MEDIA LITERACY DESIGN MANUAL

APRIL 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express our gratitude to various stakeholders, whose contributions informed the development of this manual. First, we acknowledge the Bureau of Europe and Eurasia/Office of the Coordinator of Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia at the U.S. Department of State (EUR/ACE) in commissioning the Media Literacy Evaluation contract, through which this document was produced. Specifically, we would like to thank Dr. Deborah Prindle for her technical leadership as well as John Wilcox and Erin Spitzer for their substantial support. Second, we thank individuals from Department of State's Global Engagement Center (GEC); the Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL); the National Endowment for Democracy (NED); and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) missions in Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova. Third, we appreciate the support from subject matter experts and media literacy practitioners from Debunk.EU, Equal Rights and Independent Media, Internews, IREX, Media Information Center, and Transitions Online. Finally, we extend our appreciation for the significant contributions of Martina Chapman, the primary author, and our international research team, without whom this work would not have been possible.

ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DOS	Department of State
ERIM	Equal Rights and Independent Media
EU	European Union
EUR/ACE	Bureau of Europe and Eurasia/Office of the Coordinator of Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia
IP	Implementing Partner
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIC	Media Information Center
ML	Media Literacy
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
SI	Social Impact
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly complex media environment, the importance of media literacy (ML) is widely recognized as a critical life skill and a contributing factor to policy objectives as diverse as national security and the promotion of democratic processes. However, the absence of a common definition of ML, the lack of robust evidence on the effectiveness of different ML approaches, and the blurring of policy boundaries, present challenges for the prioritization, funding, coordination, and evaluation of ML interventions.

The purpose of this manual is to provide policymakers, donors, and ML practitioners with a framework for developing and evaluating ML interventions. In particular, this document provides insight into four types of ML interventions and explores the opportunities and challenges associated with each type, based on in-depth research carried out by Social Impact on behalf of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Europe and Eurasia/Office of the Coordinator of Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (EUR/ACE).

This report is structured into seven sections. We start by highlighting the critical role that ML plays in our digitally dependent world. In section two, we look at the broader ML landscape, exploring core aspects of ML and key institutional stakeholders. In section three, we provide an overview of monitoring and evaluation as it relates to ML. In section four, we present the principles of ML programming before elaborating four specific models of ML intervention in section five. In section six, we provide resources to help readers better design, implement, and evaluate ML interventions.

1.1 THE ROLE OF MEDIA LITERACY IN TODAY'S WORLD

The modern world is characterized by individual and societal dependence on digital devices, online services, and internet infrastructure. These technologies have led to the democratization of media and the opening of the public sphere in ways that support democratic participation, civil engagement, as well as transparency, accountability, and trust in public office. When used effectively, the internet and digital technology have the potential to positively transform societies, giving voice to marginalized groups, improving representation, challenging stereotypes, and facilitating networks of support across geographically distant communities.

However, these technologies and the democratization of media has also created significant challenges. Today's media ecosystems are more complex and complicated than at any time in human history. In the last decade, hyper-connected online communities have emerged, facilitating the rapid and widespread dissemination of information, literally at the touch of a finger. The volume of information and the speed at which it circulates makes it increasingly difficult for individuals to make informed choices about the origins and authenticity of content — especially when content is not always subject to a level regulatory playing field. Online communities are increasingly targeted by state (e.g., election manipulation by domestic and international actors), commercial, and criminal actors who use propaganda, conspiracies, rumors, hoaxes, hyper-partisan content, and various types of manipulated media to influence, persuade, and polarize. These malign actors exploit social media algorithms designed to promote engagement by using emotions (particularly negative emotions, such as outrage and fear) to further amplify their messages. These processes can lead to real-world consequences such as backsliding of democratic norms, contested elections, and violence. The resulting information disorder, a term that encapsulates the phenomena of disinformation,

misinformation, and malinformation, can threaten the promotion of democracy, human rights, and governance.[1]

Problems mediated by these technologies also play out at smaller scales. Online risks for children and their parents include managing screen time, over-sharing, sexting, grooming, and online bullying/harassment. Certain groups such as women, minorities, and people in the public eye, are particularly vulnerable to hate speech and online abuse. The lack of knowledge about how digital data are collected, analyzed, and used can leave individuals vulnerable to media monitoring and micro-targeting. Finally, phishing scams, webcam blackmail, and ransomware attacks also continue to pose risks for online users.

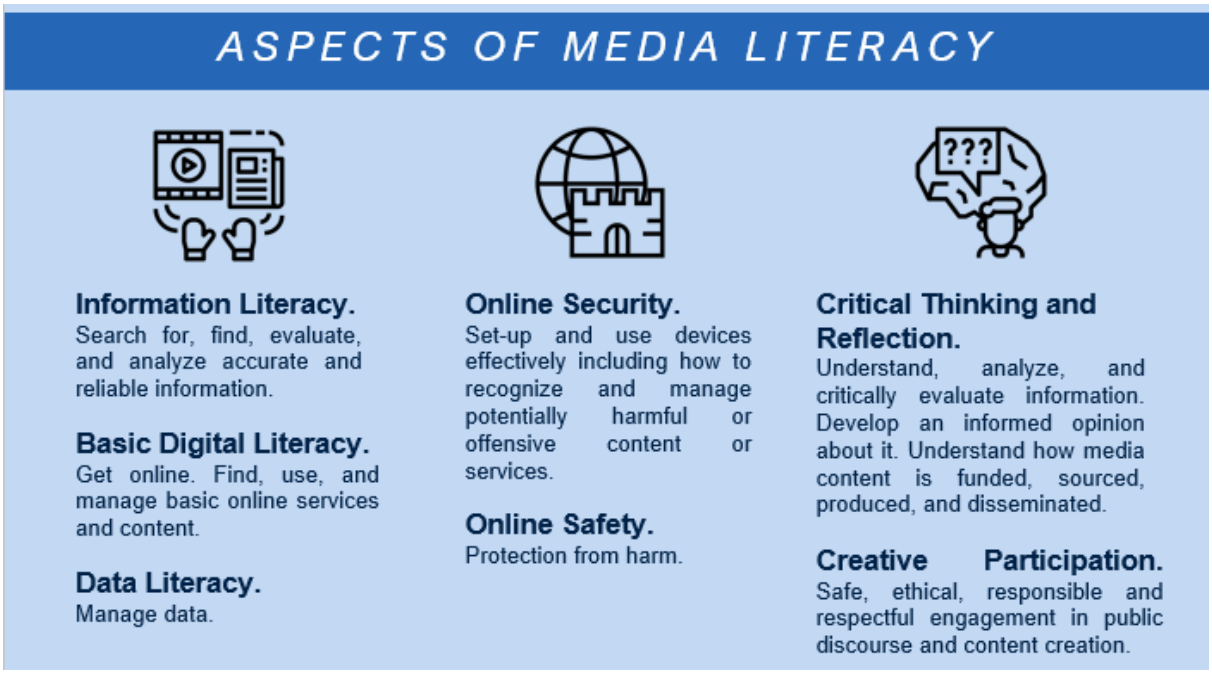
Given these diverse challenges, there is widespread agreement on the importance of empowering citizens with ML skills to fully engage in the digital media environment in a safe, responsible, and effective manner. In the aggregate, the more media literate a society, the more resistant it is to information disorder and the more likely it is to recognize and value quality journalism and media pluralism. It would, however, be a mistake to see ML as a panacea for these problems. People form opinions and beliefs for complex reasons. Better equipping citizens with the cognitive skills to analyze media content does not mean they will apply them consistently or that cognitive reasoning will win over the socio-emotional manipulation of malign actors. More importantly, the scale of the problem is not one that can be solved by individual citizens. Many of the structural issues that contribute to information disorder are deeply embedded in the infrastructure and economics of the information ecosystem. Long-term, sustainable solutions will require changes on both the supply and demand sides of the informational equation. Recognizing this broader context, developing ML skills is an excellent first line of defense for individuals and their societies. Furthermore, these competencies will only become more important in the future, as artificial intelligence, deepfakes, the metaverse, and the internet of things become more deeply integrated into our daily lives.

