



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Global Framework for Media and Information Literacy Cities (MIL Cities)

May 2019

Proclamation

We the 500 participants of the Feature Events of the 7th celebration of Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week, under the theme “MIL Cities: Voices, Power, and Change Makers”, have deliberated and adopted the *Global Framework for Media and Information Literacy Cities (MIL Cities)*.

We call on UNESCO and other international, regional and national partners to take the necessary steps to operationalize MIL Cities as set forth below.

Global Framework for Media and Information Literacy Cities (MIL Cities)

Background and Rationale

The history of promoting media and information literacy¹ (incorporating information literacy, media literacy, digital literacy and other literacies), to enable people's critical thinking or critical competencies, dates back many years. UNESCO has been involved in this work as early as the 1980's.

However, the integration of media and information literacy (MIL) into formal and life-long learning education systems has not progressed as rapidly as it should. UNESCO and its partners continue to call for this, as well as for including advancement of a media and information literate citizenry firmly on the global development agenda. On the positive side, it is understood today that MIL should be integrated into formal, non-formal and informal education, different types of clubs in schools, social media strategies etc. Stakeholders should explore more creative ways to build bridges between formal and non-formal educational efforts that are needed to enhance the diffusion of MIL competencies. Modalities for raising awareness and training about MIL have also evolved. They include face-to-face workshops, learning videos and other multimedia resources, radio and television programmes, basic online courses, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), etc.

In this context, UNESCO and partners are developing the concept of "MIL Cities" to promote creative dissemination of MIL knowledge in all forms of city activities. By taking a place-based approach, it aims to enable creative ways to promote MIL education as a complement to formal education, stimulating the involvement of non-traditional stakeholders. These new stakeholders go beyond core MIL institutions such as schools, libraries and journalists, and include municipalities and networks of mayors, election commissions and related networks, transportation systems, film councils, media regulators, entertainment and health and other social sectors, art schools and other culture groups, city museums, creative city networks, environmental conservation and waste management actors, professional associations, research institutions, NGO's, local communities and other social centres, among others. Cities are catalysts for social and civic participation, including critical engagement. **By "cities" reference is made to local authorities and other private and public organizations/institutions instrumental to community life as listed above. Rural settlements are thus not excluded from aspiring to or becoming MIL Cities.**

¹ For UNESCO, includes a set of competencies to search, critically evaluate, use and contribute information and media content wisely; knowledge of one's rights online; understanding how to combat online hate speech and cyberbullying; understanding of the ethical issues surrounding the access and use of information; and engage with media and ICTs to promote equality, free expression, intercultural/interreligious dialogue, peace, etc.

Cities around the world have benefitted hugely from the digital revolution. Information and news about transportation, health care, entertainment, media and technology industries, the private sector, civil society, and government has increased efficiency and transparency, opened up new economic, social and cultural possibilities, and enhanced transparency and participation.

A growing number of stakeholders are championing “smart cities”, which seek to make better use of information and communication technology to boost efficiency and quality of life in respect to security, health, recreation, community services, and interactions between citizens and government. As is often argued, smart cities need smart citizens. In this light, the MIL Cities initiative proposes the MIL programmes in and by cities, as well as the development of new infrastructures and interfaces in the streets. MIL Cities will recognize and celebrate those cities/communities where new infrastructure design also generates new MIL learning.

Links to the Sustainable Development Goals

MIL Cities concept throws light on an important feature of the evolving concept of Smart Cities. Smart and sustainable cities need smart citizens, empowered through media and information literacy. MIL Cities should put people at their heart by helping everyone, through creative means, throughout their lifetimes, to develop the competencies required to make the most of information, technology, and media. These competencies enable citizens to make better use of the practical possibilities a connected city can provide, and to engage more creatively, critically and effectively in it. Such actions advance the achievement of multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals including **SDG 11**, *Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*; **SDG 4**, *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*; **SDG 5**, *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*; and **SDG 16**, *Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*.

