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UNESCO MIL ALLIANCE NEWS UPDATE

EDITORIAL

A CALL TO SEEK, SHARE AND ACT ON FACTUAL INFORMATION

March 2021 marks over one year since the universal lockdown occasioned by the need to curb the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. As the prevailing global topic of the year 2020, continuing in 2021, the world has since witnessed the radical polarization, divided opinions and “different facts and belief-systems”. This is especially manifested among global citizens on social media platforms. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has dubbed the disinformation aspects of this global crisis as an infodemic - “an overabundance of information, some accurate and some not, that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources or reliable guidance when they need it”. (WHO, 2020)

Alongside the coronavirus, misinformation has spread far and wide, hampering the management of the pandemic with the drowning of factual information and credible sources needed to inform remedial and preventive action. In Africa for example, governments have taken different paths and adopted varying health protocols in the management of the pandemic, with mixed results. Now, the main challenge concerning the management of the pandemic is overcoming misinformation and conspiracy theories around Covid-19 vaccination. In the words of University of Utah’s Thi Nguyen, “the crucial issue right now isn’t what people hear, but whom to believe.” And this is where media and information literacy strategies are called upon to complement the efforts by healthcare experts and other players to contain the coronavirus.

The UNESCO MIL Alliance and the World Health Organisation are considering a partnership to adopt a media and information literacy approach for effective communication on Covid-19 issues. There is need to consolidate factual information from various experts and actors at the global, regional and national levels, and forge key collaborations in the preparation and dissemination of targeted information for various audiences, communities and groups.

The UNESCO MIL Alliance continues to play a key role in this regard as we forge ahead towards the achievement of the stated goal -media and information literacy for all, and by all.

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NOTE BY ALTON GRIZZLE - UNESCO Programme Specialist on MIL

Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week 2021, 24-31 October is fast arriving. This year, the Global MIL Week Feature Events will be hosted by South Africa. The Feature Events will be mostly online due to the continuing health crisis. UNESCO and partners call on all stakeholders around to start preparing local actions, online and offline, to celebrate the Week. Let us make Global MIL 2021 even bigger than on our collective success in 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/globalmilweek>. (click to read more about the 2020 outcomes).

NEWS

BRAZIL - From April 28th to 30th, the “Oikonomia” Online Festival will celebrate MIL and “educommunication” in Sao Jose dos Campos, Brazil. The speakers will address topics on media and community education. It includes the participation of Alexandre Sayad and Ismar Soares, MIL experts. Register free at <http://oikonomia.educomlab.com.br>

Research Meeting of Thot-CRIACOM took place on February 13, presenting the research “More women in politics: a challenge for the Thousand Cities” by author: Wania Torres, Journalist, press officer for the City of São Paulo and mediated by Prof. Dr. Felipe Chibás Ortiz, Thot-CRIARCOM Coordinator and UNESCO MIL Alliance Latin America Representative.

CYPRUS - The production of short films on cyber safety aims at cultivating key competences like autonomous learning, communication and collaboration, creativity and innovation -media and information literacy skills, while promoting responsible attitudes towards a safe and creative use of the internet. The contest was open to primary and secondary education students.
<https://internetsafety.pi.ac.cy/competition-details/short-video-2020-2021>

GREECE- EKOME organizes its 3rd webinar within EKOME MIL Webinar Series on 6th April, 2021 (16.00-17.00 EET) with a topic on MIL and Digital Skills. UNESCO MIL Alliance International Steering Committee co- Chair, Alex Le Voci Sayad, will be among the guest speakers alongside Alesandra Falconi from Zaffiria, Italy and Cristina Pulido from Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain. Watch it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHv9BMdI6Ec>

JORDAN-Ambassador Mr. Mohammad Asad, the Technology and Innovative Solutions Officer at EMPHNET has been working with the Ministry of Health in Jordan as information management expert to analyse records of covid 19 cases in Jordan, and contributed to a public webinar on 'Youth Engagement for Global Action' conducted during the International Youth Day by World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNESCO.

KENYA - The Centre for Media and Information Literacy - Kenya (CMIL- Kenya) is developing the organisation's strategic plan to align its programme themes on MIL partnerships, advocacy, awareness creation, research, resource development and capacity building within the newly developed MIL Alliance strategic plan and guidelines. Partnerships between the centre and Youth Cafe, Kenya Libraries Association and International Leadership University, are in the offing.

SPAIN - The Catalan Audiovisual Council is working on the implementation of the EDUMEDIATEST Project, currently carrying out the local pilot test of the IT tool. Also, was a meeting of the Media Literacy Platform of Catalonia in which there was a presentation by the Irish regulator BAI and the Irish National Media Literacy Coordinator about the main activities in MIL carried out in Ireland. The CAC is also active on the disinformation on Covid-19 vaccines.

NORTH AMERICA- EUROPE -The North American-European Regional Committee for UNESCO's MIL Alliance had its recent quarterly meeting on Feb 5. Committee members volunteered their time to provide insights into regional activities and practices for the International Steering Committee. Leaders from each SubChapter in our region participated.

The European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL 2021) previously planned 20-23 September 2021 will be held as an online event. All information and important dates regarding the conference are visible here: <http://ecil2021.ilconf.org/important-dates/>

WORLDWIDE - TAKORAMA 2021, under the patronage of UNESCO, a free online short film festival for teacher, students and children around the world, is opening for participation. <https://www.takorama.org>

MEET THE UNESCO MIL ALLIANCE ISC

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/gapmil/isc>

**ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE UNESCO
MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY ALLIANCE?**

To join, visit and contact the steering committee,

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/gapmil/about>.

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