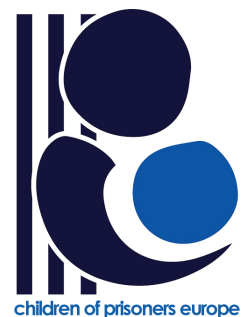




*'If you don't communicate, you don't exist'*  
Working with the media on behalf  
of children with imprisoned parents

By Edoardo Fleischner



**bambinisenzasbarre**



**Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)** is a pan-European network of non-profit organisations working on behalf of children separated from an imprisoned parent. The network encourages innovative perspectives and practices to ensure that children with an imprisoned parent fully enjoy their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and that action is taken to enable their well-being and development.

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## What is a media kit?

This toolkit might be called a tutorial, a manual or a theoretical-practical guide. In any case, it is a communications tool for NGOs working with and advocating for children who have a parent in prison, and more broadly for families affected by the imprisonment of a loved one.

From the outset, this toolkit has been written with medium-sized NGOs (about 15-20 people) in mind, although many of the methods, rules and guidelines for communication practices may be applicable to NGOs of practically any size.

It has been created to help NGOs navigate the process of strategically approaching complex and difficult media systems, especially the process of working with media professionals whose primary focus is on producing media — and thus who may not be sensitised to the complex and challenging topic of children's rights in general nor to the situation of children and families affected by imprisonment in particular.

*The ultimate goal of all your communication actions is to achieve face-to-face communication.*

### Some preliminary clarifications

#### **What is a media kit?**

- A **media kit** is a public relations tool for brands, celebrities, politicians, 'influencers', and organisations both public and private, including NGOs. This tutorial is geared specifically towards NGOs working for children and families who have parents or relatives in prison.
- A media kit is a package of information about your organisation and the work that your organisation does, ready to be delivered to media professionals.
- A media kit is created to make a **media plan** operational. See Section II of this toolkit for elaboration on how to create a media plan from a **communication strategy**.

#### **Who is your media kit for? What is your audience?**

Your media kit should be adapted for distribution to local, national and international media, prospective partners (other NGOs, institutional partners, foundations, companies, etc.), as well as stakeholders, professionals, suppliers and the general public.

### **A note on advertising**

Your communication plan can include an advertising campaign, but in this media kit, we have not included a specific chapter on this aspect. We only put in your ideal 'media toolbox' an advertising banner and video spot, advertising on press and an advertising audio spot.

### **Do media approaches differ according to whom the audience is?**

Yes, media approaches should be audience-specific, particularly in choice of language and tone, but not in substance. Whoever is going to read, listen or view your communication materials should find the same sentences, topics, ideas and thoughts of yours, albeit prepared for different audiences. *Be careful not to present different identities or altered images of your organisation.* This can lead to spreading a distorted or unfocused image of the organisation, or in more drastic cases a negative image.

### **Does an NGO really need a media kit?**

A media kit should be set up to be ready to explain the NGO's aims, work, actions, services and commitment, thus providing full information about themselves. Having a media kit allows for immediate engagement with the media when an opportunity arises.

### **What kind of outcomes can be expected as a result of preparing a media kit?**

The potential outcomes of preparing a complete package of information are numerous, and include:

- Awareness raising and sensitising of the public at a local and regional level, as well as nationally and internationally;
- Awareness raising and sensitising of institutions at a local and regional level, as well as nationally and internationally;
- Visibility boosting of your NGO to both the public and to institutions; and,
- Visibility boosting of your NGO to foundations, companies, banks and individuals for fundraising purposes.



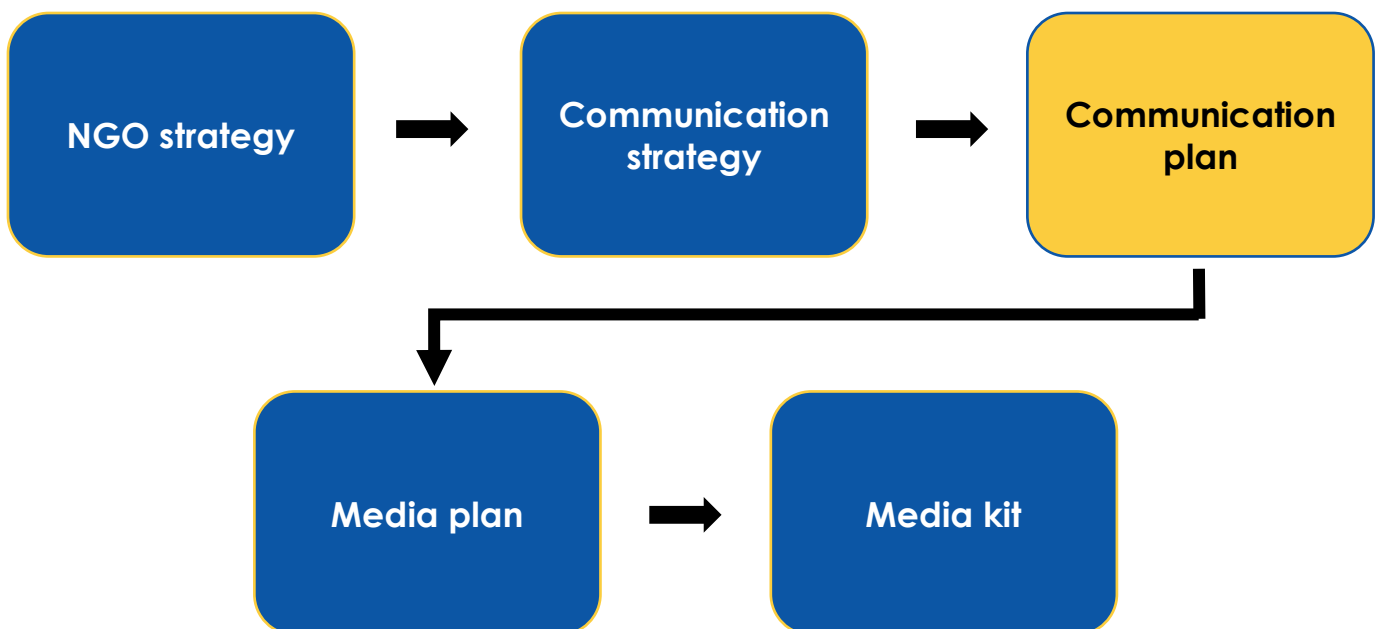
## Your communication plan

Let's assume that your NGO has a strategic work plan established annually, which is perhaps revised 1-2 times a year, and that projects are ongoing and last beyond the span of a year. Your NGO's strategic work plan is based on a well-designed and thoughtful strategy.

