



UNESCO MIL ALLIANCE NEWS UPDATE

EDITORIAL

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IS A CONDITION OF POSSIBILITIES FOR THE EXERCISE OF RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The report by the Covid-19 Observatory of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) **1**, showed a significant growth of the connectivity in the region at the time of the pandemic: 67% of people and 60% of households in the region had an Internet connection. However, the data in the report also shows that two thirds of the countries did not reach download speed requirements that would allow the necessary functionalities for teleworking or virtual education.

The report figures show that the one third of the population that does not have access to the Internet is located mainly in rural areas, affected by geographic isolation. In terms of use, the report says that one third of those who have internet connectivity use it little or not at all, and this depends on the economic condition of the population. According to the report the connectivity for the poorest people costs between 12% - 14% of their income, when the UN recommends 2%.

This landscape shows that the accelerating digitalization of our societies has had the effect of widening the gaps, so that economic status and access to technology coincide more closely. It also suggests that other categories that reinforces inequalities in society -gender, disabilities, race, being part of the LGBTQ community, etc.- will be reflected also in the technology access, abilities and use.

Communities affected by the different digital divides will suffer, at least in the medium term, the consequences of non-existent, precarious or intermittent connectivity. But in addition, it seems that they are condemned to a persistent gap of abilities and use.

To allow an active participation in public spaces, that are more and more driven by digital processes, society needs to tackle simultaneously the different divides. Everyone needs to acquire critical skills to digest information, and everyone needs to develop the necessary media and information literacy competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) to participate in the digital space. Without addressing all the different forms of the digital divide, the public space will not be diverse. All communities deserve to have the capacity to produce content, and all voices should have a place in the digital space.

The development of technological solutions by companies and States is limited by the boundaries of their will and imagination. Furthermore, policies and resources are sometimes preferentially directed for these development efforts. The reasons are complex and multivariant. To bridge the qualitative gaps mentioned earlier, achieving universal connectivity is an imperative but not a sufficient step. Media and information literacy requires equivalent, urgent and simultaneous policies, strategies and resources. A lot is at stake.

The Inter American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) stated back in 2017 in relation to Latin America that “(t)he States of the region have broadly recognized that access to technology is distributed unequally, based on wealth, gender, geography or social group, both between States and within them. The “digital divide” is not only related to the availability of Internet access, but also to the quality, information, and technical knowledge necessary for access to the Internet to be useful and beneficial for users” **2**.

Therefore, promoting media and information literacy for all levels of society can help the repayment of the debt that technological developments owe to the efforts, equality and freedoms of millions of human beings.

A determined global effort in media and information literacy can contribute to guaranteeing large populations a future in freedom and democracy. To achieve this end, societies need a critical citizenship to face power relations in their various environments, while also engaging creative and imaginative citizenries, with the skills and abilities to communicate. These goals are indispensable to sustainable development.” Let us promote the use of new technologies combined with media and information literacy. In this way, we expand the possibilities of participation in public spaces for dialogue and learning.

1.https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/presentation/files/final_final_covid19_digital_26_agosto.pdf

2.<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/Poverty-HumanRights2017.pdf>

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NEWS

- The Moulay Ismail University of Meknes, Morocco, in collaboration with UNESCO, organized an International Expert Conference "AUDIENCE MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY: Ten Years of Achievements and the Way Forward" on November 29-30, 2021 in Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Fez Declaration on Media and Information Literacy and the 10th Edition of the Global Media and Information Literacy Week.

The event gathered 39 experts in various fields of Media and Information Literacy from 21 countries. All information about the Conference is available at the following link:

<http://chouitnfissi.simplesite.com/450554364>

Contact: Dr. Drissia CHOUIT, Conference Chair and Editor: d.chouit@umi.ac.ma.

- The LAC Committee's MOOC Cities MIL Course with teacher and support for universities and entities of different countries of the region. The course is available in Portuguese, Spanish and English.

<https://classroom.google.com/c/MjgxNDQ4Mzc1MzYz?cjc=jy3xsmw>

- Check the book "UNESCO MIL CITIES AND AGENDA 2030, Metrics, Education, Communication and Sustainable Health". printed by the Ministry of Education of Cuba organized by Felipe Chibás Ortiz and authors like Divina Frau-Meigs, José Manuel Tornero and others,

<https://bit.ly/3Egi8gJ>

- The documentary "Trust Me", directed by Roko Belic, produced by Joe Phelps and Rosemary Smith (both from Getting Better Foundation) was aired by PBS (Public Broadcast Service) in the U.S in January 2022. Mr. Phelps and Mrs. Smith have also joined a community session and debate in Brazil, with more than 450 teachers, organized by Atmo Educação and moderated by Mr. Alexandre Le Voci Sayad. To know more details how to screen the documentary or use its educational material on MIL, access:

<https://www.trustmedocumentary.com>

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[HTTPS://EN.UNESCO.ORG/THEMES/MEDIA-AND-INFORMATION-
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