

**SHIFT – actions for migrating perspectives** is a collaboration between initiatives, editors and journalists who research narratives around migrants in the European media and critique the current power structures in our information ecosystem.

# EDITORIAL TEAM



# **Mercy Abang**

Mercy is Co-Managing Director of Hostwriter, an award-winning network connecting 6,700 journalists from 158 countries, and the publisher of Unbias the News – an international cross-border newsroom. A journalist and media entrepreneur, Mercy was voted one of the most powerful women in journalism in Nigeria in 2021. As a former reporter and a freelance producer with Al Jazeera Media Network, she has reported stories across communities in Africa and Europe, both as a TV host and in print. She has also reported from the United Nations in New York, covering world leaders and the security council meetings. She is very vocal about the challenges of media funding, polarisation and public interest media in the global south.

# Mahmoud Elenani

Mahmoud is an Egyptian independent documentary producer and investigative journalist. His films documented the political situation in the Middle East and North Africa for Al Jazeera Media Network, Amazon Prime, DW and AlAraby TV Network. Mahmoud's investigations have focused on the identity change among young people after the Arab Spring revolutions, social and economic rights, and the prisons and detention facility conditions for women and children in the Gulf states and Egypt.





# Moha Gerehou

Moha is an independent journalist and a contributor for Vogue, Carne Cruda Radio and Aragón Televisión. He is a member of Conciencia Afro and a former President of SOS Racismo in Spain. Author of the 2021 book *Qué hace un negro como tú en un sitio como este*, Moha is a lecturer, speaker and presenter on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issues in social organisations, educational institutions and companies. He was named as one of the European Young Leaders of 2020.



### Gabriela Ramirez

Gabriela is a Venezuelan storyteller and multimedia journalist based in Berlin researching the intersections of journalism, innovation and product strategy. With a Master's degree in Interactive Journalism, Gabriela mostly covers migration, human rights and climate justice and is always eager to explore new multimedia narratives and formats to build a more innovative journalism.





# Osama Al-Sayyad

Osama is an Egyptian investigative journalist based in the Netherlands. His work focuses on civil-military relations in the Middle East and North Africa. He has contributed to projects that highlight the intertwined relationships between Egypt's military generals and businessmen across kinship and benefit-based networks. He has published several investigations on human rights, illicit financial flows and corruption. He has worked on projects that use data for positive social change and is a member of several cross-border investigation teams.

### Tina Xu

Tina is a multimedia journalist whose stories interrogate the three-way street between people, politics and power. She has created videos on artists and musicians with refugee backgrounds for InfoMigrants. Her interactive designs were nominated for the Innovation Award of the European Press Prize in 2022, and she received the Excellence in Reporting on the Environment Award from the Society of Publishers in Asia in 2021 for a deep dive on community organising against industrial pollution in rural China.



# PRODUCTION TEAM



# Savannah Koolen

As co-founder and director of Stichting Here to Support, Savannah is committed to a dignified life for refugees and undocumented migrants. Through Stichting Here to Support, she hopes to achieve this by making refugees and undocumented migrants more resilient and by creating platforms to amplify their voices.

# Malou Lintmeijer

Co-director of Stichting Here to Support since 2018, Malou is experienced in the strategy, entrepreneurship and finance of non-governmental organisations. She fights for human rights and advocates for municipalism.





### Liza Saris

Liza specialises in European identity and has been engaged in several research projects questioning the exclusivity and inclusivity of a European identity. She works with European-wide projects, focused on the collaboration of grassroots activists. She founded the project Where is Europe? which aims to explore narratives around European identity. She played a major role for the Re:framing Migrants project in community development, coordinating the City Assembly and the Decolonised Newsroom.

# Julia Vernersson

Co-Managing Director of Hostwriter, Julia has more than 15 years of experience in the non-governmental organisation sector. She has focused on bringing forward international projects that address socio-political problems and inspire creative forces for social change.





# Vicky Anning, Copyeditor

Vicky worked as a print journalist in the US and the UK, before moving into the charity sector. For almost 20 years, she has worked as a freelance writer and editor for charities challenging injustices – including Unicef, CAFOD, SOMO, Eurodad, Arisa and Frontline AIDS, as well as the European Cultural Foundation.

# DESIGN

# Vivian Mule, Illustration

Vivian is a creative currently living and working in Hamburg, Germany. When she is not working at her main occupation as a photo editor and designer at a publishing house, she supports independent projects as an illustrator, photographer and videographer.

Instagram: @vivianmule





# Ariel Sosa, Graphic Design

Ariel is a Honduran photographer, designer and visual artist as well as an anti-racist activist currently based in Spain. Their work addresses the tensions between the memory of marginalised populations in the global south and the narrative of hegemonic history. Many of their projects focus on the exploration of transgenerational trauma, linking personal, intimate and familial experience to its social context addressing conflict, grief, migration, sexual dissidence and mental health.

Instagram: @ese.arielsosa

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# VIDEO DOCUMENTATION

### Shivani Hassard

Shivani is a filmmaker and researcher from the UK. Her previous work includes narrative films, documentaries, music videos, artists' moving images and interactive experiences. She was a co-editor of *Contra*, a print magazine about visual culture and conflict, and she is passionate about the role of media in shaping political and emotional realities.

website: https://shivanihassard.com/



# FOREWORD - WE SEE THE SHIFT COMING

How can we make sure that journalism tells the whole story - the story that represents all of us?

Can a newsroom reach its full journalistic potential without racialised or with migrant background professionals? Can good journalism be done without an anti-racist and migrant perspective while reporting?

No newsroom operates in a vacuum. Structures outside of media are bound to replicate in the internal dynamics of media production. To truly decolonise a newsroom is not possible without decolonising the larger society. However, media shapes how we view wider society at large, and we as journalists have a special responsibility to take active steps to provide accurate reporting that questions the status quo. Many migrant and racialised journalists experience discrimination within mainstream media, making independent initiatives and platforms increasingly necessary. In SHIFT we have focused on the experiences of the new media makers that are emerging and bringing their unique perspectives to light, shining a spotlight on the realities that are so often ignored by design and are frequently silenced by the mainstream media.

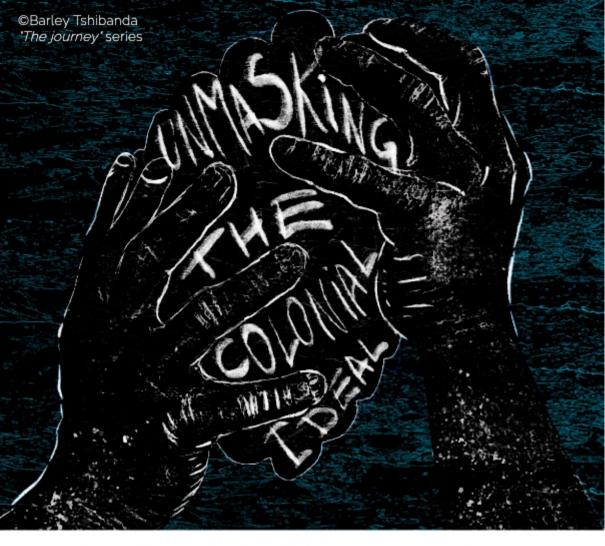
In SHIFT - Actions for migrating perspectives, we have the pleasure of introducing some of Europe's most vibrant media makers. Within these pages, we share some of their experiences dealing with the mainstream media and their ideas for decolonising the news industry.

We cover best practices for creating inclusive media in three chapters:

Newsrooms that accurately represent and adequately participate in the reporting process – highlighting and connecting initiatives and individuals with immigrant backgrounds who work in Europe. We explore the need for decolonisation and evaluate network connections within marginalised communities.

**Podcasts** are becoming an increasingly popular medium, covering a wide range of topics. These new media audio files can be produced quickly and relatively cheaply using mobile phones or by building an improvised studio in a refugee camp. Streaming digital audio services like podcasts are now the go-to medium for in-depth analysis of events for racialised people, migrants and refugees to highlight important topics, stories and voices from the community.

New media platforms like Instagram, YouTube and TikTok are playing a significant role in driving and influencing social actions and movements globally. Young generations are leading conversations on these platforms



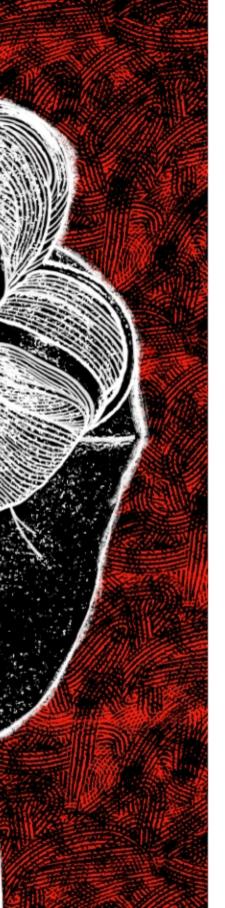
by organising, sharing information, building coalitions and shaping movements. New media is also being used by the migrant community to bring social change and to offer different perspectives of the global south and refugees around the world,

As part of this trend, individuals and organisations are taking the lead in transforming how people of colour are represented in the media,

This publication was produced during a three-week pop up editorial event in Amsterdam focusing on the decolonisation of newsrooms and exploring innovative reporting standards related to refugees, minorities and immigrants in Europe. We report on diverse communities within our societies, yet many newsrooms remain homogeneous, leading to inadequate representation of marginalised groups. The people and initiatives featured in SHIFT have set themselves apart through their independent reporting on asylum, immigration and the media, providing invaluable insights and models of good practice.

The shift is happening - and we're excited to be a part of it!







Barly Tshibanda was born and raised in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. He received his education from the Academie des Beaux-Arts Kinshasa and INA (Institut National des Arts de Kinshasa), and is currently studying at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Denmark. His practice is centred around decolonisation processes and anti-border regime strategies. He draws inspiration from different lived experiences with the European border regime and racism in Denmark. He has a strong connection with local activist and artist groups in Europe and Africa and is also a member of Bridge Radio from Copenhagen and La Folie dance crew from Kinshasa. The need to connect these two places of belonging is a recurring theme in Barly's work.

The journey is a series of drawings from the European border, from Kinshasa to Copenhagen, from Lesvos to Lampedusa. Who decides whether freedom of movement is a human right? From the west, the border is an exotic experience. Others experience the violence of the border every single day, to the point where many people are losing their lives.



1 O Newsrooms

# GHANAIAN-BORN SPANISH TV PRESENTER, BEATRICE DUODU

Interview by Moha Gerehou



Beatrice Duodu is a TV3 news anchor in Spain. She was born in Ghana and has lived in the Barcelona area since she was four. A journalism graduate from Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, she has worked for media outlets such as RTVE or RAC1. She started out at TV3 as a social reporter for the programme Planta Baixa before she became an anchor for the channel's news show in 2022.

rowing up watching the BBC or CNN through a satellite dish remains one of the most formative memories for journalist Beatrice Duodu.

Fast forward 20 years and Beatrice made history when TV3 appointed her as the presenter of the Spanish network's nightly news programme in October 2022. For the first time in 39 years, a black woman became a news anchor for the TV3 news channel. It was a significant moment for people of colour like Beatrice – giving viewers from similar backgrounds across Catalonia a sense of belonging and a chance to be seen.

Born in 1996, Beatrice is the daughter of a Ghanaian migrant who left Africa when she was four. Her parents moved with her to the small Catalonian town of Vic in Spain, but she then moved to Barcelona, where she spent her formative years and studied journalism.

After several internships, Beatrice leaped into TV3, the influential television channel of Catalonia. TV3 is part of Catalon public broadcaster Televisió de Catalonya, a subsidiary of the Catalon Media Corporation (CCMA). She started out as a social reporter for the programme Planta Baixa, which means "ground floor" in Catalon, before she became presenter for the nightly news show.

Beatrice's visible presence at the channel has given TV3 a new dimension and responsibility for changing the narratives and ways of telling the stories of racialised and migrant people. That is why Beatrice is one of the people we are turning to in this publication — to talk about her life trajectory, the importance of representation in the media and how to improve the quality of journalism so that it reflects societies.

# You were born in Ghana, moved to Spain when you were four, and have lived in the Barcelona area ever since. Does the migrant label represent you as a way of defining yourself?

Yes, it does, both in how I present myself and how the world sees me. For years I have lived a process of non-acceptance or of wanting to be part of the population surrounding me at school, park and high school, I grew up in Vic, a small town 60 kilometres from Barcelona, with a much more closed mentality and a smaller population. I wanted to fit in there until I did my work of mental emancipation to understand that I don't have to look like them. I have no choice but to embrace the label, not out of resignation but out of pure logic, And I do it with all my pride.

# Was journalism ever present in your life's choices as a child?

Journalism has always been in my life, but I didn't even know what form it took or what it was called. For example, I used to see correspondents on television making live connections, and I thought: "I want to do this". Also, since I was very young, I used to translate or transfer news to people in my community who didn't understand the language while I was the person fluent in the language. I had to explain the news to my family, friends, uncles, aunts, uncles and cousins.

In my house, we had a satellite dish and watched BBC or CNN. I consumed different channels and loved to sit down and talk about topics I didn't know or translate them into a plain and common language.

# Do you think journalism is accessible at a socioeconomic level? How was it for you?

It is not accessible. University prices still need to be within reach for many families. And it's a shame because there is a lot of talent and people with great potential who need access to these careers [but can't] because of the socioeconomic barrier.

When I talk about how I managed to go to college, I always say that, at 13, I was already babysitting, and I worked in an underwear store during high school, I would get home at 10 p.m., eat dinner and start studying. Sometimes I would stay up until four in the morning, My mother would get up at 4:30 a.m. to work at the meat shop, and sometimes she would meet me at home and scold me so I wouldn't stay up studying and go to sleep. I made many personal, social and friendship sacrifices because I had to pay 2,500 euros per year in tuition fees. But that should not be the norm, and it should be that everyone can access a university degree,

# Did you share a course with other racialised people or people of immigrant descent during your journalism career?

I could count the racialised people in my career on the fingers of one hand. Some didn't finish their studies, and the journalism career is structured so that whoever resists the first year is a champion. A lot of people drop out in that

You said that your

being a young person

were the newsroom

dynamics for a voice like vours to have

that relevance?

The newsroom had a way of

operating that

and a newcomer. What

voice was heard despite

first year. The racialised people were few, and each with their own story. If there had been more of us, statis tically, we would have found people who had similar stories to us. But there was me, another black girl, and a Moroccan. The rest were all white.

# Your first experience in TV3 was in the programme Planta Baixa, where you were a reporter on social issues. How did that experience help you?

was different from the usual It was terrific to do social issues way, very because journalism means improvtransversal. ing the lives of disadvantaged people. I liked picking up problems not generally on the agenda, such as reporting on the need to be more literate, drawing on the testimony of two tremendous illiterate women, Despite being very young in the newsroom, my voice was heard. I proposed topics, and most of them came out. I met diverse people and dealt with various issues, such as a report on people who couldn't fill out administrative forms. like their children's school enrolment.

IDEA THAT I DON'T WANT TO BECOME WHAT I'VE ALWAYS HATED.



