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JOURNEY THROUGH THE ✨ MULTIVERSE



Media and Information Literacy
Toolkit for Youth Organizations

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SHORT SUMMARY

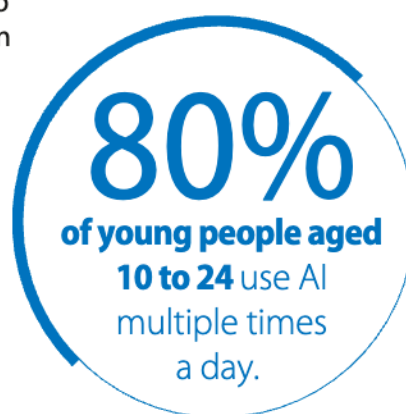
Empowering Youth Organizations with and for Media and Information Literacy

In an era where digital interactions dominate, young people must be equipped with more than just basic digital literacy skills. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has become an essential competency, enabling them to critically navigate the overwhelming flow of information in our fast-paced and complex information ecosystem.

With the Internet user base getting younger every day — data shows that one in three internet users is a child — countries worldwide are increasingly working on integrating MIL into their education systems. Despite these advancements, many young people still grapple with challenges such as disinformation, hate speech, and other harmful online content. Additionally, new technologies continue to emerge, creating challenges with unknown impacts. For example, 80% of young people aged 10 to 24 use AI multiple times a day for education, entertainment, and other purposes.

Global youth organizations are at the forefront of UNESCO's efforts to promote MIL among young people through informal education. This toolkit serves as a primary resource to help these organizations incorporate MIL into their strategies, policies, and operations, aiming to make MIL a lasting component of their practices and peer-to-peer educational programs.

Join us on this journey through the MILtiverse and empower the next generation by making MIL a fundamental life competence for their futures.



"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

JOURNEY THROUGH THE MULTIVERSE

Media and Information Literacy
Toolkit for Youth Organizations



FOREWORD

Today's youth are growing up in a world dramatically different from that of previous generations. Social media, streaming services and online communities are at their fingertips, where young people learn, communicate and express themselves. Yet, these digital spaces, full of potential, also present a web of challenges: disinformation spreads at lightning speed, online hate thrives in echo chambers, and harmful narratives often take root with real-world consequences. The rise of Generative AI, which can produce convincing but false content, further blurs the line between reality and fabrication. Meanwhile, millions of young people around the world still lack reliable internet access, limiting their ability to engage with both the opportunities and the challenges of this digital world.

At UNESCO, we believe that navigating this complex digital world requires more than just knowing how to use technology. It demands a Media and Information Literacy (MIL) – a critical set of skills that empower individuals to engage thoughtfully and responsibly with information. It is no longer enough to passively consume content; we must be active participants, capable of making informed choices in all spheres of life, to fully enjoy our human rights.

Youth organizations play a pivotal role in disseminating MIL skills and competencies to young people in informal settings. Their mission is clear: to work 'for' and 'with' youth, providing them with the tools to navigate this digital landscape with critical eyes and thoughtful minds. This publication, "Journey through the MILtiverse: Media and Information Literacy Toolkit for Youth Organizations" is designed to support this mission. It offers youth organizations a dynamic resource to integrate MIL into their policies, strategies, and operations.

Whether working in advocacy, education, youth development, or environmental causes, this toolkit is for all youth organizations seeking to make MIL a central part of their approach. It includes model policies and strategies, checklists, educational tips, and other resources needed to bring MIL to life within your organization.

To ensure that this learning journey is fun and engaging, we have designed the toolkit like an adventure through the multiverse, where each mission tackles key aspects of MIL. Equipped with a compass and a map, you will embark on exciting missions, face challenges, discover solutions, and arm your organization with practical tools in an interactive way.

We invite you to explore, engage and take action. In a world filled with digital complexity, we need leaders who are prepared to navigate with integrity, curiosity and a commitment to truth.

✦ **Let the journey begin!**

Tawfik Jelassi
Assistant Director
General for Communication
and Information of UNESCO



We are the main characters of a crucial moment in human history: **the digital era.**



Never before have we been so connected; the possibility to get to know and interact with people on the other side of the world is just one click away. But along with the exciting opportunities that the digital era brings, there are challenges unlike anything we've seen before.

Disinformation spreads like wildfire online, diminishing trust and making it harder to identify what is real and what is not. **Hate speech invades social media**, fragmenting communities and pushing people into extreme positions. The spark of violence these days can ignite with a single social media post. In such a polluted information ecosystem, it is easier to get lost than to find the path to truth and respect for others.

That is why, now more than ever, we need to embark on an epic learning journey throughout the exciting Media and Information Literacy¹ (MIL) universe, the MILtiverse.

Throughout this journey, you will understand the power that MIL has to prepare you with the necessary competencies –knowledge, skills and attitudes– to critically assess the vast universe of information that reaches you daily through social media, media outlets and all kinds of digital platforms.

With the MIL lenses, you will not only consume information safely; you will also recognize yourself as a producer of content as a means to express yourself and your causes in this constantly expanding online landscape.

This toolkit is designed to help you acquire the skills to think critically and also provides resources to properly integrate MIL principles at the core of your organization's policies and strategies, as well as into your daily life as a citizen of the digital era.

In this MILtiverse, no one is a non-player character, rather we all take the central stage!

So, this journey is not just about learning to ethically navigate in a universe filled with online challenges; it's about rising above them and becoming a leader who stands for human rights, truth, peace, respect, integrity, and positive change in their communities.

✦ Ready for **take-off?**

¹ Media and Information Literacy (MIL) refers to the set of essential competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that allow citizens to engage with content providers effectively and develop critical thinking and life-long learning skills for socializing and becoming active citizens. UNESCO. 2021. Think Critically, Click Wisely! Media and information literacy curriculum for educators & learners. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377068>

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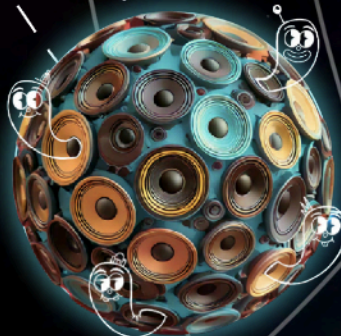
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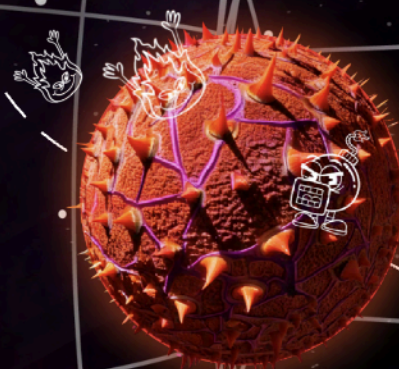
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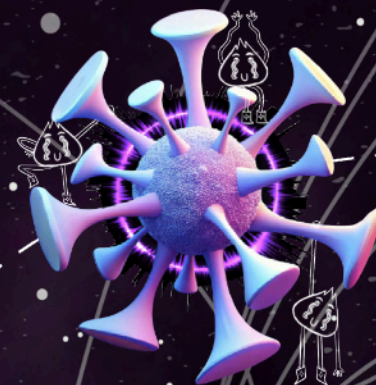
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Media and Information Literacy (MIL) core values and principles

As we embark on our journey through the MILtiverse, it is essential to have a strong compass—our guiding principles that will steer us through the vast universe of the digital landscape we are living in. The "Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Core Values and Principles" are the foundation of this journey, acting as our North Star as we navigate the challenges and opportunities that we face as society in this era.

In this section, we will discover the fundamental values that underpin MIL². These are not just abstract concepts; they are the principles that will empower us to think

critically, engage ethically, and lead our communities to navigate with integrity in the digital information ecosystem. By embracing these core values, we will be better prepared to tackle misleading and harmful information, foster respectful dialogue, and contribute to creating a more informed and peaceful society, online and offline.

Let's consider these principles as the constellations that light our path, guiding us toward a digital era where facts and respect for others prevail.

	Human rights and dignity: MIL empowers individuals to act responsibly and stand up for and defend human rights and dignity in the online world – theirs and that of other people navigating digital interactions.
	Freedom of expression and access to information: MIL ensures that individuals can freely express their ideas while understanding the boundaries of hate speech and incitement to violence. It also seeks to protect access to information as a fundamental human right, essential for making informed decisions and effectively participating in society and public life.
	Self-awareness: MIL encourages self-awareness and the ability to challenge one's beliefs and biases, strengthening critical thinking.
	Solidarity and peace: MIL is crucial for building more cohesive and cooperative societies in an interconnected –and often conflicting– world.
	Respect for cultural diversity: MIL competences contribute to nourishing tolerance and respect for others, relevant attitudes for peaceful and harmonious coexistence among a diverse society.
	Intercultural and interreligious dialogue: Promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue through MIL fosters mutual understanding and respect among different communities, essential for global peace.

² UNESCO. n.d *Welcome to the International Media and Information Literacy e-Platform* [Website] <https://www.unesco.org/mil4teachers/en>



How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to take you and your organization through a journey into some of the most important and applicable aspects of Media and Information Literacy (MIL). As you can imagine, MIL is a vast universe, so we will not cover every single aspect of it. Feel free to explore it at all its extent at the *UNESCO International Media and Information Literacy E-Platform*³ and to go deeper on the subjects of your interest.

This toolkit is divided into four main sections.

The first section is "**The journey through the MILtiverse**". In this chapter, you will embark on an adventure through nine missions that will lead you to discover the fascinating universe of MIL.

Before stepping on your interstellar journey, the subsection called "**Before departing**" will equip your spaceship with all the resources you need to get the most out of your MIL journey. This section is designed so that you, an individual traveler, or your organization, can do a self-awareness check:

- * What's your purpose?
- * What is your vision?
- * Where do you want to go?
- * How will the insights of this journey align with your path?

These questions will help you be self-aware before embarking on your journey.

In each of the nine missions, you will find a scenario designed to provide you with new knowledge, skills, and tools to navigate the vast digital information universe responsibly, critically, safely, and consciously. Each mission is designed for you to work through individually or within your organization, allowing you to gain the knowledge, skills, and tools that each mission seeks to provide. Additionally, the missions are designed for training others, such as your team, beneficiaries, and audiences. You and your organization play a significant role in extending the toolkit's reach and impact.

Get familiar with the structure of this chapter! Each mission includes:



* A **title** that introduces the main topic of this mission.



* The **mission goal**, which outlines what this mission aims for you and your organization to achieve. Think of it as the "special task" you're being asked to complete in relation to this topic.



* The **MIL values and principles** is a brief but significant segment that serves as a reminder of why it matters to address the mission's contents in our contemporary global society: "We are facing the mission of countering hate speech because we seek to live in a world where solidarity and peace prevails."



* **Information** that explains the relevance of the mission's content and provides an overview of the mission.



* The **key concepts** which provide essential definitions that make the mission meaningful. These concepts will provide clarity and will guide us in understanding the relevance of these topics in this digital era.



* Each mission starts with an invitation to **Take a look inside**: this involves answering a set of questions with assigned scores which will give us an initial assessment of whether we are currently integrating MIL contents into our daily practices or those of our organizations.

Read the scores based on the following table. This will give us guidance on how to move forward to effectively integrate MIL into our practices.



If the final ponderate score is **between 1 and 3 points**, we invite you and your organization to dive deeper on the concepts we explore during the mission.



If the score is **between 4 and 6 points**, we invite you and your organization to explore the mission with curiosity, focusing your energy on what you could do better.



If the score is **between 7 and 9 points**, you and your organization are ready to inspire others! Go even further by exploring how you can advocate for a cultural change in your community by sharing your insights on the subjects of this mission.

³ UNESCO. (2021). *Think Critically, Click Wisely! Media and information literacy curriculum for educators & learners*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377068>





* **Let's jump in** at the core of each mission. This is where we delve into the concepts by reflecting from our experiences as being part of the digital information ecosystem. Here, we will gain knowledge, understanding, tools, and skills to navigate the MILtiverse in a safe, critical and ethical manner.



* **Time to complete the mission** encourages us to reflect on the contents covered in the mission to extract the superpowers we need to move forward. We will find two key elements:



A question designed for you and your organization members **to brainstorm ideas or develop strategies** that will help integrate MIL into your organizational practices and initiatives.



An invitation to explore the **"MIL Supercharger of ideas"** section, where you will discover power-ups for integrating MIL practices at the core of your organization's policies and strategies.



* **Inspiring notes for your journey** offers inspiration from real case studies of young people like us, who are already successfully integrating MIL competences and taking action regarding the matter addressed in the mission.



* **Want to go deeper?** provides additional resources (such as articles, videos, podcasts, and others) to help us gain a deeper understanding and acquire new tools for integrating the contents covered in the mission.



* Finally, **Get your answers right!** Allows us to check the correct answers to the activities included in the mission.

The second section is the **MIL Supercharger of ideas for policies and strategies**. It includes suggested ideas on how to effectively incorporate MIL related practices into the organization's policies and strategies. These ideas will power up your organization's purpose to integrate MIL coherently and consistently into its core practices and initiatives.

The third section is **A step-by-step guide to include MIL into your organization policies and strategies**. You will find easy-to-use templates for your organization to draft **policies** and develop **strategies** to effectively integrate MIL competences, principles and practices.

Finally, in the last section **"Bringing MIL alive into your organization: A "how-to" guide"**, you will find two more easy-to-use templates to transform your policies and strategies into a concrete **action plan** per strategy and a **feedback** model to evaluate the success of your organization into integrating MIL contents, principles and skills into your practices.

✦ See you on **the MILtiverse!**



BEFORE DEPARTING...

We are about to embark on a journey through the MILtiverse, so it is time to **get our spaceship ready**. In order to successfully integrate MIL knowledge, skills and behaviors into the organization's policies and strategies, it's a good idea to first have a clear idea of how well-equipped we are to accomplish this.

Think of your organization as if it is our spaceship for this journey. This is the safe space that will drive us through the different dimensions of the MILtiverse. But for every piece of knowledge, understanding and guidelines we will gain throughout this journey, it's important to understand why it is important for us to embark on the exciting journey of the MILtiverse.



Take a look inward

Use this section to look inside your organization and answer the questions.

- * What is your organization's purpose?
- * What is your organization's vision for the next five years?
- * What are your organization's values and principles?
- * What does your organization do? (Activities, audiences, etc.)
- * If your organization had feelings, which situations would make it feel happy, angry, or sad?





Take a look outward

Use this section to reflect on the image your organization projects and answer the questions.

- * How do you communicate your ideas or actions?
- * Describe the image you want to portray to your audiences.
- * Write three hashtags with which you want your organization to be associated.
- * What does the environment surrounding your organization look like? (E.g. politically, economically, culturally, etc.).

If you want to get a deeper assessment of how prepared you are to integrate MIL knowledge, skills and tools into your organization, answer the following questions with your colleagues. When answering them, keep in mind that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. All of them provide insights for your organization to consider when designing policies and strategies aimed to integrate MIL practices at its core.

General MIL-related questions

	How would you define MIL in the context of your organization?
	Does your organization have a specific policy or strategy related to MIL skills or practices? If so, could you describe it?

Integration of MIL into organizational practices

	Do you currently develop any type of MIL initiative within your organization's activities and practices?
	Do you have any future plans for developing MIL initiatives?
	What impact do you seek to have in relation to integrating MIL into your initiatives, activities and practices?

Organizational capacities

	Have you or your colleagues ever received any training related to MIL?
	What resources do you have at your disposal for integrating MIL practices, skills and tools within your organization?

Collaborations and partnerships

	Do you collaborate with other organizations, experts, or institutions to promote MIL among different stakeholders? If so, can you describe them?
	Do you have any kind of collaboration with social media platforms to support MIL initiatives?

Challenges and opportunities

	Which are the opportunities or advantages that will help you ease the path to MIL integration into your organization's policies, strategies or initiatives?
	Which risks do you think you might encounter in this path to MIL integration into your organization's policies, strategies or initiatives?


 All set!
We are ready to depart!





MISSION 1

Exploring the galaxy of access to information



Mission Goal

By the end of this mission, we will understand the importance of accessing information and engaging with content in an active, critical, and ethical manner and its importance to democracy while navigating the online and informational environment safely and responsibly.

MIL Values and Principles



Freedom of
expression and
access to information



Information

Imagine we need to make a crucial decision regarding our MLTiverse journey, but the information we require is just out of reach: there are no manuals, guidelines, maps, anything! Now, think about visiting a public library or navigating a website to get access to information that is relevant for us to embark on this mission. Does it feel different?

Accessing information is more than a routine task — it's a fundamental human right. However, the information that is available may or may not be of quality and relevance. Also, when entities or authorities hold information of public interest, it becomes their duty to ensure that right for everyone. Access to information is the key to making informed and ethical choices in our society.

As citizens, organizations, or content providers, we need to understand, integrate, and ensure this right, which is an essential component of decision-making, social participation, and democratic societies in general. In this mission, **we will be aware of the importance of accessing information and learn how to do so in an active, critical, and ethical way.**



Key Concepts

Fill in the blanks using the provided words to complete each definition.

unauthorized
critically
identify
credible

effectively
public interest
knowledge
public authorities

* **Access to information:** The right, the possibility and the ability to _____, obtain and make use of information _____.

* **Safe navigation:** The ability to _____ access, and navigate various media platforms and information in general. This involves understanding how to access quality information, identify _____ sources, or avoid misinformation.

* **Data protection:** Safeguarding personal information that is not of public interest from _____ access or misuse.

* **Right to access information:** The right to access information held by public bodies or by private bodies performing public functions or performing functions with _____⁴.

