



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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WELCOME LETTER

DEAR COLLEAGUES, PARTNERS, STUDENTS!

It is an honour to present the Media Development Foundation’s annual report for the year 2021. Given our organization’s primary mission to foster building societal resilience towards harmful information, our team has shown unprecedented effort amid the global pandemic. In addition to focusing on the information manipulation operations from the hostile country and the political agenda of the malign domestic actors, MDF has mobilized efforts to counter the infodemic by protecting the environment from information pollution and thus contributing to public health.

Through our partnership with Meta’s Third-Party Fact-Checking Program, MDF has managed to not only play a significant role in shaping a better-informed society but to ensure the accountability of the media and other actors in the face of the public, thus encouraging the practice of establishing a professional standard of correcting mistakes in a commensurate manner.

MDF’s Media literacy programs have always played a pivotal role in enhancing societal resilience, as the active learning approach utilized in the process envisages equipping media consumers with the necessary skills to filter harmful information. In 2021, MDF’s team visited a number of cities and villages across Georgia to support the development of critical thinking skills and the ability to verify information with open-source tools among youngsters.

The “Myth Detector Laboratory” – one of our most successful projects implemented together with the Deutsche Welle Akademie in the field of media literacy for the sixth year now holds special



significance for our organization. A number of graduates of the program are now part of MDF’s team and contribute to the daily fight against false and harmful information, while others actively use the knowledge acquired during the project in other organizations and civil activism.

Similar to the previous years, in 2021, we prepared a number of insightful pieces of research, online games and publications for the public, and professional publications for journalists, academia and school teachers.

I would like to thank all our partners, donor organizations, students and program participants and highlight that our relationship is not limited to one-time cooperation, since we are united by common goals, which are related to enhancing information integrity and promoting a healthy environment for informed choices in a democratic society.

TAMAR KINTSURASHVILI
Executive Director

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ABOUT MDF

The Media Development Foundation (MDF) is a leading Georgian NGO in media monitoring, research and communication, specialising 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 raise awareness on the importance of fighting fake news.

OUR MISSION

The Media Development Foundation (MDF) aims to promote:

- 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 misinformation, 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.

OUR TEAM

The Media Development Foundation unites 24 full-time staff and 13 volunteers.

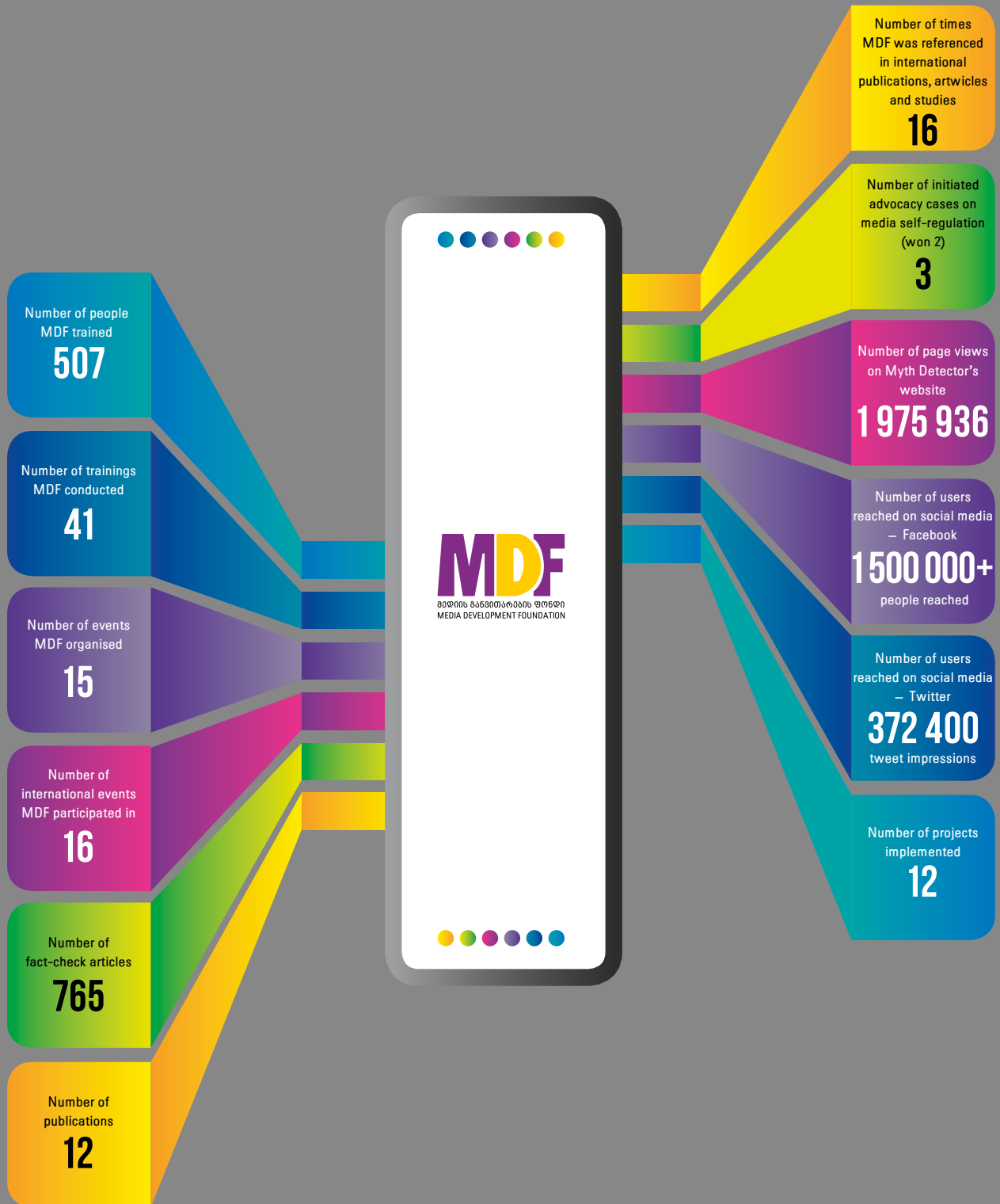
BOARD MEMBERS

- TAMAR KINTSURASHVILI, *Executive Director*
- TAMAR KHORBALADZE, *Chair of the Board*
- KETEVAN MSKHILADZE, *Board Member, Gender Program Director*
- TAMAR SHAMILI, *Board Member*
- GIGA ZEDANIA, *Board Member, Iliia State University*
- BEKA MINDIASHVILI, *Board Member, Tolerance Center of the Public Defender's Office*
- LEVAN GIORGADZE, *Board Member*

Detailed information on MDF's staff is available on the [website](#).



MDF'S PERFORMANCE IN NUMBERS



The Media Development Foundation (MDF) studies the following manifestations of manipulative media content:

1. **FOREIGN INFORMATION INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES** (direct propaganda by Russian government-sponsored media and indirect anti-Western propaganda);
2. **DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROPAGANDA** (using trolls and fake pages on social media for political purposes);
3. **DISSEMINATION OF FALSE INFORMATION FOR ECONOMIC PURPOSES** (clickbait web pages).

