Media and Information Literacy in the Western Balkans: Unrealized Emancipatory Potential

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Media for Citizens – Citizens for Media is a project by seven media development organizations (**Foundation "Mediacentar", Albanian Media Institute, Macedonian Institute for Media, Montenegro Media Institute, Novi Sad School of Journalism, Peace Institute, SEENPM**) in the Western Balkans aimed at building the capacity of civil society organisations in the region to advance media and information literacy (MIL).

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Preface

Almost two decades of the regional network of media centres and institutes in South East Europe – the South East European Network for Professionalisation of Media (SEENPM) – have been spent in attempts to intervene through regional cooperation to make the media in these countries serve democracy. Since 2000, when our network was established, dozens of regional actions have been carried out – from training and exchange of journalists, editors and media managers, the promotion of media ethics and self-regulation, mapping media ownership and its impact on media pluralism and independence, to examining labour relations in the media, developing a regional award scheme for investigative journalism, empowering journalists and activists for fact-checking and countering disinformation, and finally addressing corrupt policies and practices in the media systems and advocating for media integrity as a guiding principle of media reforms.

All our efforts for media development in the region have been about strengthening public service values in media and journalism, and contributing to informed citizenship. The main partners in our regional efforts have been actors in the media community, civil society and policy-making. Media literacy has been an occasional topic of our regional efforts while some of the individual media centres and institutes pioneered the promotion of media literacy in their respective countries.

This book is part of a coordinated regional action developed by the members of the SEENPM and supported by the European Union, to contribute, in the period 2018-2021, to the advancement of media and information literacy (MIL) in five countries of the region – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Under the title "Media for Citizens – Citizens for Media", the regional project in particular seeks to strengthen the role and capacity of civil society organisations in advancing MIL.

Five national research reports are presented in this book explaining the current state of MIL policies and practices in each country and elaborating in more detail different aspects of MIL development, depending on the priorities in each country – from MIL integration in the education systems of Montenegro and Serbia and the role of civil society organisations in MIL promotion in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the engagement of public institutions, including public service broadcasters, in strengthening MIL in Albania and Macedonia. In addition, a regional overview provides

comparative perspective and highlights the needs and obstacles for the use of the emancipatory potential of media and information literacy.

The research on mapping MIL policies and practices in five countries was conducted between April and October 2018. The researchers examined the 58 most relevant and concrete initiatives and actions aimed at MIL development in their countries and at regional level. Despite numerous actions and some new positive developments towards strategy development and coordinated efforts for MIL advancement in some countries, there is no country in the region with comprehensive policies and institutional framework for developing MIL in a systematic way and at scale. Media and information literacy as a condition for the empowerment and emancipation of citizens is clearly not a political priority of any government in the region, but is rather left on the margins as a toy for civil society, enthusiasts in the public sector, and international organisations.

Our regional project "Media for Citizens – Citizens for Media" recognises the potential and momentum for putting media and information literacy higher on the political agenda by mobilising and connecting different actors in national coalitions and joint advocacy actions. At the same time, it will give financial support to grassroots actors for creative efforts at local level, provide training for civil society organisations and facilitate cooperation between schools and media professionals in media pedagogy, increasing the size of the community of actors from various sectors and professions working in the field and demanding a systemic approach to media and information literacy.

This book has been published by the Mediacentar Sarajevo as a regional coordinator of the "Media for Citizens – Citizens for Media" project. The Peace Institute in Ljubljana coordinated the regional research and work on the research reports. The project partnership also includes the Albanian Media Institute, the Macedonian Institute for Media, the Montenegro Media Institute, the Novi Sad School of Journalism and SEENPM as a regional network which connects all the partners.

With this publication and the regional project we do not mean to suggest that media and information literacy is the answer to all problems and failures of media policy and media system reforms in the countries of the region. Quite to the contrary, media reforms are imperative. But we see media and information literacy as something bigger than any media policy instrument or media reform. It is about the overall potential of our societies to cope with challenges of media and information order, and its interaction with political systems of our time. It is a condition for informed citizenship, for critical thinking, and for making democracy functional.

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Regional overview

Brankica Petković and Sandra Bašić Hrvatin

1.   Introduction

When the offspring of Jules Verne, the famous French writer of the 19th century, renovated their family house twenty years ago, they found an old, forgotten safe and in it, an even older manuscript, of an unpublished novel of Verne's. The novel had been written in 1863 and takes place in 20th-century Paris (Verne 1996). The first publisher to whom Verne had offered the manuscript refused it and the administrators of his literary estate never wanted to have it published because they believed its content too incredible even for a writer like Verne. This is how it remained forgotten in a safe for close to 150 years.

The novel's main character, Michel Dufrénoy, was born in what was for him the worst possible historical period. The faculty at which he studied has just given him an award for the best poem written in Latin. In a society dominated by the natural sciences and entrepreneurship, poets are marked out as losers. The social elite is made up of engineers who build advanced infrastructure and entrepreneurs who engage in financial transactions. They have also taken over governing roles, those that used to belong to politicians and civil servants. There is no art to be found in museums because there are no museums. Only a few retired literature professors remember once-famous French writers and poets.

Michel has to learn how to survive in this world with the help of those still remembered by older people. He is assisted in this by Uncle Huguenin, the family's black sheep, who taught the humanities until retirement. During one of their walks through Paris, his uncle explains to him that many old professions have disappeared due to social change. One of those extinct professions is journalism. The reasons for the disappearance of journalism cited by Verne are largely identical to those we have been witnessing 150 years later. In a world run by engineering and entrepreneurial brains, there was no room for politics either. Political parties did exist but they were no longer distinguished by programmatic or ideological differences. A bureaucratic society did not know of (and did not seek) an alternative. The disappearance of politics hit not only the politicians but also the newspapers that throughout their history had served the political class and those who installed politicians in power and supported them financially. Since politics was of no interest for anyone anymore, journalists were left without the most important topic to report on. Newspapers thus became pamphlet-like in content and volume. Their owners tried to make up for the loss of topics and newspaper space with new content meant to attract readers interested in critical and expert texts about society. However, a new

misfortune befell them. The political and economic elites had had enough of media bias; therefore they demanded, in order to ensure balanced reporting and protection of civic rights, that each newspaper publishing criticism also allow for publication of corrections and differing opinions. Editors started facing serious problems once this law was adopted. They had to publish tens of corrections with each published article. The newspapers which persisted in critical reporting were becoming thicker and thicker, while the readers found their content to be incomprehensible and illegible. In the end, most of them closed down. The fate of critical media outlets scared the editors of those that were still operating, so they demanded of their journalists to publish only articles for which no one would request a correction. However, no one wanted to read such newspapers.

The social change was accompanied by technological change as well, explained Uncle Huguenin. In the old times, the number of readers much exceeded that of writers. Books were written and published by few authors. The same applied to newspapers. The price of printing and distribution (of books or newspapers) was too high for most people. The technological revolution made printing and distribution so cheap that anyone could publish or distribute whatever they wanted. At first sight, the technological change had positive consequences: the barriers to writing and publishing were removed. In this way, the right to access to the public was democratised. However, the enthusiasm about these changes did not last long. There was no longer criticism or critics (for fear of lawsuits) and as a result the media space was chockful of content that no one examined, corrected or classified. The truth and lies had the same value. New authors mostly wrote just for themselves or for the like-minded few. The number of writers exceeded that of readers, which rendered publishing as a distinct industry completely redundant.

Almost 150 years later, we have the impression that Verne's vision of the world is materialising. This is, however, only an initial impression that should not make us believe that there is nothing we can do about it. The famous TINA (*there is no alternative*) way of thinking might be precisely where we should direct our critical thinking and action. There is an alternative (or, better even, alternatives). It is being offered by individuals and groups who, everyone in their own field of action, with limited resources and limited political support, are seeking to design and implement change. For close to two decades now, our research has been looking for an answer to the seemingly simple question: why do we have the media systems that we have? We have been looking for complex answers and are trying to offer a possibility to think about the system and the alternatives in a different way. We have been warning of the implications of the concentration of media ownership for media pluralism (Hrvatin and Petković 2004) for over a decade now; we have defined the notion of media integrity and asked for it to become the key reference in media policy and in the creation of a media system based on media acting in the public interest (Hrvatin and Petković 2014); we

have examined and suggested possible alternative sources of media financing (Živković 2016); and pointed out the importance of the public broadcaster's role in protecting the citizens' right to information and of the operation of a public communication space (Hrvatin and Petković 2004, 2014; Petković, Panić and Hrvatin 2016). We believe that it is possible to reform media systems (and not only introduce cosmetic improvements through superficial changes to laws) and to make them a key tool for critical thinking and action in the hands of citizens. This is why this latest study of ours has shifted the focus of analysis onto media and information literacy and its role in helping citizens acquire literacy in order to understand the world we live in. However, as can be seen from the activities taking place in some of the countries covered by our analysis, active citizens above all need an active state. We need more, and not less, state, and one that will not engage in *governance* but *governing* (Brown 2015, 135).[1]

The spread of false information aimed at manipulating public opinion; the abuse of citizens' personal data for commercial or political purposes; the non-transparency of algorithms determining what will be disseminated in the public space and what not; and the crisis of journalism due to which the media has become only one source of information, and not the most important one at that; all of these are problems that, in the view of many citizens, require an active state policy. Such manipulations can be resisted only once the interests of monopolists in information capitalism no longer take precedence over the interests of citizens and their fundamental communication rights. Without these rights and their protection, it is impossible to actively advocate social change. Algorithms and smart devices can by no means ensure it. Media owners cannot (or do not want to) ensure it either; together with the owners of communication portals and technocratic politicians, they have privatised one of the fundamental rights of every citizen in a democratic society: the right to credible, truthful and public interest-based media.

Media and information literacy, or what Douglas Kellner (1995) calls "critical media pedagogy", is the possibility to shape new modes of communication of citizens in the public space rather than service users in a commercial relationship of exchange. Today's media (or rather, the media generally through the long history of their operation) do not allow equal access to all participants in the public debate. Those who own the means of production (in our case the media and communication platforms) decide who can talk and who is talked about. The media space is only a "market" in which the holders of different opinions are vying for the audience's media attention. Citizens are, thus, reduced to consumers of media content sold for profit by media owners to advertisers. Media and information

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1 According to Brown, *governing* implies active political work and is different from *governance*, which consists of a series of unrelated practices, negotiations and assurances which governments direct at those they govern.

literacy, despite positive efforts, represents an attempt to resolve the accumulated problems of the media industry in a unilateral manner: it seeks to make consumers literate, at the same time absolving media producers (media owners, editors and journalists) of any responsibility. The democratisation of the media system requires of us to critically reflect on the fact that very little or almost nothing is left of the liberal principle of the public as a space for public discussion in which differing opinions and arguments are confronted. Media and information literacy, as we understand it, aims to make literate all the players in the media system: from citizens to the media and politicians. It is important to add that media and information literacy is not an organised system for shaping moral judgements on media content; neither is it (only) learning how to be the media itself, but rather a process in which we learn how to communicate, resolve communication conflicts, and tame the demons of democracy.

In order to understand the importance of media and information literacy, we have to understand why we have the media and the media system that we have. What are the key trends that have shaped them; how has the liberalisation of media policy affected media pluralism; how have the position and role of public media services changed; what have been the responses of national and supranational (EU) lawmakers when it comes to the protection of freedom of expression and media freedom; and how have media audiences and their habits changed? Once we have understood this, we will find it easier to understand how important it is for media and information literacy to become part of public education policy. The fragmentation and segmentation of both media supply and media demand; the monetisation of citizens' personal data on social media; and the people's loss of trust in the credibility of the media (with a loss of trust at the same time in all political elites and representative democracy) require us to apply critical thinking to the question of what kind of media we need.

2.   Mapping the world

Although it seems that the media do not play an important role in the education of their audiences and that the education of the audience, as some media representatives assert, is not their job, this is not true. *Public service*, as the fundamental function of the public media since their emergence almost a century ago, has from the very start

been based on educating the audiences. Educating, informing and entertaining (in this order) were required of all creators of programming content. Of course, this education function of the public media was not intended as a substitute for the institutional education system, which had always fallen under the ideological domain of the state. Creators of media content were aware of the responsibility entailed in their work intended for mass audiences. *Accountability*, *responsibility* and *responsiveness* became the fundamental organisational principles of the public media. Accountability had to do with taking care of the public interest; responsibility with the high professional standards of all employees; and responsiveness with establishing a strong relationship with the audiences that the media serve. In the case of print media, an obligation to meet these standards has never been formally introduced. Of course, journalists have adhered to the standards of their profession and certain self-regulatory mechanisms have been shaped to prevent the state from taking repressive action against journalists, and the responsibility of all the employees has been to create a product that will bring profit to the owner (while respecting the above-mentioned standards). Communication platforms and social media are not media in the sense of print media, radio, television, and audiovisual media services. Those are technological and communication platforms on which millions of users publish and exchange messages and thus shape the public communication space, whereby these platforms do not bear any kind of responsibility typical of the media. They are not bound by any public interest (apart from providing users with a commercial possibility of accessing those services) and have at the same time become the most important source of information and the most important communication channel for a large section of the population.

Before we show how the responsibility of those participating in the consumption of media content has replaced the responsibility of those participating in the production of media content, we have to understand what it is that makes the work of the media influence the way people understand the world they live in.

The media play an important role in the creation and legitimisation of dominant worldviews. They represent, as critical media pedagogues usually note, a key instrument in the "radical democratic project" of creating critical public spaces for informed and socially active citizens to think and act in. The media do not only determine the topics to be discussed in public but above all offer acceptable interpretations thereof: they explain to us why and how something has happened. The real world is too complicated and unfathomable to be experienced directly. We ourselves do not have sufficient knowledge to understand all the dimensions of a problem, all the different views and countless interpretations. And still, we are forced to act in this environment, to reconstruct it, and also to understand it by applying a simplified interpretation model. "To traverse the world men must have maps of

the world," writes Walter Lippmann in his book *Public opinion* (2003). It is precisely the media that provide us with those "maps"; they outline paths and install signposts precisely to help us understand events taking place around us on a daily basis. The media gather information on and analyse events that we ourselves have not experienced and about which in most cases we have not shaped an opinion or a view. We see the media as a credible source of information, a "chronicler" of events, a guarantor that what is being reported has really happened. The media build their credibility on being our most important independent source of information and interpretation. Most people judge the credibility of information content based on the source: based on who says something to us we judge the credibility of what has been said. This is why we cannot look at the work of the media as just another area of activity.

Mass media (above all radio and television) are an extremely important historical institution of the 20th century. In their book *A Social History of The Media - from Gutenberg to The Internet* (2009), British historians Asa Briggs and Peter Burke ascribe to the media an important role in the emergence and strengthening of modern nation-states. National radio and television connected the citizens of a nation-state, men and women, into a linguistic and cultural unit – a media community. Mass media and mass audiences were also key for post-war political theorists of liberal democracy, who advocated the idea of free and informed citizens choosing their political representatives at elections, with the help of information passed on to them by the media. The notion of representative democracy allowed media enterprises to enjoy the privileged status of "guardians of democracy". It was only them who could enter the living rooms of different social classes with common political, cultural and entertainment content. We have to take the term "guardians of democracy" literally here. The media have played an invaluable role in the preservation of a certain organisational and production model typical of the post-war world.

In the mid-20th century, the two-tiered media system (a powerful public broadcaster and the early beginnings of commercial RTV programmes) that had prevailed up to that point started changing. The liberalisation of the media market was accompanied by the emergence of an ever-larger number of commercial media outlets who sought to attract the attention of specific audiences and advertisers. In the 1980s, nation-states started awarding concessions for the broadcasting of an ever-growing number of commercial RTV programmes, for which the national market soon became too small. National media in some countries had to compete with global broadcasters (above all US corporations) and the media space required more and more new programming content. The print media market, which had for centuries absorbed most of the advertising money, now had a strong competitor in television. The idea of free-of-charge newspapers might have attracted a large number

of readers within a short period of time, but in the long run it destroyed the market and raised an audience that was no longer ready to pay for journalistic content. Media concentration proceeded at such a pace that more and more media enterprises changed owners, becoming part of large media conglomerates. National and supranational (EU) legislators had no effective response to this. Lip service paid to media pluralism was not accompanied by effective mechanisms to ensure it in practice. Following the change from the socialist system that took place in the early 1990s, Southeast European states joined a global media community for which they were not prepared. Unsuccessful privatisation, ineffective legislation that did not ensure oversight in implementation, instrumentalisation of media and corruption of advertising space drew the outlines of dysfunctional media systems whereby the biggest losers were journalists and citizens. The global financial crisis of 2008 only exacerbated the already-accumulated problems of the media industry. It became obvious that no one any longer protected the interests of citizens and their right to diverse information sources. The migration of the media, advertisers and the audience to the Internet was only the straw that broke the camel's back. Against this backdrop, the idea of media literacy, i.e., strengthening the critical role of "media consumers",[2] became part of the political agenda of most states. However, it was never quite clear how this idea should be translated into practice. The search for potential models that would work in practice was left to civil society. And the search is still ongoing.

3.   Crisis of a reform-adverse system

In his book *Losing the News* (2009), American journalist and editor Alex Jones analyses the consequences that the media and journalism suffered due to the economic crisis. He describes the economic model underlying the media industry, explaining that the sales and advertising model that used to secure the money for the operation of the

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2   We use different terms in our text when examining relationships in a communication process. The term "media consumers" refers to audiences in a commercial communication system, and the term "media users" to users of services of different information platforms and technologies. And the public media should, by definition, look at their audiences as citizens.

media has been exhausted. The media and journalism crisis was accompanied by newsrooms shrinking, foreign bureaus closing down, part time media staff being exploited, capital exerting pressure on editors, workload of media staff growing, and the influence of information mediators (such as lobbyists and public relations officers) spreading; all of this has led to a greater share of media content created by recycling topics, forms and ways of interpretation. In Jones' view, the old business model will not return even after a potential economic recovery. This is why journalists will have to look for new sources of funding, primarily for reporting on important topics without which informed citizens and democratic societies cannot be imagined.

Jones' view is widespread among media theoreticians and practitioners alike. Journalists perceive the crisis of the media industry and the dying out of newspapers in the same way that industrial workers who lost their jobs in the 1970s and 1980s – miners, assembly line workers and many others – looked at the mass production crisis, globalisation and automation. Journalists and media owners finally have the same goal: to save the media factory. Owners have been saving it by dismissing employees, buying more media outlets, centralising newsrooms, and trying to influence the legislators so that they protect their position on the market and restrict the operations of their online competitors. Journalists hope that they would perhaps get a better owner after the crisis (they usually talk about "a strategic owner") or are considering taking over the media outlet they are working for or founding their own media factory. Neither group thinks about how to win the audiences back and how to explain to citizens why the media and journalism are important.

In his book *Market-Driven Journalism – Let the Citizen Beware?* (1994), John H. McManus explained the market mechanisms which helped advertisers shape media content and, by redirecting the flow of advertising money, contributed to the success or failure of a particular media enterprise. For the new, corporate media owners, journalistic work was important as long as it helped them sell ads and make profit. Owners' demands for ever-larger profits were accompanied by the closing down of expensive newsrooms that were not interesting in market terms as they brought no revenues to the shareholders. The commercialisation of journalism took place in parallel to other political and economic trends: liberalisation of media market and deregulation, and concentration of media ownership and reduced media pluralism. These trends had for decades worried only critical media theoreticians, journalists' associations and civil society activists, who had been warning of consequences that were eroding freedom of expression. Media owners, too, started feeling the crisis when traditional advertisers realised that the media were no longer the best platform for placing advertisements. Online ads, electronic social networks, browsers and news aggregators offered advertisers a much better sales performance at much lower ad prices.

Google, Facebook, Amazon and other owners of communication platforms knew their users much better than the media knew theirs. They watched their every click, every slogan typed in the browser, every purchase made and every content read. The Internet showed how strongly dependent media enterprises had been on only one business model: the sale of ads. Direct transactions with media consumers – hawking newspapers, TV licence fee, sale of digital packages – did not generate sufficient revenues for numerous media organisations. Although one would assume that the media had learned their lesson about the consequences of the "monocultural" model, online companies did the same. Online economy, too, is driven by advertising and the money of the advertisers who see information infrastructure as an opportunity for an even bigger profit. The market pressures that McManus writes about have become even more pronounced on the Internet due to the optimisation of work and computer algorithms with the help of which every click, news report or user content can be used for advertising purposes: a blog post, a tweet, a video recording or a social media post. The domination of the advertising model in the media industry is over, and a new sustainable model is still not on the horizon. Journalists are facing not only the loss of advertising that used to finance their work but also the search for new ways of paying for journalistic work and for a new (or the restoration of the old) meaning of journalistic work. It turns out that the crisis is not of a structural but rather a systemic nature and that it has had disastrous consequences for journalism.

During most of the 20th century, the operation of the media factory was marked by the standardisation of journalistic work and media content. While watching his first car intended for mass consumption being produced on an assembly line, Henry Ford said: "The lightest jobs were again classified to discover how many of them required the use of full faculties, and we found that 670 could be filled by legless men, 2,637 by one-legged men, 2 by armless men, 715 by one-armed men, and 10 by blind men. Therefore, out of 7,882 kinds of jobs, 4,034 – although some of them required strength – did not require full physical capacity" (Ford 1923, 109). The universal factories for mass production intended for non-mass consumption by isolated individuals are based on an even higher degree of standardisation of work achieved by algorithms. The moment in which the founder of a universal factory (for example Google) takes over the work of a traditional news factory marks the historical cycle described by Canadian legal scholar Tim Wu in his book *The Master Switch – The Rise and Fall of Information Empires* (2010).

As Wu warns, today's information monopolists seek to avoid in all possible ways the curse of ancient Greek god Chronos. Chronos was afraid of the prophecy according to which one of his children was to overthrow him as the supreme god. This is why he ate his own children upon birth, but his son Zeus escaped and fulfilled the prophecy. In the same way, the old information Chronoses (the media) used all of their power and clout to prevent new business

Zeuses from threatening their dominance (oftentimes with the help of the state and the regulators). The telegraph monopolists hindered the development of telephony. The telephonic empire, in turn, tried stopping the development of the radio, while radio owners managed to restrict the development of television to radio with pictures for a few decades.

The media and telecom industries have got caught up in a similar cycle over the past decade, trying in all possible ways to limit the influence of the online industry. Spanish and German publishers have, thus, banned Google from including free of charge magazine and newspaper content in its Google News service. Publishers have also asked Google to stop its book-scanning project Google Books, which digitised several millions of books, over copyright violations. The owners of telecom infrastructure – national telecoms, cable and other telecom operators – are trying, by violating the principle of net neutrality, to restrict online enterprises (above all Netflix) which offer competitive online services on their infrastructure: commerce, music and video streaming, cloud computing, telephony and text messages. An important way in which they differ from information monopolists is that they have almost complete control over technology and content, which makes them the biggest editors and curators of our media consumption.

Canadian political economist Vincent Mosco (2014) warns us that contemporary databases can be created and maintained only by the largest enterprises and states, which is why the online industry is far more concentrated and centralised than the media industry. Complex information systems require a far more harmonised work process than was typical of the media factories of the past. Instead of human beings, these complex processes are run by algorithms and robots, whose pace of work is set by ever faster computer processors. Google has consolidated under a single user account the data that so far not even the state has been able to gather: Internet searches; content of private electronic messages; location; consumer habits and tastes; personal social network; sexual orientation; and political beliefs. Whenever we manage our Facebook account, when we choose videos on YouTube or upload photos on Instagram, we leave our traces which platform owners collect and sell. In the case of the media industry, the goods sold to advertisers were their audiences, and for platform owners those goods are our personal data. This is not a one-way process. The users of services offered by platforms are starting to adapt their behaviour (e.g., selection of information) to the offer shaped by algorithms, whose operations are not transparent. Today's programmers know well how to analyse and predict a new music hit, how to translate from foreign languages, how to write a symphony or a sonnet or algorithms that then create decent journalistic pieces (Steiner 2012). Our analysis should not limit itself only to an examination of technological tools shaping our media consumption but should also

look at the social and economic trends contributing to the spread of their use: automation; decreasing labour costs; belief that only by using information tools more efficiently can we maintain robust economic growth and solve some of humanity's biggest problems (climate change, excessive exploitation of natural sources, poverty), without any radical thinking about the sustainability of the current social organisation.

Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (2016) are convinced that already in the first wave of automation smart devices will take over numerous jobs that are today done by close to half of all employees. Just think of driverless cars. Those employed in the so-called creative industries are confident that their jobs are safe. Algorithms are the most efficient precisely in jobs entailing logical and structured processes of data analysis: accounting, translation, writing boilerplate lyrics and music, medical diagnostics. Algorithms in journalism produce standardised journalistic texts which have been a reality for a long time in non-algorithm journalism. The most difficult to replace will be jobs in the so-called emotional economy, which are currently mostly done by women with a very small or no remuneration, Brynjolfsson and McAfee believe (2016).

The education system aimed at producing precisely-defined staff for precisely-defined workplaces will have to change. Instead of offering pessimistic assessments of the situation, Brynjolfsson and McAfee make suggestions as to how technologies should be used for the benefit of the entire humanity. Let us not forget the fact running as a thread throughout our text: the largest piece of the cake (money) will go to the owners of smart machines – algorithms and electronic platforms, which in turn spells growing (rather than reduced) social inequality and greater social and economic power of a small minority. Today more than ever, it is true that those who control communication channels control what travels along those channels and what the users of the channels consume.

The information and communication rights of citizens, freedom of expression, free access to information and protection of privacy require the state to play an active role. Without these rights, it is difficult to imagine an active citizen and activism aimed at positive social change. The political and economic history of the modern state shows that the rise in electronic surveillance should not be understood only as a problem of technology. After all, technological surveillance can be limited by using counter-technology to protect our information rights. But this requires knowledge that no institutional education system offers.

The tech entrepreneurs who over the last two decades have also become media owners or founded new media enterprises portray themselves in their public appearances as the guardians of the information rights of their consumers (not citizens!). Just think of Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, who has lately had to justify himself publicly over the abuse of services offered by his corporation. In all of his texts, the keyword is

community. Facebook has made possible the emergence of the largest human communication community in history. Facebook has allowed for a billion people to belong to a communication community. It has been argued that a billion users for whom Facebook's technology is the most important information and communication channel cannot be punished because of a small number of those who abuse Facebook services. The argument that the state must not encroach upon freedom of expression is close to the concept of *soft touch regulation*, an approach advocated by TV owners in the 1990s. All tech entrepreneurs believe that communication platforms constitute a positive alternative to the ideologically-loaded mass media that serve national politics. Which interests are served by the platforms is not difficult to imagine: The interests of their owners, who cannot be surveilled by anyone – either the nation-state or a supranational community such as the EU. And this is precisely why media and information literacy is crucial. We have to know how information and communication platforms operate, we have to know how an algorithm operates and we have to know who controls communication. Being media and information literate is not only a responsibility of all of us individually but above all a responsibility of public policy.

4.   Information cult

The term information has become unavoidable over the past twenty years both in academic and political talk of media and communication. We have thus talked about information society (whose arrival was being announced by everyone), information economy, the value of information, and information privacy. What is important for our analysis is that the term information is used as a catch-all: from mathematic formulas, weather forecasts and road conditions to a journalistic text. The term was taken over by the humanities from cybernetics and initially referred not only to human communication but also the communication of humans with machines and of machines with machines. Norbert Wiener's work inspired the first communication theories whose main goal was to establish how communication helped a system operate: "Information is a name for the content of what is exchanged with the outer world as we adjust to it, and make our adjustment felt upon it" (Wiener 1989, 17). Wiener was interested

in the complicated physiological control mechanisms that maintain the sensitive state of homeostasis in the body. These physiological mechanisms were for him a sort of information system operating on the principle of feedback. In the 1960s and 1970s, cybernetics became very interesting for information science students, scientists developing artificial intelligence and the pioneers of cybernetic culture who saw in "the information machine" a revolutionary opportunity to establish homeostatic balance in society through feedback. However, Wiener was not only a mathematician and a pioneer of "cybernetic management". He was also the first to warn of potential problems this entails for society. He was against any sort of information cult that started spreading around the world like a virus. He was concerned by the possibility of artificial intelligence and automation being taken over by "non-homeostatic" factors that in the past took over control of the technological achievements of the industrial revolution: capital, competition, the dictatorship of competition, and greed. He strongly opposed the view that the free market was homeostatic by nature and asserted that a conflict of private interests could in no way lead to the emergence of a wonderfully balanced world. He compared capitalism to the board game Monopoly, in which at the end of the game only one player always wins while all the others lose. According to Wiener, a major role in creating or upsetting "social homeostasis" is played by the mass media, to which all the rules of non-homeostatic capitalism apply.

Capitalist information systems are not neutral, says Wiener in the last chapter of his book *Cybernetics* (1965). He explains that newspapers do not sell without a certain dose of religion, pseudoscience and pornography. Radio programmes are influenced by listener ratings, consumption analysis and opinion polls through which a media owner wants to learn to which extent the audience of his media outlet is susceptible to the lies and manipulations with the help of which a certain product or service is sold. This is why we cannot easily establish in the media which piece of information is the right one even though it is true because a large number of others (equally important pieces of information) have been left out or intentionally not mentioned. If we wish to understand who is upsetting the homeostasis in society, we first need to ask ourselves who controls the means through which society communicates. It is precisely these communication systems that are subject to certain restrictions that prevent homeostasis. The first restriction has to do with the system's aspiration to make profit: non-profit media or media outlets that do not make sufficient profit are replaced by more profitable ones. The second restriction has to do with the ownership over means of communication in a society. The owners of the means are a small group that hold wealth in their hands and do not want this system to ever change. The third restriction has to do with the wish of the owners of means of communication to have political power. As long as the media are left to

the mercy of this game of power and money, it is difficult to expect them to operate in the public interest. As we can see, Wiener's view of "information society" was far from today's depoliticised view of information technology. It is hence understandable that all of his warnings regarding the destructive power of information technology have disappeared from public discourse.

Technological determinism ("information society will benefit everyone") has never been anchored either in theory or in practice. The official doctrine of the new information economy (digital economy, creative industries) is primarily based on the idea of technology allowing for global mobility of capital and services (but not of people), without any restrictions imposed by nation-states, without regulation and without taxes. History teaches us the valuable lesson that today's undemocratic use of information and communication technologies is not the only one possible. Wiener knew this very well. In *Cybernetics and Society*, he wrote: "Woe to us if we let it [machine] decide our conduct, unless we have previously examined the laws of its action, and know fully that its conduct will be carried out on principles acceptable to us! [...] For the man who is not aware of this, to throw the problem of his responsibility on the machine, whether it can learn or not, is to cast his responsibility to the winds, and to find it coming back seated on the whirlwind" (Wiener 1989, 185).

Workers had to resort to organised struggle in order to force politicians not to think about workers' rights only in the context of increasing production efficiency but also to take into account the unacceptability of exploitation and the right to fair remuneration and safe working conditions. Members of the social groups classified as "not normal" by bureaucratic standards had to fight for their political and human rights over decades or centuries of struggle for equality. Environmental pollution had for a long time been an inevitable corollary of industrialisation before the issue was raised by organised groups of environmental activists advocating the view that protection of nature is a matter for us all, for our common living space, and not the private interest of factory owners. The same applies to media literacy. Claiming the right to credible media that serve the public and allow everyone to have access to information of public importance is a fundamental communication right the respect of which should be ensured by the state through accepting that freedom of expression is the right of everyone and not only of those who own the means of communication.

5. Media and information literacy – responsibility of the state

For the purposes of our research, we have defined media and information literacy as "cognitive, technical and social skills and abilities of citizens to access, critically evaluate, use and contribute information and media content through traditional and digital information and media platforms and technologies, with an understanding of how these platforms and technologies operate; how, when using them, to manage their own rights and respect those of others; how to identify and avoid harmful content and services in order to use information, media content and platforms purposefully with the aim of meeting their communication needs and interests as individuals and as members of their communities and of exercising active and responsible participation in the traditional and digital spheres and in democratic processes". In our opinion, this definition attempts to synthesise all the key elements and fully covers the objectives of media education. Researchers from the five countries included in the analysis (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia) have analysed the media literacy situation in different ways and by focusing on different topics: from key stakeholders, civil society initiatives, and the role of public media, to student and teacher attitudes in the context of effectiveness of the current media literacy models in education. It is clear that none of the countries has a systematic long-term policy in this field, and often the momentum for introducing this content in the education system or for implementing research projects comes from international institutions and donors. Despite lip service paid to media literacy, there is no clear vision on why it is necessary, even less on how to check if actual attempts at literacy really work. In most cases, the responsibility for making citizens media literate is assigned to the education system, civil society and media regulators, and the active involvement of the media themselves in this process is rare.

Given the state of the media and the development of new forms of communication on platforms, media and information literacy is one of the key elements of media policy. The European documents and policies in this area leave it up to nation-states to develop their own effective models of media literacy. In some countries, an important role in this field is being played by the public media; in others, this is the domain of independent regulators; while

most countries have included this content in the formal education of pupils and students. However, media and information literacy must become a system for making all citizens literate and must become part of the general literacy whose objective is to have literate citizens.

At a time when the media space has become a vast network of different sources of information, the most important thing for each of us is to develop an ability to choose information that is credible and true and that helps us understand the problems that affect our understanding of the world. In this cacophony of content, the media have become but one source of information, for many not even the most important one. For a long time now, instead of serious reforms and systemic measures aimed at restoring people's confidence in the media and the institutions, the EU media policy has been offering media literacy as a measure to mitigate problems caused by the irresponsible work of the media and communication platforms. If people wish to know which media outlet deserves their confidence (and which one does not), they have to become media literate. Instead of requiring the media to respect journalistic professional rules and punish a lack of professionalism, making sure he/she uses professional media content has become a responsibility of the media consumer, who has almost no influence over the media policy itself or the operation of the media. The problem lies in us not knowing even how to determine who is media literate and who is illiterate (and in the belief that if you are illiterate this is your problem) and not knowing if the media literacy programmes that are currently being implemented really produce literate individuals. In the case of general literacy, we know exactly who is literate, who is illiterate and who is what we call functionally illiterate. For literate persons, we assume that they can read and write, that they are able to understand a text critically and that they understand what they have read. This is ensured by the entire education system with its numerous mechanisms of checking an individual's level of literacy. Of course, bad education systems, bad schools, bad teachers, bad programmes and students with no learning habits do exist. But the overall system has possibilities to rectify this. In the case of media literacy, no one assumes responsibility for most of the population being media and information illiterate. The media industry that produces content and is part of the problem does not assume any responsibility. The belief that we have to know technology in order to be literate is completely wrong. One does not have to know how a book is printed in order to enjoy reading. It is editors, publishing houses, reviewers, and public libraries that take care of the content of books. Imagine if they did not exist. Who would help us choose a good book? Anonymous writers writing reviews in online bookstores? The algorithms that determine the sequence of information in browsers? The media illiterate have no clear criteria based on which they could distinguish between true and fake information on the web. And not only this. The media illiterate can further spread the information they themselves choose (which is, let's say, fake) on the

networks. It is naïve to believe that we can solve this problem by making as many people as possible media literate. The entire media system has to become "literate". The concept of media policy as a public policy is not ideologically neutral. Media literacy cannot be a support for the system. Essentially, media literacy teaches people to critically understand how the media industry and communication platforms work. This is why we shall, referring to authors who discuss critical media pedagogy, point the direction in which the overall literacy system needs to develop.

The theoretical approach developed by Iris Marion Young in her discussion of multiculturalism points in the possible direction of development of critical (radical) media and information literacy. According to Young, what we refer to as participatory democracy has become a paradoxical democracy because in it the voices of underprivileged groups have been silenced while only the privileged can have social power. She puts forward a demand for a broader understanding of politics and for overcoming the system in which every public policy gets depoliticised. The processes of democratic acceptance of decisions are also an important element of and condition for social justice (Young 2005, 17). Recognising differences and encouraging different social groups to autonomously organise themselves and fully cooperate in public life must be the foundations of a democratic policy (Young 2005, 222). Young speaks of a heterogenous public that encourages social groups to self-organise and get involved and be represented in decision-making, even if this comes at the price of conflict occurring in public debate. A heterogenous public is a public in which participants discuss problems and accept decisions according to the principles of justice. Any public policy also needs to take into account the views of those who are systematically excluded from public debate (Young 2005, 231). The model of a heterogenous public is the exact opposite of a monolithic public, which is inseparable from the operation of the media. The media inform and form their audiences. They determine who speaks and who is spoken about and define which worldview is acceptable and which not.

The media are an important and often misunderstood source of critical pedagogy. They teach us how to behave, what (and about what) to think, what to feel, what to believe, what to be afraid of and what to want – that is, they also teach us about all the things that we must not do. The media are a sort of informal "education system" (social curriculum) which teaches us how to be a man or a woman, how to dress, what image of ourselves to project in public, how to spend, how to respond to members of other and different social groups, how to be popular and successful and how to avoid failure, how to adapt to social norms and values, to the practices and requirements of institutions. Media spectacles show who has power in a society and who does not. They show who is allowed to use force and violence and who is not. The media legitimise the position of those who have power and expose the powerlessness of those who do not have it (Kellner 2003, 11).

Critical pedagogy (just like critical media pedagogy) requires the pedagogues to develop concepts of critical citizenship, to develop a new vocabulary, to be aware of their own cultural and political location (Giroux 1996, 77). Whether the media are "allies" or "opponents" in this is the key question asked by critical media pedagogy, above all in the works of Douglas Kellner (1995, 2003). We operate on the assumption that reflecting on media power cannot be only the right (or duty) of citizens but must primarily be the duty of the media themselves. Similarly, media pedagogy itself must reflect on its own position of power in the field we refer to as "media learning".

Acquiring media literacy knowledge and skills is therefore, according to Kellner, an important way of mastering the abundance supplied by the information environment. Learning how to read and write, how to think critically and resist the media's socio-cultural manipulations helps people become sovereign in the consumption of media culture (Kellner 2003, 9-10). Acquiring power in the sphere of media consumption, however, does in no way affect the balance of power within the media system. Being aware of media manipulations and of the limitations of what the media have to offer does not change the established relations of power in the field of communication. The "critical" media consumer is still a consumer and not a producer of media content. His/her power, however great it may be, cannot match the power of the media themselves. And in the case of social media, the ability to make a critical selection of credible content and responsibility in public communication are key elements of literacy.

Critical media and information literacy must sensitise people to discovering ways in which relations of power and domination are encoded in media texts and prevailing media practices. We would like to warn here once again that learning about and identifying the media reproduction of balances of power and domination in and of itself does not lead to overcoming and changing them. Media and information literacy is not only identification of different forms of media practices or manipulations but rather a tool for actively changing them and for creating a field of public communication in which the principles of pluralism, integrity, credibility and respect for the public interest are respected and developed.

To paraphrase Kellner, who speaks of cultural studies, media and information literacy is not an academic fad but can (and must) become a way to fight for a better society (Kellner 2003, 19). Media and information literacy must explain the media from different perspectives: a) the perspective of production and political economy, b) the perspective of analysis of media texts, c) the perspective of reception and use of media texts, whereby the term media text applies to all types of media products (Kellner 2003, 12). David Buckingham, too, in his book *Media Education* (2003, 54-69) presents a potential approach to using critical media pedagogy that includes four levels of analysis: the level of media production; the level of using a certain type of media "language"; the level of media representation; and

the level of audience analysis. As we can see, these dimensions are also included in our definition of media and information literacy.

Critical media pedagogy does not consist only of making pupils and students media literate by teaching them how to read, analyse and decode media texts, how to use ICT as a tool for expression and production of their own texts; critical media pedagogy is all of this and more. This "more" refers to learning how to form a critical attitude towards media products and their interpretations and how to use the media as a means of expression and social activism (Kellner 2003, 551). Critical media pedagogy and activism require a new role and function for intellectuals, warns Kellner, especially now that ICT is creating new spaces of political conflict and interventions.

A democratic media policy seeks to have ICT develop in the service of people, in order to inform and educate individuals, and not (primarily) to protect the interests of media owners. The future of democracy largely depends on who will control the media and communication platforms, what possibilities the public will have to access them, how responsibility and credibility of the media, their financing and their regulation in the public interest will be established. Hence the crucial importance not only of citizen activism (although it is very important) but also of an active policy of the state, which should "give back" to the people the fundamental principles of freedom of expression. This is why an activist and an analytical approach are in a way interwoven in the notion of media and information literacy. Attempts to clearly define media and information literacy as an analytical tool used to understand the operation of the media industry largely focus on shaping an activist attitude of individuals vis-à-vis media consumption.

Of course, this is an open-ended concept and can be discussed primarily on a descriptive level – through comparisons of different (mostly already existing) practices. The main purpose of our research was to map the field of analysis. We have shown that some good practices and good attempts to translate an idea into a concrete public policy can be found in each of the countries. And it is exactly this which is important for further work. Fragmented attempts, mostly by individual activists and civil society, should be turned into a coherent public policy with clear objectives, clear stakeholders and clear performance indicators.

