



Supporting Media & Information Literacy Education in the Middle East

Experts meeting, Doha, June 11-13, 2013

The Doha Centre for Media Freedom

The **Doha Centre for Media Freedom** (DCMF) is a non-profit organisation working for press freedom and quality journalism in Qatar, the Middle East and the world. Press freedom and quality journalism are vital for empowering citizens to participate in social and political life. Well-functioning media are crucial for healthy societies and sustainable economies. The Doha Centre for Media Freedom focuses its activities in three domains: direct assistance to journalists, training and education and research, reflection and memory.

The **Doha Centre for Media Freedom Media and Information Literacy programme** is dedicated to creating a learning environment that helps youth to develop critical and analytical thinking skills and teaches them how to evaluate media content. The programme strives to transform average media consumers into active media participants, and develop a strategy to empower citizens to engage in the development of national media. DCMF MIL programme provides direct supervision and assistance through training workshops for schools during which students learn how to film reports and investigate issues that affect their immediate surroundings.

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Foreword

A message from DCMF Director General

Media freedom doesn't only require political will, a legal framework, developed journalism and skilled journalists. It can only grow and blossom in a culture of tolerance and critical thinking, in a generalised situation of the public having the skills, knowledge and attitudes to handle this enormous flow of information we are facing every day.

At the Doha Centre for Media Freedom, we believe that media and information literacy (MIL) is a prerequisite for media freedom and ultimately for having an informed public. It fills a gap in our educational system. Citizens need the skills to handle the enormous influx of information we receive on a daily basis. This is an enterprise for the long term – not a short fix.

Over the past two and half years, we have made MIL education one of our top priorities, recognising the need to teach younger generations about the significance of becoming media literate critical thinkers.

MIL education is a relatively new concept in the Arab world but we are committed to being at the forefront of its development in the region. DCMF's MIL conducted training with 45 schools in Qatar and recently held workshops in Jordan, Bahrain and Egypt.

This strong incentive to continue developing this programme in the Middle East is based on the conviction that MIL education plays a major role in developing and defending press freedom.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank, once again, the wide range of international and regional experts brought together in Doha last June to discuss the best ways forward for MIL education in the Arab world.

Jan Keulen



A message from DCMF's MIL Senior Coordinator

I am very pleased to host this MIL experts meeting in Qatar, to highlight the importance of understanding the media and information literacy, at a time when all of us are bombarded with information from different channels.

The centre's MIL programme continues to grow from strength to strength and fulfil the centre's mission of educating and developing media, not only in Qatar but in different parts of the Arab world. I am extremely happy at the success of the meeting and we hope to further collaborate with international organisations in organising effective expert meetings in the future.

This meeting provided a perfect opportunity for officials in the region to network with some of the most important experts from across the world. Developing media and information literacy education is essential in modern society. It also plays an integral role in developing responsible quality journalism and safeguarding media freedom, which is at the core of the centre's aims.

Through examining case studies and the experience of experts from different parts of the world, participants will produce a number of proposals and recommendations for the development of MIL education in the future.

These proposals will include ideas about the role of governments, regulators, trainers, experts, schools and various other institutions in supporting the spread of MIL throughout the Middle East and the rest of the world.

The meeting is the first of its kind to be held in the region, and the participants' recommendations have been compiled to produce the *'Doha Declaration on Supporting Media and Information Literacy education'*.

Rania Khaled Al Hussaini



Introduction

Media and Information Literacy education: modern competencies meeting modern demands

Access to news and information has never been as open as it is in today's society. With the click of a finger, we are able to consume a vast array of media sources and information providers, enabling us to keep up-to-date with stories around the world and to answer any questions we may have as soon as they arise.

While the benefits of this increased access to information are obvious, obvious pitfalls appear when considering the ever-changing media landscape.

The sheer volume of resources available presents challenges to us as consumers. How do we know that what we are reading is credible and verifiable? How can we ensure that the information we are using is based on facts and not simply on opinions or conjectures? And from where and by whom is the information and news that we are consuming being produced?

These are all essential questions to be addressed through MIL education. Developing MIL education is a lifelong endeavour which allows students to gain a wide range of competencies that can lead to success in all aspects of life.

Cross cultural dialogue, tolerance and understanding have never been as important as they are today. Media can contribute as much towards these elements as they can towards misinformation, conflict and dissonance. This makes comprehension of the interests of media outlets and the ability to judge the veracity of the information they present, integral aspects of consumers' everyday lives.

It is therefore essential that stakeholders work together to introduce policies and initiatives to develop MIL education and ensure that people, especially future generations, have the tools they need to live as fully active, participative and informed global citizens.

Doha Centre for Media Freedom has been running an extremely active MIL education programme since 2011, bringing educational activities to a large number of schools in Qatar. This is a long term project and one which continues to grow on an annual basis, as DCMF and the Supreme Education Council of Qatar have carried out multiple meetings to assess the best ways of adding MIL to the national curriculum for different school years. DCMF also has ambitions to develop MIL education across the Arab world.

The experts' meeting on Supporting MIL education in the Middle East held in Doha in June 2013, brought together officials, media representatives and authorities in the field of MIL education to discuss the best way forward for developing the discipline across the region.

The meeting looked at case studies of the experiences of a number of countries and their work in introducing MIL education initiatives. Participants shared their technical expertise to discuss best practices and then collaborated to produce and ratify the Doha Declaration on Supporting MIL education in the Middle East. The declaration includes a number of recommendations for supporting the development of MIL education, as well as pledges for steps to be taken in the future.

The following report intends to provide insight into some of the examples which were presented at the meeting, as well as outlining some of the details of the discussions which took place. The report also includes the Doha Declaration, and some examples of the work being produced by DCMF's very own Junior Reporters programme, which has grown from strength to strength and continues to bring together local students to understand how media is produced.