* **Information of public interest:** Data and _____ that is of importance or relevance for the general public.

* **Public access to information:** An effective system to meet citizens' rights to seek and receive information, particularly that held by or on behalf of _____⁵.



Take a look inside

1. Imagine that you need some information about the environmental awareness programs that have been carried out in the last five years by a public institution in the place where you live. You...

- a. Don't know how to get the information.
- b. Know that there is an established procedure for accessing the information, but you are not sure what it is.
- c. You are clear about the process for accessing the information.

2. How important is it for you to have access to high-quality (reliable, clear, verified) public interest information?

- a. It is important, but it has never been a priority.
- b. It is important and a priority, but I don't know how to access or protect the right to information.
- c. It is very important, and I know how to access quality public information, and when I hold this data, I know how to engage with it responsibly.

3. Does your organization take specific actions for promoting the right to access information?

- a. No.
- b. Yes, we have done some activities to promote the right to access information, but not as a part of our regular operations.
- c. Yes, we have one or more policies with strategies with the objective of promoting the right to access information.



Check the correct answers at the end of the mission!

If you chose 'a,' give yourself 1 point. If you chose 'b,' give yourself 2 points. If you chose 'c,' give yourself 3 points. Now, read your scores on page 10.

⁴ UNESCO. 2021. *Think Critically, Click Wisely! Media and information literacy curriculum for educators & learners*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377068>

⁵ UNESCO. 2023. *A Steady Path Forward: UNESCO 2022 Report on Public Access to Information (SDG 16.10.2)*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385479>





Welcome to the first stop on our journey through the MILTiverse. On this planet, the guiding question of our quest is:
Why is the right to access information so relevant?

1. Understanding the right to access information

Access to information is vital to empowering citizens as it gives them the means to actively participate in society, engage in decision-making processes, promote transparency and accountability, advocate for their rights, and contribute to development and positive social change.

Think of it this way – having the information about what governments, big corporations or other powerful actors are doing or how their actions are impacting our communities and societies, gives us the power to hold them accountable for it. It also strengthens our capacity to take informed actions and demand that our rights be adequately protected.

This dynamic brings into the light a crucial notion: access to information involves both obligations and rights. Authorities, as duty-bearers, have the obligation to ensure, through the necessary legislation and policies, that public information can be accessed by the citizens. As such, Governments should provide

information to the public, not just by responding to requests for access to information, but also by proactively sharing it, and making sure that other powerful actors also abide by the same principles, putting in place the necessary accountability and transparency systems.

However, not all information serves the same purpose – there is a difference between general information and information that is of public interest, and information that is harmful. While harmful content can lead to misinformed actions, public interest information is empowering citizens to make informed decisions and choices. That is why, to ensure that such information is accessible, there are laws that protect the right to access public interest information. These laws often establish frameworks for transparency, outlining the obligations of duty-bearers to disclose information proactively, but also set in place independent oversight institutions in charge of ensuring effective implementation of the laws.

But what is information of public interest? Public interest is broadly defined as the welfare or well-being of the general public and society. Thereby, the following are often considered as public interest information (keep in mind, this is a non-exhaustive list):

- * **Public health and safety.** Disease data, safety regulations, and emergency alerts to protect the health of an entire community.
- * **Government financial information.** Government budgets, expenditures, and financial audits.
- * **Environmental data.** Environmental conditions, pollution levels, and natural resource management.
- * **Legislative and policy documents.** laws, regulations, and policies from all public bodies.
- * **Public service information.** Education, transportation, and social services.



Hacks for actively accessing information:

- * Before searching for information, **clearly define what type of information you need and for what purpose.** Knowing your specific requirements helps you find the most relevant sources.
- * **Clarify the steps** involved in requesting information of public interest.
- * **Assess the credibility** of your sources by considering their verification methods, fairness, and transparency.

2. Learning how to promote the right to access information as an organization

As a youth organization, promoting the right to access public information is a powerful way to empower young people in your community. When young people know how to access information – like education policies, job programmes, or local government services – they can take control of their futures and get involved in

decision-making processes. It is about ensuring that young people can understand the developments and opportunities that affect them, have well informed opinions, and effectively participate in public debate and discussions.





Hacks to promote the right to access information actively among youth

Research which right to information -related laws or policies exist in your country and discuss them with your group using the following suggested questions: a. In your opinion, do these policies or laws effectively function in your country? b. What could be the consequences or risks if the right to access information is not guaranteed in your country? c. Do people in your community understand that they have the right to access to information?	Engage your team and young people in your community in a discussion: a. What different types of information that might affect youth are — for instance, laws, public services, job/educational opportunities? What topics would make a difference for them? Is such public interest information provided in an accessible format for youth? b. Do you know how the social media platforms that you use every day, use your personal data to show you certain content? Do you know how your data is used or shared with third parties, including other companies?
Based on the answers in these discussions, plan your next steps: you can engage in peer-to-peer education, awareness raising, and advocacy! For instance, if there is no access to information law in your country, organize a discussion on how to advocate for such laws and policies. Also, you could create social media posts, organize workshops, or collaborate with local schools to promote peer-to-peer education and teach youth about their right to access information and how they can exercise it.	

Time to complete the mission!

 **What do you think you can do to continue promoting the right to accessing information among young people**

Write down your answers. These will be powerful insights to integrate MIL strategies at your organization.





Check the “MIL Supercharger of ideas”, where you will find some inspiration on how to guarantee the right to access to information at the core of your organization’s policies and strategies.



Inspiring notes for your journey

Encode Justice is a global youth-led organization that advocates for a fair, transparent and accountable Artificial Intelligence (AI) ecosystem. Their work involves ensuring that AI technologies are developed and implemented in ways that respect human rights, including the right to access accurate and reliable information.

The organization has mobilized young people across the world to demand transparency in AI systems and to advocate for policies that protect the public from AI-driven harms such as misinformation, privacy violations, and discrimination.

By pushing for regulations and policies that require openness and accountability in AI, Encode Justice is directly contributing to the broader **right to access information**.

Their efforts highlight how crucial it is for young people to have access to accurate information, especially in the rapidly evolving field of AI, where the stakes are high and the implications for society are profound.

For more information, visit <https://encodejustice.org/>



Want to go deeper?

	If you want to get more information about the right to access information, check this video produced by UNESCO: Access to Information... A universal right. ⁶
	If you want to have a global overview and to stay informed regarding the Right to Access Information, visit UNESCO's website: "Access to Information Laws" ⁷
	If you want to get familiar with advancement towards enforcing Access to Information laws worldwide, read UNESCO 2023 Report on Public Access to Information (SDG 16.10.2) "The need to accelerate worldwide progress" . ⁸

Find below the correct matches to the game at the Key Concepts section:

Access to information. The right, the possibility and the ability to identify, obtain and make use of information effectively.

Safe navigation. The ability to critically assess and navigate various media platforms and information in general. This involves understanding how to access quality information, identify credible sources, or avoid misinformation.

Data protection. Safeguarding personal information that is not public interest from unauthorized access or misuse

Right to access information. The right to access information held by public bodies or by private bodies performing public functions or performing functions with public interest.

Information of public interest. Data and knowledge that is of importance or relevance for the general public

Public access to information: An effective system to meet citizens' rights to seek and receive information, particularly that held by or on behalf of public authorities.

Get your answers right!



⁶ UNESCO. 2016. *Access to information... A universal right* [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=og-UNP1ZvPU>

⁷ UNESCO. n.d.. *Access to information laws*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://www.unesco.org/en/access-information-laws>

⁸ UNESCO. 2024. *The need to accelerate worldwide progress*. UNESCO 2023 report on public Access to Information (SDF 16.10.2). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389214>



MISSION 2

The winds of freedom of expression



Mission Goal

By the end of this mission, we will understand the fundamentals of freedom of expression as an important right in democratic societies, recognize its limitations, and build strategies to make an ethical use of our right to freely express ourselves.

MIL Values and Principles



Freedom of
expression and
access to information



Information

Imagine living in a place where speaking up for what you believe in, sharing your thoughts, or protesting against injustice is forbidden by law. Your voice is silenced, dissent is crushed, and any challenge to authority is met with severe punishment—imprisonment, harassment, or worse. Such a world stifles creativity, halts progress and makes advocating for change nearly impossible.

Unfortunately, this is not a distant nightmare; freedom of expression has suffered a global decline during the last decade. This decline can be seen in the increasing pressure that independent journalism around the world have experienced in the form of censorship, direct attacks against journalists, and financial challenges to maintain their business model afloat⁹.

Freedom of expression is vital for a healthy democracy because it ensures fair political participation, amplifies minority voices, and holds governments accountable for their decisions. Understanding what this right truly entails, how to exercise it responsibly, and recognizing its boundaries is crucial for building a society where human rights and needs are protected. But it is also essential to question: Are there any limits to what we can express? Are all forms of expression protected?

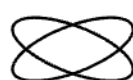
In this mission, we will delve into the complexities of freedom of expression and its limits. By the end, you will be ready to effectively communicate your causes while safeguarding your rights and respecting those of others.



Key Concepts

Match the concepts on the right column with its definition on the left column:

Concept		Definition
Freedom of expression	1	A A set of entitlements and protections regarded as necessary to protect the dignity and self-worth of a human being. Such rights are usually captured in national and international documentation that articulates these rights. ⁹
Human rights	2	B Refers to the changing or the suppression or prohibition of speech or writing that is deemed subversive of the common good. ¹⁰
Censorship	3	C Defined in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."



Check the correct answers at
the end of the mission!

⁹ UNESCO. 2021. *Think Critically, Click Wisely! Media and information literacy curriculum for educators & learners*. UNESCO. Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377068>

¹⁰ Anastaplo, G. 2024. *censorship*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. [website] <https://www.britannica.com/topic/censorship>





Take a look inside

1. Do you know what freedom of expression is and recognize its limits in your country?
 - a. I really don't know how freedom of expression is legally protected and regulated in my country.
 - b. I have a vague idea of my rights and responsibilities but don't understand my country's laws regarding them.
 - c. Yes, I understand the legislation related to freedom of expression in my country and I am aware of my rights and limits.
2. The right to freedom of expression is important for democratic societies because:
 - a. It allows everyone to say whatever they want, regardless of its consequences.
 - b. It allows people to express their thoughts and opinions. However, it should be limited when it comes to debating or criticizing a government law or decision, to maintain national unity and avoid conflicts within society.
 - c. It allows citizens to express diverse opinions, hold their leaders accountable, and participate fully in the political process. It supports the exchange of ideas, and fosters debate in all kinds of matters.
3. Does your organization have a specific policy or strategy to favor a culture of freedom of expression both inward and outward your organization?
 - a. No, we don't have a policy with specific strategies related to freedom of expression in our organization.
 - b. Yes, we have a policy, but it is not updated.
 - c. Yes, we have an updated and functional policy with specific strategies to favor freedom of expression at all times.

 If you chose 'a,' give yourself 1 point. If you chose 'b,' give yourself 2 points. If you chose 'c,' give yourself 3 points. Now, read your scores on page 10.



Let's jump in

Why is the right to freedom of expression so important to uphold?

1. Understanding the right to freedom of expression

Read the following articles extracted from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)¹¹, a key international treaty that enforces 193 United Nations member states to respect and protect individual civil and political rights. These articles outline the right to **freedom of expression** and specify the conditions under which this right may be limited:

¹¹ United Nations (General Assembly). 1966. *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. Treaty Series, 999, 171. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/ccpr.pdf>

Article 19

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
 - (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
 - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.

Article 20

1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.
2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

2. Tracing the limits of freedom of expression

Imagine you are part of the government of your country. Read the following situations and decide whether or not you should limit or punish the expression involved in each case. Place an "X" in the box that best matches the extent to which you, as the part of the government, believe you should limit the expression based on these criteria:

1. _____
You may not limit or punish this type of expression.
2. _____
You can limit or punish this type of expression under exceptional conditions.
3. _____
You are unsure if you can or can not limit or punish this type of expression but you think there may be good arguments on both sides.
4. _____
You should usually be able to limit or punish this type of expression..
5. _____
You should always be able to limit and punish this type of expression.



After placing your scores per each scenario, add the total score.

 Situation	Score				
	1	2	3	4	5
A public speaker gives a speech at a rally advocating for violent revolution against the government, claiming that the only way to achieve true freedom is through armed conflict.					
A blogger writes an article criticizing the government's healthcare policies, stating that the current leadership is corrupt and incompetent.					
A comedian performs a stand-up routine that includes jokes making fun of a particular religious group, which some audience members find offensive and provocative.					
A newspaper publishes an opinion article that argues in favor of racial segregation, claiming that different races should not mix for the sake of preserving cultural purity.					
An activist group distributes pamphlets in a public square calling for the boycott of businesses owned by a minority ethnic group, claiming they are "taking over" the local economy.					
During a family dinner, one of the older family members expresses strong political views, saying that people who support the opposition party are "traitors" and "should be punished." This person also says that "we should remove these people from society to restore the country's values".					
During a team meeting at work, a colleague casually comments that women are "naturally incapable" of handling leadership roles because they are "hysterical by nature." The teammate goes on to say that he prefers working with men because they are more "rational" and "better decision-makers."					
A social media influencer posts a video denying a well-documented genocide, suggesting that historical accounts are exaggerated and influenced by biased groups.					
A student group at a university organizes a peaceful protest against a new government policy, during which they chant slogans critical of the government.					
An online forum moderator allows users to post content that glorifies terrorist acts and encourages others to join extremist groups to fight against perceived enemies of their faith.					
A journalist publishes a report alleging corruption among high-ranking officials without providing concrete evidence, leading to widespread public distrust and unrest.					
A teacher at a public school teaches their students that a certain race is superior to others, using pseudoscientific theories to support their claims and encourage students to adopt these views.					
Total score					

3. Discuss with your colleagues around your scores

Is there a difference between your scores? What is this difference indicating about the way you understand freedom of expression and its limits?

Time to complete the mission!

 What do you think you can do to protect the right to freedom of expression while considering its limitations? <i>Write down your answers. These will be powerful insights to integrate MIL strategies at your organization.</i>			 Check the "MIL Supercharger of ideas", where you will find some inspiration on how to guarantee the right to freedom of expression within your organization!
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Inspiring notes for your journey

The Youth Democracy Cohort is a multi-stakeholder platform launched during the Year of Action at the 2021 Summit for Democracy. Its mission is to advance good governance and democratic renewal around the world by supporting active youth participation. As part of their efforts, they launched a **"Menu of possible commitments"** to enhance youth rights and participation in national and local contexts. One of these commitments focuses on supporting youth freedom of expression by: **1)** Helping young advocates, artists, journalists and bloggers peacefully exercise their freedom of expression by strengthening legal frameworks and ensuring safe civic spaces, **2)** promoting youth access to voting by facilitating access to citizen ID, and **3)** Accrediting young citizens to observe democratic institutions (e.g. parliamentary monitoring) and processes (e.g. peace monitoring, election observation, parallel vote tally) and advise on possible reforms.

During the 2023 Summit for Democracy in Costa Rica, the European Democracy Youth Network, in cooperation with the European Partnership for Democracy, launched the **Youth Participation Handbook**, a handbook that brought together best practices on inclusive youth participation in democratic processes, identified and implemented by young people around the world.

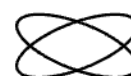
Check out the **Youth Participation Handbook** to get inspired!¹²

Want to go deeper?

If you want to know more about freedom of expression and the threats independent journalism is facing around the globe, check out: Journalism Is a Public Good: World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development, Global Report 2021/2022. UNESCO

	If you want to learn more about freedom of expression, how to defend it and advocate for its protection, check out UNESCO's Freedom of Expression toolkit: a guide for students. ¹³
	To understand more about the limits of freedom of expression, watch "The Legitimate Limits to Freedom of Expression: the Three-Part Test" ¹⁴ and "The Rabat Plan of Action on the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred" ¹⁵ produced by UNESCO.

Get your
answers right!



Find below the correct matches to the game at the Key
Concepts section:
1 - C | 2 - A | 3 - B

¹² European Democracy Youth Network (EDYN) & European Partnership for Democracy (EPD). 2023. *Youth Participation Handbook*. <https://youthdemocracycohort.com/the-youth-participation-handbook/>

¹³ UNESCO. 2013. *Freedom of expression toolkit: a guide for students*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000218618>

¹⁴ UNESCO. 2021. *The Legitimate Limits to Freedom of Expression: the Three-Part Test* [Video]. <https://youtu.be/Wg8fVtHPDag>

¹⁵ UNESCO. 2021. *The Rabat Plan of Action on the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred* [Video]. <https://youtu.be/ADrB320Se3A>



MISSION 3

The meteors of hate speech and harmful content



Mission Goal

By the end of this mission, we will be able to identify if your organization's communications contain prejudices or stereotypes that could harm your audience. We will understand the limits and characteristics of hate speech and learn how to effectively communicate the organization's values while respecting and embracing pluralism and diverse perspectives.

MIL Values and Principles



Respect for
cultural
diversity



Intercultural &
interreligious
dialogue



Human
rights and
dignity



Solidarity
and
peace



Information

Hate speech, both online and offline, is one of the most pressing challenges of our time, with severe consequences for societies globally. It has been used to dehumanize entire populations, leading to crimes ranging from hate crimes to genocide. However, the term "hate speech" is sometimes misused as a tool for censorship, punishing those whose opinions differ from the prevailing political agenda, which infringes upon freedom of expression and affects human rights at large.

Various international agreements and guidelines¹⁷ call for specific actions from states to prevent and combat

hate speech while protecting freedom of expression. These frameworks provide a foundation, but the role of individuals and communities is equally vital in addressing this issue.

