

TEXT BOOK OF JOURNALISM

**INTRODUCTION
TO DIVERSITY
REPORTING**

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(IN CO-AUTHORSHIP WITH
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**INTRODUCTION
TO DIVERSITY REPORTING**

FRIEDRICH NAUMANN FOUNDATION FOR FREEDOM

Friedrich Naumann
STIFTUNG **FÜR DIE FREIHEIT**



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„Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom“ works in more than 60 countries in the world to protect and promote liberal values such as human rights, open society, education, social market economics, responsibility and personal freedom.

In 2016, within this field of activities, Friedrich Naumann Foundation in collaboration with The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, with The Institute of Democracy, Media and Culture Exchange as well as with local partners started a three-year educational project for the journalists from the South Caucasus.

Three groups consisting of fifteen journalists of different age, professional background and experience from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia received high-level training and acquired practical skills regarding economics, cultural values and impartiality of journalism in the area of conflicts.

This educational project aims at contributing to the development of impartial journalism and establishing contacts between the representatives of regional media.

Under this theoretical and practical collaboration between the Journalists from the South Caucasus and the international and local experts were created three textbooks in impartial journalism in following fields: economics, cultural values and conflicts.

Peter-Andreas Bochmann

Project Director for The Friedrich Naumann
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About the author

Dr Pandeli Pani has been working as a journalist and a consultant and has been holding training for 25 years. He has a number of times arranged and led training to prepare journalists in Ukraine, Balkans, CIS and Central Asia countries. As a consultant, he is mainly working on issues such as transforming the state radio broadcasting into a public one (East Europe, Ukraine) and establishing a communal radio station (South-East Europe, Myanmar. Pandeli Pani was a visiting professor at the Free University of Berlin, at Bonn and Jena universities as well as at the Tirana University, the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University in Bulgaria and at the Tbilisi State University.

About the co-author

Dr Ulrike Fischer-Butmaloiu is a journalist, a training leader and an assistant professor. She was leading the training with the International Board of Journalists at the Free University of Berlin in which there were participants from all over Europe, CIS and the US. She was invited to hold training, lectures and seminars in Egypt, Palestine, Ghana, Cambodia, Central Asia, Balkans and the Caucasus. Fischer-Butmaloiu gave courses in Media Culture, Political Communication and Practical Journalism. The topic of her PhD dissertation is Russian Median in the Times of Crisis.

Free and independent media plays an important role in preserving democratic culture in a country. It contributes to forming public opinion and thus fulfils the most crucial purpose of the society. Journalists are given special privileges and opportunities for their research in order to then be able to properly accomplish this purpose. Nevertheless, these advantages come with a great responsibility against their future audience and in general, against the whole society. This responsibility implies not only utter cautiousness when it comes to the matters of an extreme delicacy such as conflicts or information about capital markets and financial products but also the necessity of continuous advancement as a professional.

In Georgia, in Armenia and in Azerbaijan journalism education aims at training the journalists who can generally write about anything. Although such broad spectrum education allows them to be able to review any topic, the fact that they are busy working on daily news and their skills are more general rather than profound so their professional level is determined by how good their general education and knowledge is. However, this leaves them almost no time to study new subjects and deepen their knowledge. This issue appears especially problematic when these journalists have to report news on conflicts, crisis and disasters.

By holding the trainings about reporting on finance and business, cultural diversity and conflicts Friedrich Naumann's Foundation for Freedom responds not only to the needs of South Caucasus countries in regard to those topics but also to the growing expectations toward the journalists all over the world as journalists are required to have better social and professional skills every day.

In which manner should the journalists write about financial matters so that their reportage was interesting, lively and clear for the reader? How should they acquire information on financial institutions and business companies? How should they remain impartial when writing about crisis, conflicts and war? What are the criteria to measure the qualifications of a journalist in the times of crisis? How do stereotypes and superstition influence the media in the country? What should a discrimination-free reportage be like? – These are some of the subjects and topics that were discussed during the workshops held by the foundation. Theoretical knowledge was then reinforced with practical exercise. During the workshop, the participants were divided into three groups and worked on joint projects carrying out the interviews and enquiries in order to complete the obtained information and point out the most critical aspects. In the end, the groups reviewed the projects together and the participants got the opportunity to talk about their work and discuss the issues of journalism ethics.

While working in international groups the participants got the chance to explore intersecting topics and widen their professional range as well as establish contacts that are useful for their future activities in the field. Since the workshops help participants develop supplementary skills it gives them the opportunity to acquire new profiles which ensures their higher professional market value. Great interest from the participants, lively discussions during and after the workshops and joint projects clearly demonstrate how crucial such events are in raising the level of professionalism in journalists.

And last but not the least it is nonetheless important that the workshops let journalists of different cultural and national backgrounds get to know each other while working together which helped them get rid of many superstitions and stereotypes. Each participant left the workshop with the hope that they can provide better-prepared information for their audience as well as contribute to raising sympathy and understanding between the nations.

Pandeli Pani,
November 2017.

INTRODUCTION

We hear a lot about the importance of European values. And the larger the EU becomes, the more important it is for the people who live in it to realize that their union has been built on common values. But what are European values?

Human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to minorities – these values are embedded in the EU treaties.

When speaking about European values the most journalists refer usually to human rights. Human rights involve questions of law, morality and political philosophy as well as practical problems and how to deal with them.

JOURNALISM – A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Journalism and human rights interact at several points. Journalism can be seen as a human right – right to inform and be informed – on the one hand, on the other hand human rights cannot be spread, develop and protect without support of the media and journalism. The media – radio, television, print and online – plays a central and crucial role in reporting human rights issues and promoting those. The media has also a vital role to present communities to one another and to seek greater understanding of them all.

However journalism is a double-edged sword. On one side journalism is concerned with facts-on-the-ground, what-happened-when. But journalism also includes opinion-making (editorials, op-eds and columns), and in that sense is broader than mere reporting. This means that, though they are essentially mostly observers, journalists can sometimes also be (powerful and opinionated) players.

The many humanitarian crises and armed bloody conflicts after the fall of the Iron Curtain not only destroyed human lives and long-established societies, but showed us quite plainly how effectively the media can contribute to dig moats and to tear communities apart by invoking the ghost of the past, fueling fears and prejudices, and by inciting and encouraging inter-ethnic conflicts. So in the case of defamation, hate speech and fueling intolerance instead of providing information that supports intercultural understanding, the media and journalism can be seen as instruments for human rights violations.

