2023-2024

# RJI Fellows Six-month Impact Report





Each year the Reynolds Journalism Institute empowers a cohort of Fellows to transform their expertise into accessible, free and innovative resources for the journalism industry.

News organizations can use the tools from the 2023-2024 class of RJI Fellows to support journalists in reporting after natural disasters, foster healthy newsroom culture to prevent burnout, raise the voices of marginalized communities, and address other critical needs.

In the six months since the Fellows presented their projects in a **public webinar** on March 15, 2024, their resources have found wide interest across the industry.

**Used by** 

300+

Newsrooms

**Journalists** 

Presented to

1,000+ 30+

**People** 

**Conferences & Demos** 

#### 2023-2024 Fellows

- María Arce, ARENA
- Tamoa Calzadilla and Factchequeado,
   Guide for Journalists Covering Latino
   and Spanish-Speaking Communities
- Stacy Feldman, <u>Pop-up Community</u>
   Newsroom Toolkit
- Kate Maxwell, the Local News Go Bag

- Jennifer Mizgata, Building News Culture
- Arjuna Soriano, Community Sports
   Reporting Toolkit and Playbook
- Celia Wu and Global Press, Global Press
   Style Guide Google Chrome Extension
- Ariel Zych and Science Friday, Getting Started with Sensitivity Professionals

## Spotlight

Here's a closer look at some of our Fellows' projects and their impact on local news.

#### Local News Go Bag



Kate Maxwell presents the Local News Go Bag at the Online News Association's 2024 annual conference on September 20 in Atlanta



A great example of a proactive approach to preparing for crisis' coverage.

early user

The Local News Go Bag has been presented at conferences and webinars such as SRCCON, Rural Roundtable, and ONA, as well as crossindustry gatherings like the annual Natural Hazards Research workshop. The Local Independent Online Publishers newsletter spotlighted it as "One Great Idea" and it's been featured in Editor & Publisher.

Local newsrooms across the United Statesfrom large urban startups to small rural
outlets—have used The Local News Bag to
create or refine their emergency operation
plans. Many newsrooms have used the
resource to advocate for management support
in disaster preparedness and to prioritize
community engagement initiatives.

The Local News Go Bag serves as an ongoing resource for **community-centered disaster coverage**, providing reporters with actionable information, tools, and resources to meet critical information needs during times of crisis.

#### Guide for Covering Latino and Spanish-Speaking Communities



Tamoa Calzadilla speaks about misinformation with Félix de Bedout June 23, 2024 on Univision's Al Punto

The guide... is very useful, especially for people venturing into the world of fact-checking, as they can find everything in one place and with examples.

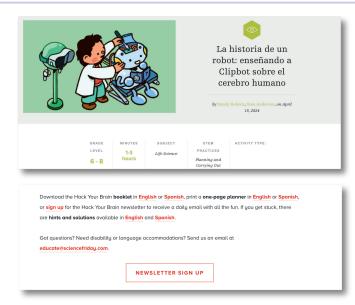
Tal Levy, Editor, elDetector

Journalists have learned how to address misinformation affecting Latino communities through **presentations** of this guide at over **10 conferences,** including API's Local News Summit, the News Literacy Project, and the International Symposium on Online Journalism (ISOJ).

Members of Factchequeado's Spanish-language newsroom network received training in debunking myths, reaching Latino communities effectively through WhatsApp, utilizing tools like Google Lens and Invid, and detecting Al-generated images. The guide has been shared with more than **90 media organizations** and over 13 journalism programs including at Florida International University, UCLA, and Rutgers.

This bilingual toolkit offers 17 practical tools and methods to combat misinformation and address information deserts within Latino and Spanish-speaking communities.

### Getting Started With Sensitivity Readers



Following toolkit recommendations, Science Friday translated Hack Your Brain into Spanish and included instructions for disability accommodations The Sensitivity Reader guide has been shared with the membership of LION Publishers, INN, and Gather, giving journalists a fresh approach to keeping their newsrooms' style guides up-to-date and inclusive.

Science Friday's education team used the toolkit to **minimize ableism** in the design of the educational activities for their Hack Your Brain program.

This toolkit supports newsrooms in sourcing, selecting, compensating, and collaborating with editors whose responsibility it is to **prevent the marginalization** of specific communities and identities.

This kit helped us identify blindspots and address them, improving the overall quality of the work and reducing the potential for harm.

Sandy Roberts, Education Program Manager, Science Friday

#### Amateur Radio Emergency Newsroom Alliance (ARENA)



María Arce distributed 250 copies of the ARENA booklet at the Online News Association's 2024 annual conference September in Atlanta

ARENA trains reporters to share **critical information** and **alerts** in the aftermath of a **natural disaster** by working independently and in tandem with local ham radio operators. With training and equipment, ARENA members stand ready to keep communities informed when it matters most.

ARENA's approach to disaster communication has been presented at the Radically Rural workshop, the Online News Association's annual conference, and the Natural Hazard Workshop.

And in a more comprehensive pilot approach, seven reporters from two newsrooms—El Vocero de Puerto Rico and Global Press Journal's Puerto Rico bureau—have received **radio equipment**, obtained General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) **licenses**, and participated in **training** and **drills** with local ham radio operators and the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Puerto Rico team.



El Vocero and Global Press reporters train with the Puerto Rico Community Communication and Amateur Radio Emergency Service teams in March 2024 at the Emergency Management Office in Caguas, Puerto Rico

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After Hurricane Maria's impact, the communications system's fragility became visible. This radio represents an auxiliary tool that allows me to continue my work, even in extreme cases like the one we have already experienced.

Gabriela Meléndez, associate reporter, Global Press Journal

#### Building News Culture



Photo credit: Fig Media

Jennifer Mizgata speaks at the "Building Work Culture" session at LION's 2024 Independent News Sustainability Summit on September 6 in Chicago

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I just completed the Building News Culture course...
It's a fairly light lift, but it inspired some heavy reflection. As a leader in a newsroom, I endeavor to be part of the change.

course participant

Two partners have committed to translating Building News Culture to reach new audiences: <u>LION Publishers</u> will produce a **Spanish** version and <u>Médianes</u> will create a **French** translation.

To date, more than **300 people,** including **news leaders** from Fort Worth Report, VT Digger, Wisconsin Watch, Cedar Rapids Gazette, The Marshall Project, Globe and Mail, and The Washington Post, have taken the course.

This six-week newsletter course empowers news leaders who want to build culture with actionable steps that anyone aiming to make change can use. Subscribers receive weekly emails that explore how **culture** shows up in news organizations, complete with frameworks and examples of **policies**, **programs**, and **practices**.

#### Who we are

The Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) empowers journalists with knowledge, tools and funding to strengthen journalism through practical innovation.

Learn how to apply for fellowships, get involved, and implement tools and workflows from the Reynolds Journalism Institute in your news organization

**Fellowships** 

rjionline.org/about-rji-fellowships/

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