

# External Evaluation report - Media4us2 project

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## 1- Aims Goals and evaluation methodology

The overall objectives of the project were:

- To enhance the general public perception on migration by making immigrants' and their integration efforts more **visible**
- To encourage immigrants' **participation** in the democratic process by developing a transnational comprehensive multimedia strategy

The evaluation has tried to inquire if the project has reached its objectives and how.

The evaluation took into consideration the quantitative results of the project as well as the qualitative aspects of the **participation and role** of third countries nationals to the different activities.

The visibility of the efforts of migrants to be part of the democratic life in Europe and in the countries involved has been also evaluated both for what concerns the validity of the multimedia strategies experimented as well as for the real and effective empowerment of the third country nationals in this process.

The importance to measure the effectiveness of media and participatory strategy developed has been one of the main aspect of the evaluation.

### List existing sources of information

The sources of information we referred to for the quantitative analysis are:

- The interim reports written by all the partners
- The information collected by Mira Media and Metro International on the number of copies of the newspaper supplements printed and distributed
- The information collected by Mira Media concerning the European conference and the follow up and extension of the project in other EU countries.

For what concerns the qualitative aspect of the evaluation we referred to the following tools and information useful for the analysis:

- Skype/phone interviews with all the national project coordinators
- Analysis of the outcomes of the project and in particular of the quality of the newspaper supplements, as well as the websites realized and the responses of the readers
- Onsite interviews in Italy and at the final conference with 3 key actors among migrants, mainstream journalists, local or national authorities involved in the project.

- Observations and conversation during Media4us Academy, the management meeting in Budapest and the final conference in Utrecht.

### Interviews/data gathering

During October and November 2012 we collected and analysed the information based on the interim report and the management meetings' reports, as well as we passed through the websites' productions.

The interviews with all the national project coordinators have been realised during December 2012 and January 2013.

During the final conference in Utrecht – 21-22 of February 2013 – the last interviews with relevant key actors were done and the information already collected has been checked with the partners and the transnational coordinator.

The qualitative interviews have been realised on the basis of a questionnaire (see annexe 1), which it has been used as a trail.

## **2- Evaluation of the results**

### **2.1 - Visibility**

The project has developed different tools (media, workshops, photo competition) and a multimedia strategy, combining mainly the websites and the Metro insert, to reach this goal.

All the activities provided have been realised despite the (un)foreseen obstacle to produce a Metro insert in Germany, due to the absence of Metro publication in that country. It was known from the beginning that there is no Metro in Germany. There was however an alternative plan to publish the insert in the monthly German Railway Magazine 'Deutsche Bahn' or in another (free) newspaper. Due to various reasons (ideological & financial) the attempts for such a cooperation failed. The German partner (Adolf Grimme Institute) finally produced a small 4-page brochure that was distributed among their network. This element could be considered as a weak point of the project writing but at the same time we noted that the problem has been brilliantly solved with another Belgian edition of Metro Insert in Flemish.

Much effort has been made by all partners to realise the media products (website and the insert). The photo competitions and the final workshops have been out carried differently in the participating countries and with different results in the countries involved.

In general the visibility has been reached mainly with the simultaneous publication of the **Metro insert** called **Perspectives** in 8 different countries (7 countries – 8 inserts, 2 in Belgium). “All eight inlays were available for free to more than 5 million readers”. In most countries additional copies were printed by Metro, because of which , the insert has been distributed to an even wider public.

The contents of the **Perspectives** has been designed to attract and serve a general audience but at the same time the direct protagonism of the migrants in producing those contents and the relevance assigned to this, gave the real possibility to show other sides of the migration phenomena.

Each partner considered the METRO insert’s experience positively because:

- It gave the real opportunity to enlarge the readers
- It attracted migrants to take part to the initiative
- It gave great visibility to the contents and to the migrants professionals

At national level all partners established good relations with Metro and in some cases it allowed to go on for further collaborations (Hungary, The Netherlands).

The simultaneous publication was a boost for respecting the time schedule and to create a common feeling and identity among migrant journalists and activists involved.

The transnational work has been judged positively, even if there could be room for improvement in the news exchanges, in launching some common themes to cover using more the European website to this aim.

The collaboration with Metro International was at times difficult and in many countries it has been considered an obstacle instead of a value added to the Metro- NGO relation.

Metro International has often limited the possibilities to expand the insert’s potentiality at national level, both in terms of putting advertisement to edit more pages, and in terms of negotiating contents and layout solutions for a more effective impact of the insert.

The participation of Metro International didn’t allow to benefit of the value added of a real transnational activity; this role has been effectively replaced by Mira Media whose positive contribution to the European coordination has been recognised by all the partners. One

positive thing is that Metro International helped to bring down the price of each separate national inlay.