Prejudices and other -isms

Most people think of prejudices¹, hate speech or intolerance with regard of people of different ethnicities or races than one's own. In fact besides racism, there are many "-isms" like sexism, classism², anti-Semitism, ageism³, ableism⁴ and other forms of prejudice toward so called "others" or "outsiders", meaning people whom we perceive as different from our social or ethnic group.

Prejudices lead often to discrimination. So people may be discriminated because of their ethnicity, origin, race, religion, age, disability, political belief, sex or gender, sexual orientation, language, culture and on many other grounds.

This practical handbook is designed for working journalists to help them report fairly and accurate about "the other" and the diversities in society. It will help journalists to strengthen their awareness of the impact of words and images on society and avoid falling into traps of derogatory language and inadequate emphasis. In addition this guide will offer recommendations for reporting on ethnic and religious differences, gender issues, sexual minorities, persons with special needs, elderly, refugees and displaced persons, and different races.

¹ Prejudice is an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason; any preconceived opinion or feeling, favorable or unfavorable; unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes, especially of a hostile nature.

² Classism refers to prejudicial beliefs and or behavior towards "groups of persons sharing a similar social position and certain economic, political and cultural characteristics"

³ Ageism refers to prejudice or discrimination against a particular age-group and especially the elderly.

⁴ Ableism refers to the discrimination and prejudice towards people who are physically or mentally challenges.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY AS A NEWS TOPIC

Europe is changing and journalists' engagement with that change, as well as the promotion of diversity have become one of the pressing issues of today. Nowadays journalists have expanded coverage of human rights issues into new areas like representation of the different communities in society and promoting and encouraging respect for the diversities whether they are related to ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation or other differences between individuals. Yet much progress has been made, examples of ethnic stereotypes and bias, insulting language, and one-sided reporting can still be found without looking too hard. Unfortunately the media still boost the notion that difference signifies inferiority, that minority groups pose a threat to the nation and do not deserve equal rights or treatment. However the opposite is the case: discrimination and intolerance based on religion, gender, social status, age, physical and emotional disability, sexual orientation, and other characteristics threaten the stability of a country or region and provide fertile ground to those who seek to promote extremism.

One of the biggest challenges that journalists face in their work is to write about people who are unlike themselves in fundamental ways. Whether a source is of another ethnicity, religious faith, sexual orientation, social class, or economic status, the role of the journalist is to convey accurately that person's perspective, ideas or worldview, even when the differences are profound.

Most of the readers/viewers/listeners have a very poor level of knowledge about minority social groups and that few of them have personal relations with persons of another ethnicity, religious faith, sexual orientation. In those cases, audiences become particularly reliant upon the media to inform them. That is not to say that the media simply tell us what to think – people do not absorb media messages uncritically. But they are key to the setting of agendas and focusing public interest on particular subjects, which operates to limit the range of arguments and perspectives that inform public debate. In this context journalism has a strong and important role in tackling stereotypes and misinformation about ethnicity, religion or sexual

orientation by reporting in a professional manner and offering facts and informed opinion, which allow the reader, viewer or listener to make up their own mind and seek further information.

Accurate, fair, truth-telling, sympathetic and in-depth reporting is critical in promoting public understanding of diversity, minority communities, and human rights, as well as confronting prejudice and challenging radical political agendas. Strictly speaking no society is truly homogeneous, and the transition to democracy cannot be accomplished without recognition of that fact and respecting diversity. So reflecting and covering the needs and aspirations of all members of society in the media, and giving a voice to the voiceless, is not simply a matter of fairness and objectivity but a step in offering everyone the opportunity to have a share in the responsibilities and advantages of citizenship.

Reporting on diversities is not limited to events in a society. With globalization and the increasing interaction between citizens of different countries around the world, the importance of reporting on diversities is becoming even greater. The events that happen in one country can have serious and direct impact on other countries or nations. Thus, the problem in one country can become a problem in the region or beyond.

Progress through diversity

By maintaining and fostering diversity we encourage respect for diversities based on race, sex, origin, sexual orientation and other factors that distinguish individuals from one another. Instead of being anxious or prejudiced due to the existence of differences, people are encouraged to accept that there are different interests, values and physical and emotional characteristics of the community in which they function.

Maintenance and respect for diversity lead to reduction of discrimination and promotion of equal opportunities.

What characterizes the process of maintaining and fostering diversity in society?

- *Through it the reality is accepted that people differ in many ways.*
- *It establishes the consequences arising from the diversities.*
- *It proposes or imposes approaches that comprise these issues in the interest of the environment or society in general.*

The diversity represents value that deserves particular attention, especially through the media. It must be understood and cultivated as a condition for the existence of a quality journalism. To achieve mutual understanding, correct, accurate, clear and comprehensive reporting is essential. If a democratic society is expected to promote good relations between people, the media has the main role and responsibility in the representation of different communities in an objective and honest manner.

WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

Diversity is nothing more than a difference from the majority. As mentioned above no society is truly homogeneous, within a society people differ in many ways and it exist a variety of cultural groups. Those groups can share many characteristics which are different from the majority of the population. They include: culture, religion, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, class, gender, age, disability, health differences, ideological attitudes, political affinity, geographic location, marital status, work experience and lots of other things.

Many of us have a peculiar habit of assuming that those who differ from our norms are wrong. Therefore the diversity deserves particular attention, especially through the media, because diversity represents a value that must be understood, promoted and cultivated as a condition for a democratic society.

In Article 3 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity is stated: “Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.”

Diversity is often confused with inclusion but there are small differences between them. Inclusion of everyone ensures that all people can take part and the focus on diversity ensures that everybody can take part on their own terms. In this context the media has the main role and responsibility in the representation of different communities in an objective and honest manner.

WHAT ARE STEREOTYPES?

Long ago, the journalist Walter Lippmann wrote that societal feelings, beliefs, opinions and actions are responses to “pictures in our heads,” not to the world itself. And indeed many of us tend to view the world from a rather myopic view by using stereotypes. Stereotypes are perceptions or beliefs that we have for groups or individuals based on our previously formed opinions or views. Scientists have pointed out that the stereotype acts as both a justificatory device for categorical acceptance or rejection of a group, and as a screening or selective device to maintain simplicity in perception in thinking.

One general characteristic of stereotyping is the difference claimed with respect to the qualities associated with the members of in-group (‘us’) and out-group (‘the other’). Usually, out-groups are seen as more homogeneous than one’s own group and they are perceived as possessing less desirable traits than the in-group. In cultural stereotypes ‘the other’ is usually valued negatively in comparison with ‘us’ and our culture, which we see as ‘normal’, ‘natural’, and ‘correct’, and the customs and the ethical values of which we feel are universally valid.