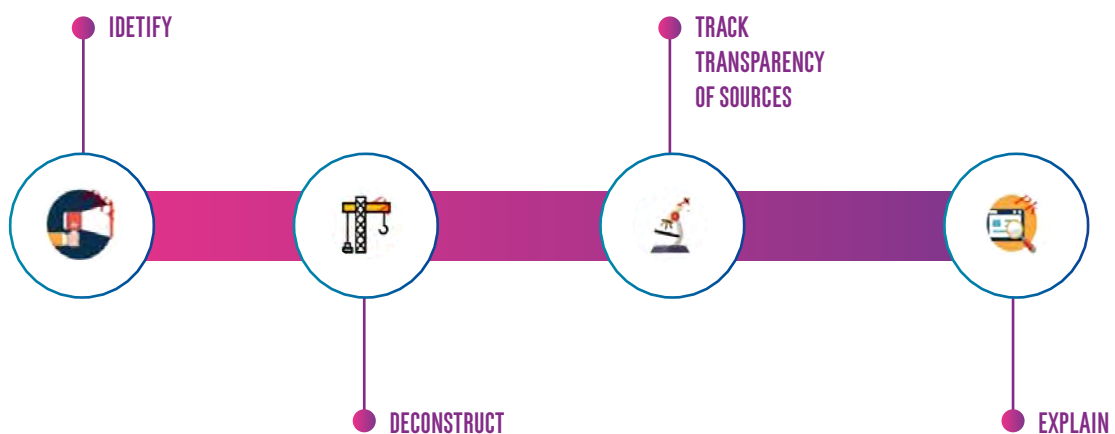
While exposing foreign information influence activities as well as disinformation activities of local actors, the MDF applies the following four-step approach:

IDENTIFY. Media monitoring is conducted to study anti-Western messages and their sources, as well as the framing of narratives to understand a broader context. Moreover, the monitoring enables the identification of false or/and manipulative content.

DECONSTRUCT. The verification of false or/and manipulative content and the establishment of authentic facts are being carried out through OSINT tools and transparent methodology.

TRACK TRANSPARENCY OF SOURCES. Transparency of sources entails looking into the formal or informal ownership of a media outlet, examining its financial transparency, and informing society about the reliability of a news source.

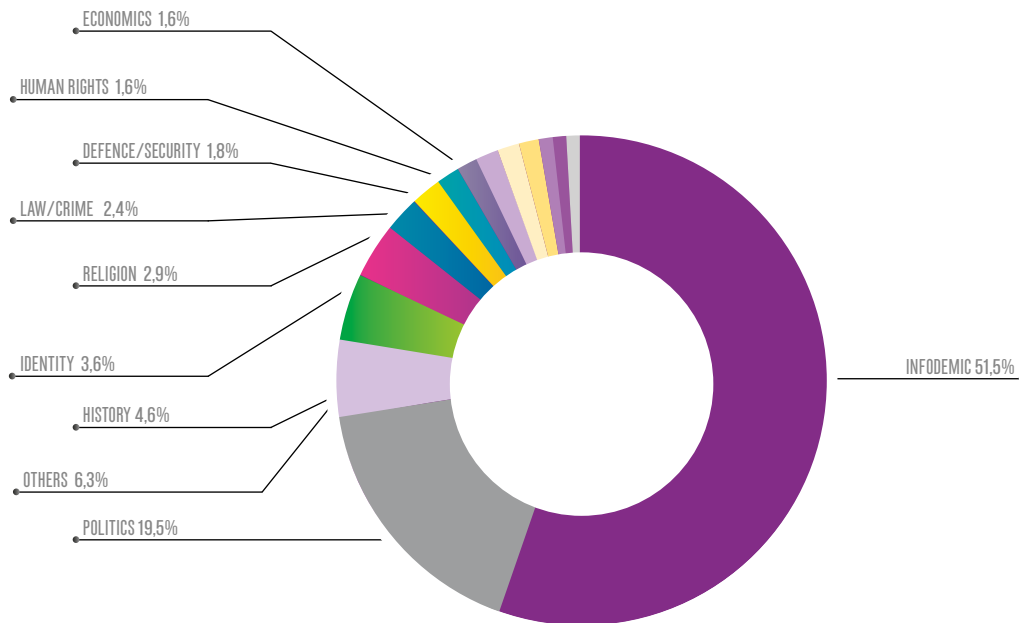
EXPLAIN. Informing society about propaganda methods and techniques used in spreading fake news by an interested party that aims to harm society. Media literacy enhances societal resilience, enabling citizens to identify and filter out fake news, making them less vulnerable.



1. FACT-CHECKING PROGRAM

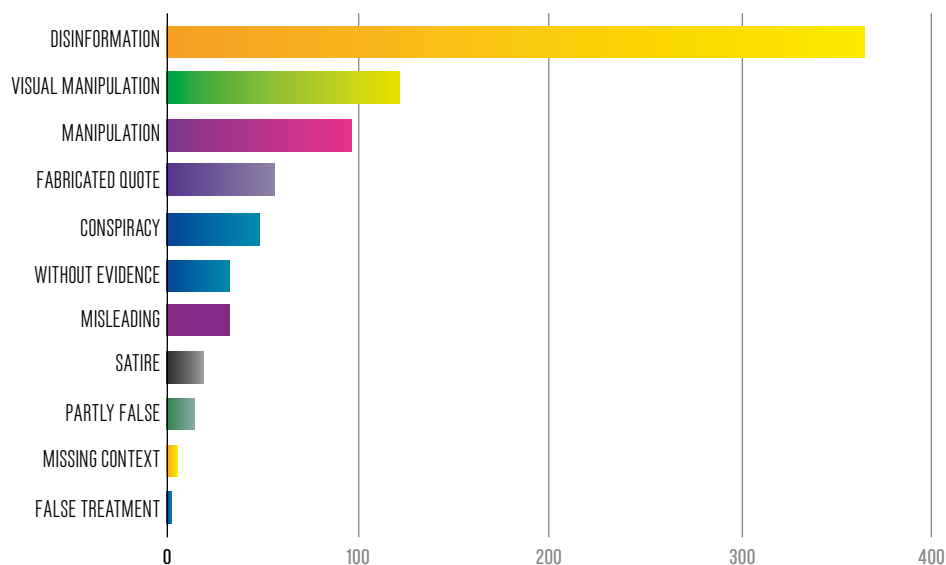
In 2021, Media Development Foundation’s fact-checking platform “Myth Detector” (www.mythdetector.ge) published a total of 764 articles, the majority of them (51,5%, 428 articles) devoted to the infodemic.