The European **website** has been used by Mira Media to sustain the collaboration and the news exchange among partners and it has been conceived more as a showcase of the national websites and of the project than as an online newspaper as such.

The national websites have common features but offer a wide variety of products in terms of graphic, editing and of contents . The websites have been considered more a testing and a training tool for migrant journalists and activists, than a real online media.

In general the websites were meant as on line platforms for views and opinions of migrants, but most of them hadn't been conceived with this clear mission. Some had the concept of an online newspaper while it wasn't so clear the editorial lines and public to attract information website.

In general it seems quite difficult with the existing capacity to create and think for sustainable websites linked to other stable media initiative or to launch real new online newspapers.

The reasons for such a weakness (difficulty) could be summarized in:

- Few resources dedicated to such activity;
- Project's obligations which didn't allow to choose the most sustainability option but forced to open new web pages with the name of the project;
- Lack of time and resources to develop a real editorial online product

In general the sustainability of most of the websites (except Kif Kif, MRC and Mira Media's ones) depend largely on the activation of other projects even if some as the Hungarian – Subjective – has created positive and interesting link to very a well known and visited online news.

Several partners are looking for possibilities to continue the websites based on a network of volunteers and additional projects. Financial means for hosting, coaching and editing will be needed to sustain these initiatives. Other partners are discussing cooperation with other organisations, which consider the Media4us platforms as an additional value to the core activities.

Moreover the websites represented also a key element of the multimedia strategy experimented in the project: the websites were the launching platform for the Metro inlays and in the websites some items published in the insert were deeply and longer developed.

The websites hosted also audiovisual and radio contents realised by the migrants participating to the project, giving to such media a real multimedia dimension. At the same time migrants

could experiment their capacity with a wider range of media tools, testing their multimedia skills, very useful for the actual media labour market.

As a result in Sweden 4 young journalists of immigrant background now work in the public TV broadcaster SVT, albeit on temporary contracts, thanks also to the contacts the Swedish partner could have with the public TV and radio.

The **photo competition** has created another occasion to reach the visibility provided by the project. The topic (Melting Pot) and the quite easy formula chosen for the competition have guaranteed good results, even if in countries like Italy the number of applications has been quite limited.

The idea of a photo competition is not very original, but in this project it seems particularly apt and functional to Metro inserts where most of the winning photos were placed. (The winning picture of the international photo competition was placed in all Metro inserts and was also handed out in person to the EIF Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom, who was also informed about the project and gave an interview, that was published in all 8 inlays to migrant media4us journalists from Belgium in November 2012). The editorial line of Metro in all the countries is based on short news articles and a large use of photos. In this sense the idea of photo competition was well thought out.

The photo competition could also be considered as part of the multimedia strategy for each partner and for the Eu project, which enlarged further the attention to the project's aims to a more generalist public. Publishing the winners in the Metro inlays and involving them in the final conference could be considered effective ideas for practical and positive intercultural interactions examples.

The **national roundtables** have been differently conceived by the partners: some have organised a specific event, some others have chosen to connect to other events and present a workshop dedicated to the project's results. Roundtables have been thought as an added occasion of visibility especially in Czech Republic, Belgium and Germany with a quite large and qualified audience invited.

The roundtables were meant also as a way to involve local or national authorities and discuss with them about migrants participation. In some countries it has been successful strategy to advocate migrants participation rights to the key authorities (i.e in Czech Republic and Belgium).

In other countries roundtables has been organised as workshops and seminars to evaluate the results but also to share opportunities and new ideas to develop at local or national level.

Another positive remark should be done to the direct involvement of Eu Institution during the execution of the project, as the interview to Cecilia Malmstrom, the presentation of the Metro inlays and other regular information shared. These elements strengthened the feeling of a Europe – wide initiative among participants.