We had an organisational chart, but there was a boss with decision-making power and a lot of sensitivity. He opened the doors to our voices, and he valued them very much. We had a weekly meeting, but we could occasionally approach his desk to propose a topic. At that moment, he could mobilise cameras directly, making the process very agile.

My voice was also heard because I was an advisor on racial issues, so the rest of the newsroom consulted me when there was a story to be done.

# Now you are a TV3 news anchor. What are the biggest challenges you face daily when you sit in front of the camera?

The biggest challenge is to face myself and my self-requirement to do every—thing perfectly. Also, the cameras can betray you, even if you've been there for many years. Another chal—lenge is overcoming the idea that I don't want to become what I've always hated. For example, I don't think of saying a nationality when it's unnecessary, but then the news has clear guidelines, unlike in reporting, where

you have more flexibility. I am revising the texts several times and making changes, such as adding the word "people" when discussing "migrants".

# How are these anti-racist corrections that you bring in received in the newsroom?

There is usually a good reception because I make the corrections very assertively. Some people have been working in TV3 for 30 years and have internalised a way of doing their job, so I have to be very respectful and go step by step. But the newsroom usually listens to my directions, and there is also an internal document with guidelines on how to work with information about racialised people or immigration. Now is a good time because there is a reinvention work with other issues such as gender violence or the trans community, so I take advantage of it.

# How have viewers received you as a news anchor? Are they detecting any changes?

In the African migrant community, people tell me things like their parents watch the news to see me.





# Bea's list of journalists & communicators to follow:

Tania Adam

Desirée Bela-Lobedde

Lucía Mbomio

Reine Elisabeth

Nkiambote

Oumaima Abalhaj

Desirée Ndjambo

Francine Gálvez

Some are changing their consumption habits because of the decision to put me there. Or because of a children's programme on TV3 in which Maria Bouabdellah (a daughter of Moroccan migrants, who co-presents a cultural show for kids on the channel') appears, which will surely make many migrant families put their children in front of the TV because she is there.

It has to be a more substantial change. In terms of language, people don't realise the changes, but the messages must be received differently. TV3 is committed to producing content that appeals more to migrant communities. Progress is being made, but I want to see much more done.

# In closing, what recommendations do you have to make this work less dependent on one person and more structural?

We need European policies and directives that force public media, and to some extent private media, for diversity quotas and representation of racialised people, migrants or refugees in the media. Also, creating statutes and guidelines allows the development of information about these communities in a respectful and non-paternalistic way.

It is essential to make the university system more accessible. The more educated people we have in the racialised communities, the more we can be in the media to shape and propose information that concerns us. And finally, something that is not often said: in our communities, we must internalise that we have a voice and power in the media.

TV3 IS COMMITTED TO DO CONTENT THAT APPEALS MORE TO MIGRANT COMMUNITIES, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A LOT MORE DONE.

<sup>\*</sup> https://www.ccma.cat/tv3/sx3/random/



The chain of events that brought journalist Seada Nourhussen to independent media began when she used "white" in an article she wrote for the Dutch daily newspaper Trouw.

When her story came back from an editor, the neutral word wit or "white" had been replaced with the word blanke or "blank" - a Dutch adjective for white people with connotations of "pure" or "untainted". A group of colleagues gathered around her desk and told her, "This is how we write it in this country".

Seada, now in her mid-40s, grew up in the Netherlands, moving with her family from Ethiopia at the age of three. She attended journalism school and worked in Dutch legacy media for 15 years. She recalls that she was often the only black person in the room.

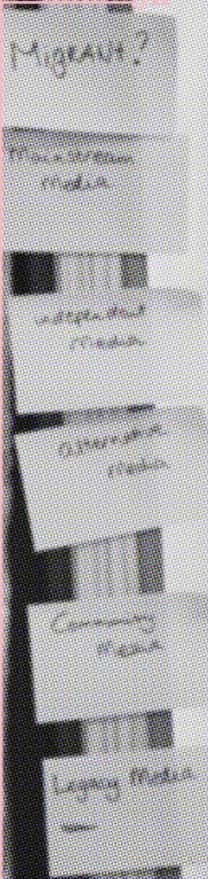
"I got so disappointed that I wrote an email to the entire company," Seada recalled over the phone. "Some people came to ask me if they were racist, as if I had to help them through their racism."

igrant-led media

shaking up the European media landscape

> by Tina Xu and Mahmoud Elenan





Journalists from racialised migration backgrounds are still rare in most European newsrooms; a 2022\* study by the Reuters Institute at Oxford University found that, across 100 top media brands in the UK, Germany, the US and Brazil, only 8% of top editors are non-white, compared with 31% of the general population.

In the UK and Germany, none of the top editors of the country's highest-circulation media were non-white, the study found,

The media rarely reflects migrant communities or the society around them, and the negative consequences reverberate from editorial decisions to content output, staff retention to newsroom culture.

Almost a decade after Seada's suggestions were shut down by top editors, this January her former paper joined several news organisations that changed their editorial policies to adopt the neutral word for "white" following years of heated national debate.

But for Seada, the point was already made. "That was one of the first times I felt like, 'OK, so this is the space I get, and this is the boundary where I don't get to co-decide what our language looks like'."

Seada left her job at *Trouw* in 2018 to become the first black woman chief editor and co-owner of a Dutch media title, OneWorld. The next era of her career has been dedicated to building a platform to redesign journalism. She joins a growing number of newsrooms, many led by migrant journalists, in search of new journalistic values to reflect the full complexity of our world. How are they doing things differently?

<sup>\*</sup> https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/race-andleadership-news-media-2022-evidence-five-markets

# "Breaking open" journalism

When Seada joined as chief editor of the Dutch online media platform **OneWorld** in 2018, she saw an opportunity to venture in a new direction. The women-led outlet, which publishes daily online and quarterly in print, has 7,000 paid subscribers and between 150,000 and 175,000 unique monthly visitors.

OneWorld began as a publication about development aid in 2011. But even in 2018 Seada recalled receiving pitches with "a colonial point of view", to the tune of: "My great uncle has a project in the inland of Indonesia. He's an amazing guy, can't we do a story about how he's helping the indigenous people civilise?"

Seada drew a line in the sand between the publication's past and its future vision in a ten-point editorial manifesto. The process began by re-examining the newsroom's archive, from its headlines to photography, through a decolonial lens.

OneWorld made its new language guide public, explaining the origins and damage of xenophobic, islamophobic, transphobic language, including terms referring to indigenous communities. In response, the staff received an email from a Surinamese woman, Ellen-Rose Kambel, explaining that the phrase they replaced was one the Surinamese population fought for to describe themselves. Seada responded by inviting Kambel to write an explainer about the term's history.

For Seada, these practices represent the inclusive dialogue she is trying to foster: OneWorld begins with self-reflection and invites people to co-create language and stories to describe their experiences.

"Media shouldn't be this closed-off fort. It should be part of democracy," said Seada.
"I felt a responsibility to use this sector and this profession to break open or share and exchange knowledge. It shouldn't be broadcasting and never receiving."



Why the word "indigenous" is also valuable.

Ellen Rose Kambel, Marie-Josee Artist



C Gabriela Ramírez

### A new newsroom culture

The cross-border feminist newsroom **Unbias the News** was founded in Germany in 2021 to address structural issues in the media. Unbias the News asserts in its mission statement that newsroom diversity is not a moral issue, but an issue of quality.

"Legacy media would always prefer to work with journalists they already knew, commis—sioning the same experts and correspondents, rather than working with more diverse contributors," Tabea Grzeszyk, co-founder of Unbias the News, explained to Shift. "At Unbias the News, we wanted to create a different newsroom culture."

The team at Unbias the News turns many standard newsroom practices on their head: For example, the editorial guidelines state that the team seeks the most pertinent expert to speak to rather than the easiest to contact given shared language, social networks or search engine bias. The editorial team does not commission parachute journalism but works with local journalists who know the terrain. They do not use fixers but give all authors a byline.

Additionally, they seek to open the doors for those who are structurally excluded from journalism: Journalists are commissioned based on the quality of their story pitch rather than who they know or where they have previously published. In-depth editing assistance is provided to welcome non-native English speakers, and efforts are made to accommodate journalists with limited internet access.

# Better migration reporting

Migrant voices are often absent from migration reporting.
A study\* of European media from the London School of Economics found that refugees' voices were included in 17% of articles, while politicians' voices were in 66% of reports. OneWorld declares that it privileges grassroots voices that don't have as much space in other media, as politicians "have plenty of other platforms to be heard," Seada explained.

Secondly, migrants are often described as a group (or "horde", "stream" or "wave") rather than as singular individuals with their own unique sets of motivations and memories. An analysis\*\* of a decade of reporting in the UK by the Migration Observatory found that the top ten modifiers for "immigration" in the news included "mass," "net", "uncontrolled", "large-scale" and "high". The dignity of the individual is hopelessly lost in the conversation.

"Nameless, ageless, professionless, people who migrate become an anonymous group that inspires little empathy and only arouses mistrust," wrote migrant-led French media Guiti News in their manifesto. They seek rather to "humanise" and "rationalise" the conversation around migration.

Thirdly, migration is de-contextualised, without explanation for histories of colonisation or international involvement in the crises that have caused people to flee conflict, climate change, corruption and destroyed economies.

A small handful of newsrooms have resolved to deepen their coverage. Unbias the News specifies that they seek to "give or reference historical context for modern-day inequalities". Guiti News, too, operates under the understanding that all major issues are interconnected: "Migration means talking about health, climate, security, women, racism, homophobia". OneWorld declares in its editorial manifesto, "We don't cover incidents; we cover systems".



Guiti news manifesto.

<sup>\*</sup> https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1748048517727173

<sup>\*\*</sup> https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/reports/decade-immigration-british-press/



© Guiti news

# The rise of migrantled newsrooms

Across Europe, migrant journalists are setting up newsrooms that seek to enrich conversations on migration with more complexity.

The first members of **Guiti News** in France gathered at poetry readings in Paris and a squat in Athens. Brought together by frustration around prevailing media portrayals of migration, a Syrian and Chadian journalist, a Pakistani photographer, a Cameroonian cartoonist, an activist, a camerawoman and two Parisian journalists published on the online platform for the first time in 2019. Fittingly, "Guiti" means "the universe" in Persian.

Now led by co-founder and executive editor Nina Gheddar, a dozen staff journalists and a network of about 20 contributors strive to write about migration "less as a 'political issue', 'problem', and 'challenge', and a little more like human stories just waiting to be told," states the Guiti News website. Guiti has a reach of 16,000 from its publication and media literacy programmes combined.

Publishing in French, Guiti often works in reporting pairs of a French journalist with an exiled journalist. "Nine out of ten exiled journalists in France are not able to continue their job as journalists," said Kimberley Lestieux, staff journalist at Guiti News. "Men end up working in restaurants as waiters, and women end up working as nannies because their education and experience are not valued or recognised."

Working together, the practice aims to generate stories representing a local and global view of issues.

In Spain, a group of Syrian journal ists living in Madrid gathered in 2021 to create **Baynana** as a "public service", co-founder Okba Mohamad told Shift, Baynana in Arabic means "among us". A team of a dozen jour nalists publish in Arabic and Span ish, focusing on stories that bridge the Arabic diaspora as well as other migrant and local communities.



© Nine Fluitsma

Baynana's content includes in-depth interviews with change makers, such as Najwa Elba, former deputy of the Spanish Parliament, on why she entered politics and the racism of Spanish migration law; and Razan Ismail, founder of Qudwa, an organisation that provides legal information to migrant communities in Barcelona. It also makes accessible practical resources to Arabic-reading audiences, such as housing policies and the steps to obtain a driver's licence.

### The African Media Association

Malta (AMAM) is another online grassroots publication initiated from within the African diaspora community in Malta, It seeks to give voice to "the African perspective" on life in Malta, filling a virtual void in reporting on black issues in the national media of the island of 500,000 people.

Many of AMAM's articles concern underreported issues in local media, including court cases detaining African migrant youth, the double standards of EU migration laws, and deaths on poorly overseen construction sites. AMAM president Regine Nguini Psaila penned an opinion piece: "Being shocked is no longer enough; Maltese institutions hate and mistreat black people."

Through their web magazine and online radio, they "identify special challenges of African immigrants in Malta and lobby for positive changes by bringing them to the attention of governments and other relevant authorities," reads a statement on the magazine's website.

In 2022, AMAM was invited to a conference titled *Turning the Tables*, organised by Malta's Human Rights Directorate's Intercultural and Anti-Racism Unit. The AMAM columnist Sara Scarano wrote in response, "Turning the tables? But there is no table!"

For migrant journalists in Europe, it may still feel that there are few platforms for their voices to be heard. Yet migrantled newsrooms are on the rise across Europe, following a new set of journalistic practices that seek to counter existing imbalances in the field.

They are writing themselves into the public light, and building their own chairs at the table.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MORE ACCURATE REPORTING

Key takeaways from Unbias the News - Why diversity matters for journalism

Like all people, journalists hold unconscious biases, stereotypical assumptions, and national or cultural ideas that affect their view of the world. Therefore, fighting for more diverse reporting is not a question of political correctness or patronage. It's a question of quality. These days, journalism cannot tolerate the dramatic underrepresentation of the perspectives of women, people of colour, and members of the L.G.B.T.Q.I. Community, amongst others. We understand diversity as a form of journalistic fact-checking. Stereotypical narratives, reductionist notions, structural racism, or hard-as-nails sexism can usually be deciphered by affected journalists in the twinkling of an eye — if only they are given the space.

Collaboration, accessibility and continuous self-reflection are all key to creating a good working environment - make audits a default practice.

# Inclusive reporting

- News should reflect and serve society we should periodically review our headlines to determine who is most frequently represented and how.
- Take extra care when it comes to how issues involving crime and inequality are reported.
- Words matter: language should not unnecessarily exclude groups or further essentialism. Example: 'Germans' versus 'people who live in Germany'; 'women' versus 'menstruators' or 'pregnant people'.
- Ask people how they identify and respect their categorisation (i.e., use neutral pronouns such as 'they' or 'ze' upon request).
- Ensure accessibility of website and reporting (i.e., provide transcripts of podcasts, as well as written description of pictures and graphics).
- · Ensure tech, apps, security measures are accessible.

# Experts, witnesses, interviewees

- Use trauma-sensitive reporting guidelines, respecting a person's right to frame their story and not replay their trauma multiple times.
- People who are reporting trauma should not be treated as hostile witnesses fact-checking is not best done by haranguing interviewees.
- People who are affected by crises should have the chance to tell their own story and should be consulted as experts – not perceived as biased because of their experience.
- Consider who you are contacting as an expert and whether they are the most pertinent or rather the most convenient because of characteristics you share with them (such as language).

- · Consider search engine bias as you research and look for experts.
- Present people so that they have agency in their own story.

