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Booklet for Ethical Migration Reporting and Intercultural Competence



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Chapter 1: The Issue of Migration Reporting

In the contemporary media environment, the methods by which journalists and editors gather, process, and disseminate news are continuously evolving. Journalists face significant time constraints due to the rapid pace of online news updates which makes it increasingly more difficult to always maintain the ethicality and accuracy of the information to the wider public. This problem becomes even more problematic for journalists when it comes to the controversial topic of migration. Therefore, in many cases the views and opinions disseminated can be predisposed by the biases and stereotypes of the context in which they are communicated. This issue underscores the necessity of providing guidance on ethical standards and fact-checking in journalism, and of raising awareness about how news reporting can impact the fundamental rights of everyone.

The Ethical Reporting Booklet, a set guideline for monitoring and reporting news, is designed primarily for those reporting on migration news that will be distributed or published by media organizations or any other online platforms as news in the context of Municipalities in Larnaka. To aid in training on the coverage of migration news, the material of this Booklet offers trainers and trainees access to factual reporting examples and informative resources that highlight work dilemmas faced in the newsrooms of television channels, newspapers, radio stations, and online outlets. Consequently, the ultimate goal of this Booklet is to contribute to creating Intercultural Cities, as part of the Intercultural Cities programme (ICC), by providing the tools for journalists (or anyone reporting or writing about migrants) to override stereotypical representation of migrants, by adopting an ethical, inclusive and humanistic approach to reporting when reporting on migrants' stories

Henceforth, this Booklet is intended to be used by:

- Professional journalists across various factual reporting genres.
- Municipalities' press officers and social media managers
- Media students enrolled in journalism schools or training institutes.

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- Citizens who create, publish, or distribute news content.
- Media trainers and practitioners, which includes anyone involved in writing, editing, or broadcasting news and information to the public.

1.1 Defining Migrant Populations

Despite being commonly used in various media outlets and political discussions, the terms “Migrant” and “Migration” have no universal definition. Migrants may choose to move to another country for a variety of reasons. For instance, to find better living and working conditions, temporary or long-term stays, accompanying family members of workers. As a general rule of thumb, migrant populations are defined by two main criteria: 1) Place of birth, 2) Citizenship

Who is a migrant?

There exists no universally agreed upon definition of a migrant. However, the common lay understanding defines a migrant as:

“ A person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons.

This definition covers both international and internal migrants. An **international migrant** refers to:

“ Any person who is outside a State of which he or she is a citizen or national or, in the case of a stateless person, his or her State of birth or habitual residence.

International migrants may intend to move permanently or temporarily, and/or be in an irregular situation because they have for instance entered the country irregularly or have overstayed their visa.

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Image Retrieved from
https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/documents/migration_factsheet_2_migrants.pdf

A Few Key Definitions:

Migrants: Individuals residing in a foreign country for more than a year, either by choice or circumstances.

Refugee: Anyone forced to leave their country due to war, violence or persecution, and most probably wants to avoid returning back.

Asylum Seeker: Any person seeking safety in a foreign country and awaits a decision to be made on his or her refugee status.

Interculturalism: Interaction and exchange between different cultural groups, promoting dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect. It emphasizes integration while recognizing cultural diversity and fostering cohesive societies.

You can find more key definitions here:
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf

1.2 Social Integration as a Societal Aim

Migration is an important aspect of broader social transformation with complex dynamics connected to class, ethnicity, gender, generation, power, and social status (Klarenbeek, 2021). These dynamics are not static, they can change throughout the settlement process and can impact migrants' integration into a new country. Some migrant groups that are considered 'foreign' are perceived and treated as less legitimate citizens than others and therefore may suffer economically, politically, and socio-culturally (Holt-Lunstad & Lefler, 2021; Klarenbeek, 2021).

Although existing as a concept or a theory, social integration may be somewhat difficult to find a concrete definition, which can be universally accepted. For the purpose of this

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Booklet, social integration is the process by which newcomers or minorities participate in social relationships and engage in social activities in order to bring about a sense of belonging, community and identity (Holt-Lunstad & Lefler, 2021). In other words, social integration is whether someone can blend in with the rest of the community and the degree of which he can achieve it. Therefore, effective implementation might be depended on the host society and the migrant, as countries' migration governmental policies and integration programs, societal attitudes towards migrants and their consequent sense of inclusivity, can play a significant role.