The image of a country shows the same kind of personification: the country may be perceived as hostile, friendly, hospitable or frosty as if it were an alive human being with feelings and sensations of its own.

For example in Azerbaijani media is often used the stereotype Armenia is a hostile country and an Armenian is an enemy⁵. It has a “mirror” ver-

⁵ Example: “The chief coach noted that soon the names of the sportsmen who will come out on the ring in weight categories of 54 kg and 60 kg would be pronounced, and stressed that they had nothing to fear from the team of Armenia: “Armenians will be coming to our country with strongest boxers. Thus, for example, Narek Abgarian who appears in category of 51 kg is the champion of Europe. Others have been winning prizes in different competitions, too. But despite all this, we are capable of defeating the sportsmen of the hostile country.” (http://epfarmenia.am/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/glossary_eng-1.pdf)

sion in the media of Armenia: “Azerbaijan is a bitter enemy of Armenia, Azerbaijanis are eternal enemies of Armenians.”⁶

On the other side in Armenian media is often used the stereotype Azerbaijanis are vandals, barbarians, insolent, aggressive, bloodthirsty and mean people of uncertain ethnical origin.⁷ It has no direct “mirror” version in the media of Azerbaijan. Yet here the publications where Armenians are characterized as mean liars, as cruel, examples are cited when Armenians destroy the Azerbaijani cultural heritage.

Another stereotype in the Azerbaijani media is that Armenians have a tradition of political terror.⁸ This stereotype is mostly used in the context of the terrorist attack on the Armenian parliament on October 27, 1999 and the assignations of Turkish politicians and diplomats by members of Armenian nationalist groups. Defining the Armenian nation by these events looks like a wish to insult and artificially discredit. Naturally, it causes negativism in return. So in the media of Armenia is used the stereotype “Azerbaijan is a terrorist state, a criminal country that supports the international terrorism.”

⁶ “Azerbaijan is not a simple opponent of the Armenian party, it’s a bitter enemy that sees its primary goal to be not the search for reconciliation but the destruction of the whole Armenian nation.” (http://epfarmeria.am/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/glossary_eng-1.pdf)

⁷ Examples: “Aggressiveness of Azerbaijanis in 21st century has reached a climax. They commit cruel crimes with no mercy even for their families.”; “The blood-thirsty face of the Tatars of the Caucasus is still noticeable behind the back of an Azerbaijani.” (http://epfarmeria.am/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/glossary_eng-1.pdf)

⁸ Example “Considering the Armenian traditions of political terror, such an attempt can become too costly, and Serzh Sargsyan who headed the secret services of Armenia during the ‘quiet coup’ of 1998, accompanied by a number of political assassinations, knows this better than anyone else. But he is also aware: making official claims to Turkey is too risky for Yerevan.” (http://epfarmeria.am/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/glossary_eng-1.pdf)

Perceptions about a collective's identity are often called images. These include assumptions about the characteristics of the individual members of the collective, such as a minority, the inhabitants of a region – or a nation. Simply put, stereotypical images are characteristics imposed upon groups of people because of their race, nationality and sexual orientation, among others. Those images may be made up of certain physical facets possessed by the inhabitants, including such characteristics as skin color, facial features, color and styling of hair, and typical attire, and personality facets or personality and behavioral traits which are assumed to be shared by all members of that collective. These characteristics tend to be oversimplifications and generalizations of the groups involved and mass media also provide most of these pictures.

Yet the presence of stereotypes in the media itself is not negative, it is important to understand the ways in which stereotypes in these representations are defined and controlled, or what values and ideas are presented with them, what is the content, which is the function and significance of stereotypes. Because stereotypes often lead to the marginalization, segregation and discrimination of minority groups in society. Stereotypes underlie all prejudice and generalizations that are made by stereotypes may lead to a strong hatred among people and to acts of violence against minority groups.

So when the media fails to recognize and understand the effects of stereotyping, media can become an instrument for reinforcement of stereotypes, dissemination of prejudices and hate speech. Prejudice is the gateway to hurtful and intentional racism, homophobia and inferiority and superiority complex. For John Sanchez, professor of Communications at US-Penn State College, prejudice is like a cancer: “Prejudice makes the victim feel defensive and works on you like a cancer does on a person.” But then again through correct, accurate, clear and comprehensive reporting and representation of different communities in an objective and honest manner the media can also do something against these trends. And also the media plays a powerful role in changing the manner of expression in the society.

GENERAL TIPS ON REPORTING DIVERSITY

Words matter

A Georgian proverb says: “The tongue has no bones, yet it can break bones.” And a similar Armenian one says: “Something cut with sword will be healed, but cutting with tongue not”. – so be careful in your use of words and expressions. Words have a great power to hurt⁹ as well as to heal. Some words or descriptions used carelessly can offend those about whom they are written but also mislead the public opinion, increase ethnic and social tensions and stir up social unrest, even if that is not what you mean to do. So, being accurate is not just a matter of being politically correct. Therefore use balanced arguments and avoid words conveying negative or positive discrimination. Professional reporting involves using **neutral terms** that do not constitute an insult and injury to the feelings of others.

◆ Be aware of how members of a minority prefer to be called in the language in which you are writing. For example, the Chechen sub-ethnos in Georgia, who live in the Pankisi valley call themselves ‘Vaeppii’, the Georgians refer to them as ‘Kisti’ or ‘Kisturi’.

If a social group objects to the use of a particular word to describe its members, explore the history of that word. What associations and ideas does it communicate when it is used? Why do people object to it? Why do members of another social group continue to use it?

Here are some examples you can think and discuss about: the word “Armenian” (erməni) is widely used as an insult in Azerbaijan; черножопый, черножопый, or chernaia zhopa, directed against people from the Cauca-

⁹ The suicide of the former Chief of the Security Council of Georgia is believed to be related in some measure to a sustained campaign in the media that labelled him as homosexual; see: Quinn, S., Forced out: LGBT people in Georgia – a report on ILGA-Europe/COC fact-finding mission, August 2007.

sus countries like Chechnya, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia, it means “black-arse” in Russian;

◆ Some politicians, clerics, and others may use offensive terms and expressions when talking about minorities, however this does not mean you are obliged, as a journalist, to include this sort of slurs and insulting language in your articles and reports. If necessary, rephrase their words. If you decide to quote them directly, you should mention that members of the minority being talked about consider such language to be insulting and incendiary.

