

1430 – 1830 Which role can media play in fighting stereotypes & discrimination?

Stereotypes are as old as mankind. They reflect ideas and images that one group or society holds about others who are different from their own. In the era of mass-communication, media play a crucial role in creating and perpetuating stereotypes. They may reflect the biases of journalists or may just be used for providing a quick identity for a person or group that is easily recognized by the audience. Deadlines looming, it is sometimes faster and easier to use stereotypes to characterize a person instead of providing for a more complex explanation.

When features such as gender, nationality, religious beliefs, ethnic background, profession, age or social status are associated with certain expectations and limit the chances of a person or a social group in society, stereotypes turn into prejudices and can lead to discrimination. At the same time, media can also help to prevent discriminatory behavior by offering balanced information and unprejudiced reporting. In order to do so, media have to be(come) aware of their responsibilities and understand the dynamics of how stereotypes are produced and diffused.

This **Open Space Session** provides all participants with the opportunity to share their experiences and start a dialogue about how media in Asia and Europe are facing those challenges. With the help of experienced moderators, participants are asked at the start to jointly create their own agenda by raising subjects they are passionate about. In the following, they can host their individual discussion groups, e.g. about topics such:

Are there regional differences in using stereotypes both between and within Asian and European countries? What kind of stereotypes are most likely to be reproduced unquestioned? What effects does the usage of stereotypes have on social and political developments? And how can media contribute to overcome cultural misunderstanding within different societies? Can we identify best practices for doing so?

How can journalists best be trained to act and react sensitively in an environment where discrimination is omnipresent? With whom lies the responsibility to provide such training? What can management do to organize an institution to work according to such principles? What effects do different types of media like radio, television, print media or the internet have in spreading and challenging stereotypes? And in how far do stereotyping and discrimination hinder achieving the MDGs?

Facilitators: **Jost Wagner**

German consultant, trainer and facilitator based in Thailand

Janice Lua

Co-Founder, Facilitators Network Singapore

Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available during the whole session

1745 – 1830 Plenary discussion of points raised in the Open Space Session