The worst that can happen is for media and information literacy to become a sort of Trojan horse of liberal policy that relativises the rights of people by reducing them to the possibility to choose between different identity forms of media consumption. In this relativist view, critical understanding of, and a media-literate attitude vis-à-vis, the media and media content is but one possibility we choose as citizens. And what is the other possible choice? Media illiteracy and being doomed to non-critical acceptance of media manipulations? Can we allow this to be a matter of choice? This is a policy that in an unacceptable way does not assume responsibility for something that should

be a fundamental right of citizens to be ensured and exercised. Today's situation of radical closing-off inside filter bubbles is not far from that. The argument of freedom of expression is used today to defend different forms of unacceptable discrimination against individuals and groups who have no communication power (e.g., refugees). The answer offered to the inundation of disinformation and manipulations is the concept of a literate media consumer who has to find his/her own way and properly distinguish between credible information and lies. People find a large amount of information on platforms that current legislation does not define as media to begin with. Personal data has become a currency used by large telecom enterprises in exchange for access to platforms that they own. Media pluralism has been reduced to an unlimited possibility to choose one and the same thing. Media monocultures have drastic consequences for social media. Closing oneself off inside filter bubbles creates a communication space in which like-minded people communicate among themselves and get more radicalised. We have reached the point where as participants in communication we cannot even agree on what the facts are. Relativisation of the truth, relativisation of citizen rights and finally relativisation of democracy might have devastating consequences for the future of all of us. Media and information literacy is not a magic formula that can solve all the accumulated problems. But it is certainly the first step towards us admitting that we have a problem and that it needs to be solved. Accepting total cultural relativism, as Edward O. Wilson says, does not allow us to seek an answer to the question of what holds human society together. If the fundamental ethical standards of a society are culturally conditioned and if cultures are endlessly different and equal, on what basis can we then reject theocratic regimes, slavery, torture or child labour (Wilson 1999, 201)? Science is not simply one worldview nor just one of the intellectual subcultures available to us, says Wilson.

The idea that it is possible to have a rational public debate in conditions of inequality in terms of communication power is, of course, an academic challenge and difficult to bring about as a media/communication practice. To communicate means to seek to reach agreement regarding the fundamental questions that bind society together (*communis*) and regarding their interpretations. This means constant negotiation and respect for the interlocutor's arguments. The bulk of today's communication is not based on this. Media communication is based on forming as large an audience as possible and selling that audience on the advertising market. For the media, all audiences are equally important if they bring money. The media are not a space of open public communication (the idea on which the liberal concept of the public sphere is based) but a monolithic market space in which information and media production and consumption are based on the laws of the market. So far, the idea of critical media pedagogy has remained "half way". Namely, the media cannot be changed on the consumption but on the production side. And this

is where we see the most important critical and emancipatory potential of media and information literacy: to achieve that citizens have the ability to come out with the radical demand that media and communication platforms work in the public interest (Sen 2006; Nussbaum 2006).

6.   On this regional research

The regional research, intended for mapping and better understanding the situation and development of media and information literacy in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, was conducted between April and October 2018. The context of our research was provided by frequent references to media and information literacy in many of the current documents of European institutions and organisations, which suggested media and information literacy as the answer to various accumulated problems and shortcomings in media policies and media practices in both individual states and in Europe as a whole.[3]

The conceptual framework, as well as the agenda and timeline for the activities and strategic approach to media and information literacy in our region, has mostly been shaped by international organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, the European Union, the Council of Europe, and OSCE. They work with governments and NGOs and encourage transfer of knowledge, and also often act as donors for activities in this field. The negotiations and preparations for EU membership set the political framework and influence the way media literacy is dealt with in the countries of the region by means of the transposition of the EU directive on audiovisual media services and the requirements set out in this legislative act and other EU documents transposed into national legislation. International players mobilise local stakeholders in the region and offer significant support, in particular for the protection of children on the Internet.

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3   One such reference to media and information literacy is to be found, for instance, in a report by a group of experts nominated by the European Commission and tasked to produce an analysis and propose media policy measures to fight "fake news and disinformation on the Internet". The report *A Multi-dimensional Approach to Disinformation* was published in March 2018. At the same time, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted *Recommendation to Member States on Media Pluralism and Transparency* (Council of Europe 2018), which includes a list of measures in the field of media literacy and education to be taken by states in order to put in place media pluralism and transparency.

Our research was carried out at a time when the earlier concept of media literacy had expanded to include, with increasing frequency, information literacy, and sometimes even notions such as digital literacy and data literacy. This is why the first step in our research was agreeing on the definition of media and information literacy that we applied later in the research and that served as a basis for other steps in the research. This was followed by a review of the relevant literature, past analyses and legislative and strategic documents concerning media and information literacy in each of the five states. The main elements of the first part of the research were mapping the main stakeholders and main initiatives, projects and actions advancing media and information literacy in the five countries covered by the research.

In order to ensure ease of reference and an even distribution of stakeholders, we created 11 categories. These consist of state bodies and institutions making policy and regulating the field of promotion and development of media and information literacy; institutions and stakeholders in the system of formal education; institutions and organisations providing training of trainers in the field of media and information literacy; civil society organisations; websites, platforms and portals intended for the promotion of media and information literacy; media industry stakeholders (private, public and non-profit media, traditional and digital media); film and gaming industry stakeholders; research and academic institutions and communities; networks of a large number of stakeholders, created with a view to the promotion of media and information literacy; and libraries.

Similarly, we divided the main projects, initiatives and actions in the field of media and information literacy into several categories. In the process, we relied on the methodological approach adopted in the mapping of actions to promote media and information literacy in the 28 EU member states, carried out by the Council of Europe's Audiovisual Observatory in 2016. We partially adapted the approach creating five categories of skills and competences that are contributed to or encouraged by a particular identified action or project. Those are the following five skills and competences: the skill of searching for and using information, media content and services through traditional and digital media and information platforms and technologies; the skill of creating, producing and contributing media content and information in different formats and wisely; the skill of critical thinking, evaluation and understanding of media and information; awareness and engagement regarding the protection of rights, freedoms and equality; and the competence of participation and interaction. We recorded in detail the information on the most important actions and initiatives promoting and developing media and information literacy: the skill encouraged; sector (or stakeholder category) in which it is implemented and lead institution or organisation; target group; time period; financing; and reason for including a particular action among the most important ones.

We mapped 58 most important actions and initiatives promoting and developing media and information literacy in five countries: nine in Albania, 14 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 12 in Macedonia, seven in Montenegro, and 11 in Serbia; and five at regional level, i.e., actions implemented in several countries or involving stakeholders from several countries in the region.

We have found that the most active stakeholder in these flagship projects, initiatives and actions in the field of promotion and development of media and information literacy is civil society: most of those leading and participating in the activities come from this sector. Civil society is followed by the authorities/state bodies and institutions of formal education, stakeholders from the academic and research community, and websites, platforms and portals focusing on different elements of media and information literacy. Somewhat less active are stakeholders from the media and film industries and the ICT industry, as well as libraries. The national library features as an important player in Montenegro, less so in Albania and Serbia, where it is rather school libraries that get involved in civil society projects and explore initiatives to transform themselves into school infotheques and media education facilities.

The bulk of the 58 initiatives, projects and actions that we have singled out was intended for pupils and students, notably high school students. Most of the initiatives and actions aimed at developing the skill of searching for and using information, media content and services; followed by the skill of critical thinking, evaluation and understanding of media and information; and the competence of participation and interaction. Less numerous are actions and initiatives developing the skills of creating, producing and publishing media content and information.

In each individual country, we also identified, ranked and described in detail the five most important actions and initiatives in the field of promotion and development of media and information literacy, including the main activities, budget, and (expected) outcomes.

Table 1: Main initiatives in MIL promotion and development in five countries, as assessed by researchers

	1	2
Albania	MIP elements in school curriculum	Activities of the regulator - Agency for Audiovisual Media – public debates, work with universities
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Project "Strengthening media literacy in Republika Srpska", organised by the RS Ministry of Transport and Communications	Drafting of MIL strategy by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of B-H
Macedonia	Media literacy network linking close to 40 stakeholders, under the auspices of the regulator (Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services)	Makedox – travelling cinema, local youth film clubs, documentary film handbooks and workshops for teachers and students
Montenegro	Activities of the regulator (Agency for Electronic Media), campaign and survey	Activities of the National Library in study development, teacher training and translation of a MIL publication
Serbia	Creative Drive project, with seminars for teachers and librarians, summer camps, festival organised by the Novi Sad School of Journalism	School of Media Literacy for high school and university students organised by the Margin Centre

The actions that we identified at regional level are for the most part short-term in character and depend on funding by international partners such as UNESCO and the European Commission. One such initiative is the Coalition of Information and Media Users in Southeast Europe (CIMUSE), which over a period of three years, in 2016-18, fostered public debate and consultation on strategies to develop media and information literacy in countries of the region and encouraged citizens to follow media critically and lodge complaints to report disputed practices. The project was implemented by the regional network of media centres and institutes SEENPM. At regional level, in recent years there

3	4	5
MIL research, debates and advocacy actions by the Albanian Media Institute	Safer Internet initiative	Faktoje, fact-checking website
Project "Building Trust in the Media in SEE Countries and Turkey", led by the Institute for Social Research	Raskrinkavanje, website for fact-checking and critical analysis of media content	Activities of the regulator, the Communications Regulatory Agency, studies, debates, campaigns, guidelines
Vistinomer, fact-checking website	Medium, supplement in Nova Makedonija daily produced by high school students; Medium website; media camp and media labs in schools	Campaign "Dr. Dragan - ekspert manipulator", organised by the Macedonian Media Institute, with video and audio clips on how to identify media manipulations, propaganda and disinformation
Follow-up activities by the National Library – drafting national MIL strategy and teacher and librarian workshops	Introducing Media Literacy as an elective subject in formal education	Teacher training for Media Literacy as an elective subject
Introducing Language, Media and Culture as an elective subject in grammar schools (starting from school year 2018/2019)	Activities of the Culture and Information Ministry in the coordination of main stakeholders aimed at adopting a strategic approach and legal arrangements based on good practices in MIL promotion	EU Delegation programme supporting media reforms, including support to the Ministry for Culture and Information in drafting and action plan for MIL promotion and to public broadcasters in producing youth media content

has been networking among stakeholders that combine their knowledge in the field of digital media and technologies with efforts to strengthen democracy, civic awareness and participation. One such long-term initiative is the annual conference POINT, held in Sarajevo in 2018 for the seventh time.The second part of our regional research included smaller thematic and empirical research actions in each of the countries on different topics that needed to be additionally examined in order to better understand the situation and encourage strategic and practical actions to develop media and information literacy. In Montenegro and Serbia, the researchers focused on the education system

and looked at student and teacher attitudes towards introducing and teaching Media Literacy as an elective subject in grammar schools. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we had a thematic research analysing the actions of the civil sector in developing media and information literacy. In Macedonia, the focus was on the public broadcaster's obligation under the law to produce and air programmes promoting media literacy, as well as on presenting the situation on the ground and comparing it to the activities of the public broadcasters in two European countries (the United Kingdom and Belgium). In Albania, an analysis was carried out of the activities of different public-sector bodies and institutions aimed at promoting and developing media literacy.

7.   Policy work and activities of state authorities

Media and information literacy is not explicitly, transparently or continuously included as a goal in policy documents, public policies or legislation in the countries of the region that were subject to our analysis. However, some aspects of media and information literacy are mentioned in strategic documents and legislative acts concerning media, information society and development of education. In Macedonia and Albania, strategic documents and public policies in the field of education and information society stress the goal of developing digital information infrastructure and technical skills to allow for the use of ICT in the education process and for access to the information and services of the public administration and the commercial sector. In Serbia, media and information literacy also feature in public information and education strategies, while the Macedonian law on audiovisual media services of 2013 introduces the obligation of the regulator (the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services) to promote media literacy and of the public broadcaster, MRT, to air programmes that promote media literacy. However, the strategic goals and legal obligations have not been fully met.

What we identified were current positive developments and direct incentives to state authorities in almost all the countries subject to our analysis to set about adopting a national strategy for the development of media and information literacy. These activities involve and link up state authorities and public institutions from several

sectors (e.g., culture and media, information society, education), as well as stakeholders from civil society, libraries, academies, and the like. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the development of a strategy was taken over by the Ministry of Civil Affairs drawing inspiration from the regional project "Building Trust in the Media" and the systematic work of the Institute for Social Research. In Montenegro, the National Library drafted a strategy for the development of media and information literacy and the Ministry of Culture is expected to get involved. In Serbia, the Ministry of Culture, through national consultations and a working group, coordinates and encourages a strategic approach and proposals of legal arrangements based on good practices in the promotion and development of media and information literacy. These initiatives and actions might result in the adoption of state-level strategies for the development of media and information literacy and of legal arrangements and measures – but they might also dry out due to lacking political support and efforts by the decision-makers in state bodies. The enthusiasm of some civil servants who sometimes without any dedicated funds link up public institutions in activities promoting media literacy, as is the case with the project created on the initiative of staff members of the Republika Srpska Ministry of Transport and Communications in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is an important proof that an awareness exists that efforts are necessary and advances possible. However, systematic and long-term work requires that such individual and isolated efforts become a state policy, incorporated in laws and institutions.

Our research has shown that regulators of electronic media or audiovisual media services, such as the regulatory agencies in Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, and partly also in Albania, can assume an important role not only in the analysis and promotion of media and information literacy but also in the coordination of different stakeholders for the sake of comprehensive and harmonised actions in this field. This can be seen in the case of the Macedonian regulator, which serves as an example in that country but also in the entire region of what a regulator can do in the promotion of media and information literacy if the law prescribes it and the regulator is allowed to work in this field freely and professionally. In addition to working to raise awareness and analyse the state of media literacy, the agency for audio and audiovisual media in that country launched and coordinates a network of close to 40 stakeholders – institutions and organisations active in the field of media and information literacy in Macedonia.

The Council of Europe's Recommendation on Media Pluralism, adopted by the organisation's Committee of Ministers in March 2018, encourages states to develop a coordinated media literacy policy and make it operational through action plans while at the same time securing funds and other necessary elements. One of the main strategic approaches recommended to states is the creation and coordination of a network of stakeholders dealing with

media literacy and exchanging good practices. The Council of Europe also recommends that media literacy classes be introduced in the education system at all levels and as part of life-long learning, and that regular teacher training be organised and appropriate teaching aids developed (Council of Europe 2018).

8.   Education system

The education system has been identified as one of the most important pillars of a strategic approach to comprehensive, long-term and mass development of media and information literacy in the countries of the region not only in documents produced by international organisations but also in recommendations resulting from academic research and from analyses carried out by civil society organisations in the region. This approach is all the more important in light of the contribution of media and information literacy to the strengthening of democratic mechanisms and active citizenship. Civil society organisations in several countries of the region recognised this strategic role and potential of the education system at the beginning of this decade (in 2010 and 2011), when for example the Macedonian Media Institute and the Albanian Media Institute established cooperation with the state authorities responsible for the education system in Macedonia and Albania, encouraging them to introduce media literacy as a subject or media literacy content in schools. The process included the development of curricula, organisation of teacher trainings (in Macedonia, around 1,000 teachers were trained in this way), and preparation of textbooks. However, both of these initiatives fell through due to changeable and unstable structures and political support for such efforts in state bodies.

Almost ten years later, media literacy does not feature as a subject in schools in these two countries, and only some aspects of media and information literacy are scattered across several other subjects (such as Mother Tongue and Civic Education). At the same time, subjects focusing on the technical skills of using ICT have been incorporated in the education system, but schools are underequipped and teachers undertrained for their application, which prevents schools from playing a comprehensive role in developing digital literacy with students.

On the other hand, in Montenegro the subject of media literacy was introduced as a one-year elective subject in the second or third grade of grammar school in 2008 as a result of cooperation between civil society, international

organisations and state institutions in the framework of the education reform that was being carried out at the time and as part of the efforts to decentralise and improve the education system. However, Montenegro is the only country in the region where such a subject designated explicitly for media literacy in schools is to be found, albeit with limited reach. Another exception is Slovenia, where for more than two decades now students in the three senior grades of primary school have the option to attend classes in the elective subject of Media Education.

A step towards integrating a media literacy subject in the education system has been made in Serbia, where the elective subject of Language, Media and Culture was introduced in grammar schools in the school year 2018/2019.

The empirical research we conducted in Serbia and Montenegro as part our project through interviews, focus groups and student and teacher polls showed that the mere introduction of a subject is not sufficient for this kind of school reform to succeed. Without appropriate preparation and good and continuous teacher training, and without good textbooks, access to equipment and teaching aids, the goals of introducing the subject cannot be achieved. In Montenegro, the number of students attending classes in media literacy as an elective subject dropped by half over a period of ten years. Of the 20 grammar schools in the country, 11 have introduced the subject so far but in the school year 2016/2017 it was taught in six schools, with 164 students attending the classes, and in 2017/2018 it was still taught only in four schools, with 60 students attending. What has been missing is consistency and building on the initial foundations, as well as a systematic approach to teacher training and selection, provision of technical support and equipment, production of textbooks to replace initial teaching materials, and potentially bringing visiting professionals to teach. Also, too little has been done to promote the subject itself in schools and in public as neither state institutions nor the media have shown interest in this.

In Serbia, our research revealed teachers' concern over the insufficient information and preparations for the introduction in grammar schools of Language, Media and Culture as a new elective subject. At the same time, they pointed out that it was teachers themselves that often constituted an obstacle for the success of school reforms because they are uninformed or uninterested. However, teachers believe it necessary to introduce teaching content and methods in order to foster media and information literacy of both teachers and students and thus make education more functional and also bridge the communication gap between teachers and students.

What the pupils and students who took part in our research expect from their teachers and schools is better communication, greater use of digital technologies, and openness and ability to critically analyse information and media content with them.

Different institutions and organisations in the countries of the region have for several years now been implementing seminars and workshops to train teachers to teach content with elements of media and information literacy. These are for the most part civil society organisations that carry out such activities with enthusiasm as part of short-term and sporadic projects funded by foreign donors. In our research, teachers in Montenegro and Serbia praised these seminars and confirmed that teachers showed more interest in training once they learned that the seminars were of good quality. Nevertheless, there is no systematic or long-term approach to training; nor is there any monitoring of quality. In Montenegro, the Education Institute, a state institution, started accrediting different teacher training seminars in media literacy only in 2015 and added them to the official catalogue of professional development programmes for teachers. Ten years after the introduction of the subject Media Literacy in secondary schools, the subject was introduced at university, in the academic year 2018/2019, for students of media studies and journalism at the Faculty of Political Science in Podgorica. In this way, a systematic approach to the development of media literacy is passed on to future journalists. The same kind of step forward was made at the universities in East Sarajevo and Banja Luka, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the subject Media Literacy was introduced at journalism departments starting in the academic year 2016/2017. It is precisely journalists, in addition to teachers, that are identified by studies on fighting disinformation as stakeholders who need to further develop media and information literacy awareness, knowledge and skills and who have the potential, with this developed knowledge, to contribute to the awareness and knowledge of a large number of citizens, and thus multiply the effect of their own media and information literacy (European Commission 2018, 25).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, media and information literacy skills have only partially been incorporated in the teaching of different subjects in primary and secondary schools. Just like in other countries with this kind of approach, the aspects of media literacy that develop the skills of critical thinking, understanding and analysis, and production of media content have been neglected in the school system. Initiatives aiming at the systematic integration of the concept of media and information literacy in school curricula and the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina encounter discouraging obstacles in the form of a complex administrative system and fragmented responsibilities of 14 ministries, but also a lack of funds and of interest on the part of decision-makers. Still, the enthusiasm of individuals, just like in other segments of the promotion of media and information literacy, does bring about small and isolated advances in the education system, such as the introduction of the subject of Media Literacy in the form-based teaching course at Tuzla's Faculty of Philosophy.

The question remains as to why even when in some countries of the region the obstacles are overcome and an agreement is reached on introducing a school subject that develops media and information literacy, this remains an elective subject and is limited only to grammar schools. Something that is thus finally recognised as an integral part of the school curriculum and that all research reports and strategic documents of relevant local and international organisations see as a precondition for critical and active participation in democratic and social processes is left to students' choice and to competition with other elective subjects, and limited only to schools attended by students with the ambition to continue their education at university. Students' results in functional and reading literacy (PISA tests) in most countries in the region are not encouraging and this is mentioned as an obstacle to the broader introduction of the subject of media literacy at all levels of education and in all types of schools. At the same time, one of the methodologies measuring media literacy takes precisely the poor PISA results in the countries of the region, in addition to poor indicators for media freedom, as a proof of a low level of media literacy, the lowest in Europe (Lessenski 2018).

9. Civil Society

Civil society organisations are pioneers when it comes to the promotion and development of media and information literacy in the countries of the region. These organisations were active in raising the awareness and ability of citizens, notably youth, to critically examine and get involved in the work of the media and digital platforms even in times when the concept of media and information literacy was not as well-elaborated as today. They were often the first to promote the concept in their countries and network with foreign experts and international organisations with the aim of transferring knowledge and encouraging state institutions and bodies to make systemic advances in the promotion of media and information literacy. These direct efforts have lasted for over ten years now. In most cases, they provide training and informal education of young people and their trainers (including seminars and workshops at local level), and organise professional events, awareness campaigns, critical analyses and researches, and publications.

A catalogue of all the civil society organisations in the region and the media and information literacy actions carried out by them would be extensive, as our mapping of leading stakeholders and initiatives already shows. But the large number of actions and stakeholders has not brought major advances: the stakeholders appear scattered, their actions mostly short-term; and they are overall dependent on foreign donations. The most frequent donors are the European Union and US government funds such as USAID and NED. Despite project-based funding, some civil society organisations are managing to maintain continuity in activities contributing to media literacy. Through their policies and funding mechanisms, as well as thematic priorities, international donors strongly influence the work and development of civil society in the region, including in this field. In addition to the awareness and ideas within civil society itself, it is the agenda of foreign donors that has contributed to civil society's efforts in the promotion of media and information literacy being dynamic, numerous and dominant.

The civil sector in the countries of the region often makes up for the passivity of state bodies and the slow introduction of systemic arrangements and measures to develop media and information literacy. Civil society organisations link up with academic institutions and researchers and contribute fundamental analyses and recommendations. In the civil sector, one can find accumulated knowledge and experience, including in the field of informal education, which should be used to complement the activities of the public sector. International players, especially the European Union, are more likely to be able to push the public sector to act and to have state-level strategies and systemic arrangements adopted, but the cooperation of the civil sector in these processes is absolutely necessary.

The problems of spreading of disinformation, manipulations and propaganda aimed at thwarting democratic mechanisms and potential in citizens' public communication and actions, and at instigating polarisation and radicalisation, have led to civil society organisations in the region making efforts to expose such practices, content and platforms. In almost all of the countries covered by our research, there are websites and teams actively working to expose disinformation, check facts, and publish analyses in order to raise awareness and improve citizens' media and information literacy. In Albania, this is *Faktoje*, in Macedonia *Vistinomer*, in Serbia *Istinomer* and *Tragač*, in Bosnia and Herzegovina *Raskrinkavanje*. Civil society organisations such as the Macedonian Media Institute and the Serbian Share Foundation use both video clips and documentary programmes in their Internet and TV campaigns seeking to warn and teach as many citizens as possible how to recognise and counter disinformation and manipulations in the media and on digital information and communication platforms.

Good practices are also to be found in the activities involving civil society organisations, state institutions and international organisations with the aim of protecting children on the Internet.

Notwithstanding the diverse activities of civil society in the promotion and development of media and information literacy, the sector faces a number of problems when it comes to achieving continuity, focus and stable quality of activities, as well as coordination among organisations in order to avoid duplication. What is missing is information and analysis as to where efforts are the most needed and how efficient the implemented activities are. There is insufficient knowledge when it comes to undertaking well-elaborated and targeted advocacy actions to influence those who are in power and make decisions in institutions and state bodies. An advocacy project of civil society organisations promoting media and information literacy could aim at influencing state bodies to replace the current non-transparent and corrupt funding of media by public funds with a transparent state mechanism to fund media pluralism, which would also include regular funding of civil society projects developing media and information literacy.

10. Media, film and ICT industries

The media are not a particularly active player in the promotion of media and information literacy in the countries of the region. Even when they do show interest, this happens most often through media associations and self-regulatory bodies. The Press Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina (which covers both print and online media) is one such example of long-established good practice of working to involve citizens in complaint procedures while at the same time raising awareness of ethical standards in the media and of citizens' rights through the promotion of the self-regulatory mechanism, dedicated radio shows, events and transparent work. A similar emancipatory role is played by the Serbian Press Council and the Macedonian Council for Media Ethics. The valuable work of self-regulatory bodies consists of explaining to citizens how the media work and what aspects of their work are disputable from an ethical point of view, and of explaining to the media how citizens perceive their work and what they find disputable. This constant dialogue, explanations and discussion represent an important element in the spectrum of activities and players contributing to media literacy among citizens, but also among members of the media community itself.

Long-established good practices identified in the media industry in the countries of the region include the activities of the Serbian Media Coalition and Media Association in campaigns and educational projects, intended to promote

better understanding of the media and the development of media literacy skills among citizens, in particular among primary school students.

In Macedonia, there are several examples of excellent long-standing cooperation between civil society, academic institutions and the media. The School of Journalism and Public Relations as an important player in informal education is the hub of this networking and organising work. Thus, for example, since 2014 it has organised Media Day, on which secondary school students visit media outlets and see for themselves how media content is produced. In cooperation with the School of Journalism and Public Relations, since 2011 the *Nova Makedonija* daily has regularly published the supplement *Medium* with articles written by secondary school students.

On the other hand, public broadcasters in the countries of the region are doing almost nothing in terms of promoting media and information literacy although working to empower and educate citizens should be an integral part of their mission. In Macedonia, since 2013 the public broadcaster, MRT, has had an obligation under the law to produce such content but advances are very slow to happen and special content is being introduced only gradually, in cooperation with civil society. In Albania, the public broadcaster, RTSH, has a weekly morning programme in which a media studies professor speaks of media and information technologies, thus contributing to the development of media and information literacy skills among citizens.

In the film sector, we can only single out the activities of MakeDox in Macedonia, where since 2010 a travelling cinema has brought documentaries to rural regions, at the same time working on education and offering a curriculum, handbook and training for secondary school teachers on introducing the skills of documentary film production and analysis in schools. One of their main activities is the above-mentioned Festival of Creative Documentary Films, MakeDox. In 2013 and 2015, in cooperation with similar organisations from other countries, they also organised a regional school of documentary film for young people from the region.

ICT companies in the countries of the region have for years been organising workshops teaching pupils and students programming and other skills. In this, they are also guided by the commercial interests of promoting their products and technologies. However, we have also identified a systemic effort in Mostar, where in 2018 the local telecom enterprise, HT Mostar, signed a contract on long-term cooperation with Mostar University, whereby it committed itself to provide, among other things, new technologies for university studies, cooperate in research projects, and offer students possibilities of study visits and scholarships.

11. Research on media and information literacy

Media and information literacy is the topic of many research projects and studies in the countries of the region. Some of these studies are comprehensive and take stock of and analyse all the relevant segments of media and information literacy in a given country, giving recommendations for public policies. Others deal with the introduction of dedicated subjects and content in schools or examine the media literacy indicators for children and parents or for citizens in general. These research projects have been carried out by researchers from civil society organisations and universities. Researches have also been carried out by electronic media regulators (for instance, in Macedonia and Montenegro). At regional level, our network of media institutes and centres in Southeast Europe, SEENPM, has already undertaken smaller-scale researches on media literacy issues (Londo et al. 2017). This topic also features in diploma, Master's and Ph.D. papers of students in the countries of the region. Research activities are sometimes duplicated or findings and conclusions repeated. These activities also often depend on foreign donors' projects and donations and, as a result, the thematic frameworks and focus are determined under this influence.

A common element of almost all the research reports is a call for the countries of the region to adopt national strategies and action plans for the development of media and information literacy as a matter of priority.

Despite the large number of analyses, there is no fully harmonised definition or understanding of the concept of media and information literacy – a problem also encountered by researchers outside of our region. What would be necessary is a detailed overview of the research agenda in each of the countries; taking stock of under-researched areas; creating conditions for good longitudinal research actions; permanent funds in the budgets of the regulators and national research agencies; and special budget items in media pluralism funds in order to ensure regular research and participation of researchers in international academic and professional debates. The European Commission, too, could contribute to this by involving researchers and experts from the countries of our region in thematic and strategic meetings, expert commissions and research in the field of media and information literacy.

12. Conclusion

To speak of a media crisis or a journalism crisis today is to speak above all of citizens losing trust in the work of the media. The crisis did not emerge overnight, like a natural disaster that could not be predicted. It was built in the work of the media virtually from the very beginning. The further away the media moved from their audiences and the closer they got to the political and economic centres of power, the more their work lost its integrity and credibility. The same happened in politics. Political expropriation and mental subjugation is a fundamental feature of our times, says Mastnak. The depolitisation of citizens is not the end of politics but rather their political defeat. That is a victory of politics without people and against people. Democracy as political representation of citizens has turned into a performance played by citizens without them being represented (Mastnak 2015, 148-149). The media play an important role in the piece.

If we wish to understand what kind of media system we are living in, we have to think. We have to know how to critically value not only media content available to us but also how to think of alternatives to the media system that produces the consequences discussed by Mastnak. The flood of disinformation; negation of facts and science; hate speech; sale of privacy; disappearance of serious political debate regarding the past, present or future; populism, which offers quick solutions to complex problems; the lack of trust in political institutions; these are all results of the destruction of democracy that has been going on for a long time now. *Time* magazine collectively named "the guardians of democracy" – journalists, men and women, who through their uncompromising work acted in public interest – its person of the year 2018. One of them, Jamal Khashoggi from Saudi Arabia, was murdered in such a way that his body will probably never be found. Two Reuters journalists, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who reported on the genocide against the Rohingya are in prison facing long sentences. The staff of the US newspaper Capital Gazette were targets of a hate murder by a person who did not agree with their reporting. Award-winning journalist Maria Ressa, who fights against extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, is facing constant pressure by the authorities over alleged tax evasion. There is no one to protect the guardians. More than ever, we need journalism that works in the public interest and journalists who will place their integrity and the public interest above private and particular interests of any group, and a critical public that will know how to support their work and become an active guardian of the media working in the public interest. Citizens who think critically are the strongest guardians of democracy.

Media and information literacy is not a magic wand that will resolve all the accumulated problems in the media sphere. But it is a first step on the long road of transforming the system and making citizens' information and communication needs an imperative for an active state policy in the public interest. Definition of the priorities, creation of broad alliances for a reform of the media system (at national and supranational level) and active defence of the right to credible information make up the political framework for these changes. Our earlier research on media integrity showed the outlines of these steps and they are also clearly presented in this research on the development of media and information literacy in the five countries of the region and in the recommendations of our researchers. Despite the fairly large number of activities and stakeholders dealing with and promoting media and information literacy in the countries of the region, and despite some advances in the state bodies towards the adoption of a national strategy for media and information literacy in several countries of the region, these are but sporadic steps with an uncertain outcome. Both successful and less successful steps towards a strategic approach and towards a realisation of how urgent it is to adopt one, clearly show that coordination and joint efforts of state authorities in education, media and information society are needed, as well as the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, above all civil society and public media, in designing public policies and in multi-layered but coordinated implementation of activities.

The examples of efforts made by electronic media regulators show that those state bodies have the potential to play a key role in the promotion of media and information literacy if such a role is assigned to them and facilitated and if they perform it in a serious and professional manner.

Professional and independent regulators can also, in line with the recommendations of international organisations, take over the role of coordinators of networks and coalitions of all the relevant stakeholders in the promotion and development of media and information literacy. There are many proofs of the exceptional benefit that can be derived from networking and collaborative activities, especially when strategic work and joint actions are undertaken in cooperation with state bodies, civil society, but also other players, including the media. The media and journalists should be further encouraged to assume a more active role in the promotion of media and information literacy, in particular public media and non-profit media as well as journalists' associations. The non-participation of media and journalists in the region in strategic measures and activities aimed at improving citizens' media and information literacy is a historical failure on their part. The narrow focus of their attention and energy on their own survival strategies and on fending off attacks on their survival and dignity is understandable, but their non-participation in activities to improve citizens' media literacy means that they are missing a historical moment and that they have not recognised the opportunity to reconnect with citizens and invest in their empowerment as active and critical citizens, guardians of democracy.

Within the media community, public media should be obliged by law to play a powerful and central role in the promotion of media and information literacy among citizens. They can do this through their own programming content, but also through their overall organisation and operation, through opening themselves up for citizens' visits; for practical courses for pupils and students; for complaints and public discussions; for transparency of operation and for pointing out to citizens that these media are accountable to them; as well as for cooperation with schools.

At the same time, it is indispensable to design mechanisms for the continuous training and professional development of journalists and other media staff in order to improve their own media and information literacy given the challenges resulting from new technologies and complex structures for the organised spreading of disinformation, which pose a threat to the survival and critical role of the media and journalists.

The system of formal education in any country is complex and slow to respond to reform but it has the necessary potential for mass empowerment and emancipation of citizens if media and information literacy classes are introduced and well implemented. Teachers are the most important link in this process and they can do much of the media literacy work with students. This is why teachers should be involved in the strategic planning of reforms and why investment in formal and informal teacher training should be generous and the quality standards of the training high. We live in times in which political and economic inequality has assumed such proportions that 26 rich individuals (including the owners of the most important communication platforms setting the tone in our communication world) have the same financial power as the four billion poorest citizens of the world taken together (Oxfam 2019). Vaidhyanathan sees the world of our communications as a world of monopoly, privilege, addiction and manipulations: "Amazon Echo, Google Home and Oculus Rift are currently just vanity products for the wealthiest among us. But the model is clear: the operating system of our lives would be about our bodies, our consciousness, our decisions. Attention would be optional. Power would be more concentrated and manipulation constant. That's a world with no patience for autonomy and no space for democracy. It would be a lazy, narcotic world" (Vaidhyanathan 2018, 105).

The profit and non-profit community of producers and digital media and technology specialists must be allies in the policies and practices aimed at developing media and information literacy, and at raising the awareness and improving the skills of citizens. Their responsibility and efforts are of great importance. Both big and small ideas and actions are important; we need the efforts of both global and local players, as well as organisations and individuals who know and understand the digital world and can contribute to using its benefits for citizen emancipation and for progress, and not for the destruction of knowledge, cultural achievements and democracy.

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Role of Public Institutions in Media and Information Literacy Development in Albania

Ilda Londo

1. Introduction

Media and information literacy in Albania is a relatively new and unexplored concept in its formal sense, both in terms of public debate and of policies discussed and applied to develop initiatives in this field. So far official policies tackle only limited aspects of media and information literacy (MIL) and the efforts to apply such policies have not always been consistent or successful. Civil society actors have been pioneers in this regard, even though their initiatives have not been long-term or particularly efficient either. The following sections provide an overview of the main initiatives in MIL from state, public, and private bodies and civil society organisations, analysing the main trends in the field of MIL that also shape the focus of this research report.

1.1. Official policies related to media and information literacy in Albania

Almost all references to media and information literacy in official documents, policies and strategies share two common features: they relate mainly to information rather than media literacy, and they address almost exclusively the need to build competencies in information literacy, while critical thinking on information and media content is neglected or missing altogether.

Key documents that detail government policies on information society, such as the *Digital Agenda Strategy (2015-2020)*, and its predecessor the *Inter-Sectoral Strategy of Information Society (2008-2013)*, focus on the need to introduce information and communications technology (ICT) as a subject in schools. Overall, the priorities identified for the years 2015-2020 in the *Digital Agenda Strategy* include the overall improvement of national ICT infrastructure, increasing high speed connection (at least 100 Mbps for 50% of households and 30 Mbps for the population), increasing the share of the population using the Internet from 50% in 2013 to 90% by the end of 2020, and broadband Internet

connections for all schools in the country.[1] More specifically on ICT in education, the Action Plan of the Strategy includes the digitalisation of libraries in pre-university education institutions, ICT training for teachers, developing an e-learning system, and continuing work with ICT in pre-university education.[2]

Official strategies in these documents briefly address the importance of educating the public on how to take advantage of information, but information is taken for granted as an opportunity and is not viewed as a potential subject of criticism and scrutiny. It seems that the main focus of policies with regard to information literacy has been influenced in particular by the ongoing digitalisation of both public and private services. In this respect, official documents have tended to favour educating and instructing citizens on e-government and e-society in general, equipping them with the technical skills on how to obtain, use, and spread information regarding these services.

Critically judging other aspects that come with digitalisation or the quality of information itself has not been part of official policies or strategies. This is a trend that pertains not only to digitalisation and new media but also to traditional media, in view of the lack of any policy on media literacy in both general and media-specific regulation.

1.1.1. ICT defines MIL policies in formal education

The basic legal framework for pre-university graduation in Albania is laid out in the Law no. 69/2012 "On pre-university education in the Republic of Albania". The main approach taken in legislation is that pre-university education is competency-based and includes digital competencies among the competencies that students must acquire, which can be seen as related to MIL skills. Digital skills are later defined and then implemented in the curricula, but the main principle is similar to the official strategies in the area of information, namely that it is important to have students capable of finding or creating content, while students that see and think critically about content does not seem to be a particular priority.

The same spirit is evident in other important documents of formal education such as the *Strategy of Development of Pre-University Education 2014-2020* and the *Curricula Framework and the Core Curricula*. With regard to digital competencies, these documents focus strongly on technology and ICT, which are one of the seven main learning areas defined in pre-university education curricula. As a result, ICT is a mandatory course for both public and private

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1   Council of Ministers, Ministry of Innovation and Public Administration, *Cross-cutting Strategy "Digital Agenda of Albania 2015-2020"* (Council of Ministers, Ministry of Innovation and Public Administration, 2015). http://www.akshi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Digital_Agenda_Strategy_2015_-_2020.pdf (Accessed 2 December 2018).

2   Ibid.

pre-university schools in the country. Even though the teaching of this subject is not always problem-free and training of teachers could be improved, the curricula recognise the importance of citizens possessing digital skills.

The critical part or deconstruction of media and information structures and practices, on the other hand, is not part of official policies and priorities. However, small sections of certain subjects do address limited aspects of critical thinking on media content, such as text, advertising, access to information, etc. This section remains marginal compared to the weight of ICT, though, and there is no clear or important vision in the official policies on education regarding critical thinking on media and information.

1.2. Civil society organisations: pioneers in media literacy

The main players to occasionally attempt to fill the void in MIL come mainly from civil society. These initiatives tend to be limited in time and scope, and lacking a long-term policy and vision, which would also require cooperation with other actors. Nonetheless, despite their limitations, they constitute the main serious efforts in terms of educating citizens on MIL to go beyond ICT.

For example, as part of a 2010 project, the Albanian Media Institute took the initiative of collecting and exchanging experiences with other countries in the region on media literacy initiatives and exploring potential ways of introducing them into the curricula. As a result, two textbooks were created, which could be adopted by the official curricula even in a pilot form, but for various reasons this has not happened.

Training on digital literacy for young people is among the most common initiatives of civil society organisations. These initiatives are usually short-term courses, while long periods of training similar to a diploma course are infrequent. Several organisations have engaged in such efforts, including the Albanian Media Institute, Media Aktive centre, and others. In addition, there have also been competitions calling on citizens to produce video or other media content on social issues, which is another form of media literacy. Recently, a fact-checking website was established as part of a bigger project on justice, which tackles the veracity of statements made by politicians.

1.3. Media authorities and professional media bodies: silent on media and information literacy

Overall, these efforts have been limited, addressing a particular group, and lacking a long-term effect. The lack of involvement of media actors is also part of the problem in the effective creation of MIL initiatives. Regulatory and self-regulatory bodies that could address the aspect of educating citizens on media and raising awareness on the need to critically view media content are weak or do not have media literacy as their main priority. The Complaints Council, which is part of the regulator, the Audiovisual Media Authority, has organised a few meetings on this topic, but so far they have included only professionals in the field.

The Council of Viewers and Listeners at the public broadcaster was recently established and it remains to be seen if it could play a role in this regard. Similarly, the Council of Ethics, an organisation established by media professionals with the aim of improving media ethics, has also a limited scope of work and does not have a long experience, even though in theory it could play a role in advancing MIL.

In general, the media have not shown any interest in educating citizens on media and information literacy, especially on the need for media scrutiny in a democratic society. The only positive effort in this regard is the introduction of a 30-minute section in the morning show of the public broadcaster as an interview with a journalism professor, focusing on discussing media conduct and critiquing media content.

1.4. Private companies and MIL: a further boost to ICT skills

Efforts of the private sector, such as IT companies, have also been rare. Microsoft sponsored a project for a massive open online course (MOOC) on coding practices and other ICT aspects in 2016, a pilot project in cooperation with the then-Ministry of Innovation, and the platform is still accessible online. The subjects offered in online classes and tutorials include English, mathematics, physics, and chemistry as general subjects, as well as coding and ICT as

professional subjects. Recently the ICTS lab was opened as part of the ICT Academy, aiming to teach ICT skills to children age 7-19.[3]

Again, overall efforts of the private industry in the field of MIL focus almost exclusively on ICT, while critical thinking on media and its conduct, on fake news and propaganda, while constantly present in public discourse, are not addressed seriously or consistently, or at all for that matter.