In this mission, we will explore a community-based strategy that effectively counters hate speech while safeguarding freedom of expression and equality. This involves identifying and reporting hate speech and, most importantly, using our freedom of expression to create counter-narratives that promote respect, inclusion, and protection for all, regardless of race, religion, ideology, or values.



Key Concepts

Fill in the blanks to find out the definitions of the key concepts of this mission:

Freedom of expression | **Prejudice** | **Pluralism** | **Stereotype** | **Hate speech**

* _____ is any kind of communication in speech, writing or behavior that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, descent, gender or other identity factor.

* _____ is a fundamental human right enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It refers to the right of any human being to express their opinions, ideas, and to have free access to information without fear of censorship, retaliation, or legal sanction. However, this is not an absolute right and must be exercised responsibly, with respect for the rights of others, and in a way that does not incite violence, hatred, or harm.

* _____ is a preconceived opinion or attitude towards someone, formed without knowledge or specific reasons. Is usually directed against people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or nationality. It involves judgments that can lead to discrimination, social exclusion, and psychological and physical violence.

* _____ is a fixed and oversimplified belief or idea about a particular group of people, their ways of living and thinking. These are often based on generalized assumptions and can lead to prejudice, discrimination and violence. The spread of these generalized views can perpetuate misconceptions and biases within society.

* _____ is a political philosophy that recognises and affirms the virtues of diversity within a society. Its relevance is based on the fact that modern societies are culturally, religiously, linguistically, and ethnically diverse and as such, we should learn to live in harmony and collaboration. It involves not just the coexistence of diverse groups but also their active participation in the political, social, and cultural life of the society.



¡Check the correct answers at
the end of the mission!

¹⁷ E.g. Articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR; *The UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech*; *The Rabat Plan of Action on Hate Speech*; The agreements achieved on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to mention just a few.





Take a look inside

1. What is the primary goal of enforcing laws and guidelines against hate speech?
 - a. To ensure that only opinions aligned with the government's stance are allowed.
 - b. To silence all opinions that could be considered offensive to any individual or group.
 - c. To prevent speech that discriminates based on protected characteristics and could incite harm or violence while preserving freedom of expression
2. How does hate speech relate to the concept of pluralism?
 - a. Hate speech is necessary for pluralism because it encourages robust debate on controversial issues.
 - b. Hate speech has no impact on pluralism, as pluralism only concerns political diversity.
 - c. Hate speech undermines pluralism by promoting intolerance and hostility towards diverse groups, which can harm social cohesion.
3. Does your organization have a specific policy and strategies regarding preventing or countering hate speech both inward and outward your organization? (This includes working actively in issues related to intercultural or interreligious dialogue or directly against hate speech).
 - a. Yes, we have a functional policy with specific strategies, or work actively to counter hate speech.
 - b. Yes, we have a policy but it is not updated and actually we do not revisit it frequently or we have not included these subjects into our organizational core activities recently.
 - c. No, we don't have a policy with specific strategies related to hate speech in our organization or we have never worked on subjects related to these issues.

✨
If you chose 'a,' give yourself 1 point. If you chose 'b,' give yourself 2 points. If you chose 'c,' give yourself 3 points. Now, read your scores on page 10.



Let's jump in

How can we counter Hate Speech and its impacts on society?

1. Identifying Hate Speech and Harmful Content

Hate speech is a concept that varies in definition depending on where you are in the world. For the purpose of this activity, we will use the definition provided by the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech: "any kind of communication in speech,

writing, or behavior that **attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language** with reference to a person or group **based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, descent, gender, or other identity factor.**"

Using this definition, we can analyze online communications—whether written, graphic, or audiovisual—to determine whether they constitute hate speech. **It is important to note that we are not deciding whether these communications should be illegal.**¹⁸ The goal of the following activity is to identify the key elements of hate speech and use our creativity to build counter-narratives that help counter its negative impact on society.

Now, take a look at the following examples of hate speech and answer the following questions:

Questions	
1.	What is the main purpose of this communication?
2.	What are some possible impacts of this kind of communication on the person or group who is targeted?
3.	What would you do if you find that the person that created or reposted this communication is your friend or someone you know?
4.	If your organization would opt to respond to this communication, what do you think would be a proactive response?
Examples	
You find a post on social media that states that all the people belonging to a specific religious group is a menace to the security, survival and well being of your society.	
You watch a video of a politician stating that insecurity in the community is the responsibility of immigrants and that they should all be deported as soon as possible without contemplation of their situation.	
You read a column that affirms that a genocide episode against a minority is a hoax invented for this minority to take control over the political power of the country.	

¹⁸ For insights on international guidelines regarding hate speech and freedom of expression, please refer to the introduction of this chapter.

You find a social media post that explains a theory that states that getting near people of certain ethnic group is dangerous for your health because they carry diseases of all kinds.

You see a meme affirming that people that defend the rights of the LGBTQ+ community should be punished with all the power of law.

You see a meme that affirms that the world would be better off if a certain religious group didn't exist at all.

2. Creating counter-narratives that promote **Human Rights, peace, inclusion and diversity**

Now that you've identified different types of hate speech and reflect on its impacts, it's time to take action by creating counter-narratives that promote human rights, dignity, respect, peace, diversity and inclusion. Choose one example from the previous section and develop a counter-narrative in response. To do so, follow the following steps:



✱ **Choose a means to share your message:** this can be written format, an image, a video or other kind of language.

✱ **Create a message** that promotes consciousness about the subject that you choose. This can be done by highlighting pluralistic values or sharing empirical data that proves that the hatred message is stigmatizing,

✱ **Double-check:** Before sharing or posting, ask yourself: "Is this message free from inciting aggression or violence?" "Is it rooted in a mindset of division ("us" vs. "them"), or does it promote pluralism, peace, respect, and/or inclusion?"

Keep in mind that **hate cannot be countered with hate**. By creating counter-narratives, we foster a growing awareness of the profound impacts of hate speech and begin the gradual process of shifting mindsets from seeing others as "enemies" to recognizing them as "allies." While this transformation takes time, it is the essence of pluralism and the foundation of building a more inclusive society.

¹⁹ Südwind. 2020. *Hate Busters Project*. [Website] <https://hatebusters.erasmus.site/>

²⁰ Südwind. 2020. *The lazy person's guide against hate speech*.



Time to complete the mission!



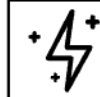
✱ What steps do you think your organization can take to respond to the potential risk of being targeted with hateful content online?

✱ What do you think that your organization could do to actively counter hate speech online?

Write down your answers. These will be powerful insights to integrate MIL strategies at your organization.



Check the "MIL Supercharger of ideas", where you will find some inspiration on how to integrate actions to counter hate speech within your organization!



Inspiring notes for your journey

The HateBusters Project, an Erasmus+ EU initiative was a two-year project (2020 - 2022) aimed to share effective strategies for combating hate speech and cyberbullying among a group of partner organizations.

Equipping youth workers and young people with the skills to recognize and deal with hate speech both online and offline, the project promoted a holistic approach that connects real-life behavior with online actions. Some of their key activities included specialized training for youth workers, development of a guide for grassroots campaigns, a toolkit for raising awareness, and an app (Hatebusters APP) featuring simulations to enhance understanding and response strategies. This experience highlighted the importance of empowering individuals at the grassroots level to actively counter hate and promote respect.

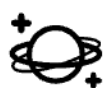
For more information visit:

<https://hatebusters.erasmus.site/>¹⁹

Check their "Lazy person's guide against hate speech":

<https://neu.suedwind.at/bildungsmaterial/the-lazy-persons-guide-against-hate-speech/>²⁰





Want to go deeper?

	Watch "Words Have Power. Countering Hate Speech and Protecting Freedom of Expression" ²¹ , a video produced by UNESCO that explains the impacts of hate speech and what has been done globally to counter it.		To understand the role of education in countering hate speech, take a look at the Global citizenship education in a digital age: teacher guidelines by UNESCO. ²⁸
	Check this video produced by UNESCO on How to address online Hate Speech with a human rights-based approach? ²²		If you want to know the role of education in addressing antisemitism, take a look at Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education. Guidelines for Policymakers by UNESCO & OSCE. ²⁹
	If you want to better understand the limits between Freedom of Expression and Hate Speech, take a look at this video: Understanding the Limits on Freedom of Expression produced by Amnesty International. ²³		To understand how AI can affect the way humanity remembers the holocaust history, check out AI and the Holocaust: rewriting history? The impact of artificial intelligence on understanding the Holocaust by UNESCO. ³⁰
	If you want to know more about hate speech consequences, check out this video: Hate Speech & the Consequences Explained / What You Can Do to Prevent the Next Atrocity produced by the United Nations. ²⁴		Read Addressing conspiracy theories: what teachers need to know - UNESCO ³¹ to understand the dynamics and dangers of conspiracy theories and how to address them in the classroom.
	Do you want to get a better understanding of the limits to Freedom of Expression? Check the video The Legitimate Limits to Freedom of Expression: the Three-Part Test produced by UNESCO. ²⁵	Find below the correct matches to the game at the Key Concepts section: 1. Hate Speech 2. Freedom of Expression 3. Prejudices 4. Stereotypes 5. Pluralism	
	Get to know one of the most important international frameworks that addresses Hate Speech and Incitement to Hatred: The Rabat Action Plan , in this video produced by UNESCO. ²⁶		
	Do you want to know if there are specific laws regarding hate speech in your country? Check out the Global Handbook on Hate Speech Laws , produced by the John Templeton Foundation. ²⁷		

Get your answers right!



²¹ UNESCO. 2024. *Words Have Power. Countering Hate Speech and Protecting Freedom of Expression* (Long version) [Video]. <https://youtu.be/LNW6GOsZo0M>

²² UNESCO. 2022. *How to address online #HateSpeech with a human rights-based approach?* [Video]. <https://youtu.be/JirA4suOdXI>

²³ Amnesty International. 2021. *Understanding the Limits on Freedom of Expression* [video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zemBh2uoCdQ>

²⁴ United Nations. 2022. *Hate Speech & the Consequences Explained / What You Can Do to Prevent the Next Atrocity*. [video]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQeoUQa3MiU>

²⁵ UNESCO. 2022. *The legitimate limits of freedom of expression: the Three - Part Test*. [video]. <https://youtu.be/Wg8fVtHPDag?si=1S7FPVT68fH1w5iv>

²⁶ UNESCO. 2022. *The Rabat Plan of Action on the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred*. [video] <https://youtu.be/ADrB32Ose3A?si=EisXuRV9z8ZlpkNo>

²⁷ Alkiviadou, N., Mchangama, J., & Mendiratta, R. 2020. *Global handbook on hate speech laws. The Future of Free Speech*, 7, 2.

https://futurefreespeech.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Report_Global-Handbook-on-Hate-Speech-Laws.pdf

²⁸ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388812>

²⁹ UNESCO & OSCE. 2018. *Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education. Guidelines for Policymakers*. Paris, UNESCO.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000263702>

³⁰ UNESCO. 2024. *AI and the Holocaust: rewriting history? The impact of artificial intelligence on understanding the Holocaust*.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000390211>

³¹ UNESCO. 2022. *Addressing conspiracy theories: what teachers need to know*. Paris, UNESCO.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381958>





MISSION 4

The asteroids of disinformation,
misinformation and malinformation



Mission Goal

By the end of this mission, we will have developed practical skills to identify different types of false or misleading information, e.g. disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation, including Generative AI content. Also, we will gain tools to prevent from spreading such content.

MIL Values and Principles



Freedom of expression
and access to information



Self-awareness



Information

Do you ever find it hard to tell what is real from what is false online?

These days, the internet is packed with misleading information—from news stories that look legit but are actually satire, to click-bait headlines, AI-generated images, and content that's been manipulated or completely made up, such as **deepfakes**. **Social media makes it easy for this kind of content to spread quickly**, which is why knowing how to spot trustworthy information is a must-have skill for anyone navigating today's digital world.

Journalists play a key role in countering misleading content online by ensuring the reliability of information. Their work is centered in verifying factual information and consulting credible sources. In fact, one of the easiest ways to fact-check information is by checking reputable media outlets, as they adhere to strict guidelines to ensure accuracy of the information. Understanding and valuing the role of journalism is crucial to help us discern between truthful and factual stories and fabricated news or misleading information. Journalists play a special role in our societies, as they act as watchdogs of the powerful, holding them to account. They provide factual reports and insightful analysis to help audiences understand current affairs and decision-making. In this mission, we will learn how to identify different types of misleading content—like disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation. Plus, we will learn how to apply lateral reading skills, the same ones used by professional fact-checkers, to help evaluate the trustworthiness of the content we come across, create, and share in our online life.



Key Concepts

* **Disinformation:** Content that is false and/or misleading. However, a more specific use of the term is to limit it to false content created by producers who know about the falsity and have the intention to cause harm.

* **To fact-check.** To confirm the truth of a claim (an assertion made in speech or writing, or a purportedly true image), often as part of the research or editorial process.

* **Deepfake:** Artificial intelligence (AI)-generated or manipulated content, specifically video, audio, or images, that are used to mislead or deceive by creating realistic but false representations of people or events.

* **Misinformation.** Covers false and misleading content. Deceitful or unintentional creation and dissemination of such content. Content that is false but not created to cause harm, although its effect may be as harmful. Frequently, misinformation derives from initial disinformation.

* **Malinformation.** Information that is based on reality, but used to inflict harm on a person, organization or country. True information that violates a person's privacy without public interest justification.

* **Lateral reading:** A strategy for investigating who's behind an unfamiliar online source by leaving the webpage and opening a new browser tab to see what trusted websites say about the unknown source.



Take a look inside

1. Imagine you receive a message on your WhatsApp that produces an emotional impact on you. You...

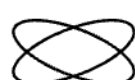
- Share it immediately to your WhatsApp groups. Everyone should know this!
- Read it, but you don't do anything about it.
- Search for further information on your favorite browser.

2. How important is it for you to make sure that everything you share or post online is accurate or true?

- Not important.
- Somehow important, but I don't fact-check the information before posting.
- Very important. I make sure that everything I share or post is trustworthy information.

3. Does your organization have a protocol for fact-checking information before posting online?

- No
- We post it or repost it if it looks from a reliable source.
- Yes, we have a defined protocol to fact-check information before posting.



Check the correct answers at
the end of the mission!

If you chose 'a,' give yourself 1 point. If you chose 'b,' give yourself 2 points. If you chose 'c,' give yourself 3 points. Now, read your scores on page 10.



Let's jump in

How can we fact-check information?

1. Get familiar with lateral reading skills

Read out loud the definitions of disinformation, misinformation and malinformation provided in the "Key concepts" section above.

You will find some examples of potentially misleading information in this section. Your task is to identify whether they are reliable information or if they fall under disinformation, misinformation or malinformation. Use any of the **lateral reading skills**³² presented below to determine your answer.

	Lateral reading hacks to fact-check information online
	Check the source * Identify if the piece of news includes a trackable source. For example: "Canadian man makes history after receiving zero election votes: 'I am the true unity candidate,'" (The Guardian, June 27, 2024).³³ * Now, use your favorite browser to search for information about that source (The Guardian). Consider the credibility of the source—Is it a reputable news outlet, a social media post, or an unknown website? * Use the "Just add Wikipedia"³⁴ trick to check what it says about the source. Now, identify some signs of reliability: i.e. daily newspaper, formed in 1821, "newspaper of record" in the UK.
	Check the claim * Search the claim of the piece of news you want to fact-check on your favorite browser. Or type down keywords to search if other media outlets have reported on it. * Analyze the results. If there are other reliable media outlets reporting on it, it's most likely to be reliable information. If fact-checking organizations have already reported on it as disinformation, these results will appear on your search. * Watch the video "Check the Claim"³⁵ to better understand this lateral reading skill.
	Reverse image search * If the piece of news you want to check has an image, use the "Google Reverse Image Search" to track the original source of the image. * Carefully analyze the results to see if the image corresponds to the news, if it was taken out of its original context, or if it is AI generated. * Watch the video "Skill: Search the History of an Image"³⁶ to better learn how to apply the Reverse Image Search hack.