Here is an example how not just the interviewed person (a Georgian sociologist, Anzor Gabiani) but the journalist as well use offensive terms and expressions when talking about homosexuals, starting from the headline: “*How homosexuals trapped inexperienced boys.*”¹⁰

In the lead (opening paragraph) of the article we read: “*Since Georgian politicians directed their gaze towards west, the number of homosexuals in our country has raised significantly. Lesbians and “homiks” [offensive slang word for homosexual in Russian] opened their own club in Tbilisi, imagine yourself, they even intended to hold a parade. They even say that, they are all gathered in governmental institutions and are busy by tempting young office-seekers.*”

In his answer the sociologist says: “*Following to our country’s Europeanization, even in such a traditional country as Georgia, homosexuality is gaining more and more wide scale and difficult nature; what’s more, it is increasing. Unfortunately, young people and children, not knowing the taste of women yet, are being trapped in this process, some falsely and some by force. **Homosexuals have their own clan, like mafia**, all over the world and they support each other in everything, which is very dangerous, in nature.*”

◆ Avoid ‘demonizing’ adjectives, as wicked, cruel, brutal or barbaric. Instead, you need to report what you know about inappropriate behavior

¹⁰ Kviris Qronika (Week’s Chrinicle) (# 31 (345), 2008

and should provide as much information about the authenticity of the statements or descriptions of other people about that behavior.

Demonizing and profoundly scurrilous is e.g. also an expression like *LGBT-Kashia* used from a local journalist of the Asaval-Dasavali newspaper, after Guram Kashia, captain of Georgia's national football team wore a captain's armband adorned with the rainbow colors in support of LGBT rights during a match on October 15 for his professional team, Vitesse Arnhem, in the Netherlands: "*LGBT-Kashia must be cut off from the Georgian team!*".¹¹

◆ Be careful when you use phrases like "as everyone knows" "it is a known fact that..." or "it is evident that...". This sort of expression is usually the way some politicians, experts and journalists introduce their own biases or those of their own social group, and whatever it is that "everyone knows" is as likely to be false or based on prejudice as it is to reflect a real understanding of the facts of a particular situation.

Here is another example from the above mentioned interview with Anzor Gabiani: "*It is a known fact, that "mamamavlebi" try to find jobs in places with lots of boys, like schools or kindergartens, it's not hard to trap them falsely.*" Beside of the generalizing phrase "*It is a known fact ...*" Gabiani make also use of the word "*mamamavlebi*" – a Georgian slang for homosexual, which according to experts implies a criminalization connotation of the expression.

◆ Avoid making generalizations with potentially controversial subjects. Instead of using the word "all" use "some," or "often" instead of "always."

◆ Use clear expressions. These are essential in reporting on topic related to diversity. Ambiguity leads to loss of credibility and confidence in what you write

¹¹ In Asaval-Dasavali newspaper, October 19, 2017.

Pictures in our heads

One of the most difficult things for a journalist to do is write their story without bias. Bias is the showing of favoritism towards a specific topic or view point. As a journalist, you will be faced with a wide variety of topics to write about; some of these topics you may have never heard of, while others may personally affect you or a loved one. Writing a story without bias is difficult because if that topic personally affects you, your first instinct will be to write to persuade the audience. This, however, is not the job of the journalist. A journalist's job is to truthfully inform the public about the facts of the story.

As you gather material, try to recognize any biases, stereotypical images, or preconceived ideas you may have. As mentioned you will have of course your own opinions, but part of the role of journalism is to question your own and society's prejudices. Even though many stereotypes are based on completely illusory information or perceptions, scientists have identified that some of them do stem from a kernel of truth, and still others may be fairly accurate. However, although stereotypes may sometimes be relatively harmless, they can also lead to prejudice, which means hostile or negative feelings about people based on their group membership. For that reason:

◆ Never identify by faith or minority

Portray people as human beings instead of representatives of religious or ethnic groups or sexual minority. Refer to a person's religion, ethnic background, level of education, age, sexual or political orientation only when it is directly relevant to the story and only in cases when you consider that it is necessary to understand the essence of some questions.

When you mention ethnicity, sexual or political orientation and so on, provide appropriate context, or more information.

◆ Avoid sensationalism based on stereotypes and prejudices

Everyone is different, so treat members of minorities as the individuals they are. Don't portray one person's behavior as if it were general to all in the same faith or minority as for example suggested in the above

mentioned headline: *“How homosexuals trapped inexperienced boys.”* And don’t ascribe familiar characteristics to them all. Even though it may look from the outside as if all members of a community have the same traits, habits or a single perspective, life is never so simple. Some may behave as all in the minority from which they come are fabled to do so. But most will not. For example, some gay men are effeminate (as are some straight men), and some lesbians are boyish, but not all of them are so; as well as not all blacks are athletic.

To inform objectively, at first you should analyze your own attitudes and perceive whether they contain any bias. Identify your own stereotypes and prejudices as well as those of your in-group and make sure generalized comments do not affect your reporting and do not cast discredit on an ethnic or religious minority.

Talk to as many people as possible and present a range of views in as nuanced and clear a manner as possible. Use a broader network of expert sources. And spend at least a whole day with a homeless Roma women or man, a transgender or a refugee to understand what their lives are really like. What are their hopes and fears? Do they conform to your stereotypes or not?

Also never let your personal experience influence you when reporting about a minority, because it is irrelevant. Look for facts and logical explanations and not for culprits.

◆ **Be aware of creating negative images:** Minorities carry the burden of being different. Don’t make them synonymous with the things that worry everyone, like terrorism, lawbreakers, delinquents, intellectually challenged (of low intelligence; stupid) and less able, drug dealer, thieves, arms smuggler, oppression of women, forced marriage, fraudulent benefits claims, etc.

For example A member of the Armenian parliament, Manvel Badeyan, Republican Party, offended a journalist who asked him a question by comparing him with a Yazidi street cleaner: *“Are you really that low-levelled*

*that you think like that? If this question was asked by some Yazidi on the street I wouldn't be surprised, but do you really think like that?"*¹²

The most important dictum to remember is the fact that crime, poverty or intelligence, do not have any ethnical color. And also keep in mind that crime and poverty could have some systemic explanations, so dig deep inside the system.

◆ **Avoid 'us and them' imagery:** Being Georgian (Armenian/Azeri) gives everyone the same rights and responsibilities. Remember that most people who belong to minorities (e.g. Kists, Abkhazians etc.) are Georgian- (e.g. Assyrians, Kurds etc. are Armenian) (e.g. Lezgins, Talysh, Tats, Avars or Ashkenazi Jews are Azeri). Celebrate the diversity but also what you have in common, such as shared moral values among people of different faiths like hospitality, love of family, and concern for the elderly people and poor.