# Exploitation, reporting standards

- Body on the line = name comes first, Editors are editors, not authors.
- Fixers and translators should be cited directly in reporting unless they
  request otherwise when possible not as fixers but as co-authors,
- Pay equal pay for equal work not based on location.
- People should not be coerced into putting themselves in danger for a story

   risks must be entered into knowingly and with consent and adequately
   acknowledged through both credit and pay.
- Add into contracts the option to reject assignments for danger/trauma reasons.
- Local journalists should be given first priority to decide whether a situation is dangerous, culturally insensitive, exploitative or otherwise not appropriate for coverage.
- Journalists should not suffer because of lack of internet access when possible, provide VPN or extend deadlines where practicable.

# Press freedom, censorship, bias

- Don't remove items or change them to flatter governments or organisations or to avoid their embarrassment – tell the full story, including its implications.
- Make readers aware of limitations based on algorithmic bias, what is missing and why.
- Be open about the 'tilt' of the newsroom and how that may be reflected in any coverage. This includes information about background and perspective on the role of the news.
- Don't give authority figures quote approval, use government quotes as headlines, or publish articles that present a two-sided dialogue between the ruling party and opposition without taking a side.
- Assume a subjective perspective, and that cultural background informs your own and other perspectives.

# Workplace equality

- An outside person who is not a direct supervisor should be available for reporting harassment of any sort,
- An atmosphere welcoming feedback and criticism should be available –
  ON ALL LEVELS and any incidents of abuse should be dealt with in a
  transparent manner, according to a defined policy.
- Accusers should be believed as a default.
- · The workplace should be a place where people are not just allowed

but welcomed, which means examining exclusive behaviours (e.g., drinks nights where not everyone is invited, micro-aggressions, food choices, only Christian holidays).

- People on sick leave or maternity or care leave are on leave respect the personal life of co-workers.
- If you can't pay people enough so that this is their only job, expectations should be adjusted towards them accordingly, i.e., don't expect more than you can pay for.
- Do not require qualifications that will not be used for a job (i.e., requiring native German speaking level for a photo editor).
- Have a plan in place for trolling/doxing of a person in charge of reporting, such as a team to take over social media of a harassed person, and documentation of harrasment.
- Make sure workplaces and all events are accessible and provide childcare if necessary.

# Be aware of language domination

- Translate with respect, context and attention.
- Use languages other than English when possible and do research in other languages before launching an investigation – just because it hasn't been done in English doesn't mean it hasn't been done.
- Give context if appropriate when translating; who you were talking to and what
  it means to talk to them.
- Make efforts to include linguistic minorities when reporting pertains to them.

# WHAT CAN I DO?

HERE ARE SOME TIPS...

European Federation of Journalists

**Commitment from the top is essential.** If top leadership doesn't make a point of changing practices and culture, nothing will happen. Talent and diversity strategies must not be delegated to the HR department or some "Diversity Editor". Core people in the newsroom need to be on board.

**Cultural change is critical.** Nothing is gained if diversity remains a pure box-ticking exercise. Leadership needs to make it clear that diversity of perspectives and thought are appreciated. They need to change communication channels and practices accordingly, for example by implementing reverse mentoring or encouraging small-scale workshops.

**Metrics are key to change.** To improve a situation you need to know what the status quo is, and you need a goal. Leaders should be able to provide for some statistics on the composition of their newsroom with respect to diversity.

Diversity needs to be managed and supported. Diversity candidates

might need support others can live without, particularly when young and entering the industry. This could be language training, financial help for trainees from disadvantaged backgrounds or legal support when things get tough.

**Recruitment strategies need to be professionalised.** Active efforts have to be made to attract talent from communities where a journalism career has not been on the list of young job seekers. It is equally important to revamp selection processes and account for cultural or gender differences when interviewing candidates.

**Diverse career tracks help to attract diverse talent.** Modern newsrooms have a need for very different kinds of talent. There are tech-, data- and product-focused roles, managerial roles and others that have to be filled beyond the traditional reporter and editor careers. Defining, developing and advertising these roles will attract candidates that might not have envisioned themselves as journalists before.

Revive career tracks for non-academics. Journalism used to be a profession for candidates from a variety of social backgrounds before it became an almost exclusively academic profession. Consequently, today's newsrooms are more socially homogeneous than ever. Certain tracks should be explicitly made available for non-academics.

**Diversity of content has to be monitored separately.** The assumption is that diversity of staff automatically results in diversity of content. This is likely but not a given. This is why content should be monitored. Diversity doesn't help to better connect with audiences if the journalism stays the same.

Diversity needs to be looked at not only in numbers but also with regard to status. It is not enough to proudly present a variety of faces and names on the homepage or in company publications. Diversity in leadership is essential. This also means that injustices like the gender wage gap need to be openly addressed. Gaps in income levels are an indicator for inequalities of opportunity.

**Different aspects of diversity must not be played off against each other.** It is important to keep an eye on all kinds of groups. The assumption is that the diversity of gender, ethnicity, social background, religion and rural vs. urban background will result in a diversity of political views if followed through in earnest effort.

JOURNALISM PRACTICES

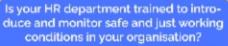
**Acknowledge different perspectives.** A diversity-sensitive culture needs people who acknowledge and promote different perspectives on content – and not occasionally but as part of the daily newsroom routines and processes – e.g., from choosing a news topic to picking experts.

Address structural inequalities inside and outside the organisation. The study points out that avoiding or sugar-coating structural forms of discrimination inhibit diversity. Sexism and racism need to be confronted and actively challenged. One idea is to introduce workshops to increase a diversity-sensitive culture within the staff population and create an open communication sphere.



# **PROVE THAT YOUR** NEWSROOM ISN'T RACIST!

Anti-racist test to become a better journalist and have a more inclusive newsroom (RMP = racialised migrant people)



Lyes Ino

Is there a wage gap between the RMPs and the rest of the staff?

□ yes □ no

Has your entire organisation introduced diversity as a standardised requirement policy?

Tyes Ino

Are you looking for talent outside of the classic places?

Myes Mino

Are you adequately using the full talent and potential of your RMP newsroom staff?

∰yes ∰no

Do you have a way to receive story tipsin an anonymous way?

Tues Ino

Do you see RMP communities as news consumers?

Elyes Elno

Do you have marketing strategies specifically targeting RMP communities?

Tyes Ono

Do you see RMPs as representatives of an entire community rather than individuals?

Tyes Tino

Do you tell stories of the RMP communities besides as victims/ perpetrators and do you visit certain places where RMP's gather?

yes Ono

Is inclusivity a permanent operating rule in the work of your newsroom?

Tyes Tho

Do you have a racial equality plan in your newsroom?

Myes Mo

Do you have conversations led by RMP experts about racism?

Myes .

Dino

Is there a mechanism in place to end racism in your newsroom?

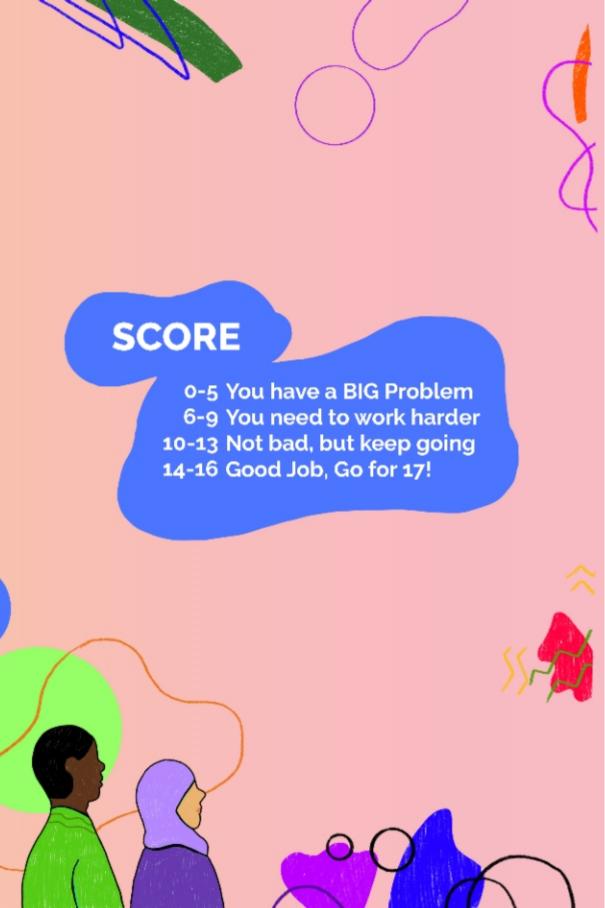
□yes □no

Do you know how many RMPs are in your newsroom?

Tyes Tho

Is your leadership team taking measures to ensure that the newsroom staff and work reflects the whole social diversity of society?

lyes lo



### Unbias the News!

Unbias the News creates a space for journalists who experience structural barriers in the field. They are a feminist cross-border newsroom, run by Hostwriter, working towards a more equitable and inclusive world of journalism.

- Online Magazine
- · Berlin · English

IG: @unbiasthenews

### Zaborona Media

Zaborona Media is a communityfocused media in Kyiv that stands up for the audience, and whose stories seek to influence social processes.

- · Online Magazine
- · Kyiv · Ukrainian/English

IG: @zaborona\_com

# **Guiti News**

Guiti News is an online magazine in France changing the media discourse on migration and exile through the humanisation of stories and recognition of the complexities and nuances in the identities of people interviewed.

Online Magazine
 French
 IG: @quitinews

# **NEWSROOMS TO FOLLOW**

### OneWorld

OneWorld is the largest migrant-led online magazine in the Netherlands, focusing on justice journalism, representing those who are less represented; not covering incidents, but uncovering systems.

- Online Magazine
- Amsterdam · Dutch
   IG: @oneworldnl





# Kohero

A community magazine focussing on representing the underrepresented migrant communities.

- · Online Magazine
- · German/English

IG: @koheromagazin

Lost in Europe is a not-for-profit cross-border journalism project that investigates and uncovers the stories of child migrants after arriving in Europe.

Journalist

Europe
 English
 IG: alostineuropestories



Rosa Mag informs, inspires and empowers black women through lifestyle, beauty, cultural and political topics.

- Online Magazine
- · Berlin · German IG: @rosa\_mag



Radio Africa Magazine is an opinion, culture, art and African music publication, conceived organically from an African perspective.

- Podcast
- Barcelona

IG: @radio\_africa

#### African Media Association Malta

African Media Association Malta is a media NGO that promotes the African perspective with news, empowerment and advocacy, in an inclusive platform for all to debate.

Malta • English

IG: @africanmediamalta



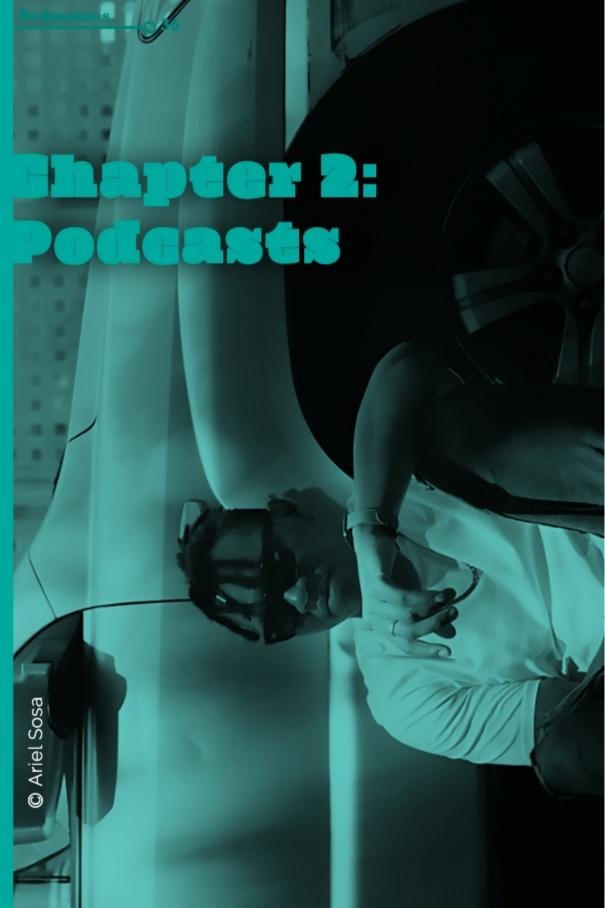
#### Solomon Mag

Solomon is a non-profit organisation based in Athens that uses media as a tool for social inclusion and change on migration, accountability, the environment and food systems.

· Malta · English

IG: @we\_are\_solomon





MACIE. WEINGHE ID HE NOW HOSTS A PODCAST: f We are writing A NEW HISTORY, THE HISTORY OF MIGRANTS"

Interview by Gabriela Ramírez



Mohamed Bah is an activist from Guinea living in Amsterdam who creates platforms for undocumented people in the city to gain access to information and help their voices to be heard. He is the communications manager at Amsterdam City Rights and hosts the podcast City Rights Radio. Mohamed also launched the City Rights App to provide essential information for undocumented people living in Amsterdam.

hen Mohamed Bah talks about his almost year-long journey from Guinea to the Netherlands in 2018, he often uses words like "lucky," "luckily," "fortune" or "fortunately". He had to cross seven countries and 5,000 km, including crossing the Mediterranean on an improvised boat with more than 50 other people. He recalls being very close to dying several times.

Mohamed, who is also known as Mo, tries to explain something that does not have a clear explanation for him, and the only way he can make sense of it is by thinking that it is "purely luck".

"What I did, a lot of people tried to do," he thinks out loud. "But some died, and some were captured and sent back. How do you explain that?"

Mo's courageous journey continues almost four years after he arrived in Europe. Stepping off that boat in Spain did not mean that, all of a sudden, life was good: It was just the beginning of a new story. However, what life was like for Mo and many others like him after being washed ashore is often overlooked by the mainstream media.

He vividly remembers how journalists would occasionally approach him, wanting to tell his story. In many cases, he experienced an unethical practice where "journalists would cut your words, completely changing the meaning, to fit a certain narrative".

"I gave interviews to journalists," Mo explains.

"And when I see the horrible stuff they wrote,
I am not sure what we discussed."

That's why Mo felt that something needed to be done.

## "Staying was the difficult part"

Despite Mo's traumatic journey to get to the Netherlands. he still thinks that "coming was easy, staying was the difficult part". This was not only because he was in a place where he didn't know anyone and had to start from scratch. but Mo also had to prepare for the uncertainty of living as an undocumented migrant with little access to basic needs and lengthy procedures to apply for asylum. He also had to learn how to coexist with his everyday thoughts. as he constantly grappled with the fear of being deported to the place he escaped from.

"My brain could not handle it," he says. "My body could not handle believing that I almost died after crossing, and I did not get time to process any of it." His new life did not give him any time to heal either. Indeed, the asylum process immediately led to new stress-related health problems.

#### "If I don't tell this story, who will?"

Mo's migrant experience helped him to get to know himself better and introduced him to many other people's personal stories. He met dozens of other people who, like him, were fleeing from traumatic experiences in their countries, such as persecution from authoritarian governments, armed conflict and difficult economic situations. Still, their stories and who they are was not necessarily portrayed in the newspapers.

