

SOLUTION JOURNALISM: FROM “WATCHDOG”  
TO “GUIDE DOG”

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**I**ntroduction. From pervious century we have started to speak and write about economic and ecologic crisis. Since that time, we acknowledge that the world we are living in is facing economic and ecologic crisis of higher degrees, including climate change, drought, malnutrition, environmental pollution, noise pollution etc. The main reason for these defects is population convergence caused by urbanization, unregulated production, indiscriminate mining, and overuse of scarce resources. Following the rapid growth of the human population of earth, the demand for natural resources increased exponentially. It is natural to expect that mining and mass production would increase to meet growing demands. Naturally, the issues of us running out of resources would gain greater focus and would be discussed in many forums.

Most mass-produced products usually use natural resources

(friendsoftheearth.uk) which are constantly depleting and limited. There is a logical expectation that there will be a point when these natural resources would run dry. As those resources dwindle, we would start to see a stagnation in production and we would not be able to meet the demands of our growing population. For instance, without water, vegetables will not grow, and without plants, animals will die. In other words, the balance of nature would be lost, its original appearance would be in despair. As a result, there is a risk of chaos and wars for scarce resources.

The Concept. The same thing is happening in this journalistic field today. In other words, the ecosystem of the journalism industry has been disrupted (Wizard Victor, 2019). In parallel with the search for a way to correct this serious distortion, a new direction in journalism must be adapted, there needs to be a move from merely being a watchdog for society to becoming a guide dog. We are starting to see the mode of operation emerging and is already

being implemented in developed countries.

Currently there has been over 12,595 publications in solution journalism, produced by 1,585 media outlets in 184 countries around the world (storytracker.solutionsjournalism.org). This was reported by Story Tracker, whose website is storytracker.solutionsjournalism.org.

They are a solution journalists' center based in New York City, USA. Distortions in the information ecosystem can be clearly seen in the attitudes and assessments of public journalism in these countries. They first focused on identifying the reasons for the public's lack of confidence in the information. The question of why this was done is answered in many ways, and the ways to improve the situation were sought. One of the main problems they found was poor quality information. To properly tackle a problem, we must first acquire all the information concerning that problem, historical data, past actions taken and their outcomes. Without this vital information, those in power are not properly informed to make the right decisions to solve the pressing issues that plague society. It is through solution driven journalism that this gap can be filled.

With the rise of Fake News, the job of journalism has become even harder. People now must withstand the barrage of misinformation to arrive at the truth. This can sometimes corrupt the truth and make it harder to bring about the solutions we seek. The propagation of Fake News is

essentially an ethical issue. Therefore, we must prioritize quality information, information based on facts and figures to gain back trust of the public.

**M**aterials and methodology. First, do we have any solution to improve the quality of information we produce? This is the question we need to ask. The journalist, who is a unit of society themselves, is directly affected by the issues society faces. They also move according to its rhythm and natural speed. Simply put, based on the definition that a society is a group of people who have something in common (khanaca-demy.org), social development and its quality are determined by the quality of life of the individual, who is a part of the whole. For example, the quality of your life, or how you live, is ultimately the result of personal choices made since you became able to make decisions. What profession to choose, who to associate with, what kind of man or woman to choose as a partner, where to work, when to have children, and how to relate to those around you are all a personal choice. It will be interesting to see what the individual's choice depends on. For example, the choice of wearing water boots or not can be driven by the weather report of your local news show. The choices you make can be driven by people you trust like your local weatherman. Other major choices are just as conscious and unconscious dependent on personal information you have received so far. Following this line of thought, you can conclude that only

someone with quality information can make the right, useful, and realistic choice.

From a journalistic point of view, it is important to understand ethical journalism is built on quality information. This means that a journalist in search of quality journalism always going to be an ethical journalist. There are about 400 codes of ethics ([accountablejournalism.org](http://accountablejournalism.org)) that guide journalists from head to toe. All of them are aimed at improving the quality and accuracy of journalism. The basic principles are:

- Accurate
- Independent
- Impartially
- Humane
- Responsible

([accountablejournalism.org](http://accountablejournalism.org)).

