



MEDIA LITERACY FOR ALL

Supporting
marginalised groups
through community media



Martina Chapman
Nadia Bellardi
Helmut Peissl

Artificial Intelligence – Intelligent Politics
Challenges and opportunities for media and democracy
Background Paper, Ministerial Conference, Cyprus 2020



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Authors:
Martina Chapman
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Helmut Peissl

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This background paper explores how the community media sector promotes media literacy and how this work can strengthen marginalised communities' participation in community media and beyond, with a view to informing and inspiring practitioners and policy-makers.

A key characteristic of community media is the voluntary participation of civil society members in creating and managing programmes. The role of volunteers is absolutely critical to the functioning of most community media organisations.

A common thread stretching across community media is empowering community groups with the access and skills to create their own communication channels which meet the specific needs of their community and foster participation in the public sphere in a structured and professional manner. As a result, many community media projects and activities promote the direct empowerment and participation of communities who are typically absent from public debate.

Community media have evolved differently from country to country, adopting a number of different models, including those looked at in this study. The common starting point has been the need to support the communicative needs of citizens, especially within minority groups and at a local level.

This study compares five models of community media from Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain and the United Kingdom and highlights a number of findings. For instance, community radio is legally recognised in Ireland, Luxembourg, UK and Spain (although there is an absence of specific legislation pertaining to community media in Spain). Community media is not legally recognised in Cyprus.

Of the three community media models with legal recognition and a licensing process, the country with the most community radio stations is, by far, the UK with over 250 community radio stations which roughly equates to one community radio station to 250,000 people, less than 25 in Ireland roughly equating to one community radio station per 200,000 and less than five in Luxembourg which corresponds to about one community radio station per 120,000 inhabitants.

Generally, the promotion of media literacy is seen as 'core business' across the community media sector and each of the models we investigated promoted media literacy in a variety of ways.

The importance of community media in helping the growth of an 'informed citizenry' is well recognised by the Council of Europe. However, it remains that community media in many European countries still lack formal, legal recognition, fair access to distribution platforms and sustainable funding.

The two most common challenges to community media identified in this study were a lack of financial security and reductions in funding, lack of legal status or infrastructure or poor support from Government and/or the responsible authority.

Structured evaluation of community media, or of media literacy projects, is not commonplace – potentially adding to the challenge of securing long-term funding.

This report echoes the recommendations made in the Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership, calling on Member States to develop a co-ordinated national media literacy policy and ensure its operationalisation and implementation through annual or multiyear action plans and by providing adequate resources for these purposes.

Community media and Community Media Associations should be recognised as main stakeholders in any cross-sectoral media literacy strategy or activities and as potential partners for the formal educational system. However, to achieve this potential, community media needs to be resourced accordingly.

This is especially true in relation to the unique opportunities the community media can offer to marginalised communities and those with less formal educational backgrounds to re-engage with learning. Maximising these opportunities requires resources for intensive outreach activities and potential cooperation with other educational actors.

METHODOLOGY

Information was gathered using a mix of quantitative and qualitative research techniques, including the use of two small-scale online surveys (conducted via Survey Monkey), as well as a series of qualitative, first person, in-depth interviews. The surveys were carried out in English.

This data gathering was supported, where necessary, by desk-based analysis of relevant research and policy papers.

Using the knowledge of two experts in community media (N. Bellardi and H. Peissl), a range of models of community media were identified in the following five countries: Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The on-going Council of Europe study “ACROSS GENERATIONS - community media as spaces for local dialogue and cohesion” focusses on a number of other countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, France and the Balkan area) and may address some overlapping themes. As a result, these countries were not taken into account in this study.

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The purpose of the quantitative surveys was to collect data on:

- ▶ Five different models of community media, each from a different country with a view to creating a high-level comparative analysis.
- ▶ Case-studies of promising practices (up to a maximum of two from each country) with a view to identifying common success factors and common risk factors.

Our experts identified appropriate respondents from each country to complete a set of standardised questions created to provide a broad framework for the collection and analysis of data against specific criteria. Where a national community media association or network exists, the nominated respondent was drawn from there. Where no national community media association or structure exists, a recognised ‘expert practitioner’¹ was identified to gather and consolidate information from that country in order to create a picture of community media in that country. To help ensure fair and balanced responses, the respondents were asked to indicate their involvement in any of the projects nominated. The respondents were expected to consider all aspects of community media when completing the survey (radio, TV and online), and to consult with other relevant community media stakeholders where necessary.

The first online survey collected data on the origins of community media in each country, a description of the model(s), funding structures, relevant media policies, statutory role/remit, operational structure and role in the promotion of media literacy.

The second online survey gathered data on two specific ‘promising projects’ or initiatives from each of the countries which:

- ▶ Promoted media literacy.
- ▶ Contributed to strengthening marginalised communities’ participation in community media, and as a result, community media itself, along with media pluralism.
- ▶ Ideally, included a digital media component.

The aspects of the community media projects investigated via the survey were: the target audience for the projects; project objectives (e.g. media literacy skills developed); stakeholders involved; budgets and funding structures; key outcomes; evaluation process, and results.

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Following an initial analysis of the quantitative survey results, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted by N. Bellardi and H. Peissl. With the permission of the respondents the interviews were also recorded for translation and analysis purposes, as necessary.

1. Consulted experts/practitioners were: Romy Ruppert (Radio ARA) and Dirk Alt (Radio LNW) from Luxembourg, Orestis Tringides (CCMC) from Cyprus, Sally Galiana (NearFM) from Ireland, Dr. Salvatore Scifo (Bournemouth University), Mary Dowson (BCB Radio) and Jon Kelly (SINE FM) from UK, Mariano Fernandez Cabarcos (ReMC), Javier Garcia (Radio XATA) and Alejandro Blanco (Onda Color) from Spain.

These interviews investigated the projects in more detail in relation to the challenges faced, what future opportunities might arise and what a useful policy response might look like.

SUBJECTIVITY AND DATA VERIFICATION

Given the nature of this methodology, the selection of ‘promising practices’ involves individual and subjective reasoning. To help mitigate this risk, the respondents were asked to consult with relevant community media stakeholders and produce the most comprehensive picture possible and were made aware that this information could be cross-checked with the Community Media Forum Europe Expert Group.