Producing media, working closely with media and information experts and developing an understanding of exactly what is being consumed are all essential aspects of MIL education. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that governments, experts, educational institutions and all other stakeholders work together to ensure that MIL is prioritised. It is no longer reasonable to consider MIL education as an added bonus; without it, citizens will be at a major disadvantage in almost every aspect of their lives.

“It is essential that stakeholders introduce policies to ensure that people, especially future generations, have the tools they need to live as fully active, participative and informed global citizens”



Defining MIL education

Media Literacy or Information Literacy?

One of the subjects raised on numerous occasions during the experts' meeting was the fact that information literacy is often haphazardly included in the definition of MIL education with little emphasis placed on what is an increasingly important aspect of the discipline as a whole. However, participants at the experts meeting strongly stressed the need to address information literacy and media literacy together in education.

Clarification of those definitions is essential to identify ways to move forward. Let thus start with describing the two main concepts of MIL education: media literacy and information literacy. There is a clear difference between media literacy and information literacy which needs to be recognised when outlining educational initiatives.

Media Literacy

According to UNESCO, media literacy is:

“The process of assimilating and using the codes involved in the contemporary media system as well as the operative skills needed to properly use the technological systems on which these codes are based”

“And the capacity to access, analyse and evaluate the power of the images, sounds and messages with which we are faced every day and which play an important role in contemporary culture. It includes the individual capacity to communicate using the media competently. Media literacy concerns all media including television, film, radio and recorded music, the press, the Internet and any other digital communication technology”

UNESCO, Media Literacy and New Humanism, 2010

Media literacy is therefore related to freedom of expression. It focuses on the content of media messages and involves media professionals and journalists who produce media messages.

Information Literacy

Information literacy, a concept as important as media literacy in education, is

“knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner”

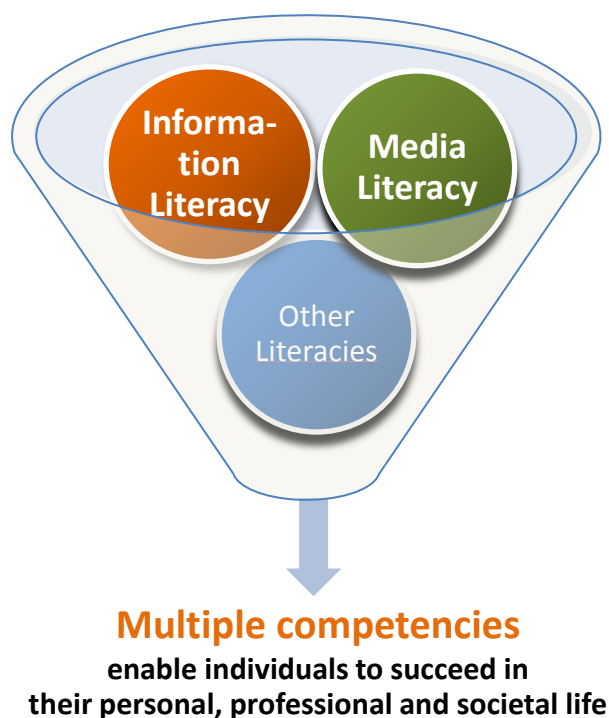
Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)

“Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals”

The Alexandria proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning, 2005

In this sense, information literacy is about access to information, data, knowledge and wisdom. It is the ability to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use information to solve a problem at hand. Individuals which may support information literacy therefore include librarians, archivists, IT professionals and educators.

Towards a joint approach: combining media and information literacy



While media literacy and information literacy are two independent subjects, it is possible, due to their overlapping aspects, to adopt a more integrated approach in order to develop both competencies and produce media and information literate students.

According to the *Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy* of 2012, MIL education incorporates the ability to critically analyse a wide variety of media with comprehension of how to obtain and analyse information, as well as understanding the interests and motivation of media and information providers.

“MIL is defined as a combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices required to access, analyse, evaluate, use, produce, and communicate information and knowledge in creative, legal and ethical ways that respect human rights.

Media and information literate individuals know when and what information they need and what for, and where and how to obtain it. They understand who has created that information and why, as well as the roles, responsibilities and functions of media, information providers and memory institutions.

MIL competencies thus extend beyond information and communication technologies to encompass learning, critical thinking and interpretive skills across and beyond professional, educational and societal boundaries. MIL addresses all types of media (oral, print, analogue and digital) and all forms and formats of resources”

The Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy Information Literacy, 2012

The rapidly changing global media landscape together with ICT developments, political transformations, the increasing level of information and the new competencies required for employment mean that developing strategies to assist with education is an ongoing process. However, lifelong learning is an essential aspect of promoting MIL throughout society as a whole.

Why do students need media and information literacy?

- to develop opinions based on varied sources and multiple perspectives
- to use evidence to back up their argument
- to make connections between ideas and concepts
- to synthesise and integrate information
- to cite and reference consistently and correctly
- to evaluate the trustworthiness of information
- to critique the quality of information in regard to bias, viewpoint and perspective
- to explore and use primary and secondary sources
- to collect, manage, and organise data and information
- to contextualise data with regard to the relevant literature

Who plays (or should play) a role in the development of MIL education?

