MANUAL

CERV-2023-CITIZENS-CIV

From Training to Action:
Case Studies in Media Literacy for Democracy

EU Fact Checker Network:
Mobilizing Youth and Journalists for
Enhanced Democratic Resilience

EU DEM

Table of Abbreviations

EU DEM	EU Fact Checker Network: Mobilizing Youth and Journalists for Enhanced Democratic Resilience
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
EU	European Union
ASC	Civic Service
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
IBERIFIER	Iberian Digital Media Observatory
MILObs	Observatory on Media, Information and Literacy

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1. Introduction

The **EU-DEM project** plays a crucial role in defending democratic resilience across the European Union by tackling disinformation and foreign interference. In an era where digital misinformation is a major threat to the democratic process, the project empowers citizens, particularly youth and educators, with the tools needed to critically engage with media content and participate effectively in public debates. At its core, the project aims to promote media literacy, equipping young people, educators, journalists, and civil society actors with the skills to identify disinformation, assess information sources critically, and actively contribute to informed democratic processes. By focusing on these key areas, EU-DEM fosters an environment of informed participation, encouraging active civic engagement and improving democratic resilience.

YOUTH   **EDUCATORS**   **JOURNALISTS**   **CIVIL SOCIETY**

This **Manual** serves as a **comprehensive resource** documenting and sharing insights from the local training events conducted within the EU DEM project. Designed as a case study manual, it captures our experience in implementing teacher training on media literacy at the local level. By consolidating best practices, challenges, and key learnings, this manual provides valuable guidance for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders interested in strengthening media literacy education.

More specifically, it acts as a showcase of the valuable **lessons learned and best practices** from the teacher training events on media literacy conducted by the project's country partners. These local events were designed to enhance educators' ability to teach young people and other community members about the complexities of media messages, disinformation, and critical thinking. The manual highlights a selection of case studies that demonstrate the diverse approaches and strategies used in various countries to promote media literacy and combat disinformation.

Through detailed accounts of these training events, the manual provides insights into the methods used, the challenges faced, and the success stories of the participating partners. It captures feedback from both educators and participants, offering practical examples of how media literacy can be integrated into educational practices. The goal of this manual is to serve as a practical resource for those looking to replicate these initiatives in their own contexts, while providing concrete recommendations for enhancing the impact of media literacy education.

It also features case studies showcasing real-world applications and challenges encountered, best practices and recommendations for educators and trainers, and lessons learned that can inform future media literacy initiatives. Readers are encouraged to explore the document based on their specific needs, whether they are looking for strategic insights, pedagogical approaches, or concrete examples of media literacy training in action.

2. Case Studies: Local Implementation of the Activities

This section presents a series of **case studies** highlighting how EU-DEM's media literacy training was implemented at the local level across different countries. Each case study provides a detailed account of the training activities, offering insights into the **context, execution, challenges, and impact** of the initiatives. By examining these experiences, readers will gain a deeper understanding of the **practical aspects** of media literacy education, including **effective strategies, encountered obstacles, and innovative solutions**. The case studies also feature **recommendations from project partners**, making this section a valuable resource for those looking to implement similar initiatives in their own communities.

CONTEXT → **EXECUTION** → **CHALLENGES** → **IMPACT**
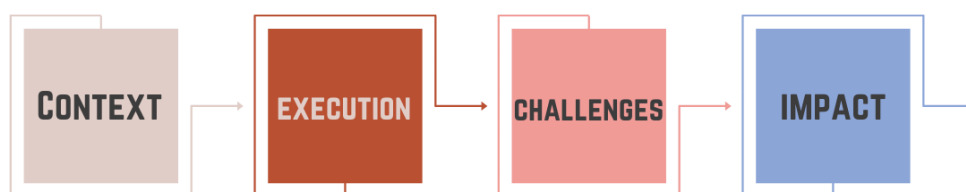
Belgium – Brussels

2.1 Background Context

The teacher training workshop on media literacy took place in **Brussels, Belgium**, at the EPFC educational center, under the guidance of Alphabet Formation. As the capital city of Belgium and the de facto capital of the European Union, Brussels presents a unique media landscape characterized by multilingualism, high exposure to European and international news, and a diverse population. The urban setting provided an ideal location for the training, as it allowed engagement with a broad demographic, including young people from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

The target audience consisted of **youth workers, educators, and adult learners** engaged in professional and personal development programs. The sessions brought together a diverse group of participants, spanning different age groups, genders, and cultural backgrounds. While one group reflected the international and multicultural character of Brussels, another was composed of individuals with shared experiences linked to migration. This diversity enriched the discussions, fostering an exchange of perspectives and approaches to media literacy within different community and professional settings.