"We are not being talked about to bring change," he says. "We're being talked about to create fear. And this fear brings untrue anti-immigrant sentiments to locals." After experiencing the usual inaccurate language used by some media outlets and other discriminatory experiences. Mo embarked on the creative and healing path of working on different initiatives to support migrants in Amsterdam and shift the narrative. One of those initiatives includes running his own podcast, City Rights Radio.

"I wanted to change the stereotype of undocumented migrants," says Mo, who posts on social media as @MrNiceGuv Official, a handle meant to counteract the stereotypes commonly associated with people of Mo's skin colour. With that motivation. he and a group of undocumented migrants living in the Netherlands turned the mic on for the first season of the City Rights Radio podcast in October 2021.



©Dembo Diaby

"Why are we not treated as human beings, but as 'illegals', 'dangerous', and 'liabilities'?" That's the opening question of the podcast's first episode. Mo holds honest discussions with people who have lived for five to 20 years in the Netherlands and are still undocumented. From finding somewhere to live to dealing with racial profiling, using public transport and facing the stresses caused by lengthy legal procedures, these are just some of the topics discussed in the 13 episodes and two seasons of the City Rights Radio podcast,

For Mo, it's important that migrants tell their own stories. That's why each episode of the show brings one of their voices to the fore to explain the reality of living as an undocumented person in Amsterdam. "Our stories are being told in the wrong way, by the wrong people, and for the wrong reasons," he affirms.

The radio show aims to convey not only migrants' lived experiences but also solutions and ideas based on their experiences that could improve the lives of those living in cities that don't recognise them. One proposed solution is the development of a city ID card to allow them to have a more "normal life" while their legal processes are pending.

#### More power to the protagonists of the stories

"We want to ensure that they tell their stories according to their terms and conditions," says Mo. "That is security, and that is the feeling we want to give everyone. Show them that they control what we are doing."

How can journalists tell stories more accurately when reporting

# UN OUR STORIES ARE BEING TOLD IN THE WRONG WAY AND BY THE WRONG PEOPLE AND FOR THE WRONG REASONS.

on migration? That's one of Mo's missions, despite not considering himself to be a journalist.

"I am an activist, and I am a podcaster," he chuckles. In Guinea, his home country, he also used audio format to teach English with a podcast called "English is Fun".

For Mo, what is essential now, as he hosts his podcast, is that he doesn't make the same mistakes some journalists made back then when approaching him or his friends.

"Consent is everything,"
Mo believes. In this sense,
he recommends, before interviewing,
explaining to the source
how all the information shared
will be used and constantly
checking before publishing.

"We are now delayed on publishing a new episode, but it is OK. We are doing this because we are waiting for the sources to review and give the last word," Mo explains.

"I don't care if my episode is boring, and I don't care if it is not that interesting for some people. What matters is that we share the story in a way that is most comfortable to them and not something that I will do for my gain, like fame," he explains.

Working on a story solely to get a new piece out, winning an award or simply gaining recognition is another feeling Mo got from his interaction with the media.

"I've seen a lot of that, especially with researchers, who come and ask you for an interview, and then they go, and you never hear from them again. It's like they don't care about you," he says.

#### A way of healing from his journey

The night Mo boarded the boat that would take him from Morocco to Spain, the waves were 2.5 metres high. Indeed, he recalls the 18-hour voyage as "deadly". Three years later, Mo returned to the Mediterranean, this time to the Italian island of Lampedusa, as part of his podcast project.

Confronted once again with the imposing Mediterranean sea allowed him to face his painful memories.

"The waves of the sea and the smell of the fuel from the engines just revived this



CLaurent Leger Adame

memory, and I felt everything returning. It was challenging," Mo says, describing his response to boarding a boat again as part of a ceremony to honour people who have died at sea during their migration journeys.

"For a long period, when I told people about my crossing story, I told them the beautiful part. The fact that I saw dolphins jumping out of the ocean like in the Titanic movie," Mo remembers. "The fact that I got to see these huge tankers on the high seas, or that all of us in the boat were arguing and angry at each other, then decided to forgive one another wonderfully and pray together and have this special moment."

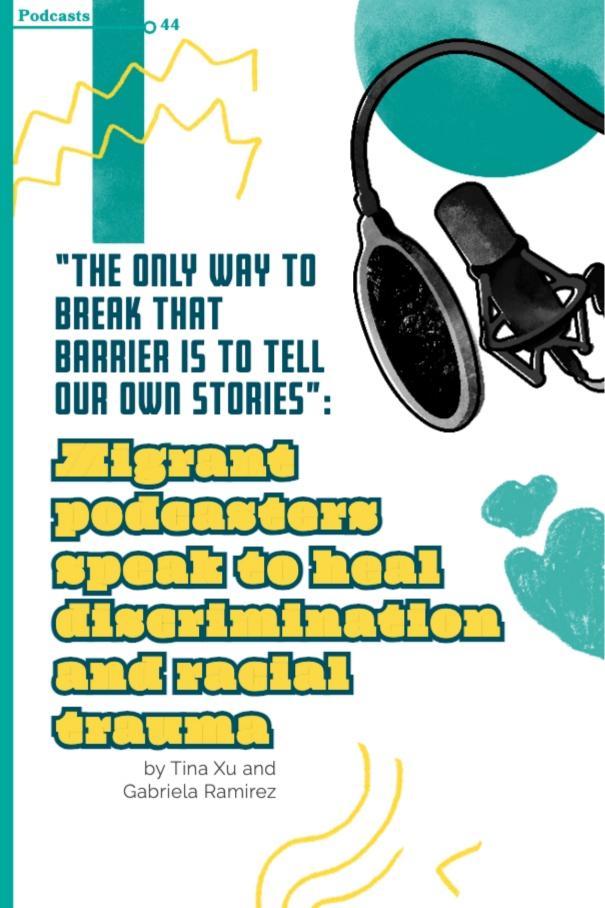
Since the United Nations migration office began tracking figures in 2014 until February 2023, 20,285 people have been found dead in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe. Being in Lampedusa showed Mo that he had been lying to himself for a long time by telling all these stories of "success and adventure".

The reason: All this time, he just wanted to forget, and somehow, the only way he could do so was by opting to enter "survival mode". Nevertheless, he feels fortunate to have visited Lampedusa and recognises how his relationship with the sea has changed over the last few years.

"I can only now acknowledge that I had a challenging experience, and I can tell it as it is because, in the journey of creating empathy and change, you cannot give half information," he says.

"A famous documentary maker once said that no one has the right to erase the history of a nation, because a nation without history is like a world without a soul," Mo reflects. For him, creating a podcast is about preventing these compelling stories from being erased from history.

"I think about that person in my podcast and me creating an archive, a source that could counteract what mainstream media says about migrants," he says, not only today but 100 years from now. "We are writing a new history, the history of migrants."





Before
clicking
'record', Barly
Tshibanda always
closes his eyes. "I feel
scared and I don't know
why," he chuckles. But that's
the thing about mics: "It can feel your
happiness, it can feel your sadness, there
are these things about voices." Put simply,
he explains, "It's one of the most direct ways
of expressing my soul."

It's a Sunday afternoon in Copenhagen, and Barly and other members of The Bridge Radio team are making an episode about how to pass the waiting time in Danish asylum camps: the weeks, months and years of waiting for asylum claims to be processed, during which people live in barracks, squeezed together in tiny rooms, with little transparency about their fates.

The Bridge Radio team knows this topic only too well: It is their daily reality. The Bridge Radio is a radio show organised by a team of people living in the asylum camps. Over the last seven years, The Bridge Radio has often gone where most journalists do not or cannot go, including a Danish deportation camp under Covid-19 lockdown,

A woman who stirs a sizzling pot of pilau rice tells the mic, "I try to learn different skills, find ways to be of use. Then I feel ashamed, like, crazy, because of this country and this system. It's just horrifying and traumatising and destructive. I feel powerless. But I also know the strategy of the government in the camp is to not ask people in the camp for their opinion. That's also why I'm part of The Bridge Radio."

In the four years that Barly lived in the camps, he met others who had been waiting for asylum for more than ten years. He recalled, "One man said to me: I'm not afraid to die, but I'm afraid of not having a meaning while I'm alive. When we lose hope, you are breathing but you're not there." Stuck in a place that is "killing us slowly", self-expression for Barly is nothing short of "a way of healing".









Maria Cariola

Carrying all the nuances and richness of the human voice, while relatively cheap and accessible to produce, podcasts have risen in popularity in recent years. More than 420 million people listen to podcasts globally, with over 2 million podcasts created in the last three years worldwide. With fewer institutional gatekeepers, as anybody can upload tracks to the internet, many structurally excluded communities have turned to this intimate yet anonymous form to carry their stories.

#### Asylum seekers and undocumented people speak for themselves

Across Europe, migrant storytellers are taking the mic. As singular voices, rather than the "floods" or "huddled masses" portrayed in mainstream media, they share stories, jokes, speeches, songs and discussions.

After almost three years living without documents in the Netherland, as we've already seen in the previous article, Mohahed Bah or Mo - was frustrated
that journalists would
cut his words to fit their
agenda. As we saw above,
he founded the City
Rights Radio podcast
in 2021 with a collective
of undocumented citizens.

"Many people who have not got a chance to talk with us, share experiences with us, have this kind of doubt and fear toward us. Basically, because they just don't know us," Mo believes. He is also convinced that "the only way to break that barrier is to tell our own stories".

Now in its second season, City Rights Radio discusses undocumented life in the Netherlands. In Season 1. Episode 5. Mo discusses with his guest Yusuf how "the Dutch exclusion system creates inferiority complexes among undocumented people", and "deprives us of a continuity of life". In the story, they discuss the possibility of a City Card, a solution that has been implemented in cities like New York and San Francisco. and that could allow undocumented

people to get access to basic services.

In Germany, Nigerian engineer Larry Macaulay founded Refugee Radio Network in 2015. with the motto of "for refugees, by refugees". with live broadcasts in Munich, Berlin and Hamburg, and over 1.2 million plays of their episodes online. "Deadly misinformation and character assassination portraved in some sectors of mainstream media propelled us to challenge this negative stereotyping of migrants and refugees as things. and rather as fellow human beings," Larry states in a video on the RRN's website.

The flagship programme is the **Refugee Voices Show**, with uncut talking points from refugee communities. Additional



programmes that have been produced include the Somali Voice with programmes in Arabic and Afghan voices with programmes in Dari and Pashto, The radio also includes a World Music Mix and Oriental Karaoke, which play songs and poetry from around the world, bringing nostalgia and joy for refugee communities, as well as bringing new sounds closer to German audiences.



The Bridge Radio



#### Juggling precarity and sustainability

These three podcasts face similar challenges: Members' lives are mired in uncertainty. Collaboration across different backgrounds is often necessary, yet thorny.

At **The Bridge Radio**, the project was originally conceived through a radio workshop hosted by a white American at Trampoline Haus, a community centre for refugees and asylum seekers. When Barly joined the team, he recalls that the team was mostly made up of white Danish people. As more asylum seekers joined, the team decided to "actively decolonise our way of working", explained Barly.

The disparities were structur—
al: For example, white colleagues
would be the ones with their
names in the funding applica—
tions, who decided when to have
meetings, how to use the money,
and who had access to the money.
"We were crying. We were fighting
a lot, And I think that this actually
was teaching us a lot," said Barly.

Colleagues who lived in the camps outside Copenhagen raised the issue of long travel times to attend meetings in the city. So the team moved operations into the camps, with outside colleagues in a supporting role. "The people experiencing the border regime everyday, they are the ones who should be on the front line," explained Barly.

Barly stresses the significance of prioritising the mental well-being of the members of the asylum-seek—ing team. He clarifies that, when the Danish team members were initially disappointed with people's absence from meetings, he had to explain that a member was "not in the mindset" to attend, as they had received deportation notic—es. The team has now embraced mental health over consisten—cy, even if episodes have become more sporadic as a result.

Thus the podcasts are as precarious as the lives of their hosts: Many shows at Refugee Radio Network have fizzled out after a few episodes, or a few years. Many show hosts are volunteers, sometimes while waiting for legal status and unable to work legally.

"I am surviving and the precarious conditions I am living in won't stop me. The question is how long will it last? Is this sustainable?" adds Sani Ladan, a migrant podcaster in Spain.

Refugee Radio Network



## Cultivating new voices in migrant communities

While self-organised radio initiatives in asylum-seeker and undocumented communities are beautiful, they are often rare and difficult to sustain. A more common model is to have programmes coordinated by an existing organisation, such as a human rights organisation or a media platform, which then cultivate talent through workshops and training, to produce a podcast.

One example is Radio Dande**lion** in Greece, coordinated by the Network for Children's Rights, which supports local teenagers from refugee backgrounds to run their own radio show. In one episode called The Road to Self-Love. two teenage refugees interview two Greek psychologists about self-love, sharing their own reflections on grappling with shame as a young person. The girl shares that, when her family doesn't support her playing football as a girl, she blames herself: "Why am I a girl?" The boy speaks about his own vulnerabilities: "Why do I have moles on my face?"

While episodes are hosted by teams of teenagers, and creative direction is free enough for the teenagers to put uncut versions of Bruno Mars songs, the overall direction of the product is overseen by the organisation.

African Media Association
Malta, a self-organised media
platform run by the African community in Malta, is in
a similar situation. The Association participated in the "Podcast
for Inclusion" project, in which
they joined Radio Kalon
in France and Share Radio
in Italy in piloting training
courses about citizen journalism
to local and migrant youth.

The Association's podcast, RadioLit, targets young people from migrant backgrounds between the ages of 16 and 30, to discuss the damage of drug and alcohol addiction in the community. At the same time, the podcast is funded by the US Embassy in Malta, and while the voices represent young people in the community, it is debatable to what extent the project emerged organically from the community, or from guidelines given by the founder.

Radio Dandelion





RadioLit AMM



#### Deepening conversations on race and culture

After some time living in a new country, perhaps even a generation, often another kind of podcast emerges: Personal-ity-driven podcasts untangling complex topics like race, culture, diaspora and identity.

"If you are looking for something and you can't find it, do it your self". That was the advice Sani Ladan received from his dad, which inspired him to create **Africa en 1 click**, a podcast narrating his continent, Africa something he couldn't find in Spanish language.

Sani recognis—
es all the stereotypes
portrayed by main—
stream media about
Africa, As a specialist
on international relations

in Africa and Europe, and a Cameroonian living in Madrid for ten vears, he has experienced it. He knew from the beginning that it would be a challenge to fight the narrative of a "poor and wild Africa" through his podcast. where in less than ten minutes per episode. Ladan brings the diverse and rich continent closer to the Spanish audience through its cultures, ethnicities, histories and geopolitics. But he is committed to challenging those stereotypes.

Another podcast
exploring conversations
about race, feminism,
colorism, racial profiling,
white privilege, culture
and intersectionality
narrated from
the experiences
of Afro-Caribbean
women living in Spain
is the **La Guira**, hosted



Africa en 1 click



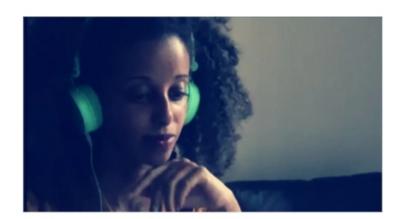
La Guira

by Yania Concepción and Georgina Marcelino. Episode 32 is called *Emotional* wounds and racial trauma, and episode 33 is called The whole world wants to touch my afro.

