



**MEDIA
COLLABORATION
TOOLKIT
FOR CHILD HELPLINES**

**And if we want to achieve
our goal, then let us empower
ourselves with the weapon of
knowledge and let us shield
ourselves with unity and
togetherness ≡**

Malala Yousafzai



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Children of a football team in Lima
responding to a reporter

Foreword

During the early years of my work with Childline South Africa I learned the power of working with the media – not just to flag issues of violence against children, but also to inform the public, and particularly children, about the services available to prevent and respond appropriately to issues of child protection. Sometimes I realised that journalists and I had some very different perspectives on children, violence against children, and appropriate prevention strategies and responses. And I knew very little about journalism and “what works” when trying to raise public awareness on an issue that many members of the public would sometimes rather not know about.

So journalists, reporters and other media persons helped me understand how media works, the importance of being able to sell newspapers, books, visual material appropriate for the internet and television; and my Childline colleagues and I helped them learn about violence against children, the impact of the violence, and evidence- and practise-based prevention strategies. This enabled the many media persons with whom Childline worked to write quality materials that increased public awareness and understanding of the challenges children face. This sharing of knowledge about children and responsible media reporting on children’s issues has now developed into a university diploma course in journalism and children.

One has, of course, to consider the protection of children from the media where public exposure may result in secondary trauma to a child or increase a child’s vulnerability. This did at times cause some tensions between journalists and Childline, and we had to remind ourselves (and media representatives) of our core business – protecting children.

One of the most exciting partnerships I had with the media was during the process of law reform after the dismantling of apartheid and in the early years of the new democratic government in South Africa. Some of our population groups had no or little awareness of how the majority of children in South Africa lived, the extent to which they were seriously disadvantaged, and how their human



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Children of a football team in Lima
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The knowledge and strategies it contains are of great value in ensuring that, whilst putting children's stories and information relating to children's issues into the public space, this engagement will occur in a responsible and effective way 

rights were violated by the policy of apartheid. Media helped raise awareness of how children suffered, and also helped create public consciousness about what needed to be done in order to ensure that children's rights are upheld. During this period, Childline South Africa and partners in service delivery to children engaged frequently with all forms of media in order to educate and motivate for the passing of laws and policies that would ensure equal services and the holistic protection of the rights of children.

This Media Collaboration Toolkit will enable the reader and user to engage with the media productively in advancing the cause of children's rights. The knowledge and strategies it contains are of great value in ensuring that, whilst putting children's stories and information relating to children's issues into the public space, this engagement will occur in a responsible and effective way. Those who use this toolkit will be able to avoid the many mistakes I made along the way!

Joan van Niekerk

Child Rights and Child Protection Specialist, South Africa
Past President, International Society
for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)

Why a Media Collaboration Toolkit for Child Helplines?

A strong coordination between child helplines and media partners can produce a more effective delivery of services to children and youth, and in the long run help strengthen the child protection system and mechanisms of a given country.

But the challenge lies in the fact that the work of a country's media organisations and a child helpline does not automatically intersect. A local media outlet could develop a television and radio programme on children and youth without consulting or mentioning a child helpline. A child helpline could run its usual course of operations without thinking that television or radio programmes could be vehicles to further its cause. Moreover, a local media partner can be developing television and radio programmes without necessarily involving the youth's perspective in the content. Therefore, the collaboration between media partners and child helplines must be actively sought and nurtured.

In crafting this Media Collaboration Toolkit, five media partners, eleven child helplines and five youth representatives with different perspectives and experiences were interviewed and consulted. Four visits to countries such as Greece, the Philippines, Peru and South Africa also contributed to the wealth of information used in this toolkit.

With this document we hope to provide useful information and tools to child helplines that have not yet explored or implemented partnerships with their local media, and to improve the collaboration between child helplines and media partners where partnerships exist.

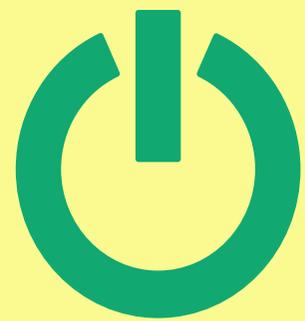
Without the support of media partners, child helplines miss the chance to tell the story of their work.

Without child helplines, media partners fail to gain the full picture of the realities children and youth face every day.

The Media Collaboration Toolkit aims to enhance collaborative synergies between the media industry and the child helplines 

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Getting Started

Getting Started

1. FOUNDATION OF A SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION: GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

The basic principle of a partnership between two or more bodies is the mutual acknowledgement and respect of each other's work. It is highly unlikely that a relationship may bring fruitful results if the organisations involved do not understand each other's mission and the code of ethics underlying their actions. It is important then, before we proceed to the methods and goals of this toolkit, to pin down the main actors targeted by this manual and provide a general overview of what they do and how they can support each other's work.

Child Helplines

Child helplines have a rich and vast experience in engaging with children and young people. They are often a young person's first point of contact with child protection services and one of the most

trusted gateways to the child protection system of a country. Child helplines are equipped to handle various queries and issues from children – from providing much-needed information to rescuing in dire circumstances. They use a variety of methods to ensure that children can always find someone to talk to. These methods include: telephone services; text messaging; online support via email, chats and forums; drop boxes in schools and community centres; postal services and mobile outreach units. Child helpline counsellors actively listen and link the child to resources and emergency assistance when needed. Additionally, child helplines are rich sources of up-to-date information on children's rights issues as they keep track of the reasons children and young people contact them. Child helpline data is a useful benchmark to evaluate the implementation degree of children's rights in a specific country. Moreover, it can be used at the national or regional level as an important source of information and a tool for joint advocacy efforts.

Local Media Partners

Local media partners are non-governmental organisations or private entities operating in a given country and engaged in the development and production of print publications and/or programmes for broadcast on television or radio. In this toolkit, the term 'print media' mainly refers to newspapers and publications of special interest

in their printed and/or online forms. Local media partners often use social platforms to engage with their increasingly interactive audience, but in this toolkit social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc., will not be taken into account. Media are powerful catalysts in raising children's rights issues to the appropriate audience. Through various media platforms such as television and radio, programmes can easily tug at the heartstrings and affect people who watch and listen to the shows. From communities in hard-to-reach places, to citizens in major cities, to representatives of local and national governments and members of civil society, carefully crafted programmes in television and radio can make a difference in positively affecting a child's life – and perhaps even saving a child's life.