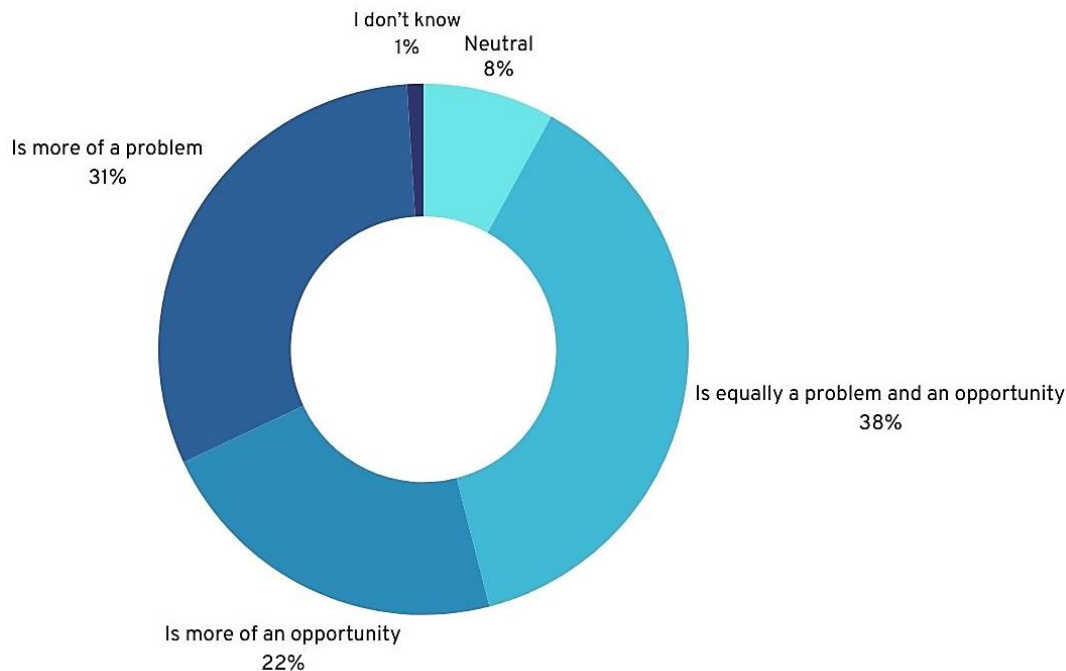
Emotional integration is often regarded as a social integration's by-product. Emotional integration refers to the emotional attachment a migrant can feel towards the social system, capturing in a sense, migrants sense of belonging to their residing counties' societies (Becker, 2022). Consequently, the inability to become socially integrated can lead individuals towards a downward trajectory. Low or lack of social integration has been shown to be correlated with both physical and mental health decline. Holt-Lunstad & Lefler (2021) brought forward that such physical problems can be found in the form of cardiovascular complications. Respectively for mental health, there are evidence to suggest that that it can lead to increased probabilities of developing dementia and depressive symptoms.

Furthermore, Scheff (2007) argued that alienation and solidarity are vital concepts that could help us put social integration into perspective. There are six different dimensions to alienation – powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, cultural estrangement, self-estrangement, and social isolation. Taking all the above dimensions into account, alienation can result to an unhealthy, almost volatile environment, creating an atmosphere of “Us against them”. Migrants in this case, could be constantly feeling pressured of having to gain the approval of the society, which unfortunately may never come to fruition. Thereby, raising awareness through knowledge-sharing, active dialogue and engagement can establish solidarity between society and migrants, alleviating effects of alienation stated above.