- School teachers and students
- Policy-makers working in the field of education
- Media workers
- Parents
- Librarians and library associations
- Museums and archives
- Information management institutions
- Ministries responsible for information, communication, education, ICT and Internet, employment and culture
- Educational institutions, including training of information and media professionals
- IT & T sector representatives
- Information professionals, including e-commerce
- Universities, Information and Communication faculties/departments

As a result of collaboration between various stakeholders, a number of recommendations and declarations encouraging the promotion of MIL education have been elaborated:

- IFLA Media and Information Literacy Recommendations (2012)
- Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy (2012)
- Havana Declaration on Information Literacy (2012)
- Fez Declaration on Media and Information Literacy (2011)
- Brussels Declaration on Media Literacy (2011)
- Declaration of Lima (2009)
- Toledo Declaration on Information Literacy (2006)
- Declaration of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (2004)
- Prague Declaration Towards an Information Literacy Society (2003)
- Grunwald Declaration (1982)
- Declaration on the Importance of Media Literacy by National Council of Teachers of English (2008, US)
- Alexandria Proclamation (2005)

The following table provides a guide as to the differences between media literacy, information literacy, and the ways that they can be incorporated into MIL education.

Elements	Media Literacy	Information Literacy	MIL
Human rights	Freedom of Expression	Access to Information	Article 19 Universal Declaration
Research object	Content, media messages	Data, information, knowledge, wisdom	Information and media content
Focus	Societal aspects	Information needs, personal and professional aspects	Complex
Process	Participation and sharing	Management	Context related
Tools / means	Traditional and new tools	Traditional and new information management tools	Tradition and electronic towards digital
Role	Critical audience	Knowledge builders	Successful citizens
Professional community	Media professionals, journalists	Information, IT, library, archive and museum professionals	Emerging new professional community
Discipline	Autonomous	Autonomous	Interdisciplinary

Taken from Dr Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg's presentation on June 13th, 2013



An interview with ...

JORDI TORRENT

Project Manager for MIL at the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC)

[Extracts from [DCMF's Junior Reporters Dina Omer's interview](#)]

“What we understand from Media and Information Literacy is that media is the channel through which we get our information. It is also the channel through which we receive our values and our representation of ourselves, others and our communities. Therefore, we understand that we need to be media literate in order to be able to navigate through this immense overflow of information that we have in our society. MIL is really a tool to become better and much more active citizens in our political system.

UNAOC’s MIL programme is a platform which supports the distribution of information on MIL across a number of regions. We have created a web-based resource where information on MIL resources, events and conferences, as well as organisations are uploaded and made available for individuals around the world. This resource is multilingual; it can be navigated in English, Spanish and Arabic, but content can be uploaded in any language.

UNAOC also work very closely with UNESCO and together, we have created a network of eight universities around the world which have become platforms for research and development of MIL curriculum. Those universities are themselves regional antennae to create their own networks.

So basically, we are supporting the development of the academics side of things on the one hand, and of information on the other, while also focusing on youth-produced media. We have created a youth festival called *Plural+* which is for young people to talk about diversity, migration and social inclusion, all very important subjects. So that is also supporting young people’s voices to be heard and to be distributed around the world through this platform.

“All media messages are constructions so, by being a producer, you become much more aware and you also understand that there are important choices to be made”

It is very important for people to produce media and to understand how media is being produced. All media messages are constructions, so by being a producer you become much more aware and you also understand that there are important choices to be made. By becoming a producer, you become to really understand the process of media production while at the same time becoming aware of ethical values in the media.

You are actually creating a message, and you are going to share this message with the world. This message will create impressions and create opinions, so then you are actually becoming an opinion-maker. Not only a media maker - but an opinion maker”.

Shaping the debate

In preparation for the experts meeting, participants were asked to answer a number of questions on issues related to MIL education and their ideas about the best way forward to develop the subject in the Middle East. Doha Centre for Media Freedom compiled the answers and produced the following document as a starting point for discussions throughout the meeting.

What challenges has MIL education faced and what challenges will it continue to face in the Middle East?

- **Awareness:** MIL education is a new concept in the region, and its novelty means there is a lack of understanding of what it is and what its benefits are. Furthermore the decreased role in schools' curricula of the "human sciences" in favour of "practical sciences" leads to an understanding of MIL as a "technical skill" as opposed to a "critical thinking skill." This lack of awareness on the part of educators and policy-makers results in a lack of policy commitment to applying MIL education on a wide scale.
- **Enabling environment:** For MIL education to be successful, an enabling environment is a necessity. MIL education cannot thrive in an environment where press freedom is restricted and civil liberties are not guaranteed.
- **Resources:** There is a lack of resources, manpower and expertise to implement MIL education in the region, as well as a lack of communication and cooperation between regional experts.

Is there any feasible way to tackle those challenges?

- It is key is to raise stakeholders' knowledge of MIL education and the benefits to be gained. Media literate individuals possess 21st century competencies, such as analytical and critical thinking skills and confidence in using information technologies, which will be of use throughout their personal, social and professional life. Being media and information literate has to become part of the region's culture and lifestyle.
- To tackle the political sensitiveness of the concept, it is important not to present MIL education as a political awareness curriculum. It could also be useful to reformulate certain concepts such as human rights and freedom of expression in countries where there is no constitutional guarantee of those rights.

What is the best way to institutionalise MIL education? Is the incorporation of a media literacy component in the national education curriculum enough?

- It is essential that any discussion of MIL education involved a unified vision of the system of education being proposed. Would it revolve around an integrated curriculum with various subjects or a stand-alone curriculum for MIL education? No consensus has been reached yet as per the best way to institutionalise MIL education, but three major paradigms appear from the answers collected:

- **The vertical approach:** MIL education would become an integral and mandatory subject within the school curriculum. As a separate subject, MIL education should not be taught as “computer literacy” (technical skill) but as a “critical thinking skill” applied to media messages and digital media production. Applying this method requires that each school is provided with educators who have been trained to teach this specific subject. One way to achieve this goal is to incorporate “teaching MIL education” as a course in university for students who intend to become teachers for primary and secondary schools. Training should also be provided to school administrators, education inspectors and school librarians to familiarise themselves with the MIL education framework.
- **The horizontal or “integrated” approach:** MIL education is a cross-cutting discipline included in all courses taught at school. All courses in the curriculum have a MIL education component. To develop this approach, a shared data base of media-related education resources that can be used in different subjects (language, history, geography) should be created. Also, a strong emphasis should be put on extracurricular activities. Such activities could include: creation of “media literacy clubs,” creation of school radio, website or newspapers. The Canadian model, where MIL education is taught after every lesson (grammar, comprehension skills, etc.) is considered as a best practice in this regard.
- **The multilateral approach:** As long as governments do not express a clear political willingness to implement and support MIL education, efforts to institutionalise MIL education in the curriculum will be in vain. Therefore, it is suggested to use a more multilateral approach which would extend MIL education to non-classroom settings and encourage government and regulators to build on basic literacy and invest in ICT due to current low literacy rates.

