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How social entrepreneurs can gain visibility in the media

*Social enterprises would like the news media to cover them as much as possible, but is this realistic? Journalists look for timely stories that are situated within a broader narrative. **Carl Moldestad** and **Aggrey Nyondwa** write that instead of trying to be featured as the central topic of a news article, entrepreneurs must offer their contribution as experts for the stories reporters are already covering.*

Social innovation takes centre stage as a driver of systemic change in today's troubled world. However, to make sure the public knows what social entrepreneurs do, they must secure impactful coverage in global news outlets. A key question is, how can they make this happen? The first thing they need to do is recalibrate expectations around how the media covers social innovation.

Journalists and news editors often argue that coverage is not granted on the basis of an organisation's merit or social value alone. For a story to be picked up, it must be newsworthy, timely, clearly situated within a broader narrative, and capable of resonating with the outlet's audience. Good intentions are not, in and of themselves, a hook. Media outlets exist to serve their audiences with timely and relevant stories that contribute meaningfully to public discourse, and not as PR agents for social enterprises and their founders (no matter the saliency of their work).

"That sounds brutal!" Nicolas Laing, Co-founder of **OneDay Health**, says.

It is a harsh reality indeed, but it's also a massive opportunity for social entrepreneurs to claim a more integral, credible position, where their voice, experience and expertise are sought after to shape and inform public dialogue, policy and... news!

Founders as informed contributors

The classic news pitch can easily spill into PR territory. In today's media business model, the lines between editorial coverage and PR can get blurry. That journalism is not an extension of public relations is therefore an important reminder.

"We're not here to be your PR. We're here to bring news, inspiration and new ideas to the impact community", says Julie Pybus, Editor, Pioneers Post.

Social entrepreneurs are radical problem solvers. They bring a combination of lived experience, intellectual engagement, proximity and cutting-edge solutions to the issues being discussed in media headlines. Their contribution as expert sources can therefore enrich reporting on these complex topics.

They offer the most nuanced perspectives on the challenges they tackle, whether it's about **using data to transform** the world's largest universal health care system, or merging tech with **grassroots infrastructure** to expand healthcare access for millions. Others are pioneering **student finance** to give thousands of young people in Africa a shot at post-secondary education that leads to employment.

The insights of these organisations and their founders are grounded, timely, and can significantly enhance the quality of coverage on social and environmental issues. Besides, these perspectives are often ahead of the policy curve, with real implications for public understanding.

Instead of pitching their organisations as "doing good", founders should position themselves in a way that demonstrates how they are solving a real problem, ideally through data, context and lived experience. This is especially critical in the impact space, where "doing good" is the baseline, not the story.

What makes a good source?

What distinguishes a strong source in coverage of socio-environmental issues is their ability to connect local or operational knowledge with broader system-level trends. For impact leaders, this can be seen in efforts to innovate, organise and mobilise social interventions or movements in response to said system-level trends like a national crackdown on civil rights or crumbling healthcare systems. This level of situated expertise, when coupled with explanatory capabilities, renders social entrepreneurs uniquely placed to contribute, bridging first-hand experience with broader thematic insight.

Founders who offer clear, contextualised insights, rather than polished soundbites, are far more likely to be quoted, profiled or invited back as expert voices. This is particularly relevant in underreported geographies or in emerging areas of policy interest, where expert commentary is often limited to academic or institutional voices.

Reframing the relationship

Media outlets are facing shrinking newsrooms, time constraints and increased pressure to serve niche audiences. In that environment, the quality and relevance of contributions matter more than ever. Social entrepreneurs who approach media as a partner in making sense of issues, not merely as an avenue for visibility, can play a valuable role.

If we want coverage that truly reflects the future of education, healthcare, climate resilience and other global issues, then we need the people building that future to be part of the conversation.

Therefore, the goal of media engagement for impact-first organisations should go beyond reputational rewards and focus more on building trust, offering value, and contributing to a bigger conversation. This way, the media shapes impactful narratives based on credible, real-world expertise, and social entrepreneurs get to be part of the public debate, which makes it easier to influence systems to bring about the radical change that they care about.

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- *This blog post is based on the discussions held during a recent [100x Impact Accelerator's Media Mentors session](#) organised in partnership with Publicize. The roundtable brought together journalists from The Guardian, Pioneers Post, Indian Express, TechCrunch, Sifted, The Next Web and Entrepreneur Magazine.*
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