¹² <http://epress.am/en/2013/12/13/mp-who-offended-journalists-is-confident-he-wont-be-punished.html>

GATHERING INFORMATION AND WORKING WITH SOURCES

The first step to writing a story involves gathering information about your topic. In order to do so, you need people who witnessed the event first hand or have extensive knowledge on said topic. Especially in journalism, the information you use is the heart of your writing.

When you write a story about an ethnic, social, religious or other minority, it is extremely important to interview representatives of that group and include their perspectives in the piece. Otherwise, they are the “objects” of the article rather than the “subjects”. No article should criticize an entire group of people without offering members of that group an opportunity to present its own point of view and respond to accusations.

Cultivate sources in other communities. Find people who are willing to keep you informed about what members of their social groups are thinking about, talking about, worrying about. Make contact with non-governmental organizations that represent these communities and ask them what aspects of their lives have not yet been covered. Ask them to keep in touch with you about political, social, economic and other developments that you might not otherwise hear about. The story often starts with a **tip** from a reliable source with inside knowledge or access to sensitive information.

◆ **Know what you are talking about:** By getting to know your topic you will begin to learn what your topic is about - its context and content. Be aware of the fact that there may be cultural obstacles between you and your subject matter that might block the access to information. So research the subject, consult websites and seek out experts who can help with unfamiliar subjects. Most will be pleased to help you get it right. Choose a neutral style when using information from other sources and don't repeat other people's errors.

◆ **Learn the taboos:** Try, if possible, to learn what people in different cultures find unacceptable. It may be failing to remove shoes before enter-

ing a temple or the house. It may be immodesty in women. Or it may be refusing food you have been offered.

◆ **Be skeptical, check facts and tell both sides of the story:**

Skeptical means you are not willing to believe something without evidence to support it. However that doesn't mean you have to be cynical, which is to think most people are probably lying. Important is not to take at face value everything that you hear, whether it comes from a member of your own or another community.

Remember that everybody you talk to or interview has a point of view and a particular interest. So get into the habit of asking such questions as: Why is this person telling me this? Is there perhaps some reason why they see something this way rather than another way — in other words, do they have a vested interest? What can they lose or gain if this information or opinion is published? Are they in a position to know about the thing they are talking about? Are they **qualified** to make a judgment about something because they are familiar with it or have experienced it? Are they passing information on second or third hand, what we call **hearsay** (in which case see if you can get to the original source)? Is there **another side** to this story (or even several sides)? Have I tried my hardest to seek out those who might have a different story to tell to provide the story with **balance**? Have I tried to find authoritative, **named sources** to **attribute** my information to so that my readers are able to **evaluate** what they say?

While it is usually OK to **believe your own eyes**, make sure that in most cases you have **more than one source** to back something up that you have not seen. Remember that the so called single source syndrome (SSS) can be very harmful. And remember, **when something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.**

Separate facts from opinion but treat opinion as relevant. In other words, being a good journalist is **a bit like being a judge**: what you decide to pass on to your readers should be thought about as seriously as a judge considers what verdict he will pass on a case. You need to decide whether you have enough proof, enough witnesses, enough documentary

and physical evidence. Very often, in normal day-to-day reporting, these things can be found quite easily (but be careful not to drop your standards just because the story is routine).

Most situations involving conflicts between social groups are complicated. Both sides generally have legitimate complaints and perspectives, and presenting those perspectives fairly and accurately is an important part of the journalist's job. Try not to present difficult social questions in black-and-white terms.

As mentioned above always include representatives of minorities among your sources. If the individual chooses not to make a comment or refuses to talk to you, it should not be seen as a hostile gesture. You should not assume that the person has information he/she wants to conceal, perhaps it is because of ignorance of how the media work. In this case consult a spokesperson from a support group that can represent the minority concerned. And bear in mind to give the same attention to all parties involved in the topic.

◆ **Ask your sources to recommend more sources**

At the end of interviews, ask your source whether there's anyone else you should talk to about the topic at hand. It's likely they'll have someone in mind. Sources inside an administration, whether it's a government agency, a school, or a NGO, will probably recommend colleagues, while citizens are tending to connect you with birds of the same feather. Good sources of both stripes will hook you up with sources "across the aisle," so to speak. Take your source's advice, but if they've got a bias to protect, make sure you round out their recommendations with other voices.

◆ **Source members of minorities also for other topics:** Minorities live in the same society and share many of the same concerns and challenges (unemployment, price increase, education of their children, etc.). Describe and report their views on subjects beyond their faiths and racial backgrounds. Make them ordinary.

Including people of different backgrounds is not just a question of fairness and balance it is important for the media from a business perspective

as well. Many media outlets limit their potential audience by presenting only the perspective of a single group. If they make an effort to expand coverage to highlight other communities, they can also expand their audience at the same time.

Always remember to ask interviewees how they want to be presented and respect their wish in your report. Correct grammatical errors in quotes, if they put your sources in a bad light.

◆ **Remember the women and children:** In communities where leadership is often male, it is easy to get a hard-line reaction to events. Try to focus, too, on women and children. Even in male-dominated societies, people generally live in family groups. Featuring a range of lifestyles will give a softer dimension to some ethnic minorities that might otherwise appear harsh and alien.

◆ **Avoid getting too friendly with sources:** When you interview someone often, when you write about them regularly, they can start to feel like a friend. Getting too close can jeopardize your objectivity. If you become friends, you may find yourself telling that source's side of the story – to the disfavor of the other sides. You may withhold important information to protect the source unnecessarily. You may even avoid writing news articles because your source wants to suppress information.

◆ **Expose and counter racist propaganda:** Bigots who hide behind a cloak of respectability can be the most damaging. Make sure they are always drawn into the open and their words never go unchallenged.

◆ **Take care in reporting extremists:** Generally quote people who are representative. Be wary of those with views that might make good copy but to most people seem extreme. Though it is sometimes essential to quote such extremists, be sure to place their views in the context of the numbers they might represent.

◆ **Source statistics:** False figures can be spread to cause mischief. Check them with an authoritative source and attribute them.

TIPS ON INTERVIEWING PEOPLE FROM OTHER GROUPS

Listen carefully for anecdotes during your interviews. When you hear your source begin to tell a little story, take good notes and ask for details to make the anecdote as strong as possible. When writing, try to make the anecdote a complete but brief story with a beginning, middle and end. Use quotes, dialogue, description and action if possible. But don't use anecdotes, no matter how good they are, if they do not relate to the main point of the story.