The European Commission Eurobarometer 2021 survey measured the different attitudes of Europeans towards non-EU migrants. More specifically, Europeans across various EU

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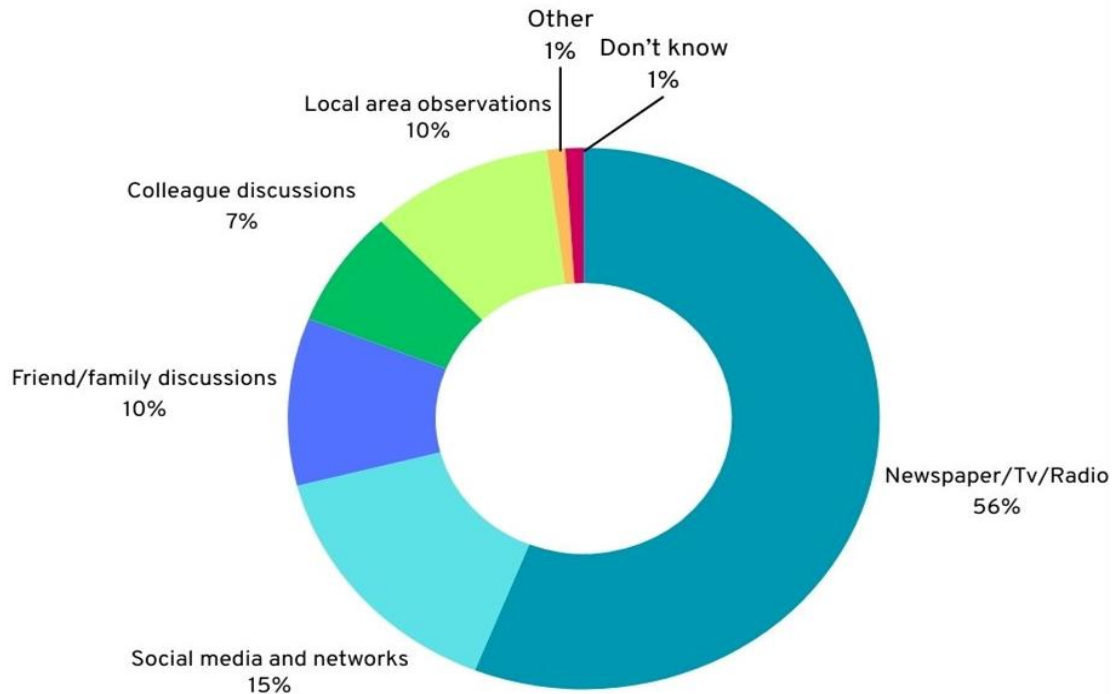
countries were asked whether they consider immigrants from outside the EU as a problem or an opportunity. Below is an adapted visual representation of the responses.



The generated perceptions are quite striking. If we take into account both responses of “Is more of a problem” and “Is equally a problem and an opportunity”, then this can be interpreted as almost 70% of Europeans have their reservations about non-EU migrants. Naturally, such statistical reports can immediately cast a negative light towards achieving intercultural cities or communities, as the vast majority of Europeans are sceptical, to say the least, of having their migrant doors open to outsiders. Concurrently, non-EU people may not feel as comfortable or welcomed to visit or reside inside the EU.

Moreover, the same survey obtained responses on how Europeans get informed about immigration and integration related matters. Below is an adapted visual representation of the responses.

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Based on the above report, most of Europeans obtain information on immigration from local news outlets and social media. If we place both presented graphs side by side and put our more cynical hat on, one could make the case that these outlets are instrumental in shaping individuals' perspectives and attitudes on migrants. Perhaps the topics of immigration in general, are portrait in such a way, that incentivizes society to assume a pessimistic outlook on the whole situation. We will examine this in more detail in the following chapters, but for the moment, keep this information as food for thought.

To differentiate migrants from the host society, we can refer to them as 'outsiders' and 'insiders' respectively, while their integration depends on the relationship build between them (Klarenbeek, 2021). To understand how social integration occurs, we need to stir away from the individualised view of migrant efforts and achievements and instead, figure out the power relations and dynamics that occur between insiders and outsiders. In other words,

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social integration is not about the objective differences between individuals, but rather requires an analysis of the reasons that are attributed to perceived differences e.g., power structures, inequalities, oppression.

This is most clearly illustrated in the discourse surrounding the social integration of refugees. According to the UNHCR (2013), there are several essential services required for the resettlement of refugees. If these basic needs are not met, the ground is not primed for social integration. These include orientation services to a new country; housing, employment, and social support; and language training.

