



What do we do?

The Media Diversity Institute (MDI) works internationally to encourage and facilitate responsible media coverage of diversity. It aims to prevent the media from intentionally or unintentionally spreading prejudice, intolerance and hatred which can lead to social tensions, disputes and violent conflict. MDI encourages instead, fair, accurate, inclusive and sensitive media coverage in order to promote understanding between different groups and cultures.

The rationale

The powerful influence of the media on our societies is well known – it shapes our views and our behaviour. Although the media often aggravate divisions in society, exclude moderate and minority voices, and foment conflict, they also possess an enormous capacity to contribute to the solution of these very problems.

People experience diversity in many ways: race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, income, and so on. Diversity can inspire social and economic progress, vibrant communities, and a richness of life. All too often, however, diversity engenders inequality, suspicion, fear, discrimination, repression, and violent conflict.

Journalists and media organisations hold a unique power to shape our experience of diversity. Through their actions, they can help diverse communities gain visibility and acceptance, or they can exacerbate misunderstanding and create division among different groups and cultures. The

war in the former Yugoslavia and the genocide in Rwanda are among the more extreme examples of how the media can play a powerful role in tearing apart multi-ethnic communities by inciting hatred but, in all societies across the world, almost without exception, prejudice, intolerance, and misunderstanding fostered by the media cause various levels of problems and difficulties.

MDI believes it is critically important that the international community explore the vast potential of the media to help foster tolerance and understanding between different groups and cultures.

How do we do it?

MDI applies a comprehensive and holistic approach of engagement, education and training of all the actors in society who can influence media coverage of diversity. These include:

-

Media decision makers: owners, editors, and managers

-

Journalists

-

Journalism academics and students

-

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) concerned with diversity issues

-

Governmental organisations

MDI employs the following means in order to achieve its goals:

-

Media decision-makers conferences bring editors, managers and media owners together to explore the importance of good diversity coverage for the societies that they serve.

-

Journalism workshops provide theoretical and practical training for journalists on covering diversity, minority and human rights issues.

-

Strengthening community media organisations through providing education and training in all basic aspects of running a media organisation.

-

Introducing Reporting Diversity courses into journalism schools and faculties.

-

Providing media relations and advocacy training for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on how to use the media to overcome negative and inaccurate portrayals of their communities.

-

MDI uses the opportunity of its workshops, conferences and other events to bring together media actors and CSO representatives, in order to break down the barriers of misunderstanding that can exist and establish long-term partnerships.

-

A wide range of manuals and resource materials are produced and published by MDI.

-

Conducting research and media monitoring studies to identify problem areas and recommendations for action.

-

Running the Global Media Diversity Network (GMDN), made up of like minded organisations.

-

Provision of a web portal which includes news and resources, plus networking, blogging and debating facilities, for those involved in the media & diversity field.

Where do we work?

MDI has worked in Europe, the former Soviet States, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and South East Asia.

Examples of MDI's work

See the 'Examples of MDI's Work', 'Current Projects' and 'Completed Projects' sections (on left) for examples of MDI's past and present work and projects.

Partners

MDI often partners with other major organisations on projects in order to bring together combined experience, knowledge and financial resources, and always partners with local organisations in the countries in which it works in order to ensure projects are culturally sensitive and benefit from local knowledge, while at the same time contributing to the sustainability of local organisations.

What people say about us

The United Nations Alliance of Civilisations Analysis on Media Report 2006:

‘Journalistic training is required to reduce ill-informed inter-cultural media reports that repeat stereotypes and emphasize extremes. Modules and full programs in training culturally-informed and sensitive reporting should be developed with the advice of organizations such as the Media Diversity Institute ...’

Organisational structure & staff

MDI is a charity (non-profit) organisation registered in the UK, headed by a Board of Directors and an Executive Director. We maintain a small mainly administrative HQ in London where a dedicated team oversees projects implemented from local offices established in the countries where we work.