



Article

Promoting Inclusive Contexts and Journalism: Testing the Effectiveness of a Training Program

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Abstract: Struggles for social inclusion necessitate efforts to enhance democratic communication. Communication practices and institutions are deeply intertwined with movements advocating for and against social justice, particularly in contemporary contexts of developing inclusion. We designed and evaluated the “Telling the Truth: How to Inform While Promoting an Inclusive Society” program. This program aimed to enhance knowledge and increase positive attitudes toward inclusion among 61 journalism students through quantitative and qualitative methods. The results indicate that participants demonstrated higher positive attitudes in the post-test, showing increased support for a more inclusive socio-economic vision and a greater inclination toward activism. Overall, these findings underscore the significance of journalism training in advancing a socially inclusive context.

Keywords: educational training; journalism; social inclusion; quali-quantitative analysis



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1. Introduction

In today’s world, humanity faces a range of interconnected crises that are both diverse and global in scope. These include climate catastrophes, humanitarian emergencies, wars, poverty, forced migration, human rights violations, workplace exploitation, and the rise of disinformation. Such challenges significantly impact the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and societies (Nota 2020; Milanovic and Schmitt 2020).

Disinformation is a pressing issue involving spreading false information and manipulating reality (Bago et al. 2020). This phenomenon contributes to the proliferation of hate speech and the social exclusion of vulnerable groups, benefiting wealthier classes who can influence the media to support their interests (Jakobsson and Stiernstedt 2018).

Compounding these issues is the concentration of news production and distribution within a few private entities, which limits the diversity of voices and obscures the socio-economic mechanisms at play (Cammaerts 2015; Schiller 2022). This consolidation results in a decline in critical and reflective journalism and an increase in sensationalist and superficial coverage (McCurdy 2012; Schiller 2022).

Journalists in the Western world are grappling with these trends, the distorting effects of digital platforms and social networks (Reale 2020), and increasing vulnerabilities within their profession. Splichal and Dahlgren (2016) and Schiller (2022) highlight the growing editorial pressures from corporate groups, leading to sensationalism and personal statements, as well as challenging working conditions such as precarious employment and devaluation of professionalism (Giulietti 2020). Additionally, there is a growing public perception of journalism as hostile and untrustworthy (Cushion and Franklin 2015; Scannell 2020).

The “Information Disorder” report for the Council of Europe (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017) and the Reuters Institute Digital News Report (Behre et al. 2024) call for a robust response to these trends, advocating for a culture of accuracy, solidarity, and inclusive social transformation (Olivera 2022). Maniou et al. (2020) underscore the role of journalism in engaging audiences and promoting diverse perspectives, which is essential for fostering an inclusive culture.

In response to these challenges, there is a pressing need to develop training programs for contemporary journalists that address these issues while emphasizing ethics and professional standards. Training journalists in sustainable development is also aligned with Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda, “Quality Education”, which stresses the importance of preparing journalists to navigate complex environments and contribute to a sustainable and inclusive society (Trappel and Tomaz 2021; Maniou et al. 2020; Olivera 2022).

This article explores a postgraduate training program to address current challenges and promote inclusive and sustainable journalism practices. We evaluate the program’s effectiveness in enhancing participants’ understanding of inclusive processes, journalism’s role in fostering inclusive contexts, and attitudes toward inclusion, social solidarity, and activism.

2. Building Inclusive Contexts and Journalism

Inclusion in the most recent conceptual models extends beyond merely addressing the needs of the most vulnerable individuals, which risks falling into paternalistic perspectives. It involves modifying contexts and creating conditions that ensure environments—and the people within them—are increasingly capable of providing everyone with a sense of belonging, involvement, empowerment, and satisfactory living standards (Theodorakopoulos and Budhwar 2015; Soresi et al. 2011; Soresi 2020). Inclusion is about building contexts where all members can simultaneously value diversity and uniqueness, identify and highlight instances of discrimination, advocate for change, provide support, and create protective networks. This is not performed as a favour to the less privileged but as a shared responsibility toward the unique qualities that characterize each of us (Nota 2020; Zeng and Chan 2023). Inclusion also involves identifying the necessary organizational and managerial changes within various contexts and amplifying everyone’s voices to facilitate a transformative process that ensures a quality of life for all (Wehmeyer et al. 2021; Santilli et al. 2022). Tajima (2021) emphasizes that fostering inclusion means creating environments where every person, in all their uniqueness, can actively participate in social and civil life.

