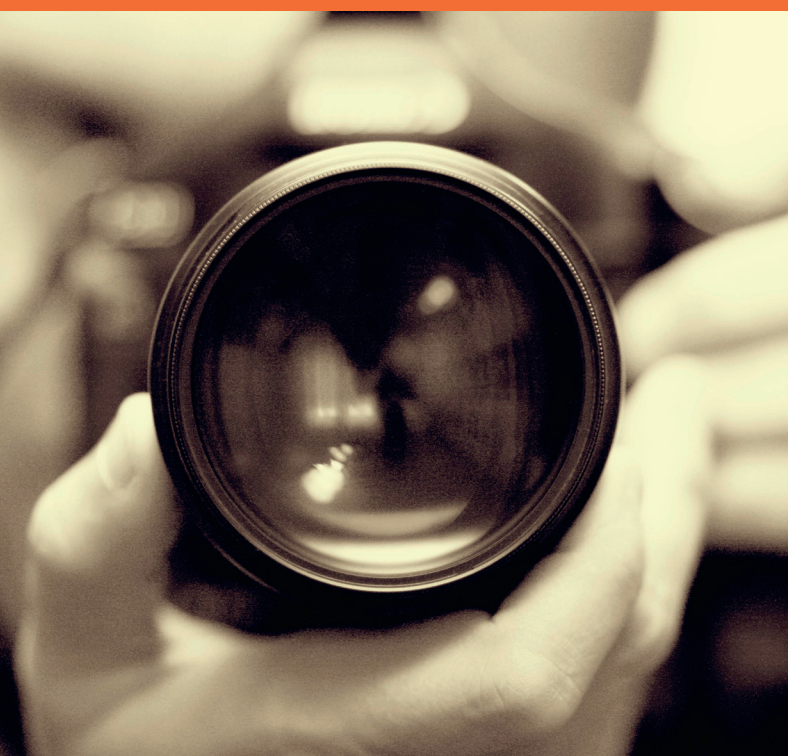


# Spaces of Inclusion - An explorative study on needs of refugees and migrants in the domain of media communication and on responses by community media



Council of Europe report  
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A Council of Europe report  
prepared by COMMIT – Community Media Institute  
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## About the authors

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COMMIT – Community Media Institute is based in Austria and works in the field of media training and research. COMMIT was commissioned by the Information Society Department of Council of Europe Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law to realize this study. The Study consist of three sections which have been delivered by different experts and a common section of Conclusions and recommendations. The authors are (following the structure of the report):

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## Table of content

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Introduction.....	5
Section I: Community Media in Europe – an overview.....	7
Section II: Study based on interviews with refugees .....	14
Section III: The right to have a voice – portraits of community media productions by migrants and refugees.....	27
Executive summary and recommendations:.....	46
Bibliography.....	49

## Introduction

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Due to conflicts and crises in the Middle East, most prominently the ongoing war in Syria, an increasing number of European countries has been faced with the arrival of bigger numbers of refugees and migrants since 2015. Whereas the media coverage of the 'refugee crisis' and the ways in which refugees are portrayed have been in the focus of a range of academic studies and public debates, media practices, communication needs and possibilities of participation and self-representation of recently arrived migrants and refugees have been rather neglected.

Addressing precisely these questions, this explorative study aims at providing an overview of key issues that will deliver first indications on how to develop adequate responses. In focusing on the role and the potential of local initiatives and more specifically of community media, the study is less concerned with private or interpersonal communication via mobile devices than with the possibility for migrants and refugees to access spaces of wider communication in order to exercise their right to freedom of expression, including the right to information.

Media as facilitators of public communication and discourse are widely viewed as key tool to managing the increasing diversity in society and promoting inclusion. This role cannot be fulfilled, however, when whole segments of the population, such as the recently arrived and often also migrants with significant length of residence – who may still encounter similar barriers in their media practices – are excluded from participation in media communication. In this context, inclusion means the recognition of refugees and migrants as relevant and respected parts of the audience with specific interests and needs (e.g. concerning information about rights, resources and duties) as well as the possibility to develop a voice that can be heard.

What role do media in general and community media in particular play for (recently arrived) refugees and migrants in response to their particular needs and with regard to their human right to freedom of expression, which includes the right to information? This is the research question which the authors of this explorative study set out to respond, focusing in particular on the following aspects:

- (1) What role do different media, formats and genres play in the daily routines of recently arrived refugees and migrants?
- (2) In how far do offers correspond to needs, expectations or desires?
- (3) What possibilities of participation and self-representation can be made use of and in how far do these possibilities correspond to the needs, expectations and desires regarding the freedom of expression/right to information?
- (4) What barriers do refugees and migrants meet when they want to make use of their possibilities for media participation and self-representation?

(5) In how far does active participation in community media or similar media projects facilitate coping with the challenges of the new environment?

These questions will be addressed through the method of qualitative or, more precisely ethnographic interviewing. Ethnographic research is not oriented towards generating representative 'facts', but rather towards uncovering the complexity of social life. This study sets out to investigate practices, experiences, and orientations of a 'group' of people who arrived as 'refugees' in Europe. The debates about this and other related labels within academia, the media, and – most importantly – among those who come to bear these labels, suggest that they do not correspond to a neutral reality but that they imply terminological choices that construct and select certain realities.

Leaving aside the evaluative implications of certain terms, the evocation of 'groupness' of a number of people through a label, in itself is problematic. This is because it suggests common practices, experiences, and orientations that are not always there. Furthermore, the boundaries of the category of 'refugee' are rather unclear under societal and biographical aspects: there are, e.g., questions of legitimacy (who is perceived to be 'entitled' to call themselves a 'refugee?'), of situational relevance (is being a 'refugee' relevant to what kind of TV program a person prefers?), of identification (does every 'refugee' relate to the term in the same way?) and of durability (does one ever stop being a 'refugee?'). As a first measure to address this terminological challenge, this study uses the broader label 'refugees and migrants'.

This broader label still refers to a highly diverse group – considering the many different life trajectories that may lead to someone being attributed the label of 'refugee' or 'migrant'. For that reason, an explorative, qualitative approach was chosen that allows addressing the research questions in their complexity. The research questions target individual experiences of and the values attributed to media (practices) by the participants. While the method of qualitative interviewing does not offer comprehensive insight into actual practices by the participants – data which is very difficult to access – it facilitates an understanding of how the participants make sense of their media experiences. This, in turn, allows the authors to draw certain conclusions about the role played by media and community media in particular for newly arrived refugees and migrants.

## Section I: Community Media in Europe – an overview

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(Salvatore Scifo, Bournemouth University, UK)

### 1. Community Media and the European institutions

The Council of Europe (CoE) has over the last four decades, jointly with other supra-national institutions such as UNESCO and the European Parliament, played a key role in the promotion of a more diverse media landscape in Europe and in the rest of the world. The contribution of bottom-up organised community media in adding diversity to the local media landscape and preserving identities has been emphasised consistently and keeps gaining acknowledgment.

Already starting from 1973, at a time when local radio and TV stations were spreading across Western Europe,<sup>1</sup> the CoE commissioned studies to discuss the role of media in a more democratic society. Those studies analysed decentralised and ‘access’ projects by public broadcasters as well as community-based initiatives, their democratic credentials and financial challenges in order to share such information among European policymakers and practitioners. Their findings were later echoed in the reports of the MacBride Commission,<sup>2</sup> that described community-based media as a crucial tool, especially for minority groups, for the preservation of local cultures and identities and thus of relevance within a wider human rights context. The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers’ Declaration on freedom of expression and information of 29 April 1982 stated that “the existence of a wide variety of independent and autonomous media” could help to reflect “the diversity of ideas and opinions and broaden exercise of the freedom of expression and information”.<sup>3</sup>

More recently, the importance of community media as a sign of diversity of national media systems was confirmed in two documents, adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe respectively. The *Resolution on Community Media in Europe*, adopted by the European Parliament on 25 September 2008,<sup>4</sup> was the successful outcome of work started by the Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE) with the Committee on Culture and Education of the Parliament. This co-operation led to the commission of the study *The State of Community Media in Europe* in March 2007.<sup>5</sup> While resolutions of the European Parliament are not binding for EU Member States, this instrument is a landmark policy reference for the sector, as it acknowledges the need for a third tier of broadcasting alongside public and commercial media.

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<sup>1</sup> Beaud, P. (1980) *Community Media? Local Radio, Television and Audiovisual Animation Experiments in Europe*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO (1978) *Interim Report on Communication Problems in Modern Society*. International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems. Paris: UNESCO

<sup>3</sup> Council of Europe (1982) *Declaration on the Freedom of Expression and Information*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

<sup>4</sup> European Parliament (2008) *Resolution of 25 September 2008 on Community Media in Europe (2008/2011(INI))*. Brussels: European Parliament.

<sup>5</sup> European Parliament (2007) *The State of Community Media in the European Union*. Brussels: European Parliament.



The second important standard-setting instrument was developed at the Council of Europe, also with the involvement of CMFE. The contribution of community media to pluralism, diversity and dialogue was emphasised in the 2007 *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on Media Pluralism and Diversity in the Media*.<sup>6</sup> In November 2007, CMFE started contributing directly to the work of the Group of Specialists on Media Diversity (MC-S-MD) of the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC), where it was admitted as an observer. Gradually increasing its presence and credibility, in 2009 CMFE was admitted as observer also to the Steering Committee on the Media and new Communications Services (CDMC), the Group of Specialists on New Media (NC-NM), and it was granted participatory status at the Council of Europe as from 29 December 2010 as part of the International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO) conference.

Participation in these committees has been important to inform relevant stakeholders of what community media are about. Indeed, CMFE's participation led the MC-S-MD to commission a study to a leading scholar in the field, Peter Lewis. *The contribution of community media to social cohesion*,<sup>7</sup> has become a reference resource for related discussions at the Council of Europe. It further contributed to the adoption of the *Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Role of Community Media in promoting Social Cohesion and Inter-Cultural dialogue* in 2009.<sup>8</sup> In connection with previous recommendations of UNESCO, the European Parliament, the OSCE and the Council of Europe itself, the Declaration recognises the social value of community media and encourages states to examine the possibility of committing funds at national, regional and local level to support the sector, to engage in studies of good practices in community media and in the exchange of good practices, to facilitate capacity building and training of community media staff, and to promote the media's contribution to intercultural dialogue.

The European Commission also began paying attention to community media as an integral part of a truly pluralistic media landscape. According to the study *Indicators of Media Pluralism* which was commissioned by the European Commission in 2009, "...community media play an especially important role (...) because they underpin cultural alternatives which media diversity is supposed to deliver (...) how this potential is used and exercised in practice will depend heavily on government policies on regulation, subsidies and control".<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Defining Community Media

Any effort to define community media should start with how those who produce such media content define themselves. According to *The Community Radio Charter for Europe*,<sup>10</sup> adopted in 1994 by the European branch of the World Association of Community

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<sup>6</sup> Council of Europe (2007) *Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)2 of the Committee of Ministers to Members States on Media Pluralism and Diversity of Media Content*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis, P.M. (2008) *Promoting Social Cohesion. The role of Community Media*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

<sup>8</sup> Council of Europe (2009) *Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Role of Community Media in Promoting Social Cohesion and Intercultural Dialogue*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

<sup>9</sup> European Commission (2009) *Indicators for Media Pluralism in the Member States. Towards a Risk-based Approach*. Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit.