### Geographical dimension

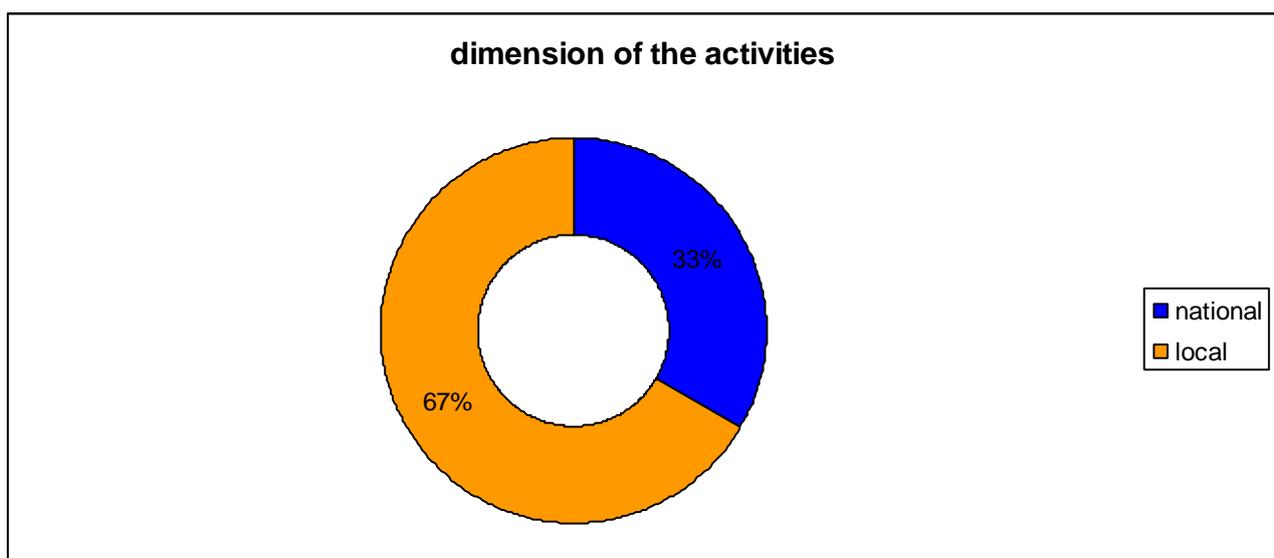
Each partner evaluated the level of such advocacy activity and decided in base of previous contacts and impact's expectations.

This aim usually referred to the dimension of project's activities in each country and to the general capacity of the partners to act at national or local level.

The geographical dimension of the project's activities are summarised in fig.1

The majority of the partners developed their mobilisation activities, such as training and roundtables, considering the usual geographical area of the organisations' action, the available resources and the logistic constraints. In Uk all the activities and the participants were based in London, and the same was for Budapest in Hungary and Prague in Czech Republic. While in Italy and in Germany the migrants participating to the training and news making activities come from different towns and regions despite the resources and logistic constraints. A national character had also the Dutch and Belgium's actions, due also to the country dimension and the presence of 2 partners in Belgium. In Sweden the partner strategically worked mobilising people from some disadvantaged neighbourhoods near Stockholm.

Fig.1 – geographical dimension of the project's activities in all the countries involved



The different advocacy actions and the involvement of national or local authorities referred also to such a geographical scheme which each partner followed in the implementation of the project.

## 2.2 - Participation

Partners have attracted migrants and third country nationals through the following activities:

- Training sessions
- Media4US2 Academy
- Online news production
- Metro insert production

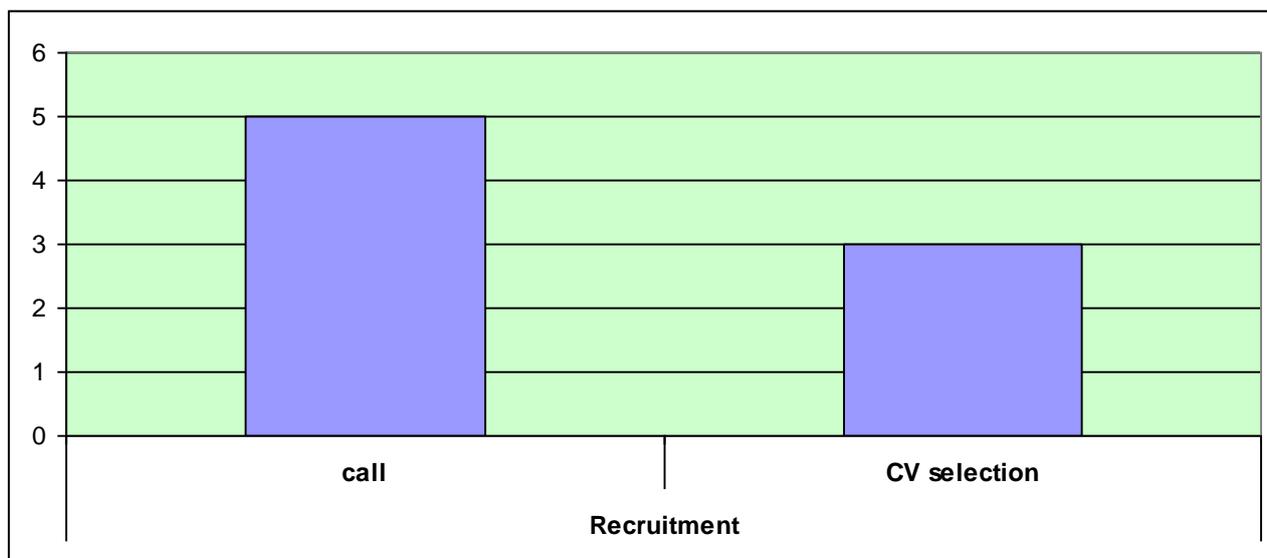
For what concerns the training each partner chose the formats (2 full days or 1-2 hours per week) but the contents were quite similar.