CHART 1. “MYTH DETECTOR” ARTICLES BY THEMATICS



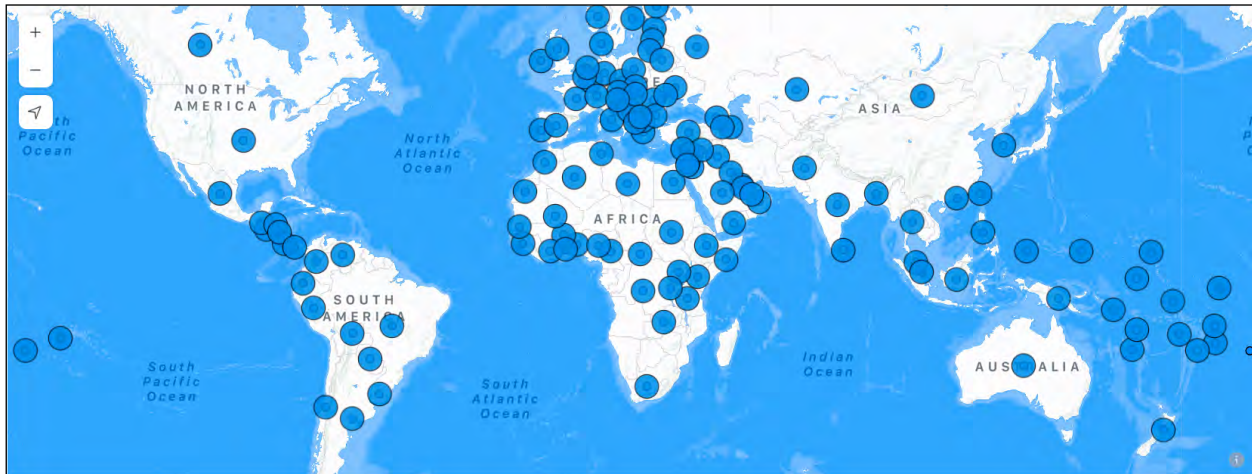
The largest share of verified information accounts for disinformation (365), followed by visual manipulation (122) and manipulation (96). As shown in Figure 2, the following additional categories of violations were identified in 2021: Fabricated quotes (56), conspiracy (47), without evidence (33), misleading (31), satire (19), partly false (14), without context(5), false treatment (4).

CHART 2. TYPOLOGY OF VIOLATIONS



1.1. “MYTH DETECTOR’S” PARTNERSHIP WITH FACEBOOK

“Myth Detector” has been a partner of Facebook’s third-party fact-checking program since 2020. Myth Detector studies and evaluates the accuracy of information disseminated on Facebook, which serves to determine the authenticity of the news and improve its quality.



1.2. 38 CORRECTED ARTICLES AND ACCOUNTABILITY BEFORE THE AUDIENCE!

Facebook’s fact-checking program helps enhance the degree of responsibility of social media users and fosters accountability before the audiences. In case of correcting the erroneous information evaluated by the “Myth Detector” in a proportionate form, the evaluation of the post will be revised, and the rating will be removed.

Following the evaluation of Facebook posts by Myth Detector in 2021–2022, the authors of the information disseminated in 38 cases corrected the primary posts and informed the audience, respectively.

In 26 out of 38 cases, the posts were corrected by media outlets, in 8 cases by Facebook profiles of different profiles, and in 4 cases by individual Facebook users. Most of the published posts were equally related to the Coronavirus pandemic (15) as well as politics (15), crime (2), and others (6).

A proportionate correction entails clearly informing the reader of an error by making changes to the same link on which the original content was disseminated.

This mechanism helps to properly inform the public by correcting the mistakes, making both traditional media and individual Facebook users accountable to the public.

1.3. MYTH DETECTOR IN IFCN

Since 2019 “Myth Detector” has been a member of Poynter Institute’s International Fact-Checking Network.

“Myth Detector has long experience of being a signatory of IFCN, and its work is based on applying professional standards and serving the audience. The editorial team does important and valuable work checking claims, revealing disinformation in the media and social networks publishing on five languages.” – notes IFCN.

The work of “Myth Detector” has been covered by the Poynter Institute in 2021 as well:

[Factually: India and Georgia look back at COVID-19’s information impact](#)
[Let’s review some falsehoods about masks](#)



1.4.#CORONAVIRUSFACTS ALLIANCE

Together with 100 fact-checking organizations around the globe, to combat the infodemic, Myth Detector has joined the Poynter Institute’s global initiative – the [#CoronaVirusFacts Alliance](#). In 2021, 394 “Myth Detector” articles were published in this database.



2. COORDINATED INAUTHENTIC BEHAVIOUR (CIB)

In 2021, “Myth Detector” identified a number of coordinated discreditation campaigns against the [Public Defender](#), [State Inspector](#), [political opponents](#) of the government, the [American democracy](#), the participants of the so-called [“cartographer’s case,”](#) and [the Rioni Gorge Defenders](#).

PRO-GOVERNMENTAL TROLLS, MEDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

Ani Kistauri | November 29, 2021 14:18 | Reading Time: 11 minutes

Network of individuals and media entities: Manana Partsvania, Archil Zedginidze, Eka Ekaterine, Seta Guven, Tamar Chergoleishvili, Nene Sakvarelidze, Elena Agrelova, and others.

5 MESSAGES AND 12 TROLLS AGAINST THE STATE INSPECTOR LONDA TOLORAIA

Myth Detector | December 30, 2021 12:37 | Reading Time: 10 minutes

Network of trolls and messages: Pavel Poliak, Giorgio Moschino, Angelina Lebedinskaya, and others.

FACEBOOK TROLLS DISCREDITING MIKHEIL SAKASHVILI IN A COORDINATED MANNER

Ani Kistauri | November 2, 2021 15:56 | Reading Time: 9 minutes

Network of Facebook trolls: Vitaliy Minin, David Gelashvili, Vladislav Melnik, and others.

CLICKBAIT WEBSITES WITH RUSSIAN IP ADDRESSES, ULTRANATIONALISTS, PRO-KREMLIN AND GOVERNMENT GROUPS AGAINST CARTOGRAPHERS

Myth Detector | February 1, 2021 11:08 | Reading Time: 11 minutes

Clickbait websites and groups: NEWS, MOSCOW, PETERSBURG, DISCREDITING CAMPAIGN.

FACEBOOK ACCOUNTS USING THE NAMES OF AND TARGETING RIONI GORGE DEFENDERS

Myth Detector | May 24, 2021 10:29 | Reading Time: 4 minutes

Facebook accounts using names of Rioni Gorge Defenders.

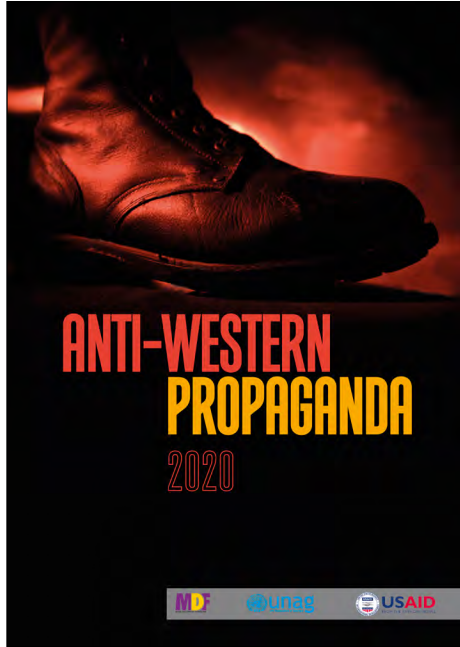
TROLLS – HIDING BEHIND IDENTITIES OF “КАТЯ РОДИНА” AND “МАРИЯ ВОЛКОВА” – REBUKE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Ani Kistauri & Mariam Dangadze | February 24, 2021 08:37 | Reading Time: 10 minutes

Trolls using identities of Katya Rodina and Maria Volkova to rebuke American democracy.