<sup>10</sup> AMARC Europe (1994) *The Community Radio Charter for Europe*. Retrieved from <http://www.amarceurope.eu/the-community-radio-charter-for-europe/>

Broadcasters (known by its French acronym AMARC, *Association Mondiale des Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires*) community radio should try to promote the right to communicate and provide access to training, production and distribution facilities that lead to programmes for the benefit, entertainment, education and development of its listeners. The stations should be established as not-for-profit organisations and should ensure their independence by being financed from a variety of sources. They should further be managed by a body that is representative of the local geographical communities or of the communities of interest that are being served. Finally, in determining their programme policy, community media should be editorially independent of government, commercial, or religious institutions and political parties, and provide the right of access to minorities and marginalised groups, thereby promoting and protecting cultural and linguistic diversity.

This description, based on practices of community broadcasters across Europe from the 1970s to the 2000s, attempts to establish community radio as *different* from mainstream broadcasting. It recalls the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of the United Nations General Assembly of 1948 and, explicitly, affirms communication as a fundamental human right<sup>11</sup>: it asserts not only the ‘access’ or the right to reply in public and commercial broadcasting, but also the possibility of having one’s own tool to exercise this right, independent from state institutions and commercial interests. The Charter also emphasises the use of media training for the development of its listeners/producers that comprise groups marginalised and neglected by mainstream media, including ethnic minorities.

Bruce Girard, a community media scholar and an important contributor to the campaigns that have promoted the idea of communication as a fundamental human right, compiled the anthology of community radio initiatives, *A Passion for Radio*, in 1992. There he argues that community radio is,

*(...) a type of radio made to serve people; radio that encourages expression and participation and that values local culture. Its purpose is to give a voice to those without voices, the marginalised groups and to communities far from large urban centres, where the population is too small to attract commercial or large-scale state radio.*<sup>12</sup>

The dual role of the community as listener and as producer is also emphasised by Frances Berrigan, a community media consultant for UNESCO who had edited several reports by the end of the 1970s, including one of the first comparative research studies in the field.<sup>13</sup> In reviewing the use of community media for development, she describes the sector as:

*(...) intended to be based on more than assumed audience needs and interests. Community media are adaptations of media for use by the community, for whatever the community decides. (...) They are media in*

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations (1948) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. New York: United Nations.

<sup>12</sup> Girard, B. (1992) *A Passion for Radio. Radio, Waves and Community*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, p.xi.

<sup>13</sup> Berrigan, F. (1977) *Access: Some Western Models of Community Media*, Paris: UNESCO

*which the community participates, as planners, producers, performers. They are the means of expression of the community, rather than for the community.*<sup>14</sup>

What emerges from these definitions other than a general and admirable commitment to letting a thousand voices thrive? Perhaps most clearly, it is concern about the role of the targeted community in the radio production process. The target community is afforded a dual role as listener and as producer so that it gains editorial control over the broadcast content. Thus, the organisational structure of a community radio station has to allow its listeners significant influence over the station's policies and administration. Advertising is permitted as long as it contributes only to covering the running costs, without being envisaged as a source of pure profit. The transmission footprint of the station can vary, depending on local specifications. Community media share the concern of providing representation to social groups that are under-served, marginalised, neglected, or misrepresented by mainstream media, from the local up to the international level. While this has in the past applied mainly to other social and ethnic minority groups, they have become relevant again during recent refugee crises, as they have shown how locally based and community-owned media can contribute to dialogue, inclusion and a more socially representative media landscape. The following sections of this study will discuss this in more detail.

It is relevant here to point briefly also to the role that a more diverse media system can play in the context of humanitarian crises (for further information on the media coverage of the 'refugee crisis', see CoE's 2017 report authored by Georgiou and Zaborowski).<sup>15</sup> Local initiatives such as the Radio for Refugees project run in 2005 by Manchester's Radio Regen, have played a very important role at the local level in supporting integration efforts, promoting social cohesion and contributing to the professional development and self-confidence of refugees. This is illustrated by the following quote from the Project Manager:

*... self-confidence and a degree of independence... how do you make someone independent? ... it's by gradually giving them control over the process and giving them the space to experiment and so now on a Wednesday morning you have Joyce getting there at 9 -9.30, she's already taken the kids to the childminder, she jumps on the Internet starts looking for news, reads her emails. (...), Ameneh's gone off and done an interview at Zion Arts Centre, caught the bus by herself, comes back and does the editing. And suppose if you contrast that to the first couple of weeks when you saw them come into the room and Ameneh had been here for 2 or 3 years and hadn't caught a bus, Joyce had never used a computer, she wanted me to go to the nursery with her cos she was worried they wouldn't*

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<sup>14</sup> Berrigan, F. (1979) *Community Communications: the Role of Community in Media Development*, Paris: UNESCO, p.8.

<sup>15</sup> Georgiou, M. and Zaborowski, R. (2017) *Media coverage of the "refugee crisis": A cross-European perspective*, Council of Europe report DG1(2017)03, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

*understand her English and now she'll jump on the phone and talk ...the self-confidence and the independence...*<sup>16</sup>

Such stories highlight the importance and the impact of media platforms that give the possibility to local communities to express and represent themselves through media outlets that are self-owned and self-managed.

### 3. Community media as a tool for self-representation

Clemencia Rodriguez has provided a very vivid conceptualisation, based on research on the ground in Colombia, on how these media (although she uses the term 'citizen media'), can impact on the participants' sense of themselves:

*It implies having the opportunity to create one's own images of self and environment; it implies being able to re-codify one's identity with the signs and codes that one chooses, thereby disrupting the traditional acceptance of those imposed by outside sources; it implies becoming one's own storyteller (...); it implies reconstructing the self-portrait of one's own community and one's own culture (...); it implies taking one's own languages out of their usual hiding place and throwing them out there, into the public sphere and seeing how they do, how they defeat other languages, or how they are defeated by other languages.*<sup>17</sup>

In other words, community media can support local, cultural production and local heritage and they can improve social and political participation of those communities, in their own language and on their own terms. As far as refugee communities are concerned, whose coverage in mainstream media is often driven by external agendas, content that is produced from local communities (or refugees) can facilitate, encourage and promote 'spaces of inclusion'.

It is also important in this context to draw attention to the ways in which community media challenge the view of mainstream broadcasters and policymakers who believe that media production should be limited to professionals in order to achieve the highest quality. This, she argues, has led to non-dominant groups being prevented for a long time from participating in the process and from circulating their views through the airwaves.

American scholar James Hamilton argues that media should also be "available to ordinary people without the necessity of professional training, without excessive capital outlay and they must take place in settings other than media institutions or similar systems".<sup>18</sup> These issues have been further conceptualised by McQuail who argues that "communication is too

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<sup>16</sup> Manchester, H.L. (2005) *Radio for Refugees. Radio Regen/ ALL FM. Refugee Integration Challenge Fund Project: External Evaluation*. Manchester: Radio Regen, p.40.

<sup>17</sup> Rodriguez, C. (2001) *Fissures in the mediascape : an international study of citizens' media*, p.3

<sup>18</sup> In Atton, C. (2002) *Alternative Media*, London: Sage, p.25.

important to be left to professionals".<sup>19</sup> He goes on to argue that groups, organisations and local communities should all have their own media.<sup>20</sup>

In his view, small-scale, interactive and participative media should exist primarily for their audiences, who would in this way exercise their rights of access to media in order to communicate, and their content should not be subject to centralised political or bureaucratic control. McQuail envisages the 'democratic participant' as someone who searches for his or her way of social and political action outside the traditional channels of participation, such as a political party. He points out the failures of the mass media system in engaging with the communicative needs of citizens, especially within minority groups. He thus calls for locally originated media that use horizontal structures of production and for not leaving communication only in the hands of professionals.

In an elaboration of this argument, van Vuuren states that,<sup>21</sup> instead of focusing only on the broadcast quality of the content, community radio stations should 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".<sup>22</sup>

It emerges from these arguments that community media do not merely allow access to audiences and local communities to participate in the production for their own sake. Access of community 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 to shape their own identities by discussing issues that are relevant to them through their own channels of communication.

In short, community media aim at providing access to communication on the community's own terms, meaning that they allow participants to "make their own news, whether by appearing in it as significant actors or creating news relevant to their situation",<sup>23</sup> correcting imbalances derived from the media content produced in mainstream media, where "powerful groups and individuals have privileged and routine entry into the news itself and to the manner and the means of production".<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. Community Media, Social Media and Diversity

When debating the local, national and global media ecologies, one must consider that communication outlets around the world are mostly in the hand of a few powerful institutions. In the past, reference was made to international audio-visual companies. Today, reference is made even more to social media networks that are, unregulated or partially

<sup>19</sup> McQuail, D. (1987) *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*, second edition, London: Sage, p.121.

<sup>20</sup> McQuail, D. (1987) *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*, second edition, London: Sage, p.121-3.

<sup>21</sup> van Vuuren, K. (2002) 'Beyond the Studio: A case study of community radio and social capital', *Media International Australia*, 103, pp. 94-108.

<sup>22</sup> van Vuuren, K. (2006) 'The enclosure of the Community Public Sphere', *Media, Culture and Society*, 28 (3), pp. 390.

<sup>23</sup> Atton, C. (2002) *Alternative Media*, London: Sage, p.11.

<sup>24</sup> Glasgow University Media Group (1980) *More bad news*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p.114.

regulated, mainly based in the United States and not subject to national media authorities' jurisdictions. They contribute to the shaping of perceptions of ethnic and social minority groups, including refugees, and often contribute to their misrepresentation. Facebook and Twitter have surely given space and relevance to many issues that have often been overlooked by mainstream media. However, it is important to reflect upon the fact that platforms that ultimately are designed to aim for maximum profit for their shareholders and not necessarily for the social good or for values such as societal inclusion, are the main source of news, entertainment and education for many particularly young people, and that they contribute to shaping views and political opinions, thereby influencing our public spheres and democratic practices. By deduction, one must also reflect on the fact that local issues, that people may feel are relevant to discuss, have less or no space in how local and international social and political agendas are formed and discussed.

Community media can strengthen local identity and interest in local affairs through the production of broadcast and online programmes that are closer to its listeners, viewers and users. Thereby they help the growth of an 'informed citizenry' who has not just a higher awareness of local issues and challenges but of political processes generally. As a result, they also have a community development function. They contribute to diversity in the media landscape and therefore tackle issues such as misrepresentation, stereotyping, bias and racism.

Community media are often accessible centres of communication and technology in their communities. They are the places where all citizens, regardless of their skills, age or background, can learn about new media tools and developments with a critical literacy approach. Community media pioneer the use of new technologies for creative media production and can use social media to enhance promotion and distribution of their content.

Finally, as highlighted by the *2016 Media Pluralism Monitor*, with specific reference to Austria,<sup>25</sup> access to community media for minority groups is among the indicators of social inclusiveness in a pluralistic system. A 'lively community media sector' is seen as an important part of it, also "because openness to the idea of community members participating in the creation of media content will be a highly important topic in future media production".<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Seethaler, J., Beaufort, M, Dopona, V (2016) *Media Pluralism Monitor 2016. Monitoring Risks for Media Pluralism in the EU and Beyond Country report: Austria*. Florence: Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom. Retrieved from <http://cmpf.eui.eu/media-pluralism-monitor/mpm-2016-results/austria/>

<sup>26</sup> Seethaler, J., Beaufort, M, Dopona, V (2016) *Media Pluralism Monitor 2016. Monitoring Risks for Media Pluralism in the EU and Beyond Country report: Austria*, p.11

## Section II: Study based on interviews with refugees

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Jonas Hassemer and Brigitta Busch (Linguistics Department, University of Vienna)<sup>27</sup>

### 1. Aim and design of the study

#### 1.1. Analytical framework

This study contributes to a body of literature concerned with *community media* (see part I),<sup>28</sup> and in particular to research concerned with community media and migration.<sup>29</sup> Addressing media practices and their social meanings in heteroglossic societies – societies which are not only multilingual but also diverse in terms of experiences and orders of social values<sup>30</sup> – such an approach contrasts with types of research on ‘mass media’ and ‘integration’ that base themselves on rather static notions of media and society.<sup>31</sup>

Calling for a revision of metaphors for media in the context of online communication, Androutsopoulos speaks in favor of a *space metaphor*, a space that is constructed through discourse and involves the aspects of “movement, presence, interaction, and agency”.<sup>32</sup> Making use of such a space metaphor, Busch encompasses aspects of inclusion and exclusion in media practices:<sup>33</sup> as mainstream media tend to retain a monolingual habitus, they do not accommodate the needs for negotiation and representation of a heteroglossic society. Mainstream media thus systematically marginalise and exclude certain segments of the population. She proposes to view community media as creative and experimental spaces where new ways may arise to develop more inclusive practices.

