



MEDIA DIVERSITY
RESEARCH CENTRE

THE ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT

MDI's Struggle to Rebuild Media
Systems Around Ethnic Inclusion
(1998-2024)

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INTRO DUCTI ON

Over the past quarter-century, the relationship between media and ethnicity has emerged as a critical frontier in the international struggle for inclusive societies. This report, drawing on the Media Diversity Institute's (MDI) extensive project portfolio from 1998 to 2024, argues that media bias is not merely a collection of individual errors but a systemic feature of media ecosystems worldwide. It posits that ethnic exclusion represents a profound structural flaw within these systems, one that requires architectural rather than surface-level cosmetic solutions. Using MDI's work as a longitudinal case study, this report traces an institutional journey, a deliberate "Architectural Project" that has evolved from addressing surface-level symptoms of bias through short-term journalist training to undertaking the complex long-term work of rebuilding media institutions and public perceptions around the principles of ethnic inclusion and intersectional justice. We chart this evolution through shifting donor priorities, conceptual understandings of discrimination and geopolitical shocks, notably the post-2016 migration crisis. Grounding our analysis in the Hierarchy of Influences model (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, 2014), we demonstrate how MDI's strategy consciously targeted the meso (institutional) and macro (ideological) levels of media production to instigate change. This report thus analyses the evolution of cumulative layers of interventions, moving from localised triage to transnational advocacy and from analogue ethics to digital accountability, all while exploring the tensions between aspirational reform and the material political and financial realities.

I. THE FOUNDATION: ETHNICITY AS A STRUCTURAL FLAW

The conceptual bedrock informing MDI's efforts to reform media representation reflects a scholarly consensus that ethnicity operates as a fluid yet potent force in defining individual identity and motivating collective social action. Ethnicity is defined as a person's identification with a particular group based on shared ancestry, cultural norms, nationality, language, and religion (Samie, 2025). Clearly, this common definition exemplifies how fluid and varied ethnicity can be as a social category. Academic definitions vary, ranging from descent-based attributes (Chandra, 2005) to shared cultural narratives, including myths of common ancestry (Horowitz, 1985; Smith, 1996). Notably, the social concept of ethnicity has replaced the term race to refer to distinct groups in society (Samie, 2025). 'Race', which was previously believed to be the scientific distinction of human groups, has been discredited, and modern-day biologists and anthropologists agree that it does not exist (Sussman, 2014). Therefore, race is colloquially used to classify differences in people by physical traits, such as "skin colour, eye shape, and other phenotypic features" (Samie, 2025). This academic perspective has also influenced governmental institutions, such as the UK's demographic survey, which uses the term "ethnicity" to categorise the different demographics of people within the UK. (Gov.UK, 2024). Henceforth, this study will use the more academically accepted term 'ethnicity'. Instances in which 'race' is mentioned in the media to specifically distinguish physical differences will also be examined in this study, as the facet of ethnicity that relates to outward appearance. In particular, cases that describe how racism has been portrayed or perpetrated by media institutions. Whilst emphasising the diversity of what ethnicity can encompass, and following academic consensus by not engaging with 'racial differences' as a scientific truth, but as a social construct.

This fluidity carries political consequences, as ethnic cleavages are invariably intertwined with economic disparities and power structures. Their intersection creates social fault lines that influence patronage networks, electoral outcomes and the risk of civil conflict (Bates, 1974; Caselli & Coleman, 2002).

Within this societal framework, the media occupies a conflicted position, acting as a critical source of information that shapes attitudes, behaviours and intergroup relations (Saleem et al., 2025). It frequently functions as a mechanism of marginalisation, systematically underrepresenting ethnic minorities (Harwood & Roy, 2005) and reinforcing pernicious stereotypes. Previous scholarly literature extensively documents this phenomenon, from the criminalisation of Black Americans and the exoticisation of Latinos (Entman, 1994; Mastro, 2015) to the pervasive Romaphobia in European media, which is often incorporated into populist rhetoric to advance political agendas such as Brexit (Breazu & McGarry, 2024). Media representations are often framed through dominant master frames, such as the 'security' or 'threat' frame and the 'humanitarian' or 'victim' frame (Van Gorp, 2005), with a recent shift towards a 'rationality' frame that emphasises responsibility and order, particularly following the 2015–2016 refugee crisis (Triandafyllidou, 2018). These frames are not only descriptive but also constitutive, actively influencing public opinion and, in turn, policy.