However, while these basic needs can be met in the lives of individual refugees, refugees as a group continue to face huge structural barriers to their social integration including negative stereotypes, political scapegoating, racism, discrimination, and prejudice which impact their sense of belonging and connection to their new home (UNDESA, 2018). These experiences are not accurate reflections of individuals and their supposed inability to socially integrate in one country, but they are still globally evident. The topic is complex and impacted by national and international contexts and policies.

Chapter 2: How Social Integration Fails: Stereotyping Migrants

Journalists and media professionals are front and centred in the representation of migration issues and their public discourse in general. Considering the ever-evolving media landscape and its global outreach, published information need to be carefully worded and developed. Today's information stemming from the media is highly visible and accessible, therefore they have to be properly filtered to eliminate the encouragement of any discrimination and prejudice (Nodira, 2020).

We don't have to look that far to get an example. The spike in migration numbers since the 1990s, have caused a rippled effect in Greece. With crimes increasing in frequency, the media was searching for scapegoats. Strong language was used in their outlets, such as

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“Albanian mafia!”, pointing the finger towards the Albanian community for any crime committed throughout that period, despite no processing any real evidence to support these claims. Similar media practices can be traced in Cyprus, where the Muslim community have been previously portrayed as extremist groups, supposedly threatening the cultural values of Cyprus (KISA, 2019). With Cyprus cultural integrity at risk, perceptions about Muslims took a heavy hit, as they were viewed more as an enemy rather than a friend which can be accommodated within the Cypriot society. Consequently, the possibility of establishing any form of communication or relationship with an individual of the Muslim community, could have been met with a raised eyebrow by Cypriots who read such reports.

Mass media have a tendency to portray migrants in a negative manner, focusing on their group identity, rather on the individuals themselves. As a result, we succumb to creating an image for a whole group or community, leading to unfair perceptions and attitudes towards the individuals. Naturally, this generates a societal dichotomy, as different societal groups are “forced” to go against each other, in the attempts to preserve their own rights and identity.



Image retrieved from: https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2017-07/Media_Migration_17_country_chapters_ICMPD.pdf

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2.1 Best Practices for Ethical Migration Reporting

2.1.1 Language use

Using precise language is essential for all journalists and media officers. Avoid the use of heavily loaded terms such as "illegal" or "aliens," as it will cause more harm than good. You also need to be able to differentiate technical terms such as asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees, in order to utilize appropriate terminology and escape potential pitfalls of coming across as offensive or insensitive. For a comprehensive overview of appropriate migration-related terminology, you can refer to the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Glossary on Migration.

(https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf)

2.1.2 Anti-Rumour toolkit

https://anti-rumour.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Toolkit_English-version_low.pdf

The Anti-Rumour Toolkit, although originally developed for younger demographic, can be a great training tool for filtering real and inaccurate information. There are a total of 17 online tools with 3 main learning objectives:

- ✓ Identifying conspiracy theories and disinformation
- ✓ Educating about currently circulating fake news
- ✓ Raising awareness regarding disinformation methods and manipulation tactics, strengthening media literacy

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The included tools are online applications (e.g. chatbots, search engines) that help with verifying online information, serious games that strengthen media literacy, evaluation tools that check sources' credibility, and websites that regularly publish fact-checking articles. This is a very user-friendly toolkit, as each tool is accompanied by audio-visual instructions on how to use it, list of possible advantages and disadvantages, contexts of use, supported languages and suggested age groups for users. There are even short tutorial videos for the more complex tools.



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2.1.3 Holistic Approach

Before reporting any migration related news or stories, you should always collect and analyse data from various sources, such as official government statements, statistical reports, social media accounts etc. A good piece of advice would be to seek actual numbers and visual representations when you are searching for material. These will help you in grasping a better understanding of the data, as well as putting information into context. The same applies to your audiences, as any visual aid will make your content more engaging and easier to get behind. Remember to also read between the lines! Numbers are important but they do not always paint the full picture, thus you might need to interpret them further. Additionally, maintain a critical eye in regards to the source of the data. Did this information come from a credible source? Has this particular social media account have any history in misrepresenting their stories? Don't take anything for granted.

