are as the voiceless people of today's society; Here the representatives of such groups are hardly seen publicly, therefore sometimes they are perceived as voiceless individuals, that are only interceded by experts and politicians. Furthermore, in public they have one face of a terrorist, thief, the agent of critical danger or simply a person who

encroaches on traditional values. This kind of depiction of stigmatized groups in various literature is linked with a commercial interest of news media. Although, as the researches show, this is not an essential element, which determines the entirety of the principles of information selection, processing and dissemination in the mass media. Along with this and other factors, which are important, an important role is given to the vulnerable groups themselves. It needs to be admitted that the representatives of the organizations, which unite these groups, usually lack the skills to communi-

cate with the media, to represent their own interests. However, to this day they are not the only challenges that they encounter on the way. In order to increase their popularity, the politicians who manipulate the fears and presumptions of the people increasingly invoke hate speech. It is no coincidence that the unpopular groups of society become their target. Incitement of hatred towards these groups is a classic strategy, which allows some politicians to successfully achieve a higher visibility, gather more votes. In times of economic crisis these kind of strategies are very affective. Therefore, to properly represent one's interests in today's world media is becoming very relevant and crucial.

In the project "*Address of Human Rights – Journalism*" we have analysed the role of the journalists in these processes. How to find the boundary between the right of self-expression and incitement of hatred? Who decides where to draw the lines? The journalists and

editors from various countries have shared their experience in this field. Information campaign for minimizing the hate speech has accompanied the discussions, educational events. Along with these actions, we have performed the monitoring of media. The exhibition of headings, scientific generalizations, based on this, have received a huge attention from the media and representatives of politicians. Thanks to the project "*Address of Human Rights – Journalism*" that vulnerable society had the opportunity to interact with the representatives of the media, to brood over, or maybe even to shatter the presumptions. At the time of the mentioned project, some persons have interacted with the mass media for the very first time and they had the courage to get rid of the label of the voiceless individuals. However, it is important to note that the main challenges with which the organizations, which unite the vulnerable groups or which work with them, have to confront will still be in the

11

future. It is very important to not to stop applying the experience gathered from this project and carry-on improving. Your farther success depends on the professional and continuous interaction with the media, on rapid and constructive reaction to cases of unethical depiction. It is very important to consistently inform the journalists about the events, which you organize, and this way to contribute to the formation of a positive image of the group, or in other words, to let them know who you are.

The project “*Address of Human Rights – Journalism*” is not saying good-bye for good. It has grown into *Media4Change* movement, which is ready to assist you. On the website www.media4change.com you can join the movement’s community and to share your stories with motivated journalists from all over the Europe. In this process we will support you, will gladly answer your questions and, maybe, as it has started to become common, we ourselves will invite you to comment about one or the other question related to your group. But, that’s not all.

In your hands is a product of the project „*Address of Human Rights – Journalism*” – a manual of interaction with the media. In it, we have gathered the experience of the trainings, which were held at the time of the project, and we have tried to answer the frequently asked questions. That is why we believe that not only those participants of the project „*Address of Human Rights – Journalism*” who will continue to apply the knowledge will find relevant advices, **but also other organizations, representatives of institutions who strive** to effectively inform the journalists about their activities, arising problems, and lastly, to destroy the harmful myths about your group.

In the first part of the issue a couple of persons who are attributed to vulnerable social groups and who are working with them will share their personal experience in interacting with the media and will give advices on how to actively take part in forming the image of represented groups in the public space.

In the second part the general mistakes of people who are not experienced in communicating with media will be introduced and advices on how to avoid them further laid out. We will also provide practical examples of effective communication. These examples have not been made especially for this methodology, but have come from the real life. They have contributed to the successful implementation of anti-stigma campaigns, which have received international recognition. Therefore, we expect that the examples in this methodology will help to acquire various ideas and to improve each time when

In other words, this manual will help you on your way to change. On this journey, it will be more as an adviser, signpost than a manual in the strictest sense of the word.

interacting with the journalists, to search for more original solutions of public communications. In the last part of the issue, you will find practical advices on how to control a critical situation.

However, the main factor will be you and the organization, which you are representing. The “magical powers” of this manual will work only then, when you will exert strong and persistent efforts, until you yourselves will try to react to the rights infringements, to consistently inform the public. You will have to try out the offered means, to observe their results and to improve communication, every time to search for different solutions. That is why we invite you to remain persistent. Evaluate the mistakes you have made and correct them. Not all of the problems will allow to be tackled.

We know from experience that consistently applied knowledge form the skills and contribute to a better visibility and depiction of your organization and group in the media.

1 CAN VULNERABLE SOCIETY GROUPS HAVE AN IMPACT TO THE MASS MEDIA? REPRESENTATIVES OF THE VULNERABLE SOCIETY GROUPS AND PERSONS WHO WORK ON ISSUES RELATED, PROVIDE AN ANSWER:

14



The Roma in Lithuania's mass media usually are negatively depicted, in a criminal context. Very little about the good things is written. I'm trying to show an example and change the negative attitude of the journalists; there are more successful examples of the Roma integration. However, those journalists who choose to incite hatred and write about a scandal are dominant.

This is why, on the one hand, I understand the fear of the vulnerable groups of interacting with the media, but, on the other hand, I'm not running away from an incentive for a change in themselves and to hone their skills. For example, I'm encouraging our Roma community to change, to not be afraid, to move forward and not be afraid of speaking, to not be afraid of further learning.

I know how it is hard to move forward when you encounter discrimination. The Romas who have suffered once seek employment with a notion: "Oh, they still won't employ

me; I'm going there in vain, because I'm a gipsy". And people seek employment, but when the people in the work office see that they are Roma, the Roma don't get the job.

Sometimes I allow myself to say that, firstly, the Romas themselves should change their notions and show initiative. It would be good, if they themselves could help somebody. On the other hand, I'm seeing that some of the Romas even have to hide their nationality, for example, in order to be employed or to not lose their job. Not to mention their communicating with the media skills.

I, myself, do no longer hide my nationality. I'm a citizen of Lithuania and I want to be equal as any other citizens of Lithuania. I don't want all of my life to have a negative "gipsy" label. Even though I have achieved much, to this day I feel that sometimes due to the belonging to the group doors close-up for me. Now I'm very busy and I try to accomplish that the journalists would find out about my activity.

15

Maybe, some will say that I'm too active, that I fight too much, I'm not afraid to speak, to tell people the truth. However, I know that we can achieve more positive visible examples.

It hurts the most when nothing ever changes and because of the "gipsy's" label our little members of the society hurts, they can't on their own go out of this closed circuit. In school, they encounter bullying, the nonchalant view of teachers and other many obstacles for attending school. I believe that everything is related with negative, preconceived notions of the society, which the mass media shapes.

That is why I'm very happy that I'm being invited to "Media4Change" journalists training and that I have an opportunity to tell about Romas, encourage to think and, maybe, change notions of the people. Up to this day, I'm interacting with some of the journalists and I want to encourage other groups to not be afraid of representation of themselves in media. You will find many useful tips in this issue. I believe that in applying them you can inform the journalists and help for their works to change.

We can see a couple of trends when talking about the depiction of socially vulnerable groups in today's media. In general, among the professionals of media there is more consciousness. However, there exists a political rhetoric



MAURIZIO MOLINARI,
free-lance journalists
with a vision disability

when a particular group of people is made into scapegoats, because of the invoked hate speech and discrimination. Many problems are linked with the coverage of the Muslim community, because of the existence of a generalization trend and political rhetoric, which tend to point fingers at them.

Sometimes it is hard for the socially vulnerable members of the society groups to represent themselves, because these groups are seen less in the public space and people with a severe disability sometimes encounter the problem of insufficient education. When you have a disability, it becomes very difficult to have an impact on something; first of all, you need to survive in the environment and then, if you can, you can tackle the changes.

This is why it is very important that among the journalists who write about the socially vulnera-



JOY FRANCIS.
From 1992 accredited
journalist. Has worked in
"BBC" and other agencies,
an initiator of various
discrimination in the media
minimizing programs. Now Joy
is a - Managing Director of The
Creative Collective Media

ble groups a change would happen. So, various trainings and experiences on how to deal with the socially vulnerable groups, how to avoid hate speech, not to advocate hate crimes are very important in order for the journalists to perceive the existent problems. It's good that such movements as "Media4Change", "European Network Against Racism" or "Media Diversity Institute" exist, which encourage the recognition of the problems and improve the communication of the media and the vulnerable society groups.

Of course, the members of the socially vulnerable groups have to become a part of a wider dialogue. They are needed in order for the journalist to broaden the scope. Take my case for instance. If you acquaint yourself with a journalist, who has a vision disability and who does his job good you may change your view on the group in which he belongs. The same can be said, if you make contact with a transsexual person or a Muslim. When

you see an example, you dispose of the stereotypes, which usually are wrong. This is why a dialogue is a basis in order to avoid hate speech and discrimination.

When fighting against the hate speech it is necessary for the representatives of the socially vulnerable groups to make contacts with the journalists working in the traditional media, especially those who decide what is to be covered and what is not. However, now we are living in the age of the Internet and there are many ways on how to disseminate information. For example, "Facebook" or "Twitter". In addition, a blog can be written.

In the Great Britain, the evidence gathered in the Levinson's research about the British media's culture, practice and ethics show that the socially vulnerable groups are still easy targets for the media. Due to today's media regard for ISIS and abductions in Syria it is clear that the media further incites Islamophobia. After the Levinson's research in

some cases the coverage of these questions has improved, but particular newspapers, especially the tabloid press, still incite hatred.

At the time of the Levinson's process *Unitas* issued report about Islam and Muslims in the British media in the year of 2012^{th1} it is unveiled that discriminative, incorrect coverage of the Muslim community in the media has consequences on how they are perceived in the society.

The crisis of Ebola is another example on how the media has too much emphasized that the continent of Africa is the source of the epidemic. As if the disease can't be dissociated from being a black person and an African up to such a level that the white parents were afraid to let their children attend school, because the children of the black persons, especially those from the mainland, are the distributors of the disease.

On the other hand, the organizations, which represent the vulnerable groups, themselves, make many mistakes in interacting with the media. It is usually because of small capacity, insufficient personnel and a limited experience in dealing with the media. Many of these organizations do not communicate with

the media at all, because they are afraid to be misrepresented, they don't know how to write reports to the press and they make mistakes in distributing them.

According to some of the journalists who have interacted with NGO's, the main problem of these organizations is that they do not have people who are ready to give an interview, they do not properly communicate their activity and its results, do not reflect the problems which the socially vulnerable groups encounter. In addition, these groups do not strategically or effectively use social media. In the United Kingdom, the journalists use "Twitter" and are more accessible than in the past.

