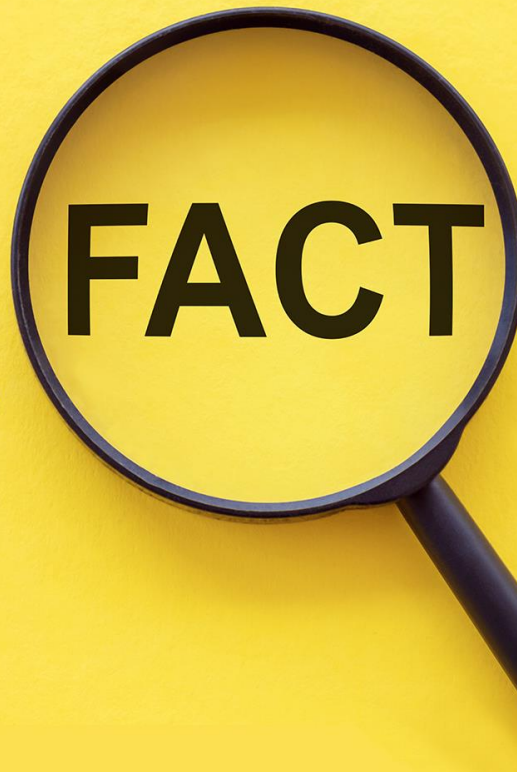


**DISCOVER
TRUTH
YOURSELF!**



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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WHO WE ARE

Media Development Foundation, MDF, was established in April 2008 by a group of professional journalists and its mission is to support:

- Fundamental human rights and freedoms; Open, inclusive and pluralistic society;
- Informed decisions in the democratic society by providing reliable and quality information, detecting harmful content, disinformation and mal-information, ensuring transparency of the sources;
- Critical thinking in a new media ecosystem and resilience building of citizens' through conscious media consumption;
- Professional and institutional development of media; Establishment of media accountability and self-regulation mechanisms.

MDF's media content analysis on hate speech and anti-Western propaganda is often cited by the US State Department¹, German Federal Government's report on freedom of religion², European Council against Racism and Intolerance³, foreign and local think-tanks and academia.⁴

WHAT WE DO

Media Development Foundation examines manipulative media content from various directions: 1) Information influence activities by a foreign country (direct propaganda by Russian government-sponsored media and indirect anti-Western propaganda by cloaked media outlets); 2) Domestic political propaganda (coordinated inauthentic behaviour (CIB) in the social network); 3) Spread of false information for economic purposes (clickbait 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 the identification of the content that is either fake or manipulative.

¹ [International Religious Freedom Report for 2015](#)

² German Federal Foreign Office, Report on Freedom of Religion and Thought, 2019 (available only in German): <https://bit.ly/3uLLlv6>

³ Council of Europe, ECRI Report on Georgia, 2016, available: [ECRI REPORT ON GEORGIA](#)

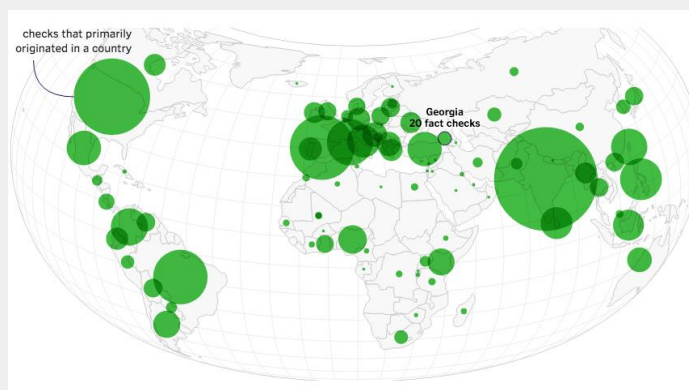
⁴ US State Department (2017 May), Can Public Diplomacy Survive the Internet?. Vivian S. Walker, Crafting Resilient State Narratives in Post Truth Environments: Ukraine and Georgia. <https://www.state.gov/can-public-diplomacy-survive-the-internet/>

2. **Deconstruct.** Fake or manipulative content is checked and real facts are established through OSINT and transparent methodology.
3. **Study into the 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 to harm society. Media literacy enhances the resistance of society, enabling citizens to identify and filter out fake news and making them less vulnerable to such information.

1. Identify. MDF produces annual reports on Anti-Western Propaganda since 2015⁵ 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 a 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 100 fact-checkers from more than 70 countries around the world and member of #CoronaVirusFacts Alliance and WhatsApp Coronavirus Information Hub.



⁵ <http://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/119> <http://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/89> <http://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/65>

“Myth Detector is performing well, doing fact-checking on a daily basis in a professional way and fully meets all criteria for signatories.” - IFCN, 2020.

In September 2020, Myth Detector partnered up with Facebook to fight against misinformation in the framework of **Facebook’s Third-Party Fact-Checking Program**. Myth Detector reviews and rates the accuracy of content aiming to improve the quality and authenticity of stories in the News Feed. When rated false, Facebook shows the story lower in News Feed, significantly reducing its distribution and warning people who see the post or try to share the post that it has been marked as false.

To identify Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior (CIB) MDF studies social media campaigns using Facebook **crowdtangle software**. Numerous Facebook pages and groups explored by MDF investigations⁶ were removed by Facebook.



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

⁶ <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>

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.



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 the necessary skills to differentiate quality media content from fabricated ones. To achieve this goal MDF developed 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, already with **53 graduates**.

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. A combination of training with practical internship allows students to exercise obtained knowledge in practice and publish verified information. The program has **175 alumni** and after completion of courses, they are actively involved in amplifying media literacy skills in various programs.

MDF has developed a total of 8 educational online-games aiming to equip youth with critical thinking skills and tools to be more media literate. 3 news games include:

- **Quack Hunter**: As the hunting season on Fake News is always open, players need to use their critical thinking skills to distinguish false information from real and not get laughed at by a hunter dog.
- **Grandma's Album**: Players become little helpers of the grandma and assist her in recalling a forgotten location shown on her old photos. The objective of the game is to have a player identify geolocation by observing the details and learn the story of that place that is shown on the historic photo.
- **Dr. Fake**: Players need to save Medial Literacy City from Dr. Fake by confronting four of his companions: Mr. Deepfake, Mr. Troll, Mr. Clone and Mr. Phisher and answer their questions correctly.

The idea to give players the opportunity to become heros of the Medial Literacy City was developed by MDF's media literacy program graduates at MDF's 1st global hackathon - Hacking the Fake News, that announced 4 winning innovative technological ideas generated during the 2-day mentoring sessions, aiming to identify, expose and analyze misinformation and disinformation.



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.

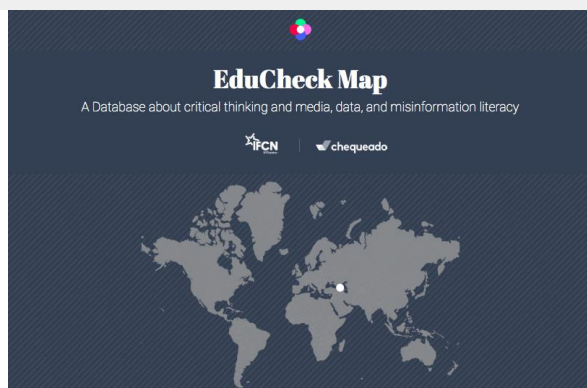


MDF is cooperating with **EUvsDisinfo** - the flagship project of the European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force and is a member of the Open Information Partnership (OIP) bringing together think tanks, fact-checkers, independent media and grassroots organisations to support efforts to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



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.