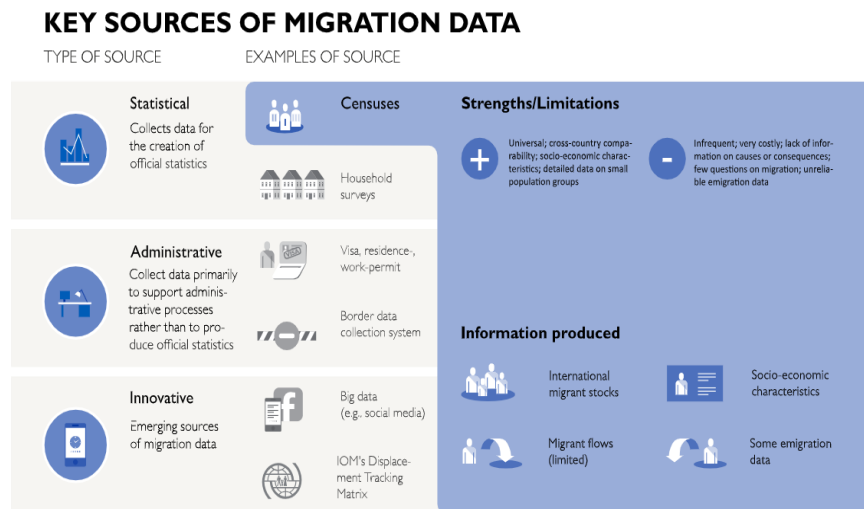


Image retrieved from: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/infographic/key-sources-migration-data>

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Chapter 3: The Regulatory Role of the Media/Journalists

In Cyprus, any media output, physical or electronic, is self-regulated by the Committee of Media Ethics, founded in 1997. This committee is independent from state oversight and its purpose is to enhance the standards of conduct among media officials, safeguard press freedom through self-regulation, and defend freedom of expression. In order to maintain transparency and ethical standards in journalism, a code of practice was created, which has to be respected and applied by journalists. A few topics covered in this code can be seen in the following infographic.



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The full list of the Code can be found here: <https://cmec.com.cy/en/journalists-code-of-conduct/editors-code/#item-13>

By adhering to these best practices, journalists can ensure ethical reporting on migration, providing accurate, transparent, and context-rich news that serves the public interest and promotes understanding. Journalists and media officers must set aside their personal biases and report information that does not step outside any ethical, legal and humane boundaries. They should also avoid directing their whole attention into negative stories and narratives and dedicate certain sections in their reports for challenging oppressing or unfair systems, providing in the process a platform for all those minority group individuals. By doing so, they can contribute to an informed and empathetic public discourse on migration.

The below infographic was created based on the Handbook on Migration Reporting for Journalists by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development ICMPD. <https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/50559/file/Handbook0on0Reporting0Migration0EN.pdf>

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Overview of Best Practices for Ethical Reporting

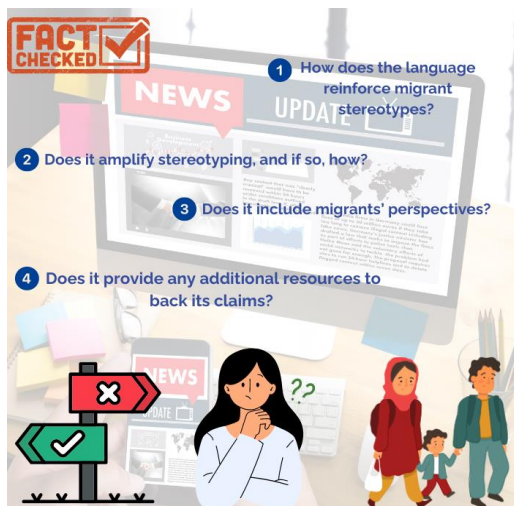
<h3>Transparency</h3> <p>Disclose sources and explain any necessary anonymization</p>	<h3>Humanize Stories</h3> <p>Stories should be told with empathy while keeping emotions and biases in check</p>
<h3>Fact-Based Reporting</h3> <p>Conduct thorough research and present verified facts</p>	<h3>Context and Background</h3> <p>Provide extensive background information to ensure a full understanding of the story</p>
<h3>Engagement</h3> <p>Encourage feedback and respond to comments promptly.</p>	<h3>Multiple Perspectives</h3> <p>Reports should include political, cultural and personal backgrounds</p>
<h3>Monitor and Adjust</h3> <p>Use social media insights to track post performance and adjust strategies.</p>	<h3>Highlight Underreported Experiences</h3> <p>Shed light to often overlooked stories</p>