Nonetheless, the active organizations representing the socially vulnerable groups can and do much in preventing the dispersion of hate-speech in public space and in changing the negative practice of the journalists. This is why laws are issued, guidelines are introduced, and documentaries are made. Nevertheless, the most important is the word "prevention", because every time there exists the problem of accessing the most important and influential channels of the media. Who has such an access? Of course,

not the socially vulnerable groups. However, the social media and *Change.org*² allow these groups in a short amount of time to reach a big number of people and partly, it forces the traditional media to re-think and to re-cover the wrongly covered question or a story.

People informing in order for them to execute competent actions is a crucial factor in making the society intolerable to hate speech and its dangerous outcomes.

The socially vulnerable groups need to enact in lobbying, make campaigns and inform about the hate speech, think-up strategies on how to make new laws or guidelines, a proper regulation, to introduce financial fines and the media's code of conduct in order to help minimize, declare it breaching the laws and, finally, prevent the hate speech. Because of the freedom of speech principle and practice, and anti-censure, a full hate prevention will always be a tough fight, which must always be fought.

The representatives of the socially vulnerable groups must always react to hate speech in the media. Depending on the country, there exists particular codes of conduct

and clear guidelines on what is and what is not acceptable in the media. Write directly to the means of media, which offends, and demand it to acknowledge the mistake. Observe the society's and other media means' reaction towards the offending article or a show in order to strengthen your position. Do people distribute or re-publish the offending article or a show? React to them also. Do people suffer harassment and hits because of the offending or incorrect coverage of the media? Do some of these actions are punishable by law, or the media's regulating authorities? Make contacts with other groups, which support a particular socially vulnerable group. Make a news out of the insult. Via social media whether it would be "Facebook" or "Twitter" create a support base. In the "YouTube" page publish your reaction towards the offending means of media and via the people survey on the internet gather the reactions of the people, because most of the times people just read/watch the reports of the media and do not second guess them. Always be ready to answer the insult. Do not be passive. Force others to listen and search for other organizations (small or big), which would support your position.

1. „Race and Reform: Islam and Muslims in the British Media“. <http://www.unitascommunications.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/race-and-reform.pdf>.

2. *Change.org* is a website for petitions, which is used by various non-profit organizations. www.change.org.

2

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE MEDIA

20

Communication of vulnerable groups with the media, as well as dialogue of the media with this social segment, is important communication way ensuring that interest of socially vulnerable groups would be visible in public space. If issues, which are most often being discussed in only small circle of people affected by particular problem, are being brought to the public discourse, then media becomes as a certain protector of human rights. Benefit is double-sided: education of society in socially meaningful but frequently concealed topics, and introduction of interests of sexual, ethnic minority and other groups for society. Initiative of vulnerable groups is essential condition to ensure constructive communication with the media; therefore, it is important to know certain guidelines for communication.

THE FIRST RULE:

no matter if your organization acts voluntarily or it has a very small number of staff, if you want to impact on portrayal of a particular group in the media, you have to appoint one or a few persons to be responsible for relations with the media.

2.1 THE STARTING POINT – THE LIST OF JOURNALISTS

If you want to make constructive relations with the media, you must know whom your relations are with. Therefore, the first task is to make a list of representatives of the media. This list has to include names, surnames and contacts of journalists, editors, radio and TV producers, who could be interested in your organization and its activity.

You have to make this list based on personal contacts, online contact lists (most news portals provide contacts of journalists working for them), authors of articles written on the topic relevant to you.

Pay attention to the list: it should include the name and surname, profession, media being represented, direct (personal) phone number of journalists, show hosts and producers, contacts and e-mail address of the media.

Whereas portrayal of socially vulnerable groups in the media is not always professional and ethic, prior including a certain media and a journalist into the list, find out if they were not portraying socially vulnerable groups particularly negatively and stereotypically in their previous articles or shows.

After having made the list of the media (news agencies, television, radio

21

shows, the national and regional press, magazines, online portals, etc.), which could be interested in activity of your organization, it is recommended to call them and find out about the persons, making decisions what information will be disseminated and what not.

A few questions, which could help you in arranging necessary information:

- Who makes decisions on events to be informed?
- Who makes decisions in absence of that person?
- Does a journalist, who often informs about events related to your organization's activity or its interests, work in this media?
- When (which day, week, month) decisions are made on particular events to be informed about?
- How much time in advance this media has to be informed about the event?

What are working terms of this media?³

It is very important to update constantly the list, therefore, having seen an article or show about your organization or social segment interested by you, remember who wrote

or informed about it. To achieve this goal, you have not only to be interested in what is being showed on TV, discussed on radio, written in press but also in what way your organization and a group represented by it are being mentioned on social media. One of the ways to do it is to use programmes easily accessible online, which send notification when there is information related to your entered keywords online, or search information every day on special search pages (The simplest program is *Google Alerts*, <https://www.google.com/alerts>; also, *Icerocket* <http://www.icerocket.com/>; *Social Mention* <http://www.socialmention.com/>; *Topsy* <http://topsy.com/> are recommended).

Even though you are very busy, do not ignore in any way young or freelance journalists. They can be the very persons who are mostly interested in your organization's activity.

When you have already arranged the list of journalists, it is recommended to make personal contacts step by step with them. If a journalist knows you personally, there is higher expectancy that he will make a phone call particularly to you when he needs to fill in the newspaper's page or needs a comment on a certain issue.⁴

To make friendly professional relations between the journalist and your organization, you need necessarily to find out, in what terms he works, when and how it is the most convenient for him to receive information.

2.2 MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA

There are a few ways how your message could be given over to the media, and every organization working with social vulnerable groups should know and use them:

- phone calls to representatives of media / offering of a story;
- the press release;
- the press conference;
- the radio, television interview, interview in newspapers and magazines;
- letters to editors;
- writing of commentary articles;
- creation of news-events;
- newsletters;
- social media.

2.2.1 Contacting mass media representatives

Personal phone calls from various representatives of non-governmental organizations to journalists are the most direct and often most effective way to introduce own story, urgently respond to certain news, article or radio / television show.

Offering of such stories is important task of organizations working in the area of socially vulnerable groups. Success stories, attitude towards culture of ethnic and other minorities, highlighting of problems via personal experience, etc., represent slightly different side of the life of socially vulnerable groups than it is usually reflected in the media. Official media usually is negative media; however, having offered different stories and perspectives, it is possible to balance portrayal of socially vulnerable groups in the media.

When you think that you have a story, which could make interested journalists, be prepared to tell them three things:

- 1) what is this story;
- 2) why the story is important, and
- 3) how it could be called.

3. Sarah Silver, „A Media Relations Handbook for Non-Governmental Organizations“. <http://www.tuningintodiversity.eu/media/uploads/Diversity%20toolkit/Media%20Relations%20Guide.pdf>.

4. „Synergy, Getting the Message Across: 10 Top Tips for Charities from Journalists“. <http://nfpsynergy.net/getting-message-across-top-ten-media-tips-charities-journalists>.

Prior calling, also have already prepared suitable for sending material: contacts, short biography of a person whom you recommend to interview, contextual information about your organization and/or concerned organization, statistical data, etc.

When making phone calls, always have in mind the fact that journalists might be busy. It does not mean that they are not interested in what you want to offer. You just have to find out when you can call them back. If the journalist is not busy, then you have about 1-2 minutes pitch your own story or news. If the journalist gets interested, provide him with more details and, after finding out his e-mail, immediately send all related information.

Usually journalists are interested in the stories conforming to the following criteria:

- **Timely information:** the information that you provide is recently relevant and interesting for society;
- **Local interest:** your story has to be relevant and important for audience of the newspaper, radio or television to which you offer it;
- **"Human approach":** all journalists need people who would "paint" story and such stories which would make audience excited;

- **Conflict:** journalists like stories featuring conflict, i.e. different approaches are contrasted;
- **Famous person:** No matter how you evaluate, society adore famous people, therefore, never under-evaluate power of famous people;
- **Uniqueness:** Emphasize any feature of your story which would distinguish it from others;
- **Reliability:** It is very important to provide reliable resources which would evidence the story.

2.2.2 How to prepare the press release?

The press release is one of the communication with media, which is proposed to provide short information about news, events, new production. Having received such release, media representatives will inform society by either publishing the same, but slightly transformed, release or using current issues named in it. However, journalists receive dozens or even hundreds of such releases every day. There are no guarantees that your release will be necessarily published or will get desired attention. As it has been mentioned, your personal acquaintance with journalists would be very beneficial. However, even without personal contacts, the press release, which was prepared well and on relevant topic, most probably will attain sufficient attention.

What is the start point for preparing the press release and how to write it? Firstly, you have to answer five W questions:

... **WHO?** Who is the object of the release: is it a person, organization, event, report, certain product, etc.

... **WHEN?** If you inform about a particular event, specify exact date and time.

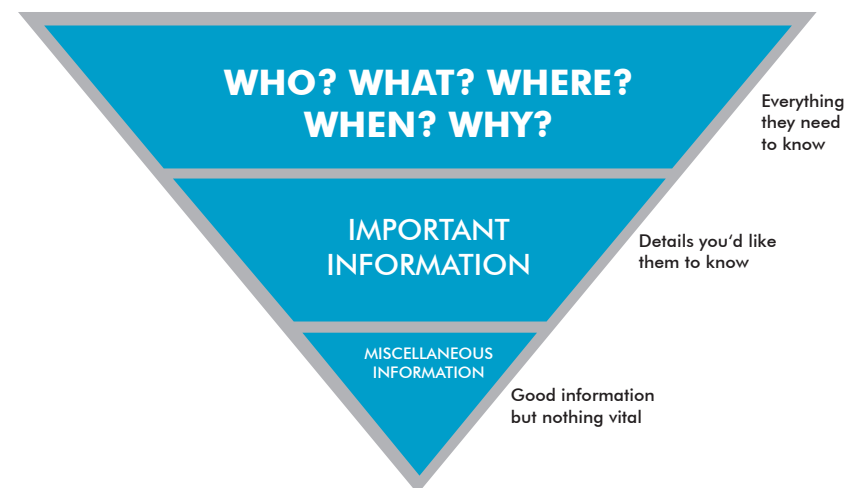
... **WHAT?** The main thought, "news" that should be known by the media.

... **WHY?** It is necessary to reason why your message to be distributed or the event is important; why it is useful to announce on it or worth to call in the event.⁵

... **WHERE?** Where the event you inform the media will be held. It is important to specify the place, to write full address. In this case, some more information could be also provided (for example, when informing about the event): how to reach the place, what is the parking availability, etc.

The press release has to be prepared using inverted pyramid principle. First of all the most important information has to be provided, and later the news supplement follows.

Fig. Inverted Pyramid⁶



5. Communication Agency "Plana", "How to prepare the press release"
<http://plana-agentura.blogspot.com/2014/01/kaip-parengti-pranesima-spaudai.html>
 6. <https://www.snpo.org/funding/images/invertedpyramid.jpg>

Heading. The heading of the press release has to be short, attracting attention and informative. The heading is the first and sometimes the only opportunity to attract attention of exhausted and distracted journalist. However, it should not be offensive or disseminate misleading information.

