

Storytelling to connect the dots between animals, the environment & human wellbeing

Internews training for journalists cultivates big-picture thinking about priority challenges to One Health

For over 20 years, Internews has been working with media and research partners in 180 countries to transform the way journalists report on health, climate, and environmental science. We equip journalists with the skills to make sense of rapidly evolving research and turn data into compelling stories that connect to audiences. We build trust in reliable sources and the most trusted channels of information to dispel misinformation. We also support media and civil society organizations (CSOs) to watchdog environmental and health policies, to hold authorities to account and promote action for community wellbeing.

Our work with journalists around the world reveals that the climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and alerts of accelerated movement towards the sixth mass extinction have spurred an unprecedented interest in the One Health approach, which recognizes that the health of humans, animals, plants and the wider environment are all inextricably linked and interdependent.

Informed, powerful journalism on One Health topics can shape global and local agendas and mobilize remedial actions by policy makers and the public alike.

Internews's Earth Journalism Network and Health Journalism Network work in synergy to promote quality reportage and storytelling of One Health.

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I recently attended an EJN webinar on Lassa Fever and Nipah Virus. I learnt a lot about the Lassa Fever in Liberia, including the reasons for the frequent outbreaks of this zoonotic disease. The webinar was a very good learning opportunity for journalists like me.

- Ojuku Silver-tongue Kangar, Jr, Liberian journalist

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The path to One Health is beset with conflicting interests and so requires journalists to investigate how commercial interests such as mining companies and their activities can adversely affect the health of communities in the neighborhood. Journalists also need to be able to identify and call out 'greenwashing' attempts by extractive businesses that harm the environment.



"One Health is a collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach – working at the local, regional, national, and global levels – with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment." (CDC)

Internews e-courses, webinars and toolkits for journalists include:

[A Journalist's Guide to Covering and Implementing the One Health Approach in Reporting](#)

[From animals to humans: An online course to report on zoonotic diseases and their environmental origins](#)

[Two Viral Zoonotic Diseases Journalists Should Know About: A Webinar on Lassa Fever and Nipah Virus](#)

[One-Health Toolkit: Reporting on Monkeypox](#)

[Using data to investigate zoonotic diseases: A tutorial for journalists](#)

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Quality One Health stories can make abstract data and information on topics such as climate science or zoonotic diseases relatable to audiences by narrating real life events with human characters. They can help audiences critically evaluate information, shape their values, and take action at the community level. Journalists can thus explore and make visible the linkages between diverse human activities and planetary health.

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Journalism for One Health: the Internews Approach

Widening the accountability for health beyond the narrow clinical confines of the health sector to encompass diverse domains such as climate science, wildlife trade, deforestation or urban planning offers exciting, but also uncharted thematic areas for journalists. Our approach to supporting journalists to produce One Health stories of high quality is based on six broad principles:



Respect diversity

An understanding of One Health begins with recognizing the intrinsic value of living beings in all their diversity. One Health is an economic, labour, race, class, and justice issue. One Health stories need to explore the concerns opportunities and rights within the planetary ecology of animals, humans, and natural resources. We believe also there is a duty to fore-front rarely heard community voices and environments under threat.



Promote scientific literacy

Tracking deforestation, outbreaks of infectious diseases, or how soaring temperatures are affecting the health of the elderly all underscore the need for a strong foundation in science and data journalism. Journalists need to be able to communicate where the weight of the evidence lies. For instance, journalists need to not only grasp scientific data, but interpret the evidence behind the benefits versus harms of how leaders respond to climate change.



Focus on the present

The consequences of climate change in the form of pandemics, flooding, drought, loss of habitats, food insecurity and migration of humans and animals are already self-evident. By framing climate change as an immediate, intersectional issue whose consequences on health are already being felt, journalists can catalyse the decisions people make in responding to it.



Create and sustain information exchange between scientists and policymakers

The media can potentially work as the major conduit for One Health conversations between scientists (medical doctors, veterinarians, agronomists, etc.), governments and the public, making visible the crucial evidence that communities can use to put pressure on governments to take action.



Dispel mis- and disinformation

Conspiracy theories and mis- and disinformation can erode critical thinking. As a result, audiences may not grasp the severity of One Health challenges. By generating several evidence-based stories on One Health, journalists can replace fiction with fact.



Highlight what's working

Telling the stories of pandemic preparedness, climate change mitigation and adaptation, responsible wildlife management and biodiversity conservation; of how people are working together across disciplines and sectors towards One Health can motivate audiences and promote the cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches across various stakeholders.

Harnessing expertise in climate, environmental and health journalism, Internews is uniquely placed to guide journalists to advance a variety of stories that connect the dots between habitat, human and animal health.

For more information, email: info.ejn@internews.org or health-journalism-network@internews.org