Belgium's media and disinformation landscape faces challenges similar to those of other European nations, with misinformation spreading through social media, language-specific media bubbles, and differing levels of trust in news sources. The country's bilingual nature further contributes to **fragmented information access**, as different linguistic communities consume distinct media, leading to varying degrees of susceptibility to disinformation.

Additionally, Belgium's status as a hub for EU institutions and international organizations makes it a focal point for various lobbying efforts, political influence, and foreign disinformation campaigns. These factors shape media narratives and contribute to the spread of biased or misleading information, particularly within distinct linguistic and regional media ecosystems.

2.2 Implementation of Training Activities

The training sessions were designed to equip youth workers and educators with the necessary skills to teach media literacy effectively. Recognizing their role as key intermediaries in youth organizations, the training aimed to enhance their ability to critically assess information, recognize disinformation tactics, and challenge media biases, including gender stereotypes.

The workshops were structured around interactive activities that encouraged critical thinking and hands-on engagement with media content. The methodology combined debates, role-playing, and analytical exercises, ensuring that participants could immediately apply the knowledge gained in their daily work with young people.

TRAINING STRUCTURE

The sessions were delivered in two language-based formats:

- English-language workshop ("Think Twice: The Power of Words and Belief")
- Italian-language workshop ("Vero o Falso?")

Both workshops followed a similar approach, incorporating:

1. **Identifying Disinformation** – Small group exercises on distinguishing real vs. fake news.
2. **News Consumption Habits** – Debates on how different media sources shape perceptions.
3. **Persuasion Techniques in Media** – Role-playing exercises demonstrating how misinformation spreads.
4. **Fact-Checking Strategies** – Practical demonstrations of digital tools for verifying news authenticity.
5. **Challenging Gender Stereotypes in Media** – Discussion on how media narratives reinforce biases.
6. **Best Practices for Educators** – Sharing strategies to integrate media literacy into daily interactions with young people.

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By working with youth workers of diverse backgrounds and experiences, the training ensured that media literacy education could be effectively adapted and delivered within different community contexts. Additionally, participants joined the **EU Fact Checker Network**, equipping them with resources and a peer-learning environment to sustain their efforts beyond the training.

The structured approach of these workshops not only empowered educators but also strengthened their capacity to foster critical media engagement among the youth they work with daily.

2.3 Challenges Faced & Solutions
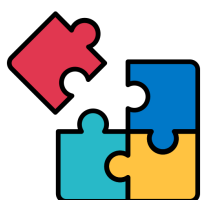
One challenge encountered was the varying levels of digital literacy among participants. Some attendees had **limited experience** with fact-checking tools or critical news consumption. To address this, facilitators incorporated simple, hands-on exercises and provided accessible explanations.

Another issue was **skepticism** towards mainstream media, with some participants expressing distrust in traditional news outlets. The solution was to encourage open discussions, allowing different perspectives while reinforcing the importance of cross-referencing information from multiple sources.

Additionally, **language barriers** posed minor challenges for some participants who struggled with technical media-related vocabulary. To counter this, visual aids, simplified definitions, and interactive matching exercises were introduced

2.4 Impact & Sustainability

The immediate impact of the training was overall positive, with participants actively engaging in discussions and expressing enthusiasm for learning more about media literacy. Feedback highlighted that the practical exercises helped them develop a more critical approach to news consumption.

In the long term, the workshop laid the groundwork for continued awareness. The strategies and concepts learned can be integrated into the

participants' daily lives and professional work, particularly for youth workers and educators. The "*Golden Rules*" list created at the end of the sessions serve as a takeaway tool to reinforce key messages beyond the training event.

2.5 Tips from Partners

The success of the training was largely due to its interactive nature, which encouraged debate and discussion while making media literacy concepts more relatable through real-world examples. To ensure future workshops remain engaging and effective, partners shared the following insights:

- A **debate-driven approach** fosters critical thinking and participant engagement. Real-life case studies help contextualize misinformation and make the content more accessible.
- **Open discussions** should be encouraged, allowing participants to express diverse opinions and engage constructively with different viewpoints.
- **Practical exercises** should be prioritized over purely theoretical explanations, as hands-on activities are essential for effective learning.
- Activities **should be adapted** to participants' language skills and digital literacy levels, ensuring that content remains inclusive and accessible.
- Incorporating **multiple media formats**, such as text, video, and images, enhances the demonstration of misinformation tactics and deepens participants' understanding.
- Sufficient time should be allocated for discussions, enabling participants to share their perspectives and collaborate on solutions.