What should be the role of governments, regulators, educators and experts in MILE?

A national strategy for MIL education needs to be developed by the major stakeholders to set the tone and create guidelines for all actors involved in field. Such a strategy should be supported by the creation of a committee of experts who would ensure implementation of the strategy and follow up on progress. To facilitate collaboration between the various stakeholders, partnership agreements should be encouraged. The roles of each stakeholder would be as follows:

- **Government:**
 - Create the enabling environment for MIL education to thrive
 - Organise national campaigns to raise awareness about MIL education
 - Organise national prize, competition and certificates to award schools and students who have excelled in the field of MIL.
- **Regulators:**
 - Ensure that the regulatory framework creates an “enabling legal and political environment” for MIL education by reviewing existing national policies and elaborating new ones. Laws that guarantee access to a diverse range of information should be developed or reinforced.
 - Provide stakeholders with the right infrastructure and equipment to implement MIL education including pedagogical material for teachers and students.

- **Media outlets:**
 - Raise awareness in the media about MIL education and encourage the development of “kids channels” or “kids newspapers.”
- **Educators:**
 - Develop and share pedagogical practices among other schools and educational organisations to promote best practices. One idea could be to create an information centre accessible to all schools for the purpose of MIL education
- **Researchers:**
 - Conduct research on a regular basis to assess the effectiveness of the different pedagogical approaches in MIL education and transform those studies into practical information for educators and policy recommendations for regulators (to improve laws and policies but also the national curriculum).
 - Share international best practices among experts and educators.
- **Parents:**
 - Encourage critical awareness and good use of the media.
- **UNESCO and other organisations**
 - Provide support to all stakeholders when it comes to best practices, information and advocacy.
- **The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO):**
 - Facilitate the elaboration of a regional strategy for MIL education in the Middle-East.

Based on the experience of DCMF in Qatar and looking at best practices around the world, who could be suggested as a team of experts to widen the implementation of the MIL education programme in the region?

- **Research:** Any region-wide initiative should start with thorough research of on the one hand existing similar national initiatives, and on the other hand potential stakeholders eager to ‘franchise’ a MIL education programme in their own countries. The goal of any regional initiative should be to complement existing initiatives, not duplicate them.
- **Cooperation:** Regional cooperation could be advanced by setting up a regional alliance or network to research, promote, and develop MIL education in the region. Representatives of this alliance could attend regional conferences, workshops and events with the goal to promote MIL education and to network with potential stakeholders.
- **Shared resources:** A pool of educational resources should be created. For example a regional version of UNESCO’s MIL Education Teachers Curriculum, adapted to the region’s specific cultural traditions. An organisation like DCMF could fulfil the role of clearing house, by sharing regional best practices, providing expertise for implementation, and organising conferences and seminars.

What is the best way to communicate the success of MIL education in the region and reach out to institutions that have the power to support this progress?

Monitoring and evaluation: Appropriate monitoring and evaluation instruments should be implemented to assess the successes and challenges of MIL education programmes.

Communication of results to policy makers: Results of these evaluations, as well as concrete results such as school test results or short videos showcasing the projects should be communicated to policy makers in a way that enables policy-makers to show the effect MIL education has had in developing a better informed and participant citizenry.

Media campaigns: Awareness of the importance of MIL education could be raised through media campaigns or community-based events, giving MIL students the chance to showcase their new skills.



An interview with ...

IRMGARDA KASINSKAITE-BUDDEBERG

Programme Specialist, Communication and Information Sector at UNESCO

[Extracts from [DCMF's Junior Reporter Abdullab Muaqat's interview](#)]

“I think it is important to share our experiences and knowledge of what we are all doing around the world. Coming from an international organisation working on MIL at a global level, it is very useful to learn from the experience of other organisations working in different regions about the conditions on the ground.

For UNESCO, MIL is a very important area because we believe that to effectively promote and create knowledge-based societies around the world it is essential that people are media literate.

We have information and media content coming from everywhere and we use information communication technologies all the time. Sometimes we have got such an overload of information that we do not know exactly how to analyse or store it, or how to do this in the most ethical ways. This is why this new kind of literacy is needed for people to succeed in society and this is why UNESCO promotes the concept of MIL to help everybody become more literate and successful in their private, social and occupational lives.

Young media producer initiatives are important because we need a new generation of people like you; young people picking up and seeing the world through these eyes. You may see or you may notice new situations around you, which others might not notice. So it is very important that we create these critical competencies at different levels, including of course younger people, who can later on carry on and produce more professional programmes, and more exciting films or interviews. It gives opportunities for all of us, and I think it's very good to build young people's capacities for media and information content.

“to effectively promote and create knowledge-based societies around the world, it is essential that people are media literate”

It is very important that MIL started from students and teachers, especially as we believe that teachers are gatekeepers, those who provide knowledge to the younger generation and those who are going for lifelong learning. But at the same time, policy makers have to be aware of the importance of MIL.