In the conceptualisation of ‘media practices’, the authors draw on the notion of *media repertoire*<sup>34</sup> and linguistic approaches to (*biographical*) *narrative*.<sup>35</sup> The concept of media repertoire offers a subject-centered perspective on how individuals engage with different media in their everyday lives. As such, this concept allows for a qualitative analysis of how participants organise and situate their media practices, and which social meanings they attach to these practices<sup>36</sup>. Media repertoires can be considered to carry traces of biography and to contain social meanings that are subject to ideologies and to specific discursive regimes. Moreover, there is an affective dimension of lived experience – *Erleben* – to it.<sup>37</sup> The authors thus understand the notion of media repertoires as pointing to the dimension of social meanings in media practices. Therefore, the notions of narrative positioning,

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<sup>27</sup> The authors would like to thank, among others, (in alphabetical order) Ameer Al-Buni, Marina Gazmagomadova, Wadee Ghattass, Jihad Nour Eddin Hussari, Lale Farahani, Ramin Siawash for their support and for contributing their perspectives as an essential part to this study.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., see Purkarthofer et al. (2008), Weyand (2008), Day (2009), Peissl et al. (2010), Peissl & Lauggas (2016), and Bellardi & Ortiz (2017).

<sup>29</sup> E.g., Bozdağ (2014), Hepp et al. (2011), and Weber-Menges (2006).

<sup>30</sup> See Busch (1998; 2004).

<sup>31</sup> E.g. Geißler (2005; 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Androutsopoulos (2016: 287).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Busch (2006).

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. Hasebrink and Domeyer (2012).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Georgakopoulou (2007), Deppermann (2013), and Busch (2015).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Hasebrink & Domeyer (2012).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Busch (2013; 2015) with regards to ‘linguistic repertoires’.

ideology,<sup>38</sup> discourse and subjectivity are salient to this study.<sup>39</sup> These concepts render individual practices and experiences, as well as the values attributed to them (as formulated in the research questions in terms of “needs, expectations and desires”) and concepts such as ‘participation’ accessible to empirical research.

## 1.2. Data collection

The data is derived from in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted in Austria with refugees and migrants with experience with local community media or other media specific projects (4), and refugees and migrants without such experience (4). This was meant to ensure that a variety of experiences would be included in the study through the choice of participants. Yet, there are limitations to this picture as some individuals refused to take part, more or less explicitly referring to “bad experiences with interviewing”. While it is not entirely clear what kind of interview experience (thinkable is everything from research or media interviews to encounters in asylum procedures) they were referring to when refusing, it still suggests that the data resulting from the interviews may be biased towards more ‘felicitous’ accounts of experience with the local media (or other institutions).

The interviews were based on guiding questions that aimed at eliciting narratives and acts of positioning by the interviewees. Because of the explorative character of the study – which aims at deepening the knowledge of the topic as it proceeds rather than producing a uniform set of comparable data – the guiding questions were revised and updated for each interview. In addition to these interviews with refugees and migrants, an additional interview was conducted with the leader of an advanced training program for journalists targeted at refugees.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, the authors participated in a workshop at *radio FRO* in Linz, organised for a group of newcomers by COMMIT. This was an occasion to establish first contact with potential participants of the study and, through dialogue, conceptualise the approach and questions to be followed in the interviews. Preliminary findings of the study were presented at the occasion of the *civil media Conference* in June 2017 in Salzburg.

The participants were recruited through several networks and channels: (1) Two of them were reached through contacts in an NGO working with refugees. They had no previous experiences with community media. (2) Two other interviewees were participants in the abovementioned workshop organised by COMMIT. They therefore had gained a first insight into the work of community media, but had no previous experience in the field. (3) Three contacts were established through direct requests made to (three different) local community media (TV and radio). Two of them worked as media professionals in their countries of origin, one started her/his career in Austrian community media. (4) The last person was a contact suggested by one of the previous interviewees. S\*he operates a news channel on Facebook.

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Deppermann (2013) and Georgakopoulou (2007).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Busch (2013).

<sup>40</sup> This program was a specialised version of the so called 'biber-Akademie' run by the Viennese magazine *biber* (<http://www.dasbiber.at/akademie-mit-scharf> [last checked: 2017-09-06]). See also the editorial of the 'Refugee Edition', summer 2017 (<https://www.yumpu.com/de/document/view/59127966/biber-07-17-ansicht> [last checked: 2017-09-06]).



The approximate age of participants ranges between 20 and 40, the group includes three women and five men from Syria, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iran and Somalia.

The interviews were conducted either in English or in German.<sup>41</sup> The participants were informed about the background, aims and scope of the study and their written consent to participating in the interviews was obtained. The interviews were audio-recorded, additional consent was asked at the beginning of each recording. When requested by the participants (this happened in two cases), the interviewers went through the questions before starting the recording, so that the participants had the opportunity to ask for clarifications and gain more control of the situation. It was made clear to participants that all questions were non-mandatory. However, no participant expressed a wish to skip any of the questions. Some participants explicitly requested to be informed about the results of the study. After each interview, contextual aspects and other situational observations were described in short field notes.

## 2. Findings

As half of the participants is actively involved in media production, while the other half is not, the results of the study contain both perspectives, from audience and from production. The findings will not be presented separately, but clustered around thematic categories. A neat distinction between audience and media agents does not match the reality of community media practices (or even media practices in general), that seem to alternate between the two, allowing for hybrid positions. As a result, the findings are clustered around the following thematic focus areas that reflect the research questions: media practices and repertoires (section 2.1.), participation and exclusion (section 2.2.), needs expectations and desires (section 2.3.), and functions attributed to community media (section 2.4.).

### 2.1. Media practices and media repertoires

Participants described their media practices generally in rather diverse ways. Information on their daily media practices was elicited through dialogue. With the active media professionals, this question was less focused upon, leaving more space to accounts of their work. From the collected data, the following aspects can be distinguished as relevant when assessing the media practices of participants:

#### a) Physical access and devices

Irrespective of the purpose (news, general information, learning, or leisure activities) media were described as being accessed mostly via smartphone,<sup>42</sup> with television and radio receiver playing minor roles. In most cases, this was due to possession and accessibility of the respective devices. Non-virtual platforms (such as libraries for books, the metro for free journals) were mentioned by some. Preferences for different genres varied, including blogs, radio, online editions of newspapers, videos and applications (e.g. for language learning).

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<sup>41</sup> Quotes from the interviews conducted in German are rendered only in their English translation.

<sup>42</sup> This observation is confirmed e.g. by the research project *Smartphones in the lives of refugees* (Tobias Eberwein, Katja Kaufmann, Mouhamad Alhassan, Fridolin Mallmann) at the Austrian Academy of Sciences: <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/de/cmc/research/media-accountability-media-change/societal-challenges-and-the-role-of-the-media/everyday-use-of-smartphones-by-refugees/> [last checked: 2017-12-21].

### b) Networks and platforms

According to the interviews with the participants, networks of various kinds assume an important role in the exchange of information and therefore in media practices of refugees and migrants. Social capital, in form of friendships and acquaintances, was described in all the interviews as playing a significant part in relation to their media routines. At the center of these networks are often NGOs and local initiatives working with refugees, cultural associations and German language courses. Such networks/platforms are seen as a relevant resource for accessing information on daily life matters in Austria (e.g. administrative procedures, housing, education, social activities, welfare). For some, informal networks drawing on the shared experience of newcomers seem to play an important role as well. In the case of media professionals, platforms providing professional training and job opportunities, such as *join media*,<sup>43</sup> seem to assume a particularly important role. The latter was referred to in three of four interviews with persons working in the media.

Social media, in particular Facebook, appear to have the role of a platform for assembling content from different media, constituting an important space for information exchange and establishment of networks. This impression is confirmed by anecdotal references made by the participants regarding the media practices of other refugees and migrants.<sup>44</sup> As could be drawn from the interview with the participant operating a news channel on Facebook, the quality of the information is viewed as varying greatly, but the anonymity of the medium – often assumed to be one of the main causes for its unreliable quality – plays less of a role: the informant stated that most of the people active in large platforms *do* know each other in person. Still, so called ‘fake-news’ figured in at least two of the interviews as a source of mistrust in Facebook.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, Facebook was also described as a space for easy access to news, as news seem to be distributed automatically and can be passively consumed. Two participants also described it explicitly as a space for vivid discussions. YouTube was often mentioned as an additional source of content, especially in relation to language learning activities.

### c) Spaces of reference

Most participants declared that they consume news regarding their countries of origin, while two explicitly stated that they avoid or disregard them, explaining this decision with a sense of priority of matters concerning their current location. One participant explained that s\*he would continue to participate in discussions on political issues with friends and family via Facebook and WhatsApp, while another declared to be actively involved in projects by NGOs targeted at the country of origin. Thus, disengagement with the political situation in the former home country exists besides continued and active participation. Sources for news from the countries of origin are in part big media houses, e.g. Al-Jazeera, BBC Somali, Middle East Broadcasting Center – these play also a role in the consumption of ‘world news’ –, but

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<sup>43</sup> Join media is a platform for “professional exchange of experiences between the newcomer journalists and Austrian media”; for more information see <http://www.join-media.eu/en/> [last checked: 2017-11-13].

<sup>44</sup> Also, an explorative inquiry conducted by the authors in late August 2017 on Facebook independently from the interviews showed that a wide range of content with reference to ‘Austria’ is being produced in Arabic language. There is an almost uncountable number of such pages with high numbers of followers. A similar picture, though maybe less copious, was referred to by a participant with regards to pages in Farsi.

<sup>45</sup> As one of the participants put it: “*when i need it [i.e. information, JH] | i will search it on so many (.) way | like (( )) facebook and google and (( )) | because normally now (.) in facebook (.) okay | you will hear a lot of the fake news*”.

also individual news blogs/pages (on Facebook and other web platforms) by journalists. The latter figure especially in the media repertoires of the media professionals, who sometimes know the media producers as colleagues or friends.

Austrian sources are also consulted by some of the participants, although the language but also general knowledge on the media environment is cited as barrier.<sup>46</sup> 'Austrian' media mentioned by other participants include newspapers and magazines available free of charge in the metro – even though they were referred to in a critical light, as biased, sensationalist and of low quality. The dailies *Der Standard* and *Kurier* were also mentioned by participants, but access here is achieved mainly via Facebook. One participant reported that s\*he made use of an online service by public service television *ORF* where current news are fed to a smartphone. This, according to the participant, facilitated understanding since news can be heard repeatedly and subtitles can be made use of.

#### d) Displacement

One of the questions asked was if the media-related behavior was (perceived to be) different before coming to Austria. The most salient examples for changes in media practice as reported by some of the participants were the following:

(1) *Trust and reliability*: A participant referred to the trust s\*he had in sources of information (such as Dubai TV), regularly consulted before the start of the war in Syria.<sup>47</sup> This is contrasted by the perception of others who describe restrictive aspects of media consumption in their countries of origin, with one participant referring to a specific media style characteristic of totalitarian regimes that one needed to distance oneself from.