2. MEDIA LITERACY LANDSCAPE

2.1 UNDERSTANDING MEDIA LITERACY

ML has been rising on policy agendas across the world, as policymakers view it as a mechanism to bolster democracy, freedom of speech, personal safety, personal health, media plurality, press freedom, internet freedom/governance, social cohesion, and trust in experts. While there is growing recognition of the importance of ML, there is no universally agreed-upon definition. Understanding of ML in different countries, regions, and organizations is shaped by existing policy frameworks, political priorities, and the needs of specific groups. As a result, ML projects are not always well-aligned to strategic objectives, there is duplication of effort, and the evidence base around ML programming is fractured. The difficulty of "defining" ML is compounded by significant areas of overlap between ML and other "literacies," which are in turn linked to different policy areas. The range of skills and knowledge that fall under the ML umbrella is very broad and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

[1] USAID Primer on Disinformation (usaid.gov).



It could be argued, however, that critical thinking, or the ability to objectively analyze and evaluate information to make an informed judgment, is the bedrock of ML. It also underpins many of the other literacies. Ultimately, being media literate is about developing and maintaining a constantly evolving range of skills and knowledge required to effectively function in a society where digital technology is deeply integrated into all aspects of life.

2.2 MEDIA LITERACY IS LIFELONG LEARNING

There is a growing acceptance that ML is an essential life skill. Viewing ML through the lens of lifelong learning may be helpful in developing ML interventions and assessing what is achievable in the short, medium, and long term. In response to rapid changes in technology and social norms, citizens need to update their ML skills and knowledge on a regular basis. This, in turn, often involves a behavior-change process. Therefore, it is important to consider the change process that participants in ML interventions will experience, and the different types of support required at various stages of their behavior-change journey.

A key aim of ML interventions should be the development of "healthy" media habits and behaviors. For example, the development of critical thinking must include the ability to question the origins and motivations behind information. However, care must be taken not to create a scenario where healthy levels of questioning morph into crippling cynicism, with widespread erosion of trust in the information ecosystem and increased vulnerability to disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation.

2.3 MEDIA LITERACY INVOLVES EVERYONE

With the convergence of digital media and communications technology/services, there is almost no sector that doesn't stand to benefit from a more media literate society, and almost no sector that doesn't have a role to play in helping to promote ML. The table below highlights key actors in the design and delivery of ML interventions:

Key Actors in the Design and Delivery of ML Interventions
Government and public authorities set policy agendas, allocate budgetary resources, and control many of the levers that can be effectively used to promote ML (such as school curricula).
Public authorities such as municipal authorities, local councils, and semi-state organizations are also in powerful positions to promote (or inhibit) ML.
Regulatory authorities help protect media users by improving awareness of regulation, empowering media users, addressing new regulatory challenges, and protecting constitutional values.
Civil society organizations (CSOs) including foundations, not-for-profit organizations, philanthropic bodies, arts and cultural bodies, charities, think tanks, communities of interest, and community networks are a key part of ML infrastructure. They work to reach adults and disadvantaged groups where they are and provide lifelong support.
Academic institutions have an important role to play in training students in ML and building the evidence base upon which ML interventions are built.
Education providers (including teachers' representative organizations and teacher training colleges) are important channels for delivering ML learning.
Media and audio-visual content providers have a key role in raising awareness of ML issues, sparking interest/debate, and directing audiences to further information and help. Content creators, and in particular journalists, are well placed to promote ML. The fundamentals of good journalism (e.g., who, what, when, where, why, and how) are also the basis for ML.
Online platforms are recognized as intrinsically involved in the spread of misinformation, but social media and search platforms should also be considered part of any potential solution.
Opinion formers and influencers have a critical role in modeling media literate behaviors, normalizing life-long learning, and helping audiences learn new skills.
Commercial bodies are often involved in the promotion of ML in line with their own financial objectives, such as banks (online banking), telecoms companies (broadband uptake), or commercial broadcasters/content producers (user-generated content).

No single organization, or even sector, can reach and/or support all citizens, all the time. Collaboration is most successful when partners work to their individual strengths and, where possible, in line with their own strategic objectives. The specific role that organizations play in the promotion of ML is dependent on several factors:

a) Whether it has a statutory responsibility or duty to promote ML.
b) What specific aspects of ML are being promoted and how they align with the strategic objectives of the organization.
c) The extent and nature of its reach (e.g., broadcasters and online platforms have significant reach).
d) Whether it has a readily available network that can be activated to promote ML (e.g., schools, libraries, community groups, post offices, and sports clubs all usually have a physical space and readily available network).
e) The level of trust it holds with the target audience (e.g., teachers, libraries, and youth workers all occupy positions of trust across certain sectors of society).
f) The level of organizational resources, including financial, personnel, and experience.

2.4 MEDIA LITERACY CAN BE CHALLENGING TO IMPLEMENT

While the benefits of promoting ML are widely acknowledged, there are several factors that can limit the effectiveness of ML interventions.

Unclear Policy Boundaries. ML touches on many policy domains, which can result in a lack of clarity around responsibility, leadership, and support for ML-related policy development at the governmental level. This often results in a situation where different government ministries are responsible for different elements of ML, and without effective coordination can result in lost opportunities, duplication of effort, and competing policy agendas.

Changing Goalposts. The range of ML skills needed by citizens to function effectively is constantly evolving in response to changes in technology, society, culture, economics, and politics. This constant evolution makes it very difficult to reach agreement on a universal definition of ML, which in turn makes it more challenging to secure consensus around how ML learning is implemented and evaluated, and by whom.

Understanding the Target Audience. ML learning journeys are predominantly informal and highly personal. As a result, defining target groups based on traditional research segmentations may not be effective. For example, not all people over 55 will need basic digital skills, and not all 24- to 25-year-olds will have the ML skills to effectively function and make involved choices in relation to social media usage. Therefore, when classifying target groups for ML interventions, it may be more helpful to consider cohorts based on characteristics such as mindset, life-stage, and education level and to draw on behavioral insights and nudge theory when designing interventions. One exception to this rule is school-age children, who as a cohort, are more likely to require similar ML skills at a similar time. An alternate targeting approach could be to target programs at particularly vulnerable segments of the population. Depending on the program strategy, these could be defined geographically, occupationally, ethnically, or any number of population cross-sections.

