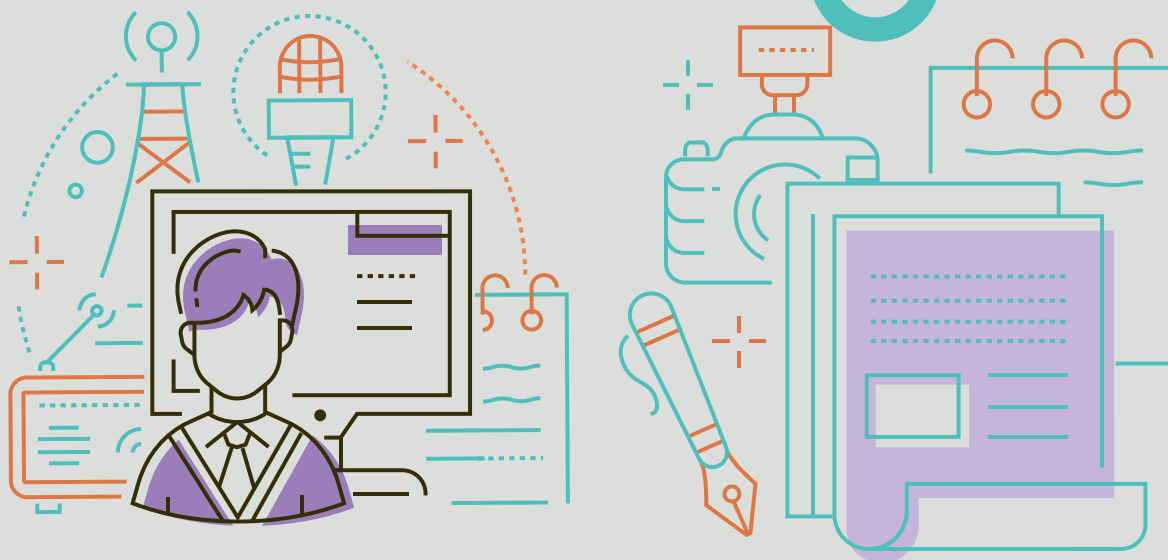
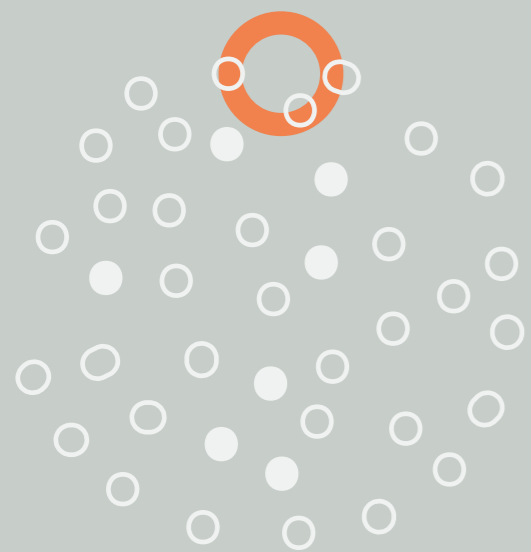


GUIDING PRINCIPLES: HOW SHOULD POVERTY BE REPORTED?



DEEP
POVERTY
NETWORK



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BE REPORTED??**



THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PREPARED ALONG WITH "GUIDING PRINCIPLES: USE OF VISUAL CONTENT ON POVERTY" AS A FOLLOW UP TO THE "MONITORING REPORT: POVERTY AGENDA IN THE MEDIA (JANUARY-AUGUST 2022)"

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The OPEN SPACE ASSOCIATION/DEEP POVERTY NETWORK is a non-governmental organization that aims at

- creating awareness about social, economic and urban problems;
- acting in solidarity with groups that face social exclusion and have difficulties in accessing their rights and needs;
- empowering these groups through diverse activities; supporting their access to public rights and services;
- reducing the obstacles that prevent these groups' access to basic human rights, including the rights to education, health, employment, and social security

Definition of deep poverty: OSA&DPN perceive poverty in a multi-dimensional frame, as a phenomenon that not only restricts people's access to basic rights and needs, but also prevents them from attaining their economic, social, political and cultural rights.