(2) *Topic shift*: With regards to media reporting, one of the participants emphasised the omnipresence in her/his home country of conflict reporting, an aspect that is perceived to be less dominant in Austrian media coverage.

(3) *Material resources*: The change in availability of resources and devices as a result of displacement is invoked in a number of cases as a reason for change in media behavior: one participant described a shift from watching television with the family in Syria to accessing almost exclusively online media in Austria, another one remembered a time without smartphones and internet in Somalia. On the side of media production, a participant described the lack of financial support and thus the lack of access to basic infrastructure for media initiatives in her/his home country in contrast to her/his perception of the situation in Austria.

(4) *Gender inequality*: A more societal aspect figures in one of the biographical narratives, as the participant described being withheld a career in the media in Chechnya for being a woman, a situation that radically changed in Austria.

(5) *Value of linguistic and cultural capital*: One of the former media professionals described his/her move from Syria to Austria as a career break, given that s/he had lost linguistic and

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<sup>46</sup> This was described by one of the participants as follows: “we still we don't know have all the background about the channels [...] you still you don't know exactly which channel you have to follow | which channel do you can trust | and same times even if you watch it | you not understand”. S\*he went on and describes a rather instrumental view of German-speaking channels used mostly “just to hear the language”.

<sup>47</sup> In the words of the participant: “in Dubai yah I can (-) for example see the news in dubai teevee | because almost they will not give you something fake | yah they will give you only the true | they will be only not: (sided/decided) to this or to this one”.

cultural capital. Skills and abilities as a witty professional cannot be valued in Austrian mainstream media, since they are tied to Arabic as a linguistic resource which is perceived as worthless in this context. S\*he can only exercise her/his profession in the context of local community media.

## 2.2. Participation and exclusion

Instances of participation (and exclusion) in media practices can be detected in various dimensions and domains. Instances of the two ideal types – *participation by becoming part of the audience* and *participation by becoming part of media production* – can be observed in the data. Both are strongly connected to questions of *self-representation*, i.e. of finding inhabitable positions that become adequate and accessible sites of identification. This entails finding oneself represented and perceived as legitimate part of the audience, which is a precondition to the availability of a place from where to speak.

### a) Participation through becoming part of the audience

Obtaining access to the media in the sense of becoming part of its audience is a topic that figured more or less explicitly in all of the interviews, in terms of ‘barriers’ as well as ‘opportunities’ or ‘resources’. Most participants mentioned the ‘language barrier’ as an obstacle to access monolingual German media in Austria. In most cases, this was considered a challenge to be overcome, often evoking internalised discourses of having the duty to learn the dominant language of the host country. While one person declared s\*he had no access at all to Austrian media, others reported individual strategies for achieving comprehension and access such as supplementing information from Austrian newspapers with information from e.g. (Arabic language) Al-Jazeera, translating headlines, practicing linguistic immersion, e.g. simply listening even without fully understanding,<sup>48</sup> and using formats that allow for repeated playback.

### b) Meta-knowledge

Beyond a mere ‘language barrier’, participants mentioned also difficulties in obtaining basic knowledge of the Austrian media landscape that could serve as orientation, especially related to quality. In this context, the concept of ‘fake news’ was introduced by one participant as a knowledge-related barrier to establishing trust in ‘the media’. This, s\*he reported, led to disengagement from certain media practices such as watching news. The lack of meta-knowledge led to mistrust and a sense of insecurity with respect to the media environment. Other participants, however, opined that this was “just a matter of simply having a look” at different sources,<sup>49</sup> affirming that they dispose of appropriate strategies to tackle the insecurities encountered when evaluating the quality of information.

Participation can mean access to public (political) debates in Austria, but also in the country of origin; in these cases, social media play a significant role. Explicitly set up for the purposes of promoting access to information and media education is e.g. the Facebook page run by one of the participants. The page offers videos of speeches by Austrian politicians subtitled in Arabic language. The participant particularly emphasised that s\*he follows clear rules for

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<sup>48</sup> One of the participants said s\*he would watch television “just to i hear the language | not to watching for example what i’m see | no | only to hear the language | hear how the way they speaking | or (( )) to catching some new word or something like that”.

<sup>49</sup> Translation, JH.

the sourcing, selection and editing of the information in order to ensure transparency and the accuracy of the contents presented.

#### c) Participation through self-representation

While some participants – mostly those working in the media – reported considerable experience as interviewees for Austrian media and expressed their satisfaction rather than critique with these experiences, there are two observations to be made. Firstly, this picture might be biased by the selection of participants, since some refused to participate in this study because of reportedly ‘bad experiences with interviews’. Secondly, participants often foregrounded their own responsibility for the outcome of such media encounters rather than the ways in which such encounters were framed and re-contextualised by the media.

An exception was the account by one participant of an interview in public service radio, that s\*he experienced as a silencing of his/her voice. Insufficient time for preparation was named as a reason for this. In addition, the organisation of the interview was not perceived to be adequate as it seems to have lacked basic understanding of the situation of the interviewee as a second language speaker. As a positive example, however, an experience made at a community radio is cited where sufficient time was provided to prepare an argument and where the structure of the show was transparent to the participants.

Connected to the questions of (self-ascribed) responsibility touched upon above, there is another issue regarding self-representation: many participants described their purpose or goal in self-representation as ‘being a role model’, as presenting an especially good example to the Austrian public.<sup>50</sup> Another participant took a clear stance against this approach, exposing the obstacles that this may pose for the participation of more disadvantaged individuals, as a result of which public recognition of the situation of refugees and migrants may be obstructed. S\*he rather urged an approach that appreciates differences and fosters mutual understanding, and that does not result in making comparisons risking to devalue the experiences of others – which s\*he described as central to her/his work in community media.

Content also plays a role with respect to self-representation. One participant considered that coverage of the war in Syria was scarce in Austrian media; a claim that is connected to a perceived disregard for the hardship experienced by Syrian refugees. Another participant cited this – apparently common – claim and objected to it, stating that this perception often stemmed from a lack of experience in and knowledge of Austrian media. This points again to the importance of meta-knowledge about the media system referred to above as well as to questions of access and participation.

#### d) Linguistic regimes and participation

In their accounts, some participants referred to the linguistic regimes that operate in the media as important prerequisite for participation or exclusion. While this is connected to what has been discussed above regarding language barriers to participating as audience, the issue goes beyond that of simple access. As the linguistic regime in the media is also an important factor in audience design, including the newcomers’ languages means recognising them as addressees, thus making the linguistic diversity of society visible and audible for all.

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<sup>50</sup> One of the interviewees described this as follows: “but we try i personally try to present always something positive on refugees | that i am decorously learning German | I am working at the moment not for money but so i can help other people” (Translation, JH).

The generally monolingual set-up of mainstream media, so the view of one of the participants, neglects large numbers of people as part of their audience. With a frustrated tone, s\*he asked why private or public service TV would not broadcast talk shows in Arabic language since there potentially was such a large audience. *Shabab Talk*, a show by the German broadcaster *Deutsche Welle*, was cited as a positive counter-example. Being acknowledged as an addressee of media – and particularly by mainstream media – thus plays an important role for recognition and participation. While this argument was put forward by a speaker of Arabic, a speaker of Farsi added that the situation is even worse for other languages than Arabic, which are often under-represented even in the sparse efforts to include refugees into media.

In a wider sense, this linguistic exclusion also connects to questions of access to a professional career in the (mainstream) media. As long as the audience is seen as monolingually German, there is no interest in promoting, for instance, Arabic-speaking media professionalism.

### 2.3. Needs, expectations and desires

This section discusses the general needs, expectations and desires with regards to media that were articulated by the participants or can be derived from their accounts. They concern both questions of access (e.g. to material and immaterial resources) and of recognition.

#### a) Information and entertainment

Access to information and to a more general understanding of the media environment are basic needs that are articulated in the interviews. This involves language-related needs, such as surpassing the ‘language-barrier’, learning the host country’s dominant language, and having access to information in the first languages. But access to media is not only viewed as essential with respect to information, access to media is also considered a source of enjoyment and entertainment, which provides a sense of normality in an otherwise often challenging life situation. Again, this relates to experiences with German-language media as well as to media formats in the refugees’ and migrants’ first languages.

#### b) Access to professional development

Access to media is also seen as a possible entry point to having access to paid work in the media. The continuation of a career in the media is a clear desire articulated by the media professionals among the interviewees. This involves the desire for recognition by mainstream media as well as for access to employment and economic remuneration.

#### c) Influence on media representation

Another desire that is frequently articulated is that of having an influence on the seemingly distorted representations of refugees/newcomers or their causes in the media. This entails the desire for agency in public debates. Related to this is the desire for being (adequately) represented, as audience and as object of media coverage.

#### d) Assuming a position in public debate

Participants of the study also expressed a desire for assuming a social position beyond that of a ‘refugee’ or ‘migrant’. In this category figure the different stances towards denominations such as ‘refugee’ and ‘newcomer’ that are frequently addressed in the interviews. Some participants articulated the more substantial desire of overcoming in mediated contexts the constraining delineation of their positions as refugees. Interviewees



expressed their desire to being perceived not only through their individual life stories as refugees, but to be granted a position in public debate in general.<sup>51</sup> They also aspire to leave behind the ascribed role of an assisted victim and to assume a more active position, e.g. by helping others.

One of the participants articulated the desire for acknowledgement of diversity in society, as s\*he demanded interest from the ‘Austrians’ for what s\*he wanted to share in terms of her/his cultural background. S\*he also expressed the need for having the freedom not to erase personal biographical imprints because of assimilatory demands, but instead urged exchanges and mutual learning in the media context.

#### 2.4. Functions attributed to community media

This section contains a synthesis of explicit and implicit functions that are attributed to community media or that can be derived from the narrated practices. It is remarkable that among the participants in this study, those not active in community media were also uninformed of their existence. For those active in community media, however, they constituted an important point of reference in the narratives of their lives in Austria. Most of the participants reported not having come into contact with the concept of community or independent media before they came to Austria, with two exceptions: a small-scale project in Afghanistan that the participant described as very constrained in terms of technology and professionalism, and a TV channel run by an oppositional group in Syria.

Based on the interviews, the following key functions of community media for refugees and migrants in Austria can be identified:

##### a) Professional networks

Community media provide and intensify networks for media professionals. At the same time, they offer space and resources to exercise their professions. This function is complemented by larger, superordinate networks<sup>52</sup> and training programs<sup>53</sup>. These are specifically targeted at professionals who have been working with or in the media before coming to Austria. Judging from the accounts of the participants, they provide space for meeting other newly arrived media professionals as well as for establishing contact to persons already working in Austrian public, private and community media. In the Viennese context, it seems that many ‘careers’ in media take off from these platforms. Community media are described as more accessible in two dimensions: they do not impose narrow constraints on language choice and performance, nor are they concerned with the legal status of the person or his/her work permit, as work is generally done on a voluntary basis. One can assume that the long-term goal of some of these persons does not lie in working in community media as such, but rather in developing a career in mainstream media. Another conclusion that may be drawn from the data is that community media are viewed as attractive precisely because they are open to non-professionals, offering them training possibilities and work opportunities.

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<sup>51</sup> One of the participants said about his contact with Austrian media: “the question always about me | but I speak about all the people about other people | am I allowed to say that for example (Translation, JH).

<sup>52</sup> Such as the already mentioned *join media*, as well as *fjum* – *Forum Journalismus und Medien Wien* (s. <https://www.fjum-wien.at> [last checked: 2017-10-08])

<sup>53</sup> such as the *biber-Akademie* (s. footnote 40).