Media are powerful catalysts in raising children's rights issues to the appropriate audience ≡



Children and Youth

Youth participation in child protection policy is often marginalised and not highlighted. We tend to see children and young people at the heart of the issues that need to be addressed but not as part of the solution. Youth participation is the subject matter of WADADA News for Kids, a project of Free Press Unlimited, and the core of Child Helpline International philosophy. Children and youth perspectives are the heart of the WADADA News for Kids bulletins produced by adult media makers with the participation of young people in the development and production of the WADADA bulletins. Young people choose the topics of interest, participate in interviews, give their opinions and ultimately provide feedback. Similarly, several child helplines have launched peer-to-peer counselling and a series of youth-driven initiatives. When creating a strong partnership between child helplines and local media bodies, youth representatives cannot be excluded. For this reason, one part of the Media Collaboration Toolkit is dedicated to existing practices of youth participation in order to highlight how young people can best be integrated in the development of media programmes and spark more interest in the work of child helplines.



2. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF PARTNERING WITH THE MEDIA

Why should child helplines and media partners collaborate?

From the child helpline perspective, media can:

- Reach larger shares of the population, including children, young people, parents, teachers and the general public, and inform them on the services, operations and added value of a child helpline
- Educate the general public about child protection services and mechanisms in place to support children and young people in distress
- Support child helplines in their efforts to reinforce their positive public image and reach potential donors for fundraising activities
- Provide accurate and reliable information on youth and children's issues with the purpose of creating awareness and mobilising and sensitising citizens
- Promote youth participation by including young people in the provision of youth-centred programmes and magazines
- Increase visibility of child helplines and their referral partners by disseminating the child helpline's advocacy campaigns and main initiatives
- Shape political debate and exercise pressure on decision- and policy-makers by bringing topics of interest to the general public

From the media perspective, collaboration with child helplines enables media to:

- Present to the audience sound and reliable stories, information, facts, data and research on child-related issues
- Empower its audience as child helplines assist media partners on how to address topics relevant to children and the youth

Every collaboration has a number of risks and challenges which need to be addressed and overcome, especially when dealing with children and young people in need of care and support 

In particular, some media partners do not:

- Grasp the full extent of child helplines' code of ethics and confidentiality policy
- Understand child protection systems and local legislation
- Have training on how to deal with specific child rights issues
- Cross-check sources of information and data gathered prior to the publication or broadcast
- Present a balanced publication or broadcast as some media partners sensationalise stories, distort facts and cause stigmatisation of children and families

Conversely, media organisations struggle with:

- Slow procedures of some child helplines
- Non-compliance with strict deadlines
- Confidential procedures, such as the complete ban on publishing images of children
- Content message which sometimes does not fit the media programming

This toolkit addresses most of these issues and provides a good compromise in examples for both media organisations and child helplines ≡



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School children being interviewed for the WADADA News for Kids programme *Kanastara* in Bangladesh

3. THE MEDIA COLLABORATION TOOLKIT

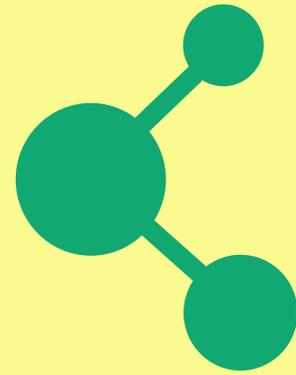
The Media Collaboration Toolkit progresses from creating a shared vision and common goal to developing an action plan. Each section will provide media collaboration examples that child helplines can adapt to their daily work with local media partners. The toolkit can assist child helplines in drafting a Memorandum of Understanding with local media partners, identifying Guidelines for use of data by media, and defining a Code of Conduct for youth participation. **The Media Collaboration Toolkit hopes to achieve the following objectives:**

- More up-to-date information on children's issues will be discussed and become the subject of media programmes
- Local media will identify child helplines as key partners in the child protection mechanism and reach out to them whenever they encounter issues involving children
- Child helplines will view local media not as a tool but as a partner in the child protection mechanism
- Local media, because of exposure to the work of child helplines, will be prompted to shift their mindset when tackling delicate subjects by being especially sensitive to the peculiarities of working with children
- Local media will learn how to discuss children's issues not on an ad hoc basis but holistically and in the context of the wider child protection mechanism
- Young people will be involved in the creation of targeted programmes and given space in an otherwise adult-centred environment

In developing the Media Collaboration Toolkit, the framework included the following aspects of a child-helpline-media relationship:

- **Share a vested interest** in the well-being of children and young people
- Possess **expertise** in their own fields as child helplines and media partners
- Develop collaboration **protocols** which do not breach the organisations' policies
- Foster **youth participation**
- **Liaise** by means of a communications team
- Reflect on the forms of collaboration that best **fit the child helpline's message**





Shared Vision, Expertise and Trust

Shared Vision, Expertise and Trust

This section will analyse the work of child helplines, the role of media partners, the ethical implications of working with children and the advantages of involving youth in media collaboration. Additionally, it will provide examples of ways child helplines enable the media to understand the leading principles overriding child helplines' work.

1. THE WORK OF CHILD HELPLINES AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Work of Child Helplines

Child helplines can develop successful collaboration with the media by involving them in their modus operandi. Some examples of engagement with the media include:

- Providing media-friendly reports based on the data as collected;
- Inviting them to the child helpline call centre;
- Taking them to visit at least one key referral partner of the child helpline;
- Discussing the main areas covered by the work of the child helpline;
- Providing media partners with an overview of the broader context, such as the child protection system of a given country.
- Explaining to them the procedures counsellors follow when answering contacts to the child helpline;

Some child helplines may stop at the work done in the call centre. However, showcasing the whole gamut of child helpline operations; for example, rescue operations and the referral system, can give media partners a comprehensive idea of the service, and media partners can, in turn, help identify gaps in the system.

Beyond the trainings and learning visits, **Uganda Child Helpline (UCHL)** has also implemented a number of other methods to include media partners in their operations. These methods include sharing UCHL's **reports** (quarterly abstracts), inviting media personnel to **stakeholder meetings**, allotting media representatives a slot on the child helpline **steering committee**, and integrating media staff members in the **casework team**, which is responsible for the follow-up of cases.



