

Reporting poverty resource pack

October 2009

This resource pack aims to help journalism tutors, trainers and students to understand the issues involved in reporting UK poverty, and offers practical advice on how to tackle the subject.

What's inside this booklet?

- **About the pack**
- **Using the pack**
- **Introduction to the main issues:**
 - **use of language**
 - **interviewing and case studies**
 - **images: photography and filming**
 - **the reporting of poverty – as others see it**
 - **ethics**
 - **good practice and journalists' experiences**

Go to www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty
to access the full range of resource materials.

For the full PDF of *Reporting poverty in the UK: A practical guide for journalists*,
go to: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/reporting-poverty-uk-practical-guide-journalists>



JOSEPH ROWNTREE
FOUNDATION

www.jrf.org.uk

Background

“Part of our job as journalists is to untangle the complicated, whether we are a City editor explaining the convolutions of international finance or a reporter piecing together scraps of information about a crime. On the whole, we can be proud of how well we do it. Yet almost no effort is made to explain poverty, its causes, effects and consequences.”

David Seymour in *Reporting poverty in the UK: A practical guide for journalists*

Poverty is a serious issue for a significant part of the population. Figures for 2007-08 for relative income poverty, which is the most commonly used standard, show that:

- 23 per cent of the UK population was in poverty – 13.5 million people
- 31 per cent of children were in families in poverty – 4 million children
- 18 per cent of pensioners were in poverty – 2 million people

To some, the number of people who officially experience poverty is perhaps quite startling. Figures from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) suggest that about three in five British households experienced income poverty for at least one year during the period 1991-2004.

With those levels, it is perhaps surprising that poverty does not have a higher profile in all areas of the media.

There is also huge stigma attached to poverty and little understanding of it.

“... one of the things about being in poverty, you feel that people are looking and saying he’s not very good or whatever, I’m better than you.”

Participant in ‘Communicating Poverty’ workshops organised by the *UK Coalition Against Poverty* (2008)

Research by Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) in 2007-08 revealed that journalists do find it difficult to report poverty – it’s a complex subject in which causes and solutions are contested. As one journalist puts it: “Poverty is worthy, not newsworthy.” (See Robinson 2009, JRF). While there are some great examples of powerful, award-winning programmes and reports exploring UK poverty, much of the reporting of poverty is still characterised by clichés and stereotypes, in a way that would be completely unacceptable if used in connection with issues of race or mental health, for instance.

JRF was concerned about the use of these stereotypes in the media and the overall level, depth and quality of media coverage of UK poverty. Recognising that the media is an important arena for reflecting and shaping attitudes and for debate on current issues, JRF worked with a range of partners to create resources to support good reporting. JRF worked with leading journalists and industry bodies that were also aware that something needed to be done, to try and influence change. This led to the publication of *Reporting poverty: A practical guide for journalists*. Written by a leading journalist, David Seymour, it explains the issues surrounding poverty and provides examples of good practice and approaches that might be taken.

The guide – newly updated – is a key part of this resource pack for journalism educators and students. The pack aims to assist them in appreciating the issues involved. It draws on the guide, the GCU research, more than twelve discussion events held across the UK in 2007-09 involving more than 200 members of the media, education and voluntary sector, and a number of other sources.

Poverty is, of course, only one issue of many that student journalists are likely to come across in their careers, but dealing well with all its accompanying sensitivities and challenges can be a key part of the basis for good journalism skills in many other areas.

And although experienced journalists often find poverty a challenging topic to cover, as the case studies in this pack show, many have managed it successfully and have won awards for their challenging and innovative approaches. For instance, *The wrong trainers*, shown on BBC Newsround, won a Children's BAFTA for factual programmes, and *The Tower: A Tale of Two Cities* (BBC One) won a BAFTA in 2008 for best factual series.

“There are a variety of problems for any journalist trying to report on poverty. Firstly, you have to try and find some way to circumvent existing prejudices amongst both colleagues and readers.”