Note the use of time elements to help tell these little stories. Some stories could start just like a traditional story e.g.: "One morning three years ago" others with the description of details like "She was watering the plants in her garden in September when"

Throughout your interview, **observe also** things going on around you and take notes, including large chunks of **dialogue**, not just quick quotes.

Avoid charged language or loaded words: This means questions that are not biased or come across to the subject as trying to persuade them towards a particular viewpoint. Your questions should not sound tough, but they should probe and issue.

People are afraid to communicate their thoughts, fearing the consequences. Your task is to try to discover the most effective approach to win the interlocutors over from different groups. Moreover, it is necessary to take into consideration not to hurt their rights and feelings.

What happens "off the record" stays "off the record"

We all know reporters who say there's no such thing as "off the record," or who promise to keep a source's information in confidence, and then quote them in the next day's news. Don't be that reporter.

Many sources want to tell you more than their higher-ups will allow. Of course, such information can be incredibly valuable, especially if you can use it to get on-the-record sources to verify what you've heard. If someone

says they want to go off the record with you, say yes -- and mean it. But don't be afraid to ask: "Is there anyone I should talk to who may be more likely to speak **on the record**?"

For many sources, going off the record is not only an opportunity to make a news story more accurate; it's **a test of the reporter**. Sources want to know whether you'll honor their request not to be quoted. If you can report those details without revealing your source, you're that much closer to gaining that source's trust. With time, this can lead to bigger and bigger tips.

Profiles

Profiles are feature stories about individuals. They can be brief or long. When brief, they often are used as examples to show readers how a person's life illustrates a larger problem. Brief profiles often run as **sidebars** (short, separate but related stories) as part of a larger news package. More in-depth profiles aim to tell readers who the person really is and what makes them successful, controversial, etc. Ask people who know the subject to talk about him or her. This is essential for longer profiles. Talk to friends, former colleagues, even enemies. Only by talking to others can you get an accurate portrait of the person.

The same basic journalistic rules of accuracy and fairness apply to profiles as they do to news and features. Consider these strategies:

- Research your subject as much as possible before the interview. Check the clips and online material, and ask colleagues for suggestions on questions they would ask.
- Interview the person in a comfortable place. For some, that might be at home. For others, it might be the workplace. Observe carefully and describe the subject's appearance, his or her actions and the interview setting throughout your profile.
- Try to discover what's unique about the subject. What are his or her dreams, regrets, heroes, strengths, weaknesses, favorite books

and movies? What motivates them to do what they are doing? How did they overcome their struggles?

- Interview long – write briefly. A good profile will contain only the strongest material from the interview, and only the best quotes.
- Encourage the subject to tell you stories you can use as anecdotes.
- Don't forget to include background that tells your readers why they should care about this subject. Has he/she been in the news recently, or involved in an event that is newsworthy? Is he/ she an example of a larger issue or trend in society?

Profiles can be long or short. The narrative form could be chronological, beginning when the person was born and taking us up to her/his present age.

Here is an example from an article by Dato Parulava of Georgian's Liberali newspaper:

'My Name Is Nata' in Liberali Magazine

'21 years old Nata is a transgender woman. Today she can provide for herself by working at barber's shop. But it was different 4 years ago. As a newcomer in the city, they was forced to take the road transgender people pushed away by society tend to take in distress'.

IN-DEPTH REPORTING AND NEWS ANALYSIS

While journalism is driven by current events, it is not limited to reporting the news. In recent years, the Internet technology has made it possible for **information** to be available very quickly, **anytime** and **anywhere**. Therefore nowadays an important, and now growing, part of media output is designed to help audiences **understand** the world, by concentrating much more on **analyzing the news** rather than simply providing the information.

Especially when reporting on incidents or conflicts with an ethnic or religious background, on disturbed inter-ethnic relations, the absence of dialogue, acts of intolerance or discrimination and so on, you should not merely focus on what happens. In other words, those events should not be covered just as news flashes and treated as an isolated process. As journalist you should take the initiative and seek out **new insights** and to provide additional information that will allow the audience to get the entire picture and help understanding an event, a phenomenon or a case. This is done by:

- Answering the question: So What?
- Better and more detailed background and context.
- Widening stories to bring in other events that help the audience understand this one better.
- Giving the event and the participants in the story scale — is this the first or the biggest or the longest?
- Devoting attention not only to the scope of the event, but by presenting the effects over ordinary citizens.
- Quoting people who are affected by the event and quoting experts who know a lot about it.

With all that in mind those events should be seen as a string, not just to focus on the latest happenings. Ethic, religious and other social struggles do not arise out of nothing. Usually there is a long history of conflict, with each side differing widely in its interpretations of the past. Before you can fairly present the material, you must understand what has come before and then you must decide how much of the past you need to include for your audience to grasp the essential points.

Too many reporters end up writing a kind of **disjointed summary** of news events over the past days. But to write a news analysis about a conflict, collision you need to run through such questions as: What things led to this particular event? Could it have been different? Could it have been avoided? What is being done about it? What might happen next?

◆ **Look at your role as something that should provide an understanding among all.** This, among other things, would be achieved through removal of barriers that exist in everyday communication or in the absence of such communication. Your role is more than just providing a chronicle of events.

One of the best ways in doing this is to connect the story on a topic related to religion to a trend or event in the country or globally. The audience gets a feeling that the topics and values that are discussed at local level are debated in a wider context.

◆ **Do not try to be too ambitious.** If there has been an incident with an ethnic or religious background, do not try to ask the question: “Is our country’s political system at risk?” Just try to answer why the incident took place and what it tells us about the status of ethnic or religious minorities in the country. Is there a structural discrimination based on the very way in which our society is organized. Is the system itself disadvantaging certain groups of people through norms, routines, patterns of attitudes and behavior that create obstacles in achieving real equality or equal opportunities?¹³ Your thoughts on the future of the country will have to wait.

What’s next? Make a list of sources that can help. You want to talk to those who will give you a detached assessment of what has happened (**independents**) and those who are much closer to the event, who might have been involved in it or might be affected by it (**protagonists**). Their

¹³ Cf. “Although Yerevan has deprived me of the opportunity to turn around, I love my city”, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/27809254.html>

views are likely to be more **partial** or **partisan**, so you will need to be sure you have a balanced cross-section.

Go first to the independents. Make clear at first that you are seeking **guidance** rather than quotable quotes and opinions, but you do want some of those too. What does he/she think about the meaning or significance of what has happened? Even ask for advice on whom to speak to. This initial conversation will not give you everything you want, but will tell you what other insights and quotes to go and get. There is no stage of this whole process more important than getting this bit right.