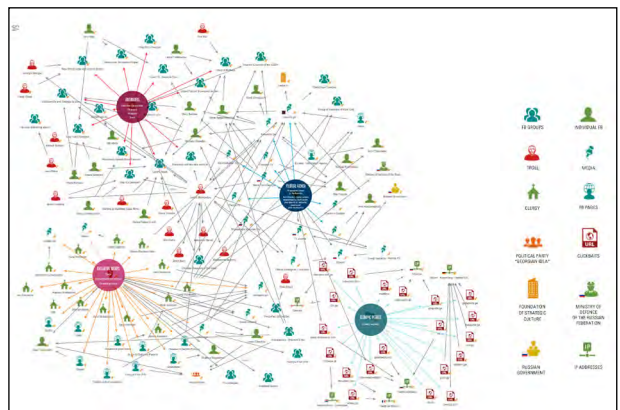
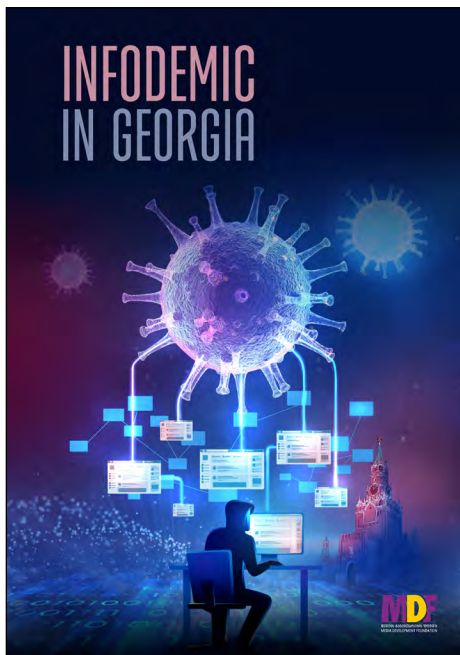
3. MAPPING HATE SPEECH AND ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA

For six years now, the Media Development Foundation (MDF) has been publishing annual reports aimed at analyzing the discourse of [hate speech](#) and [anti-Western propaganda](#) and examining their sources.



4. INFODEMIC

In 2021, the Media Development Foundation published a special report on the [infodemic](#). Reflecting the 2020 data, the report identifies disinformation narratives against the pandemic and maps the actors behind them.



5. CONFLICT REPORTING — IN AZERBAIJANI- AND ARMENIAN-LANGUAGE REGIONAL MEDIA AND OTHER MEDIA OUTLETS

In partnership with Internews, in 2021, the Media Development Foundation started monitoring [conflict reporting](#) by regional minority language media in Georgia. The [interim report](#) reflecting the results of the monitoring of Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian language regional media outlets was published in 2021.



6. RUSSIAN AND CHINESE INFLUENCES IN GEORGIA — 2021 UPDATE

In partnership with the Prague-based European Values Center for Security Policy (EVC) and NGOs working in Georgia (Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab), Civic Idea (CI), Georgian Reforms Associates (GRASS)), in 2021, the Media Development Foundation prepared an update report regarding the [Russian and Chinese influence in Georgia](#).



7. STUDY OF FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY OF MEDIA AND ADVERTISEMENT POLICY

The Media Development Foundation has released a new report on the [financial transparency of media](#) in 2021, which studies the financial sustainability of the media, including the practice of redistributing budgetary contracts and funding of anti-Western media.

In addition, as part of the ‘Open Information Partnership’ research project in 2021, together with 5 countries, the Media Development Foundation participated in a study aimed to identify Georgian companies whose ads were advertised on Russian propaganda platforms through [Google ads](#).



II. MEDIA LITERACY

In 2021, the Media Development Foundation (MDF) carried out the following activities in terms of media literacy:

1. Research
2. Trainings
3. Development of media literacy resources and strengthening the capacity of the educational sector and academia.
4. Promotion of media literacy

Target groups of the media literacy program for 2021 were as follows:

1. The youth
2. School and university teachers (Academia)
3. General public

1. RESEARCH

In 2021, MDF joined the initiative of the Latvian organization Baltic Center for Media Excellence, which entailed mapping the media literacy sector in Georgia, Latvia, Moldova and Ukraine. Carried out by four organizations – the Baltic Center for Media Excellence (Latvia), the Media Development Foundation (Georgia), the Center for Independent Journalists (Moldova) and the Ukrainian Institute of Media and Communication – the [study](#) addresses both policy issues and challenges in implementing media literacy programs. Recommendations developed during the research were presented and discussed at an international conference with representatives of the parliaments and civil society of the respective countries.



The presentation of the [report](#) on Georgia and the discussion on relevant recommendations included representatives of the Parliament, the Regulatory Commission (GNCC), the non-governmental sector and the diplomatic corps, during which long-term challenges related to the implementation of media literacy policy have also been identified.



2. MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAMS FOR YOUNGSTERS

In 2021, the Media Development Foundation has implemented two media literacy programs specifically for the youth:

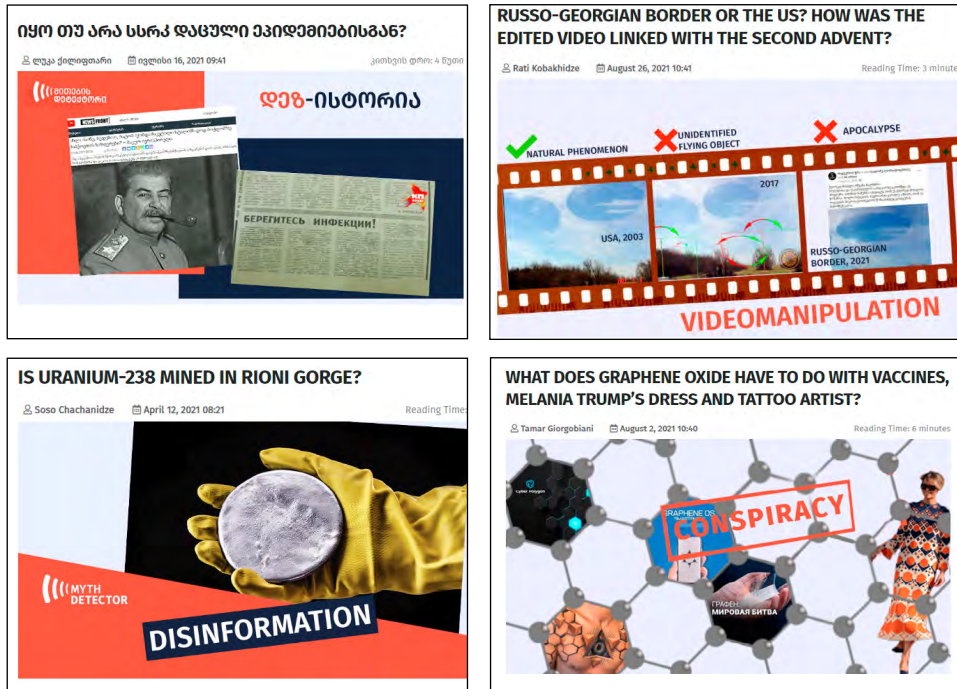
1. “Myth Detector Lab” – intensive 3.5-month Sunday course for youngsters
2. “Measure the truth!” Regional trainings for the youth

1.1. “MYTH DETECTOR LAB”

“Myth Detector Laboratory” was established in 2017 on the basis of MDF’s fact-checking portal www.mythdetector.ge in partnership with the Deutsche Welle Academy. The project has been successfully carried out for the sixth year in a row, under which more than 200 young people have already completed the media literacy course. In 2021, the program had 42 graduates from Tbilisi, Adjara, Imereti, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Shida Kartli.