Neil Mackay, Investigative journalist,
film-maker and author

Introduction

The pack has been designed to be used in a variety of ways, both by tutors and students:

- within various course modules in journalism and media courses, including matters such as practical journalism, interviewing techniques, use of language and feature writing, through to more discursive and philosophical areas such as ethics and social issues, issues of contemporary journalism, diversity, and working practices;
- for tutors, poverty issues and the documents included here and online could be the starting point for seminars and tutorials. For instance, the experiences of journalists in reporting poverty might be a useful starting point for looking at how to find a story in a complex subject and negotiate a range of ethical issues;
- for students, there is practical guidance that may help in many areas, such as interviewing;
- dissertations could look at how journalism approaches the issue of poverty. JRF's research could provide a starting point, followed up by original research on press and media approaches in a particular area.

There is very little sympathetic portrayal of poor people. And people are looking for reassuring images, that things are OK, things are fair, and that people at the bottom are there because it's their fault, and therefore we've all earned and merit our position.

Political commentator, Daily Broadsheet, quoted in Reporting poverty in the UK, p 27.

Further ideas

Reporting assignments

As a nationwide issue (even the most affluent areas have pockets of poverty, albeit in some cases hidden) poverty is a topic that can be used as the basis for practical exercises in interviewing, reporting, feature writing and programme development for all forms of media.

Ideas could include:

- investigating a particular estate or area where there are high levels of unemployment;
- considering the 'infrastructure' of poverty in an area: what facilities – both public sector and private – are there to support people?;
- report on innovative schemes that are attempting to help people move out of poverty;
- looking at the problems faced by people in poverty in rural areas and the specific issues they face in housing, transport and employment;
- investigating how hidden the poverty is: how do others view it – do they see there is a problem?

Starting points for research to identify issues and subjects include local councils, citizens advice bureaux and churches and other faith-based organisations, particularly those that have poverty outreach as part of their activities. In addition, local groups of national charities may well be able to provide statistical information about poverty issues and to provide contacts for case studies.

The following can be contacted at national level for advice and help, and to put journalists in touch with their local groups:

- Save the Children
- Shelter
- Age Concern and Help the Aged (merged in April 2009 and will be rebranded in 2010)
- UK Coalition Against Poverty

In addition, there are likely to be locally based charities that can provide help.

Seminars and tutorials

The pack provides a wide range of information that could provide the basis for debate, discussion and teaching on many aspects of journalism. There are several examples of good practice that could be considered and analysed.

A number of journalists have provided short pieces on their experience of reporting poverty. As these pieces show, there are ethical issues involved in how people are approached and reported on. The pack could be used as a starting point for discussion or debates, or as one aspect alongside other topics such as mental health or disability, where some of the issues of stereotyping may be similar.

There is also a section in which people experiencing poverty and organisations that represent them give their views on how they feel the media treats them, which is likely to provide a basis for discussion. Resources include written pieces and also short films with perspectives from people in the media and the public.

Dissertations and papers

All these topics could also provide the basis for dissertations and other course work.



Anna Kari/Save the Children

“Where people do not want to be recognised, there are, of course, ways of disguising their identity ...”
David Seymour

Photography and filming

The pack also provides information on filming and photography. Many of the issues are similar to those for the written word, and can provide the basis for discussion and debate, as well as practical exercises – such as illustrating a particular theme or feature.

Introduction to the main issues

These notes provides an introduction to reporting poverty, and the immediate issues that students will face when tackling news, features, documentaries, radio programmes and any other media formats on poverty and the problems faced by poor people.

It has six main sections:

- use of language
- interviewing and case studies
- images: photography and filming
- the reporting of poverty – as others see it
- ethics
- good practice and journalists' experiences

Issues such as poverty are frequently discussed in bland phrases or camouflaged by academic jargon. The fact is they concern people – our potential audiences of readers, listeners, viewers, internet users and even twitterers. It would be wrong both ethically and commercially not to do them the service of reporting their lives as sensitively as we would any other members of our communities.

Bob Satchwell, Executive Director, Society of Editors, and **Caroline Diehl**, Chief Executive, Media Trust, in foreword to *Reporting poverty in the UK*, p5.