By implementing these strategies, future training sessions can continue to be dynamic, impactful, and sustainable, equipping youth workers and educators with the necessary tools to foster media literacy in their communities.

France – Paris & Marseille

2.1 Background Context

The Teacher Training on Media Literacy has been implemented in two training sessions, under the lead of Fake Off. The first atelier took place in the suburbs of **Paris, France** with a strong priority for educational institutions that welcomes a large number of foreign students, some of whom are non-native French speakers. The choice of such an institution as location for the session, was motivated by feedback gathered from many of its teachers. They voiced and expressed difficulties in designing media education workshops adapted to children and adolescents from the European Union who do not have a strong command of the French language.
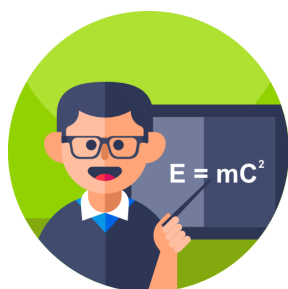
The first session's participants were exclusively middle school **teachers**, some of whom played key roles in promoting gender minority inclusion and diversity within their institutions. Several also taught civic education at critical stages, particularly in the final years of middle school and the early years of high school.

The second training session was aimed at **young adults** engaged in Civic Service as **community leaders,** in France . This group was of interest due to the nature of their role in this specific program. Notably, the ASC is a program that allows young people under 26 years old to take on roles of social and civic responsibility, within companies or organizations, while maintaining direct contact with the wider society. The participants' profiles were particularly diverse, reflecting the multicultural nature of the city of **Marseille**. This city, at the gateway to the Mediterranean, is especially affected by issues related to misinformation, particularly regarding gender stereotypes, racism, and biases linked to origins. Due to its diverse population, socioeconomic challenges, and geopolitical position as a key migration hub, Marseille is particularly vulnerable to divisive narratives that exploit social tensions and reinforce stereotypes.

2.2 Implementation of Training Activities

The training sessions were organized in **two distinct phases**:

- **The first half of the day** was dedicated to presenting the issues related to misinformation in public debate, with a particular focus on its impact on democratic life and the attempts of political influence carried out by national and international actors.
- **The second part of the day** alternated between practical and interactive exercises. Participants experimented with various workshop formats, ranging from short exercises (5 minutes) to more in-depth sessions lasting two hours.

During these activities, the leading staff analyzed with them the different stages of the exercises and tested pedagogical approaches adapted to real-life situations. Among the scenarios, there were the simulation of concrete case studies frequently encountered during Fake Off's tailored interventions. Exemplary of this, was the obstacle of facing a conspiracy-minded student convinced of the flat Earth theory or a provocative young person making controversial statements about the 2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks.

The objective and purpose of this methodology was to approach these situations calmly, systematically refocusing the debate on the issue of misinformation and the distinction between facts and opinions. Particular emphasis was placed on the spread of false information based on prejudices and gender stereotypes, using a pedagogical framework specifically designed for the training. This framework incorporated examples related to sexism, gendered misinformation, and the use of gender as a tool for discrediting.

TRAINING STRUCTURE

The sessions were conducted in French, with special attention given to adapting workshops for non-French-speaking participants. To this end, the moderators implemented games based on cards and images, covering topics such as:

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- **The distinction between information and influence:** Role-playing and card games to differentiate journalists, influencers, and content creators.
- **The concept of fact vs. opinion:** Debates on media editorial lines and their influence on public discourse.
- **Identifying misinformation:** Introduction to the mechanisms of misinformation through the "three orange flags" rule (false information always relies on: a stereotype/prejudice, an exaggerated emotion (fear, anger, joy...), and a partially true or plausible element).
- **Verification techniques:** Hands-on exercises analyzing images and videos using reverse search tools.
- **Gender stereotypes:** Analysis of biases related to gender, including sexism, exclusion, and LGBTQ+ discrimination.