It is the law of the market that quality improves as more people buy into improving information quality and compete to be more accurate. However, the fact that the media market is not being governed by this law and that its quality is deteriorating is a testament to the continuing decline in public confidence in media. Researchers note that trust in media has declined by about 15-30 percent, depending on the channel. According to the research, trust in electronic news is at its lowest, while traditional news is rated slightly higher. This loss of trust means a loss of the natural function of journalism, which can be referred to as an “ecosystem defect.”

Part of the concept I'm going to introduce to you today is the concept of "sustainable journalism." Sustain-

able economic, ecological, and social development has become not only a global trend but also a goal. Such sustainable development policies and solutions are linked to the challenges facing humanity around the world. Voices about ecology and sustainable economic development are heard everywhere. It is time for us to start thinking about sustainable social development, especially the sustainable development of journalism.

Results. What can be done to ensure the sustainable development of journalism? The best way to support sustainable journalism is through Solution Journalism. It has been almost ten years since the term Solution journalism was introduced into Western journalism. It is essentially a concept of solution-oriented and evidence-based journalism ([solutionsjournalism.org](http://solutionsjournalism.org)). At its basis, the concept of “sustainable journalism” is the conversion of the journalist from "watchdog to guide dog" ([localmedia.org/2021](http://localmedia.org/2021)). It is simpler to talk about the problems rather than finding their solution. Talking about the problems has always been the role of journalist. With the growth of social media, this role has been taken over by anyone with a device and internet access. This as caused news to become more negative and opinion oriented. This is one of the reason the work of journalist has become so difficult. There must be a change for journalists to retake their relevance and credibility and I believe the solution to the problem is “Sustainable Journalism.”

In other words, a journalist must responsibly "extracts" information with an aim at preserving the credibility of their profession. We've covered mining companies and artisanal miners hundreds and thousands of times. According to the critical report, "the gold was taken, and the box was thrown away, dug up and thrown away. The river has stopped flowing and the ecosystem has been lost." The situation is similar in today's information industry. Inaccurate, discriminatory, and irresponsible journalism is rampant due to the rush to report events during development.

I strongly believed that solution journalism will provide a way to correct such shortcomings. Solution journalism has become an approach that adds color to traditional journalism and disseminates information. The essence of this direction is the idea of a journalist to cover the issue comprehensively. Comprehensive information should not be inaccurate, irresponsible, or discriminatory.

The general content of solution journalism is to produce positive information that focuses on bright solutions, not black, dark, or negative news (International Journalism Festival, 2018), which is a common picture of today's information flow. Solution-oriented action is the foundation of sustainable journalism and the foundation for sustainable social development. Sustainable development is development that does not harm the environment, preserves the environment, uses its resources wisely, and bequeaths it to future

generations. Social stability means culture, science, history, customs, and human development. The conditions are in place for public health to be safe. Scholars agree that a stable journalism environment will eventually lead to the development of Solution journalism. Solution journalism is a new field of journalism that provides detailed information on how to solve social problems (Solutions Journalism Network LEDE Fellowship Information Session 2022, 2021). It not only highlights the problem, but also provides an evidence-based solution to the problem. Experts in developed countries note that this form of journalism provides recipients with complete and comprehensive information about social ills, as well to improve the responsibility of the informant and change the public's attitude towards the media.

**T**his new direction of journalism not only defines a social problem in a simple way, but also seeks to find a solution to the problem through the example of others and then to motivate its implementation. It traces the same problem as investigative journalism, but the difference is that the questions to ask are different. For example, investigative journalism aims to detect and stop social evil, while solution journalism seeks to make others aware of the successes and causes of problems and to inspire others. One thing to note is that it emphasizes how, not who.

