

# Towards a Global Strategy for Media and Information Literacy

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*This article describes the recent activity of the Gabinete de Comunicación y Educación (Communication and Education Research Group) in cooperation with the UNESCO-UNAOC International University Network on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID University Network). Some of these activities were implemented while the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) served as Chair of the MILID University Network. In this context, the article describes the recent research efforts completed in 2014 by describing the outcomes of two major European projects EMEDUS – European Media Literacy Education Study and FilmEd – Film Education in Europe: Showing Films and other audio-visual content in European Schools – Obstacles and Best Practices. It also gives a snapshot of UAB's strategy for the period 2013/2014 which aimed to: a) Support efforts to unify globally the actions being pursued among researchers, universities, organizations and other stakeholders through the creation of different events and the outlines of common work paths and b) Contribute to the transmission of MIL among students for their professional development and the fostering of intercultural dialogue among them.*

**Keywords:** media and information literacy, EMEDUS, FilmED, MIL observatory, MIL global strategy

## Introduction

The Communication and Education Research Group (*Gabinete de Comunicación y Educación*)<sup>1</sup> was constituted in 1994 and belongs to the department of Journalism and Communication Sciences at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). The members are specialized in research, development and scientific transfer related to media and information literacy (MIL). Major projects have been granted to the group by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, Sport and Education, and the European Commission and their work has been recognized by the Government of Catalonia (*Generalitat de Catalunya*). Their aim is

to encourage research on communication and education by studying the integration of new communication technologies and development of MIL pedagogical methodologies into society.

## European Research Projects – the Five Things You Should Know about EMEDUS and FilmEd

### EMEDUS – European Media Literacy Education Study<sup>2</sup>

1. Policy recommendations: EMEDUS proposes national educational policies after analyzing the areas formal education, informal education and disadvantaged groups of 27 member states.
2. Overview reports: Individual country reports have been published, which explore the actual inclusion of MIL in each of the states in relation with their educational policies.
3. Databases on media literacy: Research has also advanced in the exploration and gathering of data composed of organizations and institutions, literature related to media literacy, international and national experts, and audio-visual records of the EMEDUS research.
4. Final conference: First European Media and Information Literacy Forum in Paris.
5. MIL observatory launch: European Media and Information Literacy Observatory (EMILO).

These activities were funded with the support of the European Commission. The project was coordinated by the Autonomous University of Barcelona with the following partners: European Association for Viewers' Interest (EAVI) in Belgium, Minho University in Portugal, Institute for Educational Research and Development (OFI) in Hungary, the Institute for Political, Social and Economic studies (EURISPES) in Italy, and the School of Communication and Media and Pedagogical University of Krakow in Poland.

### FilmEd – Showing Films and Other Audio-Visual Content in European Schools – Obstacles and Best Practices<sup>3</sup>

1. Policy recommendations: FilmEd supports the European Commission within the context of film literacy policies by identifying the existing situation concerning the use of audio-visual content in primary and secondary schools.
2. Overwiev of the report: The report reflects on film literacy pedagogical practices: the acquisition of audio-visual media production and creativity

skills, the creation of young European audiences and the educational value of European heritage film. The study maps current copyright policies in each of the countries, ensuring reliable data on the situation of the educational use of films from the perspective of both consumers and creators of content.

3. Methodology: FilmEd provides statistical evidence from a survey of 6,000 teachers and in-depth consultation with experts and stakeholders. National analysis was carried in each member country of the European Union about the pedagogical use of audiovisual-content in schools. The following factors were considered: technology and infrastructures, content, intellectual property right use, and pedagogical activity.
4. Databases: FilmEd reports on good practices and initiatives that have been implemented in different European countries within the field, considering three angles: the educational, the legal, and the relationship with the film industry.
5. Conference: FilmEd Learning Experiences Seminar in Barcelona. Different stakeholders were gathered to put in common film literacy initiatives.