INTRODUCTION

This background paper investigates how the community media sector promotes media literacy and also explores how this work can strengthen marginalised communities’ participation in community media and beyond. The intention is to inform and inspire both community media practitioners and media policy-makers by illustrating the unique, but important, role that community media have as a part of a cross-sector, collaborative approach to developing and delivering media literacy projects for the benefit of all of society, with a particular focus on marginalised communities.

Chapter Four provides some background to the topic by describing the key concepts of Media Pluralism, Media Literacy and the role that community media has in promoting those concepts, while Chapter Five identifies some of the key challenges across these areas.

Chapter Six provides a high-level comparative analysis of five models of community media from five different countries. Chapter Seven continues that theme by looking at two ‘promising practice’ examples of media literacy projects from each country, which have contributed to strengthening marginalised communities’ participation in community media, and as a result, community media itself, along with media pluralism. Chapter Eight considers some possible policy responses for member States and Chapter Nine provides some conclusions with proposals for action.

BACKGROUND TO THE TOPIC

MEDIA PLURALISM

The 2018 *Council of Europe Recommendation on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership*², notes that media freedom and pluralism are “crucial corollaries of the right to freedom of expression...and... are central to the functioning of a democratic society as they help to ensure the availability and accessibility of diverse information and views, on the basis of which individuals can form and express their opinions and exchange information and ideas” (Council of Europe 2018, p.1).

The 2019 *Tallinn Guidelines on National Minorities and the Media in the Digital Age*³ points out that the benefits of media pluralism and providing access to, and ownership of, media by minorities and other groups, help to foster understanding between groups and reduce intolerance in society. (OSCE 2019, p.50).

In highlighting the role that States can play in guaranteeing a pluralistic society, The *Tallinn Guidelines* call on States to take measures to ensure the sustainability of pluralistic media and content such as “encouraging states to introduce legislation and/or amend existing legislation to recognize the distinct nature of not-for-profit community media, which can be run by or otherwise serve national minority communities. Such legislation should guarantee the independence of community media and allow them to fulfil their objective to provide members of the communities they serve, including national minorities, with the opportunities and training that enable them to produce their own media content and to participate fully in the operation and management of their own media.” (OSCE 2019, p.19).⁴

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2. https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680790e13 – accessed 20th June 2019
 3. <https://www.osce.org/hcnm/tallinn-guidelines?download=true> – page 50 accessed 20th June 2019
 4. <https://www.osce.org/hcnm/tallinn-guidelines?download=true> – page 19 accessed 20th June 2019

MEDIA LITERACY

Media Literacy (ML), or Media Information Literacy (MIL) is a dynamic concept that evolves over time in response to technological, social, cultural and political factors.

For the purpose of this study media literacy is understood as a range of cognitive, technical and social skills, knowledge and the confidence to make informed choices about all the content and information that people come into contact with each day and how they interact, contribute and participate in the media environments.

This includes being able to critically understand and evaluate media content – wherever it comes from – and understand how media production, editorial and funding processes work. Nowadays that also includes understanding how data is used and how algorithms and AI can influence media production and choices. Being media literate also means being able to responsibly and safely use digital media services and engage with others in the public sphere, as well as fulfilling the creative and participatory potential that new technologies and services can offer.

The wide-ranging impact of ML means that it is a transversal issue addressed in various contexts by different bodies and departments of the Council of Europe. *The 2018 Council of Europe Recommendation on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership*⁵ specifically includes guidelines aimed at developing media literacy and calls on Member States to:

- ▶ adopt/develop appropriate legislative provisions;
- ▶ adopt coordinated national media literacy policy and implement it through multi annual plans involving a wide range of stakeholders;
- ▶ include media literacy in school curricula at all levels and in lifelong learning cycles;
- ▶ encourage media to promote media literacy through their policies, strategies and activities;
- ▶ ensure that national regulatory authorities have the scope and resources for the promotion of media literacy.

COMMUNITY MEDIA

Community media are civil society organizations, usually registered as legal entities, that offer and encourage participation at different levels of their structures. Also referred to as the third media sector, community media have a clearly distinct identity alongside national public service media and private commercial media. As locally originated media that use horizontal structures of production, community media projects also promote important functions including “the quality and the management of volunteers, the sector’s training capacity and the nature of various networks of which community broadcasting is a part”⁶ (Van Vuuren, 2006 p.390)

Community media is understood as taking the form of broadcasting and/or multimedia projects which share some of the following characteristics: independence from governments, commercial and religious institutions and political parties; not-for-profit orientation; voluntary participation of civil society members in the devising and management of programmes; activities aiming at social gain and community benefit; ownership by and accountability to local communities and/or communities of interest which they serve; commitment to inclusive and intercultural practices.

In a recent leaflet on community media⁷ (2019), the Council of Europe acknowledges the important role of community media in protecting the fundamental right to freedom of expression and information and recognises the contribution of bottom-up organised community media in adding to the pluralistic nature of the local media landscape as well as fostering diversity and dialogue. (Council of Europe 2019). In the *Recommendation on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership* (2018), member states are encouraged to support the establishment and functioning of minority, regional, local and not-for-profit community media, including by providing financial mechanisms to foster their development.

5. https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680790e13 – accessed 20th June 2019

6. van Vuuren, K. (2006) ‘The enclosure of the Community Public Sphere’, *Media, Culture and Society*, 28 (3), pp. 390.

7. <https://rm.coe.int/leaflet-community-media-en-january-2019/1680920a5d> - accessed on 20th August 2019

Community media is uniquely placed to marry the dual objectives of promoting media pluralism and fostering media literacy by providing digital media skills and ethical journalistic training to a variety of age, language and minority groups, including people with special needs.

The recommendations emerging from the *2015 International Seminar on Community media Sustainability: Strengthening Policies and Funding*⁸ calls on Community Broadcasters and their Associations to “collaborate with other actors to promote media and information literacy, to combat hatred and xenophobia, to contribute to a culture of tolerance, and to raise awareness about the importance and role of community media in their target communities”. (UNESCO 2015, p.3)

IDENTIFYING THE CHALLENGES

The importance of community media organisations as part of the fabric of democratic societies is recognised by the Council of Europe. However, it remains that community media in many European countries still lack formal, legal recognition, fair access to distribution platforms and sustainable funding.