1.5.　Protecting versus educating

The concept of educating citizens in the ways that the media system works is relatively unexplored in Albania, apart from occasional public discussions initiated by media in extreme cases, usually involving debates on violation of ethics. Otherwise, there is almost no effort to encourage critical thinking on media, or initiatives that serve to guide citizens in their media consumption, providing them with the necessary tools, information, and keys on how to read and use media.

More often than not, in fact, guidance of citizens on media consists in protecting citizens from the media, rather than teaching them on how the media work. This trend is especially visible in the efforts of NGOs and public agencies focused on child protection. In fact, the initiatives aiming to offer a safer online environment for children are far more advanced than any initiative involving components of critical thinking of media and information literacy. Due to the pressing need for better protection of minors and its sensitivity, state actors, international organisations, and domestic actors have been more vocal and more active in addressing this issue. This is reflected in the existing legislation, in specific guidelines set by public authorities on child safety online and on privacy issues, as well as the more visible efforts and activities held by youth and child organisations in this respect.

Currently there is a coalition of several actors and organisations, including state and intra-state bodies, international organisations such as UN bodies, and local organisations focusing on child protection online, which have their own platform and website at www.isigurt.al. Similarly to other activities carried out by these organisations, the main concern is protecting children, rather than explaining to them how to use the media and information safely but

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3   Gerta Dervishi, "Tirana's New Innovation Center ICTS Lab Prepares Albanian Youngsters for 21st Century Challenges" Follow Business Albania, 5 September 2018. https://followbusinessalbania.com/tiranas-new-innovation-center-ictslab-prepares-albanian-youngsters-for-21-st-century-challenges/ (Accessed 20 September 2018).

effectively. Recently the National Safe Internet Centre opened in Albania, aiming to increase internet safety, especially for children and youth.[4]

1.6. Thematic focus of the country research: Boosting the role of public institutions in educating citizens on MIL

To summarise this brief overview of the media and information literacy efforts in the country, efforts to address this field are still rare, lack a cohesive effort and vision, and are sporadic rather than ongoing projects. Official policy visibly favours ICT, while critical thinking on media and information is not seen as a priority in education. Efforts of civil society to fill this void have not been particularly successful. Even though ongoing, they have been fragmented and involve a limited number of players; a concerted effort of various players would ensure a greater success of such initiatives. Finally, the public debate and existing efforts visibly favour prohibitionist tendencies towards media and information rather than seeking to educate and nurture, and they favour child safety over education and awareness.

Against this background, the research report in the next chapters will focus on exploring the role of media-related public bodies in MIL - universities, the public broadcaster, the regulator, self-regulatory mechanisms - seeking to determine which factors affect the current role and impact of public institutions in promoting MIL among the population. Public institutions focusing on media are considered as potentially among the most powerful in starting MIL initiatives, but so far they have kept a very low profile. The regulator has made a few attempts through the Council of Complaints, but the initiative is still in closed and sporadic discussions.

The public broadcaster recently devoted limited air time to discussions related to MIL, but it does not have any specific policy or initiative in this regard. Even though it has recently established a Council of Viewers and Listeners, there are not steps to make it a public initiative that would assist better knowledge and communication of the

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4   Child Rights Centre Albania, "National Safe Internet Centre Opened in Albania," CRCA, 31 October 2018. http://www.crca.al/en/news/national-safe-internet-centre-opened-albania (Accessed 12 December 2018).

citizens with the broadcaster. The public university is also limited to its curricula and has not further engaged to raise awareness on MIL needs or to develop relevant tools that would promote MIL among the population.

In this context, the next chapters will focus on the role of relevant public bodies on media and information literacy. In particular, the report will focus on public bodies that are part of the education system and those in charge of the media system. The main aim will be to provide further information on and analyse the policies and practices for the promotion of MIL by these public institutions. More specifically, the research will look into pre-university and university institutions. In addition, regarding public media-related institutions the research will focus on the media regulatory authority and public service media, examining their role and influence in advancing MIL in the country.

2. Setting the scene for media and information literacy

The Albanian media landscape is quite dynamic and rich in numbers, even though this does not necessarily translate into richness and diversity of content. Although print media are clearly in decline, reflecting also the global trend of challenges for this traditional medium, there are still 18 daily newspapers for a population of a little less than three million inhabitants. The financial situation of audiovisual media seems to be healthier compared to print media, and the ratio of media outlets per inhabitant is also is high. According to the Authority on Audiovisual Media, there are 49 local radio stations, four community radio stations belonging to the four main religious communities in the country, two national private radio stations and the public radio and its four local branches.[5] In addition, there are 47 local television stations, 75 cable televisions, and five national commercial multiplexes with their respective programmes operating in the country, in addition to the public broadcaster's digital platform with its own 12 programmes.[6]

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5   AMA, List of audio operators: http://ama.gov.al/subjekte-audio/ (Accessed 12 December 2018).
6   AMA, List of audiovisual operators: http://ama.gov.al/subjekte-audiovizive/ (Accessed 12 December 2018).

At the same time, there has been an evident rise in online media, especially in the last few years, with the number of online media outlets booming each day. Since it is not obligatory for online media outlets to register, there is no information on their exact number; the Union of Albanian Journalists suggests that there are about 800 online media in the country.[7] The rise of online media has been fed by and reflected the ongoing spread of the Internet in the country. According to data from *Internet World Stats*, the Internet penetration rate reached 66% of the population at the end of 2017,[8] while data from the national regulator of electronic communications reveal that the third quarter of 2018 saw a 15% increase in broadband access from fixed lines compared to 2017.[9] In addition, social media use has spread significantly, with Facebook as the most used social network. In 2018, there were 1.5 million active social media users in the country.[10]

These statistics, and the fact that there are no obstacles in accessing media in the country in all their forms, show clearly that there is plenty of choice for the public in terms of media outlets. However, it is not always so clear what media the public prefers to follow, since there is no public data on media consumption. A public opinion survey on impunity[11] in 2016 indicated that television continues to be the main source of information, although the Internet, and especially social networks, have visibly gained ground. A significant share of respondents, 44% of them, said that they now use the Internet for information on current affairs, and specifically news agencies' websites. Even more of them (56%) said that they use social networks for the same purpose. *The Balkan Barometer 2018* also offers some insight in this regard: while 65% of Albanians use the Internet for communication, the next two highest percentages were related to news and entertainment, at 41% each (Regional Cooperation Council 2018).

In this respect, media consumption trends in Albania are not that different from global ones. At the same time, Albania's politicians also have engaged in the tendency to label as fake news and disinformation any information that they do not consider favourable, in a consistent and continuous manner, contributing to an exacerbated public communication regarding media. Prime Minister Edi Rama has continuously verbally attacked and diminished the work of journalists, often questioning their motives or professionalism, and other politicians have often followed suit. "Rama has repeatedly complained that the government is a victim of 'defamation' and has attacked critical media

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7   Aleksander Cipa, chairman of Union of Albanian Journalists, interview of 20 October 2018.
8   Data from Internet World Stats, https://www.internetworldstats.com/europa2.htm#al (Accessed 12 December 2018).
9   Data from AKEP, https://akep.al/images/stories/AKEP/statistika/2018/Raport_T3_2018.pdf (Accessed 12 December 2018).
10   Hootsuite, "We Are Social" Digital 2018 yearbook, https://www.slideshare.net/wearesocial/2018-digital-yearbook-86862930 (Accessed 13 December 2018).
11   IDRA, *Pandëshkueshmëria – Opinioni publik mbi kuptimin, arsyet dhe rolin e institucioneve* [Impunity – Public Opinion on Meaning, Reasons, and Role of Institutions], (IDRA, 2017), http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/studimi_pandeshkueshmeria_1.pdf (Accessed 13 December 2018).

using a variety of epithets, calling some of them charlatans, garbage bins, poison or public enemies."[12] This has certainly not helped a climate conducive to media freedom, creating a tense situation with public verbal assaults against the credibility of journalists in the country.

In this context, it becomes increasingly important for citizens to be aware of the role of the media in the country, how its professionalism is affected by different factors, its business model, and transparency. *The Media Literacy Index 2018* ranked Albania among the lowest scorers in Europe regarding readiness to deal with our post-truth and fake news era, followed only by Turkey and Macedonia (Lessenski 2018). Hence, at a time when Albanians have access to a greater number of media outlets than ever before, especially online ones, it seems that the preparation of the population to properly filter and critically judge these media is quite low. Against the background of continuous political warfare against the media's credibility, and also considering that media professionalism is far from perfect, public perception and evaluation of media conduct needs to be guided by professional standards, rather than the political rhetoric of the day.

Furthermore, the weak professionalism of many online media and the rapid decline in ethical standards, as well as the general political rhetoric against media are only the most recent problems that appear in the media scene, and perhaps the most tangible. The lack of application of a clear vision and consistent media policy through the years is one of the factors that has contributed to this situation. "The drafting of media policies and legislation has taken place without any particular vision or strategy, more guided by the emerging needs on the ground than by a specific vision of media development." (Londo 2014, 62) The development of this landscape in the last 28 years has had its own problematic trends, including unregulated development, a chaotic market, questionable business practices, underdeveloped professional journalism structures of self-regulation, lack of transparency, widespread clientelism and continuous concentration of ownership. Regional research conducted in the Western Balkan countries in 2014 revealed that in Albania the risks to media integrity are visible and numerous. "They include the lack of transparency of media funding and of business practices, a weak public broadcaster, and the dominance of political and private interests over public interests in developing and implementing media policies." (Londo 2014, 108)

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12 Gjergj Erebara, "Rights Groups Criticise Albanian PM's Push to 'Discipline' Media," Balkan Insight, 26 December 2018. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/rights-organizations-criticize-albania-prime-minister-push-for-online-media-disciplining--12-26-2018 (Accessed 3 January 2019).

Through the years, organisations working in the media field have monitored, analysed and highlighted the main trends and problems with the media landscape in the country.[13] In addition, media, media organisations, and authorities have debated these problems from time to time, but it is difficult to reach the public with such topics, which usually are seen as an internal matter of the profession. For example, the decision of the Constitutional Court in 2016 to abolish ownership limitations for national broadcasters paved the way for a greater concentration of the media scene, but apart from media experts and interested parties, there was not much interest from the public. This is not seen as an issue directly affecting most people, unlike the attempt to switch off the analogue signal in the capital in September 2018, which prompted a visible reaction because citizens had not been prepared. Similarly, a proposal by the main private television stations in 2018 to transfer half of the licence fee paid to the public broadcaster to commercial operators so that they could increase their quality of programming did not prompt any reaction from citizens even though it concerned public money.

These cases are only illustrations of the fairly low familiarity of citizens with the standards and role of media in a democracy and the notion of market versus public interest. This situation of media literacy levels in the public also explains in part the vague public support in cases of assaults against journalists or flagrant legal amendment proposals that violate freedom of expression. All of these, along with many other cases where public involvement in media-related actions or debates has been inexistent, as well as the data from surveys and trends mentioned above, underline the urgent need for further media education of citizens, especially in light of the growing influence of social networks and the sheer amount of unverified information that citizens might come across every day.

In this context, while civil society organisations have made sporadic attempts to educate citizens on media and information, due to their capacities and structures, the involvement of public authorities would provide a considerable boost to these kinds of initiatives. The following sections deal with the public authorities' stance in this regard, focusing on the institutions that could have the greatest influence in this field, such as formal education institutions and media-related authorities.

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13 The Albanian Media Institute has worked for 20 years in this field, producing research on media ownership, media landscape trends, media integrity and professionalism, media legislation and policies, role of regulatory bodies and of PBS, self-regulation practices, labour relations, etc. (See Media Integrity Matters 2014, Albanian media and European standards, 2018, Mapping journalists' status 2018, etc.) BIRN Albania and RSF Germany also produced a media ownership monitor in 2018, highlighting the concentration trends and influence of a few actors in the media field, in spite of the large number of media. Other organisations have also conducted media monitoring on different issues, raising awareness of problems of professionalism.

3. Formal education and media literacy policies and practices

There are no official policies or documents focused on media and information literacy in Albania. The concept as such is quite unknown and unexplored in Albania. Elements of the concept are addressed in official policy documents, but there has never been a public debate, effort, or initiative deliberately setting out to focus on MIL in the country. Nonetheless, existing official policy documents and strategies tackle several aspects that might be considered as part of MIL, even though the term itself does not appear in any of them.

The existing policies and practices on formal education in the country do recognise the importance of digital literacy, and this is reflected also in the pre-university curricula, in which ICT plays an important role. On the other hand, the official education policies fail to address the importance of knowing how the media system works and of educating citizens on how to view it critically instead of taking it at face value. This absence is not addressed even in higher education, as media education is limited to those studying journalism and education. The following sections aim to describe and analyse in greater detail the current MIL policies in public formal education both at pre-university and university level.

3.1. Media and Information Literacy: an ICT-centric exercise

Official policies on information literacy have been conditioned by a mix of factors, such as the technical digitalisation of services available, the EU integration influence on the formulation of policies, as well as changes in technology and the evolution of infrastructure. As a result, apart from the need to secure and expand e-services, the Albanian government policies have also included references to the need to invest in human capacities in order to use the new e-services. In this respect the Albanian government for years has been declaring digitalisation and having a

knowledge-based and information society a priority, both in terms of having a more open and developed society and a better economic record. For example, the *2008 Strategy* highlighted the benefits of introducing ICT as a subject in schools, but also the need for a better education of the whole population in terms of accessing and using information and e-services.[14]

Against this background, there is considerable emphasis on acquiring ICT skills and training in the curricula for the basic, compulsory school system. The increasing importance of massively learning to use technology is also mentioned in the law on pre-university education. The current law on pre-university education was adopted in 2012 and determines that the official policy on pre-university education would use a competency-based approach. The law sets out several competencies that students are expected to gain through their pre-university education, including digital competencies, directly addressing this important aspect of information literacy. This aspect is further developed in the *Strategy of Development of Pre-University Education 2014-2020*. The section explaining the visions, principles, and priorities of policies on pre-university education states that "progressive actualisation of this vision will enable the necessary conditions and opportunities for students... to use new technologies,"[15] among other goals.[16] *The Strategy* mentions as the main tools to achieve the objective of teaching ICT in schools the improvement of technological infrastructure in schools, as well as the development of multimedia materials for the curricula, mobile labs for the schools, and integration of ICT in different subjects of the school curricula.[17]

While the law and the strategy on pre-university education determine the main objectives in terms of pre-university education, including on digital literacy, these principles are further elaborated in the core curricula and more specifically in the *Curricula Framework*. Similar to the other strategic education and government policy documents, even the *Curricula Framework* only addresses digital literacy and skills and at no point tackles any element of media or a critical approach to information in general. In fact, in the *Curricula Framework* digital competencies are defined as "critical and efficient use of ICT at work, during free time, and in communication. These competencies include basic skills of using a computer to find, produce, create, present, and exchange information, as well as to cooperate in

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14   Council of Ministers, National Agency on Information Society, *Cross-cutting Strategy on Information Society, 2008-2013.* https://shtetiweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Information-Society-strategy_printed_version_en.pdf (Accessed 2 December 2018).

15   Ministry of Education and Sports, *Dokumenti i Strategjisë së Zhvillimit të Arsimit Parauniversitar* 2014-2020 [Strategy of Development of Pre-University Education 2014-2020] (Tirana: Ministry of Education and Sports, 2014), http://www.arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Strategji_APU_dokumenti_perfundimtar_24_03_2015-1.pdf (Accessed 12 December 2018).

16   This was a point strongly made also in the previous Strategy on education, for 2009-2013. One of the priorities of the previous Strategy included the widespread introduction of ICT in the curricula, enabling students to improve use of ICT and become competitive in the labour market.

17   Ibid.

information networks on the Internet."[18] Hence, the general approach of the curricula is mainly adopting and designing subjects in the curricula that would enable and ease the use of technology by students regarding information, but it generally does not purport to deal with information itself. The policies in this respect are rather basic, claiming to equip students with the necessary skills on using technology, but not going further and educating them how to understand and critique the quality of information available to them also through this technology.

The Core Curricula are based on the *Curricula Framework*, developing its general principles and policies into concrete subjects and teaching plans. Since the *Curricula Framework* views ICT as one of the seven main learning areas and one of the priorities for the new generation and the population in general, the core curricula also maintain the important weight given to ICT in the overall curricula. The introduction of ICT as a subject came about in 2007, for seventh through 12th grade. Currently, according to the core curricula established in 2014, ICT as a mandatory subject starts in fourth grade and is part of the curricula until 12th grade, which marks the end of the pre-university education.[19] ICT is in the same category as the technology subject in the teaching plan, with both at one hour per week in the overall teaching scheme, together constituting 5.4% of the teaching plan in the third cycle programme, and 3.2% of the teaching plan in the fourth cycle.[20] In October 2018, the Minister of Education announced plans to change the core curricula to allow for an even earlier start of the ICT subject in the future, in the second grade.[21] Parallel to this change, a new class on coding would be introduced in the eighth grade, further emphasising the increasing focus of education policies on ICT.[22]

The current core curricula proposes includes among the topics that the subject of ICT should address in-depth data analysis, search engines and finding information online, basic programming language, graphic design as communication, etc.[23] Some of the main competencies the students are expected to develop include drafting online content in different multimedia forms, disseminating information and content, engaging in online citizen activity, cooperation through digital channels, searching and filtering online information, etc.[24]

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18 Ibid.
19 Teaching Plan of Subjects, 2014, available at: http://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Plani-Mesimor-1-9-2014-Kurrikula-Re.pdf (Accessed 12 December 2018).
20 Ministry of Education and Sports, *Korniza Kurrikulare e Arsimit Parauniversitar të Republikës së Shqipërisë* [Curricula Framework of Pre-University Education] (Tirana: Ministry of Education and Sports, 2014). http://izha.edu.al/new/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Korniza-Kurrikulare.pdf (Accessed 12 December 2018).
21 Minister of Education Lindita Nikolla speech: "Edukimi Digjital në Arsimin Para-Universitar" [Digital Education in Pre-university Education], 2 October 2018. http://arsimi.gov.al/edukimi-digjital-ne-arsimin-para-universitar/ (Accessed 23 December 2018).
22 Ibid.
23 Ministry of Education and Sports, Curricula Framework of Pre-University Education.
24 Ministry of Education and Sports, Institute of Development of Education, *Programi i lëndës TIK, shkalla e tretë, klasa 6 dhe 7* [ICT Subject Programme, Third Cycle, Class 6 and 7] (Tirana: Ministry of Education and Sports and Institute of Development of Education, 2014). http://izha.edu.al/new/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Prog_TIK_Shkalla-3_shtator-2015.pdf (Accessed 12 December 2018).

Second, the technical infrastructure needed to teach ICT has improved, but much more remains to be done.[25] According to the *Digital Agenda Strategy*, the ratio of computers to students varies from school to school; it is typically 1:27 and in some cases even lower.[26] The data for 2016 indicates a slight improvement, with a 1:25 ratio,[27] but it needs to improve even more. Another major problem is that labs or classrooms where ICT is taught do not always have an Internet connection, which is a major factor in the success of this particular subject. In fact, the problem is admitted even in the *Digital Agenda Strategy*, which states that more than one-third of schools experience problems connecting to the Internet.[28] These fundamental problems, even though slightly improving, pose significant challenges to the successful teaching of the ICT subject. An investigative report of journalism students highlighted the difficulties in implementing a project of establishing intelligent classes in 120 schools, through use of interconnected tablets in the classroom, and one of the problems was the lack of Internet access in the school premises.[29]

In addition, a major obstacle in the teaching of ICT is related to the generation gap in skills between teachers and students in relation to this subject, which the received training does not seem to have overcome for the time being. According to the *Strategy on pre-university education*, teachers currently are expected to have 18 hours of training per year.[30] However, it seems that in practice ICT is not necessarily as high of a priority in reality as on paper. "Often this subject is taught by teachers who have had short-term training and are educated in other fields, such as physics, mathematics, and this is a way of fulfilling the number of classes a teacher must have. Training of teachers is certainly lagging much behind or is inexistent, both in ICT and in media literacy."[31] In fact, both teachers[32] and students seem to confirm that from time to time teachers experience problems in using technology and ask students for help during classes.[33] Along with the plan to start ICT teaching in lower grades and start piloting coding classes, the Minister of Education also announced that there will be parallel training for 470 ICT teachers.[34] While it is true that there are

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25 The current Strategy for pre-university education admits that "in spite of all investments made, ICT use in education institutions is limited. The equipment offered is mainly through public funds, but also through the contribution of the private sector in specific cases. However, according to the Strategy, for the most part, the equipment is not properly used or is out of use. The basic public education schools report to have 15,731 personal computers, out of which only 11,331 are functional. There are also 1,631 laptops in the schools, out of which 432 are out of order.

26 Council of Ministers, Ministry of Innovation and Public Administration, *Cross-cutting Strategy "Digital Agenda of Albania 2015-2020"*.

27 AKSHI monitoring of Action Plan for Digital Agenda Strategy, 2016.

28 Council of Ministers, Ministry of Innovation and Public Administration, *Cross-cutting Strategy "Digital Agenda of Albania 2015-2020"*.

29 Nevila Dosti and Enkel Xhangoli, "3.5 milione euro per klasat inteligjente pa internet," [3.5 Million Euros for Intelligent Classes without Internet] Pse, 3 April 2017. http://pse2017.com/3-5-milione-euro-per-klasat-inteligjente-pa-internet/ (Accessed 2 January 2019).

30 Ministry of Education and Sports, Strategy of Development of Pre-University Education 2014-2020.

31 Erida Koleci, specialist, Institute of Education Development, interview of 30 July 2018.

32 Top Channel TV, "Mësim me tablet, projekti në pak shkolla. Fondi është përdorur i gjithi" [Tablet Learning, Project in Few Schools. The Fund Has All Been Used Up], 12 May 2018. http://top-channel.tv/2018/05/12/mesim-me-tablet-projekti-ne-pak-shkolla-fondi-eshte-perdorur-i-gjithi/ (Accessed 3 January 2019).

33 Dosti and Xhangoli, "3.5 Million Euros for Intelligent Classes without Internet".

34 Minister of Education Lindita Nikolla speech.

strong ambitions from the education system regarding ICT in terms of strategy, the implementation in practice has had its obstacles, both due to lack of infrastructure and as a result of challenges with the training of teachers.

3.2.   MIL in other subjects: a limited effort

While ICT is part of the core curricula as a separate, mandatory subject, as well as integrated with other subjects, there is no particular part of the curricula that deals with critique of information from the media and information literacy expertise. A few elements in particular subjects, especially civics, are dedicated to finding more about media texts and genres and being able to judge them. For example, the programme of the subject of civics for the tenth grade, which is a mandatory subject, includes also the topic of right to information and the law on media.[35] The programme suggests holding six classes for this topic, out of a total of 70 classes, which is the duration of the whole subject for the academic year.

What is noticeable when looking at the topics and sections spread over the subject of civics is that there is a significant emphasis on legislation, constitution, and on human rights (with respectively six, five, and ten classes out of a total of 70 classes for the whole subject). However, only a small section is devoted to freedom of expression among the overall topics of these classes, while attention to other rights and legislation is more significant. The guiding section on information is more detailed and it starts with this general premise: "Information is essential in every democratic society. It is both a right and an obligation. It is a power, and, for this reason, it is often used unfairly, at the cost of interest of individuals, groups, or society. As such, it should always be viewed critically."[36] This premise seems in line with the principles of MIL, or more specifically warns on the need to properly understand and analyse media instead of taking information at face value.

However, when looking at what is the suggested programme in terms of topics, the initial premise of the section on information seems to grow weaker. According to the suggested programme, the knowledge that students should gain includes categories such as what are the means of information, the different kinds of media, TV myths, etc.

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35   Ministry of Education and Sports, Institute of Development of Education. *Kurrikula bërthamë lënda: qytetari klasa: X* [Civics Subject Programme, Class X: Curricula Framework] (Tirana: Ministry of Education and Sports, Institute of Development of Education, 2016). http://izha.edu.al/Biblioteka/3Programe%20Lendore/4Programet%20e%20 Arsimit%20te%20Mesem%20Kurrikula%20e%20re/Programet%20e%20klases%20se%2010/Programet%20e%20Klas%C3%ABs%20s%C3%AB%20X,%20Kurrikula%20 B%C3%ABrtham%C3%AB/Qytetari.pdf (Accessed 15 December 2018).

36   Ibid.

Other suggested topics that should be covered are related more to the right to information and existing general principles and regulation, including risks emerging from especially online information. Such topics include TV and law on minors, general principles on the right to information in Albanian legislation, right to information, and legislation on print and electronic media, abusing right to information, safety risks, etc.[37] Overall, the suggested topics are related more to the general principles and legal rights on information as such, rather than freedom of expression and obstacles that might exist in this regard. In addition, the section seems to be disproportionate in warning of the risks for minors posed by the media and the Internet, rather than on the risks to freedom of expression itself, or the obstacles that citizens should know about public interest and media. In this respect, it seems that the subject guidance is more prone to warning the students of the media and their abuses, rather than teach them on how to maintain a healthy distance from media and critique it.

Apart from the general guidance on the subject of civics provided by the Institute of Development of Education, there were three textbooks[38] approved by the Ministry of Education for the school year 2018-2019, and teachers can choose to use one of them. An analysis of the information section in the teacher's books that accompany these publications reveals that the main focus is on the legislation and the general role of media in society, on the one hand, and understanding the adverse effects media might have on minors, on the other. For example, one of the teacher's books lists the following competencies that the students must develop at the end of the class: "Developing skills for identifying the source of information and analytical judgment, and determine sources and truthfulness of digital information" (Celcima s. a., 21). Furthermore, the student is supposed during the class "to filter and find the right information online, to choose efficient resources of information, and critically assess the information" (Celcima s. a., 24). These competences seem to be very much in line with the notion of media literacy and critical analysis of information received from the media.

However, when looking at the elaboration of topics proposed for the specific classes devoted to media and information, the focus seems to shift to other things that are not strictly related to critical analysis of media content or media conduct. Three major themes appear among those that teachers should address during class in all three textbooks: the right to information, media regulation, and protection of minors from media. The section on media regulation only guides teachers on the way media freedom is guaranteed in the constitution or in international documents, such as Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, with some general remarks about the importance

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37 Ibid.
38 The textbooks are those published by publishing houses Albas, Pegi, and Erik.

of the media in a democracy. At the same time, both the student's and the teacher's books mention that there might be abuse from the media with information conveyed, even though they are supposed to be objective and unbiased. However, the textbooks fail to provide guidance on how to distinguish bias in the media, how to filter information based on truthfulness of sources, and all the specific red flags that are part of this exercise. In this context, the heavy focus on media legislation seems to burden the students with information they might not find as necessary as discussing the truthfulness or objectivity of news they hear every day. In addition, since the teachers have not received any specific training on media literacy,[39] it is not clear how prepared they are to focus on media legislation, a topic that even journalists are not always familiar with.

Another trend that is evident in all three textbooks under consideration is the significant focus on the right to information in a chapter that is supposed to speak of the media and their role in society. In fact, a few classes in the orientation text start out under the topic of media, or media legislation, and almost all the content and orientation to teachers is related to the right to information. For example, in one of the textbooks, the topic of one of the classes is Albanian and international legislation on media and information, whereas the keywords are the law on the right to information, coordinator of the right to information, and commissioner on information (Dosti, Lila and Bozhani 2016). They focus on the role of the Commissioner on Information and Data Protection and the importance of being informed in a democracy. While rarely the texts highlight the difference between the legal right to be informed on public documents and the basic notions of freedom of speech and free press in a democratic society, most of the time the term "the right to be informed" is not further specified. In this way, this term risks being used as a blanket for the overall information received, instead of specifically explaining that it is a constitutional right for all citizens that wish to hold the government accountable, and it is not to be confused with freedom of information in the media. This general way of using the right to information in a chapter that is supposed to address information from outside sources, rather than public documents, indicates that these texts only scratch the surface and fail to bring to the fore what citizens should do to analyse the information they are served each day.

Finally, all three textbooks in a sense assume that media, especially the Internet, in one way or another harm children, and that they should be prepared on how to avoid this harm. For example, in one of the teacher's books, the section on information of minors, some of the challenges listed are: "lack of parental control on channels and on the way information is received, inadequate information for youth, access to accurate and non-manipulated information,

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39 Erida Koleci, interview of 30 July 2018.

etc." (Tabaku and Hoxha s. a., 118). Furthermore, when analysing the problems with different sources of information, some of the problems mentioned include that "they are not checked by parents to avoid inappropriate information for children, or that the use of these programmes clearly has a bad effect on them, or that children easily imitate bad behaviour they see on these channels, etc." (Tabaku and Hoxha s. a., 118). The textbooks clearly focus on the potential harmful effects that media and the Internet may have on children, but they seem to see the solution only in parental guidance or supervision. The guidance books do not further develop any method or exercise on how to train children to use the Internet or the media while developing understanding skills that would enable them to filter the potential harm these can bring with them. At the same time, the sections on child protection seem to highlight only the negative effects on children, while it is also true that with proper guidance, the Internet and information in general can become a tool for students to use to their advantage and to deepen their knowledge.

3.3. The case of universities: a missed opportunity to expand media and information literacy in education

Public university education on media and information literacy in Albania is currently available only as part of specialised degrees offered by the Department of Journalism at the Universities of Tirana, Elbasan, and Shkodra, and of the degrees related to information sciences. When looking at the subjects that are mandatory or electives across various degrees and faculties, it is hard to find subjects related to media literacy.[40] Elective degrees offered routinely include academic writing, foreign languages, gender policies, economic policies, and even physical education. Even though media content is consumed each day by students and the whole population, and although there is widespread use of social media, there are no attempts to introduce basic knowledge, understanding, and analysis of media in the universities, neither as mandatory nor as elective courses. Even social sciences degrees, which are arguably closer to or more affected by media studies compared to other degrees, do not contain any media-related education in their curricula. The only exceptions are courses on public communication, which are more related to public speaking than

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40 Information from published curricula of departments of University of Tirana, available at: http://www.unitir.edu.al/ (Accessed 4 January 2019).

to an analysis of media context or factors that the public and students need to know on media and different facets of information. This is in line with the overall lack of public policy on promoting education on critical understanding of MIL, mainly due to a lack of tradition in this field.

With regard to specialised degrees that are directly relevant to MIL, such as journalism, formal education is offered in public university branches in Tirana, Elbasan, and Shkodra, while private universities offer mainly communication degrees. The Department of Journalism at the public University of Tirana has undergone significant change in the curricula. From the classic 4-year degree, it has adopted a two-tier system in accordance with the Bologna process. The bachelor's degree offers three profiles of journalism: social/culture journalism, political journalism, and economic journalism.[41] Second-level degrees also offer opportunities to become more specialised in the profile of journalism desired. The profiles offered are public relations, media marketing, media management, European and international journalism, and intercultural communication. While the first-level degrees focus more on professional journalism, out of four specialisations in the second-level degrees only one is related to journalism, while the others focus on PR and marketing, placing a greater emphasis on persuasive communications rather than journalism.

However, while being a journalist in the early 1990s seemed to be a favourite with many students, its popularity seems to have declined. A 2016 survey with journalism students in the country showed that only 33.8% saw journalism as their dream job, while 30% chose it because it provided an opportunity for social and political engagement, and another 12% for reasons of fame or popularity through the profession (Godole and Karcanaj 2016). These figures also reflect a certain disappointment with the media among youth and a lower desire to engage in this profession.

The same survey also found that while in general the students were satisfied with the theoretical side of journalism studies, some of them expected more to be done in terms of practical opportunities. While 43.9% of students said that there was a good balance between theory and practice, another 52% said that the lacking ingredient at most faculties were practical exercises (Godole and Karcanaj 2016).

The reasons for this weak point of public universities offering journalism seem to be problems in equipment and learning conditions, and lack of internship opportunities for students arranged between the faculty and media outlets. The survey notes that 41% of journalism students were satisfied with the equipment available for practice at the faculty, while another 49% said that they found it difficult to access the technical equipment for practice (Godole and Karcanaj 2016). However, when it comes to media practice, there is a limit to what internal faculty labs

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41 University of Tirana, Faculty of History and Philology, Department of Journalism Teaching Plan 2013-2016, available at: https://www.fhf.edu.al/plani-mesimor-ne-gazetari/ (Accessed 4 January 2019).

can do, independently of their general technical condition. What seems to be a key problem is the inability of the faculty to have ongoing agreements with media outlets where students can work as interns or part-time employees. While many students already do this, it is mainly by their individual initiative and not in an institutionalised manner. This is a weakness also highlighted by recommendations based on a survey carried out with journalism students in 2016: "based on students' insights, there is an urgent need to foster a dialogue between educational institutions and local media" and "more practical classes are necessary" (Godole and Karcanaj 2016). In 2015 the Department of Journalism signed an agreement with the regulator, the Audiovisual Media Authority, enabling internships of the journalism students with the regulator.[42] Although this is a step in the right direction, clearly more must be done, as practice with the media regulator does not equal skills gained during a practical internship in a real-life newsroom.

In addition to educating future journalists, the Department of Journalism at the University of Tirana also routinely organises surveys and academic conferences, usually on an annual basis. Although these are events targeting mainly specific circles within the profession, such as academics, media regulators, editors and journalists, they do contribute to enriching the information available on the media situation. Topics of previous conferences have been related to digitalisation effects in the media landscape, the perception on the public broadcaster's performance among the population, the future of media professionalism, etc. The presentations delivered at these conferences have been collected in publications. However, the contribution of the faculty in these events remains restricted to the same group of people, without expanding to a wider target group. So, while the Department of Journalism at the University of Tirana does its job in educating students in journalism, the focus is strictly on them, rather than on other activities that might serve to raise awareness among the population on MIL or key problems affecting media development.

This is a trend that characterises the whole public university system in the country. There is no tradition of extracurricular initiatives that aim to establish links between teachers, students, and other relevant groups of the population for this field of study. This might be related to the strict understanding of teaching as a process that only happens in school, which has been the basis of the Albanian education system. At the same time, there is no requirement in terms of faculty policies or mission that would engage teachers in this framework to also address the rest of the population in some way. Some of the professors are active and appear in public debates and publish their work in the media. However, this is purely an individual choice, not an institutional guideline, instruction, or tradition.

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42   News on signing of agreement with Faculty of Journalism: Audiovisual Media Authority, "AMA dhe Departamenti i Gazetarisë dhe Komunikimit nënshkruajnë marrëveshjen për praktikat studentore" [AMA and Department of Journalism and Communication Sign Agreement for Student Internships], 20 November 2015. http://ama.gov.al/2015/11/20/ama-dhe-departamenti-i-gazetarise-dhe-komunikimit-nenshkruajne-marreveshjen-per-praktikat-studentore/ (Accessed 26 December 2018).

As a consequence, even the impact that the university's contribution might have on the population's understanding of media seems to be mainly dependent on the visibility of individual professors, rather than a planned approach in this direction.

4. Public media institutions with a role on MIL

Since media and information literacy is a relatively new concept in Albania, it has not been the focus of public institutions related to media and information. The adoption of laws and regulations and the establishment of institutions have not been accompanied by concerns or discussions on the need to develop media literacy. As a result, the main institutions dealing with media and information do not have a specific role assigned to them by law to address such concerns. In the last two years there have been attempts to be more active in this regard, even though these initiatives are far from long-term or coordinated among different actors. The following section describes the role, competencies, and initiatives related to MIL from these public institutions, more specifically the Audiovisual Media Authority and the Albanian Radio and Television.

4.1. Audiovisual Media Authority

The first, and also major, absence or obstacle to the work of the regulator, the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA), in the field of MIL is the failure of the law or its bylaws and regulations to address media literacy among the regulator's competences or duties. In fact, the term media and information literacy is not mentioned in any legislation or policy documents, highlighting the late introduction into public debate of this term and the general absence of this notion in the vision of policymaking on media and education in the country. AMA is the regulator of audiovisual media in the

country, functioning as a public independent legal entity, established by the Law on Audiovisual Media. The law lists numerous competencies for the authority, but it does not ascribe any particular role regarding MIL. Since there is no obligation in this field, the authority's top priorities are understandably fulfilling the mission determined by law first, rather than tackling new ones.

However, although formally the regulator does not have a duty to engage in media literacy, several facets of its work have prompted it to potentially cover such a role, at least partially. The first way it influences media literacy is through the public complaints mechanism installed within the regulator regarding the observation of ethics and professional standards in audiovisual media. The law establishes a Council of Complaints as an integral part of AMA. The Council is composed of three members, elected by the AMA Board, with experience in media and ethics. The Council members have to respond to the complaints received, justifying the admission of a complaint or its refusal, based on the Law on Audiovisual Media and on the Broadcasting Code approved by the AMA.

The Council of Complaints was established in 2016, and two of its members were re-elected for a second term in 2018. The Council replies to complaints from citizens, citing the legal basis for the decision made on the complaint and explaining if the complaint is accepted or not. In this context, the very process of citizens being able to complain and then receive an answer from the authority on their concern regarding media is a way of educating the public about the rules of media conduct and what constitutes ethical behaviour and what does not.

The Council of Complaints examines requests and complaints also from non-profit and private organisations on particular media content that might be offensive to human dignity and violate human rights. It acts as an intermediary between the public and the media. In this process, it assumes a small educating role for the public and the different complaints received in terms of the rules in place regarding ethical coverage in the media.

In these years of activity, the Council of Complaints received 24 complaints in 2016; the number peaked at 33 in 2017, and halved, to 15, in 2018.[43] There is no particular reason to believe that media professionalism levels improved greatly in 2018, leading to a decrease in the number of complaints. Previous attempts to establish self-regulatory mechanisms to act on complaints by citizens to several newspapers prompted almost no reaction from readers, as they preferred to deal with the author directly rather than go through a formal route of e-mail complaints. Similarly, a lack of familiarity, distrust, or even failure to see concrete results after complaints might be more likely explanations for the decreasing number of complaints lodged with the Council of Complaints. In addition, according to the published

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43   Audiovisual Media Authority, "Buletini i Ankesave" [Bulletin of Council of Complaints editions 1, 2, 3, 4] http://ama.gov.al/buletini/ (Accessed 22 December 2018).

complaints, many of the complaints have come from state agencies dealing with children's rights, or NGOs, even though individual citizens have also filed complaints,[44] which suggests that perhaps not many citizens are aware that there is the possibility of complaining about unethical conduct of audiovisual media. In fact, the country's low participation culture, or a preference for shortcuts to contacting media directly, and especially venting on social networks rather than addressing the respective institutions, also has to be understood as an important factor when considering the work of these institutions, as well as the challenges in developing media self-regulation process. Most complaints filed are related to problems with reporting on minors and violations of privacy and human dignity.[45]

In addition, the Council of Complaints, and the administration of the AMA in general, have well received the idea of becoming more active in media literacy. However, as mentioned above, results in this field are slow in getting realised, since this is more of an additional activity rather than part of the strict legal duties assigned to the AMA and its bodies. Nonetheless, the Council of Complaints has been involved in activities on media literacy organised by the Albanian Media Institute and has also organised its own activities, focusing mainly on fake news. In 2017, in cooperation with the Department of Journalism at the University of Tirana, the Council of Complaints held a conference on the topic "Fake news and the challenge for the truth in the media", aiming to raise awareness on the risks that emerge regarding fake news against the background of technological developments (Audiovisual Media Authority 2018). The conference also resulted in a publication collecting presentations and papers by experts on the topic. The outcome of the conference facilitated a more concrete meeting in 2018, when the Council of Complaints convened a debate with stakeholders on media literacy in Albania, aiming to discuss the situation and what can be done. The meeting brought together members of parliament, representatives of the Ministry of Education, NGOs, and the media. Even though this was meant to be a first meeting that would lead to further steps, there have been no other initiatives in this regard, which means that unless there is a legal obligation or a strategic approach or objective for a given institution, it is difficult for this institution to embark on this process in a serious manner and to achieve concrete results.

In parallel with its own initiatives, for several years now the AMA has also cooperated with various associations related to media, enabling them to implement projects related to media professionalism, including also media literacy. For example, in 2017 the Albanian Media Institute implemented a project that was focused on media literacy in one of its components – a tour of universities by well-known journalists, holding public talks on the media landscape, its problems, and the media's effects on society.

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44   Ibid.
45   Monika Stafa, former chair of Council of Complaints, interview of 15 September 2018.

Finally, the AMA also has an important actual and potential role in informing and raising awareness on the situation of audiovisual media in the country. In this respect, the AMA has been publishing a bulletin[46] every six months starting in 2016, aiming to provide a structured report on trends related to audiovisual media. The bulletins provide statistics and data on economy and profit trends of audiovisual media, their ownership structure, dynamics and characteristics of the staff employed in these media, as well as technical aspects of broadcasting. In addition, the bulletins also contain information on the regulator's media monitoring, specifically the percentage of political parties and figures in news editions of the public and national private broadcasters, and data on advertising time and volume in the main broadcasters. The bulletin provides comprehensive data on audiovisual media in a structured form, available to the public and media scholars; it is published on the regulator's website as well as in hard copy. Given the nature of the data contained in these publications, though, the content is more relevant to a small group of media scholars and media practitioners, rather than to the broader public. Nonetheless, this is a step ahead in terms of the regulator being more active on providing and systematising information periodically, enabling the documentation of trends in the audiovisual media through official documents and data.