Your communication plan should mimic this model. Your **communication plan** should be based off of an intelligent **communication strategy** that is well-suited to your goals and capacities. Indeed, your communication strategy should be a part of your NGO strategy.

Your **communication plan** is the hinge that your media kit swings on — in other words, the thing that links your engagement with the media to the overall strategy of your NGO.

Here's a diagram to show the important role that the communication plan plays:



## GUIDELINE #1: Identify your communication objectives

Your communication objectives are most likely an extension of your NGO's strategic objectives. Looking at what you are and what you do, let's first make a coherent **list of your NGO's strategic objectives**. All of these objectives will help to shape the narrative delivered to the media.

This is an example of strategic objectives for an NGO advocating for children and families with a parent in prison. Keep in mind that this is an organic list — in other words, your objectives will shift, and you can enrich your objectives whenever you feel necessary.

### Strategic objectives:

- a. To work on maintaining the fundamental bond between children and their parent in prison;
- b. To provide children who have a parent in prison with social care and psychological support to help improve their resilience;
- c. To advocate for children affected by imprisonment to be treated with justice and fairness so that they can live healthy, active lives free from stigma and disadvantage;
- d. To provide training to prison staff, social workers, health care professionals and teachers in order to sensitise them to the issues and challenges faced by children affected by parental imprisonment;
- e. To responsibly raise awareness about children with a parent in prison through communications with the public and through media engagement;
- f. To sensitise the media to the issues and challenges that children with a parent in prison face, and to fight against further stigmatisation of these children;
- g. To encourage media professionals to follow a code of ethics for responsible reporting, particularly when communicating about potentially vulnerable children;
- h. To support the rights of children with an imprisoned parent by advocating **internal change**, making the environment **inside prisons** more child-friendly and conducive to the maintenance of strong, sustained relationships between prisoners and their loved ones;
- i. To support the rights of children with an imprisoned parent by advocating **external change**, engaging strategically with media and through other campaigns **outside prisons** to mitigate the stigma of parental imprisonment and to fight against negative framing of children with parents in prison, such as:
  - 'Offenders' children are future offenders'
  - 'Roma children are all thieves'

- 'I don't want my children in the same classroom as an imprisoned parent's kid'.
- j. To make media professionals aware of these delicate issues through communication materials that focus on commonly misunderstood issues or incorrect assumptions spread by media.

Evidently, some of your NGO's main strategic objectives, exemplified above, are directly about dealing with the media world. And in truth, nearly all of your objectives concern the media in one way or another. And this is the reason why having strategic communication capabilities is so important.

## GUIDELINE #2: Recognise your tools

Let's fix three definitions, to establish a common language for this section and the following sections:

- a. **Tool:** an empty template for the presentation of your content — an empty website, an empty social media account, an empty advertisement. See below for an inexhaustive list of media tools.
- b. **Content:** the substance of your advocacy work, the message that you wish to convey.
- c. **Media:** a tool filled with content — the face of your organisation, the completed product.

To set this in context, imagine that you've decided to use a website as your **tool**, which you fill with **content** and then make public, thus creating **media**. Creating media is like building a house: taking tools and raw material, shaping it into something and producing a finished product that serves a purpose. Like a house, you should also consider the media that you produce as an **asset** — an asset of yours, which has a **value**, both valuable for the purpose that it serves and as something with economic value too. Among media professionals, finished media is also called an '**immaterial asset**'.

Here is a selection of the most commonly used **media tools**. You know them well:

TEXT-BASED MEDIA TOOLS
<b>Speech:</b> the best way to communicate except for music and singing
<b>Interview:</b> it is very useful to be interviewed; you will use quotes for website, press releases, etc.
<b>Press release:</b> usually the starting point of any kind of further communication. Not anymore.
<b>Leaflet</b> (or banner on the Web): still a good media to stick on the bulletin board
<b>Poster</b> (or landing page linked in email): still a good media to communicate an



event
<b>Sign</b> (or a button on the Web): important in the events, but it's very difficult to make them clear
<b>Newsletter</b> (paper or pdf): a very good medium, after some years in shadow
<b>Book, booklet:</b> still very powerful media, still surviving after 500 years!
<b>ONLINE MEDIA TOOLS</b>
<b>e-book:</b> a lot cheaper than publishing a book. No distribution cost and it can reach 4.5 bn people
<b>Website:</b> your showcase — it's where everybody can land and get to know all about you
<b>Social networks:</b> they're clubs. They're 'arrivals' and 'departures'. A lot different from each other
<b>Testimonial/influencer:</b> useful but dangerous. You must learn how to drive them. Not vice versa
<b>VISUAL MEDIA TOOLS</b>
<b>Film, medium-length film, short film:</b> powerful, a milestone, but its production is a very hard job
<b>Documentary:</b> another very powerful medium. You should produce one every year
<b>Cartoon:</b> powerful too. For any kind of audiences. Useful for feeding other media of yours
<b>Advertising banner:</b> potentially it reaches millions of people. But difficult to make it effective
<b>Advertising video spot:</b> many different kinds for different aims. It must be created by professionals
<b>Video clip:</b> very good as support or driver of many other media: Social networks, websites, etc.
<b>Video footage:</b> important for feeding your documentaries, presentations, seminars, etc.
<b>Photograph:</b> A great medium. Take as many pictures as you can. And use them at most.
<b>Slide show:</b> A great medium but not so easy to make it effective. It's a very cross-media tool.
<b>Painting, drawings:</b> done by children and kids who are often Picasso. Set up exhibits.
<b>AUDIO MEDIA TOOLS</b>
<b>Advertising audio spot:</b> very effective. It reaches the widest audience not the biggest. It's cheap.
<b>Audio clip:</b> useful for feeding your documentaries, presentations, seminars, social networks, etc.
<b>Podcast:</b> an emerging medium to be used also as a newsletter. Increases your followers.

