



Inclusion through media

Training module 2





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Introduction

The good practices and feedback collected during the media literacy workshops of the Media Against Hate Campaign all pointed to **inclusion** as one of the best strategies to prevent hate speech and discrimination.

This training module is based on the three international media literacy workshops that took place in 2017 (in Austria, Poland and Germany), organised by CMFE and COMMIT. The workshops addressed the topics of: Inclusive approaches to storytelling; freedom of expression and the respect of human rights - where are the boundaries and what is hate speech?; Creating hate-free media environments for young people - platforms and literacy skills.

The following resources and case studies highlight the role and responsibilities of media, civil society and institutions in enabling (or hindering) empowerment and participation of all members of society. We have identified 5 strands linked to the principle of inclusion: 1. Direct participation, 2. Gender equality, 3. Storytelling, 4. Language, 5. Audience interaction.

1. Direct participation

A. Community Media

Not-for-profit community radios and TVs are playing an important role in providing media literacy skills to people of different backgrounds and ages and to promote projects countering discrimination. Community media share the concern of providing representation to social groups that are underserved, marginalized, neglected, or misrepresented by “mainstream” media, from the local up to the international level.

Direct participation is one of the key principles:

- the right to communicate is promoted through direct access to training, production and distribution facilities;
- programs are aimed at entertainment, education and development of the listeners/producers;
- the organizational structures of community radio and TV stations allow their listeners significant influence over the station's policies and administration but guarantee independence from government, commercial, or religious institutions and political parties;
- minorities and marginalized groups, including producers with a refugee or migrant background, have been active in community media since the origins of many such media projects, promoting cultural and linguistic diversity;
- local, cultural productions and local heritage play an important role and improve social and political participation of local communities;
- intercultural and multilingual program formats support stronger cooperation between different sub-groups.

Community media should thus be considered for their community development functions: *“these include the quality and the management of volunteers, the sector’s training capacity and the nature of various networks of which community broadcasting is a part”* (van Vuuren). Access of diverse groups to the media is important because small-scale stations, with their local outreach, can be tools that allow these communities to speak for themselves and contribute to public debate by discussing issues that are relevant to them through their own channels of communication – supported by media literacy and ethical training.

Some case studies include:

- **Salam Show** on community radio ARA in Luxembourg is a weekly program in Arabic and English for newcomers and locals, that aims to bridge the gap between different cultures.
- **Common Voices** on community radio Corax in Halle, Germany, is a multilingual radio show made by refugees and migrants in English, German, Persian, Arabic and French.
- **Indimaj** (“Integration” in Arabic) is a monthly magazine on Okto community TV in Vienna, Austria, presenting stories and diverse topics such as poetry, arts, films, cuisine, integration, cultural diversity, politics or music from the perspective of newcomers, in particular refugees.

Additional case studies can be found in the Council of Europe report [Spaces of Inclusion](#).

B. Civil society

Several civil society organizations and NGOs support direct participation in media production, through training activities and creative initiatives. Some case studies include:

- the NGO [Maks](#) in Brussels uses digital story projects to work with young people with a migrant background around various topics, including radicalization and social cohesion based on interreligious contacts.
- the project [Solomon](#) in Athens believes that social inclusion is also “being an immigrant that does not write about migration issues” and promotes the [Inclumedia Lab](#), connecting tandems of im/migrants who are willing to become journalists or used to work as journalists in their home countries with local students of journalism.
- the Digital Opportunities Foundation (Stiftung Digitale Chancen – SDC) in Germany honors projects, initiatives and people that make best use of social media for their social and or cultural engagement with the “[Smart Hero Award](#)”.

C. Media organisations

Professional media organizations and associations are also increasingly committed to facilitating access to media production and management. Some good practice examples include:

- [Join Media](#) is an Austrian initiative that tries to support refugee/newcomer journalists and put them in contact with Austrian media.
- the [Refugee Journalism Project](#) aims to connect its participants with established UK-based journalists through mentoring.
- [Neue Deutsche Medienmacher](#) in Germany provides a database of both diversified sources and diverse media professionals, based on the principle that “*good journalism is always diverse*”.