The **Smile of the Child in Greece** has shared a remarkable example of how child helplines can clarify operational procedures to media partners. The Smile of the Child has developed a series of **simulation exercises** on the tools and mechanisms activated whenever a child goes missing. A real simulation on the operations of the child helpline's search and rescue team for missing children is a good way to explain to the media and the public the procedures followed every time police authorities launch the Amber Alert, an alert system for missing children.



Role of Media

The role of media in child protection systems is often understated. The media are perceived as a tool, as an opportunity to make children's and youth's concerns known to a greater audience, and ultimately as a way to raise awareness of the child helpline and the services offered. They are somehow thought as the final stage of a process, in which content has already been created and awaits to be disseminated.

Media outlets reach out to child helplines for a myriad of reasons. They may need **statistics or first-hand data** on a given topic of interest, **specific details on a case** involving a young person, **expertise on a specific topic** on child rights, or the **volume of contacts received** after a child helpline's content has been featured on a TV or radio show. Sometimes media channels go a step further and **invite child helplines' representatives** to their TV or radio shows. On these occasions the audience is presented with a precise and truthful representation of the issues children and young people face every day. Below are specific ways media can support child helplines.

Media are much more than a tool or opportunity. They can be invaluable **partners** of child helplines, key actors which can contribute to the development, production and dissemination of a successful story. They are **experts** in shaping political debate around an issue, countering stereotypes and misconceptions, and educating by providing alternative viewpoints. All this, if carefully planned, can be extremely beneficial to children and young people by boosting the activities fostered by the child helpline.

Print Media

Print media refers to paper publications circulated in the form of physical or online editions of books, magazines, journals and newsletters. Print outlets are an easy medium to spread awareness or advertise to any particular geographical area. Besides they are always popular among consumers and in comparison to other media can be used for a longer length of time. Print agencies can provide child helplines with:

- Dedicated **articles** on the operations and services of the child helpline
- **Reportages** on specific child protection issues and the child helpline's programmes
- **Editorials** focused on a given topic of interest
- Publication of statistical **data**
- Publication of **real stories** and specific cases of children to sensitise the audience
- A **youth column** for young people to present daily news or give their ideas on a specific topic
- **Interviews** with child helpline staff to provide guidance, prevention tips and support to children and youth
- **Coverage of Press Briefings**
- Reproduction of **Press Releases** and announcements
- Support for **awareness-raising campaigns**
- **Publication of the child helpline's marketing materials** such as posters, logo, pictures, etc.

Television

Television is a powerful media partner. It is direct, immediate and can reach a larger and more diverse population, including those with low literary levels or in isolated areas. Messages shared through TV are by far most effective and resonant, but also much more costly. TV partners can assist child helplines through:

- **Public service announcements** of child disappearances through the reproduction of missing posters
- Broadcasting of **awareness-raising spots** on the operation and services of the child helplines (free-of-charge) as well as in the context of national campaigns targeting children, youth, parents, teachers and the general public (on abuse, trafficking in children, bullying, etc.)
- **Advertising** International Days including International Child Helpline Day (May 17) and International Missing Children's Day (May 25) every year
- **TV Reportages** focusing on real stories of children and highlighting the role of child helplines, the tools and mechanisms in use, the cross-border cooperation and partnerships, and the role of volunteers
- Hosting staff members of the child helpline in **TV bulletins programmes and documentaries** to raise awareness of the issues related to children and facilitate the exchange of information

© Fundación ANAR, Spain

Press Conference presenting the report and the social media campaign of ANAR Foundation and Mutua Foundation against bullying

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No



BULLYING

Fundación ANAR
Ayuda a Niños y Adolescentes en

Acabar con el bullying comienza en ti



Radio

Radio broadcasting works efficiently to create awareness and educate the public on specific issues and in specific regions and localities. Radio programmes usually feature field experts and people can listen to them by sitting comfortably in their homes. Radio is often considered as a talking newspaper since it is mainly used to access the latest news and events. Additionally, it transmits short stories – these being factual or fictional, and it is much more affordable than its TV counterpart. Examples of radio collaboration include:

- **Interviews** of child helpline officers and managers on issues like child protection, corporal punishment, child marriage, relief distribution for children, etc.
- **Promotion** of the helpline and its activities (in some regions, radio reports of lost children have mentioned the number of the helpline)
- Airing segments of **stories of children** who survived abuse and illnesses and now serve as inspiration particularly to those who are experiencing a similar situation as well as for those who reach out to the child helpline
- **Talk-shows**, lasting one to two hours each and covering general topics of child protection including the role of the child helpline
- **Live coverage of public events** (as for example, on the occasion of press briefings, public launches of campaigns and International Days) with parallel live interviews



© Bantay Bata 163, Philippines
Teleradyo DYAB interviewing Sheila Estabillo and
Melisa Alison of Bantay Bata 163

Capacity-Building Training and Workshops

Child helplines are experts in counselling children and youth who face different kinds of problems in their everyday life. Media organisations are an expert in mobilising society by conveying a message to the public, by being watchdogs, and by being catalysts for change. Child helplines should take advantage of media organisations' expertise by learning from their skills. Below are examples of capacity-building training and workshops that media organisations can facilitate.

Childline South Africa included a Media Literacy Training during their Annual General Meeting. Provincial directors were given a chance to show a two-minute video on the work of the child helpline using the simple guidelines in community journalism. Community journalism takes place when public citizens play an active role in collecting, reporting, analysing and distributing information to an audience most often using mobile devices. This workshop will enable Childline South Africa to create relevant and interesting content especially when they are in the field working with children. The Media Literacy Training was made possible by **Vuselela Media**.



In response to the rise of Trash TV in Peru, **Teléfono Anar Peru** and **TV Cultura** with the support of the Council of the Peruvian Press, Advisory Council of Radio and Television (CONCORTV) and Instituto de Formación para Educadores de Jóvenes, Adolescentes y Niños Trabajadores de América Latina y el Caribe (IFEJANT) conducted the workshop, "Development of a reference guide for the media on the defense and promotion of the rights of Children and Adolescents (NNA)". Over 46 journalists attended, and experts in the fields of Ethics in Journalism and the Best Interest of the Child and Media presented. CONCORTV introduced the campaign "Respeto el Horario Familiar (Respect the Family Schedule) 6AM to 10PM". Lastly, all 46 journalists went through a workshop on spotting all the red flags in news articles violating child rights. The journalists also proposed alternatives in presenting the same news articles integrating the principles learned during the workshop.



