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UNESCO MIL ALLIANCE NEWS UPDATE

EDITORIAL

STRENGTHENING PRESS FREEDOM AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITH MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

With the theme “Information as a Public Good,” World Press Freedom Day 2021 emphasized the importance of enhancing media and information literacy (MIL) to empower people to protect and defend journalism as an important part of information as a public good.

Media and information literate individuals are able to effectively access, analyze, critically evaluate, interpret, use, create, and disseminate information and media content, through creative, legal, and ethical means, using appropriate channels and tools.

These competencies therefore enable people to understand and appreciate the role of a free, independent, and transparent press that holds power to account, keeps the public informed, provides a platform for people’s voices, and facilitates discussions on matters of public interest. At the same time, MIL empowers citizens to demand reliable information, independence, transparency, and accountability from the media.

Efforts to increase MIL around the world were discussed during World Press Freedom Day 2021 activities. As MIL initiatives multiply, however, new challenges continue to emerge.

Misinformation and disinformation are among the problems that persist globally, and the mechanisms for spreading false information have become increasingly sophisticated, especially on the internet. This “infodemic” adds another layer of complexity to the challenge of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, as it has made it more difficult for the public to access reliable health information.

Another related challenge is the economic viability of the media, another sub-theme tackled in this year’s World Press Freedom Day activities. With the shutdown of news outlets in different parts of the world, whether for economic or political reasons, it is the people who suffer the consequences of losing credible information sources.

The decline in public trust in the media, the reliance on social media platforms as information sources, and attacks on the credibility of news outlets and journalists are equally urgent issues that require continuous research and attention.

More MIL initiatives are needed as different countries face these complex, interconnected problems. There is a need for continuous multisectoral and community-based efforts to educate citizens about the importance of the press and the role of the public in ensuring the sustainability and accountability of the news media, as they protect press freedom and continue to demand quality journalism.

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NEWS

- 1. UNESCO's New MIL Model Curriculum Launched.** The second edition of UNESCO's MIL Model Curriculum was launched during the international high level event, "Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically Click Wisely!" held recently. To know more about the new MIL Curriculum and the event, please visit https://en.unesco.org/news/media-and-information-literate-citizens-think-critically-click-wisely_
- 2. Conversations with Asian MIL Experts Held.** The UNESCO MIL Alliance Asia-Pacific Chapter, in cooperation with the Philippine Association for Media and Information Literacy (PAMIL), held its webinar with Asian MIL experts with the theme "MIL and Press Freedom" last May 8. The guests included Prof. Ramon Tuazon (Philippines), Dr. Sabariah Mohamed Salleh (Malaysia), Prof. Jun Sakamoto (Japan) and Dr. Kyoko Murakami (Japan). Related information on the event is available in this link <https://www.facebook.com/107220347346018/videos/193878872453987>.
- 3. IFLA Conducts Webinar on Digital Fatigue.** The IFLA Africa Section Standing Committee proudly hosted a panel discussion on the subject of "Digital Fatigue, InfoDemic and Meta Literacy", last May 14. The panellists included Rachel Fischer (South Africa), Collence Chisita (South Africa) and Sarah Kaddu (Uganda). Forty participants joined across Africa and engaged in discussion on digital wellness, digital hygiene, emotional diets, infobesity, and the management of information consumption.
- 4. Critical Thinking in Video Games Webinar Conducted.** The webinar, "Digital Playgrounds: young gamers and critical thinking: How video games can foster critical thinking in children" was developed by Games For Impact and Indigames Poland, with Sherri Hope Culver as guest speaker. Available to stream at <https://centermil.org/2021/04/09/digital-playgrounds-webinar/>
- 5. NAMLE Conference Now Accepts Applicants.** Attend the virtual conference for the National Association for Media Literacy Education. July 16-18, 2021. Details available here: <https://namleconference.net/>
- 6. World Press Freedom Day 2021 Celebrated.** UNESCO convened the Asia Pacific Regional Forum to discuss the sub-themes of World Press Freedom Day 2021: Media viability, transparency of online platforms, and media and information literacy in the region. The moderated discussions brought out experiences and insights from New Zealand, Myanmar, India, South Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand.

NEWS

7. **Global Media and Information Literacy 2021 Event Planning Underway.** UNESCO has started planning for this year's Global Media and Information Literacy Week celebration. The global theme will be announced soon. Please read the report for Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2020 here, <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/globalmilweek>.

8. **Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Journalism Handbook Now Off the Press.** Check out the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy in Journalism: A handbook for journalists and journalism educators, https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/mil_eng.pdf. The handbook includes both practical and theoretical material, as well as exercises, case studies and practical tools to help promote a deeper understanding and to support its translation into practice. The handbook deals with the notion of 'fake news' and disinformation, provides a conceptual framework for media and information literacy underlining its relevance and importance for journalism, as well as explores principles and roles of media and information literacy in journalism education.

9. **Cambridge University Lauds UNESCO Campaign Against Misinformation.** Cambridge University research confirms that UNESCO's #ThinkBeforeSharing infographics are effective in that they increased people's perception of the manipulation related to misinformation, increased their confidence in spotting misinformation, and reduced their reported willingness to share it. Read more here, <https://en.unesco.org/news/qa-inoculating-against-covid-19-misinformation> and see more infographics for download and sharing here, <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/communicationinformationresponse/visualresources>. Join us on MIL CLICKS for more <https://en.unesco.org/MILCLICKS>.

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<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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