

Tuning in to Diversity 2010

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

“Monitoring media coverage” workshop for NGOs representatives and researchers

NGOs and researchers will join to discuss short term and long term perspectives of media monitoring. Why do you monitor the media? Which media are better: local or national, liberal or conservative? Which monitoring techniques do you use? When do you do media monitoring: on a stable basis or in times of crisis?

Report by Marian Chiriac (Divers Weekly Magazine, Romania)

Presentations:

The Media Watch project by Bashy Quraishy (Denmark)

Media monitoring by Citizen, democracy and Responsibility NGO – by Lubica Trginova, Slovakia (a PowerPoint file of the presentation is published in this section)

Chair: Marcello Maneri (University of Milano, Italy)

Bashy Quaraishy presents the Media Watch project. He wants to stress why media monitoring is important for NGOs and civic organizations. Shows two clippings from British press about a crime in Berlin involving Turkish people. Journalists mention the nationality of the criminals and also make connections between their ethnicity and Islam. “Journalists not only reported, but they also created agenda by representing the topic in an unprofessional way”.

Another example from the media is a cartoon in which a Somali man is depicted in his traditional clothes, but when related to his religion the representation is of the Sharia, a man carrying a fire-gun.

Quotes a report, saying that 67 percent of reports about minorities is negative. In order to counter this behaviour, Media Watch is alerting international organizations, local authorities but also is trying to get in contact with the journalists and, in a very polite but clear way, tries to explain them why they are wrong in their reports.

Then, he presents a list of activities an NGO should do in order to proper counter-act poor media reports. Among recommendations: express your point of view in a clear and polite way; never forget to compliment the journalist; try to stay connected, create networks...

Mustafa Hussein, University professor from Denmark presents some results of a media monitoring from Denmark showing that the number of articles related to “burqa” is much more numerous than those about crisis in Denmark

Lubica Trginova (Slovakia) presents a case report about “Monitoring media in the field of anti-discrimination”. Important findings:

- Media follow perceptions of discrimination in public affirming and reproducing prejudice and stereotypes
- Most attention is paid to issues of race/ethnicity, very little is paid to discrimination on grounds of age
- gender and multiple discrimination topics are absent
- antidiscrimination law or human right were never mentioned
- language used by media is insensitive

- In Slovak language a generic masculine is used to talk about women which is perceived as gender ignorance
- Public authorities do not put discrimination in context of human rights, constitution, anti-discrimination laws
- The presentation ends with media standards for correct informing on discrimination
- www.diskriminacia.sk

Questions from participants

Question: When monitoring the media: how do you define minority? Are you looking for specific words, for images?

Answer: we use key words (race women, name of ethnic minorities, gay, lesbian, age, disability etc), try to monitor most relevant papers/journals. Make first a quantitative analysis.

Another answer from Bashy. First of all we collect the information on a specific period of time. In the same time, we are looking for key words useful in our research. Then he presents the case of a US journal who wrote – wrongly – that honour killings came from the Middle East,

Bashy: networking is also very important!

Marcello Maneri presents the case of a Italian journalist who wrote a very offensive article against Romanians. Another journalist tried to call for a public movement against his colleague, but not too many people supported the initiative.

Participant from Greece:

Journalist should have always in mind that they also are using stereotypes and media monitoring remember them this situation.

NGOs have to monitor racism cases but also have to tell some journalists that they are making a good job, and in this way other journalists should follow their examples. NGOs have to monitor, to value and to say what is wrong and what is bad. But many times it is better to offer publicly good examples.

Media monitoring should also focus not only on mainstream media but also on small websites, publication of different organizations, blogs because they have also an important voice, at least on a particular audience.

Marcello Maneri: there is a US-based organization which regularly reports about under-reported issues, which mainstream media missed.

Razvan Martin, Media Monitoring Agency (Romania): We need new ideas, from sociology, about monitoring methodology. Let's stay in contact in order to exchange ideas on this issue.

Marcello Maneri: Methodology depends on the final results you expect to find/prove, main aims of your monitoring and research. You should also take care of different aspects: labelling, which are main voices from reports; when monitoring, the more complex are your questions, the less reliable are your findings

Participant from Greece: First of all, you should know exactly how many people and how much time you have for your research. Only after, you should establish your methodology.

Bashy: One also has to be careful when making comparison. It is better to compare the way in which media is depicting business community and minority community than to compare media community and a majority issue.

Marcello Maneri: Also we miss an historical perspective on different issues. For example, it would be very interesting to see how Hungarian media from communist time wrote about Roma.

Participants agree to set up a platform, a data base where everybody should put her/his research, ask questions, share information on issues related to media monitoring.