Now you are ready to go to the protagonists. They might be much more difficult to deal with, possibly because they don't trust the press or are afraid to talk to a journalist. So before you contact them, map out a series of **key questions**. Write them down and know exactly where they are in your notebook so that you can refer to them when you've got someone on the line or you are in a face-to-face interview. But don't stick slavishly to those questions. If during an interview someone comes up with a different line of argument, don't pull them back into your preconceived framework, unless they are moving off the subject. It is more important to seek clarification about what they are saying and to follow it up with further questions than it is to come back to your key questions.

- Always keep in mind, that when reporting on a conflict or collision, it is necessary to identify and cover all elements, not just those that **separate**, but also those that **associate** the different sides.
- Make a clear overview of all the items that will help you and the audience. Thereby, you will succeed to connect things and to understand the views of all affected parties. Then you should assess which are the key information that will provide the correct picture of things.

◆ **Explain why things happen as well as how:** One of the fundamental questions in journalism is «why»? Without the context provided, this question often remains unanswered. So don't merely focus on what happens. Take care to provide some context for and to explain the events

you are covering. By providing context you help people better understand the problems. It will help them decide by themselves on how to form opinions and to draw the conclusion.

Throughout your reporting, observe things going on around you. And take very detailed notes, including large chunks of dialogue, not just quick quotes.

◆ **Note the emotions:** Don't write just what you hear. If the person raises his voice or starts to cry, write briefly what prompted the emotion and how the person reacted. Note your own emotions, too, and emotions of other people if they are some around. Note also what you see and smell, even what you feel and taste if those senses help tell the story.

◆ **Get the facts rights** about a case and **present them clearly** so that audiences can understand what happened and form a sensible judgment about what it means. With better understanding people sometimes come to different conclusions.

◆ You must avoid **using expressive words** that “demonize” a party to the conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REPORTING ON ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

As a journalist, you may have to report on issues for minorities within your society. These could range from a small religious sect living in your local community to large ethnic groups living side-by-side with the majority, mainstream population.

In today's world the traditional nation-state, where a distinct national group corresponds to a territorial unit, has become an endangered species and the multi-ethnic states are the norm. There are several reasons why your society may contain minority communities. These include: a) ethnic or language groups which were absorbed into your nation when borders were re-drawn, possibly by colonial powers or on independence. Examples of this are the Kurdish minority in Turkey or the Russian minority in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan; b) people who have escaped neighboring countries as refugees, such as the Palestinians in Lebanon; c) people who have developed separate identities because of their religion, such as the Bahais in Iran; or d) people who have come to your country as individuals looking for a better life.

Globalization and the increasing movement of people across borders threaten to kill off the nation state once and for all. However, some myths resist reality, and majority or dominant cultures in countries around the world still seek to impose their identity on other groups with whom they share a territory.

And even though the events of the twentieth century have taught us to think of the term ethnic conflict as one word, the two concepts do not have to go hand in hand. Through recognition, dialogue, and participation, all the citizens of a diverse society can form a greater understanding of one another's concerns and the media has important roles to play in this regard. Therefore:

- Avoid sensationalist headlines and articles, which may overemphasize the effect of a problem or phenomenon in society. Sensational-

ist headlines and articles can lead to distorted, even wrong picture of what's happening.

“Blood revenge? Details of today’s slaughter”¹⁴ The headline of this article about four Yezidis brutally murdered and 7 wounded during a mourning salon when Yezidis were assembled after burial and also the article itself, suggest that the Yezidis are murders and that they kill each other in case of problems.

- The activities of individuals should not be connected to the entire ethnic group. You must avoid representing ethnic groups as people who are “out of society”. E.g. by continuously mentioning the ethnicity of Roma offenders the media perpetuates the stereotypes and prejudices about this group, like “Gypsies are stealing”. The media also has a tendency to generalize isolated incidents over the whole Roma population.
- Ethnicity should be mentioned only in cases when you consider that it is necessary to understand the essence of some questions.
- When we mention ethnicity, it would be effective to provide appropriate context, or more information.

Present fair and accurate - with poise (accuracy):

- During the process of reporting, consult as many sources as possible and present all involved parties.
- Do not make journalistic story with an interlocutor who does not have broad perspectives. If the source of information criticizes an entire ethnic group, the representatives of that group should be given an opportunity to respond. Otherwise, you could be considered as a driver of the propaganda machine of the one side.
- Apart from consulting multiple sources, you should check the accuracy of statements, and any interests behind a given statement.

¹⁴ http://newsarm.am/?p=13504&l=en&google_query_id=feb2f506e0a1b2eb01ca849397692e0d&google_serp_position=70

- You should strive to find as many facts as possible on «hidden agendas» of the sources of information. Try to detect possible attempts to manipulate public opinion.

Provide open channels of communication:

In trying to present a balanced story, it would be useful to consult with representatives from the wider environment. It will help you determine the best approach in the treatment of the story.

- It will be particularly useful to use representatives of ethnic groups that you do not belong to as sources of information. Understanding their attitudes, desires and interests will allow you to gain a clearer picture of events, the problems or topics for reporting.
- You need to talk to people from all sides involved in the story. It means that you should consult everyone that can give you information, not just those who present themselves as leaders. Ordinary people often have a different view of the problem than those who present themselves as representatives and interpreters of the reality.
- If a member of an ethnic group refuses to talk to you, it should not be seen as a hostile gesture. You should not assume that the person has information he/she wants to conceal.
- When reporting on a conflict or collision, it is necessary to identify and cover all elements, and those associated and those that separate the different sides. Make a clear overview of all the items that will help you and the audience. Thereby, you will succeed to connect things and to understand the views of all affected parties.
- Through their actions and questions you may realize that the differences between groups are not as big as someone is presenting or seeing. That way you introduce yourself as someone who does not see the story subjectively.

Do not associate ethnic communities with appalling events and trends in society:

- Make a distinction between acts of individuals and the general picture for the groups to which they belong.

- Avoid connecting to certain data or images with criminal acts. When reporting about the suspects or convicted criminals, you should avoid unnecessary introduction of ethnicity in the story, and in particular the use of labels.

Turn off your own prejudices: To inform objectively, at first you should analyze your own attitudes and perceive whether they contain any bias.

