Promoting Media and Information Literacy for Open and Inclusive Development

What is the relationship between media and truth? From
http://youngjournalists.org/index.php/en/international?limitstart=0

Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):	Global; Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean including countries such as Uganda, Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Philippines, Myanmar, Timor Leste, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Croatia, Serbia, Albania, Lithuania, Turkey, Honduras, Bolivia, Guatemala, Suriname, Belize, Guyana etc.
Duration (in months):	42 months
Name and Unit of project Officer	Alton Grizzle, CI/FEM/MDAS
Partner(s) institutions:	UNAOC European Commission Global Alliance for Partnerships on MIL International Federation of Library Associations World Broadcasting Union International Federation of Journalists
Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs	12,000,000 USD **(This amount can be partially or fully supported)**

Rationale and background

Media and other information providers, including those on the Internet, play an essential role as drivers of sustainable development. They influence the way people learn about themselves and the world around them. They can affect the way other peoples, cultures, religions and ethnic groups are perceived. Finally, they aid the understanding of inclusive politics and governance, environment, human rights, global citizenship in a digital age, and other sustainable development issues.

For media to effectively contribute to development, they must be *free, independent and pluralistic.*

The problem is that there often exists a dichotomy in media development between the necessity to be viable and prioritizing the public interest. Often there is a disconnection between media and civil society. This is particularly so with traditional media. On one hand media are seen as elitist by civil society. On the other, civil society lack the competencies to hold media and other information providers, including those on the Internet, accountable. In the online environment citizens lack the competencies assess their behavior online and that of others, including in relation to growing occurrences of hate speech.

In emerging democracies and economies such as target countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean media development processes often lacks strong civil society involvement. Focus is, out of necessity, given to training of journalists and media owners, self-regulation; professional standards and ethics.

Therefore, the ideals of free, independent and pluralistic media fall short of public expectations. Consequently, media integrity and their contribution to sustainable development come into disrepute.

Free, independent and pluralistic media and central to building inclusive knowledge societies.

This project aims at building the national capacities on media and information literacy (MIL) enabling the appropriation of media and information as a mean to strengthen relationship between and media and civil society thereby enhancing free, independent and pluralistic media in targeted countries. In turn, this will lead to open and inclusive development.

AFRICA
Africa's priority is on access to information and knowledge. The media, Internet, and ICTs - when they are free, independent and pluralistic, can greatly facilitate access to information. However, there remain substantive challenges related to furthering their reach and addressing media and information literacy needs among all citizens to stimulate effective participation in the democratic and governance processes. Having access to information is a necessity but the impact of this access is magnified exponentially when citizens have the competencies (knowledge, skills and attitude) to critically and effectively engage with the media, internet and other information providers. Africa is lagging behind the rest of the world with respect to take-up of media and information literacy. There are promising initiatives in a few countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda, Morocco and others. In the main, not much attention is being given to the importance of media and information literacy on the continent. UNESCO is mindful of this situation and is currently in dialogue and partnerships with stakeholders in Africa to change this trend.

Why UNESCO?

UNESCO is well positioned to execute this work as the only UN Agency mandated to promote media development. The organization is a global leader in promoting media and information literacy (MIL) as a tool for sustainable development.

The project will be on UNESCO's on-going work in the area of MIL. Resources relating to MIL policies, training, assessment, and media advocacy will be a basis of the projects implementation strategy. The recently launched [Global Alliance for Partnerships on MIL (GAPMIL)](#) and the African GAPMIL Chapter will form a part of the project.

In an information driven world, information and knowledge become the life blood to development and good governance. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) requires that people of all level of society acquire skills to access and critically evaluate information and to effectively engage with media of all forms. Therefore, the project should also have a significant impact on the achievement of international goals, particular it aims at contributing to implementation of the MDGs.

The target countries to be selected have a lot in common with respect to sustainable development issues. They have vast land spaces, huge population sizes and in some cases similar, political, economic, and environment issues.

Overall Goal/Objective

The overall goal of the project is to promote media and information literacy to strengthen free, independent and pluralistic media thereby improving open and inclusive development in targeted countries.

The two main objectives are:
- Civil society, media organizations, and governments would have acquired improved capacities on media and information literacy and are to take steps to advocate for and engage free, independent and pluralistic media for open and inclusive development;
- More journalists, information specialists, and media in the practice of self-regulation would have acquired knowledge of media and information literacy and citizens' engagement and will integrate this knowledge to improve self-regulatory mechanism.

Main expected results

- Target countries facilitated to develop national MIL policies and strategies and integrate these with related, media, information, ICTs and education policies
- Civil society - women and men of all ages at all levels of society - are empowered to advocate for free, independent and pluralistic media;
- Strengthen the Global Alliance for Partnerships on MIL to promote MIL as a tool for open and inclusive development;
- Journalists/media and journalism training institutions acquire greater awareness of and promote MIL as civic education;
- Dialogue between media, civil society and journalists strengthened to raise professional and ethical standards.

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

Package MIL Toolkit for use by countries at national level

Based on existing MIL and media self-regulation resources developed by UNESCO, complete multimedia and interactive toolkit will be prepared and made accessible to respective stakeholders online and on CD-ROM. These will include but not limited to:
1. Media and Information Literacy Policy and Strategy Guidelines
2. Media and Information Literacy Curriculum
3. Global MIL Assessment Framework
4. MIL Online course for professional and for young people, civil society in general.
5. Guidelines for Broadcasters to Promoting User-generated content and MIL
6. Civic Education for Journalists
7. Professional Journalism and Self-regulation

The tool will have different entry points and guided access for each beneficiary and stakeholder group targeted in the project.