The study was carried out among the 28 Member States of the European Union. In addition, the European Economic Area Member States and Switzerland component of the study was undertaken by a Consortium composed by the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the European Think Tank on Film and Film Policy (Denmark), CUMEDIAE – Culture and Media Agency and Europe (Belgium) – and AEDE, the European Association of Teachers (Belgium).

## A Global Strategy for MIL – the Path to the Launch of a MIL Observatory

During 2014 the Communication and Education Research Group of the Autonomous University of Barcelona has organized and supported different events in order to unify globally the efforts being pursued among researchers, universities, organizations and other stakeholders.

### European Media and Information Literacy Forum<sup>4</sup> (Paris – May 2014)

The Forum was held on May 27 and 28, 2014 at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. This conference was funded by the European Commission and UNESCO within the Media Literacy Action. It registered approximately 350 participants from around 50 different countries, who attended the following 14 sessions: “New world, new literacies”, “Formal education: new curriculum”, “MIL and intercultural dialogue”, “Research and assessment on MIL”, “New action lines:

European project's recommendations", "Regulatory authorities and MIL", "Family, media and MIL", "MIL and policy implications", "The European context: Building the new media and information literacy paradigm", "Global Alliance for Partnership on Media and Information Literacy – GAPMIL", "Promoting film literacy", "Informal education, social inclusion and MIL", "Media industry and MIL", "Conclusions, adoption of Paris Declaration on MIL, and Launch of the European chapter of GAPMIL and Closing sessions".

The event ended with the adoption of the Paris Declaration<sup>5</sup> and served to encourage the creation of diverse collaborative platforms such as the European Chapter of the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL) and the European Media Information Literacy Observatory (EMILO).

#### **Global Alliance for Partnership on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL)<sup>6</sup>**

This initiative of UNESCO Communication and Information Sector was born during the Global Forum for Partnerships on MIL, Incorporating the International Conference on MIL and Intercultural Dialogue which was held from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2013 in Abuja (Nigeria). GAPMIL aims to promote cooperation among organizations, enterprises and associations in order to ensure access to media and information competences to all citizens.

#### **FilmEd Learning Experiences<sup>7</sup> (Barcelona – June 2014)**

This conference organized on 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014 gathered film education experts, industry professionals and international students at the Filmoteca de Catalunya in order to discuss and propose film literacy initiatives in Europe and pedagogical implementation of films in schools.

In the following sessions different themes related to the legal framework of copyright and the obstacles faced by schools to develop film literacy were debated: "Learning and teaching audiovisual language", "The place of cinema in European education", "Case studies: Presentation of experiences in Spain", "Case studies: Presentation of experiences in Europe", "School and cinema – literature, art, music, history", "Promoting film literacy in Europe", "FilmEd project presentation", "Discussion on copyright and licenses obstacles relating to film education" and "Film literacy and film industry".

#### **Latin American and Caribbean Media and Information Literacy Forum<sup>8</sup> (Mexico Distrito Federal – December 2014)**

This conference was held from December 10 to 11 in Mexico City. It was hosted by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (through TV UNAM) and the National Public Broadcasting System of Mexico, with the Autonomous University of Barcelona and UNESCO as co-organizer. More than 300 international

stakeholders, mainly from Latin American and Caribbean countries gathered at the Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco. They debated the assumption of new technologies among educational contexts in their countries. During the event the Mexico Declaration on MIL<sup>9</sup> was adopted and the Observatorio Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Alfabetización Mediática e Informacional (OLCAMI)<sup>10</sup> was lauched.

### European Media and Information Literacy Observatory (EMILO)<sup>11</sup>

EMILO aims to explore and systematize the European activity being achieved by organizations, experts and policy makers in the field of MIL. The research platform disseminates the exploration of the actual MIL policies in 27 European Countries (EMEDUS) and monitors different databases of recent publications, organizations and experts. Different Universities will build together a core of research to foster exchange and cooperation among different MIL actors in order to be a reference for policy-making.

## Educational Transmission of MIL

The Communication and Education Group has been offering professional development in the field of MIL during 21 years. Since 1994 international students from all around the world come to study MIL theory and practical methodologies in order to implement them at their home countries.

### Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID) Summer School<sup>12</sup>

The MILID Summer School is organized since 2013 during the first week of June and has as its main topic MIL and intercultural dialogue. Participation is open to all international students and counts on the yearly participation of the Arab Academy represented by Professor Samy Tayie from Cairo University.

Within the framework of the MILID Summer School students collaborate at the Young Journalists Platform<sup>13</sup> divided into groups of radio, online press and television production. It was created as a part of a UNESCO supported project that was connected to the second MILID Week celebration in Egypt in 2013. It aims to set up an intercultural network of young journalists and information specialists with alternative views and research approaches embedded in intercultural dialogue.

### Master's Degree in Communication and Education<sup>14</sup> (on-campus and online editions)

The classes highly rely on theory and practice through seminars, lectures and workshops, that encourage debate, critical and analytical thinking. The syllabus

is based on three areas: educational media and technology, knowledge society and media and digital society, and project management.

### Tahina-Can<sup>15</sup>

For 10 years the journalistic expedition Tahina-Can awakens cultural diversity awareness by implementing workshops about radio, television and photography among the participating students, which are selected for their outstanding performance in university subjects. The academic programme of the expedition involves cooperation and development activities, which allow them to discover and analyze media perspectives and cultural representations of the country they visit. Uzbekistan, Thailand, Morocco, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Dominican Republic and Mexico, are among the visited countries.

### Olympics on Cyberjournalism

A project developed in the Dominican Republic and Mexico, it aims to bring the concept of MIL to students from different universities. The initiatives simulates the structure of the Olympic Games, the different editions of this competition have provided theoretical and practical training to the students. The main objective is to enhance the participants' sensitivity towards a critical and qualitative use of: communication media, their messages, and the different collaborative platforms in the web. Under the project's framework, students had to create their own media and promote democratic values, train their critical thinking and ethical use of ICT.

## Recent Publications

The Communication and Education Research Group stands out for its dissemination of numerous reports and monographs, based on their research and projects. The following recent titles are related to MIL:

### Media Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue<sup>16</sup> (Ediciones Sehen)

This book presents a selection of texts discussed at conferences, seminars and reflexive sessions during the MILID Week 2012 and 2013. Each of these texts starts with the idea of MIL in relation with issues regarding strategy, debates and good practices.

### Media Literacy and New Humanism<sup>17</sup> (*Alfabetización Mediática y Nuevo Humanismo* – Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Editorial)

This book is the result of a seven-year collaboration between José Manuel Pérez Tornero (UAB, Spain) and Tapio Varis (University of Tampere, Finland), both are European Commission experts in digital literacy policies. The work is an

approach to media literacy in a holistic, critical and sociocultural approach. The authors formulate basic principles and point out an agenda to enhance the contribution of media literacy to intercultural dialogue.

**Media Literacy and the General Law on Audiovisual Communication in Spain<sup>18</sup> (*La Alfabetización mediática y la ley general de comunicación audiovisual en España* – Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Editorial)**

The book written by Juan Carlos Gavara and José Manuel Pérez Tornero presents a systematic study framed in the European legislation about the right to MIL in Spain exposed in the General Law on Audiovisual Communication (LGCA), promotes the right to education, active citizenship and participatory democracy. The reach of the law's development in the actual information society is decisive among economic, creative, culture, education and participatory issues.

**Technology Guide on Communication and Education for Teachers: Questions and Answers<sup>19</sup> (*Guía de Tecnología, Comunicación y Educación para profesores: Preguntas y Respuestas* – Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Editorial)**

The guide is a tool for teachers and researchers wishing to approach MIL from a theoretical and practical perspective. The book includes recommendations, explanations and reflections on the pedagogical use of Internet in and out of the classroom. It is presented as an everyday working tool for any teacher or researcher interested in the use of ICT at educational environments. The book was written by the students of the Communication and Education Master students under the guidance of José Manuel Pérez Tornero and Santiago Tejedor.

## Notes

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