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YOUTH FOR BETTER MEDIA

The Attitudes, Habits and Needs of Youth in BiH Regarding Media Content



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1. INTRODUCTION

The younger generations that grew up with new technologies, the internet, social networks and mobile telephones have different information and communication needs and expectations of the media than older generations.¹ Although there was a rise in the popularity of television during the COVID-19 pandemic,² reports from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism over the past few years reveal that young people have been using traditional media such as television, newspapers and radio less and less, while turning to social networks and other internet platforms more and more (Newman et al. 2020, 10). Research commissioned by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in 2020 about the way young people in the United States of America and the United Kingdom use the media showed that young people expect the media to provide information that is useful, fun and interesting, not just information that the traditional media³ presents as news that needs to be known. By monitoring the media habits of young people (18 to 35), interviewing young people and analysing content consumed by the respondents, the research came to the conclusion that respondents get information directly through social networks, documentaries and talking with friends, while most of the content falls under the categories of *infotainment*, lifestyle, bloggers, vloggers, culture, etc. (Galan et al. 2020, 4). It is therefore necessary for traditional media to find a way to attract younger audiences and create content that will appeal and be accessible to them (Galan et al. 2020, 4).

Online media and social networks are the most important source of information for young people in BiH as well. The IPSOS survey on citizens' trust in the media in BiH in 2021 showed that television continues to be the most dominant source of news in the country, but its significance is dropping among those aged 18 to 29, who more frequently get information through daily use of social networks and online media (Sokol 2021, 7). Studies about youth in BiH from 2015 and 2018 show that young people in BiH spend their free time interacting with digital technologies and the internet, and that social networks

1 The American Pew Research Centre includes millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Generation Z (born from 1996 onwards) under the term 'the younger generation'. What distinguishes these generations, among other things, is the more intensive use of technology and the Internet to connect with people and the use of social networks to post personal photos and descriptions of interests (Pew Research 2019). The decision on the year of demarcation between the two generations (1996) was made based on the impact of significant political and economic events (for example, Generation Z does not remember the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001) (Pew Research 2019). The terms are often used in the United States, especially in relation to the use of the Internet and social networks.

2 The 2020 research showed that the COVID-19 pandemic has reminded people of the values of traditional media. The research started in 2019, but due to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, some parts of it were repeated after April 2020 in Great Britain, the United States, Germany, Spain, South Korea and Argentina. Even though online media are still the main source of information, these six countries saw a growth in obtaining information via television (Newman et al. 2020, 10).

3 By traditional media we mean TV, radio, print and online portals, while new media include social networks, YouTube channels and various Internet platforms.

are their main source of information – the 2018 research uncovered that 70% of respondents stated that they are online almost all the time (Turčilo et al. 2019, 15–16).

Research has shown that they do not obtain information online in a targeted manner, but rather by scrolling⁴ and viewing content shared by their friends, going through content quickly and opening links they find interesting (Hodžić and Sokol 2019, 50–51), which can easily lead them to disinformation and other problematic media content that is very common in the online sphere. Research on the way in which young people react to problematic media content showed that young people have great distrust in the media because they feel that the media are under political influence and spread disinformation, but they have difficulty identifying problematic media content in practical examples, cannot explain what journalistic norms and professional standards entail or how to react to or report such content (Hodžić and Sokol 2019, 50, 71). Surveys on youth awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic have also shown that there is a high degree of incorrect information and opinion among young people in BiH about the coronavirus and distrust in official information about the pandemic, which may be the result of misinformation on social networks and the Internet (Hodžić 2020, 15). Therefore, it is very important to work on media and information literacy of young people, but also to prepare and adapt media content to the needs and habits of younger generations.

Based on the results of previous research, the goals of this research are to examine:

- 1) The media habits of youth, their favourite media, journalists and influencers;
- 2) The needs of young people in terms of media content and whether youth media content in BiH meets the needs of young people;
- 3) The attitudes and knowledge of young people in relation to the media and media freedoms, their activity on social networks, and whether youth policies include the media and media education.

The ultimate goal of the research is to provide recommendations for educators and media workers for educational programmes in the field of media and information literacy on the one hand, and to provide recommendations to the media for specialized media content for young people on the other. Teaching young people how to recognize professional media content, understand media freedoms and the role of the media in society, and also to adapt such content to their needs, is important for the survival of the professional media in BiH as well as for raising media and information literacy among young people. Preparing specialized educational content for young people, on the other hand, can contribute to the general information level of young people in BiH, but also encourage them to become politically and socially engaged.

4 Scrolling involves moving through web pages or social networking pages quickly, mostly in search of interesting content.

2. METHODOLOGY

The subject of this research is the media habits of young people and their needs regarding media content, the attitudes and knowledge of young people regarding journalistic standards and media freedoms, and the ways in which the media meet the needs of young people for specialized content. In order to create recommendations for media content for young people, as well as educational activities focused on media and information literacy for young people, the aim was to see what the main sources of information for young people are, who their favourite journalists and influencers are, what topics are missing in the media and what media skills they would like to master, and what attitudes and knowledge young people have about the media and media freedoms. The research was conducted from May to July 2021, and included the following components:

- 1) A questionnaire for young people on the media habits of young people and their needs regarding media content, which was answered by 321 young people from BiH. Due to the epidemiological situation, the questionnaire was created in Survey Monkey and distributed online through youth partner organizations from 12th May to 12th July. The 321 young people from all over BiH who responded included: 38% male and 62% female; 38% with higher education, 13% with upper secondary education, 46% with secondary education and 2% with primary education; 36% employed, 14% unemployed people, 37% students and 13% secondary school pupils. The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions pertaining to the main sources of information of young people, the topics which interest them most, their favourite online media, social network groups and accounts, television and radio programmes, YouTube channels, podcasts, whether they post content on social networks or react to unprofessional media content, their preferred content format, favourite journalists, hosts and influencers, their satisfaction with the favourite content of online media and radio or television shows, the topics they feel are lacking from the media, and the communication skills they would like to master (Annexe 1).
- 2) Three focus groups with young people about their attitudes and knowledge about the media and media freedoms and the role of the media included 31 young people in BiH (17 women and 14 men; 3 pupils, 16 students, 6 employed and 6 unemployed people from 22 cities in BiH).⁵ The focus groups were organised via Zoom on 21st, 24th and 25th May 2021, and were divided by age group in order to identify the differences between them: ages 18-22, ages 23-25 and ages 26-30. The invitation to the focus groups was published on the Mediacentar Sarajevo website and networks of partner youth organisations. The participants were selected for the purpose of creating the most diverse groups based on demographic characteristics such as gender, education and employment status, as well as

5 Participants were from the following cities: Banovići, Banja Luka (3 participants), Bihać, Bijeljina (2 participants), Brčko, Breza, Brod, Jablanica, Jajce, Kiseljak, Kostajnica, Kreševo, Mostar (3 participants), Prijedor, Prnjavor, Sarajevo (3 participants), Stijena Cazin, Teslić, Tešanj, Zenica (3 participants), Živinice and Zvornik.

engagement in the non-governmental sector.⁶ The focus group discussion was divided into four sections that addressed the following: the attitudes and knowledge of young people regarding the media and media freedoms; attitudes and knowledge of young people about journalistic standards; youth communication activities; and how to teach young people about journalistic standards and freedoms. During the focus groups, the topics discussed were media and media freedoms in BiH, whether citizens have the right to reliable information of public importance, what participants see as the role of public media as opposed to private media, what participants see as journalistic standards and quality media content, how to encourage young people to search for and follow quality media content, how best to teach young people about quality media content and encourage young people to react to incorrect media content (Annexe 2).

- 3) Ten semi-structured interviews with representatives of the media and youth organizations to obtain additional information and comments on youth policies in BiH and youth media content, comments on the questionnaire and focus groups findings as well as on successful activities for youth in the field of media and information literacy (Annexe 3). The interviews were carried out in June and included discussion about the content for young people in BiH and the ways in which their media outlet seeks to attract younger audiences in BiH, the basic priorities of youth policies, the activities and education about the media that worked with young people, and their comments on young people's interest in quality media content.
- 4) Media questionnaire on youth content and strategies whereby the media try to attract younger generations. The questionnaire (Annexe 4) was sent out in June 2021 to radio and television stations via the Regulatory Communications Agency register and answered by ten public and private television and radio stations. Through the questionnaire, the aim was to see whether the policies of media outlets include the development of content for young people, which programmes and content for young people are offered by media outlets in BiH and how much they are monitored, and how media outlets try to adapt their content to young people.
- 5) Secondary research that included a review of previous research on youth and media in BiH, a review of the legislative framework for youth, and a review of the obligations of public and private television and radio stations regarding the broadcasting of content for young people.

Although the samples for this research are limited, the results provide some insight into the media needs and habits of young people, their attitudes about the media and media freedoms, as well as an overview of media content for young people in BiH. The recommendations offer guidelines for media outlets on how to create specialized content for young people and attract younger audiences, and for educators on educational activities for young people in media and information literacy.

In the following chapters we will present the results of the research: media habits of young people; youth content in BiH and needs of young people for media content; attitudes and knowledge of young people about the media and media freedoms; young people's activity on social networks; a brief overview of youth policies. We then provide a conclusion and recommendations.

⁶ We received 170 applications.