Due to the limited number of training hours many partners underline the effectiveness of a continuous tutoring of the trainees during the production of news articles. The role of senior journalists in such a task seems particularly effective, both as advisory board (i.e. in UK) or in tutoring and discussing editorial lines and articles' contents.

The level of involvement of trainees in the different activities varied from one country to another,. Some partner had a more stable group of person trained who have also followed both the website and the news articles for the insert, although the majority related to a mixed group formed by the trainees, already known contacts, people attracted and approached during the project development. The overall number of migrants involved enlarged during the execution of the project and wasn't limited to people trained.

The training recruitment process has been different in the countries involved: some have done a specific call, others have selected and attracted persons already known by the NGO.

Fig.2 – training’s recruitment



The experience of the partners and the previous contacts of the organisations involved, influenced the approach used.

In every country the training has been a start up activity to identify the group of migrants to be involved in all the project’s activities while the Media4us Academy has been another step to enlarge the participation as well as to design the activities to be done after having collected news ideas and shared reflections and specific knowledge.

The Academy was meant as an event for the key persons (coordinators, webmasters and trainers) of the national projects. It has been organised in workshops held and facilitated by experts in social media campaigning, in acquisition of sponsors and advertisement strategy and other issue related to sustainability.

60 participants from 25 different ethnic origins met and exchanged ideas and opinions with each other which has lead to better communication between the project partners and gave new networking opportunities to the NGO and minority organisations that were represented in the Academy.

The possibility of organizing a side project for youngsters was discussed during the workshop. It was decided to apply to the Youth in Action fund for the project ‘Media4us junior’. The idea was to bring together youngsters from the project countries for a summer school were they will be trained in editorial, spokesperson and promotional techniques. The project proposal was submitted and approved and the project involved the majority of the media4us partners (Netherlands, Sweden, Czech Republic, UK and Hungary).

The Media4us Academy has been so an inspiring and sharing step for the execution of the project for the partners but could be also considered as one of the key moment where migrants enlarged their professional experiences.

All these steps have been useful to enlarge the groups to have a wider possibility to replace the physiologic desertion of someone. Moreover it is a demonstration of a dissemination and feeding action done by the partners all along the project's implementation and an expression of their capacity of migrants mobilisation.

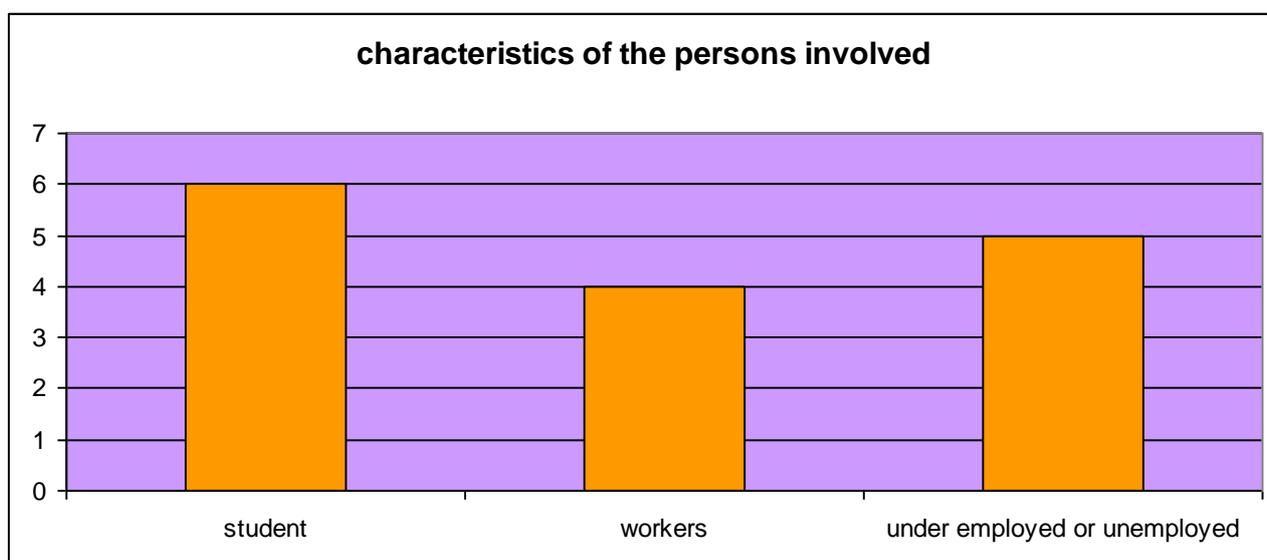
Moreover all the transnational activities offered migrants occasions to enlarge their professional experiences and contacts. They not only learned more about journalism but obtained also valuable and strategic new transnational connections. They compared difference and similarities between member states and learned also about other policy formats and advocacy strategies.