4.2.   Albanian Radio and Television

The context of public broadcaster Albanian Radio Television (RTSH) is similar to that of the AMA in terms of media and information literacy: RTSH has many competencies and functions in its remit according to the law, but it has no clear and specific role on MIL. When the law on audiovisual media was being discussed in the parliament before its adoption in 2013, the main concerns raised related to the independence of the regulator and of the Steering Council of RTSH, while the potential of its educating role for society on the media was not addressed.

In a similar context as the regulator's Council of Complaints, the public broadcaster is supposed to have in its structure a Council of Viewers and Listeners. The Council is composed of 15 members, elected by the Steering Council of RTSH. Members may be RTSH journalists or employees, while two thirds of the Council have to come from other social categories, including representation of persons with special needs. The Council of Viewers and Listeners can demand from RTSH, if necessary, surveys and studies on the broadcasting programmes on youth and minors,

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46   AMA website, list of publications available at: http://ama.gov.al/publikime/ (Accessed 24 December 2018).

senior persons, or other special social categories. The Council of Viewers and Listeners was elected in 2016, and the RTSH management said that its recommendations have been considered by RTSH programming structures,[47] but there has been no specific public communication or any other involvement in public debate of this structure.

However, even though officially there is no obligation or concrete articulation of interest in engaging in media literacy from the public broadcaster, in practice RTSH has had its own results in trying to raise awareness on particular aspects of media and social networks. Its daily programme *Miremengjes Shqiperi* (Good morning Albania) has allotted a 30-minute segment, called *Algoritem*, each Thursday to Ervin Goci, a journalism professor from the University of Tirana, to discuss the latest developments in media, social networks, and technology and their context and effects on the public, starting in 2017. The initiative resulted from discussions between the host of the programme and Goci, rather than a direct communication with RTSH programming or management structures.[48] In fact, this case is an illustration of the potential to find spaces and develop ideas and initiatives when there is the personal will to do so. At the same time, the existence and pursuit of an official line or specific interests on media literacy from RTSH would greatly boost any initiatives on MIL.

The programme takes the form of an interview between the hosts and Professor Goci, related to the effects of media and especially technology and social networks on citizens. Each programme focuses on a particular topic, and these have included trends of receiving news from social media as opposed to traditional media, personalised news, effect of algorithms in information, social networks and public mobilisation, social networks and privacy concerns, the dark side of social networks, etc. In addition, apart from general considerations and data from surveys and studies on the effects of social networks, the programme also tackles elements of critique of media and tools that the public can use to judge the value and truthfulness of information. This has included separating fact from opinion, surrendering privacy to social networks in a technological age, the reality constructed through social networks compared to the reality of traditional media, protests and their reporting by media compared with social networks, ethical management of social networks, etc. "By doing this show we are trying to fill in the void on media literacy that is very much visible in our society," said Ervin Goci.[49] The finances of RTSH and the need to meet a complex mission and a long list of tasks set in the law also make it difficult for RTSH to properly fund initiatives that it is not forced by law to undertake. When discussing the programme, Goci admits that this is just a drop in the ocean compared to what must be done. Although he has discussed with RTSH developing a separate programme for this purpose, for the time being RTSH funds do not allow for such a project.[50]

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47   Thoma Gellci, director of RTSH, interview of 6 April 2018.
48   Ervin Goci, professor of journalism at Department of Journalism, University of Tirana, interview of 22 November 2018.
49   Ibid.
50   Ibid.

RTSH has just concluded its digitalisation network investment and its maintenance, paying a loan that was object of much discussion and also a financial burden for the public broadcaster, which has the lowest licence fee in the region, set at close to 80 Euro cents per household per month. Each year with the presentation of the annual report in the parliament, the RTSH management also repeats the need to increase the tax and improve its finances, but it has not succeeded so far, as this is seen as an unnecessary tax increase bound to cause dissatisfaction among the population. In a situation where the public broadcaster is a huge operation by the standard of other media that is seeking to meet various legal obligations, dealing with media literacy cannot be a budgetary priority. For example, it is an obligation for the public broadcaster to broadcast in the language of minorities, which it has started doing, but there are still problems with funding and the budget. Unless there are sufficient funds and raising awareness on media literacy becomes part of the RTSH mission, it will not be easy to develop initiatives that further focus and deepen public awareness on MIL.

5.   Conclusions

Media and information literacy is not a widely known concept in Albania, and has been explored by a limited number of players only. Official policies do not reference or recognise the term and fail to address the notion in its complexity. Public bodies have reacted more promptly and policies are more advanced in terms of digital literacy and specifically ICT, which has become a mandatory subject for pre-university education; curricula are set to be developed even more in this regard. However, technical difficulties, such as with training of teachers and infrastructure conditions, still pose problems for the normal teaching process of this subject.

On the other hand, the notion of understanding how the media system works and analysis of all its facets is greatly underdeveloped in the pre-university curricula, being limited only to a few basic concepts and exercises. In fact, the textbook situation indicates that often the concept of information is limited to access to information, rather than a critical understanding and analysis of the information conveyed. The situation is no better with university curricula, which fail to include related subjects in elective courses, apart from the journalism degree. One of the shortcomings of the Department

of Journalism is the lack of institutional practice and exchange with media outlets in order to enable students to take up work practice placements at media outlets and see what journalism means in a real-life newsroom.

The lack of official policies and vision on media literacy also does not pose an obligation on public bodies relevant to the media system in the country, such as the Audiovisual Media Authority and the public broadcaster RTSH, to address this issue. This lack of legal obligation, coupled with the need to pursue other priorities, make it difficult to prioritise media literacy initiatives. Their communication links to the public through AMA's Council of Complaints and RTSH's Council of Viewers and Listeners needs to further develop and improve as a way of raising awareness and encouraging action of media critique towards any lack of professionalism.

However, against this background, both AMA and RTSH have managed to engage in MIL initiatives and activities, although an official line and commitment is still missing. On a positive note, though, both institutions have been open to proposals mainly from civil society, but also other actors, to be more active in this field.

6.   Recommendations

Based on this report and having in mind the Albanian context, the following recommendations should be considered in thinking about future initiatives to develop and strengthen MIL efforts in the country:

- gradually revise official policies to address not just ICT, but also media, information, and digital literacy.
- gradually revise curricula to reflect the comprehensive concept of MIL, not just ICT, with the assistance of media experts, so that they reflect important notions, concepts, and practices and adapt them to the Albanian context.
- provide continuous capacity-building for teachers, public institutions, specialised institutions, and NGOs relevant for MIL.
- support pilot programmes for the involvement of public institutions in formal education and the media in more systematic initiatives on public education on MIL.
- support monitoring and research activities on MIL, seeking to analyse different aspects of MIL.

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Media and Information Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Numerous Civil Society Initiatives and Lack of Public Policies

Sanela Hodžić

1.   Introduction

Media and information literacy is still in its infancy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily due to a failure by the public sector to invest substantial efforts in creating policies and mechanisms for its systemic development. In public policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, media and information literacy has not yet been fully recognised as a key precondition for the democratisation of society. But, some strategic documents do mention certain concepts related to media and information literacy (hereinafter: MIL). Thus, strategic documents in the area of education underline the need to develop competences for access to information, critical thinking and use of information technology for participation in the community,[1] while the *Policy for the Development of Information Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017-2021)* points to "a low level of digital literacy and skills", noting the need to promote digital literacy and IT competences. In the *Broadcasting Sector Policy (2006)*, on the other hand, media literacy is only mentioned as a key factor in reducing the risk of a digital divide.

However, the government's commitment to the development of MIL has not yet progressed from this formal recognition of its importance, and more concrete activities or strategic objectives to promote it remain undefined. Above all, the competent authorities have never adopted systemic solutions to integrate MIL objectives in the work of educational institutions. As a result, MIL remains very much underrepresented in the curricula of primary and secondary schools.[2] Formal syllabi provide an opportunity for students to get acquainted to some extent with various media forms and the basics of using new technologies, but what is missing in particular is an effort to help students develop the skills of critical thinking, understanding, critical analysis and production of media content. In teacher training, MIL-related topics are covered in a very limited number of classes of modest quality (Tajić 2013, 61-62).[3]

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1   Stimulating critical thinking, the skills of access to and use of information, and the use of information technology are, for example, mentioned as components of modern teaching in the Republika Srpska Strategy for the Development of Education for the period 2016-2021, while the 2014 Principles and Standards for Adult Education in BiH speak of "the ability of adults to understand and use media and other information …" (p. 6). The document Strategic Thrusts of the Development of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2008-2015, accompanied by an implementation plan, notes the need to modernise the education process, including the promotion of critical thinking.

2   In primary education, only around twenty classes are dedicated to topics related to media literacy, as part of the subjects of Mother Tongue, Fine Arts and IT. In secondary schools, MIL is taught as part of the subject Democracy and Human Rights, with two classes dedicated to freedom of expression and two to the role of the media in democracy (Tajić 2013, 58 and 59).

3   Some teacher academies have media literacy classes as part of language and pedagogy courses and/or the elective subject of Media Culture. Other teacher education programmes do not include the development of MIL to any significant extent (see e.g. Dedić Bukvić 2016, 73-96) but two journalism schools, for instance, offer Media Literacy as a subject.

As a consequence, information literacy is still poorly developed among teaching staff, in particular when it comes to their ability to judge the reliability and quality of information (Vehab and Mavrak 2016).

Libraries for the most part do not have the capacities required to contribute to MIL, nor does this form part of their formal duties, although it is not unusual for university librarians to lecture on how to search for and use information. Archival and museology studies in the context of information and communication sciences do not exist (Vajzović et. al. 2018, 5).

Significant progress has, however, been made in the area of regulation of the broadcasting sector. The Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CRA) was the first public institution to start using the term *media literacy*, some ten years ago. Since then, it has commissioned relevant studies, adopted rules, developed guidelines for broadcasting – primarily with a view to protecting minors and consumers[4] – and organised events and campaigns.[5] In September 2018, on the occasion of the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child in Bosnia and Herzegovina* with UNICEF, CRA announced, among other things, that it would devote special attention to children content,[6] whose broadcasting is obligatory for public radio and TV broadcasters.[7] The regulator is also planning to carry out an awareness campaign on control of content to which minors are exposed; to publish a brochure on the protection of children and minors; and to carry out an analysis of the share, in term of quality and quantity, of children and educational programmes as well as of programmes intended for minorities and vulnerable populations and programmes adapted for disabled persons.[8] CRA publishes information on radio and TV broadcasters as well as reports on breaches of professional standards, thus providing the public with an insight into media practices.[9] In recent years, however, civil society organisations

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4   The Code on Audiovisual Media Services and Radio Media Services (2016) includes rules on the protection of identity of minors and the marking of content according to its suitability for minors (which have been in place since 2013). Guidelines on categories of content and an additional two studies have also been published (accessible at https://www.rak.ba/bos/index.php?uid=1274081346). In addition, the Code on Commercial Communications (2016) includes rules aimed at consumer protection, such as prohibition of covert advertising. The codes and rules can be accessed on CRA's website: https://www.rak.ba/bos/index.php?uid=1324649058.

5   Current topics include online security; classification of content on online platforms such as YouTube; and adaptation of media and telecommunication services to disabled persons. Since 2011, CRA has taken part in the organisation of Safer Internet Days in cooperation with the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Save the Children, and many others. In 2018, CRA also held a workshop for journalists and for employees of telecom companies on adaptation of technology and services for disabled persons. Source: Lea Tajić Čengić, media literacy expert and head of the Department for International Broadcasting Cooperation of the Communications Regulatory Agency, interview of 20 September 2018.

6   Predrag Kovač, CRA director, in a report published on the platform For Every Child, 13 September 2018, accessible at http://www.zasvakodijete.ba/djeca-u-medijskom-okruzenju-unicef-bih-i-regulatorna-agencija-za-komunikacije-rak-potpisali-memorandum-o-zastiti-i-promociji-prava-djeteta-u-bih/.

7   Public TV stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina are obliged to have a minimum 6% share of children programmes per week, while the share of children content on public radio stations has to be 4% per week (Rule 77/2015, Article 29, Paragraph 2; Rule 76/2015, Article 28, Paragraph 2).

8   Source: Lea Tajić Čengić, interview of 10 September 2018.

9   The CRA annual reports on breaches of the rules, as well as the contact information and names of the directors and editors-in-chief of the broadcasters, can be found on CRA's website: https://www.rak.ba/bos/index.php?uid=1272548169.

have emphasised the need to better regulate the transparency of media ownership and financing.[10] Through the regulation of radio and TV content (managed by CRA), and the self-regulation of online and print media (with the oversight of the Press Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina), the professional standards to be adhered to by the media have been established. The system is based on citizen complaints regarding media content, with CRA carrying out partial monitoring of content from time to time.[11] The number of complaints received by the Press Council annually grew from a two-digit figure in the early 2000s to between 200 and 300 over the past five years, which might indicate improved public awareness of the complaint procedure. It is also commendable that the Press Council, and since recently CRA as well, explains the complaint procedure in a visible place on its homepage. Still, without additional efforts to develop MIL skills among Bosnian citizens, the potential of these mechanisms, as well as that of active citizen participation in communication processes in general, remains largely unused.

Momentum for CRA's significant engagement in this field has been provided by the great importance that international audiovisual policy standards attach to the active role of regulators in encouraging MIL.[12] Nevertheless, its example has not been followed by other public bodies despite international recommendations for EU member states to, among other things, launch a debate on the integration of media literacy in curricula, to support systematic research, and to develop, through training and information, an awareness of European audiovisual heritage and of the online management of personal data (European Commission 2009). Although, in contrast with EU member states,[13] the public sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not active in this field, some institutions do undertake isolated activities. An important example is the current initiative of the Ministry of Communications and Transport of Republika Srpska (RS), launched in cooperation with the RS Ministry of Education and Culture, the Pedagogical Institute and the public broadcaster Radio-Television of Republika Srpska, whose key element is an awareness campaign on new technologies and potentially harmful content (violence, advertisements, stereotypes, pornography) and regulation and self-regulation (strategies and laws, codes of ethics for the media and advertisers). The campaign will target pupils in the seventh grade of primary schools, as well as their teachers and parents, in the school year 2018/2019. This is a significant initiative launched without dedicated funds

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10 On one of these initiatives, see more on the website of Mediacentar Sarajevo: http://media.ba/bs/vijesti-i-dogadaji-vijesti/potrebni-zakoni-o-medijskom-vlasnistvu-i-finansiranju-medija-u-bih.

11 CRA can issue warnings, impose fines, and suspend or revoke broadcasting licences, while the Press Council operates based on self-regulation, that is, the willingness of the media to work in line with Council decisions and to delete or correct problematic content.

12 See above all the AVMS Directive 2010/13/EU, as well as the European Commission Recommendations (2009/625/EC).

13 In the EU, a total of 939 key players in the area of MIL have been identified, of which 175 from public institutions and 161 from academia. For more, see European Audiovisual Observatory, 2016.

thanks to the enthusiasm of individual Ministry staff.[14] However, this type of action can have but a limited effect in the absence of comprehensive public policies. The representatives of the Ministry of Communications and Transport of RS are for now only mentioning future engagement to this end[15]. A step towards the development of such policies is the recently articulated intention to draw up a media literacy strategy. Following a UNESCO proposal,[16] the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina has decided to produce a state-level strategy for the development of MIL. But no concrete activities have been undertaken in this regard so far; the primary reason given is that this is the last year of the current government's term in office.[17] At the moment, it is not possible to confirm whether the new government that will emerge from the October 2018 elections will demonstrate a willingness to develop this strategic document.

For the time being, there is still a lack of will and capacities for a broader and more substantial engagement. Still, given the great importance attached to media literacy over the past few years in the context of EU activities,[18] but also the significant emphasis placed on these issues by civil society, public bodies, too, will have to take action in this area sooner or later in order to demonstrate their own democratic credibility. MIL is examined in the context of EU accession, primarily in Chapter 10 (Information Society and the Media), which lists the EU *acquis* that candidate countries commit themselves to take over, including the European Commission media literacy recommendations of 2009 (2009/625/EC). Amira Lazović, head of the Division for Harmonisation of the Legal System at the Directorate for European Integration, believes that what is missing in the accession process is primarily a plan of legislative approximation, "whereby such a document would allow us to know the timeline to transpose a certain directive that is directly or indirectly linked to media and information literacy" and whereby coordinated and strategic action of different competent institutions would be ensured.[19]

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14 For instance, the activities of the Data Protection Agency focus on the protection of minors. During the school year 2017/2018, presentations were given to an audience of sixth graders in 27 primary schools around Bosnia and Herzegovina on how to protect oneself from abuse of personal data on the Internet. Source: Una Kurtić Demir, Data Protection Agency, meeting of 10 August 2018. The RS Ministry of Education and Culture is working to supply primary schools in the RS with laptops, network equipment and software.

15 Meeting of 18 September 2018.

16 Under the 2017-2019 project "Building Trust in the Media in Southeast Europe and Turkey", funded by the EU and UNESCO.

17 The working group to develop the strategy should include members nominated by the entity ministries as well as representatives of the broader public and expert community (civil society, media, experts for education, media, information society, library science). Source: Amira Redžić, Head of Culture Department/State Commission for Cooperation with Unesco, Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, meeting of 27 September 2018.

18 The European Commission conclusions and recommendations go in the direction of monitoring of media literacy, supporting research in this area and encouraging member states to take necessary measures to promote media literacy (see for example, European Commission 2009, the Council of the EU 2009). On 25 June 2018, the European Commission launched the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans with a view to providing support for transition towards digital economy and to fostering services, economic growth and development of the labour market (for more, see the communication: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-4242_en.htm).

19 Meeting of 16 October 2018.

1.1. Obstacles to developing systemic solutions

The key obstacle to initiatives to develop MIL policies in the public sector is the complexity of the administrative structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its fragmented, overlapping and insufficient responsibilities in the areas relevant to MIL. Initiatives to develop comprehensive policies will inevitably be confronted with the complex system of responsibilities but also with the lack of political will for cooperation and coordination. This is particularly the case in the education sector, where the responsibilities are divided between 14 ministries (the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, entity education ministries, Brčko District Education Department, and the ten cantonal ministries in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina).[20] Nor have we seen examples of any significant integration of the MIL concept in the curricula in individual administrative units, which can be primarily ascribed to the lack of resources and lack of interest on the part of decision-makers.

1.2. Contribution of the ICT and civil sectors to MIL development

The ICT sector and civil society organisations are in part contributing to the development of MIL in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Telecom and IT companies organise occasional training courses, mainly aimed at developing IT skills, while civil society organisations are the most active in promoting critical thinking and media production skills. Civil society organisations have actually been the only sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina so far that has actively worked to develop and implement different educational programmes and research and to raise awareness in this field. Through its efforts over a number of years, the civil sector has developed MIL skills among different target groups, raised public awareness of current policies and trends in this area, and developed significant resources that can serve as the basis for future action.

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20 The RS Ministry of Education has the primary responsibility for all levels of education in the territory of the RS, while the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are mostly limited to coordination between the ten cantonal ministries. Similarly, the responsibilities for legislative changes in the education sector are held by the parliaments at state level, in the two entities and in Brčko District and the ten cantons.

However, we should also note the constraints resulting primarily from the lack of a comprehensive overview of past initiatives and resources, due to which it is difficult to lay the foundations for solid future work. Accordingly, there exists a need to summarise and synthesise past experiences and to make the available resources readily accessible, not only in order to improve the work of the civil sector but also, with a view to the future, to allow the public sector to use in its future MIL initiatives the resources and knowledge developed through the long-standing efforts of civil society organisations in this field.

1.3.   About this report

This report focuses on analysing the work of the civil sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina as regards the development of media and information literacy. In doing so, it seeks to present and analyse the focus and type of engagement of civil society organisations; resources that have already been developed as well as those that are still necessary; cooperation and exchange with the public and media sectors; as well as the prospects for future action in this area. The report is based on qualitative research that included a survey carried out in the period August-October 2018; semi-structured in-depth interviews with experts (six published interviews); questionnaires filled out by representatives of the civil sector (five questionnaires filled out of the 12 sent out); additional e-mail communication (with three respondents); insights from meetings with representatives of the public sector (four meetings), civil society organisations (one online meeting), and education institutions (one meeting); as well as an analysis of secondary sources on MIL in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the region, and EU member states. Due to the small sample, the findings and conclusions are not representative of all the players and features of this field in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the respondents do include the key players in the area of MIL and related fields, which allows for insights into some of the important patterns of action.

2. Civil sector partly compensating for shortcomings in the development of MIL in Bosnia and Herzegovina

All the leading initiatives in the area of media and information literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina so far have come from the civil sector, partially compensating for the shortcomings of public policies and practices. While past studies (Brunwasser, Turčilo and Marko 2016, 26) identified around 13 domestic and international organisations active in this field, their actual number is significantly higher, especially if we also take into account initiatives that are not explicitly labelled as work in the area of MIL. For example, workshops focusing on improving the skills of media content production, such as those organised by Mediacentar Sarajevo or the Press Council, were not called MIL activities although that is what they essentially were. It is only over the past decade that the MIL label has been used for various activities. The concept of media literacy was first introduced in the public space in Bosnia and Herzegovina through a publication of Mediacentar Sarajevo of 2005[21]; owing to various publications and initiatives of the civil sector, intensified over the past five to six years, the notion of media and information literacy has gained traction in the professional and broader public. Media literacy education expert Vanja Ibrahimbegović Tihak notes that, as a consequence, it is today "quite clear that media literacy as a field is important, and that there is a need [...] in our society to deal with it".

Globally, due to the crisis in journalism, MIL has for a long time been viewed as necessary to preserve society's democratic potential. General assessments describe journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina as undergoing a permanent crisis, and most media in the country as lacking the required capacities for quality journalism. Media reports lack a pluralist perspective and in-depth information, the media are ethnically polarised, specialist and investigative journalism is very rare,[22] and there are frequent instances of speech, especially online, that directly incites intolerance. The influence of political parties on the media is believed to be strong and is exercised through media financing and through ties to

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21 In the collection of reports edited by Nada Zgrabljić Rotar, published by Mediacentar Sarajevo in 2005.
22 See, for example, Hodžić and Sokol 2018.

ownership structures, while the existence of foreign-owned media indicates an influence of world powers on the media space in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many of these influences remain hidden, however, aided by the lack of transparency in media ownership and finances. Content published anonymously on online platforms and social networks mostly escapes the reach of self-regulation. Under such circumstances, it is of decisive importance to develop the ability of citizens to get a more complete picture of social developments through information-checking, critical understanding of content and the like, and to participate in the communication on issues of public interest.[23]

In addition, the growing focus of the NGO sector and donor community in Bosnia and Herzegovina on MIL activities over the past few years is above all a response to the perceived increase in fake news and disinformation, as well as to the greater importance attached to radicalisation and the participation of Bosnian nationals in extremist activities, primarily on foreign fronts.[24] Similarly, in the context of radicalisation through communication channels on a global level, there is an increasing focus on the need to strengthen the resilience of risk groups against problematic content, all the more so because regulation cannot reach the so-called darknet,[25] where the problematic communication of extremist groups has for the most part migrated (Hussain and Saltman 2014, 38). Moreover, much of the problematic content is not and must not be punishable under law, such as toxic speech that might spread intolerance but does not include an actual call to violence, and thus the only remaining mechanism to fight against such content is to expose it and create counternarratives. Over the past few years in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it has been online platforms that have taken on the important task of analysing media content and exposing fake news and disinformation. An example of efforts to develop citizens' skills are the workshops of the UN International Organisation for Migration (IOM). They involve participants from vulnerable groups (unemployed youths) in 25 local communities, and seek to develop resilience vis-à-vis content that might incite extremism.[26]

However, MIL is currently also part of broader thematic development projects, such as the five-year Independent Media Empowerment Project (IMEP) launched in 2017 with the financial support of USAID. This project, among other things, promotes citizen journalism through workshops, grants for citizen journalists, an online platform and an application for publishing citizen journalism content.

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23 At the same time, the government should work to develop policies to improve media transparency, while incentives by the government and donors need to contribute to quality journalism.

24 On radicalisation, see for example Azinović and Jusić 2015.

25 The dark web (or darknet) is the section of the Internet that is strongly encrypted and not indexed in online search engines. To access it, one needs a special application with an appropriate decryption key as well as access permission and the knowledge of where to find the content.

26 The workshops are part of the current Countering Violent Extremism programme. In the course of 2016 and 2017, two-day workshops were held in 10 communities (Vajzović et al. 2018, 33). Additional source: Vanja Ibrahimbegović Tihak, media literacy education expert, interview of 17 September 2018.

The findings of this study point to the conclusion that civil society organisations meet the priority needs of Bosnian society only in small measure. To the question whether civil society responds to society's needs in terms of MIL, only one of the five respondents to the questionnaire replied Yes, three replied No, and one "I don't know"/"I am not sure". One of our interlocutors suggested that the quality of activities and their results are diminishing because "everyone is doing everything and things overlap"[27]. The civil sector in this area works mostly on an ad hoc basis (three out of five replies to the questionnaire) or in a planned fashion and ad hoc in equal measure (two out of five replies to the questionnaire). Civil society organisations are for the most part not familiar with the work of other stakeholders in this field and do not coordinate activities with them (four of five respondents, while one respondent replied "I don't know"). Thus, the civil sector is missing out on opportunities to improve its reach and performance in the area of MIL through planning, coordination, exchange of experiences and/or joint activities.

Civil society organisations are undertaking several types of activities in the development of MIL, primarily training, research and awareness-raising projects related to or fully focusing on media and information literacy.

2.1. Training programmes as the most frequent form of activity

Civil society organisations have organised numerous short training courses, mostly for pupils, university students and educators. The first training sessions designated as media literacy seminars in Bosnia and Herzegovina were media literacy clinics for university students organised by Internews in 2013 and 2014.[28] Since then, training courses have become more and more frequent and all the respondents (five of them) state in the questionnaire that they were involved in the development and implementation of training programmes. One example is the School of Critical Thinking (Mostar), intended for youth, to be held for the second time in 2018-2019, with a thematic focus on critical thinking in the context of journalism and the new media, with classes held at the weekend for a period of more than six months. More frequent are short workshops of one or several days, such as those organised by OSCE for

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27 Amer Džihana, media expert and representative of the analiziraj.ba platform, interview of 10 September 2018.
28 Three or four so-called clinics were organised, the first one consisting of six two-day workshops. Source: Vanja Ibrahimbegović Tihak, interview of 17 September 2018. The same project also organised training of trainers. All of these activities were part of the USAID-funded Strengthening Independent Media project that ran from 2010 until 2015.

students of social sciences,[29] or workshops for pupils which place media literacy in the context of the fight against online juvenile delinquency[30] (see Table 1).

The foundation Step by Step has organised various workshops for teachers, including those for primary school teachers in 2013/2014 that focused on media literacy. The Power Up seminars for secondary school teachers, organised by Schüler Helfen Leben in cooperation with Step by Step, among other things encourage teachers to help students develop critical thinking[31]. Since 2010, the organisation MSF-Emmaus has worked to prevent child abuse through ICT, including by organising workshops for children, parents and teachers. Summer camps organised by Hope International as part of a project launched in 2017 included educating youth on media literacy and online violence, and the plan is to publish a manual on safe use of ICT and media literacy (Vajzović et al. 2018, 33).

Table 1. Illustrative examples of MIL training in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Name and/or type of training	Target group	Organisation	Implementation timeline
School of Critical Thinking	Youth (15-30)	Centre for Critical Thinking, Mostar	2017/2018, 2018/2019
Media literacy workshops	Social sciences students (at eight universities in BiH)	OSCE	2017/2018
Workshops on juvenile delinquency through ICT	Primary and secondary school students (in two cantons)	PH International	2018
Workshops on protection of children against abuse through ICT	Primarily teachers	MSF-Emmaus	Since 2010

29 Between November 2017 and June 2018, five workshops were held (Sarajevo, East Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, and Mostar), with three more being planned (Bihać, Zenica, and Travnik). Source: Vanja Ibrahimbegović Tihak, interview of 17 September 2018.

30 The project is financed by US government and includes workshops with pupils from elementary and high schools in two cantons (Zenica-Doboj and Hercegovina-Neretva) as well as the development of a guidebook.

31 See more on the website of Schüler Helfen Leben: https://www.shl.ba/lat/novosti/item/277-power-up-seminar-za-profesore.

Name and/or type of training	Target group	Organisation	Implementation timeline
Workshops on safety of women on the Internet; data protection workshops with safe houses staff[32]	Women	Foundation One World - Platform for Southeast Europe	n/a
Workshops for youth focusing on online security and fight against violence	Youth	Hope International	2017

Sources: questionnaires, interviews, secondary sources

Vanja Ibrahimbegović Tihak reports that in her experience there is significant interest and potential in MIL training of both teachers and students. The special importance of this training and the significant interest on the part of the participants reflect the fact that this topic is close to citizens' everyday experiences and dilemmas. Ibrahimbegović Tihak notes that these workshops discuss real-life examples of content and meaning of media messages and encourage their critical understanding. In developing training programmes, she herself relies on the theoretical concepts and methodology of the Media Literacy Centre (*medialit.org*).[33] According to the respondents, the participants assess the quality of these workshops as very good, but more detailed evaluations or information on the potential impact of such training on the community are not available.[34]

Most training programmes are intended for university students and for secondary and primary school students, partly because of the identified need to help these particular target groups acquire MIL: they are vulnerable to different influences, but they are also potential agents of social change. Another reason is also that workshops with university students, and to some extent primary and secondary school students, are the easiest to organise.[35] This is the group that is the most

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32 Safe houses are facilities that provide safe accommodation for women and children exposed to domestic violence from the moment of reporting the violence.
33 The same source was also used to develop the media literacy curriculum at the Journalism Faculty of East Sarajevo University.
34 Our research has found that these training courses receive good evaluations but we have not obtained more precise information on the evaluations or the number of participants.
35 If workshops are held in cooperation with primary and secondary schools, the responsible education ministries need to give their consent, and outside of schools only parental/guardian consent is necessary for minors.

motivated to participate in such workshops, and in some cases recruiting them is made easier because workshops are organised in cooperation with universities or because university staff recommend certain workshops to students.

Seminars for teachers do exist but are rare and most teachers in primary and secondary schools remain out of their reach. The limited available insights suggest that media literacy among teachers is still insufficient (Vehab and Mavrak 2016). Workshops for parents are but exceptions (see Table 1), but we can assume that average media literacy among parents is even lower, although they could potentially play an active role in developing MIL competences. The respondents to the questionnaire (five out of five) do not indicate parents as one of the target groups of their activities. On the whole, there is no continuity in training programmes; rather, their duration is limited to one to several training sessions within projects lasting from one to several years.

The training courses held so far in the civil sector focused especially on developing the skills of critical understanding of media content. Other elements of media literacy are only partially covered and appears somewhat neglected, such as access to media, creation of media content and citizen participation in communication practices. Training courses focusing on media production skills and use of multimedia channels, held by organisations such as Mediacentar Sarajevo, are primarily intended for journalism students and journalists, and partly for civil society organisations,[36] and in most cases not for the broader public.

2.2. Surveys point to lack of MIL in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Over the past few years, research has been conducted and reports published that are partly or fully related to MIL. Most of these publications include an overview of public policies pertaining to the topic (media policies, education policies, information society policies), as well as an overview of MIL in the curricula of formal education in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in part of the initiatives of the civil sector, the ICT sector and the media in the development of media literacy (see Table 2).

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36 In cooperation with Civil Rights Defenders, for instance, Mediacentar organised several training cycles for young journalists and NGO activists on freedom of expression in the period 2011-2017. A rare programme that included the development of critical thinking vis-à-vis reporting on minority groups was organised with the support of the US Embassy in 2011 and 2013. Source: correspondence with Slobodanka Dekić, Mediacentar Sarajevo, 27 October 2018.

Table 2. Overview of research reports published as part of civil sector activities or with their partial participation

Title	Year	Authors/ editors	Civil sector participation	Brief description
Medijska pismenost i civilno društvo [Media literacy and civil society]	2006	Nada Zgrabljić Rotar (collection editor)	Publisher: Mediacentar Sarajevo	An overview of the concept of media literacy, MIL in BiH not analysed
Medijska pismenost u Bosni i Hercegovini [Media literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina]	2013	Lea Tajić	Publisher: Internews in BiH, Sarajevo	An overview of the concept of media literacy, experiences from other countries, and policies and initiatives in BiH
Medijska pismenost u digitalnom dobu [Media literacy in the digital age]	2015	Vanja Ibrahimbegović Tihak (collection editor)	Publisher: Internews in BiH, Sarajevo	An analysis of the concept of media literacy and of the situation in BiH in terms of media literacy in primary schools, trust in the media and teachers' media usage, and in terms of media regulation
Medijska pismenost u BiH: Način odgajanja (medijski, društveno i politički) osvještene javnosti [Media literacy in BiH: How to raise an informed audience in media, social and political terms]	n/a	Lejla Turčilo	Publisher: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Banja Luka	A qualitative analysis of media literacy in BiH identifying the direction of future developments in this area

Title	Year	Authors/ editors	Civil sector participation	Brief description
Mladi, politika i mediji. Priručnik za razvijanje političke i medijske pismenosti mladih [Youth, politics, and the media. A handbook for developing political and media literacy in youth]	2017	Lejla Turčilo, Amer Osmić, Jusuf Žiga	Publisher: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Banja Luka	An analysis of political literacy and media literacy in youth (based on focus groups) and a syllabus for education on the topic
Mediji i shrinking space: utišani alternativni glasovi [The media and shrinking space: hushed alternative voices]	2017	Lejla Turčilo and Belma Buljubašić	Publisher: Heinrich Böll Foundation, Sarajevo	An analysis of the media sector with one chapter dedicated to an analysis of media literacy in BiH (based on qualitative insights) and recommendations for its promotion
Media Literacy and Education needs of journalists and the public in Bosnia and Herzegovina [Media Literacy and Education needs of journalists and the public in Bosnia and Herzegovina]	2017	Kanita Halilović, Hafiz Horać and Radenko Udovičić	The section on BiH prepared by Mediaplan BiH; publication part of the regional initiative SEE Partnership for Media Development	A qualitative analysis of the media sector, citizen and journalist education, and the role of the civil sector in media literacy, with recommendations

Title	Year	Authors/ editors	Civil sector participation	Brief description
Pregledna studija o politikama i strategijama medijske i informacijske pismenosti u Bosni i Hercegovini [Overview study on media and information literacy policies and strategies in Bosnia and Herzegovina]	2018	Emir Vajzović, Amer Džihana, Mario Hibert, Vanja Ibrahimbegović Tihak, Sarina Bakić, Feđa Kulenović	Publisher: Social Research Institute of the Sarajevo Faculty of Political Science; publication financed by UNESCO and the EU; some of the authors active in the civil sector	An analysis of MIL policies and of the activities of governmental and non-governmental actors in the area of MIL, with recommendations

Past research has mostly relied on modest resources and was based on secondary sources and qualitative methods. This is the reason why many of these publications provide the same main information and make the same points, while many other issues remain underresearched. Thus, for instance, in her publication of 2013, Lea Tajić offers an overview of the presence of media literacy in formal education curricula based on an analysis of the common core curricula, while later publications do not provide more information on how and to what extent media literacy is integrated in individual curricula. In addition, publications such as a manual for journalists exposed to online violence or an analysis of women's rights and safety on the Internet,[37] also partly concern MIL.

Universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina also contribute to research in this field. Some research papers, thus, examine the attitudes of Bosnian teachers towards media education (Čičkušić 2015), explore the reliability and relevance of information available on Wikipedia (Osmić and Čustović 2015), and provide an overview of public policies in this area (Turčilo and Tajić 2015). Public bodies and institutions for the most part do not contribute actively to MIL research, but the CRA has published analyses of the influence of media content on children as well as guidelines for the classification of content (CRA 2009, Korać, Zečević i Barjaktarević 2009, Zečević 2010).

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37 See Gačanica and Arnautović 2018 and One World Platform 2015.

Moreover, the journal Adult Education – published by the Sarajevo Canton Culture Centre, the Bosnian Culture Centre and the German association DVV International – has included reports on the presence of information literacy in teacher education (Dedić Bukvić 2016) and on computer and information literacy among teachers (Vehab and Mavrak 2016). These reports constitute a valuable contribution to understanding media literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina but are limited to an analysis of the curricula at only one university (Sarajevo Canton) and two schools.

Although the insights they provide are not comprehensive, these sources show that media literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina is underdeveloped and underrepresented in public policies as well as in primary and secondary school syllabi and teacher education.

2.3. Awareness-raising in professional and general public and advocacy as part of MIL programmes

The civil sector also organises public and expert debates on the topic of media and information literacy. Although such events do not bring about significant change in and of themselves, they do contribute to the visibility of related topics and of different initiatives in this field.

The consultation on MIL policies and strategies organised on 23 April 2018 by the Social Research Institute of the Sarajevo Faculty of Political Science is an example of a conference that raised important issues, examined public policies and gathered representatives of different stakeholders.[38] The conference presented the findings of a recently-published study (Vajzović et al. 2018) and discussed future policies and strategies.

Another example of an academic event is the conference organised by the Tuzla Faculty of Pedagogy in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 2-3 November 2018, under the title "Credibility of the media: fighting fake news". This was the ninth in a series of regional academic conferences focusing on understanding the mechanisms to fight fake news and on the development of initiatives in this field.[39]

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38 Including civil sector experts, representatives of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the CRA, and the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

39 The call for abstracts was published here: http://www.ff.untz.ba/uploads/images/Gallery/Fakultet_general/aktuelno/Poziv_vjerodostojnost%20medija/Poziv%20na%20konferenciju%20Vjerodostojnost%20medija%20u%20Tuzli,%202.-3.%2011.2018..pdf.

International conferences, too, provide an important opportunity to exchange experiences and facilitate the networking of experts in this area. In September 2018, Foundation Evens – in partnership with the European Commission, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Mediacentar Sarajevo – organised a big conference, "Media meets literacy", in Sarajevo, gathering international media literacy experts and representatives of government bodies. The talks and discussions addressed fake news, post-truth policies, the growing lack of trust in the media, and the way to confront these phenomena.

At the POINT conference,[40] held annually since 2013, various stakeholders give presentations and discuss trends, projects and start-ups in the area of ICT and MIL. Also, since 2016, the One World Foundation has organised the annual BiH Internet Governance Forum, at which issues such as digital neutrality, security, privacy and data protection are discussed, especially in view of the age and gender of Internet users.[41]

Many other events facilitated by organisations active either in education or in the media sector at least touch upon MIL issues. Thus, Step by Step runs annual regional conferences which discuss, among other things, innovative education practices,[42] although there is no explicit focus on MIL. The Mostar Centre for Critical Thinking organises public panels to encourage critical thinking.[43] Mediacentar Sarajevo, BH Journalists, the Press Council and many others also organise occasional events that directly or indirectly deal with MIL, including recent events on promoting access to information on media ownership and financing that have gathered the professional community but also raise awareness of the importance of improving media transparency.

Some initiatives include awareness campaigns conducted through the mass media. Since 2010, MSF-Emmaus has conducted the Surf Safely campaign, focusing on the protection of children against abuse through ICT. Some of our interlocutors note that these public campaigns raise public awareness and might, as a result, contribute to change in public policies (more below).

Some of the above-mentioned research projects also include recommendations for the development of MIL policies, such as the general recommendations in the 2018 overview study (Vajzović et al.). The study is expected to be followed by a policy brief. Advocacy has been planned within the same project and will focus on the development

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40 The conference is run by the organisations Zašto ne (Why not), Action SEE, CRTA, Metamorphosis and the Center for Democratic Tradition.
41 See the Report on the BiH Internet Governance Forum of 2017.
42 For information, see the Step by Step website: http://www.sbs.ba/9-regionalna-konferencija-edukatora/.
43 See a text published on Tačno.net: Kristina Ljevak, "Centar za kritičko mišljenje i portal Tačno.net predstavljeni na trećem danu Bookstana" [Centre for Critical Thinking and portal Tacno.net introduced on the third day of Bookstan], 6. 7. 2018. https://www.tacno.net/kultura/centar-za-kriticko-misljenje-i-portal-tacno-net-predstavljeni-na-trecem-danu-bookstana/.

of a MIL strategy, including the establishment of an advisory body whose expert members would work to develop a policy proposal and the launch of a Web platform.[44]

MIL projects, however, most often do not include an advocacy component, or rather advocacy activities are limited to the dissemination of research reports and recommendations and final project meetings and conferences, while NGOs usually do not have the required resources for continuous and long-term advocacy for change in public policies (see Section 5).

2.3.1. Online platforms contributing to raising awareness of MIL-related issues

Several online platforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina publish analyses of media policies and practices and point out fake news, manipulations and violations of consumer rights, thus raising public awareness of these phenomena.