In modern times, journalistic information is out of balance, and the amount of dark information in the daily

news flow is tens of times greater than that of bright information. This can have a negative effect on social psychology and lead to crisis. Maintaining a balance of positive and negative information is a challenge for professionals. What kind of parent is a parent who always emphasizes only the bad their children do, while neglecting to praise their achievements? Will the organization grow or decline if the management of the organization is no different? If it does not reward its employees, and does not see the good and bright side? It is in this context that we are talking about solution journalism. The results of solution journalism are to improve the quality of information, to strengthen the relationship with the recipient of influential content, to restore trust in the media, and to increase the number of readers and revenue. Another important point to note is that honoring, advocating, and praising someone is not solution journalism at all, but a comprehensive statement based on evidence about how and in what way common social problems can or have been resolved.



**The lack of coverage of the issues that occur in the daily lives of citizens, and the fact that the media is filled with obscure information, are the main reasons for the dissatisfaction and annoyance of the recipients. In other words, the media content seems to be “hanging in the air” no matter what. Therefore, the most important task for journalism is to select the most pressing issues for the citizens, and then suggest ways to solve them, to increase the number of articles and programs that require pressure, and to gain the trust of the citizens.**



Conclusion. It is more important for a journalist to “tell the story” accurately rather than to state his or her position. In a joint study by the University of Oxford and the Reuters Institute, 48.0 percent of respondents said they refused to watch the news because it might have a negative effect on their mood, while 37.0 percent said they did not believe the news to be true (digitalnewsreport.org). In countries such as Turkey and Greece, for example, 57.0 percent of respondents said they rejected news because of the predominance of negative and dark news (digitalnewsreport.org). This is due not only to the political turmoil, economic crisis, and failure of the countries, but also to the attitude of the media. In comparison, only 6.0 percent of Japanese people refuse to watch news reports. This is because the Japanese media spend a lot of time and space on brilliant articles and programs about achievements and experiences, as well as highlighting such information on the front page or in a visible position.

It should not be hidden that a similar picture is observed in Mongolian journalism. For example, it is true that the so-called “small” issues in social life have been neglected due to the MNB's over-focusing on general political and economic issues and the commercial TV stations' focus on PR-type information. It is not a sin that newspapers are dominated by big portraits of famous people, advertisements, and interviews with politicians, leaving out the positive and negative aspects of life. In other words, the lack of coverage of the issues that occur in the daily lives of citizens, and the fact that the media is filled with obscure information, are the main reasons for the dissatisfaction and annoyance of the recipients. In other words, the media content seems to be “hanging in the air” no matter what. Therefore, the most important task for journalism is to select the most pressing issues for the citizens, and then suggest ways to solve them, to increase the number of articles and programs that require pressure, and to gain the trust of the citizens.

"Sunlight is the best disinfectant," said Louis Brandeis, a U.S. Supreme Court justice, back in 1913. It has been used in the sense that only light can change it, which is why journalists call themselves watch dogs. Indeed, their role is to identify the wrongdoing and then offer a way out. At a time when journalism is overly concerned with global and macro-level issues, and with little focus on addressing the many facets of life, the development of solution journalism is

an innovative and appropriate way to make journalism more practical and creative.

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### Summary

There is no longer a balance between good and bad news. Reports are more focused on the bad things happening and less on good news about solutions to our many problems. In this article, we introduce the concept solution journalism. We believe the concept is the solution to changing the face of journalism to be sustainable rather than destructive.

Solution journalism is evidence-based, solutions-oriented reporting that focuses on solutions to the social issues rather than the issues themselves. The main concept of solution journalism is changing journalist from mere watchdogs to guide-dogs for society. Journalists practicing solutions journalism uses rigorous evidence-based reporting to bring attention to the solution rather than just reporting on the issue. We believe that solution journalism is the new chapter in this new era of journalism.