<u>National Consultations to adapt the UNESCO MIL Policy and Strategy Guidelines including basic assessment of country-readiness for media and information literacy</u>

With a view undertake necessary situation analysis, basic country-readiness assessment will be carried out. This will take the form of series of consultative meetings with key beneficiaries and stakeholders. The consultative meetings will also facilitate the development of national MIL policies and strategies and concrete steps to integrate these with national policies, regulation and laws relating to access to information, freedom of expression, media regulation and self-regulation, libraries, ICTs and education.

<u>National programmes developed to integrate MIL into formal and non-formal education</u>

The national policies and strategies will pave the way for national MIL programmes. This will include a piloting of the UNESCO MIL Curriculum in selected training institutions, MIL programmes in the media and in various civil society groups, including youth groups. Illustratively, existing online MIL courses will be adapted in local languages and training for youth groups and NGOs on MIL, including media self-regulatory bodies, their benefits and use will be carried out – to stimulate public demand for quality journalism.

<u>Training programmes on MIL for government officials</u>

Training will be carried both face-to-face and online and will focus on policy makers, senior government representatives and technocratic in relevant ministries. The workshops will serve to increase government's awareness of MIL and it linkage to free, independent and pluralistic media – and in turn all aspects of sustainable development.

<u>Support to citizens' media groups to monitor and hold media accountable based on MIL related training</u>

Existing citizen's media groups will be identified. Where these do not exist steps will be taken to establish such groups in target countries. Comprehensive media monitoring programmes will be developed building on existing resources, as far as this is possible. Regular feedback will be given to the media and relevant self-regulatory bodies/mechanism. This activity will be linked to the setting-up/strengthening of self-regulatory mechanisms and support to media to develop internal mechanisms for self-regulation.

<u>Expansion of the international MIL Clearinghouse and Global database of MIL experts and activities</u>

In an effort to link-up similar initiative being carried on globally including on the African continent and facilitate knowledge sharing, existing platforms such as the international MIL clearinghouse and the Global Alliance for Partnerships on MIL and the WSIS knowledge communities will be enlisted in this project. These will be expanded, uniting media professionals, and civil society. A particular focus will be given to an African wide MIL observatory.

<u>Launch of an MIL application competition for mobile devices</u>

The MIL application competition for mobile devices will enable another access point for citizens to become more media and information literate. It will also serve a social mobilization purpose in the area of citizens' advocacy for free, independent and pluralistic media. In

addition partnerships will be explored with online media and information providers, computer and mobile devices manufacturers, software development companies, social network operators, digital libraries and other to include a special standardized icon in online media and information services and in all computer devices and software. When users click on this icon they will receive tips and advice related to MIL which is relevant to the online media and information service, device, and software.

<u>Develop a social media strategy on MIL linked to media ethics and self-regulation etc.</u>

In tandem with the MIL mobile application this activities will enable citizens to become media and information literate in their regular or day-to-day online experiences and to use these skills to enhance their online practices. The social media strategy on MIL will also facilitate grassroots advocacy on media ethics and self-regulation.

Other activities will include: 1) joint Meeting of UN Agencies on Media and information literacy as a basis for open and inclusive development, 2) research on the impact of MIL on women/men and boys/girl, this will include process documentation, 3) joint training of journalists, editors, self-regulatory bodies, teachers etc. on MIL, 4) support to the setting-up/strengthening of self-regulatory mechanisms with direct citizens' involvement, and 5) Support to strengthen the [International University Network on Media and Information Literacy](#), including the expansion of [Media and Information Literacy Week](#).

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

The direct beneficiaries are women/men of all ages, civil society organizations, journalists, media organizations and governments in targeted countries. Other key stakeholders will include national, regional and international development partners.

The design of the project is based on consultation with many stakeholders before, during and after the [Global Forum for Partnership on MIL](#). It is framed by the [Framework and Plan of Action for GAPMIL](#) and will be implemented in collaboration members of GAPMIL. This will ensure that the ownership, rights, interests, opportunities, needs and participation of the key beneficiary groups are addressed.

Implementation strategy

In addition to the activities mentioned above, the overall strategic approach will be centered on partnerships. The project will seek to build on and link-up existing initiatives and will only start new interventions in countries where these do not exist.   UNESCO has already carried a global survey of organizations working on MIL. The organization has also carried out assessment of professional media standards and self-regulation globally. The information gathered will be part and parcel of the approach to concretize strategic partnerships with on-going actions as key inputs for the project.

Additional assessment will be carried out to set up multi-stakeholder implementation groups at country and regional levels. This will include relevant gender analysis to inform design of national and regional strategies.

Following the above assessment country and regional level action plans will be articulated.

The three broad stakeholder groups, media, civil society and governments will be treated with equal importance. However, tailored strategy will be designed in line with the unique peculiarities of each. There will be a combination of interventions targeting each group individually and collectively.

Government buy-in will be secured for all countries involved.

Monitoring and evaluation will be an integral part of project implementation so that implementation strategies can be changed as needed. A multi-stakeholder group will be put in place to lead this process and an online mechanism linked the MIL clearinghouse established for real time feedback from project beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Sustainability and exit strategy

In line with the implementation strategy briefly described above, sustainability will be assured through the types of partnerships established for project implementation. For one the activities, will as far as is possible seek to build on related work being carried out by a partner organizations (civil society, governments or media) in target countries or at an international level. This way the project will enhance their capacity. The interventions will be institutionalized and thus follow-up ensured. For training activities, a combination of online and face-to-face training will be undertaken. Training material will be packaged and will be made available as open educational resources to enable future training after the project ends.

Steps will be taken to ensure that by the end of the project media organizations, governments, and international development partners would have integrated MIL in their on-going and future programmes. This will enable continuation of relevant actions.

A donor/development agency framework which is to arise from this project will contribute to replication and scaling-up of relevant activities. Partnerships will also be sought with private sector organizations.