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG DERNEĞİ TÜRKİYE TEMSİLCİLİĞİ (2001)

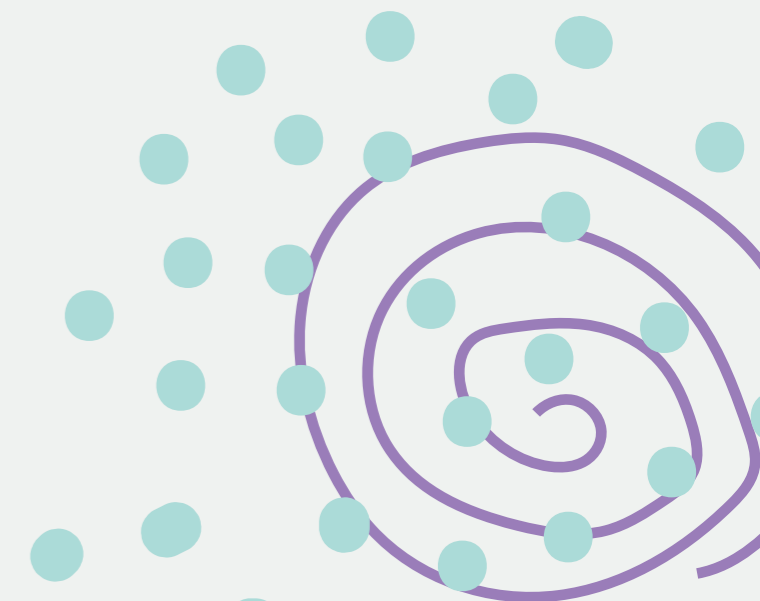
endeavors to support and motivate initiatives and activities which strive to empower democratic actors, protect human and minority rights, work on ecology and sustainable development, and develop global and regional security policies. With its central office in Istanbul, the Turkey Representative of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association has, for 20 years, supported civil society initiatives that adopt the above listed principles and strive for the protection of a democratic social order that is based on the principle of rule of law, regardless of people's gender, ethnicity, religion or color.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: *We would like to thank the people living in conditions of poverty who participated in the focus group study and told us about their experiences and expectations; all members of the press who participated in the working group meeting and shared their professional experiences and the conditions in the field with us; and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Derneği Türkiye Temsilciliği for enabling us to realize the project...*

BACKGROUND

In January 2022, we started monitoring the media for poverty-related news stories to analyze which prejudices were maintained, how the idea of being 'poor' was depicted and what discourse strategies were deployed, all while seeking to represent good examples. As a result, we published "[Monitoring Report: Poverty Agenda In the Media \(January-August 2022\)](#)" Following the analyses made in this report, this guideline was initiated with the idea that some basic principles and recommendations that could guide the elimination of poor exclusionary discourses could be useful.

"Poverty-related news" for the monitoring report were compiled, categorized and analyzed. The content of these news included; news that contain the word "poverty" or are directly related to the poverty line and impoverishment, nutritional deficiency, lack of access to housing, education and health services, -stove poisoning, metal-steel theft news, gender inequality and violence, inability to access justice, inflation, social supports, trade unions and self-organizations, solidarity, workers seeking rights, news about daily or casual workers



TARGET AUDIENCE OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This guide is intended for all media professionals and for those who make public statements and develop policies on poverty.

BASIS OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guidelines are based on the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, the Law on the Protection of Personal Data, the European Convention on Human Rights, the Revised European Social Charter, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Principles and Guidelines for a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PREPARATION OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We have organized a focus group study with people living in deep poverty conditions and listened to their experience with media professionals. They also shared their opinions about representation of the poor and poverty in various means of media channels.

Another working group meeting was also organized with media professionals focusing on how poverty should be covered. They shared their own principles and priorities and to what extent the working conditions allow them to follow their principles.

This guide is prepared as a product of these meetings while bringing together the experiences of people working in the Deep Poverty Network. The guide is open to improvement and update.

Why does it matter 'how' poverty is reported?

The economic, political, social and cultural rights of people living in poverty are systematically violated and they face the risk of discrimination and social exclusion. Existing public policies to overcome poverty should be based on the need to protect the rights of people living in poverty, and no policy or practice should deepen poverty. Considering that public perception has a significant impact on public policies, eliminating prejudiced or accusatory discourses against the poor and changing public perception can be an important factor for the adoption of rights-based anti-poverty policies. In this context, the impact of how the media agenda-tizes poverty and shapes public perception cannot be denied.

As the number of news reports on poverty in Turkey is dramatically increasing with the effects of the pandemic and the economic crisis, it is important to remember the media's

responsibility to inform the public in an impartial manner. The media can only fulfill this responsibility by best portraying the experience of people living in poverty, by respecting their dignity and giving space to what they want to say, by making the multidimensional nature of poverty visible, and by examining and holding accountable the systemic factors that cause poverty.

A series of recommendations that can give ideas to members of the press and all those who create content in this field in the processes of reporting and dissemination of poverty can be listed as follows.

How should poverty be reported?

- **The discourse and content of the news should respect human dignity:** Reporting on poverty should respect the dignity of everyone, avoid stigmatization and prejudice, and make visible the struggles of people living in poverty or their efforts for change.
- **Attention should be paid to the representation and the language used:** While preparing the news, generalizations should not be made about people living in conditions of poverty. Discourse and visuals that romanticize, pity or blame should be avoided.
- **Reality should be conveyed without detaching it from the background:** News prepared without adequate background information may personalize the difficulty or violation of the rights and detach it from the political and social context.