## FACE-TO-FACE MEDIA TOOLS

**Event:** It's still the most powerful medium. Make it a videoconference.

**Shows** (musical, poem, comedy, tragedy): if you are creative let yourself be creative.

**Conference** (Videoconference): better yearly. It can be motivating, educational, inspiring, aggregating, etc.

**Seminar** (Webinar): perfect for training purpose. It must be very interactive and built in a cross-media way

## MASTER MEDIA TOOL

...and **YOU**. Each of us is a container, full of content, most of the time, and can be a very effective medium. The best one.



## Creating content about THEM

Here's the golden rule for making media: **Content is the king of media.** This holds true when doing the work of communication, whether with the public directly or through engagement with the media, and thus when designing and creating a media kit too.

Here's the silver rule, so to speak, for our purposes: **Text is the king of any content.** You can compose a piece of music, a video without a word, a dance without a sound, but advocacy work such as ours demands a textual starting point: meaningful words strung together.

Content creation is the biggest task between you and successful communication with the public and media. In order to organise your approach to creating content, we suggest dividing content creation into two branches, which form the structure for this section of the toolkit and the section that follows — creating content about THEM (children and families of imprisoned parents, etc.) and creating content about YOU (your NGO — see the next section of this toolkit).

### GUIDELINE #3: Create content sets

The challenge of creating content that advocates for the rights of children who have a parent in prison, and their families, is in creating varied materials to address the large scale of this issue. Use your tools — text, video, photographs, audio, animations, etc. — to create **content sets** made up of diverse forms of media that address the issue of children with imprisoned parents from all angles.

Creating **content sets** like the ones that follow will help to create a successful media kit with a broad scope:

- a. **Children's rights:** The road to children's rights has been long and twisted, but it has resulted in essential international rights standards that underpin our work. You should make reference to and highlight the articles of these charters that are relevant to the issue of parental imprisonment, beginning with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and ending with Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5 to Member States concerning children with imprisoned parents, which among international standards most rigorously address the issue. Highlight laws and standards that your country has in place to protect children's rights.
  - Don't write more than 20 lines. Use even a shorter amount of text for video, audio, slide shows, etc.

- Include a datasheet, if possible, of an index which ranks how countries adhere to and are equipped to improve children's rights (such as the helpful resources from the [KidsRights Index](#)).

**A note on working with journalists [remove colons throughout in bulles]:**

Always remind journalists to write their stories responsibly, following rules for responsible and ethical reporting with a deontological approach to a child's circumstances. Children are not defined by their parent's imprisonment — they should be treated as intricate individuals, with their own needs and desires, and with futures of their own. Further details on this issue can be found in the section entitled **GUIDELINE #7: Working with journalists.**

**b. An introduction to children with imprisoned parents:**

Media wants to know who the protagonists are in their story. Introduce them to the issue of children who have a parent in prison by providing details of their situation in your country and locally in your community: how many there are at the prison(s) where you operate, how many in your country, in Europe, in the world. What are their specific needs (emphasising the importance of maintaining the child-parent bond)? What living conditions are they frequently subjected to? What limits to their development do they face? What stigmatisation are they and their families frequently subjected to? At the same time, media need to know that they are just like all other children, only faced with.

- 50-60 lines of text. Use only 1/3 of that text for video, audio, slide shows, etc.
- Include a datasheet, if possible, with figures of children with imprisoned parents and of children incarcerated themselves in your country, in Europe and around the world.

*Journalists love data, statistics and graphics. But sometimes they are not able to explain these data correctly in their stories — so you should do it for them.*

**c. Parental imprisonment as potential trauma:** Children are put at risk of developing negative responses (e.g., to authorities) as a result of the traumatic experience of parental imprisonment. Children suffer if they witness a parent's arrest; the pre-trial period can be long and complicated by bureaucratic and legal process, and in some countries they cannot see their parent during the pre-trial period; prison visits are often traumatic experiences; changes to family life are inevitable; children are likely to be affected by the imprisonment of a family member, potentially stigmatised. The list of potential traumas is long.

- 30-40 lines text. Use only 1/2 of text for video, audio, slide shows, etc.

- d. The prison environment through the eyes of a child:** Provide media with an idea of how a child might experience the prison environment, with its rules and protocols. Describe each moment of the child's visit to a prison: traveling to reach the prison, being searched, the first moment of meeting with a parent. How does the prison welcome child visitors? What does the visiting room look like? What is the dynamic like between the family of the inmate and the prison officers? What is it like when it's time to go? Provide information of what child-friendly protocols look like and why they are important.
- 30-40 lines text. Use only 1/2 of text for video, audio, photographs, slide shows, etc.
- e. Share a story:** Narrative is a powerful tool in humanising advocacy work. The goal is not to present children with imprisoned parents as victims, but to make it clear to media that this work is about humans, not about statistics. Choose narratives that are real and personal — familiar situations that you encounter when doing your daily work in prisons and with prisoners' families.
- These stories should not be put into the media kit, but should be prepared ahead of time in case a journalist asks about them.
  - 20-30 lines text for each story. Only text and a few pictures.