³² CIVIX. 2024. CTRL-F: Find the facts. [Website] <https://ctrl-f.ca>

³³ The Guardian. 2024. Canadian man makes history after receiving zero election votes: 'I am the true unity candidate.' [Website] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/27/zero-votes-canada-election>

³⁴ CIVIX. 2024. Skill: Just add Wikipedia. [Video]. https://youtu.be/1k3zr_vNRXM

³⁵ CIVIX. 2024. Check the Claim. [Video]. <https://youtu.be/a1dMpfcwbbQ>

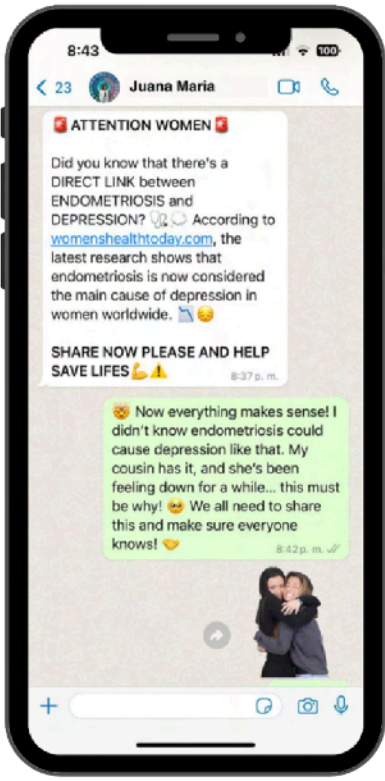
³⁶ CIVIX. 2024. Skill: Search the History of an Image. [Video]. <https://youtu.be/-ZVXA0RSgAA>



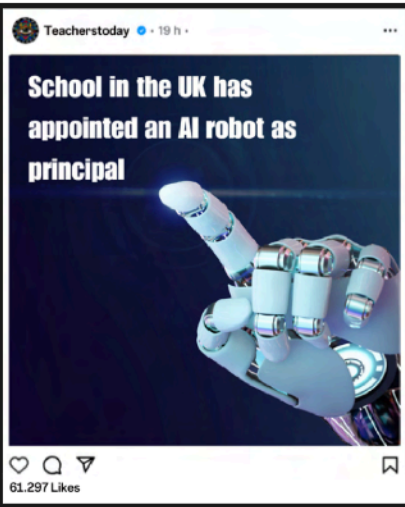
 Hacks to identify content generated by AI		
If lateral reading skills are not enough to trace if certain content is created by AI, use the following tools to detect text, videos, audios, or images. Keep in mind that these tools might have errors in their accuracy rates.		
For all type of GAI content: Google SynthID: https://deepmind.google/technologies/synthid/	Texts Quillbot: https://quillbot.com/ai-content-detector GPTZero: https://gptzero.me/ Copyleaks: https://copyleaks.com/ai-content-detector	Videos, deepfakes, and audios Sensity AI: https://sensity.ai/ Deepware: https://scanner.deepware.ai/

2. Identifying disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation

Time to test your skills! Take a look at the following examples, apply one of the **lateral reading skills** and identify what type of content do they relate to:

 Source: own elaboration.	According to the definitions provided, this is: ☐ Reliable information ☐ Disinformation ☐ Misinformation ☐ Malinformation ☐ I don't know
	Argue your choice with your colleagues.
	Fact-Checking Hack! * Open your favorite browser and look up for information about the source: womenhealthtoday.com * Is there any Wikipedia entry about this source? If so, what does it say about it? * Did the search results provide you with some hints about the reliability of this information?
	Based on your research, is womenhealthtoday.com a trustworthy source of information online?





Source: own elaboration.

According to the definitions provided, this is:

- ☐ Reliable information
- ☐ Disinformation
- ☐ Misinformation
- ☐ Malinformation
- ☐ I don't know

Argue your choice with your colleagues.

Fact-Checking Hack!

- * Open your favorite browser and look up for the keywords of this post: "School, United Kingdom, AI Robot, Principal,"
- * Check the results: are any other reliable media outlets posting about this? Has it already been fact-checked by professionals?



Source: own elaboration.³⁷

According to the definitions provided, this is:

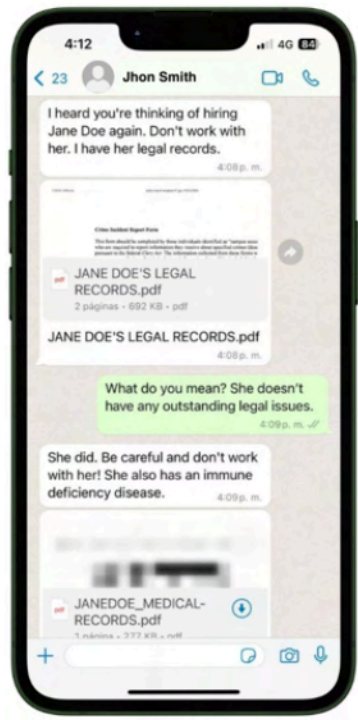
- ☐ Reliable information
- ☐ Disinformation
- ☐ Misinformation
- ☐ Malinformation
- ☐ I don't know

Argue your choice with your colleagues.

Fact-Checking Hack!

- * Open the link provided to access the original post.
- * Right-click on the image and select "Google Image Search" or "Google Lens".
- * Check the results. Does it tell you something about the trustworthiness of this image?

Based on your research, is it true that an 80-year old grandmother knitted huge cats?



Source: own elaboration.

According to the definitions provided, this is:

- ☐ Reliable information
- ☐ Disinformation
- ☐ Misinformation
- ☐ Malinformation
- ☐ I don't know

Argue your choice with your colleagues.

- * Which could be some of the impacts on the life of the person whose private information is displayed in this example?



Time to complete the mission!

* What could you or your organization do to mitigate the risk of sharing disinformation, misinformation or malinformation?

* How could your organization deal with potentially harmful or deceiving Artificial Intelligence Generated contents online?

Write down your answers. These will be powerful insights to integrate MIL strategies at your organization.



Check the “MIL Supercharger of ideas” to get inspiration on how to integrate fact-checking protocols within your organization!



Inspiring notes for your journey

The Youth Multimedia Room is an initiative launched over a decade ago by UNESCO to provide a platform for young media professionals to report on major international events and make their voices heard while learning valuable skills.

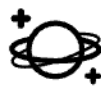
Bearing in mind the importance of integrating fact-checking skills into any journalistic reporting, and even social media content creation, UNESCO set up a “fact-checking lab” – a team of international fact-checkers certified by the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) to mentor the young journalism students, climate activists, and digital content creators covering the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day Conference 2024.

With the global theme being “A press for the planet: Journalism in the Face of Environmental Crisis,” the young team was taught the importance of fact-checking and delivering quality and verified content about the climate change crisis.

The initiative demonstrates the impact of empowering youth as agents in the fight against disinformation and misinformation and the importance of young people giving voice to their communities.

Want to explore more? Read this press entry about the initiative. **Young journalists bring local perspectives at the World Press Freedom Day Conference 2024 | UNESCO**³⁸

Visit the UNESCO Youth Media Room here: **Youth Multimedia Room | UNESCO**³⁹



Want to go deeper?

	CIVIX developed CTRL-F, a set of educational resources focused on teaching users how to fact-check information online. Explore its videos ⁴⁰ , lessons ⁴¹ , and gamification tools, such as Fact or Opinion? ⁴² , designed to test your ability to distinguish between factual and value claims, and Fake Out ⁴³ , which helps you evaluate your skills in identifying false versus trustworthy information online.
	Do you want to learn more about “Lateral Reading” skills? Watch this video ⁴⁴ created by Digital Enquiry Group as part of its “Civic Online Reasoning” curriculum.
	Do you want to explore further about the special role that journalists play in our society, and their importance in realizing our right to freedom of expression? Check UNESCO’s Freedom of Expression Toolkit: A guide for students. ⁴⁵

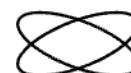


4. Jane Doe’s personal records – Malinformation
3. Grandma – Disinformation
2. Appointed AI Robot – Misinformation
1. Endometriosis and depression – Misinformation

Find below the correct answers to the main activity in the “Let’s jump in” section.



Get your answers right!



³⁷ FeedyRecip. (2023, September 20). *An 80-year-old grandmother and her crochet finished product* [Facebook post]. <https://www.facebook.com/feedyposts/posts/an-80-year-old-grandmother-and-her-crochet-finished-product-/673451594827419/>

³⁸ UNESCO. 2024. *Young journalists bring local perspectives at the World Press Freedom Day Conference 2024*. [website] <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/young-journalists-bring-local-perspectives-world-press-freedom-day-conference-2024?hub=66704>

³⁹ UNESCO. 2024. *World Press Freedom Day 2024*. [Website] <https://www.unesco.org/en/youth-multimedia-room?hub=66704>

⁴⁰ CIVIX. 2024. *CTRL-F. Verification Skills 2024*. [Video series] https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsSbsdukQ8Vb_xgdQOarM7YajJbO4o8Oz

⁴¹ CIVIX. 2024. *CTRL-F. Digital media literacy*. [Website] <https://ctrl-f.ca/en/login/>

⁴² CIVIX. 2024. *CTRL-F. Fact or opinion*. [Gamification] <https://www.guidedtrack.com/programs/y7vbjdl/run>

⁴³ CIVIX. 2024. *CTRL-F. Fake Out*. [Gamification] <https://ctrl-f.ca/en/fakeout/>

⁴⁴ Digital Inquiry Group. 2020. *Sort Fact from Fiction Online with Lateral Reading*. [Video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHNprb2hgZU>

⁴⁵ UNESCO. 2013. *Freedom of expression toolkit. A guide for students*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000218618>





MISSION 5

The warmhole of online gender-based harmful content



Mission Goal

By the end of this mission, we will understand the key traits and impact of gender-based bias, prejudice, hate speech and disinformation. We will also be equipped with tools to spot and avoid creating or spreading this type of content.

MIL Values and Principles



Respect for
cultural
diversity



Human
rights and
dignity



Solidarity
and
peace



Information

Have you ever come across content on social media that spreads harmful messages and perpetuates stereotypes and biases based on gender? Whether through posts, memes, or AI-generated content like deepfakes, it is very likely you have. Gendered content can take many forms, notably hate speech and disinformation, but also gender-based biases and prejudice, which are often embedded in the design of technology itself. An example of how AI models operate from a strong bias is the generation of masculine images related to words such as "engineer" or "business" while relating feminine ones to "marriage" or "housekeeper."⁴⁶ This is especially concerning because producers of disinformation often leverage these biases to make their content

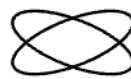
seem more credible, exploiting misogyny, racism, and other forms of discrimination.⁴⁷ And the consequences can be substantial – the spread of such content online can shape perceptions, deepen discrimination, and limit civic space and public participation of specific societal groups.

This mission will help us to understand and recognize gender-based harmful content, including prejudice, bias, hate speech, and disinformation. We will learn how to create content that avoids gender stereotypes and biases and hate speech or disinformation. This mission will also help us protect ourselves from attacks based on gendered disinformation or hate speech.



Key Concepts

Match the concepts on the right column with its definition on the left column:



Check the correct answers at
the end of the mission!

Concept	Definition
Biases in Artificial Intelligence 1	A Systematic errors that lead to unfair outcomes for certain individuals or groups. It can arise from various stages of AI development, including design, data collection, and deployment.
Equality 2	B Violence against women that uses false or misleading gender narratives and harmful stereotypes. The intersection of gender and disinformation also affects LGBTQ+ people.
Fact-check 3	C To confirm the truth of a claim (an assertion made in speech or writing, or a purportedly true image), often as part of the research or editorial process.
False connection 4	D Content whose headlines, visuals or captions do not support the content itself. Also, false links between facts.
False context 5	E Genuine content shared with false contextual information.
Gender-based disinformation 6	F The idea that everyone, irrespective of age, gender, religion, and ethnicity, is entitled to the same rights. It is a fundamental principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights captured in the words 'recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.'
Cyberflashing 7	G It refers to an act of violence perpetrated by one or more individuals that is committed, assisted, aggravated and amplified in part or fully by the use of information and communication technologies or digital media, against a person on the basis of their gender.
Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) 8	H Is one form of sexual harassment, which implies receiving explicit pictures, uninvited, to a device such as a phone or tablet via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. It can be used in schools to bully, intimidate and humiliate students.

⁴⁶ UNESCO, IRCAI. 2024. *Challenging systematic prejudices: an Investigation into Gender Bias in Large Language Models*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388971/PDF/388971eng.pdf.multi>

⁴⁷ Thakur, D., & Hankerson, D. L. 2021. *Facts and their discontents: A research agenda for online disinformation, race, and gender*. [Website] <https://cdt.org/insights/facts-and-their-discontents-a-research-agenda-for-online-disinformation-race-and-gender/>





Take a look inside

- 1.** Imagine you or a friend are being targeted by a disinformation campaign with biased, stereotypical or hate speech content. Do you have a plan to identify the type of attack and protect yourself from it?
 - a. No, I don't have a plan.
 - b. I have ideas, but no clear steps.
 - c. Yes, I have a step-by-step strategy.
- 2.** How important is it for you to make sure that everything you create by using AI avoids perpetuating gender inequity or harmful gender stereotypes?
 - a. Not important.
 - b. Somewhat important, but I don't know how to do it.
 - c. Very important. I follow specific steps for the ethical use of AI in terms of gender.
- 3.** Does your organization have a policy to ensure that reliable and verified information is disseminated with special attention to preventing gender-based misinformation?
 - a. No.
 - b. We do have a policy with statements to ensure the dissemination of reliable information, but it does not have principles to specifically prevent gender-based misinformation.
 - c. Yes, we have a policy with specific statements to specifically prevent gender-based misinformation.

✧

If you chose 'a,' give yourself 1 point. If you chose 'b,' give yourself 2 points. If you chose 'c,' give yourself 3 points. Now, read your scores on page 10.



Let's jump in

1. Understanding gender biases in GAI and gender-based harmful content

The impact of gender-based harmful content online: learning through figures

Global studies estimate that 58% of young women and girls globally have experienced online harassment on social media platforms and that most girls report their first experience of social media harassment between 14 and 16 years of age.⁴⁸ But gendered harmful content spread online does not exist in isolation — it reflects deep-seated biases present in society, and, when such content goes viral or gains traction, it creates

a feedback loop, further validating and normalizing these societal biases and attitudes.

Sometimes, this content can spill back over into real-life, resulting in real harm, harassment, threats, or even physical violence against women, specifically those working in public-facing professions. For instance, a global survey conducted by UNESCO with more than 900 women journalists from 125 countries showed that 73% of them said they had experienced online violence, while 20% of them said they had been attacked or abused offline in connection with online violence they had experienced.

The challenges related to gender-based violence have intensified with the Generative AI (GAI), as these technologies can be easily accessed and used by an average Internet user to create extremely convincing false content. Women and girls are also most often targeted by deepfakes, about which you have learned in the previous mission. Some studies show that up to 98% of deepfake videos online are pornographic and that 99% of those target women or girls. At the same time, GAI, like the harmful content it can produce, reflects and amplifies pre-existing societal biases because datasets that train these models often contain skewed gender representations, making it easier for GAI to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and narratives at scale.

Beyond this, girls are disproportionately targeted and affected by content reinforcing unrealistic body standards leading to mental health problems and eating disorders, as well as all forms of sexual violence facilitated by technology, including unwanted sexually explicit comments, emails or text messages, non-consensual sharing of intimate image, and cyberflashing. At the same time, incidents in schools of deepfake pornography portraying female pupils are increasing rapidly around the world. Girls are also spending more time on social media than boys, which affects their attention spans and learning habits.⁴⁹

A recent analysis of social media content monitored in Colombia showed that harmful narratives spread on social media particularly target political figures, activists, journalists, and artists, with the aim to discredit their professional, leadership or creative abilities. Another worrying pattern identified was related to harmful content revictimizing or victim blaming the victims of femicide, further perpetuating harmful attitudes and undermining efforts to address gender-based violence.⁵⁰

Now, check these examples of fictional situations and follow the instructions below to respond to them.

⁴⁸ UNESCO.2023. "Your opinion doesn't matter, anyway": exposing technology-facilitated gender-based violence in an era of generative AI. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387483>

⁴⁹ UNESCO. 2024. *Global Education Monitoring Report: Gender report – Technology on her terms*. Paris, UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389406_eng

⁵⁰ Linterna Verde. 2022. *Bases de datos del monitoreo Social Media 4 Peace Colombia* (Unpublished).





List the five best books on leadership literature and give me the names of the authors.

Here are five highly regarded books on leadership along with their authors:

1. "Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't" by Simon Sinek
2. "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable" by Patrick Lencioni
3. "Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action" by Simon Sinek
4. "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You" by John C. Maxwell
5. "Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts." by Brené Brown

These books cover various aspects of leadership, from building effective teams to inspiring others and leading with courage and empathy.

Imagine you are going to create a post for your social media using Generative Artificial Intelligence. You ask it to make a list of the top five books on the topic you want to position. In this example, the GAI gives you four male authors and one female author.

According to the definitions provided, this is an example of:

- * AI bias
- * Gender-based disinformation
- * False connection

Argue your choice

Open your favorite Artificial Intelligence chatbot and search for five quotes from prominent people on a topic you would like to talk about in your social media (sustainable architecture, climate justice, human rights).

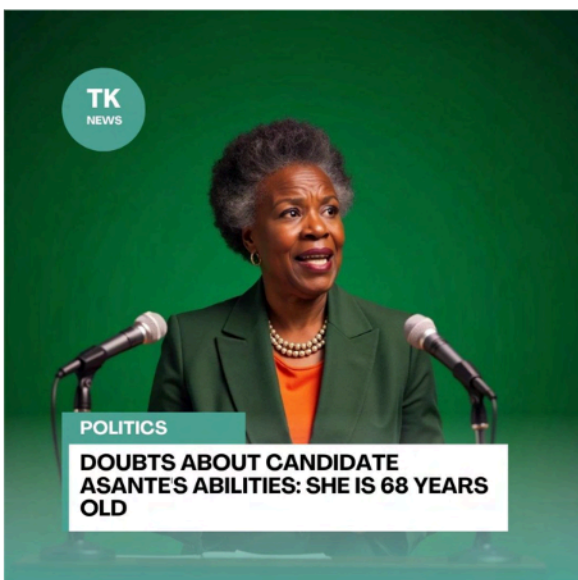
Based on the outcomes, do they represent women or LGBTQ+ people fairly, without biases or prejudices?

Yes/No Why?



Hack!

- * Check if there is a diverse representation in the outcomes.
- * If the outcome is not inclusive, ask the chatbot to diversify its answers.
- * Don't rely on just one tool to find information, use search engines, refer to specialized literature on the topic, and ask experts.
- * After publishing, invite your audience to provide feedback or suggestions on additional content that might not be included.



Source: own elaboration with Adobe Firefly.