We should also not forget business communities which could profit a lot from being media and information literate. Similarly, older generations and minorities such as people with disabilities will similarly profit a lot from being media and information literate. Basically, the benefits are for everyone.

It is important to continue bringing together people from different institutions, and different stakeholders, to work together and be as professional, inclusive and creative as possible”.

MIL education in Qatar

DCMF's MIL programme was launched in 2011 with the objective of engaging Qatari youth in the world of media and journalism.

The programme is based on the conviction that, in a multicultural context like Qatar where a generation of young people from different backgrounds and cultures interact, it is vital that the youth are trained to be able to understand the influence of media messages on their perception of the world.

In the past two years, DCMF's MIL programme has conducted a number of activities to foster media literacy education in Qatar.

Step 1: Approval from the Supreme Education Council

In 2011, DCMF approached the Supreme Education Council (SEC) of Qatar to receive approval to launch activities in collaboration with a number of schools in Qatar. The programme was presented as a media literacy education initiative which would serve to develop the analytical skills of students in the country. Within ten days, DCMF received approval from the SEC.

Step 2: Build a team of Junior Reporters

A team of Junior Reporters was created in 2011 to develop the skills of a selected number of students and allow them to gain experience in the field of journalism in Qatar. Junior Reporters cover all events related to DCMF's MIL programme through video coverage and interviews. The team of Junior Reporters, initially composed of seven students, was first introduced during the UN Alliance of Civilizations Forum in Doha in December 2011. Since then, they have also covered events such as the WISE Summit, the Doha Conference for Interfaith Dialogue, Qatar's SEC Forum in April 2013 and were also interviewed by Al Rayyan TV and Qatar TV to share their experiences. Today, DCMF's MIL programme works with a multicultural team of 35 to 40 active Junior Reporters studying in Qatar and coming from Qatar, Egypt, the UK, Japan, Tunisia and Mexico. Junior Reporters have produced and uploaded more than 180 videos on DCMF's MIL programme YouTube channel.

Step 3: Research

In order to adapt its programme to the local landscape, DCMF conducted two surveys with schools in the country on the integration and use of media in formal education in Qatar in January 2012. The surveys found out that while 90 percent of all students in Qatar consumed media on a daily basis, 80 percent of Qatari schools did not include a media literacy component in their curriculum and 59 percent of respondents had never heard of media literacy before. Students engage in media on a daily basis yet, the institutions at the heart of their education do not seem to support the youth in learning how to best use media resources.



Step 4: Launch of pilot programme

A pilot programme was launched with four schools in Qatar at the beginning of 2012. 35 students participated in workshops organised by DCMF to test the effectiveness of its MIL programme.

Step 4: Develop and distribute materials for students and teachers

Materials were developed to provide students and teachers with the necessary information to implement MIL education in schools. UNESCO's MIL Curriculum for Teachers served as a reference model for teachers in Qatar. Materials for students were developed based on the experience of the pilot programme and feedback from teachers and students. DCMF's MIL materials are currently being revised.

Step 5: Launch of the project

In June 2012, DCMF's MIL programme was officially launched in Qatar. More than 45 schools participated in the initiative. The programme consists of:

- a series of workshops to train students into understanding the news, asking the right questions and acting as independent thinkers. About 300 students have engaged in DCMF's activities so far.
- training for teachers through "Train the Trainers" workshops to enable school teachers to implement MIL education in their classes. Some 79 teachers have received such training so far.
- Production of video reports by each participating school as part of DCMF's "School News project". Video reports were submitted to DCMF's MIL programme as part of a competition to win DCMF's Media Creativity Award. Winners of the award were invited to attend DCMF's MIL Ceremony in April 2013, in the presence of His Excellency Minister of Education and Higher Education Saad Bin Ibrahim Al-Mahmood.

Step 6: Expansion of the project

DCMF has started exporting its programme across the region, with workshops conducted in Bahrain (30 students), Egypt (25 students) and Jordan (25 students). Being one of the pioneers of MIL education in the region, DCMF hopes to take a leadership position in the GCC for MIL education in the future. The centre also hopes that MIL education will be instituted as a recognised programme in the national education curriculum and, ultimately, empower citizens to engage in the development of local media. DCMF has already initiated discussions with the Supreme Education Council to add MIL materials to existing subjects in the national curriculum and create an MIL subject for high school students.



The role of the Supreme Education Council in fostering MIL education in Qatar

The Supreme Education Council has played a fundamental role in the development of MIL throughout Qatar by providing advice and technical support to DCMF's MIL programme.

The Supreme Education Council, during the experts meeting, reiterated its commitment to developing its educational policies and reinforcing the visibility of MIL education within the national curriculum, an initiative which the SEC sees as in line with Qatar Vision 2030 along with the SEC's four pillars: independence, accountability, diversity and freedom to choose.

The current curriculum for first grade students already includes disciplines related to media literacy, family education, education of value, etc. As such, the SEC suggests expanding the current educational framework to incorporate more aspects of MIL in these classes. For higher grade students, such as secondary schools, the SEC suggests creating a new curriculum that would include MIL as a chapter either part of Social studies, Arabic studies or Islamic studies. For high school students, the SEC proposes to create a MIL subject either as an elective or as a compulsory class.