Table 1 below highlights the areas identified as most challenging by the community media sector in each country looked at in this study.

Challenges	Cyprus	Ireland	Luxembourg	Spain	UK
Securing legal protection / recognition	X		X	X	
Managing volunteers / staff			X		
Competing with commercial rivals	X		X		
Securing broadcasting frequencies	X		X		
Financial difficulties	X	X	X	X	X
Changing technology		X	X		
Competing with global/online competition			X		
Governance		X			
Relationship with Government / Authority responsible for Community media	X	X		X	X

Table 1 - Summary of main challenges facing the Community media sector

Four of the five countries cited reductions in funding, lack of legal status or infrastructure, and unresponsive policies of the Government or the responsible Authority as being a significant challenge for them.

Four out of five respondents also cited funding as a challenge for community media. As noted in the *2019 Tallinn Guidelines on National Minorities and the Media in the Digital Age*⁹, adequate financing and funding are critical for the sustainability of a pluralistic media environment. The paper notes that “systemic underfunding of public service media and community media is a serious problem in a number of OSCE participating States, with the effect that those media are unable to embrace technological developments and as a result lag behind and are unable to fulfil their remit and make a significant contribution to media pluralism. In some countries, media organizations, in particular public service and community media, are in a financial crisis that threatens their very existence” (OSCE 2019, p. 61).

8. http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/news/community_media_sustainability_recommendations_en.pdf - Page 3 accessed 20th June 2019

9. <https://www.osce.org/hcnm/tallinn-guidelines?download=true> – page 61 accessed 20th June 2019

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FIVE MODELS OF COMMUNITY MEDIA

In this section we will compare and contrast five models of community media from Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain and the United Kingdom.

While community media have evolved differently from country to country, a common starting point has been the need to provide citizens and small communities with the opportunity to engage with, and shape, their local media landscape. A particular focus has been meeting the communicative needs of citizens, especially within minority groups, and empowering them to actively participate in the production of community media projects. These activities generally operate using a horizontal management structure of teams of volunteers. As a result, participants benefit not only through the active participation in the media but also by developing media skills, management skills, training and collaboration experiences.

Community radio is legally recognised in four cases (Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain and UK). In Spain, legal recognition has not yet resulted in the establishment of a licensing process or an authority. In Cyprus community media is not legally recognised.

In Ireland, Luxembourg and the UK, the media regulator is the licensing authority, and in Ireland the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland also provides some funding for the community media sector.

Cyprus: There is no legal recognition for community media in Cyprus. **However, there exists an extended informal network with direct connections to all initiatives and organisations and there are efforts to work with Media Literacy educators in the Ministry of Education.**

Spain: The evolution of community media has been challenged by the absence of specific legislation pertaining to the sector, even though community media is recognised by the General Law of Communication.

As a result, there is no specific authority to oversee or regulate the sector and award broadcasting licences, even though community media should have had licences awarded since 2011.

Legal powers are shared between the central Government and regional governments, but a lack of coordination between them has created a sense that community media is not a priority in Spain.

The Community Media Network is a legally constituted federation of community media associations.

Ireland: The community media sector emerged following a campaign in the 1980s asking for licences to be made available for community radio. In 1995, as part of a pilot project, 10 licences were granted by the Irish Radio and Television Commission (IRTC). Licences for community TV were not granted until 2006 when two licences were granted.

Community radio in Ireland peaked in 2005 with 25 licences. Although community media, and community radio in particular, is well-established in Ireland, it is not flourishing and the number of licences awarded in recent years remains below the level of 2005.

The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland is responsible for licencing, compliance and to some extent funding support under the administration of the Sound & Vision Scheme.

Community media in Ireland have two representative organisations. Community Radios are represented by CRAOL, the Community Radio Forum of Ireland, which has about 75% of the licenced stations as active members. The two community TVs are meeting under the Community Television Association (CTA). Both of these organisations receive funds to cover annual running costs from the BAI.

Luxembourg: Community media emerged from the 'pirate radio' sector. In 1991 a new media law was passed, which created a legal basis for new broadcasters. On 18 May 1992, the company Alter Echos was founded in accordance with the requirements and aims of the new media law, and Radio Ara was born. The main stakeholder in Alter Echos is an NGO which brings together the volunteer radio hosts.

Radio ARA is the only community radio station broadcasting at a national level, with a small number of community radio and TV stations broadcasting at a local level.

The media regulator for Luxembourg, ALIA, has responsibility for awarding licences but there is no specific legal definition and no representative organisation for Community media in Luxembourg.

UK: There are **255 community radio stations** across the UK, with a total of 3.5 million local listeners and about 20,000 volunteers. A further 54 stations have been granted licences, but have yet to begin broadcasting. Community radio stations typically cover a small geographical area with a coverage radius of up to 5km and are run on a not-for-profit basis. They can cater for geographical communities or for communities of interest - such as a particular ethnic group, age group or interest group.

Ofcom, the UK media regulator, has been managing the licensing process since 2004, when the community radio sector was introduced as the third full-time sector of radio broadcasting in the UK.

Of the three community media models with legal recognition and a licensing process, the country with the most community radio stations is, by far, the UK with over 250 community radio stations. There are less than 25 in Ireland and less than five in Luxembourg.

When it comes to national representation for community media in each country, Ireland, Spain and the UK all report the existence of a national representative association or network.

In terms of funding, a mixed picture emerges. As shown in Figure 1 below, private funding is a relatively valuable source of funding for community media in all countries except the UK, while advertising is a fairly low-value source of funding for all countries except the UK. Third-party grants are important in the UK, Cyprus and Ireland. State funding plays an important role in Ireland and in Luxembourg.