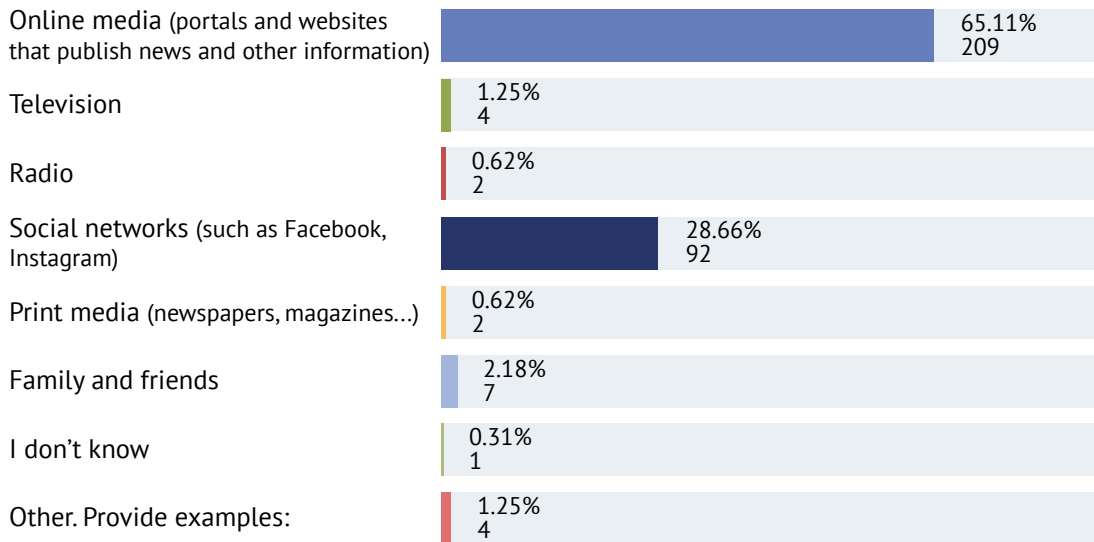
3. MEDIA HABITS OF YOUTH – ONLINE MEDIA AS THE DOMINANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION

3.1. Main sources of information

Results of the survey conducted on the basis of a questionnaire answered by 321 young people, secondary school and university students aged 18 to 30 from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina, show that the main sources of information for respondents are online media, portals and websites that publish news and other content (65%). Social networks are the main source of information for slightly more than 28% of respondents, family and friends for about 2%, television for 1.25%, whereas the press and radio were cited as the main source of information by only two respondents (0.62%). These results confirm the findings of other research of online media as significant sources of information to young people in BiH (Klingova and Hajdu 2018, 12; Hodžić and Sokol 2019, 59). The 2021 IPSOS survey on trust in the media showed that it is social networks, not online media that is the most important source of information for young people in BiH.⁷ Nevertheless, these results should be taken with caution given that previous research has shown, for example, that young people sometimes do not differentiate between professional online media and social networks, and that they access online media content through social networks (Hodžić and Sokol 2019, 48–51). The survey results also show a complete decline in the popularity of television, radio and print media as sources of information among young people: previous research has shown that television and radio are followed to some extent for entertainment, music and movies (Turčilo et al. 2019, 16).

⁷ 54% of respondents aged 18 to 29 say that their main source of information is social networks, and 24% say it is online media (IPSOS, 2021).

What is your main source of information? Select only one option.
By information, we mean socio-political information, sports, and interesting facts.



TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

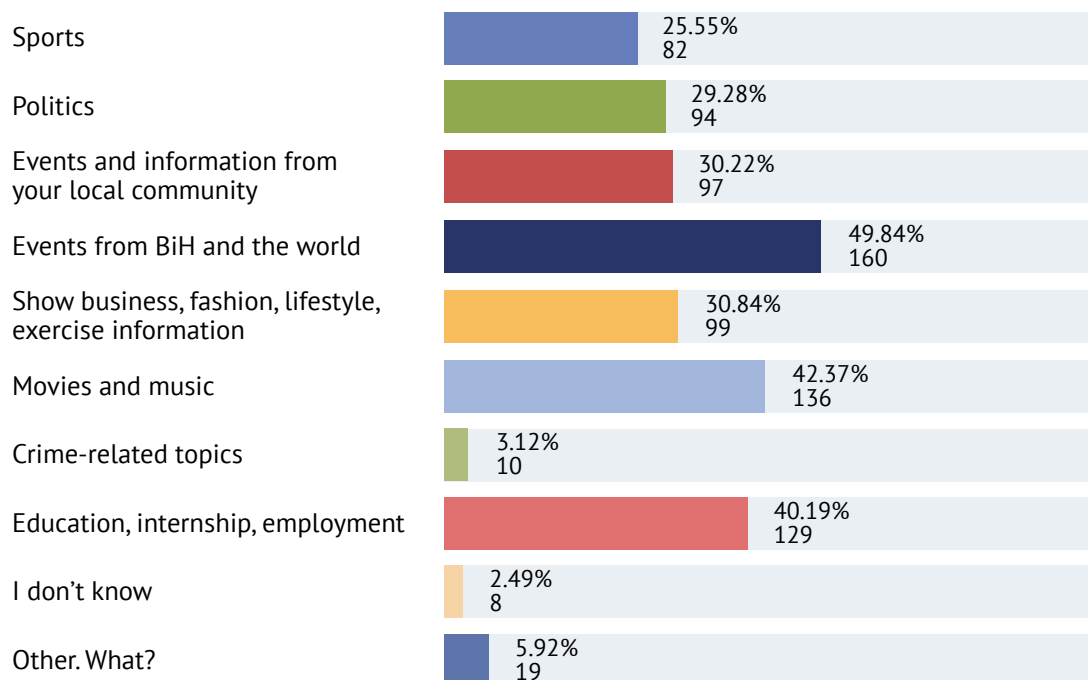
3.2. Topics/content interest young people the most

Respondents are interested in various topics and, based on information obtained from the questionnaire in which respondents could select up to three answers, they pertain to global events and events in Bosnia and Herzegovina (around 50%), followed by movies and music (around 42%), education, internship and employment opportunities (around 40%), showbiz, fashion, lifestyle and exercise information (around 31%), local events and information (around 30%), politics (around 29%), and sports (25.5%).⁸ Only 3% of respondents are interested in crime-related topics, whereas around 6% of respondents have other interests such as the economy, business, art, design, technology, computer science and cryptocurrencies. The participants of all three focus groups are not very interested in politics, do not follow traditional media because they mainly report on political figures and events, and are more interested in topics and information that are concrete and useful, such as information on studying and internship opportunities or positive stories about successful young people. One participant said that due to the excessive focus of media on politics, young people have become even more “disgusted” by it.⁹

⁸ The lower interest in sports can be explained by the fact that more female respondents than male respondents participated in the survey.

⁹ Focus group, M, 24, Kreševo, unemployed.

Which topics/content interest you the most? Select up to three options.

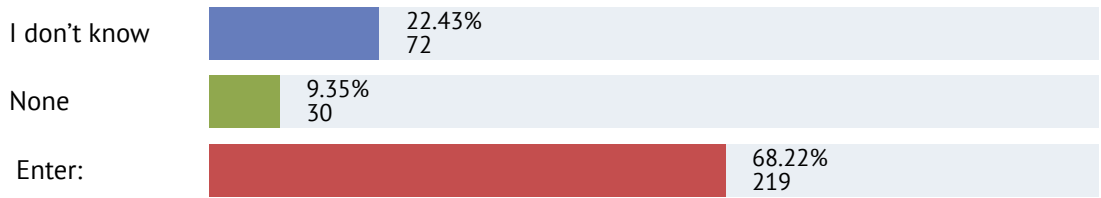


TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

3.3. Most popular online media

Most respondents cite online media as the main source of information, however, slightly more than 22% do not know how to define their favourite online media, while about 9% do not follow any. Of the online media that respondents listed as their favourites, the one that stood out is the most popular online media in BiH, Klix.ba (41%), followed by N1 (12%), Avaz (11%), Buka (7%), Radio Sarajevo (6.5%), Oslobodjenje (6.5%), Al Jazeera (5%), Bljesak (4%) and Nezavisne (2%). After the popular online media in BiH, next in order of importance are local online portals, with individual respondents (no more than 1.5%), depending on their place of residence, citing local portals from Banja Luka, Trebinje, Visoko, Kakanj, Tuzla, Zenica, and specialized sites on which young people can find information about jobs and internships, hoću.ba (3.7%) and Mreža za izgradnju mira (1.5%). Only a few respondents mentioned online media outlets from neighbouring countries, such as Informer, Blic and HRT, as well as media such as the New York Times and the Guardian, as their favourites, whereas the online versions of BHRT and FTV were mentioned only by one respondent each and the online version of RTRS by two respondents. These findings show that popular news portals are the most popular online media among respondents and, as such, have a significant role in informing young people, whereas a negligible number of them follow foreign news media or the online portals of public broadcasters. Although some of these portals have been found to spread misinformation by the fact-checking platform Raskrinkavanje, it is still encouraging that respondents rarely mention anonymous online portals as their favourite online media.

Which online media do you follow the most? Enter no more than three.
By online media, we mean news portals and websites that publish news and various information.

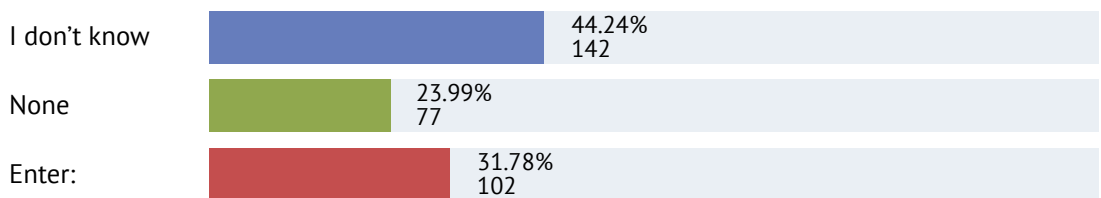


TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

3.4. Most popular social network groups and accounts

Social networks are the second most important source of information for respondents, but as many as 44% of them stated that they do not have a favourite group or account on social networks, while 24% say they do not follow groups or accounts on social networks. Only one-third of the respondents answered the question about favourite groups and accounts on social networks, but mostly citing topics and not specific names of groups or accounts they follow, such as humour, quotes, nature, celebrities from the world of music, entertainment, movies, profiles about travel, sports, fitness, accounts of NGOs, profiles of politicians or cooking recipes. Only some respondents mentioned the social network accounts of traditional media or the specialized youth groups Odliv mozgova, Hoću.ba, CAT and lonac.pro. These results suggest that respondents use social networks primarily to follow topics that interest them and less to follow news and social and political events. A large number of respondents do not have a favourite social network group or account, which may indicate scrolling processes but also following friends' content, which previous research has shown to be often the way online content is used by young people (Hodžić and Sokol 2019, 50–51). As stated by one respondent in her answer: "Honestly, there are too many [accounts and groups], it can be said that I follow everything that is interesting, useful and informative."¹⁰

What groups or accounts do you follow most on social networks?
Enter no more than three.



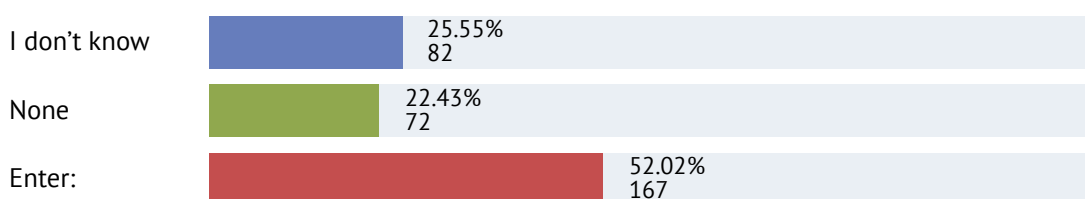
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

¹⁰ Questionnaire, F, 18–24, Ugljevik, student.