Conversely, the media holds significant potential as an instrument for subverting prejudice through inclusive representation and strategic counter-narratives (Ramasubramanian, 2015). Exposure to positive or counter-stereotypical portrayals can challenge negative attitudes and reduce outgroup prejudice (Bobba, Miniati, & Crocetti, 2024; Saleem et al., 2025). Civil society movements have leveraged this potential; for instance, Algeria's Barakat movement

(2014) used both digital platforms and street activism to demand political reform and greater recognition for the marginalised Tamazight (Berber) population (Chennoub & Bennoune, 2014). This activism paralleled decades of advocacy that culminated in the official recognition of Tamazight as a national language in 2016—a victory that shows the struggle for ethnic inclusion is fundamentally about cultural rights and recognition within contested political landscapes. Such efforts reflect a broader conceptual shift from appeals for tolerance to demands for recognition, where difference is not merely accommodated but actively valued as an essential component of a pluralistic society (Downing & Husband, 2005).

This structural understanding deeply informs MDI's operational philosophy. Its work aligns with the Hierarchy of Influences framework (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, 2014), which posits that media content is shaped by a series of concentric circles of influence, from the individual journalist (micro level) to media routines, organisational structures (meso level), and the broader social systems, ideology, and state power (macro level). MDI's history reflects a strategic engagement primarily at the meso and macro-levels. Its core analysis and interventions are predicated on the understanding that the magnitude of ethnic exclusion is directly correlated with structures of power and influence. Project evidence consistently shows that state pressures, for example, can severely limit editorial reforms, as documented in initiatives like **Russia: Fighting Discrimination Through Inclusive Reporting (2013–2014)**. This demonstrates that exclusion based on ethnicity is not merely the product of individual journalist bias but is often embedded in institutional practice and political ideology.

Recent scholarship further interrogates the mechanisms behind these problematic representations, moving beyond mere description to analyse the production processes. Media narratives are shaped by a complex interplay of political polarisation, immigration policies and prevailing journalistic master frames, often veering towards a nativist configuration (Maneri, 2025). Furthermore, studies reveal the limitations of superficial diversity initiatives within media organisations. As Douglas (2021) and Saha and van Lente (2022) argue, diversity policies can often function as racial governance, in which the commodification of race and the performance of diversity for white gatekeepers can maintain racial hierarchies rather than challenge them. This creates a disconnect between corporate commitments to diversity and the lived experiences of journalists of colour, highlighting how institutional racism can persist beneath an illusion of inclusion (Douglas, 2021; Haq, 2025).

Therefore, the strategic imperative is to interrogate and dismantle these structural barriers. The work pushes for a critical cultural and systemic shift: to move from a paradigm of merely tolerating difference to architecting media systems that recognise and empower it. This requires a re-conceptualisation of journalistic practice, audience and national identity, as Haq (2025) contends, disavowing the “us/them” model and reimagining a social imaginary that *includes* rather than *excludes* minority communities. This structural debate has been dramatically reshaped in recent years by the global phenomenon of migration, which has been identified as an internal yet primary subject within the discourse on ethnicity, particularly since 2016. The intersection of ethnicity and migration has created new dynamic social tensions, reframing priorities and demanding innovative responses that address the amplification of xenophobic and anti-migrant narratives in both traditional and digital media spaces.

II. THE FINANCIAL BLUEPRINT: DONOR-DRIVEN ARCHITECTURE

The history of MDI's work on ethnicity is, in many respects, a story of the evolution of its funding models. This financial history provides a lens through which to view how global crises, shifting geopolitical priorities, and nuanced strategic judgments by major donors have continuously reoriented and reshaped the scope, scale, and very purpose of MDI's interventions. Over the time period studied, projects with an explicit focus on ethnicity have been moulded by evolving funding streams that have served as a directional compass, alternately enabling and constraining the organisation's ambitions. This section charts this financial trajectory through three distinct yet overlapping phases: an initial interventionist period focused on crisis stabilisation; a pivot towards longer-term structural architecture; and a contemporary phase defined by the migration shockwave and the digital frontline.