Q9. Please indicate how community media is funded in your country. Please rate in order of importance

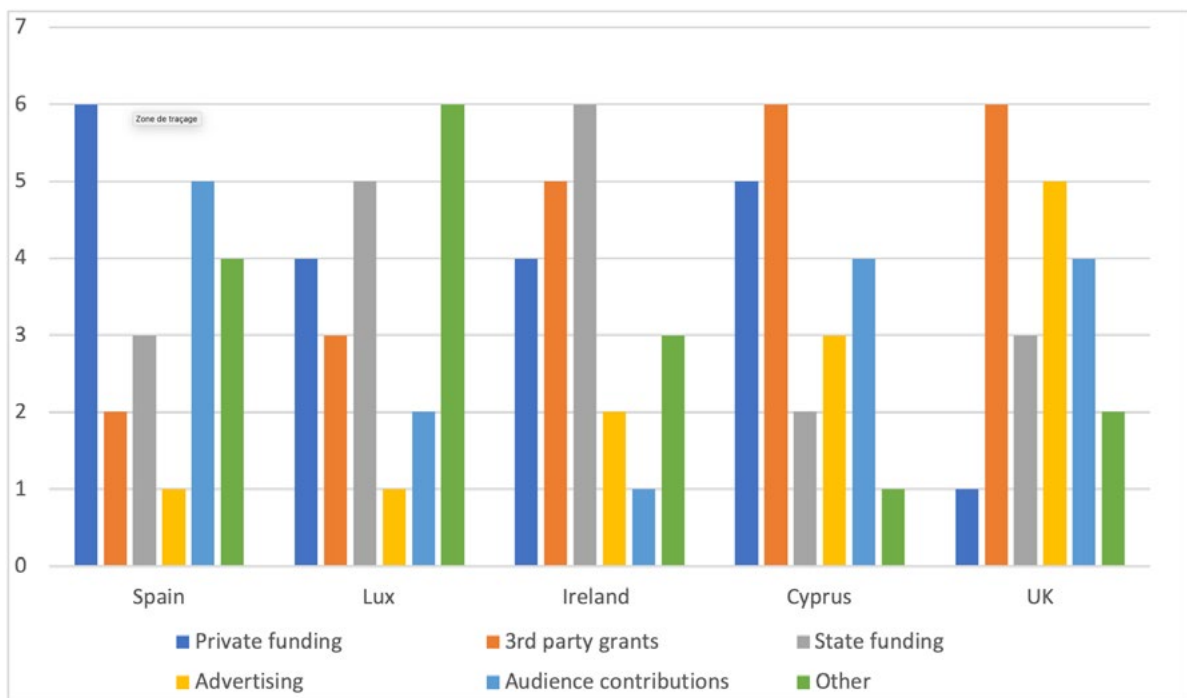


Figure 1: Sources of funding

In terms of opportunities, Spain recognised the importance of a national association for community media and acknowledged the creation of the Community Media Network as the great opportunities for community media in the country. For Cyprus there is at least a limited recognition for the importance of the creation of a Community Media network. Both Luxembourg and Ireland recognised that changing technology, while at times a challenge, can also offer huge opportunities for community media. Luxembourg also identified the innovation that young volunteers brought as an opportunity. In the UK the biggest opportunity for community media was recognised as the certainty of legal status which has seen the number of community radio stations grow to over 250.

A common thread between all of the community media models is the reliance, or possibly over-reliance on volunteer effort. When respondents were asked to indicate how important volunteers were on a scale of 1 – 100, Cyprus, Ireland and the UK responded with 100%, Spain with 95% and Luxembourg with 80%.

Structured evaluation can provide important insights in terms of improving and developing services. Measurement of the Luxembourg model is in the form of a twice-yearly audience rating survey. While there is no formal evaluation or measurement tool for community media in Ireland, individual funders sometimes require evaluation based on their own tools and frameworks. In the UK, the contribution of the community media stations to 'social gain' as outlined in the key commitments of each station is regarded as an indicator of success. There is no formal evaluation process for community media in Cyprus or Spain.

In relation to media literacy, there is no formal position or policy on media literacy in Spain. While the community media sector in Cyprus acknowledges the work of the Pedagogical Institute and the Cyprus Radio and Television Authority in relation to media literacy, it also notes that a draft policy framework on media literacy submitted in 2012 has not been adopted. In Luxembourg, responsibility for media literacy sits with the Ministry of Education. In Ireland the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland published a Media Literacy Policy in 2016, in response to its obligations under the Broadcasting Act. Similarly, in the UK the media regulator Ofcom has a duty to promote media literacy in line with its obligations under the Communications Act. Ofcom mainly addresses this issue through the commissioning and publication of a large volume of media literacy research.

In general, the community media sector considers media literacy as an essential element of what they do. Figure 2 below demonstrates some of the ways that the sector promotes media literacy. All five models selected the following activities: training the public in media production; participating in policy development; and, working in collaboration with other organisations to promote media literacy.

All models except Luxemburg and Spain reported creating and providing media literacy resources. Cyprus, Ireland and the UK also reported developing or participating in media literacy campaigns and end-user engagement that provide support and information via face to face, phone or online contact, while only Cyprus and Ireland reported undertaking research in media literacy.

Q19. Which of the following ways best describes how Community media promotes media literacy in your country? Please tick all that apply.