3.5. Most popular television and radio shows, YouTube channels and podcasts

The respondents' responses about favourite audio-visual and radio content are diverse and include mostly various television and YouTube channels. Slightly more than half of the respondents (52%) mentioned their favourite programmes and channels, but none of them stands out as significantly as the online media. Of the television channels, respondents cited N1 (6.5%), Face TV (4.6%), Al Jazeera (3.4%) and Nova BH (2%), but only a few referred to specific television programmes such as N1 Television's *Morning Program*, *Central News with Senad Hadžifejzović* on Face TV, *Finally Friday* with Maja Čengić Miralem on BHT1, *Tonight* with Ivan Ivanović and *24 Minutes* with Zoran Kesić. Very few respondents listed their favourite radio stations, mostly local radio stations, and none mentioned favourite radio shows, while the list of YouTube and podcast channels is long and varied. Among shows in local languages, the respondents mentioned CAT patrol (2%), the YouTube channel of the music group Helem Nejse (1.8%), and the Zagreb-based podcast Inkubator (1.2%). In addition, they cited various channels of influencers from BiH, neighbouring countries and the English-speaking area. Although these channels are not mentioned by more than two respondents each, their review gives some insights into what kind of content young people follow on YouTube.¹¹ It is mostly entertaining, casual and personal content, predominantly related to music, celebrities, beauty, travel, exercise, humour, male-female relationships, often in the form of vlogs, influencer video blogs or interviews with celebrities. These channels are often from neighbouring countries and the English-speaking area, which indicates that the podcast and YouTube scene in BiH is still not sufficiently developed. On the other hand, respondents rarely single out television and radio shows, which means that they rarely follow this type of content on television and radio channels, but also that traditional channels lack shows that are interesting to young people.

What television programmes, YouTube channels, radio programmes or podcasts do you follow most? Enter no more than three.



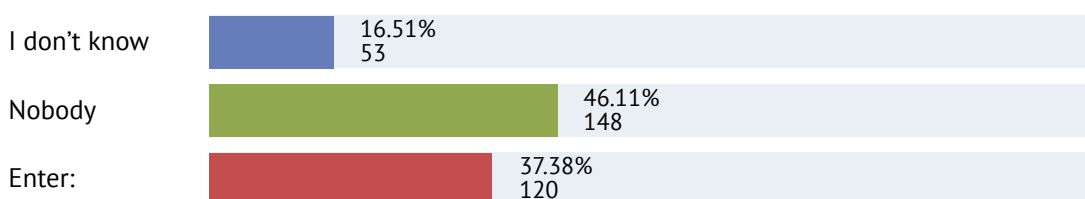
■ TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

11 Other channels that were mentioned are: Idiokratija, Netkulturno, Kontra Show, Balkan Info, Amy G Show, Državni posao; the channels of influencers: Marko Vuletić, Naida Bojnakova, Marija Šerifović, Ana Bučević, Miloš Milaković, Nađa Popivoda, Baka Prase, Andrej Maričić, Vice, Mirza Mustafagić, Amir Hadžić. Of the foreign YouTube channels and YouTubers, they mentioned the following: TEDx, Jordan Peterson, BUFF Dudes, Strength Camp, Emma Chamberlain, Lani Pilopa, Hannah Meloche, Tony Robbins, Science Guy, Joe Rogan Podcast, Monday Morning Podcast, LinusTechTips, The Basement Yard, Andrew Huang, JHS Pedals, Unsolved Mysteries, BuzzFeed, etc.

3.6. Most popular journalists and influencers

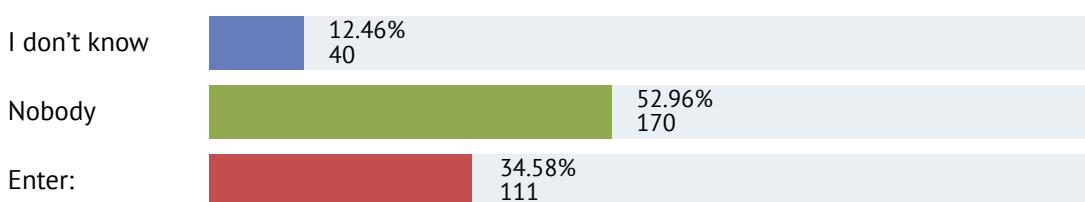
Slightly less than half (46%) of respondents do not have favourite journalists or television and radio presenters, while about 16% responded that they do not know. About 37% of respondents mentioned their favourite journalists and presenters, among whom Senad Hadžifejzović (11.5%), Emela Burdžović Slipčević (4.3%), Zoran Kesić (3.4%) and Nikola Vučić (2%) stand out. As many as 53% of respondents do not have favourite influencers, about 12.5% responded that they do not know, while only 34% of respondents listed their favourite influencers, none of whom stand out significantly. However, upon review of these lists of favourite influencers, it can be concluded that these are people from the local and foreign YouTube, podcast and Instagram scene who run channels that mainly focus on fashion, beauty, nutrition, private life, hobbies, professions and are mostly not present or known in the traditional media.¹² On the other hand, about half of the respondents do not have any favourite journalists and influencers, which may indicate that there is a lack of role models in traditional and new media, but also an indiscriminate following of media content.

Who is your favourite journalist or radio or television host?
Enter no more than three. (A journalist is a person whose profession is journalism, who reports events and works in online, TV, print or radio media.)



TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

Who is your favourite influencer (YouTuber, podcaster etc.)? Enter no more than three.
(Influencers are people who have a large number of followers on social networks and can influence public attitudes. These can be celebrities, bloggers, etc.)

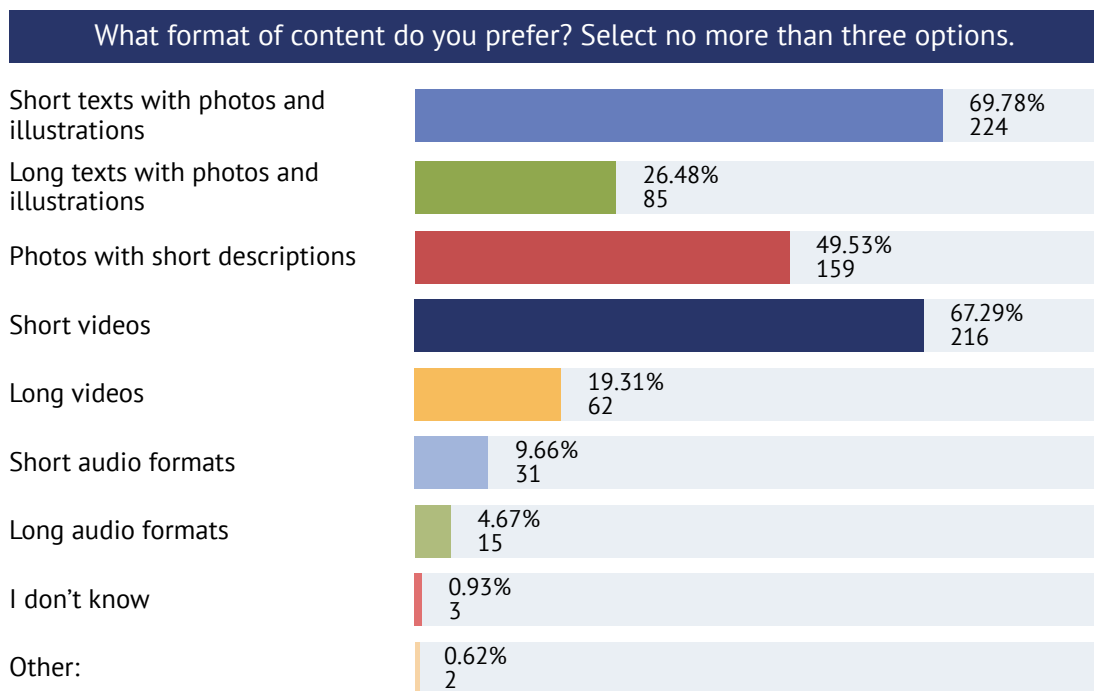


TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

¹² Some of the influencers mentioned in the questionnaire are: Serbian influencer Dunja Jovanović, Croatian YouTuber and influencer Marko Vuletić, BiH influencer Ilda Humić, Serbian presenter and podcaster Galeb Nikačević, Croatian travel blogger Kristijan Iličić, BiH influencer Mirza Mustafagić, influencer Erna Saljević, YouTuber Dunja Tatomirović, influencer Hana Hadžiavdagić, university professor, cynologist and influencer Nedin Šuta, influencers Lejla and Šejla Ramović, influencer Davor Gerbus, influencer Naida Bojankova, Ana2cats, Not Vanimy, Pave Elez, Glowhuntersmedia and many others. Some of the international influencers mentioned in the replies are: Felix Kjellberg, Matthew Encina, Marques Brownlee, Matt D'avella, Emma Chamberlain, Hannah Meloche, Beatrice Caruso, Ethan Becker, Tiffany Ferguson, Robert Kiyosaki, Lance Stewart, Feitz, Nicki Minaj, Drake, Pamela Reif, Jordan B Peterson, Andrea Andrassy, Joe Rogan, xQcOW, Kylie Jenner, Kurtis Conner, Finn Wolfhard, 1bike1world, Safiya Nygard, Dragon Garage, Ruddy Marcus, JJ McCullough, Natalie Wynn, Baylei Sarian, John Green, Hank Green, Violin MD, Caspian Report, Van Neistat, Johnny Harris, AliAbdaal, Jenna Marbles.

3.7. Most popular formats

The results of the questionnaire confirm that young people prefer multimedia content, mostly that which combines text, photographs and videos. When asked about their favourite formats, respondents could choose up to three options and most of them prefer shorter texts with photographs and illustrations (about 70%), short videos (67%), and images with short descriptions (about 50%). Respondents least prefer long videos (about 19%), as well as short (about 10%) and long audio formats (about 4%). Research shows that the favourite formats among young people, especially Generation Z, are those that contain multimedia content and all information in one place, in which video animations and visual explanations are used in addition to text, offering the possibility to use content in different periods - for example, longer and shorter videos (Zablocki 2019).



■ TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

4. MEDIA CONTENT FOR YOUTH – NOT ENOUGH SPECIALISED PROGRAMMES

There is little specialized content for young people in traditional media in BiH. The Rules of the Communications Regulatory Agency of BiH do not require all radio and television stations in BiH to broadcast programmes for children and youth. Such obligations exist only for public broadcasters and public services, which serve the interests of the public and are obliged to provide a diverse and balanced radio and television programme. The table shows the programme obligations regarding the broadcasting of programmes for children and youth.