Similarly, co-hosts Ariam Tekle and Emmanuelle Maréchal share "with—out filters" what it is like to be black in Italy through the podcast **Black Coffee**. Ariam was born and raised in Italy, while Emmanu—elle was born in Cameroon, raised in France, and did her studies in Italy.

Black Coffee hosts conversations with filmmakers, writers, activists, academics and others to focus attention on topics such as sexuality, blackness, gender and migration. For example, the series Decolonizing Accents features the voice of John Modupe, a Nigerian Italian podcaster and comedian who uses jokes to criticise the discrimination experienced by black Italians due to their accents or language attached to their cultures. "We are asking all Italians to decolonize their mentality," John says.

Sani says it is difficult to find space within mainstream media for "content that does not fit the narrative perpetuated for years". However, even as "the deconstruction process is a complex and uncomfortable one," he is convinced that this process has already begun.





Coffee



# PROVE THAT YOUR STORY ISN'T RACIST!

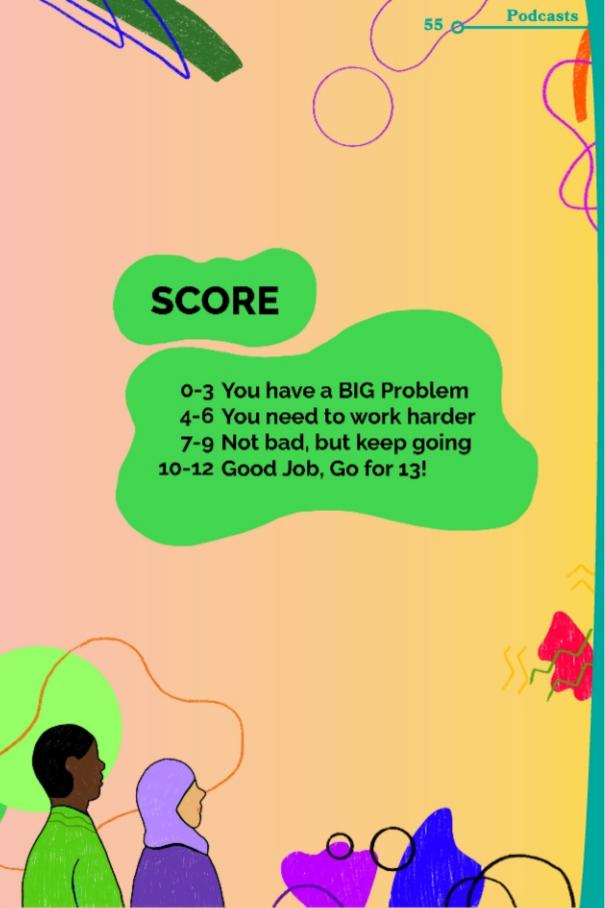
Anti-racist test to become a better journalist and have a more inclusive newsroom (RMP - racialised migrant people)

es the content contain a

Is the image you use related to the content without unnecessary negative associations?  yes no  Do you use irrelevant stereotypical	
elements in your content? (For example: black People as dancers and basketball players or Middle Eastern-looking people portrayed in front of mosques?)	Does the content contain a positive storyline?
yes no	Can you tell the story from another perspective?
Did you think of interviewing people who are part of the community you are writing about yes no	
Does the content cover RMP success as an exception?  yes no	Does your story include RMF sources and perspectives?
re you using words that relate to someone's background and are not neutral?	Did you fact-check with your source?
or example: migrant crisis vs. migrant flow / /lum seekers are burdens vs. asylum seekers need human living conditions)  yes no	
Are RMP experts fairly represented in the content?	Did you use different diverse RMP experts?  yes no
	Is the story covered from the angle that makes RMP victims?

☑ yes

□ no



056

### PODCASTS TO FOLLOW

#### Re:Framing Podcast

Re-framing Podcast is a platform created by people with a migration background giving space to unheard voices. The series follows various activities, people, communities, ideas and experiments popping up during the Re:Framing migration in European media project.

Podcast
 Europe · English
 IG: @media\_actions

#### Expert by Experience

Expert by Experience (EbE) network podcast aims to strengthen understanding, build bridges and break down the stigma towards people seeking asylum, and refugees.

Podcast

UK · English
 FB: expertbyexperienceuk/

#### Chronicles Of Black Italian Woman

A podcast by an Afroitalian woman sharing the variety of the Black experience and more through different topics from pop culture to history, society, culture, faith, wellness etc.

Podcast

UK · English

IG: @chroniclesofabiw

#### Negros en el Tibet

A chat amongst friends discussing their experiences as people of color in Spain, not as a generality but as an example/

Podcast

· Spain · Spanish

IG: amigasytepod

#### What's up with Reine?

A podcast focused on having authentic and heartfelt conversations with people from all over the world. Not shying away from controversial topics, the podcast takes you on a rollercoaster of unapologetic laughter, tears and a lot of sass.

- Podcast
- Belgium · Dutch/English
   IG: @whatsupwithreine

#### **Bridge Radio**

Migrant-led radio show in Copenhagen telling the story of undocumented refugees in the city.

- Podcast
- Copenhagen

FB: The Bridge Radio

#### Refugee Radio network

First mass radio created for and by refugees in Germany.

- Podcast
- Germany

Twitter: @Refugeeradionet



La guira

La guira makes visible the experiences of black and Afro-descendant women, Afro-Caribbean and Afrofeminists.

> Podcast IG: @laguirapodcast

#### The Black Archives Podcast

The Black Archives Podcast works to show and educate people about the hidden black history in the Netherlands.

- Podcast
- Amsterdam · English/Dutch IG: athe blackarchives

#### City Rights Radio

The City Rights Radio podcast is brought to you by a social activist group of undocumented citizens of Amsterdam. These voices are shared, political issues are discussed and talks are held with allies.

- Podcast
- · Amsterdam · English IG: @cityrightsradio

#### **Black Coffee**

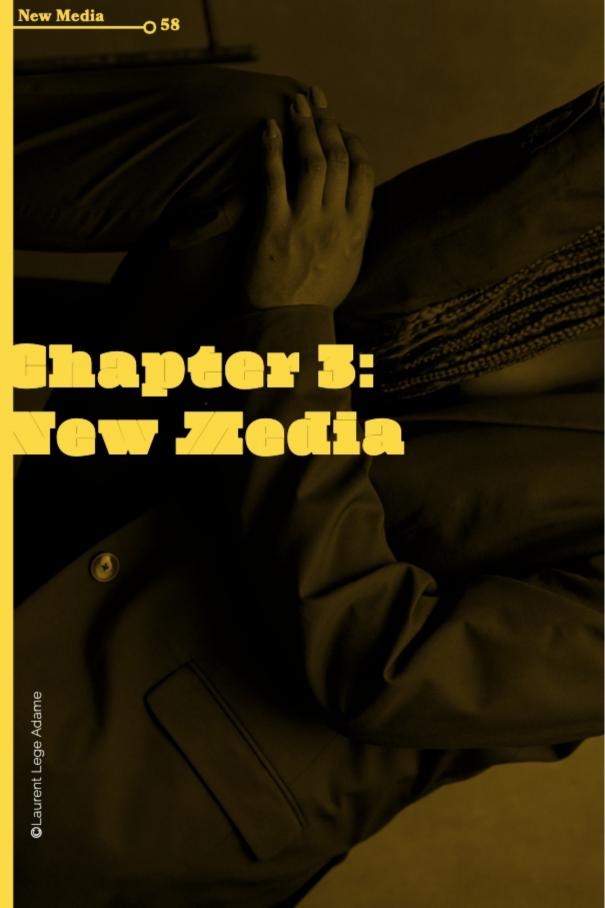
An Italian podcast on black identitiv stories told without filters.

- Podcast
- Italy Italian IG: blackcoffee\_pdc

#### Nida Dinçtürk

Founder of the independent podcast platform Medypod and organiser of the first podcast assembly in Turkey.

- Podcast
- London · Turkish/English IG: @nidadincturk







Quinndy Akeju is African, of Nigerian origin, born and raised in Spain; she is both a nurse and an Afroactivist. She's at the frontline of multiple initiatives to eradicate racism, promote recognition, justice and the development of African and Afrodescendant people living in Europe. Quinndy coordinates the European region of Afrocolectiva, a Spanish-speaking media outlet with an anti-racist, pan-Africanist and anti-patriarchal perspective.



frocolectiva is a new media platform that interacts with memes to share messages among young people, mainly Gen Zs. Spanish is the primary language used to communicate across the media platform – reaching younger European audiences with migration backgrounds.

In this interview with journalist **Mercy Abang**, the co-founder, **Quinndy Akeju** bares all in this conversation about an initiative set up to eradicate racism.

Why is Afrocolectiva an Afrofeminist, anti-racist and pan-Africanist means of communication and deconstruction? What do you mean by these terms?

In the first instance, this means that our approach is concerned with an intersectional framework of oppression that can traverse African people and their descendants worldwide.

The Afrofeminist perspective is critical to us. Without it, we cannot look at and contextualise the systematic concrete oppression against women and people of marginalised genders in our societies. This is also fed back by racism, a systematic way of discriminating based on race, physical features, skin colour, last name, etc.

And, of course, pan-Africanism — which aims to unite all African people and their descendants in the world, make the continent grow, and achieve justice and reparations once and for all — cannot be set aside, The pan-Africanist perspective also makes us turn around the entire narrative [that has been] built around Africa and its people, always putting the testimonies and words of African people at the centre. For a long time, the history of African people and Africa has been told by Europe and the West.

The only way for us to be free in the world is for Africa to be free: to stop exploiting and plundering its resources for the benefit of the West and for Europe to stop being the centre. For this, the Union of the 55 African territories is vital.



#### From my understanding, you founded Afrocolectiva because you were concerned about news reportage in mainstream media as it concerns migrants.

Yes, it is essential to consid er this because, in most societies, this anti-blackness is ultimate ly linked to migration, despite the fact that migration is a natu ral dynamic that has always exist ed. The right to migrate is indis putable. It is recognised in Article 1 of the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, and it is something that most people have done at some point in their lives.

Now, the fact of migrating freely and the conditions in which it happens, have a direct relationship with the policies of all Western countries and are directed almost exclusively at people who migrate from the global south, especially Africans and natives.

The representation of our bodies in the mainstream is always from a narrative and description of violence, dependency, poverty and crime. All these descriptions do not conform to reality. Therefore, we believe we are responsible for returning that justice to people who only exercise their right to migrate. Of course, all this presumption that migrants are criminals is linked to racism. It is used as an argument to criminalise and foreignise the entire racialised population as black in the different territories.

#### Afrocolectiva successfully addresses structural issues with media representation, diversity, inclusion and migration. Yes?

When discussing phenomena such as racism, misogyny, xenophobia and anti-blackness, it is taken as a phenomenon that can only occur on a social level. This is a grave mistake because it takes away from the visual focus of all the constructed violence exercised in different institutions and areas of society.

The phenomena are structural because they permeate other regions from the most individual to the most collective, from the most social to the most institutional. For there to be reparations, there must first be a recognised diagnosis, and therefore it must be recognised that all these discriminations are structural and are intimately related to colonialism.

Tell us more about the use of memes in communicating. This form of media storytelling is rarely discussed but is now being deployed effectively.

We firmly believe that communication models must be adjusted to social realities rather than the other way around, especially for younger and older people. The youth want to be aware of what is happening or want to identify the discrimination that affects them.

We understand that it is vital that the communication formats must be entertaining, visual and accurate with the times we live. Memes are a very effective communication method because humour is also a political weapon,

In addition, these kinds of news contents can end up burning our mental health, so sometimes we need a touch of humour to survive the social pressure for complaints, Memes have allowed us to reach many people and have allowed those same people to become involved in activism and even learn about racism. Afrofeminism and pan-Africanism.

You are big on Instagram and TikTok, and your platform has done a lot more in terms

#### of communicating and advocating the plight of migrants. What was the inspiration for these platforms?

Many times we reference all the people who have come before us and who have been active to continue with their heads held high. Our strength lies in our ancestors and all the people who have come before us and who we recognise today.

Those are our references within the African philosophy, which we call UBUNTU. In addition, we also look at our sisters and brothers in different countries to follow a common anti-racist, Afrofeminist and pan-African line.

A generation of younger people now opts for new media, short videos and explainers for their news about people, places and events. Do you consider what you do with these platforms to reach the audience that matters most?

Indeed, depending on the generation and the person, the format of the videos or the more visual format may be more or less appropriate. Still, we do reach our target audience since we provide much information that we have researched previously and given with caution and rigour.

🕠 IN MOST SOCIETIES, THIS ANTI-BLACKNESS IS ULTIMATELY LINKED TO MIGRATION, DESPITE THE FACT THAT MIGRATION IS A NATURAL DYNAMIC THAT HAS ALWAYS EXISTED. 🕡

This is working a lot because it has allowed us to adapt all that academic research to a more accessible format with a much simpler language that enables people to know the information without having to know grammatically complex words.

#### I also noticed that your organisation is big on language and the language of communicating, seeing that Spanish takes centre stage in an era where English remains the most dominant language. Why Spanish?

Most of the anti-racist content in the media is in English, Portuguese and French. However, there are hardly any media outlets with solidly anti-racist Afrofeminist and pan-Africanist perspectives that communicate in Spanish, considering that a large part of the African diaspora is found in Spanish-speaking countries, such as Colombia, Spain, Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico and Chile etc.

We need to take the production of information seriously in a language in which we can understand it. In that case, we risk letting our narratives remain in the hands of other people who do not know our realities. Information is power, so we also have to report in Spanish.

#### Do you have plans to integrate hard copies into the online operations of your media?

We want to adapt our research to as many formats as possible, so that is an option.

#### I cannot end this interaction without asking you to tell me more about yourself. What inspires you to do what you do today?

A great inspiration for me has been my mother, a sensitive but brave woman, admirable and sweet, affectionate, and an African migrant of Nigerian origin.

She has taught me to be a woman and fight for what I want. In addition to my mother, all my sisters and brothers inspire me daily: those who have come before me and those after.

#### What are your biggest challenges, and what do you think will be a boost to help overcome these challenges in reaching more audiences?

Breaking with the hegemonic narrative is hard work. It is exhausting and requires a lot of effort and mental stability. One of the biggest challenges is to keep yourself mentally stable while exercising activism. For this reason, we create spaces like Afrocolectiva, with care at the centre.

Within these spaces, we also have these containment spaces to express love to each other but also express the rage and anger that this whole process generates in us. We must unite beyond activism to create networks where we feel safe and give each other psychological support and love.

Individual struggles have never gotten anywhere. However, the collective moves us daily to walk together; the more people, the better.