Difficult to Measure. Although the importance of ML is increasingly being acknowledged as an essential life skill, there is a lack of evidence about the effectiveness of different ML programs and approaches. The reasons for this may be a combination of factors, including:

- The absence of a universal definition of ML makes it more difficult for evaluators to agree on what is within the scope of ML and inhibits cross-program comparisons.
- ML outcomes are often linked to behavior changes, which can take a long time to develop, sometimes beyond the lifecycle of the actual intervention. This can be problematic in attributing ML outcomes to specific interventions or projects.
- Lack of experience and/or resources to do longitudinal research and other more complex research designs required to measure change over time.
- The expense of doing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for ML programs (discussed in more detail in Section 3).

3. MONITORING AND EVALUATING MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAMMING

Given the lack of a universally agreed-upon definition, ML interventions can target many different concepts, skills, and competencies. As such, the first challenge of measuring the success of ML interventions is methodically defining the desired outcomes.

A theory of change and logic model should be developed for every intervention, specifying (i) the overall objective, sub-objectives, inputs, activities, outputs, short term and long term outcomes, (ii) key assumptions, and (iii) the causal logic underlying the pathways between programmatic inputs, outcomes, and the overall objective (see Annex A for an example logic model). Methodically documenting the project logic ensures that key stakeholders agree on the intervention design and objectives, allows setting targets against performance indicators, and provides a framework for M&E. Tracking performance across the entirety of a project logic model allows for the testing of the project design. For example, if certain results were not achieved, this process can identify whether fault lies in the logic downstream of the objective or breakdowns in intervention implementation.

3.1 BUDGETING FOR M&E

There is no single, optimal approach to monitor and evaluate a ML project. Considerations for how much to invest in project M&E include:

Factor	Implications for M&E
Size	• The larger the project, the more should be invested in M&E. • M&E investments should be considered as a share of the total project budget. • Standards vary, but 5–10 percent[2] is a common target range.
Importance	• The more a project's expected results factor into broader strategic objectives, the more should be invested in M&E. • The more important the achievement of expected results, the more should be invested in M&E.
Risk	• The more political, reputational, or human risk an intervention represents, the more should be invested in M&E.
Evidence Base	• If the intervention is a pilot, has not been previously evaluated, or is being adapted to new contexts, more investment in M&E is warranted. • If the intervention has previously been evaluated in similar conditions, less investment in M&E may be warranted.
Learning	• If an intervention is expected to contribute to a broader learning agenda (e.g., being a case study, being part of a portfolio evaluation) more should be invested in M&E.

While not all programs need to be evaluated with the same level of rigor and intensity, all programs should include performance monitoring of key outputs (e.g., number of graduates) and outcomes (e.g., measures of change in media literacy behavior sustained over time) to ensure Implementing Partners (IPs) and project commissioners understand progress against objectives. The ability to understand project performance also requires the setting of targets against objectives.

[2] Monitoring and Evaluation: Five Reality Checks for Adaptive Management

Opportunities to leverage existing data or platforms. Some ML programs feature online platforms which participants are encouraged to access (especially true for game-based interventions, and those related to provision of ML resources and to creating/fostering ML networks). Integrating short surveys into these platforms is a relatively easy way to capture participants' real-time outcomes, as well as capturing contact information and basic demographic information. Participants can be asked a few key questions before and after playing a ML game, or after viewing an informational video.

3.2 KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR MONITORING MEDIA LITERACY PROJECTS

In developing M&E systems, it is always necessary to ask how data will be used in the future. This exercise can reduce the unnecessary collection of data while focusing data collection efforts to promote learning and adaptive management. The following table highlights key considerations for strengthening participant intake forms, a key aspect of many ML monitoring systems.

Consideration	Reason
• Include key demographic items (e.g., sex, age, ethnicity)	• Disaggregating data by beneficiary types can help understand differential trends
• Collect data on who starts and completes the program (as appropriate)	• Understand graduation rates and how they vary by beneficiary and trainer types
• Collect multiple forms of contact information, including email, phone, and social media (as appropriate)	• Allows for post intervention follow-up to assess program effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes
• Ask for consent to be contacted after project completion (ideally by the IP and/or an independent evaluator)	
• Aggregate all participant data into one, secure dataset	• Protects beneficiary personally identifiable information (PII) • Expedites and strengthens post intervention evaluation by providing a sampling frame

3.3 MEASUREMENT APPROACHES

ML encompasses a broad range of outcomes including, but not limited to: media consumption behavior and preferences; critical thinking skills; the ability to distinguish dis/misinformation from reliable information; locus of control;[3] and awareness of the media; and digital literacy

[3] Locus of control refers to an individual's perceptions about the main causes of events or choices in their life. In the media literacy context, locus of control items are included to measure how much agency an individual feels they have in choices regarding the media they consume, resisting misleading information they encounter, etc.

skills. The choice of which measures to include in evaluation tools will depend on the project theory of change and the evaluation questions. Some useful resources for ML measurement include the UK's Office of Communication research on media use and attitudes[4], the European Commission's study on measuring ML levels in Europe[5], and the EduMediaTest (specifically for students aged 14 – 18)[6]. Below, we highlight three common approaches to ML outcome measurement followed by an overview of their relative strengths and weaknesses.

1. **Self-reported measures**. These questions typically ask beneficiaries about how their participation in a project changed their knowledge, attitudes, and/or practices regarding outcomes of interest (e.g., using a strongly disagree to strongly agree Likert scale).

2. **Competency-based measures.**[7] These questions test beneficiary knowledge and/or abilities. The easiest such measure to develop is assessing knowledge of ML-related definitions. However, these questions are not a meaningful indicator of an individual's ability to apply ML skills. A stronger application is to ask respondents to apply critical thinking through exercises such as analyzing a short news article or identifying hidden advertising. These survey items are more complex to develop (e.g., requiring piloting or expert consultation), but they provide a much more objective assessment of ML skills as compared to self-reported measures. See Annex B for an example of an item measuring respondent ability to identify misinformation.

3. **Observational measures.** While competency measures can more accurately test knowledge, they do so under unrealistic circumstances. Knowing they are being tested, respondents are primed for the assessment (e.g., actively looking for misinformation) and will generally put more cognitive effort into the task than in a real-world application (e.g., reading the news article very carefully). The ideal assessment of ML competencies would take place in the context of the respondent's daily life. For example, what sources they choose to read, or what they choose to share or like on social media. While this behavior has traditionally been unseen by implementers, new tools have enabled direct and/or indirect observation. It is technically possible to gain consent to monitor a beneficiary's online behavior for a set period following a training. However, there are practical limitations. A more promising approach is to assess aggregate behaviors. For instance, if a ML-related campaign is being launched on a social media platform targeting a particular geographic area or beneficiary group, analysis of social media metrics before and after the campaign is launched can yield useful insights on the campaign's diffusion and changes in social media behaviors (e.g., positive/negative hashtag usage, frequency of sharing posts from accounts associated with spreading misinformation).

[4] Adults Media Use and Attitudes. Ofcom.org.uk.
[5] European Commission. (2011). Testing and Refining Criteria to Assess Media Literacy Levels in Europe. European Commission Directorate-General for Information Society and Media, Media Literacy Unit.
[6] EduMediaTest Under Development to Support Media Education
7 Measuring the digital and media literacy competencies of children and teens (2017). In Fran C. Blumberg and Patricia J. Brooks (Eds.), Cognitive Development in Digital Contexts (pp. 253 – 274). London: Academic Press.