2.3 Challenges Faced & Solutions

One of the **main challenges** observed during these training sessions was the significant mistrust some participants held towards the media system. This distrust is largely due to a lack of knowledge about how journalism operates. That is why Fake Off systematically ensures to dedicate enough time at the beginning of each session to explaining how media operates, what are the information verification processes, and the newsroom hierarchies.
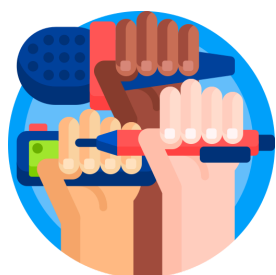
With the support of video materials, the attendees compared content produced by influencers with that of journalists to highlight the fundamental differences between these sources of information. The leaders of the activities also addressed media financing and discussed the relative independence of different actors in the media landscape. This transparent approach generally helps establish a climate of trust between participants and trainers.

A **second challenge** concerns the heterogeneous media consumption habits of participants. Some rely exclusively on content from social media, while others prefer traditional media. It is essential to deconstruct preconceived ideas associated with these different sources to harmonize participants' knowledge. A particular emphasis was placed on the

importance of developing critical thinking skills and diversifying sources of information.

2.4 Impact & Sustainability

The feedback from participants has been highly positive. Most expressed their motivation to organize practical workshops for their own audiences.

All of them unanimously highlighted that this training helped them improve their information verification techniques. Many discovered the existence of reverse image search tools and developed their skills in using specific keywords to optimize their online research.

To ensure the sustainability of the lessons learned, different educational materials were distributed, such as memo sheets on the 5W method (the five essential questions for verifying information) and a post-training kit enabling participants to design their own workshops. The workshop leaders also provided a reminder of the "three orange flags" to identify false information. These tools are freely reusable.

2.5 Tips from Partners

The success of these training sessions is based on a balance between theory and practice.

- **Encourage interactivity:** It is essential that participants quickly engage in practical and interactive exercises.
- **Leverage multimedia content:** The use of videos and audio clips fosters engagement and critical thinking.
- **Prioritize practical exercises:** Collective reflection and simulations should be favored while ensuring discussions remain focused on media education rather than opinion debates.
- **Adapt activities to the audience:** It is important to propose exercises based on the age, digital skills, and media literacy levels of participants.

By adhering to these principles, the training sessions help strengthen participants' ability to identify and counter misinformation effectively and critically.

Slovenia – Ljubljana

2.1 Background Context

Three media literacy training sessions were held in two key educational institutions in **Ljubljana,** under the guidance of Citizen D. The first took place in a secondary school, while the final two were hosted by the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Ljubljana. These locations were chosen to engage **educators**, who play a crucial role in shaping young people's media consumption. Participants came from diverse backgrounds and regions, all involved in **teaching** at the primary and secondary levels. Notably, over 75% of the 71 attendees were women, reflecting broader gender trends in education.

The location was selected due to Slovenia's growing challenges with disinformation. The country's media landscape is heavily shaped by politically affiliated propaganda outlets, while anti-vaccine influencers and public figures promoting conflicting narratives on the Russian invasion of Ukraine fuel misinformation. With students increasingly exposed to misleading content, strengthening educators' media literacy is essential.
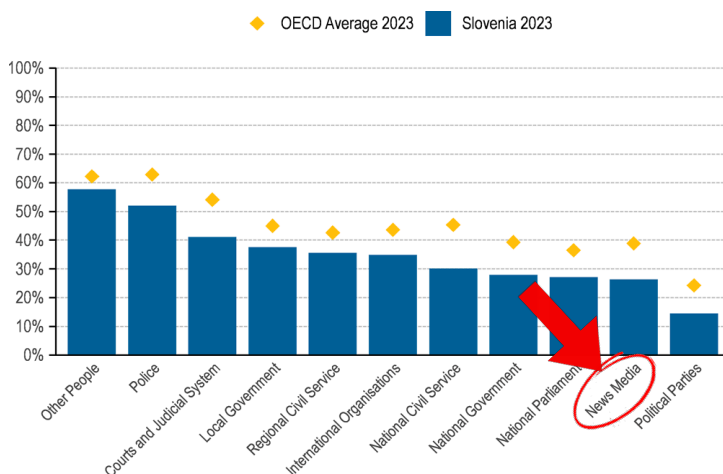
Despite relatively high digital literacy, media literacy remains a weakness, largely due to widespread distrust in mass media. According to a OECD poll from autumn 2024, confidence in the media is alarmingly low, with 24 out of 29 ranked organizations falling into the least trusted category.

However, the public broadcaster ranks 17th, and the Slovenian school system—one of the most trusted institutions—ranks 6th.