Synergies

This Global Framework for MIL Cities takes into consideration UNESCO’s multi-disciplinary approach and it integrates well with existing city initiatives. It can add another dimension to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, highlighting how media and information literate citizens can participate in creating safe and secure cities, stimulating grassroots creativity and entrepreneurship. MIL Cities can be a bridge across the seven creative fields of Creative Cities to have an interdisciplinary dialogue. MIL Cities will foster people’s learning about information, media, and technology in the UNESCO Learning Cities Network. Outside of UNESCO, MIL Cities will echo the annual World Cities Day. It has the potential to strengthen local governance and community cohesion in line with the World Urban Agenda, as agreed at the Habitat III conference in Quito in 2016. There is also potential to work with the International Telecommunications Union on its work around

technological skills, notably for the benefit of women and girls through the EQUALS Partnership.

Objectives/Purposes of MIL Cities

One of the main objectives of MIL Cities is the empowerment of citizens. By citizens, is meant those people who reside in human settlements; it covers a range of nationalities, age groups (including children) and marginalised communities. A key modality of MIL Cities is to collaborate with cities around the world to reach more citizens with MIL competencies. MIL Cities sets cities on a path to innovatively promote MIL learning while connecting with other cities across the world. Participating cities should be supported with the tools, resources, guidance needed to diffuse MIL to their citizens as they use city services and participate in local development and democracy. A key aspiration is the twinning of MIL cities across regions of the world to support each other's efforts, which can also help to stimulate MIL as a tool for intercultural and interreligious dialogue, building tolerance, countering hate and disinformation, and enabling sustainable development in general. The main entry point for city actors to participate in MIL Cities is through and in cooperation with local government authorities. MIL Cities entails the vision of building bridges between local government authorities and NGOs' activities, non-formal and informal educators, and MIL-related networks.

Key Principles

1. MIL Cities is an experimental initiative, an innovative approach to promoting MIL. It will start and evolve through progressive and incremental improvements;
2. It will be both indicator-based as well as aspirational. Cities that aspire to be fully-fledged MIL Cities will themselves need to satisfy some basic requirements;
3. All cities or local municipalities can participate;
4. Less affluent cities should be supported to advance their own MIL awareness and strengths;
5. MIL Cities recognizes the different MIL implications of cities with high technological penetration and those with low integration where some information is not conveyed by media nor exists in digital format;
6. MIL cities embraces the Five Laws of Media and Information Literacy as a basis for innovating MIL actions (See Annex 1).

Main criteria to be designated as a MIL City or an aspiring MIL City

Demonstrated commitment on the part of the local government authorities and their partners, within the scope of their competences/capabilities, that include actions to:

- a. Raise citizens' awareness about MIL by organizing at least one public activity in a public space to promote MIL learning at least twice per year;
- b. Integrate MIL learning in the information and media policies of local government authorities. That is, where cities have in place information and/or media policies and strategies to communicate with and inform their inhabitants, these policies and strategies should also include commitment and creative actions to transmit MIL in the process;
- c. Offer youth information and media services to young people and youth organizations;
- d. Infuse MIL training for the older population in existing city programmes designed for their well-being, so that they are not left behind or marginalized;
- e. Target MIL training to groups at risk of marginalization in order to help them make the best use of media and information around them;
- f. Articulate policies to integrate MIL in formal and informal education curricula where the local authorities have influence over learning and education programmes in their cities or regions;
- g. Offer political and practical support to libraries in offering MIL training, both alone and in partnership with other actors;
- h. Collaborate with NGOs/civil society actors working on MIL, including with local or national MIL associations or networks;
- i. Incorporate MIL into local government actions relating to the sustainable development goals;
- j. Incorporate MIL in various aspects of city life including information (signs and billboards – electronic and otherwise), transportation, elections/voting, health, entertainment, local governance/e-government activities;
- k. Provide information to help empower marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- l. Give attention to the importance of MIL on the public website or other noticeboards run by the municipality.

Assessment and Monitoring

To be designated a MIL City, the participating city should state in writing to UNESCO their willingness and interest to become more MIL-ready and demonstrate the undertaking of a number of new challenges, based on the stipulated criteria above. A city wishing to be recognized as a MIL City should be able to show documented actions in at least half of the criteria stated above, with examples of those actions in each area, and showing sustained actions over 2-3 years.

An aspiring MIL City must respect the same requirements for three of the criteria listed above.

Authentic and documented local good practices in MIL and real innovation are encouraged. A MIL Cities network will consider issuing a prize for the best MIL innovation in city life.

A MIL Cities register will help to document and showcase actions of participating cities or municipalities. The register will creatively show the progress of participating cities.