### b) Representing communities

As reported by participants, community media can provide a space for ‘communities’ to be represented and to allow communication among those who affiliate. Different formats figure in this category, among them information programs that serve the specific needs of a target group (such as information for asylum seekers in suitable languages), culture programs (e.g. literature), call-in programs and talk shows. Such forms of representation respond to a legitimate desire for ‘groupness’ and ‘internal’ communication, however, they may also carry the risk of fragmenting the audience and of under- and/or misrepresenting individuals as they are left out and/or subsumed into the larger group.

### c) Education

Educational purposes are also among the functions attributed to the work of community media. Target groups in terms of audiences are both, other refugees and migrants and the general population (‘Austrians’). As regards the audience of refugees, the functions attributed to community media range from providing specific, basic information (e.g. on issues related to the asylum procedure) to providing understanding of societal and political debates in Austria. Educational purposes are also touched in terms of learning in a stricter sense. Media are often described as spaces for learning German or practicing linguistic exchange – through specific programs, but also as part of general media practices. The existence of hybrid formats between language learning and e.g. news programs testify to this double function of media practices.

With respect to Austrian society as a whole, the projected purposes are mostly connected with the idea of adjusting the images of refugees and migrants that are constructed in the media.

### d) Spaces for self-advocacy

Community media are conceptualised as spaces for self-advocacy, i.e. they provide a place from where to speak and to be heard. This allows occupying a position in public discourse. As described above they are perceived to have a lower threshold for access than mainstream media, enabling encounters of different communities, and contributing to deconstructing fears of the ‘foreign’. Participants active in community media also expressed their appreciation for the availability of material facilities and training opportunities, i.e. material resources that facilitate self-advocacy.

Expectations expressed by participants concerning the role of ‘the media’ in affirming rights and positions of refugees and migrants can be clustered around three idealised stances:

(1) Professional, i.e., impartial media coverage. The goal lies in correct and balanced media coverage of refugees and their situations and in adequately preventing misrepresentations and asymmetries. This is the position taken by the two media professionals and the operator of the Facebook page. Avoiding bias and ‘opinions’ in media coverage is formulated as a sign of quality. An example for misrepresentation and asymmetry that was brought forward in one interview is the disparate approach to criminal refugees and criminal Austrians in terms of media coverage.

(2) The purpose of media is advocacy, i.e. improving the perception of refugees held by “Austrians”.

(3) Community media can ‘build bridges’ between different ways of living and different cultures.



As a result of the shortcomings of mainstream media with regards to desires of self-representation, participation and access to various resources, community media are described as filling in for a range of these needs. Thus, community media are assigned a role of complementing mainstream media. With their multilingual programs, their flexibility as to accepted formats, and their low threshold for participation, they are viewed as offering opportunities to evade some of the constraints that structure refugees' participation in the media, in particular with regards to the roles refugees/migrants are expected to assume – as objects of news coverage and as tellers of their individual stories as 'refugees'.

### 3. Conclusion

This explorative, qualitative pilot study was concerned with the role that media in general and community media in particular play for (recently arrived) refugees and migrants in response to their particular needs and with regard to their human right to freedom of expression. It was interested in:

- media practices and media repertoires, asking the question what role different media, formats and genres play in the daily routines of the study participants
- needs, expectations and desires concerning access to media and media offers
- possibilities of and barriers to participation and self-representation in media
- the role of community media and media-related projects in coping with the challenges of the new environment.

The participants were persons with recent experiences of displacement living in Austria, from diverse geographical, social, and professional backgrounds, and also including persons who had active contact with community media or other media-related projects.

The study confirms earlier findings regarding the importance of smartphones and similar devices when it comes to material access to different types of media and media content. Displacement of course leads to a change in individual media routines and practices. In the case of media professionals displacement was additionally experienced as a break in their careers. Media practices develop from the search for information of various kinds, as well as for entertainment and education. They further refer to different 'spaces', such as the respective countries of origin, the current place of residence as well as to transnational spaces, as e.g. in terms of 'world news' or virtual networks (specialised social media groups). Networks in general, virtual and face to face, are primarily mentioned in their function as providing social capital with regards to problem solving (administrative procedures, access to health care and social welfare, housing etc.). Links around activities by local NGOs, social initiatives and cultural organisations play an equally important role as informal networks drawing on the shared experience of newcomers.

This study clearly demonstrates that there is a need for further exploration of the patterns in change of media routines that are prompted by displacement, as well as the role of different kinds of networks and platforms in coping with the challenge of reorganising life in a new environment.

Access to the media, both as part of the audience and in terms of active participation, is rendered difficult for newcomers/refugees in the context of mainstream media. As the category that is constituted by the term 'refugee' is by far not homogeneous, the barriers

encountered are diverse and are experienced in different ways. Among them are the prevailing monolingual orientation of mainstream media, the lack of meta-knowledge among newcomers regarding the local media landscape, and the scarcity of available roles which results from dominant discourses that assign newcomers certain stereotypical roles but deny them acknowledgement as integral parts of the audience.

The study points to a number of media-related needs that can be addressed through projects such as community media:

- (1) bridging language barriers,
- (2) providing a less constrained space for alternative narratives and self-representations as well as for socially recognised positions for refugees and migrants from where they can speak their own voice,
- (3) giving access to knowledge, in particular for coping with the new environment,
- (4) establishing and integrating networks, and
- (5) accommodating the needs of (language) learners.

As such, community media and other media-related projects targeting refugees and migrants with the aim of facilitating media access are considered to be spaces that are potentially exempt of certain constraints that operate elsewhere: Linguistic regimes can be renegotiated, professional requirements are less strict, not all the legal bonds (such as legal status and work permits) apply that often structure the range of activities available to refugees and migrants. At the same time, especially in the newcomers' perspectives gathered in this study, community media can also assume the function of a space for transition. This applies both to producers, as they seek to develop or return to a career in media, be it in order to ultimately gain employment in mainstream media or not, and to the audience, as community media may constitute an initial space before access to a wider range of media practices is achieved. While this certainly responds to important societal ends as well to key individual needs, the authors of this study wish to emphasise that:

- (1) Even if conditions for accessing community media appear favorable, access must always be renegotiated at the individual level. It is relevant therefore to ask for each media-related project, how accessible it really is to non-professionals, and how much it responds to the needs of a specific audience.
- (2) In the dimension of professional development, it is important to keep in mind the precarious positions entailed in volunteer work. Questions to be derived from this are: how can transition into regular media-related employment be facilitated? Which resources can be provided for such a transition (within or outside community media)?
- (3) In terms of institutional representation, it should not be forgotten that an established 'space of inclusion' could become a site of exclusion, when that space is lacking recognition from outside. A political strategy that acknowledges the needs of refugees and enhances their access to basic communication rights must also seek their recognition as agents and audience in the mainstream media.

From the study it can be concluded that it is crucial for refugees and migrants – as it is for everybody else – that media, be it mainstream or community media, allow for self-

representation and active participation, and that they provide a place from where to speak and from where to be heard.

## Section III: The right to have a voice – portraits of community media productions by migrants and refugees

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(Nadia Bellardi, journalist and transcultural consultant)

Community media are fora in which migrants have been playing a highly active role since their inception in the 1980s,<sup>54</sup> compensating the absence of migrant perspectives in mainstream media.

The following portraits of projects involving people with a refugee or migrant background in community radios/ TVs aim to produce a first mapping of good practices, focusing on a selected number of European countries and on the general research questions of the present study:

- Why are refugees and migrants involved in community media?
- Which needs are fulfilled by their engagement in media production?
- How does this relate to the states' obligations in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the freedom of expression and the right to information?

Migrants have been active in community media since the origins of many such media projects, looking for access, resources and training for self-expression and participation. The relevance and continuity of this work - for migrants and non-migrants - is however only partially documented, and mostly on a local scale.

Research projects in Switzerland and Austria showed that regardless of whether they later pursued a 'professional' media career, migrants have been able to engage on equal terms in society and improve their professional and social integration skills thanks to their work in community radio.<sup>55</sup>

The role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue and their positive contribution to the fight against intolerance has been acknowledged by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2009.<sup>56</sup>

The impact for social change of community media is best described as empowerment of marginalised communities and individuals. The European Parliament points to this in its Resolution from 2008<sup>57</sup> and "*Calls on Member States to make television and radio frequency*

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<sup>54</sup> See studies Peissl/Purkarthofer/Pfisterer/Busch (2010) in Austria and Weyand (2008) in Switzerland

<sup>55</sup> See also dissertation by Lucia Vasella: *Das Lokalradio als Weltempfänger. Eine Untersuchung zur Integrationsleistung von Sendungen für sprachkulturelle Minderheiten*, Institut für Sozialanthropologie der Universität Bern, August 2007

<sup>56</sup> Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue of 11 February 2009.

<sup>57</sup> European Parliament resolution of 25 September 2008 on Community Media in Europe ([2008/2011\(INI\)](#))

*spectrum available, both analogue and digital, bearing in mind that the service provided by community media is not to be assessed in terms of opportunity cost or justification of the cost of spectrum allocation but rather in the social value it represents.”*

The portraits highlight the role of community media in:

- Capacity building and inclusion of migrant, refugee, second & third generation media makers in production and management
- Promotion of intercultural processes and integration
- Facilitating further (multi)media initiatives and projects led by people with a refugee or migrant background

## Structure of the selected programs and projects:

The portraits are grouped into three broad categories:

### 1. Refugee/migrant media productions developed within existing community media

- ✓ *Radio Somalia* on Radio LoRa Switzerland
- ✓ *Ada Vapuru* on Radio Orange Austria
- ✓ *Indimaj* on Okto TV Austria
- ✓ *New Life in Vienna* on Radio Orange Austria
- ✓ *InterRadional* on Radio RaBe Switzerland

### 2. Independent refugee/migrant media projects sometimes cooperating with community radios

- ✓ Refugee Radio Network Germany
- ✓ Radio Ghetto Italy
- ✓ ReGeneration Radio Italy

### 3. Specific projects developed through dedicated funding to support multilingual refugee/migrant media productions within existing community media

- ✓ *Common Voices* on Radio Corax Germany
- ✓ *Die MIGRAS* on Radio LoRa Switzerland
- ✓ *Radio Brhan* on Radio LoRa Switzerland
- ✓ *Salam Show* on Radio Ara Luxembourg
- ✓ *Our Voice* on Radio Dreyeckland Germany

## 1. Refugee/migrant media productions developed within existing community media

Programs in the native languages of minorities and migrants started appearing in European community radios in the 1980s. Underrepresented and marginalised by private and public service media, migrant groups identified alternative media projects as a natural channel to reach out to their communities. Producers were either individuals or associations, aiming to share relevant information and news in their mother tongue and clearly addressing the diaspora community as target audience.

Community radios thus evolved naturally into multicultural projects, where one would often hear statements like: “We broadcast in 12 different languages!”, “We have six Turkish-language programmes”, “We have 15 non-German-speaking programmes.” Community radios were reflecting the diversity of the multicultural cities in which they were based, with several cultures and languages coexisting *next* to one another, but not necessarily communicating *with* one another.<sup>58</sup>

To foster dialogue between the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as with a broader audience, community radios in Austria, Germany and Switzerland later started developing specific training formats to promote multilingual programming and exchange.