**Ground rules for telling the stories of all children, all families and all prisoners**

- You should always gain written consent by the subject(s) of your story — the 'protagonists' — before publishing it, especially if it contains their surname. See the section entitled **GUIDELINE #6: Rules for ethical storytelling** for more information.
- **Never publish the full name or family name, nor photographs of their faces.** Even if children are photographed from the back, you need the parent's consent for publishing them.

- f. Share photos:** Imagery is another way to humanise the subjects of media. Include in your media kit a collection of photographs that show moments of different facets of your NGO's work. The photographs must be excellent from every point of view: creative, well-composed, technically savvy and appealing. It's better if the photo includes a person in the foreground.
- A set of 3-5 photographs, at 3 different definitions: for printing, for publishing in the web, for broadcasting on air.
  - Be sure to write a caption for each photograph you put in your media kit. The caption should include a full description of the subject, where and when it was taken and the full name of the photographer.

*Photos tell stories! You may have a story published just because of a very good photograph of yours.*

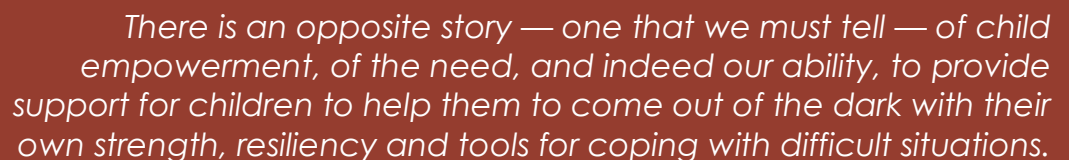
## GUIDELINE #4: The master narrative

Many of us tend to tell the dark side of a topic when we show or tell a story, particularly with an issue as difficult — and often emotional — as parental imprisonment.

Indeed, when it comes to stories of children with imprisoned parents, the **master narrative** is of those children as victims of a society that marginalises them. You've heard it said before: 'children will make the mistakes as the delinquent father'; 'prisoners' kids can't escape a bad fate'; 'they will always remain on the dark side of the road'. That children are invisible and damaged, often cited as forgotten.

When adopted by media, this narrative becomes commonplace — indeed it becomes a guiding narrative, oft-repeated in the stories that we write when doing the work of advocacy, and recounted countless times by journalists. This image filters into the stigmatisation of children dealing with parental imprisonment, even potentially reinforcing for those children the fear of being negatively marked. That their identity is as a child thrown into the shadows, without a future. It's a narrative that removes the agency of the child, treating them as the unfortunate outcomes of an unfortunate situation, without the desire and ability to act.

The **fundamental guideline to shifting the master narrative** for our particular context is this: There is an opposite story — one that we must tell — of child empowerment, of the need, and indeed our ability, to provide support for children to help them to come out of the dark with their own strength, resilience and tools for coping with difficult situations.



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The creation of empowering content that honours the agency of children as individuals shifts the **master narrative** about children with imprisoned parents. In as little as two minutes, effective media can guide the narrative away from framing a child as a victim to framing a child as a promise.

[Watch this powerful two-minute video, called 'Reversible Thinking', from Families Outside](#), a national charity in Scotland working solely on behalf of families affected by imprisonment. This video has an incredible persuasive force. It immediately enters people's minds and creates an immediate positive attitude. It has been used and is used continuously in meetings, conventions, seminars and conferences. When shown in training courses for prison officers, the mood changes instantly.

Translate it into your language if necessary — create the same movie. Use it as much as possible and put it in your media kit.

## GUIDELINE #5: The master resource

If 'Reversible Thinking' is the fundamental guideline to shifting the master narrative, **Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5 concerning children with imprisoned parents is the master resource**. The Recommendation is the most important companion piece to that narrative — a document composed of fifty-six articles and the only official document about children with a parent in prison that is signed by Ministries of Justice of forty-seven countries.

Your media kit should include the full text of Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5, [which you can download here](#). All the articles of the Recommendation are full of very interesting statements, quite useful for you and for media professionals.

The last two articles of the Recommendation concern the media, so are worth spelling out here. They come from Section VIII, entitled 'Work with the media and with public opinion':

**Article 55.** Information provided to, and by, the media should not violate the right to privacy and protection of children and their families, including data protection rules, and any media reporting should be carried out in a child-friendly manner.

**Article 56.** The media, professionals and the general public should be provided with reliable and up-to-date data and good practice examples to increase their awareness regarding the numbers of children affected and the impact of parental imprisonment, and to avoid negative stereotyping and stigmatisation of children with imprisoned parents.

## GUIDELINE #6: Rules for ethical storytelling

Story is the thread that holds your content together. Stories not only give a human face to the work of advocacy; **stories are what media and journalists want most**. They love stories. They work better when they have a good story in their hands, because a good story is:

- a. An entry point
- b. Appealing and engaging
- c. Real and concrete
- d. An opportunity for empathy
- e. Revealing of a truth or a problem
- f. One part of a whole: an example
- g. Easily passed on by word-of-mouth or text
- h. A parable, often
- i. Memorable

As effective as stories can be, the stories that your organisation tells about children affected by parental imprisonment — through text, video, audio, social network, photography, etc. — are **delicate and critical stories** because they are about

children, many of whom are vulnerable to stigmatisation and material difficulties related to their parent's conflict with the law.

As an advocacy organisation working in social services, the stories you tell are never just about your organisation — they will always concern someone else's story. Based on this fact alone, there are some **rules for story telling** that will ensure that you are telling the story responsibly and respectfully.

Responsible story telling about children with imprisoned parents begins with following standards for ethical journalism that treat their protagonists as **deontological subjects**. This means, for our purposes, that children who have a parent in prison are not defined by their parent's imprisonment — they should be treated as complex individuals, with their own needs and desires, and with futures of their own.