Take a look at this example of gender-based disinformation and reflect on the following questions:

- * What is the underlying message of the post?
- * In this example, what are the interests and motivations from the person who might have created this content?



Hacks to Identify gender-based disinformation

- * Often undermines women political leaders by spreading false narratives about their capabilities.
- * Targets women by perpetuating harmful stereotypes and narratives.
- * Frequently employing sexualized imagery and narratives.
- * Operates across multiple identities, often exploiting intersecting narratives of race and gender to enhance credibility.
- * Also affects LGBTQ+ communities.

Do you recall any cases of gender-based harmful content online?

Describe the situation.



Imagine this situation:	 Hacks to counter Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)
A deepfake video featuring a female student from your class has started circulating in private chat groups among students. The student is unaware of the video, and some people in the chat groups are sharing it with offensive comments. You've come across this video and are unsure of what to do.	* Raise awareness on digital safety: bring this conversation into your community to understand how TFGBV manifests on online interactions. * Report to authorities: Get familiar with your country's legislation regarding online harassment or any other forms of abusive behavior. This can help in holding perpetrators accountable and in advocating for safer online environments. * Promote community support: Foster online and offline communities where individuals can share their experiences with TFGBV and other forms of online violence or abusive behavior. Support among peers is key to empower others to stand against such violence and advocate for updated legislation to prevent online harassment.
Based on the situation described, reflect on the following questions: * What would you do in this situation? * What are some of the potential consequences of not acting in this situation?	

Time to complete the mission!

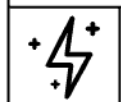




- * What do you think you can do to create content free of gender bias and gender-based disinformation?
- * What could you do to protect yourself and your organization from gendered-based harmful content and to promote the countering of such content?

Write down your answers. These will be powerful insights to integrate MIL strategies at your organization.

Check the **"MIL supercharger of ideas"** for inspiration on how to address the risks of reproducing gender-based biases in your content online!





Inspiring notes for your journey

The Coalition for Freedom of Expression and Content Moderation in Kenya (FECOMo) a multi-stakeholder mechanism dedicated to finding joint solutions to challenges of the digital information ecosystem, launched a joint action, leveraging the diverse expertise

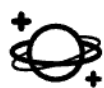
of its members and their networks, to address the gaps in the existing approaches towards addressing the issue of the spread of harmful content online, particularly affecting women and girls in Kenya.

In 2023, the FECOMo members signed a ten-point resolution as a statement of their commitment to reshape Kenya's digital landscape towards being safer for all through countering gendered hate speech and disinformation. The resolution was developed during a three-day workshop filled with discussions aiming to conceptualize and formulate innovative strategies for possible solutions to the problem. As of 2024, the FECOMo is continuing its advocacy preparing a position paper on this issue. This work is helping both national authorities as well as digital platforms, to better understand how the design and operations of the platforms are allowing content that constitutes gender based violence, or discriminates women and other groups on the basis of gender; so that adequate measures can be put in place to avoid this from happening.

For more information visit: <https://fecomo.org>⁵¹

⁵¹ FECOMo. 2024. Official website. [Website] <https://fecomo.org/>





Want to go deeper?

If you want to know more about freedom of expression and the threats independent journalism is facing around the globe, check out: Journalism Is a Public Good: World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development, Global Report 2021/2022. UNESCO

	Check this video produced by The London Interdisciplinary School on how AI image Generators make bias worse: How AI Image Generators Make Bias Worse ⁵²
	If you want to have a clear example of the impacts of gendered disinformation, read this report ⁵³ produced by UNESCO on how online violence affects women journalists.
	To learn more about technology-facilitated gender-based violence, what its most common forms are, and what is being done around the world to address the problem, visit this summary and interactive map . ⁵⁴
	Do you want to know what role can education play in determining whether technological development is gender equal? check this gender report: "Technology on her terms" ⁵⁵

Find below the correct answers to the Key Concepts section.

1 - A
2 - F
3 - C
7 - H
8 - G

Get your
answers right!



⁵² LIS – The London Interdisciplinary School. 2023. *How AI Image Generators Make Bias Worse*. [Video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2sQRfICd8>

⁵³ UNESCO. 2020. *Online violence against women journalists: a global snapshot of incidence and impacts*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375136>

⁵⁴ United Nations Population Fund. n.d. *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: a growing threat*. <https://www.unfpa.org/TFGBV>

⁵⁵ UNESCO. 2024. *2024 Gender Report. Technology on her terms*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389406>





MISSION 6

The North Star of authenticity in the generative AI space



Mission Goal

By the end of this mission, we will grasp how we can use and navigate AI-generated tools ethically and why it is crucial to be equipped with skills for identifying AI-generated content that circulates online.

MIL Values and Principles



Respect for
cultural
diversity



Freedom of
expression
and access
to information



Human
rights and
dignity



Solidarity
and
peace



Information

Have you ever used Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate images, text, video or audio?

Today it is very common for us to use Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) to create content that we share on the Internet, and even more common to find it while navigating online. AI-generated content, like all human-made technologies, **reflects aspects of our daily lives**, political environment, religious beliefs, opinions, artistic expressions, and so on. But GAI is not just about generating content for entertainment or convenience; it has a much broader and more complex impact. While it can be used positively for creativity and innovation, it can also spread harmful

narratives, misinformation, and biased stereotypes at an unprecedented scale, as we have seen at the previous mission. With GAI still at its infancy, we do not even know what the overreliance on these technologies can mean for our ability to think critically.

As artificial intelligence becomes more and more prevalent, **we need to develop ways to navigate and use these technologies ethically and ensure the protection of our human rights**. In this mission, **we will learn to be aware of the AI-generated content we encounter and or generate**, preventing the dissemination of disinformation and other forms of harmful content.



Key Concepts

Fill in the blanks using these words to complete each definition.

datasets
age
creative
human

pictures
images
gender
language

* **Artificial Intelligence (AI).** The study, application, and production of machines and software that have some of the qualities that the human mind has, such as the ability to navigate _____, recognize _____ solve problems and learn.

* **Audiences.** A group of readers, viewers, listeners, or users characterized by specific demographic characteristics such as _____ and _____. They are not only passive consumers but also active participants in content creation. They play a role not only in the media, but also in civic engagement.

* **Large language models (LLMs).** Advanced AI systems designed to understand and generate _____-like text. They are trained on large _____ containing a wide range of written content. They can answer questions, summarize text, translate languages and even generate creative content.

* **Generative artificial intelligence (GAI).** The use of large language models to create something new, such as _____, _____, graphics and interactive media.⁵⁶



Take a look inside

1. Imagine you are going to create a series of posts for your social networks using a chatbot powered by a LLM. You...

- Copy and paste the outcomes to your social media.
- Read the outcomes, use other sources, make changes and post to your social networks.
- You read the results, consult other sources to compare the results and make sure they are reliable and unbiased, and then create your texts using the most appropriate and reliable information. In your post, you state that you have used AI help for some of the text generation.

2. How important is it for you to make sure that everything you create by using AI respects your principles, principles that you share with your audience and human rights in general?

- Not sure about the importance.
- It is important, but I don't know how to ethically use AI.
- Very important. I follow specific steps for the ethical use of AI in general.

3. Does your organization have a policy to ensure you use AI tools ethically?

- No.
- We are assisted in our work by AI-powered tools, and we try to use AI ethically, based on other policies or principles such as privacy, trustworthiness, etc.
- Yes, we have a policy with specific statements on the ethical use of AI.



Check the correct answers at
the end of the mission!

If you chose 'a,' give yourself 1 point. If you chose 'b,' give yourself 2 points. If you chose 'c,' give yourself 3 points. Now, read your scores on page 10.

⁵⁶ McBride, K. Mahadevan, A. and Elkins, T. 2024. *Template for a basic newsroom generative AI policy*. Poynter. https://docs.google.com/document/d/15m3Bb1886HsVU2nPDQHG71r_aBqNdp6FBIg0AsZFul0/edit

Let's jump in

How can we navigate and use AI-generated tools and content ethically?

Generative Artificial Intelligence offers numerous benefits that can significantly improve human life. GAI can enrich cultural and creative industries by providing new tools for expression, creation and innovation, among other positive impacts. But also, it can present several challenges and pitfalls that need to be addressed to ensure its ethical use. **GAI-powered tools can exacerbate existing inequalities** by replicating harmful stereotypes, generating content that is used to disinform, or lacking transparency about how their algorithms make decisions.⁵⁷

The first that you can do to empower yourself to navigate and use GAI ethically is to understand how prevalent AI-generated content is online. Studies show that as much as 90% of online content may be synthetically generated by 2026⁵⁸. This brings the entire notion of "not real" and "impersonal" connections online to a whole new level – can you imagine that interactions may not even be human anymore! One of the best-known challenges of GAI are deepfakes, which are rising exponentially, as you have learnt during Mission 5 of this journey. To put it into figures, the amount of deepfakes shared online doubles every 6 months⁵⁹. As a result, we are seeing an alarming increase in cases where deepfakes are used for malicious purposes, including identity fraud. In the Philippines, for example, the number of such fraud attempts rose by 4,500% year⁶⁰ over year. If you encounter content that you suspect to be generated by AI, use **lateral reading skills to fact-check information online** that you have learnt in Mission 4. Moreover, you can implement this checklist:



Hacks for identifying content generated by Artificial Intelligence (GAI)

* **Check for inconsistencies:** Look for unusual details or inconsistencies in the text, image, or video. GAI-generated content may have discrepancies that don't align with reality.

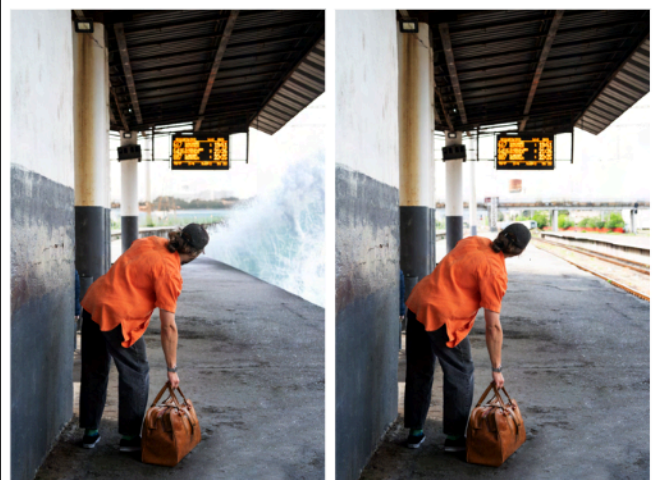
* **Analyze writing style:** Pay attention to the writing style. GAI content might lack a human touch, appearing overly formal, repetitive, or devoid of nuanced expression.

* **Examine image quality:** In images, look for artifacts or blurriness, especially around edges, which can indicate synthetic generation. GAI images may also have unnatural lighting or shadows.

* **Look for metadata:** If possible, examine the metadata of digital content, as it may provide clues about its origin and whether it has been artificially created.

* **Stay informed:** Keep up to date with advancements in GAI technology and common characteristics of AI-generated content, as this knowledge can help you recognize it more effectively.

Find the differences between these two images. Look closely and write down all the changes you perceive.



Source: own elaboration with Adobe Firefly.

⁵⁷ UNESCO. 2021. *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*. Paris, UNESCO <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381137>

⁵⁸ European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation. 2022. *Facing reality? Law enforcement and the challenge of deepfakes. An Observatory Report from the Europol Innovation Lab*. https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/Europol_Innovation_Lab_Facing_Reality_Law_Enforcement_And_The_Challenge_Of_Deepfakes.pdf

⁵⁹ Jacobson, N. 2024, February 26. *Deepfakes and their impact on society*. CPI OpenFox. <https://www.openfox.com/deepfakes-and-their-impact-on-society/>

⁶⁰ Zandt, F. 2024, March 13. *How Dangerous are Deepfakes and Other AI-Powered Fraud? Statista Daily Data*.

<https://www.statista.com/chart/31901/countries-per-region-with-biggest-increases-in-deepfake-specific-fraud-cases/>

But what about using GAI to create content?

Our overreliance on generative AI tools raises important questions about creativity, learning, and critical thinking. For example, 80% of young people aged 10 to 24 use AI multiple times a day for education, entertainment, and other purposes.⁶¹ In Colombia, a study revealed that 93.3% of young boys, girls, and adolescents engage with GAI, with 30.4% relying on it to assist with their homework⁶². Controlling your engagement with these tools is essential, as well as helping broader youth; however, it is equally important to be mindful of avoiding harmful content that may be replicated through the use of GAI.



Hacks to use GAI wisely

- * **Use GAI as a supplement, not as a substitute:** Do not delegate entire tasks to Generative AI powered tools. Instead, use them to enhance your understanding or explore different perspectives on a certain topic while engaging in active learning.
- * **Keep human oversight on the outcomes:** After using GAI, review its outputs to ensure its accuracy, identify biases and make sure it is ethically sound.
- * **Fact-check the information provided by the GAI:** Always verify the content or the information provided by GAI tools to ensure its credibility and prevent the spread of mis- or disinformation or biased information. Use lateral reading skills.
- * **Use different sources:** Using GAI is great to get a deeper understanding on a topic. However, you should not use it as the only source of information for your work, study or other interests. to fact-check its outcomes.
- * **Set clear boundaries and usages of GAI:** GAI can be great for brainstorming or editing texts, but it should not be used for decision-making processes.

To cook we use fire or heat, to paint we use oils, and to generate content we have started to use Artificial Intelligence. Imagine you want to use an AI-powered image generator to create images that raise awareness about the danger of deforestation.

What would you do to ensure that the images generated serve an educational purpose and do not lead to disinformation or mistrust?



AI-ethical content creation hacks!

- * Be transparent about the use of AI in content creation.
- * Use a clearly visible sign to mark the image as AI-generated.
- * Share when AI tools are used.
- * Provide context on how the AI tools influence the content.
- * Seek feedback from your audience regarding AI-generated content.

It is very common for GAI's to invent the results you ask for, often adding links, facts or biographical information that is not true.

Imagine you want to create a podcast episode about a popular author. As a search tool, you decide to ask an LLM for the author's biography.

How do you make sure you choose real content for your podcast?



AI-ethical content creation hacks!

- * Verify each fact using reliable secondary sources.⁶³
- * Keep a record of the AI tools used and the processes involved in content creation. This documentation can help in refining practices and ensuring accountability.
- * If you work collectively, develop and communicate clear policies on how AI will be used in content generation.



Time to complete the mission!

What do you think you can do to increase the capacities of youth to navigate AI-generated content and GAI tools ethically?

Write down your answers. These will be powerful insights to integrate MIL strategies at your organization.



Check the "MIL supercharger of ideas" to get inspired on how to create guidelines for ethically integrating AI-powered tools within your organization!

⁶¹ UNESCO. 2024. *AI and the Holocaust: rewriting history? The impact of artificial intelligence on understanding the Holocaust*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000390211>

⁶² Durán Becerra, T., Ortiz Rubio, J., Villada, J. D., Castañeda, J. G., Méndez, A. F., Hernández Vásquez, L. J., Acero Pulgarín, S., & González Gil, N. (2024). *Jóvenes en línea: Ciudadanía Digital en niños, niñas y jóvenes de la generación Z en Colombia*. <https://civixcolombia.org/jovenesenlinea/>

⁶³ Check Mission 4 for fact-checking hacks based on lateral reading skills e.g. "Check the source".



Inspiring notes for your journey

The **Poynter Institute** is a global nonprofit that strengthens democracy through teaching, publishing, convening, fact-checking and media literacy with a special focus on ethical practices. Poynter has several resources for journalists, leaders, and newsrooms working with artificial intelligence to develop ethical guidelines to guide their use.

For more information visit: **Artificial Intelligence, Ethics and Journalism – Poynter**⁶⁴

Check the Template for a basic newsroom generative AI policy: **Your newsroom needs an AI ethics policy. Start here. – Poynter**⁶⁵

As part of Poynter Institute, there is **MediaWise**, a nonpartisan, nonprofit initiative that has already reached 21 million people through online educational content and fact-checking training. They have tons of resources, and initiatives for different audiences. For example, check out their **Teen Fact-Checking Network**, in which teenagers use social media to debunk viral misinformation and share media literacy tips.

Visit **MediaWise – Poynter**⁶⁶ to know the MediaWise initiative. Visit **Teen Fact-Checking Network – Poynter**⁶⁷ to know the Teen Fact-Checking Network.

Want to go deeper?

	Do you want to better understand how MIL is addressing Generative AI? Check this policy brief developed by UNESCO: Examining Media and Information Literacy Responses to Generative AI: A UNESCO Policy Brief . ⁶⁸
	Check out this video on how generative artificial intelligence can change the way we receive information by The Verge. ⁶⁹
	If you want to develop an ethical AI use policy for a non-profit organization, take a look at this guide: How to Develop an Ethical AI Use Policy for Non-profit by the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ). ⁷⁰
	If you want a ready-to-use template for generative AI policies, check out this resource: AIHR Generative AI Policy Template by AIHR. ⁷¹
	Are you looking to create an AI policy for your school ? Explore this guide: AI Policy Guide for School by AI for Education. ⁷²

Get your
answers right!



Find below the correct answers to the Key Concepts section.
* AI: language, pictures
* Audiences: age, gender
* LLMs – human-like, datasets
* GAI – text, images.

