cmfe
Community Media Forum Europe

Autumn 2023 - The Resilient Pulse of Community Media in Europe

Dear esteemed readers,

As the leaves turn golden and the days grow shorter, we embrace the evolving season by delving into the transformative world of community media in Europe. The autumn edition of our newsletter brings forth enlightening discussions, significant milestones, and the vigor of our sector that never ceases to amaze us.

This year, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) marks 25 transformative years. Their commitment to upholding free, independent, and pluralistic media has been unwavering, and we are humbled to witness their numerous initiatives and projects. Teresa Ribeiro, the current RFoM, beautifully encapsulates their journey and vision, emphasizing the importance of media freedom as a cornerstone of comprehensive security.

At IAA Mobility 2023, community radio LORA Munich introduced an innovative "Open Mic" project, transforming a parking lot into a dynamic public broadcasting space. Here, locals discussed "Mobility and its consequences in the city." LORA's effort highlighted community media's role in providing grassroots perspectives, untouched by commercial pressures.

As we look towards a more equitable future, Rob Watson's invaluable insights on 'Equality Impact Assessments' for community media highlight the essential practice of ensuring unbiased and inclusive media representations.

The forthcoming study from "Local Media for Democracy" (LM4D) on 'news deserts' in Europe piques our interest. Their research will undoubtedly shed light on the challenges local and community media face, and we eagerly anticipate their findings in January 2024.

This edition celebrates milestones too. Denmark revels in its 40-year legacy of community media, remembering its pioneering days and foreseeing a promising future. Similarly, Radio LoRa in Switzerland, with its roots in the vibrant city of Zurich, marks four decades of resistance, culture, and diversity. The festivities on September 22 and 23 promise to be a grand reflection of their journey. More festivities will follow as Radio FRO from Linz celebrates 25 years in October.

From the UK, Rob Watson returns with his perspective on integration and community media, stressing the importance of social cohesion and interconnectedness in today's fractured world.

Ireland's community TV sector, with its ambitious vision for a 'Shared Island' Community Television service, underscores the changing media landscape and our sector's adaptability. We also join in anticipation of the review by Coimisiún na Meán, hoping for greater support and visibility.

Lastly, the intimate podcast discussion from 'We Belong' with Jana Degrott, one of the youngest elected politicians in Europe, adds a unique personal touch to our edition. Her journey and challenges provide an authentic glimpse into the realities faced by young women of color in politics.

As we approach our General Assembly this month, let's acknowledge the collective strength of our community, forging ahead with renewed determination and unity. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to community media. We hope this autumn issue enlightens, inspires, and evokes a sense of belonging.

Warm regards,

CMFE Newsletter Editorial team

CMFE Newsletters Archive

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From our own world

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Join us at the Display.Voices conference

CMFE GA 2023 to be held in Budapest

Photo credits: Rudy Balasko.

Dear members,

It is our pleasure to invite you to our annual General Assembly, which will this year happen in the captivating city of **Budapest, on the 23rd of September at 15.00h.**

This year's GA will unfold within the inspiring halls of **Múosz - National Association of Hungarian Journalists** as a finale of [Display.Voices](#) conference which CMFE organizes together with the Hostwriter as part of the [Display Project.](#)

We would like to extend the invitation to all of our members to join us at the conference, network, participate in discussions, and learn about [displ.eu](#) platform, and finally participate physically in our GA. Participation at the conference is free of charge.

All members who cannot attend (physically or online) but would like to cast their voice at the GA, please use the proxy form provided by the board. If you have not yet received your proxy or invitation, please contact the board.

Best!

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Strengthening an enabling environment

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News deserts in Europe:

Assessing risks for local and community media in the 27 EU member states

News deserts in Europe : assessing risks for local and community media in the 27 EU member states

cadmus.eui.eu

This preliminary report consists of a literature review of the existing research on EU countries regarding the state of local and community media, with the final aim of identifying the relevant theoretical and practical dimensions for understanding the phenomenon of "news deserts" in a European context. This report anticipates a wider study that will be published in January 2024 in the context of the project "Local Media for Democracy" (LM4D), which aims at supporting local, regional, and community media in emerging 'news deserts' in Europe.