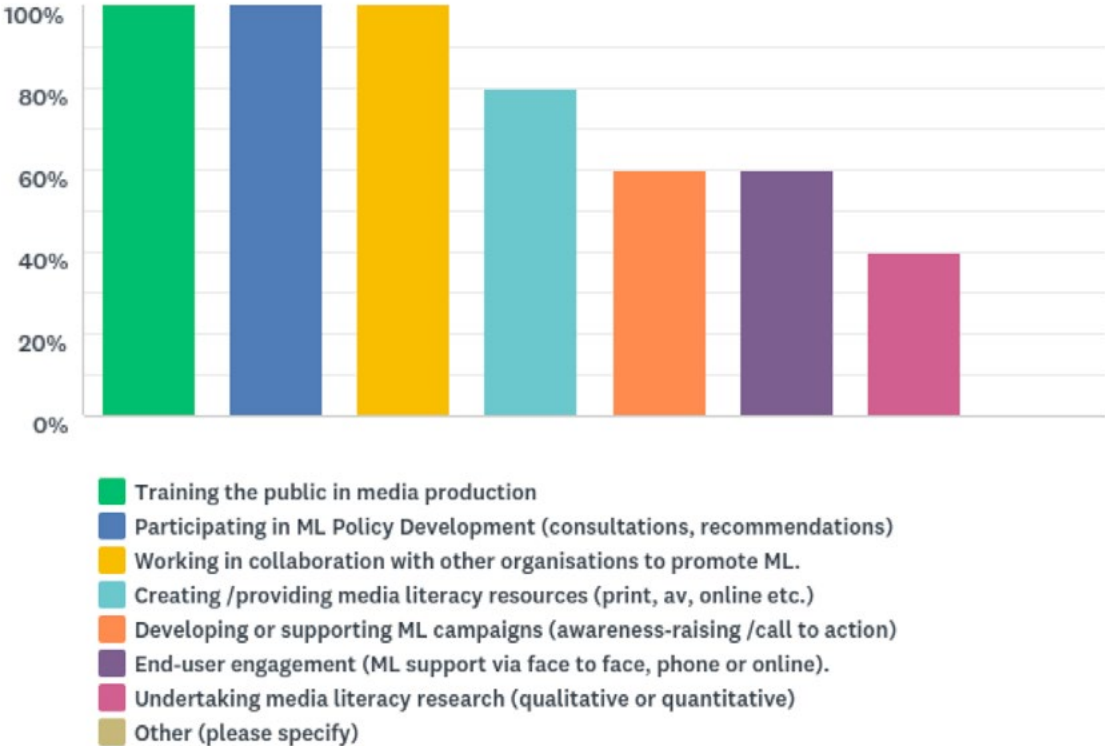


Figure 2: Ways that Community media promote media literacy

AN ANALYSIS OF THE 'PROMISING PRACTICE' EXAMPLES OF MEDIA LITERACY PROJECTS WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO STRENGTHENING MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES' PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY MEDIA

OVERVIEW OF PROMISING PRACTICES

Across the 5 countries being investigated, community media organisations are accessible centres of communication and technology in their communities. They are places where all citizens, regardless of their skills, age or background, can learn about new media tools and developments with a critical literacy approach. Within the limits of their resources and infrastructure, community media pioneer the use of new technologies for creative media production and use social media to enhance promotion and distribution of their content.

All projects share a deep commitment to guarantee freedom of expression and communication rights of marginalised communities, to support local NGOs and social movements, working with local creators and education professionals.

In five out of ten of the 'promising practice' examples identified via the survey, it is the community radio / TV itself which is conceived and regarded as a 'media literacy project' that strengthens marginalised communities' participation. This is intrinsically connected to their location – disadvantaged neighbourhoods, peripheral or rural regions.

The regular training and courses offered to enable people of all ages, skills and backgrounds to engage in media production promotes a number of MIL skills. Table 2 below shows that the following skills are those that are promoted the most: understanding how content is created and edited; being able to distinguish between different types of content such as fact, opinion and advertisements; understanding how the presentation of content (style or context) can influence how the content is perceived; participating in the public sphere by expressing opinions and responding to the opinions of others; training people to participate in media production from a longer term, sustainable perspective.

Q12. Which of the following Media Literacy skills does/did the featured project or activity help to promote? Please tick all that apply.	% of projects promoting the skill
Understanding how content is created and edited.	100.00%
Being able to distinguish between different types of content such as fact, opinion and advertisements.	100.00%
Understanding of how the presentation of content (style or context) can influence how the content is perceived.	100.00%
Participating in the public sphere by expressing opinions and responding to the opinions of others.	100.00%
Training people to participate in media production from a longer term, sustainable perspective	100.00%
Understanding media messages by reading, listening, comparing etc.	81.82%
Recognising influencing factors such as stereotyping, bias, unfair portrayal, inappropriate content or context, lack of evidence etc.	81.82%
Knowledge of how different media is regulated, or not.	81.82%
Knowledge of who owns different media outlets and how content is funded (e.g. private ownership, public funding, advertising, sponsorship).	81.82%
Creating content using text, images, audio, video and code.	81.82%
Training / empowerment to produce media content in one's native language	81.82%
Training in intercultural media production (involving different communities in joint media productions)	81.82%
Understanding the role that independent media plays in a healthy democratic society, e.g. presenting different points of view, promoting informed debate, holding power to account etc.	72.73%
Evaluating content and services for truthfulness, reliability, independence and impartiality.	72.73%
Understanding of how social and search services operate and how technology can influence media choices, patterns of behaviour and diversity of content/views (e.g. use of algorithms).	63.64%
Confidence about knowing your rights and responsibilities in relation to data and privacy and competence in managing your data and privacy/public exposure while using (social) media services.	54.55%
Training in multilingual media production (using different languages together within the same broadcast / piece)	54.55%
Recognising and managing inappropriate behaviour across all media.	45.45%
Training in media production addressing special needs (vision impairments; cognitive impairments; other disabilities).	27.27%
Other	18%

Table 2: Table of media literacy skills featured in community media projects

In addition, some specific initiatives promote direct empowerment and participation of communities who are typically absent from public debate. One example is the project running at Bradford Community Broadcasting, promoting participation of Muslim women in community decision making and democratic processes in the city through radio production training.

Another example is NearFM in Dublin, which offers intercultural media training with the aim to enable dialogue and exchange amongst people with diverse ethnic or cultural background. The training is also a forum to discuss and analyse different biographic experiences with media and examples of representation or misrepresentation of different social groups.

As illustrated in Figure 3 below, the ways in which media literacy skills are delivered are also diverse, but once again the provision of media/radio production training is the most common activity identified as promoting media literacy skills, followed by working in collaboration with other organisations to promote media literacy.

Q13. Which of the following ways best describes how the featured project or activity was delivered? Please tick all that apply.

