Nurturing Trust : A Media and Information Literacy Imperative

GLOBAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY WEEK

24-31 OCTOBER 2022

#GlobalMILWeek2022

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Concept Note
Global Media and Information Literacy Week
24-31 October 2022

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Theme: Nurturing Trust: A Media and Information Literacy Imperative

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Host Country: Nigeria

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"There is a growing disconnect between people and the institutions that serve them…
an ever deeper crisis of trust fomented by a loss of **shared truth** and **understanding**."

Our Common Agenda, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Executive Summary

This concept note for Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2022 summarizes issues of trust and solidarity as it relates to people, media, digital platforms, governments, private sector, and non-governmental organizations. It highlights some promising actions in connection with media and information literacy in the last year and how media and information literacy help with nurturing trust and countering mistrust.

There are seven broad sub-themes for Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2022 as below:

1. Promoting media and information literacy as a viable development intervention to nurture trust, social protection, and collective solidarity.
2. Accelerating the pace of people's access to media and information literacy competencies in parallel with the growth pace of universal digital connectivity. This will ensure that people are equipped with media and information literacy competencies as they become fully digitally connected. People would then be empowered to harness new connectivity more discerningly.
3. Working to entrench media and information literacy as a key component for the exercise of fundamental human rights, thereby advancing media and information literacy for all.
4. Popularizing the new UNESCO Global Standards for Media and Information Literacy Curricula Development Guidelines and the complementary resource "Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely (Second Edition of the UNESCO Model Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Educators and Learners)," and the tool Addressing conspiracy theories: what should educators know.
5. Developing innovative ways to bridge inequalities in accessing media and information literacy.

6. Partnerships and funding to strengthen trust and solidarity in media and information literacy development at all levels of society.
7. Encouraging and promoting media and information literacy (MIL) policy at organizational, institutional, national, and regional levels in ensuring equitable and ethical access to quality information.

The sub-themes above guide actions/activities around the world to celebrate the Global MIL Week including the Feature Conference and Youth Agenda Forum. They aim to stimulate progress and measurable outcomes in promoting media and information literacy as a viable development intervention to nurture trust in a world where trust is eroding, and nations struggle for peace and tranquillity.

Background and highlights from last year

In Our Common Agenda, a report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr António Guterres, twelve commitments were made by world leaders. Among these commitments, Mr Guterres highlighted the values of trust and solidarity as being the glue for social cohesion and social breakthroughs for the common good.

However, the harsh reality is that the trust factor is being eroded. "Increasingly, people are turning their backs on the values of trust and solidarity in one another – the very values we need to rebuild our world and secure a better, more sustainable future for our people and our planet."[1] The reasons for this phenomenon vary and include rising disinformation, hate speech, inequalities, lack of fairness and transparency, including in digital spaces. The Edelman Trust Barometer 2022 found that concerns about false information are at an all-time high. In the last several years, trust in government and media has been progressively eroded.[2] Loss of trust jeopardizes the protection of democracy[3].

A two-pronged approach is needed to reverse this trend. Individuals, groups, institutions, and societies must join forces to build trust and counter mistrust. The vicious cycle of mistrust is a threat to social stability and sustainable development as when people choose to mistrust without first seeking evidence, opportunities for peaceful debates become non-existent.[3] For many decades, a model of media and information literacy that was embraced by stakeholders internationally was that people should be skeptical of information from media and government. UNESCO has advocated and proposed international standards and tools for an alternative media and information literacy framework that foregrounds the necessity for people to develop and understand the indispensability of free, independent, and pluralistic media. A basic tenet of media and information literacy must be knowing what sources of information to trust

[1] In Our Common Agenda, Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Antonio Guterres (p.3)
[2] Edelman Trust Barometer 2022, (p.5)
[3] Official Journal of the European Union, Council conclusions on media literacy in an ever-changing world, (2020/C 193/06), 9.6.2020
[3] Ibid.

and why. In the same vein, media and information literacy underscore why digital communications platforms and media organizations must also strive to be trusted.

Governments, the media, digital communication companies, other businesses, and NGOs can and must contribute to the urgent changes needed. Ensuring information quality is the most powerful way to build and nurture trust across all institutions[4]. For instance, trust in scientific information and scientific methods of enquiry is being compromised. This undermining of the validity of science is a grave danger for society. We see this play out vividly within the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to this challenge of our times requires complex policies, regulatory, and self-regulatory mechanisms beyond geographies, cultures, political systems, and media frameworks rooted in ethical considerations. The Trust Project has suggested eight indicators that can help the media gain people's trust, actionable feedback, diversity in voices, citations, and references, and journalist expertise being among those.[5]

Equally imperative is to ensure that everyone acquires needed critical thinking competencies through media and information literacy to be able to assess the quality of information they receive as well as the information they generate and share with others.[6] When the assurances of media and information literate societies are combined with a push for reliable and verified information, the possibilities of building trust and countering mistrust heighten.