Would you have additional research to support the finalization of the report? Otherwise: looking forward to January 2024!

Read more

Can there be Security without Media Freedom?

25th Anniversary of the Mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom on the Media

can there be security without media freedom?

Media freedom does not come by itself. In Europe, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) was established 25 years ago, and in the forward to their anniversary publication, Teresa Ribeiro, the present OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media takes stock of where we are:

"The 25th Anniversary of the mandate is a timely occasion to look back, take stock, and reflect on the lessons learned over the past 25 years. More importantly, however, it is a time to look forward and ask ourselves the question: How can we defend media freedom in these turbulent, rapidly changing times in the years to come?

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) was established 25 years ago, with a vision: to support the participating States in upholding their "commitments to the furthering of free, independent and pluralistic media".

Over the last 25 years, the RFoM has scrutinized and assisted the participating States, and launched pioneering projects to fulfill its mandate – Open Journalism, Safety of Journalists, AI & Free Speech, Safety of Female Journalists Online, the End Impunity Campaign, Free Media Against Disinformation, just to name a couple from the dozens of initiatives the Office worked on over the years.

What makes this institution – and its activities – so unique, is that it is ingrained within the OSCE's comprehensive security concept, making media freedom a key pillar of security. My institution contributes to the overall goal of comprehensive security as part of a bigger organization."

Read more

Improving the Visibility of CM

Let community media have their say from the street

Photo of Open Mic studio at Schwanthalerstraße in Munich courtesy of LORA Munich.

Climate change, a shift in mobility, air pollution, climate-impact adaptation and, last but not least, urban planning that focuses on people as people and not as car drivers - these are all important issues in major cities, not only in Europe.

All these topics crystallized around a major trade show in Munich at the beginning of September - the IAA Mobility 2023 was once again a showcase for the ideas that the financially strong automotive industry has for the future of our cities:

People buy cars, or rent cars, preferably a new one every year!

It was clear to the city of Munich that there would be protests against the sellout of the city center, which was packed full of new display cars.

So that the wallet is not the only factor determining which mobility ideas can be seen in the city, the city council has therefore funded 9 projects that will bring

civic impulses to the public during the IAA.

One of these projects was "Open Mic" by the community radio LORA Munich. The colleagues used city funds to build a "Parklet", a fixed platform that occupies a parking lot and turns it into a place that can be used by the public. But the goal of this parklet was not only to create a place without consumerism in the expensive city, with seating, plants, and an exchange cabinet, right next to a busy street - no, on this parklet also a studio cabin was created, from which was also broadcast during the IAA. More than 50 contact persons, from residents to activists to politicians and administrators, were allowed to talk in the booth, in the still audible street noise, about exactly what they experienced here themselves: "Mobility and its consequences in the city!"

With this project, LORA Munich wanted to make the mobility turnaround audible, which certainly became clear, at least for the need for quieter cars and motorcycles.

Thanks to new technology, innovative solutions, and above all the terrific commitment of volunteers, LORA Munich succeeded in this project to occupy an issue where it occurs: directly on the street!

And because the parklet was built in such a modular way that it can be quickly and easily dismantled and assembled, nothing stands in the way of its future use throughout the city (except perhaps the bureaucracy, for which nothing is usually worse than obstructing the flow of traffic).

Such projects that bring community radios out of the studios, and closer to the communities, can be an approach to make the role of community media understandable: We don't work with a lot of money, the perfect technology, or the best control, but we are close to the people, directly to the issues that affect us all - and yes, we don't let ourselves be bought by the car industry. Because we are non-commercial, local, active, and creative!

