

# INCLUSIVENESS IN UKRAINIAN DIGITAL MEDIA

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The development of modern digital media not only contributes to the expansion of human capabilities, but also deepens social inequality. The Ukrainian media community has no positive experience in covering the problems of vulnerable social groups. As the media actively shapes public opinion and ideas, exacerbating the problem of tolerant public perception of ‘special’ people, the introduction of an inclusive approach in the media should be a priority.

Initially, the term ‘inclusion’ referred exclusively to people with disabilities. However, in certain life situations, it is not only people with disabilities who require inclusion, but any person generally. The term describes the process of inclusion of all citizens, especially those who have

problems in adapting to society. These include people with various forms of disabilities, national and gender minorities, people with non-traditional sexual orientations and the like. [1]

The issue of covering such a sensitive topic as inclusion has been repeatedly raised in the Ukrainian media. However, domestic journalism still does it somewhat clumsily, sometimes even offensively. For example, let us look at the headlines of two Ukrainian media outlets that covered the topic of people with disabilities:

1. Not “invalid”, but “a person with a disability”. The Rada supported the relevant bill (Ukrainska Pravda). [2]

2. A person will appear in Ukraine instead of “invalid”? (Zmina). [3]

Both materials cover the replacement of the term “invalid” with more correct alternatives. The publication “Ukrainska Pravda” informs its readers neutrally. Internet portal “Zmina” did not inform the audience about the law in the headline. The purpose of this media outlet is to draw attention to the news. This headline does not inform. It belittles the value of people with disabilities.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. Therefore, we raise the problem of verbal discrimination of certain social groups in the Ukrainian media environment, due to the lack of knowledge and experience of tolerant coverage of vulnerable groups. We analysed modern Ukrainian digital media and the works of predecessors with similar themes to comprehensively outline the problem.

By the example of these headlines, we can observe one of the most common problems of Ukrainian journalism - hate speech. A large number of attributes of hate speech have been formed as a reaction to specific social phenomena and incidents, and adapted according to the national legislation. An inclusive approach to the design of journalistic materials suppresses any derogatory terms against social minorities. [4]

For example, it is legally acceptable for people with any physical or mental disability to be referred to as a “person with a disability. To use such words as “invalid”, “cripple”, “inferior”, “down”, “imbecile” and others is unacceptable, because it suppresses the dignity of such people and further alienates them from society. This also applies to people of other nationalities. Such words as “Negro”, “Khach”, “Yid”, “Gypsy” should disappear from the vocabulary of a tolerant journalist.

However, the Ukrainian media community can give examples of publications that are competent and tolerant in covering the topic of inclusion. These are such publications as «Wonderzine» and «Zaborona». Below are examples of inclusive materials from the above-mentioned media.

«Zaborona» is an independent neo-newspaper about trends in society and culture in the post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe. The media

project focuses on uncomfortable, taboo, counter-versus-sensitive topics and tells them through personal stories.

«Wonderzine» is a relatively young women's magazine. Writes about careers, relationships, sex, health, style, culture, awareness and equality. Focuses on coverage of topics of gender equality and LGBT communities.

So, inclusiveness is an important component of modern Ukrainian journalism. Media representatives must be tolerant, educated and media literate in order to avoid conflicts and incitement of social discord. Discriminatory statements should disappear forever from the texts of Ukrainian journalists in order to build a quality, healthy and inclusive media community.

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