© TV Cultura – NAPA
Children training in a workshop in
Arequipa, Perú

2. CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND THE ETHICS OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Child and Youth Participation

For years child helplines around the world have been embedding this principle in their strategic plans. Some have succeeded in guaranteeing youth an ample space in decision-making within the activities and initiatives of the child helpline. Others are still exploring possibilities of engaging young people in their daily operations.

Young people bring new perspectives on issues that affect and pertain to them. Their participation leads to more accurate, relevant decisions that are better informed and more likely to be implemented. Youth are experts of their own lives and their recommendations must be listened to and acted upon.

Media professionals may not take into consideration the youth perspective because their main audience is the adult market. Children and youth are not often perceived as consumers of mainstream media; therefore, content is created without them in mind. This is the reason children and youth are underrepresented in media. And when children are represented, they are often portrayed negatively as victims or stereotypes. Below are some of the ways media should not utilise content with children:

- Children's serious comments to make adults laugh
- "Cute" children to add charm and appeal
- Children's photos in miserable situations to evoke emotion even though this does nothing for children's self-respect
- Children being patronised and spoken down to
- Adults speaking for children when children know more about the subject
- Children made to perform like circus animals
- Adults showing off children's ignorance
- Adults putting words in children's mouths or interrupting them
- Children being made to look passive when they are not
- Young people being lumped together as a problem group called "youths"



© Free Press Unlimited
A girl participating in the WADADA News for Kids
programme *Naya Pusta* in Nepal

The true core of the issue is how to foster youth participation in media collaboration without falling prey to manipulation and tokenism.

In order to foster youth participation, children and youth must be engaged through these five levels:

1. Listening
2. Supporting them in expressing their views
3. Taking into account their views
4. Involvement in decision-making processes in an active and direct way so their views can be shared and discussed
5. Sharing power and responsibilities for decision-making through negotiation, consensus or voting

To promote effective participation of young people in media projects, child helplines and media partners should:

- Identify children and young people to participate in the project by recruitment and selection processes
- Gain consent from young people, parents and carers
- Prepare children and young people for participation by establishing an agreement and clarifying mutual expectations
- Identify the needs of individuals and address these to ensure meaningful participation
- Address ethical issues
- Identify an appropriate setting

The **WADADA News for Kids media partners** have shown that youth-centred-and-driven projects can be designed, implemented and positively evaluated. **News Generation** (produced and broadcasted by Multi TV - Ghana), **Naya Pusta** (Nepal), **NAPA - No Apto Para Adultos** (Peru) and **Bona Retsang** (produced and broadcasted by Vuselela Media - South Africa) are successful examples of youth news bulletins which inform, engage and empower not only their target audience but also secondary viewers such as parents, siblings and other relatives. For a more exhaustive analysis of the goals achieved by the WADADA News for Kids network, consult [WADADA News for Kids Audience Survey](#).



An initiative of The Smile of the Child in Greece is [YouSmile](#), a Student Volunteer Network that works to:

- Promote the idea and culture of children's volunteerism
- Encourage the expression of children's genuine creativity
- Ensure the necessary tools for children to be heard
- Create an environment that brings together child volunteers from different countries and promotes their active participation in the decisions that affect their lives
- Inform and raise awareness amongst children and young people

The tools of YouSmile include an interactive website, a Web Radio and TV, and an e-learning platform that allows online live interaction among participants. YouSmile encourages young people to call or email the child helpline when they encounter problems, want to report an issue or seek help and assistance. Participants of the network cooperate with media partners informing them on the ethics of working with children and the importance of child and youth participation in their programmes.



Ethics of Working with Children

Meaningful child and youth participation occurs when children and young people are included in the planning, development and execution of a given project. But meaningful child and youth participation must also entail ethical, safe, non-discriminatory and child-friendly approaches. This means that young people's participation must be sought/welcomed in accordance with the rules or standards for right conduct or practice, conducted in a safe and protected environment, guaranteed equal treatment and democratic involvement, and comply with the ages, inclinations and capacities of its participants.

Ethical guidelines must be devised and followed by any organisation working with children and youth. Partners of such organisations must be informed about and conform to them ≡

In particular, before embarking on a participatory project with children and young people, child helplines and media partners should consider two main factors:

- Whether confidentiality and anonymity of the young people is ensured and whether they will provide their consent for the use of any artwork
- Whether young people will be given the chance to check the accuracy of the adults' transposition of content and whether they will be consulted on the validity of the adults' interpretation

Child helplines can insist that media partners abide by a confidentiality policy. Child helplines can also offer to media partners orientations on the ethics of working with children. Aside from the two main factors mentioned above, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) also lists other factors to consider when engaging with children and youth in media:

- Any journalistic activity must be carried out with appreciation of the vulnerability of children
- The communications team must strive for excellence in terms of accuracy and sensitivity
- When intruding on the media space of children, do not publish images that are damaging to them
- When promoting material involving children, do not use stereotypes and sensational presentation
- Always consider the consequences of publication of any material involving children
- Do not identify children visually unless it is in favour of public interest
- Give children, wherever possible, the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement of any kind
- Do not use sexualised images of children
- Verify the credentials of any organisation speaking for or representing the interest of children
- Do not make payments to children, parents or guardians for material involving the welfare of children

ISPCC Childline – Ireland does not provide stories to the media until they are anonymised and identifying details are changed. If a media outlet has access to the organisation's call centre, it must sign a general ISPCC confidentiality agreement for the use of content gathered, which is always pre-recorded rather than live.



The Smile of the Child Greece shares specific information on a story only if the child has become an adult and has given consent to share his/her story (such as a child from a foster home who has grown up and wants to share her/his experience).



However, even when confidentiality policies are signed and ethics are given, some common violations still occur, such as revealing:

- Any information about the family without prior consent of the family members
- The surname of minors
- Specific details on the location where a child's rights violation occurred

Child helplines must learn how to mitigate these situations of violations when children's rights issues appear in media. How can child helplines manage these instances?