There are many [standards for producing ethical journalism](#). Please read them. Media professionals and journalists too often fail to live up to these standards. The more people who are familiar with them, the more effective they become. When you are creating content that tells the story of someone affected by imprisonment, whether a child, a family member or a person in prison, tell that story with the highest standards of journalistic integrity.

### Follow these rules for creating ethical and deontological content:

1. *Be clear about your **intentions** when communicating with children, families or prisoners, and ask for your subject's consent.*
  - a. When communicating with an **adult**, either an **imprisoned parent** or an **adult family member of an imprisoned parent**, communicate something like the following:
    - In an **interview**: 'I will not write down your name, first or last, unless you give me permission to do so'; and, 'I will not report the names of your children or relatives'.
    - When taking a **photo**: 'I'd like to take some photographs of you if you give me written permission to do so'; or, 'I'd like to publish some pictures of you taken from behind where you are not recognisable'; or, 'I'm not going to publish these photos'; or 'I won't take any pictures of you if you don't want me to'.
    - When **publishing a story**: 'When I publish this story, I'd like to provide details about the prison/prison ward in which you are/your loved one is serving a sentence. Is that ok?'
  - b. When communicating with a **child who has an imprisoned parent**, you cannot speak with him or her alone, unless there is **both written authorisation** and the **mandatory presence** of one of his or her parents or legal carers.
2. *Know the **privacy and consent laws** in your country before conducting interviews, taking photos or the like.*



3. **Written authorisations** for interviews with children should include the following information:
  - The subject you are going to cover in your discussion; and,
  - How the child's words will contribute to what you are going to publish.
4. **Take measures for responsibly dealing with sensitive personal data inside your organisation.**
  - You cannot under any circumstances keep personal data in your NGO's files unless you heed the rules put forth in the [European Union's General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#).
  - If anyone who has access to this personal data is sharing it or otherwise violating the GDPR, it is your responsibility to inform them of those rules.
5. **Take measures for responsibly dealing with sensitive personal data outside of your organisation.**
  - Monitor the treatment of any information shared with media to ensure it is published according to ethical journalistic standards. Any media that you produce should follow those same standards.
  - Remind — obsessively even — journalists of their moral obligation to treat subjects through a deontological frame.
  - Insist on the following rule: **No first name, last name, address, and recognisable details about a minor can be published!**
6. **Include the above rules** for creating ethical and deontological content about children with a parent in prison when sharing materials with journalists and media.
  - Your communication materials should always be accompanied by clear notes detailing guidelines for the use of your information that reflect these expectations.

## **GUIDELINE #7: Working with journalists**

The major responsibility that you have when working with media professionals is to **make sure that they are taking responsibility** for what they write and say. Their words matter: they are the megaphones of our society, the watchmen of democracy — yet they are human, sometimes prone to human tendencies for fallibility, simplification and market-driven sensationalism.

Remember, too, that reporters have different motives than you do, such as:

- **Market-based decisions:** Journalists, their editors and the owners of media are always trying to maintain and increase their readerships, their audiences and their followers. In other words, what sells is what's written.
- **Seeking out the 'new':** In their journalism schools and in their everyday work they have learnt that 'a dog biting a man' is not news, but that 'a man biting a dog' is something worth writing about.

- **Sensationalising:** Your NGO deals with 'offenders', their children, their families and relatives. And offenders are always a 'good' piece of news. They are thieves, killers, smugglers, etc. They are the 'bad' guys.
- **Seeking the personal:** Journalists are storytellers, and personal stories get attention. Often this leads to designating people protagonists and antagonists: someone in whom you recognise yourself or don't recognise yourself at all.
- **Chasing a story involving children:** Children are innocent, they draw our affection — and thus in the media world, 'children sell copies' and 'attract' radio, television and social network audiences. Unfortunately, this perspective sometimes leads to demonization of parents, which some journalists, whether absently or cynically, feed into with their reports, and which can further stigmatise children.
- **Being reductionist and deterministic in their framing:** Too often, in doing the actions we have mentioned in the above point, journalists and media neglect to frame people who are in prison as individuals, capable of change.

For these reasons and more, your media kit should be explicit about its expectations of journalists and other media professionals. As mentioned above, your communication materials should always be accompanied by **clear notes detailing guidelines for the use of your information** that reflect these expectations.

### Tips for working with journalists:

1. When approached by a journalist, **vet the journalist** on their approach to journalism. Do they follow a journalistic code of ethics that respects duty, moral obligation, right action and how they can help protect children by avoiding determinism, sensationalism? Have a conversation with them to gauge their intentions in writing about children with imprisoned parents. Engage with them so they better understand how what they write can negatively impact children.
2. Make sure to stress to the journalist that **they should never offend the feelings of the child** nor those of his or her family, relatives or parent in prison.
3. **Journalists should never bully subjects** with their words, whether they are questions in an interview or words in a text.
4. All children have the **inviolable right to privacy**, and the media plays a key role in respecting this right. Make sure journalists carry out their work thoughtfully and with **more sensitive and responsible reporting** of stories involving children and the criminal justice system generally.

## Creating content about YOU

### GUIDELINE #8: The master text

Creating content about your NGO relies on a fundamental text — what might be called a **master text** — that defines the subject, work and vision of your NGO, and much more.

The **master text** is a corpus of all the texts and contents that your NGO will use for the purpose of communications — the text that describes your NGO at its best.