FOR EXAMPLE, SUCH HEADING OF THE PRESS RELEASE WOULD BE TOO LONG:

On 8th April 2014, the conference dedicated to the international Roma day will be held in the parliament

Therefore, you must necessarily think how you could make it shorter as much as possible. First of all, try to delete unnecessary words:

On 8th April 2014, the conference dedicated to the international Roma day will be held in the Seimas

HERE IS WHAT WE GET:

On 8th April - the conference dedicated to the international Roma day in the Seimas

ANOTHER EXAMPLE:

The National Institute of Social Integration invites to participate in the seminar "Language of hatred: legal and ethical aspects", which will be held on 23rd July from 4PM.

This heading is obviously too long; therefore, decide what is more relevant: to focus on the organization or the fact related to training? Your

goal is to attract attention; thus, details on organizers and exact time of the event can be specified in the first paragraph of the release.

~~The National Institute of Social Integration~~ Invitation to attend participate in the seminar "Language of hatred: legal and ethical aspects"; ~~which will be held on 23rd July from 4PM.~~

HERE IS WHAT WE GET:

Invitation to attend the seminar "Language of hatred: legal and ethical aspects"

ONE MORE EXAMPLE

Today Media 4 Change, the movement of the highest standards in journalism, has decided to initiate a new campaign aimed to reduce the language of hatred

Just having glanced at it, it is obvious that such heading is too long and overloaded, therefore, let's try to shorten it:

~~Today Media 4 Change, the movement of the highest standards in journalism, has decided to initiate a new campaign aimed to reduce of the language of hatred~~

THE RESULT:

Media 4 Change has initiated a campaign to reduce the language of hatred

The first paragraph. In the first paragraph of the press release (it could

be written in bold letters), the essential information has to be provided in 2-4 short sentences. The content of it depends on the message of the press release. It could include description of the event to be organized by the organization, changes, maybe presentation of a new product, report, service or special novelty.

Introduction of the release has to become as a separate and complete text, having read which we would receive the main information; the rest part of the release has to be purposed for those who want to receive more information.

EXAMPLE:

One rainy summer-end day, during the annual meeting Media 4 Change, the international movement for higher standards in journalism initiated in Lithuania, decided to start a one-month campaign promoting decrease of incitement of hatred in the media. Organizations, belonging to the movement in the European countries, such as Italy, Latvia, Spain, Bulgaria and Lithuania, cluster to decrease hatred language in their countries.

Similarly as in the case of the heading, after having written the first paragraph of the release, ask yourself if you can shorten it as much as possible?

~~One rainy summer-end day, during the annual meeting Media 4 Change, the international move-~~

ment for higher standards in journalism initiated in Lithuania, decided to start a one-month campaign promoting decrease of incitement of hatred in the media. Various organizations belonging to the movement, in the from 5 European countries, such as Italy, Latvia, Spain, Bulgaria and Lithuania, cluster to decrease hatred language in their countries.

The remaining text of the release. Statements provided at the beginning have to be explained in the body text of the release.

The campaign will be implemented from January 2013 to January of the next year. During it journalists from the mentioned countries will analyse reasons for xenophobia and racism; organizers of the campaign will carry out monitoring of the media, will respond to the language of hatred. Received results will be presented during a press conference in Lithuania, which will be purposed for dissemination of results and held in January 2015. The best participants will be awarded with good prizes.

Even though the provided above text seems rather concise, however, it could be still shortened:

~~The campaign will be implemented last from January 2013 to January of the next one year. During it journalists from the mentioned countries will analyse reasons for~~

xenophobia and racism; organizers of the campaign will carry out it is planned to monitoring of media, will to respond to the hate speech. Received results will be presented during a press conference in Lithuania, which will be purposed for dissemination of results and held in January 2015. The best participants will be awarded with good prizes.

The press release does not have to include all facts or statistics related to the news. When deciding on the most important facts, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the message, which we want to convey, understandable not only to socially vulnerable groups?
- Is it new information?
- Does it reason activity that we are presenting or story that we are telling?
- Is this information interesting or maybe it could be conveyed in more interesting way?

It is important that this part included quotations. If the information concerns a certain event, it could be a quotation from the speech of the event organizer or participant; if the information concerns activity of the organization, it is appropriate to provide a quotation of the manager or responsible person of that organization. In the press release, the quotation has to be provided in inverted commas: according to the director of "X" programs of NGO, "it is so and so..."

In accordance with Name Surname, the head of the movement, "Across Europe populist and extremist movements are manipulating peoples' fears and prejudices to build support for their divisive policies. During the project, we will analyse what is the role of the media and journalists when hate speech is on the increase? Who should decide on the limits of freedom of speech?"

THE RESULT:

Media 4 Change has initiated a campaign to reduce the language of hatred

Media 4 Change, the movement for highest standards in journalism starts a campaign promoting ethical portrayal of vulnerable social groups in the media. 5 European countries cluster to cooperate in decrease of the language of hatred in their countries.

In accordance with Name Surname, the head of the movement, politicians manipulating phobias and prejudice of people in Europe, are increasingly invoking the language of hatred to increase their popularity. "During the project, we will analyse what is the role of the media and journalists when hate speech is on the increase? Who should decide on the limits of freedom of speech?", she said.

The campaign will last one year. During it journalists will analyse reasons for xenophobia and racism; it is planned to monitor media, to respond to the language of hatred. Results will be presented in Lithuania in January 2015.

MISTAKES OF THE PRESS RELEASE

A mistake, which is often made by people preparing the press release, is related to the type of the text, i.e. advertisement-type text is used instead of information-type text. It is important to avoid advertising slogans, frequent repetition of own organization or brand name in the text. You should not forget that the press release is purposed not for advertisement but for providing society with relevant information.

It is worth not to forget the scope of the press release. In the best case, the release should not be longer than one page (with exception of enclosed annexes, for example, the event agenda, etc.).

It is necessary to follow writing and punctuation rules of the Lithuanian language, to maintain the language style which is used for public space, and to speak logically and clearly. Use as little as possible difficult to understand and international terms, refuse acronyms and vulgarities. The text should be reviewed by a competent language editor – do not forget that the press release forms image of your or-

ganization; therefore, you have to prove your professionalism. The release has to be prepared following the most important clerical rules, i.e. the text should be provided in Times New Roman font, 12 font size and 1,5 line spacing.

DO NOT FORGET! The press release has to be disseminated written on your organization's template with your organization's logo.

EXAMPLE OF THE PRESS RELEASE: isseminate the release prepared on the special template with your organization's logo

Name of the organization

1st July

(specify the date of the release to inform the journalist that it concerns the current issues)

PREJUDICES MEET SOCIETY ON THE WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

The heading has to be clear, actualizing the problem to be analysed, short and attractive

68 percent of Lithuanians think that people with mental health problems are dangerous. It was showed by the research carried out by Eurobarometer in 2006. According to the research, Lithuania was distinguished as the country the most fearful of persons with mental health problems. Whereas statistics show that such people in Lithuania have com-

mitted only 4 percent of all crimes.

As a response to misconceptions having entrenched in the society, the tolerance action "We destroy walls but educate tolerance", dedicated to the World Mental Health Day to be celebrated on 10th October and organized by the Public Institution *Global Initiative on Psychiatry* started this week. During the action, there will be evening event of movies concerned people with mental health disorders, training of journalists, and art performances.

Particularly in the very first paragraph, you have to answer the essential questions: who? what? when? and how? It should attract media attention from the very beginning.

"In accordance with data of the *World Health Organization*, one of four residents of the world experiences mental health problems at least once in his life; therefore, it is not difficult to imagine what a big number of people cannot live their wholesome life due to negative attitude of surrounding people. Attitude of employers, familiar people, colleagues, neighbours, family members, influences quality of his life. In Lithuania, which according to various researches is often leading in the area of intolerance and xenophobia, people with mental problems are feared, avoided, discriminated", - said Karilė Levickaitė, the director of *Global Initiative on Psychiatry*.

Use quotations – any quotation to be used should continue the story but not to repeat it. Indicate necessarily name/surname and status of the speaker).

In accordance with Dainius Radževičius, the Chairman of the *Lithuanian Union of Journalists*, attitudes recorded by Eurobarometer are partially resulted from journalists' work. "Society does not have many opportunities to interact with people who has emntal health problems mental illnesses. Therefore, media in their works forms the image of this group", D. Radzevičius said.

Consider availability to invoke quotation of authoritative persons related to the analysed topic. They will provide validity to your observations and arguments.

The words of the Chairman of the *Lithuanian Union of Journalists* can be also proved by monitoring of the media ordered by the *Global Initiative on the Psychiatry*. It demonstrated that the major part of news on the media describes persons with mental health disorders in the criminal context. "Journalists often make a very big harm, discriminate and force to be degraded. I miss information on the facts what high results we have achieved in our activity or how our rights have been violated. The latter cases happen particularly often", – said Saulius Pečiulis, PhD of Social Sciences, user of mental health services.

Always include into comments position of a member of the group which is being discussed. It is particularly important aspect for organizations which work with vulnerable groups and whereof expert comments do not reflect directly position of the very group.

At the end of the release, indicate sponsors and similar information.

At the very ending, include a few sentences about your organization. For example:



THIS PROJECT IS
CO-FUNDED BY THE
FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS
AND CITIZENSHIP
PROGRAMME OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION

National Institute for Social Integration (shorter - Žmogui.lt) is the organization which develops and applies social innovations assisting people from various vulnerable social groups to integrate into society.

Gedimino pr. 21,
01103 Vilnius, Lithuania
zmogus@zmogui.lt
Contact person:
Name Surname, +123568554

DISSEMINATION OF THE PRESS RELEASE

Usually the release is sent to representatives of the media by e-mail according to your made list including certain types of media and their representatives. Have in mind that your release has to reach a target audience and remember work schedules of journalists.

The release should be sent to all means of media at the same time. Sometimes representatives of different media cooperate with each other; thus, if there is difference of one or a few days between sending of the release, you may get disfavoured by some representatives of the media because of it.

On the other hand, if you want to provide the text only to one channel, mention it necessarily in your letter – the news not published elsewhere can be much more interesting and valuable.

Send the release on the specially designed template which would necessarily include the logo of your organization.

When disseminating the release, include necessarily pictures, which supplement the text and make it more convincing. When talking about the pictures, it is important to observe their copyright. Therefore, it is especially advisable to take pictures during various events of the organization. If your organization cannot afford invoking services of the professional photographer, assign this work for a volunteer. The pictures will be useful when sending various releases to the media or placing information on the social media. (1-3 figures on 20-21p)

ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE RELEASE

It may happen that the press release having sent to the media will

not be published at the time – the information contained is interesting, however, it will be archived having intentions to announce it later. For releases of such nature, the information about the very organization, its picture with detailed written description is very important.

