

Reeta Pöyhtäri, Visiting Research Fellow, PhD
Host Organization:
Section for Freedom of Expression
Division for Freedom of Expression and Media Development
Communication and Information Sector
UNESCO

14 September 2015

Final report 1.9.2014-31.8.2015 on Working as Visiting Research Fellow at UNESCO's Division for Freedom of Expression and Media Development/Paris

I have been working as the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation Research Fellow at United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris during the period of 1.9.2014-31.8.2015. The research fellowship at UNESCO, enabled by the funding of HS Foundation, is connected to UNESCO's work on freedom of expression and media freedom, and especially to the Organization's work on safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.

During the Research Fellow period, I have worked on my research interests that broadly involve journalism, media and human rights; including topics such as freedom of speech, hate speech, migration and racism in the media, and professionalism and ethics of journalists. I have finished writing some articles, but have also been working on new post-doctoral research and research ideas in the field of journalism and human rights, and especially safety of journalists. At the moment I am writing an article on journalists' safety research. For the purpose of developing new research on safety of journalists and freedom of speech the period as a Research Fellow in the Organization a very fruitful one, as it offers a good insight into the work that is being done globally in this field. On the other hand, the benefits have been mutual, as I have been able to offer UNESCO my expertise on the topics it works with.

UNESCO is the UN agency with a mandate to promote freedom of expression and its corollary press freedom. An important component of freedom of expression is safety of journalists, media workers, and social media producers of public interest journalism. In this regard, UNESCO has developed the Journalists' Safety Indicators in 2012-2013. Their purpose is to enable a comprehensive assessment of the level of journalists' safety in a given country and assess the actions undertaken by various stakeholders in addressing safety and the impunity of crimes committed against journalists.

A part of my research activities as a visiting Research Fellow have on UNESCO's request been contributing to the implementation and monitoring of the JSIs, and also to UNESCO's other research work on safety of journalists. I have offered my expertise to give analytic comments to the draft research reports of the JSI assessments that have taken or are at the moment taking place in Pakistan, Guatemala, Honduras, Nepal, Kenya and Iraq. I have also assisted the local researchers by giving them advice in the research process, including methodological and other questions. On a request of UNESCO, I have reviewed and provided comments on the JSI assessment process and the tool itself, and helped to revise them in order to make them more workable for future research purposes.

Another part of my UNESCO-related research activities has been concerning the creation of an 'Academic research agenda on safety of journalists'. It is a research document that discusses ten broad fields of communication and media research that all are linked with journalists' safety. The purpose of the document is to develop and encourage academic research on journalists' safety issues. I have first of all assisted to create the research agenda. Secondly, I have participated in academic conferences and other academic events in order to share and discuss the document with other researchers working in this area, and with researchers that could potentially engage with the topics. For example, about 100 researchers from all continents participated in a UNESCO special session on the topic of journalists' safety, which I co-chaired at the IAMCR conference in Montreal in July 2015. Discussions have been started to create an international researcher network on safety of journalists. I have assisted in discussions and cooperation with Finnish and Swedish researchers and universities, in order to have them involved in UNESCO's World Press Freedom Day conference, taking place in Helsinki in May 2016. I have also upon request provided feedback on new research proposals and existing research in the area of journalists' safety.

In addition to these activities, taken my research background with the topic of hate speech, I have provided feedback on UNESCO publications and ongoing research in that area, as well as helped to think of new related research and funding proposals. Altogether, my research expertise nicely fits into the freedom of expression work of UNESCO.

Articles published

Pöyhtäri, Reeta (2014) Limits of hate speech and freedom of speech on moderated news websites in Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK. *Annales. Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies. Series Historia et Sociologia*, 24 (3), 513-524.

Pöyhtäri, Reeta (2015) Vihapuhe haasteena uutismedialle ja journalismille. Teoksessa: Neuvonen, Riku (toim.) *Vihapuhe Suomessa*. Helsinki, Edita, 241-266. (Hate speech as a challenge to news media and journalism. In: Hate speech in Finland.)

Coming: Pöyhtäri Reeta, Väliverronen Jari, Ahva Laura (2015) Suomalaisen journalistin itseymmärrys muutosten keskellä. *Media & Viestintä*. (The self-image of the Finnish journalist in times of change. In: Media and Communication.)

Other published material (online)

UNESCO's Research Agenda on Safety of Journalists: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/unescos-research-agenda-on-safety-of-journalists/>;

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/images/Themes/Freedom_of_expression/safety_of_journalists/Draft_Research_Agenda_Safety_of_Journalists_06_2015.pdf

Conference presentations

Pöyhtäri, Reeta & Ming-Kuok Lim. *Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*. Poster presentation. European Communications Conference ECREA 2014, 14.11.2014. Lissabon, Portugal.

Pöyhtäri Reeta & Väliaverronen Jari. *Who Is the Finnish Journalist?: Old Ideals, New Professional Realities*. European Communications Conference ECREA 2014, 15.11.2014. Lissabon, Portugal.

Pöyhtäri Reeta. *Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*. Development Communication Society Nepal (SODEC) and UNESCO Stakeholder meeting, 20.2.2015. Kathmandu, Nepal.

Pöyhtäri Reeta. *Limits of hate speech and free speech on moderated news web sites*. BRICKS Project Meeting of Social Media Managers. BRICKS-project (Building Respect on the Internet by Combating hate Speech), Media Animation, 11.5.2015. Brussels, Belgium.

Pöyhtäri Reeta. *Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*. African Media Initiative (AMI) and UNESCO Stakeholder meeting, 22.5.2015. Nairobi, Kenya.

Pöyhtäri Reeta. *UNESCO's Academic research agenda on safety of journalists*. IAMCR Conference, 13.7.2015. Montreal, Canada.

Pöyhtäri Reeta. (Chair, organizer). *JRE/UNESCO Special Session on Safety of Journalists*. IAMCR Conference, 13.7.2015. Montreal, Canada.

Pöyhtäri Reeta. *UNESCO's Academic research agenda on safety of journalists*. Global Communication Association (GCA) Conference, 18.7.2015. Berlin, Germany.