



MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN KAZAKHSTAN

Media and Information Literacy in Kazakhstan

MediaNet International Center for Journalism Public Foundation
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This document was prepared by MediaNet International Center for Journalism as a result of the analyses of open-source data, official requests to relevant ministries, and in-depth interviews with experts in media and information literacy from academia and civil society institutions.

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of UNESCO. They do not entail any obligations on the part of the Organization.

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MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN KAZAKHSTAN

As part of an initiative to study and promote media literacy in Kazakhstan, the International Center for Journalism MediaNet (hereinafter – MediaNet), in cooperation with the UNESCO Almaty Regional Office, conducted a **study of the media literacy ecosystem in the country**.

This comprehensive analysis includes:

- ▶ the mapping of key stakeholders;
- ▶ an overview of existing legislative and policy practices;
- ▶ an assessment of the current state of media literacy and recommendations for its further development.

The relevance of media education and the development of media and information literacy (hereinafter – MIL) is increasingly linked to issues of national security. In today's global information space, with the rapid development of new technologies, each citizen's personal safety faces new threats. Moreover, given the diversity and real-time nature of modern information flows, users may knowingly or unknowingly become active participants in the spread of disinformation, which can lead to serious consequences.

MIL should be implemented at the state level, integrated into both school and university curricula. Modern courses and teaching materials are essential, along with the development of methodological tools tailored for various age groups. It is also necessary to ensure the training and continuing professional development of teachers, university instructors, and trainers working with adult audiences.

STATE-LEVEL REGULATION OF MIL

This section is based on the official responses from government agencies. Accordingly, its content, as well as the quality, relevance, and evaluation of the described initiatives, are not those of the authors but of the respective ministries.

Currently, several ministries in Kazakhstan address media and information literacy at the national level through legislative and educational initiatives.

- ▶ **Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan.**

This Committee is responsible for ensuring the safety of children, including in the information space, and for improving students' digital literacy.

In 2022, the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan [On Education](#) was amended to include the concept of the “bullying of a child – systematic (two or more times) humiliating actions, harassment and/or intimidation, including with the aim of coercing the child to perform or refrain from performing an action, carried out publicly or using mass media and/or telecommunication networks (cyberbullying)” (clause 4-2 of Article 1).

Rules for the Prevention of Bullying Against Children were adopted, outlining the procedures for preventing and identifying bullying, and Rules for the Operation of the Psychological Service in Educational Institutions were introduced, providing algorithms for specialists working with children, parents, and teachers to promote students' psychological well-being.

Since the beginning of the academic year, Personal Safety Lessons have been introduced in

educational institutions at all levels. These lessons aim to build children's ability to navigate various life situations, including issues related to information security. Key topics include emergency contact numbers, how to safely decline interactions with strangers, cyberbullying and protection measures, building trust with parents, online threats and risks, and children's rights and responsibilities.

In the 2022-2023 academic year, the elective component of the standard curriculum for primary, lower secondary, and general secondary education included a course on Global Competencies for grades 5-11.

A key section of this course for grades 5-9 is Media and Financial Literacy.

► **The Ministry of Culture and Information** has implemented a series of initiatives designed to enhance citizens' media literacy, including:

- ▷ A special training plan for media professionals for 2020-2021;
- ▷ A special plan to improve media education quality for 2022-2023;
- ▷ A media literacy development plan for 2024;
- ▷ A media literacy and professional development plan for media professionals in 2025.

In 2022, the Ministry conducted a sociological study on media and information literacy in society. The study identified key issues in public MIL, the major threats faced by citizens, and MIL level across various social groups.

Based on the study, the Ministry, in cooperation with local authorities, NGOs, universities, and international organizations, has organized public educational activities (seminars, training sessions, quizzes, workshops, roundtables, etc.) focused on the detection of fake news, AI usage, cybersecurity, and other current topics.