From this perspective, journalism that aims to create inclusive contexts should work to reduce prejudices and stereotypes against vulnerable populations. It should also raise public awareness about the social and structural phenomena that exacerbate vulnerabilities and inequalities while promoting solidarity, social consciousness, and collective action to defend people’s rights against exploitation (Ford et al. 2020; Olivera 2022). Journalism should ensure equal representation of diverse voices, including minorities and vulnerable individuals, in the media. This not only helps counteract stereotypical portrayals but also encourages involvement in processes of social transformation (Raetzsch et al. 2022). It should also promote inclusive language to avoid labelling, which can lead to stigmatization and social distancing, and highlight that vulnerabilities are not merely individual issues but are also shaped by environmental factors and barriers (Ford et al. 2020).

According to Ford et al. (2020), this requires a commitment to accuracy—ensuring the authenticity of facts, avoiding reductionist approaches, seeking reliability, and supporting journalistic work with thorough research. Furthermore, as Ford et al. (2020) emphasized, promoting inclusive and collaborative community journalism is crucial for fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the media, and building and maintaining trust with audiences.

With the knowledge of inclusion outlined so far, engaging news workers to foster positive attitudes towards an inclusive vision of reality is crucial. This involves promoting a propensity to value collaboration and solidarity over competition and individualism, and encouraging activism against injustice, discrimination, and hardship (Moriña et al. 2020;

Finneman et al. 2022). The following sections will delve into the critical components of these attitudes and propensities.

Attitudes towards inclusion. According to the tripartite model of Eagly and Chaiken (1993), attitudes consist of cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. The cognitive component pertains to an individual's information and beliefs about an object or person, often shaped by personal experiences. The affective component relates to the moods and emotions these objects or persons elicit. The behavioural component involves the inclination toward action based on these beliefs and emotions. Research also underscores the strong correlation between attitudes and actions that align with them (Shuman 2021). Of particular interest here, Freer (2022) highlights that positive attitudes towards people from minority groups and those with vulnerabilities, such as disabilities or migration backgrounds, are associated with a greater propensity to act inclusively and a lower tendency to adhere to stereotypical views. Similarly, Murrar et al. (2020) found a relationship between pro-diversity attitudes and a greater likelihood of engaging in inclusive behaviours, more positive attitudes toward outgroups, and a heightened appreciation of diversity.

The propensity to give value to a more supportive socio-economic vision and inclusion. The common thread in a more collaborative and supportive socio-economic perspective is the shift away from the monistic idea of the economy typical of the neoliberal market fundamentalist paradigm. Instead, it embraces a pluralistic view that includes various forms of private enterprise and organization not solely driven by profit maximization, allowing for a more balanced economic landscape (Borzaga et al. 2011). This vision of the economy is closely linked to the fight against discrimination and the promotion of inclusion. Regarding the former, Grzanka et al. (2020) emphasize that a fairer and more supportive economic mindset enables individuals to analyze social inequalities and discrimination critically. As for the latter, several studies indicate a correlation between equitable and supportive economic thinking and behaviours that promote inclusion (Caprara and Vecchione 2017; Zmigrod et al. 2018).

The propensity towards activism and inclusion. Activism is a term that emerged in the mid-seventies, referring to the ability to act and effect change, thereby influencing history. As Jordan notes, "activism is generating the future of societies" (Jordan 2002, p. 23), embodying the practice of striving for change. DeBlaere et al. (2014) define activism as actions aimed at improving conditions for and advancing the status of minorities in society. In this context, activism does not solely refer to direct action, it also includes less direct practices, such as operating within the dominant political and judicial systems. This can involve challenging the state and corporations through legal avenues and lobbying efforts, seeking to influence legislators or governments (Stake and Hoffmann 2001).