The press release can be non-published due to its low meaningfulness, non-relevance, advertising-type content, boredom, unsuitable writing.

It is worth to describe wider the topic and situation in the e-mail which is sent together with the press release; the record "Press release, the e-mail enclosure" is not informative. The very content of the e-mail has to make journalists open the press release.

Do not get upset if your press release has not received foreseen attention. Perhaps the journalists were too busy, however, they will undoubtedly get interested next time. Evaluate your made mistakes and correct them. Publish necessarily the press release on your website and various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

2.2.3 Press conference

The press conference is the event whereat representatives of communicating organization invite representatives of the media (journalists, editors) to inform them on news, to express their opinion and answer journalists' questions.

The press conference is rather risky event, which has to be organized only when:

- high interest in your organization or in some phenomenon or events related to it is being foreseen;
- it is necessary to comment publicly resulted issues to a few media channels;
- you seek to dramatize the announcement of the news.⁷

During the time you will dedicate for organizing the conference, you can make many informative calls and personal meetings with journalists; therefore, organize the press conference only when you have really important news. For example, you prepared a new report or you need urgently respond to any news to be developing in public space, crisis situation, or perhaps any famous person, politician or expert related to activity of your organization is visiting your city.

Periodically ask yourself: aren't you just wasting journalists time? Can you achieve the same results just through dissemination of the press release or calling up journalists? If you answer yes, then do not organize the press conference.⁸ If there is any doubts concerned organization of the press conference, it is worth to consider the alternative of theatrical action as well. Such example will be discussed in the last subsection of this section, when analysing example of crisis communication.

PLANNING OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE

Even though sometimes it might happen to convene press conference quite urgently (if there is a need to respond to any news developing in the media), most often you should start planning it at least a few weeks in advance. Attention should be paid at the following issues:

What do you want to say? Prior convening the press conference, make decision what the main message of the event will be. Perhaps you want to inform about new research carried out by your organization? Or perhaps to introduce a future event or respond to criticism or offensive remarks said on public space? No matter what the message is, it should be summarized for media in 3-5 main thoughts. Repeat them at least a few times during the conference and include

necessarily into handouts prepared for media (see below).

Choose date and time. Prior choosing the date of the conference, necessarily check if nothing important is happening at that time, if your conference is not held simultaneously with any important event, which would attract attention of journalists. (This question could be answered by journalists themselves). Moreover, have in mind work schedules of journalists. It is preferable to organize the press conference on any working day but not on Monday or on Friday. The best time is late morning at 10:00 to 11:00 AM.

Choose place. Besides various technical issues (is the equipment complete, is it comfortable to seat participants of the conference and representatives of the media, etc.), prior choosing the place of the conference regard such issues as parking of cars for journalists, distance between the conference place and your working place. Also, if it is possible, choose a place corresponding to the topic presented or simply visually attracting others attention.

Choose and prepare participants of the conference. The number of speakers has to be such that sufficient time was left for questions of journalists. The most optimal number – 2-3 speakers. The chosen speakers should be eloquent,

7. Sarah Silver. „Working with the Media. Health and Environment Communication“. http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/English_final-2.pdf.

8. Sarah Silver, p. 30. „Working with the Media. Health and Environment Communication“. http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/English_final-2.pdf.

should have good knowledge of the topic and be able to withstand questions of the media. Therefore, where it is possible, choose reliable and able to represent activity of your organization politicians, experts or famous people related to activity of your organization.

A FEW TIPS FOR PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE:

- Speak clearly and shortly. Avoid slang, pretentiousness, complex structures and fiery speech;
- Presume that audience is clever. Avoid patronizing tone of speaking;
- Appearance matters – participants of the event should be dressed orderly and appropriately;
- Always say the truth. If you do not know how to answer the question, say it so. Perhaps give over the word to another participant of the conference. Do not exaggerate, do not provide your opinion as facts and do not blame anybody if you cannot evidence it.

Besides participants of the conference, you will also have to find a moderator, who would know peculiarities of communication with the media and issues being presented by the conference.

It is necessary to remind to the speakers of the conference that

they would speak no longer than 3-5 minutes and overall time of the conference should be about 40-45 min. The moderator has to introduce speakers and be prepared to moderate questions of journalists.

It is important that after the end of the press conference the main speakers had time for personal interview with journalists.

INFORM REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

Here, your prepared list of journalists and producers of television and radio shows will help you again. Journalists should be informed on the press conference at least one week in advance.

It is advisable to invite not only journalists but also representatives of organizations working on similar topics. Meantime, due to popularity of social media, information on your activity can be disseminated not only by channels of traditional media.

The principle of preparation of invitation to the press conference is very similar to that of the press release. When preparing invitation to journalists, endeavour that it distinguished from others and was noticeable and intriguing. It has to include the essence of the press conference, its topic, date, time, place, participants and contacts which could be used to receive more information.

EXAMPLE OF INVITATION TO THE PRESS CONFERENCE

FROM 11TH SEPTEMBER TO CHARLIE HEBDO: HOW POWERFUL ARE STEREOTYPES TO BE CREATED BY THE MEDIA?

The heading, as always, has to be precise, clear and attracting to reveal relevance of the event

Media4Change invites journalists to the press conference on the topic "From 11th September to Charlie Hebdo: how powerful are stereotypes to be created by the media", which will be held in BNS conference hall on 19th January. During the conference, international expert team will present results of monitoring of portrayal of vulnerable groups on the media in the period of 2013-2014 and will discuss how they represent social attitudes with regard to these groups.

You have to specify in the very first paragraph who organizes the press conference, what it is about and where and when it will be held.

One of the monitoring objects is portrayal of Muslims on the Lithuanian media. *Media4Change* will present peculiarities of their portrayal in much broader investigation period, i.e. from 11th September to Charlie Hebdo, and *Media Diversity Institute* will share its insights in the international context. This partner of the movement for the highest-standard journalism

will reveal five the most often appearing mistakes of journalists, which were recorded by their radar when shedding light on Charlie Hebdo events.

Events of recent weeks in Paris and geopolitical situation encouraged Lithuania to speak about increase of loyalty and integration of its ethnic groups as well. What perspectives of integration of these groups are shown by negative portrayal on the media? How, in case of incitement of discord, to match responsibility with unquestioned value – freedom of speech?

Further text has to answer the question, why you organize the conference and why it is relevant to journalists?

You will be invited to discuss on these and similar issues by the partner team of the project "The address of human rights - journalism" visiting in Lithuania, local community of *Media4Change*, Ralph du Long (UNITED, EU – Russia Forum), one of the visiting guests of the discussion, and Božena Karvelienė, the director of Roma Integration House. She will share her insights about one of the most voiceless and negatively portrayed on the media groups – Roma.

You make acquainted with experts involved into the event. They particularly can partially lead your presentation to success: expert

level of coming people is defined. It is some warrantor of validity and reasonability of your information to be provided. Therefore, if you organize events, it is particularly important to invite also persons of high status, international experts, who agree with your position. However, do not allow them putting into the shade the topic and the group of your conference. It is very important that each time there was a person belonging to the being discussed group.

The project "The Address Of Human Rights – Journalism" was initiated and is being implemented by the *National Institute for Social Integration*.

At the end of the invitation, provide information on the organization.

You are welcome to the event!

REMINDER

A few days prior the press conference, make a phone call to representatives of the main types of the media and check if they have received your invitation. If not, resend it.

HANDOUT FOR THE JOURNALISTS

When organizing the press conference, it is necessary to prepare material for journalists: it may be provided in folders or CD format, however, it is obligatory and indispensable means.

The material should include:

- the list of the conference participants;
- the press release wherein your organization's position on the discussed issue would be described, the main focuses of the press conference and a few quotations of the conference participants would be included;
- contextual information about the issue to be discussed during the press conference (for example, statistics, history, essential events), recommendations and comments of independent experts;
- short biographies of the conference participants;
- information about your organization and contact data of the person who could be contacted in case of clarification or supplement of the information.

PREPARATION OF PREMISES

In the conference room, there should be a table big enough to seat all speakers. Cards or stays with names of the speakers should be placed in front of them. The name in the card should be seen at least from the middle of the room.

Before the conference, check if the whole set of necessary equipment,

including microphones, projectors, etc., is complete and operable. If it is possible, illustrate speeches of the speakers using visual material, i.e. graphs, posters, pictures, video material, to be showed by the projector:

In front of the room where the conference will be held, or at the very entrance inside, prepare the table with the registration list of journalists; a person responsible for registration has to stand beside the table.

DURING THE PRESS CONFERENCE

Just before the conference, meet representatives of the press and ask them to register into the list of participants.

Respect the journalists and always start the conference timely.

After introduction of participants by the moderator and after speeches of the participants, the moderator should go over to the question-answer part. The full duration of the conference should not exceed 40-45 minutes; however, after the end of the conference, it is advisable to invite the journalists to stay for informal communication with the conference participants.

It is advisable to make a few pictures during the conference, audio and/or video record for archive of

the organization and perhaps for the media.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

Try to communicate personally at least with representatives of the main media. Good contacts can be beneficial when inviting journalists to any future event or if they need interviewee.

After review of the list of arrived journalists, you should pay attention to guests that is absent from the event. Not always all invited persons can attend press conferences, however, it does not mean necessarily that the problem or issue to be presented by you is not relevant for them. Therefore, try to deliver to them personally a handout prepared for journalists, perhaps to send a video or audio record or organize personal interview of the journalist and one of the conference participants.

After the conference, disseminate the press release about just held conference to having attended journalists and non-attended ones, enclosing pictures of the event.

Evaluation. It is very important to evaluate what was successful and what not during the press conference. Ask for yourself what could be done otherwise? Evaluate if it was worth organizing the event.⁹

9. Sarah Silver. „Community Tool Box, Chapter 6 "Developing a Plan for Communication". 2015. <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/promoting-interest/press-conference/main>

2.2.4 Newsmaking

Sometimes, to receive attention of the media, an event of its interest could be organized. The goal for such organizing is to attract journalists' attention with the aim that they, when describing the event, also shed the light on your organization's goals and activity to be carried out by it.

As an example of such event could be event dedicated for commemoration of some date concerned activity of your organization. For example, World Day AIDS event, International Roma Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration event, Kurban – Bayran (Sacrifice) Festival event, etc.

Journalists have to be invited to the event under similar principle as to the press conference. It is also advisable to present to having arrived journalists certain handouts containing the Agenda of the event, information about the organization, etc., and to disseminate the press release immediately after the event.

Do not forget to take pictures and, if it is available, to film your organized events: you will have to inform on them on the social media, and visual material is much more attractive than only textual information.

