media
monitoring project

Children: Dying to make the news

EMPOWERING children &media

The Media Monitoring Project
in partnership with

Save the Children
Sweden

unicef

Contents

1 Introduction

The overall aim and objective of *Empowering Children and Media* project is to analyse the representation of children and children's rights in the South African news media. This serves as a baseline study that will enable the development of policies and strategies to address strengths and weaknesses in the coverage of children, as well as further the development of a human rights culture in the media, through training and advocacy initiatives.

Studies investigating the representation of children and children's rights in the news media are few and far between. Previous research by the Media Monitoring Project (MMP) shows that children tend to be seriously under-represented or poorly represented and, in extreme cases, may have their basic human rights violated by the media. A systematic investigation was thus necessary to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the way in which children are represented in the media and to develop strategies and policies to deal with these appropriately.

The representation of children presents some difficult ethical and human rights questions for journalists and media workers. It is essential, therefore, if strategies and polices are to be developed, that a clear picture is painted as to how children are currently represented in the media.

This report presents the results and findings of the *Empowering Children & Media* project, in which the MMP monitored the representation of children in the news media over a three-month period in 2003. It also aims to form part of a larger project to improve the representation of children in the media, by providing a base from which further research can be conducted and by providing material from which strategies can be developed and implemented in media settings to be used by journalists and media workers.

The Media Monitoring Project (MMP) is a non-governmental organisation that conducts research into the media, within a framework that upholds and respects human rights. The MMP was established in 1993 and has extensive monitoring experience, working across South Africa, the Southern African region and internationally. The MMP has researched various social and political issues, including the media's representation of local and national elections, race, gender, HIV/Aids, and children.

The MMP has worked with a diversity of partners, including the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Gender Equality, the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, the Gender Advocacy Project, the Media Institute of Southern Africa, the South African National Editors Forum, the Perinatal

HIV/Aids Research Unit, Witwatersrand University Graduate School of Journalism, the Children's Institute, and Clacherty and Associates.

The MMP further contributes to the development of media-related public policy through regular submissions to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications and other statutory bodies. The MMP is also regularly sourced in the media for expert opinion and analysis. Lastly, the MMP works with training institutions, including the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, to enhance the capacity of journalism, editors and media practitioners.

1.1   Project Overview

The Empowering Children & Media project began in 2003 and involved various processes. As children formed the focus, a vital aspect of the project was ensuring the participation of children at every level. The project was designed in such a way that children themselves could participate in the development of the project methodology, take part in monitoring the media, contribute to the findings of the project and also benefit from their participation by learning critical media literacy skills. Participatory workshops with children were held in three provinces in South Africa.

The monitoring period ran from March to May 2003. Approximately 22 000 news items were monitored, analysed and entered into a database, making the database one of the largest of this kind in South Africa. In addition to the monitoring conducted by adults, groups of children conducted a two-week monitoring project of their own, based on the methodology used by the adults. A separate database was designed for the data collected from the children's monitoring project. Much of what was monitored by the children was confirmed by the adults' monitoring and vice versa. This was an important aspect of the project as it not only ensured children's participation in the project but it also provided them valuable media literacy skills.

A report detailing the children's participatory workshops, the monitoring process and the results of the children's monitoring is also available from the MMP.

To ensure the project will positively impact on the ways in which children are represented in the media, specialised training for journalists and media practitioners will be held in conjunction with the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism. The aim of the seminars is to create awareness and highlight problems in relation to the manner in which children are represented in the media as well as to provide strategies to improve the representation of children. This forms part of a broader advocacy strategy devised by the MMP to transform reporting and editorial practices regarding children.

A stakeholders meeting was held in March 2004 where the results of the *Empowering Children & Media* project were presented to various civil society groups, as well as journalists and editors. The children also participated in this process and presented the findings of their own monitoring, answered questions and provided suggestions for the improvement of the representation of children in the media. One of the aims of the meeting was to develop strategies in conjunction with the stakeholders on how to improve the overall representation of children and children's rights in the media. Many of the media representatives committed to training processes that would address the representation of children in the news media.

1.2 Funders and partners

The aims and objectives of this project were achieved together with the child participants and various partners:

- Save the Children Sweden;
- UNICEF;
- Clacherty and Associates; and
- Institute for the Advancement of Journalism.

2   Theoretical framework and assumptions

The MMP draws on contemporary media theory, including both qualitative and quantitative methods and employs discourse and close content analyses. The organisation's extensive media monitoring experience and a thorough literature review have informed the development of the theoretical framework applied to this project. In addition, the MMP operates within a framework of human rights and advocates for balanced, fair, accurate and informative media coverage, as well as the promotion of a culture of human rights.

The MMP operates under an assumption that the discourse of news is generally negative, where bad news makes good news (or is regarded as newsworthy). This accounts for the overwhelming focus on negative news stories such as crime, disasters and accidents. The media also tends to emphasise unusual or extraordinary events and incidents. The MMP believes that the media, by virtue of its power and influence, has an ability to direct and attract attention to societal problems and issues, such as children and children's rights.

The MMP supports the position that it is incumbent upon the media to inform and educate the public in a manner that is fair, accurate and balanced, while also demonstrating due sensitivity and caution to the people they report on, ensuring their rights to dignity and privacy. Moreover, the MMP supports the various codes of conduct and guidelines in place created to attain and maintain a culture of respect for children's rights and human rights.

Children are often associated with innocence, purity and vulnerability but may also be vulnerable to poor treatment and human rights violations. Such events are newsworthy and should be covered by the media, yet this coverage has a potential to expose child victims to secondary trauma. Issues affecting and involving children do need to be reported and the MMP encourages the media to continue doing so. However, every effort must be made to ensure that the best interests of the child are not compromised.

2.1   Problems to be addressed by the project

Previous research by the MMP has revealed that children are often only represented as victims in the media and that their voices or opinions on issues affecting them go unheard. In addition, children are often represented in a manner that negatively impacts on their rights to dignity and privacy.

This is particularly obvious in child abuse cases where child victims may undergo a secondary form of abuse when their identities and details of their experiences are reported by the press. While it is commendable that societal issues such as abuse receive prominent coverage, it is also unacceptable to reveal victims' identities and

ignoring children's rights to dignity and privacy. In light of this, it is incumbent upon the media to exercise due caution and sensitivity when reporting on children, particularly if they are engaged in criminal activities or are victims of criminal activity.

While it is also commendable that the media alerts the public about crime, it is important that this is done within a framework of human rights. Reports, particularly on child or sexual abuse, may contain graphic language intended to shock readers, rather than to communicate valuable information. These practices desensitise the public and ignore the broader societal context of such events.

An education campaign of general and specific human rights in the media is an ongoing process requiring the training of journalists as well as changing newsroom cultures about what and how various issues are covered. This process should see a change in the public's overall level of awareness of human rights issues.

2.2   Guidelines and policies

Children under the age of 18 years are among the most vulnerable members of society and are therefore afforded special protection by the law. The Constitution and its Bill of Rights, as well as a body of policy and law such as the Child Care Act (74 of 1983), the Criminal Procedures Act (51 of 1977), and the South African Children's Rights Charter ensure that the rights of minor children are protected. More recently, the Office of the Presidency and the Office on the Status of the Child also released a set of guidelines addressing the media's representation of children.

Section 28(2) of the Constitution states that "the child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child".   The Child Care Act stipulates:
- No person shall publish information relating to children's court proceedings;
- The identity of the child involved shall not be revealed;
- Publicity should serve the best interests of the child; and
- Information provided must be approved by the minister or commissioner.
- The Criminal Procedure Act section 154 (3) stipulates "No person shall publish in any manner whatever information which reveals or may reveal the identity of the accused under the age of 18 years or of a witness at criminal proceedings who is under the age of 18 years."

Globally, there are a number of governance institutions affiliated to the United Nations that have developed binding international agreements on children's rights, the most prominent of which is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which South Africa signed in 1995. African governments are also signatories to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child. In addition, the International Federation of Journalists and UNICEF have formulated ethical guidelines that provide principles for reporting on issues involving children.

The UNCRC states that: "…state parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination…" (Article 2) and that "…the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration…" (Article 3). The Convention also provides for the rights of children to assert their own views freely (Article 12) and enshrines children's rights to freedom of expression (Article 13). Article 16 states that "…the child shall be protected from unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation…"

The UNCRC specifically sets out the responsibilities of the media, saying that "…states parties recognise the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources" (Article 17). Furthermore in article 17 (e) the Convention states that, "states parties shall encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well being." Article 40 states that "…states parties recognise the right of every child alleged as, accused of or recognised as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth…"

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child also recognised the need to take appropriate measures to promote and protect the rights and welfare of the African child. The Charter notes with concern that the situation with most African children, remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, traditional, cultural and developmental circumstances, natural disasters, armed conflict, exploitation and hunger and therefore requires special safeguards and care. Furthermore the Charter re-iterates the principles of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child and survival and development embodied in the UNCRC and expounds on various other principles important to ensuring the protection of the rights and welfare of the African child.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) also adopted a set of guidelines and principles for reporting on issues involving children. The guidelines state that journalists and the media shall strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children's affairs by providing information that is accurate and sensitive. The IFJ advocates the careful use of language and images to avoid intrusion and avoid information that may be damaging, avoiding stereotypes and sensationalism.

Despite these comprehensive guidelines and legislative tools, the media still sometimes fails in its responsibility to protect minor children. The *Empowering Children & Media* project aims to draw attention to these laws and guidelines and to encourage journalists, NGOs and other interested parties to ensure that the existing guidelines, legislation and media codes are observed.

2.3 Defining representation

Representation is the term used to describe the practice of placing different signs together to render complex abstract concepts intelligible and meaningful. This involves a process of selection and construction to create meaning. The resultant text communicates to the reader a message about the creator of the message as well as a message about those they are representing. Representations also provide an indication about the organisation of power relations in society. It is important that the issue of representing children in the media is addressed, as it is the representation that plays a significant role in constructing identities and provides an indication about where children are placed in the hierarchy of power relations in society.

2.4 Defining a human rights framework

Media reporting should be contextualised within a structure that explains the issue of human rights in relation to a story. These rights are those fundamental inalienable rights guaranteed in the South African Constitution, the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and the UNCRC. Reports should therefore contain an underlying discourse of human rights in order to foster a culture of respect for human rights. The communication of information within a rights based discourse creates greater awareness amongst the broader populace of their rights. This in turn also has the effect of empowering society at large, creating a vibrant and vigilant civil society.

For example a report on child abuse should not simply tell about the occurrence of the abuse but it should also talk about children's rights such as their right to protection, or a report on poverty should include a discourse of people's rights to provision and adequate health care.

3   Research methodology

The *Empowering Children & Media* project monitored and analysed over 22 000 items from 36 different media, including print, radio and television. From March to May 2003 every item or image that contained a reference to a child or children was monitored by the MMP, entered into a database and analysed. Furthermore, all other items and subjects were also recorded to determine the percentage of child stories relative to other stories in the media over the monitoring period.

The research methodology was specifically designed for the project and involved monitors capturing various quantitative and qualitative elements of each news report. A form and database were designed to capture various elements of the reports about children, including:

- A basic summary of the item.
- The location of the item in the bulletin or newspaper, in order to determine prominence.
- The type of report, according to the various sections of the news (editorial, business or sport, for example).
- The topic of the report, to determine the central subject of an item when children are reported.
- The issues raised by an item. While topic codes capture the central subject of an item, there are usually a number of other issues that are likely to be raised by an article. A set of issues was specifically designed for this project based on what the children in the participatory workshops identified as important, pertinent children's rights issues as determined by various children's rights organisations and additional issues identified as important through the MMP's previous monitoring experience.
- The geographical origin of the story, to monitor the representation of children in the news regionally.
- The role in which a child is represented in an article. A list of a broad range of roles was developed to determine in which roles children are most frequently represented.
- The sources in the story. Different source codes were developed for adults and children. Adult sources were captured when they were quoted either directly or indirectly in the item or where they appeared in an image with children. For adults, their professional or personal indicator was captured (e.g. mother, police, teacher) as well as their sex, to determine the type of person who speaks in stories on children and whether there is a gender bias. Children were regarded as sources whether or not they were accessed for their opinions in order to determine what percentage of children were given the opportunity to express their opinions. Child sources were thus captured when they were quoted either directly or indirectly, when they were mentioned only or where they appeared in images. For children their sex, age and race were captured, in order to assess the level of diversity in the representation of

children. Additional information about whether children were named and identified was also captured in order to determine how children were being sourced. (When monitoring for the racial representation of children, racial categories of black, white, coloured and Indian were used. These were included in the methodology because they are still used to measure racial representation and continue to apply in post-apartheid government policies.)

- The quality of a news item. In order to whether a news item was well or poorly reported, points were allocated to reports. A report was considered well reported if it was generally fair, accurate and balanced and maintained the best interests of the child.
- The overall news value of the report. The report was categorised as positive, negative or fair/neutral in relation to whether or not the news report communicated good or bad news. While it is the nature of news to generally focus on bad news events, these can be covered in ways that are not necessarily negative. When the report was neither positive nor negative it was regarded as fair/neutral. Each story was thus monitored using standardised criteria to determine the overall slant of the item.

3.1   Children's participation

The most exciting and innovative part of the project was the participation of children themselves. Groups of children engaged in a parallel monitoring project over a two-week period. This was done so that the children could express their views directly and so to see for themselves how the media represented them. A separate report focussing exclusively on the children's participation and the methodology used has also been published and is available from the MMP.

Participation workshops were held for children in three provinces: Eastern Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. These provinces were selected based on government's plan of action for development. Gauteng was selected in particular because of the concentration of media in this particular province These provided an opportunity to share perceptions of the way children are represented in the media, what they thought was important in the news and most importantly they were able to develop critical media literacy skills. In addition, the children were given the opportunity to make their own newspapers, thereby illustrating the ways in which news is determined out of choice and the perspectives of journalists and editors.

As well as provincial diversity, children from different backgrounds and diverse ages, races and sexes participated in the project. Working with children in participatory workshops requires a skilled, ethical and professional approach. For this reason Clacherty and Associates, who are experts in this field, were contracted to run these workshops.

In order to ensure that children would be able to continue applying the critical media literacy skills they had acquired during the project, they were provided with radios from

the FreePlay Foundation. As many of the participating children had limited access to resources, it was important that they were not disadvantaged and this was ensured through the selection of the solar and friction powered FreePlay radios.

As a key element of the MMP's partnerships with the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) and other media stakeholders, the MMP will, during 2004, conduct specialist journalist training to bring the diversity of children's issues into the newsrooms, address strengths and weaknesses in reporting and help ensure the participation of children in the media.

3.2 Mediums monitored

3.2.1 Print

The Star	Natal Witness
Business Day	Burger
Sowetan	Sowetan Sunday World
Daily News	Saturday Star
Eastern Province Herald	City Press
Citizen	Weekend Argus
Cape Times	Independent on Saturday
Beeld	Sunday Times
Ilanga	Sunday Independent
Mail & Guardian	Sunday Sun

3.2.2 Radio

SAFM	P4
Ukhozi	Motsweding
Lesedi	Zibonele
East Coast Radio	PMB
Radio Sonder Grense	Soweto Community Radio
Y-FM	

3.2.3 Television

SABC 1
SABC 2 (Afrikaans)
SABC 2 (Sotho)
SABC 3
e-tv

3.3   Limitations

There are some limitations to the study, as the inferences made are based on a sample from a selected time frame, March, April and May 2003. The sample period coincided with the war in Iraq and Child Protection Week. These may have resulted in a significant increase in the number of reports on or about children. It is not confirmed whether samples from other time frames would yield similar results and there is thus scope for further research.

Additionally, although the majority of the sections in the news were monitored, some sections were excluded particularly with regards to print. All news items, opinion pieces, features, editorials, images, photographs and cartoons were monitored, but letters and advertorials were excluded.

Due to the predominance of English-language media in South Africa particularly in the public sector, there was a larger selection of English mediums that were monitored. Other languages included in the monitoring process were Afrikaans (two print mediums and one television medium), Zulu (one television and one radio medium), and Xhosa (one television and one radio medium). Future research could include a broader spectrum of languages.

The development and utilisation of a standard monitoring user-guide, thorough training of monitors and regular communication with the monitors ensured uniform monitoring and standardised results. The use of multiple monitors however means that there will be some human variance in the monitoring. This variance is common to all monitoring projects although every attempt is made to minimise it.

4   Putting the monitoring into perspective

The spread of children's items over the three-month monitoring period indicates that children feature prominently at some times and less prominently at others. Identifying some of the key events that occurred during the monitoring period helps to contextualise the monitoring and explain some of the key research findings.

4.1   What were the key events that occurred?

- On 20 March 2003, the war in Iraq officially began and April saw extensive coverage of the day-to-day happenings in Iraq. Although the war was declared over on 2 May, the media continued to report on the reconstruction and rebuilding of Iraq.
- The monitoring period reflected a lot of attention focused on high-profile political figures. From March until the end of April, the media reported on fraud investigations involving Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. The same

period also witnessed the corruption issues around former ANC chief whip Tony Yengeni. The trial of the man who murdered Marike de Klerk was prominent in early April and Walter Sisulu's death in early May received a lot of coverage.

- Major sporting events included especially the Cricket World Cup hosted in South Africa until the end of March.
- The Metro Bus Strike received almost daily coverage in March while the strike continued and commuters were stranded.
  Controversy surrounding the Treatment Action Campaign and its advocacy efforts challenging the government's policy on anti-Aids drugs continued throughout the monitoring period.
- The Boeremag treason trial received coverage throughout the monitoring period with slightly more coverage in May.
- The spread of the SARS virus in Asia began to receive considerable coverage in April particularly as the scare became more intense.
- Road accidents were reported on prominently over the Easter weekend – 18-21 April.

4.2 Coverage of items relating to children

Graph 4.2.1
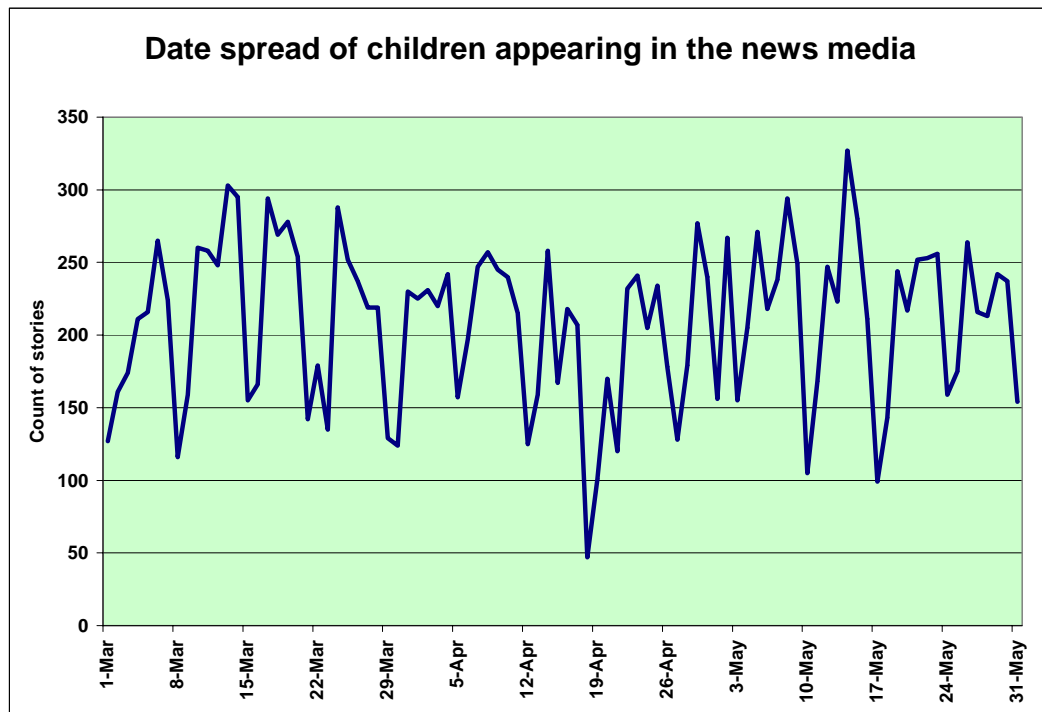
It is normal to see fluctuations in the number of children's stories over time but it is valuable to note when there are peaks and troughs. Many of the lower points, with

fewer children's stories fell on the weekends. This is to be expected, as the bulletins are often shorter on the weekend, particularly for radio where there are also far fewer bulletins.

<u>13-14 March</u>

Stories covered in this peak period included the return home of a kidnapped 15-year old American girl and reports on deaths of children in gang violence on the Cape Flats.

<u>17 March</u>

Many media featured the funeral of one of the children who died as a result of Cape Flats violence and the re-opening of a child rape case against a prominent provincial premier.

<u>8 May</u>
A prominent mobile phone company's "Take a girl-child to work" campaign garnered a lot of publicity, including images of girls posing with various professionals.

<u>14 May</u>

There were items highlighting the needs of children requiring liver transplants, as well as coverage of religious issues in school curricula.

4.2.1 <u>Prominent children's news</u>

Child Protection Week in May received a lot of coverage. The events around the family origins of a youth called Happy Sindane also captured the media's attention during May.

While the overall coverage of children is low, as revealed later in this report, there were instances where children were almost entirely absent from the news agenda. A complete drop in children's stories was found on the 19th and 20th of April. This was the Saturday and Sunday on the Easter weekend where many of the news stories focused instead on road accidents and traffic issues.