# A PLATFORM FOR PEOPLE OF COLOUR IN GERMANY

Interview by Mercy Abang



Amongst many other prizes, in 2020 she was recognised as one of 30 people under 30 creating change in Germany by the online magazine Zeit Campus. She also won the Hildegard Hamm-Brücher Prize 2021 for democracy, and Karakaya Talks was the winner of the 2020 Grimme Online Awards for culture and entertainment.

Esra herself is passionate about media justice and is committed to producing critical and accessible news content for marginalised communities across Germany and beyond.



e turn the spotlight on the show **Karakaya Talks**, hosted and run by the first hijab-wearing television host in Germany, a young woman of colour who is appealing to a different audience using new media channels.

From politics to pop culture, Karakaya Talks airs on YouTube, TikTok and Instagram specifically for Gen Zs and millennials with migrant backgrounds. The show has amassed around 50,000 dedicated followers and subscribers across these three channels, which young people rely on for their news content these days.

Founded by Esra Karakaya, who also doubles as the host and producer, Karakaya Talks is not only addressing the "crisis of representation" for people of colour in Germany, but focuses on journalism that represents the migrant population in Germany and across Europe. An estimated 10 million Gen Zs and millennials in Germany have a migration background, according to 2021 figures from the German Federal Statistical Office.

In this interview with **Mercy Abang**, Esra explains that thousands of young people, primarily migrants who have been left out of the news agenda, have found a home at **Karakaya Talks**. The show allows them not only to take the mic and to find a platform, but to use their voices without the gatekeeping control often seen in legacy media outlets to discuss topics and issues that matter most to migrants who feel unrepresented — in conversations that are socially relevant to them.



# Why did you decide to launch Karakaya Talks?

I still remember the anger I felt in 2018 when I saw how media outlets spoke about people who looked like me, my friends and my family: Condescending, stereotyping and vilifying, I also remember saying that I do not get to criticise if I do not offer a solution, And this is why Karakaya Talks was born. We are a content startup that produces news and talk shows that young German-speaking millennials and Gen Zs of colour care about. We amplify and centre traditionally marginalised perspectives by looking at what information our audience needs and how they need it delivered.

#### As an influencer with a migration background in Germany, how has it been for you to lead a media talk show for young people?

It has been so reward—
ing — and challenging! There
are so many facets of me I didn't
know existed! I didn't real—
ise I liked business modelling
and product development, nor did
I want to understand numbers,
finances, taxes and insurance.

But I also learned that finding the sweet spot in format development takes a lot of testing and flexibility. And little did I know the amount of patience it needs for our business to grow (she interjects with a burst of loud laughter)! But in the end, the more I learn, the more I feel equipped to build a virtual place that serves as a beacon for underserved communities.

A study you shared shows that, in Germany, talk show guests "of colour" in mainstream media formats are invited only to speak on specific topics. Can you expand on this?

LOL – yeah, It's comical, and Germany's mainstream media landscape has struggled to appropriately and authentical ly include its audience in reports.

For example, in one of Germany's most successful and publicly funded talk shows, "hart aber fair", in 11 consecutive productions, 56 guests were invited to talk on current political and social issues regarding Germany, All guests were white, even though 27% of Germany's population is assumed to be of colour. The 57th guest was someone with Arab roots; they were invited to talk about a so-called "Arab clan criminality". From the content to guests featured, the show highlights the vast underrepresentation of people of colour and their hyper-stereotyping through one-dimensional reporting.

# The same study also shows that 10 million Gen Zs in Germany have a migrant background. How do these young people feel when featured on Karakaya Talks?

I remember one of our paying members saying, "I like other video formats too, but you know, sometimes I gotta deal with my stuff, and that's when I came to Karakaya Talks".

For anyone within the 10 million Gen Z demographic in Germany with a migration background, coming on our platform to speak about what matters to them highlights an essential nuance of our work.

When news outlets continue to report from a so-called "neutral and objective" space that, in reality, is just a mask for a white male gaze on the world, there is little room for marginalised members of society to reflect on their position and privileges in the world. We all need information that caters to our circumstances.

There seems to be a shift to video forms of content for audiences – especially the platforms you use like TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. Can you share why more people are turning to these platforms?

I can guess why video content is consumed more than some years ago, but social media has creat ed a space for marginalised folks to speak on their own behalf.

Karakaya Talks could have only existed with social media. I would bet that not a single media company - public or funded - would give space to a Muslim woman of colour visibly wearing a hijab to be a talk show host discussing political topics, So, having room to express yourself freely without an establishment telling you how to draw people in. That is only partly true. There might be no direct editorial instance to influence your work as a creator, but other mechanisms have similar effects, like #shadowban or #freethenipple.

With a heavy social media following on TikTok, Instagram and YouTube, your talk show centres on migrants. What is your vision for Karakaya Talks within the next five years?

In 2028, we will be one of the most trusted information outlets for women and non-binary folks of colour in Germany, with juicy news content and critical takes on German happenings. We have 4,500 monthly paying members, working in a collaborative news ecosystem, and we continue to centre on those who are most vulnerable.



#### Since the launch of the talk show, what do you consider the most impactful event or activity?

The most impactful moment was the very first low-budget produced episode of our talk show in 2018; it was five hijab-wearing Muslim women and I discussing an advertisement campaign of a German sweets producer that showcased a hijab-wearing woman on their ads - a model who, outside of that job, does not wear a headscarf. This moment was incredibly unique because it was the first time in German history you would not [just] hear of Muslim women but see and hear [from] some of them directly. Also, the comment section was shocking! We got a number of angry comments not because of disagreement with what was said, but because we were speaking - it was incredible!

And then it proved my point: it felt and still feels so unnatural to many people to see marginalised people talk that some people do not even see the blatant racism they are reproducing.

### What are the challenges you've encountered so far, and why?

One of the main challenges we have been working on is growing our membership base. The core group of our community that we reach has yet to be in a financially secure



space, and most of our community are still students in traineeships or low-income jobs.

#### What is your proudest moment so far?

We did get awarded prizes such as the Grimme Online Award in 2020 and the Hildegard Hamm-Brücher Prize for democracy 2021. Still, I would



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say the proudest success story is our team, and I am incredibly excited about the work we do.

What would life be if we were exhausted and ungrateful? It would not be worth it. Our vision is enormous, and I can't wait for the years to come because this ride is FUN! [The proudest moment] is the team check-ins for me, the community meetups and the moments when we make decisions based on intuition.



Sara Lemlem, Founder of DOTZ, is a journalist of Ethiopian/ Eritrean origin who was born and raised in the suburbs of Milan. She specialises in video making at the Civic School of Cinema in Milan. In recent years, she has worked for different media outlets including NuoveRadici.world, VD.News and the Associated Press.

### BREAKING THE SYSTEMIC CHAIN

by Mahmoud Elenani

In April 2021, activists in Italy rose up against discrimination, racism and biased discourse after state television broadcast an episode of the Sunday afternoon talk show "A ruota libera".

Valeria Fabrizi, a white actress, used the "N-word" during the show, which used a barrage of discriminatory terms and racial slurs in a critique of political correctness on Rai – a TV channel that is 99% owned by the Italian government. The event raised awareness that other narratives were needed.

At the start of 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine further emphasised the problematic coverage of world conflicts, portraying refugees from the global south as uncivilised. Once again, this highlighted how biased the mainstream narrative was. This was the spark that catalysed the creation of **DOTZ** – a newsroom that takes an interest in contemporary society and its people by emphasising individual stories. A working group formed to create a media project that would provide a platform for various viewpoints in Italy and Europe on politics, economics, art and society.

DOTZ was founded by **Sara Lemlem** with the collaboration of different editors, mainly from migrant backgrounds. **Leila Belhadj Mohamed, Ariman Scriba, Federica Bonalumi, Adil Mauro, Angelo Boccato** are just some of the voices behind DOTZ. They believe unique narratives offer an alternative perspective to help understand societal changes, which often differ from the dominant perspective portrayed by mainstream media.

Shift interviewed Sara, the founder of DOTZ, who explained the story of the platform: "Despite great strides made by the global civil rights movement, Italy is still struggling with deep-rooted issues, and the Italian media lies at the heart of this problem. The project is necessary due to the dominance of a specific class in newsrooms, which has limited the diversity of perspectives in the media industry."

# DOTZ

#### Diversity is a rare coin

Through her own career in different newsrooms, Sara has significant experience in Italian newsrooms. She believes there is still a long way to go when it comes to creating more diverse workspaces in the Italian media.

The current lack of diversity perpetuates the use of discriminatory language and an overall lack of concern for "the other", Sara says. In fact, "the other" is not recognised as a concept or entity in these newsrooms' stylebooks at all, and they are often overlooked altogether. Sara sees DOTZ as an opportunity to challenge this lack of diversity and provide a voice for "the other".

Current contexts highlight the continued lack of principles in the media discourse across Italy. The tax-payer funded channel Rai made no apology for allowing the broadcast of Valeria Fabrizi's interview in 2021. Nor did they announce any policies and principles in line with the regulations of non-alignment and rejection of discrimination, or in favour of broadcasting a media discourse that respects the public.

According to government agreements\*, state ownership of the broadcaster means there must be a series of rules and guarantees to make sure the institution works to provide its service to public opinion impartially. This clearly did not happen in 2021 and is still not happening today.

The founder of the human rights group D.E.I. Futuro Antirazzista (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion – An Anti-Racist Future) believes that Italy faces a significant systemic problem with racism. The group's founder Alessia Reyna told the *EUObserver* in 2021: "We have a huge problem with systemic racism. Italy is far worse than people overseas imagine, and a huge part of it is the media."

<sup>\*</sup>https://www.mise.gov.it/index.php/it/comunicazioni/televisione/rai#:~:text=La%20RAI%20%2D%20Radiotelevisione%20Italiana%2C%20%C3%A8.un%27informazione%20completa%20e%20imparziale

#### Another voice is needed

DOTZ focuses on issues that are important to marginalised communities, pushing the conversation to more human dimensions. It is a European newsroom that is genuinely committed to empowering women and people of colour and relies on the paid-journalism model for its collaborators to allow them to provide sources of income that help them produce their journalistic stories.

However, this model puts the project under significant financial strain when it comes to providing in-depth and high-quality journalism that is independent of the 24-hour news cycle. As mainstream newsrooms continue to be dominated by white males, journalists of colour and immigrants need publishing platforms and content that gives them a voice.

The systemic problem of the Italian media also highlights the difficulty of formally practising journalism for the poorer classes, since joining journalism colleges determines, in a systematic way, who can be a journalist and who can't.

Despite Sara's long working history in Italian newsrooms, for example, she still hasn't been able to secure official journalistic accreditation, due to the hurdles presented by the current system. This kind of marginalisation makes establishing an independent newsroom more urgent than ever.

Making journalism available to all also raises the question of the Italian school curricula too. In 2021, pictures went viral from an Italian primary school textbook. This provoked a lot of anger on social media, as on one of its pages, a black child speaking broken Italian was told to learn Italian properly. In another, a high school textbook mocked an Asian girl.

DOTZ is opening a different conversation through its various products on different societies in the global south. Sara explains that this includes publications on health and hygiene for women in Africa and the Middle East, awareness of psychological and health problems such as eating disorders, as well as coverage of the reality of journalists in conflict zones. This helps to remove the current stereotyping that even permeates school textbooks, Sara says.

# ITALY IS STILL STRUGGLING WITH DEEP-ROOTED ISSUES, AND THE ITALIAN MEDIA LIES AT THE HEART OF THIS PROBLEM. 1777

### Where does the change come from?

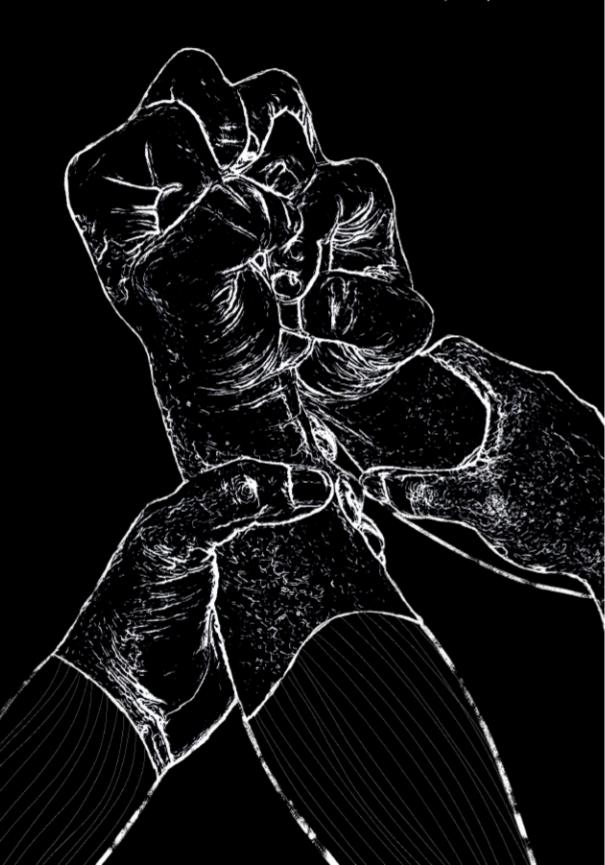
DOTZ engages with European and global issues by highlighting the representation of marginalised groups in online discourse through their visually compelling Instagram content. The platform actively seeks to showcase various perspectives, including those from Morocco, Italy, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Tunisia and Somalia, across different social, cultural and gender dimensions. By amplifying the voices of these communities, DOTZ aims to empower its members enabling them to share their stories through various mediums.

DOTZ seeks to represent the people of these communities in its cooperative plans and to publish their experiences of life as people from non-white backgrounds in Western societies. This includes the challenges for non-whites in finding houses for rent even while spending tourist holidays in several cities around the world. Research on race and gender proves the lack of opportunities offered to the people of these classes, as a result of their religious, ethnic backgrounds or gender identities.

The question of change is always difficult to answer. Change has multiple meanings and passes through multiple stages, which vary according to the context of each question. But Sara has an answer that is the strapline for DOTZ: "Change comes from the margins (Il cambia—mento arriva dai margini)".



From left to right: Ariman Scriba, Federica Bonalumi, Leila Belhadj Mohamed, Sara Lemlem.





Sonia Nandzik and Douglas Herman.

Sonia Nandzik, co-founder of ReFOCUS Media Labs, is a devoted humanitarian and public policy officer with extensive experience in international institutions, including the European Parliament, as well as practical experience in the field. Her expertise lies in refugee crisis relief, human rights advocacy, humanitarian aid coordination and project management. For the last couple of years, she has worked directly with refugees, leading the "Fresh Response" initiative to distribute fresh cooking ingredients and non-food items along the Serbian-Hungarian border while collaborating with multiple aid organisations to advance refugee rights and provide critical support. Through ReFOCUS Media Labs, she pursues the goal of changing the conversation in her home country of Poland so that refugees are regarded as equals deserving of internationally recognised human rights.