Several studies highlight a positive correlation between increased awareness of discrimination, a commitment to activism, and broader social and civic engagement (Bob 2007). Furthermore, Almeida et al. (2020) emphasize the close relationship between valuing actions that dismantle hierarchies, preventing universal access and participation in various life contexts, and a propensity for inclusion.

3. Educational Training and Journalism Focused on Inclusion and Sustainability

In 2007, the World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) in Singapore adopted a "Declaration of Principles in Journalism Education", emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of journalism education and its foundation in scientific research. This declaration highlighted the importance of preparing journalists to address the complexities of modern society through comprehensive and scientifically grounded training. In 2019, the WJEC member organizations further solidified these principles by signing the Paris Declaration of Freedom of Journalism Education. This declaration emphasized the critical role of journalism education in fostering an inclusive and sustainable transformation of societies. It underlined the need for journalism to promote diversity, a critical understanding of current events, and an unwavering commitment to the truth, especially in an era of disinformation, misinformation, and threats to press freedom. The signatories agreed that investing in

journalism education is crucial to ensuring journalism's long-term quality and integrity as an institution.

In alignment with these principles, various training programs have been developed worldwide to equip journalists with the skills to promote social justice and inclusivity. For instance, [Adebayo \(2016\)](#) designed a training program for forty journalists to develop conflict-sensitive journalism skills. The program consisted of three modules, focusing on understanding conflicts and discrimination, their causes and effects, and strategies for managing or avoiding them through responsible reporting. The objective was to foster a culture of non-violence and enable citizens to become well-informed, engaged, and active participants in their country's political processes. The impact of this training was assessed through a content analysis of the journalists' work post-training and a follow-up questionnaire. The results indicated that the journalists had successfully integrated the training's principles into their practice, advocating for peace and prioritizing stories that promoted public discourse on peace and non-violence.

Another noteworthy example is the study by [Ross et al. \(2022\)](#), which involved a 24-h educational training workshop to enhance the media's understanding of reporting on sensitive issues such as violence, crime, and discrimination. The workshop was piloted with thirty-two undergraduate and postgraduate journalism students, focusing on improving their adherence to best practices for reporting severe mental illness and other critical issues. The training aimed to increase the student's knowledge of best-practice guidelines, improve their intentions to report in line with them, and boost their confidence. Additionally, it sought to reduce stigmatizing attitudes and foster a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by marginalized groups. The evaluation, which included qualitative and quantitative analyses conducted before and after the training, revealed significant improvements in the participants' reporting behaviours and attitudes towards mental illness.

Further examples include initiatives in the MENA region, where journalists face unique challenges due to political instability, social inequalities, and cultural diversity. In Egypt, for example, the "Journalism for Human Rights" program has been instrumental in training journalists to report on human rights issues, focusing on inclusivity and ethical standards ([Elsheikh et al. 2024](#)). Similarly, in Jordan, the "Media and Information Literacy" project has equipped journalists with the skills to critically evaluate sources and counter misinformation, promoting a more informed and inclusive public discourse ([Dayyeh and Al-Zaghlawan 2024](#)).

These examples underscore the critical role of journalism education in shaping a more inclusive and equitable society. By equipping journalists with the knowledge and skills to report accurately and sensitively, these programs contribute to a media landscape that values diversity, promotes understanding, and fosters social cohesion. Further research and investment in journalism education are essential to continue this positive trajectory, ensuring that journalists are well-prepared to meet the challenges of an ever-evolving global landscape.

4. Aim of the Study

To foster an inclusive environment, this research project involved implementing a training program to enhance positive attitudes towards inclusion and increase the propensity for socio-economic solidarity and activism. The program sought to achieve these goals by deepening participants' understanding of inclusive processes and journalism's role in creating inclusive contexts. The intervention was evaluated using a quasi-experimental design, which compared qualitative and quantitative data collected before and after the intervention and longitudinally throughout the nine training sessions.