### 3- Characteristics of the groups involved

It's interesting to observe the characteristics of the groups of migrants involved to analyse the capacity and effectiveness of the participation process the projects stimulated.

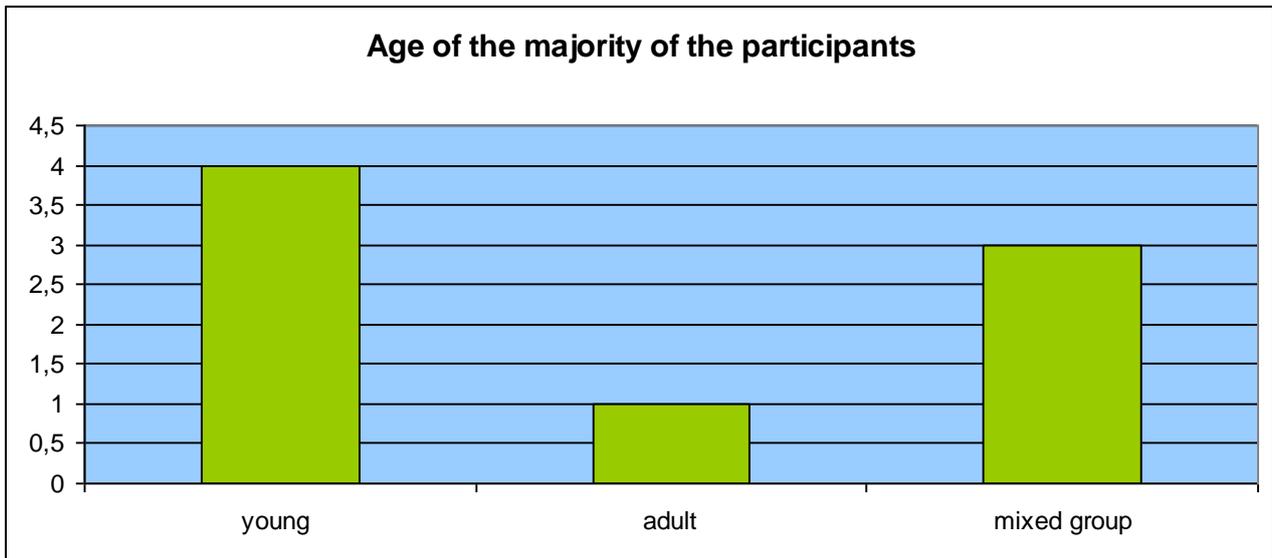
The majority of the migrants involved were students, unemployed or under employed as showed in fig.2. The project represented an opportunity to enter in the media space for these categories and to qualify the experience of the migrants.

Fig.3 - employment situation of the migrants involved



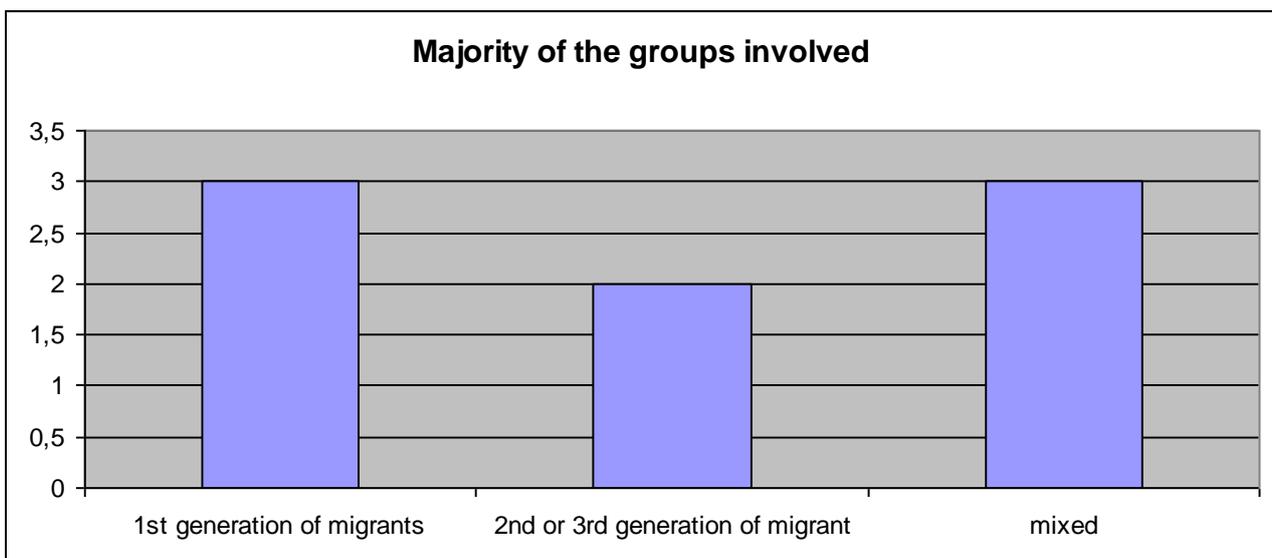
If we combine this information with the age of the participants and the generation of migration (fig 4 and 5) we highlighted that the project succeeded in attracting a good variety of different disadvantaged categories (i.e.first generation of migrants, under employed, adults) which it's usually more difficult to involve.