2. Gender equality

Participation alone is not a guarantee of access to equal opportunities, and specific measures are needed in particular to support women journalists and producers, as well as members of LGBTQ communities.

A. Protection

Female journalists often have to face different forms of hate and violence than men: threats of rape or sexual and abusive comments are gender-based and hit women more often.

As a reaction to these specific circumstances, the European Center for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) has launched the [Women's Reporting Point](#), an alarm center for female media workers, where they can inform the Center about attacks against them and seek help or advice.

B. Representation

To fight clichéd representations of violence against women and help people recognize its many different – often invisible – forms, [Scottish Women's Aid](#) and [Zero Tolerance](#) charities launched [One Thousand Words](#), a project offering free-to-use images that realistically depict domestic abuse and coercive control. They have already been used by various national and local papers, as well as online publications. The project aims to help more women who are experiencing, or have experienced, domestic abuse see themselves reflected in the photos and feel empowered to seek help.

Media coverage of LGBTQ issues (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) has moved toward more fully realized representations, not only of the diversity of the LGBTQ community, but also of LGBTQ people's lives, their families, and their fundamental inclusion in the fabric of societies. More than ever, LGBTQ people's stories need to be told in the same way as others — with fairness, integrity, and respect. The [GLAAD's Media Reference Guide](#), now in its tenth edition, offers tools that journalists can use to tell LGBTQ people's stories through fair, accurate, and inclusive reporting.

C. Policies

Also community media have an obligation to facilitate women's involvement at all levels of decision-making and programming, ensure that women's voices and concerns are part of the daily news agenda, ensure that women are portrayed positively as active members of society and support women acquire the technical skills and confidence to control their communications. Stations also have an obligation to implement and enforce an ethical policy that includes respect for women and equality as one of its cornerstones. The [Gender Policy for Community Radio](#) is one of the tools that should be part of station by-laws and ethical policies.

3. Storytelling

Regardless of who is behind the microphone, the pen or the camera, we can all learn creative approaches to include under-represented voices and stories.

A. Training

Training is a key component to facilitate inclusive reporting and storytelling and should ideally start as soon as possible.

- [Everybody In](#) is practical guide aimed at journalism students to help them make sure their reporting includes the whole audience. With introductions by respected journalists setting out their personal experiences of difference - from race, gender and class to sexuality, age and regionalism - the book offers useful suggestions to adopt inclusive thinking in storytelling.
- Mukti Jain Campion from [Culture Wise](#) delivers "Inspiring Creativity From Diversity" trainings to build curiosity about who's missing/mis-represented in the mainstream media and look for opportunities to tell stories that will surprise and challenge audiences. Mukti Jain Campion uses her copyright method of the seven **is** (incidental / inclusive / inspirational / identity / illuminating / iconoclastic / interconnected) to inspire producers to go wider and deeper in drawing original perspectives and less-heard voices into the content they produce.
- Training in community media involves communities and individuals who often are not represented by the mainstream media (ethnic, cultural or social minorities, immigrants, people with specific

needs, specific age groups) and who require specific trainings to acquire the skills needed for storytelling. One example of these specific training formats is the on-line tool **S.M.A.R.T.** created by experienced community radio trainers for community use and available in five languages.

B. Representation

Creating an inclusive culture takes both commitment and action. Images chosen to illustrate stories have a direct impact on whether the public feels included or not. Big stock photo sites now offer group photos with the obligatory one or two people of color, but how often do you see a doctor, or dancer, or banker who's plus size or has a disability? This narrow ideal affects us. Among many others, a recent study found that 70% of teen girls agreed that magazines strongly influenced what they thought was the ideal body type. The more we see unrealistic, idealized people in advertising and the media, the more it makes us doubt the worth of our own bodies, skin colors, looks and orientations... Just as a diverse mix of voices leads to better discussions for everyone, using culturally diverse stock photos can help better represent the world we live in, as for example **Representation matters**.