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Chapter 4: Reflection Activities for Ethical News Reporting Migrant Issues

In an era where media narratives significantly shape public opinion and policy, ensuring ethical reporting on migrant issues is more critical than ever. Chapter 4 delves into the essential tools and techniques that journalists and media professionals can employ to monitor and report on migrant issues in a sensitive and responsible way. More specifically, this chapter includes practical exercises that can be completed individually, in pairs or within group discussions. The exercises will showcase previous published articles or reports on migrant issues, encouraging readers to identify potential positives and negatives, taking into account the points raised in the previous chapters.

You can use the following example thinking questions as an inspiration:



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Example Exercise: “Φοβερές καταγγελίες για... εισβολή μεταναστών σε διαμερίσματα-Επιστολή σε Νουρή”. Published on March 22nd 2022, on reporter.com.cy

This article, <https://reporter.com.cy/article/2022/3/22/41071/phoberes-kataggelies-gia-eisbole-metanaston-se-diamerismata-epistole-se-noure/>, described an alleged migration issue at Paphos, Cyprus, where illegal immigrants were occupying a number of flats/accommodations, causing property damages and violating the law. Have a look at the article, keeping in mind the thinking questions stated above. Below is a summary of the Committee on Journalistic Ethics verdict:

The Committee on Journalistic Ethics deemed this publication as inappropriate, as it violated the Code of Journalistic Ethics, particularly Special Provision 12 on Adverse Discrimination. The article used inappropriate language (racist and misleading), such as "illegal immigrants" and "invasion". The article lacked transparency by misrepresenting facts and casting immigrants in a negative light. Despite the editor's defence, the committee emphasized that journalists should avoid reproducing hate speech or racist rhetoric, and urged for accurate, unbiased reporting, especially when referring to migrants. You can find the full report here: <https://cmec.com.cy/en/rulings/?page=2#id-542>

You can use the analysis of the Committee on Journalistic Ethics as a baseline for the following exercises.

Exercise 1 (Duration – 15-20 minutes): “Μετακομίζει στην Κύπρο η Αφρική” (Africa moves to Cyprus), by Alexia Kafetzi. Published on November 11th 2021, on 24h.com.cy



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Image retrieved from: <https://24h.com.cy/metakomizei-stin-kypro-i-afriki/>

Follow the link <https://24h.com.cy/metakomizei-stin-kypro-i-afriki/> and have a look at the article about the situation of African Immigrants coming to Cyprus. Take a moment to think about the title, the content and the phrasing choices of the author. Was the author's reporting fair and bias-free? In the author's attempt to bring forward this topic, were any ideologies, stereotypes or political agendas implied? How would you have written this article's topic, if you were given the chance?

Exercise 2 (Duration – 15-20 minutes): “Αυξήθηκαν οι περιοχές «γκέτο» στην Κύπρο-Τα σημεία που χτυπούν καμπανάκι κινδύνου” (Increased ghetto areas in Cyprus – The points that ring alarm bells), by George Chatzipanagi. Published on April 19th 2023, on reporter.com.cy