BHT1	At least 10 hours per week of children’s and youth programmes, both educational and entertaining, or a combination of the above
BH Radio 1	At least 3 hours per week of programmes primarily intended for children and youth
FTV	At least 8 hours per week of children’s and youth programmes, both educational and entertaining, or a combination of the above
RFBiH	At least 1 hour and 30 minutes per week of programmes primarily intended for children and youth
TVRS	At least 5 hours and 30 minutes per week of children’s and youth programmes, both educational and entertaining, or a combination of the above
RRS	At least 2 hours per week of programmes primarily intended for children and youth
Public TV stations	6% of weekly programming dedicated to children’s programmes with an educational or instructional purpose
Public radio stations	4% of weekly programming dedicated to children’s programmes with an educational or instructional purpose
Other licence holders	No obligation, the percentage of individual programme segments is determined by individual licence terms

Source: RAK 2019.

However, the analysis showed that the children’s/youth programming¹³ is not sufficiently represented in the analysed content of broadcasters:¹⁴ the share of children’s programmes in the total broadcast on television stations in 2018, excluding the television stations intended exclusively for children, Hayatovci and TNT Kids, was only about 3%. In addition to that, the analysis showed that, out of the structure of children’s programming on television stations, most is purchased/procured programming, with about 85%, while own productions comprise about 14%, and co-productions only 0.42%. The analysis also showed that, in terms of the structure of educational content, which public stations and public broadcasters are also obliged to broadcast for different age groups, the smallest amount of content is intended for young people (only 6%) (RAK 2019, 24–31).¹⁵ Educational programming as a whole is represented very little on television stations and, according to the analysis, accounts for only about 3% of the total duration of the analysed broadcast programme in 2018 (RAK 2019, 33–39).

BHT1	At least 3 hours of educational programme per week, which can be in the form of an entertainment programme, documentary, factual or study programme aimed at different age groups
BH Radio1	At least 5 hours of educational programme per week, which can be in the form of an entertainment programme, documentary, factual or study programme aimed at different age groups
FTV	At least 2 hours of educational programme per week, which can be in the form of an entertainment programme, documentary, factual or study programme aimed at different age groups
RFBiH	At least 6 hours and 30 minutes of educational programme per week, which can be in the form of an entertainment programme, documentary, factual or study programme aimed at different age groups
TVRS	At least 9 hours of educational programme per week, which can be in the form of an entertainment programme, documentary, factual or study programme aimed at different age groups

13 Children’s programming, as stated in the analysis, is mainly divided into entertaining, educational and instructive programmes (that monitor and explain the material from school curricula), but the regulator does not offer a definition of children’s or youth programming or explain the distinction between children’s and youth programming. This is explained by the fact that it is not the regulator’s practice to define types of programmes or genres, but to give broadcasters the freedom to create content themselves and classify them into certain categories (RAK 2019, 24).

14 The sample analysed 53 television stations and 88 radio stations.

15 General educational content is represented most, with about 79%, other educational content accounts for 7.84%, whereas entertaining educational content adds up to 7.43%.

RRS	At least 9 hours of educational programme per week, which can be in the form of an entertainment programme, documentary, factual or study programme aimed at different age groups
Public TV stations	At least 40% of the weekly news programmes and other news and educational programmes, with only one rerun per week included in that percentage
Public radio stations	At least 40% of the weekly news programmes and other news and educational programmes, with only one rerun per week included in that percentage
Other licence holders	No obligation, the percentage of individual programme segments is determined by individual licence terms

Source: RAK 2019.

Public broadcasters in BiH offer little specialised youth content, and based on an analysis of 23 public televisions, six have youth shows (Lalić 2020).¹⁶ BHRT and FTV have special departments for children and youth, while RTRS creates programme content for young people within the Department of Culture and Education. Of the public broadcasters, BHRT stands out with the production of several shows for young people - *Dileme*, a dialogue programme on current topics, and *Thinking Box*, which presents young artists, athletes, social activists; as well as a youth department of the radio station, a dedicated web portal, podcast and adaptation of youth content for social networks and other internet platforms (Lalić 2020).¹⁷ RTRS, on the other hand, as stated by the Editor of Children's and Youth Programming, presents young people from the area of education as part of the show *Kvadrat na znanje*, and also broadcasts youth programmes within various other programmes through which, according to her, young people are given exposure by way of guest appearances and stories filmed in the field.¹⁸ FTV used to broadcast a satirical-educational programme for youth, *Hayd u park*, produced by the Creative Development Foundation from Sarajevo (Lalić 2020).

There are very few specialized educational and entertainment shows designed for young people on TV and radio stations, and by such content the media representatives who participated in the research mostly mean reporting on young people from local communities within various shows; their successes in school, sports, music, career, and educational and other activities of youth associations. Existing shows mainly refer either to discussions on youth issues, such as the regional TV series on youth and their problems, *Perspektiva*, which is broadcast on more than 30 stations in BiH, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia,¹⁹ or to the presentation of young people who achieve significant results during and after schooling, as in the RTV7 programmes *Priča za vikend* and *Pokreni se*.²⁰

16 Youth programmes of public broadcasters are: *Impuls znanja* and *Perspektiva* on RTV Vogošća, *TVSA mladima* on TVSA, *RevolTucija* on the Tuzla-based channel TV7, *Hayd u park* on FTV, *Dileme*, *Thinking Box*. Two new programmes were launched in 2021: *Iz mlade zjenice* on RTV Zenica and *Kontraš?* on RTVUSK.

17 Vedran Prodić, Editor of the Youth Department of BH Radio 1, telephone interview, 15th June 2021.

18 Tatjana Bursać, Editor of the Children and Youth Programming Department of RTRS, written response, 6th June 2021.

19 Mebius Film, in cooperation with Radio Free Europe, The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the *Obrazovanje gradi BiH* (Education Builds B&H) association. See: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/p/5210.html>

20 Azra Kalesić, Editor-in-Chief, RTV7, Tuzla, written response, 1st June 2021.

Representatives of some media say, however, that they are not able to produce special content for young people due to lack of staff and capacity, and that they try to integrate content for young people through other programmes.²¹ However, a review of some of the programmes cited by media representatives shows that they were made in a classic informative format, and as such may not be appealing to younger generations. One of the possible models for specialized youth programmes are those that are supported by donors, such as the youth shows *Kontraš* (RTV USK) and *Iz tvoje zjenice* (RTV Zenica), presented by young journalists,²² as well as programmes produced in cooperation with youth organisations.

Radio stations offer more diverse programming for young people, which can be explained by lower production costs. Out of 63 public radio stations, thirteen are broadcast on ten radio stations that could be characterized as youth radio stations (Lalić 2020). Representatives of radio stations also say that they report on the successes and activities of young people in schools and youth organizations and cooperate with them,²³ but that they lack the staff and capacity to produce better programmes for young people.²⁴ There are examples of cooperation with youth organizations and support from donors on radio stations, such as the *Puls mladih* series produced by students of the School of Journalism and Digital Media, and organized by Free Radio Prijedor in cooperation with Šik Radio from Mrkonjić-Grad, RTV Sana from Sanski Most, RTV Jablanica and Radio Vitez, within the Bosnia and Herzegovina Resilience Initiative (BHRI).²⁵ In addition to that, there are also dedicated youth radio stations such as Radio Active, Prijatelji Srebrenice and Abraš Radio, which act as community media and in which a large number of employees and volunteers are young people. These radio stations offer youth content, talk about media and information literacy, and are mostly funded by foreign donors.²⁶

When asked how popular content for young people is, media representatives said they had no information about it. The editor of RTV Velika Kladuša says that it is very difficult to interest young people in classic media such as radio, but that they try to attract young people by posting content on social networks, and the media team often visits schools, invites young people to appear as guests, cooperates with organisations and associations that bring together young people and allows young people to volunteer in

21 Anela Halilagić, Executive Director, RTVUSK, written response, 2nd June 2021.

22 Ibid.

23 Some of these programmes are, for example: *Time Out* – a programme for teenagers, which includes educational, advisory and entertainment-music content, and *Veliki odmor* – a programme about school, school events, contests, achievements of students and other topics, aired on RTV Velika Kladuša (Aldijana Purić, Editor-in-Chief, RTV Velika Kladuša, written response, 1st June 2021), and *Carpe diem – Iskoristi dan*, a programme for teenagers, which includes educational, advisory and entertainment-music content realized by members of the Youth Association from Ilijaš, which presents successful young people, youth projects, and informs young people about scholarships and job opportunities (Nermina Durić-Kahvedžić, Editor-in-Chief, Radio Ilijaš, written response, 1st June 2021).

24 Andrea Pavić, Director, RTV Livno, written response, 1st June 2021.

25 Almina Kurić, Director, RTV Jablanica, written response, 3rd June 2021.

26 Dragana Jovanović, Editor-in-Chief of UPS Media and Founder of the Friends of Srebrenica Association, telephone interview, 15th June 2021; Husein Oručević, Editor of Programming, Abraš Radio, telephone interview, 17th June 2021; Ernad Bihorac, Director of the Naša djeca (Our Children) association, Radio Active, telephone interview, 4th June 2021.

this media outlet.²⁷ RTV Livno representatives say that they adapt their content to young people by implementing a less formal approach to serious topics that are interesting to this population.²⁸

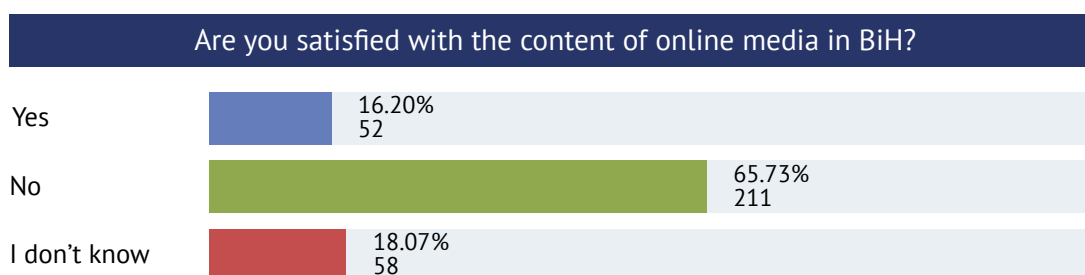
On the Internet, on the other hand, it is possible to find abundant content for young people. Popular informative online media in BiH mostly do not have special segments for young people, but there are specialized sites that are mainly intended for young people such as the information platform Hocu.ba, which offers useful information on internships and employment opportunities, webpages of the Youth Council Tuzla Mladi075.ba, the Banja Luka information portal for youth Mladibl.com, the youth magazine Karike.ba, and the webpages of the Youth Programme of BHRT. In addition, there are numerous groups, accounts and channels that young people follow on social networks and internet platforms - from the Odliv mozgova group, where you can find useful tips on internships and education, to numerous satirical groups and YouTube channels. However, most traditional media do not strategically plan how to attract younger audiences, and the media in BiH have not yet started using new youth platforms, such as TikTok and Snapchat (Tomić 2020).