⁶⁴ Poynter. 2024. *Artificial Intelligence, Ethics and Journalism*. [Website] <https://www.poynter.org/ai-ethics-journalism/>

⁶⁵ Poynter. 2024. *Your newsroom needs an AI ethics policy. Start here*. [Website] <https://www.poynter.org/ethics-trust/2024/how-to-create-newsroom-artificial-intelligence-ethics-policy/>

⁶⁶ Poynter. 2024. *MediaWise. Digital media literacy for all*. [Website] <https://www.poynter.org/mediawise/>

⁶⁷ Poynter. 2024. *MediaWise Teen Fact-Checking Network* [Website] <https://www.poynter.org/mediawise/programs/tfcn/>

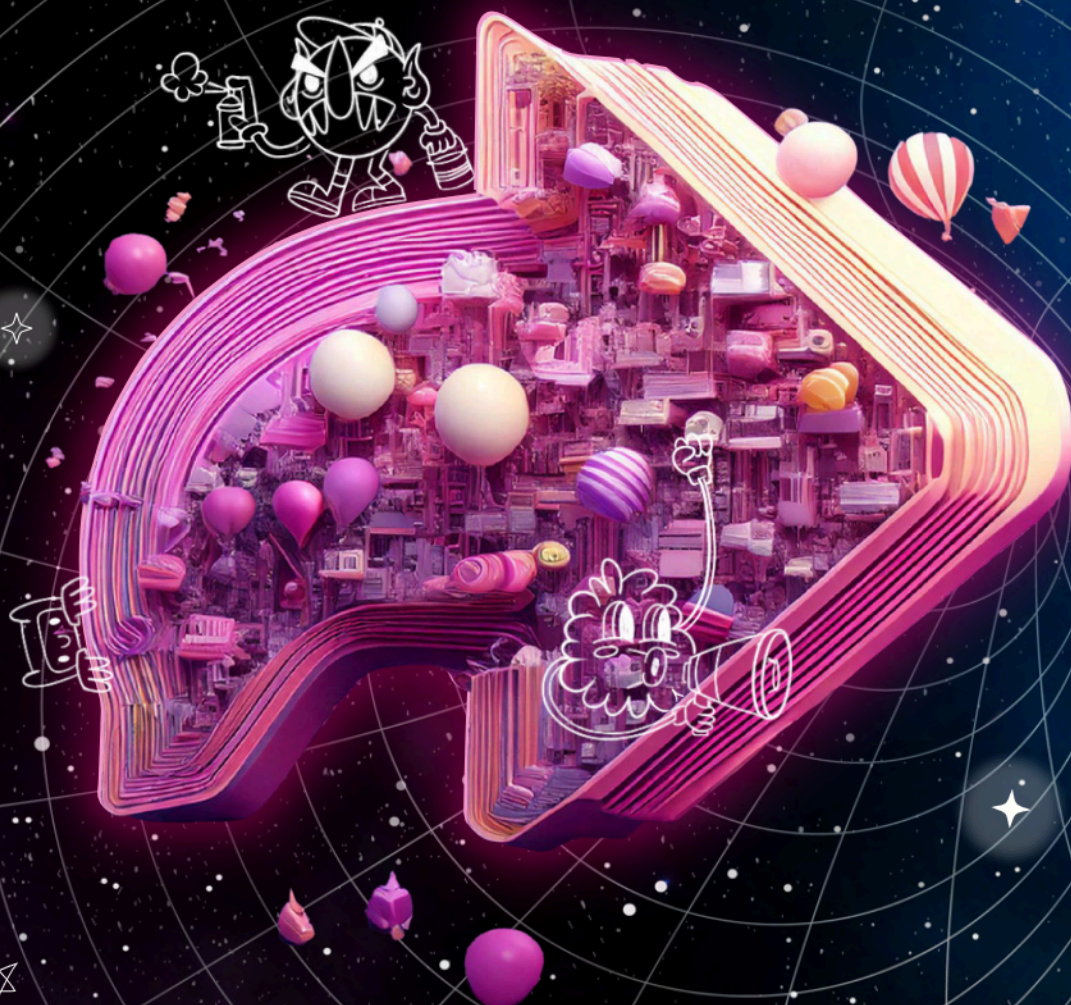
⁶⁸ UNESCO. 2024. *Examining Media and Information Literacy Responses to Generative AI: A UNESCO Policy Brief*. [website]. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/examining-media-and-information-literacy-responses-generative-ai-unesco-policy-brief>

⁶⁹ The Verge. 2024. *How generative artificial intelligence can change the way we receive information* [Instagram post]. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C-8lgiRJDRH/?igsh=Y2pza3J4YjVjODhl>

⁷⁰ ICFJ. 2024. *How to Develop an Ethical AI Use Policy for a Nonprofit*. [website]. <https://www.icfj.org/news/how-develop-ethical-ai-use-policy-nonprofit>

⁷¹ AIHR. 2024. *How To Develop a Generative AI (ChatGPT) Policy + Free Template* [website]. <https://www.aihr.com/blog/generative-ai-policy/>

⁷² AI For Education. 2024. *Guide to Developing an AI Policy For Your School* [website]. <https://www.aiforeducation.io/ai-resources/ai-policy-guide-school>



MISSION 7

The bright star of ethical content creation



Mission Goal

By the end of this mission, we will understand the principles of ethical content creation and recognize our organization as an active subject in the digital era. We will learn how to produce and share online content that aligns with our mission, vision, and values, ensuring that it engages our audience in line with them.

MIL Values and Principles



Respect for
cultural
diversity



Freedom of
expression
and access
to information



Human
rights and
dignity



Solidarity
and
peace



Information

Think for a moment about the content you usually create or share on your social media: Do you create original content? Or do you just share what others create? What is the common factor that portrays your decisions on what you post online? Every post, meme, reel or comment has a lot of power! It can influence, inspire, inform or, of course, mislead and divide.

We tend to think of ourselves as content consumers but we are actually both **consumers and producers: prosumers**. To be a citizen in the digital era is to be aware of our choices and decisions when posting online: are we contributing to peace by fostering dialogue, creating communities and advocating for Human Rights? Or are we contributing to division, violence and radicalization?

In this mission, we will explore the role of being online prosumers. We will reflect on how our values are portrayed on the content we create and share online, and its potential effects on our audiences.



Key Concepts

* **User-generated content (UGC):** Also known as consumer-generated media (CGM) and user-created content, UGC refers to the various kinds of publicly-available media content that can be produced by users of the digital media. Those consuming the content therefore also produce content, often without particular ethical standards.

* **Content moderation:** It refers to the processes by which digital platforms manage and mitigate risks associated with harmful content, including misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, hate speech, conspiracy theories, among others.

* **Prosumer:** In the digital information ecosystem, it refers to an individual who both consumes and produces content.



Take a look inside

1. Remember the last viral information you came across. You...
 - a. Shared it immediately, even though you did not know the broad context of the content.
 - b. Checked it, but you did not do anything about it.
 - c. Reflected for a second about the potential effects of sharing this to your audience.
2. Being aware of your responsibility when creating and sharing content is important because...
 - a. It allows you to freely share your thoughts, views and opinions with no regard if it affects or attacks differing thoughts, views and opinions.
 - b. It helps you make sure that your content does not offend anyone, while it is not necessary to fact-check the information you are sharing.
 - c. It helps you to be aware of the power and potential impact your content might have on your audience.
3. Does your organization have guidelines to ensure ethical content creation on its social media?
 - a. No.
 - b. We don't have guidelines as such, but we try to be ethical in what we create and share.
 - c. Yes, we have clear guidelines to ensure our content is ethical, inclusive and aware of its potential impact on our audiences.



Check the correct answers at
the end of the mission!

If you chose 'a,' give yourself 1 point. If you chose 'b,' give yourself 2 points. If you chose 'c,' give yourself 3 points. Now, read your scores on page 10.





How can we be aware of our responsibility as online prosumers?

1. Your digital persona

Go to your social media accounts and reflect on the content you have created or shared over the past few weeks. This could mean posts, comments, stories, images, reels, etc.



Take a time to think about your persona on social media:

As a content consumer:

- * What type of content does your algorithm primarily show you? Is it entertainment? Political? News? Educational?
- * How do you usually interact with the content you consume? (E.g. liking, commenting, sharing?).
- * What makes you decide to share content? Is it based on its credibility or because it emotionally resonates with you?
- * Does your feed usually present you with contents from different viewpoints? Or does it show you content that exclusively relates to your existing beliefs?

As a content producer:

- * How often do you share (create or repost) content on your social media?
- * What is the nature of the content you most frequently create or share about? (E.g. political, entertainment, educational, personal experiences, social causes etc.)
- * What motivates you to create or share this type of content? (E.g. entertain, raise awareness, provoke etc.).
- * Does your content promote dialogue among different perspectives? Or could it be divisive?
- * How often do you consider the effects of the content you create or share on your audience?

2. Analyze your audience

When reflecting on the responsibility of being a prosumer on the digital sphere, it's crucial to be aware of the audience receiving the content you create and share. Understanding your audience will provide you with the opportunity to build communities, amplify your voice, and get your message across.

Imagine your entire audience as if it were a person. Write down the answers to these questions:

- * What is this person's age?
- * What is this person like? What are this person's interests?
- * What could this person be looking for when engaging with your content? (E.g. information, entertainment?).
- * How does this person interact with you and your content on your social media? (E.g. liking, commenting, sharing, saving?).
- * What type of content does this person seem to prefer? (E.g. Posts, reels, text).

3. Align your message with ethical content creation guidelines

Now, decide what message you want to convey to your audience that portrays your mission, your values, your interests and the causes you advocate for. Keep in mind your audience's persona in order to create content that resonates with them as long as you consider the importance of creating content ethically.



Checklist for ethical content creation!⁷³

- ☐ Be transparent with your audience: be clear about your viewpoints and your sources of information.
- ☐ Be explicit whenever you are sharing your opinion instead of facts.
- ☐ Present facts as they are, even though you disagree with them. This helps develop critical thinking skills among your audience.
- ☐ Be critically aware of yourself and your actions online: Everyone has its right to expression and speech. However, when creating content, make sure you are not spreading misleading information or harmful content.
- ☐ In case of doubt, double check, it's a good and healthy practice to present your content to others before posting to make sure your message is not reproducing misinformation, stereotypes, prejudices, or symbolic violences to anyone.
- ☐ Give credit to the original sources from where you got information for your contents.
- ☐ Explicitly state when your content (video, audio, text) is created with Generative AI tools.

If you want to take your message one step further, develop **Mission 8** to increase its visibility and reach. The sky's the limit!

⁷³ Some of these guidelines are inspired by Mortensen, M. 2009. *Code of ethics for bloggers, social media, and content creators*. Mor10. [Website] <https://mor10.com/code-of-ethics-for-bloggers-social-media-and-content-creators/>





Time to complete the mission!



What could you or your organization do to make sure that all content created and shared on your social media follows ethical guidelines?

Write down your answers. These will be powerful insights to integrate MIL strategies at your organization.



Check the **"MIL supercharger of ideas"** to get inspired on how to integrate ethical content creation protocols within your organization!



Inspiring notes for your journey

Influencers are playing an increasingly important role in shaping the media and information ecosystem, even in sharing public interest information. They have a unique capacity to reach large, diverse audiences—often surpassing the reach of traditional media outlets, which are typically held to journalistic standards.

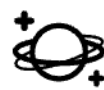
With this in mind, as a part of its "Social Media 4 Peace" project funded by the European Union, UNESCO supported capacity-building and social media content creation initiatives for **young influencers and digital content creators in Kenya**.

Beyond receiving training on integrating MIL into their content development and creating impactful stories promoting peace on social media, these young agents of media and information environment took one step further to commit to MIL by adopting a Resolution to Combat Hate Speech and Disinformation on Digital Platforms placing MIL at its heart.

Visit this webpage to get a glimpse on their **training initiative to young influencers** here: **Kenyan Social**

Media Influencers and Content Creators Trained to Address Harmful Content Online – FECoMo⁷⁴

Do you want to read the **resolution** signed by Social Media Influencers and Content Creators in Kenya? Visit: **Social Media Influencer/ Content Creator Resolution March 2023⁷⁵**



Want to go deeper?

	If you are looking for a clear set of standards regarding ethical content creation, check this Code of Ethics for Bloggers, Social Media and Content Creators developed and updated by Morten Rand-Hendriksen. ⁷⁶
	Is all user-generated content appropriate? Check this video "What is Content Moderation? Moderation vs. Censorship" produced by Eye on Tech ⁷⁷ to get a clear understanding of why content moderation is key to a healthy digital information ecosystem.
	If you wonder if social media platforms should be held accountable for content moderation as a strategy to prevent the spreading of mis- and disinformation, hate speech and conspiracy theories, read the Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms created by UNESCO. ⁷⁸

⁷⁴ FECoMo. 2024. *Kenyan Social Media Influencers and Content Creators Trained to Address Harmful Content Online*. [Website] <https://fecomo.org/fecomo-collaborates-with-acepis-to-build-capacities-of-social-media-influencers-and-content-creators-in-kenya-to-address-harmful-content-online/articles/>

⁷⁵ FECoMo. 2024. *RESOLUTION adopted by Social Media Influencers and Content Creators in Kenya TO COMBAT DISINFORMATION AND HATE SPEECH ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS*.

<https://fecomo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Social-Media-Influencer-Content-Creator-Resolution-March-2023-1-1.pdf>

⁷⁶ Morten Rand-Hendriksen. Originally issued in 2009. *Code of Ethics for Bloggers, Social Media and Content Creators* [Website] <https://mor10.com/code-of-ethics-for-bloggers-social-media-and-content-creators/>

⁷⁷ Eye on Tech. 2023. *What is Content Moderation? Moderation vs. Censorship*. [Video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOIBEr-Ynr4>

⁷⁸ UNESCO. 2023. *Guidelines for the governance of digital platforms: safeguarding freedom of expression and access to information through a multi-stakeholder approach*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387339>





MISSION 8

The galaxy of digital empowerment



Mission Goal

By the end of this mission, we will recognize that digital environments are powerful platforms for youth activism and positioning our organization's topics, interests, and causes. We will learn the importance of advocating for transparency and accountability from digital platforms, and to empower your community to engage in meaningful online participation.

MIL Values and Principles



Respect for
cultural
diversity



Freedom of
expression
and access
to information



Human
rights and
dignity



Solidarity
and
peace



Information

Think about the last time that you engaged with a social cause: maybe you shared a post on your social media, signed a petition, or joined a trend with a meaningful message advocating for human rights. To live in the digital age is **to have an enormous platform to empower communities, raise our voices and become advocates for change.**

However, for this to happen, it is essential to understand how the game field of the digital landscape works: while each user has the responsibility when engaging with online content, what about other players in the digital realm?

Are we all moving in this world on an even playing field and taking our own share of responsibility? Can social media platforms do something to ensure MIL is integrated at the heart of user experience, including through their technologies? And how do technologies affect how our voice is heard online and how it reaches our audiences?

Practices like “shadow banning” disproportionately affect historically marginalized communities. **Without transparency in how these platforms are designed, vital messages that advocate for equality and social justice are at risk of being silenced.**

In this mission, we will recognize our power to advocate for youth voices and needs, as we learn how to use trends as a strategic tool to position our messages in a digital ecosystem filled with information. Beyond that, we will learn that MIL can also be a means to an end – something to be replicated, not only among our peers, but also used to advocate for and demand greater transparency and accountability in the online information ecosystems!



Key Concepts

Fill in the blanks using these words to complete each definition.

human rights
petitions
interaction
communities
target
algorithms
campaigns
displayed

less
content
influence
communication
sharing
suppressing
harmful
demand

* **Online activism.** It refers to the use of digital platforms to advocate for social, political, environmental and other political causes through _____ or social media _____.

* **Engagement.** In the context of digital landscapes, this refers to the active participation and _____ of users with online content. This can include liking, _____, commenting or creating new content.

* **Content curation.** It refers to social media platforms processes involving criteria for determining what content is _____ or prioritized to users and what content receives _____ visibility.

* **Advocacy.** It refers to taking action to _____ public policy, to raise awareness or drive social change. In the digital ecosystem, this practice allows users to use social media platforms to promote causes regarding the guarantee of _____.

* **Social media.** It refers to different platforms designed for interpersonal _____ (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online _____ in order to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

* **Content moderation.** It refers to the process of reviewing, labeling or _____ user-generated content, in order to ensure that it meets certain standards or guidelines. Usually moderates for irrelevant, obscene, illegal, _____, or insulting contributions.

* **Shadow banning.** It refers to a controversial –not yet proven– and rising concern about digital platforms practices related to content selection and moderation processes⁷⁹, that states that social media _____ reduce visibility of a user's _____ without their knowledge, especially affecting historically marginalized communities.⁸⁰

* **Algorithmic transparency.** It refers to the _____ for social media platforms to make public how algorithms rank, boost, restrict or recommend content and _____ users.



Check the correct answers at
the end of the mission!

⁷⁹ Center for News, Technology & Innovation. 2024. *Enhancing Algorithmic Transparency*. [website]
<https://innovating.news/article/enhancing-algorithmic-transparency/>

⁸⁰ Coleman, Theara. 2023. *How content creators cope with discriminatory algorithms*. The Week. [Website]
<https://theweek.com/briefing/1023338/algorithm-ai-discrimination>





Take a look inside

1. Reflect on your own understanding of how social media algorithms may have an impact on the visibility of content related to social or political causes. Select the option that describes you the best:

- a. I don't understand how social media algorithms have an impact on visibility of content.
- b. I have a sense of the problem due to content I've seen on my feed about it.
- c. I understand how algorithms play a role in content visibility and how they might affect historically marginalized communities.

2. You engage in a social cause on your social media because:

- a. Everyone is posting about it; so do I.
- b. The cause matters to me, so I share content to raise awareness immediately.
- c. The cause matters to me, so I do research on the topic and consider different viewpoints from verified information to have an informed understanding of the matter.

