

Tuning in to Diversity 2010

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Tuning in to Diversity 2010 Conference Budapest, 26 February 2010 – Afternoon session

“How to build a diversity database, how to use it” workshop for NGOs and PSBs/mainstream media representatives

Starting the discussion from examples of existing diversity databases, NGOs representatives will discuss the most effective ways to build a diversity database for the media, PSBs/mainstream media professionals will discuss the best ways to use it.

Report by Karim Metref (Free lance journalist, Italy)

Presentation:

The agreement between Perslink, the Dutch database on media and diversity, and the national PSBs is only on paper or is put into practice? How is possible to keep a database really up to date? And does it make still sense to have a database if we can just “google” anything?... *By Giovanni Massaro (Mira Media, the Netherlands)*

Chair: Pavla Redlova (People in Need, Czech Republic)

After the introduction of the aims of the workshop by Pavla Redlova, Giovanni Massaro from Mira Media presented Perslink Database. PersLink is a privately managed Internet-database for journalists and program makers; the initiative for this database came from Mira Media in cooperation with a department of the Dutch Public Broadcast organization that was dealing with diversity and gender (Bureau beeldvorming en diversiteit). The database can be accessed by www.perslink.nl (see also the PowerPoint presentation in this section)

Giovanni presented the main objectives of Perslink database: trying to get journalists and program makers in contact with the right network, organization or person; Perslink also focuses on the visibility of experts with a non-Dutch background in the media together with that of female experts, so that opinions and views from all population groups can be heard evenly in the media.

But he also illustrated the limits of the database: being that generally experienced journalist use their own contacts, difficulty to keep the database updated, difficulty to convince potential users about its utility, need to change a culture and a mentality that sees members of minorities only speaking about their own problems...

Yorinde Vijverberg (Dutch Public Broadcaster) presented a similar diversity database but built for the Dutch news show NOVA. This model is based on direct relation with colleagues. In order to establish the relationship between program-makers and experts, the experts were invited for a screen-test.

After the two presentations, the group exchanged opinions and points of view about this subject. Opportunity to create or not a diversity database. Why? And if yes, for whom? How to let journalists use it?

The shared impression is that the difficulties in such a project are not only the technical and material ones (to build the database) but mainly the relational difficulties following its realization. How to let journalists use it? Some suggestion were made: organize a campaign, provide tutorials, invest in the relations, provide training for young journalists...

One of the possible ways identified by some participants to change the culture of the journalists was to work with journalists schools and teach students the importance of a diversity network and the ways to establish this network, making use of databases, but also investing in own contacts.

It emerged from the discussion whatever that working to bring more diversity in the media is not an easy work. It needs long term projects, education projects, technical tools, relationship with civil society and journalism....