

Terms of reference

Strengthening the information integrity ecosystem in Ethiopia: Media and Information Literacy for Dialogue (MIL4D)

Background of the project

Ethiopia is at a critical juncture. Two decades of double-digit economic growth and relative stability led many to believe in Ethiopia's success potential to breakout of the cycle of conflict and poverty, and forge a path towards economic prosperity, social progress, improved governance, peace and stability.

However, the country's relative progress is facing a downturn due to a rise in fervent nationalism, identity based political culture and media environment that is fueling perpetual communal hate, conflict, displacement, and economic ruin that culminated in a bloody civil war that is threatening to break the country apart.

Ethiopia is seeing an unprecedented explosion of content and media diversity which in the past had been dominated exclusively by state-owned and operated media houses. However, political contestations that exploit historical narratives and counter narratives to spread misinformation and hate speech are creating deep fractures that undermine social cohesion and promote violence among the country's various ethnic and religious groups.

Before the start of the war, Ethiopian media organisations were already operating under a credibility deficit resulting from their role in fanning ethnic diatribe that contributed to a number of communal conflicts and displacements.

Ethiopian citizens are also exposed to various types of unverified user generated content online, rampant information disorder (online and offline) that led to communal conflicts, displacement, war and destruction.

Verified content is a lifeline to Ethiopia's success in peace building and efforts to mitigate communal division and conflict. The need to enhance the quality of information the Ethiopian public gets and imparts requires a holistic multiple-stakeholder engagement involving citizens, especially youth, who are especially affected by calls for violence and disinformation.

This project proposes to implement a series of activities designed to initiate a bottom-up capacity development support aimed at improving the quality of news and

information the Ethiopian public gets from media outlets and mitigate the impact of information disorder on the information exchange ecosystem.

The goal of the projects is to nurture youth participation in dangerous speech and information disorder mitigation through media and information literacy training and public awareness campaigns that are designed to bring changes in knowledge, attitude and actions essential to promoting dialogue, peace and tolerance in Ethiopia.

Scope of work

- Prepare an Amharic written module addressing the key points in media and information literacy
- Conduct two days' workshops that will be held in the Oromia region, SNNPR region, Amhara region and Addis Ababa.
- Conduct online training that will be held in 4-6 sessions for a maximum of 2 hours per session as a continued mentorship for the selected 24-50 Information Integrity Ambassadors (IA) to support their actions in fact-checking and dangerous speech mitigation work.
- Monitoring and evaluating IAs' progress within the 6 months mentorship period.
- Help in the production of MIL public service announcements (PSA), educational and advocacy audio messages to be distributed via community radio, targeting rural youth and population and help produce whiteboard animation MOOC video advocacy outputs (targeting urban youth online) aimed at enhancing their MIL knowledge and skills designed to result in attitude and behaviour change.

Deliverables

- Prepare module on media and information literacy
- Conduct four two-days trainings at the four selected regions of Ethiopia (Oromia, Amhara, SNNPR and Addis Ababa) using relevant training materials including module design, slides, case studies, reference handouts, needs assessments, and course evaluations,
- Engage in continued online mentorship lasting 6 months for the selected information integrity ambassadors.
- Help in production of at least four PSAs and MOOCs.

Timelines

The duration of the contract will be from May 2023 till January 2024.

- Module preparation and submission- May, 2023
- MIL trainings
 - Oromia region- June, 2023
 - SNNPR region- June, 2023
 - Amhara region- July, 2023
 - Addis Ababa- July, 2023
- Online mentorship for information integrity ambassadors will extend from August, 2023 till January, 2024.
- PSA and MOOC productions will be produced as needed throughout the project timeline.