Child helplines can ask media not to focus on specific stories but instead discuss issues; for example, child abuse or unaccompanied minors. Sometimes, journalists have a story in mind and they already have an idea on how to present it.

In case a child's confidentiality or privacy is breached, media organisations must be reminded, warned, followed up with and if necessary, threatened with legal action by the child helpline. However, this approach must be balanced with diplomacy as the end result should be that media partners understand the gravity of the matter at hand.

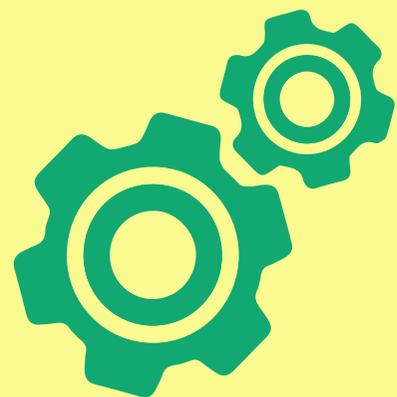
Childline South Africa has child confidentiality policies that apply to all the interactions of the organisations with other partners, including the media. Childline South Africa works closely with the Centre for Child Law, based at the University of Pretoria, which litigates on matters pertaining to children. The two organisations have worked on constitutional court matters and are currently investigating media's policies and the issues around printing children's photos, providing children's identifying details, and so on. Occasionally, Childline South Africa trains media students on the ethics and handling of child-related stories.



©TV Cultura - NAPA
A child being interviewed
on the outskirts of Lima



© Deepak Tolange
The Tamang family learning photography as part of *CHHAARO (DUST)*,
an ethnographic film with the children working in brick kiln areas in Nepal



Developing an Action Plan

Developing an Action Plan

This section will focus on the importance of liaising with the media through an effective Communications Department or Officer. Then it will consider the pros and cons of short- and long-term partnerships and offer some examples of each. Finally, it will give insight on how to structure key media content and the language to use to target the intended audience.

1. MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGEMENT

Once the ground rules have been laid down and both partners have an understanding of each other's work and leading principles, it is time to establish a contact. Communications officers are at the heart of media strategies. They are responsible for the public image and credibility of the organisation and should be fully aware of the ins and outs of the organisation. If media relations go smoothly, no one notices their presence; if they go wrong, the world is at their back. A professional Communications Department is key to fostering and handling media partners' relationships.

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Some general tips for child helplines' communications officers contacting media outlets include:

- **Be on time**, you must follow the tight deadlines set by media organisations
- **Network with journalists**, make sure to have regular contact with media to keep the engagement ongoing
- **Write well**, keep your content crisp and clear
- **Be accurate and factual**, ensure your data is well sourced
- **Think multimedia**, include visuals to your written or oral content
- **Be contactable**, available for enquiries, return calls as soon as possible
- **Be enthusiastic**, it may be the same stuff to you but not to a reader
- **Keep your promises**, be reliable, honest and trustworthy
- **Keep your temper**, you may need a lot of patience in dealing with the media





The Press and Communications Team of **The Smile of the Child Greece** is composed of five staff members with journalism or communications backgrounds. They are the first point of contact for journalists investigating specific issues and for day-to-day media requests. The assignment of the Press and Communications Team includes international media relations, local media relations and events management. Some of their tasks comprise:

- Press clippings and publicity reporting
- Drafting, editing and publishing press releases, newsletters, articles, media material, press kits
- Cooperation with media partners to showcase the organization's work and actions
- Crisis management and handling of media requests on serious cases related to vulnerable children (such as missing children cases, child abuse cases)
- Spokesperson activities
- Planning, development and implementation of awareness-raising material and campaigns at both the national and international level
- Organization of and participation in press and communications events (such as press briefings, public events)
- Development and maintenance of the organization's corporate identity





ISPCC Childline – Ireland, has an Advocacy and Communications Department. The role of the department in terms of communications is to monitor the media, manage social media, develop links with media personnel/organisations, produce press release/editorials, and to ensure appropriate messaging, seek coverage, and manage internal and external communications. Additionally, the Communications Team works with the Fundraising Team and Events Manager to organise fundraising events. The scope is to include awareness-raising initiatives (for example, anti-bullying) during these campaigns.



The Uganda Child Helpline (UCHL), which is under the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), has a Communications/Public Relations Officer who happens to be the Ministry's spokesperson. The officer's roles include: overseeing all creative inputs on the Ministry's communications and publications; developing content for print and broadcast media, and drafting and developing all content for internal and external communication. In terms of the child helpline, the officer vets all outgoing information (case stories, documentaries, etc.) to ensure that the rights of children are not violated in the process and also cooperates with media houses (particularly print) to ensure visibility of the child helpline in their publications.



Although **Teléfono Anar Peru** does not have a dedicated team to manage media relations, **Teléfono Anar Peru** and its Communications Officer use *Information Requests Forms* in order to facilitate properly any queries from outside the organisation, including media partners. A similar form is also used by the **Bantay Bata 163 Philippines** to manage what kind of information can be requested from them. The template for this form is found in **Annex I**.



2. COLLABORATION APPROACHES

Some considerations to keep in mind when planning a communications partnership is whether the child helpline benefits more from an ad hoc (per-project), or long-term relationship with the media. An initial step in this decision might be to assess how often the child helpline produces material for external use. Only then can it be decided whether to establish long- or short-term contacts. For example, if the child helpline releases youth-related articles on a regular basis, it might consider the chance of a long-term partnership with a youth magazine. The choice is at times also dependent on the child helpline's budgets and/or whether there are already some partnerships in place with media organisations. Nevertheless, it is important to plan a media strategy in advance.

The Amber Alert by **The Smile of the Child, Greece** is one of a few proactive examples of long-standing collaboration. Aside from its main goal, which is to widely disseminate information on missing children cases, it creates a positive relationship with journalists, opens prospects of wider cooperation and improves their understanding on the role and work of child helplines.



The **Uganda Child Helpline (UCHL)** partnered with PANOS Eastern Africa to train journalists from upcountry radio stations on child protection and broadcasting child related issues.



© Free Press Unlimited
A boy participating in the WADADA News for Kids programme *De Humo TV* in Nicaragua

Form of Media Collaboration

Short-term cooperation is more **reactive** to the flow of events and functions on a case-to-case basis. This approach is very useful in managing and responding to crises because in the majority of these cases, the media attention turns spontaneously towards the child helpline.