5 Key findings

5.1 Children's representation in the media is limited

5.1.1 How often are children in the news?

Graph 5.1.1
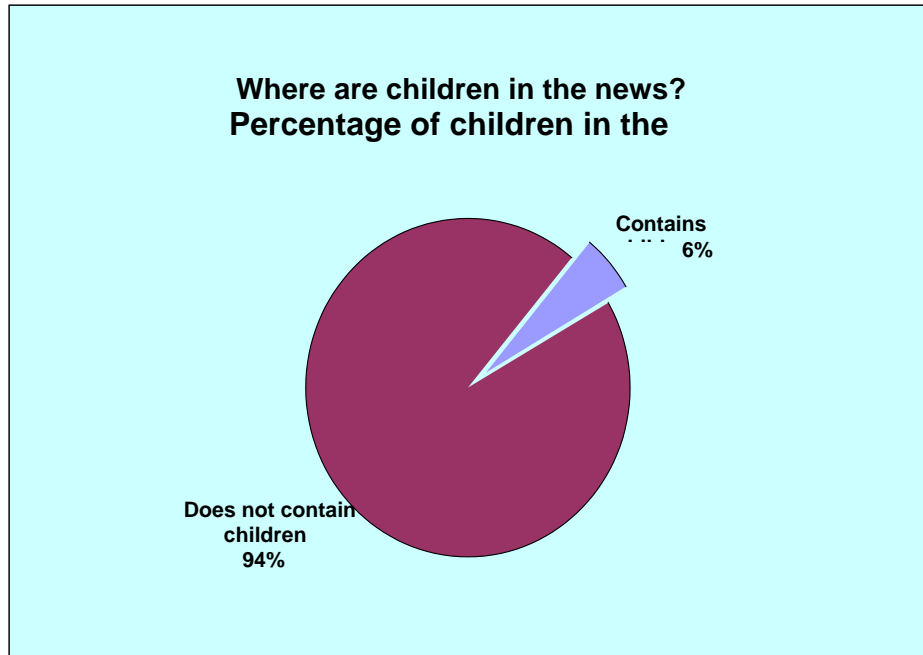
Only 6% of all monitored news items contained children. This suggests that children and children's issues are not a key element of news agendas.   Rather children's newsworthiness seems to be defined by the extreme and dramatic nature of stories.

The children in the participation workshops commented on this lack of representation:

> *"There is nothing on the radio news about children. These guys, they don't think our issues are important."*

> *"In this newspaper you see more information about cell phones. There is only one about children."*

In the newspapers made by the children, 54% of all people identified were children. The children made sure to include stories about other children but there was also a clear adult component, ensuring equitable representation.

Further analysis reveals that of the 6% of news items containing children, print accounted for 75% of news stories while the remaining 25% was evenly split between radio and television.

5.1.2 **In what types of stories do children appear?**

Graph 5.1.2

What are the stories with children about?
Top 12 topics (90% of all stories)

- Human Rights 3%
- HIV/Aids 3%
- Social welfare 3%
- Personalities, profiles and families 4%
- Arts, entertainment and culture 7%
- Health 8%
- Disasters and accidents 10%
- Child Abuse 10%
- Education 11%
- War, conflict and violence 11%
- Sport 12%
- Crime 18%
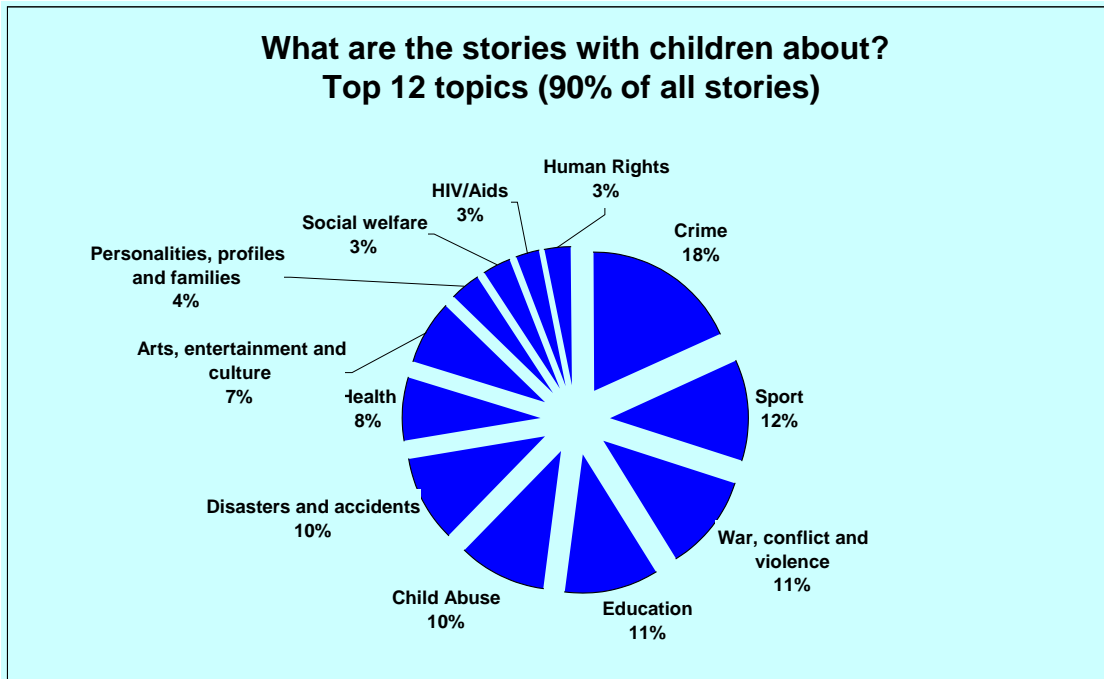
The results show that almost 50% or 1 in every 2 stories on children is negative. Out of the top 12 topics (which account for 90% of all the topics), crime accounts for 18%, war/conflict/violence accounts for 11%, child abuse accounts for 10% and disasters/accidents account for 10%. While it is a common feature of news to report on "bad news" stories such as crime, violence and abuse, this severely narrows the representation of children and helps locate children more often as victims in "bad news" stories.

The children in the workshops were acutely aware that most of the coverage afforded to children in the media tends to be negative.

> *"They only show bad things that happen to children. They never speak about good things that we do as children."*

> *"There was a story about children but it was only about the bad stuff happening"*

"I feel sad because nothing is said about the good children do."

In addition, the participants raised the fact that the media tends to focus on dramatic issues, such as child abuse, and may ignore other children's issues. This was also reflected in the monitoring done by adult monitors, thereby indicating a fairly narrow representation of children in the news media, both in terms of topics and roles.

> *"There is always a story about abuse in the paper and when a child is abused then the story is discussed by people on the news but then what about other things that happen to children. Teachers beat children and they send them home if they have no uniform. What about those stories?"*

In their own newspapers, the children strived to maintain a balance between positive and negative news stories, and often tended to juxtapose a positive item with a negative item. Even though they used negative images or stories, there was a distinct sense that these were employed in order to deliver more positive or meaningful messages. They also demonstrated a need for news that is relevant to their lives.

Children's stories do make big news. The results showed that the majority of children's stories appear on the first 3 pages of a newspaper or in the first 3 items in a news bulletin. Almost 60% of the topics receiving prime coverage were negative and were about crime (24%), disasters/accidents (12%), child abuse (12%), and war/conflict/violence (10%). It would seem that children are newsworthy when the topics are dramatic and extreme.

- Many of the media featured the story of a 12-year-old Iraqi boy who lost his limbs and his family in a bomb blast in the Iraq war/invasion. The image of the child wrapped in bandages in hospital received prominent coverage in newspapers such as the Beeld (07/03/03 p1) and the Natal Witness (17/03/03 p4)
- Many of the media including the Sowetan (22/05/03 p1) and Lesedi (22/05/03) also featured the story of a high school pupil who shot a fellow pupil with his father's gun.
- The City Press featured a report on its front page "Torture outrage: Teacher burns pupils genitals". A teacher allegedly called in grown men to help beat a confession out of the 11-year-old boy she suspected of stealing her handbag. While the child is not named and identified, adequate precautions were not taken conceal his identity. His picture appeared on the front page with only a black strip placed over his eyes, making him clearly identifiable. Furthermore at the bottom of the article appears "Do you think the teacher who allegedly tortured an 11 year old boy with melted plastic and cigarettes should be severely punished?" Followed by phone numbers to vote either "yes" or "No".

Such stories typically shock audiences and capture their attention. While the media must consider commercial imperatives, this should not surpass the imperative to educate and inform the public. It is understood that the media must report bad news in order to raise awareness of particular issues in society but news reports relating to these topics are most likely to communicate information about the who, what, where, why and how of the event with little or no information provided within a framework of human rights. In addition, when it is predominantly these stories that receive prominence, it limits the way that children are represented in the media and perpetuates a discourse of victim-hood.

5.1.3 Where were stories about children located?

5.1.4 Are children's stories positive, negative or fair?

Graph 5.1.3
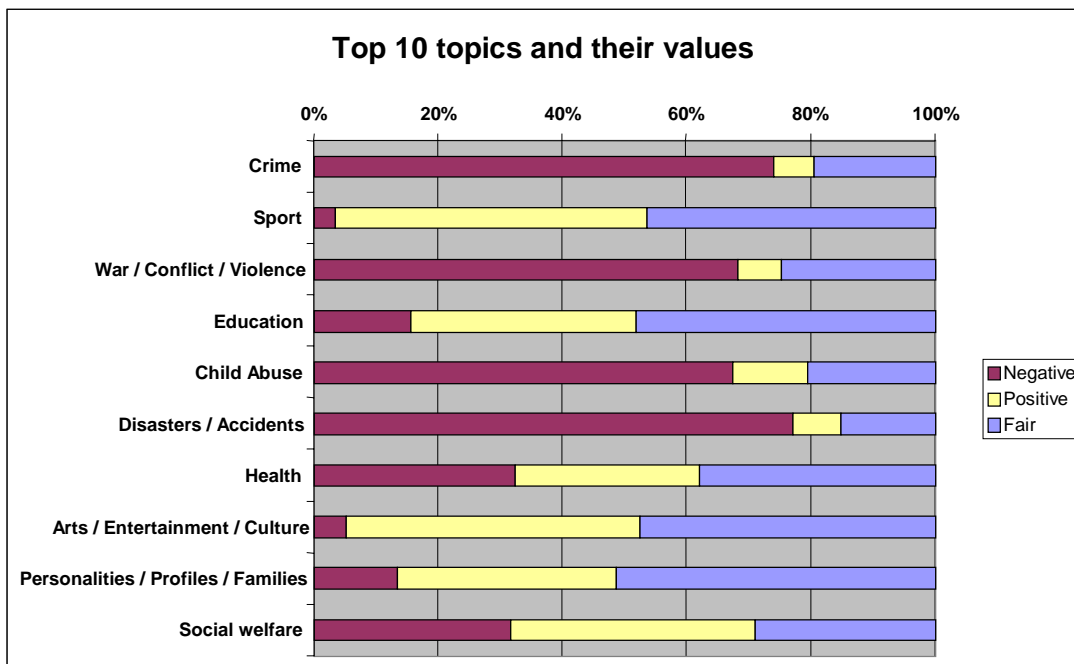
The majority of items (60%) are clearly news items, with 22% featuring photographs of children or containing children. 7% of the children's items were briefs and 5% of the children's items were sports items. Further, 3% were features or news analyses, 2% were opinion pieces and 1% was editorial.

Stories were essentially monitored for their content and were rated as either positive, negative or fair/neutral. 25% of the stories monitored had positive news

content while 33% were fair. The number of negative news reports was in the majority with 42%. The dominant representation of children in negative news stories then relegates children to roles of victims and narrows the representation of children.

The above graph represents the top 10 topics in terms of these values. As could be expected, the more negative or 'bad news' topics such as crime, child abuse, war/ conflict/violence, and disasters/accidents had far more negative stories than they had positive or fair. These topics had roughly a 70-20-10 split in terms of negative, positive and fair/neutral stories.

There was some parity between positive, negative and fair reports with regards to social welfare and only in topics about sport and arts/entertainment/culture did the positive stories outweigh the negative by a large margin.

5.1.5 <u>What roles do children play in news stories?</u>

<u>Graph 5.1.4</u>

Top 10 roles that children play in news stories

Role	
Victim	~25%
Child as member of family unit	~16%
Student	~13%
Baby/Toddler	~6%
Sportsperson	~5%
Vulnerable child	~5%
Group	~5%
Teenager/Youth	~5%
Sick child	~3%
Child offender	~3%
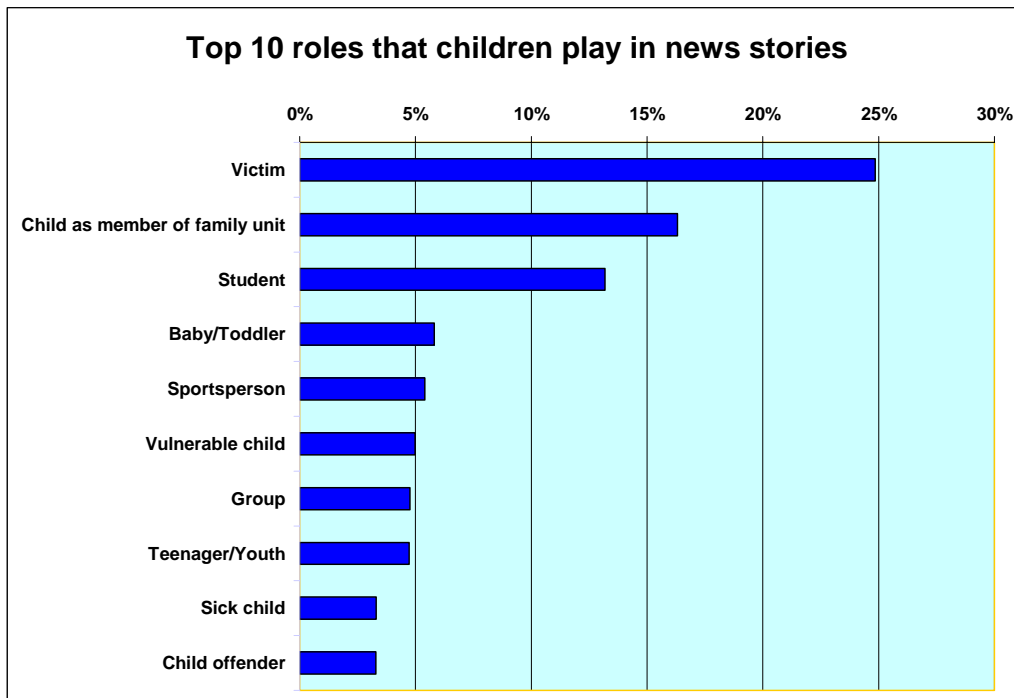
Children were represented as victims in 25% of the items monitored. The depiction of children as victims either through language or the use of photographs can have the intention to elicit sympathy from readers or viewers, or to shock them about the particular event. This links to the types of topics in which children are mostly represented – crime, abuse, disasters/accidents.   It seems that an additional component of children's newsworthiness is their role as

victims. One of the effects of this representation of children is that children are primarily viewed as powerless, helpless, vulnerable victims.

Many of the children commented on the way in which they are frequently represented as victims and also added that they would like to see more reports about children, represented in more positive roles.

> *"In every news bulletin there are children who are raped, street kids, orphans and more. This is bad for children."*

In their newspaper-making exercise, many of the children included articles about children who were represented as heroic or featured in positive roles. Many of the children selected an article about a street child who had been talent-spotted and had this to say:

> *"Still, even if you are poor it does not mean that you will never get anywhere in life. This girl she was poor, she had nothing basically, and now she is famous. The message is no matter what happens you can always become something in life."*

In addition, children were represented as vulnerable in 5% of the items, as orphans, street children and refugees, and in 3% of the items they were represented as sick. This then increases the number of items where children are depicted in helpless or vulnerable roles. Children are also identified in more "passive roles" such as babies or toddlers, in familial relationships and in groups. The popular representation of children as infants may be attributed to the appeal they elicit in adults, and also because of the vulnerability and innocence they represent. In these passive roles, the child is not recognised for their individual characteristics but often takes on characteristics of the group.

Of the top ten roles, "child offender" is the only role in which children are overtly represented in a negative but not powerless role. Narrowly missing the top 10 roles in which children are represented was that of "survivor". Children were only represented as survivors in 2.5% of the items monitored. This illustrates the scarcity of positive representations of children.

Limiting children's representation to the role of victim and more passive roles communicates messages about the positions children occupy in society. While it is important to report on bad things that happen to children it is also important to represent children in the diversity of roles they represent. Emphasis on the negative roles occupied by children encourages a negative discourse about children and children's rights in society. It is equally important to incorporate a positive discourse about children where they are not only represented as victims but also as survivors. Adopting a positive discourse about children can also be

achieved by broadening the types of stories in which children appear which would then translate into a broadening of roles in which children are represented.

5.1.6 How are children represented in stories on HIV/Aids?

How were children represented in stories on HIV/Aids? (Top 3 roles)	
Role Description	**Percentage**
Victim	30%
Orphan	21%
Sick child	14%

Given the scope of the problem of HIV/Aids and its relevance to South Africa, the MMP together with the Children's Institute in Cape Town is producing a separate report on this subject. With 3% of all topics, HIV/Aids was one of the most prominent topic codes identified.

An analysis of the roles in the HIV/Aids items revealed that 30% of the children were identified as "victims". While this figure is in line with the overall representation noted earlier, identifying children infected with or affected by HIV/Aids as victims is problematic as it may lead to further stigmatisation. This practice disempowers such children, especially when many survive adverse conditions and continue to live full lives.

The second most common role in which children were identified was as "orphans", which accounted for 21%. While this is a critical societal issue, the emphasis obscures the diversity of additional and, in many instances more common ways, in which children are affected by HIV/Aids. This emphasis is reinforced not only by the media but also by donor organisations and other bodies.

5.1.7 How often are children sourced or accessed for their opinions?

Children are rarely accessed for their opinions. The average number of sources per article on children was 2.4. The majority of these sources, however, were adults and 72% of the items do not access children. Children appeared in images in 15% of the items and they were quoted, either directly or indirectly, in only 13% of the items. This suggests that children are given a limited opportunity to represent themselves, to exercise their right to participation, and to express their views and opinions in matters that affect them.

Graph 5.1.5

How often are children sourced?

Items where children appear in images 15%

Items where children are quoted 13%

Children not sourced but item contains children 72%
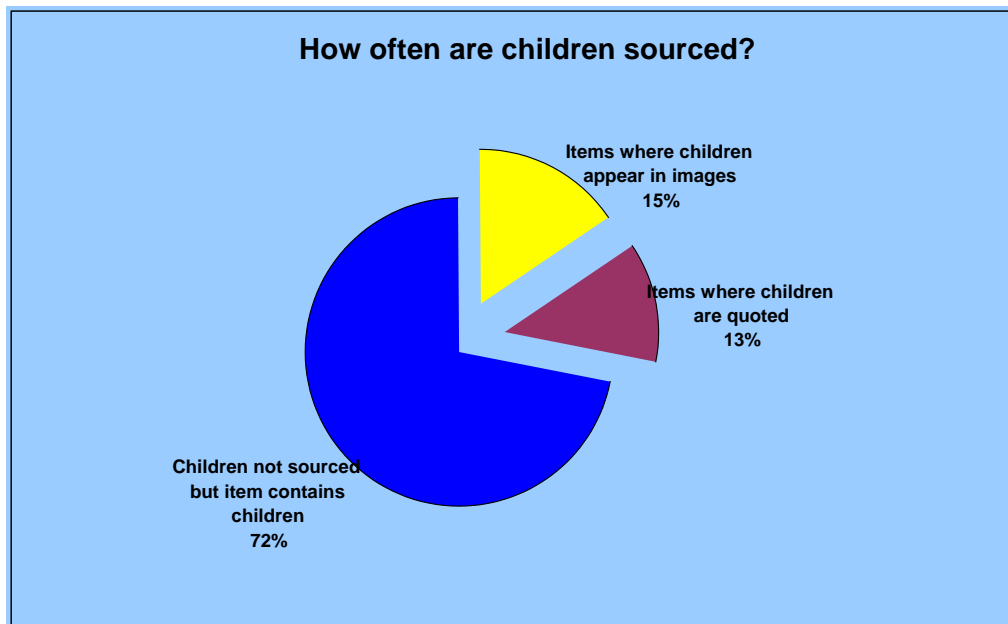
Children in all workshops talked about how few journalists interview children themselves and ask them to tell their story.

"I realised that we can understand what is going on around us. If it is about us we are the best people to say something about it."

The names the children chose for their newspapers were interesting as they indicated that the children recognised that this was an inclusive forum through which they could express themselves. It also demonstrated strong ownership of the newspaper and recognition for what children are capable of achieving.

"*We called it 'Children's Voices'. We made this newspaper and it is our voice.*"

"*We chose that because we put things that are happening in 'Our World Today', things that are affecting us.*"

When children were sourced, their comments were often limited to sport, arts/culture, and war/conflict/violence.

It is interesting that children appear more frequently in images. Images are an integral and powerful element of reporting and images of children are often the most powerful and moving because children epitomise innocence and vulnerability in society. Visuals often have a greater impact than written words

and are also more likely to capture the attention of a reader. However, this can reinforce the social stereotype where children are seen but not heard as they are so seldom accessed for their opinions even in stories about them or affecting them.

5.1.8 **What age are the children in the news?**

Graph 5.1.6

What ages were the children in the news?

- Age 0-1 10%
- Age 1-2 5%
- Age 3-9 26%
- Age 10-12 15%
- Age 13-18 44%
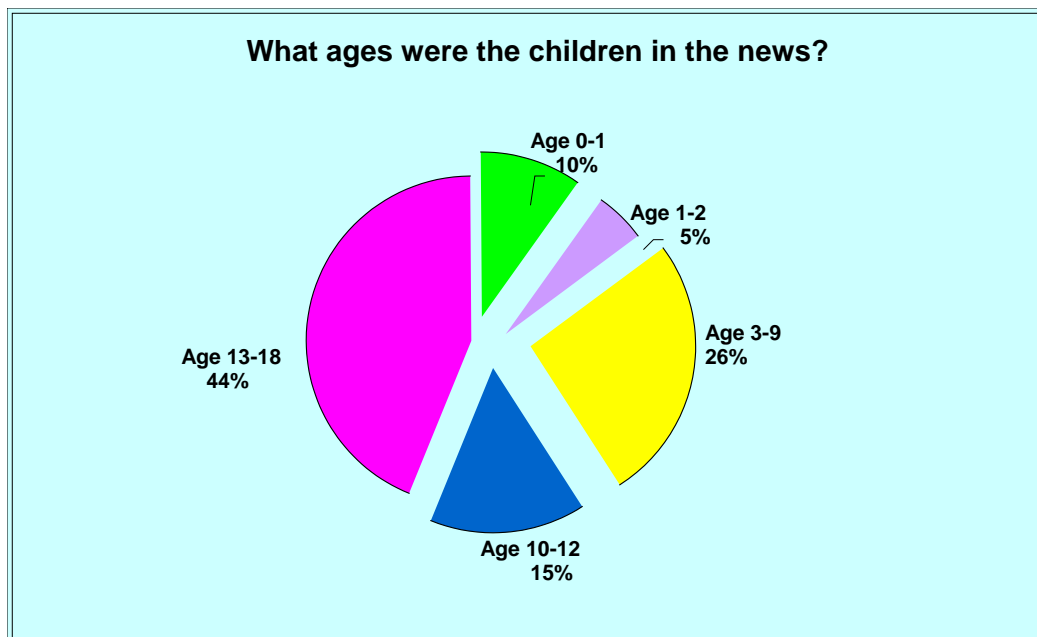
Teenagers between 13 and 18 years received the most coverage in the media (44%). This relates in part to the topics in which children appear, particularly education and sport.