<i>Language supported by people on low incomes</i>	<i>Language that has been criticised for being judgemental and/or misleading</i>
People on low incomes	<p>Poverty-stricken, impoverished, 'The poor': these can be stigmatizing. People who are poor are not a generic group (just as disabled people are not). 'Neutral' phrases such as 'people in poverty' or 'poor people' are better.</p> <p>Scroungers, spongers, dossers, feckless, lazy: most journalists would agree there is no situation when these should be used and maybe they are rarely used these days. But it is worth emphasising that these are derogatory terms and it is difficult to see any examples where they would be justified, except in quotes.</p> <p>Handouts, benefits culture: 'people receiving benefits' or 'in receipt of benefits' are more neutral choices here.</p> <p>Blame; deserving and undeserving poor: people in poverty are often blamed for their own situation, yet in the vast majority of cases it is not their fault.</p> <p>Sink estates: place someone in a 'sink estate' and you are likely to be reinforcing a stereotype. Such terms can stigmatise both a location and everyone who lives there.</p>
People in poverty	
People experiencing poverty	

Use of language

The challenge in reporting poverty is to ensure that the language used is accurate and neutral. With poverty there can be a tendency to reach for stereotypes. Objective journalists will always challenge these and report as they find, and will try to create headlines that are eye-catching without stereotyping.

Of course, there is a risk of being over-sensitive. While language is dynamic and what is accepted changes constantly, the language in the box on page 7 highlights the terms that people on low incomes themselves have indicated they support and those they do not. A longer version of this appears among the online resources as *Stereotypes and myths – what to avoid* at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/language>.

In Northern Ireland, journalists don't use words such as 'scroungers', or 'dossers' or other insulting or degrading terms, mainly because they are aware of living in a community and people know one another. I think this is something that appears more in the nationals, where the journalists will rarely if ever meet the people they are describing.

Gerry Millar, *Daily Mirror*, quoted in *Reporting poverty in the UK*, p50

We realised... that the terminology and language we used would be important. We decided that the word 'poverty' wasn't going to do us any favours. It can be offensive and it's vague. Instead we favoured terms such as 'low income' or 'disadvantaged'.

Rachel Hellings, independent film-maker in *Child poetry: filming Ewan*. See <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/journalists-experiences>

Further information

The mythology of poverty

This looks at five myths and corrects them. (*Reporting poverty in the UK* p24-7).

Word and images: mind your language

see <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/language>

'Deserving' vs 'undeserving'

Article by Ros Wynne-Jones, chief feature writer, *Daily Mirror*, which attempts to look beyond the stereotypes
see <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/language>

Problems in reporting poverty

Neil Mackay and investigative journalist, film-maker and author, explains how he tries to circumvent existing prejudices.
see <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/language>

Tackling stereotypes and prejudice

More background on the issues.
(*Reporting poverty in the UK* p46-7).

Interviewing and case studies

Just as with any sector, people in poverty are wary of journalists and the way they will be presented. But whereas people with physical health problems will expect their illness to be highlighted, with poverty there can be real stigma, and those interviewed may well feel they are not poor or want to be categorised as such.

It can take a lot of courage to go public in associating yourself with a group that may be stigmatised, and a sympathetic hearing is likely to draw out much more than a confrontational approach.

Interviewees may fear they will be harassed or criticised by neighbours or others for talking to the media. This can make them even more reluctant to be interviewed. While it is clearly better to have a named individual, there are times when using a pseudonym might be the best way out.

Building trust

At a Joseph Rowntree Foundation seminar where people in poverty and representatives from voluntary organisations gave their views on media coverage, the advice to journalists included 'the need to build up trust'. People may not tell them their life story straight away: poverty can be a very difficult subject to talk about, especially the fear of being judged by others who will read the story. The point participants emphasised most was that they wanted to be treated with respect.

Charities and voluntary organisations that support and represent poor people may well be able to find suitable interviewees. It may be that they offer to attend an interview. Don't dismiss this out of hand: their presence may well reassure a vulnerable person, leading to a better result.

"Case studies can really bring stories about poverty to life – real-life stories not only grab the reader, listener or viewer's attention but bring statistics or reports down to a human level."

David Seymour in *Reporting poverty in the UK: A practical guide for journalists*

Open mind

Assume nothing. As with any interview it is important to have an open mind: preconceptions of poverty may be mere stereotypes, not an accurate portrayal. Research shows that in the past, reporting poverty has often failed to get to the root of the problems.

There is no reason to expect that the home of a person experiencing poverty would be strikingly different to any other – indeed, it may be surprising at first what possessions a person appears to have. Any reference to possessions in your report or feature must be carefully considered: bear in mind that these may have been acquired when the family had an adequate income, or through loans.