Significant breakthroughs have been made toward advancing media and information literacy for all, over the past year alone:

1. UN General Assembly Resolution [A/RES/75/267](#) (2021) on Media and Information Literacy notably calls on countries around the world, "to develop and implement policies, action plans and strategies related to the promotion of media and information literacy…"
2. Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2021 was the first celebration at the United Nations level, after it was proclaimed by the same General Assembly resolution mentioned above.
3. For the first time in 2021, regional intergovernmental organizations including the African Union, Arab League, Asian Cooperation Dialogue, European Commission, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, and Pacific Islands Forum, expressed their commitment to fostering media and information literacy at the regional level and to enhancing global cooperation among stakeholders.
4. In 2021, the European Commission, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, ICESCO, Arab League, Twitter and Google called on other stakeholders to join as contributors and partners so that resources are secured to support media and information literacy programmes.

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[4] Edelman Trust Barometer 2022, (p. 36)
[5] The 8 Trust Indicators, The Trust Project: https://thetrustproject.org/ (accessed 08.04.2022)
[6] Official Journal of the European Union, Council conclusions on media literacy in an ever-changing world, (2020/C 193/06), 9.6.2020.

5. For the first time at the Internet Governance Forum 2021 and Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2021, high-level intergovernmental, civil society, social media, and media representatives joined together to address media and information literacy in digital spaces. There was consensus on the urgency to advance an International Multi-Stakeholder Framework for Private/Digital Communications Companies to Promote Media and Information Literacy.
6. Stakeholders have called for an International Media and Information Literacy Fund.

Nurturing Trust through media and information literacy

Considering the background above, the global community is called upon not only to reaffirm and increase commitment to media and information literacy for all but also to develop new initiatives on media and information literacy to nurture trust.

Media and information literacy supports trust and hinders mistrust by equipping people and institutions to:

- Critically listen, read, and verify before sharing information.
- Facilitate access and understanding of information about human rights, digital rights, and rights to privacy.
- Push for transparency and ethics among key stakeholders in the information and digital landscapes.
- Advocate freedom of information and freedom of expression.
- Foster discerning engagement with people, information, and digital spaces.
- Strengthen platforms for dialogue.
- Reflect and analyze information and communication platforms with appropriate mindset and attitude.
- Engage information holistically to see through the nuances of accompanying mistrust.

Media and information literate persons are better able to have a dialogue with government, media, social media, and businesses in their circles about the quality of information they share.

In 2014, UNESCO and the European Commission piloted the concept of media and information literacy to build trust in media on the following key principles:

- MIL competencies should not focus only on self-protection but also on institutional duties/obligations.
- Prioritize MIL that enables people's understanding about the functions of media, digital communications platforms, government, businesses, and NGOs as transmitters of information that is central to development and governance, and the conditions under which they can carry these functions.

- Emphasize MIL competencies that improve people's understanding of their rights online and offline. This includes the right to freedom of information and freedom of expression and privacy.
- Highlight that not all information is media and that much information is not digital.
- Stress MIL competencies to make people aware of potential biases, personal, economic, and political agenda in all forms of information.
- Enable people's understanding of how commercial and social marketing support economic development of all kinds and sustain media, digital platforms, governments, businesses, and NGOs.
- Qualify people to understand that nurturing trust in social institutions is necessary… But trust is not blind. MIL permits clarity in seeing and seeing constructively.

Sub-themes for 2022

Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2022 encourages all stakeholders to organize local events in line with these and the sub-themes listed below.

- *Promoting media and information literacy as a viable development intervention to nurture trust, social protection, and solidarity:* Ensuring that MIL learning stimulates an understanding of dialogue for transparency and ethics relating to:
    - governments
    - digital communications platforms
    - media
    - other businesses and institutions
    - NGOs
    - Groups of people from other cultures, ethnicities, religions, social and economic background, sexual orientation, gender, etc.
- *Accelerating the pace of people's access to media and information literacy in parallel to universal digital connectivity.*
- *Promoting media and information literacy as a key component for the exercise of fundamental human rights:* Promoting MIL for all as an end in itself, and as a means to promote human rights and dialogue awareness.
- *Popularizing the new UNESCO resource Global Standards for Media and Information Literacy Curricula Development Guidelines* and the complementary *resources Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely* (Second Edition of the UNESCO Model Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Educators and Learners) and the tool *Addressing conspiracy theories: what should educators know*: Treating media and information literacy as skills enhancement and lifelong learning.
- *Developing innovative ways to bridge inequalities in accessing media and information literacy.*
- *Partnerships and funding to strengthen trust and solidarity in media and information literacy development at all levels of societies.*