5.1.9 Racial profile of children in the news?

Graph 5.1.7

What race are the children in the news?

Black 39%
White 30%
Other 15%
Asian 3%
Indian 3%
Coloured 10%
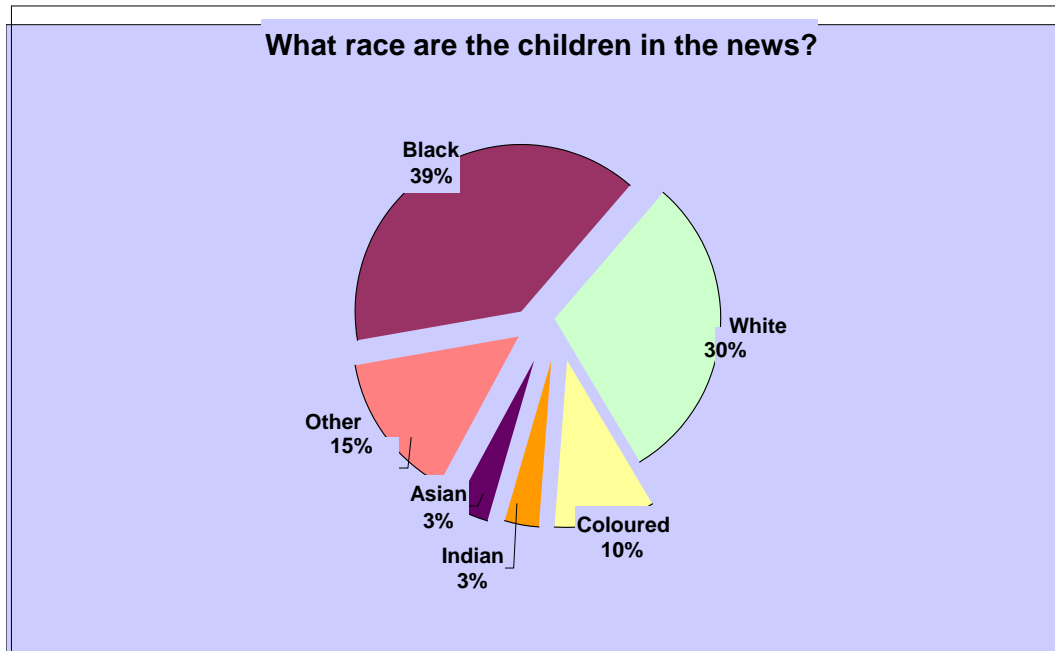
Race and the representation of race in the media are particularly important because of South Africa's apartheid history. The researchers used the standard racial classifications used in South Africa: black, Coloured, Indian and white.

39% of children who appeared in the news were black, while 30% were white. The remaining 31% included Asian, coloured, Indian and "other" races. ("Other" in this instance refers predominantly to Iraqi children who featured prominently because of the war in Iraq). These figures are clearly not representative of South Africa's demographics. According to the 2001 census, black children constitute 76% of the children's population in South Africa, while white, Indian and coloured children constitute 14%, 2% and 8% respectively. (Approximate figures). A lack of representation of certain races serves as much to discriminate against these children as bad representation does, as it makes these children invisible. It is essential to include stories on children from all races in order to affirm their place in our democracy.

White children were accessed the most for their opinions (39%), while black child sources constituted 37%. This disparity may serve to affirm and empower white children while other children's voices are not heard and receive a more narrow representation. An effort needs to be made on the part of the media to access more black children and children from minority groups (other than whites) for

their opinions. As it is particularly these people who were denied a voice in South Africa's past, it is important that they be given an opportunity to exercise their right to participation and express their opinions on matters that affect them.

The children's newspapers showed parity in the representation of race. A count of the different races represented in their newspapers found that 55% of all sources were black, while 19% were white. Although they had raised it as an issue and attempted to portray the racial demographics of the country equitably, the participants did not draw specific attention to race.

5.1.10 <u>How were race issues covered during the monitoring period?</u>

Racial issues with regards to children are not generally discussed unless it is a report dealing specifically with a racial/ racist incident. Issues regarding race, racism and racial incidents are also not overtly discussed. Instead, cases involving racial incidents often only provide an account of events surrounding the incident, with little or no discourse about human rights and discrimination.

SABC 2 (Afrikaans and Sotho 26/05/03) broadcast a news item in which two black children were forced to paint themselves white by a white farmer. The item did not specifically raise the issue of racism, although it clearly appeared to be a dimension in the event. A further problem with the report was that the children and their guardians were interviewed, thereby clearly identifying the children when they had been abused and were extremely upset about the incident. A charge was laid against the white farmer, which means that the children were not only the subjects of abuse but also witnesses to the incident and, according to the Criminal Procedures Act 154 (3), may not be identified.

Race was also a central issue in the coverage of the Happy Sindane case, whose racial identity was at the heart of the story. Ironically, and with some notable exceptions, the issues of race were not discussed. However, as pointed out in the Mail & Guardian (23/05/03 p30) "There would hardly have been a ripple in the national press if a black youth had walked into a remote police station and demanded, in fluent Afrikaans, to be reunited with his parents, who he vaguely remembered as being Ndebele speaking." While Sindane's identity was under investigation, various reports discussed how his race was under question, and many media, including the Citizen (27/05/03 p1), The Star (27/05/03 p6), SABC 1 and 3 (17/06/03) and SABC2 (Sotho bulletin 26/05/03) mentioned that he had made the news because of issues regarding his "colour". The controversy deepened when an advertising agency took played into the confusion to produce an advert featuring Sindane with the line "any shade you can think of".

It is clear that Sindane's rights to dignity and privacy were disregarded by the media and advertising industries.

Another incident that received extensive coverage was the story of the 17-year old pupil at a school in Pretoria who shot and killed a fellow pupil. In this instance, it was misinformation on the part of the media that led to a problem. The Sowetan (22/05/03 p1) in their headline stated "White pupil shoots black boy" and Lesedi (22/05/03) also referred to the 17-year-old as a "white learner." The focus on the race of the boys could have led to the incident being viewed as a racial one when in fact both of the boys were black and the incident was not racially motivated. To the Sowetan's credit, an apology and correction was printed the following day (Sowetan 23/05/03 p3).

Media's coverage of the case of a black girl who was allegedly assaulted by a fellow white pupil at their school in Cape Town again violated the privacy and dignity of the pupils involved by naming and identifying both the victim and the perpetrator. According to SABC 3 (07/11/03, 19h00) "the mother of a white school mate, her daughter, and a boyfriend viciously assaulted her (the 16-year-old black victim), shouted racial insults and left her covered in faeces in full view of other students." The black girl child is named in the Sowetan (27/11/03, p3), City Press (09/11/03, p4), and Rapport (09/11/03) and she is named and her face shown on SABC 3 (07/11/03, 19h00). The white girl child is indirectly revealed by her mother being named in the Sowetan (27/11/03, p3), City Press (09/11/03, p4), and SABC 3 (07/11/03, 19h00), and her face is shown thus clearly identifying her on SABC 3 (07/11/03, 19h00). As criminal investigations had begun it would not seem to be in the children's best interest and seems to be in contravention of the Act. In this case both the minor girls are facing charges and yet their identities are revealed.

South Africa's past makes race a very sensitive yet important issue, and it is important that the media take great care when reporting on issues which could have racial tones, as well as when identifying the race of various members in a story. The media has a difficult task helping to erase racial divisions of the past by challenging racial stereotypes and preventing discrimination.

5.1.11 What sex are the children in the news?

Children are socialised into particular roles from a young age and the representation of children and gender in the media communicates specific messages to children about the roles they should play in society. It is therefore important to establish how children are represented in terms of gender. In order to do this it is necessary to look at the sex of children in the media to determine whether there are patterns in the types of stories in which a particular sex appears, and then what this may communicate in terms of gender i.e. if the sex of a child is associated with specific roles or activities.

Graph 5.1.8

What is the sex of the children who appear in the news?

Female children
44%

Male children
56%
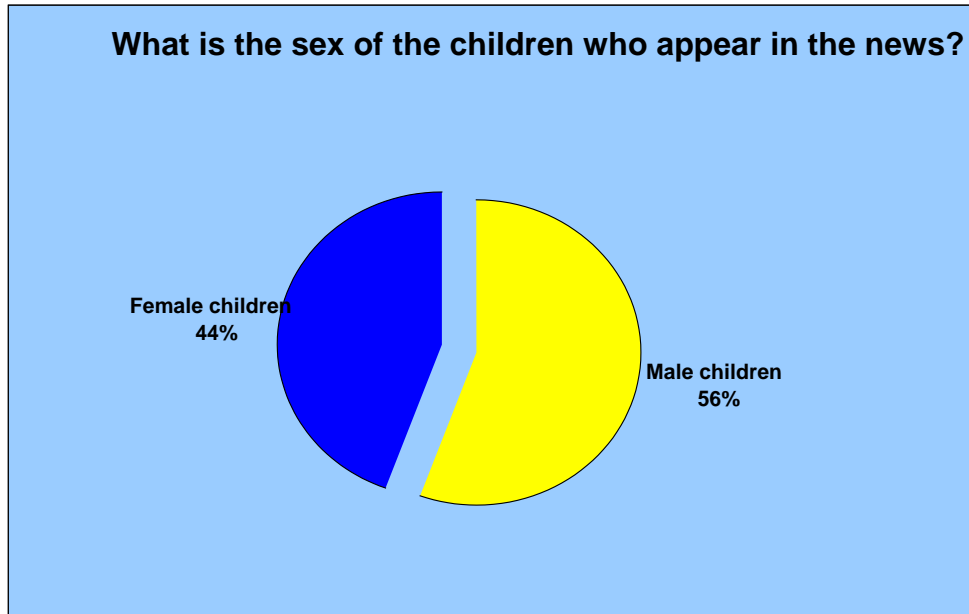
Boys and girls were represented fairly equitably – boys 56% and girls 44%. This seems surprising as previous research into the media indicates that males receive far more extensive representation than females. A closer look at the topics in which boy and girl children appear indicates that their representation is still along stereotypical lines, with girls more likely to appear in stories on child abuse and boys more likely to appear in sport-related stories. Such a disparity may reinforce stereotypes of girls as passive victims and boys as active and assertive heroes.

Graph 5.1.9

Representation of children in stories on

female
28%

male
72%

Graph 5.1.10

Total representation of children in stories on abuse

male
31%

female
69%
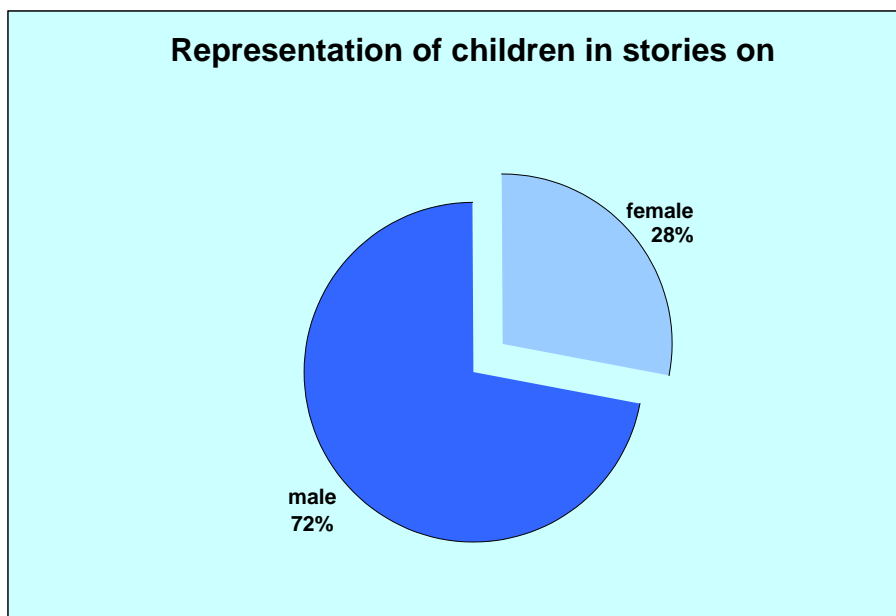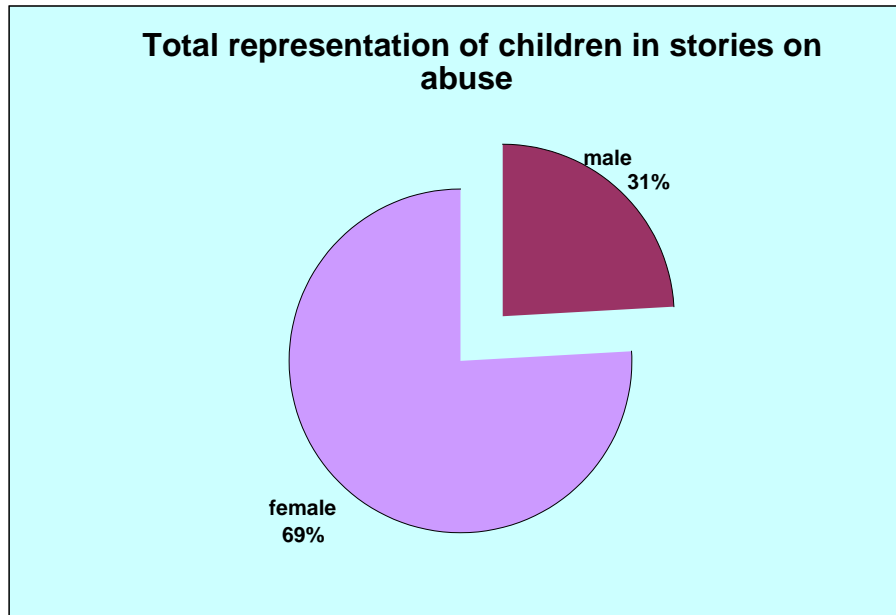
The results also indicated that boy and girl children are sourced (accessed for their opinions) fairly equitably – boys 53% and girls 47%. This seems surprising too, given previous findings by the MMP, but as mentioned above, girl children are sourced more in stories on abuse while boy children are sourced more in stories on sport. Overall the results revealed that where children's sex is identified in a story, male children are sourced more than female children in the majority of stories, while female children are sourced more in stories on child abuse, HIV/Aids and human rights which includes items on human rights in general as well as on racism and gender issues.

It must be stressed that this does not mean to suggest that abuse against girl children (especially sexual abuse where girls make up the overwhelming majority of victims) should not be highlighted by the media, but it appears that there is an emphasis on girl children on cases of sexual abuse. The MMP's findings reveal that 47% of items on abuse were about sexual abuse. Research from the United States (no comparable figures are yet available for South Africa) suggests that sexual abuse constitutes 11% of substantiated victims while just under 80% of abuse cases were neglect and physical abuse. The same research shows that the sex breakdown of abuse overall is 52% girls to 48% boys. While the figures may be international, Associate Professor, Andy Dawes of the University of Cape Town Psychology Department noted, "It is probable that in South Africa there is a similar pattern in which physical abuse and neglect are a more significant

problem than sexual abuse." [1]   Not only then does the current representation of abuse in the media highlight the dramatic and extreme but it also appears to represent patterns of abuse in South Africa along gendered lines.

It was notable in the children's newspapers that the participants were attentive to equitable gender representation and stories featuring girls or women were far more prominent than in the mainstream media. The overall ratio of men to women was just over 1:1.

5.1.12 <u>What sex are the adults in stories on children?</u>

The breakdown of adult sources appears at first glance to be better than the norm, females – 35% and males – 65%. The recent Gender Media Baseline Study highlighted the disparity in male and female sources with 81% male voices against 19% female voices (Gender Media Baseline Study, MISA, Gender Links & MMP). Again, an analysis of the roles of adult sources reveals that one of the most common sources in stories on children are mothers.

Female sources are limited to more "feminine" roles such as mothers and members of the NGO sector (it was only in these two categories that females were better represented). Similarly men were limited to "masculine" roles of police and government officials. There is roughly an 80-20 split of males to females in all categories, except for mother and NGO, including, police, justice, government official, sports, and education (including the education department). These results support gender stereotypes where males are sourced more often and more broadly, whereas the majority of female sources are limited to traditionally "feminine" categories that are usually more nurturing. The narrow and limited roles in which adults are sourced also limit children's perceptions of the roles they would assume as adults. Furthermore children would attribute characteristics about the roles men and women play in society through what is represented to them.

---

[1] R Chalk & C: Child Trends Research Brief, May 2002.

Graph 5.1.11

Breakdown of Male and Female Top 10 Adult Sources
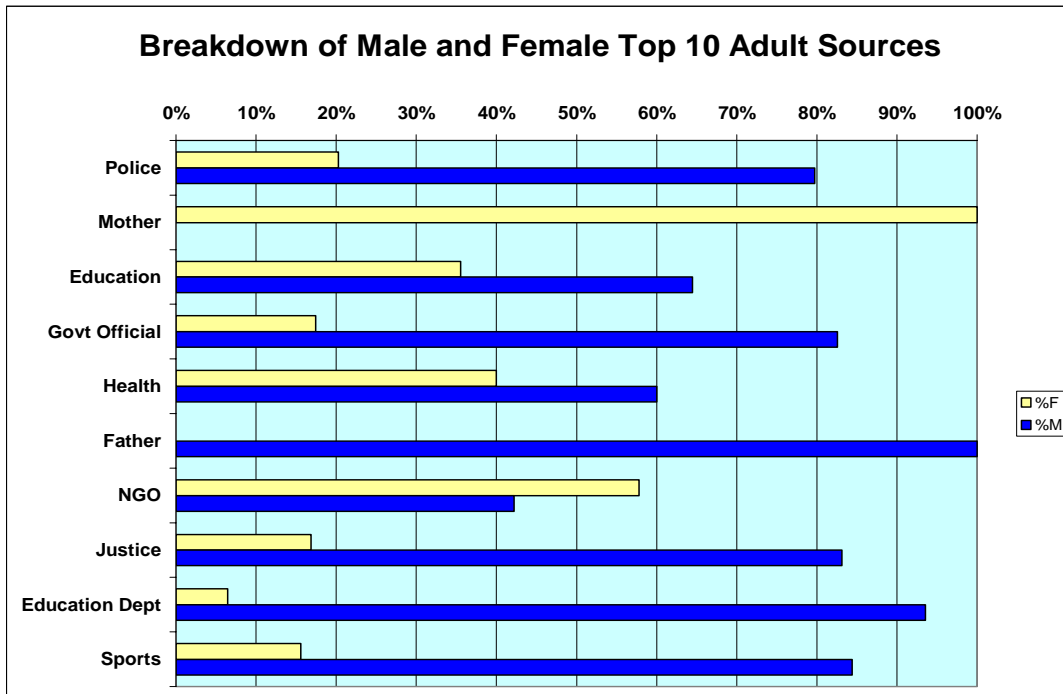
5.1.13 What gender issues were covered during the monitoring period?

Issues dealing specifically with children and gender were incorporated in the methodology. These dealt specifically with perceptions of boy and girl children and how they were represented in the media. But gender issues did not receive much coverage. The only exception was the coverage of the 'Take a girl child to work' initiative by a prominent mobile phone company. The initiative received a significant amount of coverage, although the gender issues surrounding it were only dealt with marginally. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the campaign was a mobile/cell phone initiative and served largely as an advertorial. Although this was a corporate initiative, it was a lost opportunity for the media to explore the issues surrounding the socialisation of girl children and the occupations they choose.

The first girl child conference held in Durban received only minimal coverage. The Star (02/04/03 p5) report only dealt with the occurrence of the event while nothing was said about what the conference hoped to achieve. The report was, however, accompanied by a photograph of the girls working in preparation for the conference. This was a positive and empowering representation of girl children.

One article introduced the issue of how the media influences children's perceptions of their appearances. The Star (01/05/03 p11) carried a report, "When being yourself is just not acceptable." This article was based on a story

about an overweight 6-year-old girl who attempted to cut the fat off her body as a result of the constant pressure of having to look thin. While the article did attempt to tackle the issue of child obesity, the article named and identified the child and had a picture of her mother holding the knife she used. This served no purpose other than for dramatic effect. Although the issue of child obesity was dealt with in general, the media missed an opportunity to further explore the impact media images have on children's perceptions of themselves and how this affects girl and boy children respectively.

Addressing issues of gender, particularly the roles both girl and boy children play in society, would certainly educate the public and challenge gender stereotypes. The media is in a particularly powerful position to assist in addressing gender stereotypes and bringing about change in society by showing the diversity of roles that males and females occupy and by using language that empowers both genders.

5.2   The representation of children reinforces certain stereotypes

5.2.1   How does language affect the way that children are represented?

Children, like women, do not feature prominently in the news unless they are victims. This reinforces the stereotype that women and children occupy the lowest status in society which in turn shapes society's and the media's behaviour towards them. The language used when talking about children thus affects the way in which children are represented. Language can be used to convey respect to children, to empower them, or the language can serve to disempower them. Below are some of the ways in which language can affect the representation of children.

1. Structure of a story – reports can be factual and event-based, or contain graphic detail. In many instances reports give details of an event without structuring it within a human rights framework. In some cases, particularly those that are gruesome or shocking, such as sexual abuse stories, graphic details of the event are reported. These reports often inform the public of a horrific event but seldom provide information that could empower the public. In the majority of these instances then children are represented as victims not survivors.
    - Many of the reports on children abuse during the monitoring included court reports of the serial rapist Fanwell Khumalo. The Star (13/03/03 p2) reported on a boy and girl who spoke about their ordeals at the hands of Khumalo.
    - An example of a positive article in the Business Day (04/04/03 p4) featured two ground-breaking legal decisions that could lead to heavier penalties and higher conviction rates for child rapists

in particular. This report was informative and explained the laws pertaining to child rape. This type of article is empowering as the public become more aware of their rights and the means of protecting them.

2. Statistical reporting - reports seldom provide follow-ups and often report on children as statistics without contextualising the story. This type of reporting is often found in briefs - news items that are usually clustered together and are generally about three to six lines in length. The results showed that the majority of the topics when reporting on children in briefs were crime (31%), child abuse (24%) and disasters/accidents (17%). While this type of reporting may inform the public of the event it provides no other information that may be useful. Representing children as statistics can also be disempowering and dehumanising.