To explore the effectiveness of the training program and its impact on participants, the following research questions were formulated:

- (a) To what extent do participants in the project demonstrate a significant increase in positive attitudes toward inclusion and a greater propensity toward a more supportive socio-economic vision and social activism?

- (b) How does the knowledge about inclusion change among participants, as indicated by the frequency of topics covered in post-test training sessions, such as attention to heterogeneity and consideration of diverse voices, and how does this knowledge affect the qualitative interpretation of data related to journalism professionalism?
- (c) What are the differences in participants' reflections on significant topics, such as inclusion, solidarity, and activism, across the nine educational training sessions?

5. Method

5.1. Participants

Sixty-one journalists, 21 men (34%) and 40 women (66%), took part in the project (M = 45.08; DS = 4.35), all of whom resided in Northeast Italy.

5.2. Measures

Quantitative instruments were used during the pre- and post-test phases, and qualitative instruments were used during the pre- and post-test and the training.

Specifically, the quantitative tools used were the following:

Attitudes toward Inclusion (Nota et al. 2020). The scale is based on ten items that are investigated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = agree; 5 = disagree) and the propensity participants have in accounting for inclusivity in a valuable cultural process of an entire context. An example of an item can be: "I think that in the future it may be necessary to stand up for those who may have suffered injustice and discrimination." (Alpha: 0.86). In a pilot study, focused on University professors, we used these ten items, and the alpha was 0.79. They correlated positively with more activism toward inclusion (Nota et al. 2020).

Thoughts on the development and economy of the future (Santilli et al. 2024). The questionnaire consists of 14 statements (items) focused on the way of seeing the socio-economic reality, for each of which people are asked to indicate how much they consider that way of thinking adequate for their professional future on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very inadequate; 5 = very adequate). Specifically, the instrument considers the propensity to give value to a more supportive economy (an example of an item: "To promote the development of the economy and employment it is necessary to ensure that wealth and well-being are fairly distributed"; Alpha. 87).

About thoughts, feelings, and actions towards what is not going as it should (Nota et al., in press). The tool investigates the propensity to conduct social activism in the presence of injustice, discrimination, difficulties, and threats to peace or life on our planet. It consists of 18 statements, and people are asked to indicate how much each describes them on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "the sentence describes me very little"; 5 = "the sentence describes it very much"; an example of item: "I organize events to protest against something or to demonstrate in favour of something"; alpha 0.91).

As regards qualitative assessment, we used the following procedures:

Knowledge toward Inclusivity Interview. Considering the studies by Nota (2020) and Nota et al. (2020), which suggested stimulating people's reflections on their inclusive knowledge, participants were invited to answer some questions proposed in an interview to collect the thoughts possessed about the idea of inclusion, sustainable development, the weight that contextual variables have towards discrimination processes, and the role of their profession concerning this. Some examples of questions proposed are as follows: "As you know, today we often talk about inclusion. . . What do you think about this? When, in your opinion, could a context be considered truly inclusive? What can the media do to promote inclusion?"

Ongoing self-reflection. Considering Wilkins-Yel et al.'s (2020) study and Santilli et al.'s (2021) suggestions regarding the engagement of ongoing self-reflection as salient in educational interventions, participants were invited to answer the following questions at the end of each training section: "The lesson of the program made me think about. . ."; "What struck me most about this lesson of the program. . .". People answered these questions nine times following the nine program lessons.

5.3. Procedure

National and local journalism trade unions recruited training participants, who described the project to their colleagues. The unions facilitated recruitment by contacting their members and providing detailed information about the training program. Interested participants were then enrolled and provided comprehensive materials and schedules for the nine-session training. Regular updates and feedback sessions were conducted throughout the program to ensure engagement and address emerging issues.