To break this down further, the master text is composed of ten **master points**, which are spelled out in the table below:

Master points	Possible definition	Example
VISION	'The scenario your NGO thinks about for the future'	'No child in the world should stay in or go to prison'
MISSION	'The main objective(s) of your NGO'	To maintain the bond between imprisoned parents and their children
AIMS	'The purposes or intentions; the desired outcomes of your NGO'	Change the prison, the penitentiary system, the clichés, fight the stigma
WORK	'The specialised work, the actions, the different works your NGO runs'	We support those children in prison and outside the prison
GUIDELINES	'The general rules, principles, or pieces of advice your NGO has issued for its staff'	Children should not receive the negative effects of parental sentences; maintain their parental ties
CONTEXT	'The situations, the environments, the places, the social/political/judicial framework'	The meeting rooms in prison and the correctional system
ACTIONS	'The permanent and temporary activities that are carried on by your NGO'	In prison, with families, communities, institutions and in the media
WHO WE ARE	E.g. psychologists, social workers, pedagogists, caregivers, etc.	Psychologists, social workers, pedagogists, caregivers
TEAM	E.g. 10 persons work in prison, 4 at headquarters, 1 for fundraising, 1 for communication	12 work in prison, 5 in office, 3 for fundraising, 1 for communication
HISTORY	From the founding of the NGO through the milestones; to the network, you belong to (COPE)	We started 20 years ago in 1 prison. Now we are in COPE's network.

The order in which these master points are arranged is arbitrary. But suppose a journalist is hosting you for a radio interview, writing a story in a magazine or asks you to provide material for an online publication. He or she wants to know all about your work, and thus you provide it, albeit **prioritising certain master points over others**. Indeed certain orderings might be more logical or useful depending on the recipient, if it might be more effective for a particular media, journalist, target group, audience or individual (another example is provided under Guideline #9).

On certain occasions, you will create texts that will not contain all ten master points, but instead just a few of them, depending on the context. This might look like the following:

- a. **all the master points** on your NGO's website or in your NGO's brochure;
- b. about **half of them** in a speech or in a press release;
- c. **only one master point** in an advertising video spot or in a social network post.

#### **Reminder about fundraising**

Encounters with media professionals are a great way to crowdsource funds. Remember always to mention, in a 'light' way, only incidentally, that your NGO needs donations — even small ones.

### **GUIDELINE #9: From 5 minutes to 100 seconds**

Imagine you are travelling on a train, and the person sitting beside you has overheard you chatting on the phone about your organisation and the work you do. Intrigued, he or she asks you, 'What is your organisation' and 'who are you?'

You have five minutes to explain, three minutes ideally. It takes a lot of practice to reduce your answer to only 100 seconds. But on some occasions, it's worthwhile.

A five-minute discussion is equivalent to about 600-750 words of text, and in casual conversation this may be less. Including pauses when recounting something is also important, and speaking slowly has been shown to help an interlocutor remember the content of the discussion.

This all considered, let's say you've said 600 words of substantial text in five minutes. This is an average of 60 words for each one of the **following ten points**, which you sum up while talking. This equates to about four lines of written text using the current font size: exactly the length of the paragraph you are currently reading.

Of course, in conversation, you have to **find the right balance** of time to discuss each of these points. You likely will give **different weights to each**. You have also to decide **the order** of the master points and whether or not to **mention all of them**.

Here's an example order of master points that you might use in a conversation on a train. We decided a different order and weight for each item.

Item	Words	Example
Our MISSION	90	Maintain the bond between imprisoned parents and their children
Our WORK	80	We support those children in prison and outside the prison
Our CONTEXT	60	The meeting rooms in prison and the correctional system
Our ACTIONS	40	In prison, with families, communities, institutions and in the media
Our VISION	40	No child in the world should be negatively affected by parental imprisonment
Our AIMS	40	Change the prison, the correctional system, the clichés, fight the stigma
Our GUIDELINES	80	Children not subjected to parental sentences; maintain their parental ties
Who are WE?	60	Psychologists, social workers, pedagogists, caregivers
Our TEAM	60	12 work in prison, 5 in office, 3 for fundraising, 1 for communication
Our HISTORY	50	We started 20 years ago in 1 prison. Now we are in COPE's network.
<b>Words total</b>	<b>600</b>	

Read the highlights above, one after another. This shouldn't take more than 100 seconds.

## Your language

When creating content for any communication, we constantly face many rules for language use. These rules vary depending on the context, but when communicating about children with a parent in prison, and children's rights in general, four rules tend to remain the same:

- **Be clear**
- **Be appealing**
- **Be inspiring**
- **Be respectful**

Here are a few tips for using the right language in our context, with an eye to how language differs depending on the media type:

- a. **Respect the feelings of children and their parents/families.**
  - To understand what might be hurtful for them, talk to them for enough time to understand their desires, and speak on multiple occasions. By doing so you will understand quite well which topics, which parts of the story you want to write or tell about — and which ones that are better to avoid.

- The best way to be sure not to hurt their feelings is to read them what you would like to publish, or to include in your media kit.
- b. Use accessible — but specific — language.**
- The language you use should be balanced — easily understood while including specific details.
  - **Example:** *We work every day in the prison to facilitate children visiting their parents [accessible], a right as afforded them by Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5, Articles 16-25 [specific].*
- c. Reinforce your ideas with repetitions — and by providing more detail.**
- **Example:** *One of our guidelines is to work to ensure that children with detained parents maintain their ties with them [positive]. These child-parent bonds need to be maintained [repetition] to facilitate the resilience and growth of this group of children [detail].*
- d. Use language that is evocative — but concrete.**
- **Example:** *Taking care of a child is an investment in the future of that child — and the future of society [evocative] — and can be attained in simple ways, for instance by accompanying a child in prison to meet his or her father [concrete].*

## GUIDELINE #10: You and the COPE network

Last but not least! The COPE network should be an important feature in the content you create. Your affiliation with COPE helps to situate you in a broad, international context of advocates for children with a parent in prison, and shows media professionals that the work your organisation does — and the work that they do in media — does not happen in a vacuum.

**Tell media — and anyone else, for that matter — about the COPE network.** Capitalising on your membership in COPE is encouraged, and can be a tool in and of itself. All of your material, from your letterhead to press releases, in video and in slide show presentations, should include the COPE logo right beside the logo for your NGO. Help us to boost COPE's visibility, just as COPE helps to boost that of your organisation.