Fig.4 – age of the migrants involved



The good gender balance and the cultural diversity of the groups involved complete the positive picture of the panel, confirming the validity of the partners and their actions to attract the right target to work with.

Fig. 5 – generation of migrants involved



In some of the countries it was the first time migrants could express their own point of view in the mainstream media. The contents proposed in the inserts and in the websites express migrants' will to enlarge the topics and the perspectives of the news as well as the way to participate to public discourse.

It has been an important experience for those migrants who were not professional to know better and in depth the strength and the constraints of a newspaper. It's not only important to express other point of view and other kind of news, but it has been also necessary to learn how to tell a story in an effective way and to adapt the style and the length to the editorial line.

From this point of view the project seems to have fulfilled the aim and purposes provided.

#### **4- Budget and resources**

The budget was largely dedicated to cover the costs of the 8 Metro insert which on the other end gained a very large audience and represented the core of the project.

The budget for national coordination seems really limited to adequately manage all the activities provided. Nevertheless all the partners knew since the application the financial conditions and so they organised the work partly on a voluntary basis, partly mobilising volunteers.

Due to this lack of resources some partner decided to put less effort on some parts/activities of the project and much efforts in others. In Italy and Hungary less attention has been paid to the photo competition, in UK to the relation with local or national authorities, and to their participation to the roundtable for example. Some partners successfully found synergies with other ongoing events or projects, i.e. in Sweden, in The Netherlands and in Belgium the connections realised with Media4me project.

In general there has been not enough time and resources to develop and care communication plans for all the activities done, due also to the time schedule of the project.

For a 18 months project a lot of activities were provided and the efforts have been concentrated more on the realisation of the activities than on the duly communication diffusion of such activities. Nevertheless the multiplicity of the information products realised made up for this deficiency. The Metro inlays in particular offered a unique opportunity of info diffusion on the project and its activities.

The feedbacks from migrant communities so as their active participation to the contents and debates raised with the websites and the inlays articles would have need more time and resources to dedicate to.

Partners have duly worked during the project to a possible extension and follow up of the most effective activities writing new proposals to the EC.

## 5- Transnational coordination

Transnational activities have been a structural part of Media4us2. The European dimension of the project and of the majority of the activities was clear and also really well developed. The national media prizes and photo competitions had European components and also the conference and the Academy were organised to give also an international overview of media and diversity

In fact Mira Media organised and facilitated the Media4us2 Academy and the final conference Tuning in to Diversity 2013 Conference in Utrecht. The final conference was a joint production with the municipal Treaty of Utrecht organisation.

In both the occasions the effort has been put to give not only an occasion of exchange and visibility to the partners' realisations but to involve key actors to think forward for what concerns both participation and media.

For example Mira Media built up a cooperation with New America Media (NAM). As a result NAM participated in the Media4us2 Academy and in some of the national Media4us2 conferences. NAM shared the USA experiences with the Media4us2 partners and tried to link up with the METRO project.

For what concern the internal communication and relation Mira Media's coordination received only positive feedbacks from partners. The organisation of the meetings as well as the back office daily answers were considered totally efficient. Other coordination tools as skype conference hasn't been always considered useful, because it was necessary to provide brief with the decisions after the calls. (and because it was very difficult to have a conference call with all the partners at the same time)

Due to the relation problems with Metro International and in order to support the national partners, the transnational coordinator visited Stockholm, Prague, London, Cologne and Brussels. During these visits the coordinator discussed the working relation between the national partner and the national METRO and also made presentation during national roundtables and conferences.