The training program “Telling the truth. How to inform by promoting an inclusive society” was conducted in nine synchronous online lessons for three hours each. With a laboratory approach, i.e., moments of encounter around a significant theme, which is deepened and placed at the base of discussions and reflection actions (Lindsay 2016), participatory training procedures have been launched that have promoted knowledge and the ability to reason on what is proposed until they arrive, thanks to the presence of creative drives and the availability towards interpersonal contamination, at the formulation of new ideas, intentions, resolutions, and objectives (Moon 2014; Deek et al. 2013).

Specifically, in the training program “Telling the truth. How to inform by promoting an inclusive society”, participants had the opportunity to work on different themes, such as, for example, poverty, inequality, polarization of wealth, increasing migration, the depletion of natural resources, the impact of technology on work and quality of life, the presence of increasingly precarious and undignified working conditions, manipulation of information, discrimination associated with gender, the presence of disabilities, mental health issues, precariousness, etc. Particular attention was paid to the theme of inclusion, through which the students were supported to give voice to situations of vulnerability, put the person at the centre by bringing out the contextual factors and barriers that underlie conditions of vulnerability, outline strategies to make their work more inclusive, pay attention to the voices of those who experience discrimination, promote forms of public debate on the causes of inequity and discrimination, use forms of inclusive language, emphasize human rights, and allow more people active participation in social and civil life.

On average, the project required 60 h of training activities and 190 h of individual study over six months. Participants received certification and ten university credits related to this experience.

5.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis Focused on Behaviours Toward Inclusivity. Concerning the evaluations obtained in the pre- and post-test phase in positive attitudes toward inclusion, a more supportive socio-economic vision, and a propensity towards social activism, we conducted repeated measures of analysis (MANOVA).

Qualitative Analysis Focused on Knowledge toward Inclusivity. To bring to the surface the semantic and thematic dimensions underlying the same textual collected data, the “corpus” was examined and analyzed. That translates into all the reflections on inclusion provided by the participants using a specific statistic software. The “corpus” considered was pre-processed through the dedicated software TaLTaC2 version 2.11.3.1 (Bolasco and De Mauro 2013), and the textual data were elaborated using the R3 software (version 4.3.1) and the Iramuteq, version 0.7 alpha 2 (Ratinaud 2009) software. The corpora were subsequently analyzed using a quanti-quantitative approach (Sbalchiero 2018) based on extracting “lexical worlds”. This has been performed to identify the portion of knowledge and reflections gathered that referred to the same topics (themes) by Reinert’s method (Sbalchiero and Tuzzi 2016).

Ongoing self-reflection. Finally, the results produced by Reinert’s method can be used to assess the classes’ association with the number of meetings from Nr. 1 to Nr. 9. Therefore, to verify the main topics that emerged and their distribution over time, we examined the longitudinal dimension of the lexical worlds (Ratinaud 2014b), which referred to the proportion of classes by meeting and the intensity of classes by meeting.

6. Results

Quantitative Analyses Results. Positive attitudes toward inclusion. The MANOVA showed a main effect for the time variable (pre- and post-test) [$F(1, 60) = 9.834, p = 0.003; \eta^2 \text{ squared} = 0.124$]. Post-test participants showed more positive attitudes than pre-test participants.

Supportive socio-economic vision. The MANOVA showed a main effect in pre- and post-test [$F(1, 60) = 32.956, p = 0.001; \eta^2 \text{ squared} = 0.458$]. Post-test participants showed more positive attitudes than pre-test participants.

The propensity towards activism. The MANOVA showed a main effect for the time variable (pre- and post-test) [$F(1, 06) = 5.238, p = 0.028; \eta^2 \text{ squared} = 0.204$]. Post-test participants showed more positive attitudes than pre-test participants.

The Table 1 reports the mean and standard deviation of each variables considered in quantitative analysis.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations.

