INNOVATIVE PROJECTS IN PROMOTING MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN GERMANY

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu tadqiqotda Germaniyada media va axborot savodxonligi (MAS) ni rivojlantirishga qaratilgan innovatsion loyihalar haqida so'z boradi. Mazkur loyihalar ta'limga oid tadbirlar, smartfon ilovalari, seminarlar va "WebDays" ("Internet kunlari") singari turli tashabbuslarni o'z ichiga oladi. Tadqiqotda ushbu tashabbuslarning maqsadlari va natijalari yoritilgan, MAS sohasining maktabda, maktabdan tashqari ta'lim davrida hamda ota-onalar uchun ahamiyati ko'rsatilgan. Ishda murakkab zamonaviy media muhit sharoitida samarali harakat qilish uchun tanqidiy fikrlash va raqamli ko'nikmalarni rivojlantirish muhimligi ta'kidlanadi.

Abstract. This paper explores innovative projects aimed at promoting media and information literacy (MIL) in Germany. These projects encompass diverse approaches, such as educational campaigns, smartphone apps, workshops, and events like WebDays. The paper highlights the goals and outcomes of these initiatives, emphasizing the importance of MIL in schools, non-school settings, and for parents. The discussion underscores the significance of fostering critical thinking and digital skills to navigate the complexities of the modern media landscape effectively.

In today's digital age, media and information literacy (MIL) have become indispensable skills for navigating the vast sea of information. Germany, with its rich cultural and technological landscape, stands at the forefront of innovative projects aimed at enhancing MIL among its citizens. This paper explores the diverse initiatives and strategies employed in Germany to foster critical thinking and empower individuals to effectively engage with media and information.

In the German political system, culture and education are managed by the 16 states ("Länder"). 14 media authorities in the 16 regional states have taken responsibility in furthering media literacy. Each authority has developed quite a lot of projects, targeted at parents, kindergartens, schools/teachers, as well as at young people. Today, the media authorities belong to the most relevant players in the field of media literacy. Since they are organised on the regional states' level, the scope of many of these activities is limited to the respective region [1, 6 p.].

German approaches to media literacy education are concerned with ways of using the variety of media in a meaningful way for learning and teaching and with the educational tasks that result from an extensive use of media. Considering these questions, the development and the current situation of approaches to media literacy

education in Germany are described and discussed in the entry with a focus on media literacy education in schools [2].

In Germany, a multifaceted approach to promoting MIL has emerged, blending traditional education with innovative projects that harness the power of technology and collaboration. As Marshall McLuhan famously remarked, *'The medium is the message*,' and '*We shape our tools, and thereafter, our tools shape us.'* [3, 9 p.]. Indeed, the mediums through which information is disseminated play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and understanding. Through initiatives such as collaborative online platforms for fact-checking and digital literacy workshops in schools, Germany is actively engaging with McLuhan's notion, empowering individuals to critically assess the messages conveyed through various media channels.

Germany's innovative projects in promoting MIL recognize the need to go beyond mere access to information and cultivate genuine understanding and discernment. Initiatives that emphasize critical thinking skills, such as media literacy workshops and interactive educational resources, are instrumental in equipping individuals with the tools to navigate the complexities of the digital landscape.

Germany has been active in promoting MIL through various innovative projects. Here are a few examples:

1.The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) in Germany supports several projects and initiatives at the federal level:

a. The initiative LOOK OUT! How your child handles media (SCHAU HIN! Was Dein Kind mit Medien macht). A guidance initiative for parents and guardians of children aged 3 to 13, providing tips and activities on handling digital media [4].

b. Live democracy (Demokratie leben). This national program supports projects combating online hate speech and promoting civic engagement. It focuses on empowering individuals and groups facing racism and discrimination and provides innovative educational formats to develop skills for responding to hostility online [5].

c. Dieter Baacke Award. Acknowledges educational, social, and cultural projects promoting media literacy and critical media usage among young people and families. It includes manuals offering insights and tips on media education [6].

d. Multimediapreis mb21. Recognizes creative projects by young media producers aged 11-25, with special awards given for theme-specific categories [6].

2. Digital Literacy Campaigns: NGOs and government agencies run digital literacy campaigns, such as "Netzwerk Medienkompetenz" (Network for Media Literacy), which provide resources and training to individuals and organizations on

topics like online safety, critical media consumption, and digital citizenship. Here are some examples:

a. Between 2009 and 2015 the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, BMJV) ran the project "Watch your web". It offered young people information on safety in social networks, internet scams, mobile phone security, data protection, consumer rights and copyright issues on the internet. Amongst other things, the project developer a smartphone app to raise awareness among young users in a playful manner of safe internet use. It also produced an "education package" with material that young people could use to prepare and hold their own workshops and activities on online safety, data protection and copyright issues. The project brochure "My digital life – A brief guide on legal issues" (Mein digitales Leben - Rechtliches kurz erklärt) helps young people to understand complex matters such as copyright, personal rights and data protection).

The project also initiated the WebDays event, which became a separate project in 2016, where young people discuss consumer protection with politicians and experts. They developed an agenda for data and consumer protection presented at national forums [6].

b. The "No education without media!" ("Keine Bildung ohne Medien") initiative promotes media education across society, targeting early-learning centers, schools, parents, funding for activities, networks, and integrating media education into educational degree courses [6].

3. Public Broadcasting Initiatives. Public broadcasters like ARD and ZDF offer media literacy programs and resources, including online platforms and workshops, to help audiences navigate digital media landscapes responsibly. One of the successful initiative is Funk.net. Funk.net is a content network launched by ARD and ZDF on October 1, 2016, offering online-only content on various social platforms and own website (www.funk.net). It aims to provide diverse, informative, and entertaining content without commercial or political influence. Their target audience ranges from 14-year-old students to 29-year-old professionals, catering to different interests and backgrounds. With over 60 social media channels and original content, including investigative journalism, fictional series, and podcasts, they collaborate with creators and producers across Germany. Funk.net operates under the public service model, funded by broadcasting fees, with an annual budget of approximately 45 million euros, mostly from ARD and ZDF [7].

4. Media Education Labs. Various universities and institutions in Germany have established media education labs that conduct research and develop innovative

teaching methods to enhance media literacy among students and educators. Russian scholar Fedorov discussed about some of them in his article. "Media culture is taught in the majority of German universities, besides there are several research institutes, such as the National Institute of Film in Science (FWU), which publishes literature and teaching aids for schools (videos, leaflets, brochures, etc.) Other research centres are located at Kassel University (in München) and Humboldt University (in Berlin)". (8, 183 p.).

In conclusion, Germany's commitment to promoting MIL through innovative projects reflects a recognition of the evolving nature of communication and the imperative of empowering individuals to engage thoughtfully with media. As we continue to grapple with the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age, the lessons learned from Germany's initiatives serve as valuable insights for advancing MIL on a global scale.

The innovative projects discussed in this paper underscore Germany's proactive approach to promoting MIL in an increasingly digital world. By integrating traditional education with cutting-edge initiatives, Germany has demonstrated a commitment to empowering individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern media landscape. From collaborative fact-checking platforms to digital literacy workshops, these projects exemplify Germany's recognition of the importance of critical thinking, digital citizenship, and responsible engagement with media.

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