27 Aldijana Purić, Editor-in-Chief, RTV Velika Kladuša, written response, 1st June 2021.

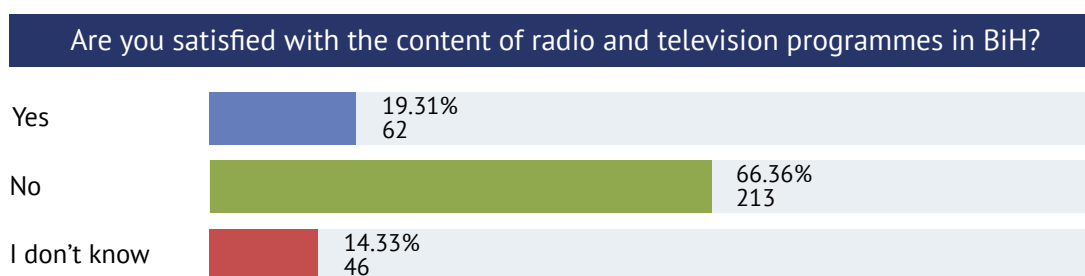
28 Andrea Pavić, Director, RTV Livno, written response, 1st June 2021.

5. YOUTH VIEWS OF THE MEDIA – YOUNG PEOPLE UNHAPPY WITH MEDIA CONTENT

Despite the existence of certain content for young people in BiH, most respondents are not satisfied with the content offered to them. More than half of the respondents are dissatisfied with the content of online media (66%) and the content of radio and television programmes (66%), and focus group participants express a negative attitude towards media content and the media, stating that they are under political influence, spread ethnic and national intolerance and clickbait headlines to make money.



TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321



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When asked what topics, content and formats are missing in online media, television and radio, about 52% of respondents said that they do not know, while about 48% of young people gave various answers, among which 9% stated that there are no success stories and positive stories about young people. Apart from that, they also stated that the media lack conversations with young people and their perspectives and opinions, as well as an objective and critical review of the political situation in this country. Furthermore, some young people say that there is a lack of educational and entertaining content for children and youth, investigative journalism, psychology advice and motivational stories, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and cultural content.

Certain respondents said that the problem is not a lack of content, but a lack of objectivity and political independence. Some of the respondents say the media need:

- “More stories about positive business ventures of young people from BiH, where SMEs/young entrepreneurs would be promoted in some way within this content.”²⁹
- “Following lesser-known cultural events, more positive stories, satire, educational content for young people in all taboo fields.”³⁰
- “There are no good podcasts, TV shows, charismatic radio presenters, no relevant game shows.”³¹
- “Any topic that would reduce the amount of news about politics and religious intolerance in this area.”³²
- “There is a lack of concrete informative content intended for young people...”³³
- “What is missing from public broadcasters is what the private and, therefore, better quality programmes offer.”³⁴
- “Content about economics, medicine, theoretical physics, satirical shows and normal shows in which talents are presented.”³⁵
- “Healthy lifestyles, young politicians, topics on volunteering and stopping the brain drain – success stories of young people.”³⁶
- “Youth programmes, shows for young people created by young people about mental health, activism, art and exercise.”³⁷

Focus group participants believe that the media should pay more attention to culture, give exposure to young people, stories about ordinary people and positive stories – which, according to one participant, should be placed on the front pages and main pages of all portals.³⁸ He also suggests launching a TV channel that will have content exclusively for young people and a news programme that will not only be about politics, but also give positive stories in prime time, while another participant suggests a “good news” section.³⁹ One participant believes that young people should do interviews with journalists to illustrate how they do their job, what they want to achieve with their stories and how they can attract a younger audience,⁴⁰ while another participant suggests presenting information on companies that employ the young.⁴¹ Another participant, on the other hand, says that there are numerous shows in the media and online about different content, but that they do not reach a relevant audience when compared to media

29 Questionnaire, M, 25–30, Lukavac, employed.

30 Questionnaire, F, 18–24, Sarajevo, employed.

31 Questionnaire, F, 25–30, Tuzla, employed.

32 Questionnaire, F, 25–30, Zenica, employed.

33 Questionnaire, M, 25–30, Tuzla, employed.

34 Questionnaire, F, 18–24, Sarajevo, student.

35 Questionnaire, M, 18–24, Banovići, student.

36 Questionnaire, F, 25–30, Sarajevo, unemployed.

37 Questionnaire, M, 18–24, Gradačac, student.

38 Focus group, M, 24, Kreševo, unemployed.

39 Focus group, M, 24, Zvornik, employed.

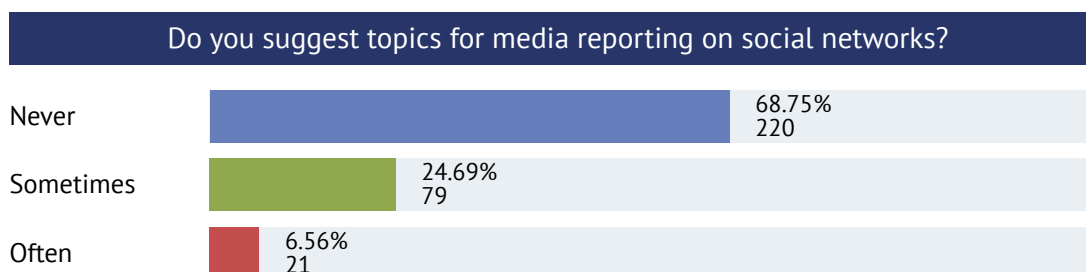
40 Focus group, F, Banovići, unemployed.

41 Focus group, M, 25, Sarajevo, student.

that publish sensationalist news.⁴² According to another participant: “Maybe the media could ... focus on more interesting and educational programmes, instead of just focusing on crime programming that brings the most views, so they only deal with that. I mean, it’s becoming increasingly hard for me to follow the headlines on social networks and watch the news on TV, I don’t know what to watch anymore without getting irritated.”⁴³

When asked what content they would make if they had the opportunity to create a TV, radio or podcast show or run online portals, about 40% of respondents said they did not know. More than half of the respondents (60%) gave answers to the query and said they would create programmes focused on the area of science and interviews with young scientists, music and music content, positive and motivating human stories, ecology and environmental protection, critical thinking and media literacy, as well as sports. Young people would also create content about travel, gaming, personal development, male-female relationships, education, projects and opportunities for young people, successful business people and their life path, fashion, books, the status of women in society, mental health and exercise. One respondent stated that she would create a show on how to decide what to do next in life for people aged 15 to 20,⁴⁴ and another respondent on how to raise self-confidence in people who need it.⁴⁵

The results indicate that respondents are not satisfied with media content, especially because they mostly deal with politics and negative news, and most respondents and focus group participants believe that the media should offer positive stories and devote more space to young people and topics that interest them – from practical advice on how to get a job, to culture, music, exercise and mental health. Although young people are not satisfied with media content, when asked if they suggest topics for media reporting, about 69% said they never do.



■ TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 320

42 Focus group, F, 29, Brod, unemployed.
 43 Focus group, F, 26, Tešanj, unemployed.
 44 Questionnaire, F, 18–24, student.
 45 Questionnaire, M, 18–24, Laktaši, secondary school pupil.

6. MEDIA NOT A PART OF YOUTH POLICIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Media and media education are not part of youth policies in BiH. The position, rights and obligations of young people in BiH are regulated through three laws on youth: the Law on Youth of the Federation of BiH, the Law on Youth Organisation of Republika Srpska and the Law on Youth of Brčko District of BiH, which regulate youth organisation through youth councils at various administrative levels, including the umbrella youth organizations: the Youth Council of the Federation of BiH, the Youth Council of RS and the Youth Council of Brčko District. These laws define additional rights for young people, such as supporting and promoting development without discrimination, and state that representatives of umbrella youth organisations have the right to be consulted on all matters concerning young people (Banjalučkić et al. 2020, 8). The laws also define the measures which competent authorities are obliged to respect when working with young people, such as providing space for young people, budgeting for young people, determining the competent services for youth issues, providing grants for youth projects (Law on Youth of the Federation of BiH), ensuring the conditions for participation of young people in decision-making (Law on Youth Organisation of RS) or the adoption and implementation of the Youth Strategy (Law on Youth of Brčko District). The interviewees said that the legal solutions are not being implemented⁴⁶ and that:

- youth policies are fragmented across the entities,⁴⁷
- youth issues are not prioritised,⁴⁸
- young people are not included in the decision-making process,⁴⁹
- basic issues – such as the brain drain and youth unemployment – are not effectively addressed,⁵⁰
- although there are positive examples, many local authorities do not offer incentives and opportunities for young people.⁵¹

In addition, the interviewees point out that there is a lack of interest of young people in participating in the activities of youth organisations⁵² and that they are not sufficiently

46 Nedim Alibegović, General Secretary of the Youth Council of FBiH, interview, 7th June 2021.

47 Miralem Turšinović, Director of ORC Tuzla, telephone interview, 6th June 2021.

48 Anesa Čutuna, Member of the Management Board of ONAuBiH, telephone interview, 11th June 2021.

49 Melisa Selak, Coordinator of Social Innovation Incubator MUNJA, telephone interview, 4th June 2021.

50 Matea Brkić, Vice-President of the Council of Youth of Brčko District, telephone interview, 5th June 2021.

51 Miralem Turšinović, Director of ORC Tuzla, telephone interview, 6th June 2021.

52 Anesa Čutuna, Member of the Management Board of ONAuBiH, telephone interview, 11th June 2021.

informed about their rights and opportunities.⁵³ Young people are not sufficiently involved in public life: data from the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs show that only 5% of young people are members of youth organizations, 6% are members of political parties, while only 1% are members of youth representative bodies.⁵⁴

The media are a good tool for educating and informing young people, encouraging them to participate in public life and decision-making, but the media are not recognized as such in the youth policies. The priorities of youth policies in BiH include education, employment, health, social status, participation in public life, culture, sports and leisure, but not specifically media education and activism.⁵⁵ In recent years, civil society organizations in BiH have been active in the field of media and information literacy, primarily media and educational organizations such as Mediacentar Sarajevo and Step by Step (Hodžić, Petković and Bašić-Hrvatin 2019), but also the youth news organisation ONAuBiH⁵⁶ and youth associations such as the Youth Resource Centre (ORC Tuzla).⁵⁷ Civil sector education programmes are, however, short-term and mainly focused on urban areas, and there is a lack of systematic introduction of media and information literacy in primary and secondary schools (Hodžić, Petković and Bašić-Hrvatin, 2019). Still, the academic community is active in the field of research and advocacy for the introduction of media and information literacy in schools.⁵⁸

Representatives of umbrella youth organizations say that their activities do not include media education of young people and that these are not their priority fields.⁵⁹ One of the reasons is the lack of capacity and finances, but also a weak connection with media organisations and the media. Representatives of youth organizations say that their cooperation with the media is good, that they publish announcements about their activities and events, but, as stated by the representative of the Youth Council of FBiH, the cooperation is mostly short-term and based on publishing information that is interesting to the media and not necessarily important to young people.⁶⁰ He believes that better and longer-term cooperation with the media is needed, but it is also necessary to build capacity within the youth organisations to communicate with the media.