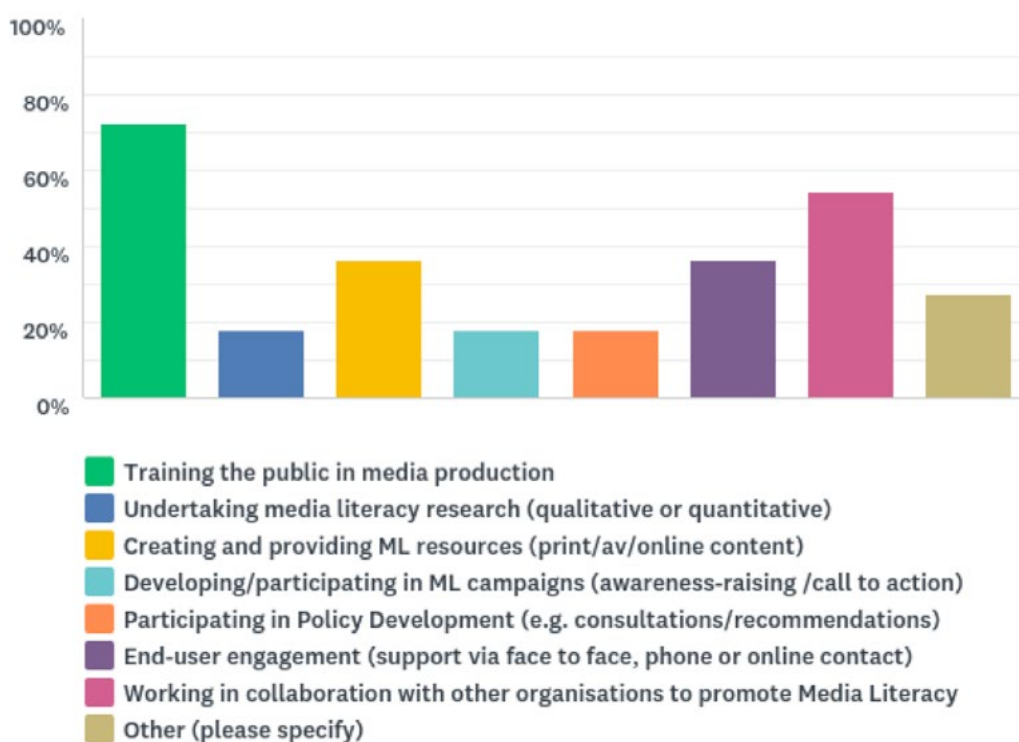


Figure 3: Delivery methods

When asked about the annual budgets for the featured projects and activities, it was notable how modest most budgets were. The majority of the projects (7 out of 10) had a budget of less than €50,000. Four of those projects reported an annual budget of between €1000 and €5000 and one project was delivered for less than €1,000 per year. This is only possible through the extensive volunteer network of community media, however it also potentially limits the scope of the projects.

The target audience identified for the featured projects and activities is highly varied and addresses all age categories between 8 and 65+. Three audiences feature particularly strongly, with 80% of the projects targeting marginalised communities, 90% targeting the 40 – 65 age group, and 80% targeting the 25 – 40 age group.

SUMMARIES OF PROMISING PRACTICES

A brief overview of the media literacy projects investigated via the online surveys and follow-up interviews is provided below.

Hear We Are - Bradford Community Broadcasting (BCB), Bradford, UK

In cooperation with Farnham Children's Centre which hosts the sessions, Bradford Community Broadcasting (BCB) delivers media training and ongoing support to the female Muslim community of the city of Bradford since 2014. The project involves mainly Muslim women of Pakistani heritage who are not in employment, aged between 26-65.

Bradford has a very high Muslim population with third, and now fourth generation of mostly Pakistani migrants. There was a recognition that there was little participation from Muslim women in most areas of community decision making and in democratic processes in the city, as well as virtually no presence of Muslim women in the media. A group of women came together who wanted to understand how decisions are made, how they might be able to play a more active role in the city - and how to get their voices heard. Working with BCB Community radio they decided that they could use radio as a vehicle to achieve those aims. BCB started working with the group, building confidence and awareness, delivering outreach radio production training as well as media literacy skills. After a year or so the group had formed a radio production team and started producing and presenting radio programmes of their own.

Through this they encountered and interviewed leaders and decision makers. They also understood how decisions are made on media content, who makes those decisions and crucially how they can influence the media by making their own programmes - with them having editorial control over the content. The group has continued to produce regular programmes as well as participating in many other areas of public life, including the Management Committee of BCB. They are leading on areas of policy effecting change within the organisation and in broadcast output, and contributing to greater ongoing participation of women, including Muslim women, within local media. As a result, more Muslim women in Bradford have an active media presence and are able to encourage other women to speak up.

SINE FM, Doncaster, UK

SINE FM is the only community radio station for the people of Doncaster and aims to be a creative platform for local residents to exchange knowledge and interests, engage and participate in entertaining ways. The radio holds regular workshops and social gatherings since 2007. The local communities, who are most often marginalised and with little access to streams of communication or of influence, have the opportunity to participate in radio trainings and later develop their own programmes.

As a result, the trainers and coordinators notice signs of confidence, of responsibility, of social interaction, of creativity. The training challenges the local communities to think about how content is presented and to become more critical media consumers. In addition, the status of the participants is increased locally as their work on-air and at the radio station is recognised, boosting their confidence and respect within the community.

Onda Color, Malaga, Spain

Palma Palmilla is a historical part of the city of Malaga, where around 15,000 people live, 25% of Roma origin, 20% immigrants, especially from Maghreb. There is high unemployment (+70%) and low educational results.

Onda Color was set up as a community radio in 2008 in Palma Palmilla in Malaga to challenge the stereotypes faced by the residents, including stereotypes about the neighbourhood, about crime, and the reputation of the neighbourhood in general. Creating an opportunity for participation in direct media production for the residents of the area has helped to challenge these stereotypes and has improved the atmosphere in the neighbourhood.

Onda Color is a platform to empower people and to improve their social skills. Through specific training residents learn how to make interviews, how to research on a topic, how to use a mixer and other technical equipment. They also attend workshops on what is a community media, what are the differences from other media, from social media. This has led to a much better involvement, which is important for the sustainability of the project.

The radio is also part of the Community Plan of the neighbourhood, building a forum where people can express their ideas and make suggestions on how to improve life in this part of the city - fighting stereotypes and showing the diversity of the communities and the richness of daily life there. Through community media this community has found its voice and has discovered new ways to help solve some problems. Participating in Onda Color as a guest of a program or as a producer of a radio show is also a way of encouraging people from outside the community to visit Palma Palmilla, which helps to break down barriers.

VARIOPINTO, XATA Sociocultural Association, Madrid, Spain

#VarioPinto “Creando Barrio con tu Radio” is a project of Radio XATA in Pinto (Madrid) portraying and connecting local associations, collectives and initiatives through interviews and features. Through the project, media and digital training are delivered to very diverse social and cultural groups, from feminist collectives to associations of mothers and fathers, of students or of people with impairments or with mental health issues.