   ▪ Motsweding (25/05/03) reported on a 9-year-old boy who was mutilated and killed in Soshanguve. This report provided no other information and represented the child as merely another crime statistic. The value of this type of report is thus questionable.

3. Reports sometimes fail to recognise the minor status of a child and use language that would only be appropriate for adults.

   ▪ City Press(19/01/03 p.1)) in the story of a well-known soccer player who was accused of allegedly kidnapping his underaged girlfriend, the report referred to the minor as his "lover". By referring to the child as a "lover" the report insinuates a consensual relationship between adults thus in part taking the blame off the accused and unduly apportioning it to the child. In addition, the report failed to mention that regardless of a child's consent to engage in a sexual relationship, it still constitutes statutory rape of a minor.

4. Language can objectify the child. In some instances the language used refers to a child as an inanimate object. This is often done when an object relating to the story (usually a story on disasters/accidents or abuse) is used to describe the child. Language used in this way is dehumanising and constitutes a language of abuse as the child is further victimised when he/she is referred to in this way.

   ▪ A recent example of this was where a child was referred to as a "drain boy" in the headline "Drain boy's body found" in the Citizen (06/02/04 p1) when it reported on a story where a child fell down an open storm water drain and drowned. In this case the language is not only dehumanising but also insensitive, towards the family.

   ▪ Another example reported on by many media was that of a 15-year old who was allegedly subjected to sexual abuse when her employees forced her to have sex with a dog. Many of the reports referred to the child as the "Dog sex girl," the headline in

the Sowetan Sunday World (27/04/03 p2) was "Dog sex girl's poverty to blame." This type of language is not only dehumanising, disrespectful and insensitive but further victimises the child. It also inaccurately associates the crime with the child instead of the perpetrators. Furthermore the language failed to recognise the minor status of the child as she was referred to as a woman instead of a child by a newsreader on the SABC 3 (16/04/03) news. This also serves to place undue responsibility on the child as she is given the status of an adult.

- Language can trivialise serious issues. This occurs when serious issues are referred to lightly or when the language used is mocking. For example, in the City Press (16/03/03 p1) report on a prominent premier facing charges of child molestation, the headline read: "Popo Faces More Dirt." This trivialises the extremely sensitive issue of child molestation and child rape as "dirt". A person reading the headline may in fact think that "dirt" refers to some celebrity-style gossip when it is in fact about child abuse. Furthermore the report foregrounds the alleged perpetrator to a large extent because of his social and political position rather than the issue of child abuse.

- In a report in the Beeld (13/05/03 p2) the headline read: "Little Lucky not that lucky - he is HIV positive." This play with the child's name trivialises the very serious issue of HIV/Aids as well as the difficulties the child will face as a result of his HIV status. An additional problem with the report is that the child is identified with his HIV status, thus possibly subjecting him to discrimination, alienation and other hardships associated with the stigma of being HIV positive.

5. The emphasis in reports on children is often on the adult (further, the emphasis is often on the man and not the woman/girl). This suggests that children are not as important as adults and that their opinions are not as important.

- In the P4 (09/05/03 p2) report on the prominent soccer player who was accused of kidnapping his under-age girlfriend, the focus of the report is on the soccer player. Rather than focussing on the kidnapping of the child, the report focussed on the soccer player instead, representing him as the subject and the child as the object. This makes the child seem trivial, as though she were just a detail to the report when the focus is on an issue (soccer) unrelated to the kidnapping.

6. Sources are more often men – this often reinforces and affirms a strong male bias while contributing to the marginalisation of females especially with the roles they occupy. As mentioned earlier, 65% of all the adult sources were male while 35% were female. In addition, females were accessed

most often in traditionally 'feminine' roles of mothers or members of the NGO sector. As children are given even less of a voice it seems to affirm that they, like women, are second class citizens, not deserving of equal respect and not given the same opportunities to voice their opinions even when the report is about them. The results showed that children were only accessed for their opinions in 13% of the items even when the item was clearly about them.

7. Language can be patronising and disrespectful. This serves to further victimise the child.

> E.g. Star (20/05/03 p.2) reported the story of a young boy, Livhuwani Mutsharini who received artificial limbs that would help him become more mobile. In the article he was referred to as "Limpopo's limbless wonderboy." The alliteration, which plays with the child's name, is patronising and disrespectful. By labelling the child the media is exposing him to possible ridicule and thus further victimisation. Even though he is described in super human terms, as "wonderboy" which is an attempt to frame the story more positively, the overall effect of the words "Limpopo's limbless wonderboy" makes prominent is disability and his defining feature.

8. There are often contradictions – children are seen as vulnerable and innocent, but this is often different with regards to sex where there is a gender bias against girls. The language used when reporting on sexual issues can perpetuate gender stereotypes and further victimise girls.

> ▪ E.g. The Daily News 14/11/03 reported a story where teachers forced a schoolgirl whom they described as promiscuous, to insert a banana into her vagina, because she had been in possession of porn magazine. The title "Teachers beat up porn pupil" suggests the child may have participated in a pornographic film, furthermore the language used reinforced the stereotype of girls as promiscuous or sexually active, while no labels are attached to boys who behave in the same way.

9. Language can reinforce the representation of a child as a victim – by calling them victims directly, by representing them as statistics and by using language that objectifies, trivialises and fails to recognise their minor status.

10. Language can be empowering when the rights of children are respected.

> ▪ In a positive example the Citizen (05/04/03 p8) carried an opinion piece on Aids law, discussing the rights of the uninfected, especially the rights of spouses and children. The item was informative and underpinned by human rights considerations. It discussed the right to privacy and the right not to be discriminated against in relation to children, spouses and people living with HIV/Aids.

5.2.2 How do images affect the way that children are represented?

1. Images are an integral and powerful element of media in general. However images of children particularly of children suffering can be even more powerful and appeals strongly to readers/viewers on an emotional level. This suggests that children can in fact be used in a most powerful way.
    - Kevin Carter's image of the starving child with the vulture in waiting was a powerful picture highlighting the plight of those starving in Africa.
    - The photo of 'Kim'– the girl who ran burning and naked down a street in Vietnam, was used to highlight the atrocities of the Vietnam War.
    - The image of Hector Peterson being carried by a friend fleeing the South African police in the June 16 1976 massacre became a powerful picture of the brutality of apartheid in South Africa.[2]

2. Children are sometimes used as tokens – their innocence and vulnerability are used in images to reinforce certain messages, but at the same time it reinforces certain stereotypes about children – often that they are vulnerable, powerless victims.
    - Images of children in war (Iraqi War) are often portrayed in extreme distress, their innocence violated. A popular image that featured in many media such as the Beeld (07/03/03 p1) and Natal Witness (17/03/03 p4) was that of a 12-year-old boy who lost his entire family and his limbs in a bomb blast in Iraq. An image of the boy covered in bandages and in extreme distress was used often on the front pages of newspapers to portray the horror of the war.

3. The way that images are used can also perpetuate stereotypes.
    - A high-angle shot focused down at a child can make the child look smaller and more like a victim.

4. Children are also used in images to reinforce broader stereotypes.
    - Images of impoverished African children may be used to support all sorts of stereotypes about Africa. Images of children in developing countries often portray little black children with bloated bellies and flies on their eyes. These images have become the popular representation of children in the third world. The media's focus on this particular representation of the child from developing countries is a narrow representation that Aids in perpetuating negative stereotypes about children in Africa.

5. There is a clear contradiction here where children can be used so powerfully but they are often portrayed as powerless. Furthermore, these pictorial representations of children suffering have a tendency to violate their rights

---

[2] Clarke, G. 1997 The Photograph, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

to dignity and privacy. While the intention of using these pictures is to highlight the plight of children in sometimes life-threatening circumstances, it is important that journalists exercise caution, sensitivity and respect for the rights of people they wish to respect.

5.3   The representation of children affects their rights

5.3.1   How are children's rights to dignity and privacy affected?

1. The identification of children in certain stories may be a violation of a child's rights and may break the law. 1 in 10 children in abuse stories are identified - this is against the law and subjects children to further victimisation.

    - In a recent example, the SABC 3 (16/03/04, Special Assignment) contained a report where a child who had been sodomised was identified in an image with his mother who said "My boy here's been sodomised twice already this year by those kids." Although this is unethical and illegal, the broadcaster, when they received a complaint, quickly removed the section from the master tape and in addition facilitated in providing counselling for the child.

    - A good example of where children's rights are protected was a report in the Star (30/04/03 p.1) and the Burger (30/04/03 p. 6), which featured the plight of children who have lost their caregivers to HIV/Aids but cannot access government grants. The way in which the children were photographed was commendable as their identities were protected. The technique used focused on their hands and silhouettes and proved to be more effective than showing the actual picture of the children.

    The participants were fairly outspoken about news articles that revealed the identity of particular children. They were quite adamant in all the groups, for example, that rape and abuse survivors should not be identified:

    > *"It is not good to show his face. Everyone knows him and will laugh at him."*

    > *"This girl will grow up and then when she grows up she will see what they said about her and will be very sad."*

2. Children are often interviewed in times of trauma or when the child may be grieving and their right to privacy may be violated. The World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines (see appendix A) for media professionals reporting on children raise the point that the media need to be sensitive to situations involving private grief and to respect the feelings of the bereaved.

This means that the dignity and privacy of those who have experienced trauma need to be respected.

- The Cape Times (05/05/03 p1) reported on the story of a toddler who survived for 10 hours in her dead mother's arms after a Cairo apartment block collapsed. Sourcing the child in these circumstances was unethical as the journalists insistently asked the child where her mother was (despite their prior knowledge). The child had clearly not comprehended the scale of the tragedy and this type of coverage is insensitive and unethical.

The children seemed to intrinsically recognise the ethical problems of interviewing a child who has recently suffered a traumatic experience.

> *"I think it is wrong to keep on asking him questions. It will make him confused and more scared. When he answers their questions a picture of what happened will come to his mind."*

3. Identification of children in certain stories may violate their rights to dignity and privacy. As the (WHO) guidelines on reporting point out, the impact of the story often affects the life of the child long after the journalist has left.
   - In a Beeld (13/05/03 p2) report the headline read; "Little Lucky not that lucky - he is HIV positive." A large photograph of the child accompanied the article. Identifying a child who is HIV positive could subject him to further trauma such as discrimination and alienation, particularly with the stigma attached to HIV/Aids.

Children pointed out the irony of protecting the identity of the perpetrator while revealing the identity of the victim.

> *"They don't show a person who is a suspect and a criminal but they show the person he raped."*

> *"If people do crime you can't see their face. But you often see the face of the innocent children. They were supposed to protect and respect the face of a child."*

4. Each of these powerful stories needs to be told and difficult stories need to be reported, but at the same time children need to be protected from further harm.

The media often help with locating missing children or children who have been kidnapped by showing a picture of the child that has been kidnapped. However the kidnapping becomes a criminal case when it is reported, where the child is the victim and witness and thus should not be identified. In

these instances the best interests of the child take precedence and the child's protection becomes a priority, which means that by showing the child's picture the media can help to secure the child's safety.

The child participants also recognised the essential role the media plays in highlighting important issues, albeit negative.

> *"I think it is good to have articles like this. Now I know about children who are hungry. I feel bad for them. I wish I could help them but it is not possible because I still depend on my parents."*

> *"I think it is good to have these articles about abuse and rape as then grown-ups are made aware. Mothers can warn their children. They will be more careful about sending them out at night in the dark."*

In all cases of reporting, the best interests of the child should be paramount.

5.3.2 How does the use of images affect children's rights?

1. Images are often used to elicit sympathy but this is sometimes done in an intrusive manner. Invasions on the dignity and privacy of children were seen most prominently in the coverage on the war. The media often showed photographs and images of children in extreme distress and it is highly unlikely that they were able to give their informed consent in those circumstances. This is also true for stories on disasters and accidents where photographs and images of distraught children are often featured.
    - In the Citizen (31/03/03 p7) was a black-and-white photo taken of an Iraqi boy sitting nearby the body of his brother in a casket prior to his funeral. His brother was a victim of a US raid on the Al-Nasser market. The image was a clear invasion of his rights to dignity and privacy and was an intrusion into his private family life.
2. Images may also be used for shock purposes. The horror of some of the crimes committed against children is undoubtedly real. There also appears to be in some instances a morbid fascination that often accompanies gruesome images or stories. Such images can be intrusive and violate privacy and dignity. In addition, one of the effects of these images is "flooding" – where people become desensitised after seeing so many similar images. In order to have the same effect, more horrific images are used. Another problem is that these types of images also lead to "compassion fatigue", where people are no longer affected by the plights of those in the images and the images fail to elicit compassion and empathy from readers/viewers.

- The Star (02/04/03 p1) on its front page emblazoned an image of the bloodied corpse of a child. The half-page image was a close-up of the child who was clearly identifiable in the image. Readers were able to see the graphic detail of the small body wrapped in bloodied rags lying against the body of its mother, still with its pacifier around its neck. The horror of the image was made even more graphic with the subheading, "Horror of Infant Corpses shocks Red Cross". No justification for using the image was provided. (Other mediums also featured the same picture including the Daily News (02/04/03 p1) which showed the image to include the dead baby with its dead mother lying in a wooden coffin.)

3. How can the best interests of children be protected and still ensure powerful and difficult children's stories are reported? While it is important for journalists to report on stories involving disaster and tragedy, it is often difficult during these times to gain informed consent from people involved, and it is always better to find alternative means of illustrating a story rather than invading on the grief of others. The MMP advocates for the adoption of a human rights framework where the best interests of the child remain paramount and the child's rights are protected.

5.3.3 <u>What reports were there specifically on children's rights?</u>

During the monitoring period, there were a few reports that discussed the issues of children's rights either specifically or broadly. This could largely be attributed to the fact that the monitoring period coincided with Child Protection Week - an initiative by the South African Police Services (SAPS) running from the 26-31May 2003. As a result there was a significant increase in the number of reports about child abuse or reports dealing with the issues of child abuse and children's rights.

The Beeld (21/03/03 p11) featured a report on the rights of children and the progress made in South Africa on this subject. This report focussed exclusively on children's rights and was particularly informative and well written. Also, the Burger (28/03/03 p14) ran a column commenting on society's and the justice system's failure to adequately protect the rights of children. This column made an impassioned call for the justice system to re-arrange the rights of children and to ensure adequate protection for children and their rights.

SABC 3 (04/04/03 at 19h00) broadcast a news report that emerged at the Justice Committee hearings about the 4000 children in jail because there are not enough safe places for them. This item raised the issue of children in South African jails, which is a violation of the South African constitution and the UNCRC. The report is commendable as it highlights an important issue without compromising the best interests of the children and protects their identities. The Burger (03/03/03 p5) carried a similar report. The report stated that Parliament stepped in to

release five children younger than 14 who had been unlawfully detained in prison while awaiting trial. Their incarceration was raised in parliament during a debate of the Child Justice Bill – current legislation makes it illegal to keep awaiting-trial prisoners under the age of 14 in jail. This article contained a rights based framework, was constructive and informative and the rights of the children were kept in the forefront.

Another extremely significant article on child abuse was published in the Citizen (28/03/03 p3), highlighting how child abusers often go free as a result of the inability of South Africa's courts to adequately punish offenders. The article discussed how high levels of poverty often forced parents of victims to accept payment to withdraw cases. The article also used a range of experts in the child rights field and attempted to provide solutions to the problem.

The issue of child pornography received a significant amount of coverage particularly during the end of Child Protection Week. The coverage was significant as it was discussed within a rights-based framework and a broader legal framework. The Star (15/05/03 p1) raised the question, "Is child porn this man's right?" It tells the story of a documentary filmmaker facing charges of possession of child porn. The filmmaker wants the absolute ban on porn lifted for people who have innocent reasons to possess it and is therefore taking up the issue of the ban with the Constitutional Court. In an article in the Sunday Independent (18/05/03 p7) he stated that he was researching the issue of child porn and was not using it for his own gratification. (The report also appeared in the EP Herald 15/05/03 p6) The article raised important issues about the dilemma regarding the complete ban of child pornography that then makes it difficult to conduct research of any kind.

The issue of child pornography was also reported on SABC 1, 2 and 3 (30/05/03). These news items were based on the case of a neighbour who lured a three-year-old girl into his flat where he showed her child pornography, raped her and subsequently took indecent photographs of her. In all three reports the identities of the child and the mother were withheld. The items on SABC 2 and 3 however used actual examples of child pornography, although warnings were issued about the sensitive nature of the photographs. In the item the mother is interviewed, together with a criminologist, the South African Police Services (SAPS), and a children's rights activist, all of whom unequivocally stated that the possession of child pornography was a crime punishable by law and that the use of child porn often leads to child abuse.

### 5.3.4 <u>What about children's right to participation?</u>

Looking at the child sources was a means of assessing the extent to which children are able to exercise their right to participation, their right to express their views and opinions and have these taken seriously according to their age and

maturity and their right to freedom of expression, including the right to receive and impart information. What also required examination was whether children were sourced in a way that did not violate any other rights of the child but that the primary consideration was for the best interest of the child at all times.

Children have a right to participation but they are often not given the opportunity or taken seriously. This affects the way in which children are represented. The media, however, has a responsibility to provide balanced reporting, and one way in which the media can address the limited representation of children is to exercise their power by giving children the opportunity to participate.

As mentioned previously, children were accessed for their opinions and quoted either directly or indirectly in only 13% of all the news items. Additionally children appeared in images in 16% of the items. The graph below shows a further breakdown of these results. Where children appeared in images they were identified in 13% of the items but remained unidentified in 3% of the items. Where children were sourced by direct or indirect quote, they were identified in 10% of the items but remained unidentified in 3% of the items.

Graph 5.1.12
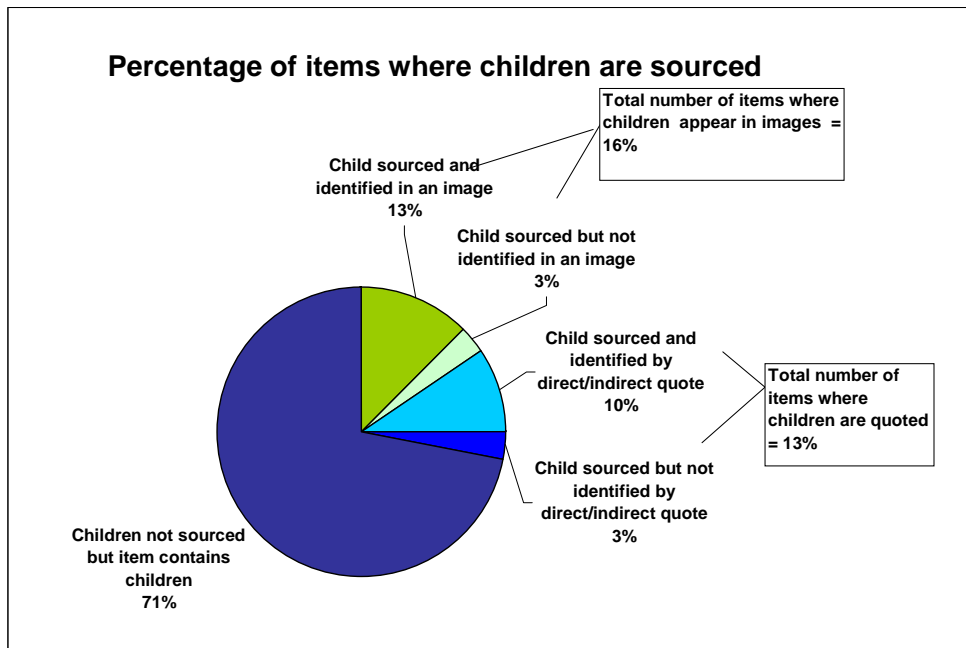
The Criminal Procedures Act strictly prohibits the naming and identification of a minor child who has been abused, or is involved in or a witness to a crime. It is imperative that the identities of such children are protected and that the best interests of the child are not compromised. Due to legal prohibitions, as well as moral and ethical reasons, children should only be identified when it is in their best interests.

It was encouraging to note that the number of reports in which the identities of children were protected and the best interests of the child were upheld and respected were greater than the number of reports that revealed the identities of children where it was clear that it would have not been in the best interests of the child. For example, Rapport (06/04/03 p7) reported a story of a girl who was raped by a parent. The 16-year old girl, who was placed in the care of a man and woman when she was only four months old, alleged that the man molested, abused, raped and sexually assaulted her throughout her life. In the reporting of this case, the media took the necessary precautions to protect the identity of the child and thus ensured her best interests.

The SABC 1, 2 and 3 (09/04/03 at 19h00) broadcast a report on the effects of war on children in which a group of children at a primary school were interviewed on their opinions and feelings about the war. This was a positive example of how children are able to express their opinions and participate without having their rights violated in any way.

The media also has the responsibility to inform the public. This responsibility also pertains to children who not only listen to and read about the news, but also actively request to be informed on matters that affect them.

The children in the participation workshops commented on this:

> *"I would like to see articles about how other children live in other parts of our country."*

> *"We want information about HIV/Aids. Children have to know how to protect themselves."*

> *"We want to know when schools reject children with HIV/Aids. We need to know also when schools send children away because they do not have school fees."*

Children's participation is not only about realising the right to receive, impart and access information and participate in decisions that affect them, it also makes good business sense to do so. If children's participation is ignored and the roles they are represented in are limited, if they are marginalised, it must then be understandable that they lose interest in the news.

It must also be recognised that children's participation can be difficult. Some of the reasons are:
- Issues of consent;
- Interviewing children requires additional skills;
- Intimidation on the part of the interviewer and the child;
- Issues of naming and identification; and

- Language, lack of understanding and other communication issues

There are however, solutions to these difficulties in the form of practical guidelines as well as advice and information bodies such as Save the Children Sweden and UNICEF and other children's rights organisations.

5.3.5 What issues were raised during the monitoring?

While topic codes capture the central subject of an item, there are usually a number of other issues likely to be raised by each article. The monitoring of issues provides an indication of what other matters were raised in relation to a topic. The results showed that the category of human rights issues was the most prominently raised category (31% of all the issues raised were human rights issues), but issues relating to this were raised implicitly rather than overtly. The media however need to use their power to raise awareness and educate the public about human rights and children's rights.

Individually, the most prominently raised issues related to rights to protection from maltreatment, abuse, neglect or degradation and the right to family or parental care when removed from the family environment.

9% of the issues raised in the children's items were issues of abuse. Often reports about child abuse are factual and event-based and do not address the issues around abuse. These reports tend to represent children as statistics, which then tends to perpetuate a discourse of victim-hood. Issues surrounding children and gender are infrequently discussed but gender plays a very important role when reporting on child abuse particularly when girl children are more frequently represented in abuse stories.