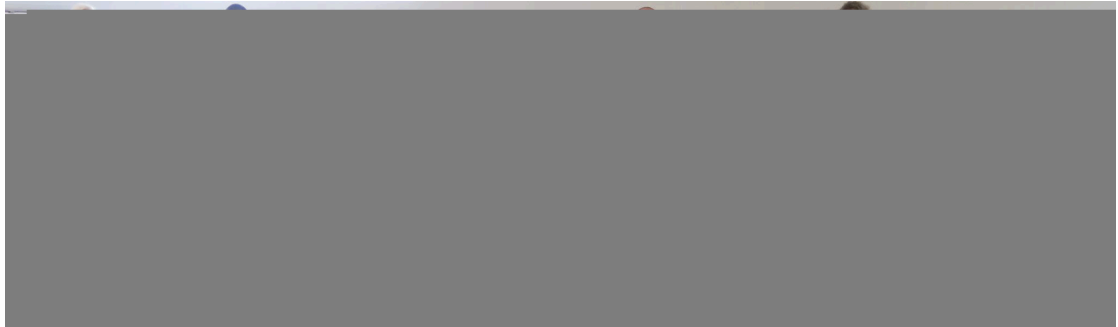# Designing Equality Impact Assessments for Community Media

From Rob Watson's 'Media for Positive Social Change', we are pleased to share this exciting presentation of how to operationalize UK equality legislation for community media, doing 'Equality Impact Assessments'. Rob tells:

"An **Equality Impact Assessment** ([EIA](#)) is a process designed to ensure that a policy, project, or scheme does not unlawfully discriminate against any people based on what are known as protected characteristics. The EIA process aims to identify and mitigate or prevent discrimination against people who are recognized as being associated with one or more of the protected categories. The UK Equality Act 2010 defines nine protected characteristics, including race, religion or belief, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, marriage or civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

The Equality Act places a duty on public sector organizations to act in accordance with the provision of the act. EIAs are therefore a means of ensuring that the public sector equality duty is met. The Public sector equality duty came into force in April 2011, meaning that public authorities, like the Ministry of Justice for example, are now required as they go about carrying out their functions, to have due regard for the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010."

[Read more]

Denmark celebrates 40 years of Community Media

In 1983 Denmark joined the other two Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Norway, when it opened its period of experiments with Community radio and TV. Community radio was put on a permanent footing in 1986, and since then, Denmark has had a well-established community broadcasting sector with 140 non-commercial local radio stations and 38 non-commercial local television stations. Community broadcasting development has taken priority over local commercial broadcasting. Since 1988 it was decided to introduce a systematic public support system for the non-commercial local radio and TV, not carrying advertisements. While limited and contested, it is better than nothing.

The 40-year anniversary was organised by the Danish Community Radio Association SAML (Sammenslutningen af Medier I Lokalsamfundet) and brought together 52 radio and TV representatives from all over the country. Four old-timers, who were active in the very first stations, including CMFE's past President Birgitte Jallov, shared stories and perspectives from then, looking at the challenges and opportunities for community media in today's reality. Leif Lønsmann, another one of the four, said in his closing remarks that the radio has been declared dead many times, but that the radio has survived all its death sentences and that the radio – the audio medium, whether as a podcast or traditional radio, will continue.

Radio LoRa - 40 Years of Resistance!

[Radio LoRa](#) is the oldest community radio in Switzerland. It was founded as a political project and still sees itself as a critical actor in political and cultural events in Zurich. Around 300 dedicated volunteer producers broadcast 24 hours a day from the studios in Kreis 4 (District 4 of the city of Zurich). As an intercultural radio station, LoRa reflects the social reality of the city of Zurich in 20 different languages, where every third inhabitant lives a daily life that is not (only) in Swiss German. Radio LoRa's programming is as colorful and diverse as the opinions, cultures, and music of the people of Zurich - which is why no two hours on LoRa sound the same.

40 years have passed since the first broadcast - a proud anniversary to be loudly celebrated!

LoRa is taking this milestone birthday as an opportunity to get out of the studios, bring the wealth of music, culture, and history that LoRa holds to the outside world, and mark a presence in the city for which they broadcast daily over the airwaves. LoRa will celebrate by discussing, dancing, and exchanging ideas, preferably together with many different people, during an unforgettable weekend on **September 22 and 23**.