In a MIL city, all partners of local government authorities helping to advance and sustain MIL Cities could receive online recognition, badges and/or an official certificate as MIL City advocates.

UNESCO shall explore the set-up of a simple and easy-to-use online evaluation form. This form will include elements for basic assessment of cities' MIL readiness and verification of whether they meet the aspirational or full requirements of MIL Cities. Independent evaluation of designated MIL Cities may be carried out.

UNESCO should use its convening powers to invite and assemble city officials, such as mayors, to participate in UNESCO's MIL Cities initiative, so that policy-makers can become involved and supportive of the initiative.

How can cities get involved?

Local government authorities can create an MIL City website and liaise with UNESCO about their initiative.

Local government authorities should actively seek partnerships with other city actors. City actors can themselves initiate partnership with local government authorities.

Other types of organizations or institutions, private sector or civil society, networks, associations, or clubs should contact their local government authority and liaise with them, to motivate actions that could set the city on a path to becoming a MIL City.

Examples of the types of activities in which local government and other city actors can engage include:

The examples are non-prescriptive and intended only to stimulate localized approaches and new innovative ideas/actions.

General Examples

All local governments and partnering city actors can:

- become official partners of the annual Global MIL Week celebration led by UNESCO based on negotiations and mutual agreements;
- participate in local, regional and international MIL-related events including the annual Global MIL Week Feature Conference and Youth Agenda Forum;
- share the UNESCO MIL CLICKS social media posts related to MIL Cities with their networks (please see more information on MIL CLICKS on the website: <https://en.unesco.org/milclicks>);

Local Authorities and Libraries

- partnerships can be fostered to stimulate MIL through libraries, including actions undertaken by local and regional libraries, those libraries within school environments, and informal community libraries. Examples include a series of workshops offered by a library on MIL-related topics, a section of the library devoted to books on MIL-related topics, film screenings at the library with a facilitated discussion about a MIL topic, etc.;
- organize a library day in schools where librarians or writers explain how information is produced, the usefulness of libraries, issues related to MIL, such as functions of media, online privacy, and/or intercultural dialogue;
- set up a media corner in libraries where citizens can access news and information with guided assistance from the librarians. The media corners offer local citizens access to a wide array of media including online media;
- motivate the relevant city actors to organize local events in celebration of Global MIL Week in the city, and register these on the Global MIL Week official website;

Transportation Industry

- set up self-serving MIL information booths in train or bus stations or boxes in buses;
- display MIL-related educational posters/learning content, that could be provided by UNESCO or originally developed, in different types of stations;
- display a MIL City map poster (to be requested from UNESCO) in commuter hubs;

Mayors' Networks

- integrate MIL aspects into city policies;
- initiate a MIL City vision; encouraging and assisting the promotion of MIL-related content in city public facilities, such as city transportation system, billboards, city landmarks, to raise awareness among citizens;
- disseminate the MIL CLICKS social media innovation to network members (please see more information about MIL CLICKS on the website: <https://en.unesco.org/milclicks>);
- support and partner with MIL stakeholders and other municipalities or local government authorities to set up and monitor national MIL networks to build synergies and to cooperate with Regional Chapters of the UNESCO-led Global Alliance for Partnerships on MIL (GAPMIL);

Election Commissions, Authorities, or Associations

- integrate MIL aspects into election education programmes in order to support the goal of free and fair polls;
- issue and distribute newsletters or feature articles on MIL to raise awareness among members;

- disseminate the UNESCO MIL CLICKS social media innovation to your networks (please see more information on MIL CLICKS on the website: <https://en.unesco.org/milclicks>);

Health System

- promote campaigns focused on MIL as a tool to understand and resist misinformation about vaccinations and other health issues;
- promote health information and MIL through coordinated programmes in health centres, schools and community groups;
- use media available spaces and coordinate activities with schools to teach how to choose the right sources about nutrition and health in media etc.;

Museums/Archives

- promote MIL activities mixed with your regular activities;
- create thematic days to teach how to find and deal with information and media content about a specific subject or theme;
- draw on local history to demonstrate how narratives, information and media content have been constructed in the past. Use exhibitions and programming to show how different narratives can exist and have existed;