- *Encouraging and promoting media and information literacy policy at organizational, institutional, national, and regional levels in ensuring equitable and ethical access to quality information.*

Draft programme elements

1. Special Session: Media and information literacy: Spurring a more transparent digital common
2. Media and information literacy in the workplace
3. MIL and communication transparency
4. Media and information literacy for trust in media and electoral processes
5. Media and information literacy curriculum in schools for intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding
6. Special Session: Media and Information Literacy Cities: Data collection and the trust factor
7. Special Session: Global Media and Information Literacy Week meets World Cities Day
8. Special Sessions: Youth Media and Information Literacy Agenda Forum
9. MIL, access to information and freedom of expression: Combined to renew trust
10. Media and information literacy in the age of AI and the Metaverse
11. Media and information literacy: Enlightenment for All
12. Media and information literacy: Communication for Better Communities
13. Media and information literacy for Resilience and Flourishing
14. Media and information literacy for human rights
15. Distrust undermines democracies: Experiences and MIL solutions
16. Automated content moderation and challenges of inaccuracies and censorship
17. Media and Elections in the Era of Misinformation and Disinformation: What answers lie in media and information literacy?
18. MIL to mitigate the consequences of disinformation and on governance
19. Special Sessions: Conversations with global media agencies and digital platforms - Facebook, Google, Twitter, Reuters, Associated Press, etc.
20. Conversations with the grassroots: Providing a platform to enlighten rural communities on media and information literacy
21. Transgenerational conversation among women on trust in media and digital platforms
22. Special Sessions: Young girls in digital technology – the place of MIL for critical thinking
23. Special Sessions: Scamming practices and the challenges of trust
24. MIL in digital spaces: Youth engagement
25. Special Sessions: Global conversations – MIL, libraries, and trust
26. Special Sessions: Global conversations with government and civil society on promoting MIL in schools to nurture the future of trust in an ailing world
27. Special Session: UNESCO-Twitter Space – Building the global square of trust
28. Special Sessions: Global conversations with teachers on MIL and trust
29. Media & Information Literacy & AI in News Literacy

30. Innovating access to media and information literacy learning
31. New interdisciplinary and innovative application of MIL
32. Scientific method and science literacy made simple with MIL
33. Media and Information Literacy meets Cultural Literacy: A trust enabler
34. Digital platforms distrust and algorithmic biases
35. MIL, Media and Mindset: Assessment of selectivity theory and information seeking behaviour
36. Media and Information Literacy for Global Citizenship: Values of mutual understanding and trust
37. Addressing conspiracy theories: Media and information literate approaches
38. Post-pandemic ICTs adoption in homes: Media and information literate parents, what to trust?
39. Dialogue with indigenous communities: MIL for trust
40. Special Session: UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Alliance and the UNESCO MIL and Intercultural Dialogue University Network Meetings
41. Funding Media and Information Literacy: a call to partners

Outcomes and deliverables

- Contribute to collective actions necessary to achieving relevant goals set forth in "Our Common Agenda, report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations," specifically by mobilizing media, digital platforms, government, business, international development organizations, and community-based organizations to further media and information literacy to build trust and solidarity.
- Draft key recommendations on media and information literacy as a fundamental human right.
- Launch of an international multimedia platform on media and information literacy.
- Reaffirm the urgency for the international community to allocate the needed financial and human resources to increase people's access to media and information literacy.
- Provide scientific approaches that can be employed to help societies develop a more discerning approach to engaging with the information received, heard and read in any context.
- Harvesting commitments from key stakeholders to nurture and promote trust across the information and digital landscapes.
- Conceptualising epistemological approach to discovering truth and ensuring trust.

Youth Agenda Forum

UNESCO strives to equip youth with media and information literacy competencies, which enhance capacities of young people to access and verify information and media content and to harness the power of technology. When empowered, youth can be co-leaders and co-creators

of MIL development and diffusion. Media and information literate youth can contribute to building societies based on trust and solidarity.

Keeping this in mind, since 2016, UNESCO has been providing a platform dedicated to young people during the annual Global Media and Information Literacy Week, namely the Youth Agenda Forum. The Forum aims to highlight the importance of ensuring participation of youth in programmes, initiatives, and activities on MIL, and to engage youth in the creation and dissemination of MIL knowledge and resources as leaders and peer educators.

This year, the Forum will center around the topic of "Media and Information Literate Youth Engaging in Nurturing Trust and Solidarity," under the overarching theme of Global MIL Week 2022.

Fourth Global Media and Information Literacy Youth Hackathon

The Global Media and Information Literacy Youth Hackathon is an occasion for young people and youth organizations around the world to participate in the creation of innovative MIL learning in meaningful ways. Following the previous three successful editions, the fourth Global Media and Information Literacy Youth Hackathon will be held during Global MIL Week 2022. UNESCO and partners will call on youth worldwide to participate in this virtual hackathon to design innovative solutions to a defined set of social challenges, in connection with the year's theme.