a. The Interventionist Phase: Crisis Stabilisation

The inaugural phase of funding, spanning the late 1990s to the mid-2000s, can be characterised as reliant on urgent stabilisation capital. A significant portion of support originated from prominent multilateral and bilateral actors, including the European Commission, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Open Society Foundations. The strategic priorities of these funders were firmly located in unstable post-conflict regions, such as the Balkans and the South Caucasus, where media had often been weaponised to inflame ethnic tensions. Projects from this era, such as **Reporting Diversity Training and Development for News Agencies (2000-2001)** in Southeastern Europe, **A Jewish and Arab Student-created Newspaper Project (2004-2005)** in Israel and **Reporting Diversity: Training the media, empowering minorities; a project for improved media coverage of ethnic and minority issues in the South Caucasus (2003-2006)**, were designed as direct interventions to stabilise fragile media environments and counter virulent narratives of ethnic discrimination. Due to MDI being a newer institution and to diversity studies not being at the forefront of policy and media, funding for these projects focused on early-stage, equitable, and inclusive reporting in former war zones that had experienced ethnic-based tensions. Notably, the focus was on creating projects that would encourage and produce media content promoting ethnic harmony in these fragile environments. The South Caucasus project, however, produces diversity-focused reports on diversity training for journalists in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. This larger undertaking, engaging with national conditions and deep academic study, gives us a clearer sense of the work that will be common for MDI regarding ethnicity in the media as it continues to expand.

b. The Pivot to Structural Architecture

By the late 2000s, a discernible shift occurred as funding mechanisms grew more sophisticated, demonstrating an emerging willingness among donors to engage with the slower, more complex timelines of institutional reform. For example, the European Commission widened its focus beyond immediate post-conflict zones to include EU accession states and neighbouring countries, as seen in projects such as the **European Dialogue on the EU Media and Diversity Study (2009-2010)**. This reflected a policy-driven ambition to harmonise diversity standards

across an expanding European sphere of influence. The 2010s further refined this approach by introducing hybrid funding models. These initiatives paired larger institutional support from European bodies with deep local grassroots partnerships, blending resources for greater impact and legitimacy. Projects such as **Strengthening Media Freedom Serbia (2013-2016)** and **Address of Human Rights - Journalism (2013-2015)** thus combined EU funding with local implementation to address the intertwined issues of ethnic discrimination and human rights, thereby building more resilient and contextually attuned media ecosystems.

c. The Migration Shockwave and the Digital Front Line

A profound reorientation of donor priorities occurred in the wake of the 2016 European migration crisis. This geopolitical shockwave reframed funding streams, which increasingly began to target projects at the intersection of ethnicity and migration in a concerted effort to counter rising xenophobia and anti-migrant rhetoric across the continent. EU funding, in particular, was channelled towards initiatives that directly addressed the marginalisation of ethnicities correlated with new migration flows. Projects such as **New Neighbours: Mobilising Media and Civil Society Actors to Foster Greater Intercultural Understanding between Migrants and Host Communities in Europe (2019-2021)**—which produced documentary content and facilitated partnerships between public service media and CSOs to encourage understanding—and **Covinform (2020-2023)**—which studied the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on migrant and ethnic minority communities—are examples of this strategic pivot.

Simultaneously, this period witnessed the maturation of digital intervention as a core funding priority. Donors began to actively support projects that leveraged technology to combat the digital amplification of hate speech. Initiatives like **DTCT: Detect Then Act (2019-2021)**, which used AI to monitor ethnically charged online rhetoric, and **INFOTEINMENT (2016-2021)**, which developed innovative infotainment formats to counter disinformation in former Soviet states, showcased this new frontier. This trend towards intersectional, digitally enabled interventions represents a significant evolution from the legislation-focused projects of the 2010s (**EU Media and Diversity Study (2009-2010)**; **Our Elections, Our Europe! Engaging European Youth Young to Counter Hate Speech, Promote Diversity, and Encourage Inclusion (2014)**). This is evidenced by multi-year funding frameworks and collaborative models of practice (**New Neighbours (2019-2021)**; **DTCT (2019-2021)**; **Get the Trolls Out! Phase IV, (2020-2023)**) that blend institutional resources with technological tools and local expertise to maximise impact in an increasingly complex and digital media landscape.

In short, the financial architecture of MDI's work reveals three overarching trends: a chronological move from short-term, reactive grants to sustained, multi-year commitments; a geographic and thematic expansion from a post-conflict focus to a global engagement with ethnicity as it intersects with migration and digitalisation; and an operational shift towards hybrid models that strategically blend top-down institutional funding with bottom-up, grassroots partnership and innovation.