	Self-Report	Competency Testing	Direct Observation
Pros	• Easiest to develop and administer • Provides a window into participant perceptions/attitudes	• Objective measure of ML skills • More objective measure of programmatic effects • Allows tracking across time and populations	• Most robust and objective measure of real-world behaviors • Allows for measurement of spill over effects[8] • Allows for population-level analysis • Relatively low cost once developed
Cons	• Prone to response bias (e.g., social desirability, Dunning-Kruger[9]) • Differential understanding of concepts and scales	• More difficult to develop, requiring specialized skills and time • Possibility of cheating • Prone to repeat-testing bias if administered more than once per individual	• Most difficult to develop. Requires data science skills and updating of measurement approaches as social media behavior changes • Difficult to attribute effects to a given intervention

While competency testing and direct observation represent significant improvements in the objective assessment of programmatic effects, self-assessment can provide important information about beneficiary subjective experiences. Where possible, we recommend a combination of measures with a prioritization toward competency testing.

Considerations in Administering Beneficiary Surveys
Beneficiary targeting refers to the collection of information from direct beneficiaries (i.e., individuals that interacted with the project). Collecting this information is significantly easier than doing so for indirect beneficiaries (i.e., individuals who received a benefit from direct beneficiaries, like in a cascade training model). If assessing outcomes among indirect beneficiaries is important, it is critical to plan for and resource the collection of contact information from these populations.
Survey length should be determined on basis of expected attention span of the target group and the intensity of the intervention. For instance, participants of a short online ML game are unlikely to complete a lengthy questionnaire. Similarly, in-person surveys can be longer than online surveys (which should be limited to 10 minutes, if possible).
Online surveys are dependent on computer and internet access. ML interventions targeting populations with access constraints should use alternate administration approaches (e.g., in-person, telephone).
Survey timing should be considered relative to the target population's schedules and obligations. For example, when surveying students, surveys should be avoided during summer/winter breaks, during school semester start/end dates, exam times, etc.

[8] Positive or negative effects experienced by individuals unaffiliated with programming (e.g., when a beneficiary shares knowledge with family members).
[9] A cognitive bias whereby individuals with relatively low baseline knowledge of a subject can overestimate their competencies, while those with a higher degree of subject matter knowledge can assess competencies more objectively. This can take the form of reduced self-perception scores as individuals increase knowledge.

3.4 MEASUREMENT FREQUENCY

A single assessment with participants after completion of the intervention can provide a snapshot of participants' ML competencies. However, interpreting programmatic effects is difficult without baseline data. Therefore, irrespective of the type or length of an intervention, ML measurement should be administered at the start and end of a given individual's engagement with a project. This not only allows for comparisons of changes over time but also gives more confidence in understanding the degree of programmatic effects. Furthermore, given that ML competencies benefit from practice, which continue after an individual exits a project, it is ideal to also conduct longer-term follow-up assessments to test for the outcome sustainability. These assessments are more logistically complicated to administer, as beneficiaries are often not in direct contact with the implementer. However, aggregating contact information into a single dataset and administering the assessments in an online format can greatly reduce labor and transaction costs associated with this approach.

One important consideration in collecting and analyzing longitudinal data is to assess and account for differential response rates. Most concretely, it should be expected that long-term follow-up assessments will have lower participation rates. If this participation is, in turn, correlated with factors that affect ML competencies (e.g., degree of engagement with the project, access to computers) it is likely that conclusions derived from the sub-sample would induce bias. To account for this issue, the weighting of responses is recommended. Finally, when utilizing direct observation approaches, web scraping techniques should be tracked over time (before, during, and after the launch of the campaign).

Collection of longitudinal data is uncommon because project timelines are often short, additional survey rounds require funding, and participants become harder to contact as more time elapses. While conducting long-term follow-up surveys may not always be necessary (e.g., if implementing a previously studied intervention), this remains the best way to document longer-term outcomes. Follow-up data collection events need to be planned and budgeted for during the intervention design.

3.5 IMPACT EVALUATION

Comparing changes in outcomes before and after an intervention helps in assessing programmatic effectiveness. However, the ability to definitively attribute *impact* to a project requires measuring changes over time between project participants and a similar group of individuals that did not participate in the project (i.e., the counterfactual). Identifying a valid comparison group can be challenging. The most rigorous comparison requires randomly assigning eligible individuals into project (i.e., treatment) and non-project (i.e., control) groups. Ethical concerns with exclusion can be accounted for by offering the project to non-participants after a sufficient period to measure results. If randomizing participation is not an option, a comparison group can be constructed through statistical matching (e.g., propensity score matching,[10] coarsened exact matching[11]). A pre-requisite for considering this method is the existence of pre-intervention data from participants and a large pool of non-participants with the same demographics and other indicators related to key outcomes (such as media consumption behaviors, ML attitudes, and knowledge).

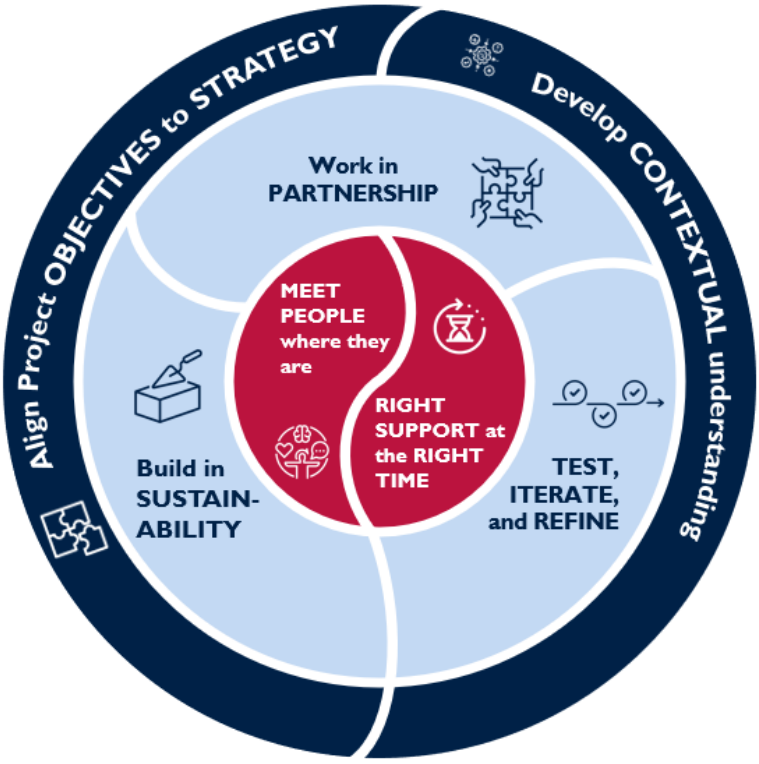
[10] Propensity Score Matching
[11] Coarsened Exact Matching

Pursuing a research design that features a comparison group requires more resources and a higher degree of evaluation expertise. It also often imposes additional administrative burdens on implementers. Given these demands, it is recommended that impact evaluations be conducted on the highest priority interventions and be led by independent researchers.

Data Sharing. It is important to review data sharing regulations of implementing partners and of countries where projects are being implemented. In the European Union (EU) for example, General Data Protection Regulations limit sharing of EU resident data by organizations. In these instances, third party evaluators would need to rely on implementers to disseminate assessments to participants on the evaluator's behalf, which has both practical and research design-related implications.

4. PRINCIPLES OF MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAMMING

Before developing an intervention, it is worth considering some overarching principles of ML programming. We propose a seven-step rubric for designing strong, contextualized, and sustainable ML projects. In the following section we highlight key considerations from each step.