The British are remarkably effective in disguising their poverty. Here are a couple of examples given to me by journalists from stories they covered:

- ***a mother who lived on virtually nothing but bread so her children could eat well and have a few little luxuries;***
- ***a children's bedroom with the latest electronic games, so the kids didn't feel ashamed at school, but with a mattress on the floor being the only piece of furniture.***

David Seymour

Other information and sources

People in poverty – how they view media coverage, by Dan Paskins, formerly of the UK Coalition Against Poverty. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/interviewing>

'The reporting challenge' in *Reporting poverty in the UK* chapter 3, p 41-54 expands on this issue.

The case study may alienate the viewer, listener, or reader, especially if they don't match our preconceptions. I remember hearing about a television crew doing a report from a scheme in the east end of Glasgow. Half way through the reporter took the charity worker who was helping them find interviewees to one side and told him "These people aren't poor enough. They've got carpets".

Huw Williams, BBC Radio 4 Today programme from *The story of the Farepak savers*. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/perspectives>

Images – photography and filming

Producing striking and memorable images depicting poverty provides opportunities for creativity. There is no one image that can symbolise the subject, in the way, for instance, that a picture of a hospital can for health issues. As David Seymour, journalist and author of the Reporting Poverty guide says, it is a long way from the simplicity of images of poverty such as Gin Lane by William Hogarth in the 18th century or pictures of extreme poverty in a developing country.

As with words, photography and filming need to be handled very sensitively, and a number of important considerations must be taken into account.

Be innovative

Avoid the stereotypes. The starting point must be to aim for an image that accurately represents the situation of the people or person being featured, as they are.

Our first problem was how to convey rural poverty – we were filming in a picturesque Cornish town and all our shots were very beautiful! The use of sync here was critical: by laying Ewan’s commentary about the violence and unemployment that exists in the town over the picturesque shots, we were able to change the tone of the piece to reveal a very different story and challenge the perception of an idyllic Cornish village.

Secondly, Ewan’s story was retrospective and therefore there were no visible signs of ‘poverty’ apparent now. So we looked to enhance his words by using quite stylised images of Ewan which helped to convey the feelings of desperation and isolation he’d experienced.

Rachel Hellings, independent film-maker in Child poverty: filming Ewan. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/journalists-experiences>

Willing participants

Finding someone can be a challenge. Given the stigma attached to poverty, many people are unwilling to be portrayed as poor – few people in any circumstance like ‘bad’ photos of themselves.

Anonymity

There are many ways of disguising people’s identities through over-the-shoulder shots, silhouettes or pixellation. Another approach is stylisation, or use of an illustration. Some other approaches are shown in the online resources. Photos of the interiors of people’s homes may be suitable in some circumstances, or perhaps the area where they live.

People may not want their picture taken next to stories about poverty – especially if it puts them in a bad light. There is a stigma attached to poverty. Participant in the ‘Reporting Poverty’ seminar in Manchester, quoted in Reporting poverty in the UK, p 50.

Commenting on an extract from the Daily Mirror, written on International Day for Poverty Eradication, 17 October 2006, participants felt that the photograph which was used was a stereotype and suggested that all families living in poverty conformed to the image of an unhappy lone parent. Why not show the rest of the family (the woman is wearing a wedding ring but there’s no sign of the father in the picture)?

People in poverty – how they view media coverage, by Dan Paskins, formerly of the UK Coalition Against Poverty. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/interviewing>

Sources

For general pieces, it may be appropriate to use stock shots to illustrate a story. There are a small number of photo agencies that specialise in social issues and have good examples that may help (details are listed at the end of this section).

Captions

Any caption can change the significance or context of a picture, and this is another area where great sensitivity is needed, so subeditors need to be well-briefed. The positive impact of an otherwise understanding piece can be wrecked if the caption beside it says something like: 'Mary Smith in the hovel she calls home.' In some cases, captions may be superfluous.

Sources and information

For more information on photography and filming, go to:

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/photograph-filming.pdf>

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-film-making-project.pdf>

<http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/resources/policyreports/imagesforchange/view>

<http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/resources/policyreports/imagesforchange/view>

There are also examples of photographs and captions relating to poverty throughout *Reporting poverty in the UK: A practical guide for journalists*.

The past 30 or so years have seen tremendous changes in the way various groups are portrayed: journalists have had to consider the way they operate and write, perhaps to a greater degree than in the past. Sometimes as a result of legislation or codes of conduct, or sometimes simply as a result of changes about what is or is not acceptable in society, the way language is used to describe people has changed quite dramatically in many cases.