The project encourages them to produce their own programmes, helps the growth of the associative fabric of the neighbourhood and supports synergies between the different associations who would otherwise not necessarily have a chance to work together. The project is supported by subsidies from the City for cultural development.

Through VarioPinto it was possible to train several groups and to generate radio programs with thematic diversity such as feminism and equality, international cooperation, education(s) and functional diversity. Radio XATA also promotes knowledge and use of open source and open code ICT, to facilitate the digital engagement of individuals and collectives beyond mainstream commercial options.

Older Citizens intercultural media training at Near FM, Dublin, Ireland

The aim of the “Older Citizens intercultural media training” project was to involve people aged 50+ who mostly did not have contacts with people from other language or ethnic communities, in intercultural media literacy training. Sharing their own experiences and working together on the production of radio programmes helped to increase an understanding of each others’ reality and experience in society. The project was supported by the Dublin City Council.

NearFM is one of five community radios in Dublin and is part of the Near Media Co-op, a democratic not-for-profit media co-operative which uses media as a tool for community development. The Co-op was founded in 1982 and has over 600 shareholders and more than 120 regular volunteers, and 32 staff members. The radio programmes are produced in partnership with a wide variety of local groups, adult education groups and minority groups such as Travellers, disability organisations, asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. All volunteers receive induction training, which includes a basic introduction to media literacy. NearFM has been involved in several European projects developing training resources that are used in Community media or in adult education. The organisation is also represented in the steering committee and in the project and resources working group of Media Literacy Ireland, a network of organisations involved or interested in media literacy.

The catchment area of NearFM has a population of 150,000 including some of the country’s most affluent areas (Sutton) as well as those experiencing very high levels of poverty and social exclusion. Key interest programming topics for listeners are local information and current affairs, the environment/human rights, history and heritage in the local area and specialist music.

SMART Radio Training, NearFM & Partners

SMART Radio Training is a project which offers the opportunity to create radio trainings for community radio covering different needs. SMART focusses on specific training situations and on the distinct training frameworks that already exist within community media. It brings together training units, methods and relevant information for all aspects of community radio. The training units are also designed to meet the specific needs of special target groups, such as radio training for visually impaired people, people with learning difficulties and migrant women.

The online platform can be used to search for suitable media training modules based on the training objectives, the number of participants, the timeframe, the location of the training and the available equipment.

SMART is one of the few community media training resources used by practitioners all across Europe. The units were collected, tested and adapted by experienced international radio trainers and are available in English, German, French, Hungarian and Basque Language. A follow-up project aims at setting up a train-the-trainer course to contribute to quality development and assurance in community media training.

SALAM Show part of Graffiti / Radio ARA, Luxembourg

Radio ARA is the independent, alternative radio station of Luxembourg. Many citizens and associations participate in the programmes. The programmes are characterized by the following aspects: - original: always something new to discover - special: the combination of different styles - multicultural: different voices and languages, music from here and from far away.

Salam Show on Radio Ara/Graffiti is the first radio show in Luxembourg delivered in Arabic, English and French. It brings together the Arabic and Luxembourgish communities, providing information relevant to the integration process and opening a window for residents of Luxembourg to learn about Arabic culture.

Salam Show (Salam means “peace” in Arabic) aims to help refugees integrate in society, reduce barriers between both refugees and locals, fill gaps and create an understanding for refugees and their issues. It actively supports an intercultural, mutual integration process, based on the principle that different cultures can enrich one another and create something new. The show has become a new meeting point for people and for activities both on-air and off-air.

Radio LNW, Wiltz/Luxembourg

This non-commercial school radio was created in 1991 by a group of teachers with the aim to use radio production as an education method within their lessons. It is managed by “Coralie Woltz”, a non-profit association including teachers, team members, students and members of the municipality of Wiltz.

The radio was set up originally for educational use e.g. to support language learning or to teach media expression but is open to all interested parties wishing to broadcast a programme, interviews or round tables. In addition to the language course programmes, some students and adults use Radio LNW outside school hours to address regional listeners. LNW Radio broadcasts in the north of Luxembourg but is also available via internet.

MYCYradio - Multilingual Community Radio in Nicosia / Cyprus

Established in 2009, the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC) works to empower civil society organisations and community groups with the tools to communicate their message to a wider audience. Through training and dedicated production support, equipment loan and access to a state-of-the-art production studio, CCMC promotes the benefits of community-based media by giving people the skills to be in control of their own messages.

Based in the heart of Nicosia’s Buffer Zone, CCMC is accessible to all communities across the whole of Cyprus and acts as a bridge between the mainstream media and civil society, facilitating the development of sustainable relationships between the media across the Cyprus divide. Through its work it aims to contribute to a more inclusive, collaborative, transparent idea of media, promoting the creation and the broadcasting of productions that contribute to community reconciliation, diversity and multiculturalism.

MYCYradio was established in 2013 as a web-radio project by the Cyprus Community Media Center based in Nicosia. MYCYradio aims to engage with and serve all communities living in Cyprus by providing a platform for a diversity of voices, highlighting cultural and linguistic diversity, encouraging social integration and promoting a culture of active citizenship and participatory democracy. MYCYradio had to stop broadcasting early in 2019 but works to regenerate and to start its transmission again in 2020.

Old Nicosia Revealed, Nicosia / Cyprus

Old Nicosia Revealed is a photography collective, which, for the last 5 years, has been active in exploring and revealing Nicosia in a community-participatory manner, by using photography as a medium for a better understanding and appreciation of Nicosia, and thus, fostering a better dialogue within the community.

Old Nicosia Revealed invites people to see, feel and understand the features and stories of the wall, through discussion walks on history accompanied by photographic perspectives and activities. It aims to foster

participation from the people of Nicosia, encouraging the creation of their own discourse, photos and expression of their views for the city on topics such as public spaces, (contested) historical narratives, art, architecture, stories of migrations etc.

Nicosia photo walks collaborate with photographic communities, activists and organisations and have organised and taken part in exhibitions, events and projects. They run workshops and talks on participation, techniques or community photo projects. All activities are free, or low cost - aiming to make it available for as many people as possible. Old Nicosia Revealed also had a radio show at MYCYradio, where it discussed all issues for the Nicosia old town and strengthened the participation of marginalised communities' in community media and connection to other people.