4.1 DEFINING THE INTERVENTION OBJECTIVE AND ALIGNING IT TO AN OVERARCHING STRATEGY

Sometimes the hardest part of developing a ML program is clearly defining its purpose. These interventions are often deployed to address complex problems like disinformation, online radicalization, or hate speech. Although ML absolutely has a role to play in addressing these issues, it is unlikely to be an effective solution on its own. Therefore, understanding the role that a ML training might realistically play in addressing the problem is critical.

Every ML intervention should be developed in line with an explicit programmatic strategy that defines objectives, key terms, and target populations.

Since ML does not fit neatly into a single policy area, it is useful to map how the objectives and the desired outcomes of an intervention might align or impact other strategic aims or policies.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Clearly define the policy objective underpinning the ML intervention.
- Illustrate how project activities will lead to outcomes that support the policy objective.
- Map the policy landscape to identify any other policy areas/strategic objectives with which the ML intervention might align.

4.2 DEVELOP CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

ML is influenced by culture, education, trust in authorities and political factors. These factors vary from country to country, and often within countries. Identify these influencing factors and develop a comprehensive contextual understanding of the ML landscape in target areas to promote the likelihood of intervention success.

To understand the context, it is necessary to identify:

- Existing ML interventions. How/why they were designed and how they have performed.
- ML assets (e.g., the media ecosystem and its regulatory framework).
- ML challenges (e.g., sources and objectives of disinformation).
- The specific ML needs of target groups.
- Potential triggers, motivations, and barriers the target group might face.
- When interventions should be deployed and by whom.

ML learning journeys are very personal and vary greatly. Strategies and approaches must be developed based on in-depth understanding of the target group – and how to reach them. For example, not just seniors, but seniors that have access to internet, not just youth, but youth that are vulnerable to disinformation.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Map the factors that influence the promotion of ML interventions in the country/region.
- Understand who you are talking to and how they are likely to respond to your message.
- Develop a theory of change model based on a conceptual understanding of the problem, the target audience, and potential risks and opportunities.

4.3 WORK IN PARTNERSHIP

ML affects all sectors of society, and all sectors have a role to play in promoting ML. No single organization can do it alone. Collaboration, particularly with domestic organizations with a proven track record, has been shown to increase ML project reach, impact, and sustainability. It is worth investing in relationship building and maintenance among key stakeholders from the earliest possible stage in the project lifecycle.

Investment in partnership management will depend on the type of ML intervention. If the commissioning agency wants to work through schools, partnership will take significant effort. Conversely, if the project is a stand-alone training, the investment will be categorically lower.

Map the existing ML landscape to identify key organizations (governmental and non-governmental) and how they may be leveraged to support the project. When conducting a partner analysis, assess organizational capacity as well as how incentive structures of public employees could help/hurt implementation.

Collaboration can take many forms, from formal (e.g., contractual partnerships, memorandums of understanding) to informal, voluntary support from partners. ML networks, often but not always, facilitated by national regulators can be great entry points for programming.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Assess organizational mission and capacity; select the best partners for achieving the project objective.
2. Identify the extent of relationship and/or capacity building early in the design process.
3. Strengthen existing professional networks if working with schools or libraries.

4.4 TEST, ITERATE, REFINE

Project M&E is a critical tool for understanding the effectiveness of individual projects and aggregating learning across the sector. Develop an M&E framework during project design to make sure the right questions are asked, at the right time, and with sufficient resources.

Commissioning and gathering robust research are beyond the scope, resources, or timescale of many projects. Project funders should consider the relative importance of each project and require an M&E framework commensurate with the need (see Section 3), including the use of independent evaluators.

Agreeing what kind of regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms can be put in place is very important, but equally important is having a process for making sure that the findings can influence and refine the project throughout the project lifecycle. Build adaptive mechanisms into projects to allow for learning. This practice is oftentimes complex to operationalize due to limitations in contract and grant-making processes. As possible, flexibility for course corrections should be built into implementation agreements. If this is not possible, adaptation across projects (e.g., in the decision to extend a project) can help improve the effectiveness of ML interventions over time.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Develop an M&E framework at project design stage.
2. Adequately resource project M&E to fit learning and accountability objectives.
3. Establish a baseline from which to measure progress over time.
4. Ensure there is a way of using the information via regular monitoring (and possibly evaluation) to refine and improve the project.

4.5 BUILD IN SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability refers to lasting changes in ML outcomes as well as the extent to which certain elements of a project can be expected to continue after the intervention. It is important that any discussion of sustainability differentiate between these concepts.

A sustainability plan should be developed at the start of the project, including how it fits into existing programs and how it might be funded in the future.

Work in partnership with existing institutions such as schools, libraries, ML networks, and professional associations to promote sustainability. Another approach is the creation or strengthening of professional networks such as teachers, librarians, NGOs, journalists, and academics.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Be specific about what is meant by sustainability.
2. Build in sustainability from the start of the project.
3. Identify possible project partners who can help to sustain the project and the initial funding /deployment stage.

4.6 MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

ML works best when the learning opportunity meets people where they are, rather than depending on people to seek out ML learning opportunities.

Individuals are on personalized learning journeys influenced by factors such as existing knowledge, changes in technology, social norms, culture, and politics. There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to ML interventions. Consideration should be given to how to reach and maintain engagement in ML learning. For example, the integration of interactive components (such as online games) might help to engage particular groups.

Don't reinvent the wheel, instead leverage what already exists (e.g., school curricula, community and voluntary networks, NGOs, etc.) and work out the most appropriate and practical entry-points within existing systems. Where possible, local actors should be central to implementation for better contextualization, reach, trust, relevance and sustainability.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Don't expect people to seek out ML learning opportunities.
2. Find ways to use existing networks and trusted intermediaries.
3. Develop strategies for sustaining engagement.

4.7 PROVIDE THE RIGHT SUPPORT AT THE RIGHT TIME

ML is lifelong learning and often involves people going on a behavior-change journey. It is critical that learners can easily access the right support at the right time.

Lifelong learning requires sustained effort on the part of the learner. It is important to create truly engaging learning experiences to maintain learner participation. Learning tactics (such as games, competitions, user-centered programming, etc.) should be carefully matched to the target groups and layered into interventions to enrich the learning experience.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Understand the target population's experiences with ML.
2. Promote sustained engagement (e.g., through mixed programming, integration with existing ML resources, building/strengthening networks, promotion of service projects, curation of social events).

5. MEDIA LITERACY MODELS

Given the range of skills and knowledge that fall under the banner of ML and the fact that different target groups require varying levels of ML training, it is not surprising that there is a diverse range of ML models and interventions. For the purposes of this manual, we focus on the four intervention models that were evaluated by EUR/ACE: instruction via formal education, library-based interventions, stand-alone trainings, and game-based trainings. Within each, we provide an overview of the model, itemize strengths/weaknesses, and present recommendations for its operationalization.

5.1 INSTRUCTION VIA FORMAL EDUCATION

Overview
When the objective is to promote population-level, generalized ML competencies, school systems offer a temptingly "oven-ready" delivery infrastructure. Instruction via formal education is very effective at targeting children and young people, particularly those aged 5 to 18 years.

