

Topic Youth vs. Disinformation: Media Literacy in Action

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Key Takeaways Background

Disinformation has become a significant threat to democracy, social cohesion, and informed decision-making. Young people, as digital natives, are at the center of the information flow and must develop critical media literacy skills to navigate and counter misinformation effectively. The session focused on understanding misinformation, its impact, and strategies to fight against it using Media and Information Literacy (MIL).

Understanding Disinformation and Its Impact

- Forms of Information Disorder: Disinformation (intentional spread of false information), misinformation (unintentional falsehoods), and mal-information (truthful information used maliciously).
- Consequences of Disinformation: It influences public opinion, manipulates electoral processes, and exacerbates social tensions. The misuse of artificial intelligence, such as deep fakes, has further complicated the issue.
- Real-World Examples: "Story Killers" investigation, where journalists exposed organized disinformation campaigns affecting elections in over 33 countries.

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) as a Solution

Media literacy is essential to empower youth to critically assess information, recognize biased narratives, and act responsibly online. The five core MIL competencies discussed include:

1. Access – Learning how to find and verify media sources.
2. Analyze – Evaluating credibility and identifying misleading information.
3. Create – Producing responsible and factual content.
4. Reflect – Understanding the impact of information on individuals and society.

5. Act – Engaging in counter-disinformation efforts and advocating for responsible media consumption.

On a larger scale, protecting the mass and educating the public is achieved through educational programs. In Switzerland, similar programs already exist to teach students media literacy.

Encouraging Youth to Take Action

- **Why Engage?** Young people play a vital role in shaping the digital landscape. The session emphasized the importance of engaging in online spaces responsibly, protecting vulnerable groups, and preventing social divisions caused by false narratives. Engage to protect victims.
- **Concrete Steps:** Participants were encouraged to launch awareness initiatives, fact-check information before sharing, and advocate for policy changes that promote media literacy in education systems.

Other
resources

Resources :

- **Additional Resources:** Participants were invited to explore MIL resources such as the UNESCO MIL Alliance and EDUK-MEDIA initiatives to further their understanding of disinformation.
- **Tools of factchecking:** Google lens (research image search, to verify if an image is real or AI), TinEye (reverse image search engine)
- UNESCO trains content creators to become trusted voices online.