COMMON CHALLENGES

In addition to the persistent issue of underfunding, there are other shared challenges.

Building confidence within the target groups so that a level of ongoing engagement is ensured, can take time. For the projects to achieve sustainability and enable change, it is crucial to understand the importance of outreach, of working in the communities' space, on their terms and over a long period of time.

Successful community media projects are characterized by a fruitful cooperation of a small group of staff members and a large group of volunteers engaged in programme production or content design. The challenges for staff members are high and it is often not easy to find adequate training for these roles requiring high levels of personal, social and professional competences. Educational institutions like universities with media & communication departments or with a focus on social work rarely include community media in their curriculum.

Most learning opportunities in community media can be found in informal or non-formal settings and are related to active media production or "learning by doing", as well as developing critical understanding by getting to know the production side of the media. As a result, there is often a lack of recognition for community media within the larger educational system.

CONCLUSIONS WITH PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

This study has identified a number of factors which appear to be essential for the successful development of community media, and by extension the promotion of media literacy and the strengthening of marginalised communities' participation in community media. A number of (necessary) actions also emerge from these observations.

1. The presence of legislative measures which provide community media with appropriate legal status, recognition and protection are an essential pre-requisite for community media to grow and flourish. Inadequate or non-action by the authorities responsible for community media can have the potential to seriously negatively impact the development of the community media sector. Therefore, the provision of appropriate, standardised procedures for licensing, monitoring and regulation by the appropriate regulatory authority, should take place in a timely manner.
2. Funding, or the lack of appropriate, secure long-term funding is a common concern across the entire community media sector. Different community models, and initiatives, have different funding structures in place. The absence of sustainable, long-term funding schemes which take into account the specific nature of community media structures, requirements and activities can seriously limit the potential of community media to develop long-term plans.
3. The promotion of media literacy is generally considered to be a core part of the community media proposition. As such, it is likely that the community media sector may have much to contribute, in terms of experience and knowledge, to any cross-sector initiatives to promote media literacy. Collaboration with the community media sector may deliver strong results for future cross-sector media literacy initiatives.
4. Evaluating and measuring the reach and impact of media literacy projects is difficult, but important. The development of a shared evaluation framework for media literacy projects may help the community media sector demonstrate the value of their work in this area.
5. Changes in communication technology and audience consumption habits mean that the communication landscape is in a state of flux. Community media cannot afford to stand still and must invest in long-term

strategic planning which will foster innovation, experimentation and engagement, especially in relation to utilising emerging technical and digital communication services to facilitate audience engagement and distribution.

6. In the past, the nature of community media broadcasting meant that audiences could be limited in size. However, changes in content production techniques and distribution increase the potential for community media to reach beyond its traditional boundaries, empowering a wider range of people to contribute to, participate in and actively shape their media landscapes.
7. The development of Community media Associations appears to be very important for the community media sector in terms of advocacy, policy making processes and funding decisions.
8. Involvement of individuals or groups from diverse and partly marginalised communities in media production is one of the core tasks of most community media. This includes multilingual media production to represent the wide range of languages present in today's European societies. These activities provide unique opportunities for people, especially those with less formal educational backgrounds, to re-engage with learning. Maximising these opportunities requires resources for intensive outreach activities and potential cooperation with other educational actors.

POSSIBLE POLICY RESPONSES FOR MEMBER STATES

Based on the conclusions and proposed actions outlined above, Member States could support the development of community media, and by extension the promotion of media literacy and the strengthening of marginalised communities' participation in community media in the following ways:

- ▶ If legislative measures are not in place, Member States should as a matter of priority develop the appropriate legislative measures to provide community media with legal status, recognition and protection, as a distinct broadcasting sector with clearly identifiable objectives and characteristics.
- ▶ Member States should identify and adequately resource the appropriate authority who is responsible for community media, and ensure that appropriate, standardised procedures for licensing, monitoring and regulation are put in place in a timely manner.
- ▶ As outlined in the 2018 Council of Europe Recommendation on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership¹⁰, Member States should encourage and support the establishment and functioning of community media, including by providing financial mechanisms to foster their development within and across communities and at regional and local levels.
- ▶ Furthermore, as also proposed in the Recommendation on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership, Member States should develop a co-ordinated national media literacy policy and ensure its operationalisation and implementation through annual or multiyear action plans and by providing adequate resources for these purposes. A key strategy could be to support the creation of a co-ordinated national media literacy network comprising a wide range of stakeholders, or the further development of such a network where it already exists. In this context, Member States should ensure that community media and Community Media Associations are understood to be key stakeholders in any cross-sectoral strategy or activities, and are resourced accordingly.
- ▶ Member States should recognise the high potential of community media as a partner for the formal educational system. Cooperation with schools, universities and adult education should be supported on a long-term basis. This should include involving community media in teachers' media literacy education.
- ▶ Similarly, Member States should recognise and support the role that community media have in promoting informal learning and increasing employability as well as personal and professional opportunities.
- ▶ Member States should, where required, help to resource the development and running of Community Media Associations to act as an independent advocate for community media, with the capacity to influence policy and funding decisions and provide coordination and support for community media organisations.
- ▶ A qualitative development of the community media sector with the aim to raise and maximize its societal contribution should be supported by internal and external evaluation but also by other forms of research activities on a periodical basis.

10. https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680790e13 – accessed 20th June 2019

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Being media literate means being able to critically understand and evaluate media content and to responsibly and safely use digital media services. Media literacy helps us engage with others in the public sphere, using the creative and participatory potential that new technologies and services can offer. Nowadays, it also includes understanding how data is used and how algorithms and AI can influence media production and choices.

The importance of community media in supporting the formation of an 'informed citizenry' is well recognised by the Council of Europe. Community media have the ability to empower community groups with the necessary access and skills to create their own communication channels and to foster their participation in the public sphere in a structured and professional manner. However, in many European countries community media still lack formal, legal recognition, fair access to distribution platforms and sustainable funding.

This background paper explores how the community media sector promotes media literacy and how this work can strengthen marginalised communities' participation in the media environment and public discourse. Comparing five models of community media from Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain and the United Kingdom, it seeks to inform and inspire practitioners and policy-makers, highlighting a number of findings and policy responses that can help member States fully realise the potential of community media.

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