Long-term relationships require bigger investments, not only monetary, but in terms of planning, implementation and evaluation. These approaches have a **proactive** nature in the sense that they are not triggered by a specific event but instead aim to produce more sustainable and long-lasting results. More established child helplines are likely to undertake long-term relationships with the media, although this is not always the case. It might happen that the more established child helpline has built such an extended network of media contacts that long-term partnerships are no longer deemed necessary. On the same line, small child helplines might take into consideration proactive approaches to create or reinvigorate media interest.

Free Press Unlimited (FPU) and the **Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ)** created and launched the community radio soap opera, **Mitini**, to raise awareness on child marriage in Nepal. As a result of this programme, more youth and adults call **Child Helpline 1098** in Nepal to report incidents related to child marriage.



If we were to define the nature of each media channel by the proactive-reactive dichotomy, it could be said that:

- Child helplines' collaboration with **print media** is more reactive than proactive. Child helplines tend to contact media (or vice versa) because of an event or an increased interest in a topic. Sometimes it is for advocacy campaigns and awareness-raising.
- Cooperation with **television channels** is usually ad hoc and sought; likewise print media when there is important news to disseminate or topics of interest to discuss. Child helplines' staff members are often invited to live programmes when serious cases of child abuse occur or in response to emergency situations.
- Working relationships with **radio stations** develop more on a day-to-day basis. Radio is more proactive in nature because child helplines are periodically invited to talk shows. The demarcation line, though, is very thin and more cases of ad hoc participation have been recently preferred by child helplines.

Online Media Collaboration

Communications officers and teams of child helplines often meet with media partners at events of the child helpline, conferences hosted by association of journalists and face-to-face interviews arranged by media partners. However, not all media partners have a local presence. Some media organisations cover only international news and stories. Some media organisations are present only online. Some journalists are not connected with any media organisations, such as bloggers who

publish their own websites with their own articles, and vloggers who upload their own video content on social media. And because of these constraints, Communications officers and teams must be flexible in their approaches to these media organisations and journalists.

Kindertelefoon in the Netherlands invited local vlogger, **Metabi**, to the premises of the child helpline to help raise awareness on child abuse. **Metabi** featured this visit in his [YouTube channel](#).



The use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Reddit to engage with these media organisations and journalists is important. Some media organisations active online are Huffington Post, The Guardian, Washington Post and The New York Times. Bloggers and vloggers can be well-known locally or internationally. However, because of the rapid changes in online media from one year to another, Communications officers and teams must always be aware of these trends to maintain a relevant presence in online media.

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3. STRUCTURING MEDIA CONTENT: LANGUAGE AND FORMAT

The final element of successful collaboration is the action plan – the way to implement all the variables your organisation has carefully chosen to evaluate whether partnering with the media is a fruitful way to enhance your reach and work. To briefly summarise the variables considered so far, child helplines and media partners should:

- **Share a vested interest** in the well-being of children and young people
- Possess **expertise** in their own field
- Develop collaboration **protocols** which do not breach the organisations' policies
- Foster **youth participation**
- **Liaise** by means of a communications team
- Reflect on the forms of collaboration **that best fit the child helpline's message**

If the child helpline has made up its mind to go ahead, it is then time to give a structure to your media content. When drafting content, child helplines must make sure the chosen media format is relevant to the intended target audience and that the structure and language of the message fit both the recipient AND the medium. The table below shows some useful tips on how to outline your message depending on the type of media format.



© UNICEF/UNI73460/Wangusa
A girl interviewing a boy during the International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) talk show on NBS TV

A successful CSO needs a well-thought-out media strategy, trained communications staff and the time and money to back them up. To get your 'messages' heard, it is not enough to be right; you have to be skilled as well. It is not enough to rely on winning over a few influential journalists or public figures; you have to compete on traditional and social media together, the old world and the new ≡

Lisa Essex and Brandon Oelofse

MEDIA FORMATS

	Press Releases	Press Conferences	Interviews	Crisis Communication	Media Campaigns
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News media • General Public, if webcasted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted by journalist • Informing the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News media first • General public to follow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various
Aim		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigns • Safety emergencies • Promotional purposes, such as a campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigns • Promotional purposes • Information Sharing • Comment and Opinion sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To handle crisis and the spreading bad news 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you do not include any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness - Education - Improve profile - Deepen understanding <p><i>General goals should be avoided. Be specific.</i></p>
Structure or Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant content stays at top of the message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullet points and key notes • Prepare possible questions and visual aids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back up your discourse with evidence, such as numbers / statistics / pictures • Estimated time for evidence support 20-25 seconds max. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor what it is said about your organisation • React to journalist enquiries • Be open and frank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide what will be done (content), by whom (team of experts) and when (time to develop and implement the campaign) • Think of how to measure the outcomes

	Press Releases	Press Conferences	Interviews	Crisis Communication	Media Campaigns
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Text • 1 page max. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral – although material is prepared beforehand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral - for TV or Radio, although conversation can be recorded and transposed for print supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written or oral, depending on requested input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is written, oral or broadcasted on social media
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple, Eye-catching, Punchy, Short sentences • Active verbs • Key words • W's rule (Who / What / Why / Where / When) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker must be fluent and diplomatic • 10 minutes per speaker (2 max.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on audience • Be ready to answer neutral as well as hostile questions • Speak slowly and clearly • Try to look in control • Stay polite • Use the bridge technique: acknowledge the journalist's question but then use a linguistic devise (e.g. "however"), to link the question to your safety zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be polite however unpleasant the questions are • Don't speculate or lie • If you have a legitimate reason for withholding information, say what it is • If your organisation has blundered, admit it, apologise openly and promise effective solutions to contain the damage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuade, provoke, inspire • Speak to the heart as well as the head • Tell stories, paint pictures and • create events • Use humour and surprise • Speak the audience's language
Extra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact details and useful links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put together "press-kits" in advance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a quote which sums up your argument and is clear and interesting 		

Child helplines can use a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with media partners to reflect any agreements on the action plan. A template for this MOU is found in **Annex II**.