53 Melisa Selak, Coordinator of Social Innovation Incubator MUNJA, telephone interview, 4th June 2021.

54 Data available at: http://www.mladi.gov.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=%20view&id=46&lang=hr

55 Matea Brkić, Vice-President of the Council of Youth of Brčko District, telephone interview, 5th June 2021.

56 Anesa Ćutuna, Member of the Management Board of ONAuBiH, telephone interview, 11th June 2021.

57 Miralem Turšinović, Director of ORC Tuzla, telephone interview, 6th June 2021.

58 See the activities on the website of the Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo. <https://fpn.unsa.ba/b/medijska-i-informacijska-pismenost/>

59 Matea Brkić, Vice-President of the Council of Youth of Brčko District, telephone interview, 5th June 2021; Nedim Alibegović, General Secretary of the Youth Council of FBiH, interview, 7th June 2021.

60 Nedim Alibegović, General Secretary of the Youth Council of FBiH, interview, 7th June 2021.

7. MEDIA LITERACY: YOUTH VIEWS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MEDIA AND MEDIA FREEDOMS

The participants of the focus groups and the questionnaire respondents show a certain level of knowledge about the media, but also very negative attitudes about the media, media content and the audience in BiH. When asked what the role of the media in society is, focus group participants said that the role of the media is to inform citizens, participate in the development of democracy, raise awareness of political processes, improve society, educate citizens, and have the courage to tell the truth. However, they believe that the media in BiH instead spread political propaganda, ethnic and national tensions, lies and clickbait content and provide sensationalist and unnecessary information, that they are biased, and that journalists are often incompetent. The youngest group particularly highlighted the inflammatory role of the media, the spread of ethnic and national tensions and they criticised the older generations who spread hate speech on the Internet and whom younger generations imitate, while participants in the second focus group spoke about political influences on the media and the way the media earn money from clickbait titles. Participants of the third focus group were more informed about certain cases of political influence on the media and the role of the Communications Regulatory Agency, but they were especially critical of the audience, which, according to them, is the reason why the media publish sensationalist content.

One participant said that “the most important role of the media (is) to inform the citizens of the country where these media are from, to provide accurate and correct information, so that the people know what needs to be done, what information they need to know ... while here ... there are many media outlets that are nationalist and there are more fake news and clickbait headlines, just to attract clicks and thus make as much money as possible, while not presenting true and accurate information.”⁶¹

When asked what media freedoms are, one participant explained that media freedom is courage, daring to tell the truth, but that media freedom is misunderstood in BiH to include expressing hatred and discrimination,⁶² while another participant said that it is the freedom of a journalist to work without censorship and self-censorship as long as

⁶¹ Focus group, M, 20, Teslić, student.

⁶² Focus group, M, 18, Živinice, secondary school pupil.

they bring useful information,⁶³ and journalists working free from pressure.⁶⁴ Participants of the second focus group claimed that there is no freedom in journalism,⁶⁵ and participants of the first focus group asserted that freedoms are restricted in BiH – in the words of one participant: in BiH, given the ethnic and national divisions, freedom is not equal in all parts of the country and not everyone has the right to express their opinion depending on which municipality, canton and entity they live in.⁶⁶ Regarding media freedoms, one participant said: “The climate is not comfortable at all and it certainly takes a lot of courage, bordering on insanity, to be able to properly engage in investigative journalism in such an environment and, therefore, have media and individual freedoms.”⁶⁷

They all agree that media freedoms are needed, but some participants in the first and second focus groups believe that only competent people in certain areas should express their opinions on social networks as well as engage in journalism. As one participant said, “I think in some way some censorship should exist, because if too much freedom is given to everyone, then it can also be abused.”⁶⁸

Participants of the first focus group are critical of the hatred visible on social networks, for which they mostly blame the older generations, but stated that it is sometimes expressed by young people as well.⁶⁹ According to one participant: “These are young people who were raised and bred with statements by the older generations, about the war... then, based on that, whether they know or don’t know anything about it, whether they researched it or not, they publish comments, write, just to make matters worse, to hurt someone as much as possible.”⁷⁰

In terms of journalistic standards, they say that they are about objectivity and the media publishing as simple information as possible, however, the participants did not elaborate on their answers, just criticised the work of the media. Some of the answers were that journalistic standards must be related to science,⁷¹ that the media must publish information as simply and clearly as possible,⁷² and that journalistic standards are “above all, truthfulness; secondly, objectivity; and thirdly, brevity.”⁷³ Participants of the third focus group said that journalistic standards follow the rules of five basic questions: who, what, when, where, why?

When asked how citizens can exercise their right to information and how it is possible to regulate media content, participants did not provide any direct answers, are not familiar with the Law on Freedom of Information and the Press Council, and only a few of them know the role of the Communications Regulatory Agency. They believe that citizens have the right to reliable information and that they deserve it, but they do not know how they

63 Focus group, M, 22, Zenica, student.

64 Focus group, M, 24, Kreševo, unemployed.

65 Focus group, M, 24, Zenica, employed.

66 Focus group, F, 22, Kiseljak, student.

67 Focus group, M, 29, Mostar, unemployed.

68 Focus group, M, 23, Banja Luka, student.

69 Focus group, F, 18, Bihać, secondary school pupil.

70 Focus group, F, 20, Sarajevo, student.

71 Focus group, F, 22, Kiseljak, student.

72 Focus group, F, 20, Sarajevo, student.

73 Focus group, M, 24, Kreševo, student.

can exercise that right. Participants of the first focus group said that this right can be exercised by following several media, not just one, given that the media in BiH provide one-sided information. Participants in the first focus group believe that public broadcasters in BiH do not provide reliable information and are under the political influence of the leading parties, but they are not aware of the differences between public and private media. Some said that it is necessary to introduce a certain type of control over what is published, in such a way that, for example, there is a commission that would review everything that is published.⁷⁴ One participant believes that it is necessary to better classify the media so that some can publish only content about culture, others content about sports,⁷⁵ and others that it is necessary to introduce a list of reliable and verified media⁷⁶ or labels for accredited, i.e. reliable portals.⁷⁷ Participants of the third focus group talked about the need for better education of journalists, but also the establishment of greater control of information and sanctions for misinformation. One participant in the third focus group believes that consequences should be borne by fake media.⁷⁸

All participants agree that journalism is a very risky profession and that the state, police and media outlets need to protect journalists and tighten sanctions for attacks on journalists. In the first focus group, they also expressed negative attitudes towards journalists and partly blame them for these attacks by spreading false news, and said that it is necessary to encourage the media to write professionally.

The participants expressed positive attitudes towards education on media and information literacy, believe that young people need to be constantly educated about the media and misinformation through workshops, seminars and formal education, in which, as one participant said, it is necessary to introduce a subject on how to recognize media spin.⁷⁹

They said that it is possible to additionally engage young people in the field of media by connecting the media, media organizations and youth associations, but also that each person can act at the micro-level by talking about misinformation and propaganda with their loved ones.⁸⁰ One participant stated that young people need to be positively motivated because the messages they receive are mostly discouraging and lead them to believe that they cannot succeed in their goals.⁸¹ Some of their attitudes towards media education are:

“I think that young people should be educated on the topic of media and that as many workshops as possible should be organized, why not in schools, at least an hour or two once every six months ... And I think that would help the development of media in BiH in the future, these slightly worse portals, which spread untruths etc., would not be so widely read and thus the interest of young people in such news would decrease.”⁸²

74 Focus group, F, 18, Živinice, secondary school pupil.

75 Focus group, F, 21, Bijeljina, student.

76 Focus group, F, 26, Sarajevo, employed.

77 Focus group, F, 25, Banovići, unemployed.

78 Focus group, F, 28, Kostajnica, student.

79 Focus group, M, 29, Mostar, unemployed.

80 Focus group, M, 28, Mostar, unemployed.

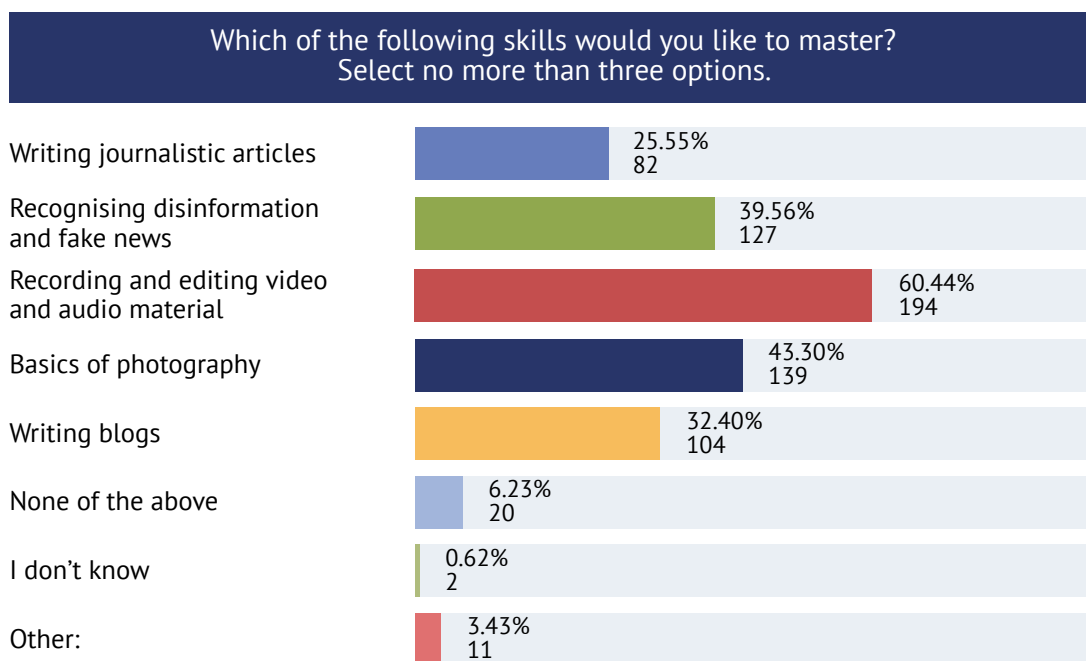
81 Focus group, F, 22, Jajce, student.