	Pre Test		Post Test		Total	
	M	DS	M	DS	M	DS
Positive attitudes toward inclusion	11.49	1.95	13.50	3.55	12.41	2.96
Supportive socio-economic vision	26.91	3.56	29.48	3.10	28.09	3.58
The propensity towards activism	19.04	6.12	20.48	6.15	19.70	6.14

Qualitative Analysis Results. Knowledge toward Inclusivity. The corpus is composed of the answers provided by the program participants organized by the longitudinal variable, i.e., from meeting Nr.1 to meeting Nr.9. The corpus was pre-processed using IRaMuTeQ 0.7 alpha 2 software (Ratinaud 2014a; Sbalchiero 2018). The normalization consisted of replacing uppercase with lowercase letters, such as punctuation, numbers, and stop words, which were removed because they were not significant in content. Moreover, the pre-processing steps helped reduce redundancy and provide homogeneity among forms. In this regard, the lexicometric measures (Table 2) indicate that a statistical analysis of textual data is plausible for this corpus (Lebart et al. 1998), taking into consideration that the ratio between hapax and type is less than 50% (42.86%).

Table 2. Lexicometric characteristics of the analyzed corpus.

Number of Texts	9
(N) word-tokens	204,007
(V) word-type	11,443
(V1) Hapax	4904
$(V/N) \times 100 = \text{Type/Token Ratio}$	2.4
$(V1/V) \times 100 = \text{Percentage of hapax}$	42.86

By applying Reinert's (1993) method to our corpus, made available in the R-based version of IRaMuTeQ (Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires) (Ratinaud 2014a), we extracted a series of topics, or what Reinert (1993) calls "lexical worlds". Suppose the procedure has the advantage of identifying the lexical worlds contained in a corpus by reducing the biases of merely qualitative encoding on the other side. In that case, it permits the detection of topics more likely to appear as clues disseminated among participants' answers. The procedure involves several successive stages: after importing and pre-processing the corpus, the next step consists of the automated identification of minimal units called elementary context units (ECUs) following two empirical criteria: the length of the ECU (the maximum number of words

they can contain, 40 words by default), and punctuation marks (if an ECU ends at 38 with a dot, punctuation is respected). When applied to the corpus analyzed, this led to the identification of 5647 ECUs containing a mean of thirty-six words each.

The procedure identified seven classes (or lexical worlds), and it works well because almost nine out of 10 ECUs have been classified (87%). Consequently, the words characterizing a class are semantically associated and not only do they refer to the same issue, but they also interpret each class.

Specifically, Theme 1, sustainable development, brings together reflections on sustainable development and is characterized by words that recall the need to pay attention to pollution, consumption, and waste.

Theme 2, inclusion, is characterized by words that bring to the centre of attention inclusion, in their fullest and most current concepts, of combating inequalities and discrimination, of enhancing heterogeneity.

Theme 3, accuracy and inclusive language, is characterized by words that recall the importance of accuracy and careful and inclusive language, which avoids labels and stereotypes to prevent the spread of fake news and counter forms of hatred.

Theme 4, decent work, contains words that concern the idea of decent work based on fair compensation, safety, health protection and trade union protection.

Theme 5, equity, rights, and dignity, concerns words and phrases on the value to be provided to rights and equity in life contexts as goods to be safeguarded to guarantee human dignity.

Theme 6, the traditional role of journalism, concerns the importance of journalistic activities in bringing everyone information and knowledge that describes reality.

Theme 7, journalism as a process of approaching the truth, collects words and phrases related to the idea of a journalist or communication expert as a professional who seeks the truth, albeit with difficulty, considering the complexity, context, environmental variables, and individual ones. It makes deeper analyses, avoids reductivism and simplicities, and assumes a more significant social role for democracy.

Finally, the semantic classes were presented using the contributions of the χ^2 association (positive or negative association of the semantic classes for meetings) to compare the topics over the different meetings. As far as a given meeting can be represented as a distribution of semantic classes that characterize it, the contributions of the χ^2 association allow us to view the proportion of ECUs in each meeting from a longitudinal perspective (Figure 1). If a topic is discussed more during a given meeting, then the positive differences and the threshold for the significance of χ^2 will indicate an association between the meeting and semantic class. When specific topics (semantic classes) have positive values in a meeting, there is an association between the topic and the meeting; otherwise, negative values indicate that the topic is little or not present in the subjects' testimonies during that meeting.