The course is based on active teaching methods and aims to equip young people with critical thinking and the ability to verify false information/visuals through OSINT. In addition to providing theoretical knowledge, the course also entails an internship at the editorial office of “Myth Detector”, during which, only in 2021, program graduates have prepared 95 articles, some of which were published on the platforms of EUvsDisinfo and the Pointer Institute and the #Coronavirus Facts Alliance.

The articles prepared by the program graduates covered topics such as the [global pandemic](#), [history](#), [mining](#), [video manipulations](#), etc.




During the 5 years since the launch of the program, students have prepared a total of 451 articles.

SUCCESS STORIES. One of the indicators for measuring the success of “Myth Detector Lab” is the employment of the program’s graduates. Program’s alumni are employed in a number of organizations in the field of disinformation research and media literacy, including the Media Development Foundation:



MARIAM TALAKHADZE
2019 ALUMNA

“In the process of fact-checking and debunking fake news, I regularly use verifying tools that I’ve learned while I was a student at Myth Lab. The program also helped me to strengthen skills like critical thinking, working on open sources, researching, and academic writing.”



DAVIT ROBAKIDZE
2021 ALUMNUS

“Myth Detector served as the main catalyst for my interest in media literacy, while the practical knowledge acquired through the course now serves as my primary weapon in the everyday fight against disinformation.”



ANI KISTAURI
2018 ALUMNA

“Myth Detector Laboratory happened to be a career-defining project for me. It helped me to develop fact-checking skills and gave me the chance to guide others in the process of differentiating false news and propaganda from the real facts and people.”



NIKA SHEKELADZE
2019 ALUMNUS

“Since I joined the MDF team, I have been actively employing the expertise obtained via Mythlab in my everyday tasks and research.”

1.2. REGIONAL TRAININGS FOR THE YOUTH

Since 2019, with the support of the US Embassy, the Media Development Foundation has been conducting a series of trainings “Measure the Truth!” Within the framework of the program, in 2021, MDF trained 309 young people in media literacy. In 2021, In addition to online trainings, MDF conducted in-person trainings in 10 cities (Kutaisi, Batumi, Jvari, Akhaltsikhe, Telavi, Tkibuli, Ambrolauri, Khulo, Gori, Tbilisi) and 2 villages (Nigvzara, Eshtia). A total of 720 young people participated in the training since the beginning of the program.



A series of [videos clips](#) has been prepared, in which the training participants share their experiences with others:

MARIAM AMBROLADZE
PARTICIPANT OF THE MEDIA LITERACY TRAINING FROM TKIBULI

“One should not form an opinion on a certain topic based on a single source. It is necessary to check the text and the visuals and pay attention to the logos and URLs of the media.”



NINO TABATADZE
PARTICIPANT OF THE MEDIA LITERACY TRAINING
FROM VILLAGE NIGVZARI

“I often came across false information, which I thought was true, and then I found out that it was, in fact, false. I think I have learned so much today that it will not happen to me in the future. I will pay attention to how reliable the page or profile is.”



TAHIRA MAKARADZE
PARTICIPANT OF THE MEDIA LITERACY TRAINING
FROM BATUMI

“I started using Facebook a while ago and then I did not know what trolls were. After this training, I think I will be able to defeat many trolls.”

3. DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA LITERACY RESOURCES AND STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR AND ACADEMIA

The Media Development Foundation has close working partnerships with universities and schools across Georgia to train teachers as well as to strengthen their capacity by providing various teaching resources.

In 2019, a course “Teaching Media Literacy in Schools” was introduced at Ilia State University, which is being offered to the participants of the teachers preparation program. In 2021, the course was completed by 23 students, and a total of 76 students since the start of the program.

In 2021, university lecturers and teachers, as well as representatives of professional organizations, were trained on how to integrate new information verification tools and media literacy competencies into curricula. 14 representatives from 8 universities and 1 professional organization took part in the training.



THE TEXTBOOK. In 2021, the Media Development Foundation translated and published the UNESCO textbook “Journalism, ‘False News’ and Disinformation” in Georgian. The textbook, which has been translated into 29 languages, is available in Georgian in both [MDF](#) and [UNESCO](#) e-libraries and is integrated into the curriculum of higher education institutions.



GAMES. In order to promote interactive learning, the Media Development Foundation continued to create online games and quizzes in 2021 as well. Dr Fake – the winner of the international hackathon was especially popular.

In 2021, a number of quizzes on infodemic, gender, satire and video manipulation were created, which are available on our media literacy resources website (www.millab.ge).



4. PROMOTION OF MEDIA LITERACY

The slogan of the Media Literacy Campaign of 2021 is the words of Ilia Tchavtchavadze “Explore, Dig Deeper!”. Ilia Chavchavadze’s words from the polemical letters, which date back to 1887, emphasize the importance of critical thinking, which is one of the foundations of media literacy. The Media Development Foundation also produced an informative [video](#) clip on the subject, starring US Deputy Chief of Mission Rian Harris.

“Explore, if possible and circumstances permit, dig deeper, verify, and only when the opinion of an authority is proven correct, take it as truth and as such, turn others’ discoveries and legacy into your belief.” – ILIA CHAVCHAVADZE, *polemical letters “Life and Law,” 1887.*

MIL FORUM. To promote media literacy, the Media Development Foundation runs the annual Media Literacy Forum in Georgia and joins UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Week.

Within the framework of UNESCO’s Media and Information Literacy Week, #GlobalMILWeek2021, the MDF MIL forum named the most media literate youngster of the year, who was selected through a blogging competition.

Nino Maghradze became the most media literate youngster of 2021. She is from the village of Vakhani of the Kharagauli municipality and is currently pursuing her studies student at the English-language bachelor’s program at ISET.

“Disinformation is a virus that infects the human mind, and weakens its immunity against dubious information. However, critical thinking is the antibody that allows us to combat the disinformation with factual accuracy,” – wrote NINO in her winning [blog](#).



The Regional Media Literacy Forum was held in Kvareli in 2021 and was attended by US Ambassador Kelly Degnan.

“I have worked in many countries, but in Georgia, because of your neighbours, I see a lot of disinformation.”
– **Noted KELLY DEGNAN at the Media Literacy Forum in Kvareli.**



Forum participants had the opportunity to engage in media literacy games and workshops.