Douglas Herman, co-founder of ReFOCUS Media Labs, wears many hats as an educator, media artist and humanitarian. For nearly 20 years, he has been empowering young people and refugees with media creation skills, an effort he spearheads through Rough Cut Media. His dedication to achieving equity in media creation tools both locally and globally has fuelled his mission. In 2016, he embarked on a life-changing journey, following the path most refugees have taken over land and sea to seek safety in Europe and claim asylum. His photo series on Instagram, #InTheirFootsteps, became a yearlong case study inside classrooms. The continued escalation of this crisis prompted Douglas to return full-time to the frontline in Greece, where he co-founded ReFOCUS Media Labs with fellow humanitarians. Together, they created a platform for refugees to tell their stories and develop professional media creation skills for future employment. Douglas's current goal is to bring the classroom to the crisis and provide equal opportunities for all, as he believes that, without this, nothing will truly change.

Sonia

### An X-ray of t challeng Dortumit for creatin Nandzik. Herman and Douglas Herman co-founded ReFOCUS Media Labs in 2017, and manage three labs in Athens,

Krakow and Lesvos. They put their expertise together to create a global network of media labs to equip asylum seekers and recognised refugees with

six years, ReFOCUS Media Labs has grown into a unique modern media creation skills. Over the last and powerful model for media integration, bringing together people from all backgrounds and cultures to share their stories and experiences.

This interview is a rare opportunity to get an inside look at their work and to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in giving a voice to those who have been silenced or ignored in the media.

Below are excerpts of the conversation between Sonia and Douglas and Shift journalist Osama Al-Sayyad.





#### How did you start ReFOCUS Media Labs?

"It was just the two of us in a community centre on Lesvos with one camera," said Sonia.

Before starting this initiative, Douglas was involved in education and worked with inner-city youth in Philadelphia to create a film and television programme, a film festival and a production company. He focused on supporting young voices, showcasing their creative work at significant platforms and helping them to attend media school or enter the industry, During a summer break, he engaged with the refugee situation in Greece, and on the last day at the border of Serbia and Hungary, he met Sonia. They are now married.

Together they were working on a humanitarian project that provides refugees with basic needs such as food and clothing at the border between Serbia and Hungary. They noticed a gap in humanitarian aid, particularly in education and skills training for slightly older refugees, particularly

teenagers and young adults who needed something to do. They decided to create a media lab on Lesvos to provide education and skills training for refugees. The programme was well-received by refugees who were hungry for knowledge and something positive to do.

# What is your opinion about the approach of the mainstream media to covering immigration?

Journalists have the power of changing the reality. It is difficult, it is very difficult, but if you have the attention as a journalist, of either your followers on social media or in your newspaper, you have to be aware that with this power comes responsibility.

Sonia doubts the media industry's ability to embrace diversity and create sustainable change without actively recruiting and supporting people from various backgrounds.

ReFOCUS Media Labs have been cooperating with mainstream media on projects, and when doing so, Douglas has negotiated proper wages,





entitlements and allowances for all workers, even those without official status. The project generated significant coverage and led to some changes for the refugees, such as getting resettled in other countries.

Now ReFOCUS MediaLab continues to open the conversation about the need for localised

teams, fair wages and the inclusion of community members. They have been in discussions with the editorsin-chief of mainstream media regarding policies and requirements, and stress the importance of actively seeking out and engaging with those impacted by the reported issues and incorporating their voices in the media.

In 2021, ReFOCUS Media Labs released a film called Nothing About US Without US, highlighting communities' struggles when their voices are not heard or expressed in the media, Supported by Allianz Kulturstiftung, the film serves as a call to action for mainstream media to develop a new standard of engagement with the communities they report on, The documentary was written, directed and edited by Yaser Akbari and Nazanin Foroghi. It was filmed by citizen journalists from ReFOCUS Media Labs chronicling the past two tumultuous years of the struggle faced by asylum seekers and refugees before. during and after the fires that destroyed the Moria camp.

What are some of the biggest challenges that ReFOCUS Media Labs has faced and how did you overcome them? As with every startup of such scale, only a few are able to triumph over the obstacles they face, said Douglas. ReFOCUS Media Labs have encountered numerous challenges along the way that demanded innovative and strategic solutions.

One of the main challenges has been financing and obtaining the necessary equipment to create a foundation for people to learn the fundamentals of filmmaking and photography, Another significant challenge was managing the growth and demand of the programme, which required finding more teachers, volunteers and supporters to reach the increasing number of people wanting to join the programme. The apparent need for the programme was also a significant factor in the programme's success, requiring a consistent presence of people, volunteers and media creators.



However, the programme also faced resistance from governments and powers above who didn't want refugees to have access to resources or programmes that facilitate their integration into a new community or country. The programme faced obstacles from the media too, perpetuating fear among local communities and creating barriers to the programme's desire to create an inclusive society.

Despite these challenges, ReFOCUS Media Labs have successfully provided the tools and skills that allow individuals to tell their stories, share their experiences and positively impact their local communities. The organisation sees the value of the programmes daily, which keeps the motivation flowing.

#### How does ReFOCUS Media Labs incorporate diversity and inclusion into its work and team?

When it comes to diversity and inclusion in their team. Sonia and Douglas emphasise that ReFO-CUS Media Labs is a composition of refugees or graduates from their programmes who come from various backgrounds. The team members have multiple skill sets and experiences in media creation. ReFOCUS encourages mentorship and collaboration among its members to create a world where people from different backgrounds can work together seamlessly. They also strive to exchange knowledge and educate and learn from each other about the issues and concerns in their respective countries,

#### What role does technology play in the work of ReFOCUS Media Labs?

Technology continues to play a pivotal role, not just in terms of innovation but also when it comes to transitioning organisations in addressing the emerging challenges of the 21st century. Sonia and Douglas talk about exploring the role of technology in their work:

"Looking at new technology, we can also talk about it from the logistical, challenging budgeting standpoint. We are a forward centric organisation. We are caring about what happens next for the lives of the people we work with. How can they leverage their current situation to set themselves up for success? When they eventually leave our community or go to the next place, wherever they choose to settle in life, they need to be ready to walk right onto a set. know how to pitch, know how to use the cutting-edge tools that would be asked of them. They need to know and be trained on the actual tools used currently. We want them to be at the edge of the technology movement,"

However, funding for modern equipment is challenging, and the organisation must constantly fundraise to secure the necessary resources to provide state-of-the-art training. They have created a **Filmmakers' Fund** to give equipment to graduates who need it for their careers.

#### Tell us about ReFOCUS Media Labs in Ukraine and the resilience of the Ukrainian people as the war continues.

In response to the war in Ukraine, ReFOCUS Media Labs established a third lab in Krakow, Poland, to employ and educate Ukrainian refugees. Ukrainian refugees in Poland and Greece face challenges integrating into new communities and dealing
with trauma from the war. Despite
these obstacles, the Ukrainian community has shown remarkable resilience
and resourcefulness, creating strong
support networks. They immediately implement what they learn
in classes into community projects
to help others affected by the war.

ReFOCUS Media Labs produced an art exhibition that showcased the refugees' observations and work, including anti-war posters and promoting a more positive image of Ukraine beyond the war. Some people in the programme work as freelancers and photographers and create graphic designs, and there is the potential to work towards offering more services such as high-quality graphic design.

Douglas highlighted that the engagement with Ukrainian students and the community differs from country to country. A significant percentage of Ukrainians in Greece were either there before or as a result of the war. He notes that the outpouring of support for Ukrainians from European communities and governments starkly contrasts with the treatment of refugees from other countries. The Ukrainians learned that only some people outside of their community received the same level of respect that they did. At the same time, the non-Ukrainians recognised the struggles faced by Ukrainian society. Through structured engagement, they empathised with one another and supported each other.

# What would be your advice to someone interested in starting a similar social impact initiative?

Like every other sector and industry, Douglas advises that people
must be willing to put in the
effort and take the risk. One will
face obstacles and problems that
can ruin the momentum but these must
be viewed as opportunities to develop
creative solutions. A localised community that centres on core principles
such as who is involved in the process,
who is in charge, and what is produced
and disseminated is crucial.

Sonia adds that the person must have a strong belief and passion for the project, as there may be hard times, especially if the project is in any way controversial.

#### Where do you both see ReFO-CUS Media Labs in the future?

ReFOCUS Media Labs intends to expand its network beyond the three existing labs where people can learn from each other, create together and build their futures. They are considering opening labs in Amsterdam and Berlin. The focus is on growth while ensuring sustain ability and longevity, and the strength of its students to produce more films, journalistic materials and podcasts.

# NEW MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS

The internet has revolutionised the way we access information and social networks have become an essential tool for our everyday lives. Today, there are more than 5 billion internet users around the world, which is more than 64% of the global population. Almost 60% of those are active social media users.

The boundaries between different types of media are becoming increasingly blurred, as consumers themselves become content creators and the advances in the internet and technology democratise communication channels. This allows almost anyone to access information and/or publish their own content without many restrictions,

Could this be an opportunity to create a digital space that is more inclusive and diverse where all voices are represented?

The potential is enormous. There are over 200 million content creators in the world today, many

of them using audio and video technology. Currently, there are over 2 million independent podcasts globally with more than 420 million listeners. And there are more than 51 million YouTube channels with over 500 hours of video content being uploaded to the platform every minute.

While having access to all these channels represents an opportunity for new creators and those trying to change the narrative in the media world, there are other challenges that have come to the fore. For example, 59% of new creators have not been able to monetise their work yet. On average, it takes content creators at least 6.5 months to earn their first dollar.

Below we draw on a series of reports to summarise some of the most important facts that are changing the new media industry and its consumers in Europe today. We also share some recommendations for those trying to create a more representative space in the digital world.

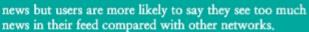


#### REUTERS DIGITAL NEWS REPORT 2022

49% of top news publishers are now regularly publishing content on the video sharing platform TikTok.

The vast majority of Spanish (86%), French (86%) and UK (81%) publishers operate active accounts on TikTok, News organisations in Italy (29%), Denmark (27%) and Bulgaria (7%) have been slower to move onto the platform,

Facebook remains the most-used social network for



While older groups remain loyal to Facebook, the youngest generation has switched much of its attention to more visual networks over the last three years.

TikTok has become the fastest growing network, reaching 40% of 18 to 24 year olds; 15% of these young users rely on the platform for news,

While social media have increased the profile of many digital journalists, the most well-known journalists are still TV anchors and presenters in most countries,

The smartphone has become the dominant way in which most people first access news in the morning.

In Norway, Spain, Finland and the UK, the smart – phone is now accessed first ahead of television, while radio retains an important role in Ireland.

Morning newspaper reading is still surprisingly popu – lar in the Netherlands.

\*Reuters Institute



In 2021, 72% of internet users aged 16-74 in the EU read news sites, newspapers and news magazines online,

Between 2016 and 2021, online news use increased slightly more among women than men. Overall, however, men were more likely to use the internet for accessing news content than women

(74% compared to 71%).

People with a "high formal education" were more likely to access news online (85%) than those with lower levels of education (57%),

Among EU Member States, the highest percentages of internet users reading news online were registered in Finland (93%), Lithuania and Czechia (both 92%) and Croatia and Greece (both 90%). The lowest usage was reported in Romania (59%), Germany (62%), France (63%), Italy (64%) and Belgium (67%).

\*Findings from Eurostat





#### Challenges for migrant representation in new media

As part of the Re: framing Migrants project, research was carried out into the impacts of new media and the findings were published in Report and Visualiza – tion of Media Representation Dynamics.

Below are some of the main findings from this research:

#### Content moderation bias

Social media platforms make choices about what to flag or block according to their policies regarding hate speech or harassment. However, a reliance on automated content moderation tools, filters or algorithmic bias can mean that people from marginalised populations have the content they create erased, suppressed or shadow-banned.

The report found: "The remov al of content produced by marginal ised populations contributes to generate exclusion, censorship, auto-censorship and social apathy in the digital envi ronment. This dynamic reinforces and reproduces existing power struc tures that leave behind marginalised communities, making them invisible."

#### Amplifying causes... and stereotypes

The ability of migrants to engage with social media means increased access to information, a chance to share their stories and gain international attention for causes, as well as documenting their journeys.

However, they found that news stories on social media regarding migrants "tend to focus on crime, public unrest, cultur al misunderstandings, social problems, and economic costs," often without the voice of any migrants themselves. Conspiracy theories about migrants causing health and crime problems can spread like wildfire on social media, while articles debunking such theories receive fewer views. "Disinformation, hate speech and incitement to violence pose a real threat to minority groups that are objects of discrimination," the report concluded.

#### Legal problems

Governments and law enforcement agencies have also increasingly monitored social media for evidence of migration flows as well as monitoring migrants themselves and searching for proof about their identities. Numerous European countries also apparently "allow for the seizure of mobile phones from asylum or migration applicants from which data is then extracted and used as part of asylum procedures".

At the same time, migrants can and do use digital media for positive purposes: to connect with non-profit organisations, learn about their legal rights and network with diasporic communities that offer guidance and assistance.

#### Challenging the paradigm: recommendations for change

Armed with knowledge about how digital media and social media can amplify discrimination, the report recommends that organisations can work to change the system by:

- identifying techniques and tools to subvert the social media system
- planning strategies to address the power asymmetries that characterise the social media information space
- designing strategies and actions to amplify those voices that are now excluded from the debate
- shaping regulations that contextual ly consider the risks to which social media expose specific social groups.

#### TO FIND OUT MORE



Eurostat | Consumption of online news rises in popularity



Types of information collected by migrants



"Eight things journalists should keep in mind when reporting on migration" by Ronahi Hasan



Medios de comunicación en tik tok



How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on migration?



Reporting migration as a human story



Fake news/fake information identification and analysis in the context of migration



Migrant representation in the media 2022



Displaced in Media



Report & Visualisation of media representation dynamics



Carta di Roma



Auditing social media: Portrayal of migrants in YouTube



How to cover migration on media? 7 recommendations for journalists



©Barley Tshibanda 'The journey' series

### NEW MEDIA TO FOLLOW

#### ReFOCUS Media Labs

ReFOCUS Media Labs is dedicated to creating a global network of media labs to equip asylum seekers and r ecognised refugees with modern media creation skills. They provide a platform to showcase original work, share stories and help people from migrant backgrounds pursue professional careers.

- Advocacy organisation
- Poland & Greece · English
   IG @refocusmedialabs
   YT: @ReFOCUSMediaLabs

#### Esra // Karakaya Talks

YouTube talk show made for and trusted by millennials and Gen Z with a migration background. They centre marginalised groups. The effect: valuable impact on society at at large.

- YouTube
- · Berlin · German

IG @karakayatalks YT: @KarakayaTalks



#### Dotz

DOTZ is a media project that aims to give a wider point of view on different topics, such as lifestyle, politics, economy, art and environment, in an Italian and more general European context too.

- Online Magazine
  - · Milan · Italian

IG: @DOTZ

#### Afrocolectiva // QUINNDY

Quinndy is the founder of
Afrocolectiva, a medium to communicate
and deconstruct Afrofeminism,
antiracism and pan-Africanism
through humour and various media like
TikTok and memes.