By placing the training sessions within academic institutions, the initiative leveraged trust in the **education system** to promote media literacy. Equipping teachers with these skills ensures they can help students critically assess information, fostering a more informed and resilient society.

2.2 Implementation of Training Activities

The training sessions were structured to ensure a **progressive approach** to media literacy, balancing theoretical foundations with interactive, practice-based learning. The workshops combined lectures, demonstrations of best practices, and participatory discussions, allowing attendees to engage critically with media literacy concepts and explore their relevance to civic education.

The sessions emphasized **media literacy as a civic duty**, highlighting the dual role of individuals as both consumers and citizens. Additionally, discussions underscored the lack of a systemic approach to implementing media literacy in formal education and the need for a pedagogical link between media literacy and civic engagement.

The training activities were implemented across three workshops, each adapted to the specific background and expertise of its participants. The workshops provided an opportunity to test different teaching approaches and assess the applicability of media literacy concepts in various educational settings.

- The **first workshop**, held at the **Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana**, was aimed at pedagogy students preparing to become educators. The focus was on integrating media literacy into civic education, emphasizing the **critical role of future teachers** in equipping young people with the skills to navigate digital media responsibly. Participants explored how media shapes public perception and discussed the challenges of addressing disinformation in the classroom. The session introduced Dekodiraj.si, an online resource offering tools for media literacy education, sparking a conversation on how such platforms can support educators in developing structured curricula.

- The **second workshop** took place at **Gimnazija Vič, a secondary school**, and brought together both educators and students. The discussions centered on **media literacy as an interdisciplinary subject**, examining how it could be embedded into various school subjects beyond social sciences. A significant part of the workshop was dedicated to **the role of generative AI in media**, with a focus on deep fakes, misinformation, and the ethical dilemmas surrounding AI-generated content. Participants analyzed examples of professional journalism versus user-generated media and debated how framing techniques influence public opinion.

This workshop highlighted the growing concerns among educators about the reliability of information available to students and the urgent need for critical thinking tools in secondary education.

- The **third workshop**, also hosted at the **Faculty of Education**, was tailored for students in **arts-focused pedagogical programs**. Given the participants' backgrounds, this session took a **visual storytelling approach**, examining the implicit messages conveyed through media and artistic representations. The discussion moved beyond traditional news media to explore how **propaganda manifests in visual culture**, both historically and in contemporary political narratives. The participants reflected on the power of visual media in shaping opinions and behaviors, engaging in a critical analysis of **media representation and bias**. The workshop also revisited Dekodiraj.si, demonstrating how artistic tools and visual resources could be leveraged to promote media literacy in creative ways.

TRAINING STRUCTURE

Each session was designed to follow a structured learning pathway:

- **Theoretical Foundation:** Introduction to the historical development of media literacy and its role in democratic societies.
- **Core Concepts:** Presentation of key media literacy principles, covering topics such as:
    - History of mass media.
    - Journalism, human rights, and the ethics of information.
    - The influence of mass media on democratic participation.
    - The distinction between professional and user-generated content.
    - The impact of generative AI on media consumption and credibility.
- **Practical Exercises:** Interactive activities designed to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios. These included:
    - Case study simulations analyzing the role of misinformation in public debates.

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- ○ Hands-on exercises identifying bias and manipulative media tactics.
- ○ Debates exploring the ethical dimensions of digital content creation.
- **Reflection & Feedback:** Participants were encouraged to share their perspectives and insights, contributing to the continuous development of media literacy training resources.

Across all three workshops, participants actively engaged in discussions, shared their experiences, and provided valuable insights into the practical challenges of teaching media literacy. Their feedback will serve as a foundation for refining the curriculum and developing further supporting materials that cater to diverse educational environments.

2.3 Challenges Faced & Solutions

Most participants were highly engaged in discussions, recognizing the significance of media literacy for their audiences. However, many highlighted a lack of structured knowledge or ready-to-use materials to support their teaching. While they had previously addressed media literacy in their work, it was often in an ad-hoc manner rather than through a systematic approach.

Time constraints emerged as a recurring challenge, particularly for educators who struggled to integrate media literacy into already demanding curricula. To address this, the workshop mentors facilitated ongoing communication by exchanging contact information and offering follow-up support. Additionally, the flexibility of these training materials was substantially emphasized , encouraging gradual adoption rather than overwhelming educators with immediate full-scale implementation.

2.4 Impact & Sustainability

The introduction of Citizen D latest digital resource, **Dekodiraj.si**, along with its curated media literacy materials, was met with enthusiasm. Many participants had already incorporated aspects of media literacy into their teaching but welcomed the opportunity to approach the subject in a more structured and sustainable way.