A grant project was implemented for NGOs titled Improving the Effectiveness of Public Information Campaigns on Financial, Legal, Medical, Religious, and Digitalization Issues, reaching 1,200 individuals at the national and regional levels. (*Note: No detailed data or outcomes of the project were found in open sources.*)

In 2023, the Kazakhstan Institute of Public Development prepared an analytical report titled [Research on Children's Content in Kazakhstan](#). The report was aimed at experts in child-focused IT research, sociologists, psychologists, educators, and other specialists. The findings were used in developing protective measures for children on social media and to improve the mechanisms for protecting children's rights by authorized entities.

In 2024, the SynSana mobile app was developed to enhance media literacy. It includes four gamified modules: Education and Science, Legal Security Online, News Factory, and Fraud Prevention. The app was created by the [Kazakhstan Institute of Public Development](#) and is available on [App Store](#) and [Play Market](#).

As part of the 2025 Media Literacy and Media Professional Development Plan, a new university-level course on media literacy is planned for inclusion in the general education disciplines at institutions of higher and/or postgraduate education.

In 2020, the Ministry of Culture and Information initiated the [stopfake.kz](#) project to combat disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS REGULATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION AND DIGITAL SPACE IN KAZAKHSTAN

Title	Date	Official Summary
Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Personal Data and Their Protection	May 21, 2013	Regulates public relations in the field of personal data and defines the purpose, principles, and legal framework for the collection, processing, and protection of personal data.
Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan On Access to Information	November 16, 2015	Governs public relations arising from the exercise of the constitutional right to freely receive and disseminate information by any means not prohibited by law.
Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan On Informatization	November 24, 2015	Regulates public relations in informatization between government bodies, individuals, and legal entities, and governs ICT sector development and support.
Recommendations of the Information Security Committee on Cybersecurity Measures	2023	Provides cybersecurity recommendations and measures for technical data protection, radio monitoring, personal data security, and digital literacy enhancement.
Information Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan	March 20, 2023	Emphasizes critical thinking and the development of media and information literacy. Aims to ensure a high MIL level among citizens.
Law Amending Legislative Acts on Information Security and Digital Assets	December 11, 2023	Introduces changes to laws and codes related to information security threats and violations of personal data protection.
Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan On Mass Media	June 19, 2024	Regulates public relations in the field of mass media, establishes legal frameworks, and ensures constitutional rights to freedom of speech and creativity.

A separate note should be made regarding the [President of Kazakhstan's Address](#) of September 2, 2024, in which he emphasized the need for the government, together with financial regulators, to introduce educational programs on financial literacy and digital hygiene in schools and universities.

Also, starting September 1, 2025, schools in Kazakhstan will begin piloting a New National Educational Standard. Notably, elements of media and information literacy, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), will be integrated into school subjects. Full implementation of this standard is planned for 2026–2027.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

► United Nations (UN)

In 2021, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing the [Global Media and Information Literacy Week](#) (October 24–31), emphasizing the need for the dissemination of factual, timely, purposeful, clear, accessible, multilingual, and evidence-based information. Global MIL Week is held annually from October 24 to 31.

The resolution acknowledges that the significant digital divide and data inequality, both between and within countries, can be partially addressed by enhancing individuals' competencies in locating, accessing, and communicating information in the digital sphere.

In addition, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) offers a variety of educational activities related to MIL, including webinars, seminars, training sessions, and more, as part of its broader educational initiatives.

► United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

It was UNESCO that, in 2007, proposed the [comprehensive concept](#) of Media and Information Literacy (MIL). MIL encompasses all competencies related to both media literacy and information literacy.

According to UNESCO, MIL is a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and practices that enable individuals to access, analyze, critically evaluate, interpret, use, create, and disseminate information and media content using various tools and platforms, in a creative, lawful, and ethical manner.

MIL is an integral part of 21st-century skills, or so-called 'soft skills'.

In Central Asia, MIL promotion within UNESCO's mandate is implemented by the [UNESCO Almaty Regional Office](#) and the Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) in Moscow.

In 2024, UNESCO Almaty, in partnership with the Internet Association of Kazakhstan, [organized](#) a regional training for journalists and media organizations, aimed at integrating MIL practices into their work.

IITE has developed a [training program for educators](#) on MIL, as well as a Russian-language version of the new [MIL curriculum for teachers and learners](#) titled Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely.

