

Thibault Chareton – United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

## **Presentation for the 2nd GFMD 2014-2015 Thematic Meeting**

### **1- The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and its mission**

We are a project and initiative of the Secretary General and we are based in New York, NY.

Our main goal is to galvanize international action against radicalism through the forging of international, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, with a special emphasis on defusing tensions between the Western and the Islamic worlds. We are an incubator for innovation on ways to address today's main challenges against peace, tolerance and diversity.

Our work is organized around four main pillars: Education, Youth, Migration and Media. We achieve our mission through the organization of different initiatives: conferences, fellowships, global forums, trainings, study tours, festivals and many other initiatives.

### **2- Our work**

Through our Media and Migration program, we seek to improve the media coverage of migration and migrant communities, in order to enhance relations between migrant communities and host societies.

In 2012-2013, we organized two seminars in Paris, France and in Bern, Switzerland, which brought together editors, journalists and migration experts from Europe and the MENA region to discuss challenges and best practices in the media coverage of migration.

<http://www.unaoc.org/2013/01/covering-migration-challenges-met-and-unmet/>

Following these conferences, we developed a glossary of migration in order to help journalists do responsible media coverage on the topic ("Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration", in partnership with PANOS Europe Institute). In addition, we built the Online Community on Migration and Integration, a website that showcases successful models of integration and highlights good practices implemented by a variety of stakeholders. <http://www.unaoc.org/ibis/>

UNAOC also developed a series of media trainings with Google and the World Bank: "Digital Tools for Newsgathering & Reporting across Cultures" to provide media professionals with new reporting tools.

Finally, each year we organize a youth video festival called Plural + in partnership with the International Organization for Migration, which focuses on the themes of migration, diversity and social inclusion. The winning videos are distributed across the world on multiple platforms, from TV broadcasts to screenings at festivals and the internet. <http://pluralplus.unaoc.org/>

### **3- Next steps**

We're now looking towards the future and working on certain topics, such as:

- a) hate speech and the role of the media in diffusing and limiting amalgams against certain migrant communities, especially in light of recent tragic events and terrorist attacks;
- b) the use of technology in migration reporting, and the impact of a multidisciplinary approach to this type of journalism, through active collaboration between journalists, tech professionals and community members;
- c) Diversity in the newsroom and opportunities for diverse youth to access careers in the media;

d) Youth and the positive use of the Internet and various social media platforms.

#### **4- A few challenges identified in the media's coverage of immigration**

Too much emphasis on the "otherness" of immigrants.

Immigrants are always presented in the same type of narratives, and often in terms of good versus bad: the immigrant "threat" (who takes jobs and uses social security benefits); the immigrant "victim" (who suffers poverty and discrimination), or the immigrant "hero" (who manages to thrive despite his or her conditions).

Migration reporting is often too episodic. The media are good at covering events but not processes. That's a problem because migration is a story that develops over time.

#### **5- Recommendations**

Language is key. Journalists need to be aware that the language and the specific words that they use can have a tremendous impact.

Need for diversity in the newsroom to reflect society's opinions and views. The media must take greater measures in favor of diversity as part of its contract with society. The newsroom must be as diverse of possible, and journalists with diverse backgrounds should not necessarily be asked to cover immigration, but all topics.

There's a need to humanize stories and to tell the stories behind the numbers.

There's also a need to use technology: journalists need to develop tech skills to be able to put together simple graphs, short videos, maps, in order to make their stories more appealing to people.

There's a need to give a voice to immigrants more often, not solely in times of crisis.

Journalists need to do their homework, and they should make sure to learn about economy and religion, in order to get a better understanding of various migrant communities.

#### **6- Ethnic Media**

Note: ethnic media is not necessarily the preferred term. Other options include: "diversity media", "diaspora media", "cross-cultural media", "multicultural media", etc.

While much of the traditional media has endured shrinking resources and audiences, segments of the ethnic media have seen significant growth. It is one of the fastest growing sectors in American journalism with more than 3,000 ethnic media outlets.

The diaspora often feel underserved by mainstream media. Ethnic media provide a voice to diaspora people. They give them the tools to be better informed, better connected and better able to influence policy makers.

#### **7- The use of the Internet by Youth**

There's an emergence of a younger generation of ethnic media now, on YouTube, Twitter feeds, and other websites, which challenges the traditional definition of ethnic media.

Youth are looking for ways to express. The more assimilated second, third, and fourth generation of immigrants often don't relate to first-generation media, based on the common experience of the

home language and fighting discrimination. Historically, ethnic media have indeed built advocacy and community around common negative experiences.

Young people now often see diversity and diverse backgrounds as both positive and fluid. This is a generation for whom identity is a choice, which is a revelation.

There's a lot to be done with this youth, to work on changing views on migrants and diversity in general. We need to use modern tools and platforms to better communicate with the youth and new generations, and share with them accurate and positive messages.

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