The cultural centre [Rote Fabrik](#) is the chosen location for the festival, as its history is closely linked to the emergence of LoRa. Both projects emerged from the youth movement of the 80s and stand for the same values.

We wish LoRa a beautiful festival in this beautiful place!

https://fest.lora.ch

FRO invites you to the Ü25 party

[Radio FRO](#) is celebrating 25 years of free radio in Linz and we are all celebrating in their base of operations the famous Stadtwerkstatt.

On September 6, 1998, Radio FRO started terrestrial broadcasting on 105.0 MHz in Linz. A quarter of a century later, we would like to take a look back as well as into the future, but above all celebrate the 25th anniversary with all our friends and companions. The best way to do this is with an over 25 party.

On Saturday, **October 21st**, Radio FRO's Ü25 party will take place. It starts at 5:00 p.m. in the Stadtwerkstatt, Kirchengasse 4, 4040 Linz. There will be radio pirates from the early days, people from friendly media outlets (local and international), and musical acts.

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Action for Coop. and Change

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Community TV in Ireland

'Sundays at Noon', a Dublin tradition. Near TV filming at Hugh Lane Gallery: http://neartv.ie/the-hugh-lane-concert-series-berginald-rash-annalissa-monticelli-and-fiona-gryson/

It is a very exciting time for community TV in Ireland. There are two community TVs in the republic, CCTv in Cork and DCTV in Dublin, and one in Northern Ireland, NVTV in Belfast. We cooperate on many aspects and we are discussing, as a medium-term plan, a 'Shared Island' Community Television service. We are currently looking for state support and also looking to international models, such as Frikanalen in Norway, for ways forward with this. This is not straightforward as it involves two different Media Authorities, Coimisiún na Meán in the Republic and Ofcom in Northern Ireland. (also not in the EU).   It will however provide us with the capacity to offer community television participation to everyone on the island of Ireland.

The new media authority in the republic, Coimisiún na Meán (The Media Commission) offers new possibilities for Cork and Dublin. Both channels are now in receipt of funding from the Social Benefit Fund from the TV licence fee. This was €75,000 this year, and while this is not a huge amount, it is expected to be annual and to grow. Coimisiún na Meán have committed to introducing a Community Media Fund in 2024, and while it is not entirely clear what shape this will take, there is optimism that this, for the first time, will offer us sustainable support.

In a broader sense, community TV in Ireland is fully aware of the changing media landscape and understands our role as much more than simply linear television, with a focus on being a creative space for production with multi-platform distribution on a planned video-on-demand space. CCTv has already

embarked on the road of setting itself up as a community media hub, and are currently looking for premises to set-up new studios. DCTV, after many quiet years, is nearing a relaunch and also sees itself as a creative space with platform-neutral dissemination.

This year Coimisiún na Meán initiated a statutory review into community television with a view to new licencing in 2024. It is expected that this report will be formally published soon, and we believe it will reflect very well on our track record in spite of infrequent and piecemeal statutory funding.

Ciarán Murray,

Coordinator of Near Media Co-op, Dublin.

Former CMFE president.

[Cork Community TV](#)

[Dublin Community TV](#)

[NVTV, Belfast](#)

Other

[Coimisiún na Meán](#)

[Near Media Co-op](#)

[Frikanalen (Norway)](#)

Community Media – Talking About Integration

Photo courtesy of

From the UK Rob Watson reports through his "Media for Positive Social Change" newsletter about integration and community media. As we find this can inspire beyond UK's boundaries, we are happy to share here:

"How do diverse communities maintain a functional and desirable sense of social cohesion in an age of cultural fragmentation, media-driven misinformation, and globalised threats to the integrity of UK politics? How do communities prosper and function effectively as an integrated and cohesive entity when the pressure to strongly identity with one's heritage, faith or social status, takes precedence over the capacity to mix with people from other walks of like, social classes, ethnic and cultural backgrounds?