8% of the reports raised the issue that children have the right to protection. This issue obviously ties in to the more prominent stories in which children are found – crime, war, conflict and violence, child abuse, and disasters and accidents. This issue was mostly raised implicitly and was usually not elaborated on, even though there seems to be a great need, given the amount of coverage these types of news stories receive.

Overall, 24% of the top 10 issues referred to children's rights (children's rights to protection (8%), provision (6%), participation (4%), protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation (3%), and the right to family care or parental care or to appropriate care when removed from the family environment (3%)). This suggests that reports need to address these issues by making people more aware of children's rights and educating people on how these rights can be enforced.

The children also commented on this:

"I think they must put in more about children's rights and responsibilities. Parents don't give children their rights and children need to know about them."

6 Focus areas and case studies

6.1 Negatively reported stories

During the course of monitoring, items were given an overall positive or negative value. A positive value indicated that the report was not discriminatory and did not violate any ethical/ legal codes of conduct while a negative value indicated the opposite. A report was also considered discriminatory if it perpetuated a discriminatory stereotype, or specifically violated guidelines and codes of conduct adopted by journalists. For example, a report would be given a negative value if it named and identified a child when it was not in the best interests of the child or where a child's rights had been clearly violated.

6.1.1 What types of stories were reported on most negatively?

Top 10 negative point topics

Topic	
Crime	
War, conflict and violence	
Child Abuse	
Disasters and accidents	
Education	
Health	
HIV/Aids	
Personalities, profiles and families	
Vulnerable children	
Happy Sindane	
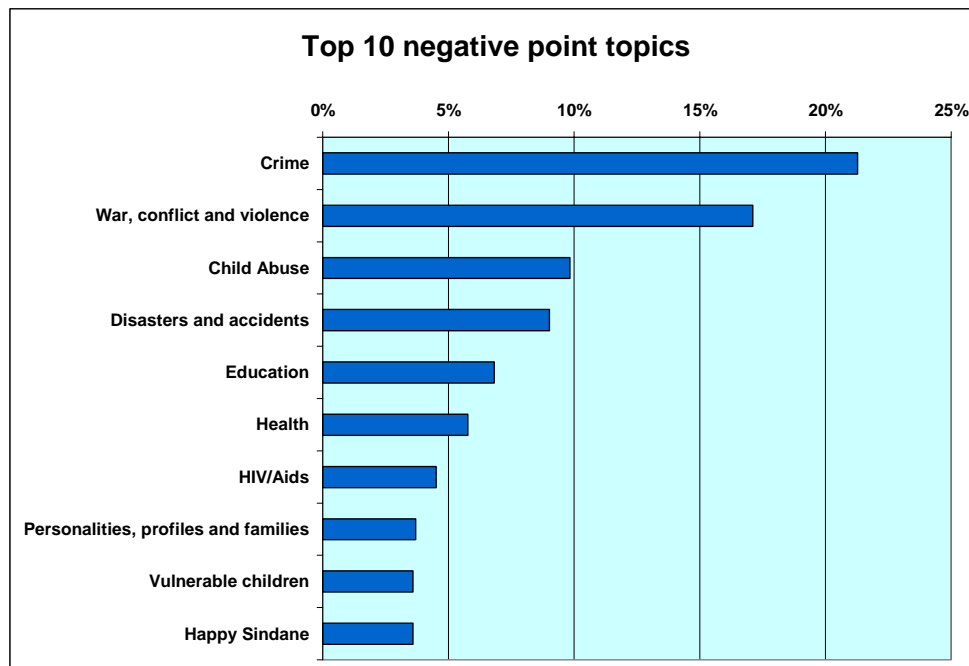
The above graph shows that 21% of all the reports that received the most negative and discriminatory rating were about crime. This was followed by the coverage of war, conflict and violence (17%), child abuse (10%) and disasters and accidents (9%). 5% of the negative reports were on HIV/Aids, attributed to the media's naming and identification of children with HIV/Aids.

6.1.2 Happy Sindane

Happy Sindane received so much coverage particularly during the latter part of the monitoring period that he was awarded a topic code of his own. This is the story of a boy who claimed to have been kidnapped by a black woman and raised by a black family but believed that he was from a white family. The media's coverage of the story raised many ethical questions. It was clear that this was regarded as a newsworthy story because it had interesting racial dimensions in that the "white boy" could speak only fluent Ndebele.

The case received prominent coverage across all print, radio and television media. The coverage began when Happy Sindane apparently walked into a police station asking for help in finding his "real" parents and the media eagerly followed the investigation into his true identity, often blatantly violating his right to privacy and clearly violating the Criminal Procedures Act by naming and identifying him.

This caused considerable distress to the boy and he was declared a ward of the state and was housed in a place of safety. In addition the court issued a gag order restricting the media's coverage of the case in terms of the Child Care Act (74) 1983. This order restricted the media from publishing in any way any information relating to the case except for official press releases. No information pertaining to his real identity was permitted, although speculation regarding his parentage was allowed where it was not negative or harmful to the boy.

The majority of the publications were sensitive to this order to the extent that the gag order itself was published. Others, however, such as the Sowetan (22/05/03 p3) unlawfully published information about an incident for which Sindane was arrested without showing in any way the relevance of this information. In light of the uncertainty of his age, and given that he was being treated as a minor, this was inappropriate. Particularly as the Justice Department spokesperson said that "the media attention the case had generated had left Sindane 'very traumatised,'" (Star 21/05/05 p.1) it does not seem that this would be in the best interests of the child.

In addition, the Sowetan (22/05/03 p.3) claimed that "the question regarding the true identity of the 'white' boy ….was solved by his black aunt yesterday." The report then gave an account of Sindane's real parents, violating the gag order and purporting to resolve the issue of Sindane's parentage.

While the media have the task of informing the public about events in society, they have to balance this against the rights of the parties concerned, and this often presents an ethical dilemma. The media often play a vital role in helping to locate missing children and it could be argued that the attention may have helped to locate Sindane's parents. But it is when the minor's best interests are not at

the forefront that it becomes problematic. It could even be argued that Sindane's picture and name should not have been printed to begin with, given that his exact age had yet to be determined which meant that he should have been treated as a minor. The media had the responsibility of remaining sensitive to this fact and needed to exercise extreme caution in printing any additional information, maintaining the best interests of the child. In particular, the media needed to continue to take cognisance of the court ruling when dealing with further information pertaining to the case.

6.1.3 Child Abuse

Child abuse as a topic featured in 10% of the items monitored and it fell among the top 10 topics of news items containing children. Given the seriousness of child abuse and the problem it presents to South Africa, it warrants and receives a significant amount of coverage by the media. According to a report by the Children's Institute in 1996, 59% of crimes reported by young people involve rape, 15% assault and 10% violence and intimidation. [3] The South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare indicates these incidents are on the increase

6.1.3.1 What issues are raised in the reporting on child abuse?

This study revealed that the language used when reporting on child abuse is often dramatic and the reports contain unnecessary detail. Reports tend to be disempowering in that they provide little or no information that could assist the public either in the prevention of child abuse or in the reporting of cases or seeking of help. They also tend to perpetuate a discourse of victim-hood by representing victims as statistics.

An example of extreme and dramatic reporting was seen in the coverage of the rape of 9-month old "Baby Tshepang" in the Northern Cape in 2002, followed by another case of an infant so badly raped that her intestines were left hanging out. These cases were clearly horrific but in both cases the issue of child rape was sidelined. In the case of the rape of baby Tshepang there was an enormous amount of pressure from the media for the police to make an arrest and as a result nine men were arrested who were not the real perpetrators. The media had tried and convicted nine men while the rapist walked free. In the latter case there was much discussion and debate about whether or not to publish the photo of the infant. The debate surrounding the issue of publishing the photograph however took precedence over and effaced the issue of the child rape.

---

[3] Berry, L.& Guthrie,T. 2003 Rapid Assessment: The Situation of children in South Africa, Children's Institute University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

6.1.3.2 How does the media represent child abuse?

In order to establish specifically what was being said about child abuse it was necessary to create sub-categories for the monitoring. The following graph illustrates these sub-categories and what percentage they make up of the total stories on child abuse.

Graph 6.1.2

How were child abuse stories represented?

- Child Prostitution 2%
- Mental & Emotional Abuse 0%
- Child Pornography 5%
- Physical Abuse 7%
- Child Neglect 8%
- Child Abuse-general 38%
- Sexual Abuse 16%
- Child Rape 24%
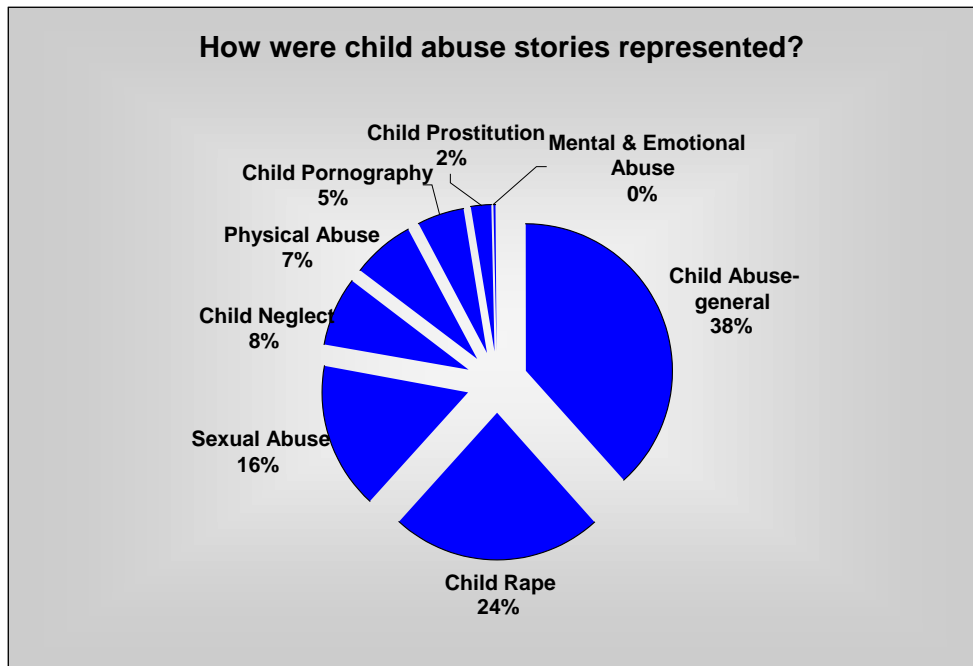
Child abuse – general, which constituted 38% of the reporting, referred to stories where abuse was mentioned but not specified. Interestingly, the focus of much of the reporting was on child rape and sexual abuse that together accounted for 40% of the stories on abuse. This seems to confirm the focus of the media on the dramatic and extreme as these types of stories often allow for shocking and gory details.

The following graph further illustrates how boys and girls are represented in these specific sub-categories.

Graph 6.1.3

Representation of girls and boys in stories of abuse
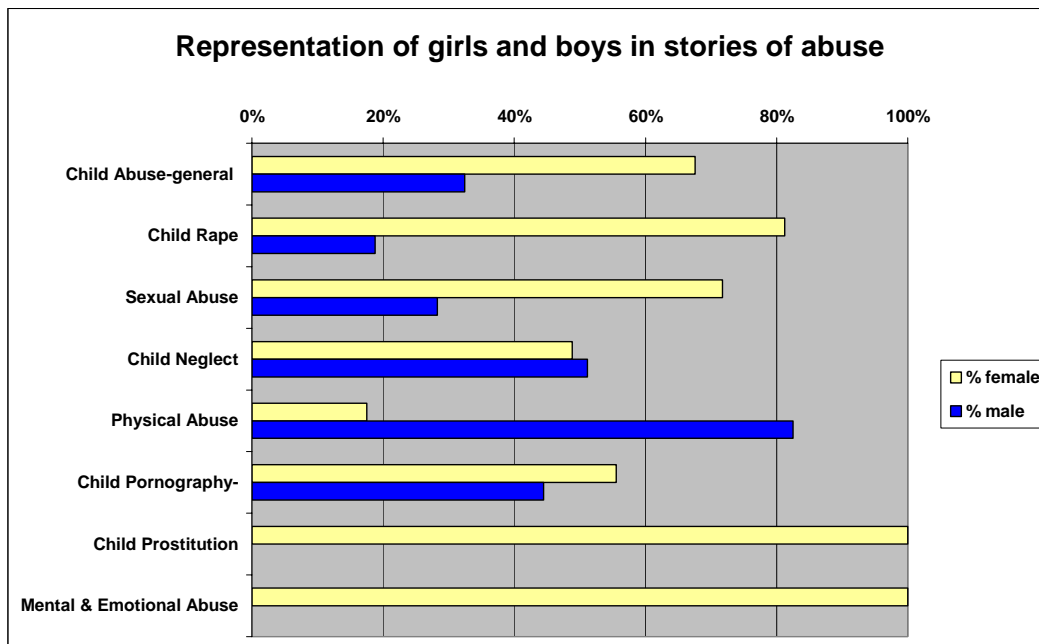
Stories about girl and boy children appear to be relegated to specific sub-categories about child abuse e.g. 100% of stories dealing with prostitution and 100% of stories about mental and emotional abuse represent female children only. Also, in the majority of the sub-categories the representation of girl children is much higher than the representation of boy children. The exception to this is the representation of gender in the sub-category physical abuse, in which 83% of the stories represent boy children and 18% represent girl children. The possible explanation for this maybe that boys are normally perceived as being physically stronger than girls and a way of demonstrating power over boys is through physical violence while girl children are sexually violated. The second exception is the sub-category of child neglect in which there appears to be some amount of parity in the representation of both genders.

The media's representation of child abuse tends to re-enforce popular misconceptions about gender, particularly that girls are violated more often than boys. There exists a tendency for the media to focus on girl children in stories about child abuse even though there is no evidence that child abuse is less prevalent among boy children. This then suggests that girl children are more vulnerable and innocent than boy children.

6.1.3.3 How are children sourced in stories on child abuse?

The following graph illustrates how children have been sourced (or not) in relation to stories on child abuse.

Graph 6.1.4
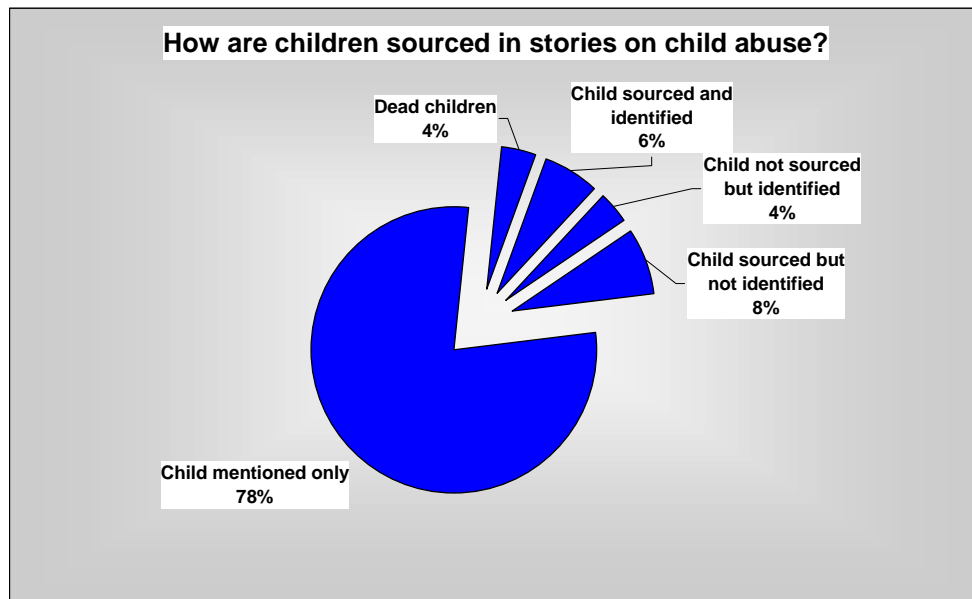
In 6% of news stories dealing with child abuse children were sourced and identified and in 4% of news stories children were not sourced but identified. This makes a total of 10% where children were identified. Identification of a child does not only include naming and photographing an abused child but also includes the publication of information that would inevitably lead to the identification of the child. For example, showing photographs of the parents or the house where the child lived could make the child easily identifiable to people in its immediate environment.

The identification of a child who has been abused is problematic for ethical and legal reasons. Section 154(3) of the Criminal Procedures Act prohibits the naming and identification of a child who has been abused. Ethically, revealing the identity of a child is an invasion of the child's rights to dignity and privacy and also exposes the child to further humiliation and ostracism.

More positively however the graph indicates that 8% of children were sourced but not identified and 78% were mentioned only. This is a good indication of media's efforts to highlight issues of abuse without naming and identifying a child thereby, maintaining the best interests of the child.

6.1.3.4 What were some of the problems in reporting on child abuse?

The monitoring revealed that the issue of child abuse is given a high news value when the report is shocking, unusual, gory and detailed. Such was the case of the girl who was allegedly forced to have sex with a dog. This story was reported on in many media including the Sowetan Sunday World (20/04/03 p5), Saturday Star (09/04/03 p2), Daily News (11/04/03 p5), City Press (13/04/03 p18) and SABC3 (16/04/03 19h00). The language used in the reports was often very graphic and the focus was on the gruesome details of the abuse. Some of the media referred to the girl as the "Dog sex girl" (Sowetan Sunday World 27/04/03 p2). This type of language is dehumanising and disrespectful and serves to further victimise the child. It also serves as a negative label placed unduly on the child. It is important the media respect the rights of the victims instead of subjecting them to further trauma.

The case of Fanwell Khumalo, a child rapist, also received a fair amount of coverage in the media – Sunday Times (02/03/03 p7), The Star (13/03/03 p2) and Sowetan (01/04/03 p2). The reports were largely based on court testimony and contained detail about the rape of the girls. In merely providing accounts of the rapes, the children are represented as statistics. It is important to frame the article instead within a rights-based framework. The media is to be commended, however, in protecting the identities of the girls.

The most worrying factor when reporting on child abuse is the identification of the minors involved or the publication of information that could lead to the identification of the child. This was clearly seen in the case of a 9-year-old boy who was sodomised but identified in the EP Herald (19/03/03 p4). The identification of children who have been abused is unethical as it stigmatises the child and often leads to further victimisation. The victim may be blamed for their role in the abuse (comments such as "she had it coming" or "if you go out dressed like that then you are looking for trouble") and there is still considerable shame associated with being abused (women and girls, in particular, may be seen as "damaged goods" or "unclean").

In another report in the Star (04/04/03 p3), "Jailed mom purges her pain with daughters" tells of a programme that allows imprisoned women to express remorse for their crimes. In this article, a woman who killed her husband for years of violent abuse is named and identified. Accompanying the article is a photograph of the woman and her daughter. The article mentioned that the daughter was also sexually abused. While her daughter's identity is not revealed directly, naming and photographing her mother indirectly reveal it.

6.1.3.5 What were some of the positive reports on child abuse?

An article about the abuse of women in South Africa appeared in the Business Day (27/03/03 p11). The article stated that the home, instead of being a safe haven, is where most of the abuse occurs and that children frequently witness this violence. This item was a well-written assessment of the problem of domestic violence and how it impacts on children.

During Child Protection Week, there were numerous reports on child abuse framed within a rights-based framework. These reports were empowering and focussed on creating awareness and educating the public about the scourge of child abuse. An example was the SABC 1, 2, and 3 (30/05/03) who broadcast a report about "kinderprinting". This was a report about an initiative by the SAPS to record the details of children attending pre-school in order to trace children involved in kidnapping or child abuse.

6.1.4 HIV/Aids

6.1.4.1 What issues are raised in the reporting on HIV/Aids?

The HIV/Aids pandemic has enormous implications for South Africa, especially the high infection rates. It is undoubtedly a highly topical issue in which children and the images of children are used to highlight the effects of the pandemic and to elicit sympathy from readers. In using images of children, the media sometimes fails to protect the identities of children infected or affected by HIV/Aids. This then has serious consequences for the people they report on and raises ethical concerns. Disclosing the identities of people living with Aids without their informed consent may lead to rejection and their being ostracised by family and society. This is particularly problematic for children who may not understand the consequences of disclosing their status publicly and who thus need to be protected.

In spite of the impact of HIV/Aids on children and the high HIV infection rate, information about children and HIV/Aids has a low news value as opposed to images of children with HIV/Aids. Reporting on HIV/Aids in general has been extensive but has focused on the conflict around governments HIV/Aids policy. Since government's change in its policy, HIV/Aids as a topic has featured less prominently on the news agenda. It is imperative, however, that the media inform and educate the public about HIV/Aids and its preventative measures. The media also has a role to play in educating children about HIV/Aids. Children from the participation workshops expressed a clear need to obtain more information about HIV/Aids and how it affects children.

> *"We want information about HIV/Aids. Children have to know how to protect themselves."*

6.1.4.2 **What did the monitoring reveal about how the media represents HIV/Aids**

In order to address all the issues surrounding HIV/Aids, sub-categories were created for the monitoring to identify what aspects of the pandemic were given coverage in relation to children. The monitoring revealed that out of all the stories monitored, 3% were about HIV/Aids. Further analysis revealed that the bulk of these reports (63%) dealt with HIV/Aids in general, while 16% were about treatment, 13% dealt with children orphaned as a result of HIV/Aids, and sex education and funding accounted for 5% and 3% respectively.