With poverty there has been no specific change – though clearly journalists must follow guidelines when interviewing or reporting on vulnerable groups such as children and older people.

The Press Complaints Commission's code of practice <http://www.pcc.org.uk/cop/practice.html> is the most significant code for journalists. It does not specifically refer to poverty but its first condition on accuracy is clearly relevant, as is its third:

"1. Accuracy

i) The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures."

and

"iii) The Press, whilst free to be partisan, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact."

Similarly the National Union of Journalists' Code of Conduct (<http://www.nuj.org.uk/innerPage/nuj.html?docid=174>) requires members to:

"... ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair... and ... differentiates between fact and opinion..."

The BBC has extensive guidelines covering every aspect of broadcasting and in particular to news and documentaries.

Related to all this are considerations about:

- anonymity: people may ask for their names to be withheld because of stigma, fear of reactions of neighbours or other factors;
- payments to interviewees: people on low incomes may need to be reimbursed for expenses or other costs, which would not normally be the case in other situations;
- checking copy: it may be appropriate in some cases to give a person sight of copy;
- getting consent from interviewees and making sure they are aware of how a piece may be used. People in poverty may be more vulnerable to some of the repercussions that publicity can bring than some interviewees. It is also worth being aware of the issues third sector organisations have to think through when approached by journalists for case studies.

Sources and more information

A list of organisations relevant to this can be found at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/ethics> along with two resources from Robinson et al (2009) *Poverty in the media: Being seen and getting heard*.

The reporting of poverty: as others see it

As with many other issues, there is a divide – distrust – between the media and people experiencing poverty about how they are portrayed. Research by Glasgow Caledonian University and Durham University has looked at this from both sides, and it does show that there is a lack of understanding on both sides.

It is an issue that has been recognised by the Society of Editors.

“When the latest pictures arrive of pestilence, natural disaster, disease or famine, the media responds with immediacy and sensitivity and cash flows into charities. It is more difficult to convey the long-running, grinding disadvantage experienced by people who may not be living quite so obviously in poverty and despair in the UK.”

Bob Satchwell, Executive Director, Society of Editors

The research suggests that the media is selective in its approach to the subjects it covers, with the situation of children and older people far more likely to make the news agenda as they are perceived as more ‘deserving’ of sympathy. Coverage tends to pigeonhole people, categorising them as heroes, victims or villains.

The flow of stories about abuses of the welfare system can lead to the assumption that all people receiving benefits are not only ‘on the fiddle’ but also getting a handsome income. Neither is true. While there are cases that appear to confirm such prejudices, the benefits system remains a safety net to provide a very basic income for people who would otherwise have little or nothing.

Another approach that can misrepresent people in poverty is to cast the spotlight only on the achievements of entrepreneurs who have risen from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Such positive examples are actually few and far between. While giving them publicity can provide a positive story, the absence of stories explaining what makes it difficult for everyone to achieve such a change can imply that the overwhelming majority of people in poverty have failed by not achieving as much.

Views of people with experience of poverty

I learnt about poverty the hard way.... and it made life a lot more difficult than the media made it out to be. And, you know, that’s why I don’t like these stories you get ‘Mrs Somebody or other gets one thousand, five hundred pounds a week in benefits’ and you’re thinking ‘yeah’. To get benefit you have to battle. You have got to really struggle and, you know, just to get your basic requirements, you’ve got to struggle. But the media, you know, publicises that it’s so easy, there’s so much money floating around, you just go in and ask them for it.

Male, low income, rural Scotland, quoted in *The media, poverty and public opinion in the UK* by Glasgow Caledonian University, published by JRF, September 2008.

They also felt that the piece would be much more effective if it was less unrelentingly negative. The phrase in the title ‘no hope’ suggested that there was nothing that could be done, and hence no point in people engaging with it.

People in poverty – how they view media coverage by Dan Paskins, formerly of the UK Coalition Against Poverty. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/interviewing>

Good practice, perspectives and journalists' experiences

In the online resources, there are examples of how the media has tackled poverty, telling the story without reverting to stereotypes. The examples listed on the right-hand side of this page can be found in full at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/journalists-experiences>

Journalists and broadcasters have also written of their experiences and the issues and problems they have had to face. Brief quotes from these articles are included here: the full articles are included in the online resources.