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A key takeaway from the training sessions was the appreciation for a nuanced, context-driven approach to media literacy. Attendees noted that past efforts to implement media literacy had often been too ambitious or **techno-deterministic**—with fact-checking being cited as an inadequate solution due to the constantly evolving nature of disinformation. Instead, participants valued strategies that emphasized **critical thinking, contextual understanding, and the societal dimensions of media literacy**, making the training more adaptable to their teaching environments.

2.5 Tips from Partners

QUICK
TIPS

Based on the organization's prior experiences with media literacy teacher training, the workshop leader had already identified some of the constraints within this sector. This insight allowed them to design a tailored training program that addressed their specific needs and roles, ultimately facilitating a clearer and more effective understanding. To set a clear foundation, the sessions began by **explicitly defining media literacy**. This ensured there was no confusion between media literacy and digital literacy, nor was media literacy mistakenly perceived as solely a consumer-based skill.

The attendees were also provided with **previously prepared curricula for media literacy** implementation alongside materials to supplement the curriculum. These materials focused specifically on presenting media literacy as a sustainable knowledge practice, avoiding a techno-deterministic perspective and shifting the focus away from individual tasks, such as fact-checking. Therefore, the emphasis was placed on its role in positioning mass media as the fourth estate and an integral component of active citizenship.

Finally, key was the **recognition and appreciation** of the knowledge and skills the audience had already developed, seamlessly incorporating these into the training to make it more relevant and impactful. This approach ensured that participants did not feel compelled to re-learn existing competencies, while also encouraging them to adopt a more sustainable and holistic perspective on media literacy.

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Portugal – Braga & Ponte de Lima

2.1 Background Context

The teacher training workshop on media literacy organised by CEER Foundation and scientifically conducted by MILObs - Observatory on Media, Information and Literacy, from the University of Minho, was held in two different locations with significantly different geographical characteristics. One of the editions of the workshop entitled 'Disinformation and fact-checking: A look through the prism of media literacy' took place in **Braga, Portugal**, at the public library (Biblioteca Lúcio Craveiro da Silva), located in the historic center of this city, the third largest in Portugal. This first session was coupled with a training meeting (already planned and not part of the EU-DEM project) for different primary and secondary school teacher librarians from the region, and was also attended by French teacher librarians visiting schools in the region under the Erasmus+ exchange program. In Portugal, teacher librarians have long played a key role in promoting media and information literacy, and are therefore favoured interlocutors for reaching the young people who are one of the ultimate targets of the EU-DEM project.

The second location can be classified as a less urbanised area: the Escola Básica e Secundária de Freixo is not only located in a much smaller municipality (**Ponte de Lima, Portugal**), but also in a parish bordering the town centre. Despite its small size, it is a school that is recognised throughout the country for the media education work it does through a digital school newspaper: Comunica, which has already won awards in the National School Newspaper Competition organised by the national newspaper Público and its media literacy initiative Público na Escola. At Escola Básica e Secundária de Freixo, the participating teachers were not all actively involved in this school newspaper. In other words, there were the teachers who have been leading Comunica, but also others with an interest in the topics covered in the workshop and which could then be worked on in different subjects - in line, in fact, with the

cross-curricular nature of the 'media' theme in the curricula of the different school subjects in the Portuguese education system.

In short, the two sessions of the workshop made it possible to include teachers with different profiles: **librarian teachers** (who have a well-established tradition of fostering media and information literacy initiatives at their schools, in Portugal) from different schools in the Braga region (thus working in schools of different geographical contexts, teaching cycles and size), **teachers with experience in classic media education initiatives**, such as school newspapers (who can now apply the principles of fact-checking to this news outlet, in cooperation with the youth that work there as journalists), **and teachers from different disciplines** (and who have a more regular contact with students throughout the school year). In this way, the topics covered were disseminated to multiple contexts that young people, as pupils, can attend. Notably, over 80% of the 31 attendees were women, reflecting broader gender trends in education.

The study "Patterns of consumption of disinformation in Portugal and Spain", carried out by the IBERIFIER - Iberian Digital Media Observatory in 2024, indicates that it is the **younger groups that show the greatest distance from the news** and, in particular, the less educated, and that these conditions may be contributing to the polarization of society. The report concludes that disinformation is a phenomenon made up of multiple dimensions and therefore requires multidisciplinary intervention. With regard to Portugal in particular, although polarization is historically low and there is a lack of intentional, deliberate and widespread disinformation campaigns, there is cause for concern due to a social media landscape dominated by small, more radicalized parties that can adopt far-reaching strategies based on disinformation.