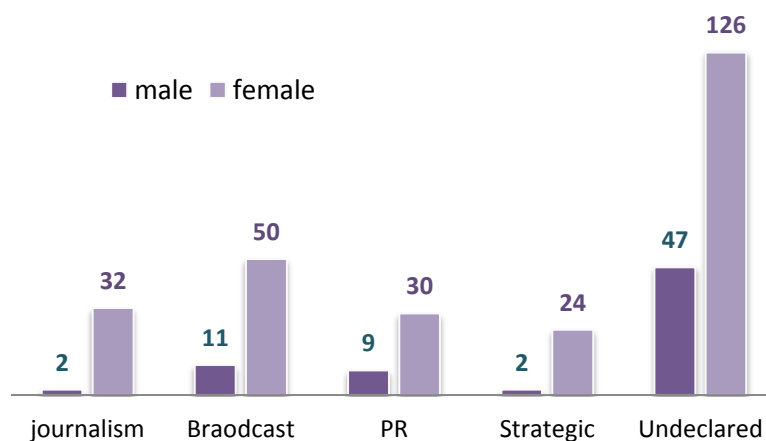


The role of Qatar University in fostering MIL education in Qatar

Qatar University’s Department of Mass Communication, headed by Dr Mahmoud Galander, is playing an increasingly important role in addressing the issue of MIL education in Qatar. The university department offers undergraduates programmes in print journalism, broadcast journalism, public relations, mass communication and is therefore well aware of the challenges facing MIL in the country. According to Dr Galander, journalism, which is an integral part of MIL education, is facing difficulties in its development in the region because:

- Journalism is relatively new in Qatar (the first official gazette was released in 1961) and is seen as a profession for expatriates. It is also highly stigmatised.
- Journalism is not seen as a financially rewarding profession in Qatar. The profession also involves heavy work as well as long and unfixed working hours.

The number of students enrolling with the Department of Mass Communication is on the increase. The majority of these students are female. However, as Dr Galander points out, only a very small number actually go into the profession of journalism once they have graduated, for the two main reasons stated above.



Student Distribution at Qatar University Department of Mass Communication, from 2012 to 2013

(source: Dr Galander’s presentation, June 13th 2013)

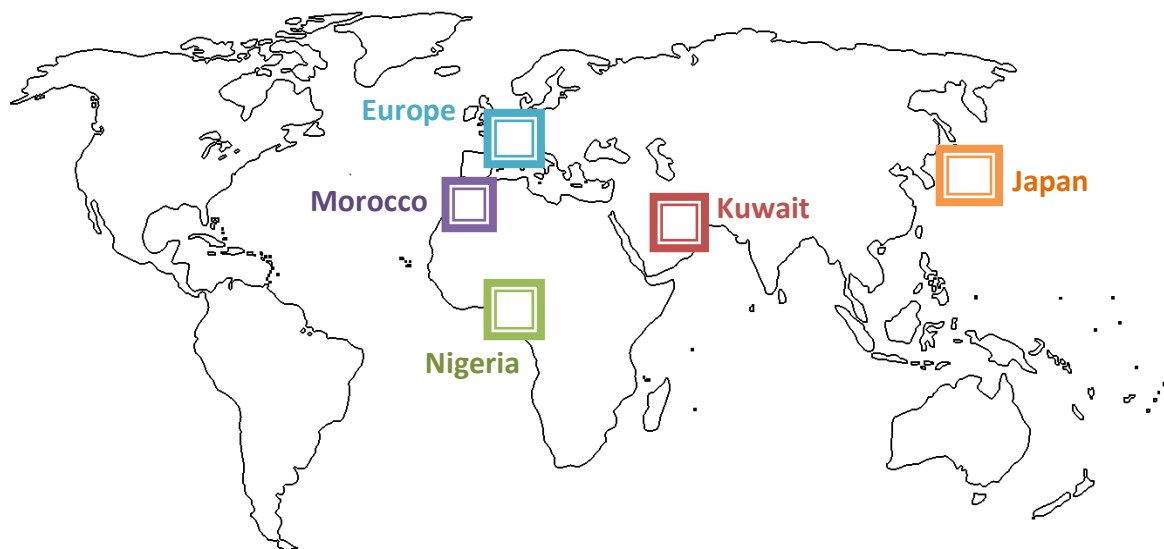
To overcome those challenges, Qatar University has partnered with DCMF's MIL programme to encourage Qatari youth to become media literate and engage in the development of the local media landscape. Such initiatives include:

- Participation of the Mass Communication Department in all DCMF's MIL related activities
- Invitation of school children to visit Qatar University's Mass Communication Department and vice versa.
- Journalism-related contests co-organised by Qatar University and DCMF

It is hoped that this collaboration between Qatar University's Department of Mass Communication and DCMF will lead to a new understanding of journalism in Qatar, change the youth's perception of the profession and develop a body of young, media literate and professional Qatari journalists.

Drawing from best practices

How is MIL implemented around the world? A number of international and regional experts shared their experiences during the experts meeting. In this section, we highlight the example of Europe, Morocco, Kuwait, Nigeria and Japan.

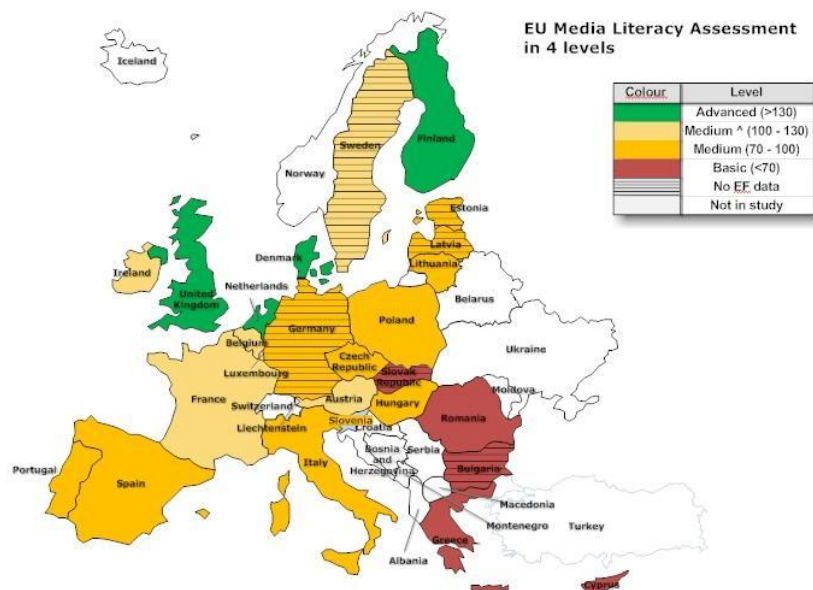


Europe

The European Association for Viewers' Interest (EAVI), a non-profit organisation based in Brussels and established with the support of the European Commission, was created to unify activities aimed at supporting European citizens' and consumers' interests in the field of media. One of EAVI's fields of intervention is media literacy. The organisation believes that European citizens are still facing a dangerous standardisation of media content and therefore need a European platform where actors can advocate for quality programmes, viewers' rights and democracy. Three main initiatives have been launched by EAVI to reach those goals:

