

OBJECTIVE 03

To support reconciliation, dialogue, closer relationship and trust between the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities

TRAINING ON HUMAN RIGHTS JOURNALISM AND PEACE JOURNALISM

VASVI ÇİFTÇİOĞLU



Photo Credit: Doğuş Özokutan

THIS ACTION INVOLVED

Organisation of two "Towards Peace Journalism and Human Rights Journalism in Cyprus-Bi-communal workshops and roundtable discussions": for journalists on 11 October 2018, and for scholars on 12 October 2018.

Visits to media organisations to receive inputs regarding the development of a peace journalism roadmap.

Preparation of a peace journalism roadmap.

ABOUT VASVI ÇİFTÇİOĞLU

Vasvi Çiftçioğlu, has been working as a journalist, editor and director in various media organisations in Cyprus for close to 20 years. Since 2004, he is working at the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (PIK) and he has been one of the key directors for Cyprus' only bi-communal/bilingual television program "Biz/Emeis". Vasvi completed his PhD in peace journalism, while at the same time working to implement peace journalism in all his fields of work.

STORY OF THE ACTION

"Journalists in Cyprus can "go beyond the easy narrative" by challenging themselves and their readers. It means resisting the blame game, refusing to demonize the "other side" and resisting presenting "our side" as always right or justified. Now is the time for the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot media/journalists to go beyond the easy narrative and practice peace journalism in a proper way."

Vasvi Çiftçioğlu

Vasvi Çiftçioğlu wanted to address the fact that journalism in Cyprus often falls short of adopting a human rights perspective. In the framework of the Grow Civic action, two workshops were held on peace journalism and human rights journalism, to raise awareness and reinforce the capacities of journalists and scholars from the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. The action contributed to the mitigation of hate speech in the media, and allowed for mutual communication and dialogue among journalists from the two communities.

"Peace journalism plays a fundamental role in society by giving a platform to the interests and points of view of all stakeholders. This can be facilitated through the practice of peace journalism, where non-violent options to the resolution of conflict are revealed. Peace journalism can reduce the distance between journalists and media workers from both communities. It encourages the media to highlight the diverse voices in Cyprus, rather than reducing dialogue and debate to a win/lose, zero sum mentality."

Vasvi Çiftçioğlu

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On 1 October 2018, he organised "Towards Peace Journalism and Human Rights Journalism in Cyprus Bi Communal Workshop and Roundtable Discussion for Journalists", where Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, the creator of the "Human Rights Journalism" theory and a world-renowned writer-scholar, attended to share his knowledge and experience. In the workshop, peace journalism and human rights journalism were introduced, samples of news coverage from international and national press were distributed and the level of the "peace and war journalism" used in these stories was discussed. According to Vasvi, the roundtable discussions made the obstacles of peace journalism in Cyprus more visible. The next day, the same event was held for scholars, with the aim of discussing how higher education can contribute to peace and human rights journalism in Cyprus. The discussions and the feedbacks from the participants were used as the basis of a roadmap for peace journalism in Cyprus. After the training and workshop, Vasvi and Ibrahim Seaga held meetings with various media organisations to reach out to the editor-in-chiefs who could not attend the event.

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RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

Thanks to the workshops and face-to-face meetings, Vasvi and Ibrahim Seaga were able to define and frame a peace journalism roadmap. They underlined the importance of increasing local capacity on peace journalism through specific courses in higher education curricula to support the production of news with a peace and human rights viewpoint in mainstream media outlets. They received enormous support from the Press Workers Union to not only reach journalists across Cyprus but also to widely distribute the roadmap to relevant stakeholders and duty bearers. By promoting the real meaning of "peace journalism", Çiftçioğlu planted the seeds of "learning, understanding, teaching and using the human rights perspective".

WHAT'S NEXT?

Vasvi Çiftçioğlu, as an academician and a journalist, is continuing his endless efforts for the implementation of the "peace journalism roadmap". He is convinced that the implementation of the roadmap would ensure the development and the widespread execution of both human rights journalism and peace journalism in Cyprus.

TO FIND
MORE ABOUT
THE ACTION

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