## Your media plan

### GUIDELINE #11: Know your audience

Your audience will change depending on what groups you are targeting. Generally speaking, the media kit that you will create will be intended for media professionals — journalists, producers and the like. This tends to be the most important target group.

In some cases, it may be strategic to design a media kit for other **target groups**. Here's a list of recipient target groups, including suggestions of material best suited for them and the best ways of getting in touch:

TARGET GROUP	BEST MATERIAL TO DELIVER	BEST MEDIA TO REACH THEM
Local newspaper journalists	Texts, photographs, stories	Telephone call, email, face to face talks
National/international newspaper journalists	Texts, photographs, stories, data	Telephone call, video chat, email, face to face talks
Local radio journalists	Texts, audio clips, stories	Telephone call, email, face to face talks
National radio journalists International radio journalists	Texts, audio clips, stories, data	Telephone call, video chat, email, face to face talks
Local TV journalists National TV journalists International TV journalists Local website journalists National website journalists International website journalists	Texts, video clips, stories, data	Telephone call, video chat, email, face to face talks
Prospective partners Prospective NGOs as partners Prospective institutional partners Foundations Companies, Insiders, Professionals	Texts, printed material, video, website, data	Newspaper, TV, radio, newsletter, event, seminars, conference
Imprisoned parents' families	Printed material, video, website, your social	TV, radio, event, podcast, app
Prison staff and officers	Texts, printed material, video, website	Newspaper, TV, radio, newsletter, event, podcast

Children with imprisoned parents; Children in general	Printed material, photographs, video, audio	TV, radio, event, podcast, app, cartoon, videogame
The general public	Printed material, photographs, video, audio, social network	Newspaper, TV, radio, app, event

## GUIDELINE #12: Designing your media plan

A media plan is a lot more than just a timetable (though it includes one). Your media plan should include a **Gantt chart** (a tool for keeping track of a project schedule) and could also include a **Pert chart** (a project management tool for organising tasks). Your media plan will also include more than just project management tools.

### Four steps to design your media plan:

1. **Decide which tool to use** (radio, newspaper, TV, website, newsletter, etc.), depending on what target group will be the recipient of your communication.
2. **Identify which provider or journalist to contact**, namely the media outlets, radio/TV channels/stations, online newspapers, etc.
3. **Decide when and for how long** you want to use the media that you have identified.
4. **Draw a chart** showing what you have planned in steps two and three. Use a Gantt chart and/or a Pert chart to better control the implementation of your media plan, which will be put in action only once your media kit is finalised.

### A cross-media approach

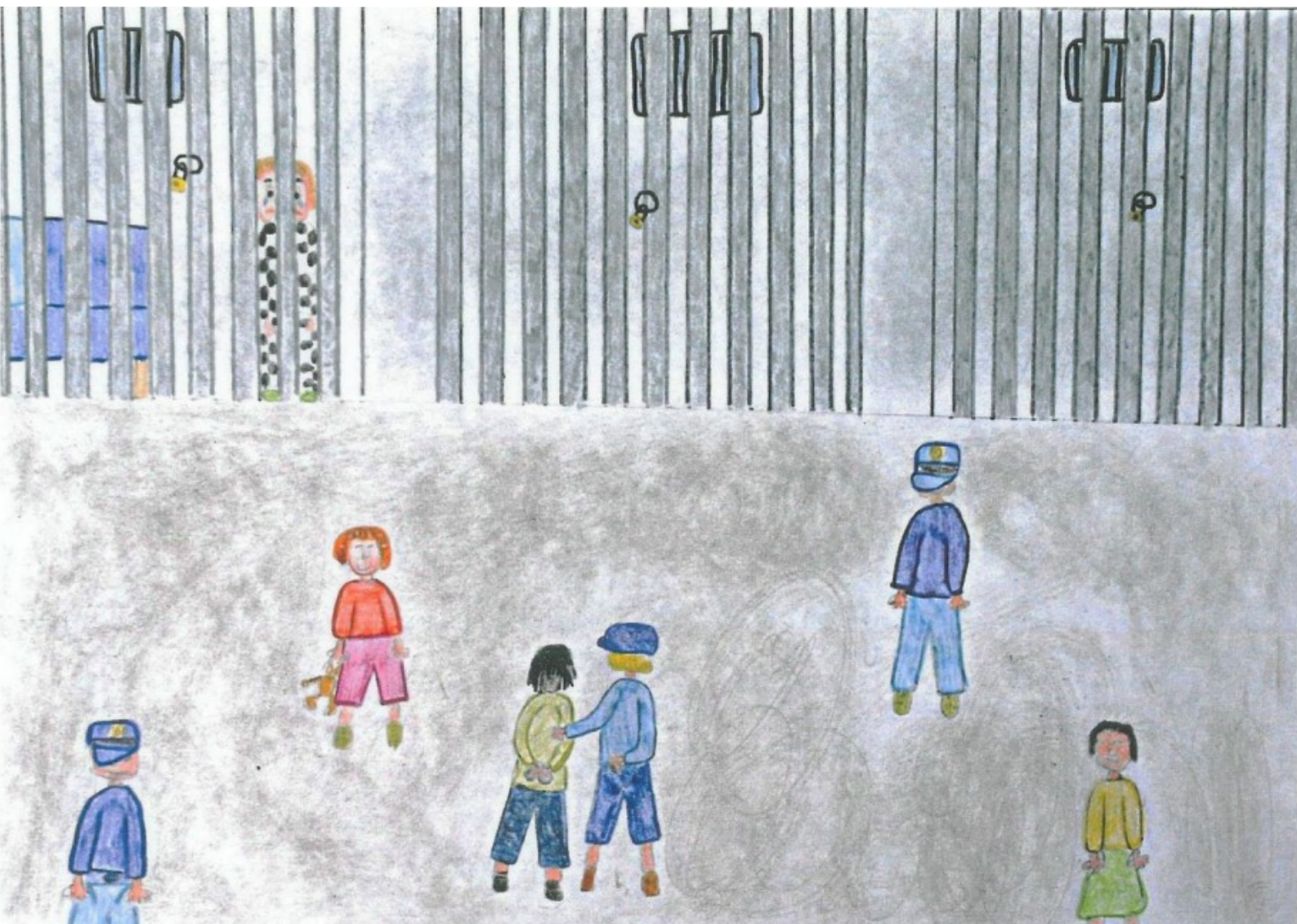
The media system of our current globalised world is an **international cross-media system**. Even if your NGO is working in a small town, you are never separate from global media networks. In point of fact, you are most likely situated within a **'glocal' media system**: you have a local media/communication environment, but inevitably you are connected with the global milieu as well.