III. THE CONSTRUCTION SITE: EVOLVING OBJECTIVES FOCUSED ON ETHNICITY

The project objectives articulated by the MDI over the past quarter-century delineate a profound disciplinary and strategic shift, moving decisively away from treating ethnic bias as a matter of individual misrepresentation and towards confronting it as a deeply embedded element of the media's structural and ideological architecture. This trajectory reflects a deepening engagement with the Hierarchy of Influences model, demonstrating a conscious progression from interventions at the micro-level of the individual journalist to a sustained challenge of meso-level institutional practices and macro-level ideological forces that perpetuate exclusion. A central thread in this evolution has been the conceptual journey of establishing migration not as a separate issue, but as a fundamental and dynamic dimension of contemporary ethnic identity and conflict. This evolution can be mapped across three interconnected phases: an initial triage phase; a strategic pivot towards structural buy-in; and a contemporary phase focused on countering digital amplification.

a. From Triage to Structural Buy-In

The initial projects of the late 1990s and early 2000s were characterised by objectives aimed at immediate, pragmatic outcomes in post-conflict and volatile regions. The primary focus was at the micro level, seeking to improve the skills and awareness of a small group of journalists, on the assumption that correcting professional practice was the most direct path to altering harmful narratives. Furthermore, the group of journalists and organisations with which MDI had worked would create media outputs which would counter these narratives. For instance, initiatives such as **Reporting Diversity Training and Development for News Agencies (2000-2001)** in Southeastern Europe and **Seeing the Roma Without Prejudice (1999-2001)** provided targeted training to journalists as a mechanism for re-education. The training in this phase was foundational and practical, typically involving workshops that deconstructed common and harmful stereotypes about ethnic minorities. Journalists were introduced to ethical reporting frameworks that emphasised sensitive language and accuracy, and they participated in practical exercises designed to encourage source diversification beyond official channels, including perspectives from within minority communities. Success in this era was defined by quantifiable outputs, particularly in broadcasting, articles, studies, or other media products created through MDI's workshops and training. A clear example of these outputs can be seen in the project, **Seeing the Roma Without Prejudice (1999-2001)**, where partners created two guides for Roma NGOs to help them engage closely with mainstream media and counter harmful narratives. However, the limitations of this micro-level approach became starkly apparent in contexts such as the Balkans, where a sole focus on training individuals risked being a superficial remedy without parallel efforts to address the editorial hierarchies and institutional policies that constituted powerful meso-level influences.

By the late 2000s, project objectives began to consciously incorporate these institutional levers of change, signalling a strategic turn towards structural buy-in. Projects like **Reporting Diversity: A Project to Promote Inter-Community Dialogue and Moderate Voices as a Means to Prevent Religious Radicalisation in Egypt (2008-2011)** and **Morocco: Towards Inclusive, Responsible & Independent Media (2011-2013)** explicitly articulated ethnic inclusion as a mechanism for conflict prevention. The objective was no longer merely to train journalists

to write more diversity focused pieces, but to embed diversity principles into the very fabric of journalism education curricula and newsroom policies. This represented a critical shift from individual accountability to institutional reform, and from reactive training to proactive policymaking, acknowledging that sustainable impact required change at the organisational level of the media ecosystem.

b. Intersectionality and the Migration Fault Line

The 2010s marked an era of more ambitious, analytically sophisticated objectives, in which inclusivity was proposed as a cornerstone of democratic resilience. This period saw the explicit incorporation of intersectionality into project design, recognising that ethnic discrimination is compounded and shaped by other identity markers such as gender, religion and migration status. Initiatives like **Creating an Inclusive Media in Lebanon (2013-2014)** tackled sectarianism by partnering with civil society to challenge systemic underrepresentation, while the **South Sudan: People's Voice Newspaper (2010-2012)** empowered marginalised groups as storytellers in their own right. Critically, this decade witnessed a definitive shift towards addressing migration as a crucial ethnic fault line, responding directly to the rise of xenophobia across Europe and beyond. Projects such as **Our Elections, Our Europe! Engaging European Youth Young to Counter Hate Speech, Promote Diversity, and Encourage Inclusion (2014)** were conceived to counter anti-migrant political discourse during European parliamentary elections. Later initiatives, such as **New Neighbours: Mobilising Media and Civil Society Actors to Foster Greater Intercultural Understanding between Migrants and Host Communities in Europe (2019-2021)**, explicitly aimed to encourage greater intercultural understanding between migrants and host communities through collaborative media production. This evolution was both conceptual and practical, representing a move away from framing ethnicity as a static, inherited identity toward addressing the dynamic social tensions and reconfigurations of identity arising from global migration flows. The journalistic training evolved accordingly, incorporating modules on migration terminology that moved away from dehumanising language, on ethically covering complex trauma and on applying an intersectional analysis to stories.