It is great advantage if you foresee to visualize the content, problems of the event during the planned future event. If you are able to

Figure 1



Photo by A. Didžgalvis

Figure 2



Photo by A. Didžgalvis

Figure 3



Photo by A. Didžgalvis

convey it in the way of reportage already in the press release (to draw the view of the event), it is expected that the event will also attain attention of TV journalists, photo reporters. And it is directly related to better visibility of your event and organization.

We provide below pictures (figure 1-3), which were made during one example of crisis communication management provided in this guideline. There are moments recorded during action "Straitjackets of government – for saving and human rights?". These moments were distributed together with the press release and republished in the biggest Lithuanian media. If the action had not had visual access, it is very likely that it would not have received high visibility.

EXAMPLE OF CREATION OF THE EVENT-NEWS¹⁰

LITHUANIAN JEWISH HOLOCAUST DAY WILL BE REMEMBERED BY "THE STONE OF PAST".

Heading of the release is short and intriguing. The very heading should actualize the event, how it is related to current issues. For example, in this case, relevance is provided by commemoration of Lithuanian Jewish Holocaust Day and it is reflected very clearly in the text below.

Upon the initiative of the International Historical Justice Commission, young people from various places of Lithuania will travel to visit places of former ghetto, synagogue. As a sign of commemoration and respect to tragic fate of the Jewish community, young people will make a word "Remember" from stones on the ground and will form a stone knoll, decorate death places of victims of such tragedies.

The very first paragraph identifies already the organizer of the event (it is very important for positioning of the organization) and essential actions distinguishing it from other similar events.

In the capital, the commemoration event will be organized in the territory of Vilnius ghetto and Paneriai memorial for victims of fascism.

The scope and meaning of the event is being defined.

In accordance with Ingrida Vilkienė, the coordinator of Educational Programs of International Commission for Evaluation of Crimes of the Nazi and the Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, such involvement into events helps to realise historical lessons and to think about absence of human value in the totalitarian system.

Answers to the question why the event is being organized and what his impact is.

"When talking about victims, we often mention various numbers. However, we do not notice frequently historical lessons behind these numbers and we do not reflect", - she said.

Short quotation revealing characteristically the content of the event, how it distinguishes from other events of similar nature. It is very important to include a quotation into the main thought of the event and not to use many words. Think over very well the information you want to convey. It is very important to encode smoothly and concisely the essential mind in it. The quotation should not repeat the content of previous or upcoming presentation and should not be too extended. If you leave in it not more than 2-3 short sentences, it is likely that you are leaving selection of the essential mind for the journalist, and the final result cannot fully reflect your expectations.

In accordance with I. Vilkienė, only during such commemoration events historical lessons about genocide of Lithuanian residents will be meaningful, will promote students to think about the face of the former and current society as well as own moral face.

Impression is increased through non-use of many words. Do not

leave full quotation in inverted commas. Integrate it smoothly into the text using overtelling style. The more integration of the quotation or arrangement of the text reminds the format of the final article or message, the more likely that the media will republish it more authentically.

The thought to choose stone for honouring came from the tradition widespread in Israel to bring to the cemetery not flowers but a stone, as a symbol of memory.

When you have already provided the main information under the principle of inverted pyramid, the very time is to reveal also other meaningful details. Such as how the thought came to organize the event, or wider context. It is particularly reflected by this paragraph and the one below.

The idea of the commemoration event "The stone of past" in Vilnius should be prolonged by the sight-seeing tour of students along historical places, related to the Jewish life, Holocaust topic. Students will realise the trip using maps of historical places purposed specially for this occasion.

Teachers will make acquainted students participating in the commemoration event with historical facts related to the Jewish genocide topic, stories of people affected by holocaust, cases of rescue of Jews from ghetto. It will help students to perceive meaning of the event

10. N. Jurčiukonytė. [2008] "The stone of past" will remind victims of the Jewish genocide in Lithuania"

and will explain the meaning of the word “memory”. Such lessons have been organized by the Commission since 2003.

Without using many words and refusing additional words, you provide more information on your concern to event held, and what is your experience and status in this area. Such information helps position your organization in eyes of journalists as important and reliable source in the events related to similar topic.

On 23rd September, 1943, Vilnius ghetto was liquidated and a part of its residents were shot in Paneriai, others were brought from Lithuania to concentration camps. Until the Second World War, about 220 thousand of Jews lived in Lithuania. During the war, about 95 percent of them were killed.

Do not leave journalists alone to interpret historical events. Provide essential dates, data reflecting the scope of the problem. If it is available, instruct them where they could find more data.

2.2.5 Writing commentary articles

In the section “comments”, “opinions” of newspapers, magazines and online news portals, articles of people not employed in those me-

dia are often published. Most press editors gladly accept articles, which are written professionally and on relevant topic, and this is a good opportunity for representatives of your organization.

By writing of such commentary articles and their publication, quite a big number of goals, which are important for your organization, can be achieved, including information and influence to both politicians and readers; through comments of the article, it is possible to show increasing consciousness of society and support to particular political initiative. Also, such articles enable to analyse a certain social problem and to advice on ways for its solution. Furthermore, in this way you can inform both journalists and editors about your concerned issues and activity being implemented in your organization.

A FEW TIPS FOR WRITING SUCH COMMENTARY ARTICLE:

The commentary should concern events to be analysed in the media at that time, to respond somehow to them. Therefore, constantly follow what is happening in the public discourse, what discussions are currently going on and respond to various issues concerned activity of your organization or group represented by it. Perhaps some article offensive to your group or incorrectly representing it has been published in the media? Perhaps some journalist has touched a

problem meaningful to your group or organization, however, did not interview any member of your organization or a group represented by it? If so, then a published commentary would be nice way to become heard.

When writing the article, you have to keep in mind audience of the magazine, newspaper and news portal. Remember that many readers most probably are not aware of your problem or issue to be raised or, unfortunately, are rather negatively prejudiced in advance.

Write in short sentences. Avoid slang, pretentiousness and complicated structures. “Paint” the commentary using human stories: pay attention how the issue being analysed affects particular individuals.

Composition of the article. The article has to include a heading; however, if you cannot think up quickly good heading, do not worry and do not get upset for it as the editor of the newspaper, magazine or online webpage can change it anyway.

It is obligatory to provide subheading for the article, i.e. one sentence which would sum up the whole content of the article. In particular this sentence will determine if the reader reads it through to the end.

For example, if you wished to write an article about the fact that Roma still remain as a social group to be portrayed the most negatively in the media of Lithuania, which often stays speechless and non-addressed, the heading of the article could be as follows:

SILENCE OF ROMA

And the subheading summarizing the article would be as follows:

Roma, which are being the most negatively portrayed in the media, stay speechless – journalists almost do not address their representatives but they can say much

Further, research results should be specified and consequences of such tendencies in the media should be discussed as well possible ways of solution should be suggested.¹¹

It is important to provide in one sentence author’s profession, description of his competence and to indicate the organization to be represented in the article.

DISSEMINATION OF THE ARTICLE

It is very important that your article got into hands of the person who makes decisions on issues to be printed in the newspaper or magazine or to be published in the news portal. Having sent the article, it would be necessary to call to the

11. Example of such commentary article can be found here:
<http://www.media4change.co.lt/publikacijos/romu-vaizdavimo-rekomendacijos/>

editorial office after approximately one week and to find out if the article will be used. If not, you might try to send it to another media.

An example of the commentary article is provided below. It was written as a response to non-ethical portrayal of people with mental illnesses and to be provoked moral panic, which involved not only journalists but also law enforcement officials.

EXAMPLE OF WRITING THE COMMENTARY ARTICLE¹²

MURDERS CHALLENGE PROFESSIONALISM OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE MEDIA

As well as in writing the press release, heading of the article is very important. On the other hand, as it has been mentioned, if you cannot think up anything smart, you can leave it for the portal / newspaper printing your comment. Just ask them to coordinate with you editing of the whole content.

Responses of the prosecution and the media regarding murders, which were committed last week, started seeding fear and myths about persons having problems of mental health. Based on them, comments and statements of law enforcement officials in the media demonstrated how deep-root-

ed myths about dangerousness of persons having problems of mental health are in the society.

In particular at that moment, *Public Institution Global Initiative on Psychiatry* was implementing public campaign "They want and can work", which was denying these myths. Myths about persons having problems of mental health, which were escalated on the background of the campaign, demonstrated still very weak understanding about this social group and its exclusion.

Tell concisely, in a few paragraphs the problem's nature. These paragraphs should answer the question why the commentary was needed to be written. Specify quotations, statements, which seemed to you as non-ethical.

In accordance with evaluation of experts of *Global Initiative on Psychiatry*, comments of officials of police headquarters, which followed the murders, were too urgent and non-conforming with legislation of the Republic of Lithuania – firstly, imperative provision, stating that data of pre-trial investigation may not be publicized.

Disregard of this provision leads to violation of other fundamental principles, such as presumption of innocence and the right to privacy.

When describing the problem, use opinion of the expert, ask persons who have suffered from unethical information on the problem.

Moreover, law enforcement diagnosed an illness to the person having committed a criminal act and related it directly to the reason of the crime. After these events *Global Initiative on Psychiatry* distributed formal letters to the General and Regional Prosecutor's Offices, wherein they were encouraged changing vicious practice.

"Each time after occurrence of a tragic event immature states and societies look for coercion roots using "scapegoats". Meanwhile mature states implement effective coercion prevention programs and change attitude of society towards vulnerable groups. The more tolerance in the society towards vulnerable groups, the less coercion, and vice versa", Dainius Pūras, the associate professor of Vilnius University, the Chairman of the Board of *PI Global Initiative on Psychiatry*, comments the event.

In accordance to him, mental health suffers particularly from the set of obsolete attitudes of the society itself but not from supposed dangerousness of mental patients. "Intolerant position forms certain causal links, which so far have been hindering not only different people - they are hindering recovery of society and state from certain moral disability", he stated.

Reason with arguments why such coverage in the media can have painful consequences.

According to Dainius Pūras, good mental health is sometimes confused with morality of actions, and disturbed psyche – with immoral actions. "Most crimes are committed by people with healthy psyche. Particularly they, having very clear goals, plan murders and commit them in cold blood. Their morality is often highly damaged though they do not suffer from mental illnesses", - Dainius Pūras says.

There is a myth, widespread in Lithuania, about dangerousness of persons having mental health problems. In 2006, in accordance with data of the research made by *Eurobarometer*, residents of Lithuania distinguish from other European countries as the most fearful of persons having mental health problems: even 68 percent of Lithuanians think that persons suffering from mental illnesses are dangerous. Meantime statistics shows that such people have committed only 4 percent of all crimes and less than 1 percent of all violent crimes in Lithuania.

In accordance with Karilė Levickaitė, the director of *Global Initiative on Psychiatry*, the events of last week impede efforts of non-governmental organization to educate tolerant society. "Similar phenomena condemn people with mental health disorders for exclusion; force them to hide their disability even deeper.

12. Neringa Jurčiukonytė, 2008. Murders challenge professionalism of the law enforcement and the media. The article was published on the portal lrytas.lt.