For example, the Mediacentar Sarajevo website has been in operation for more than 15 years and has published analyses of media policies and practices as well as educational content and news, intended primarily for media professionals but also for a broader public. The *analiziraj.ba* platform is an example of an online watchdog that over the past few years has published analyses of media content which seek to provide the broader public with "examples from practice showing where the problem is when it comes to reporting in the media"[45]. Launched in 2017 and operating with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the US Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Web page raskrinkavanje.ba focuses on exposing fake news and disinformation. *Raskrinkavanje.ba* has registered a growing number of citizen reports on a daily basis regarding potentially problematic content.[46] The website also has a media literacy subsection, where short articles seek to explain the importance of information being available on media ownership and on those persons who are responsible for particular publications. The Press Council website, too, provides information on ethical standards, examples of their violation and on ways to lodge complaints. The users of these platforms in this way learn about professional standards and problematic practices, but also about the possibilities for citizens to react to identified problematic practices. In addition, *raskrinkavanje.ba* publishes media responses to criticism, which in particular makes it possible to draw conclusions regarding the accountability of individual media outlets vis-à-vis the public.

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44 Emir Vajzović, head of the Institute for Social Research, Faculty of Political Sciences, meeting of 4 October 2018.
45 Amer Džihana, interview of 10 September 2018.
46 Source: Tijana Cvjetićanin, research coordinator and content editor of the website raskrinkavanje.ba, interview of 17 September 2018.

These platforms, however, only have the capacity to analyse a small share of media content in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, as a result, their reach is far less than that of the mass media. Nevertheless, *analiziraj.ba* and *raskrinkavanje.ba* have been registering a growing number of visits.[47] It is important that they use specific analyses to point to the general need for citizens to critically understand media content in their everyday use of the media.

It is also important to mention other online platforms, such as the website *sigurnodijete.ba*, run by MSF-Emmaus, which publishes information and advice related to fighting online violence and to risks of online communication for children. Through the project Strengthening Independent Media, the platform *futura.ba* has produced and published promotional video clips introducing the concept of media literacy and discussing issues such as hate speech, while the remaining content for the most part focuses on consumer protection.

The following chapter will look at the participation of the public sector in the MIL initiatives of the civil sector and in the responses of public policy to society's needs in the area of MIL.

3. Public sector participation in initiatives by civil society organisations: modest but not negligible

It is rare that the public sector participates in projects and activities of the civil sector in the area of MIL. Where this does happen, the respondents describe it as modest although not negligible (two of the five respondents). Representatives of relevant public bodies and institutions most often take part in these projects through events and consultations, and to some extent also in the capacity of trainers and consultants or users of studies and analyses

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47   According to Džihana, in mid-2018 the analiziraj.ba platform reached the number of 4,000 visitors, and according to the replies given by Zašto ne to the questionnaire, raskrinkavanje.ba has as many as 100,000 regular users.

prepared by civil society organisations. For instance, representatives of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in the project "Building Trust in the Media in Southeast Europe" through attendance at a workshop and through consultations.

MSF-Emmaus is a rare organisation whose activities often involve representatives of the public sector such as the state-level Ministry of Security, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the Ministry of Communications, and the CRA, most frequently in the capacity of trainers, event participants, consultants, and users of recommendations and analyses. In addition, three projects in 2014, 2016 and 2017 focusing on the fight against abuse of minors through ICT also received financial support from the Federation Ministry of Education and Science.

Of great importance for platforms such as raskrinkavanje.ba are adequate and timely replies by public authorities to their queries aimed at checking information from media reports. As noted by Cvjetićanin, while some public authorities reply readily and are relieved that someone is finally dealing with these issues, others, for political reasons, do not reply at all or provide "generic replies that are not really replies". One gets the impression that in this regard public institutions play a fairly passive role of providing replies to queries regarding the accuracy of some reports and do not contact such platforms themselves in order to flag problematic content.

According to some of the MIL experts interviewed, however, there is a general lack of knowledge, capacities and interest in MIL in the public sector, although there are individual exceptions. Representatives of the public sector tend to reduce media and information literacy to information literacy only.[48] The public sector is generally insensitive to proposals and initiatives to change public policies in the area of MIL. Nevertheless, some of the respondents point to the potential indirect contribution of the civil sector to a change in the practices of public authorities, specifically through raising public awareness and through public pressure. Thus, the representative of the analiziraj.ba platform says that the public pressure to which the platform contributed prompted the CRA to step up its monitoring of the application of broadcasting rules. MSF-Emmaus also notes that its Surf Safely campaign has indirectly contributed to increased activities of relevant institutions to prevent abuse of children.[49] However, to date no clear commitment of the public sector to promote MIL has been articulated through any strategic documents or public policies.

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48 Amer Džihana, interview of 10 September 2018.
49 Source: filled-out questionnaires.

3.1. Cooperation between the public and civil sectors as a model for future action

The respondents in our survey do recognise the exceptional potential of the efforts of individual public officials who are enthusiastic and committed to the idea of MIL and believe that they can initiate positive change. Such individuals have primarily been identified in the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Integration Directorate, the Ministry of Communications and Transport of Republika Srpska, and the CRA.

In the future, it is precisely the cooperation between civil society and the public sector that will be of key importance. According to one of our interlocutors, "the civil sector plays a major role and sometimes their voice is stronger than that of the governmental sector"[50]. Interlocutors from the civil sector especially emphasise the potential for joint advocacy and action to integrate MIL more strongly into public policies.

Potential for future cooperation is also found in the transfer of knowledge and resources from the civil to the public sector. As one respondent says, "I think that it is then the task of the civil sector to help them [author's note: the public sector] to the maximum [...] So, this should be used wherever there are projects that offer a possibility to give them something"[51]. Una Kurtić Demiragić of the Data Protection Agency, for example, notes that the Agency does not have the required materials or capacities to be more active in the promotion of media literacy and believes that the civil sector can help them in this regard. Professor Mirjana Mavrak from the Faculty of Philosophy of Sarajevo University quotes an example of transfer of experience: after participating in a workshop for trainers in the area of media literacy organised in 2013 by Internews in BiH, she introduced media literacy classes in the regular Andragogy course for students at the Department of Pedagogy. "This is one subject [...] around 60 classes and out of these 60 classes approximately one-sixth of the time I talk about media literacy and about developing critical thinking", using, among other things, the materials and online sources recommended at the workshop.[52]

That steps forward are possible at universities, with encouragement from civil society, is shown by the fact that the journalism departments of East Sarajevo University and Banja Luka University have introduced the subject of Media

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50 Amira Lazović, Head of Division, Division for Harmonisation of the Legal system, The Directorate for European Integration, Council of Ministers, meeting of 16 October 2018.
51 Amer Džihana, interview of 10 September 2018.
52 Mirjana Mavrak, professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sarajevo University, interview of 17 September 2018.

Literacy. In East Sarajevo, the subject was introduced in the school year 2016/2017, following the participation of teachers from these departments in media literacy workshops organised by Internews in BiH in 2013 and 2014. As noted by Vuk Vučetić of East Sarajevo University, "the curriculum has been developed in consultation with experts […] but also based on our past experience and work and combines theoretical knowledge with practical exercises, which have proven to be very useful for a better (de)construction of media content and largely rely on the five concepts of media literacy that we have taken over from the Media Literacy Centre", at *medialit.org*; the experience with this subject has been very positive.[53] Similarly, at the Grade Teacher Academy in Tuzla students can choose Media Literacy as a subject, while the Psychology Department offers the elective subject of Media and Audience.[54]

However, such subjects or additional classes within other subjects also need to be introduced at other faculties, as well as at earlier stages of education, in order to improve the overall media literacy of citizens.

4. Rare and modest efforts of the media and ICT sectors in encouraging MIL

The ICT sector does implement some MIL projects, primarily through awareness-raising activities, such as the campaign undertaken by M:Tel in cooperation with the RS Traffic Safety Agency to discourage use of mobile phones while driving.[55] Another form of activities are occasional donations by the ICT sector and joint work such as the one between HT Eronet and Mostar University, whereby Eronet undertook to help with technological modernisation, facilitate student visits and internships and cooperate in research and education projects.

In addition, training organised by the ICT sector – such as Microsoft BiH, Logosoft and Comtrade workshops – focuses on developing information literacy and, as a rule, does not include other aspects of MIL.[56]

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53 Written reply, 8 October 2018.
54 Zarfa Hrnjić Kuduzović, Journalism Department, Tuzla University, written reply of 19 September 2018.
55 Be Smarter Than Your Phone campaign, implemented over a period of three months in 2017.
56 One example is the MS Skills Center, founded by Microsoft BiH in cooperation with the association MS Community BiH, with the aim of offering IT training and improving the competitiveness of young people on the IT market.

ICT companies very rarely participate in civil sector initiatives to promote MIL and in most cases provide only sponsorship for film festivals that may include a MIL component. The Sarajevo Film Festival and the Pravo Ljudski festival, for example, offer film criticism and film production workshops. In 2017, the Pravo Ljudski festival included a workshop discussing media literacy, film literacy, critical thinking and alternative forms of social action, especially through social media and blogs. Some of our interlocutors point out that literacy is not encouraged even in the primary area of work of ICT companies, i.e., telecommunications and information technology: "You will not find written information for older or younger people, you will not find flyers in their shops"[57].

The situation is similar when it comes to the media, which often do not sufficiently inform the public about their own services (such as on-demand services), their own credibility and that of related stakeholders (ownership structure, sources of revenue, ethical standards they adhere to, programming orientation), and about journalistic ethical standards more generally (including, for instance, respect of copyrights). Only some of the media regularly publish content on new technology (e.g., *Oslobođenje, Klix, Bljesak.info*), although in most cases this comes from other sources, or content on consumer rights (e.g., the *Računica* programme on RTRS), or sponsor film festivals.[58] The media usually carry press releases on media literacy events and projects just to a certain extent, without attaching any special importance to them or publishing in-depth or continuous reports on these issues.[59] Not even the public media in BiH – including the three RTV broadcasters, which should by their nature serve the public interest – are committed to these issues in any significant way.

While the media are rarely active in the promotion of media literacy, some outlets do occasionally work with civil society organisations on individual projects, most often providing journalistic expertise and/or media sponsorship. Although this type of cooperation is rare, our respondents believe that in some cases it has proven to be very important for the success of MIL initiatives. The *analiziraj.ba* platform, for instance, has had close cooperation with media outlets such as tačno.net, zurnal.ba and etrafika.net, which republish the platform's content.

On the whole, our findings show that the potential for action in this field is underutilised and that the current role of the media in media literacy initiatives is modest. Nevertheless, it is evident that the media could play a key role in extending the reach of MIL initiatives and contribute to raising the awareness of the public, but also of the public sector, of issues related to it.

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57 Lea Tajić Čengić, interview of 10 September 2018.
58 For instance, Klix, Aljazeera Balkans, Gloria, RSG Radio, Radio Antena and Radio Mix are the partners of Sarajevo Film Festival, while BHRT is the media sponsor.
59 An example of such an experience is the Data Protection Agency. Source: Una Kurtić Demir, meeting of 10 August 2018.

5. Good prospects for future action to develop MIL

Over the past few years, MIL-related activities of civil society organisations have been either increasing (three out of five replies in the questionnaire) or at the same level as in the previous years (two replies). All the organisations/individuals who have replied to the questionnaire (five of them) say that they have ongoing media literacy projects and are planning similar projects for the long term.

The interviewed respondents note the need to continue working in the area of training, research, awareness-raising and advocacy in order to contribute to promoting MIL in different fields. In this, it is necessary to rely on the resources that have been developed and continue to be developed through activities of civil society organisations.

5.1. Civil sector resources for implementing MIL initiatives

Civil society organisations have developed significant MIL resources and knowledge that can serve as a solid basis for developing future initiatives in this field.

As for the questionnaire respondents, their most developed capacities are those for the design and implementation of training projects. These capacities include already-developed human resources, concepts of training programmes, and in part training materials/tools as well (more in Table 3).

Table 3. Most important civil sector resources in the area of MIL

Type of resource	Frequency of replies (N=5 replies to questionnaire)
Human resources	5 (3 – staff for design and implementation of training programmes; 2 – research and policy analysis staff and 1 – advocacy staff).
Developed concept of training programmes	4
Training materials/tools	3
Strengthened technological capacities	3
Methodology of research, monitoring, policy analysis	2
Report/policy analysis that might steer future action	2

However, access to some of these resources is limited. For example, we cannot at present access information on the media clinics organised by Internews in BiH in 2013 and 2014; neither are their publications available in one place since the website of this media project of Internews became inactive. The concepts and agendas of training projects are not always publicly accessible, especially once the participants have been recruited.[60] An example of a training syllabus in the area of MIL – with defined objectives, outcomes, content and timeline and explanations of concepts – is available in the 2017 publication Turčilo et al.

In addition, networks of experts and other stakeholders in the area of MIL have been developed in some projects. In particular, the recent project "Building Trust in the Media in Southeast Europe and Turkey" has gathered experts from the fields of media, media literacy, education, library science and information society, and in part also representatives of relevant public institutions and civil society organisations, who can be consulted in future initiatives.

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60 Following our query, civil society organisations were not willing to send detailed plans or tools and materials that they use for this type of training. Some of the organisations said that this was not possible due to the confidential nature of their contracts with partners and/or because civil society organisations compete for donor funds. A list of topics, and the names of speakers, for the School of Critical Thinking is, for example, available at https://www.tacno.net/novosti/pocinje-prijem-druge-generacije-studenata-skole-kritickog-misljenja-u-mostaru/, but without detailed descriptions of the content or of the tools and materials used. Neither is there information available on the evaluation of training programmes.

Nevertheless, MIL initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina are facing significant constraints and obstacles, most importantly a lack of MIL expertise as well as difficulties in terms of sustainability, and to some extent also a lack of resources (Table 4).

Table 4. Obstacles in the implementation of MIL projects

Type of obstacle	Frequency of replies in the questionnaire (N=5)
Lack of MIL expertise	4
Difficulties regarding sustainability of MIL activities	4
Lack of resources for good implementation of MIL activities	3
Low participation of decision-makers	2
Inability to influence systemic change	3
Lack of analyses and recommendations to determine thrust of action	2
Poor coordination/cooperation with other players	2

Most of the respondents from the civil sector believe that the sector is not working to meet society's needs in the area of MIL (three of five replies, plus one reply "I don't know"). Some of the reasons given for the poor cooperation of the academic community and the public sector with civil society organisations are linked to a perceived and/or actual lack of credibility. Thus, one of the interviewed respondents notes that a partial lack of a thought-through and academic approach in the work of the civil sector is one of the reasons why the academic community is not more open to cooperation,[61] while another respondent suggests that any cooperation with the civil sector, even just a reference to sources and resources published by NGOs, is often perceived only as promotion of those organisations and not as promotion of issues of public significance.[62] Accordingly, there is a need to better demonstrate the credibility and commitment of the civil sector to these issues, as well as to further develop capacities.

61   Mirjana Mavrak, interview of 17 September 2018.
62   Una Kurtić Demir, meeting of 10 August 2018.

In the assessment of civil society representatives, there is above all a need to develop fundraising capacities for MIL projects as well as to develop technological resources, both hardware and software (Table 5).

Table 5. Capacity-building needs of civil society organisations

Type of capacity	Frequency of replies (N=5)
Fundraising capacities for MIL projects	4
Development of network of external collaborators	2
Development of technological resources	3
Development of training materials/tools	2
Development of expertise for research, policy analysis and formulation of recommendations for creation of MIL policies	1
Development of advocacy knowledge and skills	2

For example, there is a lack of information expertise on the part of individuals who check the accuracy of media content. As one of our interlocutors states: "I do not know how Google's search engine algorithm functions, which means that I would have to spend a lot of the time that I do not have to learn those things while I am sure that there are people who know them already but we are not connected and that is where I see a problem."[63]

Past models of civil sector action have in particular been missing a communications component and a sort of forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience, which would consolidate in one place the resources (research, tools, training programme concepts) as well as facilitate interaction between different stakeholders and formation of coalitions for advocacy of common MIL objectives. This kind of platform, inskola.com, exists currently only for teachers. On this platform, members of the community exchange teaching materials and authored texts, but MIL-related materials, such as examples of media content that could be used in teaching, are still missing.[64]

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63 Tijana Cvjetićanin, interview of 17 September 2018.
64 Source: interview with representatives of Step by Step, 29 October 2018. Step by Step runs the inskola.com platform. Although our interlocutors say that the platform has developed significantly, they also note that it could reach its full potential if at least one or two persons were to work full-time to run it, which is not the case today.

5.2. Financial sustainability depends almost entirely on the support of international donors

The civil sector cannot work to develop MIL in a way that would be fully strategically thought-through, sustainable in the long run and continuous since it depends on the financial support of international donors, for whom MIL has never been a high priority. This has prevented media literacy projects from continuing to run for longer periods of time and, in the experience of the respondents, even some well-designed and solid projects have failed to attract donor funds.[65] Over the past few years, however, the donor community's interest in MIL has grown, especially in the context of a stronger focus on fake news and radicalisation. As a result, the trend of donors investing in this thematic area is expected to continue in the next five years.

For the time being, the bulk of funding for such projects cannot be raised from private donations by citizens, although such funding campaigns have been used by some initiatives and might play a more significant role in the future. The Mostar-based Centre for Critical Thinking, for instance, partly funded the second season of its School for Critical Thinking in 2018 from donations by individuals, with a total worth more than 2,000 euros.[66]

Only one of our respondents mentioned the need to use public funds to invest in MIL development, which in part can also include the funding of civil society projects. The respondents to the questionnaire do not mention the ICT sector as a significant source of resources, but some of the interviewed experts note that this sector could contribute to the strength and reach of MIL initiatives above all with technological resources and support.

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65   Lea Tajić Čengić, for instance, mentions one such project.
66   Information from the tačno.net website, available at http://www.tacno.net/mostar/podrzite-skolu-kritickog-misljenja-u-mostaru/.

6. Conclusions

Primarily as a result of civil sector activities, the past few years have seen significant progress in awareness-raising in all segments of society on the concept and importance of MIL, creating the preconditions for a broader social dialogue. Through NGO activities, a consensus has been established among experts on the belief that media and information literacy includes most various skills of access, use, critical thinking, content production and participation in communication. This clearly-defined media literacy concept can be easily transposed into future public policies.

Through many research, training and awareness-raising and advocacy activities, the civil sector has to some extent made up for the lack of action by the public sector and developed significant resources, above all by facilitating the education of professional staff and by developing training programmes. However, needs have been identified in the area of capacity-building, advocacy skills and capacities as well as additional research in the field of MIL. Furthermore, civil society activities have so far not been coordinated or linked in a way that would ensure better results as well as influence on public policies. Civil society capacities are particularly underdeveloped in the field of advocacy, which has so far been only a marginal part of MIL projects.

We expect the trend of increased attention and support by the donor community and civil society for projects focusing on MIL to continue in the years to come. Accordingly, existing resources should be used, missing capacities developed (especially for research and advocacy), civil sector initiatives linked up and coordinated, an efficient exchange of knowledge and experience facilitated, and broader coalitions for media literacy advocacy created.

The respondents in this survey, however, identify the need for stronger efforts by the public sector and for substantial cooperation between the public and civil sectors as necessary elements for progress in the area of media literacy.

Nevertheless, the awareness of these issues is still limited in the public sector and a commitment to develop policies ensuring a systemic development of media literacy has not yet been clearly articulated. For the time being, media literacy is only a marginal part of most curricula and no concrete steps have been taken to draw up a state-level media literacy strategy. The rare initiatives by public bodies only confirm that for the time being, the will and capacities for broader and more substantial activities are missing. Still, individuals in relevant public bodies and institutions are

developing interest and enthusiasm to promote MIL in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which might be an important driver for the development of public policies and practices of public bodies. A particular priority is the need to integrate MIL in formal education, which would ensure the development of media and information literacy skills among all the participants in the education system and among future generations. [67]

The current activities of the media and ICT sectors in civil society initiatives are assessed as rare and modest. At the same time, it is recognised that broader cooperation would enable a wider reach of MIL initiatives and ensure the development of key competences in citizens, but also indirect influence on public policies.

In the future, efforts on the part of all the mentioned sectors in the area of MIL will ensure broader social change and encourage democratisation of Bosnian post-conflict society.

7.   Recommendations[68]

Given that donors currently attach great importance to media and information literacy, that numerous organisations are active in this field and that there is a growing awareness of its importance in the public sector, it is necessary to use this momentum and continue to work more actively in this field in the long term.[69] In this, it would be important to expand, strengthen and link up networks of experts and stakeholders active in this area in order to enable future joint action. This requires long-term projects and financial support by international donors.

In the period to come, the civil sector will by necessity be leading change in the area of media literacy, but greater efforts on the part of the public, media and ICT sectors will be required for broader and substantial progress.

Media and information literacy need to be more strongly integrated in strategic documents, which will ensure future change in policies and practices in this field. Above all, pursuant to a decision of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the government to be formed following the elections in late 2018 should

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67 This need is recognised by the interviewed respondents but also noted in international recommendations (European Commission 2009).

68 The recommendations will serve as a basis for advocacy activities within the same project, but also contribute to other initiatives in this field.

69 It is necessary to ensure that the current trend to treat media literacy as a priority in the particular context of radicalisation and fake news should not be excessively reductionist and that, as a result, MIL should not be neglected in long-term democratisation processes.

develop, in cooperation with experts and the civil sector, a media literacy strategy and later on an action plan and implementation mechanisms. In the context of EU accession, it is necessary to draw up a plan for approximation with EU standards, including those related to MIL. The cantonal and entity ministries responsible for education should integrate MIL in education programmes at all levels (perhaps initially through pilot projects). On the model of journalism studies in East Sarajevo and Banja Luka, other faculties at all universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina should also work to introduce media literacy subjects. In addition, the Education and Pedagogy Institutes in the entities and cantons should strengthen media literacy elements in teacher training and thus indirectly make MIL more present in classrooms. This will require capacity-building at Pedagogy Institutes.

Civil society organisations should advocate, exert pressure and render support to the public sector in adopting a strategy and action plan, integrating MIL in curricula, and developing the mentioned pilot programmes, teacher training, teaching aids and textbooks for MIL education.

It is necessary to strengthen cooperation and coordinate activities of all sectors in this field in order to ensure exchange of knowledge and experience and coordinated action towards the common objectives of developing MIL in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Broader coalitions need to be formed for advocacy on key strategic issues (Strategy for Media and Information Literacy and introduction of school subjects, among others). Civil society organisations should launch such coalitions and plan appropriate resources for long-term advocacy.

Civil society organisations should work to establish an online resource centre for media and information literacy in order to make available all existing content and resources related to MIL (research reports, training programme plans, training materials and tools, lists of MIL experts), facilitate interaction, exchange experiences, and enable consultations among all stakeholders.

The civil sector should strengthen monitoring and evaluation of its own efforts in this field in order to demonstrate its accountability and credibility (publish information related to research and training methodologies, good and poor performance and impact), encourage cooperation among key stakeholders, and allow for identification and adoption of best practices.

Civil society organisations and experts should carry out additional research on the situation concerning MIL in Bosnia and Herzegovina (such as an analysis of formal and informal education programmes; surveys on media literacy among pupils, university students and teachers/professors, as well as on the role of parents in developing MIL skills). More comprehensive quantitative research is also required to draw reliable general conclusions. In line with the above-mentioned international recommendations, research should be encouraged through public funds,

primarily through grants from the ministries of education and communications and civil affairs. This research would allow the development of activities of the public and civil sectors focusing on priority needs.

It is necessary to further develop civil society efforts in training programmes. Training centres should develop specialisation and recognisability in training in a particular area and for particular target groups. Overall, these programmes should include different groups, among them teachers, pupils and university students. Lifelong learning centres, parents' associations and other organisations should develop training for parents, which is the least frequent type of training at the moment.[70]

In terms of training, the tendency to focus on critical thinking can be considered a good strategy for transferring key competences to participants in very short training projects. However, training programmes should not neglect the development of more comprehensive skills, including access to the media, content production and active participation in communication, which are also key for citizen participation.

Stronger efforts on the part of ICT companies (including BH Telekom, HT Mostar, M:Tel, Microsoft, Logosoft, and many others) are required in this area. ICT companies should inform the public of their own field of activity and services, but also invest technology and funds into media literacy programmes,[71] through which they would promote their own brand in public but also demonstrate social responsibility.

The media sector needs to get more involved in the development of media and information literacy. The media should increase the visibility of relevant activities of other sectors in this field, and it should also produce content focusing on MIL (including content on regulation and self-regulation, media ownership, disinformation) on an ongoing basis (e.g., through regular rubrics).

In particular, public media should, in accordance with their mission, promote public awareness of MIL issues through content production, and allow citizens to get acquainted with media work and production of media content through visits to these media outlets (e.g., open doors days, presentations and visits for pupils).

It is necessary, in parallel, to encourage the development of a media environment in which information on media and quality media content will be available. More specifically: a) international donors and the public sector should provide financial support for credible and quality journalism; b) communications ministries and other relevant bodies should

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70   These include DVV International (Sarajevo), the Doboj Centre for Lifelong Learning and the Sarajevo Centre for Continuous Education.
71   Vanja Ibrahimbegović Tihak quotes the example of workshops funded by Microsoft through equipment donations, in which civil sector representatives helped pupils develop ICT and critical thinking skills.

work to develop a legislative and institutional framework, including a framework for promoting the transparency of media ownership and financing.

Citizens need to be informed more about legal and ethical standards of public communication and about all the existing complaint mechanisms through the above-mentioned platforms (analiziraj.ba, raskrinkavanje.ba, media.ba, vzs.ba, and others). This includes complaints sent to the CRA, the Press Council and watchdog platforms as well as complaints about problematic content submitted to large online platforms such as Facebook.

Public institutions should in the future be encouraged to actively work to counter disinformation, i.e., to contact themselves the media and platforms for analysis of media content if they spot inaccurate information published in the media. Given that disinformation is most frequently linked to security and health issues (such as anti-vaccine propaganda), an important role is to be played in particular by security authorities and healthcare institutions.

Measures like these would allow different actors to contribute to information literacy of citizens and therefore to the strengthening of democratic processes in BiH.

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Slobodanka Dekić, Mediacentar Sarajevo, 27 October 2018.

Vuk Vučetić, Journalism Department, East Sarajevo University, 8 October 2018.

Zarfa Hrnjić Kuduzović, Journalism Department, Tuzla University, 19 September 2018.

Filled-out questionnaires	Questionnaires without replies
1. Propulsion	1. Press Council
2. Zašto ne	2. Internews in BiH
3. Centre for Media and policy analysis	3. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
4. EMMAUS	4. OSCE
5. STEP BY STEP	5. FUTURA
	6. CPCD
	7. ONE WORLD SEE

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Strengthening the Role of the Macedonian Public Service Broadcaster MRT in Promoting Media Literacy

Vesna Nikodinoska, Slavčo Milenkovski and Bojan Georgievski

1. Introduction

The Macedonian Radio and Television (MRT) has a legal obligation to create and broadcast programmes that relate to promoting media literacy, as stipulated in the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services.[1] By the end of 2018, the public service broadcaster (PSB) did not have media content on its programmes that strictly integrates this concept. However, in December 2018, MRT began producing and broadcasting a media literacy educational serial for young people and the wider public.

In Macedonia, the only document deriving from the legislation that contains a general definition of media literacy (ML) is the *Programme for Promoting Media Literacy in the Republic of Macedonia* prepared by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services.[2] Still, there are no detailed strategies, guidelines or initiatives inside the PSB for developing programmes related to this concept. As a result, MRT is experiencing a lack of trained professionals who could produce content dedicated to ML. Several laws that apply to MRT limit the employment and rational reallocation of staff across different departments when needed. Another important constraint are the technical and financial resources for implementing such programmes, which for some original projects are certainly necessary. On the other hand, with initiative and ideas the concept of ML could be integrated into some of the existing content by using existing capacities.

The need for MRT to produce and broadcast various programmes in the field of media literacy stems from the core mission of the public service broadcaster, which is to inform and educate, and media education and media literacy are a natural and essential part of these functions. Promoting media and information literacy (MIL) is becoming a necessity for the public service broadcaster in light of technological and media progress and the surge of information from various media platforms. In this context, it is particularly important for audiences that are surrounded by and in constant contact with the media to develop skills for critical use of the information coming from different sources,

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1   Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia* 184/13, Article 110. http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Law_on_Audio_and_Audiovisual_Media_Services_as_published_in_Official_Journal.pdf (Accessed 14 January 2019).
2   In this document media literacy is described as "the citizens' ability to effectively use, understand and consciously participate in all forms of communication, as well as in the democratic and political processes". See: Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, *Programme for Promoting Media Literacy in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: AVMU, 2015). http://mediumskapismenost.mk/media/2017/12/Programme_for_Promoting_Media_Literacy.pdf (Accessed 20 January 2019).

to defend their right to freedom of information and expression and to become active and responsible citizens representing democratic values.

Martina Chapman, a media literacy expert from Ireland, underlines several key reasons for promoting MIL through the public service broadcaster. Firstly, she cites the audience reach and the incentive for engaging this audience given the availability of multi-platform content in today's multimedia environment, in which audiences use many media outlets simultaneously. According to her, the creative potential of the audience that can create and transfer content is of particular importance for the media, as well as creating partnerships, because experience shows that the promotion of MIL is more successful when delivered in this way than when implemented in isolation. This also increases opportunities to generate new funding sources.[3] Chapman cites the example of the UK commercial broadcaster ITV, which has identified six consumer needs that drive the consumption of multi-platform content, each of which has MIL skills linked to it: connecting, self-expression, belonging, sharing, extended enjoyment, control and convenience.[4]

The aim of this research is to provide guidance to the public service broadcaster MRT that should develop strategic, organisational and professional capacities to create basic conditions for the production and broadcasting of programmes related to MIL. Therefore, a comparative analysis including the British public service broadcaster, the BBC, and the Belgian public service broadcaster, RTBF, which broadcasts programmes intended for the French-speaking community, was conducted. These public service broadcasters are leading with their experience and innovation in the production of programmes related to MIL and can offer useful examples and practices for MRT.

The research was conducted in the period July to October 2018. Secondary data from relevant sources from all three countries was used, including strategic documents, analyses, reports and other publications from national and European institutions, as well as legislation in this area from the three countries. In addition, four interviews with media experts from Macedonia, the United Kingdom and Belgium were conducted.

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3 Martina Chapman, media literacy expert, *Mercury Insights*, interview of 24 September 2018.
4 Ibid.

2. Media literacy in legislation and strategic documents

In addition to the fact that MIL-related content is essentially part of the mission of the public service broadcaster, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) in its documents stresses other important reasons why they should be produced and broadcast precisely through the PSBs.

In achieving their role as promoters of media literacy, the public service broadcasters should be guided by three key principles.[5] The first principle – bridging the digital divide – involves the promotion of media literacy through educational and awareness-raising programmes, which would enable universal access to quality content and modern distribution platforms. The PSBs should help the public to objectively view their programmes and to connect and engage with different media platforms, in order to effectively benefit from the services provided. The second principle refers to informing and empowering the democratic capacity of citizens, that is, the PSB should help them understand how the media function and influence their lives and how they can be used in the best possible way. Through various programmes, online services and initiatives, they need to strengthen critical understanding, active citizenship and participation in the public sphere. Creating a trusted space for audiences is the third principle that relates to the role of PSBs in encouraging citizens to use advanced media technologies in order to stimulate creativity, an engaging audience and innovations through creating a safe, creative digital environment for children and youth. Through campaigns, online tools and cross-media programmes, they should enable active participation in the media world for children and others.[6]

In order for these principles to be translated into concrete activities by the PSB, it is first necessary for management and administrative structures to have greater awareness and understanding of the very concept of MIL so that it can then be operationalised through internal documents of MRT. For the time being, the *MRT Statute* (Article 14) only

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5   EBU, *Empowering Citizenship through Media Literacy: the Role of Public Service Media* (EBU, 2012) https://www.ebu.ch/files/live/sites/ebu/files/Publications/EBU-Viewpoint-Media-Lit_EN.pdf (Accessed 20 January 2019).
6   Ibid.

repeats the article from the Law on AAVMS,[7] while the Code of Ethics[8] does not even mention the term media literacy. The Code contains the professional and ethical principles that apply to MRT employees, as well as the standards for disclosure of information. The MRT also adopted *Guidelines for Ethical and Professional Principles of MRT for Media Coverage of Election Processes*[9], which were developed in cooperation with the British public service broadcaster (BBC) and the Macedonian Institute for Media. All these documents contain elements that refer to ML but do not invoke it directly, nor do they contain any definitions and directions for creating content that would incorporate this concept.

Unlike in the case of MRT, the BBC's incentive for media literacy is based on the priorities outlined in the BBC's *Media Literacy Strategy* (2013). This document in turn builds on the guidelines outlined in the *BBC Charter* A*greement* (2016),[10] which highlights the need to promote media literacy in order to help people in "building their self-confidence and skills, and encourage audiences to move from passive consumption to active participation and constructive involvement".[11] The priorities highlighted in the Strategy are aimed at communicating the importance and use of new technologies and digital content to different audiences, and especially to those who do not have enough knowledge in this area, as well as to their parents. The intention is to help the public develop the skills and knowledge of media literacy needed to better understand the media environment and to enable them to create and transmit media content so that they can move to active participation in public debate about issues important to society.[12]

The French-language Belgian public service broadcaster, RTBF, has a *Media Literacy Strategy* that is prepared annually. This is an obligation arising from the RTBF Management Contract, which is agreed with the public authorities. So far, the RTBF has adopted five strategic plans for ML.[13] These documents are part of the PSB's mission, and the broadcaster is independent in their preparation from any higher instance. Some of the objectives of the *Strategic Plan* are to develop the public's capacity for access to all media in order to enable citizens to understand and critically evaluate various aspects of the media and their content. The document envisages the promotion of the ability of the public to

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7   MRT, *Statut na Javno radiodifuzno pretprijatie Makedonska radio-televizija* [Statute of the PSB Macedonian Radio and Television] (Skopje: MRT, 2015) http://mrt.com.mk/node/19974 (Accessed 21 January 2019).

8   MRT, *Eticki kodeks na MRT* (Skopje: MRT, 2017). http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/%D0%95%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%BA%D0%B8%20%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%9C%D0%A0%D0%A2.pdf (Accessed 21 January 2019).

9   MRT, *Etički i profesionalni principi na MRT za mediumsko pokrivanje izborni procesi* [Guidelines for Ethical and Professional Principles of MRT for Media Coverage of Election Processes] (Skopje: MRT, 2016). http://mrt.com.mk/node/29490 (Accessed 22 January 2019).

10   Government of UK, "Copy of Royal Charter for the Continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation", 2016, http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/about/how_we_govern/2016/charter.pdf (Accessed 23 January 2019).

11   BBC, *BBC Media Literacy Strategy* (BBC, 2013). http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/overview/about/assets/bbc_media_literacy_strategy_may2013.pdf (Accessed 23 January 2019).

12   Ibid, Pg. 4.

13   The 2018 Strategic Plan is based on the results of the implemented activities in the Plan for 2017, also taking into consideration the *Strategic Plan "Vision 2022"* prepared by the RTBF for the period 2017-2022.

communicate, participate and create content in different contexts and across multiple media, while importance is also given to decoding representations and stereotypes, to the freedom of expression and its boundaries, the fight against illegal content, the protection of children, the decryption of information as a way of debunking lies, manipulation and propaganda, fake news, etc., as well as critical and independent use of ("new") media.[14]

Table 1. Strategic goals for the development of ML by the BBC and RTBF

STRATEGIC GOALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ML

Public service broadcaster of the UK, BBC	Public service broadcaster of Belgium, for the French-speaking community, RTBF
• Acting through partnerships in order to convey clear messages about the importance of using new technologies and promoting digital skills; • Strengthening the skills and knowledge of the media about media literacy, which are necessary for a better understanding of the media environment, including the process of preparing media content and the ways of presenting and accessing it; • Enhancing the ability of parents to understand and manage risks related to online activities; • Encouraging the audience to creatively experiment with digital media in order to contribute to the BBC's online content, but also to actively participate on social issues of interest to different communities.	• Enhancing the capacity of the public to access all media; • Critical understanding and assessing various aspects of the media and media content; • Advancing the ability of the public to communicate, participate and create content in different contexts and across multiple media; • Training the public on accessing and familiarising itself with media and means of communication; • Decoding representations and stereotypes, content, advertisements; • Analysing freedom of expression and its boundaries; • Fight against illegal content (defamation, discrimination, violence, hate speech, privacy violation, copyrights...); • Child protection; • Deconstruction of information (information vs. lies, manipulation and propaganda, false news, the journalistic profession, sources, journalism ethics...); • Developing skills and abilities for active, creative, critical and independent use of ("new") media.

14   RTBF, *Plan strategique d'Education aux medias* (RTBF, 2018).

Developing and implementing such strategic documents usually forms part of the responsibilities of the PSB's management bodies. The fulfilment of the programme obligations, principles and standards defined in the Law on AAVMS in Macedonia is monitored by the MRT Programme Council. This body adopts the MRT Statute, the annual work report from the previous year, the annual working programme for the next year, as well as the MRT development programme.[15] So far, the Council has not discussed or decided on issues related to obligations in the area of media literacy. The Annual Reports on the work of the MRT are reviewed by the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, but the absence of specific programmes on media literacy has not been addressed in the parliamentary debates.

The main challenge is to raise awareness, both in the managerial and editorial structures and at a higher national level, about the importance of this concept, in order to initiate and encourage the creation of programmes related to ML.

The Board of the BBC public service broadcaster is responsible for the fulfilment of all of the BBC's functions. This body must ensure that the BBC fulfils its mission and promotes the public purpose, and it conducts particular activities, including assessing the ways in which strategies are implemented.[16]

The RTBF Administrative Board (Conseil d'Administracion) adopts the Strategic Plan and monitors its implementation. The evaluation of the plans from previous years is done first internally, and then in cooperation with the Higher Council for Media Education (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation aux medias), which is not a regulatory but an advisory body involving partners acting on a voluntary basis. The external control of activities related to media literacy, as well as other activities of the public service broadcaster, is a task of the Council, which in recent years has always positively evaluated the work of RTBF in view of this content.[17]

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15 Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, Article 124.
16 Government of UK, "Copy of Royal Charter for the Continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation", (Constitution – the Board), Art. 20, item 3.
17 Stéphane Hoebeke, Legal Councillor, responsible for coordination of all the actions related to MIL at the Belgian PSB RTBF, interview of 9 October 2018.

3.   Newsroom organisation of the PSBs as a precondition for the development of ML

The absence of any strategic documents whatsoever that would provide direction for the work and production of content related to MIL has, among other things, resulted in a lack of journalists and technical staff sufficiently trained for the implementation of such programmes.

The editor-in-chief of MTV's First Programme Service, Aneta Andonova, who was appointed to this position in August 2018, agrees that the public service broadcaster should develop and promote ML. She is considering both models – via journalists working in various public service departments, as well as via a separate, stand-alone department that would cover topics related to ML. Andonova explains one of the possible ways of organising the journalists and technical staff for the production of content related to ML:

"In order to produce a weekly broadcast show you need to have two technical teams, consisting of two journalists each, one to do the research and one to prepare the script, a director, a sound engineer, a cameraman, a light engineer and an editor. That is at least ten people to produce a 30-minute show that would be broadcast once a week and it should be prepared for seven to eight days [in advance]. And those teams would work, probably, as part of the educational editorial office."

The "dispersive" model for the production of content related to ML is a more logical solution for Emilija Petreska-Kamenjarova, head of the human rights and media literacy department at the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services.

"I do not think that there should be a separate department, but all employees involved in the production and realisation of the programme should first get to know the concept and apply it further in their programme. Media literacy is a broad process, and all forms of fighting against stereotypes, for example, enter into this concept in some way. MTV has other obligations to fulfil, for example in terms of gender equality, creating programmes for persons with sensory disabilities or for the category of citizens with special needs. Therefore, in all segments of the programme, one should understand what media literacy exactly means".[18]

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18   Emilija Petreska-Kamenjarova, head of the human rights and media literacy department at the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, interview of 11 September 2018.
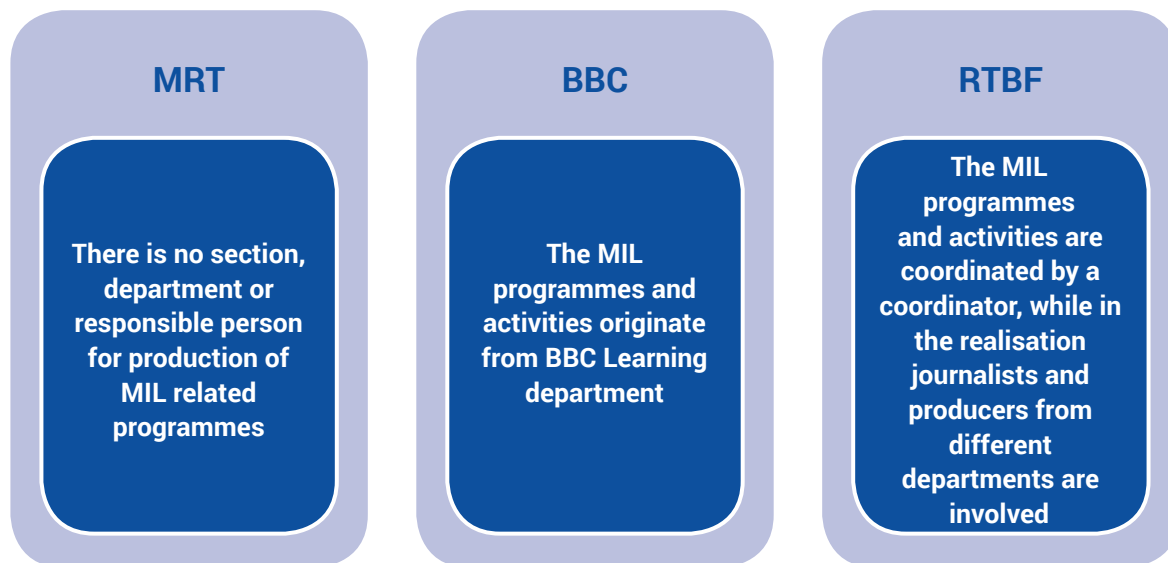
In the British public service broadcaster BBC, for example, the programme related to media literacy is dispersed across various departments, but initiatives for producing such thematic content officially originate from the BBC Learning Department. In the period 2011-2015, most programmes related to media literacy were produced mainly within this sector, because it was difficult to persuade the producers and editors of the news sector to cover information or stories related to ML if they were not newsworthy. Martina Chapman, who has worked in the BBC for ten years, and from 2011-2013 worked in the Learning Department, where in her final years she was a media literacy editor, explained the breakthrough of ML-related programmes. She also worked on the development of the *Media Literacy Strategy*. According to her, the staffing and content related to media literacy should be dispersed across all departments within the public service broadcaster, rather than be concentrated in a separate department.