Graph 6.1.5

How were stories on HIV/AIDS

Treatment
16%

Orphans
13%

Sex Education
5%

Funds/donations for
treatment
3%

HIV/AIDS general
63%
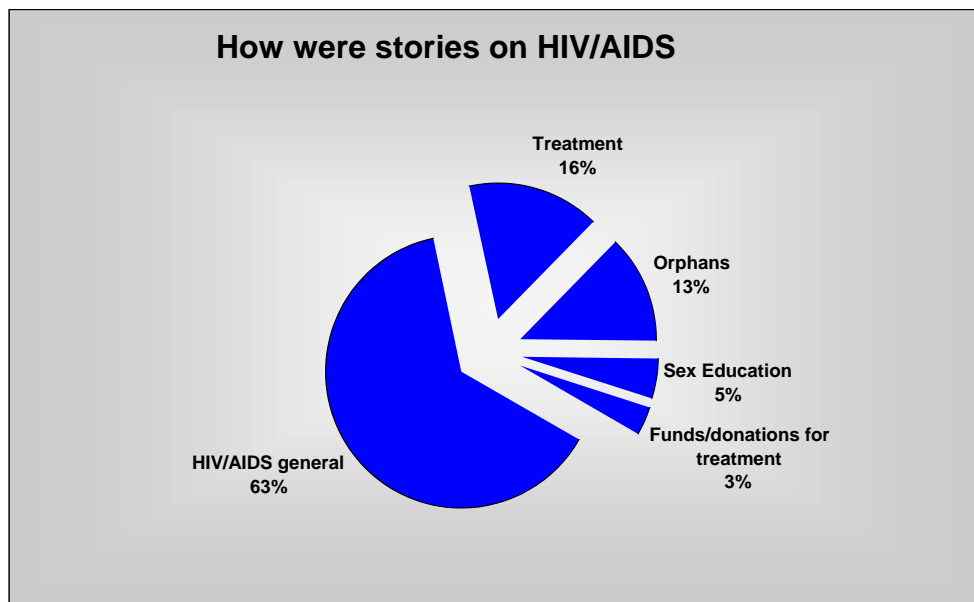
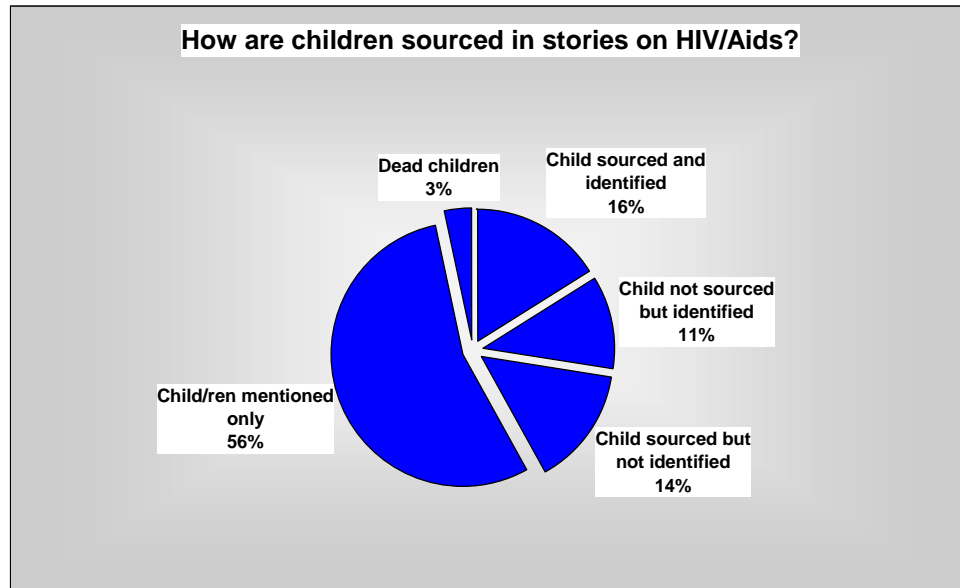Many of the reports dealt with the conflict surrounding treatment and government's policy and the children were tangential to the reports, but there were many stories during the monitoring period that were positive in terms of content and which dealt with the subject of HIV/Aids broadly.

6.1.4.3 How are children sourced in stories on HIV/Aids?

Graph 6.1.6

The monitoring revealed that in stories dealing with HIV/Aids, 16% of the items sourced and identified children while 11% identified but did not source children. This makes a total of 27% where children are identified. The identification of children with HIV/Aids is problematic because of the stigma attached to it. It could expose children to rejection and discrimination and therefore to secondary trauma. Even identifying children living with a family member with HIV/Aids could lead to the child being ostracised because of the fear and lack of knowledge of the disease.

In the majority of reports (56%), children are mentioned only. In 14% of reports children are sourced but not identified. This indicates that children's opinions and perspectives are accessed without revealing the identities of children. Sourcing children in this way does not compromise the best interests of the child.

6.1.4.4 What were some of the problems in reporting on HIV/Aids?

There was one prominent story during the monitoring period that blatantly violated ethical guidelines. The story was about a 13-year-old boy who contracted HIV/Aids from a blood transfusion after an operation in October 2002 and it was only in January 2003 that it was discovered that the blood he had received was HIV positive.

This story was first reported in the Beeld (05/03/03 p1). On the front page there was an image of the boy sitting on a kitchen chair without a shirt and his

distraught mother in the background. The high angle of the image seemed to perpetuate an unequal relationship between the subject (the child) and the reader. The inequality of this relationship is illustrated through the way in which the boy is looking up, towards the camera. This kind of imagery relegates him to the already selected role of the vulnerable, powerless, and innocent victim.

Both SABC3 (07/03/03 8pm), and e-tv (07/03/03 7pm) covered the story of this young boy. During the SABC 3 news report, the journalist spoke about the Legal Aid Board's willingness to help the family with legal aid, and the child's dream of becoming a lawyer – this during images shown of the boy playing with his dog. The report clearly identified him and the fact that he is HIV-positive. The e-tv report at 7pm, labelled "Deadly Donations", followed suit in that it spoke about his dreams and the possibility that they might not come true. What was interesting about this report was that e-tv had chosen to interview the boy himself. When asked his opinion he responded by saying: "All the children will laugh at me . . . because I am HIV-positive". This acknowledgement in itself points to the inability of the boy to comprehend the extent to which a broadcast like this would expose him. Additionally, in SABC 3's roundup, the journalist noted the following, "next time you need a blood transfusion you could become another tragic statistic". This type of language is not only inflammatory, but it also reinforces the negative stigma of being HIV-positive in South Africa. Even to suggest that the boy is merely a statistic is irresponsible journalism in that it perpetuates a culture of journalism that focuses on the dramatic, disregards the child's suffering and pays no heed to the paramount importance of children's human rights.

It is interesting to note the reporting on this case by two other written media, The Citizen (06/03/03 p3) and The Star (17/03/03 p3). Both of these papers chose to approach the story from a technical point of view – how it is possible for something like this to happen; the chance of this happening to other people who have to receive blood from the blood transfusion service; and, the process donors have to go through before being allowed to donate blood. While both of these papers are to be commended for the tone of their respective articles, they nevertheless contribute to the violation of the child's human rights by not hesitating to name the boy and reveal his HIV status. It would seem that a pattern is evolving in media reporting in that once one medium breaks with the name of a child and his/her HIV status, other mediums freely follow suit (such as the case with The Citizen (06/03/03 p3) and The Star (17/03/03 p3)).

The International Federation of Journalists encourages journalists and media organisations to take into account the consequences of the publication of any material regarding and concerning children. When deciding to report on a case such as this, one very often has to weigh up public interest against the best interests of the child. This is somewhat complex however as it often involves a decision on what the best interests of the child are – in this case the rendering of

possible financial and medical assistance to a child who is HIV positive, versus his right to not having his HIV status revealed in the press.

This type of decision often has to be made by the parents and sometimes even by the children themselves. In this case, the Beeld (05/03/03, p1) notes that the mother herself does not really know much about the virus, indicating that even for the parents it could not have been an informed decision. However, having little money, limited recourses and being, as they themselves admitted, somewhat ignorant of the virus it is easy to understand why they would resort to the papers to elicit not only sympathy but also badly needed medical assistance.

The question here then is whether the media, in their decision to run with the story, consequently violated the best interests of the child, and accordingly his human rights. Taking into consideration the nature of the boy's illness, and the current concern regarding the stigma attached to people living with HIV, the best interests of the child clearly did not lie in his HIV status being revealed. It is arguable that he could still have received financial support had the media put forward his case without identifying him. Many media use equally effective techniques such as silhouettes, or pictures of the child's hand. However his name as well as his HIV status had been revealed, and as such is a violation of his human rights.

Additionally, the World Health Organisation's guidelines for media professionals covering health issues warn that journalists must be "mindful of the consequences of the story".   The Beeld (05/03/03 p1) notes that, "according to his mother he does not fully understand the implications of contracting HIV". In this case it is obvious that the child did not know (at the time of publishing) the repercussions that could come from such a story, particularly relating to the stigma attached to HIV/Aids and people living with it. In a follow-up story the Beeld (20/03/03 p5) notes how the subject had to deal with the stigma and ignorance of the public (people walking out of the same restaurant he and his mother were visiting), yet at the same time also indicates that there are people who do not suffer from the same affliction (long lost friends looking him up). While the follow-up report seems to attempt an improved representation of the boy and his situation, it does not preclude the initial repercussions of the first report on not only his self-image, but also his social environment. Similarly, while sympathy for his situation currently encapsulates a significant component of the reaction to the report, the fact that his HIV status is revealed will stay with him for the rest of his life, and will influence, at some level, the way he is treated by various people. It is essential thus to advocate for 'informed consent' in these cases.

It is questionable whether the print-media would have included the story on the front page had it been a child with any other life-threatening disease. A qualitative survey by the Media Monitoring Project (to become part of a larger

study) shows that this has not been the case. The survey run in March 2003 shows that out of 14 articles dealing with children who have some sort of life threatening illness, it was only the article dealing with an HIV-positive boy that reached the front page. (The following papers were monitored for this survey: Beeld, Burger, EP Herald, Natal Witness, Rapport, Sowetan, Star, Weekend Argus). Taking this into consideration, one could argue that the choice of the paper to run with the child's HIV story as front-page news has contributed to a growing problem regarding HIV/ Aids and stigma in South Africa. Once again the focus of the report is not with portraying the story of this child but rather with the drama that goes hand in hand with reporting on HIV/Aids.

Admittedly the media often plays a vital role in obtaining financial assistance for children who have terminal illnesses or who are in some other type of need, this assistance however should not come at the cost of their human rights. The Media Monitoring Project encourages media practitioners to find alternative means of generating help and support for these children. Bearing in mind that children's rights should be paramount, it is imperative that their human rights are protected in the media at all costs.

6.1.4.5 What were some of the positive reports on HIV/Aids?

There were some examples that demonstrated the media's ability to exercise due caution and sensitivity when reporting on children. A report about HIV/Aids in the Burger (30/04/03 p6) told the story of orphans who had lost their caregivers to HIV/ Aids and who were not receiving their child support grants as there was no adult caregiver to receive the grant in their behalf. The same report was carried by the Star (30/04/03 p1) and highlighted the problems associated with the government's grant system. In addition the way in which the children were photographed was commendable in that it protected their identities. The technique used focused on their hands and silhouettes and proved to be more effective than showing the actual picture of the children.

As mentioned earlier in section 6.1.4.4, the Citizen (05/04/03 p8) carried an opinion piece on Aids law, discussing the rights of the uninfected, especially the rights of spouses and children. The item was informative and was underpinned by human rights considerations. It discussed the right to privacy and the right not to be discriminated against in relation to children, spouses and people living with Aids.

It is these types of reports that are far more educative and informative and contribute to the public's better understanding of HIV/Aids and its associated problems.

6.1.5 War

6.1.5.1 What issues are raised in reporting on war?

Reporting on war is a difficult task for the media, as it requires a delicate balance of informing people about the war and at the same time protecting the rights to dignity and privacy of those already suffering as a result of the war. As wars are often international events, it is also important that the media do more than just report on the facts and events. The reports need to be accurate, fair, interrogative and most importantly placed within a framework of human rights.

6.1.5.2 What did the monitoring reveal about how the media represents war?

During the monitoring period, the war in Iraq received prominent coverage in the media. Images played a vital role in the representation of the war and television news bulletins and newspapers were filled with an array of images including children in various stages of distress, showing their war injuries. These images are often used for the purpose of eliciting sympathy.

6.1.5.3 How are children sourced in stories on war?

The war in Iraq featured prominently in the media and not surprisingly there were a large number of reports and images on the effects of the war on children. The majority of the media used images of children for a specific purpose, to highlight the plight those affected by the war or to affect the way that either side is viewed. The images of children are effective in that they put across with great poignancy the devastation brought about by the war, for the child is perceived as the epitome of innocence and vulnerability.

Graph 6.1.7

How are children sourced in stories on war?

Dead children 16%
Child sourced and identified 19%
Child not sourced but identified 20%
Child sourced but not identified 13%
Child mentioned only 32%
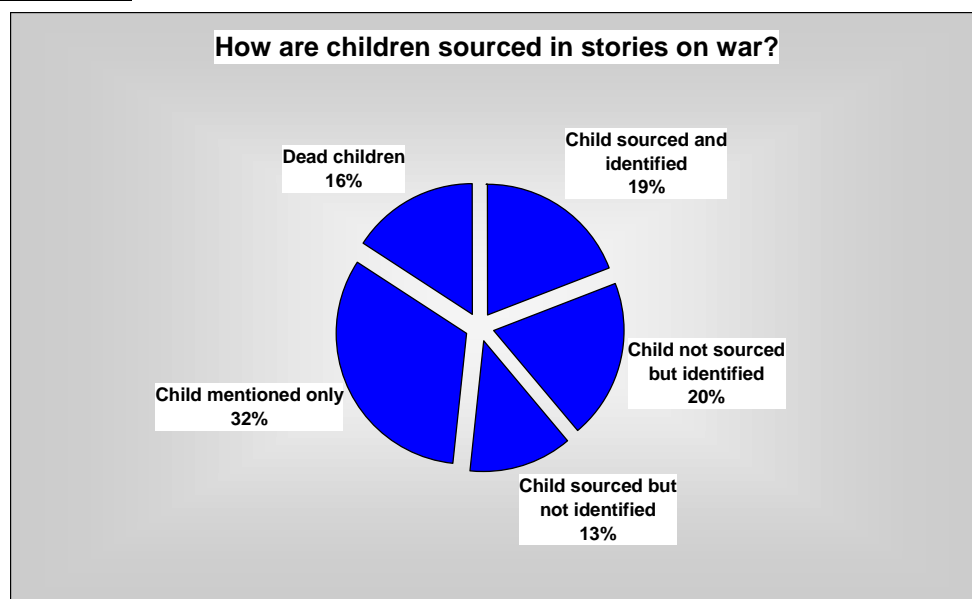
The above graph illustrates how children were accessed or reported on in stories on war. 16% of the reports featured children who died, where they were either photographed or mentioned in the text. In many of the reports the children's voices and opinions are not heard. 20% of reports about the war identified children but did not source them and 19% of reports sourced and identified children. A total of 39% of reports therefore identified children while 13% of the reports sourced children without identifying them. Showing pictures of suffering children can at times motivate people into action to help, but most often the pictures serve as a short-lived macabre voyeurism. In the end then the pictures are an invasion of the child's right to privacy and dignity.

6.1.5.4 What were some of the problems in reporting on war?

The Sunday Independent (02/03/03 p14) published a collage of images in which children featured prominently. Images of a sick Iraqi boy and girl were shown as well as an image of a dead Iraqi boy. The pictures that appeared in the Sunday Independent while obviously relating to the war were not contextualised or accompanied by any article framed within a rights-based discourse. While a picture is revealing, it is important that the rights to privacy and dignity of those reported on are maintained even though the images are published in a foreign country. The constant barrage of such images desensitises readers and viewers to the cost of human life.

The question raised at that time, was, whether the media had pushed the limit in its mission to show the public the face of war. The Star (02/04/03 p1) and Daily News (02/04/03 p1) on the front page emblazoned the disturbing image of a bloodied, dead corpse of a child (The Daily News included the dead mother lying in a wooden coffin). It seems that the picture was used to show the horror of war. While some maintain that images of war are used to make an indictment against war (Clarke, G. 1997 The Photograph Oxford University Press p159) or to communicate to the reader the atrocities of war, it can be argued that images of death and despair also produce "compassion fatigue" (Taylor, J. 1998). It appears as though the "horror makes for fascination" (Ibid.). This problem is compounded when the images contain children as they represent the most vulnerable sector of society and the horror is supposed to be greatest when these innocents are violated.

Some of the mediums forewarned readers about the images, including the Beeld (31/03/03 p1) who forewarned readers that such images were on the increase when it included the image of a hurt Iraqi child, bloodied and crying, in the hands of coalition military medical staff. While this is necessary, it does not make the images less intrusive and still perpetuates the cycle of showing ever more bloody and disturbing images to shock the public.

One of the most poignant stories was that of a 12-year old boy who lost both his arms and his entire family in a missile attack. The story received prominent coverage by all media and photographs of him lying in a hospital bed bandaged were shown in many newspapers including the Natal Witness (17/03/03 p4), the Star (17/04/03 p10) and Beeld (07/03/03 p1). The suffering endured by this boy clearly struck a cord with the public and the media eagerly followed any reports of treatment and progress. While it is commendable that the media report on the atrocities of war and how innocent people are injured and killed, this should not be done at the expense of the people involved. The WHO recommends that journalists always remember that their stories continue to have an effect long after they have gone, and that sensitive reporting is essential if the story is not to have negative repercussions.

6.1.5.5 What were some of the positive reports on war?

In spite of the negative images featuring children some media engaged in critical analysis of the media's role in reporting on the war. Sunday Sun (30/03/2003 p14) featured a report "Where should the media draw the line?" The report discussed the value of publishing pictures of mutilated corpses and whether it was propaganda on behalf on behalf of the US not to allow the publication of images in order to sway public opinion about the war.

Also on the positive side were a few reports relating to children and the war and in particular focussing on images of war and its effects on children. The Cape Times (09/04/03 p6) carried a report that provided a detailed report on the effects of watching war on TV, with particular attention given to the effects on children. In this report, experts unanimously agreed that in order to reduce the effects of stress brought on by media coverage of the war, people should stop watching the war on TV.

The Star (02/04/03 p2) featured a story about Grade 2 pupils at St. Mary's school in Johannesburg whose lesson included writing a prayer for the children of Iraq. The report stated that the questions on the minds of pupils were on human rights issues, such why an ambulance was bombed or why women and children were not taken out of the country before the war. This was an exceptionally unusual and a thought-provoking article showing the public another aspect of the war and its effects, and allowing children to have a voice in matters that affect them.

6.1.6 Crime

6.1.6.1 What issues are raised in the reporting on crime?

Crime was the most negatively reported topic and the majority of the reports, as would be expected, represented children as victims. The focus of children particularly in relation to crime may be attributed to the innocence and vulnerability generally associated with children. Eliciting sympathy from readers and viewers seems to be more effectively achieved by publishing pictures and stories that include children. It is important that the media in its coverage of crime exercise due caution and sensitivity particularly when reporting on children, regardless of whether they are the victims or perpetrators of crime.
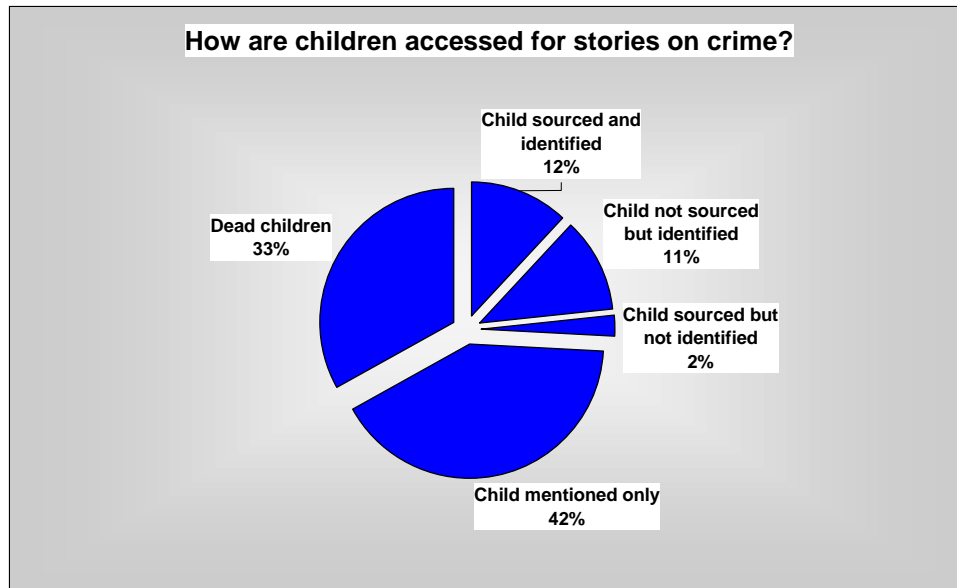
The majority of reports on children and crime are often factual and the details of the case and photographs used seem perfect for eliciting horror and sympathy from the public. In addition these reports do not contain a rights based framework and mostly lack information that is empowering. This seems to be particularly the case for radio as radio news bulletins in general are short – on average they are 5-8 minutes in duration. The challenge is to try and report on the facts in such a way that crime does not sound like an inevitable daily occurrence to which people are powerless victims or bystanders, but rather to present the information in a way that is empowering.

6.1.6.2 How are children sourced in stories on crime?

Sourcing children in relation to crime is an important issue particularly when children are the victims, perpetrators or witnesses of crime. The Criminal Procedures Act prohibits the naming and identification of children involved in criminal proceedings. Even when no charges are laid however, great sensitivity is needed when sourcing children as they, like adults, are often severely traumatised by crime.

Graph 6.1.8

According to the graph, 33% of stories either showed dead children in photographs or identified them in stories. This is a fairly high number largely because there is no legal prohibition on naming children who have died. The graph also shows that 12% of children were sourced and identified and 11% of children were not sourced but identified in relation to crime. Therefore 23% of stories on crime revealed the identities of children. Only 2% of stories sourced children and did not identify them.

How are children accessed for stories on crime?

- Child sourced and identified 12%
- Child not sourced but identified 11%
- Child sourced but not identified 2%
- Child mentioned only 42%
- Dead children 33%

6.1.6.3 What were some of the problems in reporting on crime?

The Cape Flats gang violence received a substantial amount of coverage during the monitoring period. Gang violence is a growing problem in certain parts of South Africa and it necessitates the communication of information that would empower those directly affected by it. Many of the reports however were factual and event-based and the majority focused exclusively on the deaths of children.

Some examples included Zibonele (02/04/03) who reported that 60 guns were confiscated from gangsters in the Bishop area, following the killing of a 10-year old girl. Motsweding (05/04/03) also reported on an 8-year old boy and an 11-year old girl who were gunned down in Robindale. The 11-year old girl was a state witness in a case involving 28 gang members. Zibonele (19/04/03) again reported on a 16-year old girl who was rushed to hospital after she was shot in Eastridge when two gangs were embroiled in a fight. Ukhozi (28/04/03) reported that the body of a 6-year old girl was found in Kraaifontein in the Western Cape with bullet wounds to the head.

Other reports were very brief to the extent that there was no contextualisation e.g. Motsweding (25/05/03) reported that a 9-year old boy was mutilated and killed in Soshanguve. In this case the child is represented as merely another crime statistic and one must inevitably question the value of such a report as it is of little value in terms of information.