- ✓ ***Radio Somalia* on Radio LoRa Switzerland**
- ✓ ***Ada Vapuru* on Radio Orange Austria**
- ✓ ***Indimaj* on Okto TV Austria**
- ✓ ***New Life in Vienna* on Radio Orange Austria**
- ✓ ***InterRadional* on Radio RaBe Switzerland**

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<sup>58</sup> Borger, A., Bellardi, N. From coexistence to cooperation: Experiments in intercultural broadcasting in Swiss community radios. Telemat. Informat. (2009)

## *Radio Somalia* on Radio LoRa Switzerland

**On-air since:** 1998

**Producers:** 1 responsible producer (male) + various collaborators

**Languages:** Main language Somali with occasional use of German

**Topics:** News from Somalia / life in Switzerland / asylum

**Airtime:** Every Thursday from 2 to 3 pm

**Broadcast:** Zurich 97.5 FM / 88.1 Cable / DAB+ /

[Internet streaming](#) / [Internet Archive](#)

**Specialty:** Strong links to Somali diaspora around the world



Broadcasting since 1983, [Radio LoRa](#) in Zurich is one of the oldest community radios in Europe. Men and women with a migrant background have been involved in the radio since its onset and today programs are aired in more than 20 languages. Four of the seven employees managing the radio in 2017 have a refugee or migrant background.

*Radio Somalia* is a weekly one-hour program in Somali reporting news about Somalia, information related to life in Switzerland and to the life of Somalis in Switzerland, including asylum-related topics. The program also includes music and cultural topics. It has been on-air since 1998 and is coordinated by the promoter of the Somali Swiss Diaspora Association.

*Radio Somalia* has been able to facilitate links with the diaspora community worldwide before the advent of social media, thanks to live Internet streaming and an online archive of the broadcasts. This is true also of many other programs on Radio LoRa hosted by refugees from countries with strict media censorship such as Iran, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Iraq. According to their producers, until a few years ago their programs were one of the few means for residents of their home countries to hear unbiased news.

Nowadays the broadcasts are complemented by YouTube channels and Facebook pages that allow promoting and multiplying the work produced at the community radio.

## Ada Vapuru on Radio Orange Austria

**On-air since:** 2002

**Producers:** 1 responsible producer (female) + various collaborators

**Languages:** Main language Turkish with occasional use of German

**Topics:** Culture

**Airtime:** Every Saturday from 10 to 11 am

**Broadcast:** Vienna 94.0 FM / 92.7 Cable / [Internet streaming](#) / [Internet Archive](#)

**Specialty:** Intergenerational



[Radio Orange](#) in Vienna is one of the largest community radios in the German-speaking world, with over 500 volunteers and 150 programs. Broadcasting since 1998, it provides diverse content in 25 languages and alternative music to its audience.

*Ada Vapuru* takes its name from the ferry boats connecting since 1846 the city of Istanbul with the Princes' Islands, an archipelago of 9 islands just off the coast of Istanbul in the Sea of Marmara. The islands were formerly a place of refuge and asylum for Byzantine Princes and deposed monarchs, later they became a popular holiday destination for people of various communities - Jewish, Greek, Armenian, Turkish. As the multicultural life in Vienna reminds the producer of the atmosphere on these ferry boats, she has named her program after them.

The aim of the program is to be a bridge for the first, second and third generation Turkish citizens living in Vienna, to provide solutions to their issues and concerns, as well as to promote human rights and democratic principles.



## Indimaj on Okto TV Austria

**On-air since:** 2017

**Producers:** team of 4 men and 1 woman

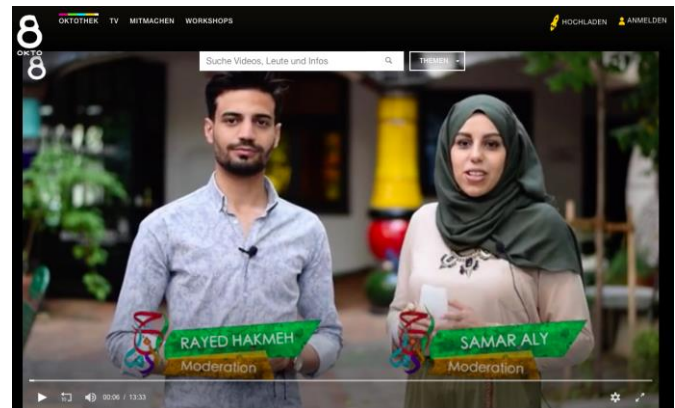
**Languages:** German

**Topics:** Arts & culture / Integration and life of migrants and refugees in Austria

**Airtime:** Monthly

**Reception:** Austria A1 TV / UPC / kabelplus / DVB-T2 simplyTV / Livestream / [Internet archive](#)

**Specialty:** Bridge-building with local communities



[Okto](#) is a community television in Vienna, established in the fall of 2005, providing training, infrastructure and support to around 500 volunteer producers.

The monthly Magazine *Indimaj* (“Integration” in Arabic) presents stories from the perspective of newcomers, in particular refugees. Every episode features 3-4 stories and addresses diverse topics such as poetry, arts, films, cuisine, integration, cultural diversity, politics or music. Through reporting about events and initiatives in the Austrian society, *Indimaj* helps newcomers integrate and connects people together. The video element is particularly powerful, as it effectively counters narratives and images of refugees as helpless, giving visual space and voice to their needs and aspirations. *Indimaj* was one of the outcomes of the Austrian initiative [Join Media](#), facilitating professional exchange of experiences between newcomer, refugee journalists from Afghanistan, Austria, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan and Syria and Austrian media.

## *New Life in Vienna on Radio Orange Austria*

**On-air since:** 2016

**Producers:** team of 3 women and 1 man

**Languages:** Arabic, Dari, Somali, English and German

**Topics:** Practical information about Vienna for newcomers

**Airtime:** Every Friday from 1 to 1:30 pm

**Broadcast:** Vienna 94.0 FM / 92.7 Cable / [Internet streaming](#) / [Internet Archive](#)

**Specialty:** Multilingual



[Radio Orange](#) in Vienna is one of the largest community radios in the German-speaking world, with over 500 volunteers and 150 programs. Broadcasting since 1998, it provides diverse content in 25 languages and alternative music to its audience.

*New Life in Vienna* is a multilingual information program in Arabic, Dari, Somali, English and German, that addresses newly arrived refugees in Vienna. The aim of the program is to provide its listeners with practical tips and useful information about everyday life in Vienna. The program's topics are, amongst others, mobility and language courses in Vienna, access to health care, how to live on a budget, tips on affordable accommodation and leisure activities.

The [team](#) of four editors and producers has international roots (Afghanistan, Algeria, Bulgaria, Somalia) and can rely either on self-involvement or on first-hand experience in dealing with these issues. The presenters also have a journalistic background or have worked as journalists in their home countries.

## *InterRadional on Radio RaBe Switzerland*

**On-air since:** 2009

**Producers:** team of 5 women

**Languages:** German, Swiss German, Polish, Portuguese, Icelandic, Arabic and other languages

**Topics:** Migration, intercultural topics

**Airtime:** Five times a year

**Broadcast:** Berne 95.6 FM / Cable / DAB+ /

[Internet streaming](#) / [Internet Archive](#)

**Specialty:** Multilingual, intercultural approach



[Radio RaBe](#) is broadcasting since 1996 in the Swiss capital Berne. Like many community radios in German-speaking countries, RaBe gave air time to migrants from the start. In 2002, broadcasting in about 15 different languages, Radio RaBe started the project MigRaBe, focusing on improving the quality of migrants' programs and strengthening them as a main pillar of the radio. Conceived as a two-year project, MigRaBe successfully achieved its goals and won the first integration award granted by the City of Berne in 2004. Collaborating with the Swiss radio school [klipp+klang](#), migrant producers were introduced to methods of multilingual broadcasting. InterRadional is one of the regular multilingual programs currently produced in Radio RaBe, aiming to show a diversity of opinions and experiences, as well build bridges across cultures.

## 2. Independent refugee/migrant media projects sometimes cooperating with community radios

Within the context of the 'refugee crisis', community media remain a crucial point of contact, mediation and training and can act as catalysts for further (multi)media initiatives and projects led by migrants and refugees.

Some high-profile projects are also being initiated independently via online broadcasting, and only at a later stage connect with traditional community media. According to Larry Macaulay, founder and editor of Refugee Radio Network in Hamburg, "*Today migrants are taking control over their own narrative across Europe*". Macaulay became an activist in the 90s during the Abacha military junta for pro democracy in Nigeria. There was an independent radio station created by exiles called Radio Democracy and he joined to help spread the message across the Western part of Nigeria. Since then, he has understood the power of radio as a tool to educate and raise awareness about the challenges refugees face, which is why he created RRN.

- ✓ **Refugee Radio Network Germany**
- ✓ **Radio Ghetto Italy**
- ✓ **ReGeneration Radio Italy**

## Refugee Radio Network Germany

**On-air since:** 2014

**Producers:** team of 7 people

**Languages:** English, German and multilingual productions

**Topics:** Migration, life of refugees in Europe, arts, culture

**Airtime:** 24 x 7

**Broadcast:** [Internet streaming](#) / [Internet Archive](#) / on FM through partner radios

**Specialty:** Social inclusion



[Refugee Radio Network](#) is a self-organized 24-hour online radio, in which own and guest productions run in many languages, also through cooperation with community radios like FSK in Hamburg, Radio Corax in Halle and others.

It was started as an independent network for migrants and refugees in Germany, to provide an alternative voice to mainstream media. *“When we started, there was a lot of negative narratives in mainstream media about people like myself,”* the founder said. *“We are dangerous, we are terrorists, we are rapists ... in order to deconstruct that we had to engage. And, how do we engage? By having our own alternative voice.”*

The [team](#) of Refugee Radio Network is multinational, led by the founder, moderator and managing editor, a refugee rights activist from Nigeria. Other team members are from Afghanistan, Syria, Gambia and Somalia.

Since launching in 2014, Refugee Radio Network reaches over 90,000 listeners per week on radio and over 1.2 million listeners online through SoundCloud. It began with one program but today has expanded to 30 programs reaching communities across Germany in languages including English, Arabic, German and Somali. RRN is often run by up to 20 individuals at a time. This includes volunteer independent producers that have never used a computer nor had media training before, as well as professionals - refugees who were journalists back home.

The [programs](#) address a range of issues faced by refugee communities, from topics such as discrimination to inequality within refugee groups, as well as integration and cultural understanding in Germany. RRN cooperates with the network of German and Austrian community radios so that its contents are available both online and via FM. In turn, RRN rebroadcasts refugee programs produced locally by the partner radios.

The key issues of who is entitled to speak and who decides what is relevant are at the heart of the project: *“If we allow others to tell our story for us, we are doomed.”*

## Radio Ghetto Italy

**On-air since:** Every summer since 2012

**Producers:** Team of volunteers and seasonal migrant workers

**Languages:** Bambara, Jola, Wolof, Pular, Moré, Arabic, French, English and Italian

**Topics:** Life of seasonal migrant workers in Apulia / Music / Culture

**Airtime:** Variable

**Broadcast:** Locally 97.0 FM / [Internet Archive](#) / on FM through partner radios in Italy and Africa / Facebook page [Radio Ghetto](#)

**Specialty:** Awareness-raising about slavery and exploitation in agriculture



[Radio Ghetto](#) is a participative radio project giving a voice to migrant communities living in the countryside of Foggia, Apulia. The area has an important agricultural production and relies on seasonal, mostly migrant workers to carry out all activities of the agricultural cycle. The living conditions of most migrants and their families don't meet any basic safety or humane standards. The radio initiative started in the summer of 2012, bringing all necessary transmission equipment on-site. Since then, it comes alive with the voices of volunteers and farm workers every summer, providing a space for local debate and information. Until the summer of 2016, Radio Ghetto broadcasted directly from the "Gran Ghetto" (the migrant workers living quarters) of Rignano Garganico, also aiming to build bridges with the local Italian community. After the eviction of the workers from that area, the radio moved to the former airport landing strip of Borgo Mezzanone, South of Foggia.

