



WOMEN ENERGIZE WOMEN

Blog Article

Energy Journalism does not stop beyond borders

Women Energize Women Event on Energy Journalism (8th NOVEMBER 2022)

Our last online event in 2022 brought a topic onto the agenda that was brought to us from our community: Milou Dirx from Clean Energy Wire (CLEW) and Lisa Kretschmer from Reporters without borders (RSF) discussed with Claudia Solera, an energy journalist from Mexico and one of our #womenenergize Media Fellows the importance of energy reporting, the challenges journalists are faced with and measures to overcome them.

Energy reporting as an accelerator of the green transition

Especially today, when the urgency to accelerate the energy transition and reach the 1.5-degree target increases with each passing year, ambitious energy journalism becomes more and more important. We need investigative reporting that exposes omissions and offers solutions, articles that make complex issues tangible to the public, and journalists who hold governments and decision-makers accountable for their actions that will affect not only our very own survival but also the future of the next generations to come. However, this often puts energy reporters in direct line of fire, which is reflected in the work of Claudia Solera: As Mexican climate policy has been very stagnant in the last years and women are underrepresented with only 2% positions held by women in the energy ministry, she sees her duty in showcasing those problems, reaching out to people in leading positions and presenting solutions and female role models. As a result, she is under constant threat and insecure for how long she will be able to continue her work. There are frightening figures on this: RSF estimates that an average of 80 [journalists](#) are paying with their lives for their job every year, among them 10 environmental journalists between 2005 and 2010.

Female journalists are facing two-fold repressions

Female journalists are facing a two-fold danger writing on very sensitive topics like minorities and human rights and becoming victims of stigmatization in general: “We investigated that workplaces are the second dangerous places for female journalists as they are often being harassed by their male colleagues” says Lisa Kretschmer, Head of Advocacy at RSF. “As a woman, the possibility of getting personally targeted and your credibility questioned is much higher”, one participant also reports from her own experience. While data-driven journalism is often being mentioned as a tool to increase reputation, Milou Dirx, Journalism Network

Manager at CLEW raises another important point: “Data and facts can be very subjective as well but are predominantly used by male journalists and thus gain credibility – but other formats such as human-interest stories are important to address certain audiences as well.”

Joining forces for sustainability reporting

While journalists around the world are increasingly teaming up to withstand those burdens and report on global topics, this is particularly evident in climate and environmental journalism, which does not stop at borders. Dirx observed that “for a long time, journalism was very competitive. Nowadays we can observe that this lone-wolf attitude is shifting towards a more collaborative mindset.” Encouraging examples are initiatives like “forbidden stories”, an international network of journalists dedicated to finishing stories of journalists that have been silenced, killed or forced to stop their work due to threats. But “even if there is a huge solidarity along environmental journalists this is not enough to balance out the danger of being attacked by organized crime”, Solera points out.

What is being done about it

Therefore, RSF is offering a huge toolbox to support journalists practically, for example offering scholarships to expand their skills, make a fresh start in their career, or simply take some time out to refocus and strengthen their mental health that is under a constant pressure because of the unstable working conditions. Secondly, there is the possibility of being checked for surveillance technologies, even remotely. Last but not least there are a lot of structural approaches in terms of advocacy as well: “We try to trigger international protection mechanisms and fight impunity because nowadays, many perpetrators are still going unpunished for what they’ve done”, Kretschmer explains. Besides, structural long-term funding of projects for sustainability reporting is very important: “Many funders only want to fund the shiny new project for one year.”, Dirx mentions, referring to the bigger timeslot that is needed to establish resilient foundations and really have an impact. Finally, to have the matters of all genders represented in energy and climate journalism, empowering female journalists should be another priority for us as a society. Thus, getting more women into decision-making positions and on expert panels is key but also empowering and helping them to overcome gender-related difficulties in their everyday-lives is important: “Put women in the front, but don’t let them alone!”, Kretschmer sums it up in one sentence.

Author: Women Energize Women editorial team