- In 2012, production of "A Journey to Media Literacy", a seven-minute video designed to explain in an interactive way what media literacy is all about and why it is essential for a society to be media literate [DCMF's MIL programme translated the video into Arabic and is now available for world users since July 3rd, 2013 on [this link](#)].
- In 2010, organisation of the EAVICamp in Modena, Italy under the theme of "Active Citizenship through Media". The media camp was organised as a user-generated conference aimed at collecting the opinions of citizens through online media and included a session about "security, curiosity and relevance: the need for media literacy".
- Designing the "CinELmotion" project to promote critical understanding through movies and strengthen ties between European and Latin American audiences, teachers and students of cinema.

- Undertaking research about media literacy in the European Union as part of the Emedus project, conducted in collaboration with other European institutions. The research analyses (infrastructural and legal) mechanisms in place for European citizens to effectively participate in media governance and assesses media literacy levels in the European Union. It is hoped that final findings of the Emedus project will inform policy-makers about how to develop media literacy in the region and facilitate the integration of media literacy education in national curricula.
- EAVI is currently under discussion with DCMF to work on the first MIL Video Game in the world.



Map of Media literacy levels in the EU, EAVI, 2010

Morocco

The first International Forum on MIL was organised in June 2011, in Morocco. The forum marked the official launch of UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers. Regional consultations on the MIL Curriculum for teachers for the Arab States were also organised in order to adapt UNESCO's curriculum to the specificities of the Arab world and lay down the foundations for constructive dialogue in the region and beyond. It was the first consultation of this kind to take place in the Middle East.

UNESCO's MIL Curriculum for Teachers was launched at the same time and reinforced for countries such as Morocco, Oman and Lebanon. The conference resulted in the creation of a working group between UNESCO and the Moroccan Ministry of Education.

A year later, UNESCO's MIL Curriculum was adapted to the Moroccan context and in 2013, the Ministry of Education announced that it would integrate a module of 20 hours on MIL education into the national teacher-training curriculum and facilitate trainings of teachers through a series of workshops in 15 national training centres and 35 associate centres in the country.

Initiatives aimed at familiarising students with how the media operates have also been launched across the country with school visits to local radio and TV stations.

Participants at the experts meeting stressed the importance of sharing the experiences of countries from the Arab world such as Morocco and supporting the efforts currently undertaken across the region.

Kuwait

The implementation of MIL education started in Kuwait in 2006 thanks to efforts led by the Association of Kuwaiti Teachers.

In 2007, the conference “Media Literacy: a necessity for the age of media openness” was launched to discuss how to best implement MIL education, featuring participation from academics, media literacy experts and teachers in Kuwait, and to raise funds. More than 1,000 people attended the forum including representatives from the Ministry of Education who showed interest in implementing MIL education into the national curriculum.

At the request of the Ministry of Education, Kuwaiti media literacy expert Rawia Alhumaidan was asked to draft a MIL curriculum to be implemented at the national level. In parallel, a committee of five Kuwaiti teachers was formed to discuss the content of the curriculum.

In 2013, the Kuwait Centre for Media Literacy was established. The centre cooperates with the US-based Temple University Media Education Lab to enable exchange and cooperation between American and Kuwaiti students through extra-curricular activities. The centre also enables students to broaden their cultural knowledge by teaching them how to access information about foreign countries, such as Spain or the USA.

From left to right: **Dr. Abdel Hamid Nfissi**, Professor at Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University Fes Morocco, **Rawia Alhumaidan**, Assistant Professor in Instructional Technology and Media at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training in Kuwait and **Madga Abu Fadil**, Director of Media Unlimited



Nigeria

The African Centre for Media & Information Literacy (AFRICMIL), a non-profit organisation based in Nigeria, was established as a result of the first Africa Media Literacy Conference in Abuja in July 2008. AFRICMIL aims to promote a new vision of MIL by providing Africans with the skills required for effective participation in the media and effective use of new media and ICT.

AFRICMIL focuses its activities on the importance of media education for children in Africa and the roles of young people in a world of rapidly changing communication and information technologies. Such activities include:

- Production of training manuals for students, youth organisations, community groups, researchers and educators. The manuals also serve as guides for parents and educators to develop effective media plans that can be used at home or in the classrooms, including “a guide to literacy and social change” and “making your voice heard: a media toolkit for children and youth”.
- Publication of *YouthLink Africa (YAfrica)*, an online journal serving as a platform for African youth to share their stories and experiences on issues affecting young people in Africa. All reports are written by young citizen reporters and correspondents across the continent.
- Organisation of AFRICMIL’s first National Youth Media Forum with the support of the Federal Ministry of Youth Development in Nigeria.
- Conducting one-week video workshops for students in Abuja, enabling students to create their own videos on different issues including violence, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and child abuse.
- Creation of a media club at Prince Alex Royal Academy, a nursery, primary and secondary school near Abuja. The media club serves to raise awareness about the media and encourage the integration of media and information literacy into the school curriculum.



