MDF PORTFOLIO | 2020

მედიის განვითარების ფონდი
MEDIA DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

DISCOVER
TRUTH
YOURSELF!

Media Development Foundation (MDF) is a leading Georgian NGO in media monitoring, research and communication, specialized in detecting and verifying fake media content. With its **well-established media literacy programs** and **experienced fact-checkers**, MDF aims to promote critical thinking in media consumers and to raise awareness on the importance of fighting fake news.

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www.mdfgeorgia.ge
www.mythdetector.ge
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WHO WE ARE

Media Development Foundation, MDF, was established in April 2008 by a group of professional journalists and its mission is to support free and pluralistic media environment, open and inclusive society and contribute to resilience building by promotion of conscious media consumption.

MDF's media content analysis on hate speech and anti-Western propaganda are often cited by the US State Department[1], European Council against Racism and Intolerance[2], foreign and local think-tanks and academia.[3]

WHAT WE DO

Media Development Foundation examines manipulative media content from various directions: 1) Information influence activities by foreign country (direct propaganda by Russian government sponsored media and indirect anti-Western propaganda by cloaked media outlets); 2) Domestic political propaganda (coordinated inauthentic behavior (CIB) in social network); 3) Spread of false information for economic purposes (click bait web-pages).

To reveal information influence activities of foreign countries as well as misinformation activities of local actors, the MDF applies an approach consisting of the following four steps:

1. **Identify.** Media monitoring is conducted to study anti-Western messages, sources of these messages, framing of narratives and to understand a broader context. Moreover, the monitoring enables identification of content that is either fake or manipulative.
2. **Deconstruct.** Fake or manipulative content is checked and real facts are established through OSINT and transparent methodology.
3. **Study into transparency of sources.** Transparency of sources means establishing formal or informal ownership of a media outlet, studying its financial transparency and informing society about the reliability of a news source.
4. **Explain.** Informing society about propaganda methods and techniques used in spreading fake news intentionally by an interested party in order to harm society. Media literacy enhances resistance of society, enabling citizens to identify and filter out fake news and making them less vulnerable to such information.
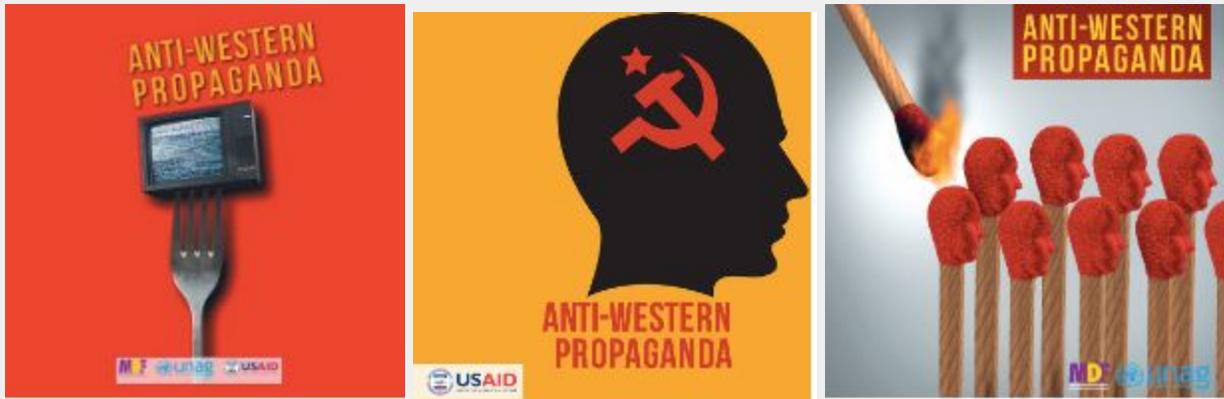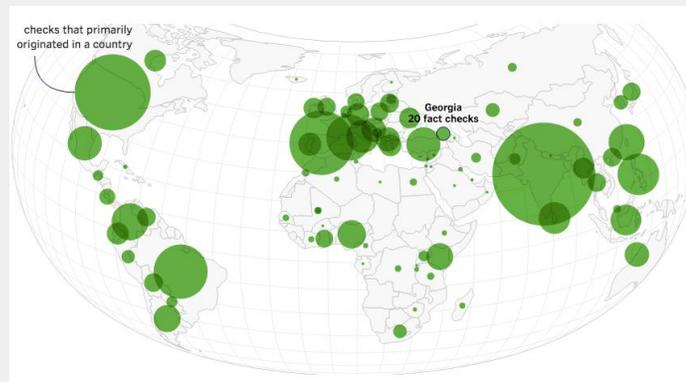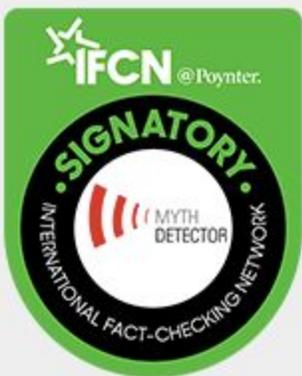
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[1] https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom//index.htm#wrapper
[2] https://rm.coe.int/fourth-report-on-georgia/16808b5773
[3] US State Department (2017 May), Can Public Diplomacy Survive the Internet?. Vivian S. Walker, Crafting Resilient State Narratives in Post Truth Environments: Ukraine and Georgia. https://www.state.gov/can-public-diplomacy-survive-the-internet/

1. Identify. MDF produces annual reports on Anti-Western Propaganda since 2015[4] mapping messages and their source and observing shifts in narratives over time.