c. Battling Digital Amplification

The most recent phase of the Institute's work engages directly with the digital transformation of public discourse, focusing on how technology amplifies and disseminates discrimination at unprecedented scale and speed. The focus has shifted decisively to the macro-level influence of digital platforms and their algorithms. The **DTCT: Detect Then Act (2019-2021)** project was a pioneering endeavour that utilised artificial intelligence to monitor and analyse ethnically charged hate speech online, aiming to move beyond mere detection to facilitating counteraction. Similarly, the **INFOTEINMENT (2016-2021)** project aimed to counter disinformation in former Soviet states by developing new information formats designed to make credible, inclusive narratives more appealing to young audiences. The training components in this digital phase have become highly specialised, moving beyond traditional journalism to include digital rights activists and staff from civil society organisations. This training now includes instruction on digital monitoring tools, with hands-on workshops using AI-based software to track hate-speech trends and map disinformation networks. Participants are also taught counter-narrative campaign design, which entails training in creating compelling digital content, such as memes, short videos, and interactive graphics, that effectively debunk myths and promote inclusive alternatives. Furthermore, a critical

component is digital safety and security, equipping journalists and activists from ethnic minorities with the skills to protect themselves and their sources from online harassment and doxing. Throughout these stages, the push for systemic change has consistently confronted political realities. The objectives of **Russia: Fighting Discrimination Through Inclusive Reporting (2013-2014)**, for instance, were ultimately constrained by the state's institutionalised power, which prevented the necessary editorial and policy reforms regarding ethnic diversity from taking root, thus underscoring the immense challenge of implementing structural solutions in hostile or illiberal environments.

IV. THE LOAD-BEARING WALLS: ETHNIC IMPACT AND POLICY LEGACY

The enduring impact of this architectural project is most visible not in transient outputs but in the gradual cumulative systemic changes achieved across professional practice, public discourse, and policy frameworks. The true legacy of this work resides in its load-bearing walls, those structural reinforcements that have empowered marginalised communities and begun to recalibrate the very foundations of media systems. This impact manifests across the embedding of knowledge and professional standards; direct influence on policy and institutional norms; and the achievement of scale through digital innovation and political action.

a. Embedding Knowledge and Standards

A crucial layer of impact lies in its capacity-building legacy, which has successfully institutionalised knowledge around ethnic inclusion within media ecosystems. In the project, **Indonesia: Reporting Diversity Network (2010-2011)** established a self-sustaining mechanism for educating future journalists by embedding dedicated reporting diversity modules within university journalism programmes. This effort was complemented by the critical recommendation to translate key academic texts into Bahasa Indonesia, an initiative aimed at decolonising knowledge and ensuring its perpetual local accessibility. A parallel region-shaping impact was achieved through **Reporting Diversity: Training the media, empowering minorities; a project for improved media coverage of ethnic and minority issues in the South Caucasus (2003-2006)**, which produced a 'Reporting Diversity Manual'. This comprehensive resource, with sections entirely dedicated to ethnicity, religion and refugees, provided a training framework for partner organisations across Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, equipping them to champion inclusive journalism as a professional standard in a complex post-conflict environment.

b. Policy and Institutional Influence

Beyond pedagogical tools, this work has exerted a more complex influence on national policy dialogues and institutional practices concerning ethnic issues. In Morocco, the multifaceted approach of the pilot media programme to promote inter-community dialogue (**Reporting Diversity: Pilot Media Programme to Promote Inter-Community Dialogue and Social Inclusion in Morocco (2008-2011)**), which included university modules, an Arabic-language Inclusive Journalism Manual, and high-level national conferences, contributed to a tangible, if indirect, effect on the political superstructure. Anecdotal evidence from the implementing organisation suggests this work informed the subsequent establishment of a Parliamentary Commission

on media and diversity. A more direct policy-level impact is documented in **Strengthening Media Freedom Serbia (2013-2016)**, where expertise directly informed the development of a new national media strategy and a draft broadcasting strategy, thereby shaping the regulatory landscape in line with evolving European Union standards. Furthermore, this initiative has actively challenged entrenched ethnic hierarchies, as demonstrated by the project **Morocco: Towards Inclusive, Responsible and Independent Media (2011-2013)**. This project leveraged the voices of marginalised Tamazight groups through public audio vignettes on Chada FM, successfully amplifying a civil societal struggle that paralleled the broader movement which secured the official recognition of Tamazight as a national language in 2016.

