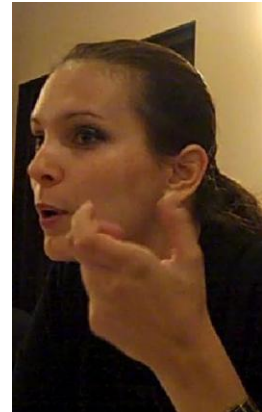


Sources of Stories and Information: How Civil Society Organisations can Contribute to the Improvement of Media Coverage of Diversity

By Antonia Meszaros, News Anchor, Hungarian TV

Database of Diversity Experts

Create a 'Database of Diversity Experts' who can comment on a variety of subjects, that is accessible to the media. This would be really helpful for the media when they are looking for experts for voxpops in news packages and studio guests. It is very important that screen tests/videos of each expert are attached to their profile in the database, so that producers can see what they look like and how they talk, and therefore whether they will be good on camera and radio.



Database of Facts

Create a database of the main facts and figures to do with the various aspects of diversity, which is accessible to the media. This will make it much easier for journalists to access the correct information quickly. If the facts and figures are already converted into graphics they will also stand a better chance of getting printed or broadcast, as they look better and are more likely to capture a journalist's attention.

Rapid Response Factsheets

There are always specific debates appearing in politics and in the media to do with issues relating to diversity (such as the link between Roma and petty crime for example). NGOs could really make a difference to the depth of the media coverage and the extent of reporters'/presenter's knowledge if they supplied rapid response factsheets on these subjects to the media, which could include data if possible and also little-known facts, main arguments, in-depth analysis and even suggested experts, case studies and potential human interest stories to contradict prejudice.

Unusual Events

Organise interesting, slightly unusual campaign events to get the media's attention. Ordinary press conferences will not get anyone very excited.

Awards for best and worst coverage

Organise awards for the best article/TV programme or news item of the month and also a 'Raspberry' award for the worst example. Hold an award ceremony once a year, when the prize for the best news organisation in that year can be given, as well as shaming the worst offenders. Build a website to list the best and worst examples, including the names of those responsible. Everybody



likes to win prizes and nobody wants their name on a wall of shame if they get googled by someone. Maybe the winning organisation could get a logo they could display on their website, PR material, etc for a year.

Build good relationships with specific media outlets and journalists

Some things work best if instead of pitching to the entire media community, an NGO builds good individual relationships with specific media outlets and journalists and targets them with specific ideas, suggestions or projects. Such as:

Commissioning studies and opinion polls

Commissioning studies and opinion polls is always great – but could be better if done in conjunction with or offered in advance to one specific media outlet, which can be first to run with the material. They will be more likely to give it lots of space, if they can claim it as their own, exclusive stuff. They might even build a whole section of a programme or paper around it. If it's good, everyone else will run with it afterwards anyway.

Human Interest Stories

Everyone loves 'human interest' stories, but they are hard to find and the media is not very likely to start digging in the diversity area by themselves anyway. Good stories, half or already set-up, offered to a specific media outlet would probably be very welcome. However, the relationship with the media outlet needs to be solid for there to be the trust that the stuff is genuine.

Secret/Hidden Cameras

A lot of problems to do with diversity and discrimination can be exposed using secret, hidden cameras. However, the media, especially the public media might not have sufficient funding to spend the time and money needed to do this in depth undercover investigate work, or find someone to put themselves in discrimination's way. If there is a solid relationship with a particular media outlet, working together and partly funding 'social investigations' of this kind, supplying the secret camera, and someone willing to wear it etc might help to make sure more of these kinds of investigations get done.

Partnering on Projects

There is funding available for diversity projects from the EC and other donor organisations, but media outlets rarely know of them or have the time and energy to chase them. Here an NGO could really help to seek out and draw attention to these opportunities, help with applications or perhaps even apply jointly for funding for specific projects. For example, a project in a ghetto plus filming of the project and creation of documentary, news coverage, etc.