- The important thing is not to represent those views in your reporting, either directly or indirectly. You need to understand people and their fears, feelings, attitudes, etc.. The role of media in creating and maintaining an impartial picture of the people is of great importance.
- To offer true and complete picture about some events or conditions, you should provide additional information.
- The events should be seen as a string, not just to focus on the latest happenings.
- It often happens when reporting on incidents, disturbed inter-ethnic relations, or the absence of dialogue, those events to be treated as an isolated process. You need to provide all the information, for former and current events, which will allow the audience to get the true picture.
- You should assess which are the key information that will provide the correct picture of things. If it comes to ethnic conflict, it is necessary to devote attention not only to its scope, but to present the effects over ordinary citizens.

Constantly check the information:

- It is necessary to remember that the information should be checked in every stage of your working. In situation of conflict between different ethnic groups, the sensitivity of all concerned parties is high and the public is always 'hungry' for information. Trying to satisfy this hunger for current information, we can make a mistake in our reporting and present incompletely checked data, and even speculations. It can cause considerable damage to the public, on

its perception and understanding of the problems in the society. The audience should be allowed to find out as much as possible about the source of the information and the motivation behind it, in order to be able to get the true picture.

Don't take sides:

- If you merely report information from the one side, you will not be able to offer a clear picture of ethnic tensions, conflicts or communication. «We can not understand what we do not see. And we can not explain the conflict if we hear only one side.
- In your reporting, you should not be biased towards the expectations or demands of either side of the story. If you are biased, it will easily be seen and will adversely affect inter-ethnic relations, stability in society, and the reputation of the medium.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REPORTING ON ELDERLY PEOPLE

In many countries research provides evidence of the negative stereotypes about older people. News, television and film commonly feature stereotypes that show older adults through a lens of decline and diminished value, emphasizing the “burdens” of growing old.

In traditional societies old age was generally valued and older persons often provided knowledge, experience, and help to their families and the society. After the fall of communism, the collapse of Soviet Union and the changes of societal and economic structures, many older people in the successor states have found themselves in desperate situations. In the most cases the pensions are not sufficient and inadequate, leaving many without choice, opportunity and quality of life.

Attributes like ‘victims of change of the communist system’, ‘carping’, ‘forgetful’, ‘old-fashioned’, ‘have difficulty learning new tasks’ and ‘likely to be sick’ are commonly held stereotypical beliefs. Use of such attributes, as well as negative language about elderly people and ageing, and media portrayals of older people – almost always in the person of a babushka, stooped with age and muffled in a tattered shawl, begging on the streets or complaining about her desperate situation – in the media– shape, largely reinforce negative stereotypes. It is rare that elderly people are portrayed as sage, helpful, caring for grandchildren, attractive, fighting for their rights, but mostly as passive victims of circumstances.

However media influences negative perceptions of elderly people not just through the prevalence of negative stereotypes, but as well as the under-representation of older people in the media.

To transform the experience of ageing and ageism in our societies, we must change the way the media portrays ageing. Negative stereotypes need to give way to realistic portrayals, so that depictions encompass the many different experiences of ageing without attaching a value judgment.

Here are a few tips on creating a more diverse image of the elderly:

◆ Language can be a powerful tool in shaping our views and reflecting public attitudes and perceptions - both of which can form barriers that prevent people of every age from integration and participation in society. So ask yourself whether words such as old, elderly or aged are appropriate. If they are not necessary or relevant to the story, don't include them. Use language and imagery that provide a fair, accurate and balanced view of ageing.

◆ Older people covers a very diverse grouping: men and women, rich and poor, dull and clever, fit and unfit, with higher education and uneducated, workers, artists, doctors and a lot more. As journalists you would do well to take time to discover what they do, to understand their feelings and the problems they encounter. Talk to them, ask them about what kinds of issues they face, thus you can give the rounded picture of them they deserve.

◆ Financial concerns of elderly people are of course important, but they are not the only aspect to explore and write: all of the them do some or all of the following: tend to their own families; care for their grandchildren or neighbor's children; contribute to their communities in various ways; fill theatres and cinemas, read books and newspapers, are doing extraordinary things, listen to and watch current affairs and news programs. Elderly people typically have great knowledge and skills and through their frequent presentation in the media you will help overcome the traditional stereotypes.

BASIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MEDIA TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN SOCIETY

Become aware of the impact on individuals and on different communities over journalists' reporting and the way it is done.

- Establish and maintain regular contact with members of different groups and communities.
- Look at your role as something that should provide an understanding among all. This, among other things, would be achieved through removal of barriers that exist in everyday communication or in the absence of such communication. Your role is more than just providing a chronicle of events.
- Reporting on diversities is not limited to events in a society. With globalization and the increasing interaction between citizens of different countries around the world, the importance of reporting on diversities is becoming even greater. The events that happen in one country can have serious and direct impact on other countries or nations. Thus, the problem in one country can become a problem in the region or beyond.
- When asked to report on a topic that is related to diversity, it is necessary to carefully consider the angles from which it will be covered. Considering that you will be reporting on the topic related to diversity, it is necessary to reconsider the previous practice and method of reporting, and consider all possibilities.
- Most journalists have their own explanations for the facts they are reporting, and they can easily become "part of the story." Given that it can not be avoided, it is especially important not to point out at the diversities as something bad.
- Try to understand the views of others.
- Constantly check the facts, and especially be careful when dealing with unreliable sources of information or events that may cause the crisis.

- It is also necessary to try to predict the consequences of your reporting and the public reaction. In order to do this, you need to know well the context in which things happen, to have enough information about the history of a problem, but also for the possible development of the situation.
- Avoid group generalizations as much as possible. When reporting on individuals or their actions, whether positive or negative, look at it as an individual question, not as something that concerns or affects the whole group he/she belongs to.
- Professional journalism implies continuous effort of journalists to improve their skills for “mediation” between people and reality in which they live.

REMINDER ON THE QUESTIONS THE JOURNALISTS SHOULD ASK WHEN REPORTING ON DIVERSITIES

- Am I reporting on all aspects of various communities, including both positive and negative?
- Am I aware of the power of perceptions that I create with my reporting and whether I am avoiding further imposing of stereotypes? Am I looking for and discovering different perspectives when doing interviews, regardless of the story?
- Are the «labels» that I am using to describe people appropriate and necessary, and whether I respect the principles of my editor's office and ethical standards of the profession?
- Do I regularly check a wide range of sources of information?
- Do I discuss about diversities and whether I ask colleagues and editors to explain decisions they make related to the news?
- Do I explore the various groups to avoid fostering stereotypes?
- Am I aware of hidden agendas and divisions in the groups, in order not fall under the influence or manipulation of some sources of power?
- Do I consult with colleagues and editors when in doubt about the tone of the story?

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