Once ML learning is embedded into national curricula, high-quality, sustainable training with a strong multiplier effect can be expected to deliver long-term results. However, reaching this point is usually time-consuming and expensive, requiring significant stakeholder engagement and management. In addition, if the project objective is to target a specific ML issue rapidly, and/or target non school-aged beneficiaries (e.g., to address disinformation and election interference), then this approach is a poor fit.

Stakeholders for this type of programming include government ministries for education and youth, formal educational institutions, teachers' representative bodies, school principals, civil society, media professionals, academia, school librarians, and parents.

Media Literacy Instruction Via Formal Education

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
Best way to promote population-level competencies.	Enormous investment of time with unknown returns on investment.
The education system provides an ideal structure for the introduction and reinforcement of ML messaging across subject matters and as students progress through the system.	Bureaucratic and political constraints, risk aversion, resistance to outside influence, transitions of government, and politicization of critical thinking.
Organizational systems can help disseminate programming more broadly and consistently than NGOs.	Challenging to modify curricula, either as new subjects or integrated into existing subject matters. Elective classes compete with other offerings. Extracurricular classes have limited sustainability.
Schools and teachers hold high status/trust.	Lengthy process to update curricula to keep current with a rapidly changing field.

Media Literacy Instruction Via Formal Education	
BENEFITS	**CHALLENGES**
Captive audiences — exposure can be more intense and more uniform than non-state interventions.	Limited availability of teacher training programs that include media literacy components.
Significant spillover potential (peer-to-peer, student-parent).	Safeguarding considerations may negatively impact the collection and use of some types of evaluation data (e.g., PII).

1. Assess the baseline state of the education system to (i) understand the current state of ML instruction, (ii) understand the political context (likelihood, frequency, and implications of government transitions), (iii) gauge ministry and sub-ministerial capacity, and (iv) assess the structure and strength of the educational system.

2. Identify the most practical entry points for ML instruction. The ideal outcome is the formal integration of ML into the curriculum as a cross-curricular subject across multiple grades. This is not always possible, however, so programs should meet the education system where it is, integrating ML through stand-alone classes, optional classes, limited integration into other subject matters, or support to extracurricular activities and/or clubs.

3. Invest in building and maintaining relationships among key education stakeholders such as government ministries for education and youth as well as formal educational institutions, teachers' representative bodies, school principals, civil society, media professionals, academia, libraries, and parents to varying degrees.

4. Understand teachers' incentive structures and institutionalize ML training for teachers through teacher training colleges or other tertiary institutions. Continued professional development courses in ML could be developed for teachers on an ongoing basis to ensure that their own ML skills stay up to date. This would also help with maintaining quality control and retention of teachers (for extracurricular interventions).

5. Support teacher training and the provision of practical, approachable materials such as lesson plans, resources, and digital/non-digital games.

6. Promote and strengthen inter/intra-school teachers' networks to promote mutual exchange of resources and support. This strengthens the quality of ML instruction and supports the sustainability of ML investments.

7. If a critical relationship is not likely to lead to key agreements and/or support, know when to cut losses and disengage.

5.2 LIBRARY-BASED MEDIA LITERACY TRAINING

Overview
The national reach offered by library networks can potentially provide easily accessible, face-to-face support offered by trusted intermediaries to a broad range of citizens with a good multiplier effect.

Once a robust training and professional development program is in place for librarians, it should be relatively straightforward for new ML modules to be rolled out in response to emerging issues, increasing the long-term sustainability of the program.

The physical location of libraries across countries and regions may also allow for the deployment of ML training to address issues linked to specific geographic locations (e.g., misinformation around local elections).

This model meets people where they are — but only the people who actively engage with the library. If the target group includes people who are not usually library patrons, this model may be limited in its ability to reach the intended audience. Older people, younger people, parents of younger children, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and those with a natural interest in information are the most likely target groups for library-based media literacy training.

Stakeholders include municipal governments, elected officials, librarians' representative bodies, civil society, media professionals, and academia.

Library-based Media Literacy Training

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
National infrastructure with broad and varied reach (school and community libraries), particularly in post-communist countries.	Capacity constraints among librarians are common (pedagogical skills, ML skills, and self-confidence).
Receptive audiences among librarians who are looking to stay current, relevant, and display greater social benefits to both patrons and civic leaders.	Many librarians view themselves as informational curators and do not engage with patrons in educational pursuits.
High degree of community trust among both the young and elderly.	Highly variable and oftentimes inadequate resourcing for community libraries.
Librarians are often champions of information literacy and may welcome support in promoting media and information literacy.	Heterogeneity in patrons makes designing and delivering media literacy programming difficult.
	Discrepancy between the possible and practical reach. Library patronage is highly variable across and within societies.

Recommendations for Library-based Media Literacy Training

1. Given the variable degree of librarian competencies and library resourcing, establish which libraries and librarians will be the most cost-effective partners promoting ML, by assessing (i) the level of political/financial support from municipal leaders, (ii) the existence of key library assets necessary to attract/engage patrons, (iii) librarian motivation/initiative for developing and delivering activities with varied audiences, and (iv) librarians' incentive structures.

2. Publicize library successes to pressure communities and municipal leaders to support ML.

3. Adapt training programs to suit the needs of librarians with lower baseline ML competencies by (i) spending more time on basic concepts, (ii) integrating pedagogical concepts into librarian training, (iii) extending the duration of the training sessions (relative to school or stand-alone trainings), and (iv) including practical instruction (ideally in the middle of the training).

4. Provide easily adaptable manuals/lesson plans for a variety of library patron audiences.

5. Trainings should be co-led by local organizations trusted by communities with existing linkages with library professionals.

6. Create and strengthen librarians' networks, including both community- and school-based librarians to promote mutual exchange of resources and support. This strengthens the quality of ML instruction and supports the sustainability of ML investments.

7. Consider pairing small grants to libraries with the ML program to fund key materials/equipment for future ML training initiatives (e.g., computers, media corners, furniture).

5.3 STAND-ALONE MEDIA LITERACY TRAINING

Overview
Stand-alone ML training can be developed to target a specific group, address a particular ML issue, or augment an existing learning curriculum. For projects of limited duration, limited funding, varying beneficiary populations, or thematic topics, the flexibility, adaptability, and targeted nature of stand-alone interventions means they have the potential to be one of the most efficient programmatic approaches to promoting ML.

Due to their sometimes ad-hoc nature, however, the development and implementation of stand-alone trainings should be based on strong evidence of need on a specific subject or within a specific target group.

Similarly, identifying and engaging community leaders or influencers linked to the target group at an early stage is important because the training needs to be tailored to the target group in terms of capability, attitude, and accessibility. It is not a case of "build it and they will come."

Stand-alone trainings may work best as part of an overarching training or behavior-change program.

Finally, the audience benefitting from stand-alone trainings can be greatly increased through the use of a **cascade training model**. In this approach, the project uses master trainers to capacitate and incentivize one or more individuals (i.e., direct beneficiaries) to conduct similar trainings with their peers (i.e., indirect beneficiaries). The tradeoff from the increased reach of cascade models is the reduced quality assurance and implementer control of downstream trainings.