c. Digital Scale and Political Action

In the contemporary digital sphere, the impact has reached an immense scale, translating media interventions into tangible political outcomes in countering ethnic prejudice. The **INFOTEINMENT (2016-2021)** project achieved a quantitative reach of over two hundred million views for its innovative content. More significantly, its investigative series directly influenced legislative action in Ukraine, illustrating how strategic media interventions can shape formal political processes. Beyond sheer scale, projects like **Address of Human Rights – Journalism (2013-2015)** and **CODIME: Countering Disinformation in the Middle East (2019-2021)** have built resilient cadres of journalists and civil society organisations, better equipped to counter hate speech and disinformation. These initiatives have developed a professional resilience that persists beyond project timelines, creating an enduring infrastructure for accountability. The ethical frameworks and transnational coalitions established by initiatives such as **Get the Trolls Out! Phase IV (2020-2023)** and **Disability: A Matter of Perception (2018-2020)** have further mainstreamed ethnic and inclusive sensitivity in media monitoring and narrative construction, ensuring that the impact of these interventions continues to unfold long after their formal conclusion. This legacy effect shows that the ultimate impact is not a linear narrative of success but a cumulative process of layering interventions, where each project strengthens the load-bearing walls supporting a more inclusive media architecture.

V. THE UNFINISHED EDIFICE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESISTANCE

The long-term effort to reconfigure media systems around principles of ethnic inclusion consistently confronts a substantial array of structural barriers. Indeed, the trajectory of initiatives, as illustrated by MDI projects, reveals that the journey from recommendation to sustainable implementation is fraught with political and financial resistance. These projects' recommendations consistently highlight the inherent tension between aspirational ideals of inclusion and the harsh realities imposed by political resistance and funding constraints. Over time, these proposals evolved in nature and scope, reflecting pragmatic adaptation to the challenges encountered in the field, shifting from broad advocacy for national policy overhaul to more discrete, targeted interventions within specific parts of the institutional media.

In its earlier endeavours, recommendations were often foundational, focusing on embedding knowledge and establishing professional standards. In Indonesia, the work on the **Indonesia: Reporting Diversity Network (2010-2011)** project progressed from initial workshops to the concrete recommendation to integrate a reporting diversity curriculum into university

journalism programmes. This included the crucial long-term suggestion to translate critical academic texts from English into Bahasa Indonesia to ensure local accessibility and intellectual decolonisation. A similar approach was mirrored in the South Caucasus under the **Reporting Diversity: Training the media, empowering minorities; a project for improved media coverage of ethnic and minority issues in the South Caucasus (2003-2006)** project, which produced a comprehensive manual offering practical recommendations for using precise language, cultivating diverse sources and integrating diversity into newsroom routines. In Morocco, the project to promote inter-community dialogue (**Reporting Diversity: Pilot Media Programme to Promote Inter-Community Dialogue and Social Inclusion in Morocco (2008-2011)**) ushered in a series of recommendations aimed at institutionalising inclusive journalism, including the development of university modules on diversity, the creation of a Young Inclusive Journalists' Network and the publication of an Arabic-language Inclusive Journalism Manual.

Despite such progressive blueprints, many structural recommendations were documented as only partially implemented or as aspirational ideals, particularly where sustained funding or significant national policy agreements were required. The proposals advanced by **Seeing the Roma Without Prejudice (1999-2001)**, for instance, which aimed to develop the media relations skills of Roma community leaders, were severely circumscribed in scope by limited budget and organisational capacity. Similarly, the **Ethical Journalism Initiative (2010-2012)** in Europe delivered extensive capacity-building, yet its ambitious recommendation to formalise a permanent, centralised online resource was never realised, illustrating a recurring sustainability challenge. This pattern was evident even in later digitally focused projects; **INFOTEINMENT (2016-2021)**, for example, yielded pragmatic recommendations to improve equity by reaching media outside capital cities, but its more ambitious goal of institutionalising cross-border journalist exchanges faced insurmountable political and logistical constraints.