During the broadcast, workers discuss issues and difficulties of their life and work, play music, comment news and organise rap contests for rappers and singers. Their day-to-day stories come to life and find a place for expression. Throughout the years, Radio Ghetto has become a place where to reflect on migratory dynamics and life in the area – a free space for debate, entertainment, relaxation and arguments. Most importantly, Radio Ghetto is an alternative to isolation and exploitation. The past five years of broadcast have been made possible by the commitment and enthusiasm of the ghetto residents, who animate the radio after exhausting days working in the fields, as well as by different volunteers and activists who join the team each summer.

Besides providing news and entertainment by and for the local ghetto community, the radio started also producing programs in [Italian](#), aimed at informing the Italian public about the exploitative reality of agricultural work, which are re-broadcasted through Italian partner radios. Since 2015 the project also produces [Radio Ghetto Africa](#), a half-hour broadcast in French available through partner radios in Africa, with the aim of raising awareness about the reality of agricultural work in Italy – not to discourage new migrants, but to equip them with better knowledge.



## ReGeneration Radio Italy



**Online since:** April 2017

**Producers:** Associazione Arcivescovo Ettore di Filippo

**Languages:** Italian, English, French, Mandinka, Arabic, Bangla and many other local languages from Africa and Asia

**Topics:** Social activism, nonviolence, interculturalism, international solidarity, herbalist wisdom, art and interreligious dialogue

**Reception:** [Mixcloud](#), Facebook Page [ReGeneration Radio](#)

**Specialty:** Interculturalism, live music, migrants' talents and opinions

[ReGeneration Radio](#) is a non-financed grassroots free traveling media lab, intended as an expression channel for migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, adults and minors, who are resident or not in reception centres in the Molise region, southern Italy. The web radio broadcasts not only music of all kinds, ages and parts of the world, sometimes live recordings, but also insights and reflections on social activism, nonviolence, intercultural solidarity, herbalist wisdom, art and inter-religious dialogue. Since the foundation in April 2017 ReGeneration Radio has recorded and edited up to ten episodes, involving at least one hundred people in different reception centres.

### 3. Specific projects developed through dedicated funding to support multilingual refugee/migrant media productions within existing community media

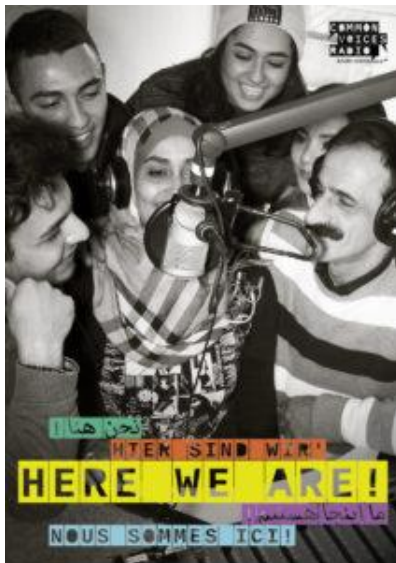
In the late 1990s a group of radio activists from Austria, Germany and Switzerland started promoting closer cooperation between radio producers of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds through multilingual programming. The working group *babelingo* focused on how to conduct programs using two or more languages within the same program (multilingual programming) versus plurilingual programming (different programs in various native languages). Some of the methods implemented by the activists participating in the workshops were language hopping, the use of a bridge language or summarizing. The listeners could enjoy multilingual productions by broadcasters with different backgrounds, some of whom had never before used a language different than their own on air. This led to several joint projects to develop and implement intercultural radio training schemes and toolkits, which are still used today.

It became evident that intercultural programming could bring a number of benefits to volunteer-based organisations like community radios: a stronger cooperation between different sub-groups, a shared sense of responsibility for the organisation as a common project and the facilitation of participatory processes. Whilst multilingual methods are now included in most basic radio trainings offered to volunteers, specific funding from governmental authorities and private foundations is needed for more articulated intercultural projects.

- ✓ ***Common Voices* on Radio Corax Germany**
- ✓ ***Die MIGRAS* on Radio LoRa Switzerland**
- ✓ ***Radio Brhan* on Radio LoRa Switzerland**
- ✓ ***Salam Show* on Radio Ara Luxembourg**
- ✓ ***Our Voice* on Radio Dreyeckland Germany**



## Common Voices on Radio Corax Germany



**On-air since:** 2016

**Producers:** 3 coordinators + team

**Languages:** English, German, Persian, Arabic and French

**Topics:** Life, art, culture and music

**Airtime:** Every Thursday from 4:10 to 6 pm

**Broadcast:** Halle 95.9 FM / [Internet streaming](#) / [Internet archive](#) / Facebook page [Common Voices](#) / Twitter page: @CommonvoicesCX

**Specialty:** Intercultural dialogue and discussion

[Radio Corax](#) is a community radio in Halle, Germany active since 2000 and involving around 300 volunteers.

*Common Voices* is a multilingual radio show made by refugees and migrants in Halle and surroundings. It is produced collectively and broadcast live on Radio Corax on a weekly basis, and also on StHörfunk radio in Schwäbisch Hall.<sup>59</sup> The producers want to “*pick up questions, issues and problems which are relevant for refugees and discuss them on air. Together we want to use the radio as a bridge in order to create a more sympathetic community.*”

*Common Voices* is coordinated by three German trainers, involves more than 20 people from all over the world and produces the multilingual show in English, German, Persian, Arabic and French.

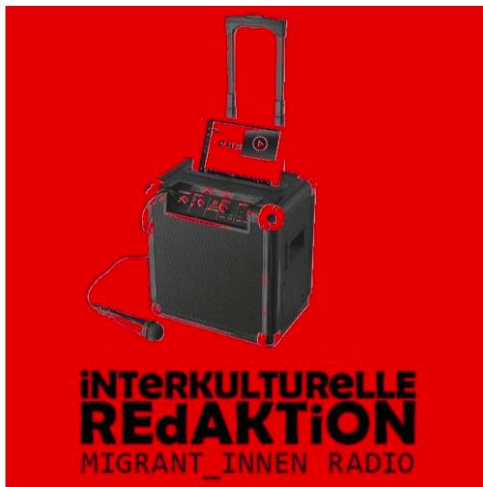
The people from *Common Voices* see radio as a bridge between communities, not only about refugees: “*it is more about gathering people and their relevant topics from everywhere*”.

The project is funded by the Hallianz für Vielfalt Foundation, by the Ministry for Health and Welfare of Sachsen-Anhalt and by the Regional Office for Integration.

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<sup>59</sup> You can listen to Common Voices on StHörfunk on 97,5 FM in the region of Schwäbisch Hall and on 104,8 FM in Crailsheim or via live stream (every Monday from 10 to 12).

## Die MIGRAS on Radio LoRa Switzerland



**On-air since:** 2016

**Producers:** team

**Languages:** German, Swiss German, English, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, Kurdish, Farsi and many other languages

**Topics:** Life in Switzerland as a migrant or refugee / racial profiling / integration

**Airtime:** Once a month on Sunday during OPK (Offenes Politikanal) from 6 to 8 pm

**Broadcast:** Zurich 97.5 FM / 88.1 Cable / DAB+ / Internet streaming / Internet Archive

**Specialty:** Multilingual, intercultural approach

Broadcasting since 1983, [Radio LoRa](#) in Zurich is one of the oldest community radios in Europe. Men and women with a migrant background have been involved in the radio since its onset and today programs are aired in more than 20 languages. Four of the seven employees managing the radio in 2017 have a refugee or migrant background (Colombia, Philippines, Syria, Turkey).

Radio LoRa started experimenting with multilingual, intercultural programming in the early 2000's, recognising that the presence of diversity within the radio was not in itself a guarantee of intercultural dynamics. *Die MIGRAS* is the most recent of a series of intercultural projects inviting volunteers with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to produce programs together using German as the main language.

The multilingual broadcasts discuss various topics related to migration (employment, health, arts, music, generational and gender relations, etc.) and are produced by groups of 3–8 people who haven't yet worked together at the radio and who have rarely or never used German on air. Producers have a diversity of biographies and experiences ("first", "second" or "third" generation migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, people with a double citizenship, non-German speaking Swiss, mother tongue German speakers...). Two workshops on multilingual programming and intercultural work round off the project.

*Die MIGRAS* is supported by the Zürcher Spendenparlament, by the Integration Fund of the City of Zurich and by the Integration Office of the Canton of Zurich.

## Radio Brhan on Radio LoRa Switzerland



**On-air since:** 2016

**Producers:** team of 5 women and 4 men

**Languages:** Tigrinya

**Topics:** News and information about life in Switzerland / humour / music / entertainment

**Airtime:** Once a month on Saturday from 1 to 2:30 pm

**Broadcast:** Zurich 97.5 FM / 88.1 Cable / DAB+ / [Internet streaming](#) / [Internet Archive](#) / Facebook page [Radio Brhan](#) / [YouTube](#)

**Specialty:** Topics of interest to the Eritrean community, in particular youth

[Radio Brhan](#) is a project initiated by Asylorganisation Zurich in cooperation with the Swiss radio school [klipp + klang](#) and Radio LoRa. The broadcast talks about life in Zurich and in Switzerland from the perspective of Eritrean refugees, broadcasting news, music and cultural topics in Tigrinya. The editorial group is composed of 9 members who meet regularly for trainings and then broadcast live once a month. Some of them worked as professional radio and print journalists in Eritrea before fleeing to Switzerland and requesting asylum, others were teachers, authors or actors.

Asylorganisation Zurich identified the need for specific support and capacity building of the Eritrean community in order for a radio broadcast in the Tigrinya language to be produced. The broadcast focuses on the everyday life and integration of the Eritrean community in Zurich and surroundings. Topics related to the situation in Eritrea are not part of the program as a conscious choice. *Brhan* means light, brightness, clarity in Tigrinya. “For a bright future” is the wish of the producers regarding their life in Switzerland.

The funding for the project is provided by the Integration Fund of the City of Zurich and by the Integration Office of the Canton of Zurich.

## *Salam Show on Radio Ara Luxembourg*



**On-air since:** 2016

**Producers:** 1 responsible producer (female) + various collaborators

**Languages:** Arabic, English and French

**Topics:** Luxembourg's local culture and institutions / Arabic culture / refugee integration

**Airtime:** Every Monday from 2 to 3 pm

**Reception:** Luxembourg 102.9 & 105.2 FM / 102.0 Cable / [Internet streaming](#) / [Internet archive](#) / Facebook page [Salam Show](#)

**Specialty:** Multilingual, intercultural approach

[Radio ARA](#) is the only community radio in Luxembourg. For the past 25 years, it has thrived mostly thanks to the commitment of volunteers and is a true community media project, based on participation of citizens and associations, diversity in music programming, diversity of languages and intergenerational participation.

*Salam Show* on Radio Ara/Graffiti is the first radio show in Arabic, English and French in Luxembourg, that brings together the Arabic and Luxembourgish community.

The producer and her team discuss topics of interest to newcomers from Arab speaking countries and provide information relevant to the integration process. From interviews with locals to newcomers retelling their journey, first impressions, their dreams and aspirations... all rounded off with the best Arabic music.

*Salam Show* (Salam means "peace" in Arabic) aims to help refugees integrate in society, reduce barriers between both refugees and locals, fill gaps and create an understanding for refugees and their issues. It actively supports an intercultural, mutual integration process, based on the principle that different cultures can enrich one another and create something new.

*Salam Show* is supported by mateneen – Oeuvre Nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte.