3. Does your organization have a policy or a strategy related to digital campaigns?

- a. No, we don't have any strategy or policy related to campaigns.
- b. We design our campaigns organically, as we feel they are needed.
- c. Yes, we have a clear set of strategies and guidelines to design our digital campaigns.

If you chose 'a,' give yourself 1 point. If you chose 'b,' give yourself 2 points. If you chose 'c,' give yourself 3 points. Now, read your scores on page 10.



Let's jump in

How can we advocate for social causes online?

1. Mapping the social media ecosystem

We might think that the only actors involved in making the social media ecosystem safe, fair, equitable and respectful are us as prosumers and social media companies that provide the services.

However, the truth is that there are many actors involved in this landscape, and in a constantly changing ecosystem, governments and other international organizations have struggled to keep all stakeholders held accountable for their responsibilities in how information spreads in this setting.

An important step towards making sure that the social media ecosystem is an open, respectful, equitable and safe space for all citizens is to understand the playing field: who are the players, what are their roles and responsibilities, their relationships and their scope of action. Having a general view of the playing field could be helpful at times of advocating for legal frameworks for content moderation, algorithmic transparency,

Let's map the dynamics and actors involved like **detectives** do. This is relevant if we want to make sure that it is a safe and fair place for youth like us to be able to position our voices, needs and interests.

1. Find a wall in your organization's headquarters.
2. Ask yourselves who are the different actors involved in the social media ecosystem. Think about social media platforms, users, governments, media outlets, academia, think tanks, fact-checkers, journalists, educators, entrepreneurs, influencers, content creators, Generative AI platforms, youth organizations, human rights defenders, etc. Use magazine images or print down some pictures that represent each one of them. Make sure to place your organization into the map.
3. Once all actors involved in the social media ecosystem are displayed, reflect on their roles and responsibilities in the sustaining of a healthy social media ecosystem (think about user experience, human rights like freedom of expression, other responsibilities like equality, ethical use, transparency, etc.). Write your findings on a piece of paper for each actor and pin it into the map. e.g. Governments create legal frameworks for social media platforms to operate in a country, fact-checkers ensure trustworthiness of information.
4. Describe the relationships among actors: e.g. governments regulate social media platforms, users produce content to share on social media platforms, etc. Connect the actors using a piece of wool and then label each connection/relation with a name.
5. Now discuss: as a youth organization, what is your role in this ecosystem? What actions could you take in relation to some of the other actors to contribute to a healthier social media ecosystem? (e.g. Demand transparency from social media platforms).
6. Finally, ask yourselves:
What information do you think social media platforms should provide to ensure transparency and make it an "even playing field" for all? (e.g. how personal data is used, how algorithms are programmed to recommend or hide content, how producers of harmful content are regulated, etc.)



2. The power of digital empowerment

Many youth-led movements and organizations worldwide have successfully used digital platforms to stand for their rights and make sure that their voices are heard. Exploring inspiring examples of how digital ecosystems contribute to youth empowerment is key.

Search your favorite browser or social media platform for successful youth-led digital campaigns. Choose one that aligns with your interests or causes and answer the following questions:

What cause did the campaign aim to mobilize support for?



What worked or made the campaign successful?



Do you notice any particular feature that young people use to position their campaigns online from other forms of advocacy?

Share thoughts with your colleagues to inspire yourself and your organization to develop creative online campaigns that effectively communicate your messages.

3. Create and position an innovative digital advocacy campaign

Note: 

This activity is complementary to the main activity ("Let's jump in") presented in **Mission 7**.

Follow the following steps to create your own digital campaign. For a better understanding of the steps, you'll see an example on how to create a digital campaign that demands social media platforms for algorithmic transparency.

 Hacks to create an impactful digital campaign	Example
Choose a cause: A good campaign has a clear purpose. Pick a cause you're passionate or interested about. Make sure it's clear and meaningful to you.	<i>Demand social media platforms practice algorithmic transparency to ensure fairness and equality to all users.</i>
Define your purpose: What is it that you want to achieve with this campaign? (E.g. awareness, mobilization, advocacy, or action?)	<i>Awareness and advocacy</i>
Choose your message: Stay focused—what's the key point you want the world to hear?	<i>Lack of transparency from social media platforms regarding how algorithms are designed leads to a reduced diffusion of content created by historically marginalized communities, further silencing their voices and needs and deepening discrimination.</i>
Define a catchy name: Be creative! Make sure it resonates with your audience.	<i>#Showthecode #Openthealgorithm, #TransparencyNow</i>
Select the right format: Keep in mind the format (text, video, post, etc), the tone (fun, serious, academic) and your target audience to tailor your content.	<i>Reels - TikTok & Instagram Post - Instagram</i>
Pick your platforms: Tailor your content (TikTok for Gen Z, Instagram for visuals, YouTube for longer videos) according to your target audience.	<i>Audience: GenZ Platform: TikTok & Instagram</i>
Use hashtags wisely: Hashtags are key! Be strategic in choosing them to boost visibility.	<i>#Transparency, #Algorithms, #Shadowbanning</i>
Set a schedule and periodicity: Choose a frequency (daily, weekly, etc) and plan your posts accordingly.	<i>Weekly</i>



4. Time to create!

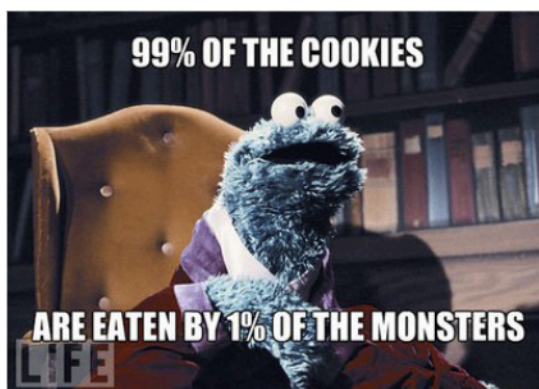
This final step is essential for positioning your campaign. In a digital world where the algorithm rules decisions on visibility and reach, seek inspiration from content with high visibility to understand what worked: was it the tone? The format? The length?

Want a secret? The key for an impactful digital campaign lies in **creativity**.



Hacks to break through the algorithm!

Take a look at this example of how young digital activists designed memes to promote messages during "Occupy Wall Street" in 2011.



By Any Media Necessary © 2016 NYU Press.*
Source: Jenkins, H.⁸¹

One strategy used by content creators with social political messages is using **trends** to "fool" the algorithm and get their message widely disseminated. Check out **this example** of how to use a trend (in this case, music) to raise awareness about textile waste in Kenya.



<https://bit.ly/4eioC00>

Look out on your social media for more examples of how to use trending topics or elements – such as audios, videos, choreographies, aesthetics – to your advantage and gain greater visibility. Do keep in mind that creation of digital campaigns should be oriented by the ethical content creation guidelines suggested in Mission 7.

⁸¹ Jenkins, H. 2016. Youth voice, media, and political engagement: Introducing the core concepts. In H. Jenkins, S. Shresthova, L. Gamber-Thompson, N. Kligler-Vilenchik, & A. M. Zimmerman (Eds.), *By any media necessary: The new youth activism* (pp. 1–60). NYU Press.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt180401m.4>





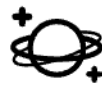
Time to complete the mission!

What could you or your organization do to creatively position your messages and causes on social media?

Write down your answers. These will be powerful insights to integrate MIL strategies at your organization.



Check the **"MIL Supercharger of ideas"**, where you will find some inspiration on how to move towards drafting a content creation policy for social media campaigns within your organization!



Want to go deeper?



Here is a study case in which an organized movement demanded transparency from social media platforms. In 2020, more than 20 organizations from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) signed this **open letter**⁸⁴ calling for social media platforms to ensure equal access to digital spaces for MENA activists, journalists and human rights organizations.



Read these **"Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms"**⁸⁵ designed by UNESCO (2023) to get a sense of what can be done through a multistakeholder approach to address the problems of hate speech and dis-, mis- and malinformation online, while safeguarding freedom of expression and access to information.



Inspiring notes for your journey

The **Harry Potter Alliance** (HPA) is a prime example of youth digital activism that creatively merges fandom with social justice. By using the Harry Potter universe as a platform, HPA engages young people in real-world activism, addressing issues such as LGBTQ+ rights, educational access, and climate justice. The alliance mobilizes fans through campaigns, online petitions, and social media activism, effectively demonstrating how pop culture can inspire civic engagement and advocacy. This model is a best practice for using digital tools to engage youth in meaningful social change.

For more details, visit **Beautiful Trouble's page on the Harry Potter Alliance**⁸² or read this paper written by Jenkins, H. **"Decreasing World Suck: Harnessing Popular Culture for Fan Activism"**⁸³ published by NYU press to get a broad understanding of this movement.

Find below the correct answers to the Key Concepts section.

Online Activism, petitions, campaigns
Engagement, interaction, sharing
Advocacy, influence, human rights
Social media, communication, communities
Content moderation, suppressing, harmful
Content curation, displayed, less
Shadow Banning, algorithms, content
Algorithmic transparency, demand, target

Get your
answers right!



⁸² Beautiful Trouble. *Harry Potter Alliance*. [Website] <https://beautifultrouble.org/toolbox/tool/harry-potter-alliance>
<https://www.icfj.org/news/how-develop-ethical-ai-use-policy-nonprofit>

⁸³ Kligler-Vilenchik, N. 2016. *Decreasing world suck. Harnessing popular culture for fan activism*. In L. Gamber-Thompson, S. Shrethova, N. Kligler-Vilenchik, A. Zimmerman, & H. Jenkins (Eds.), *By any media necessary: The new youth activism*, 102-148.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctt180401m.6.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Aa71ac3e9d5975bf8efc58fec708790b1&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1

⁸⁴ Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor. 2020. Social media companies must stop silencing marginalized groups. [Website] <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/4061/Social-media-companies-must-stop-silencing-marginalized-groups>

⁸⁵ UNESCO. 2023. Guidelines for the governance of digital platforms: safeguarding freedom of expression and access to information through a multi-stakeholder approach. Paris, UNESCO <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387339>





MISSION 9

Arriving to the harbor of peacebuilding online



Mission Goal

By the end of this mission, we will understand the importance of promoting cultural understanding and intercultural communication using ICTs, while supporting freedom of expression and addressing polarization and radicalization.

MIL Values and Principles



Respect for
cultural
diversity



Freedom of
expression
and access
to information



Human
rights and
dignity



Solidarity
and
peace



Information

Cultural diversity is now a common thread in societies worldwide. People from various cultural backgrounds, religions, and traditions interact daily, both online and offline. **These interactions can sometimes lead to conflicts and misunderstandings fueled by cultural differences, hate speech, social inequalities, extremism, and political populism.** If you live in a culturally diverse environment, you may have encountered or been affected by these challenges.

To thrive as a global society, it is crucial to promote intercultural competence — such as empathy, openness, and cultural self-awareness — through dialogue and education. These approaches help people **connect with the richness of different cultures, building peaceful and inclusive communities based on mutual understanding.** Intercultural dialogue and education also foster respect for differences and strengthen resilience against xenophobia, discrimination, hate speech, and extremism.

In this mission, we will examine our own cultural biases and explore key intercultural competencies to deepen our understanding of what it means to live in a truly pluralistic society and counter narratives of separation, radicalization, polarization and xenophobia found on online social platforms.



Key Concepts

* **Interculturality.** The existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect.



* **Intercultural competence.** The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes.



* **Xenophobia.** The fear and contempt of strangers or foreigners or of anything designated as foreign, or a conviction that certain foreign individuals and cultures represent a threat to the authentic identity of one's own nation-state and cannot integrate into the local society peacefully.



Take a look inside

1. Define your level of intercultural understanding:

- I am aware of the existence of different cultures and that each culture has its particular social norms and values.
- I value cultural diversity and I am able to adapt certain aspects of my cultural behavior to connect with people outside my cultural group.
- I feel competent in understanding cultural diversity within my environment, adapting to different cultural behaviors and respecting or including cultural behaviors that are important for the culturally diverse group I belong to.

2. How are cultural differences integrated into your organizational culture?

- We are not aware at all of cultural differences; what's most important is to be able to work together.
- We are aware of some aesthetic aspects like clothing style and eating preferences and we respect them as a team.
- We are pretty much aware of cultural differences (visible and invisible) within our organization and we integrate this knowledge into our organizational culture.

3. Does your organization have a guideline of any sort to include cultural diversity into the organizational culture?

- We don't have anything of the sort.
- We have some implicit agreements.
- Yes, we have something written that works as a guide to help us include cultural diversity into our organizational culture.



If you chose 'a,' give yourself 1 point. If you chose 'b,' give yourself 2 points. If you chose 'c,' give yourself 3 points. Now, read your scores on page 10.



Let's jump in

How can we promote peace online?

1. Create your "cultural iceberg"

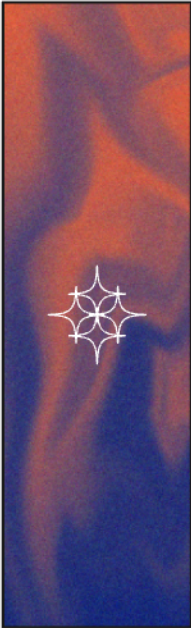
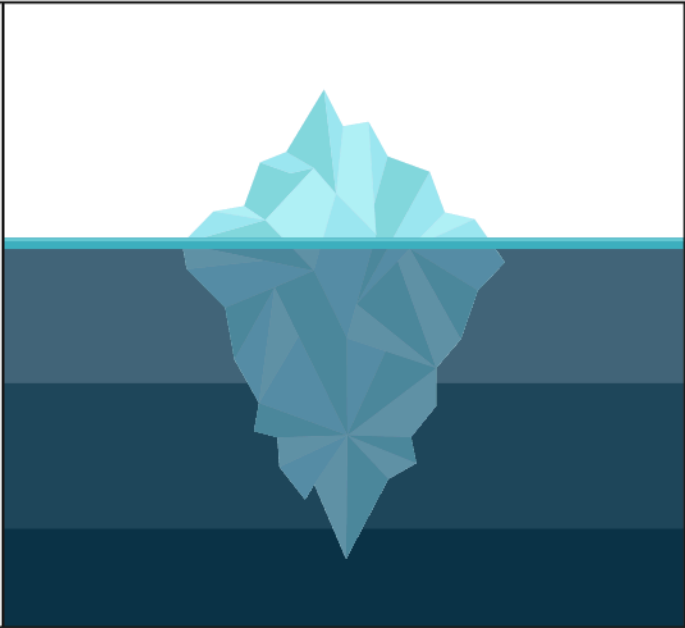
Every culture has **visible and invisible aspects that constitute its unique expression** in the world. Visible characteristics like eating preferences or gestures, are usually the expressions of deeper invisible aspects, such as values, beliefs and assumptions about gender roles, power, etc. The following "cultural iceberg" will help you bring to sight your own visible and invisible cultural characteristics, and then to compare them to the ones of others.

If you live or work with people from other cultures, this exercise will help you understand why you do things like you do them and others do things in different ways. This realization can help you develop intercultural

awareness and help you create a strong organizational culture.

To make your cultural iceberg, first draw on a big piece of paper the image of an iceberg, with its upper small portion over the water and its lower bigger portion under it.

Now sort the following cultural characteristics as **"visible"** (that you will place into the upper part of the iceberg) or **"invisible"** (that you will place in the lower part of the iceberg). If you find visible or invisible characteristics that are not listed, feel free to add them.

	a. Family roles b. Language c. Favorite and undesired food d. Concept of time ethics e. Concept of personal space f. Gender roles g. Sports you play h. Beauty ideals i. Relation to power j. Preferred music k. Gestures l. Roles according to age m. Core values n. Dress code o. Health beliefs p. Beliefs about religion q. Unwritten personal rules r. Humor	
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Now think about your own personal characteristics related to the items you sorted on the iceberg. (e.g. Family roles: Men go to work while women stay at home). Write them down directly under or beside the characteristic descriptor.

2. Create a "cultural iceberg" of someone completely different from you

Repeat the same process but now do it for a person that you consider is fundamentally different from you. This exercise can be done with a person from a different culture, but it works also with people of your own cultural background. The important thing is to look for someone that you identify as different from you in various aspects.

3. Compare your cultural icebergs and answer the following questions:

Are there any visible or invisible characteristics that appear to be incompatible between both of you?
Name them.

_____ ✨ _____

Can you find some similarities between both of you at the visible and the invisible levels? Name them.

4. Let's reflect about what we do to deal with our differences:

It seems to be that we have been culturally taught to deal with our differences with violence. You might have found something online with which you disagree; have you had a violent reaction towards it? Or if you haven't, do you recognize violence in the interactions between people that have different standpoints or perspectives? Is there a different way rather than violence, to deal with our differences, no matter how profound they are?

There is not a perfect recipe for dealing in a peaceful way with the fundamental differences between people, but our guess is that probably **a good start is to make the conscious effort of seeing our shared humanity**. Each one of us, as human beings, share the same fundamental values: "what is important for me, is probably equally important for people who I identify as different from me." Think about family, desire for well-being, having dignity and being respected for who she/he is, etc.

As a final reflexion for this activity, think about one of the fundamental differences you found between you and the other person you described in the previous exercise (eg., I'm an atheist and this other person is an evangelical Christian), and answer the following question:

What would be three important guidelines for a peaceful conversation, if you had to sit and talk with this person about your fundamental difference?

Think about possible strategies that can help you respect, accept or integrate these differences you identified.

Time to complete the mission!