Sources

The following can be found at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/journalists-experiences>

Poverty and the media: Getting seen and being heard by Fred Robinson, Richard Else, Maeve Sherlock and Ian Zass-Ogilvie, JRF 2009.

Reporting poverty in the UK throughout, but in particular Chapter 2: The media and poverty pp 31-8.

Communicating poverty report, UK Coalition Against Poverty [http://ukcap.org/Communicating_Poverty\[1\].pdf](http://ukcap.org/Communicating_Poverty[1].pdf).

The media, poverty and public opinion in the UK, JRF 2008.

Sunday Herald, 1 April 2007

This feature looked at different aspects of child poverty in Glasgow, and presented a number of different views – a family experiencing poverty, children on the streets, charities and Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People – alongside statistics showing the scale of child poverty.

York Press, 18 July 2007

This feature takes the findings from a JRF study on poverty and wealth and makes them relevant in a local context. Like the Sunday Herald cutting (above) this piece includes the views of local people, from residents to a senior local councillor, and facts and figures explaining the bigger picture.

The wrong trainers

An animation shown on BBC Newsround was responsible for more hits on the website than ever before. A description by film-maker Kez Margrie appears in the section on journalists' experiences. The programme won a Children's BAFTA for factual programmes. http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_7110000/newsid_7112500/7112543.stm

There's a long tradition of good journalism about poverty and that is not just historic, it goes on to this day and it can be very powerful. The media's role is in bringing that to people's attention. So I think it's worth having a caveat that it's not all bleak ... however, there is very little coverage of social issues in the tabloids at all. It's all kind of celebrity-driven news, entertainment news and when it's in the broadsheets it is often ghettoised to supplements.

Editor, Sunday Broadsheet supplement, quoted in *Reporting poverty in the UK*, p 32.

Journalists' experiences

How do you tackle a story about poverty? Here a number of journalists describe the issues they have had to face and how they tackled them. The full texts, along with further stories, are included in the online resources.

Deserving vs undeserving

By Ros Wynne-Jones, chief feature writer, Daily Mirror

We need to report poverty in all its ugliness, yet without exploiting it. It is the dilemma that faces the photographer in a famine zone facing an emaciated child. And it is a dilemma in UK poverty terms we are only starting to explore now.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/language>

The story of the Farepak savers

By Huw Williams, BBC Radio 4 Today programme

... the downside of having to have an example is that people's real lives don't fit neatly into compartmentalised boxes. Someone is never just an example of the aspect of poverty we're trying to illustrate. To really understand them, you have to understand the background...

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/perspectives>

Problems in reporting poverty

By Neil Mackay, investigative journalist, film-maker and author

There are a variety of problems for any journalist trying to report on poverty. Firstly, you have to try and find some way to circumvent existing prejudices amongst both colleagues and readers.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/language>

Child poverty: filming Ewan

By Rachel Hellings, independent film-maker

At the outset, we discussed how we should approach potential contributors, for we knew that finding and getting access to case studies wasn't going to be easy. We realised, too, that the terminology and language we used would be important. We decided that the word 'poverty' wasn't going to do us any favours. It can be offensive and it's vague. Instead we favoured terms such as 'low income' or 'disadvantaged'.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/journalists-experiences>

Talk to the Bevan Foundation, July 2009

By Duncan Higgitt, former news editor and features editor at the Western Mail

News gatherers aim for objectivity, but they are simply making judgements on what they perceive to be the subjective interests of their audience. As such, any organisation that is pressing a cause will often have reason to complain. But put yourself in a news editor's boots.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/perspectives>

Rich Kid Poor Kid: perspective of the producer

Documentary-maker Zac Beattie directed the film Rich Kid Poor Kid, which was shot in Larkhall, Stockwell, and aired on Channel 4 in November 2008, as part of the Cutting Edge series. The film depicted the stark contrast between very wealthy people and very poor people in London, and the extreme proximity in which they exist.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty/multimedia>

About the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is a leading funder of social research and development work in the UK. It works with the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust to provide evidence, solutions and ideas that will help to overcome the causes of poverty, disadvantage and social evil.

Published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Homestead, 40 Water End, York YO30 6WP. This project is part of the JRF's research and development programme. These findings, however, are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Foundation. ISSN 0958-3084

Available in other formats