Youth from local schools, universities, youth centres, and youth organizations, as well as young leaders from around the globe, are invited to participate. The winning teams and the outcome of the Hackathon will be presented during the Global MIL Week Youth Agenda Forum.

In 2021, the Global Media and Information Literacy Youth Hackathon was organized under the theme Hacking "Media and Information Literacy for Better Futures." **85** teams from **45** countries participated in the Global Media and Information Literacy Hackathon, and **6** winning teams were selected.

Offline/Online Celebrations around the Global + Regional Events

MIL stakeholders around the world are called to organize and register online/offline events or activities related to MIL in their community, city, municipality, or region, taking place around the period of Global MIL Week in September/October/November 2022.

To follow up on efforts launched in 2021 to stimulate regional and international cooperation on MIL, regional intergovernmental, multilateral organizations and United Nations Agencies/Funds/Programmes are invited to lead regional Global MIL Week events in cooperation with UNESCO.

All events must be registered on the link provided on the official website of Global MIL Week 2022. Registered events will be displayed on the Global MIL Week official website. Notable events will be highlighted and promoted through UNESCO's press releases and newsletters.

The 10th anniversary celebration in 2021 was punctuated by over 800 events around the world in 85 countries.

Other online engagement

In addition to mobilizing online/offline celebratory events around the world, the hybrid Feature Events, and the fourth Global MIL Youth Hackathon, the Global MIL Week 2022 online interaction will have other components including: 1) distribution of micro-learning content for online/offline learning via the UNESCO MIL CLICKS social media channels, 2) #GlobalMILWeek and #MediaandInfoLiteracy social media campaigns, 3) cooperation with social media platforms, 4) coordination with other UNESCO Sectors, UN agencies/funds/programmes, and bilateral partners, 5) enlistment of social media influencers as well as entertainers, and 6) a series of online Global Conversations to facilitate dialogue around MIL and trust among key stakeholders.

Global Media and Information Literacy Awards 2022 led by partners of UNESCO

The Global Media and Information Literacy Awards are led independently by the International Steering Committee and members of the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Alliance. The Global Media and Information Literacy Awards recognize information/library, media and technology specialists, educators, artists, activists, researchers, policy makers, NGOs, associations and other groups innovatively integrating MIL in their work and related activities. Specifically, the awards recognize excellence and leadership in six sectors: Education, Research, Policy, Advocacy, Media and Communication, and Information.

The Global Media and Information Literacy Awards are presented every year at the Global MIL Week Feature Conference. For 2022, the Global Media and Information Literacy Awards are spearheaded by the International Steering Committee and members of the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Alliance.

Visit the Global MIL Week and the UNESCO MIL Alliance website for details about the award categories and selection criteria.

The awardees will be invited to the Global MIL Week 2022 hybrid Feature Conference and will receive certificates as well as recognition from fellow members of the UNESCO MIL Alliance at the dedicated session of the Feature Conference.

Partners are invited to make financial or in-kind contributions to the Global Media and Information Literacy Awards and to propose new categories that they may have a particular interest to support.

In 2021, six organizations/individuals recognized and received the Global Media and Information Literacy Awards.

Conclusion

The 2022 Global Media and Information Literacy Week will be purposeful and decisive in reaffirming and accelerating MIL development on the international development agenda. It will stimulate MIL activities in the annual global calendar across an unprecedented spread of stakeholders. It aims to set the pace for exponential growth in future years, by achieving unprecedented geographic reach and numbers of activities during 2022. We must, however, combine our efforts.

This concept note is, therefore, a call for action, to galvanize ideas and programmes relevant to the international context and linked to these themes. With growing goodwill globally, the 2022 Global Media and Information Literacy Week can indeed advance the quest towards rediscovering and nurturing trust through media and information literacy, and media and information literacy expansion in general.

Annex: Media and Information Literacy and the Sustainable Development Goals

Although media and information literacy is related to all SDGs, particular attention can be given to:

- SDG 4: Targets 4.6 ("ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy"), and 4.7 ("ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development"), by affording youth and adults with critical information, media and digital competencies that enable quality education, global citizenship and peacebuilding.

- SDG 5: Target 5.b ("Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women"). By enhancing people's abilities to detect and counter gender stereotypes, hate and racial discrimination in all types of media and digital platforms.

- It also plays an essential role for SDG Targets 13.3 and 12.8 by empowering informed decision-making, increasing climate adaptation and mitigation capacities of communities, and raising awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

- SDG 16, Target 16.10 ("ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms") and SDG 11 ("Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"), by raising citizens' critical awareness of their access to information; and raise their power of communication in this regard, their fundamental freedoms, and critical evaluation and use of information that makes cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.