## Our Voice on Radio Dreyeckland Germany



**On-air since:** 2017

**Producers:** team of 6 people

**Languages:** German, English, French, Arabic, Kurdish and Turkish

**Topics:** Journalism / Migration / Integration and life of migrants and refugees in Germany

**Airtime:** Every second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 4 to 5 pm

**Reception:** Freiburg 102.3 FM / Cable / [Internet streaming](#) / [Internet archive](#)

**Specialty:** Multilingual, intercultural approach

[Radio Dreyeckland](#) is a community radio in the South-West of Germany, involving 150 volunteers in the production of diverse and multilingual broadcasts. No other radio in the region offers such a variety of programs, with more than 50 music shows covering all styles and genres, 17 broadcasts in different languages, daily news and coverage of political topics, as well as a special focus on culture and sub-culture, gender, environment and literature.

*Our Voice* is produced by a group of journalists of different backgrounds from Syria, Turkey, Togo, The Gambia and Cameroon. In their show, they aim to show people that they are more than “just” refugees. They talk about personal stories that people have experienced as they were fleeing from their countries, problems that they face in Germany, and their daily lives. Furthermore, they discuss current political issues or new laws in the field of migration and refugee policies. The show is addressed to everyone and currently moderated in German, English, French, Arabic, Kurdish and Turkish. New languages as well as refugees who do not have any experience in journalism are welcome to join. Workshops and trainings are organised based on the principle that “Everyone can do radio – radio can give voice to the voiceless!”

The programs are also included in the framework of broadcasts produced by Radio Dreyeckland for the European project [Respect Words](#).

*Our Voice* is supported by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung and by the Foundation SEZ (Stiftung Entwicklungszusammenarbeit Baden-Württemberg).

## Concluding remarks

There may be different reasons for participating in community media initiatives – as a hobby, as training for a future journalistic career, out of a passion for music – but for most people with a migrant background it is one of the few opportunities to exercise a basic human right: the freedom to receive and impart information.

Migration is not a new phenomenon in Europe, but creating inclusive societies requires the political willing to actively promote intercultural processes. Migrants – including 2nd and 3rd generation citizens with a migrant background – are seldom experts, and even more rarely, journalists. Unlike most ‘professional’ media, community media have a relevant history of capacity building and inclusion of refugees, migrants, and second & third generation citizens – in both production and management. Within the context of the ‘refugee crisis’, community media are a crucial point of contact, mediation and training, enabling the rights of access to information and of freedom of expression, as well as fulfilling the need to speak in one’s own voice. Legal recognition, support and funding are needed at the local, national and international level to enable community media to operate.

Furthermore, through specific multilingual and intercultural approaches, community media can question the distinction between ‘migrant’ and ‘native’ and aspire to a broader understanding of culture. For this, specific resources and training are necessary. If culture is sketched as a heterogeneous, complex, evolving package of experiences and values, rather than linked to fixed national identities or other reductive definitions, it can be the basis for embarking on a truly intercultural integration path.



## Executive summary and recommendations:

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European societies are diverse and multilingual due to fluxes of migration over centuries. Diversity and multilingualism are therefore part of the European identity. With the increased arrival since 2005 of refugees fleeing from conflicts in Syria and other countries, the portrayal of refugees, but also of migrants who have lived in European countries for a long time, is dominated by stereotypes and negative connotations. Migration-related issues have even become the core topic in national elections for right and far-right groups, often in complicity with boulevard media and assisted by the algorithmic logic of social media platforms. But even quality media cope only rarely with the needs of refugees and migrants and seldom try to make their voices heard. This study aims at identifying the needs of refugees and migrants in the domain of media communication and highlights existing and possible responses by community media.

In the first part of the study Salvatore Scifo gives an overview of the concepts of community media as third media sector - beside public service and commercial media - and its definition and recognition by European institutions and UNESCO. Community media are defined as mostly local, independent not-for-profit media which provide access to training, production and distribution facilities. Community media appear mostly in form of community radio. The participatory approach to content production leads to the fact that they manage to include marginalised groups and contribute to community development, social inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

In the second section Jonas Hassemer and Brigitta Busch analyses ethnographic interviews with refugees they conducted in 2017 in Austria. The aim of the interviews was to identify what role media in general and community media in particular play for (recently arrived) refugees and migrants in response to their particular needs and with regard to their human right to freedom of expression, which includes the right to information. Among the central needs expressed, they highlight the role of networks in general – virtual and face to face – as they afford social capital with regard to problem solving (administrative procedures, access to health care and social welfare, housing etc.). Local NGOs, social initiatives and cultural organisations equally play an important role as informal networks that contribute to the shared experiences of newcomers. Access to mainstream media, both as part of the audience and in terms of active participation, is often difficult for newcomers/refugees. As the group of people that is described by the term ‘refugee’ is by far not homogeneous, the barriers encountered are also diverse and are experienced in different ways. Among them are the prevailing monolingual orientation of mainstream media, the lack of meta-knowledge relevant to the local media landscape, and the scarcity of available roles as a result from dominant discourses that assign newcomers certain stereotypical roles while denying them acknowledgement as integral parts of the audience.

These barriers could be overcome by specific projects or more permanent involvement with community media. Because of their open and flexible nature, they offer activities that help bridge language barriers, provide a less constrained space for alternative narratives and self-representation, and accord socially recognised positions for refugees and migrants, where their voices can be heard. As demonstrated in this study, community media can help getting

access to knowledge, in particular for coping with the new environment, in establishing local networks and facilitating language learning.

In the third section Nadia Bellardi opens an insight to a series of good practice examples across Europe on how refugees and migrants can get active in community media or have set up their own communicative structures to get a voice and to communicate with the broader society. These examples demonstrate how community media can meet the communicative needs of refugees and migrants by offering training, space for self-representation and offering points of entry to local networks. This bottom-up approach to content production leads in many cases to multilingual media that reflect to a very high extent the linguistic and cultural diversity of the society.

Based on their findings, the authors propose the following list of actions to improve migrants' and refugees' access to media as spaces of public communication and in order to facilitate their exercise of their right to freedom of expression:

## **Recommendations for an inclusive media policy with respect to migrants' and refugees' right to freedom of expression and access to information**

### **Policy-makers should:**

- recognise the contribution of locally based and community-owned media to dialogue, inclusion and a more socially representative media landscape;
- include and consult with community media when developing intercultural integration or inclusion policies at the national, regional and local level;
- develop adequate policies to implement at national level the European Parliament (2008) *Resolution on Community Media in Europe* and the Council of Europe (2009) *Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Role of Community Media in Promoting Social Cohesion and Intercultural Dialogue*, in particular by
  - Giving legal recognition to community media as third media sector, alongside public and commercial media;
  - Committing funds at national, regional and local level to support the sector;
  - Encouraging studies on good practices, outreach and quality development in local and community media and the exchange of good practices;
  - Facilitating capacity building and training of local and community media staff with an inclusive approach;
- encourage and support further research on refugees' and migrants' needs regarding their orientation, participation and social inclusion in local society and structures

### **Civil society organisations should:**

- develop media partnerships with local and community media to raise awareness and visibility of concerns and issues of under-represented communities;
- support (critical) media literacy of organisations' members through participation in community media trainings and programs;
- encourage public service and commercial media to improve representation of social groups that are under-served, marginalised, neglected, or misrepresented.



**Public service and commercial media should:**

- recognise refugees and migrants as relevant and respected parts of the audience with specific interests and needs (such as concerning information about rights, services, resources and duties);
- develop media partnerships with community media aimed at multiplying visibility of content produced locally by people with a refugee or migrant background;
- support exchanges of training and contacts with community media;
- encourage the development and implementation of inclusion policies for personnel structure and content production.

**Community media should:**

- identify and tackle any barriers to access and participation for people with a refugee or migrant background to the stations' programming and management;
- strengthen partnerships and exchanges of good practice within the community media sector, in particular related to training formats for multilingual and intercultural programming;
- multiply visibility and access to media content and training through partnerships with civil society organisations, local institutions, public service and commercial media.

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## Links

### Radio LoRa

<http://www.lora.ch/>

<http://www.lora.ch/sendungen/aktuelle-sendungen>

<http://www.lora.ch/sendungen/aktuelle-sendungen?mode=2&terms=&list=Radio+Somalia>

<https://soundcloud.com/user-934179218/sets/die-migras-interkulturelle>

<http://www.lora.ch/sendungen/aktuelle-sendungen?mode=2&terms=&list=Radio+Brhan+>

<http://www.lora.ch/aktuell/mitteilungen/506-radio-brhan>

<https://www.facebook.com/RadioBrhan>

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=radio+brhan](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=radio+brhan)

### Radio Orange

<http://o94.at/>

<http://streamintern.o94.at/live.m3u>

[http://o94.at/radio/sendereihe/ada\\_vapuru/](http://o94.at/radio/sendereihe/ada_vapuru/)

<http://streamintern.o94.at/live.m3u>

<https://cba.fro.at/series/new-life-in-vienna>

[http://o94.at/wp-content/uploads/producers\\_NewLifeInVienna\\_EN.pdf](http://o94.at/wp-content/uploads/producers_NewLifeInVienna_EN.pdf)

### Radio ARA

<http://www.ara.lu/>

<http://stream.ara.lu/stream.mp3>

<https://www.salam-ara.com/podcast-الحوارات/>

<https://www.facebook.com/salaamlux/>

### Okto TV

<https://okto.tv/de/>

<https://okto.tv/de/series/58e4c5c687df4>

### Join Media

<http://www.join-media.eu/en/>



**Refugee Radio Network**

<http://www.refugeeradionetwork.net/>

<http://www.refugeeradionetwork.net/listen-on-demand--podcast.html>

<http://www.refugeeradionetwork.net/moderatoren.html>

<http://www.refugeeradionetwork.net/programmhinweise.html>

**Radio Ghetto**

<https://radioghettovocilibere.wordpress.com/>

<https://radioghettovocilibere.wordpress.com/archivio-trasmissioni/>

<https://www.facebook.com/radioghettovocilibere/>

<https://radioghettovocilibere.wordpress.com/radio-ghetto-italia/>

<https://radioghettovocilibere.wordpress.com/radio-ghetto-africa/>

**ReGeneration Radio**

<https://www.facebook.com/ReGenerationRadio.UnityandLove/>

**Radio Corax**

<http://radiocorax.de/>

<http://www.commonvoices.radiocorax.de/>

<https://www.facebook.com/commonvoicesradio/>

**Radio RaBe**

[www.rabe.ch](http://www.rabe.ch)

<http://stream.rabe.ch/livestream/rabe-mid.mp3>

<http://rabe.ch/interradional/>

**Radio Dreyeckland**

<https://rdl.de/>

<https://rdl.de/sendung/our-voice-die-stimme-der-unsichtbaren>

**Radio school klipp+klang**

<http://klippklang.ch/>

The role played by media in framing the public debate on migration, with often divisive narratives focussing on the threats that refugees and migrants can pose to the security, welfare and cultures of European societies, has attracted much attention in political and academic circles. While it is essential to properly equip and prepare journalists for the challenging task of contextualised and evidence-based reporting on this complex topic, it is equally vital to ensure that sufficient opportunities are provided to migrants themselves to develop an independent voice. This report explores the media habits and particular needs of refugees and migrants in the domain of media communication. Good practice examples show how community media can meet the communicative needs of refugees and migrants by offering training and space for self-representation, and by offering points of entry into local networks. Their bottom-up approach to content production contributes to a multilingual media environment that reflects the diversity of European societies and recognises marginalised communities as integral and respected part of the audience.



[www.coe.int/freedomofexpression](http://www.coe.int/freedomofexpression)

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.