This ongoing friction between recommendation and implementation prompted a discernible evolution in MDI's tactical approach. The Institute's proposals gradually incorporated a more explicitly policy-oriented dimension, as in **Strengthening Media Freedom Serbia (2013-2016)**, where recommendations were directed at harmonising national media legislation with European Union standards and integrating media literacy into education systems. However, recognising the immense difficulty of achieving top-down reform in many contexts, priorities developed over time to incorporate less direct advocacy for sweeping policy change and more specific interventions targeting manageable parts of the institutional media. This shift is evident in projects like **DTCT: Detect Then Act (2019-2021)** and **Get the Trolls Out! Phase IV (2020-2023)**, where recommendations focused on building capacity for tracking hate speech and creating counter-narratives, rather than demanding immediate national policy reform. In instances where institutional action stalled entirely, the recommendations often paved the way for civil society actors to take up the mantle individually, as seen in the project **Seeing Roma Without Prejudice (1999-2001)**, where the work was eventually written into local journalistic training and advocacy, demonstrating a resilient, if fragmented, path towards sustainable change.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, this expansive 26-year Architectural Project demonstrates strategic navigation of complex intellectual and financial landscapes to advance the debate on ethnic diversity from episodic, short-term triage to the pursuit of enduring, systemic reform. This evolution tracked profound geopolitical shifts, particularly the waves of migration that reframed the very context of ethnic inclusion. The institutional impact is evident in the manifestation of permanent structural accountability, with successes ranging from embedding 'Reporting Diversity' in university curricula in Indonesia through **Indonesia: Reporting Diversity Network (2010-2011)** to directly informing national media strategies in **Strengthening Media Freedom Serbia (2013-2016)**. While constantly battling the unfinished building of political resistance, notably state sanctions encountered in **Russia: Fighting Discrimination Through Inclusive Reporting (2013-2014)**, and the persistent challenge of lacking ongoing financial support identified in initiatives like **Reporting Diversity: A Project to Promote Inter-Community Dialogue and Moderate Voices as a Means to Prevent Religious Radicalisation in Egypt (2008-2011)**, a significant digital resilience was successfully cultivated. This is evidenced by achieving massive scale with over 200 million views through **INFOTEINMENT (2016-2021)** and by translating digital advocacy into tangible legislative action in Ukraine. The ultimate contribution, therefore, is a validated blueprint for a sustainable media ecosystem that articulates how capacity can be built and marginalised voices empowered, even when the direct avenue to national reform is politically stymied.

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GLOSSARY OF MDI PROJECTS

(Full name, timespan and funder)

(Link available)

[Latvia and Romania: Reducing Ethnic Tensions \(1998\)](#) - Freedom Forum

[Southeast Europe: Reporting Diversity Training and Development for News Agencies \(2000-2001\)](#) - Westminster Foundation for Democracy, The U.S. Department of State

[Seeing the Roma Without Prejudice \(1999-2001\)](#) - European Cultural Foundation and Open Society Foundation

[Reporting Diversity: Nigeria \(2001\)](#) - World Bank

[Southeastern Europe: The Reporting Diversity Network \(2001-2003\)](#) - The European Commission, The European Cultural Foundation, The Freedom Forum, The Guardian Foundation, IREX, the Open Society Institute, The U.S. Department of State, The Westminster Foundation for Democracy

[Mentorship: Research Fellows at the Central European University \(2002-2005\)](#) - The European Commission, The Eurasia Foundation, IREX Media Innovations Program for Georgia, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[Reporting Diversity: Training the media, empowering minorities; a project for improved media coverage of ethnic and minority issues in the South Caucasus \(2003-2006\)](#) - The European Commission, The Eurasia Foundation, IREX Media Innovations Program for Georgia, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[A Jewish and Arab Student-created Newspaper Project \(2004-2006\)](#) - The European Cultural Foundation, The Open Society Institute, The Sigrid Rausing Trust, The Westminster Foundation for Democracy

[Part II: Seeing the Roma Without Prejudice \(2004-2006\)](#) - The Department for International Development (UK)

[Training for Trainers: Reporting Diversity \(2006-2007\)](#) - The Sigrid Rausing Trust

[European Union: Study on Media and Diversity \(2007-2009\)](#) - European Commission