2.2 Implementation of Training Activities

The training sessions were designed to equip educators with the necessary skills to teach media literacy effectively. Recognizing their role as key intermediaries, the training aimed to enhance their ability to critically assess information, recognize disinformation tactics, and challenge media biases, including gender stereotypes.

The workshops were structured around interactive activities that encouraged critical thinking and hands-on engagement. The methodology combined theoretical concepts and practical exercises, and examples and discussions ensuring that participants could immediately apply the knowledge gained in their daily work with young students.

TRAINING STRUCTURE

The sessions were delivered in two different places and contexts

- **Braga**: Urban, Capital district, third largest city in Portugal
- **Ponte de Lima**: Small city, parish boundering the town centre

Both workshops followed a similar approach, incorporating:

1. An activity where each teacher was challenged to **write down the understandings** they already had about each of the three concepts that would be worked on in the workshop - disinformation, fact-checking and media literacy.
2. A **commentary on the conceptions** written by the teachers, which had been posted on three flipcharts.
3. Then moved on to a more **theoretically sustained presentation** of each of the concepts, as well as how to frame disinformation and fact-checking through the prism of media literacy (thinking of the media as more than technologies, but as protocols where eminently social dimensions come into play and which open up space for debate on issues such as gender inequalities or argumentative fallacies).
4. The code of principles of the International Fact-Checking Network was the example adopted to discuss **the ways in which fact-checkers work** and how transparency and critical reflection on the ways in which facts are verified are indispensable for applying and thinking about these tools with students.
5. The sessions ended with the **distribution of some examples** that could be used in classes with students and the **discussion of questions** raised by the teachers who took part in the workshops.

CASE STUDIES IN MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

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By working with educators of diverse backgrounds and experiences, the training ensured that media literacy education could be effectively adapted and delivered within different community contexts.

2.3 Challenges Faced & Solutions

A cross-cutting challenge for both sessions was the **novelty introduced by the workshop**: that is, despite the popularity of fact-checkers, the teachers involved had no in-depth knowledge of how they work and how they relate to the macro-concept of media literacy. As a result, the sessions were necessarily introductory: a piquing of curiosity about a topic that will need to be developed at a later date.

Additionally, **jargon barriers** posed minor challenges for some participants who struggled with technical media-related vocabulary. To counter this, visual aids, simplified definitions, and interactive matching exercises were introduced

2.4 Impact & Sustainability

The feedback received at each of the sessions was overwhelmingly positive. Even though the topic and the prism proposed to the teachers was relatively new in terms of their knowledge of the media, all the participants not only had a prior interest in the topics to be covered, but most of them had already had other experiences (including other media literacy training courses, some of them organised by MILObs) that fostered interest and the debate of ideas on the relationship between disinformation, fact-checking and media literacy.

In the long term, the workshop laid the groundwork for continued awareness. The strategies and concepts learned can be integrated into the participants' daily lives and professional work.

2.5 Tips from Partners

The success of the training was largely due to its interactive nature, which encouraged debate and discussion while making media literacy concepts more relatable through real-world examples. To ensure future workshops remain engaging and effective, we concluded from the sessions that:

- It is important to **clarify concepts before** working on them in practice: without a sustained discussion of the limits and potential of work on disinformation, fact-checking and media literacy, it is not possible to take informed action in the field with young people.
- **Teachers** already have a long track record in related areas and are therefore **favoured interlocutors**, not only because they can easily reach students, but also because they have a prior theoretical interest in the issues raised.
- Teachers made us aware of an indisputable fact - they are just one of the sources of socialisation for young people, who so often bring their families and their representations into schools. Therefore, interventions to promote **media literacy cannot be limited to schools**, even though we recognise their fundamental role.
- **Practical exercises** should be prioritized over purely theoretical explanations, as hands-on activities are essential for effective learning.
- **Sufficient time** should be allocated for discussions, enabling participants to share their perspectives and collaborate on solutions.

By implementing these strategies, future training sessions can continue to be dynamic, impactful, and sustainable, equipping educators with the necessary tools to foster media literacy in their schools.