Another critical issue in crime reporting is the identification of victims and perpetrators. In reports about the crime it is important that the media does not name or identify minors involved in criminal proceedings. Often the naming and identification of minors has the effect of endangering their lives. This was seen in the case of a Muslim woman and her daughter who were murdered on the Potchefstroom highway. A second child who was with her survived the attack, yet the media, including the Star (11/03/03 p2) and Cape Times (12/03/03 p3), indirectly named and identified the surviving daughter by naming her relative and by doing so could have endangered her life.

What is also important to remember in the reporting on crime is whether relevant family members have been notified of all the facts in a case. There have been serious incidents in the past where family members have found out about evidence of abuse through the media instead of through the police.

It is important that the media highlight the problem of crime as it affects the lives of almost all South Africans, including children. However it is essential that the media exercise due caution and sensitivity when reporting on children and take adequate measures to protect the identity of children in accordance with the Criminal Procedures Act.

The naming and identification of children could also possibly endanger a child's life particularly if the child is involved in a criminal proceeding where he/she is a key witness. Such was the case in an item by Rapport (13/04/03 p10) "Mother becomes armour against death bullet rain." In this article a 5-year old boy survived a vicious attack on himself and his mother when his mother put her body between him and the bullets and in doing so saved his life. (The mother was a key witness in a case against a gang.) The article was accompanied by a photograph of the boy in spite of the fact that he was going into a police protection programme. This article is in clear violation of the Criminal Procedures Act 154 (3) and has also possibly endangered the boy's life, as he is now clearly identifiable.

The Citizen (15/03/03 p5) reported on the story of a 16-year old girl who testified against her father who was on trial for killing his wife (the girl's mother). This item was extremely problematic as the names of both her mother and father were provided thereby indirectly identifying the child. This is clearly a violation of the rights of the child witness, who was under 18 years old and thus legally entitled to be protected by remaining unidentified.

6.1.6.4 <u>What were some of the positive reports on crime?</u>

Some of the print mediums addressed the issue of gangsterism in which many innocent children often die in the crossfire between various gangs. The Cape Times (13/03/03 p10) in their editorial "The Death of an innocent" commented on the death of Lulu Appolis, a young girl, and showed a photograph showing her father being lead away from her body. The editorial made an impassioned plea to the public, and called on the police, prosecutors and leaders to stand up against gangsterism and crime. The issue of gangsterism and how it affects children was discussed comprehensively within a rights-based framework.

Radio PMB (08/04/03) reported on a primary school teacher accused of murdering an 8-year old. The report was balanced and also placed the incident into context by raising and discussing the issue of corporal punishment in schools.

Ukhozi (15/03/03) reported on nine boys between the ages 9 and 18 who appeared in court in Groblershoop for killing a boy and throwing his body in a dam. This report is commendable as it did not name or identify the minor children involved. Ukhozi (31/05/03) also broadcast a report about a 13-year old boy who was questioned following the rapes of babies while his mother was at work. This report protected the identity of all the children involved. It is important that the media protect the rights of all children regardless of whether they are victims or perpetrators.

6.1.7 <u>Disabilities</u>

6.1.7.1 <u>What issues are raised in the reporting on disabilities?</u>

Children with disabilities as well as issues relating to disabilities receive marginal coverage and, as a topic on its own, received only 1% coverage in the news media. However for the purposes of analysis, the topic "children with disabilities" fell under "vulnerable children" which fell amongst the top 10 most negatively reported topics.

Children with disabilities are often represented as "other" or as different from the normal. Emphasis is often placed on the disability making the disability a defining feature of the child. Also, the language used in these reports tends to be insensitive, such as a report about a child with a facial disfigurement was referred to as "Monster Boy" in the Sowetan Sunday World (21/09/03). Such labelling has may have the effect of ostracising the child within his own community.

The media occasionally reports on stories of children with unusual disabilities or disfigurements in an attempt to solicit assistance from the public. The results are

often positive as there are follow up reports informing the public that child has received assistance. However sensitive reporting in the coverage of such cases is essential particularly with regards to the use of images. Some images seem to focus on the horror of the disability and are often invasive, infringing on the child's right to dignity and privacy.

6.1.7.2 **What were some of the problems in reporting on disabilities?**

An item appeared in the Citizen (23/05/03 p11) in which a boy born with deformed arms and no legs received prosthetic arms and legs that would enable him to get himself to school. While there was an attempt to frame the story positively, the language used contained a very dramatic discourse especially in the first line in the article, which read, "When Livhuwani Mutsharini was born his father was overcome by horror. He tried to convince his wife to kill the child." The disclosure of such information to the public could at a later stage have a negative impact on the child as he could discover that he was seen as a burden and was essentially rejected by his father. The same story was reported in the Star "Limpopo's limbless Wonderboy". While this may be a description of the child it represents the child as a victim and contains a negative discourse. This insensitive discourse could lead to ridicule in a social context.

6.1.7.3 **What were some of the positive reports on disabilities?**

The Star (07/03/03 p2) reported on a "Disabled schoolgirl doing time for good cause." In this report a young girl and a teacher had volunteered to give up their freedom for two days in a mock prison to raise funds for the disabled. The monies were to be used to build an elevator and ramps for their school. This report was a positive representation of a child with a disability in that she was seen as responsible and willing to take initiative. This report is different to most reports on children with disabilities and children in general where they are often represented as victims. This particular report however is empowering and represents the child positively.

In addition SABC 3 (06/04/03 at 19h00) reported a story in which young people with disabilities were given the opportunity to play golf, thanks to an innovative programme run by the South African Disabled Golf Association. This item was positive by nature of its content but also in that it accessed the children for their opinions and this was not done in a derogatory manner.

6.1.8 <u>Sport</u>

6.1.8.1 <u>How were children represented in stories on sport?</u>

Sport was not reported on negatively, but it received a significant amount of coverage in the media and thus warrants some discussion. Prior to the study being conducted the general perception was that sport reports were largely aimed at male adults, however this perception was found to be untrue. While sport accounted for 12% of news stories containing children there was distinct gender bias. 72% of children represented in sport reports were boys while 28% of the children were girls. In general there appears to be a tendency to represent girl children in negative contexts while boy children are represented in more positive contexts. The dominance of boy children in sports confirms the perception and stereotype that boys are more capable, more active and less vulnerable than girl children.   The lack of representation of female children in sport and the dominance of female children in reports about child abuse re-enforces the stereotype that girl children are weak, vulnerable and powerless. It is important to alter the representations of the capabilities of girl and boy children particularly as children are socialised into particular roles at a young age.
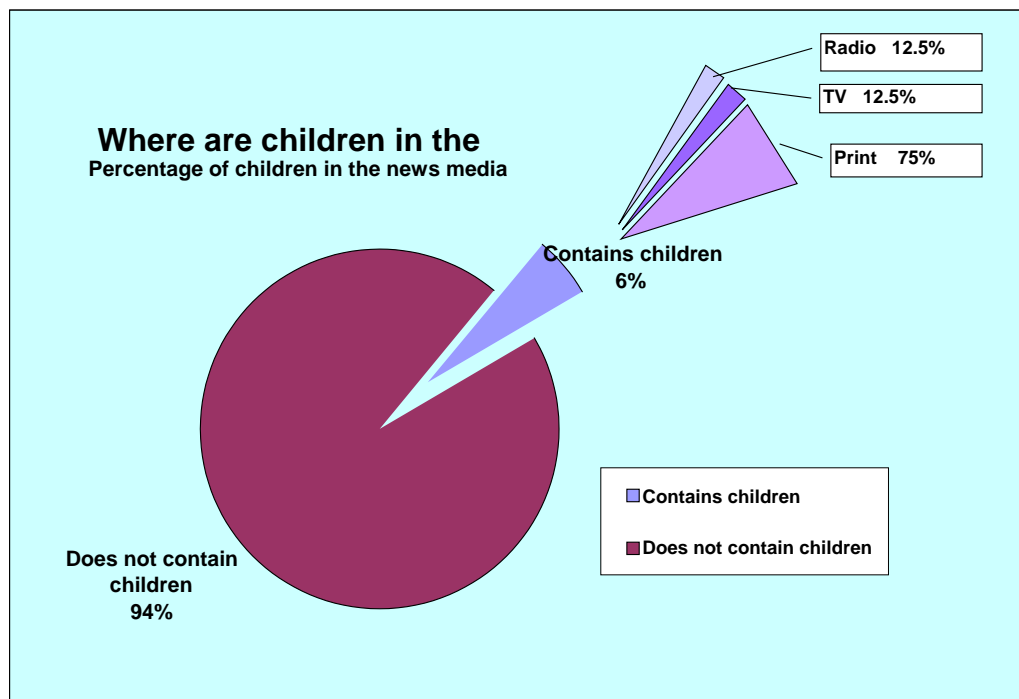
7 Media's coverage of children

Individual medium's coverage of children was assessed in terms of which medium carried the most coverage of children's items.

7.1 How frequently did each medium represent children?

Referring to the graph below, it can be seen that of the 6% of stories on children, print carried 75% of them while radio and TV each carried 12.5%.

Graph 7.1

Out of all the items on children, the Citizen carried 10%. The Burger carried 9% of the items and The Star carried 8% of the items. It was to be expected that print would contribute most to the total number of items on children as there are far more news items in the print medium compared to radio and television.

However, it is important to look at the number of children's items relative to the total number of items they each carry in order to get a better idea of how each medium represents children. The graph below shows how children were represented by television. Of the 5 prime-time news bulletins monitored, it was found that 19% of SABC 2's Sotho bulletins contained children, followed by SABC1 with 18%. SABC3 had 16% while the SABC2 Afrikaans bulletin had 15%. Of all the news bulletins monitored e-tv had the lowest number of news reports in relation to children with 13%.

Graph 7.2

Percentage of stories with children in Television

Television stations (bar chart, x-axis 0% to 20%):
- SABC 2 (Sotho): ~19%
- SABC 1: ~18.5%
- SABC 3: ~16%
- SABC 2 (Afrik): ~14%
- e-tv: ~11%
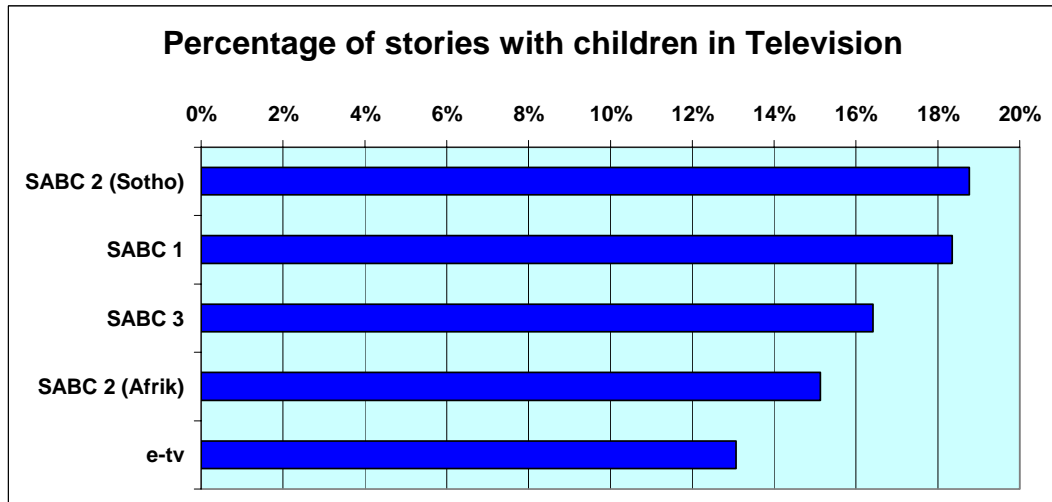
The following graph indicates a closer analysis of how radio stations represented children. The highest news content in relation to children was YFM with 13%, Zibonele with 12%, Radio PMB with 11% and P4 with 4%. The radio station with the lowest news content in relation to children was Radio Sonder Grense with 6%.

Graph 7.3

Percentage of stories with children in Radio

Radio stations (bar chart, x-axis 0% to 14%):
- YFM: ~13%
- Zibonele: ~12.5%
- Radio PMB: ~11.5%
- P4: ~10.5%
- Lesedi: ~9%
- East Coast Radio: ~8.5%
- Jozi (Soweto Community Radio): ~8%
- SAFM: ~7%
- Motsweding: ~6.5%
- Ukhozi: ~6.5%
- Radio Sonder Grense: ~6%
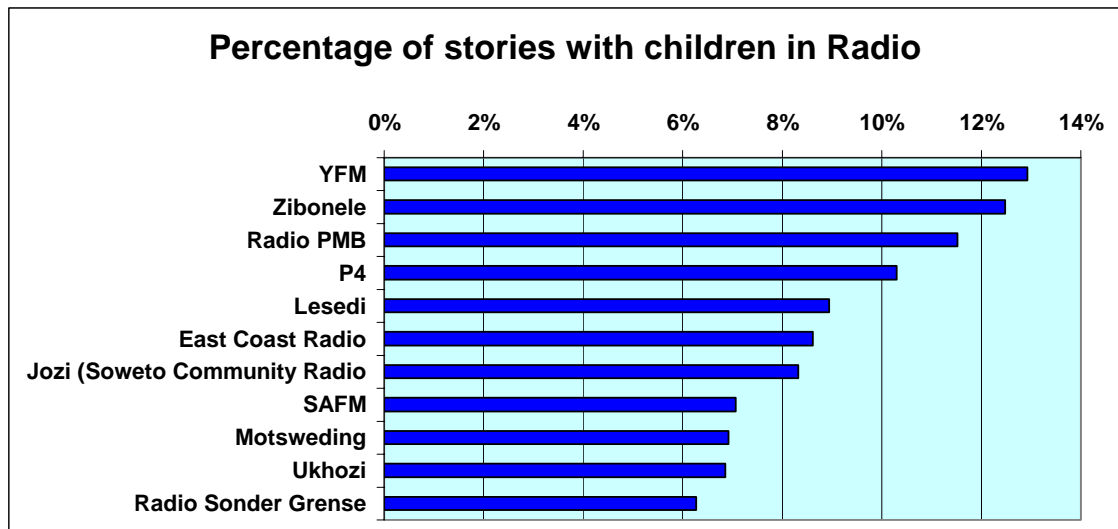
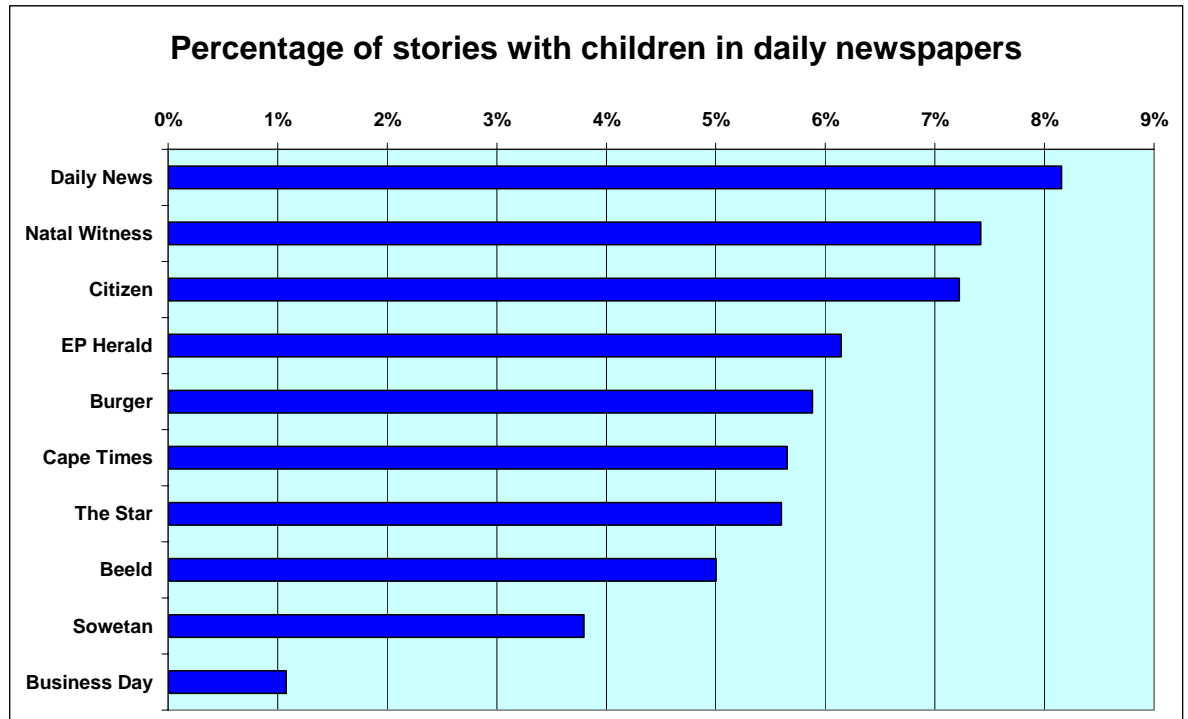The following two graphs indicate how the daily and weekly newspapers represented children. Of the daily newspapers, the Daily News had the highest representation of children with 8%, followed by Natal Witness and Citizen with 7% each. The EP Herald,

Burger, Cape Times and The Star were each close to 6%, the Beeld had 5% and the Sowetan 4%. Lastly Business Day had the lowest representation of children with 1%.

Graph 7.4

Percentage of stories with children in daily newspapers

Newspaper	Percentage
Daily News	~8%
Natal Witness	~7.3%
Citizen	~7.2%
EP Herald	~6%
Burger	~5.8%
Cape Times	~5.6%
The Star	~5.6%
Beeld	~5%
Sowetan	~3.8%
Business Day	~1%

Of the weekly newspapers Ilanga had the highest representation of children with 12% (Ilanga is slightly different however as it is a bi-weekly paper). This was followed by the Sunday Sun and Independent on Saturday with 7% each, the Rapport, Saturday Star, Mail & Guardian and Sunday Times with 6% each, the Sowetan Sunday World and the Weekend Argus each with 5%, the Sunday Independent with 4% and lastly the City Press with 3%.

Graph 7.5

Percentage of stories with children in weekly newspapers

Newspaper	Percentage
Ilanga	~11.7%
Sunday Sun	~7%
Independent on Saturday	~6.5%
Rapport	~6.3%
Saturday Star	~6.1%
Mail & Guardian	~5.7%
Sunday Times	~5.7%
Sowetan Sunday World	~4.8%
Weekend Argus	~4.7%
Sunday Independent	~4.1%
City Press	~3.3%
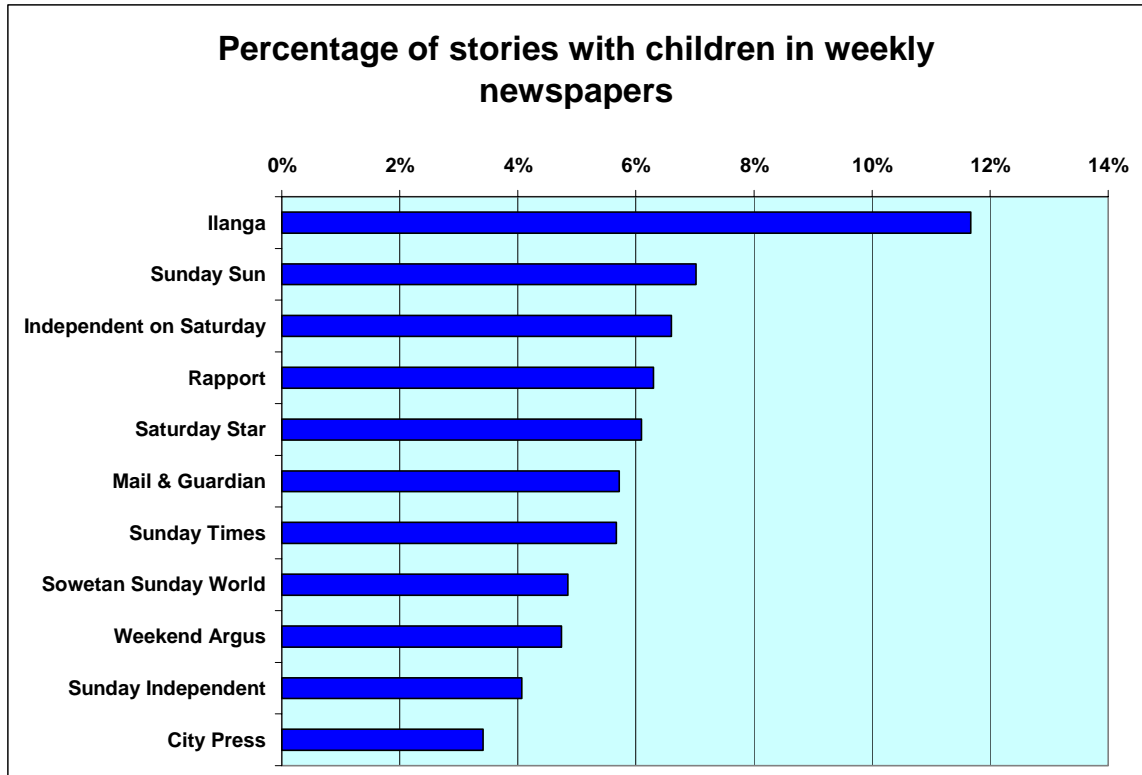
Overall the average for the average for daily newspapers is 5.6%, weekly newspapers is 6%, the average for radio is 9% and the average for TV is 16.3%. TV then has the highest number of children's stories relative to the number of stories that they carry, while print has the lowest number of stories on children relative to the number of stories that they carry.

8   Stakeholders' Meeting

The Stakeholders meeting took place on 26 March 2004, where the results of the monitoring were presented to the media and other interested stakeholders. The children who participated in the project were also given the opportunity to present the findings of their monitoring and their experiences of the workshops. In addition, they formed a panel and responded to questions from the floor on their understanding and opinions of the representation of children in the media. They also gave a number of suggestions to improve the representation of children in the media.