[Reporting Diversity: A Project to Promote Inter-Community Dialogue and Moderate Voices as a Means to Prevent Religious Radicalisation in Egypt \(2008-2011\)](#) - UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Suupport for Inclusive Society in Cuba: Enhancing the Capacities of Civil Society and the Media \(2009-2015\)](#) - International Republican Institute

[Reporting Diversity: Pilot Media Programme to Promote Inter-Community Dialogue and Social Inclusion in Morocco \(2009-2011\)](#) - UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[A European Dialogue on the EU Media and Diversity Study \(2009-2010\)](#) - European Commission, Europe For Citizens Programme

[Indonesia: Reporting Diversity Network \(2010-2011\)](#) - Open Society Foundation

[Ethical Journalism Initiative: A Campaign to Fight Discrimination Through Freedom of Expression and the Highest Professional Standards of Journalism \(2010-2012\)](#) - European Commission

[South Sudan: People's Voice Newspaper \(2010-2012\)](#) - European Commission, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), Country-Based Support Scheme (CBSS)

[Morocco: Towards Inclusive, Responsible & Independent Media \(2011-2013\)](#) - European Commission

[Rebuilding Post-Revolution Egyptian Media: Embracing Free Expression, Diversity and Inclusiveness \(2011-2013\)](#) - Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

[Building Citizen Participation in the Political Process in Egypt Through Better Media, Parliamentary and Civil Society Interaction \(2012-2015\)](#) - UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office

[Let the Roma Youth Be Heard \(2012-2013\)](#) - Open Society Foundation: Media Program, European Commission: Life Long Learning Program

[Civil Society & the Media Working Together to Fight Ethnic & Religious Discrimination in the EU \(2012-2014\)](#) - Open Society Foundation

[Creating an Inclusive and Responsible Media in Lebanon \(2013-2014\)](#) - European Commission

[Promoting Freedom of Expression, Diversity and Inclusion in Morocco \(2013-2016\)](#) - European Commission

[Russia: Fighting Discrimination Through Inclusive Reporting \(2013-2014\)](#) - European Commission

[Inclusive Journalism Initiative: Reporting Europe and the Asia Pacific \(2013-2016\)](#) - European Commission

[Algeria: Inclusive Media For An Inclusive Society \(2013-2017\)](#) - European Commission, UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (Arab Partnership Fund)

[Our Elections, Our Europe! – Engaging European Youth to Counter Hate Speech, Promote Diversity, and Encourage Inclusion \(2014\)](#) - European Commission

[Infocore: Identifying the Role of Media in Conflicts \(2014-2016\)](#) - European Commission

[Dune Voices: Bringing the Voices of the Sahara into the Public Sphere \(2014-2017\)](#) - Arab Partnership Fund, UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office

[MAMIL: Macedonian Media and Information Literacy Coalition \(2016-2018\)](#) - European Commission

[INFOTAINMENT \(2016-2021\)](#) - US State Department

[Youth Against Hate: Empowering Youth to Combat Hate Speech in Local Communities \(2017-2018\)](#) - OSCE Mission to Serbia

[Silence Hate Project against Online Hate Towards Migrants and Refugees \(2018-2019\)](#) - European Commission

[Through Inclusion to Stability and Harmony: Strengthening the Capacities of Chinese Journalists and CSOs to Advocate for and Promote the Human Rights of Marginalised Groups through Cross-Sector Collaboration \(2018-2021\)](#) - USA State Department

[New Neighbours: Mobilising Media and Civil Society Actors to Promote Mutual Understanding between Migrants and Host Communities in Europe \(2019-2021\)](#) - European Commission

[MLADI: Supporting Youth Civic Engagement Through Media and Digital Presence \(2019-2022\)](#) - Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia

[DTCT: Detect Then Act \(2019-2021\)](#) - European Commission

[Get the Trolls Out! Phase Four \(2020-2023\)](#) - United States Department of State

[Reporting Diversity Network \(RDN\) 2.0 \(2020-2024\)](#) - European Commission, Balkan Trust for Democracy, a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade

[Covinform \(2020-2023\)](#) - European Commission: Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme

[Inclusive Media, Cohesive Society \(2020-2023\)](#) - Thomson Reuters Foundation

[Get the Trolls Out! Sri Lanka \(2021-2024\)](#) - European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

[CODIME: Countering Disinformation in Media Environments \(2022-2024\)](#) - United States Department of State

[Strengthening Media Freedom in Serbia \(2022-2024\)](#) - European Commission - Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