In 2023, IITE conducted [a series of MIL training sessions for youth in Kazakhstan](#) commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

UNESCO remains one of the most significant and active actors in advancing MIL globally, regionally, and within Kazakhstan.

► International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN)

The International Fact-Checking Network was launched in 2015 at the Poynter Institute in Florida (USA) and unites some of the world's most reputable fact-checking organizations. It also develops professional standards for independent fact-checking. IFCN is a global leader in the fact-checking field, offering over 100 services worldwide. It facilitates global dialogue among fact-checkers through events such as IFCN Talks, Global Fact, and International Fact-Checking Day.

On September 24, 2020, IFCN adopted [the Charter of the International Fact-Checking Network](#), which serves as a foundational document for ethical and professional fact-checking. The network supports independent [verification](#) of content on major platforms, including Meta.

► European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFCSN)

The EFCSN is an association of European fact-checking organizations established in Paris in 2022. Like IFCN, it promotes fact-checking standards and best practices.

It also participates in independent verification programs, such as [the Third-Party Fact-Checking Program](#) (3PFC) implemented by Meta.

REPRESENTATIONS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN KAZAKHSTAN

► UNESCO Almaty Regional Office

The UNESCO Almaty Regional Office works within UNESCO's programmatic framework on MIL, adapting global MIL resources and approaches to the [local context of Kazakhstan](#).

► Internews Network Representative Office in Kazakhstan

The Central Asian [MediaCAMP](#) Program (2018–2023) was one of Internews' key regional projects, with one of its components focusing on enhancing media and information literacy among youth and adults, and building a more discerning community of information consumers and producers.

As part of MediaCAMP:

- Four “EduThons” (innovative MIL seminars) were organized.
- [The first MIL textbook in Kazakhstan](#) for grades 9–11(12) was supported, along with a teacher's guide in both Kazakh and Russian languages. (The project was implemented by MediaNet; see below.)
- Numerous seminars and training sessions were held for various target groups: journalists, teachers and school administrators, and NGO representatives.

In 2024, [the CAIIA project](#) (Central Asia Information Integrity and Accountability), implemented by Internews and partners including Zinc Network, focused on developing trustworthy, balanced information and preventing disinformation in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Key objectives included: preventing disinformation in Central Asia; training in fact-checking technologies; developing critical thinking skills among youth.

KAZAKHSTANI NGOS WORKING ON MIL DEVELOPMENT

► MediaNet International Center for Journalism

[Factcheck.kz](#) is the first and largest fact-checking project in Central Asia, operating since 2017. Since 2018, it has been a [certified member](#) of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), which brings together the world's most reputable fact-checking organizations. Since 2024, Factcheck.kz has participated in the Third-Party Fact-Checking Program (3PFC) by Meta, covering Facebook, Instagram, and Threads.

In addition to fact-checking, MediaNet has implemented several projects aimed at combating disinformation and propaganda, as well as promoting media and news literacy. Among its initiatives:

- [The first media literacy textbook](#) and [teacher's guide](#) for grades 9–11 in Central Asia (mentioned above),
- The [QLEVER.Asia](#) educational game platform (mobile games for media literacy training),
- The large-scale educational project [Factcheck Dive](#),
- The [Shyndyq](#) (“Truth”) podcast,

- ▶ The [MediaIQ](#) video explainer series,
- ▶ A [study](#) on vaccine-related disinformation,
- ▶ Various training and methodological [materials](#) on media literacy, hate speech and other related topics

▶ Youth Information Service of Kazakhstan (YISK / MISK)

Research:

- ▶ [Quantitative study](#) (2022): Impact of disinformation on youth in Kazakhstan.
- ▶ Qualitative study (2024): 60 expert interviews on disinformation in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

Development and delivery of fact-checking and anti-disinformation [training programs for youth](#). Training of trainers and implementation of sessions across 10 regions and 16 rural schools in Kazakhstan.

Despite state criticism of civil society organizations (CSOs), it is evident that CSOs – and especially NGOs – have played a critical role in the active development of MIL across multiple areas in Kazakhstan. However, due to various factors (described below), many of these efforts remain non-systematic.