Stand-alone Media Literacy Training

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
Flexibility: can be targeted and adapted to different audiences (including non-institutional).	Limited scope: generally, not scalable, cannot affect population-level changes.
Efficiency: can be implemented rapidly, particularly with existing curriculum and established organizations.	Sustainability: requires continued funding to persist (even if implemented through existing organizations/networks).
Best for projects of limited duration, limited funding, specific beneficiary populations, or specific thematic topics.	Wide variance in the intensity, quality, and implementation methodology of stand-alone media literacy training.
Positive externalities: potential for increased awareness of ML issues, increased media coverage, galvanizing interest, and promotion of journalism/fact-checking.	Strong adaptability and speed, but contextualization and translation are difficult and expensive to do well.
In cascade models, positive leadership competencies are developed.	Difficult to evaluate long-term behavior change given the short-term nature of most stand-alone ML training.

Recommendations for Stand-alone Media Literacy Training

1. Identify specific objectives for the stand-alone ML training intervention, which will influence the targeting strategy, design/adaptation of the ML curriculum, selection of trainers, desirability of cascade model, and M&E approaches.

2. If beneficiaries are from communities with strong norms, close bonds, or high levels of mistrust, use a dual-trainer model. One trainer is a subject matter expert (e.g., journalist, academic), the other is a trusted member of the group. Use a trainer with pre-existing relationships with the beneficiary population.

3. Promote sustainability by using trainers affiliated with civil society or embedded into existing networks linked to the target audience.

4. Trainings should (i) include interactive activities (e.g., games, case studies, group work), (ii) use a combination of in-person and online approaches, (iii) be supported through network building (e.g., creation and moderation of a social media group), and (iv) provide online resources for future beneficiary use.

5. If using a cascade model, quality assurance and proactive support to trainers should be integrated into the trainer training.

5.4 GAME-BASED MEDIA LITERACY TRAINING

Overview
Online games or the gamification of media literacy content offers a low-cost distribution mechanism. Online games or the gamification of ML content offers a low-cost distribution mechanism.

Games can be developed to target a specific group, address a particular ML issue, or to augment an existing learning curriculum. Online games are best used for targeting groups that are likely to self-initiate.

Reaching large numbers or specific target groups relies on advertising, but the gamification of ML content can result in high degrees of sustainability if online hosting is integrated with existing funding streams.

Game-based Media Literacy Training	
BENEFITS	**CHALLENGES**
Appeal/engagement games can act as a hook and hold the attention of individuals who would not normally engage with ML.	The learning and retention potential of games cannot compete with the learning and retention achieved in-person instruction and discussion.
Role-playing can help demonstrate techniques in a different light rather than speaking about them in an abstract or academic manner and broach complex subject matters.	The game must be designed to maintain interest and this can make it challenging to address complex or in-depth topics.
Games can expand the ML instructional space (e.g., phone-compatible games).	The perception of games as being childish or may result in a stigmatization of games and create a barrier to engagement for certain types of beneficiaries.
Games can be a strong complement to other types of ML programming (e.g., support teachers/trainers to demonstrate concepts).	Strong adaptability/speed, but contextualization and translation are difficult and expensive to do well.
In cascade models, positive leadership competencies are developed.	Online games can be subject to security concerns, particularly if registration and participant tracking are intended. This is especially problematic when creating games for children and young people.

Recommendations for Game-based Media Literacy Training

1. Integrate games into other ML interventions.

2. Consider the best game approach for the beneficiary population (e.g., self-paced online is not optimal for the elderly).

3. In-person games can be an important marketing tool for other types of ML interventions, particularly if conducted in larger groups, including offering prizes and building participant interest.

4. Publish games online on sites with existing funding/support for sustainability.

6. RESOURCES

6.1 MODEL/INTERVENTION QUICK REFERENCE

Based on the evidence collected and analyzed as part of the Social Impact study, the following table provides a quick reference guide to some of the key characteristics of each of the four ML models.

Characteristic	Formal Education	Library-based	Stand-alone	Game-based
Reach	Population-level potential	Broad and varied reach. Potential for population-level reach but realistically likely to only reach existing library patrons	Potentially very effective reach for specifically targeted groups	Potentially very effective reach for specifically targeted groups
Impact	Variable impact, contingent on nature of integration into curricula.	Relatively low impact due to challenges with librarian trainers.	Variable impact, dependent on the quality of instruction and receptivity of the target group.	Higher impact if integrated with other ML approaches. Low impact otherwise.
Flexibility	Limited flexibility once integrated into the curriculum	Widespread location of libraries may facilitate bespoke ML training addressing local/emerging issues	Excellent flexibility — can be targeted and adapted to different audiences	Variable. Some games have limited flexibility once designed and distributed

Characteristic	Formal Education	Library-based	Stand-alone	Game-based
Targeting	Highly targeted for a wide age range (preschool to university)	Older people, younger people, parents of younger children, lower socioeconomic groups, groups with an existing interest in information	Projects can be designed to target any group	By their nature, games are usually designed for very specific/narrow groups
Cost-effectiveness	Can be very time-consuming and expensive to establish	Variable. Resourcing sometimes inadequate	Variable	Variable
Sustainability	Excellent sustainability once integrated into the curriculum	Moderate potential for sustainability	Low potential for sustainability of core programming	High degree of sustainability
Level of stakeholder engagement	Significant stakeholder engagement required at ministerial level, within school infrastructure, and among professional networks	Moderate stakeholder engagement with municipal governments, elected officials, and librarian representative bodies	Low. However, interventions linked to existing larger programs will require a higher degree of engagement	Lowest
Multiplier effect	Strong multiplier effect from teachers	Relatively strong multiplier effect among librarians and patrons	Potential for strong multiplier effect but dependent on project design and delivery	Lowest

Characteristic	Formal Education	Library-based	Stand-alone	Game-based
Consistency of quality	Very consistent	Difficult to maintain consistency of quality	Potential for high levels of consistency, but cascade model limits quality control	Very consistent
M&E	Good infrastructure for M&E, but possible issues around access and data sharing	Limited potential for M&E compared to schools, but better than stand-alone	Variable potential for M&E linked to project type	Good potential for data collection on reach/use but less potential for data collection on impact
Best suited for	Promoting population-level competencies for 5 to 18 years of age	Targeting community-based groups or local issues	Projects of limited duration, limited funding, specific beneficiary populations, or specific thematic topics; works well as part of existing larger programs	Hooking individuals who would not engage with ML; works well as part of existing larger programs
Not good for	Projects of limited duration, funding, or political support. School-based training unlikely to impact non-school-going groups or emerging/local ML issues	Less likely to have reach or impact with groups unfamiliar with libraries	Not likely to support long-term interventions	Learning/retention potential unlikely to compete with in-person instruction and discussion

6.2 DESIGN PRINCIPLES CHECKLIST

There is no "one size fits all" solution to developing ML interventions, but there are some useful guiding principles that may be helpful. This summary sheet provides a reminder of the key considerations when designing or commissioning ML interventions and offers some prompts as questions.

 **Define the Objective of the Intervention and Align It to an Overarching Strategy**	 **Develop Contextual Understanding**
What is the problem to be addressed? What policy areas does the problem impact?	What is the evidence of need for the target groups, including direct beneficiaries and the indirect beneficiaries of the intervention?
Who is affected by this problem (target groups)? Who are the direct beneficiaries of the intervention and the indirect beneficiaries? How do they relate to the target groups(s)?	What is the desired change in the target group in relation to the problem (awareness raising, skills development, skills improvement, knowledge development/ enhancement, knowledge-sharing, behavior change)?
What project outcomes would address the problem, and how (awareness-raising, skills/confidence development, call to action, behavior change, skills sharing, etc.)?	What behavioral insights are available for target groups in relation to the problem?
How might the development of media and information literacy skills/knowledge help to address the problem within the target group?	What level of understanding/ability do target groups already have in relation to media literacy and the specific media literacy skills/knowledge being addressed in the intervention?
How might the improvement of media and information literacy skills/knowledge help to address the problem in the target group?	What are the baseline existing competencies, and how can they be measured?
How does the objective fit into/support broader/existing strategies?	