2. Deconstruct. In 2014 MDF launched a fact checking web-portal Myth Detector to track disinformation flow, to analyze major trends in propaganda methods and respond to fake media content with fact based approach. Since November 2019, Myth Detector is a verified signature of the **International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN)** of the **Poynter Institute**, working alongside with 100 fact-checkers from more than 70 countries around the world and member of **#CoronaVirusFacts Alliance** and **WhatsApp Coronavirus Information Hub**.

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4 http://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/119 http://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/89 http://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/65

To identify Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior (CIB) MDF studies social media campaigns using facebook **crowdtangle software**. Numerous facebook pages and groups explored by MDF investigations[5] were removed by facebook.

MYTHDETECTOR.GE
A Pro-Governmental "Blogger" Giorgi Aghapishvili is Actually an AI-Generated Photo | Myth Detector

From 2020 with the support of DW Akademie MDF introduced a truly **media** technology solution for its monitoring and verification activities.

3. Study into transparency of sources. Myth Detector

investigations go beyond appealing headlines and tempting brand names and try to find who is behind the story and cloned websites with Western brand names.

MYTHDETECTOR.GE
"Russian Cluster" of disinformation and its "internal spread" in Georgia | Myth Detector

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5 http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/pro-governmental-blogger-giorgi-aghapishvili-actually-ai-generated-photo

http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/how-kandiashvilis-espersona-administers-facebook-groups-and-pages

http://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/109

http://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/123

4. Explain. With its well-established Media and Information Literacy programs and experienced fact-checkers, MDF aims to promote critical thinking among media consumers and equip them with necessary skills to differentiate quality media content from fabricated one. To achieve this goal MDF developed a media and information literacy programs for two main target groups:
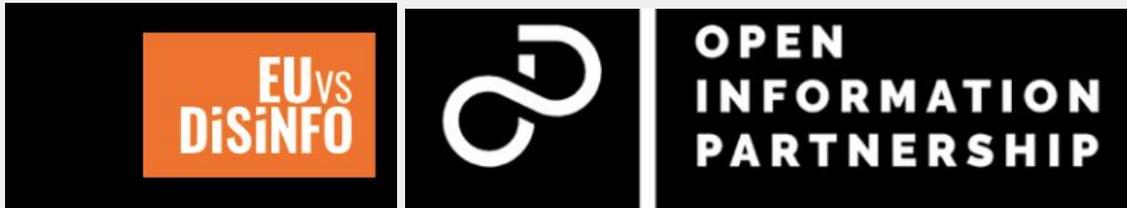
1. Youth
2. School teachers

In 2019 MDF developed a new curriculum "Teaching MIL in schools" and introduced this course for teachers preparation program at Ilia State University.

Learning by doing. Launched in 2017, Deutsche Welle Akademie-supported Myth Detector Lab provides intensive training for youth between 18-28 and internship at www.mythdetector.ge. Combination of trainings with practical internship allows students to exercise obtained knowledge in practise and publish verified information. The program has **126 alumni** and after completion of courses they are actively involved in amplifying media literacy skills in various programs.

On the international level, MDF is cooperating with **Deutsche Welle Akademie's Media and Information Literacy Expert Network (MILEN)** promoting critical thinking and sharing experiences globally.

MDF is cooperating with **EUvsDisinfo** - the flagship project of the European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force and is a member of the Open Information Partnership (OIP) bringing together think tanks, fact-checkers, independent media and grassroots organisations to support efforts to counter hostile information influence operations.

MIL Resources

MDF's media literacy resources are available in four languages (Ge, Arm, Az, Eng). www.millab.ge and gives access to teaching resources, online games and exercises.

MILLAB.GE
Millab.ge - Media & Information Literacy Lab | Millab.ge
Online platform of Media and Information Literacy Lab (MilLab) is an ancillary…

They are also accessible at EduCheck Map.

Donors

MDF has extensive experience in managing projects financed by USAID, US Embassy, German Marshall Fund, Hedayah, Embassy of Netherlands, OSGF, Deutsche Welle Akademie. MDF is a counterpart of UNAG in implementing USAID supported Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Awareness (PITA) program.