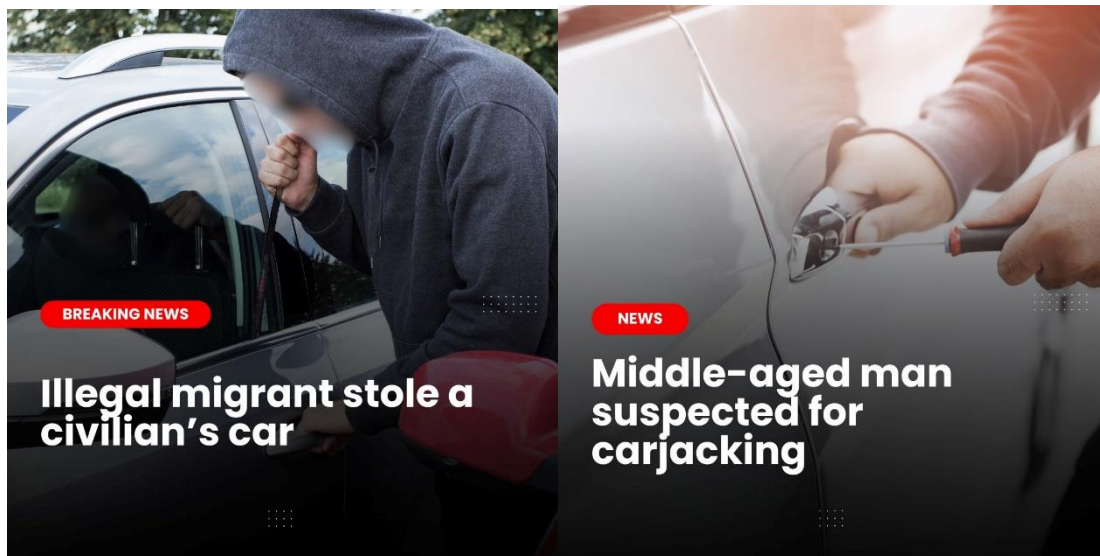
Image retrieved from: <https://reporter.com.cy/article/2023/4/19/708255/auxethekan-oi-periokhes-gketo-sten-kupro-ta-semeia-pou-khtupoun-kampanaki-kindunou/>

The above article describes a violent episode during Easter Sunday of 2023 between alleged illegal immigrants, which took place at Nicosia, Cyprus. Follow the link <https://reporter.com.cy/article/2023/4/19/708255/auxethekan-oi-periokhes-gketo-sten-kupro-ta-semeia-pou-khtupoun-kampanaki-kindunou/> and pay close attention to the

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language chosen and the projected narrative by the author. This specific article came under scrutiny, as it supposedly violated important journalistic ethics. Your task is to identify which ethics may have been violated and discuss the implications that this article may generate, in terms of the public perception on migration.

Exercise 3 (Duration 10-15 minutes): Take a moment to observe the following examples (created for this booklet) of media headlines stories.



Both headlines refer to the same story, but they are presented very differently. The picture on the left is more targeted and appears to be less objective than the one on the right. Regardless of the offender's background, the title will always stand out. The more titles of this nature we get, the more negative associations we can create to the average readers about migrants or minority groups. Additionally, some readers may not even bother to read the whole article, hence their perception will be based purely on the outlets' headlines.

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Chapter 5: Building Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence can have some overlaps with everything that has been mentioned about ethical migration reporting. Intercultural competence refers to the ability to understand, communicate and respect alternative cultures' traditions, behaviours and potential barriers to your own. Unfortunately, although various initiatives and campaigns throughout the past years have been developed by both the Council of Europe and EU countries themselves, intercultural competence is still not at a desirable level.

Taking Cyprus specifically as an example, according to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance's (ECRI) 2022 report, there are certain aspects that hinder other cultures' integration to the island. Most strikingly, the school choice for primary school age children eligible for international protection, is often determined by their age, rather than their skills and competences. Additionally, they do not get any formal education classes in Greek language, making their whole school and community integration even more challenging. Education on LGBTI is almost non-existent, as there are currently no mandatory teacher trainings in place on LGBTI awareness, meaning that this subject is difficult to be imbedded to any extent to the formal education system. Moreover, hate speech monitoring is very limited, while condemnations of discriminative remarks of any kind are rarely evident in public figures' speeches.