 **Test, Iterate, Refine**
What data are necessary for programmatic adaptation and learning including feedback to policy?
What is the purpose of the evaluation?
What aspects of the intervention will be measured, monitored, and evaluated (impact, reach, outputs, outcomes)? Why?
What are the key reflection points in the theory of change and the logic model? What data can/should be collected at these points?

What methodology will be used? How will the data be analyzed?

What mechanism is there to use the evaluation findings to test, iterate, and refine?

 **Work in Partnership**	 **Build-in Sustainability**
Who are the key stakeholders?	Should this intervention and/or media literacy learning be self-sustaining after the initial funding period?
What are their specific roles?	What does the funding structure look like?
Who are the key points of contact?	How many funders are involved? What is the funding cycle, and how does it fit with the project cycle?
What is the nature of the relationship with key stakeholders?	What is the sustainability plan?
Which stakeholders are mission-critical? What stakeholder management process is in place?	Who are the key sustainability stakeholders?
What agreements are in place (informal, formal, statutory duty, memorandum of understanding, legal contract)?	 **Meet People Where They Are**
Who are the trusted intermediaries for the target groups (including direct beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries)?	What intervention model might best reach the target group (including direct beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries)?
How will intervention participants be recruited, motivated, monitored, and measured?	What type of media literacy training could be employed as part of this intervention (peer to peer, intergenerational, cascade, one-on-one, self-guided, formal, informal)?
What support networks exist for intervention participants?	

 **Provide the Right Support at the Right Time**

What is the theory of change process?

What intervention model might best reach the target group (including direct beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries)?

What type of media literacy training could be employed as part of this intervention (peer-to-peer, intergenerational, cascade, one-on-one, self-guided, formal, informal)?

What tools and resources will be required and when (games, audio-visual, online content, webinars, conferences, etc.)?

What skills are required to produce the tools and resources?

What is the optimum timing and duration for the intervention?

6.3 CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To improve beneficiary media consumption, (i) focus on nudging behavior within media types (e.g., accessing different news sites, following different accounts on social media) rather than attempting to shift across media types (e.g., moving from newspapers as a primary informational source to websites), (ii) equip beneficiaries with skills to assess media credibility (e.g., identifying ownership, identifying content bias), and (iii) provide beneficiaries with a menu of reliable media sources.

2. To improve beneficiary understanding of how media consumers are targeted and influenced by algorithms, explain (i) core concepts in straight-forward language (e.g., unseen computer programs that select the content that social media platforms show you), (ii) the incentive structures behind the use of algorithms (e.g., maximizing the time users spend on a given platform to maximize advertising revenue), (iii) beneficial (e.g., more relevant, curated content for users) and detrimental (e.g., spread of conspiratorial content) effects of algorithms, and (iv) how algorithms can be abused by malign actors to manipulate public opinion and behavior. Asking beneficiaries to play a game like BadNews, wherein the player strives to exploit algorithms, can strengthen these core pedagogical elements through experiential learning.

7. CONCLUSIONS

We live in an interconnected world where the global media ecosystem impacts local media ecosystems and vice versa. ML has been rising on policy agendas globally, prompted, at least in part, by the threats posed by information disorder. Despite the acknowledged importance of ML and the current policy focus on it, the development of effective ML interventions is hampered by the ever-changing nature of how ML is defined and understood, and the fact that it often falls within multiple policy areas with a potentially negative effect on the strategic coordination, funding, and evaluation of ML interventions. Despite the policy "no-mans land" that ML sometimes finds itself in, excellent efforts are being made at many levels of society, by many different stakeholders, to empower citizens through ML. In particular, CSOs and NGOs are a leading light in the development and implementation of ML interventions across the world, supported by donors, foundations, and philanthropic funders.

This manual outlines some recommendations for both donors and project implementers to foster continued funding of effective, impactful ML interventions that will complement (rather than compete with) any other ML work being carried out by state or local actors. Key considerations include:

- Clearly identify and understand the problem that will be addressed by the proposed ML intervention, as well the target group for the ML intervention.
- Consider how the proposed intervention might strategically fit into the wider ML landscape and/or related policy frameworks or programs.
- Ensure that the intervention is designed to reflect and resonate with the local experiences of the target group. Work with the most appropriate local stakeholders.
- Develop and adequately fund a M&E framework during project design to programmatic learning, improvement, and the aggregation of a sectoral evidence base.
- Plan for sustainability during project design, focusing on both the continuation of key aspects of programming as well as the retention of learning over time.

People can develop ML behaviors to help protect societies from the threats that emerge from the modern, complex, and interconnected digital media ecosystem. However, ML is not a panacea. Many issues that ML interventions seek to address are multifaceted. Solutions to these issues also need to be multifaceted, involving a wide range of actors over long periods of time. Right now, ML is the best first line of defense, requiring support and coordination at local, national, and international levels.

ANNEX A: LOGIC MODEL EXAMPLE – CASCADE TRAINING INTERVENTION

EUR/ACE training in logic models and a worksheet with template to assist in their preparation can be found at the following link: https://www.state.gov/foreign-assistance-resource-library/. Once at that link, scroll down to find the heading "Training: Logic Models, Theory of Change and Program Evaluation." The logic model template is the last page of the training's worksheet.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
What are the resources invested to start and maintain the program?	What activities will you implement?	What are the immediate results of those activities?	What are the intermediate results of the intervention?	What are the long-term results due to the program intervention?
• Updated and contextualized curricula • Master trainers • Training facilities and materials	• Peer trainers trained in ML technical content • Peer trainers trained in pedagogical approaches • Peer trainers equipped with ML resources	• Peer trainers demonstrate improved ML competencies • Peer trainers demonstrate core teaching competencies • Peer trainers become effective ML instructors	• Improved ML competencies among cascade beneficiaries	• Lower susceptibility to mis/dis-information • Better informed citizenry • More support for democratic institutions and processes

ANNEX B: DESIGNING OBJECTIVE MEDIA LITERACY ASSESSMENTS

There are many options for measuring ML competencies (e.g., subjective self-assessments, objectives tests, multiple-choice questions, long-form items to assess critical thinking, etc.). For project implementers looking to implement a relatively objective method for measuring ML skills, image comparisons like the ones presented below are an option to consider. In this approach, respondents are presented with pairs of images comprised of a headline, graphic, and metadata. They are then asked to assess image credibility through four responses:

- Image 1 is more credible
- Image 2 is more credible
- Both images are equally credible
- Neither image is credible

The image comparisons should be designed to quickly test respondent awareness of common tactics used to disseminate disinformation, such as sensationalist language, extreme imagery, and lack of reliable sources. Correct responses are aggregated to generate a credibility assessment score.

When determining topics and messages for use in the images, it is advisable to vary ideological/political perspectives to ensure the instrument is measuring latent ML skills rather than reflecting the ideological leanings of respondents.

CORRECT RESPONSE:
IMAGE 2 is more credible