In 2021, youngsters from Pankisi also had the opportunity to participate in online games. In addition to the training, an event organized by UNICEF, which was also attended by representatives of diplomatic missions, included an exhibition of online media literacy games for youngsters.





PROMOTING THE GAME – DR. FAKE. In order to promote its new media literacy game, the Media Development Foundation launched a campaign in social and traditional media. Prepared [promo](#) videos were distributed on social media, while MDF visited the morning shows of Mtavari and Formula TVs, introducing the concept of the game to a wide audience, where it is necessary to defeat Dr. Fake and his 4 minions – Deepfake, Troll, Clone and Fisher – to save the media literacy city. Within the framework of the TV visits, MDF organized a mini-competition for the audience and presented the winners with commemorative prizes.





SALOME TORADZE, a high school student from Kutaisi, was the first one to distinguish an authentic photo from an altered one.



KETI MACHARASHVILI, a student from Tbilisi, was the first one to recognize a blogger generated by artificial intelligence.

MEDIA LITERACY VIDEO CLIPS. To raise awareness on media literacy issues, MDF produced a number of social clips in 2021, which were disseminated through national channels and social media as part of the campaign. In addition to critical thinking, the clips show the audience how to use the mobile app to verify [fake photos](#) and inform them about [Facebook's fact-checking program](#).

website credibility



#5STEOPS FOR MEDIA LITERACY is another successful product of the Media Development Foundation’s Social Media Campaign, in which Myth Detector fact-checkers and Georgian influencers have recorded joint videos on topics such as:

Video manipulation;

1. [Website credibility](#);
2. [Identifying internet trolls](#);
3. [Facebook’s fact-checking program and partnership with Myth Detector](#).



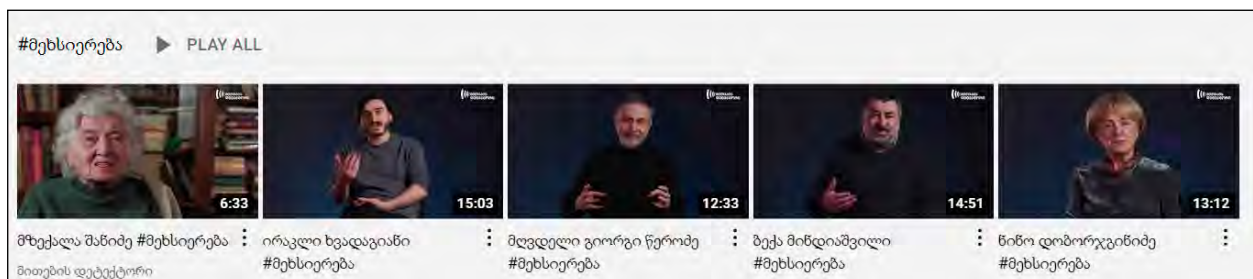
#FACEBOOK VS FAKEBOOK. The Media Development Foundation has created a new mini-series for the viewers of PalitraVideo.ge and the subscribers of the “Myth Detector” Facebook page.

TV hosts Baia Dvalishvili and Sandro Gabisonia help the viewers of “Facebook VS FAKEbook” to navigate through the informational labyrinths. MDF implements the project with the financial support of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Zinc Network. In 2021, [4 episodes](#) have been offered to the viewers.



#MEMORY. As a countermeasure to the Kremlin’s disinformation narratives around identity issues and historical memory, and with the aim to raise public awareness, the Media Development Foundation, with the support of the Open Information Partnership and Zinc Network, produced a series of video blogs named #Memory, entailing the following episodes:

1. **SHARED VALUES** – The fight of Ilia Chavchavadze’s generation to put Georgia on the path of progress and development – Linguist [Mzekala Shanidze](#)’s vlog;
2. **ANTI-RELIGION POLICIES OF THE SOVIET UNION** – A vlog by [Irakli Khvadagiani](#), a researcher at the Soviet Past Research Laboratory (SovLab);
3. **THE SOVIET UNION’S ATTEMPTS TO ERASE HISTORICAL MEMORY** – Ilia Chavchavadze and the Society for Spreading Literacy among Georgians, A vlog by Prof. [Nino Doborjginidze](#), Rector of Ilia State University;
4. **ORTHODOX CLERGYMEN REPRESS BY THE SOVIET UNION** – priest [Giorgi Tserodze](#)’s vlog;
5. **THE FIGHT FOR THE AUTOCEPHALY OF THE GEORGIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH** – the history of Kirion II – theologian [Beka Mindiashvili](#)’s vlog.



III. ADVOCACY AND JOURNALISTIC PROGRAMS

1. IDENTIFYING DISCREDITATION CAMPAIGNS AND FALSE INFORMATION AGAINST JOURNALISTS

The Media Development Foundation (MDF) systematically investigates ongoing cyber-attacks and targeted discreditation campaigns against journalists. In 2021, MDF has uncovered a number of discreditation campaigns pursued by anonymous pages and fake accounts related to the professional activities of journalists, involving both pro-governmental accounts and anti-liberal violent groups:

- The discreditation campaign against [TV Pirveli](#) was linked to the airing of a secret recording by the channel, which allegedly showed government officials and individuals linked to the ruling party.
- The second case was related to the coordinated discreditation campaign and the spread of disinformation against TV Pirveli and the deceased cameraman [Aleksandre Lashkarava](#), who was beaten by violent groups in an anti-Pride rally in Tbilisi before his death. In both cases, the discreditation campaign involved the creation of new Facebook pages and government accounts, some of which were deleted by Facebook.



2. ADVOCATING MINORITY SELF-REGULATION

For the purpose of establishing a standard for professional and ethical coverage, the Media Development Foundation has won two cases initiated at the Charter of Journalistic Ethics in 2021, one involving [xenophobia](#) against ethnic Azerbaijanis and the other dealing with the [false treatment](#) of the coronavirus pandemic. In order to advocate for the interests of Muslim groups, together with the member organizations (GDI, TDI, IDSD) of the civic platform "No to Phobia!", the Media Development Foundation has also appealed to the self-regulatory body of Imedi TV.



THE GEORGIAN CHARTER OF JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

3. TRAININGS AND TEACHING RESOURCES FOR JOURNALISTS AND ACADEMIA

In the framework of the Hedayah Foundation and the EU-supported project “Prevention of and Responding to Radicalizing Narratives in Georgia”, the Media Development Foundation carried out the following activities on terrorism and diversity coverage for journalists and students, as well as the academia:

1. **FOR THE ACADEMIA:** Two curricula have been developed: 1) Covering violent extremism and terrorism, and 2) coverage of diversity; Two simulation modules on terrorism coverage that have been integrated into the media school curricula of various universities. Supporting materials on terrorism coverage were translated for university lecturers.
2. **FOR JOURNALISTS AND ACADEMIA:** A handbook on “How (not) to cover diversity” was developed to teach inclusive coverage and distributed to university media schools and participating journalists and students.
3. **FOR JOURNALISTS:** Journalists from national and regional media, as well as students (20 journalists, 6 students) were trained in reporting terrorism, led by Pilar Requena, International Investigative Reporter and Professor of International Relations.
4. **COMPETITION FOR JOURNALISTS:** MDF has carried out a competition on covering diversity issues, encompassing 28 journalists, with a jury identifying 10 winners whose papers were covered by both national and regional media. Among the winners were journalists Channel 9 of Akhaltsikhe (1, 2), [Mtavari Arkhi](#), [Civil.ge](#), [On.ge](#) (1, 2, 3), [Publika](#), [GuriaNews](#) and [qvemoqartli.ge](#).