A good cohesion among partners has been noted at the end of the project. The new project proposals written all together is a proof, but we can also say that a platform to exchange and discuss ideas and comments has been built among them.

## 6 – Different strategies and approaches

In each country and at European level the project obtained good results and the aims were overall reached.

The qualitative analysis highlighted two different strategies adopted by the partners to develop the project.

1- **A grassroots approach** – in some countries and some partners emphasized citizen journalism as a way to occupy media spaces by those persons who are usually object and not subject of the news, especially those who live in suburbs or in a marginalised position in the media panorama.

In this case the project was developed at local level to serve local communities (more or less large) and to give opportunities to express different opinions or tell different news, in order to increase or to open to migrants participation in the public sphere and in public debate.

The participation element and grassroots approach was central in the project and much efforts were made in the relations with migrants communities or with suburbs inhabitants. This could be the case in Sweden, in UK, in Belgium with Kif Kif and partly in the Netherlands.

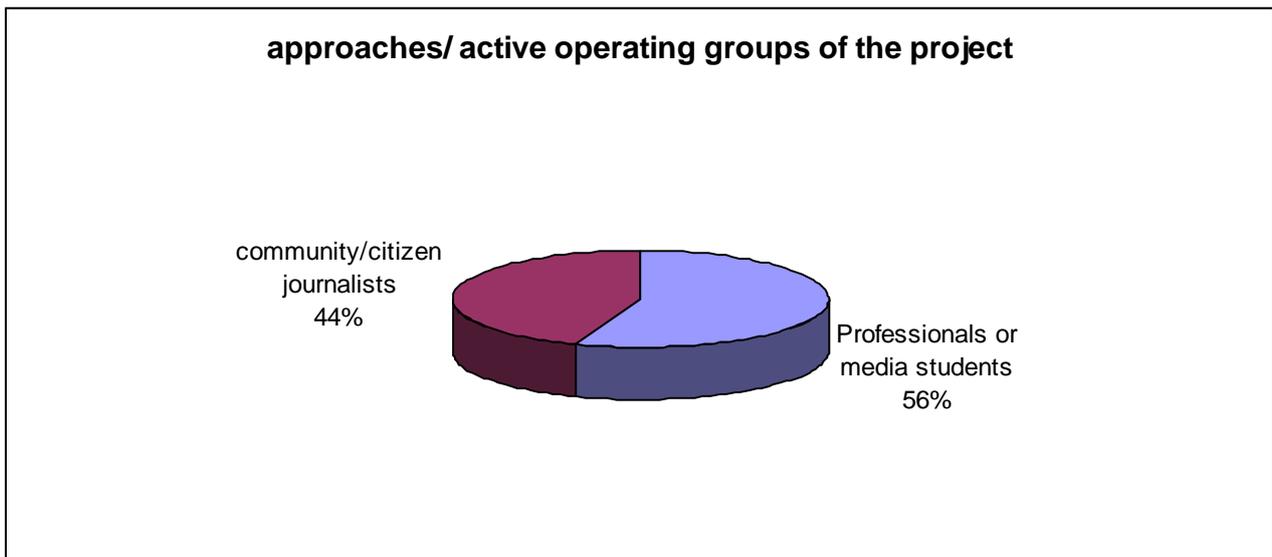
2- **A professional approach** - in these case the project has involved migrants media professionals in order to show their contribution to the journalistic production, and underlining the value added of those professionals to enlarge the potential stories or news items – including the rather more colourful ones – which readers and the public may be interested in hearing about. The quality of the news production is important in this approach so as the role models of journalist with ethnic minority background.

Those migrants media professionals who have intercultural skills become the key agent to select and find different news. They can contribute to overcome the mistrust in mainstream media many migrants have and so facilitating their participation in public debate. In this approach migrant journalists become not only professional representatives but they often end up having added responsibilities towards migrants communities and of cultural mediation towards native journalists and media.

This approach emphasizes the need of migrant communities and individuals to compete on a professional level in the media landscape with different contents, different news and different point of view and data interpretations.

The info products become so a showcase of migrants journalists professionalism and a demand of equal opportunity to access media both for what concerns new contents and new journalistic profiles.

Fig.6 – two different project's approaches



Both strategies were valid solutions to reach the project's goals. It reflects the various composition of the partnership, the wide number of the countries involved and the richness of these mixed elements.

Moreover both approaches are based on the common strong request of participation of migrant communities or marginalised neighbourhood inhabitants to public sphere and debate. They both act to gain media spaces which means reaching a public arena to influence political and public debate on relevant issues.

The project succeed in designing different policy strategies and social models to refer to when we discuss about sustaining and promoting migrant participation.