Creation of Child-Friendly Material

Before we come to a close for the Media Collaboration Toolkit, note that all the principles and guidelines learned must be concretised in child-friendly material. Below are three examples of stories from media organisations created with the aid of child helplines. All three examples illustrate the use of data collected by child helplines, specific cases encountered by child helplines, awareness-raising of particular issues and celebration of days on child rights.



International Missing Children's Day

On May 25, 1979, 6-year-old Etan Patz disappeared from a street corner in his New York neighbourhood while walking to school. A photo of Etan generated national and international media attention and became a symbol of the missing children movement. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25 as National Missing Children's Day. In 2001, May 25 was first observed as International Missing Children's Day. Nowadays, an estimated 8 million children are reported missing each year around the world. International Missing Children's Day is a day where people around the world commemorate the missing children who have found their way home, remember those who have been victims of crime, and continue efforts to find those who are still missing. The symbol of International Missing Children's Day is the forget-me-not flower.

...

A child is reported missing every two minutes in Europe. Over 209,000 calls were received by the European network of hotlines for missing children in 2015. Data collected from this network of hotlines tells us that children running away from or pushed out of homes or institutions represent 54 percent of missing children cases reported to hotlines. Children abducted by a parent following a family conflict make up 29 percent of cases.

...

Additionally, it's worth mentioning the European Telephone Number for missing children – 116000. This hotline operates 24 hours a day and calls made to it from mobile and payphones are free of charge, while landlines are charged only at local rates. It is staffed by properly trained social workers and psychologists, so they can offer support to parents of missing children, receive information from citizens regarding a missing child, and contact the competent authorities regarding any case in close cooperation with the police.

Source: [Hellenic Centre for Research and Action for Missing Persons](#)



© Free Press Unlimited
A girl participating in the WADADA News for Kids
programme *Naya Pusta* in Nepal

Kathmandu Street Kid Now an Author, Activist

KATHMANDU: When Basu Rai was abandoned at the age of 4, he had nowhere to go. Streets of Kathmandu became his home and he became one of the capital's many street children. He then became part of a lifestyle adopted by many street children – begging, pickpocketing, getting into fights, facing brutal attacks and exploitation. But in 1998, Child Workers in Nepal, an organisation working for the street children and child labourers, rescued Basu.

The same year, Basu was one of such rescued children to be in Geneva for the Global March against Child Labour. Children like Basu from 20 other countries were there. Later he went to New Delhi.

Time has really flown by, says Basu who is in Kathmandu to launch his book, *From the Streets of Kathmandu*. It has been a decade and a half since he was rescued from the streets, and now he has become an author. Basu, who has chronicled his personal experiences as a street kid in his book, calls himself a human rights activist and motivational speaker.

"I wrote this book to make people understand the lives of street children," says Basu. "The other reason of writing this book is finding my mother," adds Basu, who was left by his mother who wanted to pursue her career in modelling. "If she happens to read this book and remembers her love story with my father, she will recognise me as her son," he says.

Basu currently lives in New Delhi, India. "I want to open shelter homes where children rescued from the streets can be kept," he says.

He plans to stay in Kathmandu for about a week. "It feels as though I have come home," he says. "I want to visit various places that I missed for 15 years."

Source: [Himalayan News Service](#)



© TV Cultura – NAPA
A child training in a workshop
in Ayacucho, Perú

Death of a Chatsworth Toddler

Childline South Africa is deeply distressed by the death of the child in the Chatsworth area. The fact that this child suffered physical and sexual abuse to a fatal extent is a sad indictment on our society.

We are presently observing the 16 days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children. Despite 16 years of this national campaign we, at Childline, receive on a daily basis distressing reports of the most appalling abuse of children – physical, psychological and sexual. Our helpline receives over a million calls per year, a substantial number of which relate to all forms of violence against children.

At all provincial Childline offices, calls are entered into a data collection system, and all children requiring services are then referred to the nearest child protection service provider. All referrals are followed up and files are closed only when that service provider reports back to Childline. Regarding the case of the above-mentioned child, Childline KwaZwalu-Natal can find no record of a report to them in relation to the child's circumstances. It appears that in this instance Childline may have been confused with the Chatsworth Child and Family Welfare Society who were providing ongoing services to this child and family, as the child was in foster care.

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 provides for a comprehensive framework aimed to protect children who have been found in need of care and protection, including placing children in foster care to be monitored by social workers. Systematic challenges such as shortages of social workers to follow up on foster care placements might lead to situations where abuses go undetected as may have been what happened in this tragic case. Despite these challenges, we appeal to the public to report cases of child abuse, neglect and exploitation to Childline (08000 55555) or to their nearest police station or child welfare. Please when you report, keep a note of the date, time and person you report to, to enable follow-up if service does not appear to follow the report. It is our responsibility as a society to create a safe environment for our children 365 days of the year.

Source: [Press Release of Childline South Africa](#)

Collaboration with the media is an ongoing process. It requires debriefing about positive and negative outcomes, mapping obstacles, reviewing implemented strategies and updating models and tools. It also changes and cannot be fixed in a set of rules. This is the reason examples of possible media partnerships are showcased in this toolkit to let the child helpline decide what practices are going to be suitable.

Media is an important ally of any child helpline. Do not miss this chance to have a good collaboration with your media partner 

Annex I

Information Requested Form

Template child helplines can give to partners such as media organisations to streamline the process for information requests.

Details of the applicant institution
Name of the institution:
Type of Media:
Telephone:
Mobile Telephone:
Email:
Details of the person responsible for the application
Name:
Position:
Telephone:
Mobile Telephone:
Email:
Information Requested:
Intended use of the information requested
Deadline for the information

This template is from Teléfono Anar Peru.

Annex II

Sample Memorandum of Understanding with Media Partner

Memorandum of Understanding
between
(Organisation of the Child Helpline)
and
(Media Partner)

WHEREAS

The **(Name of the Organisation)**, hereinafter referred to as (Acronym of the Organisation), is (Description of the Organisation), represented by (Name of the Organisation Representative), (Position in the Organisation), with address at (Address of the Organisation).

The **(Name of the Organisation)** operates the (Name of the Child Helpline). **(Name of the Organisation)** is a member of Child Helpline International.