82 Focus group, M, 24, Zenica, employed.

“Because if we can learn Latin, which I will never use in my life, why can’t there be a subject about something that literally surrounds you, that you look at on your mobile phone, on television, on the screen ... Long-term education is the only solution.”⁸³

When asked about which skills they would like to master, to which they could give a maximum of three answers, more than half of the respondents in the questionnaire (60%) stated that they would like to acquire skills and knowledge in recording and editing audio and video materials, the basics of photography (43%) and recognizing disinformation and fake news (39%). Also, 32% of the respondents would like to acquire the skills for writing blogs, and 35% for writing newspaper articles, while others cited graphic design, animation creation and design, music and film production and creation of memes.

The results of the survey show that a larger number of respondents would like to master the skills of shooting and editing videos and the basics of photography compared to writing blogs and newspaper articles, which shows that young people are more interested in video and photographic content than text, but are also drawn to skills that can improve their self-presentation on social media. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that almost 40% of respondents are interested in mastering the skills of recognizing disinformation and fake news, which shows that young people are aware of the dangers of problematic media content, and that, as the focus group results show, they are interested in media training and information literacy, which should be taken as a positive indicator and incentive in the process of establishing and creating education programmes for the media literacy of young people.



TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

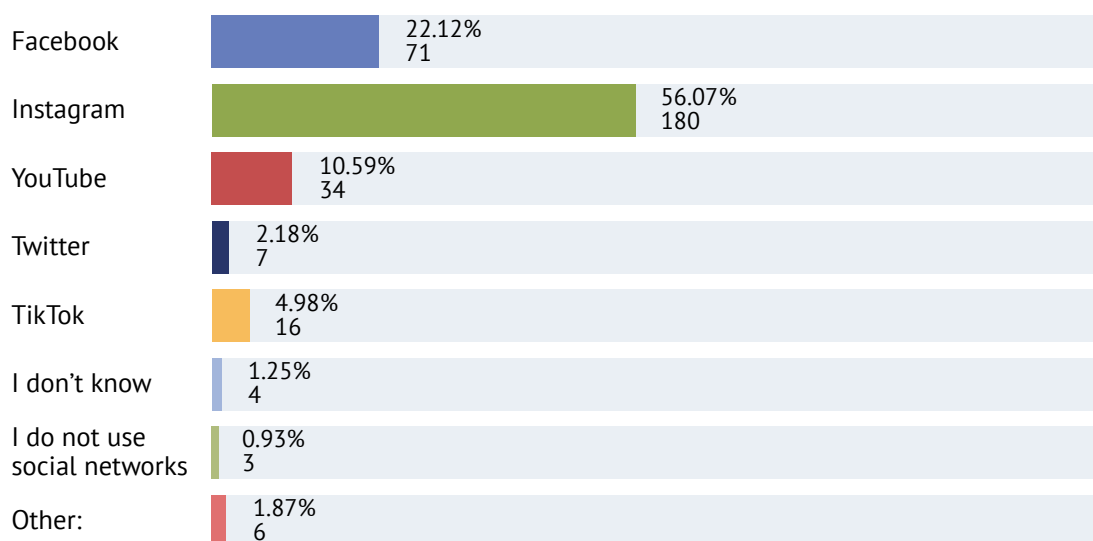
⁸³ Focus group, M, 25, Sarajevo, student.

8. YOUTH ACTIVITY ON SOCIAL NETWORKS: POTENTIAL SPACE FOR YOUTH ACTIVISM

Given that young people spend much of their time on the Internet and social networks, social media can be a good tool for youth activism in the field of media and for pointing out problematic media content. The results of the questionnaire indicate that respondents spend most of their time on Instagram (56%), followed by Facebook (22%) and YouTube (about 11%), while TikTok with 5% and Twitter with 2% are less popular, and only 3 respondents stated that they do not use social networks. On social networks, respondents most often follow the posts, photos and statuses of friends, and comment least often on media posts:

- About 67% of respondents often follow posts, photos and statuses of friends, 29% sometimes, while only 3% never follow this content.
- About 22% of respondents often follow the posts, photos and statuses of celebrities, 59% sometimes, and 19% do not follow this content at all.
- About 50% of respondents often follow the news published by the media, 44% sometimes, while 6% do not follow news from the media on social networks at all.
- About 40% of respondents often follow the information and publications of various organizations, about 55% of respondents sometimes, while about 4% do not follow this content.

Which social network do you spend the most time on? Select only one option.



TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 321

Respondents comment more on the content of their friends (67% sometimes comment on the content of their friends, and 20% often) compared to the media (64% of them never comment on the content of the media). More than half of the respondents (60%) sometimes publish content, photos and statuses, about 32% of them often do so, and only about 7% of respondents never publish such content. They mostly publish personal photos from travel, with friends, art photographs, and statuses that depend on the current situation and mood, and share interesting content that is current and already available on social networks: music, opportunities, news, educational content and articles, as well as humorous content and memes. As one respondent stated: “Most often it is private content.”⁸⁴ However, several respondents stated that they also share activist content: “ranging from promoting things that raise awareness among young people, youth activism, their poetry ...”⁸⁵

Just over half of respondents (53%) say they sometimes point to unprofessional content on social media, and only 15% of respondents do so often. When asked what unprofessional content they point out, they stated that it is hate speech, inappropriate content, nationalist and inflammatory content, inaccurate and false (fake) information, violence, racism, sexism, political manipulation, media reporting that raises panic and incites conflict, misinformation, derogatory comments and pornographic content on networks and channels where it should not be, and some cited fake profiles and unprofessional journalism. In the words of one of the respondents: “It doesn’t happen that often, but it can happen ... if I come across a certain scene that propagates violence or hate speech, especially related to threats, I definitely point it out either by leaving a comment or by reporting inappropriate content.”⁸⁶ The answers point to a certain level of criticism of young people towards the political and social situation in the country, nationalist rhetoric, gender inequality, but also to the work of the media and journalists. Several respondents stated that they react to problematic media content, such as “socially irresponsible and unprofessional reporting,”⁸⁷ “political bots and fake journalism,”⁸⁸ “fake photographs presented with the wrong date, as referring to the wrong event, etc.”⁸⁹ and expressed a negative attitude towards journalists: “fake news, clickbait and fabrications by those who do not deserve to be called journalists.”⁹⁰ The respondents have a certain level of media and information literacy and have knowledge about the problematic parts of media reporting. However, such answers should be taken with caution because previous research has indicated that young people do not know how to point out problematic points of media reporting on specific examples (Hodžić and Sokol 2019, 50, 71). The fact that more than half of the respondents sometimes react to problematic media content should be taken as a good indicator and the basis to further educate young people in the field of media and information literacy and how they can recognize quality media content and contribute to it.

84 Questionnaire, F, 18–24, Višegrad, student.

85 Questionnaire, F, 18–24, Ugljevik, student.

86 Questionnaire, F, 25–30, Bileća, unemployed.

87 Questionnaire, F, 18–24, Sarajevo, employed.

88 Questionnaire, M, 18–24, Mostar, student.

89 Questionnaire, M, 25–30, Sarajevo, employed.

90 Questionnaire, M, 18–24, Banovići, student.

On the other hand, 30% of respondents never react to incorrect media content. As one respondent stated: “Unfortunately, I do not react to them. Sure, I notice mean and offensive comments, but I just keep scrolling through. I do not report them, nor do I dare to respond to such a thing.”⁹¹ Previous research has shown that young people often react to problematic media content by ignoring it (Hodžić and Sokol 2019, 71), as one respondent answered in the questionnaire: “I don’t follow it so I don’t react to it, and even if I come across unprofessional content, I usually just block it.”⁹² Participants of the second focus group said that they are not familiar with the ways in which they can report problematic media content and that it is necessary to teach young people how and to whom to report such content.

The results indicate that the activity of young people on social networks is often mostly related to following and commenting on the statuses and photos of friends, as well as posting their own photos and statuses and content of interest to them, that young people are familiar with problematic media content, but that they only sometimes or never react to it. This is often the result of not knowing how and to whom to report or point out problematic media content, which is why it is necessary to educate young people in this area.

91 Questionnaire, F, 25–30, Zenica, student.

92 Questionnaire, M, 25–30, Zenica, student.

9. CONCLUSION

Younger generations have different information and communication habits, needs and expectations from the media compared to older ones. As the research showed, online media are the main source of information for young people, and among them, the most followed are the popular informative online media in BiH. Respondents use social networks to follow topics that interest them, and the list of YouTube and podcast channels that young people follow is very long and varied. Such content about music, beauty, fashion, exercise, humour, male-female relationships are mostly in the form of vlogs or interviews with celebrities, offering a more casual, intimate and fun approach to sometimes trivial topics and the private lives of influencers. Respondents rarely single out television and radio shows, which means that they rarely follow this type of content on television and radio channels, but also that traditional channels lack programmes that are interesting to young people. In terms of the formats, they prefer short texts with photos, short videos and pictures with short descriptions, which corresponds to the formats they find on the Internet.

Traditional media in BiH offer little specialized content for young people, although media representatives say they are trying to attract a younger audience and cover the activities and work of young people and youth organizations. More than half of the respondents in the survey are not satisfied with the content of online media (66%) or the content of radio and television programmes (66%), and focus group participants have very negative attitudes towards the media in BiH and believe that they spread political propaganda, ethnic and national tensions, lies and clickbait content and provide sensationalist and unnecessary information. Respondents and focus group participants stated that the media lack positive stories, conversations with young people and the presentation of their views and opinions, educational and entertaining content, as well as an objective and critical review of the political situation in the country.

The media are a good tool for educating and informing young people, encouraging participation in public life and decision-making, but in youth policies the media are not recognized as such, and youth organizations often do not have the capacity and knowledge in the area of media education and cooperation with the media. The questionnaire respondents and focus groups participants show a certain level of knowledge about the media, but they lack information on how citizens can exercise their right to information, how it is possible to regulate media content, and how to report problematic media content. The young people in the focus groups expressed interest in training programmes on media and information literacy, and almost 40% of respondents to the survey are interested in mastering the skills of recognizing misinformation and fake news, which shows that young people are aware of problematic media content, but also that they lack those skills. The interest of young people in media and information literacy training should be taken as a positive indicator and incentive when establishing and creating education programmes for youth media literacy.