Name	Online Source	Systematic Work	City / Region
Educational Institutions			
Almaty Management University (AlmaU)	#LikeButVerify campaign as part of TikTok's Safety Academy initiative	Occasional	Almaty
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, UNESCO Chair in Journalism and Communication	Academic and educational work on MIL	Regular	Almaty
Akhmet Baitursynuly Kostanay Regional University	Scientific, educational and research activities in the field of media literacy	Occasional	Kostanay
School Gymnasium No. 5, Almaty	Young Media Trainers School project	Regular	Almaty
The National Academy of Education named after Ybyrai Altynsarin	Development of MIL curricula and methodological recommendations	Occasional	Astana/Almaty
Non-Governmental Organizations			
Civil Alliance of Mangystau Region	Media literacy training sessions	Occasional	Aktau

Erkindik Kanaty Public Foundation	<i>Kazakhstan Without Censorship training on freedom of expression and digital rights with MIL components</i>	Occasional	Astana
Foundation for Information Support of Society Development	<i>Media Literacy for Teenagers course</i>	Occasional	Ust-Kamenogorsk
Internews Network Representative Office in Kazakhstan	<i>Regional program to develop a balanced information ecosystem</i>	Regular	Almaty
IREX in Kazakhstan	<i>Promotes MIL through educational programming</i>	Regular	Almaty
Kazakhstan Media Network	<i>Promotes MIL through training and cooperation with educational, NGO, and governmental institutions</i>	Regular	Almaty
Legal Media Center	<i>Media law course including MIL components</i>	Regular	Astana
Legal Policy Research Center (LPRC)	<i>Implementation and Development of Media Education in Kazakhstan Research</i>	Occasional	Almaty
MediaNet International Center for Journalism Public Foundation	<i>Development of teaching materials, training, fact-checking, and cooperation across sectors</i>	Regular	Almaty
Minber Center for Support of Journalists	<i>MIL and media ethics training for journalists, students, and activists</i>	Occasional	Almaty
TAUAN	<i>MIL training for various populations as part of the "Media Literacy Homes" project</i>	Regular	Pavlodar, Karaganda, Petropavlovsk
Tilshi Regional Media Center	<i>MIL training for journalists and activists</i>	Occasional	Aktobe
Youth Information Service of Kazakhstan – MISK	<i>Fact-checking training for youth in Kazakhstan and Central Asia</i>	Regular	Almaty

ASSESSMENT OF MIL DEVELOPMENT BY KAZAKHSTANI EXPERTS

Experts interviewed during the preparation of this study noted several challenges hindering the promotion of media and information literacy (MIL) in Kazakhstan. In particular, they identified issues with government regulation of educational programs in schools and universities – the current regulations significantly complicate the integration of MIL into the national education system.

Among other pressing concerns, experts highlighted the low level of public awareness: MIL is not perceived as an essential competency, especially in the regions. Many people do not realize the real dangers of disinformation and fake news, even against the backdrop of rapidly growing online fraud.

Access to high-quality educational resources on MIL remains limited, and the available resources are insufficient to engage a large audience. There is a notable lack of adapted and original materials in the Kazakh language, which is increasingly important given the growing Kazakh-speaking audience. Rural schools and libraries often lack access to digital resources and trained MIL instructors.

Experts also noted a disconnect between adult society and the knowledge and values being instilled in schools. Therefore, efforts must focus more on engaging adult audiences using the full range of online learning opportunities.

Another key issue is the shortage of educators with MIL expertise and modern teaching methods. Experts pointed out that it is difficult to engage current school teachers – particularly subject-specific teachers – because they often lack the time, motivation, or interest in learning and teaching this new topic.

Institutional and policy support is critical to the development of media literacy in Kazakhstan. This includes creating and implementing a national MIL strategy, mandating the inclusion of MIL in educational standards and curricula, and integrating MIL into the frameworks of general and higher education.

Civil society institutions, particularly NGOs, also face a lack of funding, resulting in fragmented and non-systematic efforts in the MIL field, which limits both reach and audience engagement. Experts recommend leveraging crowdfunding and alternative funding sources to address this gap. However, the primary financial responsibility should be borne by the state.