In Lithuania, it should be currently discussed about responsibility of the whole society. Particularly important role in these processes falls also on the media and law enforcement providing information to the former", - she emphasizes.

Some media shed light to the tragic events providing wider opinion of professionals and not highlighting dangerousness of persons with mental health problems. However, majority of media linked the crime in Panevėžys with the mental illness not having any exact facts yet, and unreasonably escalated and emphasized mental health condition of the person having committed the crime.

According to L. Levickaitė, representatives of both law enforcement and media can choose. "These meaningful members of our society can contribute to education of tolerant society or to separate it again. Education of tolerant society depends on possessed knowledge and realization of impact of the media on social processes. Everybody wants to live in a safe, civic and tolerant society. However, it must not be forgotten that we ourselves – everybody of us is responsible for the process of development of such society".

Do not finish the article with just criticism. Your goal is to encourage journalists that in future, when shedding the light to the events of similar nature, they would think about consequences of used words.

2.2.6 Letters to the editorial office

Socially vulnerable groups are often portrayed in the media with reinforcement of entrenched-in-the-society stereotypes and negative prejudice. To change this situation, it is particularly important that organizations representing these groups would not conceal such cases and would express their opinion. One of such possibilities is writing letters to the editorial office.

News portals, newspapers and magazines often have a section of opinions or comments, wherein letters of readers, written to response of certain published articles, are published.

Even though there is no such section and your letter would not be published, its writing can have positive impact on future publications. Sometimes journalists are so much used to emphasizing stereotypes existing about some social group that they do not think there could be also different way of writing or making reportage.

When writing such letter, attention could be paid at certain important facts that are not mentioned in the published article, to correct a mistake or understanding wrongly reflected in the article. To highlight the problem frequently happening in the media that, when introducing an issue related to a certain social

group, no one its representative is interviewed. It is possible to offer in the letter different approach to the problem analysed in the article.

It is important not to attack an editor or a journalist, to use polite and censorial writing language as your goal is to make them colleagues but not enemies.

Letters to editors should be as short as possible; any published article or show should be responded by such letters as soon as possible.

The previously provided commentary can be a perfect example of the letter to editorial office. According to research, there is particularly high need and meaning of the letters which attract attention of the editorial office to unethical portrayal of vulnerable groups. This need was showed by research, which was carried out by *Media 4 Change*, regarding editors' attitudes. The research revealed that editors memorise letters of similar nature and tend to follow advises provided by experts. Such letters are especially valued if they include remarks and advises based on constructive and professional, expert-based information. When providing such remarks and advises, always have in mind specificity of the journalist work and urgency. Estrangement from reality and requirements, which do not regard specificity of the journalist work and are unreasonable, can lead to negative response of the editorial office.

2.2.7 Interview: what is necessary to know?

If your organization managed to pay media's attention at itself, there is quite big possibility that some time their representatives will contact you regarding interview. In that case, remember that regardless the type of the media and regardless the person interviewing you, the key rule is to control always the situation.

Prior giving interview, make decision what you want to achieve by it. Remember that you will be differently preparing for radio, TV or press interview; the main thing is to be prepared.

THE KEY RULES OF INTERVIEW:

- When communicating with the media, you need to be self-confident. Do not be shy and be decisive.
- Have in mind that some journalists set traps. They would like you lost self-control or contradict to yourself. Be prudent and stay calm.
- The golden rule of interview is to say the truth. It is much more preferable to answer the question by "no" or "do not know" but not to lie.

When making arrangements regarding interview with a journalist or radio / TV show producer, a few things should be found out:

- When the interview takes place? Find out its exact date and time.
- Where will the interview take place? If you do not know the location, find out precisely how to come there, if you need a permit, etc.
- What is the name and surname of the interviewer? If you do not know him, listen to his shows or read his articles. It is particularly important to get acquainted with the show format and the style of the journalist to be interviewing you.
- Find out what is expected from you? Why particularly you were chosen for the interview?
- Will be the interview live broadcasted or recorded? If it is recorded, when the show is broadcasted?
- Will you be interviewed alone or will you participate in the discussion together with other conversers? How many of them there will be? Who they are? What is the format of the show? How much every person has to speak?
- How long will be the interview?

- What is the exact subject of the interview?
- Provide accurately your name and surname, function and specify how your organization should be introduced during the show.

If there are no answers to the questions above or answers make you feel inconveniently, consider if it is worth to take part in this show / to give interview. If a journalist or a show host looks biased, if the questions are confronting, if producers avoid answering your questions or if you do not like culture of the show, consider if it is worth participating in that show. Attention of the media is not always useful and positive thing.

If it is important for you how you will be introduced, what words the journalist or the show host should avoid, when describing your social group to be represented by you (for example, in any way not to use the words "gypsy", "negro" as it sometimes still happens on media of Lithuania), inform the journalist and / or producer on it in advance.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW?

Write down an ideal interview. When talking with journalists, it is important not only answer questions but also to show initiative. Prior meeting the journalist, decide what you want to say. Divide this

message into three points. They will be your support points to which you can return constantly when being interviewed.

Make rehearsal with colleagues. If you have possibility, ask them to play a show host and / or an opponent. However, never learn answers by heart as they will sound unnaturally. Have in mind three main thoughts that you want to transmit. Do not use slang and use statistics as little as possible. Speak with enthusiasm and energy.

Prepare for the worst. Try to foresee questions which will be analysed during the show and prepare suitable arguments. Think necessarily what the worst questions could be and how you could answer them.

Decide for whom you speak. Ask yourself who will listen to you, see you or read your thoughts? What do you want the audience heard? How do you want to change the audience's attitude? Do you want to receive any response from the audience?

DURING INTERVIEW / SHOW

Appearance is very important, therefore, come for the interview dressed conservatively, comfortably and orderly. You can even bring intended-to-deliver 3 points, which would be written on 1 paper sheet. You can look at it during break, however, in no case read it from the paper.

During the very interview, it is the most important to convey the main and foreseen in advance thought. It is particularly important if you attend the show together with other conversers as they can direct conversation towards different than you intend direction. During the interview, do not be passive or overpolite. If your opponent dominates in the discussions, interrupt him. However, in the way if it were simple disagreement, difference of opinions but not fighting. When answering a question or an argument of the opponent, avoid preaching. No matter how confronting or provoking questions are, do not allow being put out of temper and never rise your voice.

When answering the interview questions, have in mind that you want to convince listeners / viewers but not the interviewer himself. If the interviewer wants to go away from the points you want to convey, be polite but return to the subject using the language "bridges", such as "I would like to add", "I am often asked", "it could be the truth, however...", "I think that the most important is...".

The key rule of the interview is – always say the truth and, when having mentioned something as a fact, be sure that it is the fact. If a journalist gives you a question, which you do not want to answer to, try not to avoid the answer. The more open you are the better is. However, if you feel that you really cannot answer, say so or return to the support points, which you want talk

about. If you are interviewed by the journalist of a newspaper or a magazine, suggest answering later.

If the journalist asks questions, which express critical and negative evaluation, when answering them do not repeat the very negation. Your work is to convey 3 thoughts. Correct quickly wrong information or evaluation and continue conveyance of your main points. Stay positive. If it is strong criticism, reply that you are happy to be asked about it: "Many people have such wrong opinion; however, the truth is that..."

50

During radio / TV show, your answers have to be short. During press interview, you may speak slightly more, however, always observe the journalist's reaction. Use simple and clear language. Do not use professional slang or abbreviations to be understandable only by you and people concerned. Use lively language, scenic illustrations (instead of quoting exact statistics, use imaginative comparison) and be enthusiastic. If you need to use special terms, professional slang, necessarily define in the simplest way.

Do not get scared in case of longer silence. You are not bound to fill

No matter what difficult interview was, always end it with a smile.

it in. It is an interviewer's responsibility. During slightly confronting interview, silence is often used a technique by which the converser is being provoked to talk.

Always presume that the microphone is switched on. Never think that interview is over until you are in safe distance from the interviewer. Conversers often say something that is the reason to regret later on. Never say anything what you do not want to read, hear on radio or watch on TV.

Never leave the interview if it has already started.

Request for urgent interview. Sometimes journalists could call you asking for some quotation, response to a certain event or somebody's speech. It is often good opportunity for your organization to become a part of important news. The call could encounter you unexpectedly, however, if you receive a few minutes to prepare, you can do it quite well.

If you got such a call, find out the name, surname and phone number of the journalist and ask if you may call him back after a few minutes. Control yourself. Think up 3 thoughts that you wish to convey. Check facts and resources. Practice yourself. Make urgent investigation about the journalist, the media to be represented by him, their audience. And then call him back as soon as possible.

Important. Never forget to call back as otherwise you may get into the "blacklist" of the journalist.

Giving interview can be learnt up through practice, therefore, after each interview, read, listen or watch it over and learn from your mistakes.

After interview. Good relations with the media mean that you are bound to make professional relations with persons who are meaningful for your organization's mission. If you attended any TV or radio show, or good article about your organization appeared in the newspaper or magazine, write necessarily gratitude letter to the journalist or producer.

If it seems to you that the subject is not suitably provided, inform about it producers of the show or the author of the article. However, argument your dissatisfaction reasonably and avoid emotions. If you consider that the journalist overstepped limits of professionalism and violated ethics of the journalist, do not conceal it and apply to responsible authorities.

2.2.8 Newsletter

The newsletter is one of the cheapest and the most effective means for public communication. It is good way to inform your community's members, consumers of your provided servic-

es, other organizations engaged in similar activities, representatives of society, and media on activity of your organization, its achievements, and various events. Solution of technical issues related to the newsletter's design and sending should be helped by a company supporting your webpage. (A few links to the newsletter templates: <http://mailchimp.com/>; <http://www.mailerlite.it/>)

WHAT ARE THE MAIN RULES FOR SUCCESSFUL WRITING OF THE NEWSLETTER?

- The newsletter has to be written and sent regularly but not too often.
- Its regularity has to depend on your anticipated needs of the audience; however, the newsletter should be sent not more frequently than once per week and at least once per month. If you send it too frequently, you might get boring. If you send it so seldom that subscribers cannot remember what is your organization's activity, your newsletter will appear at the end of the Reading List.
- On the other hand, if you do not have what to say, better to wait for more interesting news. Always have in mind that nobody wants to read advertising texts, thus, send only such information that is really relevant and interesting to subscribers of your newsletter.
- Consider title of the newsletter.

51

Figure 4

DO NOT PLACE ALL MESSAGE OR ARTICLE IN THE NEWSLETTER. PROVIDE ONLY ONE OR TWO PARAGRAPHS AT THE MOST, FROM WHICH THE READER WILL DECIDE, IF HE WANTS TO READ FURTHER.