Entertainment Industry

- organize MIL workshops in a form of a play for students at local theaters;
- include MIL themed films into local film festivals program and organizing discussions after the screening;
- invite various creative industry associations for monthly MIL brunch;
- establish a "school/lab" for MIL agents – MIL researchers, practitioner who have ideas how to promote MIL culture;
- use edutainment tools to increase people's awareness about MIL;
- work with schools to publish and broadcast kids and student issues;
- create and broadcast campaigns to help citizens to deal with misinformation and disinformation;
- explore MIL themes through productions and programming;
- invest in work through schools and libraries to build awareness, and empower people of all ages to create their own works and productions in order to understand how information and media are made;
- organize MIL Summer Schools with awards for participants' best media production;

Schools

- organize a class field trip to local media outlets or libraries and discuss with the editors, journalists, librarians, and technical staff how information or news is created;

- invite information, media and technology professionals to the school for discussion in a classroom or general assembly;
- screen a movie related to media and information;
- engage students in critical thinking and discussion about the information, metaphors and hidden messages;
- conduct school outreach to city councils to promote MIL in public spaces;
- contact local governments and raise their awareness of the importance of MIL for citizens;
- integrate MIL skills into multidisciplinary projects or activities in the formal curriculum;

Media Industry

- produce special supplements related to MIL to existing programming;
- air MIL learning announcements as public service announcements on radio and television;
- host MIL practitioners and experts from your community in the programme (news stories, interviews, etc.);
- engage with children and youth from the local community and invite local schools to visit the newsroom;
- organize media day in schools where journalists, editors or media experts explain how news is produced, the dangers of the profession, etc.;
- organize webinars/online Q&A on MIL to highlight new ways in which media can promote MIL in city and community spaces;
- provide small grants for joint projects developed by regional media, local youth and other interested local stakeholders;
- organise media tours for youth led by well-known journalists, bloggers and activists on local, national and international social issues;

Social Media Companies and other Technological Intermediaries

- generate a specific emoji for the annual Global MIL Week and MIL in general for promoting the concept of MIL on these platforms;
- present Global MIL Week on your official platform and support the Global MIL Week MIL CLICKS Live Q&A;
- invite a celebrity/social media influencer/MIL expert to do a live interview about MIL on their platforms;
- offer advertising grants to MIL partners of UNESCO and non-profit organizations around the world who are involved in MIL work and performing local actions to promote the celebration of UNESCO's annual Global MIL Week;
- boost or amplify MIL-related content on social media including the social media innovation MIL CLICKS (please see more information on MIL CLICKS on the website: <https://en.unesco.org/milclicks>);
- develop and promote digital MIL games online and offline.

Process to elaborate and adopt this MIL Cities framework

A consultative and inclusive process has contributed to the preparation of this framework for MIL Cities. It started with the idea being broached among the International Steering Committee of GAPMIL. A session under the theme MIL Cities was organized at the Feature Conference of Global MIL Week 2016, which took place in Brazil. UNESCO initiated a global online discussion among the members of GAPMIL around the world. The main recommendations emanating from this discussion were consolidated. The MIL Cities Framework Drafting Committee set up by UNESCO made further inputs to enrich the document. Participants of the Global MIL Week 2018 Feature Events in Lithuania and Latvia deliberated about the Framework and inputs incorporated. The Feature Conference adopted the Global MIL Cities Framework. The document was made available online and was widely circulated for one final round of review and inputs from the MIL community. These inputs were incorporated and the final document was published online.

Annex 1

FIVE LAWS OF MIL



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

LAW 1

Information, communication, libraries, media, technology, the Internet as well as other forms of information providers are for use in critical civic engagement and sustainable development. They are equal in stature and none is more relevant than the other or should be ever treated as such.

LAW 2

Every citizen is a creator of information/knowledge and has a message. They must be empowered to access new information/knowledge and to express themselves. MIL is for all - women and men equally - and a nexus of human rights.

LAW 3

Information, knowledge, and messages are not always value neutral, or always independent of biases. Any conceptualization, use and application of MIL should make this truth transparent and understandable to all citizens.

LAW 4

Every citizen wants to know and understand new information, knowledge and messages as well as to communicate, even if she/he is not aware, admits or expresses that he/she does. Her/his rights must however never be compromised.

LAW 5

Media and information literacy is not acquired at once. It is a lived and dynamic experience and process. It is complete when it includes knowledge, skills and attitudes, when it covers access, evaluation/assessment, use, production and communication of information, media and technology content.



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