3. Conclusion & Key Takeaways

3.1 Summary of Key Insights Across All Local Events

The **EU-DEM** project's local training events provided invaluable insights into the implementation of media literacy initiatives across Belgium, France, Slovenia, and Portugal. These events highlighted the importance of equipping educators, youth workers, and civil society actors with the tools to critically assess information, recognize disinformation tactics, and responsibly engage with media. A key finding across all locations was the **effectiveness of interactive and participatory learning approaches**, including debates, role-playing exercises, and fact-checking demonstrations. These methods significantly enhanced participants' engagement and retention of media literacy concepts.

Another major insight was the necessity of **tailoring training approaches to local contexts**. Each country had unique socio-political and linguistic landscapes that influenced how media literacy challenges manifested. In multilingual environments such as Belgium, addressing language-specific media bubbles was crucial, while in Slovenia and Portugal, there was a strong emphasis on countering digital misinformation targeting specific demographic groups. The adaptability of the training materials allowed for effective customization, ensuring that local needs were met.

3.2 Common Challenges and Solutions Identified Across Different Locations

Despite differences in local contexts, several common challenges emerged across all training events:

1 Diverse Media Literacy Levels

- *Participants had varying levels of familiarity with media literacy concepts, making it necessary to adopt differentiated teaching strategies.*
- ✔ *Solution:* Implementing tiered learning approaches, where foundational concepts were introduced before delving into advanced analytical skills.

2 Prevalence of Echo Chambers and Misinformation

- *Many participants were influenced by digital echo chambers, limiting their exposure to diverse perspectives.*
- ✔ *Solution:* Encouraging cross-group discussions, media source comparisons, and practical exercises in fact-checking tools.

3 Limited Institutional Support

- *In some locations, educators and youth workers faced institutional barriers in integrating media literacy into formal education or community programs*
- ✔ *Solution:* Advocating for policy support and providing scalable, easy-to-integrate educational resources.

4 Engagement and Sustainability Challenges

- *Sustaining participants' engagement beyond the training sessions was a concern, particularly in ensuring long-term impact.*
- ✔ *Solution:* Establishing follow-up networks, resource-sharing platforms, and peer-learning opportunities to maintain active involvement.

3.3 Best Practices for Scaling Media Literacy Training

From the experiences across the four countries, several best practices emerged that could inform the scaling of media literacy training initiatives:

- ☐ **Incorporating Digital Tools:** Utilizing fact-checking websites, verification tools, and interactive media platforms increased the effectiveness of training sessions.
- ☐ **Fostering Peer-Led Learning:** Encouraging participants to become media literacy ambassadors in their own communities helped extend the training's reach.
- ☐ **Integrating Real-World Case Studies:** Using contemporary examples of misinformation and media bias made the training more relevant and impactful.

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☐ **Partnering with Local Stakeholders:** Collaborating with educational institutions, NGOs, and policymakers helped reinforce the sustainability of media literacy programs.

☐ **Ensuring Multilingual Accessibility:** Providing training in multiple languages or adapting content for different linguistic groups enhanced inclusivity and comprehension.

3.4 Recommendations for Future Initiatives

Building on the lessons learned from the EU-DEM project, future media literacy initiatives should consider the following recommendations:

❖ **Strengthen local partnerships**: Collaborating with grassroots organizations, schools, and municipal bodies can foster ownership and ensure broader reach.

❖ **Invest in capacity-building infrastructure**: Beyond one-off training events, there is a need for continuous professional development opportunities and access to updated resources.

❖ **Support multilingual and inclusive education**: Future projects should ensure availability of tools and materials in multiple languages and formats that cater to different learning needs and disabilities.

❖ **Embed media literacy in formal education**: Advocate for the integration of media literacy into school curricula and teacher education programs to guarantee sustainability.

❖ **Encourage peer-to-peer sharing**: Establishing regional or thematic communities of practice can enable participants to continue exchanging experiences and solutions post-training.

❖ **Measure impact effectively**: Develop simple yet robust evaluation tools to assess the short- and long-term impact of training activities on participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

❖ **Foster innovation through co-creation**: Encourage the active involvement of participants in the design of future training formats and materials to ensure relevance and uptake.

3.5 Conclusion

The EU-DEM project has demonstrated the significant impact that well-designed media literacy training can have on strengthening democratic resilience. By fostering critical thinking, equipping educators with practical tools, and addressing local challenges, the project has laid the groundwork for future initiatives. **Continued investment** in media literacy education, coupled with collaborative efforts between educators, policymakers, and civil society, will be essential in countering disinformation and promoting informed democratic engagement across Europe.