At RTBF, content related to ML is not located in a separate department, but there is a person responsible for coordinating all activities on this topic. Stéphane Hoebeke has been working as a journalist and a legal councillor at RTBF since 2014 and describes his role as trying to turn the activities proposed in the *Strategic Plan* into concrete reality, but every producer or journalist who creates or realises content related to ML is responsible for their own work.

"Media literacy is a 'cross-cutting' activity - it is done on the radio, television, the Internet, on social media, through various genres and content, such as information, news, cultural programmes. It is not limited and it can refer to young people or the elderly. As the person in charge, based on the content realised in the previous year, I am trying to make a balance in the new plan for the following year".[19]

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19   Stéphane Hoebeke, interview of 9 October 2018.

Figure 1. Organisation of ML departments in the PSBs in Macedonia, the UK and Belgium

MRT	BBC	RTBF
There is no section, department or responsible person for production of MIL related programmes	**The MIL programmes and activities originate from BBC Learning department**	**The MIL programmes and activities are coordinated by a coordinator, while in the realisation journalists and producers from different departments are involved**

Since media literacy is channelled through the programmes of various departments, Hoebeke is unable to say exactly how many journalists are working on these programmes, but "there are many who work on content that is specifically dedicated to media literacy, which do not necessarily need to be exclusively dedicated to ML". The figure is variable, adds Hoebeke.

Regardless of what model we choose for developing and producing programmes related to ML, it is clear that MRT will need to train professional staff - journalists, cameramen, producers who would "understand the topic and the core of the work".[20] Petreska-Kamenjarova from the Agency adds that in the departments of the PSB MRT, it is necessary

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20   Aneta Andonova, editor-in-chief of the MTV First Programme Service, interview of 31 August 2018.

to provide knowledge transfer: "There are journalists there who can transfer knowledge, but they also need younger staff. The process of rejuvenating the staff in the entire MRT is not taking place with the necessary momentum".[21]

At the BBC, at the time when Chapman was the media literacy editor, there were no trainings for journalists, but she emphasises that the BBC Editorial Guidelines are too detailed, and all journalistic standards and rules are actually the principles of media literacy.

> *"It is, however, necessary to organise trainings in order to remind producers and journalists that not everyone has the skills they have and not everyone interprets the media content in the way they do. Media literacy is a developing concept, it changes as a result of the technological, political and other factors, and it is useful to recall it from time to time."*

Unlike the BBC, in its *Strategic Plan*, the Belgian PSB envisages training of its employees from all platforms that are broadcasting programmes related to ML. According to Hoebeke, once or twice a year they try to organise sessions to speak about media literacy, the *Strategic Plan* or future proposals in this area.[22]

The development of media literacy in the programmes of the PBSs also requires financial support. If there is a will and initiative at MRT to develop such programmes, those activities should be taken into account when creating the media literacy strategy and planning the future budget structures of MRT. Martina Chapman advises that the most effective way to promote media literacy through the public service broadcaster is to have a specific budget for MIL projects for which all departments could apply. Such an example exists in Ireland, where the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) has developed the *Sound&Vision* funding scheme through which media projects for radio and television programmes that deal with different topics, among which also media literacy, can be supported. The public service broadcasters can also apply for these funds.

RTBF does not have a specific budget for programmes related to ML, but these programmes are financed from the public service broadcaster's budget.

The projections for financing specific programmes related to ML are still a problem, given the limited budget of MRT. After the cancellation of the broadcasting fee in 2017, MRT is now being financed from the state budget, 0.5% were allocated in 2017 and 2018, and the percentage will increase in the following years, by 0,8 to 1%. However, the media associations and the public service broadcaster often stress that this amount is insufficient for MRT to be able to fully and effectively fulfil its public service functions. In light of this, the

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21 Emilija Petreska-Kamenjarova, interview of 11 September 2018.
22 Stéphane Hoebeke, interview of 9 October 2018.

administrative and managerial structures should also consider other creative solutions in the production of programmes related to ML and utilise the capacities at their disposal, which would not require additional funds.

4.   The programme content related to MIL in the PSBs in Macedonia, the UK and Belgium

The annual reports of MRT on the realisation of the programme do not contain content related to ML in the period from 2014, when the Law on AAVMS entered into force, until 2017. Yet, certain shows that were produced and broadcast, mainly in the morning educational programme, include certain aspects related to this concept. Aneta Andonova, editor-in-chief at the MTV First Programme Service says that MRT did not have programmes directly related to ML, however, media literacy as a form of education was included in the framework of *Golem odmor* (School Lunch Break), for example.

"We had a quiz about how to use the Internet, the dangers and advantages, and this is covered in the segment of media literacy. [...] Programmes follow the curricula that schools have, and primary schools are already studying elements of media literacy [...] In addition, the pupils and students have an obligation to visit a media house and through understanding the principle of functioning of a media outlet, such as television or radio, in a certain way, they learn how information is produced. Another form is through the news, as well as through the educational segments."

Some of MTV's best-known school or educational programmes are *Dzvon* (the Bell) and *Golem odmor* (School Lunch Break), which according to Andonova involve children: they follow the steps in the production of news items, visiting the newsrooms and studios of MTV. During the preparation of the quiz, MTV co-operated with the Directorate for Personal Data Protection, and this programme content has proven to be an efficient and interactive way for children

to learn that information is not necessarily exclusively found on the Internet, and that it could be found outside their house.

Otherwise, this content in the school programme has been broadcast in the last few years and is most often intended for schoolchildren. Andonova agrees that programmes addressing media literacy should extend their scope to include other age groups, such as parents. According to her, general educational programmes explaining media literacy, ways of producing and selecting information, or recognising false news are definitely needed.

The Macedonian Institute for Media and MRT began the production and broadcasting of *Mediateka*, a media literacy educational programme for youngsters and the wider population, in December 2018, the first programme of this kind devoted to the promotion of ML. The programme consists of debates with high school students in the studio on specific ML-related topics, and short videos with experts.

According to Petreska-Kamenjarova from the media regulator, both the public service broadcaster and the state should understand that democracy requires active citizenship:

"One of the important dimensions of active citizenship is good awareness and preparedness for action. And for this purpose it is necessary to develop critical understanding of the media. [...] It is necessary to deconstruct the attitudes and stereotypes [...] to provide additional context for events that have preceded a particular topic, for people to be reminded. Citizens should be provided with all the information they need in the informative and educational programme, etc. And, you should have a different approach to the audience coming from different age groups".[23]

With respect to the content related to ML, in 2015 and 2016, the PSB broadcast two videos to encourage media literacy (originally produced by the European Association for Viewers Interests), prepared in Macedonian by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, the presentation of which was recommended by the regulator to all broadcasters in the country as a public interest campaign.[24]

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23 Emilija Petreska-Kamenjarova, interview of 11 September 2018.
24 See: Media Literacy in the Republic of Macedonia, http://mediumskapismenost.mk/avms-for-media-literacy/ (Accessed 24 January 2019).

Table 2. Examples of media content related to MIL produced by the PSBs in the UK, Belgium and Macedonia

PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES DIRECTLY RELATED TO OR CONTAINING ELEMENTS OF MIL		
BBC - Programmes and activities for MIL	*RTBF* - Programmes and activities for MIL	*MTV* - Educational programmes
BBC School Report – educational project	*Les Niouzz* ("The News") – daily news for the youth	*Si bilo ednash* ("Once upon a time…") - children's educational show
Real News – educational project	*#Danslatoile* – digital educational programme	*Od A do Š* ("From A to Z") - children's educational show
iReporter – interactive online tool	"Bye bye Belgium" - faux documentary film aimed at inciting a reaction from the audience	*Dzvon* ("The bell") – children's show
"Britain in a Day" – documentary film		*5+ Familija* (5+ Family) – children's entertainment and educational show
		Infotin ("Infoteen") – educational show
		Videos on MIL prepared by the AAVMS
		Mediateka -ML educational programmes for youngsters

The BBC has a rich portfolio of programmes that integrate concepts of MIL. Interestingly, content with elements of media literacy was being produced even before it was officially designated with this term. Martina Chapman, who is well acquainted with the work of the public service broadcaster in the UK, says that it is difficult to determine when programmes related to media literacy were introduced by the BBC.

"For example, the public service broadcaster has been running a show for several decades now in which listeners can call in a programme and complain about the content or ask questions to producers who need to explain why something had been done in a certain way. This is an example of a project that helps raise awareness of media literacy by giving space to citizens to criticise content and ask questions to producers coming from the public service broadcaster."

Although MIL-related programmes are most often produced by the BBC Learning Department, the BBC Academy[25] started the project *Real News*[26] intended for students. This project has an educational function, but also the task to engage its young audience. This subsection on the BBC's website contains lessons (texts and videos), journalism video-tips from well-known BBC journalists, as well as video tutorials on how to identify false news, misinformation, check stories and sources, etc. Another example of engaging younger audiences is *iReporter*[27], an interactive tool that enables young people to learn how to be a journalist coping with the challenges of misinformation in today's digital landscape. The game *iReporter* puts the players at the heart of the newsroom and gives them the opportunity to create breaking news. By creating journalistic stories throughout the game, the participants should understand what is real and true, at the same time avoid traps such as false information, and their success is measured according to the accuracy, speed and impact of the information.[28]

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25 Educational platform for the employees in the British public service broadcaster, and for everyone who is interested and wants to keep abreast of the trends in the broadcasting industry and the role of new digital technologies. BBC Academy, https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/en/articles/art20170213153622069 (Accessed 22 January 2019).

26 Website of *Real News*: https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/collections/schoolreport#real-news (Accessed 22 January 2019).

27 BBC iReporter: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-8760dd58-84f9-4c98-ade2-590562670096 (Accessed 22 January 2019).

28 BBC Academy, "BBC iReporter: What Would a Journalist Do?", 14 March 2018. https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/en/articles/art20180305143328629 (Accessed 22 January 2019).

Figure 2. BBC *iReporter* and *Les Niouzz* on RTBF
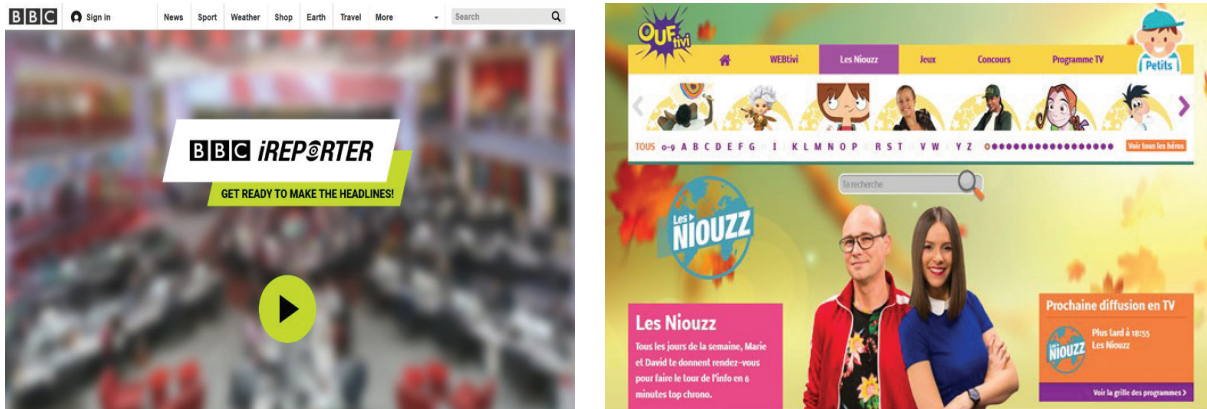
Other BBC projects are the BBC *School Report*,[29] a project/educational programme designed to educate a young population aged 11 to 18 about journalism and media literacy. The project provides students with access to BBC events, trainings, resources, and the opportunity to share their stories with editors and journalists from the public service. All online resources[30] derived from the *School Report* programme are available on the BBC Academy web platform. The resources are organised in several categories that contain information on the activities within the *School Report* and a curriculum for studying the basics of journalism and media literacy.

Similarly to the BBC, the underlying mission of RTBF is to develop the critical eye of the public, to inform them, to listen to their views and help them act in society. The broadcaster does this in all its programmes (in the TV videos, news, shows), in special programmes (*Medialog, Les Décodeurs, Empreinte digitale, #Danslatoile, La boite à clichés*), blogs, through films or literature. The Belgian public service broadcaster has created its own website, called *Education aux media*[31], to provide the general public with a tool for decoding the "media world". The site is divided into three parts: the first part, *decoding*,

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29 Joint project of *BBC News*, *BBC Academy*, *BBC Children* and *BBC Sport*. "What is BBC Young Reporter?", 18 September 2017. https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/en/articles/art20170829100617113 (Accessed 22 January 2019).
30 BBC Young Reporter, https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/en/collections/schoolreport (Accessed 23 January 2019).
31 See: RTBF, "L'éducation aux médias, c'est quoi?" https://www.rtbf.be/entreprise/education-aux-medias (Accessed 24 January 2019).

provides advice on how to view the information with a critical approach and independently analyse it; the second part, *participation*, gives directions on how to be active, how to react and be creative; the third part, *programmes*, informs about all the programmes that help better understand the media, their structure, their practice and their content.[32]

RTBF's media literacy programmes are intended for a general public, but there are many programmes targeting younger generations, such as *The News* (*Les Niouzz*), which broadcasts daily news for young people conveying content related to media literacy, as well as *#Danslatoile*, a short programme for digital education, made in co-production with the French, Canadian and Swiss PSBs.

Regarding the visibility of these programmes, the media literacy adviser at RTBF, Stéphane Hoebeke, is realistic in his assessment:

"I do not think that much of the audience, spectators, listeners and Internet visitors, are aware that there is great production in the field of media literacy, which is a problem. And, we are trying to produce programmes that can reach the audience, but it is very difficult. We have an extensive production, but the consumption of these programmes by the audience is not that great". [33]

5. Mechanisms for communicating with the audience used by the PSBs in Macedonia, the UK and Belgium

The concept of media and information literacy underpins the involvement of the audience and the creation of active and responsible citizens. Therefore, public services need to develop different channels of communication with their audiences. For now, the Macedonian public service broadcaster MRT broadcasts contact programmes and

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32   Ibid.
33   Stéphane Hoebeke, interview of 9 October 2018.

organises educational study visits for students. It does not have other mechanisms through which citizens would be involved, in order to hear their opinion on quality and ideas on content and programmes, or to engage them as an active audience in the democratic process.

"We are seriously looking into digital marketing and developing our website, displaying the entire programme on a platform, and thus make the programme available to viewers at any moment. But I am not sure that communicating through the website is sufficient due to the divide between users of linear and non-linear media. How will we reach our older audience? Or the children, for example, if we know that they cannot use Facebook before the age of 13? At the moment, the level of media literacy in Macedonia does not ensure quality information consumption. Maybe the entire picture would change in a couple of years", says Aneta Andonova, the editor-in-chief of the MTV First Programming Service.

According to Petreska-Kamenjarova, MRT needs to use all forms of communication - e-mail, telephone calls during programmes, comments on social networks, guest visits to the programmes.

"We used to have that, and now it is mostly in children's shows. There are schools working on projects related to media literacy, so they can present these projects in more detail. Children watch these programmes, and they are aware, to a certain extent, of everything that is in them, and this can be an initiative for other schools as well".[34]

From time to time, MRT organises visits of pupils and students, which is considered an activity related to ML. For example, on the initiative of the School of Journalism and Public Relations, starting from 2014, as part of the Media Day, groups of secondary school students from all over Macedonia tour the public service broadcaster in order to learn about its work and functions (Shopar, Kjupeva and Temenugova 2016, 52). Reporters and editors as hosts introduce secondary school students to the process of producing news as well as the day-to-day operations and functioning of the television.

MRT's website is largely static and offers content that is not easily accessible and searchable. The interactive tools (forum, blogs) do not function on the website, nor does it have educational content intended for different segments of the audience. The PSB does not actively use social networks to distribute its content and communicate with its audience.

The BBC, in addition to its programmes, extensively uses its website to provide all sorts of content in all formats designed for different audiences. The BBC's engagement of its own journalists as mentors to secondary school

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34   Emilija Petreska-Kamenjarova, interview of 11 September 2018.

students is innovative. For example, the Media Centre on the BBC website refers to one of the programmes that the public service broadcaster promoted in 2017, through which journalists helped young people distinguish actual news from fake or false news.

"Up to 1,000 schools will be offered mentoring – in class, online, or at events, from […] BBC journalists […] All schools will have access to free online materials, classroom activities, video tutorials, and an interactive game developed by the world-famous Aardman studio, where the player experiences being a BBC journalist in the heart of the newsroom." [35]

The project provides a *Reality Check Roadshow* across the UK, where each school nominates students to participate in dozens of regional events, as well as events organised as part of the BBC *School Report*.[36]

One of the BBC's original ideas for engaging audiences through its programme is the documentary *Britain in a Day*, in which BBC producers asked viewers to turn on their cameras on 12 November 2011, record part of their lives and send in their footage. As a result, the documentary includes 11,526 clips posted on YouTube, allowing the British audience to tell, in their own words, a fascinating story that represents "an important aspect of the lives, love, fears and hopes of people living in Britain today".[37] After the premiere of the film on BBC2, a huge archive of material was uploaded online to see the full length of the clips used to make the film.

The Belgian public service broadcaster RTBF promotes content related to media literacy across all media platforms – on radio, television, on its website, and through social media. Unrelated to the production of content, and yet of great importance for engaging audiences, are the visits it organises: RTBF invites citizens to visit the studios and production facilities, and about 10,000 visitors are welcomed each year, including students and senior citizens. The public service broadcaster also organises workshops and media laboratories.

"At the workshop called 'Fifth Edition' a group of 15 students were given access to all the news and sources used by journalists. The exercise is to make a selection of news broadcast on the radio at 13:00. Then, after the news is broadcast, students can talk to the editor about the news edition - the choice of the editor or the news angle", Hoebeke explains.[38]

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35 BBC Media Centre, "BBC Journalists Return to School to Tackle 'Fake News'", 6 December 2017. https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2017/fake-news (Accessed 24 January 2019).
36 Ibid.
37 Link to the documentary film "Britain in a Day": https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00kqz5p (Accessed 24 January 2019).
38 Stéphane Hoebeke, interview of 9 October 2018.

RTBF has produced content that spontaneously encourages the audience to react, but the idea goes back much earlier than the BBC documentary. The fake documentary *Bye Bye Belgium* was broadcast on 13 December 2006, interrupting the regular programme of RTBF's *La Une* channel with news reports that the Flemish parliament unanimously declared independence from Belgium, and that the state had ceased to exist. The credibility of the event was substantiated with the interviews given by well-known Belgian politicians (some of whom were informed about the film) as well as screened footage of the evacuation of the royal family. The broadcast provoked fierce reactions among the French community in the country, and as a result, a significant number of schools spontaneously organised sessions dedicated to analysis (by teachers and students) of the reporting and how it grew into a media event. This is an example of media literacy in action in schools, originating directly in the field, without being encouraged or enforced by any authority.[39]

Some of these examples found in the BBC and RTBF have already been applied by MRT, but as incidental activities (such as organised visits for secondary school students), which can be extended to different age groups and intensified throughout the year. The website, on the other hand, needs to be redesigned as a multimedia platform, so that it can appeal to a young generation more focused on the digital environment.

6.   Conclusion

By creating and broadcasting content related to media literacy, Macedonian Radio and Television can offer quality programmes of interest to different segments of the audience, which would enable them to monitor, analyse, evaluate or even create media content in an active and responsible manner.

The initiative for the introduction of content related to ML should originate with the highest administrative body, the Programme Council, which is responsible for fulfilling the programme obligations of the public service broadcaster. The first step required is to develop strategic documents to serve as a basis for MRT in creating and producing ML-

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39   See: "Bye Bye Belgium", https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bye_Bye_Belgium (Accessed 24 January 2019).

related content. An example of this could be found in the BBC and RTBF strategic documents for encouraging media literacy in their programmes and on all media platforms that are part of these two public service providers.

The BBC's strategy is more general in format and contains the basics of media literacy, why it is important in today's multimedia environment, its strategic goals and priorities, the editorial organisation in relation to these programmes, and the importance of creating partnerships. RTBF's annual strategic documents, on the other hand, offer specific and detailed guidelines for the production and broadcasting of content that contains the concept of MIL, paying particular attention to the goals, audiences, and means by which it will develop priority activities for the following year, content for children, youth and adolescents, organised tours and workshops, public engagement, staff training, cooperation with other relevant bodies, and monitoring and evaluation of the *Strategic Plan*. *The Strategic Plan "Vision 2022"* for the period 2017-2022 shows that RTBF has a long-term strategy that integrates ML-related programmes.

Based on this, MRT needs to build the capacities necessary for the production and broadcasting of these programmes, such as providing the necessary number of journalists, producers and technical staff. Whether the content related to ML will be produced according to the "dispersed" model, that is, through journalists working in different departments (educational, informative, documentary, etc.) or activities will be located in a single department, is a decision that needs to be made by the management and editorial structures of MRT, who have insight into the current capacities at their disposal. In any case, everyone involved in the production of content related to ML will need to be well informed and familiar with the very concept and the ways to integrate it into different types of content. Therefore, everyone working on these types of programmes requires training in order to effectively communicate the message to the audience and achieve a certain effect.

If MRT shows commitment to producing and broadcasting programmes related to ML, it is necessary to include a provision for this purpose in MRT's financial projection. Although some MIL-related content, such as interactive online tools (the opportunity for forums or comments from the audience on the website) or social networks (for example, a Facebook page), does not require significant means, the development of multi-platform content, such as an interactive website with multiple subsections for content related to MIL, or a specific broadcast on television or radio, requires certain professional and financial resources.

There are many ideas from the work of the BBC and RTBF that could serve as starting points for MRT for the production of their own content in the field of ML. Some of them are easily feasible and do not require many resources to implement; an example are student visits to the PSB or visits of journalists to schools. However, for some of the more complex projects of the BBC, such as the *School Report*, a partnership is needed between various departments

(BBC News, BBC Children, BBC Academy, BBC Sport). The same goes for the production of the show *#Danslatoile* on RTBF, a co-production with the French, Canadian and Swiss PSBs.

Therefore, MRT should develop existing and create new channels of communication with the public, starting with those that require the least financial resources. In this context, the school and educational programme of MRT, which has its own audience among the school population, can offer creative ideas for new content related to MIL. The first step was made with the production of the media literacy educational serial *Mediateka*, in partnership with the Macedonian Institute for Media, in December 2018, which can serve as an example for cooperation with other civil society organisations working in this area. It is also necessary to redesign the MRT website and make it interactive and open to reactions by the public. In addition, MRT should use the potentials of social networks to reach a young audience. Another easily feasible idea is an Open Day, where MRT opens its doors to as many visitors as possible, from all age groups, in order to enable them to get acquainted first-hand with the work of the PSB.

A good example for MRT are the visits of BBC journalists and editors to high schools, as well as the contribution of older and more experienced journalists and editors to the website in the form of texts, videos, tips and other content relating to the work of the journalist and issues of MIL.

MRT already has a legal obligation to act in this area, but doing so requires strong will and capacities (professional, technical, and financial). Certainly, while any such initiative should originate from within the public service broadcaster, wider support from other relevant actors which can help in the process, such as the regulatory body, educational institutions and the civil sector, is also needed. These actors already implement various initiatives and projects related to MIL; therefore, creating partnerships and cooperation could set free significant resources to come up with ideas and deliver content variety.

7.   Recommendations

The MRT Programme Council should initiate the development of strategic documents for the creation and broadcasting of programme content related to the promotion of media and information literacy on various media platforms of the public service broadcaster, intended for different segments of the audience.

The managerial staff should propose an organisational restructuring of journalists and technical staff for the creation of programme content that would include the concept of ML. Journalists, editors, producers, and all others who would be involved in creating ML-related content, should undergo training in order to get to know the basics and the meaning behind the concept itself so that they could effectively integrate it into their programme.

Based on the strategic documents, the PSB should create different content that integrates the concept of MIL, targeting different segments of the audience and different age groups. This content may include videos, audio files, online content, texts, testimonials, as well as a variety of forms for engaging and capturing the audience, such as games, lessons, quizzes, and online tools for recording news.

The public service should engage its journalists in promoting media literacy. Following the example of the BBC, they could record useful video materials or prepare short tips and guidelines for students, visit schools, or hold workshops for secondary school and university students at MRT. MRT should continue and intensify the organised visits to newsrooms and studios, or open its doors to all interested parties, so they can get acquainted with the work of journalists as well as with the role and functioning of a PSB, but also of the television media in general.

MRT should focus on developing various channels of communication with the general public, such as an interactive website that will offer multimedia content, social networks or contact shows, through which it will give the opportunity to its audiences to express their opinion on the quality of the public service programmes, to offer and exchange ideas and opinions, as well as to open debates on certain issues of public interest.

The public service broadcaster should co-operate with the civil sector and academic institutions working on projects related to MIL, in order to utilise common resources and produce content that would be broadcast or uploaded on various MRT multimedia platforms.

MRT should establish cooperation with other PSBs in Europe that are already producing and broadcasting MIL-related content, for the purpose of exchanging ideas, knowledge, and experiences and to create partnerships.

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Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Aneta Andonova, editor-in-chief of the MTV First Programme Service, Skopje, 31 August 2018.

Emilija Petreska-Kamenjarova, head of the human rights and media literacy department at the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, Skopje, 11 September 2018.

Martina Chapman, media literacy expert, *Mercury Insights*, Skopje (via Skype), 24 September 2018.

Stéphane Hoebeke, Legal Councillor, responsible for coordination of all the actions related to MIL at the Belgian PSB RTBF, Skopje (via Skype), 9 October 2018.

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Media and Information Literacy in the Education System of Montenegro: Experiences and Prospects

Pavle Pavlović

# 1.	Introduction

The development paths of activities to promote and improve the state of media and information literacy in Montenegro can be observed through the actors implementing initiatives in this field. In the period between two key reforms – a reform of preschool, primary and secondary education completed in 2008, and a reform of higher education completed in 2017 – numerous activities in the field of media and information literacy (MIL) were carried out at state and institutional level as well as by civil society.

## 1.1.	Education reforms and the introduction of media literacy in the curricula

The reform of 2008 introduced an elective course on media literacy in the secondary education curriculum, making Montenegro, together with Slovenia, the first country from the former Yugoslavia to implement such a course.[1] In 2000-08, reforms of pre-school, primary and secondary education made significant changes in terms of decentralisation of the education system and improvements in the quality of education.[2] The reform was developed with the aim of "shaping of such an education system that would result in the creation of knowledge for both personal and social development" (Reškovac and Bešić 2012, 7), and it included cooperation between the civil sector, international, and state institutions. The purpose of introducing elective courses was to develop students' participation through the expansion of their own capacities and interests in order to promote a democratic environment in the field of education: "In addition to their functional objectives for acquiring knowledge in areas of individual interest of students and parents, elective courses contain a democratic component as well. By offering them the option to choose, we

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1	In Slovenia, a media education course ('medijska vzgoja') was introduced as an elective subject in 1994. With the education reform of 2003, when a nine-year system of primary education was introduced, the course was organised for grades seven, eight, and nine of primary school.
2	The reform of the education system and the implementation of new curriculums and programmes began in 2006/2007 in general secondary schools. With the issuing of strategic documents *The Book of Changes* from 2001 and the *Basis for the Revision of Curricula*, as well as the accompanying legislative changes in the field of education, new plans and programmes were produced for the subsequent reform (Zavod za školstvo 2009, 7).

will achieve that the students participate in the change of traditional climate in both the school and society itself. […] Through elective courses the school to a large extent enables students to develop their potentials, knowledge, skills, abilities, as well as to learn about roles in a democratic society" (Zavod za školstvo 2009a, 16).

The introduction of the media literacy course as an elective subject in general grammar schools was initiated by the professor of literature Božena Jelušić, and supported by the Foundation Open Society Institute (FOSI). With the development of a curriculum authored by Božena Jelušić and Tomislav Reškovac,[3] the initial requirements that the Ministry of Education had set before this initiative were met. At a meeting held on April 4, 2008, the Council of General Education of Montenegro approved the introduction of the aforementioned course in the education system (Ružić 2016). The pilot project was launched in Budva and Kotor, and in the following year it was offered to all schools of general secondary education (gymnasium) as an elective course.[4] It is a one-year course and the programme is intended for second- and third-grade classes, and held twice a week. The condition for forming a class at a school is a minimum of 20 attendees. However, due to teaching continuity of this course, the classes were often held with a smaller number of students. For the needs of the course, several materials were issued by media experts Dragoljub Vuković and Janko Ljumović (director of the National Theatre of Montenegro at the time) (Ružić 2016); on the other hand, teachers were advised to use the teaching strategy "MediLit Kit".[5]

The classes according to the new curriculum were introduced in the current academic year (2018/2019), including a media literacy subject at the Faculty of Political Science.[6] Media literacy training in higher education could be introduced only after the implementation of the higher education reform. The reorganisation of the University in response to its re-accreditation (2015-2017) has allowed for a number of changes that facilitated a more efficient operation of university units, improved quality of teaching, management problem solving, links with the labour market, and up-to-date business and sustainability control (Univerzitet Crne Gore 2015). The reform focused

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3   Božena Jelušić is a literature professor and literary critic whose field of scholarly interest includes the theory of literature, literary criticism and teaching methodology. Tomislav Reškovac is a professor of philosophy, logic and literature in Zagreb. He is a contributor to several institutions which deal with education and the author of a significant number of academic articles. He is the author of the textbook *Ethics* for the third grade of high school.

4   The course was also offered to mixed secondary schools that implement the programmes of general secondary education. Of a total of 20 schools of general secondary education, the media literacy course was set up in 11 schools. In the school year 2017/2018, the course was offered in 4 schools.

5   The MediaLit Kit is a teaching strategy that provides schools and teachers with the organisation and structure of classroom activities in the field of media literacy (Center for Media Literacy, "CML MediaLit Kit", http://www.medialit.org/cml-medialit-kit, Accessed 2 October 2018). For teaching purposes in Montenegrin grammar schools, the Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro has provided translation of the textbook *5 key questions that can change the world - Student activities that can change the world* by authors Jeff Share and Elizabeth Thoman.

6   Fakultet političkih nauka, *Novi nastavni plan i program Fakulteta političkih nauka Univerziteta Crne Gore* [New Curriculum and Program of the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Montenegro] (Fakultet političkih nauka, 2017) http://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_18551/objava_3556/fajlovi/Nastavni%20plan%20i%20program%20za%20akademske%20osnovne%20studije%20_%20Medijske%20studije%20i%20novinarstvo.docx (Accessed on 3 October 2018).

on the application of practical skills and knowledge. The Faculty of Political Science has undergone significant changes since the reorganisation of the previous journalism study programme resulted in a new programme, "Media Studies and Journalism", which offers the media literacy subject to second-year students. Furthermore, in the current academic year, the MIL course was introduced at the doctoral level as well, which gave a certain scientific perspective to this field in Montenegro. The reform failed to achieve the introduction of the course in other university units. Thus, the faculties that train teaching staff and provide degrees in education were deprived of the media literacy course.

1.2.   Teaching staff training

In order to administer media literacy in secondary schools, it was necessary to train teaching staff, since teachers employed in general secondary schools had not had the opportunity to acquire knowledge in media literacy in the course of their studies.[7] Activities to train teachers for holding classes on this subject began as part of the project "Media and Education - Media Literacy", created by the Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro; 28 teachers were trained for the purpose of conducting lectures on the subject, in two seminars held in April and June 2009, both lasting two and a half days. The Bureau for Education Services began offering programmes for the professional development of teachers in the field of media literacy in 2015. Between 2015 and 2018, this institution carried out trainings for 137 teachers, through three modules: media use in a democratic society, secure communication with the media, and media literacy.

Staff training was also provided by the National Library "Đurđe Crnojević". Through the UNESCO Participation Programme, this institution conducted numerous activities in the field of information and media literacy.[8] Two projects implemented under this programme in 2014-17 aimed to formulate a national strategy in the field of information and media literacy as well as to educate library staff. The final outcome of the project was a proposal for a Strategy for Information and Media Literacy, which was officially submitted to the Ministry of Culture in 2017. Through

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7   The curriculum for the media literacy course specifies the profile and professional qualifications of teachers who can teach this course. They may be professors of language and literature, psychology, sociology or philosophy with additional professional training, and professional education includes topics from the sociology of culture and media, political philosophy, media theory, media psychology, media aesthetics, semiology and media technology (Zavod za školstvo 2009a).

8   The UNESCO Participation Programme provides support to national, subregional and regional activities of the Member States in accordance with the priorities for the five major organisational areas in agreement with Resolution 37 C/35 (UNESCO 2016).

two accredited training programmes, the National Library implemented the training and thereby strengthened its personnel capacities (with a total of 169 participants in training) in the field of MIL. For the purpose of education, four UNESCO manuals were translated and issued (in digital or printed form) in order to promote the importance of MIL as well as guidelines for its implementation.[9]

1.3.   Strategies in the field of media and information literacy

The Law on Electronic Media established the Agency for Electronic Media as an independent regulatory body in charge of audiovisual media services.[10] Since 2018, the Agency has been implementing a three-year project for the development of media literacy, including the strategy *Let's Choose What We Watch* in cooperation with UNICEF, in order to raise awareness of the importance of media literacy for parents, children, and caregivers (Agencija za elektronske medije 2017). Under the project quantitative research has been conducted with "Children, parents and the media in Montenegro" (Agencija za elektronske medije 2018).

Due to its commercial interests, the media and information technology and services industry also offers activities that contribute to the development of media literacy. Since 2014, as part of the campaign "For All Good", Montenegrin operator Telekom has supported projects aimed at implementing media literacy activities.[11] In 2018, this strategy supported the "Teach today" project aimed at raising the awareness of children and parents on avoiding threats and taking advantage of all the benefits that digital technologies provide.

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9   The following manuals were issued: *Information and Media Literacy - Policy and Strategy Guidelines*; *Teacher Training Curricula for Information and Media Literacy*; *Introduction to Open Access*; and *Open Access Infrastructure* (handbooks can be downloaded on the official website of the National Library).

10   Zakon o elektronskim medijima [Law on Electronic Media], https://www.paragraf.me/propisi-crnegore/zakon-o-medijima.html (Accessed 31 January 2019).

11   More about campaign available at: Telekom, https://www.telekom.me/za-svako-dobro-2018.nspx (Accessed 14 September 2018).

1.4. Scientific research

As in other fields, scientific research and academic work is also scarce in the field of media literacy. The journal of media and society research, *Media Dialogues*, dedicated its edition 22/2015 to the topic of media literacy (Media Research Centre 2015).[12]

Nevertheless, we should stress the interest of the academic community in this topic, which is evident from a number of published academic papers on media literacy in education. The first evaluation of the education process can be found in Igor Varga's undergraduate dissertation, published in 2009. The author points out the positive effects of teaching this subject both on media awareness and on the critical approach to media content by students who attended the classes (Varga 2009). Jelena Perović explored the role of staff in educational institutions in raising awareness about the importance of establishing media literacy as an academic course. The author concludes that the improvement of the status of teaching staff, cooperation with the local community and the media, regular trainings and the implementation of media literacy courses at other levels of education would improve teaching on this subject (Perović 2015).[13] Analyses of the present state of media literacy in Montenegro can also be found in the work of Nataša Ružić, professor at the Faculty of Political Science, which deals with the challenges of implementing the course on media literacy in the Montenegrin education system (Ružić 2016). Ružić identifies three problems behind the poor implementation of media literacy: the elective nature of the course; the implementation of the course in secondary schools of general education exclusively; and insufficient commitment by teachers to raising students' interest in the course (Ružić 2016).

1.5. Observed limitations

Although the concept of introducing media literacy primarily through the creation of a media literacy course in secondary education received strong support from the Ministry of Education, the institutions operate without an

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12 The journal is intended for a regional audience and themes are covered in a wide scope. This edition contained the following articles by Montenegrin authors: Srđan Vukadinović – *Media (il)Literacy as a Picture of Society*, Radenko Šćekić – *Political Literacy and the Media*, Nikola Radunović – *The Importance of Media and Information Literacy for Electronic Communication with the Public Administration in Montenegro*, Miroslav Doderović and Dragana Mrkić – *Media Literacy and Climate Change Issues*.

13 The author holds a PhD on the topic of media literacy in education.

expansive strategic and legislative framework in relation to this field. The lack of strategy places Montenegro among the countries that are still in the initial stage of development in the field of MIL (Perović 2015, 103). The laws of Montenegro protect freedom of expression and advocate the development of professionalism and democracy, as well as the protection of children and youth from the harmful influence of media content. However, apart from indirect identification of the topic and its connection to the concept of media literacy, more substantial, systematic work in this field is lacking. The actors who could have shaped the development of media literacy did not recognise the importance of the previously mentioned education initiative. This area came to life only in 2018, the "year of media literacy".

The proposed initiatives and work in the field of media literacy show different dynamics and intensity. Taking into account their originality and the number of actors and their importance, we realised that it would be useful to examine the media literacy in education more closely, i.e., the ways in which the subject of media literacy is being implemented in schools of general secondary education. The importance of this topic is also supported by the alarming results of PISA testing in Montenegro[14]: the testing conducted in 2016 revealed below-average results in practical knowledge, competencies and skills which students acquire during their education, as well as a declining trend. The results of PISA testing have positioned the 15-year-olds from Montenegro in 56th place out of 70 countries that participated in the testing.[15]

A decrease in attendance in media literacy classes is also an indicator of the situation in this field. In the previous academic year (2017/2018), only 60 students attended classes in this course.[16] This should also be seen in the context of research by the Open Society Institute in Sofia, which ranked Montenegro 31st on its *Media Literacy Index*, out of 35 ranked countries, a drop of two spots compared to 2017 (Lessenski 2018). The report states as reasons for the poor results the low performance in the education process as well as controlled media - in such conditions the impact of fake news is considerably higher (Lessenski 2018, 2).

Previously presented data point to the need for an analysis of the implementation of the media literacy programme in formal education. The lack of an institutional and strategic framework, declining course attendance, quality of teaching staff training, elective character of the subject, its exclusivity to secondary schools of general education,

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14 Roditelji.me, "PISA testiranje nalaže promjene u sistemu obrazovanja" [PISA Testing Requires Changes in the Education System], Roditelji.me, 8 January 2017. https://www.roditelji.me/blog/2017/01/08/pisa-testiranje-nalaze-promjene-u-sistemu-obrazovanja/ (Accessed 14 September 2018).

15 Dragana Dmitrović, *PISA 2015. u Crnoj Gori – Rezultati* [PISA 2015 in Montenegro - Results] (Ispitni centar, 2015) http://www.iccg.co.me/1/images/dok/medjunarodno/PISA%202015%20rezultati.pdf (Accessed 14 September 2018); Predrag Nikolić,"PISA testiranje učenika: Opet među najgorima u Evropi" [PISA Student Testing: Again among the Worst in Europe], *Monitor*, 16 December 2016. http://www.monitor.co.me/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7323:pisa-testiranje-uenika-opet-meu-najgorima-u-evropi&catid=5109:broj-1365&Itemid=6479 (Accessed 13 September 2018).

16 In the time period 2011-17, student attendance in the media literacy course was between 257 and 154 students, with a declining trend.

alarming results of Montenegrin high-school students in PISA testing and the country's poor ranking in the index of media literacy all indicate the need and the direction of further action.

The evaluation of the needs and the efficiency of the implementation of the media literacy course in general secondary education in Montenegro are the focus of our research within the regional project "Media for Citizens, Citizens for Media". We have focused on secondary and higher education as the most substantial steps were made at this level. The decennial gap between education system reforms suggest a need to analyse the conceptual shifts that have occurred in this field, and whose understanding is crucial for quality implementation. However, our main focus will be the analysis of the current state in this field. We will also identify recommendations building on our research, and thereby identify obstacles that may arise in the implementation of this course.