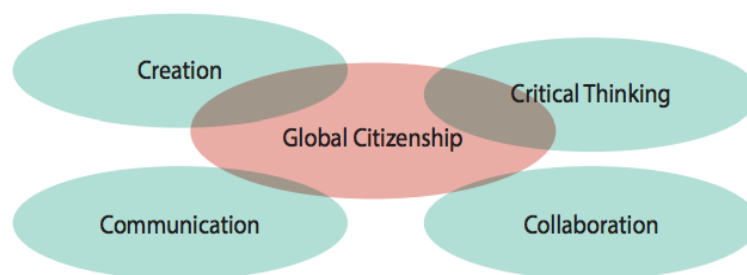
YouthLink Africa, an online journal created by AFRICMIL

Japan

The Asia-Pacific Media and Information Literacy Education Centre, based in Japan, launched the CultureQuest project with elementary schools in Japan in 2007. The CultureQuest is an idea originally created by the Centre for School Development of the School of Education and the City College of the City University of New York in 2002.

The CultureQuest project was implemented in 2009 as a MIL education initiative in Japan to fight against biased information on the Internet about Asian countries, including China, Korea and Japan. As part of this effort, a collaboration was developed between a number of Japanese and Cambodian elementary schools to overcome cultural stereotypes.

Through this programme, classrooms in Japan and Cambodia were connected through videoconferences via Skype, allowing students in both countries to directly interact together, exchange ideas and search for information on each other's cultures. The CultureQuest programme was developed in three phases (correspondence, communication and collaboration) implemented through face-to-face conversations (via Skype), drawing on computers simultaneously to make picture stories together and playing games together using Skype.



In total, three classes of fifth grade children (100 in Japan, 30 in Cambodia) participated in the project along with three teachers, one Japanese vocational trainer and one Cambodian vocational trainer. Prior to videoconferences between the two countries, each class in Japan received training and lectures about Cambodia's basic culture and about how Japanese TV shows have portrayed people in Cambodia. The same lectures were conducted in Cambodia about Japan.

The CultureQuest project represent six to eight hours of classrooms, including two hours of critical thinking skills to ensure that students can identify stereotypes embedded in certain media messages.



The Doha Declaration

Participants at the experts meeting adopted the following Doha Declaration on Supporting Media and Information Literacy Education in the Middle East as part of combined efforts to promote media education throughout the Arab world.

The participants discussed the MIL landscape across the region and around the world, making the following observations:

- Developing understanding of the concept of MIL among education policy makers and other institutions is a major challenge
- As an abundance of sources of information continue to emerge, there is a need to work towards the long term aim of incorporating MIL into school curricula, to ensure that younger generations are made aware of critical thinking and true comprehension of the information available to them.
- A lack of resources and manpower means that networking between MIL experts is absolutely essential to develop the subject across the region. However, effective communication is lacking at the moment.
- Many countries face difficulties as a result of socio-economic and political issues and a lack of political will from stakeholders. In countries where governments have created an enabling-environment for MIL education, initiatives launched by various organisations have experienced a marked increase in success.

Based on examining case studies and learning from the experiences of various organisations around the world, the following recommendations have been made:

- It is essential to help all stakeholders recognise the value that MIL skills offer students in other aspects of their lives. Technology-literate students, capable of critical thinking, will benefit any workplace and contribute to society in general in the future. Recognition of this fact is a fundamental necessity which will assist in the development of MIL on every level.
- The formation of a steering committee, comprised of between six and ten MIL experts, which will be responsible for developing and sharing ideas and programmes for developing MIL in the Arab region. This committee would also be responsible for attending international events and networking on behalf of educators in the region.
- The provision of sustainable training programmes, research and curricula on MIL education for teachers will contribute to the development of MIL. Examples of how this can be done exist (like in Morocco) and can be used as a starting point to be introduced across the region.
- A lifelong approach to learning should be adopted, while interactive methods of education should be introduced in classrooms to develop critical thinking skills. Librarians and media professionals should play a more prominent role in helping students understand and process information, and should work closely with teachers and professors in this regard.
- Establishing exchange programmes to build on successful youth-produced media initiatives and to develop understanding of how media, information providers and memory institutions work around the world. These could include summer school courses, internships and virtual meetings. Initiatives which enable young people from different cultures to interact within the media play an important role in MIL's mission to combat stereotypes and encourage tolerance.
- Creating socially inclusive MIL programmes for visually impaired, special needs and disabled children and adults.
- Creating inclusive MIL programmes for women in the Arab world.
- Parents and care-givers must be included in MIL education, so as not to isolate them from their children's education and to contribute to the development of a viewpoint which sees MIL as an extension of general literacy.
- Mapping MIL across the Arab region should be introduced. It is essential to monitor the performance of MIL programmes over time. While regional and international organisations can assist in this regard, the responsibility for these assessments should lie with national bodies.
- National and international networks within the Arab region should be established in order to share knowledge and resources between stakeholders and encourage countries in the region to engage in MIL.
- An annual experts' meeting should be convened in the Arab world to discuss issues related to MIL, to assess ongoing schemes and develop further programmes.

- Representatives are committed to advocating for MIL education at the highest levels with the aim of enlightening governments' views of MIL and sharing ideas for the introduction of national MIL policies. International organisations such as UNESCO and UNAOC, as well as the Arab League and other international and regional organisations could assist in this end.
- The production of shared resources, designed in a culturally-sensitive, gender-sensitive and disability-friendly manner, to help teachers work according to best practices. While there are cultural differences to be considered when developing these materials, there are key competencies at the centre of MIL which should be agreed upon and used to strengthen the cause of the subject with different stakeholders.
- Universities and news organisations should implement MIL programmes within their respective countries.