Key MIL-related topics requiring heightened attention, as identified by experts:

- ▶ Countering propaganda
- ▶ Combating disinformation
- ▶ Addressing the negative impact of artificial intelligence
- ▶ Detecting and preventing online fraud
- ▶ Protecting personal data
- ▶ Ensuring overall cybersecurity

Given that MIL affects audiences of all ages – all of whom have different preferences for types of content, formats, and technologies – these factors must be taken into account when developing training components. Pretesting and focus groups are essential for achieving maximum effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM KAZAKHSTANI EXPERTS ON ADVANCING MIL IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

General Recommendations:

- ▶ Establish a systematic and carefully considered approach to integrating MIL into the education system.
- ▶ Establish a unified vision for both government and civil society. Currently, civil society has a well-developed concept, while the state has the administrative resources – coordinated collaboration is essential.
- ▶ Develop methodologies and textbooks, train target audiences, and create additional educational and interactive materials. Test and integrate them in the formal education system.
- ▶ Ensure access to existing MIL resources, both online and offline, across all regions of the country. Raise awareness of these resources among target groups.
- ▶ Synchronize updates and activities among MIL actors to coordinate efforts and avoid contradictions.

Recommendations for Government Agencies:

- ▶ Take the lead in institutionalizing MIL and promoting its systemic use;
- ▶ Widely integrate MIL components into school and university curricula;
- ▶ Provide state-supported training for MIL teachers and instructors;
- ▶ Organize MIL courses for civil servants at all levels of government;
- ▶ Conduct research on MIL proficiency across regions and regularly assess the impact of disinformation on public opinion;
- ▶ Apply best practices from both local and international MIL experts.

Recommendations for International Organizations:

- ▶ Establish partnerships with Kazakhstani organizations: NGOs, educational institutions, and media outlets;
- ▶ Support local initiatives and projects promoting MIL;
- ▶ Contribute to the adoption of new regulatory and legal frameworks, including ministerial orders, aimed at advancing MIL.

Recommendations for Non-Governmental Organizations:

- ▶ Serve as creators of diverse MIL content tailored to different age groups and audience preferences;
- ▶ Expand work with parent-child audiences, improving MIL competencies from early childhood;
- ▶ Ensure the training of adult MIL instructors in both Kazakh and Russian for nationwide coverage;
- ▶ Collaborate with government institutions to improve civil servants' MIL skills and promote the systemic integration of MIL into all levels of education;
- ▶ Develop special MIL programs for rural populations and the elderly, adapting content to local contexts, including the production of Kazakh-language materials;
- ▶ Conduct creative information campaigns on the importance of MIL using social media and messaging platforms.

Recommendations for Educational Institutions:

- ▶ Integrate MIL into the curricula for students of all ages;
 - ▶ Use a modular approach to distribute MIL topics across school subjects;
 - ▶ Motivate teachers to undergo MIL training and consistently update their knowledge;
 - ▶ Continuously update MIL courses and programs to reflect the rapid pace of technological development.
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Interviewed Experts

Tatyana Golubtsova, Vice President of the “Psychology–Business–Media” Association, media trainer, head of the “Media Literacy House” project.

Irina Mednikova, Information Integrity Specialist at ZINC Network; founder of the Youth Information Service of Kazakhstan (MISK).

Baktygul Burbayeva, media trainer, expert in media and information literacy.

Ruslan Karatabanov, educator, researcher, author of geography textbooks, developer of educational programs, former Vice President of the Y. Altynsarin National Academy of Education.

Oryntay Oshanova, Head of the UNESCO Chair in Journalism and Communication at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

Kanat Auesbay, Dean of the Faculty of Journalism at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

Askar Aktileu, Media manager, project director at the Public Foundation “Tilshi” Regional Journalism Center.

Askhat Yerkinbay, Senior Lecturer at Suleyman Demirel University (SDU), media trainer.

Yessengul Kapkyzy, journalist, media trainer, lecturer at Suleyman Demirel University (SDU), head of the Journalist Support Center “Minber”.