8.1   <u>What were the media's responses to the research results?</u>

- Mondli Makhanya, editor of the Sunday Times, was one of the guest speakers at the meeting. He reiterated the importance of journalist ethics in reporting and said that the media does care about the representation of children. He said that the BCCSA and Press Ombudsman played an important role in holding the media accountable for their reporting. His criticism of the results centered around the idea that children are not the target audience of the news media (Sunday Times) primarily because they are not economically viable. He said that it is adults who make decisions and that this is the reason that adults are the focus of the news, particularly as sources. He also said that children were accessed where necessary e.g. in reports featuring the opening of schools at the beginning of the year or at exam times.   He said that many of the newspapers now have supplements for children and in this way also cater for children. He stressed that they (the Sunday Times) do their utmost to protect children where necessary.
- Joe Thloele, editor-in-chief at e-tv, agreed with much of what Makhanya had to say. He added that decisions on what to show and what not to show were difficult and complex and had to be seen in context. He said that the decisions are never taken lightly but that there was often fierce debate on any particular issue. With regards to the finding that children are often absent from the news he said that every new day determines what will be news that day and that there will be times when there are few stories on children. He was however very open to the suggestions the children made in improving the representation of children in the news media and said that this should be taken into account in addressing solutions.
- Jeremy Gordin of the Independent Network News felt that there was dissonance between the research findings and what goes on in reality. He said that newspapers exist, like other business to make profit and that, for this reason, children are not the target market. It is adults who primarily buy newspapers and the information in the newspapers has to appeal to adults. With regards to the finding that children are often represented as victims, Gordin said that they are often victims and that the media has the responsibility of letting people know. He said that because this is a reality, many of the

stories on children are generally negative. He also stressed the importance of securing empathy and sympathy for children with regards to particular issues. He did agree that it is possible to strengthen the demographic representation of children and access them more frequently and said he would welcome training in the area of reporting on children.

- Portia Kobue of KAYA FM said that the research would help greatly in determining ways of improving the representation of children in the news media. Like Thloele she said that there were often debates at KAYA on what to include and that the decisions were often very difficult. She also said that they had a policy of excluding gore.
- Primedia representative Benita Levine said that Primedia have a policy of not naming and identifying children.
- ICASA councillor Nadia Bulbulia, stated that children are an important sector of society and to disregard children because they are not "economically viable" is to disregard the role of children in society. She maintained that it was children who in 1976 were responsible for the Soweto riots and played a vital role in bringing about change in South Africa. She agreed with the findings of the project and acknowledged the need for greater and diverse representation of children in the news media, greater participation of children and also for the promotion and protection of children's rights.

8.2   What were the children's suggestions to the media?

- All of the children said that journalists need to think before they write or use pictures of children. The children said that the effects of the story were often harmful to children and that journalists should think about whether they would like it if it happened to them.
- The children also said that children suffer double trauma, such as when they have been raped and then the media shows their face. They felt that children should be protected.
- The children were all very enthusiastic about the research in which they had participated and said that they loved participating and that it would be nice if more children could do what they had done. They also said that children like to be involved in the news because many of the stories are about issues that affect them directly.
- One of the participants suggested that more attention be paid to newspaper supplements so that they include and access more children.

9   Conclusion

Greater and improved representation of children and children's rights plays a key role in creating a protective environment for children. The media's influence and reach would enable the communication of messages that is empowering to children and would facilitate greater awareness of children and children's rights to both adults and children. It is therefore vitally important that reports are framed within a rights based framework to create awareness and educate the public and children about their rights.

The media also plays an important role in challenging stereotypes and assumptions made about children, their roles in society and perceptions of themselves. Discriminatory stereotypes about race and gender are especially concerning as children are socialised into certain roles from a young age. This was clearly seen in the media's representation of gender where girls are largely represented in stories about abuse while boys are largely represented in stories about sport. This representation suggests that girl children are mainly victims of abuse that is contrary to reality as boy children are also victims of abuse. Herein lies a valuable opportunity for the media to discuss children and gender in a meaningful way. Such a discussion would vastly improve and alter perceptions about the role of men, women and children in society.

The media largely effaces the issue of race and racism in relation to children. In spite of a number of reports about racial incidents the media does not deal with the issue of race and racism in a comprehensive way. This does not suggest that the media does not highlight racial incidents but that the coverage of such incidents necessitates a meaningful discourse that clearly states that racial discrimination is unacceptable and counter to democratic values and principles, rather than re-stating facts to the public about what had happened. This was seen in the coverage of the case of the racial incident where two young children were forced to paint themselves by a white farmer.

The dominant and consistent representation of children as victims in the news media is disempowering and perpetuates a discourse of victim-hood. This is particularly the case for reports that are factual and event-based, as they tend to represent victims as statistics. Reports dealing with abuse often only report the occurrence of the abuse while issues of abuse and children's rights are tangential to the reports. Reports about child abuse would become more valuable if framed within a rights based framework and would be more likely to effect change in a positive manner. A strong rights based discourse is the primary key to the development of a strong, self-sustaining democracy and a proactive civil society.

During the monitoring period there were numerous reports about HIV/Aids but only a few dealing with HIV/Aids in relation to children. This is also a missed opportunity by the media especially in light of the fact that South Africa has one of the highest infection rates which also then means that there are a large number of children affected by HIV/Aids (either through themselves being infected or being orphaned). However the media in its endeavour to report on children and HIV/Aids must exercise caution in

naming and identifying children and also in the language used when reporting on children affected by HIV/Aids. This is necessary to protect children from being ostracised especially because of the social stigma attached to the disease.

The naming and identification of children in relation to children and crime and children who have been abused is equally important. In this regard the law however is clear and states that children involved in criminal proceedings and children who have been abused may not be named and identified. The naming and identification of children who have been abused could lead to further trauma as there are usually stigmas attached to those who have been abused which in turn could lead to rejection and marginalisation. The protection of children involved in criminal cases regardless of whether they are perpetrators or victims again aims to protect the best interests of the child and to protect children from further harm.

The media's role in highlighting various issues in relation to children thus far must be acknowledged. It is important that the media continue to raise awareness about children and children's rights. The overriding consideration for journalists when reporting on or about children is maintaining the best interests of the child framed in both the South African Constitution and the UNCRC. This is not a simple task and the challenge of addressing the strengths and weaknesses must be done in partnership with children's rights organisations, human rights organisations and civil society.

It is equally important to give children and people critical media literacy skills that would enable them to monitor in an ongoing sustainable manner the representation of children and children's rights in the news media. The transference of critical media literacy skills would create a sustainable protective environment in which children would be greatly empowered.

10 Way Forward

Some of the critical areas are:
- The participation of children in terms of being sourced on different issues and being included in the news making process;
- Broadening the representation of children both in terms of roles and stories;
- Including a greater diversity of children;
- Addressing gender and racial imbalances;
- Specialised child-focused training for journalists and media practitioners;

11 Literature Review

11.1 <u>The role of the media</u>

The media exerts an enormous amount of power over society as it has the ability to influence and shape perceptions through the communication of everyday messages. It is therefore important that the media is monitored in general and specifically in relation to the messages communicated to and about children. Children have far greater exposure and access to the media today than ever before and the manner in which children are represented becomes a crucial issue. It is often misrepresentations that lead to the development of negative stereotypes that in turn lead to discrimination. In this regard the media has a positive role to play in challenging and interrogating discriminatory stereotypes. The media also has a role to play in informing and educating the public and not simply representing the facts.

Denis McQuail (1997) argues that the mass media is an instrument of social power. The crucial question then is not whether the media have power and how it works but who has access to the use of this power. The media according to this argument, has the ability to shape and influence perceptions by virtue of its power and relationship to society. MMP however maintains that the media also has the responsibility to inform the public.

McQuail (1997) argues that the media can attract and direct attention to problems, solutions or people in ways that can favour those with power and also divert attention from rival individuals or groups. Secondly, the mass media can confer status and confirm legitimacy. Third, in some circumstances, the media can be a channel for persuasion and mobilisation. Fourth, the mass media can help to bring certain kinds of public into being and maintain them. Lastly, the media is a vehicle for offering psychic reward and gratifications.

The public however perceives the news media as an important source of information. Dennis K Davis and Robinson John (1986) describe the development of the way television communicates and trace how the theoretical understanding of public communication generally and TV news specifically, has changed. According to Taylor (1998) the presentation of news is important. He quotes John Hartley (1982) states that the way the presentation of news "can work to re-enforce dominant ideas and beliefs is through the way it makes sense of events for the viewer." The presentation of news attempts to position viewers in relation to its content. This is achieved by presenting an ideological position for the viewer to assume from which they consequently consume information. The viewers are invited to see this ideological position as natural and in their own interests. In this way the ideological content of news reports is masked by the conventions of the television news format. It is simply expected that the news will be presented in this way, therefore there is no invitation or reason to question its truthfulness and its

construction as news. Furthermore, audiences are invited to think that the form cannot dictate the content and that news programmes simply present the public with the truth.

Tony Bennett (1997) in his paper challenges the notion that the media offers a reflection of reality, where it exists above society and passively mirrors it rather than forming an active and integral part of it. The media influences the way we perceive reality and this is not done in an abstract or mystical way but in a way that is wholly concrete and in a way that reflects the way it is produced. The media are not apart from social reality but are part of social reality, contributing to its contours and to the logic and direction of its development via the socially articulated way in which they shape our perceptions of the world. Hall (1972)

11.2 Representation

The availability of literature dealing specifically with the representation of children and the media is limited. For purposes of conducting research reference was made to literature dealing broadly with representation.

Defining representation

Taylor (1999) maintains that representation is the term used to describe the practice of placing different signs together to render complex abstract concepts intelligible and meaningful. This involves a process of selection and construction to create meaning. The resultant text communicates to the reader a message about the creator of the message as well as a message about those they are representing. Representations also provide an indication about the organisation of power relations in society.

For example people of colour, women and the disabled have been represented in pejorative ways. The constructions of these representations are subject to social, historical and cultural change. Alternative representations have been developed to challenge dominant representations.

In a similar way stereotypes constructed about children are reflected in their representation in the media. The roles children play are constructions of both media and society and indicate where children are located in terms of importance on the social ladder. Taylor discusses the relationship between representation and stereotypes and maintains that a stereotype is a crude selection and construction of undeveloped and generalised signs that communicate messages about particular social groups relating to their attitudes, behaviour and background.

Hall's (1972) discussion about representation is fairly similar and maintains that representation is the production of meaning through language. In representation, we use signs organised into languages to communicate meaningfully with others.

11.3 Children and media

Thornfinn Helena (2002) in her book Children, Ethics and Media describes the relationship between children and media as powerful. The average child in the Western Hemisphere spends more time with media than with their parents. Although many children in the world today do not have access to computers and television sets it is probably true to say their dreams and lives are intimately connected to the media landscape.

Thornfinn focuses on three aspects of the question of children and media; Protection, Provision and Participation. Media is at the same time a friend and an enemy to children.

Thornfinn writes within the legal framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) and deals with the latest trends and tendencies in research about children and media. The book addresses issues of whether a changing and booming media scene has altered the way in which the way children are portrayed by media and what the areas of concern for researchers and publicists are when it comes to children.

Representation of children.

Research by the MMP has found that children are most often represented as victims either pictorially or through language. This victim-hood is consistent through a range of topics. For example children are victims of abuse, crime, neglect, war, accidents, disasters, tragedy and so on.

Language used when reporting stories in which children are victims may tend to trivialise the abuse suffered by a child. This applies especially to reports that are factual and event based (reports that only name the crime and location). These reports tend to perpetuate the discourse of victim-hood and are disempowering. At the same time these reports tend to represent the subjects of their reports as statistics and as such are dehumanising, as they do not acknowledge the trauma suffered by the victim/survivor.

These arguments are clearly reflected in the article "Taking the child out of the hood; Packaging childhood in an Other-Directed". The author argues that we rely on a constructed and packaged idea of childhood that is media-driven and consumption oriented. It is through the reproduction of stereotypical and sentimentalised images of children that the mass media industry is maintaining a socially and culturally constructed order. Diane Sykes (2000).

Research by the MMP also indicates that children are represented in a stereotypical manner, either through text or through images. According to Lisa

Woll (1996) children are stereotyped into a number of roles. In a similar way stereotypes are constructed about children and these are reflected in their representation in the media. The roles children represent are constructions of both media and society and indicate where children are located in terms of importance on the social ladder.

These are some of the common media stereotypes of children:

- The gender stereotyped child e.g. the tough boy and the flower picking girl
- The violent child, with an AK 47 in a distant war
- The poor victim child, the crying hungry baby
- The innocent romanticised child, the sparkly happy beautiful child
- Children in developing countries are commonly represented as victims of abject poverty, trauma, and tragedy

11.4 <u>Children and Gender</u>

Literature on the representation of children and gender in the media is very scant. Most of the information available does not deal with the representation of children in the news but rather the portrayal of children and gender in advertisements. There is however a wide range of literature dealing broadly with the representation of gender.

Jeanne Prinsloo (2003) looked at the way advertisements in South African magazines construct childhood along gendered lines. A sample of 119 advertisements was used in this study. Prinsloo argues that the construction of childhood is remarkable in its blandness. Its locations of children are narrowly confined and decidedly non-exotic. Children engage in a very narrow range of activities and they exist largely in a tight nuclear family.

Signorelli (2001) states that the media plays a pivotal role in shaping and influencing children's identity, especially their sex roles. Sex role research finds that children will replicate the role expectations seen in the media when asked about appropriate chores for boys and girls. Also, television can strengthen the consistency between adolescents' gender based attitudes about chores and their actual behaviour in the family. Television therefore contributes to the endorsement and maintenance of traditional gender roles. Research also shows how teenagers make meaning from media content in terms of conventional gender roles; boys reproduce gendered meanings that embody traditional male culture, identifying with the models of masculinity available through the media content and imputing stereotypical notions of gender to the mass media. Girls also use the media to develop their notions of femininity and what it means to be a woman. Femininity is largely defined as based in physical appearance and girls' success at relationships with boys and girls. The media therefore plays a significant role in the young adults navigation of gender identity.

11.5 Children's participation

Children's participation has been an important element of the project. To this extent workshops with children were held in three different provinces. In addition, an education specialist was consulted to facilitate the workshops as well as literature focussing on children's participation.

Henk van Beers (2002) looks at the major benefits that can be derived from involving children at project level, in policy development and in research. This publication analyses experiences from capacity building and training in children's participation in project contexts. It examines the results of training adults and provides detailed examples of different ways to involve children.

The lessons learnt are useful for organisations and individuals who plan to promote children's participation in their policies, research and interventions. Children can participate and make contributions on issues that affect them- and this report shows the benefits of children's participation, both for children and adults.

Henk van Beers addressed the concept of children's participation, the need to involve children in programming and the benefits that can be obtained from it. The value of children's participation has been further emphasised through the use of practical project examples. It asserts that projects involving children that fail to include their perspectives and opinions also fail to address children's problems. In addition Henk van Beers highlights the main features of capacity–building in children's participation and the ethics related to involvement of children.

Thornfinn also places emphasis on giving children the opportunity to participate, recognising that it follows closely on some of the fundamental principles in the UNCRC. In addition Thorfinn sets out the various codes of conduct and explains the UNCRC and the Oslo Challenge, the UNICEF handbook and last but not least guidelines for journalists from the Save the Children Alliance.

Another valuable resource highlighting the importance of children's participation is a book by Gerison Lansdown (2001). Lansdown contextualises the importance of children's participation and discusses article 12 of the UNCRC. He also discusses the potential scope for children's participation and practical lessons for promoting effective participation using practical examples. Lastly Lansdown addresses the issue of involving children in conferences, looking at questions to address and recent examples of conferences involving children.

11.6 <u>**Case studies in other parts of the world**</u>

<u>Children in Asian news</u>

Goonasekera (2001) says that the media " are deeply implicated in patterns of discrimination operating against children in society. This happens mainly through silence and the neglect of child –related issues."

The book is based on selected findings of research conducted in thirteen Asian countries. These are Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Goonasekera argues that in the hierarchy of importance, news is dominated by topics of politics, crime, governance, business, international affairs and sports. Children and social issues in general are rated to be of lesser importance than these topics. In general children are not newsworthy, if children do appear in the news it is dependant upon their involvement in some other newsworthy event. Children are also represented in events that are sensational such as violence and accidents. When children are victims of abuse, violence, rape or murder, mass media in many Asian countries sensationalise the story- often with graphic accounts and photos, irrespective of any legal protection applicable to such media publicity. The full identity of the suspects and the victims are also often reported.

<u>Sweden</u>

A similar study was conducted in Sweden to determine the image Swedish news media present regarding children. The study found that when children featured in the news, they were most commonly represented in subjects such as crime, accidents or violence. It was also found that children's voices are seldom heard and that it was common for adults to speak for or about children.

<u>Kenya</u>

A broad of this study was to establish how the media covers children's issues, with a view to determine whether it helps to broaden and limit the understanding of children's rights. This study also aims to sensitise the media and the society on the extent to which attention is given to children's rights by the media. This study compares three newspapers circulating in Kenya and their coverage of children's rights over a year and included both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the media's coverage of children's rights. The study found that children's rights issues do not receive as much coverage as other issues. The media only reports children's issues when the reports are sensational. The study also finds the media fails to educate the public on children's rights and does not give voice to children's opinions.

Bibliography

Beers, van Henk "Children's Participation: Experiences in capacity building and training" Save the Children Sweden, 2002.

Berry, L.& Guthrie,T. 2003 Rapid Assessment: The Situation of children in South Africa, Children's Institute:University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Bennett, T. 1997 Mass Communication and Society, The Open University Press, London

Clarke, G. 1997 The Photograph, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Curran, J et al (eds) 1977 Mass, Communication and Society, The Open University Press, London.

Dahlgren, Petra "Children in Swedish News" ICCVOS, vol 1, 2002

Gender Media Baseline Study (2003):South Africa Report, Media Institute of Southern Africa & Gender Links, Johannesburg

Goonasekera, A (ed). "Children in the news: Reporting of Children's Issues in Television and the press in Asia", Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) and the School of Communication Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, 2001.

Nwankwo, H.E & Okwemba, A. (2002) How the Kenyan Media covers the Children's Rights Issues: A Content Analysis, Presentation to the International Federation of Journalists, Kenya.

Hall, S. (ed) (1997) Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices, Sage Publications, London.

Hall, S. (1972) Culture, media, and language: working papers in cultural studies, University of Birmingham, London.

Hartley, J. 1982, Understanding News, Routledge, Great Britain.

Hart, C. 1998 Doing a Literature Review, Sage Publications, London

Lansdown,G. 2001"Promoting children's participation in democratic decision-making, UNICEF, Innocenti Research centre, Florence, Italy.

McQuail, D. 1997 "The Influence and Effects of Mass Media" in Curran, E. Mass Communication and Society, Open University Press, London.

McQuail, D. 1997 "The Influence and Effects of Mass Media" in Curran, E. <u>Mass Communication and Society</u>, Open University Press, London.

Media Monitoring Project: <u>A snapshot survey of Women's Representation in the South African Media at the end of the Millennium</u>, Commissioned for Women's' Media Watch, December 1999.

Prinsloo, Jean (2003) "Childish images. The gendered depiction of childhood in popular South African magazines" in <u>Agenda Gendering childhood</u>, no 56 2003.

Punch, K. 1998 <u>Introduction to Social Research</u>, Sage Publications, London

Robinson, J.P & Davis, D. 1986. "The Social Role of Television News: Theoretical Perspectives in <u>The Main Source: Learning from Television news</u>", Sage Publications, London

Robinson JA<u>: Law of children and Young Persons in South Africa</u>, Butterworths, Durban, 1997

Shrestha, Saurav Kiran 2003 "Media's Image of children: Print coverage on children's Issues in Nepal" <u>ICCVOS</u>, vol 1.

Singer, D & Singer, J. 2001 "<u>Children and the Media</u>" Sage Publications, USA

Signorelli, N. 2001 "Television's Gender Role Images and Contribution to Stereotyping" in <u>Children and the Media</u>, Sage Publications, USA.

Sykes, D. 2000, "Taking the Child out of the "Hood", packaging childhood in an other-directed society", in Slim, H. Studies on <u>Emergencies and disaster relief, Doing the Right thing</u>, "American sociological Review, no 6,1999.

Taylor, L & Willis, <u>A 1999 Media Studies: Texts, Institutions and Audiences</u>, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford

Taylor, J. 1998 <u>Body Horror</u>, Manchester University Press

Tebbel, C. (2000) "<u>The Body Snatchers: How the media shapes women</u>", Finch Publishing, Sydney.

Thornfinn Helena 2002 "<u>Children ethics media</u>" SCS Sweden,

Woll, Lisa "Children, ethics and the media: A Paper presented by the International Save the Children Alliance to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child", Geneva October 7th 1996

Appendix A

World Health Organisation Guidelines

The WHO guidelines for media professionals covering health issues were devised by PressWise and adopted by the European Region of the WHO at its Moscow Convention in 1998. They recommend the following:

1. First, do no harm.
2. Check facts, even if deadlines are put at risk.
3. Be careful not raise false hopes, especially when reporting on claims for "miracle cures".
4. Beware of vested interests. Ask yourself "who benefits from this story?"
5. Never disclose the source of information imparted in confidence, unless compelled to do so under national law.
6. Be mindful of the consequences of your story. The "subjects" will have to live with it long after you are gone.
7. Be sensitive to situation involving private grief.
8. Respect the privacy of the sick, and their families.
9. Respect the feelings of the bereaved, especially when dealing with disasters. Close-up photography or television images of victims, survivors or their families should be avoided wherever possible.
10. If in doubt, leave it out.

International Federation of Journalists Guidelines

1. All journalists and media professional have a duty to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards and should promote within the industry the widest possible dissemination of information about the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications for the exercise of journalism.
2. Media organisations should regard violation of the rights of children and issues related to children's safety, privacy, security, education, health and social welfare and all forms of exploitation as important questions for investigation and public debate. Children have an absolute right to privacy, the only exceptions being those explicitly set out in these guidelines.
3. Journalistic activity that touches on the lives and welfare of children should always be carried out with appreciation of the vulnerable situation of children.
4. Journalists and media organisations shall strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children's affairs and, in particular, they shall:

   - Strive for standards of excellence in terms of accuracy and sensitivity when reporting on issues involving children;
   - Avoid programming and publication of images that intrude on the space of children with information that is damaging to them;

- Avoid the use of stereotypes and sensational presentation to promote journalistic material involving children;
- Guard against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest;
- Give children, where possible, the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement of any kind.
- Ensure independent verification of information provided by children and take special care to ensure this takes place without placing child informants at risk;
- Avoid the use of sexualised images of children;
- Use fair, open and straight forward methods of obtaining pictures and, where possible, obtain them with the knowledge and consent of children or a responsible adult, guardian or carer;
- Verify the credentials of any organisation purporting to speak for or represent the interests of children;
- Not make payment to children for material involving the welfare of children or to parents or guardians of children unless it is demonstrably in the interests of the child.