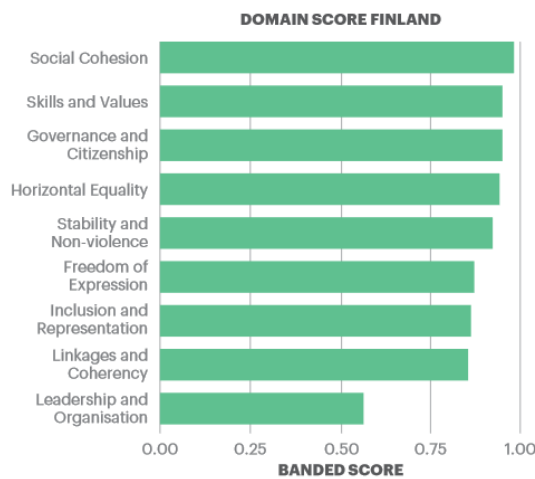
5.1 Case Studies

Finland: Following a rise in migration numbers over the last decades, Finland saw the value of integrating migrants into the Finnish society, rather than taking a firm stance against it. The Finnish government created certain initiatives that benefited the economic and societal integration of immigrants and minority groups, by educating them on the Finnish labour market and society. Education became free for every citizen, regardless of their race, culture, age etc., meaning that education was seen more as a human right instead of a privilege. Furthermore, upon reaching upper secondary education, students are allowed to follow and study their religion of choice. This multicultural inclusivity has also made it possible for immigrant students to learn their native language as part of the curriculum, on top of

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Finland’s dominant native tongues of Finnish and Swedish. Additionally, the Finnish government is perceived as trustworthy, transparent and can be held accountable, which all contribute to establishing avenues for intercultural dialogue and freedom of speech, without worrying about any negative consequences.

Finland’s UNESCO Framework for Enabling Intercultural Dialogue domain scores



Source: UNESCO; IEP

You can read the full report on Finland, along with other countries’ case studies in the following link:

UNESCO. (2022). *We need to talk. Measuring intercultural dialogue for peace and inclusion*. UNESCO. <https://doi.org/10.54678/JKFI1098>

STOP-RACISM: This is currently an on-going European project in which Citizens in Power (CIP) are involved in. STOP-Racism seeks to enlighten society in intercultural literacy, through developed curriculum, interactive activities and workshops and e-learning platforms, aimed to eliminate discriminating behaviours and perceptions in youth. The project’s consortium conducted research on current situation surrounding racism, discrimination and interculturality for their respected countries. Overall, their reports indicated that even though there might be projects and initiatives on the matter, racist behaviours are still evident from an individual level, all the way to institutional and structural

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levels. This information can lead to the suggestion that intercultural competence still needs rethinking in terms of creating effective and more meaningful trainings. The project has thus far brought forward a competence framework, where it goes into details about the necessary skills and abilities people should prioritise to develop, in order to eliminate racist behaviours. To be able to make a societal change, we must first look within and adjust our individual stance. For example, we should strive to be more sensitive and inclusive when talking or referring to people of different ethnicity or gender, as illustrated below. Being more open-minded and conscious about others' background, can help avoid in jumping into rushed, often uneducated opinions and perspectives, which can lead to creation of stereotypes as discussed earlier.

ANTIRACIST DISCLOSURE PROFICIENCY LEVEL	
FOUNDATIONAL	
I can:	Be friendly, respectful and courteous to people of different backgrounds
	Effectively contextualise attitudes, behaviours and expectations of oppressed and unoppressed groups
	Avoid the contact with information or with individuals I know are racist and embedded in power relations
	Ask the experts for an opportunity to discuss (not debate)
INTERMEDIATE	
I can:	Give priority to the voices of People of Colour
	Address race in a non-additive, non-neutral or untokenized manner
	Search for People of Colour's narratives
ADVANCED	
I can:	Explore the background of each text by contextualising them with social and historical context
	Analyse the external relations that control the production and use of the text
	Identify appropriate anti racist resources and direct peers to antiracist texts, authors, books, websites, etc.
	Promote linguistic and cultural heterogenization

Here is the link to STOP-RACISM's website: <https://stop-racism.eu/>

Link to the intercultural literacy and competencies framework: <https://stop-racism.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/SR-Competences-framework.pdf>

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Chapter 6: Helpful Tools and Additional Reading Material

Tool	Link	Focus	How to use	Target audience
Debunking handbook	https://www.climatechangecommunication.org/all/handbook/the-debunking-handbook-2020/	Understanding misinformation	Educational purposes	Journalists, policymakers
Website	https://www.media-diversity.org/for-journalists/	Best investigative journalistic practices	Check out the available resources	Journalists, media officers
Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation Handbook	https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265552	Filtering and fact-checking information	Educational purposes	Journalists, media officers, policy makers
Video	Developing Intercultural Competencies through Story Circles https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUQcA-FKWqg	Building intercultural competencies	Informative video	Journalists, media officers, policy makers

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