4. Language

European societies are characterized by great linguistic diversity and several provisions protect the use of regional and minority languages. Multilinguism is even more relevant in the context of increased migration flows, as concerns basic human rights of freedom of expression and information. Language used by media directly impacts inclusion (or exclusion), both for members of the audience as well as for potential producers.

A. Media consumption

Content in multiple languages is available online, but rarely covers local news or quality information. To facilitate active participation, in particular of newly arrived communities, access to relevant information in a language that can be understood is a basic requirement. Community broadcasters fill this gap by giving space to native languages of minorities and migrants and

promoting multilingual productions. Public service broadcasters are also launching initiatives to share relevant information and news in the mother tongue of refugee communities.

■ **New Life in Vienna** on community radio Orange in Vienna, Austria, is a multilingual information program in Arabic, Dari, Somali, English and German providing listeners with practical tips and useful information about everyday life in Vienna and covering topics such as mobility, language courses, access to health care, how to live on a budget, tips on affordable accommodation and leisure activities. There are 17 community broadcasters in Austria (radios and TVs) broadcasting in a total of 41 different languages.

■ **WDRforyou** by German public service broadcaster WDR is an online offering for refugees providing information, reports and entertainment in English, German, Arabic and Farsi.

B. Media production

Whereas insufficient language competences are one of the main obstacles to the exercise of a media profession for refugees and migrants, opportunities to work as volunteer producers are offered by community broadcasters. Multilingual training concepts have been developed to ensure that the necessary journalistic skills and guidelines can be taught to a broad audience.

■ **Inter.Media** is an Intercultural Media Training Handbook for community media trainers and editors in Europe, available in English, **German** and **Turkish**. The handbook is the outcome of a two-year process of discussion and development on the topic of “intercultural dialogue”. It outlines a practical basis for journalistic training and workshops that can be offered to those active in non-commercial community media.

■ **Lust auf Sprachen** is an Austrian Toolkit for community radios with ‘recipies’ for the use of multiple languages on air – in radio dramas, as well as in news and reports. The materials and creative ideas can also be used in schools and for adult education courses.

5. Audience interaction

Keeping discussion forums free from hate is one of the biggest challenges for journalists and media organizations and is a decisive factor in determining who feels included and who is excluded from a debate.

Investing in online audience moderation is important not only to inform, educate and provide access to opinions and technology in a participative way, but especially to engage with the ‘silent’ audience.

The Portuguese daily newspaper **Publico** has a system for moderation of online comments that also involves readers as ‘reader-moderators’. Research findings by Prof. Marlis Prinzing on online news discussions in Germany confirmed this to be an effective strategy. A dialogue-oriented attitude and a clear openness for discussion flourish when online communities feel they are taken seriously. Attitudes and profiles of user-commentators were examined and this also raised the question of whether “*such kinds of community-building should become a core function of professional journalism*”. Apparently, a constructive debate is possible—and can potentially enhance social responsibility and common values.

A **study** by the Centre for Power, Media and Communications at Roskilde University, Copenhagen found that negative conclusions drawn about social media interactions are often based on marginal examples, involving divisive topics. When regular online debate was examined, over the period of one week, the study found that Internet debate is mostly neutral and harmless. The researchers believe that “*the community managers from established online media could act as moderators of online debate, by asking more positive questions and not posing confrontational questions at the outset. The media itself could even opt-in to the conversation in a constructive way, not just moderate by deleting comments*”.

Another strategy has been tested in Norway, where NRKbeta, a media and technology subsidiary of public broadcaster NRK, has requires viewers to correctly answer three questions about articles before being able to comment on them.

Community radios have experience with open-microphone formats where listeners phone in and participate. To keep an open debate and civil dialogue, the ‘rules’ are clearly set out by the moderators at the onset and the discussion is regularly reframed to make sure it stays on topic.