These are some of the questions that were prompted by the discussion 'Lessons from Leicester: Bridging Communities across the UK' which was organised by British Future, and took place at the House of Commons on Wednesday 12th July. Sharing lessons from the social disturbances in East Leicester in 2022, this discussion highlighted the need for people from different communities to self-regulate their wider social interaction in a way that is sustainable and purposeful, seeking to achieve a sense of intercultural cohesion that creates a balance between 'bonding' forms of social capital, and 'bridging' forms of social capital.

Social capital is a term in social science that refers to the connections, networks, or relationships among people and the value that arises from them. It's about the benefits we get from our social interactions, which can potentially lead to mutual benefits and collective achievements. The concept of social capital is further divided into two types: bonding and bridging."

Running for Elections in Luxembourg

We Belong in conversation with Jana Degrott

For their 33rd podcast episode, We Belong had an intimate discussion with their Co-Founder, Jana Degrott, who also counts as one of the youngest elected politicians in Luxembourg and in Europe.

Since the age of 16, Jana has been active in politics, and by the age of 21, she was elected as a Local Councilor in Luxembourg. Recognized Obama Leader by the Obama Foundation, Responsible Leader by the BMW Foundation, and Goalkeeper by the Gates Foundation, she is a role model for many aspiring female leaders.

In conversation with Jana, she recalled her first elections compared to the current elections she is campaigning for. She also opened up on the mental health struggles she faced due to her political work and how she found her sense of belonging. Despite the toxicity and backlash she faced as a young woman of color, Jana is convinced that her place is in politics because of what her presence there represents and as a sign to all those who will follow.

You can listen to the podcast **here** and via the GTTO podcast pages on **Anchor** and **Spotify**.

We Belong is a platform and safe space for people of color to share their experiences. Launched in 2020, We Belong has grown to include members across Europe, includes virtual and in-person events, and also features We Belong: The Podcast. Subscribing to the theory that change starts when personal stories are shared, the women behind We Belong are helping legitimize immigrant daughters' stories and spark new conversations about womanhood, the intersectionality of feminism, and challenging the conventional wisdom of what it means to belong.

https://www.webelongeurope.com/about-us

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The Circle Media hubs creates 3 new hubs in Italy, Sweeden and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Journalists and media professionals in Mostar, Naples, and Gothenburg, this might be for you.

Apply now to be part of The Circle Hubs and secure 10,000 EUR to kick off your idea! Design sprints will be organized in these cities in September and October!

Mostar application

Gothenburg application

Local Media for Democracy (LM4D)

Local Media for Democrac (LM4D)

The European Federation of Journalists, with a consortium of partners, the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom, International Media Support, and Journalismfund.eu. is launching the "**Local Media for Democracy**" project to help struggling local, regional and community media in the news desert areas in Europe by providing financial support and organizational capacity building.

The project is accepting grant proposals until 28 September: https://www.journalismfund.eu/local-media-democracy

CMPF's preliminary study, "**News deserts in Europe: Assessing risks for local and community media in the 27 EU Member States**" is carried out as part of the project. See this newsletter under 'Enabling Environment'.

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Publications

Women's Activism Online and the Global Struggle for Social Change

Carmit Wiesslitz edited this new book, published by Palgrave-Macmillan in the series: Palgrave Studies in Communication for Social Change. The editors present the work like this:

"This book showcases the online activism of women's groups around the world in the post-#MeToo era and presents an overview of the diversity of its current expressions. The focus of this book extends beyond campaigns against rape culture to include women's struggles on other political and environmental issues, such as the campaign against the radical right-wing in Austria.

Moreover, the book's chapters highlight the genuine complexity of the efforts of women activists who are not only challenging the patriarchal order within male-controlled digital platforms but are also challenging the hegemonic voices within the women's movements. The book's case studies attest to the proliferation of digital campaigns aimed not only against discrimination of women but against discrimination based on their color, age, ethnicity, and nationality. The internet helps them to voice their agenda and strive for social change as well as to create both connective and collective identities.

The book offers a holistic and wide-angled perspective on activism and it'd be a great fit not only for women's studies courses but also for topic courses on political organizing and democratic participation in general, social movements, alternative media, online communities, and online campaigns.

Read more