For example, when news reports on deaths due to stove poisoning published in the winter months are conveyed without mentioning; why people heat with stoves, the poverty and inadequate housing conditions in which they live, the quality of the coal burned, the alternative materials used in cases where they cannot buy fuel and the risk posed by them, the message of the news report cannot go beyond "unfortunate deaths".

- **The responsibility of political actors responsible for protecting people from poverty should be emphasized:** Ignoring the structural and systemic inequalities, social, political, economic and cultural discrimination that cause poverty, and the responsibility of political actors and mechanisms responsible for preventing it, can shape the reader's perception of who is responsible.

"I read news like "People are in this situation, let's help them". We don't need anyone, I don't like this perception. Where is the duty of the state? These are not individual problems, this should be the main subject of news. Why should I become a material for a newspaper to access my rights?"

- **News should be data-driven:** Including quantitative data on the topic in news reports makes it easier to see the bigger picture. When selecting data, independent and scientific sources with a clear research methodology should be preferred. If available, it may also be important to include comparisons on the same topic from different sources or from different years.

For example, if a news report on “a person who took out a personal loan with an interest rate from a bank during the pandemic and met his basic needs, then could not pay the monthly installment of the loan” includes only the narrative of a person who took out a loan, the news report may turn into a story of inadequacy of a person who failed to meet even his basic needs. While it is important to give voice to the subject, this is not a singular story. A news article that includes data (if available) on increased demand on personal finance credits and foreclosure files during that period, comparative graphs of the demand on loans by years, and demographic information on the groups where borrowing has increased will better reveal the problem. Taking a loan during a crisis such as a pandemic means that, mechanisms to protect the access of people at risk of poverty to their basic rights are not working, and people are forced to develop their own survival methods.

- **Include the narratives of people who experience poverty:** It is incomplete to report on a situation without listening to the subject of that situation. News reports based only on numbers or expert opinion will be insufficient to convey the experiences of people living in conditions of poverty. The narratives of the subjects are also necessary for the reader to empathize and understand the impact of the information on their lives.

“It is necessary to talk to people as part of a whole, the aim is to make it easier for the reader to understand the whole, rather than just showing what one person or family is going through. There is a need to show that what we are saying is real. (Journalist, Digital Newspaper)”

- **It should include experience or expert opinion:** It may be important to utilize different perspectives when preparing a news article. Getting the opinion of a professional or expert working in the field, an activist or civil society worker, a researcher or an academic can broaden the reader’s perspective.

For example, when preparing a story on girls’ access to menstrual products and information about menstruation, it may be important to hear the opinions and experiences of a civil society worker or academic working in the area of menstrual poverty, a teacher or psychological counselor working in schools, a family doctor working in a family health center, or a gynecologist.

- **It should be independent:** Media outlets should not turn reporting on poverty into political propaganda.

For example, social support provided by the public sector should not be appropriated and presented as favors provided by the minister or the president. The struggle for the rights of people struggling against poverty should not be turned into a tool for the opposition, and news on poverty should not become election material.

- **There should be no click-bait journalism:** In order to attract the reader’s attention or to ensure that they click on the news, a striking part of the news should not be taken out of context and highlighted, and headlines should be carefully selected.

“When editors assign headlines, it is a very fast process; they need to deliver the news as soon as possible. With the concern of attracting attention and getting the news read, clichés are used. (Editor, Digital Newspaper)”

- **It should not engage in perception management:** Discourses that criminalize poverty, detach the issue from its political context and reduce it to the individual should be avoided. The media should reflect reality as it is, provide accurate and complete information to readers/viewers, and not distort reality for various purposes.

“Aids are portrayed in such a way on TV, you think you will get one. You get up and go to apply with your child, you stand in line for hours, but when it is your turn, you realize that there are criteria that are not described in the news, that the reality is not like that.”

Media is a platform that can open up space for many people who

want to make their struggle against poverty visible, to make their voices heard. When interviewing people living in conditions of poverty for a news story, their needs should be taken into consideration.

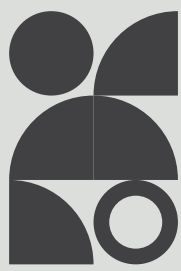
In the focus group studies we conducted, people shared that they are open to meeting with journalists and telling their experiences, but they had also some concerns.

In response to the question

“What would you like a journalist to pay attention to when interviewing you?”

the following suggestions came to the fore:

- Explaining how the story is designed, the questions to be asked and who else will be interviewed before the interview,
- Being sensitive to their needs during the interview, having the right to opt out,
- Getting ideas about the photograph that can be used in the news,
- Not to be objectified for news, to be able to speak freely, to be treated equally,
- Reflecting the facts as they are, without distortion, and not taking photos and videos of their children,
- To be informed about where the news will be published and where it can reach,
- To be able to read the news before it is published,
- Not sharing the information of those who want to contact him/her about the news published without permission



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