

An Overview of Community Media

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Editorial

Community media are often classified as a distinct sector of the media because of their independence, civil society roots, and focus on providing a social service rather than profit. Apart from private and public media, they play a significant role in providing communities with a platform to express their concerns about local issues, engage in democratic debate, and provide trustworthy access to information. However, because each location has its own kind of community media, there is no unanimity on a definition. Community media, on the other hand, is mass media, but it caters to a far smaller audience than mainstream media [1].

Community media are broadcasting and/or multimedia projects that share some of the following characteristics: independence from governments, businesses, religious institutions, and political parties; non-profit orientation; voluntary participation of civil society members in the development and management of programmes; activities aimed at social gain and community benefit; ownership by and accountability to local communities and/or communities of inmates. Community media are civil society groups that offer and encourage participation at various levels of their structures. They are normally registered as legal entities. Community media, also known as the "third media sector," have a separate identity from national public service media and private commercial media [2].

Community media encourage active citizenship and political participation for all as alternative and complementary channels of media production and delivery. They serve a wide range of communities and engage thousands of volunteers in multilingual media productions, training, and management, with women, marginalised groups, artists, journalism students, citizens, some of whom are migrants or refugees, non-mainstream DJs, youth, and the elderly at the forefront.

Community media groups are a vital aspect of democratic societies, but they still lack formal legal recognition, equitable access to distribution platforms, and long-term finance in many European nations. Public funding, volunteer contributions, participation-based training, and grants for social-impact programmes are all common sources of funding. In practise, however, special public subsidies for community media, where they exist, risk being easily removed or redirected to other media entities, including private and profit-oriented enterprises, due to a lack of unambiguous recognition and status for community media [3].

For community media, which are typically small-scale broadcasters who rely on inexpensive rates for author rights, terrestrial frequencies, and bandwidth on digital platforms, access to suitable distribution technology, is a challenge. The essential technical equipment is supplied through in-kind donations in most European countries, and the labour is mostly done by volunteers. Community media's audio and video broadcasting services are frequently devalued and underpaid, and they are rarely given proper attention on digital platforms [4].

People in hundreds of communities, notably women and marginalised groups, were given the instruments of communication via community media, allowing them to construct their own means of cultural expression, news, information, and discourse. Community media initiatives are managed on a non-profit, democratic basis, with members of civil society participating in programme creation and management on a voluntary basis.

People's empowerment through community media helps them improve their social and economic circumstances, resist prejudice and racism, become more effectively involved in their community and country's democratic growth, and give an alternative to mainstream commercial material [5].

Conflict of Interest

None.

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