PAY ATTENTION, THAT THIS IS SHORTENED SAMPLE. USUALLY IT CONSISTS OF 3-4 NEWS.

media4change.co

Media4change is a powerful international movement for highest standards in journalism. We believe that media is a powerful weapon to protect the public interest. At the same time, we strive to create the society with no forgotten people.

EVERYTHING IS CONVENIENT EXCEPT THE TRUTH!

We can manage our finances by a few strokes through the phone screen, having left at home holy papers with passwords, pseudonyms and other confidential information. However, when looking for convenience, we give over our confidential information existing in the phone by one button-click, installing mobile banking app. Who needs our data and what information we transfer to the bank?

[Read the investigation here](#)

National Institute of Social Integration
Gedimino pr. 21,
01103 Vilnius, Lithuania
+370 65263085

We apologize if the newsletter reached you accidentally. You may refuse it.

[Refuse](#)

www.zmogui.lt
www.media4change.co

AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER PROVIDE INFORMATION ON YOUR OWN ORGANIZATION. ADD NECESSARILY YOUR LOGO

IF HE WANTS, HAVING CLICKED "MORE", HE WILL BE DIRECTED TO THE WEBSITE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

USE ANY OCCASION TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF YOUR FOLLOWERS, THUS, INDICATE NECESSARILY HOW YOU CAN BE FOUND ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA

AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER, AVAILABILITY TO REFUSE IT SHOULD BE PROVIDED

- It should be such attractive that encouraged the reader to read the newsletter at once but not to postpone for later. It may happen that, having postponed for later, the reader will never read your sent information. However, never choose a deceptive title – if readers of the newsletter feel cheated, it may happen that they will stop subscribing it.
- Save subscribers' time.
- Always have in mind that your readers are busy people, therefore, do not send such newsletters which would be stuffed with much information. If you have prepared many articles, better keep some of them for a later newsletter.
- Remember that you do not write to professionals, thus, do not use slang.
- If you include any difficult term, necessarily explain it. Use language for writing as simple as possible.
- Avoid sending the newsletter on Friday afternoon and during weekends. It is preferable to do it on Tuesday and Wednesday.

It is never late to improve the newsletter. You can learn how to write it, having subscribed the newsletter from organization engaged in similar activity.¹³

2.2.9 Social media

In accordance with researches, even 22 percent of the time spent online is related to social media.¹⁴ Therefore, no organization, which has intentions to be visible and to influence public discourse, can ignore it.

Social media comprises of virtual communities or networks wherein any individual can disseminate, share or exchange his/her information and ideas. Social networks, forums, blogs, microblogs (for example, Twitter), wikis (for example, Wikipedia), etc. are considered as social media channels.

HOW TO START?

Make decision what you seek when using social media, and according to it choose appropriate social networking sites. For example, LinkedIn is the largest professional network wherein professionals of various areas interact with each other, make new business contacts and share new information. Therefore, it is preferable when searching for new employees. However, if your goal is to increase public awareness of your organization, you must create your account on social networks Facebook and Twitter. Through making a sufficient-size community of followers on these networks, flows to your website would particularly increase.

¹³ About newsletters:

<http://knowhownonprofit.org/campaigns/communications/effective-communications-1/enewslettertips>
<http://www.writingthatsells.com/class.html>

¹⁴ Anne Taylor. „Social Media as a Tool for Inclusion“. 2011.

[http://www.homelesshub.ca/ResourceFiles/Taylor_Social%20Media_feb2011%20\(1\)_1_2.pdf](http://www.homelesshub.ca/ResourceFiles/Taylor_Social%20Media_feb2011%20(1)_1_2.pdf)

FIGURE 5. FOR EXAMPLE:



INSTEAD OF PUBLICATION OF JUST A LINK TO THE ARTICLE, TRY TO ATTRACT ATTENTION: "DO NOT MISS GREAT OPPORTUNITY: [VILNIUS UNIVERSITY INVITES YOU TO FREE HEBREW LANGUAGE COURSES](#)"

54

Foresee time to be used. Regardless any type of the chosen webpage, make sure you can spend particular time for it. Webpages of social media can be beneficial in making dialogue between your audience and you; therefore, before starting ensure your active participation in it.

If you, as an organization, have decided to use social media, there are a few tips below how to do it successfully (attention is focused on two social networks *Facebook* and *Twitter*, which are the most popular worldwide):

The first and the most important rule is necessity "to listen". It means that you must observe what is

happening online. What and how do organizations, famous social leaders and politicians, which are engaged in similar activity, say? Subscribe their news, follow their accounts on social networking sites and respond to their statements. It is also important to use aforementioned webpages, i.e. *Icerocket* <http://www.icerocket.com/>; *Social Mention* <http://www.socialmention.com/>; *Topsy* <http://topsy.com/>. Through entering particular keywords, you can check what is being discussed on your relevant topic on social media.

Be active: place regularly information on your accounts. However, do not publish anything just for the sake of publishing. You have

FIGURE 6. EXAMPLES OF PROMOTING THE DISCUSSION IN THE SOCIAL NETWORKS



some mission, seek some goals which are important for the whole society; thus, be important. Think of issues that are relevant and interesting to your followers. However, in no case be only publisher of links to another webpages. Publish various-type information and provide it in various formats: publish articles, pictures, caricatures, quotations of famous people, etc.

If you place a link to an article, which is, according to your opinion, relevant to your organization, on the social network *Facebook*, choose necessarily any important quotation or write a short comment on it. Do not leave that article just to "hang".

Always respond to all questions and comments provided by your followers. Social media helps to establish connections between your followers and you; therefore, do not ignore them in any way as you can lose them. Also, encourage them to be as active as possible. Give questions to them; invite them to discuss, to express their opinion, to participate in surveys, etc. Their involvement will not only inform you about relevancy of your being implemented activity but also help to attract new followers.

Illustrate your messages on social networking sites as much as possible and as often as possible: most often the image affects and attracts better

55

than the text. Use pictures, links to footage.

Coordinate. If your organization has accounts on the social networks, necessarily make links to them on the website of your organization. Also, necessarily coordinate information being published on Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites.

Never under-evaluate power of celebrities. If you are carrying out any particular campaign, are looking for sponsors, want to attract people to some event, contact a famous person, who is active on the social networking, and convince him in the importance of activity of your organization. If he mentions your organization on his own account, it will undoubtedly contribute to popularity of your organization and its goals.

Publish responsibly. Remember: any information, whatsoever, to be posted on your social network account will influence image of your organization. Therefore, consider every message to be posted and its potential impact.

Be patient. Just having started to use social networking you will not attract thousands of followers. Social capital must be accumulated, so start from members of your organization – all of them are to become followers of the account of your organization. Through your activeness, responding to various discussions, news and activity of

other organizations, you will gradually extend your community.

Do not forget that all public communication means are interrelated and facilitate you to seek common goals: traditional media facilitates you to increase awareness of your organization, and popularity on the social media can attract attention of journalists to your organization.

Prior starting implementation of the campaign, by which you seek to influence public discourse, to solve a social problem, to amend a law, etc., make sure that you have accumulated a critical mass of followers.

SYMBOL „#“ AND ITS USE

When reading messages on such social networks like Twitter or Facebook, you saw undoubtedly and used actively the symbol „#“ (so called hashtag). The symbol „#“, which is placed prior particular word or group of words written without spaces, creates automatically a keyword. This keyword links records published on the same topic by different users and groups on various social networks.

Even though this function provided by social networks is still little used in Lithuania, this availability should not be ignored as all international fashions, even being delayed, finally reach us as well.

What is benefit of this function? When having clicked on the key-

word, you can see all records on that topic. You can thus get aware of the existing situation and contribute to the discussion which is common on various social networks.

On the other hand, after filtering information with the use of this keyword, you can reduce the audience and reach particularly those persons or organizations which are interested in information encoded by the symbol „#“.

How is the symbol „#“ used?

On the social networking sites, place the symbol „#“ prior a word or a group of words written without spaces and each word with the first capital letter. For example, #SocialiaiPazeidziamosGrupės; #ZmogausTeises, #NeapykantosKalbaiNe, etc. Keywords have to be short, clear and easily memorized.

This function is important if you want to involve in or start a particular discussion; also, it is irreplaceable for event communication. If you initiate a discussion or organize an event, create a keyword in advance and publish it.

- You must check necessarily if the created and intended to be used keyword does not exist and has not been used yet. Also, check if it has not acquired any other meaning. It can be done through Twitter Search, Hash-tags.org or Tegalus.

- After making sure that the keyword has not been used or that it is suitable for a goal to be pursued, start using it. At the beginning, it is important to describe the context of your keyword, i.e. to describe what it means. Always consider what benefit of this keyword is to your audience.
- If your keyword does not exist yet, add it and its description to Tegalus, the storage of keywords marked with „#“.
- Set an alert notification to receive an e-mail message every time when somebody uses your mark. One of such means is Twilert.
- Respond.

2.3 MANAGEMENT OF CRISIS SITUATIONS

Every organization faces crises. The crisis can be described as such situation when the very existence of the organization or at least its welfare is hanging in the balance. Crisis situation can either severely weaken the organization or destroy it completely, or make it stronger.

Crisis can be provoked by anybody, including improper behaviour of the employee or attorney, publicity of mistakes of the organization, dissatisfaction of people having encountered the organization, etc.

Nowadays, whereas most media have online news portals, information spreads particularly fast. To manage a problem occurred during crisis situation and to minimize its impact on organization, it is necessary to know basics of management of crisis situation. The very goal of management is to show that, regardless the occurred fact, the organization is functioning normally, is controlling crisis consequences and is recovering public support.

HOW TO PREVENT CRISIS SITUATIONS?

Crisis situations can be prevented by suitable preparation for them. Identification of problems and weakest points of the organization can serve when facing crisis situations. After identification of the weak points of the organization in advance and with knowledge about reasons causing crisis, some resources can be allocated to overcome it and to encounter only small internal troubles instead of public scandal.

Even though nature of crisis situation depends on the organization, most often the following crises are being faced:

- External criticism
- Physical troubles (fires, thefts)
- Financial crises
- Inappropriate formation of the organization image.

Issues threatening to the organization's image can soon become crisis, in particular when the "bad" news is noticed by media. Usually, non-governmental or non-profit organizations face at least one of the following problems: confrontation, unforeseen cases, crimes, tragedies, evaluation as the worst, the slowest, etc. If at least a few of these unforeseen cases have happened in some situation, a published story can be very unpleasant and highly damage image of the organization.

In the event of crisis, it is particularly important to make aware all employees or members of the existing situation and taken situation management. It is obligatory as different reports appearing from the same organization can worsen the situation.

Employees can become good lawyers and representatives of their own enterprise and to manage undesirable attention of media. The communication team should have foreseen in its strategy the standard messages, which would be used in an unfavourable situation by employees for crisis management. They should be constantly updated and the employees should be made aware of news and the organization's position. When informing persons functioning in the organization about the situation, it is particularly important to emphasize that only authorized members of the team may communicate with and be interviewed by media.