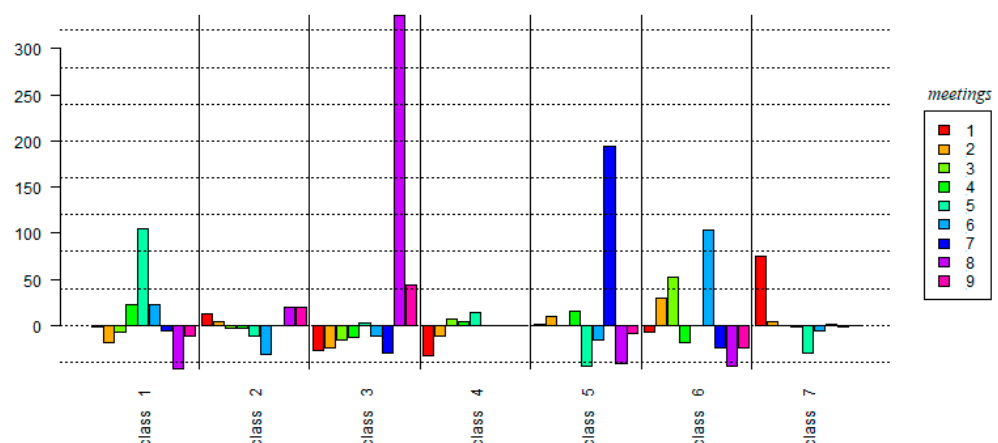


Figure 1. Association of semantic classes by meetings.

This representation reveals the trend of the topics over the meeting. While class 7 (which refers to reflections of the participants on the specific topic related to inclusion and the importance of journalism as a process of approaching the truth) was typical of the first meeting, a different trend can be seen, especially for class 3, related to the importance of accuracy and a careful and inclusive language, which avoids labels and stereotypes, in order to avoid the spread of fake news and to counter forms of hatred characterizing the last meetings (Nr. 8 and 9). The other issues raised concern specific discussions for meetings: Class 5 (language and human dignity as a whole) characterized meeting Nr. 7, while Class 1 (sustainable development) characterized multiple meetings (Nr. 4, 5, 6) as a theme emerged on several occasions. The other classes can be defined as “evergreen topics” because they are present across the different meetings, even to a different extent.

Therefore, the data obtained at the end of the training show that the participants are more likely to consider journalism a process of approaching the truth and inclusive language a tool to counteract the spread of discrimination.

Overall, the data highlight a tendency for the participants to reflect in a more complex and articulated way on the themes related to the value to be provided to rights and equity, environmental sustainability, inclusion and the fight against inequalities and discrimination, and the enhancement of heterogeneity.

From a longitudinal perspective, we can summarize the evolution of the themes that emerged during the different meetings. In the first meeting, as observed, they explored journalism as a process of approaching the truth related to the concept of a journalist and communication expert as a professional who seeks the truth, albeit with effort, considering complexity, context, environmental variables, and individual ones. From the initial framework, the discussions have contributed to addressing diverse topics in subsequent meetings under the logic of complexity, ranging from sustainable development to individual growth, while avoiding simplistic reductionism and emphasizing in-depth exploration.

7. Discussion

This research is based on the premise that all professions, including journalism, have a role in creating inclusive environments that prioritize rights and equity (Ferri 2020). This involves amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, challenging stereotypes, and fostering awareness of vulnerabilities. Such efforts empower citizens and contribute to a more active and equitable social and political system, aligning with the 2030 Agenda. Despite these goals, the literature indicates significant challenges in achieving them, often due to a need for specialized skills. This shortfall frequently reinforces existing power structures, reduces the representation of vulnerable groups, and limits diverse voices in media (McChesney 2008; Nota et al. 2020).