2. About the research - methodological framework

The topic of this research is the implementation of the media literacy subject in the Montenegrin education system from the beginning of the reform of pre-school, primary and secondary education, to the reform of higher education. One of the aims of the research is to create recommendations based on the analysis of implementation of this subject, of initiatives that have been realised, and of efforts in the field of scientific, heuristic and academic activities. The main hypothesis of this research is that the obstacles to the development of media and information literacy lie in the poor commitment of school representatives to the development of media literacy as a subject as well as in the inadequacy of institutional solutions (elective character of the subject, selective implementation and training of teaching staff).

In this research, we applied quantitative and qualitative methods. The analysis includes in-depth interviews with representatives of relevant institutions, teaching staff, civil society and international organisations, experts who worked on teaching materials for the subject of media literacy and representatives of universities. We also employed the experimental method and field research.

Field research included all schools where classes in media literacy were conducted over the last two school years - 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of attendees in media literacy classes

Academic year	School	Number of students
2016/2017	General secondary school "Niko Rolović" – Bar	23
	Combined secondary school "Danilo Kiš" – Budva	21
	General secondary school Cetinje	62
	General secondary school "Slobodan Škerović" – Podgorica	21
	Combined secondary school "Mladost" – Tivat	26
	Combined public secondary school "17. septembar" – Žabljak	11
Total		**164**
2017/2018	Combined secondary school "Danilo Kiš" – Budva	9
	Combined secondary school "Braća Selić" – Kolašin	13
	Combined secondary school "Mladost" – Tivat	20
	Combined public secondary school "17. septembar" – Žabljak	18
Total		**60**

Source: Ministry of Education.

School visits allowed us to talk to teachers and school management about the implementation of media literacy in the education system. On this occasion, we conducted in-depth interviews with teachers as well as a survey among the students. For the purposes of the survey research, we applied an experimental method which included both the students who had already attended media literacy classes and the students who hadn't.

3. The reform of secondary education – introduction of media literacy course in general secondary schools

3.1. Systemic action of relevant actors in the democratisation of society

The media's influence on the construction and representation of reality constitutes an obligation for the education system to deal with media pedagogy. One of the prerequisites for a change in educational culture is the implementation of the media literacy subject, because this course enables the "ventilation" and re-examination of the value system, a factor of a more prominent vertical mobility in a society. These needs were recognised by a considerable number of actors at the time when the reform of the education system was initiated.

The education reform and the changes it brought forth contributed to the decentralisation and depolarisation of the system in the pre-referendum period (2006). This also prompted political support for the initiative to introduce the media literacy course.[17]

Božena Jelušić, professor of literature, played a key role in the introduction of the subject of media literacy. She recalls that the Bureau for Education Services issued a set of provisions for the introduction of the course, which included building of the infrastructure and its verification. The Ministry of Education thus obtained an "off-the-shelf product", ready for immediate implementation.[18]

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17   Božena Jelušić, professor of literature and media literacy, interview of 6 September 2018.
18   Ibid.

Although the initiative for the introduction of the course received a positive response from the institutions, the schools themselves did not show great interest.[19] Dušanka Popović, Professor at the Faculty of Philology, points out the reasons for this response: "To my knowledge, teachers didn't want to engage in the lectures in media literacy, only literature. They thought it was not their obligation, they insisted to teach literature solely and showed a tremendous resistance towards non-linear text and content, such as tables and graphs, for example".[20]

Once introduced, the course trained students for an interdisciplinary approach to teaching materials and encouraged non-linear thinking.[21] Božena Jelušić stresses two main advantages of the course:

"The most important thing about this course is its ability to develop and improve the critical potential of young people, and this is the most important effect. Additionally, students will acquire education fit for a democratic, civil society, and through various examples we will encourage sensitivity in relation to different perceptions of prejudice".[22]

3.2. Realised training programmes and identified drawbacks

Conceptually, the course had a good basis for realisation; however, the inconsistencies in the application and further development of initiatives and programmes have caused it to lose momentum during the implementation. The two main problems in this initial period were the intermittency of teaching staff trainings, and the level of knowledge acquired in training.

Through the creation of the curriculum and its implementation via a pilot project, the programme of media literacy as well as the skills and knowledge that the teachers adopted and transferred were evaluated. Teachers usually obtain knowledge from the field of media literacy through certified trainings of the Pedagogical Centre or the Bureau for Education Services, or through informal self-education.

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19 Nataša Ružić, professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Podgorica, University of Montenegro, interview of 17 September 2018.
20 Dušanka Popović, professor of the Faculty of Philology in Nikšić, University of Montenegro, interview of 31 August 2018.
21 Božena Jelušić, interview of 6 September 2018.
22 Ibid.

When media literacy was introduced in the education system, teaching staff training was organised by the Pedagogical Centre (2009). Other institutions and civil society organisations initially failed to recognise the significance of these activities. Since 2015, the Bureau of Education Services has accredited training in the field of media literacy, which was implemented from preschool to secondary school level and which is under the authority of the Ministry of Education within the Catalogue of Professional Development Programmes of Teachers.[23] Table 2 shows the number of attendees.

Table 2. Number of attendees in trainings organised by the Bureau of Education Services

Title of the accredited training	Year of realisation	No. of attendees
Use of media in a democratic society	2015 and 2016	56
Safe communication with the media	2016	24
Media literacy	2016	28
Media literacy	2017	29

Source: Ministry of Education.

The most frequent participants in the training are literature teachers, although this option is offered to other profiles as well. Namely, the process of job systematisation in education determined the rules for the selection of teachers, and the subject programme for media literacy determined which education profile correlates with the profile for teachers of media literacy. The programme envisages that lectures may be conducted by teachers of language and literature, as well as of psychology, pedagogy, philosophy and sociology. Through interviews with the teachers of the course, we established that language and literature teachers have taught this subject for the past two years (in one case, it was a teacher of French language and literature, while all others were teachers of native language and literature). Anita Adžić, Montenegrin language and literature teacher, points out that the knowledge and skills she "translated" from her primary subject facilitated the acquisition of knowledge which she now implements through the media literacy course.[24] However, other teachers have expressed concern over the knowledge and skills that

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23 Ljiljana Ivanović, independent consultant in the Bureau for Education Services, interview of 27 August 2018.
24 Anita Adžić, literature and media literacy teacher in combined secondary school "17. Septembar" in Žabljak, interview of 8 October 2018.

students need to adopt under their supervision. It is not rare that a teacher who conducts classes in this subject is not certified for it at all. Vesna Pavićević, a literature teacher in general secondary school "Niko Rolović", expresses concern over the knowledge gained from the training and points out that better infrastructure is essential for the better organisation of lectures.[25] She even suggests the possibility of engaging external professional staff for the implementation of the media literacy course.

3.3. Course organisation and technical capacities of schools

The character and the level of knowledge acquired through the course and the technical capacities required for teaching the media literacy course imply a more creative approach in comparison to other subjects. This further highlights the efforts required by the teaching staff, and the methods and technical capacities are critical for a more favourable outcome of the course activities.

The curriculum of the media literacy course has not been revised or amended since its introduction in 2009. In class, teachers use the *MediaLit Kit*, which is a form of structural and creative support to teachers for the realisation of practical activities. Since the beginning of programme implementation, no textbook on this subject has been produced. For the teaching of lectures within the course, the curriculum stipulates mandatory equipment and such classroom aids as television set, camera, DVD or VHS, computers and software support (Zavod za školstvo 2009a). Teachers agree that high-quality and dynamic teaching requires modern IT resources that would enable students to develop practical skills. Zoja Bojanić Lalović, principal of the "Slobodan Škerović" general secondary school in Podgorica, points out that today's educational frameworks require keeping pace with digital trends: "For a long time, the only teaching tool in general secondary schools was a textbook; the new generations need more than that".[26]

However, the lack of technical capacity affects many schools. Some schools also lack a good Internet connection, and the computer lab which is equipped with the required tools is rarely used for media literacy classes. Schools rarely cooperate with the media because such an approach requires budget funds that are never assigned for these needs.

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25 Vesna Pavićević, native language and literature and media literacy teacher in general secondary school "Niko Rolović" in Bar, interview of 11 October 2018.
26 Zoja Bojanić Lalović, principal of general secondary school "Slobodan Škerović" in Podgorica, interview of 4 October 2018.

Affected by these shortcomings, teachers often lose motivation. Vesna Pavićević explains the conditions under which teachers operate: "... it has become quite monotonous because the [MediaLit Kit] tutorial was not easy to use, and, in order to follow the plan, I tried to manage the classroom activities by myself, without any technical support from the school for the most part".[27]

For a better implementation of the course, teaching resources need to be provided; these include the production of textbooks and guidelines for teachers, as well as an ongoing re-examination and revision of teaching methods. Tatjana Zeković, French language teacher at the general secondary school in Cetinje, proposes Method 270 and points out the following:

"You have a project of a Method 270, which is related to a flipped classroom - where mobile phones and internet should represent a means to carry out the classes, rather than an obstacle. A flipped classroom will seek ways to create a programme together with the students, utilising sources and means to obtain answers to questions that the media literacy course poses, which is the aim of that course".[28]

A successful realisation of classes requires regular education and keeping pace with contemporary digital technologies as well as the development of skills and knowledge for their use. The question remains as to whether teachers whose training lasted only a day or two can be considered trained. Media literacy therefore represents a great pedagogical challenge for teachers, and the quality and success of these classes affect not only the students' knowledge, but also the popularity of the course.

3.4.   Drop in attendance

The attendance rate of the media literacy course is an important indicator of the success in the realisation of these classes. Based on data obtained from the Ministry of Education, a troubling drop in attendance is evident.[29] Chart 1 shows the progression of the total number of students who attended classes in this subject divided by academic

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27 Vesna Pavićević, interview of 11 October 2018.
28 Tatjana Zeković, French language and literature and media literacy teacher in general secondary school Cetinje, interview of 9 October 2018.
29   In the academic year 2010/2011, the Ministry of Education introduced the Montenegrin Education Information System (MEIS), and data on class attendance are available starting from this period. By collecting data on students, teaching subjects and employees, MEIS makes possible the analysis of education data and enables quickly available statistics at all levels, among other things (Čabarkapa 2014).

years. In the first two years after the introduction of the media literacy course, we can clearly notice a positive trend that marked the beginning of implementation. However, the initial enthusiasm faded very soon.

From the academic year 2011/2012 onward, a decline in attendance is evident. This decline is consistent up until the academic year of 2016/2017 where there is a minor deviation from this trend, but after that year, the decline continues. The current academic year (2017/2018) has seen the smallest number of students attending these classes since the collection of attendance figures was begun.

The largest number of students who attended the media literacy course is in Cetinje (301 students) and the smallest number in Berane (21). Other schools are revolving around a certain average where the number of attendees ranges between 71 and 175. Cities with lower population density (Plav, Kolašin, Žabljak) show a certain sustainability in the teaching of this subject. The respondents explain the negative trend in attendance with the lack of richer content for students (which would make the school the centre of their daily activities, encouraging students to attend classes) as well as with the practice of some teachers of using the course merely to meet the required norm.[30]

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30 Božena Jelušić, interview of 6 September 2018; Nataša Ružić, interview of 17 September 2018.

Chart 1. Attendance rates of media literacy course
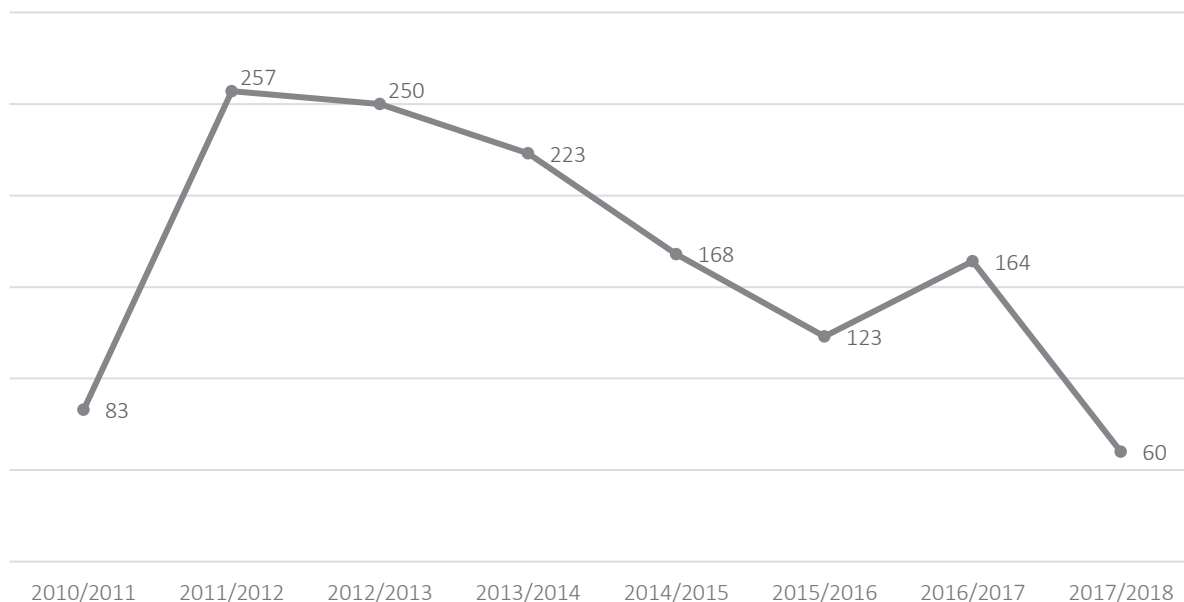
Source: Ministry of Education.

Although the curriculum of the media literacy course is envisioned as a one-year course, the classes were often organised in second and third grade due to students' interest. Out of the total number of students who attended this course (1,328), 302 attended classes in the third grade, and 1,018 in the second grade. Teachers have pointed out that the older students generally achieved better results because the course likely requires a certain maturity, which also affects the students' achievement.

The majority of students attended classes in the municipalities of the central region (430), while the northern region had the largest number of municipalities where classes in this course were conducted. Nevertheless, a disconcerting fact is that in some municipalities these classes have not been realised at all (Kotor, Nikšić,

Danilovgrad, Ulcinj, Bijelo Polje, and Pljevlja). Schools that maintained a continuity of attendance were located in the municipalities of Bar, Budva, Tivat, Žabljak, and Cetinje. Cetinje general secondary school continually conducted classes in this course from the academic year of 2011/2012 to 2016/2017, without interruption. In the current academic year (2017/2018), there are merely 60 attendees in four municipalities - Budva, Kolašin, Tivat and Žabljak.

3.5. Opting for the course and its elective character

The reform of education introduced elective subjects which allowed students to partly adjust their education according to their personal preferences. Reformed education includes a list of 11 compulsory subjects which is then expanded with the list of elective subjects. In order for students to fulfil the requirement for passing the final exam and thus complete their secondary education, they must meet the graduation standard defined by the number of classes they attended in the 3rd or 4th grade (Ispitni centar 2010).
Students have the opportunity to choose media literacy after completing first grade in a general secondary school. A public presentation of elective subjects is organised in schools. The students are largely influenced by the quality and the manner of teachers' presentation of subjects. Zoja Bojanić Lalović, principal of the "Slobodan Škerović" general secondary school in Podgorica, explains how this school organises this process:

"We define a certain period during the year when we organise the presentations of elective subjects. Presentations are also attended by teachers who teach the subject, and the students who are experienced in elective courses. The course and learning outcomes are presented and then we hand out a questionnaire where the students opt for a particular subject".[31]

At the same time, the Principal adds, this way of promoting elective subjects has proved to be insufficiently productive, because there is a noticeable decline in class attendance, and the formation and the realisation of classes is sporadic. For the purpose of informing students about elective courses, the Bureau for Education Services has created two handbooks, *Catalogue of elective subjects in general secondary schools* and *Our school*, and distributed them in all high schools. Ljiljana Ivanović, an adviser in the Bureau for Education Services, points out that the main reason for the

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31   Zoja Bojanić Lalović, interview of 4 October 2018.

drop in class attendance is the insufficient engagement of teachers in the promotion of this subject in the first grade, through the subject of Montenegrin-Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian language and literature.[32]

However, the teachers we interviewed expressed different views. They believe that students who choose to attend media literacy classes do this for two reasons: either they already have a developed understanding of the importance of the subject, or they choose it due to previous positive experience with the teacher teaching the course. Milica Vuković, literature teacher at the combined secondary school "Danilo Kiš" in Budva, pointed out that the media literacy course was mostly attended by already well-educated students, and therefore they had existing developed knowledge about the importance of media literacy.[33]

One of the factors that have an impact on the choice of this subject is the manner in which other elective subjects are promoted. Namely, media literacy is most often taught by teachers of literature and language, and these are teachers who have the most frequent time slots and thus meet the norm set by the Ministry of Education. However, teachers of other subjects who teach a smaller number of classes, which is a prerequisite for keeping their position, struggle to catch up with the standard. Most often, the students need to be enticed to join the class by the promises of organised excursions, field trips or some other "convenience" that is more attractive to students than traditional classes conducted in the classroom. The media literacy curriculum envisages visits to the national TV broadcaster, a local media outlet or media institute, but these activities are usually limited by the resources and technical capacities of the school. Research shows that such activities are rarely realised in practice.

3.6. Evaluation of knowledge and probability of obtaining mandatory status

A significant percentage of students lacks understanding of what media literacy is, and a large number believe that the course teaches spelling literacy for journalists.[34] In order to eliminate these ambiguities and gain initial knowledge about the concept of media literacy, it would be necessary to work on better promotion of the subject not only in schools, but also through media campaigns.

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32 Ljiljana Ivanović, interview of 27 August 2018.
33 Milica Vuković, literature and media literacy teacher in combined secondary school "Danilo Kiš" in Budva, interview of 12 October 2018.
34 Dragoljub Vuković, media expert, interview of 23 August 2018.

One of the problems that are also evident is the assessment of the knowledge acquired. The highest grades are given at a high right in the elective subjects compared with the generally high assessment criteria in general secondary schools, which makes the status of elective subjects, according to our respondents, quite worrying. Students are expected to demonstrate better achievement, and deficiencies in the grades from mandatory subjects are being compensated for by high grades in elective subjects, which diminishes the status of elective subjects. The highest grades are frequent in the media literacy course, so there is a reasonable concern that students choose this subject because of the favourable assessment criteria and not because of the knowledge and skills they would acquire. Teachers are at liberty to evaluate students based on their engagement in class, and, as the organisation of classes differs from that of other subjects, the question remains as to whether the application of standard assessment criteria is justified. The improvement of results in the media literacy course should be accompanied by changes that would include more coherent assessment criteria.

Education reform envisages that this subject is implemented only in general secondary schools while secondary vocational schools are excluded from it. In such schools, the system of "professional orientation" that was discontinued in general secondary schools is still in force. Our respondents have different opinions about the issue of the subject's elective status. In the opinion of Dragoljub Vuković and Biljana Maslovarić, its limitation to only general secondary school is a factor in its degradation. The solution would therefore include mandatory status of the subject and its implementation in all secondary schools.[35] Dušanka Popović, on the other hand, questions such a solution: "I do not know if the mandatory status of the course would affect its popularity because the teachers are the ones who pass on the knowledge".[36] She also underlines the issue of the subject matter of the Montenegrin Language and Literature Programme for Secondary Vocational Schools, which foresees the realisation of classes in the third and fourth grade through programme units that are realised with the aim of developing skills for understanding and analysing the screened non-literary texts and similar media content.

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35   Ibid; Biljana Maslovarić, professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić, University of Montenegro, interview of 28 August 2018.
36   Dušanka Popović, interview of 31 August 2018.

4.   The perspective and significance of media literacy - students' opinions

In order to obtain a more detailed insight into the topic of this research, we conducted a survey in which we examined students' attitudes towards the media and media literacy, as well as their assessment of class realisation.[37]

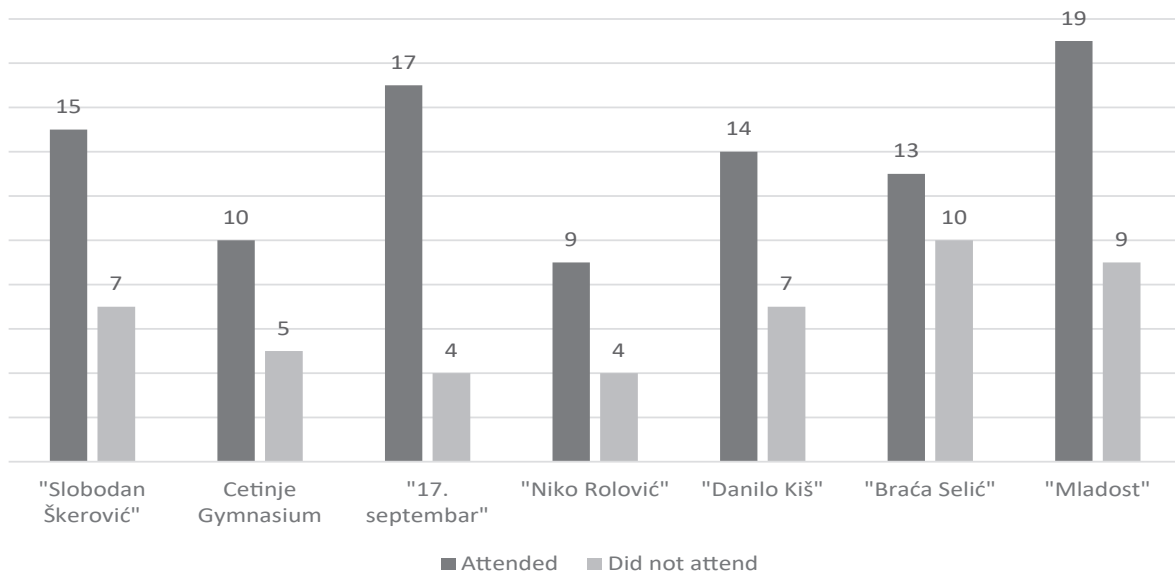## 4.1.   Characteristics of sample

The experimental method in this phase of research implied a sample with two groups of subjects. One group consisted of students who attended the media literacy course within the previous two academic years (2016/2017 and 2017/2018), and the second group consisted of students who had not previously attended classes on this subject (control group). When creating the sample, we took care that the sample size per school did not exceed 30 students, which was also the physical capacity of the classrooms in which the questionnaire was filled in.

Out of the 224 students in total who attended classes in the previous two academic years, our sample consisted of 97 respondents who attended the media literacy course and 46 who did not.[38] Chart 2 shows the structure of the survey sample in relation to the school where the survey was conducted.

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37 For the needs of this phase of the research we created a questionnaire with seven questions - of open, closed and semi-open type. The survey consisted of two Likert-type scales, by which we assessed the level of differences in knowledge about the media and media literacy as well as the students' assessment of the realisation of classes.

38 Distribution of the survey was conducted by a researcher of the Montenegro Media Institute, which ensured the quality of the answers received. After the survey was completed, we examined the quality of the answers received by applying logical analysis; at this stage, we excluded 13 questionnaires, which we deemed had not been filled out with enough attention.

Chart 2. Structure of the survey sample (per school)

Legend: ■ Attended ■ Did not attend

Values per school:
- "Slobodan Škerović": 15 / 7
- Cetinje Gymnasium: 10 / 5
- "17. septembar": 17 / 4
- "Niko Rolović": 9 / 4
- "Danilo Kiš": 14 / 7
- "Braća Selić": 13 / 10
- "Mladost": 19 / 9

4.2. Students' attitudes towards the media and their operation

By responding to the views from Table 3, we conducted a partial assessment of media knowledge acquired through the media literacy course.[39] The results of the survey indicate slight differences between the two groups of students in relation to the awareness of media influence on events in society and social reality, as well as to the greater need

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39 We have already pointed out that our goal was not to evaluate the knowledge acquired through attending classes because that sort of research would require a more comprehensive questionnaire, created by education experts.

of citizens to influence the work and content of the media. Table 3 shows that these differences are present in three stated opinions: "The media have substantial impact on our perception of events in the society"; "Public broadcasters should be at the service of all citizens"; and "Citizens should have more opportunities to influence the media and their content". However, by looking at the column of mean value, it is evident that the variance is negligible.

Table 3. Students' attitudes towards the media (ANOVA)

	Mean values		
	Yes	**No**	**Sig.**
The media have substantial impact on our perception of events in society	4.66	4.41	.032
The state has the right to limit the work of the media	2.71	2.65	.823
Freedom of the media is limited by media owners	3.66	3.68	.925
Public broadcasters should be at the service of all citizens	4.77	4.41	.025
Journalists should not impose their own point of view when reporting about a particular event	4.14	4.20	.806
Citizens should have more opportunities to influence the media and their content	4.36	3.78	.001

The results from the mean value column (Table 4) show that the differences between the answers in relation to which group the respondents belonged to are negligible. The fact that students who attended classes in media literacy and those who did not gave similar answers requires additional analysis. Our simple survey with two groups of students cannot explain the results from Table 4.[40]

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40   When creating a synthetic (summary) score, we checked the internal consistency of the scale using the mean inter-item correlation and determined the insufficiently high correlation coefficients. We find the reasons for this in a small number of opinions and their general character. For the purposes of future research, the conceptualisation and creation of a scale would need to be based on the mentioned guidelines, and the scale used by this research can serve as a basis for creating it.

Table 4. Average differences between students in relation to knowledge about the media (summarised scores)

	Have you attended classes?	N	Median values
Knowledge of media literacy	Yes	94	4.05
	No	44	3.85

4.3. Students' attitudes towards media literacy course

By analysing the motivations for attending lectures in media literacy, we have determined the main factors influencing the choice of this subject by students. Most students attend this course in order to acquire general knowledge and skills which they find would be useful for further education. This indicates that 60 respondents (Table 5) had recognised the importance of the subject to a certain extent before attending classes. The second most frequent answer was "I would like to develop a critical attitude towards the media" (36 students), indicating that a certain number of students choose the subject in order to develop a critical attitude towards the media, which is also the aim of the programme. Schools should recognise the importance of promoting the subject and attracting interest among students who do not possess preceding knowledge about the importance of media literacy. What raises doubt is the effect of the current promotion method, which neither gave the needed results nor attracted the interest of a sufficient number of students for this course.

Table 5. Reasons for choosing the subject

	N	%
I wish to develop a critical attitude towards the media	36	26.1%
I plan to work in the media and journalism sector in the future	15	10.9%
The subject offers opportunities to acquire general knowledge and skills for further education	60	43.5%
The lectures are well-organised, using modern methods and technology	11	8.0%
The subject is not difficult	16	11.6%
Total	138	100 %

Acquired knowledge and skills represent an important indicator for the success of the course. This indicator can be used in creating guidelines to improve classroom activities. For these purposes, we created questions regarding the acquired knowledge and skills, as well as the students' opinions towards teaching methods on the subject (Table 6). If we systematise the answers, we might get an overview about the effects and disadvantages of the course. Students indicate that for the most part, the level of gained knowledge helped them to better understand the operation of the media. Creative expression and understanding of ethical standards comes after this response. The results show what parts of the programme were the most useful in students' opinion, as well as what parts of the programme were best communicated by the teachers. However, opinions are divided on the potential mandatory character of the subject. Earlier in the research it was pointed out that certain schools lack technical capacities for the realisation of lectures, which is reflected in the knowledge acquired through this course. This conclusion is based on the least represented answer in the table - that the smallest number of students are satisfied with the knowledge they gained when applying different tools in order to gain a greater insight.

Table 6. Acquired knowledge and skills[41]

	Mean values
The media literacy course has improved my understanding of the media and their operation	4.45
Lectures in media literacy have helped me to recognise and use my potentials to develop creative expression through media formats (blog, video …) and platforms	4.22
By attending lectures in media literacy, I have gained knowledge of various tools (databases, web browsers, social networks, blogs) that can help me get a greater insight	3.82
I have acquired knowledge on the professional and ethical principles used in assessing the quality and credibility of media content	4.21
The media literacy course should become a mandatory subject	4.05

In the semi-open question, the students had the opportunity to indicate which changes in their opinion should be introduced in order to improve the quality of the lectures. Three responses stood out (Table 6): Better cooperation with the media and civil society with significant practical training, as well as modern and better-quality equipment, are factors which, in students' opinion, would improve the quality of these classes.

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41 The range of responses: 1. I completely disagree with the claim; 2. I partially disagree; 3. I'm not sure; 4. I partially agree with the claim; 5. I fully agree with the claim.

5.   Reform of higher education and introduction of media literacy in higher education

5.1.   Conceptual differences between media literacy and media and information literacy

Since its introduction in general secondary schools, the concept of media literacy has undergone significant changes. Today we are increasingly talking about the field of media and information literacy, while the term media literacy is often seen as anachronistic. This issue has largely arisen from the development of digital technologies that pose challenges for policymakers as well as for those who implement them.

The field of media literacy increasingly relates to digital content, which requires a change or updating of the methods and the knowledge acquired on this subject. Jelena Perović stresses the role and importance of the education system in recognising and monitoring the emergence of the new digital paradigm as well as the content and trends that accompany it: "Updating of the key concepts in media education is an absolute need due to the changes that the digital revolution introduces" (Perović 2016, 99).

Changes in the concept and, subsequently, the content of the media literacy course are related to the role of the media as a backbone of information as well as the increased use of the Internet for information purposes. The general objectives of the media literacy course, created in 2009 for the purpose of classroom realisation, clearly indicate the necessity for developing a critical attitude towards the media, i.e., critical reception and individual production of media content (Zavod za školstvo 2009a). The programme emphasises the role of the Internet in the process of informing; however, a large portion of the content in this programme refers to the need of developing a

critical attitude towards content coming from traditional media. It is envisaged that the knowledge acquired through the Internet is used to provide teachers with additional ideas for the teaching of classes (Zavod za školstvo 2009a), but the curriculum does not envisage the acquisition of knowledge that would help students develop information techniques using modern digital technologies. Since its publication, the curriculum has not been amended or revised, and Ružić questions whether it is fit for the modern digital challenges at all.[42]

The generation gap in the understanding of the knowledge which young people need to acquire needs to be overcome, because a modernised curricula and activities are essential for the subject programme to be topical at the time it is being realised. Thus, media literacy and information literacy are conceptually complementary. Gordana Ljubanović, the Project Coordinator of the National Library "Đurđe Crnojević", explains this synergy: "The media that is void of information is an empty box, and the information without its carrier is pure abstraction; it needs to materialise one way or the other"[43].

The conceptual permeation of media and information literacy is demanding from the perspective of policymakers, but it is essential for the quality of education. Monitoring of the trends and rapid changes in the conceptualisation of this notion is an obligation for the institutions as they create a framework for monitoring these changes through co-operation with teaching staff and the scientific community. According to media expert Dragoljub Vuković, the task of education in the field of media and information literacy is to help students discern between reality itself and a media reality; to learn how to decode a media message and to understand that a media message is a construct and not an objective reflection of a certain reality, and that they acquire relevant skills for its understanding.[44]

UNESCO's *Media and information literacy - policy and strategy guidelines*, published by the National Library "Đurđe Crnojević", advocates an approach in which the creation of information and media literacy policies should be designed to harmonise and include different types of literacy that can be recognised in the digital age (Grizzle 2015, 13). The manual does not include a definition of information and media literacy, but rather focuses on key learning outcomes and principal elements of this subject. This concept encompasses knowledge that enables citizens to: a) understand the role and operation of the media and all other sources of information in a democratic society, b) critically evaluate the information and content obtained, and c) synthesise and create ideas derived from the media and other sources of information (Grizzle 2015, 13-14).

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42 Nataša Ružić, interview of 17 September 2018.
43 Gordana Ljubanović, project coordinator at the National Library "Đurđe Crnojević", interview of 5 September 2018.
44 Dragoljub Vuković, interview of 23 August 2018.

5.2.   Introduction of media literacy course at the Faculty of Political Science

The reform of higher education has introduced changes for the more effective implementation of the knowledge acquired during the course of studies. The reform was followed by a reorganisation of study programmes as well as amendments to the curriculum. In the academic year 2018/2019, at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Montenegro in Podgorica, a media literacy course was introduced in the second year of the Department of Media Studies and Journalism, as well as the subject Media and Information Literacy in doctoral studies. It is important to note that the Faculty of Political Science struggled to maintain the status of an independent university unit. The reform of the university advocated the idea of "allocating" departments to other university units, and some of the alternative solutions included the discontinuation of the Department of Journalism and instead suggested the introduction of a new department, for Communication Studies. Currently, as of 2017 onwards, the education of journalists is located within the programme of the Department of the Media Studies and Journalism.

The reasons for these changes and the introduction of new courses can be found in a general decline of Montenegrin journalism, and according to Nataša Ružić, professor and head of the Department of Media Studies and Journalism, the need for media literacy education among journalists is what prompted her and her colleagues to advocate the introduction of this subject.[45]

Previous curricula for certain courses at the Department of Journalism involved units related to the field of media literacy; subjects such as Media Psychology, Media Discourse Analysis, Media Audiences allowed students to acquire certain skills in the field of media literacy. This is also reflected in students' substantial interest in media and information literacy; a significant number of graduate and master theses have been written on this subject.[46] Students have been acquainted with current trends in journalism in the course Introduction to Journalism during their first year of studies, as well as such topics as manipulation techniques, post-truth politics and fake news.[47]

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45   Nataša Ružić, interview of 17 September 2018.
46   Ibid.
47   Ibid.

However, the questions that were left unanswered were why the teaching of media literacy is being carried out at undergraduate level while media and information literacy is reserved for the doctoral level, and what content the curriculum for these subjects includes.

The importance of the media literacy course was not recognised in the teaching at other university units. Namely, graduates from the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Philology in Nikšić mainly attain jobs in education; their lack of knowledge in the field of media literacy undoubtedly influences their skills and competences in teaching young people, where critical insights into the world around us are essential. Dušanka Popović, a professor at the Faculty of Philology in Nikšić, tried to initiate the introduction of media and information literacy in this institution, but the appeal fell on deaf ears.[48] One of the main excuses was that at these faculties, a sufficient knowledge of media literacy is gained through the Sociology of Media and Media Philosophy subjects, and therefore a separate course was considered redundant.[49] This illustrates the lack of understanding among the professors concerned, which significantly reflects on the status of knowledge in this field among students as well.

6.   Conclusion

Indicators of the state and quality of education in Montenegro can be found in the results of PISA testing, but also in the index of media literacy and the attendance rate of the media literacy course. The skills acquired in the subject of media literacy can be described as educational skills for the 21st century.

The reasons that led us to closely examine the circumstances surrounding the implementation of the media literacy course in the Montenegrin education system were encouraged by the ten-year period from the initial implementation of this subject in general secondary schools, its formal character and the number of instances involved in its implementation. We also found an additional motive in the obstacles we had observed in the implementation of this subject, which could serve as a useful guideline for potentially similar future initiatives in the countries of the region.

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48   Dušanka Popović, interview of 31 August 2018.
49   Nataša Ružić, interview of 17 September 2018.

Regardless of the initial success, media literacy was soon lost among other elective subjects in general secondary schools. This is also supported by reports on a drop in class attendance, to which neither the public nor the civil sector offered any reaction. In the period from 2009, when this subject began being implemented, to 2015, when media literacy was introduced in the Catalogue of Professional Development Programmes of Teachers, there was a long period of discontinuation that was supposed to improve the status of the subject. During this period, the success of lectures on the subject depended solely on the enthusiasm of teachers, and the level of attendance on the enthusiasm and interest of students.

Instead of treating the problems that this initiative warned about shortly after the beginning of implementation as incentives for its improvement, the inconsistency of the players involved in the initial implementation has jeopardised the prospect of this subject.

Problems in the scoring method for the graduation standard, a lack of textbooks, the issue of fulfilling the norm, and the insufficient promotion of the subject are some of the reasons that led to the current state of affairs concerning media literacy, as established through our research.

Our research points to the inefficiency of the methods used in promoting media literacy. Also, all respondents who participated in the interviews agree that the competition with other elective subjects and their promotion is most often motivated by the fulfilment of the norm, which is one of the main obstacles for a better implementation of the course. Another relevant issue concerns the effective promotion of the media literacy course by teaching staff. The questionnaire directed at students indicated that there was a preceding understanding of the importance of the subject and its goals among a large number of those who attended classes in this subject. This potential was largely underdeveloped.

This subject does not represent a supplement to the graduation standard, and opting and attending this course depends on the inclination of students to obtain knowledge in this field. Teachers should play a more prominent role in promoting the subject; one of the reasons for students to opt for the subject is to maintain continuity of attending classes held by a particular teacher whom they respect.

The lectures themselves and the methods used to teach them are in line with the programme of media literacy being implemented since 2009, and compliant with the existing guidelines for the realisation of lectures from the *MediaLit Kit*. Teachers stress that it is necessary to update the programme and create a textbook for the subject, which would be convenient for both teachers and students. The textbook would also standardise the teaching structure and thus facilitate evaluation of the knowledge gained on this subject.

Over the period of nine years during which the programme was implemented and lectures on media literacy initiated in general secondary schools in Montenegro, there have been conceptual changes in this field that have not been reflected in the programme itself. This also affected the structure of the realised lectures. New methods and techniques brought about by digital technology, which became an indispensable content of the subject programmes, were not put into force. The question is whether and how many schools would have the required technical capacities; our field research showed that some schools do not have a good internet connection, and IT labs were not used for media literacy classes.

Intermittent training of the teaching staff and insufficient evaluation of their competence and skills have a considerable impact on the quality of the realised programme. There are recurring examples where teachers appointed to this subject had passed the training organised by the Pedagogical Centre in 2009 and have not received additional training since then. Through the interviews, we also learned that some teachers had not received any training whatsoever, but instead carried out the lectures following those units that they personally assessed to be important enough for this field. The lack of guidelines from the Ministry of Education concerning the implementation of the programme according to the already established curriculum raises concerns, and as a consequence teachers have the freedom to change the programme as they go along.

After nine years of implementation of the media literacy programme in secondary education, the higher education reform has made certain breakthroughs with the aim of greater application of theoretical knowledge in practice. One of the changes involved the introduction of media literacy at the Faculty of Political Science. The initial experience is positive, but there remains an open question as to why this subject was not implemented at the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Philology in Nikšić, whose students most often find jobs in the teaching profession after graduation.

The hypothesis of this survey was confirmed in certain aspects as far as the subject matter is concerned. The programme itself suffers from a lack of agility on the part of the relevant institutions and insufficient willingness of the teaching staff to contribute to better teaching through new methods and more efficient teaching materials. It is questionable to what extent the elective status of the course could improve the implementation. Its limitation to general secondary schools is to a certain extent justified, as the implementation of units that are related to media literacy is already included in the programme for Montenegrin-Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian language and literature. The readiness of all relevant players to commit themselves to improving the implementation of the media literacy course is essential for the course's prospects.

7. Recommendations

In order to increase the success of the media literacy programme and improve class attendance, we propose the following recommendations for the competent education authorities:

- to conduct a scientific and professional evaluation of the media literacy subject taking into consideration the results of its implementation as an elective subject in general secondary schools since 2009;
- in cooperation with the institutions responsible for media policies, to conduct a public debate which should include all relevant players (schools, civil society, representatives of the media, academia and similar) about the importance and further development of the media literacy subject as a form of developing critical thinking, essential for the understanding of the world we live in;
- to examine the content of the curriculum for the media literacy subject in general secondary schools and assess the possibility of introducing new goals and topics with regard to the development and influence of modern information technologies. This measure should also be accompanied by the development of textbooks that would enable students and teachers alike to facilitate the implementation of the programme;
- to examine the possibility for the media literacy course to become a supplement to the graduation standard (for general secondary schools);
- to examine options and modalities for media literacy to become an inter-subject topic in secondary vocational schools;
- to provide regular training of teaching staff and monitor the quality of their work within the media literacy programme;
- to upgrade technical capacities in classrooms in order to more effectively realise the media literacy lectures;
- in cooperation with the institutions responsible for media policies, to improve the work on promoting the media literacy programme in both schools and the media, and introduce regular campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of media literacy.

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Translation
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Experiences and New Opportunities in Implementing Media and Information Literacy in Primary and Secondary Schools in Serbia

Dubravka Valić Nedeljković and Milica Janjatović Jovanović

1.   Introduction

"Teachers have to change their notion of their work entirely. They should not be frightened by the fact that their pupils sometimes know more than they do, which is often the case nowadays."
"Simply, a teacher no longer carries information but only needs to teach students how to learn."

(teachers, participants of the focus groups)

The process of raising the degree of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) among citizens of Serbia is currently taking place on several levels, primarily through project activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).[1] Most of the actions that have MIL as their focus recognise the young population as the target group. Putting an emphasis on educating youth is even more meaningful considering that one of the key points of MIL is the ability to critically analyse media content knowing that the best time to form critical minds is in the early stage of life. The question of adequate education in understanding the way the media works and in understanding the messages sent to us through the media has still not been systematically resolved; as a result, every NGO initiative and activity is welcomed. However, the dispersion of actions of the NGO sector, which remain without a unified focus, is the result of relative constraints on project activities that further affect the lack of general prevalence of the awareness of the need for media literacy. After considering a wide spectrum of activities, the following conclusions were reached:

- It is necessary to carry out awareness campaigns in the media about the importance of raising the level of MIL among citizens of Serbia;
- Despite some progress in the field of official education, advocacy for the systematic inclusion of MIL in the primary and secondary education system should continue;
- It is necessary to focus on adequate education regarding MIL for education workers.