In this sense we can also underline the multiplier effect such a social experimentation could have and the policy relevance in considering media and diversity one of the crucial priority at national al Eu level .

## 7- Conclusions

### 7.1 Positive achievements

#### *Migrants actives in the public sphere*

The way in which cultural diversity is delivered through media can act as 'glue' for social cohesion as well as protecting national cultures and providing a mirror into one's own culture and society. It can remove misconceptions and it can add to the understanding of the richness of the world. Mainstream media remain important medium and an influential way of reaching large audiences at the same time. However its dominance is fading in most of the countries as the multiplicity of technologies make possible access to news content through a variety of means.

Media4us was able to dialogue and interact positively with mainstream, proposing and adapting contents to reach a wide and variety audience. In some cases migrants journalists were even able to influence public agenda by presenting relevant data and asking authorities to discuss about them.

This element however could be better explored and developed in possible future initiatives: once they have realised it has been the most effective way to propose their contents and points of view.

In general migrants involved in the project gained spaces in the public sphere, increasing their self esteem and showing their potentiality in terms of opinions, skills and competencies to a large audience.

#### *Enhancing strategic skills*

Data journalism and multimedia skills represent not only important professional experiences for the present and the future media labour market, but they are also fundamental for campaigning.

The audiovisual websites experiences and the mainstream Metro inlays required adapting media products but above all a strategic reflection on news selection, the public to refer to and in general the aim of such media actions.

Participants so develop a common understanding of multimedia strategies and their potential use in mobilising people and reaching political goals. This is a crucial foundation on which new informed and purposeful communication processes can develop.

Besides transnational networking and collaboration among migrant journalists are multiple positive effects which could produce new initiative and longer term results.

## 7.2 Open challenges

### ***Sustainability of the websites***

Despite many positive feedbacks the sustainability of the national Media4me websites after the project period is giving some worries. Some of the partners: Kif Kif and Mira Media and partly MRC, made the website part of their existing platforms. They used the media4us project to extend their platform with articles from migrant journalists. Because of this there is more guarantee for continuity of the website and involvement of the migrant journalists after the project. These websites are financed by various projects and are often based on a stable group of volunteers. Other partners have a shorter history and created the Media4us2 website as part of the project. For them the continuity of the website is going to be a challenge.

### ***Attracting private sponsors to sustain experimenting info initiatives***

According to an online survey conducted by Metro International among its readers in Hungary, Hungarian readers appreciated the content and themes of the insert since they had not read anything of the kind before. This also led the Hungarian partner Foundation of Subjective Values to seek to produce a national follow up to the 'Perspectives' insert not part of Media4us2. On the other hand similar survey in The Netherlands and Sweden indicated that the readers appreciated the information in the 'Perspectives' inlay but did not find the theme that original.

The project revealed that there are a lot of professional capacity among migrants and that media products realised are of good quality and have great potentiality to attract commercial sponsors.

Nevertheless the inexperience of the partners and the fact that the partners did not have any product to show before publishing was a limit to this end.

Another obstacle was the fact that METRO (national and international) have their own advertising arrangements with big companies. Media4us2 was not allowed to make separate contracts with these companies. However many Metro national (Italy, Hungary, The Netherlands and Belgium both French and Dutch) were very interested to explore the follow up of the experimentation also with the advertisement's support.

It was positive that partners could learn a great deal from the contacts with commercial companies, while also several transnational workshops have been organised around this theme.

It's a challenge for the future to build cooperation between private and public funds to guarantee the sustainability of such info initiatives.

Annexe 1-

Questionnaire for the skype interviews

- 1- How do you facilitate in general the active participation of third country nationals and migrants to the project's activities?
- 2- Did you have face some problems for their active involvement? If yes which problems?
- 3- Was it easy or difficult to find and involve Third Country national in particular and ask them to participate?
- 4- Do the persons trained have been the same level of involvement in the website and insert activities? If no why?
- 5- In general do you find that there has been differences in participation's involvement among youngsters and adult, female and male, professional or not professional migrants and third country nationals? In your opinion why?
- 6- Did you involve local or national authorities in the project? If yes how and with which role and aims. If no why?
- 7- How did you connect (if you did) the website and insert activities? Did you have done a specific communication plan?
- 8- Which have been the main problems in realising the Metro insert?
- 9- Which has been the relation with Metro at national level? And with the International Metro?
- 10-This project and its activities have been part of a more comprehensive strategy towards migrants participation for your organisation?
- 11-How do you judge the results of the project in general and for your specific strategy towards migrants participation?
- 12-What is your evaluation of the transnational coordination?
- 13-Do you consider the budget adequate? If not, why and for which activity in particular?