Here are some things to keep in mind, given this fact:

**Engage with local media.** Whatever your organisation does locally can affect the global milieu. Local media can become global media with the flip of a switch. Create and cultivate a relationship of mutual respect and of trust with the local media. Work together — and hold them accountable when they misinform the public, or break a code of ethical journalism.



- a. **Be ready to navigate in a global media system.** Communication with local media can lead to global response. Be ready for that.
- b. **Write for the 'glocal' sphere.** Remember to plan/organise/create/implement your communication strategy, content, media plans and media kit bearing in mind that your language, stories, approach and editing must be 'glocal'.



### GUIDELINE #13: Compiling and distributing your media kit

If you have followed all of the guidelines described until this point, you have almost finished all the work needed to build your media kit.

The final actions to finalise your media kit are as follows:

#### 1. What goes into your media kit

- a. Remember: different groups should receive different materials. This means adapting your media kit depending on the recipient.
- b. A media kit — properly adapted for the recipient — could in theory be a full collection of the material you've prepared up to this point, (including videos, ad spots, interviews, apps, press releases, documentaries, printed material, etc.)
- c. On the other hand, your media kit could consist of one of these forms of media — even just a single press release.

#### **Don't forget:**

*Different groups should receive different materials. This means adapting your media kit depending on the recipient.*

#### 2. Where to put your media kit

- a. Following the decisions that you've made when designing your communication plan, you likely have decided to set up different media kits for different target groups, like press outlets, radio stations, general people, etc.
- b. Most of the material you created is likely in digital formats, but some material is certainly on paper, especially if you are going to distribute your media kit at an event of yours. Here are various distribution scenarios:
  - **Events and face-to-face meetings:** upload your media kit to a USB drive and put it in a nice (possibly your NGO branded) folder with additional printed material.
  - **Made available online:** put your media kit on the cloud, in an online server at the disposal of journalists and media professionals. Use platforms like Dropbox and send your contact a link and a password — for their eyes only. The printed material will be in PDF format.

- **For one or a few journalists or media professionals in a more private relationship:** compress your media kit (.rar, .zip) and send it to contacts via an app like WeTransfer.

**Be smart:** If you send a media kit to a journalist who writes for a press outlet that is owned by a media group that also produces TV and an online newspaper, send the same material to that TV channel and online newspaper. Tell the journalist to pass the material on to his or her colleagues working in other media.

### 3. How to PUSH your media kit to the public

- a. You can plan to push the various material contained in your media kit to a single journalist, or to a specific organisation, or to any other recipient you can convince to ‘**subscribe**’ to your media (newsletter, podcast, etc.)
- b. The challenge is **to have as many as subscribers as possible** — but also for those subscribers to be include strategic partners, as well as the general public.

### 4. How to PULL the public to your media kit

- a. Pull people to your media kit through attractive, engagement content on your social media pages and your website.
- b. There is a reciprocal relationship between the media you make public through working with media professionals (press, TV, radio etc.) and the media you make public on the spaces you manage (social media, website). Good media in the press and other public spaces pulls more people to visit your pages.

Whether you aim to **PUSH** your media kit to the public or to **PULL** the public to your media kit, find a way to **let people know that you have communication material** to share — that they can find material to read/watch/listen to — and **show them how to find it.**

### 5. When and how to update your media kit

- a. You can have up to thirty — or more — different kinds of communication material in your media kit. When you change — even slightly — what you aim to communicate, **update your communication material** and find a way to disseminate that.
- b. Updates to your communication material should be an opportunity to re-evaluate your methods of producing content and disseminating it. Consider referring back to this publication when that time comes.

## GUIDELINE #14: A useful timeline

We got through all the steps of a medium-level communication action, following strictly and methodologically the path outlined above.

At the beginning of the whole work sequence of our example, your communication staff (one/a few/many persons) likely helped itself with a timeline chart, a kind of action plan that puts on a timeline the Communication Plan 7 steps just listed above. Something like a Gantt chart.

Let's draw down an example Gantt chart that shows the actions of our example's list. **The timeline can be variable:** All depends on how large your NGO is and on how many people your organisation can/wants to assign to communication work.

STRATEGIES and ACTIONS	timelines																									
ACTIONS - HIGHLIGHTS	months																									
NGO's strategy 2020 > Write it down and plan	■	■																								
Communication Strategy > Write it down and plan		■	■																							
Communication Plan > Write it down and plan		■	■	■																						
Communication Plan > Define and execute	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
1 — Your communication objectives		■	■	■	■	■																				
2 — Your tools — decide which ones				■	■	■	■																			
3 — Your content — main description text							■	■	■	■																
4 — Your assets							■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
5 — Your target groups — decide which ones																					■	■	■	■	■	■
6 — Your consequent MEDIA PLAN/s																					■	■	■	■	■	■
7 — Your consequent MEDIA KIT/s																								■	■	■