

**DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN  
COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD**

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**ABSTRACT.** *The development of media and information literacy (MIL) has become one of the fundamental educational priorities worldwide. The rapid spread of digital technologies, social media, and online communication has transformed how people access, evaluate, and use information. This paper examines the global evolution of MIL, focusing on the conceptual foundations, national policies, and practices in various countries. The study identifies differences in implementation strategies, challenges related to educational systems, and the role of international organizations such as UNESCO in standardizing approaches. The results reveal that while developed countries have established structured MIL programs integrated into curricula, developing countries are still in the process of institutionalizing these practices. Recommendations are offered for fostering inclusive and sustainable MIL education in diverse cultural contexts.*

**Key words:** *media literacy, information literacy, digital competence, UNESCO, global education, critical thinking, education policy.*

**INTRODUCTION.** The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented explosion of information sources and communication technologies. Media and information literacy (MIL) has emerged as a crucial life skill for citizens to participate effectively in the knowledge society. It involves not only the ability to access, evaluate, and create information but also to understand media's social, cultural, and political roles [UNESCO, 2013, p. 8].



Globally, MIL is increasingly recognized as essential for democratic participation, combating misinformation, and promoting sustainable development. The rise of “fake news,” propaganda, and algorithm-driven content requires critical media engagement and responsible digital behavior [Livingstone, 2018, p. 12]. Consequently, many countries have incorporated MIL into educational policies and curricula, though the level of integration varies significantly.

**LITERATURE REVIEW.** The concept of media literacy emerged in the mid-20th century as a response to the growing influence of mass media. Scholars such as Masterman and Buckingham emphasized that media education should develop critical awareness rather than mere technical skills [Buckingham, 2003, p. 45]. Information literacy, on the other hand, originated in library science and focused on locating, evaluating, and using information effectively [Catts & Lau, 2008, p. 17]. The convergence of these ideas led to the broader concept of “media and information literacy,” promoted by UNESCO to address the challenges of the digital era. UNESCO’s “Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers” (2011) marked a milestone in global efforts to institutionalize MIL. The framework encourages integration of critical thinking, communication, and ethical use of information across educational systems [UNESCO, 2011, p. 5]. Researchers have also pointed out that MIL supports civic engagement, digital inclusion, and social empowerment [Hobbs, 2010, p. 32].

In the European context, the European Commission launched media literacy initiatives as part of digital competence frameworks, emphasizing citizens’ ability to interpret and produce media messages critically [European Commission, 2018, p. 11]. Meanwhile, in the United States, the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) promotes standards for educators to implement MIL-based pedagogy [NAMLE, 2020, p. 14].

In Asia and Africa, MIL development is closely linked to digital inclusion efforts and education reform. Countries like the Philippines, India, and Kenya have partnered with UNESCO to localize MIL programs that address misinformation and promote intercultural dialogue [UNESCO, 2021, p. 23].

**DISCUSSION. Conceptual Foundations.** Media and information literacy is a



multidimensional concept that combines cognitive, ethical, and socio-cultural competencies. It empowers individuals to critically analyze information sources, understand media influence, and produce responsible content [Wilson et al., 2013, p. 6]. Beyond technical skills, MIL encompasses understanding the economic and ideological structures shaping media systems.

**Global Policy Approaches.** Different countries have approached MIL development through various frameworks: Europe: Many European Union (EU) member states have adopted the “Digital Competence Framework” (DigComp) that integrates MIL as a core competence for lifelong learning. Finland, for instance, embeds MIL across subjects from primary to higher education, emphasizing critical evaluation of media and information [Palsa & Ruokamo, 2015, p. 9]. North America: In the United States and Canada, MIL education is integrated into media studies and civic education. American schools use project-based approaches to teach digital citizenship, fact-checking, and responsible online behavior [Hobbs, 2017, p. 28].

Asia-Pacific: Countries like South Korea and Singapore have established national strategies for digital literacy. South Korea’s “Smart Education” policy includes MIL to strengthen students’ critical and creative use of media technologies [Kim, 2019, p. 42]. The Philippines was one of the first Asian countries to integrate UNESCO’s MIL curriculum into secondary education.

Africa and the Middle East: The African Union has emphasized MIL in its Continental Education Strategy 2025. In Kenya, Nigeria, and Egypt, pilot programs train teachers to incorporate MIL principles into civic education [UNESCO, 2021, p. 25]. Despite progress, limited access to ICT infrastructure remains a major obstacle.

**Challenges and Gaps.** Several challenges hinder the global implementation of MIL: Lack of trained educators: Many teachers lack the pedagogical skills and digital competence to teach MIL effectively.

Digital divide: Unequal access to technology exacerbates disparities between urban and rural learners, especially in developing regions [Livingstone & Bulger, 2014, p. 19].

Cultural differences: Western-centered models of MIL may not fully align with





local media cultures and languages.

Policy fragmentation: In many countries, MIL policies exist in isolation from broader educational reforms, limiting their sustainability.

**The Role of International Organizations.** UNESCO has played a pivotal role in advancing MIL through policy advocacy, curriculum development, and global partnerships. The UNESCO MIL Alliance connects stakeholders from over 120 countries, promoting collaboration and resource sharing. Similarly, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7 highlights MIL as a key component of quality education and global citizenship [UNESCO, 2020, p. 7].

**RESULTS.** The comparative analysis of global MIL initiatives reveals several key findings:

1. Institutionalization of MIL: Developed countries, particularly in Europe and North America, have achieved significant integration of MIL in national curricula. In Finland and Canada, for instance, MIL is taught across subjects, fostering analytical and creative skills.

2. Emerging adoption in developing regions: Asian and African nations are increasingly recognizing MIL as a tool for social inclusion and democratic participation. Pilot projects in the Philippines and Kenya demonstrate the adaptability of UNESCO frameworks to local contexts.

3. Correlation with digital competence: There is a strong relationship between national digital literacy policies and MIL development. Countries with advanced ICT infrastructure tend to have more comprehensive MIL education.

4. Teacher training as a determinant factor: The effectiveness of MIL programs largely depends on teacher preparedness. Nations that invest in professional development and continuous teacher training, such as Finland and South Korea, achieve better learning outcomes.

5. Impact on misinformation resilience: Countries with established MIL frameworks show higher levels of public awareness and resistance to misinformation and online manipulation [European Commission, 2018, p. 16].



**CONCLUSION.** Media and information literacy is a cornerstone of education in the digital era. It not only equips individuals with technical abilities but also nurtures critical thinking, ethical communication, and democratic participation. The global development of MIL shows substantial progress, yet disparities remain between developed and developing countries.

To foster equitable and sustainable growth, international cooperation must prioritize teacher training, infrastructure development, and culturally contextualized pedagogies. MIL should be integrated across all levels of education and linked to broader digital transformation policies. As digital environments continue to evolve, media and information literacy will remain essential for building informed, resilient, and responsible global citizens.

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