(More detailed description of the Organisation including Mission / Vision and relevant ongoing programmes)

And

(Name of Media Partner), hereinafter referred to as (Acronym of the Media Partner), is a media production company, represented by the (Name of the Media Partner Representative), (Position), with address at (Media Partner Address).

(Name of Media Partner) produces the (Enumerate relevant ongoing programmes). (Name of Media Partner) is a local media partner of (Global Organisation of Media Partners, if affiliated).

(More detailed description of the Media Partner such as Mission / Vision and relevant ongoing programmes)

Both parties have agreed to this Memorandum of Understanding as follows:

ARTICLE 1: Objective of the Memorandum of Understanding

(Enumerate the specific objectives, for example, if pursuant to a specific grant or a global agreement of their global / regional network organisations.)

ARTICLE 2: Areas of Collaboration

2.1. (Name of Organisation)'s role

2.1.2 (Name of Organisation) will provide (Name of Media Partner) support in the following:

(For example)

- a. Information, for example stories and statistics, related to issues of children in (specify the country / region)*
- b. Orientation on the work of (Name of the Child Helpline) and its role in the child protection system in (specify the country / region)*
- c. Access to key referral partners of (Name of Organisation and / or Child Helpline) such as law enforcement agencies, drop-in centres, schools, etc.*
- d. Access to the activities and materials of Child Helpline International (CHI), for example, the Free Our Voices campaign*

2.2 (Name of Media Partner)'s role

2.2.1. (Name of Media Partner) will provide (Name of Organisation) media assistance in the following:

(For example)

- a. In every feature relating to children, to flash the logo and name of (Name of Child Helpline) before, during or after the (Name of the Programme in TV/ Radio/Newspaper)
- b. For (Name of Organisation) activities related to children, for example, child trafficking, to be featured through reports, headlines, short news in the (Name of the Programme in TV/Radio/Newspaper)
- c. Production of documentaries that support the work of the (Name of Organisation) in the field of children or women

ARTICLE 3: Implementation

- a. All the activities in ARTICLE 2 must abide by the Work Plan as established in the attachment to this Memorandum of Understanding. Any deviation to this work plan must be agreed upon by both parties.
- b. All (type of material) to be produced by (Name of Media Partner) in connection with this Memorandum of Understanding must be approved by (Name of Organisation) before airing or release.

ARTICLE 4: Duration

- a. This Memorandum of Understanding enters into force on the date of its signature by both parties until (End Date of the MOU) unless terminated by either party with advance written notice of at least one month to the other.

For (Name of Organisation):

For (Name of Media Partner):

 (Name of Representative)
 (Position)

 (Name of Representative)
 (Position)

 Date

 Date

Attachment - Work Plan

DATE	ACTIVITY/TASK	PARTY IN CHARGE
For example: April (Year)	Identify topics for the (Name of the Programme in TV/Radio/Newspaper)	(Name of Organisation) (Name of Media Partner)
April (Year)	Orientation on the work of (Name of Child Helpline)	(Name of Organisation)
May (Year)	Sharing of Information and Date for the (Name of the Programme in TV/Radio/Newspaper)	(Name of Organisation)
June (Year)	Presentation of Story-Board for the (Name of the Programme in TV/Radio/Newspaper)	(Name of Media Partner)
July (Year)	Approval of the Story-Board for the (Name of the Programme in TV/Radio/Newspaper)	(Name of Organisation)
August (Year)	Presentation of the Final Videos for the (Name of the Programme in TV/Radio/Newspaper)	(Name of Media Partner)

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[Free Press Unlimited \(FPU\)](#) is one of today's leading press freedom organisations. Based in Amsterdam, the foundation is active in more than 30 countries and works to grant people around the world access to unbiased and factual information. Free Press Unlimited supports local media professionals and journalists in countries without or with limited press freedom.



[WADADA News for Kids](#) is one of FPU's many projects. It focuses on the development of local news bulletins for kids and young people and sees a large presence of international organisations and local media partners, which together contribute to make children and youth more informed, engaged and empowered. WADADA News for Kids is a network of local media organisations, active in at least 15 countries, which cooperate to produce relevant and independent reporting targeted at children and youth; a global community where kids and young people get the chance to tell their stories, hear from their

peers and be confronted with a diversity of opinion; an online newsroom and video library where broadcasted material can be looked up, viewed, uploaded and exchanged. WADADA News for Kids is supported by the Nationale Postcode Loterij (NPL).



The WADADA News for Kids media partners who provided information for this Media Collaboration Toolkit are:

- Icon Media Production (Egypt)
- Multi TV (Ghana)
- Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists
- TV Cultura (Peru)
- Vuselela Media (South Africa)

Information in this Media Collaboration Toolkit was collated from the following Child Helpline International members:

- 123 Aló! (Brazil)
- AMPCAN (African Movement for the Protection of Child Abuse and Neglect) (Ghana)
- Bantay Bata 163 (The Philippines)
- Child Helpline 16000 (Egypt)
- Childline South Africa
- CWIN (Nepal)
- ISPCC Childline (Ireland)
- Fundación Anar (Spain)
- Teléfono Anar (Peru)
- The Smile of the Child (Greece)
- Uganda Child Helpline – Sauti 116

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- Jasmineijt Kaur (Malaysia)
- Kiran Patel (New Zealand)
- Teryn Heckers (USA)

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- Essex, L., Oelofse, B. (2015), [Making the Media Work For You | A Guide for Civil Society Organisations](#), European Journalism Centre, Maastricht, The Netherlands.
- Horwath et al., (2011), [You Respond. Promoting effective project participation by young people who have experienced violence. A guide to good practice through training and development.](#)
- [UNICEF Reporting Guidelines](#)

Colophon

Child Helpline International is the global network of 183 child helplines in 142 countries (December 2015), which together receive over 14 million contacts a year from children and young people in need of care and protection.

CHI supports the creation and strengthening of national toll-free child helplines worldwide and uses child helpline data and knowledge to highlight gaps in child protection systems and advocate for the rights of children.

Child Helpline International

Pilotenstraat 20-22

1059 CJ Amsterdam

The Netherlands

Phone +31 (0) 20 5289625

Email info@childhelplineinternational.org

Web www.childhelplineinternational.org

Writing and compilation: Child Helpline International

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Design: Devi Luna Adamo

Illustrations: Sue Doeksen

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A girl participating in the International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) talk show on Radio Bilal

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