The communication plan for management of crisis situations should consist of the following:

- Clearly defined position of the organization;
- Key messages for instant responding;
- Communication channels and minutes;
- Foreseen spokesman.

The most important is to introduce suitably an own message to be sent, to act quickly and to provide all necessary information to the spokesman. In the best-case scenario, two persons should talk with media. It is also possible that the spokesman was a person from society, who is constantly working with the organization or using its service. Such spokesmen are particularly beneficial if services of the organization are being questioned; they are directly involved in the organization, thus, can deny any fears related to functioning of the organization or its services.

COMMUNICATION DURING CRISIS SHOULD BE RELATED TO SEVERAL ASPECTS:

Self-identification. If there is dissatisfaction with the organization's activity, the first thing you should do is self-identification with the person and acknowledge that you understand why public dissatisfaction can occur.

Context. The situation should be described with insertion of neces-

sary context. For example, "Due to financial instability prevailing in the market, we, as well as majority of organizations, must limit the scope of our services to be provided".

Activity. Specify what measures you will undertake to solve the problem.

Transparency. Be open and sincere. If you are not sincere, it can still worsen the situation. Journalists and readers can get to feel very quickly your insincerity; therefore, to prevent worsening of the situation by incorrect information it is preferable not to lie from the beginning. Mistakes can happen to everybody; thus, the first strategy would be to acknowledge existing fault and clearly indicate reasons why it has occurred.

THE FOLLOWING THREE FACTORS HAVE THE MAJOR MEANING IN THE SITUATION MANAGEMENT:

Speed. Saying "speed kills" has particularly significant role during crisis situations. By the way, in this case high speed helps manage the situation much better and slow speed worsens the situation. If the organization responds to events, it is preferable to do it until the story is not known to media networks yet and to have answers prepared and explain the situation as soon as it is inquired for.

Comment of the spokesman. When commenting the situation, the spokesman should regard three issues, which are as follows:

- **Length of the comment.** It should be not long – not more than three four sentences.
- **Exactness.** To speak only essential things concerned the situation to be discussed.
- **Unambiguous.** Sentences which could be interpreted in several ways should be avoided. It will help to prevent further misunderstanding.

Response to phone calls of journalists. Saying “No comments” or not calling back at agreed time can mean still deeper crisis than it was before. There is nothing worse than a line in the article with the name of the organization, like: “Refused to comment”. However, too much speaking should be avoided as well. That is particularly important when the crisis overtakes unexpectedly and the organization does not have any prepared formal position on that issue. In that case, the journalist should be asked whom he has already spoken with and what information he has got. The journalist could be suggested calling back later; this would give some time to discuss on the situation with colleagues and to prepare for suitable publicity of the situation.¹⁵

There is an example of management of crisis situation below. It is worth to note that it is not a typical case of crisis situation man-

agement. The crisis (termination of funding) was caused not by consequences directly depending on the institution. In this event, in the face of clients’ dissatisfaction the organization undertook a brave crisis management plan and started counterattack. In other words, it was decided to organize a theatrical protest and in that way to attract attention of media and decision-makers.

EXAMPLE OF THE CRISIS COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT, EXTRACT FROM THE PRESS RELEASE ¹⁶

PROTEST “STRAITJACKETS OF GOVERNMENT – FOR SAVING AND HUMAN RIGHTS?” TO BE HELD TOMORROW

On 9th July from 12:45 PM, the first part of the protest “Straitjackets of government – for saving and human rights?” will begin in Europa Square. This piquet is purposed to attract attention to thriving lawlessness of officials of the Social Issues Department of Vilnius City Municipality under shelter of crisis at the expense of not only people with disability but also whole society. It is expected that the protest “Straitjackets of government – for saving and human rights?” will promote speaking other organizations facing similar behaviour of Vilnius City Municipality.

Describe concisely the essence of the problem. It should answer the

question why the event was needed to be organized. A tip on the theatrical event is given in the very first sentence. Pay attention that, for impression purposes, aggressive style is used in the article. Such decision was made after suitable preparation of organizers: after having invoked service users, analysed research of cost effectiveness and having invoked later these data for reasoning.

In accordance with Rūta Lukošaitytė, the director of the Public Institution Vilnius Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre (thereinafter – VPSR Centre) organizing the protest, it must be emphasized that lawlessness of officials is being currently directed against the most vulnerable residents of Vilnius city. These persons are not capable to fight for their rights to receive quality services; possibility to participate in public life is being disrupted for them. “Modern services for people with disabilities, which area being destroyed under shelter of crisis, not only cover their costs but also save money for tax payers”, emphasizes R. Lukošaitytė.

With the use of representing comment of the decision-maker, the organizer widely describes reasons for the event and their meaning in a wider context.

A theatrical spectacle, which will be performed during the piquet, will reflect behaviour of Vilnius City Municipality and consequences of

such behaviour. Lined up protesters wearing straitjackets will demonstrate hopeless state of people with disabilities.

By this paragraph, you are drawing up concisely and intriguingly a view of the event. In other words, you are making a tip that this event is relevant for both photo and video journalists.

There in after scientific reasoning of actions follows using for it reasoned and understandable language. It is expectable that this topic will be enlightened by journalists who are not professionals in your area. Thus, they need essential based-on-facts information, which they could base on when making questions to decision-makers. You must guess what counterarguments of decision-makers or other sides could be. Do not let them get away, pre-empt and provide organizers of public information with information which could prepare them for discussion. Moreover, by doing it you will demonstrate your own expert level, and it will contribute to formation of your positive image and positioning as reliable source.

HUMAN AND COST-EFFECTIVE SERVICES TO BE TERMINATED IN VILNIUS CITY

Vilnius City Municipality, under the decision of the Council of 29-12-2004, has the contractual obligation as a shareholder to fund implementation of Psychosocial Re-

15. Sanela Tunović-Becirović, Mehru Aygul, Ayca Bulut-Bican, Aida Fazlić. Media Relations for Civil Society Organizations. 2013 http://www.tacso.org/doc/doc_manual6.pdf

16. Neringa Jurčukonytė. „Taupymui ir žmogaus teisėms – valdžios tramdomieji?“. Pranešimas spaudai. 2009.

habilitation Service Program. It was re-approved by Health and Social Issues Committees at the beginning of 2009. However, management of Social Issues Department impedes funding of psychosocial rehabilitation services, and the funding foreseen for the year 2009 has not reached VPSR Centre.

According to R. Lukošaitytė, managers of Social Issues Department of Vilnius City Municipality neglect political decisions of Vilnius City Council and committees, arbitrary and without any explanation ruin modern services to be provided for people with disabilities. "In that way, treatment conditions for people with disabilities and their rights to integrate to society become limited", R. Lukošaitytė said. With absence of such specialized services for people with disabilities, only long-term treatment at hospitals or life boarding until the end of life remains for them.

Self-willed actions of officials fall on shoulders of tax payers with even greater burden. Treatment at hospital or boarding of a person costs huge money for tax payers. Hospitalization of one person at psychiatric hospital costs 5000 to tax payers. Rehabilitation is an alternative which returns a person to full life and costs 3-5 times less in comparison with treatment at hospital. Saved money exceeds 3 times the annual budget of the service.

The director of VPSR Centre applied 7 times in writing to responsible officials of Vilnius City Municipality regarding occurred situation and non-execution of contractual obligations of the Municipality; signatures of persons receiving services were collected and presented to the Mayor. No answer to any of the letters has been provided to the VPSR Centre so far. Also, no information about made decisions or to

be planned considerations of the issue has been received.

VPSR Centre has already applied to controllers of the Seimas regarding non-receipt of responses from Vilnius Municipality. Since this week, society can publicly express its opinion regarding continuity of funding of psychosocial rehabilitation in the petition <http://www.peticija.lt/visos/2673>.

<...>

VILNIUS PSYCHOSOCIAL REHABILITATION CENTRE

VPSR Centre, which was established in 2001, carries out its activity being as **an example in the area of rehabilitation and social integration of people with psychic disabilities** in Lithuania and Eastern Europe. Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services Program provides comprehensive support,

including social, psychological and psychiatric ones, to people with psychic disabilities. Efficient service of case management and being implemented relapse prevention **reduces the number of cases of psychotic relapse and rehospitalisation, and getting at the boarding hospitals.** Psychological and social burden to kin is being reduced and their life quality is being improved.

For more information about the protest, please contact **R. Lukošaitytė** by the phone number 12345678.

Do not forget to introduce shortly your organization and its added value, what it distinguishes by, what its expert level is, and provide contacts of a person who will represent you in discussions with media. Note the person to be always prepared to answer the phone and comment the event in the live broadcast.

3.

APPENDIX. FOR SUCCESSFUL START

If you decided to cooperate with media and to develop successfully these relations, first of all you have to answer positively the following two questions:

64

- 1) Is there any person (persons) in your organization who is / will be responsible for cooperation with media?
- 2) Have you prepared the main working tool – the list of journalists?

Remember: if you organize an event or want to inform society on a particular issue:

- a) **make a call** to the editorial office of the chosen media and try “to sell” your story;
or use the most common way and
- b) prepare and distribute **a press release**.

Prior sending the press release, read it carefully once again. Is the information arranged following the inverted pyramid principle? Pay attention one more time to the heading: does it attract attention?

If you organize **a press conference**, answer the following questions:

- a) are the chosen date and time suitable?
- b) is the chosen place suitable?
- c) have you informed conference participants what you expect from them?
- d) do you have a conference moderator?
- e) have you distributed an invitation to attend the press conference?
- f) have you made a call to the invited journalists and reminded them about the conference a few days in advance?
- e) have you prepared handouts to journalists?

After end of the conference, it is necessary to distribute the press release about just held event.

If you are invited for **interview**, always remember that the key rule is **to be prepared**.

To increase public visibility of the organization, it is necessary to maintain cooperation not only with media but also with wide society, therefore, the following is important:

- a) to send **newsletters** regularly;
- b) to maintain intensively cooperation with sponsors and any persons interested in the organization's activity via **social media**.

This public communication manual is a result of a project „The Address of Human Rights – Journalism“. It is directed towards the leaders and members of civic organisations and groups working in the broad field of human rights. The authors hope that this manual will provide activists with useful tools on how to effectively take part in public discussions and how to influence the public discourse. Such topics as how to be visible and heard, or how to maintain authority and thrustfulness, also inquiries into techniques of how to challenge harmful assumptions and myths about vulnerable social groups are being discussed in this publication.

www.media4change.co

media4change.co

“Media 4 Change” is a powerful international movement for highest standards in journalism. We believe that media is a powerful weapon to protect the public interest. At the same time, we strive to create the society with no forgotten people. The movement was initiated by the project “Address of Human Rights — Journalism“. This is the official name of “Media 4 Change” activities.



THIS PROJECT IS CO-FUNDED
BY THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS
AND CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