4. EASTERN PARTNERSHIP MEDIA HUB

The Media Development Foundation (MDF), in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), has established the EaP Media Hub to enhance professional connections among journalists from Eastern Partnership countries.

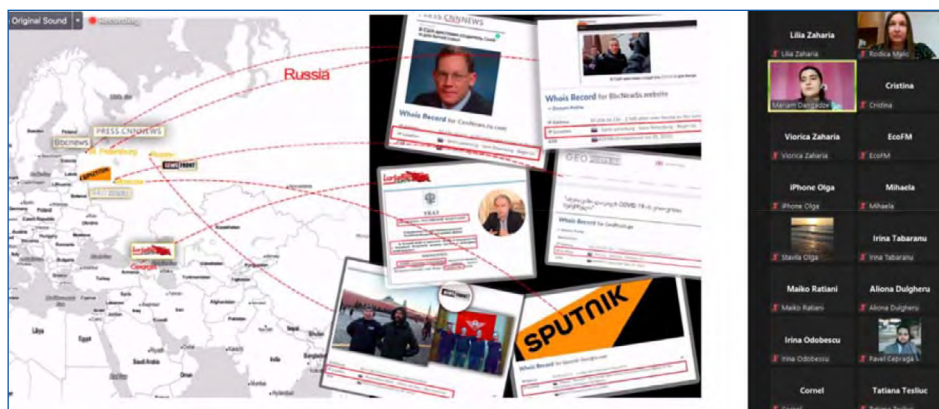
Within the framework of the hub, journalists from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were invited to a seminar aimed at highlighting common topics of regional relevance and collaborating on a joint journalistic product.

The project also entailed a competition, under which the jury selected [four media projects](#) from 17 EaP Media Hub bids. The projects were jointly prepared by journalists from EaP countries and covered diverse topics such as US labs, anti-vaccination movements, fake Covid passports, and the new 3 + 3 regional format.



5. TRAININGS FOR JOURNALISTS FROM MOLDOVA

The Media Development Foundation has also conducted trainings for Moldovan journalists in verifying false information. At an [event](#) organized by the Moldovan Association of Independent Press, training participants explored ways to verify information with open-source intelligence (OSINT).



IV. PUBLICATIONS AND REFERENCES

In 2021, the Media Development Foundation published a total of 12 publications, 4 of them in collaboration with partner organizations. One of the publications is a translation of UNESCO’s manual on the topic of false information, available in 29 languages, including Georgian, in the digital library of UNESCO; One is a manual textbook developed by MDF on the topic of covering diversity issues.

MDF’S ANNUAL THEMATIC REPORTS:

1. Anti-Western Propaganda – 2020
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/207>
2. Hate Speech – 2020
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/219>
3. Financial Transparency of Media – 2020
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/215>

VARIOUS THEMATIC REPORTS:

4. Infodemic in Georgia – 2020
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/201>
5. How Georgian Companies Advertise on Kremlin Propaganda Media Platforms through Google Ads
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/203>
6. Conflict reporting – in Azerbaijani- and Armenian-language regional media and other media outlets
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/213>

TRANSLATIONS AND TEXTBOOKS:

7. Journalism, Fake News and Disinformation
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/geo/view-library/199>
8. How (not) to Report Diversity
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/geo/view-library/205>



JOINT PUBLICATIONS WITH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS:

9. Mapping Research: Comparing Foreign Influence in Georgia
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/197>
10. Media Literacy Sector Mapping in Georgia, Latvia, Moldova and Ukraine – Georgia Country Report, 2021
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/217>
11. Media Pogrom: Tbilisi, 5-6 July 2021
<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/geo/view-library/209>
12. Anti-Western Narratives and Actors Around Nika Melia’s Arrest and Discrediting Campaign on Facebook
<https://mythdetector.ge/en/anti-western-narratives-and-actors-around-nika-melia-s-arrest-and-discrediting-campaign-on-facebook/>



REFERENCES IN INTERNATIONAL REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS:

Publications of the Media Development Foundation (MDF) have been cited in a number of international reports and publications, including:

1. U.S State Department: “Contaminated Trust: Public Health Disinformation and Its Societal Impacts in Georgia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine” – <https://bit.ly/37OhWdq>;
2. U.S State Department: “2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Georgia” <https://bit.ly/3PmuzwN>;
3. NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence: “Georgia’s Information Environment through the Lens of Russia’s Influence” – <https://bit.ly/3Ecwe3P>;
4. European Parliament’s Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union: “The misuse of social media platforms and other communication channels by authoritarian regimes: Lessons learned” <https://bit.ly/37Rw6KW>;
5. Internews, GEORGIA An Information Ecosystem Assessment, 2021 <https://bit.ly/3awwEaQ>;
6. Ian Kelly and David J. Kramer, “A Country on the Verge: The Case for Supporting Georgia”, German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2021; <https://bit.ly/3RrTYHf>;
7. International Republican Institute (IRI), “Election Report of the IRI Technical Election Assessment Mission to Georgia”, 2021 <https://bit.ly/3yw7GQQ>;
8. Lisa Clifford, Ethical Journalism Network, 2021 <https://bit.ly/3AMaIZp>.

V. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Media Development Foundation (MDF) is actively involved in the international cooperation of various formats. MDF became a [member](#) of the International Steering Committee (ISC) of the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Alliance, as well as a member of the Deutsche Welle Akademie Media and Information Literacy Network ([MILEN](#)), a member of the Open Information Partnership ([OIP](#)), and is a [verified signatory](#) of the Poynter Institute’s International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN). Since 2020, MDF has been working with [Meta](#) in the framework of [Facebook’s third-party fact-check-](#)



[ing program](#). MDF is a partner of [EUvsDisinfo](#), a flagship project of the European External Action Service’s East StratCom Task Force. In 2021, MDF started cooperating with the American organization [The Critical Mass](#), and for years now, MDF has been cooperating with the [US Global Media Agency](#), Latvian organization [Baltic Center for Media Excellence](#) and other partners.

“THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO DEBUNK FAKE NEWS”

In 2021, the executive director of MDF, Tamar Kintsurashvili, participated in a roundtable discussion organized by the MILEN network on the topic: “[The use of artificial intelligence to debunk fake news](#)”. In addition to [MILEN](#) members, representatives of the Deutsche Welle Akademie, London School of Economics (LSE), Ghana’s fact-checking organization, participated in the event.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO DEBUNK FAKE NEWS

 JOCHEN SPANGENBERG <small>DEPUTY HEAD, RESEARCH & COOPERATION PROJECTS, DEUTSCHE WELLE</small>	 TAMAR KINTSURASHVILI <small>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MEDIA DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, FOUNDING MEMBER OF MILEN</small>
 RABIU ALHASSAN <small>DIRECTOR & MANAGING EDITOR AT GHANAFACT, GHANA'S INDEPENDENT FACT-CHECKING PLATFORM</small>	 CHARLIE BECKETT <small>HEAD OF THE POLIS, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, JOURNALISM AND AI RESEARCH PROJECT</small>
 NAGLAA ELEMARY <small>MEDIA EXPERT, HEAD OF RESEARCH CENTER, BRITISH UNIVERSITY IN EGYPT, FOUNDING MEMBER OF MILEN</small>	<div style="text-align: right;">  OCT 30TH  12:00 UTC </div> <p style="font-size: small;">MODERATOR: ALEXANDRE AMARAL REGISTER TO ATTEND: LIVESTREAM @MILENNETWORK</p>





CONTAMINATED TRUST: PUBLIC HEALTH DISINFORMATION AND ITS SOCIETAL IMPACTS IN GEORGIA

In 2021, together with the American organization The Critical Mass (TCM), MDF hosted a joint event – [“Contaminated Trust: Public Health Disinformation and its Societal Impacts in Georgia.”](#) The event entailed the presentation of the main findings of the TCM report on the impact of Russian disinformation on public health, and together with representatives of the Georgian health sector and disinformation experts, it hosted the head of Facebook’s European fact-checking program, Sophie Eyears, participated, who discussed Facebook’s policies in the fight against the pandemic.



DISRUPTION NETWORK LAB

In 2021, two discussion panels organized by the German organization Disruption Network Lab, [“Weaponized Disinformation in Regions of Hot and Cold Conflict”](#) and [“Disinformation is a Virus – Fake News and the Pandemic,”](#) were joined by Tamar Kintsurashvili, the executive director of the Media Development Foundation, and Keti Khutsishvili, the deputy editor-in-chief of “Myth Detector.”



ARIJ21 AND THE TUNIS INNOVATION IN POLITICS FORUM

In 2021, Tamar Kintsurashvili, the Executive Director of MDF, participated in the annual international forum “Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism” at [#ARIJ21](#), as well as in the [Tunis Innovation in Politics Forum](#).



#GLOBALMILWEEK



Within the framework of #GlobalMIL-Week, Myth Detector researcher Mariam Dangadze and media literacy program graduate Tako Chkhartishvili led the [online discussion](#) organized by the MILEN network and discussed the conspiracy film “Plandemic” with students from different countries.

OTHER INTERNATIONAL EVENTS:

1. [WBIMLC 2021](#) Western Balkans Information and Media Literacy Conference;
2. Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation: [Disinformation in the Black Sea Region](#);
3. [ICE – Institute for Central Europe](#): “Propaganda tools of Russian actors on social networks – how to recognize them and how to defend them?”;
4. [Slovak Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense](#): Countering disinformation and malign foreign influence operations;
5. Georgian Internet Governance Forum ([GeolGF 2021](#)): Disinformation: Challenges in the Georgian Digital Space;
6. [Digital Communication Network](#): Serious Games Against Disinformation: Armenian and Georgian Games;
7. Online Discussion: [Electoral Discourse ahead of Georgia’s Local Elections](#), organized by ISFED;
8. [European Values Center for Security Policy](#): The Current State of Play in Georgia and the International Consequences.

VI. DONORS AND PARTNERS

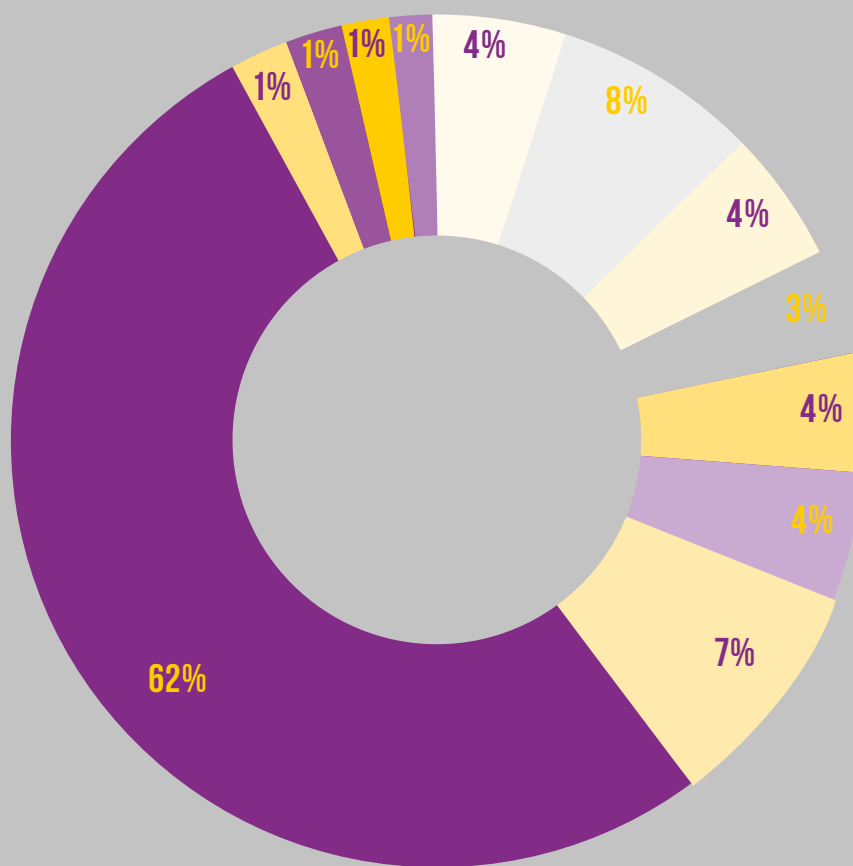




VII. FINANCIAL REPORT 2021

The total revenue of the Organization in 2021 amounted to 544,448.36 €, of which 38% was from grants, and 62% was from other contracts.

BREAKDOWN OF SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR 2021 YEAR



DW US EMBASSY INTERNEWS UNAG HEDAYAH ESN ZINC FACEBOOK EVROPSKE HODNOTY Z.S. (European Values) BALTIJAS-MELNAS VIESOJI ISTAIGA ADENAUER

For more information about the annual financial report, please visit [the link](#).

VIII. FUTURE PLANS

In 2022, the Media Development Foundation will continue working toward achieving the organization's primary aims and objectives. In particular, MDF plans the following:

- Expanding the target groups of MDF's media literacy programs and working more closely with schools and academia to strengthen societal resilience;
- continuing working with youngsters and creating formats that will further amplify media literacy knowledge and skills;
- Developing our fact-checking platform further and increasing access to it using different communication formats;
- Developing new projects that will contribute to the development of gender studies and enhance the sensitivity of journalists to these topics;
- Promoting the professional development of the media in the fight against disinformation by enhancing their capacities;
- Working together with international partners on joint projects that will be focused on community resilience and the professional development of the media;
- Preparing new studies and supporting learning resources for academia and various actors;
- Contributing to information integrity and the active involvement of informed citizens in the democratic processes.

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