- Online Magazine
- · Online · Spanish

IG @AFROCOLECTIVA TikTok: @Afrocolectiva

#### Gorm Media

Gorm Media's mission is to unify across differences and advance belonging for marginalised communities. Their vision is to spark a movement of unity and shared understanding through innovative digital media, intercultural education and events. By aiming towards the Sustainable Development Goals of (10) reducing inequality and (16) peace justice & strong institutions, they believe that unity can be built by engaging across lines of difference.

Creative
 Dublin · English

IG: @gormmedia TikTok: gormmedia

#### Hoder

Hossein Derakhshan is an Iranian-Canadian author, researcher and public speaker, as well as the pioneer of blogging, podcasts and tech journalism in Iran. Hossein spent six years in prison in Iran from 2008 until 2014 because of his writings and digital activism. Upon his release, Derakhshan wrote an essay on the demise of blogs titled The Web We Have to Save.

- Journalist
- London

IG: @hod3r\_fa

#### Migration Jam

Migration jam is a creative agency and storytelling platform to inspire and empower communities worldwide. They are a collective of talented and creative professionals from the migrant and refugee communities who believe in the power of storytelling to facilitate positive change using multi-media tools.

- Community Platform
- Started in Istanbul, but communities all over Europe
  - IG: @migrationjam

rethinking photographic archives and representation of migrant identities ©all photos by Cigdem Yuskel Text by Ariel Sosa





Cigdem Yuksel, a photographer, commenced her career in photography with the Dutch newspaper, de Volkskrant. Her focus was predominantly on the topics of migration, refugees, and identity. In May 2016, she trekked to the city of Gaziantep in Turkey and partnered with two reporters to create a poignant portrait series that showed Syrian child refugees working in textile and shoe factories. When she came back, she was conferred with the prestigious Zilveren Camera award. The acclaim received by her photo series was due to the fact that it effectively presented Western consumers with a stark representation of the consequences that arise as a result of our political and economic policies.

Over the last two years, her attention has turned towards exploring perception and the influence wielded by photographers. In pursuit of this goal, she began researching our shared visual memory and the depiction of Muslim women within the Netherlands. This effort culminated in a widely-discussed 2020 research report which analysed the presentation of Muslim women within the ANP image database. Through her "A New Beginning" initiative, she has been working with young individuals as they navigate the process of establishing their identities following their migration to the Netherlands.

Meron (20) is a hip-hop enthusiast who finds herself grooving and humming along to the tunes of Cardi B and Selena Gómez. Whenever she thinks of her native land, she feels a longing for her mother and is reminded of the colour yellow. Amin (20) has been battling with the rejection of his asylum application multiple times. His feelings can be summed up by the colour black, which represents his constant struggles and impending doom. Only his faith and his love for Carrie Underwood's music keep him going.

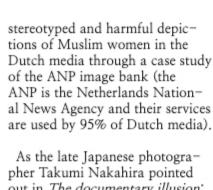
Walter Benjamin, a German philospher particularly interested in photography, thought that art should have a political significance and be a way of resistance against domination and control. Historically, populations from the global south have been depicted in the media through a Western lens. This process of otherisation perpetuates the idea that people in the south, migrants, refugees, racialised people, etc., are monoliths of uneducated, violent men, oppressed women and malnourished children to be pitied or saved.

Since the beginning of her work as a photographer, Cigdem Yuskel has had a clear interest in migration and identity. Her experience in the field has turned her attention to the role of photographers in shaping public perception and the power this entails. Her research project Muslima challenges this power directly, shining a light on the continued use of









As the late Japanese photographer Takumi Nakahira pointed out in *The documentary illusion*: if institutionalised power only gave us a single, predetermined narrative and made us believe this perspective they've selected was the only authentic reality, that would mean we have willingly surrendered our liberties.

Nakahira proposes that those in power portray their sense of morality, their idea of truth, as universal truth and analyse the role that photography plays in media to keep these power structures functioning. Because we presuppose photographs to be a faithful representation of reality, what we choose to photograph, how we desire to present it, and what is selected from by media platforms effectively shape what we think the truth is.

Yuskel understands the direct impact of media depictions of marginalised communities on their lives, Through her work, she aims to change the collective visual memory in the Netherlands. The audiovisual work in her project A new beginning is a clear example of this: She works with young people trying to find their identities after migrating to the Netherlands. This work becomes a tool of resistance for herself and the young people she works with, who no longer want the narrative about them to be controlled by anyone but themselves,







Migration is a process that can break your sense of self. It can be painful. But it also allows you to reflect on yourself and reimagine who you are or want to be.

Unlike most photographic projects about migrants, which depict their subjects from a distance, Yuskel has consciously tried to portray them as they see themselves, with their subjectivities, their desires and the identities they are constructing and claiming.

A crucial aspect of this series of multimedia stories is that it show cases young migrants and refu gees not only as victims of trauma but as complex individuals with many different shades to them, creating beautifully layered portraits of young people who have gone through terrible things, yes, but are also much more than the history of terrible circumstances life has dealt them. These young people carry so much pain with them, but they are also vulnerable, intelligent and curious; they hope and suffer and find solace in music, the colour pink or feeling relaxed and beautiful like Beyoncé.

A new beginning is also part of a larger multidisciplinary media platform called Shadow Game. At www.shadowgame.eu you can access the different stories in the project and several other forms of investigation and art surrounding young refugees and migrants dealing with the terrible wall of European borders.

# Challenging narratives through collaborative storytelling

by: Osama Al-Sayyad

In this interview with *Shift*, Dana Olărescu discusses her experience as a socially engaged artist in the collaborative Incubator designed by Beyond the Now. This is part of the Re:framing migrants project, which brings socially engaged artists, investigative journalists and digital activists together to co-create and ideate new ways of telling the story of migration through a range of storytelling mediums and platforms. The Incubator facilitates experimentation, risk-taking and collaboration by mixing methodologies and approaches to storytelling and forming new alliances.

Dana talks about the importance of alternative and parallel storytelling platforms and the relevance of history, particularly colonialism and migration, in creating reparative perspectives in storytelling.

The aim is to move beyond individualistic morality tales about migrants and community displacement to research, map and communicate a more interconnected, systemic story that is shaped by multiple points of entry across a complex ecosystem.

DanaOlårescuisasociallyengaged artist who challenges minority exclusion and environmental injustice. Through participatory methodologies that democratise access to art and knowledge, she aims to give agency to underserved migrant groups so they can become active co-producers of culture.



# Can you tell us about your experience as a socially engaged artist in the Collaborative Incubator part 1&2, and how has it influenced your approach to storytelling?

I'm part of a group of four individuals including Dominik Czechowski (an independent curator, lecturer and writer), Ashish Ghadiali (a filmmaker and activist who works for racial justice and environmental justice in diverse contexts) and Daniel Trilling (a journalist, author and editor). We were all invited to a collaborative incubator in Berlin to question how migration could be framed differently in European media.

Our work focuses on the systems that govern our lives, specifical— ly looking at the root causes of racism and xenophobia. Personal stories are essential to connecting and engaging with communities, but storytell—ing is not critical to my own practice. I am interested in seeing the systemic and institutional failures behind them. We used our experience as differ—ent practitioners to reflect on how that affects the way we tell stories.

#### In what ways did the Incubator encourage experimentation and risk-taking in forming new alliances between socially engaged artists and investigative journalists?

It is important that, despite our mixed training and expertise as well as approaches, we have come together and identified our common interest in forced climate displace—ment. It is concerning that around 1.2 billion people may be displaced by 2050 due to climate change, and yet climate refugees don't have a status that would give them protection. We are interested in what the future holds when so many people are being displaced with no protection. We have

been thinking about ways of framing migration in the media differently,
as it is always portrayed as an issue
and instead of something to celebrate
or learn from. We decided to experiment with different ways of turning
this term on its head and using it as
a point of connection and learning.

We wish to include the voices of those who have experienced forced displacement and understand their perspectives. We have planned a trip to Palermo in Italy to learn what the challenges and opportunities for those who arrive there are. We are interested in the social and environmental intersection. and how soil failure results in massive displacement of people. Our aim is to link these issues so that readers can make the connection more easily. Climate action should be led by those who have lived experience of its impact, not by leaders safely tucked away in skyscrapers.

#### How have you approached moving beyond individualistic morality tales about migrants and community displacement to a more interconnected and systemic story?

I believe that asking meaningful questions and having large conversations is essential in socially engaged art. Consent is also important, and I always go back to the people I spoke with to ensure their edits and input are included in the artwork. This entanglement and interdependence helps to represent stories accurately. As a group, we aim to do this by giving full ownership to those we will speak to, and by asking them how they may wish to be portrayed and represented in the media, had they the power to change the status quo.

#### What have you learned about sources, verification and evidence in crafting new narratives

#### in the Incubator, and can you share any best practices or resources that have been identified?

I believe that understanding the importance of facts and figures is crucial, especially at the intersection of journalism and digital activism. I have seen firsthand how the media can amplify numbers without verifying their accuracy, which I consider to be unlawful. During a recent conversation with journalists, we discussed the rigorous research process that goes into every piece, and the significance of using verifiable sources. While journalism cannot create fiction, art allows for creative freedom. However, digital activists and journalists always face challenges in ensuring accuracy. and one journalist shared that she needs to send her work to lawyers at every stage to ensure correctness. This level of attention is incredibly important to maintain the integrity of journalism.

#### Can you discuss the importance of amplifying stories and new platforms and share some current case studies related to the themes explored in the Incubator?

Our approach is focused on care and intention. We understand that Palermo is often portraved in the media as a place where migrants are struggling, so we want to create a counterpoint and approach things in a more insightful way. When we meet the people we'll be working with, we think it's important to establish a strong foundation and a working method. When visiting Palermo our main goal is to highlight the infrastructures and networks of support that migrants have created and we want to give them a platform to share their stories. Most importantly, we want to make sure that people feel heard, supported and safe during our visit.

In the past, I worked with young men seeking asylum in London. We connected through physical activities like building a low-impact classroom for May Project Gardens, which led to sharing stories and ideas. We created a curriculum that gave them access to wider platforms. One spoke about climate-induced migration at COP26, while another now works on holding the housing sector accountable for poor living conditions for asylum seekers and refugees.

#### How has the toolkit concept developed and evolved through the course of the incubator, and what role have the four artists/journalists/ activists played in shaping it?

We will gather our experiences in a toolkit, as it is crucial to the dissemination of the project. We are keeping field diaries to record our thoughts and ideas as we are working together. Our goal is to inform each other about different methodologies and best practices, and to learn from each other's ways of working. Palermo will also be a test-bed for the documentation, with audio, video and text recorded live and then compiled by socially engaged artist Isabel Lima.

How has the topic of climate emergency and displacement been reframed through the lens of geographies of extraction and migration, and what storytelling ecologies have emerged between the filmmaker/ activist, investigative journalist, curator and socially engaged artists?

What we have been discuss ing until now with respect to the climate crisis is how we can collabo rate on this in a substantial proactive way. We are trying to figure out what facts we need to collect in order to start working, and also what type of forum this collaboration will take.

As artists, we would like to produce an outcome that may be a short film or a series of posters, something that can be seen by the wider public. We looked at two elements: the statistic on 1.2 billion people being displaced by 2050, and how the media describes movements of people in a similar way to the natural world.

For example, we see terms like "a swarm of people" or "a flock of migrants", which are normal ly used to describe nature. We want to turn those terms on their heads so that they become positive.

Our idea is to work with speculative fiction and borrow from the natural world in order to show how people can work together. It is worth mentioning that these ideas are still forming as we go along, and we are intentionally making room for the "unknown" for our Palermo trip. This will, no doubt, affect aspects of our thinking and production.

#### Can you discuss the relevance of history, specifically colonialism, migration and Europe, and its use in creating reparative perspectives in storytelling?

Decolonisation could potentially provide a foundation for reparative actions. However, before we can truly move towards it, it's crucial that we educate ourselves and future generations on its history and impact. As someone living in Europe, I have noticed that decolonisation is rarely discussed in depth and is often presented in a positive light: "We gave them train tracks" - to extract their resources. not for people's mobility concerns. We need to acknowledge the harm that was done in the past and make efforts to repair the damage that has been caused. This includes offering apologies and implementing reparations that make those in charge accountable for their processes. But decolonisation discourses often take place in the academic world, not at governmental levels, and without taking responsibility and recognising the wrongs of the past, we can't make progress towards true decolonisation and reconciliation.

#### How has the trauma-based storytelling methodology been explored in the Incubator, and can you share any relevant case studies?

During the Incubator, one journalist told us that they used gamification to help the general public understand the experiences of displaced persons. We talked about the role of trauma in these experiences and how important it is for people to be trained in trauma-informed ways of working. If we don't start from a place of empathy and understanding, there is a risk of exploitation and media misrepresentation. We must create cultures of thoughtfulness in our approaches. And while educating ourselves about trauma-informed ways of working, it is also important to fight against the ongoing abuse migrants encounter as soon as they arrive in new places, which risks further traumatising them,

But I would love to end with a quote from Gabes Torres, a therapist, organ—iser and artist whose work focus—es on imperialism and its vast impact on our collective mental health: "We are more than our wounds. We have inherited more than just the trauma. We have also inherited the medicine. We've also inherited the joy. We've also inherited laughter." And this is a great catalyst for reconstruction, and fighting for dignity and empowerment through personal stories and histories.



### Publication partners

#### Stichting Here to Support

www.heretosupport.nl

Stichting Here to Support has been involved in setting up platforms to amplify the voices of (undocumented) migrants since 2013. The platforms all have different forms, shapes and outcomes. They are designed with professional artists, designers, theorists, academics and cultural producers with and without migrant backgrounds. Stichting Here to Support takes a facilitating role, safeguarding quality and production; putting those in the field in the lead. They have extensive expertise in bringing people together and creating democratic spaces and co-creations.

#### Unbias the News

www.unbiasthenews.org

Unbias the News is an international cross-border newsroom focused on creating a space for journalists who experience structural barriers in the field. The newsroom is run by Hostwriter (www.hostwriter. org), an award-winning network connecting 6,700 journalists from 158 countries.

#### The European Cultural Foundation

www.culturalfoundation.eu

The European Cultural Foundation (ECF) strengthens the European sentiment by developing and supporting cultural initiatives that let us share, experience and imagine Europe.

When ECF was launched in 1954, the founders envisioned a united Europe where citizens feel proudly European, a place where they can live, express themselves, work and dream freely, in diversity and harmony. This is why we need to challenge current media narratives about migrant and refugee communities across Europe.



#### Re:framing migrants in the European Media

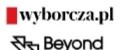
www.reframingmigrants.eu

The publication SHIFT - actions for migrating perspectives is part of the larger project Re: framing migrants in the European Media, which is financed by the European Commission and the European Cultural Foundation, The publication was created over the course of three weeks in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in a pop-up editorial event that enabled the content team to work in person. This was made possible by the Democracy and Media Foundation.

It builds upon the network of Decolonising the Newsroom, a community event that took place in Madrid in July 2022, which was coordinated by the organisation ZEMOS98 and cultural platform Conciencia Afro, with research by ethical research specialists Ethicas,

#### HERE TO SUPPORT















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