What could you or your organization do to promote peace online and foster intercultural dialogue?

Write down your answers. These will be powerful insights to integrate MIL strategies at your organization.

Check the **"MIL Supercharger of ideas"**, where you will find some inspiration on how to integrate diversity and inclusion strategies within your organization.



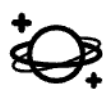
Inspiring notes for your journey

"#Meetyourneighbors" is a program designed by the Intercultural Dialogue Institute (IDI) to give intercultural participants the opportunity to experience sacred dinners of different traditions, hosted by one family and attended by another family from a different religion.

The purpose behind these programs is to build bridges between communities and experience the value of intercultural interactions. These experiences accomplish new friendships and connections through the exchange of ideas, stories and worldviews. This is a powerful strategy to foster kindness, respect, generosity and intercultural harmony.

Checkout this initiative at
<https://meetyourneighbour.ca/about-us/>⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Intercultural Dialogue Institute. 2021. *Meet Your Neighbour*. [Website] <https://meetyourneighbour.ca/what-is-myn/>



Want to go deeper?

	Want to get hands-on activities to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue within your community? Check CIVIX's Politalks ⁸⁶ , a resources-filled website with constructive dialogue protocols and activities to develop in educational settings.
	Check out UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions . ⁸⁷
	If you want to see examples of how gestures can have different meanings depending on the culture that's using them, check out these videos: World of Gestures SHORT 13 30 ⁸⁸ , Gestures Around the World ⁸⁹ .
	Do you want to see what could happen when not considering the cultural backgrounds of your audience? Check this clip ⁹⁰ from the movie "Outsourced" directed by John Jeffcoat (2006).
	If you want to learn more about cultural competences, read this interesting article: Beyond the tip of the iceberg. Five stages Toward Cultural Competence ⁹¹ .

⁸⁶ CIVIX. 2024. Politalks. *Building habits of constructive discussion*. [Website] <https://politalks.ca/>

⁸⁷ UNESCO. 2005. *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (mul)*. paris, UNESCO <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000142919>

⁸⁸ Robert Arnold. 2015. *World of Gestures SHORT 13 30* [Video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRo0gLWqKxI>

⁸⁹ The World is Our Thing. 20217. *Gestures Around the World* [Video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCo3wSGYRbQ>

⁹⁰ Michael Voitz. 2012. *Intercultural communication and understanding is important* [Video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmoYmcZCoiw>

⁹¹ Jerome Hanley. 1999. *Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg Five stages Toward Cultural Competence*. The community circle of caring journal. https://pdkmembers.org/members_online/academy/L08-BeyondtheTipOftheIceberg.pdf



Supercharger of ideas for **MIL policies and strategies**

If any of the missions from this toolkit have sparked ideas for specific actions, operations, or programmes within your organization, use this Supercharger of Ideas to help you turn that inspiration into a concrete part of your organization's MIL Policy and Strategy. The ideas below are designed to fuel your creativity and serve as a starting point for integrating the MIL concepts you have learned about in this toolkit into your organization's framework.

But just like the MILtiverse itself, the challenges — and the actions you can take to address them — are vast and diverse. So, keep in mind that the ideas for actions you see below do not constitute an exhaustive list, but rather a launching pad for your own creative approaches. Each mission has its own complexities and opportunities, and the solutions you implement will need to be adaptable and tailored to the specific needs of your organization and community. Use the questions below to reflect on what each mission means for your organization, and to identify how to translate these insights into impactful MIL initiatives. The Supercharger of Ideas is here to help you get started—but ultimately, it is up to you to innovate, adapt, and lead the way in creating a robust MIL strategy and policy tailored to your organization's vision and goals.



Power Up: Mission 1 - Access to Information

This action area should aim to empower your community, especially youth, with the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for and enforce their right to access information, enabling informed decision-making and active participation in democratic processes.

? Key questions for your organization:

1. What types of information are most relevant and impactful for the youth in your community?
2. Are there any gaps in access to public interest information that specifically affect youth in your community? If there are, what can your organization do to address these gaps?
3. How can your organization educate young people in your community about their right to access public interest information?
4. How can you involve youth in promoting access to information through peer-to-peer education, advocacy or community projects?
5. What steps can your organization take to advocate for laws or policies that improve access to information for youth at the local, regional, or national level?
6. What partnerships can you develop (e.g., with schools, local governments, or media outlets) to ensure broader access to public interest information for young people?

Hacks or possible actions

A1. Capacity building of your organization's members to ensure internal capacities of the organization are built to promote the right to access information and to raise awareness among youth about this right.



A2. Craft and implement awareness-raising initiatives to educate broader youth about the importance of enforcing this right and seeking and accessing information through the trustworthy channels, including traditional media outlets.



A3. Create advocacy work plan for ensuring that this right is effectively applied and practiced, so information is accessible and understandable for youth.

Power Up: Mission 2 - Freedom of Expression

This action area should aim to raise awareness about the importance of freedom of expression in your community, especially among youth, as a fundamental right for voicing their opinions and ideas, expressing their identities –social, cultural, gender, etc.–, and value the role that journalists play in democratic societies.

? Key questions for your organization:

1. Are youth in your community aware about the legal protections and limitations of freedom of expression that exist in your country? And what are the international standards?
2. What can your organization do to promote a safe environment for open dialogue and the sharing of diverse opinions among youth?
3. Are different actors in the digital information ecosystem playing their part in protecting freedom of expression? If not, is there something that your organization can do to change this?
4. How can you engage your community in discussions about the importance of freedom of expression and its role in democracy?
5. What outreach activities can you organize to raise awareness about the challenges faced by independent journalists and activists in your context?
6. How can you promote the participation of young people in the decision-making processes related to freedom of expression?

Hacks or possible actions

A1. Organize training and workshops for members of your community on the right to freedom of expression.



A2. Engage schools and other educational institutions to develop and launch educational and awareness-raising initiatives teaching youth to protect their right to freedom of expression. Such initiatives can involve influencers and digital content creators or journalists.



A3. Organize talks or visit to media newsrooms to learn first-hand from journalists about the work that they do and the news making process.

Power Up: Mission 3 - Hate Speech

This action area should aim to equip people in your community, especially youth, with the tools to recognize, challenge, and counter hate speech.

? Key questions for your organization:

1. How well do your organization and, broadly, young people understand the definition of hate speech and its implications for individuals and communities?
2. What training or resources can you provide to ensure that youth can identify and speak against hate speech and its harmful effects?
3. How can your organization actively promote counter-narratives that highlight diversity, inclusion, and respect for all individuals?
4. In your specific cultural setting, what would "diversity inclusion" mean to your organization? What behaviors would be demonstrative of "respect for diversity"?
5. How can your organization advocate for stronger protections against hate speech at the community or national level?

Hacks or possible actions

A1. Guidelines on ethical external communication. Design a protocol to double check your posts, reels or any other type of communications format so that every piece shared on your channels is coherent with your vision regarding hate speech and harmful content.

A2. Training on hate speech. Train staff, stakeholders and community in hate speech and how to create positive and peaceful counter-narratives.

Power Up: Mission 4 - Misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation

This action area should aim to enhance the capacities of people in your community, especially youth, to navigate the information disorder and evaluate the trustworthiness of information in the digital landscape.

? Key questions for your organization:

1. How can your organization improve its understanding of what the challenges and needs of young people in your community are when it comes to information disorder?
2. What training opportunities or resources can you provide to sustainably empower young people in identifying misleading and/or false content?
3. How can you create engaging campaigns or workshops that raise awareness about the dangers of disinformation and misinformation?
4. What protocols do you currently have in place for fact-checking information before sharing it with your audiences?
5. Are there opportunities for collaboration with local media outlets or fact-checking organizations to enhance your efforts in promoting accurate information?
6. How can you build partnerships with other youth organizations to amplify your messages and strategies regarding online misinformation and disinformation?

Hacks or possible actions

A1. Develop a fact-checking protocol for your organization with a step-by-step guide to verify trustworthiness of all organizational communications before it is published using lateral reading skills.

A2. Implement training on fact-checking skills to build capacities in members of the organization to verify the accuracy of online content.

A3. Design and launch youth-led fact-checking initiatives and tools to help counter disinformation and ensure youth perspectives and agency in the fact-checking processes.

Power Up: Mission 5 - Gender-based harmful content

This action area should contribute to raising awareness and understanding of gender-based harmful content and promoting respectful online interactions and encouraging the creation of safe digital spaces.

? Key questions for your organization:

1. What specific socio-cultural biases do you observe within your community regarding gender, especially against women and girls, and how can your organization address them through its programs?
2. How can you incorporate discussions about gender bias into your activities to raise awareness among young people?
3. Are there areas in your content creation process where gender biases might unintentionally be reinforced?
4. What workshops or training sessions can you develop to raise awareness of gender-based disinformation and biases among our community?
5. How can you incorporate diverse perspectives, particularly from women and LGBTQ+ individuals, in your content creation processes?
6. How can you advocate for better policies, including from social media platforms, to combat gender-based hate speech and disinformation?

👤 Hacks or possible actions

A1. Online harassment response protocol. Provides guidelines for addressing online harassment. It involves online monitoring, reporting incidents to relevant authorities or platforms, and taking legal action if necessary. The protocol is about keeping everyone safe and offering support.

A2. Gender-responsive content creation guidelines. Encourages organizations to create and amplify content that reflects diverse gender perspectives and challenges harmful gender stereotypes.

A3. Offer workshops and resources focused on ethical storytelling and inclusive media production, where gender equality is highlighted as a core value.

Power Up: Mission 6 - Generative Artificial Intelligence

This action area should contribute to increasing the capacities of youth to navigate AI-generated content and GAI tools ethically.

? Key questions for your organization:

1. How can you educate youth in your community about the ethical implications and potential biases of generative AI in content creation?
2. What types of activities and initiatives can you organize to help parents understand and mitigate adverse impacts of GAI on their children's ability to think critically?
3. What specific actions can you implement to ensure that your use of generative AI aligns with principles of human rights and ethical standards?
4. In what ways can you promote transparency when using generative AI to create content, ensuring that audiences are informed about GAI's role in our outputs?
5. How can you empower young people to critically evaluate AI-generated content and distinguish between authentic and manipulated information?
6. Are there partnerships you can explore to promote ethical use of GAI among youth in your community?

👤 Hacks or possible actions

A1. Basic GAI training: Familiarize yourself with what generative AI can do: drafting articles, summarizing meetings, generating content, collecting data, etc.

A2. Create an AI committee, dedicated to overseeing and guiding the ethical use of artificial intelligence within the organization. This committee will be responsible for following up policies, reviewing ethical guidelines, and ensuring compliance.

A3. Organize workshops for parents and youth on ethical use of GAI in education and learning.

Power Up: Mission 7 - Ethical content creation

This action area should aim to instill principles of ethical content creation among youth, encouraging them to produce and share content that aligns with their values and promotes positive engagement.

? Key questions for your organization:

1. What type of content does your organization typically share on social media, and how so you ensure it aligns with its values?
2. In what ways do you consider your audience's perspectives when creating or sharing content and what is your main objective when creating or sharing content?
3. How can you foster dialogue and engagement among your audience through the content you share or create?
4. What measures do you take to ensure your content does not contribute to division or misinformation?
5. Is there any potential in engaging different actors with a role in ensuring that online content is created and navigated ethically (like parents or digital content creators and influencers)?

Hacks or possible actions

A1. Design a protocol on handling controversial issues. Provides clear guidelines on when and how to engage with these issues, how to respond to criticisms, and when it might be more prudent to remain silent.

A2. Teach youth on ethical digital content creation: implement workshops aimed at ensuring that influencers and digital content creators understand their share of responsibility when creating content online and the need to commit to some ethics in content creation.

Power Up: Mission 8 - Empowerment of users on digital platforms

This action area should aim to cultivate a culture of online activism among youth and strengthen their agency and control over their digital experiences.

? Key questions for your organization:

1. Do people in your community understand the ways in which digital platforms shape their experience online?
2. Is there something you can do to understand what the needs of young people in our community are when it comes to their user experience?
3. How does your organization currently perceive the role of social media algorithms in influencing the visibility of your advocacy messages?
4. What measures can you take to educate your community about the implications of algorithmic transparency and shadow banning?
5. What social causes resonate with your organization's mission, and how can you leverage digital platforms to advocate for them effectively?
6. Who are the key stakeholders in the digital ecosystem that you could engage with to promote accountability and transparency on digital platforms?

Hacks or possible actions

A1. Formation of organization members in content moderation and curation policies and practices of platforms and how these can impact the experiences of users online. This can encompass Training of Trainers to teach young people to be aware about the ways in which social media dynamics affect their experiences on digital platforms, as well as ways to report content to platforms and identify harmful content.

A2. Guide discussions and consultations with youth about content moderation and curation and the ways in which technologies should adapt to young users to ensure their empowerment and support their critical thinking.

A3. Develop tools and resources that raise awareness about the issues that can emerge from the ways in which platforms moderate and curate content.

Power Up: Mission 9 - Peacebuilding and constructive dialogue

This action area should aim to promote cultural understanding and intercultural communication, empowering youth to navigate cultural diversity while supporting freedom of expression and addressing polarization and radicalization.

? Key questions for your organization:

1. How well do you understand the cultural diversity within your community, and how can you enhance our awareness of different cultural norms and values?
2. What steps can your organization take to actively promote respect for diversity and positive narratives among its members and broader youth?
3. In what ways can your organization incorporate intercultural dialogue into its programs or initiatives to address societal tensions, divisions, polarization, or conflicts?

Hacks or possible actions

A1. Protocol for constructive disagreement online and offline. Develop protocols for the organization that promote respectful and conflict-sensitive communication when addressing disagreements, both online and offline.



A step-by-step guide to include MIL into the organization's policies and strategies

We have made great progress in the MILtiverse up until now! In this section, you will find user-friendly templates to help you and your colleagues draft policy ideas for incorporating MIL into your organization's practices, initiatives, and core values.

These templates are versatile and can be applied to any aspect of the organization.

The **Policy Template** helps envision the overall integration of MIL, serving as a roadmap for the organizational mission.

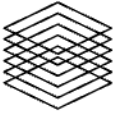
Each policy requires a set of strategies for implementation. The **Strategies Template** will assist you in developing SMART strategies—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bounded,—that will help you materialize the policies in concrete actions.

In the fourth section, you will find additional templates to further clarify the steps needed to successfully implement MIL initiatives within your organization through **Action Plan Templates** and a **Feedback Template**.

1 POLICY TEMPLATE

STRATEGY TEMPLATE 2





Bringing MIL alive into your organization: A "how-to" guide

Now that you have decided to draft a policy for MIL integration into the organization and defined some strategies that help you achieve this goal, in this section it's time to turn ideas into action!

The **Action Plan Template** will guide you into turning a strategy into a set of concrete steps to make it real. Remember to develop an Action Plan per strategy included into each policy.

Finally, the **Feedback Template** is designed to periodically assess the advancement of the policy

implementation. It has the form of a **spiral model**, that represents that evaluation, feedback and integration of lessons learned is a permanent task, and is key for success in consistently integrating MIL-related principles, actions and initiatives at the core of your organization.

Just like the **Policy Template** and the **Strategies Template** presented in the previous section, these are versatile and can be applied to any aspect of the organization.

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE 3

Strategy	Activities	Small tasks	Responsible	Timeline	Investment	Support
Write down one of your strategies. Use this template to outline specific activities, tasks, responsibilities, partners and resources for your strategy. Set realistic objectives and deadlines, including each step as if you were already carrying it out. This will help you identify logical steps and any potential gaps.	Write your strategy and break it down into small tasks.	Write down the small tasks that you need to complete to achieve your strategy.	Who will be responsible for each task?	When are you going to start and when do you plan to finish the task?	Do you need financial, technical or human resources to carry out this task?	Who does the responsible need support from to complete their task?
1. Write this template in A2 size. 2. Use sticky notes to fill in the information.						

What are we going to evaluate?	Evaluation time frame	
Write down the strategy of your organization to evaluate.	Set the range of time you are evaluating.	1. Observe 2. Plan 3. Implement 4. Evaluate
1. What did work?	2. What did not work?	3. What did you learn from the experience?
4. What are your next steps to integrate what you learned?		

4 FEEDBACK TEMPLATE



JOURNEY THROUGH THE MILTIVERSE

does not end here

In previous pages, we have embarked on a brave journey through the MILtiverse, testing our Media and Information Literacy skills, learning new concepts, asking the most relevant questions about the digital world that connects us all in this era, and rising to the challenge of becoming advocates for change for a safer, more equitable and ethical digital ecosystem for all.

However, the responsibility for creating a fair digital environment is not a task for a single group. **It requires collective action from all stakeholders**—governments, social media platforms, journalists, content creators, advocates, educators, and all citizens in general! We all play a role in shaping today's digital information ecosystem.

If you want to delve deeper into MIL-related content, visit **UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy website** to stay updated with resources and inspiration from across the online and offline worlds.

We invite you to take what we have learned and share it with others. All the insights, competences, knowledge and skills derived from this toolkit are designed to empower us as citizens to think critically, act ethically, and become advocates for a more just and transparent digital world.





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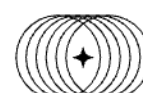




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This toolkit, "Journey through the Mltiverse," is designed to help youth organizations integrate Media and Information Literacy (MIL) into their policies, strategies, and operations. It covers essential topics such as countering hate speech and disinformation while protecting freedom of expression, promoting ethical content creation, and fostering online peacebuilding.

The toolkit equips youth organizations to foster critical thinking skills among young people and strengthen their participation in the online world.



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