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1   Studies were conducted by the Faculty of Philosophy Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy Niš, Mediacenter Niš and BIRODI.

1.1.　　Research on Media and Information Literacy

In the last several years, many studies have been conducted to assess the level of MIL of citizens of Serbia.[1] These studies have approached the MIL problem in several different ways, thus yielding more comprehensive results that can serve as a starting point in further resolving the issue of media literacy of the population.
The studies covered the following four fields:

- Communication needs of students and teachers;
- Ways in which a MIL educational programme should be implemented in Serbian schools;
- The current level of MIL among citizens of Serbia;
- The awareness of the need for raising the level of media literacy.

The main conclusions of these studies suggest that there is a simulacrum of media literacy in Serbia and that it is necessary to raise the level of media literacy of the entire population. One of the main recommendations is that the media should take an active role in the process of implementing MIL in the education system (Stamenković 2013).

When it comes to the communication needs of children, it is noticeable that their interests are slowly shifting to the virtual sphere and that they are much more interested in solving problems and challenges if they are in the digital sphere. Most teachers note that generally, educational materials and didactic tools are obsolete and that a systemic reform is necessary to adequately implement MIL in education. Also, students notice that media content is not sufficiently discussed in schools, in spite of their needs (Valić Nedeljković, Bala and Geler 2017).

1.2.　　State initiatives

In the last several years, the state administration has drafted important documents that recognise the importance of education reform in Serbia as well as the importance of MIL. Reforms have been taking place since the school year 2018/2019. MIL is mentioned in the *Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System* and in the *Strategy for Education Development in Serbia 2020*. In these documents, raising the level of MIL among children is set

as one of the goals that should be accomplished by transforming libraries into media libraries, which would provide opportunities for acquiring new knowledge in the field of media.[2]

The Ministry of Culture and Information convened a national consultation in mid-2018 to bring together all actors dealing with media literacy in Serbia, with the ultimate goal of identifying good practice models that would be an integral part of the strategy for the systematic introduction of media literacy in primary and secondary schools. The working group for the preparation of MIL curricula was appointed by the ministry in October 2018. By the end of the year, it made the first step by defining the number of classes for the media part of the programme "Language, media and culture"; the next step is the elaboration of classes under the programme.

From the school year 2018/2019, education reforms have introduced the elective course "Language, media and culture" that students can choose in the first year of grammar school (gymnasium).[3] The goal of the "Language, media and culture" programme is to contribute to the improvement of communication skills, the development of a media culture and the adoption of cultural patterns that will enable the student to navigate the modern world, build an identity and develop professionally. The total number of classes during the school year is 37.[4]

1.3.   Initiatives of the civil sector

Non-governmental organisations of various provenance deal with MIL in several ways, by organising:

- Seminars for the professional development of teachers;[5]
- Workshops, camps, and festivals for students;[6]
- Courses for secondary school and faculty students;[7]
- Media production.[8]

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2   Even before defining the Strategy, the project of Library Plus NGO - Internest was implemented. The focus of this project was to transform libraries into media libraries, which should help to express creativity by presenting school material in a different, media format. See more at: http://www.bibliotekaplus.rs/ (Accessed 14 January 2019).

3   Grammar schools (gymnasiums) offer general and broad education, and differ from two other types of secondary schools in Serbia – professional and vocational schools. There are currently 133 grammar schools (gymnasiums) in Serbia, however, the elective character of the subject prevents us from predicting the exact number of students who will attend these classes this school year (2018/2019).

4   In order to see what the benefits are, and what the subject is missing, it would be good to do a cross-section of the situation after the first semester.

5   Novi Sad School of Journalism, Library Plus.

6   Novi Sad School of Journalism, Library Plus, ASMEDI.

7   Social Margin Center.

8   TV series *In the Network* created by Share Foundation is an example of quality production – both technically and in its content. As studies have shown, young people still spend a lot of time watching television, therefore this segment of the media should not be disregarded when implementing MIL on a wide scale. See more at: https://www.umrezi.rs/ (Accessed 14 January 2019).

The actions of the civil sector are mostly focused on alternative educational activities. It is evident that every organisation has a different approach to the implementation of their activities. These forms of non-formal education could serve as a model when forming a MIL plan of formal education at all levels. In addition to the programmes as such, the work of the non-governmental sector is also significant due to the pool of MIL experts. What is lacking in the MIL initiatives in Serbia is networking that would allow easy insight into and review of activities, as well as exchange of experiences. The assumption is that the creation of a coalition of experts would provide better quality work in raising media literacy levels in the population. Since state initiatives have been launched to introduce MIL in education systems, the advisory role of the civil sector could be a factor unifying experts on a common task. NGOs could retain their role as educators in the field of non-formal education even after the formal introduction of MIL in the education system since it is a field that changes daily, depending on the direction in which information technology develops and social trends. The flexibility of project activities could be a good complement to formal education at all levels of education.

1.4. Thematic focus of the country research: Teachers' and students' experiences and expectations regarding MIL

As one of the most experienced non-governmental organisations in Serbia in the field of MIL, the Novi Sad School of Journalism (NSSJ) has focused its activities on introducing the practice of media and information literacy in the existing systems of primary and secondary education as a form of functional literacy of citizens in a democratic society of the 21st century.

The experience of lecturers and teachers attending MIL seminars organised by NSSJ shows the necessity for systematic work with teachers, as well as for raising awareness about the necessity of training in this field. Therefore, the focus of the country research has been examining the experiences and expectations of teachers and students regarding MIL in primary and secondary schools in Serbia. The next chapters of the research report will present the findings of the five focus group discussions with teachers and students.

During August 2018, the focus groups were organised with 52 teachers and students from elementary and secondary schools from 11 cities in Serbia. In addition, the report refers to an online questionnaire on media habits of young people: 211 students from 18 cities and villages in Serbia filled out the questionnaire in September 2018.

2. About this research

By reviewing current MIL activities in Serbia, and on the basis of years of experience of NSSJ in the field, it can be assumed that the introduction of MIL in the education system should be carried out in a systematic way, and that professional development seminars are not an adequate response to the educational, methodological and didactic needs of educators. It is also assumed that the communication gap between education workers and students arises as a result of a) students' digital literacy, exclusively from the technological aspect, without understanding the media content that reaches them through digital technologies; b) education workers' digital illiteracy preventing them from communicating with students to perform content analysis for which students are not competent.

In order to provide an adequate response to these assumptions, the research on the challenges for implementing MIL in the education system carried out as part of the project "Media for Citizens, Citizens for Media" was guided by the following general research questions:

What challenges does the education system face in the situation of introducing media and information literacy as a part of regular teaching?

What are adequate responses to the educational needs of educators in the field of media and information literacy?

What is the best way to overcome the communication gap between educators and students caused by various communication habits of these groups?

Do educators and students recognise the benefits of introducing media and information literacy into the system of regular education?

The objectives of this research were to examine past experiences and to consider the proposals for the implementation of MIL in the education system, then to establish the level of current competence of education workers for the education of students in the field of MIL, as well as to examine the communication and media habits of students.

Within current NSSJ project activities, it has been shown that dialogue with children is one of the best methodological approaches for a better understanding of their communication needs, as well as their ability to understand media content critically. For this reason, it was decided to carry out this research as part of the regional project "Media for Citizens, Citizens for Media" primarily using focus groups with students and teachers of primary and secondary schools in Serbia. Focus group participants[9] had the opportunity to express their views and experiences in their past work and to come up with common recommendations for the future through interaction and exchange of opinions.[10] An electronic questionnaire for collecting data on media habits of students was used as a supplement to focus groups.[11] Also, the research methodologically included the review and analysis of academic and professional literature, strategic documents, laws, as well as activities of civil society organisations dealing with the problem of MIL.

Focus group participants were selected by their direct interest in the problem of implementing MIL in the education system, but also their direct involvement in the implementation process itself. The experience and attitudes of education workers are significant given their years of work in education, which included experience with several education reform cycles.

Three important features of the focus groups participant sample are:

1. Education workers came from different schools, which also included different levels of classroom digitalisation.
2. Only some of the participants had attended MIL seminars.
3. Only teachers from grammar schools had information on the "Language, media and culture" elective programme, while primary and secondary school teachers still have no opportunity to work on such a programme with their students, or to consider the proposal for its introduction in the teaching process.

A special contribution to the research was the experience of students in classrooms without, with, or with only a partial digital dimension. At the same time, by examining their media habits, the research strove to determine whether the education system adequately responded to their needs and whether they were enabled to learn how to critically analyse the information they receive outside of school.

The results obtained through this research demonstrate established practices in the way teachers work. Then, the presentation of the patterns by which educators and students form opinions on modern ways of communication,

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9   In August 2018, five focus groups were organised with teachers and students from primary and secondary schools from 11 Serbian cities (Apatin, Bačka Palanka, Belgrade, Kragujevac, Kruševac, Loznica, Novi Pazar, Novi Sad, Požega, Vranje, and Vrbas). The focus groups were attended by 52 participants (37 female and 15 male), 18 of which were teachers and 34 of which were students.

10   The statements of the focus group participants given in the text represent the views expressing general approval, or views that differ significantly from the views of other participants. No conclusion was made exclusively from one statement.

11   The questionnaire was filled out by 211 primary and secondary school students from 18 cities and villages: Apatin, Arilje, Bela Zemlja, Belgrade, Blace, Čajetina, Kriva Reka, Kruševac, Loznica, Lučani, Mačkat, Novi Pazar, Novi Sad, Požega, Šljivovica, Užice, Vranje, and Zlatari.

communication in general, as well as education, allows the final articulation of a general attitude about the future of education reforms in the direction of media literacy of younger population, but also to make recommendations for future activities of competent bodies in the field of education.

3. Research results

3.1. Strategic challenges for the implementation of media and information literacy in the education system

3.1.1. Elective course "Language, media and culture"

The introduction of the elective course "Language, media and culture" in grammar schools from the school year 2018/2019 is one of the most important steps made towards a systemic solution for media literacy of the youngest segments of the population.

The very process of introducing the programme has largely confirmed the concerns and scepticism of education workers with regard to education reform. The stated attitudes of the focus group participants indicate that teachers in grammar schools, who were the only ones with the opportunity to be presented with this course, have different information about the course itself; most of them are still not sure how the course will be implemented; and only teachers who were personally interested in the course had more information about it.

Given that it is an elective course, most teachers, based on the experience from previous elective courses, expressed concern that only a small number of students will be interested in attending it, and that its realisation will be poor.

"We are all aware that MIL is essential and that it can indeed be useful. Experience has shown that students do not take elective courses seriously and that teachers who hold them do not have enough time to dedicate themselves to this."[12] Most participants emphasise that the implementation would be better if the programme was implemented in a cross-curricular manner, or applied through several subjects.

3.1.2. Capacities of education workers for teaching programmes dealing with media and information literacy topics

Education workers, whose responsibility is not only to carry out teaching but to offer their teaching capacity and experience as a guideline for creating the very programme, are a significant factor for the success of the implementation of reforms. Given that in the course of discussions with educators, it was repeatedly stressed that most educators are not interested in supporting reforms of any kind, the question was raised as to how the very teacher can contribute to reforms. The assumption of the research participants is that a small number of teachers do not have any interest in the reforms, or a desire to support them, and that most of them remain passive if they are expected to make the entire reform exclusively through their enthusiasm and creativity in forming the programme if the existing ones are not adequate.

Teachers expect to get a well-designed curriculum, the possibility of cooperation between teachers of various schools offering this programme, a well-regulated field of activities and duties, and the assumption they formed from previous experience is that in this case colleagues slightly less willing to work would also accept it.

"The key is cooperation. We need to exchange experiences and be involved in a common story to make the work better quality. If we do not share the experience of what we did or did not do, there is neither transparency nor examples of good practice that are necessary."[13] The fact that there is no coherent attitude among education workers about what media literacy is and how it should be implemented in the education system tells us how important cooperation and exchange of experiences are.

"We adults should learn how to receive and understand the news, that is the first step."[14] Most educators do not consider themselves, or their colleagues, competent to pursue programmes that deal with media literacy of students until they themselves reach a certain level of media literacy.

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12 Marija, education worker (all participants in the focus groups were assigned pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity).
13 Nevena, education worker.
14 Ibid.

3.1.2.1.   Past experiences of education workers: poor interest in reforms

For the past several years, the process of introducing MIL in teaching in Serbian schools has been taking place through the implementation of projects of various NGOs[15] with librarians primarily foreseen as carriers of the MIL programme. However, the reality in schools has largely hindered this initiative. According to the teachers who participated in focus groups, the library is the most common place to compensate for the insufficient teaching load of teachers. This has led to a situation in which different teachers work in libraries for a short period of time, constantly changing, preventing continuous work on programme implementation. At the same time, there is a group of teachers who have recognised the importance of MIL and introduce processing of media content in their lessons on their own initiative to bring them closer to students and to teach them to think critically. "When we talk about MIL, everything is subject to critical analysis."[16]

It is noticeable that teachers who have well-equipped classrooms (Internet, computer, smart board) take a positive attitude toward the introduction of MIL since they already had the opportunity to realise some of the elements of this programme and test the effects they can have on the improvement of the teaching process.

The only digital addition that was available to all teachers were coded textbooks that could provide additional information on lessons from textbooks on the Internet. "My experience with the links is that teachers have been provided with a textbook and a search code for links where they can learn more about each lesson. Less than 1% of teachers have used this. So it is not a matter of their interest."[17] Although such a statement may be indicative, it should not be concluded that educators are not interested in using the Internet or improving themselves (precisely because of the fact that some teachers pointed out during focus groups that they already use the Internet and digital technologies in their teaching). It should rather guide us to think about the very form of textbooks, as well as the generally problematic principle of introducing digitalisation without proper training, and how to improve the quality of teaching with these resources.

An anecdote told during the focus group is one example of poorly implemented digitalisation: "After the introduction of a projector in classrooms, a school director insisted that all teachers use presentations in teaching, and checked it by peeking into classrooms. Teachers who did not need a presentation at some point would play anything on the video wall so that the director could see that they are using the projector."[18]

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15 Available at http://www.internest.rs/?page_id=35 (Accessed 25 October 2018).
16 Lena, education worker.
17 Dragana, education worker.
18 Ljubica, education worker.

Most of the participants agreed with the statement that an extremely small number of colleagues were interested in education reforms, whether towards digitalisation, media literacy, project teaching, or other innovations. "All our education reforms have been sabotaged by education workers themselves!"[19]

Pessimistic views of this type were most often heard from participants who were actively involved in the process of implementing reforms, while other participants confirmed such attitudes without too many arguments, agreeing at the same time with attitudes about the poor position of educators and the generally poor functioning of the education system.

Such attitudes illustrate the complexity of the education reform problem and how much effort is needed to implement reforms successfully. Complexity stems from various factors: a lack of interest of educators, poorly designed reforms, infrastructure and technical/technological equipment of schools, and so on. Each factor contributed to the poor implementation of past reforms in a unique way and should not be ignored when designing new ones.

3.1.3. Capacities of education students to participate in media literacy programme

One of the main challenges the entire education system faces is the very outcome of education. Thinking about the best ways to implement the practice of media literacy among students leads us logically to checking what are the general results on students' functional literacy tests in Serbia.

The Education Strategy 2020 provides the following information:

"International research (PISA and TIMMS) shows that a worrying percentage of our students aged 15 is functionally illiterate (one third of the population according to PISA, 2009), that student knowledge is mostly of a reproductive type, that the degree of applicability of this knowledge is below the global and regional average, that we have a negligibly small percentage of students in the highest categories of knowledge (below 1%) and worryingly large in the lowest categories of achievement. For this education subsystem, a particularly serious challenge is low reading literacy (text comprehension and ability to work on the text), as it is the basis for continuing education. Universities complain about the low level of

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19   Jelena, education worker.

knowledge and literacy of students coming from GSAE[20], and this can also be seen in poor achievements in general knowledge tests in university entrance exams."[21]

These data indicate that students do not have a good basis for going through a media literacy programme since they are expected to learn to critically analyse media content, which would also include the deconstruction of manipulative patterns that are often not at all apparent. However, this may be the only challenge that could partially be resolved by the very process of implementing media literacy. For, if students were able to think more critically, neither text comprehension nor the ability to work on a text would be a problem for them.

At the same time, the high technical level of student digital literacy is a good starting point for going through a programme in which they would learn how to critically analyse the media content they are exposed to.

3.2. Education of teachers in the field of media and information literacy

Media literacy of students cannot start without media literate teachers. The only training opportunities in the MIL field so far have been accredited training seminars for teachers dealing with the field of media. During focus groups, the problem of the adequacy of the current and the planning of future education was thematised.

3.2.1. Students' attitudes toward the competence of their teachers

By summarising student attitudes toward the work of their teachers, it can be concluded that there are three basic groups of attitudes reflecting different approaches of education workers to the process of teaching, but also partly explaining the cause of such approaches.

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20 General secondary and artistic education.
21 Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Strategy for Education Development in Serbia 2020 (Belgrade: Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2012). http://erasmusplus.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Strategy-for-Education-Development-in-Serbia-2020.pdf (Accessed 14 January 2019).

Figure 1: Students about the way teachers work
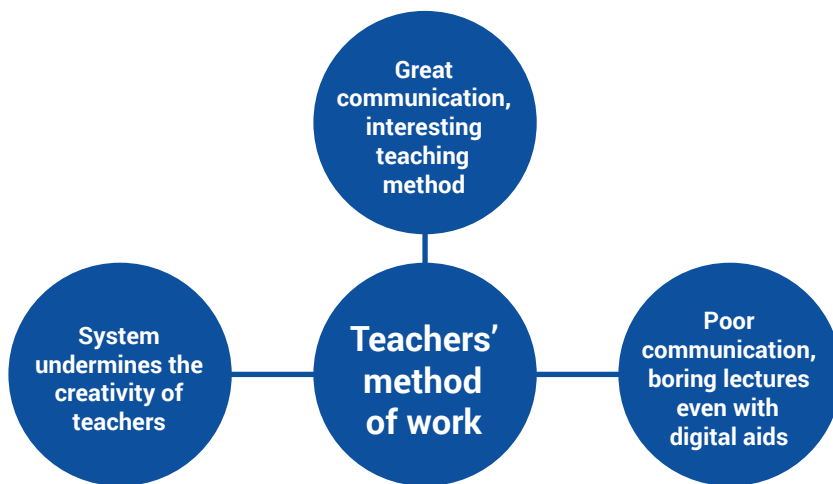
Speaking of good communication with teachers, students particularly emphasised their ability to bring the lesson closer to them in an interesting manner and their expectation toward students to think about and relate the material themselves. Often in such cases, it was pointed out that students were actively involved in teaching, they were supposed to act some lessons, sometimes teachers organised a quiz competition, and sometimes the lesson was complemented by a show or film analysis. Although such a way to process lessons is not currently expected by the programme, this is encouraging in the context of introducing MIL given that in each of these activities it is possible to recognise segments of what MIL as a course/subject in schools should represent.

It is noticeable that primary school students can intuitively recognise the injustice and other inadequate pedagogical measures of teachers, while secondary school students are more reasoned about these topics and can recognise more clearly where the problem of communication with professors lies. The conclusions about the intolerance of teachers, the propagation of political or religious attitudes through teacher's monologues and hindering discussion with students were accompanied by several picturesque examples (situations in which teachers openly propagated misogyny and political attitudes were mentioned).

The topics that are suitable for critical analysis and which could be the subject of MIL classes are currently imposed on students through a one-sided approach by certain teachers, which once again confirms the importance and urgency of the introduction of media literacy in schools.

Another dimension of poor communication between students and teachers is the inadequate use of digital technologies in teaching. The pace of digitalisation is not the same in all schools, and for that reason, it is not possible to speak of a universal problem. However, each step of the digitalisation process has specific problems and challenges in implementation. Poor implementation of digital technologies in teaching primarily relates to respecting a form that is not accompanied by adequate content. This is also supported by the poor experience of students with teachers who do not use digital technologies to bring the material closer to students and make it more interesting; on the contrary, they make it difficult for students by not investing effort in teaching, assuming that everything conveyed through a presentation or a film is completely clear. In this context, it is particularly important that the digitalisation process is accompanied by adequate teacher training so that reforms would not be implemented in vain.[22]

By analysing teacher creativity, the students agreed that the system contributes to the reduction of creativity.[23] Some observations of the students included: *"I think that the problem is also the very system. Teachers cannot keep up with the norm and all that stress diminishes their creativity."*[24] *"The system is obsolete, it is not the teachers that should be blamed for everything. The technology is progressing, and the system cannot keep up."*[25] *"I think that everything would be different if teachers themselves could create their agenda and programme, they would be more creative, and we would remember more. And not like this, they give three lessons in two classes".*[26]

The students agreed that their teachers needed education, especially for using new digital technologies in teaching, searching the Internet and using modern means of communication. The professional authority of teachers, despite the recognised weaknesses in the methodology itself, will survive only if teachers are ready to work on their professional development and admit their professional weaknesses in using new digital technologies in front of students, with the desire to work on them further and to commit themselves to lifelong learning.

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22 Primary school students criticised the use of electronic grade books, claiming that it takes a lot of time for teachers to fulfil the administrative part of their obligations, so part of the lesson that they did not manage to do in class must be finalised at home. Conditions where administration takes away the time intended for processing the lesson make a shift toward creativity and quality realisation of classes very hard.

23 Creativity in using teaching materials and presenting lessons is certainly something that is desirable. However, one should not expect creative realisation to be left exclusively to the professor's initiative. Such initiative is a nuance that can make the class more interesting, but the 'creative core' should be designed by the programme itself.

24 Miloš, student.

25 Luka, student.

26 Nemanja, student.

As soon as students feel that teachers do not want to admit a mistake and incompetence in the technical/technological and methodological approach, the teacher's authority is challenged and even the very respect for them as individuals is questioned. Such teachers are often called names.

3.2.2. Teachers' attitudes about their own and their colleagues' competences

Education workers have recognised three patterns in the work of their colleagues that can influence the implementation of reforms.

Figure 2: In what way educators value the work of their colleagues
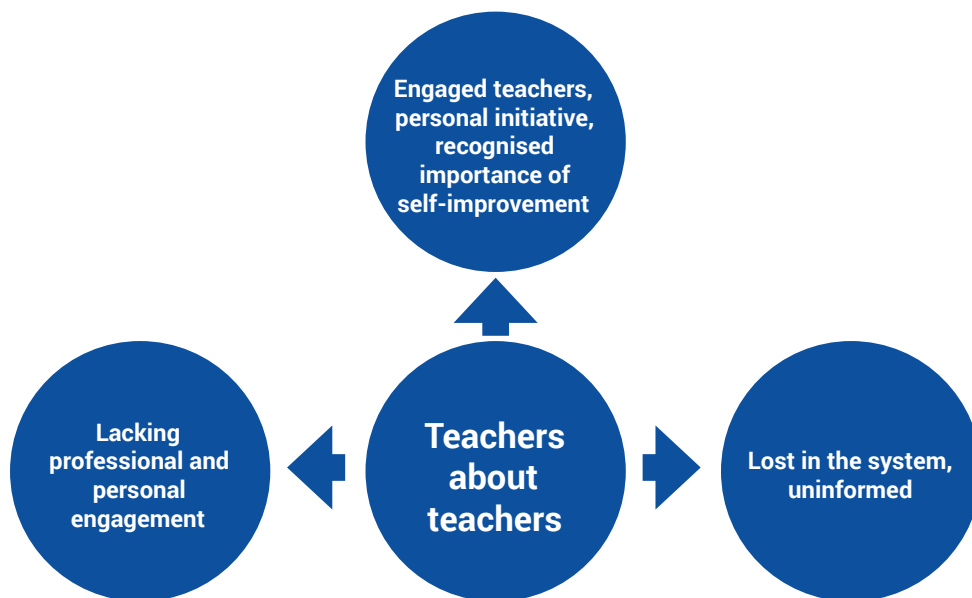
An education worker made this observation on lifelong learning:

"What is fundamental is that we should work on teachers' media literacy along with other types of literacy that are part of lifelong learning. And we have some teachers who reject in general the concept of lifelong learning. It's enough to train a teacher to play a little with editing statements; it will then be clear to him why MIL is needed. The whole school structure must make a climate demanding work on it."[27]

One of the general problems of every education reform is the willingness of teachers to change their working habits, admit that their professional capacities are obsolete and that they should work on raising their own competences. In a situation where a new programme ("Language, media and culture") is being introduced, which, if implemented properly, should be updated every semester, this problem will be one of the key obstacles to overcome. The observations made by education workers included:

"I think that the biggest mistake is that we want to create an image in students that learning is easy. And we made the most progress when we were sitting on wooden chairs and reading long books. I think a big gap is made between the school and what will be waiting for students at the university. It will not be too colourful, just pure learning."[28]

"I think colleagues often misunderstand this. They think we are changing the classes just to make it interesting for students. And we need to change them so that students can find the lesson clear, close to their interest, and understandable."[29]

From these statements, it can be concluded that already in a small group of educators there is a conflict between their understanding of the very setting of the education system and what it should essentially represent. Is the essence of reform to make teaching "colourful" and if not, how can such a statement even occur? The slippery slope of education reform calls for extra caution when implementing MIL. Namely, if the teachers themselves do not fully understand the essence of the reform, there is a risk that it will not be properly implemented, even if turned into its opposite.

The challenges arising during the consideration of teachers' professional development in the area of MIL are widely known to teachers. The experience of working in a collective shows that there is always a certain number of teachers who will sabotage reforms, as there is a number of those who will act as the driving force behind the reforms.

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27   Petar, education worker.
28   Gordana, education worker.
29   Jelena, education worker.

However, the impression is that the majority is made up of those who remain underinformed, who receive partial information and who decide based on this information whether or not they will support the reforms. This group most often constitutes the critical mass for the success of reform, and needs to be put in the focus of work.

3.2.3.   Raising professional competences of education workers

The adequacy of training educators is also one of the general topics independently of the MIL programme. When it comes specifically to media literacy seminars, there are several accredited curricula at the Institute for the Advancement of Education (IAE), and some of the focus group participants have gone through this kind of education. The quality of the seminars themselves was not questioned, and educators recognised them as the best way of professional development, although exclusively in the case of continuous training.

Every aspect of improving competences that involves the self-initiated reading of recommended literature, loses sense since an extremely small number of educators actually work on developing professional capacities in their spare time. From previous experience, teachers have created recommendations to improve professional development or pointed to the segments they currently lack in the education process.

Figure 3: Raising the professional competences of education workers
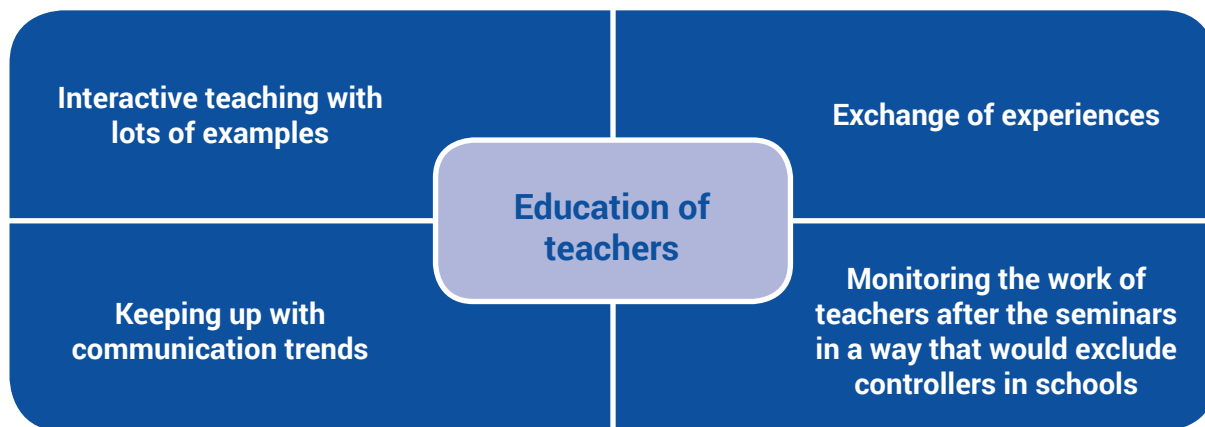
A focus group participant opened the discussion on teachers' interest in MIL seminars:

"I have experience with MIL seminars. Maybe six, seven, eight colleagues came to the first seminar. The next seminar was organised for over 30 people, and over 50 participants applied for this summer's seminar. The teachers from the first seminar talked to colleagues how useful, interesting and informative it had been. The key is to awaken the teachers' interest in the right way, and then the result can be achieved."[30]

She concluded the discussion with the view that the problem of engaging education workers is solvable, although it is one of the biggest challenges.

3.3. Raising education workers' awareness of the importance of introducing MIL in schools

Based on their own experience, focus group participants concluded that reform of any kind, and therefore the introduction of MIL in the education system, should be carried out through a particular type of campaign. Given that the biggest problem is usually the lack of understanding of the essence of the reform, the campaign could be used, first and foremost, to inform each collective about the need for reform. Also, the inclusion of educators in the design of the implementation programme could significantly contribute to better-quality implementation. The methodology of reform implementation that is least valued by teachers is the directive of superior authorities. Education workers often resist an order that arrives without explanation or the consideration of people working in the field or in schools, even in cases when the order makes sense and benefits education workers. What prompts resistance is the non-consultative nature of the decision.

Some participants expressed concern about members of the collective who are *a priori* against reforms and reject any engagement that is not the result of a direct order. For this reason, they recommended that raising educators' awareness of the significance of reforms towards MIL implementation should include both a campaign as well as a ministry directive in order to ensure the implementation process. "There should be a combination of both. There are those who will not do it if you do not make them. For example, the MIL questions must be found in the graduation

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30   Sonja, education worker.

tests and in this way teachers have to deal with these topics in the classroom. If you wait for good will, 10-15 percent of people will probably work, then some percent will work partially, and a part will do nothing."[31]

In the course of the conversation, a proposal could be heard on the establishment of a 'Lobby Group' that would advertise the significance of MIL implementation:

"To create a 'Lobby Group' of interested teachers who seek support among those who can help and then use these 'Lobby Groups' to exert pressure through various forums and events, with the final result delivered to the Ministry. It would have an effect if implemented at the planning level from beginning to end."[32]

Participants agreed that this proposal would contribute to the introduction of MIL in the education system.

3.4. Influence of means of communication on education

3.4.1. What the students' media habits tell us

Of the traditional media (television, radio, print editions of newspapers and magazines), the students who participated in our survey (N=211) devote the most attention to television (84.4% of respondents), although almost 60% of respondents reported less than an hour a day spent on watching TV. At the same time, 99.5% of them said they used the Internet, and as much as 86.7% confirmed that they were on the Internet for over an hour a day (43.1% of which were online for more than three hours). When it comes to devices that students know well how to use, most of them opted for a mobile phone (92.4%), then a computer (58.3%), a tablet (43.1%), and finally a camera as last (37.9%).[33]

For the youngest population, the purpose of using the Internet is primarily communication with friends and entertainment, with learning and seeking information in third and fourth place. Most respondents said they checked the information received on the Internet in some other place (about 70%) while more than 15% of students noted

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31   Sonja, education worker.
32   Petar, education worker.
33   Multiple answers were allowed.

that they had absolutely no trust in the truthfulness of information obtained through the Internet. Regarding the issue of responsibility when uploading online content, as many as 94.3% of students indicated that they considered themselves responsible and had to take into account what content they were uploading.

3.4.2.   Communication and media habits of students

Different means of communication contribute to a communication gap between teachers and students. Disagreement on communication channels is reflected in the fact that students have almost completely rejected traditional ways of communication and turned to keeping up with modern trends that are rapidly changing, while educators have remained committed to conventional ways of communication and accept new trends slowly and with difficulty. The common characteristic of primary and secondary school students is the prevailing use of Instagram. The adjectives given by students to describe their use of Instagram were mostly positive (fun, wonderful, exciting, quick, easy), and only one student stated that she did not find Instagram interesting, but used it exclusively because the whole company switched to that social network and closed accounts on all the others. Instagram contributed to a different trend in the field of communicative habits of young people, as it replaced Facebook, which is described by current users of Instagram as slow, more complicated to use and insufficiently dynamic.

The concern expressed by educators was precisely the students' inability to correctly understand the content they consumed, and it is in this field that they see the possibility of a symbiosis that would take place through the combination of digital skills of students and the critical thinking of educators.

Regarding the competence for the use of modern ways of communication, students have an unequivocal advantage over teachers (according to the statements of both students and teachers).

During the conversation with students, there was a constant repetition of the fact that communication is one of the most important components in student-teacher relations. Secondary school students expect teachers to listen to them, appreciate their opinion, but also have the opportunity to speak to them outside regular classes. The significance of quality communication is supported also by the attitude of students that there is no emphasis on the use of digital technologies, but on the approach to lesson processing and the opportunity to have the purpose, applicability, and importance of what they learn explained to them, and also to be able to talk to teachers about extracurricular issues. Modern ways of communication can facilitate this process, but at the same time, they can lead to the blurring of the boundary between private and professional conversation. According to one of the primary

school teachers, each teacher should assess where the boundary in communication with students is: "I do not think we should be friends with children on social networks. We also need to measure ourselves - to what extent you are a teacher, and where you should leave children to their parents."[34]

There is an expectation among primary school students that teachers should direct students' Internet search if it is for school purposes. While learning, they mostly adhere to textbooks and materials they receive in class and rarely use the Internet to get additional information. When they use it, they generally consult Wikipedia, although they are aware that the data on this site is not entirely reliable; even most of the teachers do not approve of using Wikipedia as a supplement to the lesson. When it comes to the influence of digital technologies on teaching, students of primary schools have a strong desire to see teaching digitalised and modern ways of communication introduced. The enthusiasm of students is also reflected in a series of proposals for what reform should look like (visualisation of lessons, interactive applications, and so on).

Older students use the Internet as a supplement for lessons only if it is a subject they are particularly interested in or if the lesson in the textbook is particularly boring. Apart from these extreme situations, they do not invest additional effort to enrich the material with information from the Internet. However, a variety of suggestions could be heard on ways to improve teaching with the help of applications and the use of the Internet, although it would still be desirable that classes are based on student-teacher dialogue.

There remains a dilemma as to whether the ways of communication change according to the needs of users, or whether the way of communication itself changes the habits of its users. The question is whether there is a direct cause-effect relationship or whether these two segments complement each other. What we know for sure is that the younger population mostly consumes shorter content, video clips, and images. A fundamental change in communication needs occurred precisely by shifting the emphasis from the content to the form of communication. The extent to which the change in the form of communication affects the process of learning and following teaching was discussed in all focus groups. The general conclusion is that the influence of digital technologies and modern ways of communication on the education process cannot be avoided. What can be considered are the ways and the extent that need to be reached in the reforms.

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34   Sonja, education worker.

3.5.   Interpretation of media content and education

The media content that older students are most exposed to are also labelled as taboo topics in schools. These are primarily daily political issues and current problems in society (such as the situation in Kosovo, the gay population, the position of women in society, religious matters).

In the focus groups, secondary school students expressed the need to learn how to understand and analyse content that addresses these topics. Most of their initiatives to talk about it in class had been suppressed. Since they are to become voters during their schooling, the students made a proposal to pay attention to and deal with topics that will enable them to make decisions on their own on issues of political importance. Students feel that they are not competent to decide when they do not have enough objective information, but at the same time, they worry because they do not know to whom to turn to teach them how to critically analyse the information they receive through the media.[35] The concerns the students expressed should alert a broader public, especially professionals, to the urgency of a response through education reform. This is even more urgent given that messages are conveyed through the media not simply in the form of information but as a blend of audio-visual effects that contribute to the integrity of the message, a dimension that has been left out of consideration and about which students may not be conscious.[36] Although raising the level of media literacy in the population may appear too ambitious given the amount of media messages we are exposed to on a daily basis, it is not an unattainable goal that requires grand ambitions. James Potter assures us: "It is not realistic to expect that by vigilant use of the media we will achieve much regarding protection against its harmful effects. […] Almost all media messages are received automatically, and we pay attention to only about one percent of them. […] My point is that if we learn to view things differently within that one percent of the media messages we receive, we will also learn how to reprogramme our mental code. Changes in our mental code will help us to process the remaining 99 percent of messages in a different way when our consciousness is on the automatic control mode" (Potter 2011, 36).

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35 During the conversation with secondary school students, it could be concluded that some of them already have firmly established attitudes about topics that require an extra level of awareness to mark the opinion as definitive and unchangeable. These students clearly expressed the view that they had already formed their opinion and that it was too late to change it as it would be inconsistent. In order to prevent the consequences of early appearance of prejudices towards critical forming of attitudes, it is necessary to systematically train students for a critical analysis of media content at an early age.

36 "Any media message or content, such as a photo, movie, or TV show, can be viewed as text. For any text to be read and understood, we must know its language and language rules, regardless of the type of media." (Andevski and Vučković 2012, 22)

4.   Conclusion

The introduction of the elective course "Language, media and culture" in grammar schools from the school year 2018/2019 is a significant step in the process of raising the level of media literacy of young citizens. This research was aimed at gaining a clearer insight into the strategic challenges for the quality implementation of this programme in primary and secondary schools in Serbia, as well as the possibilities for expanding the field for introducing MIL in the education system.

Considering the previous experience of education workers as well as changes in the media and communication needs of students, it appears that insufficient attention is being paid to the fundamental problems affecting the introduction of any elective subject, especially when it comes to a course that essentially requires a change in the paradigm of the system functioning, in the work of teachers and students, as well as in their approach to education. Strategic challenges in the implementation of MIL in the education system are challenges that can structurally obstruct the process of implementing reforms. The research has shown that such challenges appear at all levels of the system. Not eliminating them would at the same time mean abandoning reform itself. The reform would be formally defined by law, regulations and education programmes, but it would essentially be left without any effect on the target group.

When it comes to media and communication habits of students, the results of online research have shown that students spend more and more of their free time in the online sphere, which has almost completely replaced other media. Monitoring and analysis of the change in students' attention as a result of this shift in media attention could give important guidelines for creating new educational programmes. Although the results of the survey which we conducted on a sample of 211 students suggest that the youngest Internet users at least declaratively understand the consequences of uploading content on the Internet, consideration should be given to the possibility of providing socially desirable answers. For this reason, extensive research should be done in the area of responsibility for uploading content on the Internet.

We can conclude that solving the problem of motivation of students and educators when it comes to the education process is very similar. Namely, both expect the material to be interesting and interactive, but they also need to know

the purpose and the applicability of what they learn. This should be the starting point for any education reform. If teachers are provided with adequate and continuous professional development, it is likely that this will also improve the quality of teaching itself, thus making students more satisfied, and each new reform would be easy to implement and would not require, as now, a reform of the whole education system. The readiness of the system to overcome the challenge of constant changes and the analysis of the direct and indirect impact of the media on the population, especially its youngest and most vulnerable segment, has not yet been secured. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm that exists among a certain number of education workers to introduce media literacy at a slow pace, regardless of the fact that the system is not yet ready, represents a good starting point for the overall reform.

5.   Recommendations

State authorities responsible for education should consult and inform teachers about every change they want to introduce concerning the inclusion of media literacy in the education system.

Institutions in charge should pay more attention to the creation of an adequate and quality programme of professional development of education workers in general, but also specifically in the field of MIL, whose effects and applicability could be monitored and evaluated afterwards.

Students are mostly dissatisfied with the communication with their teachers; therefore, it is desirable to make an additional effort in this regard during the professional development of educators, whereby media literacy can be a factor in improving the quality of classroom communication.

Classroom digitalisation is one of the preconditions for the implementation of MIL in schools. Therefore, it is recommended that the Ministry in charge initiate digitalisation evenly across all schools in order to avoid stratification of teaching quality between schools based on the equipment at their disposal.

Institutions in charge should provide educators with regular training in the form of seminars and other professional gatherings where they can exchange experience and teaching materials, especially when it comes to a programme new to all teachers.

Establish a 'Lobby Group' consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, education workers, experts in the field of MIL and the media that would work on the creation and implementation of a programme to raise awareness among educators and the general public of the importance of education in the field of media and information literacy.

Institutions in charge should monitor the process of implementing MIL and modify the programme if they notice that a particular segment of the teaching content does not yield the expected results.

Education workers should establish a methodology for monitoring students' media habits and analyse how these habits affect their attention and interests, in order to improve both student motivation and the teaching process.

During the process of raising the level of media literacy, educators should emphasise the development of students' critical thinking, as it has been shown that constant exposure to false information adversely affects the development of freedom of thought and autonomy of young people.

Education workers should enable students to understand the different types of information they receive outside the classroom.

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Focus groups

Focus group with primary school teachers, 10 participants, Zlatibor, 16 August 2018.

Focus group with secondary school teachers, 8 participants, Zlatibor, 19 August 2018.

Focus group with primary school students, 10 participants, Zlatibor, 15 August 2018.

Focus group with primary school students, 10 participants, Zlatibor, 15 August 2018.

Focus group with secondary school students, 14 participants, Zlatibor, 19 August 2018.

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