The research shows that it is necessary for the media in BiH to take a strategic approach to the development of specialized content for young people, and to prepare educational and entertaining content with topics, formats and platforms that are interesting and accessible to young people. Given that young people have great distrust of the media, it is necessary to offer positive examples of professional media reporting through education in order to build trust in professional media and journalists, but also to point out the problems that young people in BiH face through this content. On the other hand, it is necessary for the media and media education to become an integral part of youth policies and for youth organizations to be empowered to cooperate with the media and offer educational programmes in the field of media in order to make the voices of young people as strong as possible.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. To the media

With their editorial policies, the media should take a strategic approach to the creation and preparation of specialised content for young people, which would:

- Cover topics of interest to young people: events from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the world, films and music, education and opportunities for internships and employment, business information, fashion, lifestyle, exercise, culture, art, activism, and offer information that is useful and informative but also entertaining;
- Shed light on the problems faced by young people and youth organizations: fragmentation of youth policies by entity, non-involvement of young people in decision-making, inefficient solutions for the brain drain and unemployment, lack of incentives for young people at the local level, and also focus on the issue of lack of political participation of young people;
- Place emphasis on positive stories, especially through the stories of young people. The media should also think about introducing a positive news section or the concept of solution-oriented journalism;⁹³
- Contain informative and educational programmes intended for young people with a more casual approach and a dynamic and interesting concept, which may contain interviews or vlogs;
- Combine text with interactive forms and multimedia content, use video and animation, visual solutions, short texts with photos and illustrations, short videos and pictures with short descriptions;
- Adapt and present content on social networks and video platforms, especially on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, the most popular youth platforms in BiH, and prepare podcasts;
- Offer content that allows the consumption of news of different duration, for example, a website on one topic could have all the information in one place, but have both longer and shorter texts and videos for visitors to choose from;
- Empower young journalists - who would also serve as role models - to host youth shows.

In order to achieve this, media outlets need to invest funds and educate staff for the creation of such content. It is especially important that public services allocate funds for the production of quality programmes for young people, as well as to adapt the content

⁹³ For more information about this type of journalism, see: <https://media.ba/bs/magazin-novinarstvo/solutions-journalism>

and format to younger audiences. Given that popular online information portals play a significant role for the younger population, the creation of special content for young people should be considered, while also bearing in mind the importance of adhering to professional standards. In the end, it is very important that all media follow professional standards and do not spread disinformation, which can be harmful for the younger population and further shake their trust in the media. The media should also consider possible specialized content for young people through which they would talk specifically about media and information literacy.

10.2. To educators and activists

The results of this research indicate that young people are interested in training on media and information literacy and that 40% of respondents would like to master the skills of recognizing disinformation and fake news. The components that such types of education would include are:

- Training on basic journalistic standards and forms and the role and responsibility of the media in society, on the ways in which the media function, and on the public interest;
- The development of skills such as checking the sources of information, the credibility of the author, checking for representation of the “other side of the story”, etc.;
- Training about the meaning and role of hate speech and propaganda content, and ways in which they can spread on the Internet;
- Knowledge about the right of citizens to information, media freedoms, methods of regulation and self-regulation of media content;
- Knowledge of how to report problematic media content and how young people can react to it;
- Positive examples of professional media reporting that would strengthen young people’s trust in the media;
- The role of influencers and the ethical standards they should adhere to, as well as ways in which products are promoted through different channels.

These workshops can be focused on the development of skills and knowledge in the field of recording and editing audio and video materials and the basics of photography, which a large number of respondents want to master, but also through conversations with journalists and influencers that would further the interest young people in these topics.

10.3. To youth and media organisations, and donors

- Youth organizations should incorporate media education of young people as an integral part of their policies.
- Such trainings may include interviews with journalists, visits to local media stations and media organizations, expert workshops on media and information literacy (see 10.1).

- Media organizations and donors should provide resources and empower and educate youth organizations to engage in media education and better present the problems of young people to the media, as well as advocacy activities directed towards decision-makers to promote media education.
- Media and youth organizations should jointly advocate for decision-makers to introduce media and information literacy in formal education.
- Youth organizations at the local level can, in partnership with the media, propose media topics and/or prepare shows and content for young people.
- Media organizations and youth organizations should encourage young people to be more involved in the media and organize contests, visits, trips, debates with young people about the media and media content in order to engage young people in this field.

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11.3. List of interviews

Anesa Ćutuna, Member of the Management Board of ONAuBiH, telephone interview, 11th June 2021.

Dragana Jovanović, Editor-in-Chief of UPS Media and Founder of the Friends of Srebrenica Association, telephone interview, 15th June 2021.

Ernad Bihorac, Director of the Naša djeca (Our Children) association, Radio Active, telephone interview, 4th June 2021.

Husein Oručević, Editor of Programming, Abraš Radio, telephone interview, 17th June 2021.

Nedim Alibegović, General Secretary of the Youth Council of FBiH, interview, 7th June 2021.

Miralem Turšinović, Director of ORC Tuzla, telephone interview, 6th June 2021.

Melisa Selak, Coordinator of the Social Innovation Incubator MUNJA, telephone interview, 4th June 2021.

Matea Brkić, Vice-President of the Council of Youth of Brčko District, telephone interview, 5th June 2021.

Vedran Prodić, Editor of the Youth Department of BH Radio 1, telephone interview, 15th June 2021.

Tatjana Bursać, Editor of the Children and Youth Programming Department of RTRS, written response, 6th June 2021.

11.4. List of media responses

Andrea Pavić, Director, RTV Livno, written response, 1st June 2021.

Anela Halilagić, Executive Director, RTVUSK, written response, 2nd June 2021.

Anid Hrnjić, Director, Antena Radio, written response, 7th June 2021.

Aldijana Purić, Editor-in-Chief, RTV Velika Kladuša, written response, 1st June 2021.

Alem Lolić, Director, Kanal 6HD, written response, 2nd June 2021.

Almina Kurić, Director, RTV Jablanica, written response, 3rd June 2021.

Azra Kalesić, Editor-in-Chief, RTV7, Tuzla, written response, 1st June 2021.

Emina Karzić, Editor, NTVIC, written response, 2nd June 2021.

Elvira Aganović, Editor, RTV Goražde, short telephone interview, 1st June 2021.

Nermina Durić-Kahvedžić, Editor-in-Chief, Radio Ilijaš, written response, 1st June 2021.

12. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Anida Sokol is a researcher at Mediacentar Sarajevo. She has conducted research on hate narratives and propaganda models in the media, public trust in the media, media financing from public budgets and media habits of young people. She leads solutions journalism and media literacy training programmes. She works as a lecturer at the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology and Burch International University in Sarajevo. She has a master's degree in English Language and Literature from the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo and a PhD in History of Europe, which she received as a Basileus grant holder at the Faculty of Political Science, Sapienza University of Rome, where she worked as a research fellow.

Senad Alibegović is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Media and Communication Studies in Vienna. His main research focus is youth and media, the role of youth online campaigns in building digital resilience in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the use of social networks and online spaces as tools to combat hate speech. He has many years of experience in the field of media, communications, television, radio, podcasts, public relations, and the development of media programmes and activities for various international, governmental and non-governmental organizations. He has a master's degree from the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Sarajevo, and specialized in public relations at the London School of Public Relations (LSPR). He has won a number of awards and recognitions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond.

13. ANNEXES

Annexe 1: Questionnaire

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Education
4. Employment status
5. Place of residence (municipality/city)
6. What is your main source of information? Select only one option. By information, we mean socio-political information, sports, and interesting facts.
7. Which topics/content interest you the most? Select up to three options.
8. Which online media do you follow the most? Enter no more than three. By online media, we mean news portals and websites that publish news and various information.
9. What groups or accounts do you follow most on social networks? Enter no more than three.
10. What television programmes, YouTube channels, radio programmes or podcasts do you follow most? Enter no more than three.
11. Which social network do you spend the most time on? Select only one option.
12. On social networks, do you: a) follow posts, photographs and status updates of friends? b) follow posts, photographs and status updates of celebrities? c) follow news published by the media? d) follow information and posts of various organisations? e) comment on friends' posts? f) comment on media content g) point out unprofessional content? h) suggest topics for media reporting? i) publish content, photographs, status updates?
13. If you post content online, what type of content do you post?
14. If you point out unprofessional content online, what type of unprofessional content do you report?
15. What format of content do you prefer? Select no more than three options.
16. Who is your favourite journalist or radio or television host? Enter no more than three. (A journalist is a person whose profession is journalism, reports events and works in online, TV, print or radio media.)
17. Who is your favourite influencer (YouTuber, podcaster etc.)? Enter no more than three. (Influencers are people who have a large number of followers on social networks and can influence public attitudes. These can be celebrities, bloggers, etc.)

18. If you could create a television or radio programme or podcast and run an online portal, what would they be about? Enter no more than three.
19. Are you satisfied with the content of online media in BiH?
20. Are you satisfied with the content of radio and television programmes in BiH?
21. What topics, content and formats are lacking from online media, radio and television stations, that you would like to see? Enter no more than three.
22. Which of the following skills would you like to master? Select no more than three options.

Annexe 2: Focus group questions

Attitudes and knowledge of young people about media freedoms

1. How do you see the role of the media in society? Do you consider it important?
2. What do media freedoms mean to you?
3. Do citizens have the right to reliable information of public importance?
4. What, in your opinion, is the role of public media and what is the role of private media?
5. Is there a certain type of content control to prevent abuse and is it needed? Is it a threat to media freedom?
6. Are journalists and the media exposed to attacks and pressure? What kind of protection, in your opinion, should be provided in that case?

Attitudes and knowledge of young people about journalistic standards

7. What are journalistic standards?
8. Who is responsible for regulating media content? To whom can we report violations of journalistic standards?

Youth communication activities

9. Have you ever attended any media and information literacy workshops?
10. Have you ever reported instances of unprofessional content?
11. Do you write comments, blogs?

The best ways to teach young people about journalistic standards and freedoms

12. What do you consider to be quality media content?
13. How can young people be encouraged to search for and follow quality media content?
14. What is the best way to teach young people about quality media content?
15. How can young people be encouraged to react to incorrect communication content (disinformation, hate speech, etc.)?

Annexe 3: Interview questions

1. How do you rate the content offered by the media in BiH to young people?
2. What are the basic priorities of the youth policies of BiH? Do they include the media? What, in your opinion, is lacking in that sense?
3. Do media policies deal with young people? Please clarify ... In your opinion, should media policies change in that sense?
4. TO THE MEDIA: Does your media outlet offer specific content for young people; and which ones? How does your media outlet adapt to formats that interest young people?
7. Your organization has implemented a lot of activities with young people. Which ones proved to be the most successful? Have you been involved in MIL activities? Which ones?
8. To what extent, according to your knowledge and opinion, are young people interested in quality content? How, in your opinion, can young people be encouraged to take an interest in quality communication content?
9. How much do young people participate in communications? How can they be empowered and encouraged to participate in communications (publishing content, reacting to and reporting inappropriate content) and to actively demand quality media content and content intended specifically for them?

Annexe 4: Media queries

1. Do you have segments dealing with youth content in your editorial policy?
2. What programmes and content for young people does your media outlet offer?
3. To what extent are those programmes followed?
4. Does your media outlet attempt to adapt to the new forms followed by young people (social networks, YouTube, TikTok ...)?

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