To address these issues, we implemented a training program to enhance journalists' knowledge of inclusion and encourage positive attitudes. This study examines the training's initial effectiveness by analyzing quantitative and qualitative data collected before and after the program, along with reflections from participants after each session.

In the post-test, quantitative results show that participants exhibited significantly higher positive attitudes toward inclusion and a greater inclination toward supporting a solidarity-based economy and social activism. These findings are consistent with those of Maniou et al. (2020), who emphasize that educational activities should prompt journalists to be accountable to society rather than solely to shareholders, owners, and advertisers, and to engage in public debates on social issues. Similarly, Araujo (2016) highlights that promoting a solidarity vision of the economy and social activism is crucial for fostering inclusive communities.

Qualitative results from interviews with participants reveal that the training deepened their understanding of inclusion. The thematic analysis indicates that their views on inclusion align with the contemporary literature and identify various barriers to achieving a quality life for all. This suggests that all professions, including journalism, are responsible for contributing to environments where everyone can participate fully and equitably.

(Bradley et al. 2023). Specifically, the analysis identified seven distinct thematic classes from the data, with 87% of the utterances being successfully classified into these categories. Each theme reflects a distinct aspect of the discussions and captures the complexity and depth of the participant's engagement with the training topics. The semantic classes provide a comprehensive view of how the training influenced participants' reflections on various aspects of journalism and social issues.

As regards ongoing reflection, we analyzed how the reflective process evolves in a group of journalism professionals who are participants in an educational activity and able to consider more frequently the issues related to inclusion.

The longitudinal analysis reveals a progression in the participants' focus throughout the training. Initially, there was a strong emphasis on the journalistic pursuit of truth, which gradually evolved into a broader engagement with themes like sustainable development, inclusion, and accurate reporting. This progression reflects an increasing depth of understanding and a more sophisticated approach to journalism's challenges.

The final sessions highlighted a shift towards a more critical and complex reflection on the role of journalism, with a notable increase in attention to inclusive language and the fight against discrimination. This evolution indicates that the training successfully facilitated a deeper engagement with these critical issues.

Our findings align with previous research and indicate that fostering an inclusive culture within journalism is feasible (Carballo et al. 2021). This is crucial, as journalists can play a pivotal role in promoting inclusion and preventing the exclusion or discrimination of individuals with disabilities and other vulnerabilities (Shpigelman et al. 2016; del Olmo Fernández et al. 2020).

Practical Implications: The results are encouraging and underscore the benefits of specialized postgraduate training for journalists. By focusing on contemporary challenges and inclusive practices, such training can enhance attitudes toward inclusion, foster a more supportive economic vision, and encourage social activism. This study highlights the potential for collaboration between journalism associations and universities to advance the 2030 Agenda goals, particularly those related to inclusion and quality education for journalism. Moreover, the laboratory-based training approach offers several advantages, including flexibility, ongoing communication, network support, easy access to resources, and substantial autonomy in learning (Carballo et al. 2021).

Limitations: Despite the promising results, this study has notable limitations. Firstly, the lack of a no-intervention control group prevents causal conclusions about the impact of the training. Future research should include experimental designs to address this gap. Secondly, as post-test data were collected immediately after the training, there needed to be a follow-up to assess the sustainability of the effects. Long-term evaluations are necessary to determine if booster sessions or continued training are needed. A third limitation is the absence of participant demographic data, such as gender, age, or academic rank, which could provide insights into how different groups benefit from the training. Addressing these limitations in future research could yield more detailed findings. Despite these constraints, the observed effects are promising, and further exploration of strategies to enhance journalists' understanding of inclusion and diversity remains essential.

8. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of continued investment in journalism education to foster a more inclusive and sustainable media landscape. The positive impact suggests that targeted training programs can enhance journalists' understanding of critical issues and promote a more reflective and socially responsible approach to their profession. As journalism continues to navigate an evolving global context, such educational initiatives will be crucial in shaping a media environment that upholds the principles of accuracy, inclusivity, and social justice.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

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