

Fact Checking: Navigating Truth Amidst Rumors and Misinformation



Youth Assembly hosted a training session titled “Fact Checking: Navigating Truth Amidst Rumors and Misinformation” on November 23, 2024, in support of WAVE Foundation. As part of CIVICUS Global Perspectives 2024: Truth, Trust, and Technology during Membership Engagement Month, the workshop equipped participants with crucial skills to combat misinformation.

In today's digital era, especially in this new normal situation, misinformation and disinformation have become pervasive, threatening trust in institutions, media, and interpersonal relationships. The spread of false information can fuel conflicts, undermine democratic processes, and distort

public understanding of critical issues. Fact-checking is, therefore, a vital skill to counter these challenges, ensuring that people are better equipped to discern truth from falsehood and make informed decisions.

Youths are the most active users of social media and online platforms, where rumors and false information often proliferate. Empowering youth with fact-checking skills ensures they become responsible digital citizens who can critically evaluate content, challenge stereotypes, and prevent the spread of hate speech or divisive narratives. Moreover, equipping young people to tackle misinformation fosters a culture of accountability, enabling them to lead efforts in promoting truth and trust within their communities.

After the Anti-Discrimination Movement in July, Bangladesh has entered a transformative period. In this new normal, a survey was conducted among the members of Youth Assembly, where they expressed their interest in training on fact-checking. Responding to this demand, Youth Assembly organized the training program titled "Fact Checking: Navigating Truth Amidst Rumors and Misinformation."

Participants Category

Thirty selected participants from various universities, volunteering organizations, Clubs, Civil Services Organizations (CSOs) and other organizations attended the session to develop crucial skills in identifying and addressing misinformation. Participants came from universities such as the University of Dhaka, Jahangirnagar University, Daffodil International University, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Government College Of Applied Human Science, Bangladesh Home Economics College, Sher-e-Bangla Nursing College, Independent University Bangladesh, Dhaka College, Bangladesh University of Professionals, Government Titumir College, Mirpur Bangla College, Eden Mohila College etc. including organizations like - WAVE Foundation, Avvudoy, Climate Frontier, Youth Action for Social Development (YASD), Youth Policy Forum (YPF), and Youth Assembly etc. Not only youth but participants from different age groups, sexual identities, and occupations participated in this training. This diverse representation stimulated engaging discussions and a productive exchange of ideas.

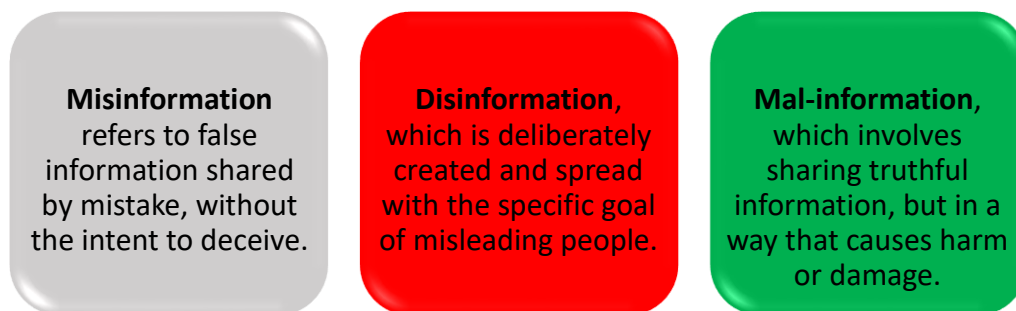
About the Facilitator

Shuvashish Dip, a Fact-Check Expert at Fact Watch in Bangladesh, facilitated the session. He has conducted more than twenty workshops in fact-checking and media literacy and has a partnership with Meta for third-party fact-checking.

Training details

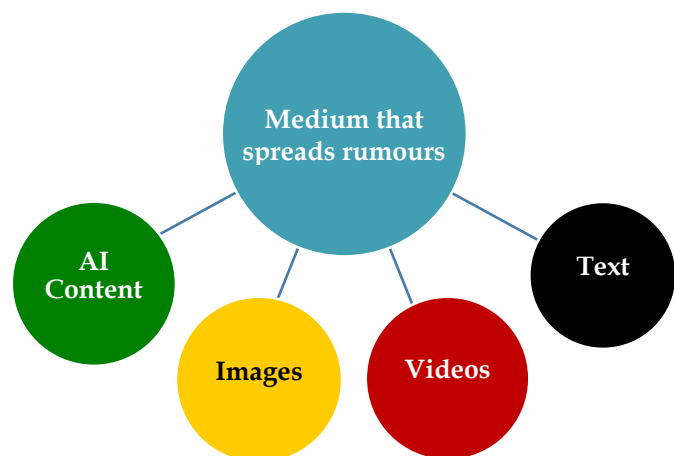
In today's world, where misinformation spreads rapidly and technology constantly evolves, the training highlighted the need for trust and transparency in civil society. The program aimed to empower participants to critically evaluate information, share responsibly, and contribute to a more reliable media environment.

This training was focused on three main types of misleading information- **misinformation**, **disinformation**, and **mal-information**.



The facilitator explained these to the participants using the necessary tools. He also explained various mediums through which rumors spread, including text, videos, images, and AI-generated content. Additionally, the training covered societal issues related to misinformation, such as hate speech, stereotyping, and misogyny.

The session emphasized practical strategies to tackle disinformation. Participants learned about Prebucking techniques, such as developing critical thinking skills, media literacy campaigns, and inoculation theory, as well as debunking methods like fact-checking and lateral reading. The training also introduced tools and methods for verifying information, including reverse image searches, Google Lens, video verification techniques, and the use of AI image and video detectors.



The training featured a hands-on segment where participants practiced identifying fake news. They worked on verifying images through reverse searches, checking video authenticity by analyzing timestamps and locations, and exploring other tools to confirm the credibility of content. This interactive approach allowed participants to apply their learning in real-time. To further engage the audience, a quiz competition was held, which the participants found both enjoyable and educational. The event concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony, marking the successful completion of the session. The participants left with enhanced skills and a deeper understanding of how to challenge the spread of misinformation and contribute to building a more truthful and trustworthy media environment.

Follow-Up Activity Plan

This initiative is taken to encourage participants to extend their learning by organizing fact-checking workshops in their universities and communities, fostering a culture rooted in truth and informed decision-making.

Implementation Framework

1. Participant Role:

Each participant from the initial workshop will act as a Fact-Check Ambassador, leading similar workshops in their own campuses or communities.

2. Target Audience:

- University students, faculty, and staff.
- Community groups, including local youth, organizations, and activists.

3. Workshop Content:

- Definitions and distinctions between misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information.
- Tools and techniques for verifying information (e.g., reverse image searches, Google Lens).
- Practical exercises and case studies on identifying fake news.
- Promoting critical thinking and media literacy.

Support from Youth Assembly

1. Resource Materials:	2. Logistical Assistance:	3. Capacity Building:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ready-to-use presentations, training manuals, and fact-checking toolkits.- Infographics, case studies, and activity templates for hands-on practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Financial support for organizing workshops (e.g., venue booking, snacks, and certificates).- Digital support, including designing promotional materials and online outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Virtual mentoring sessions to guide participants in planning and executing their workshops.- A dedicated WhatsApp/online group for peer collaboration and troubleshooting.

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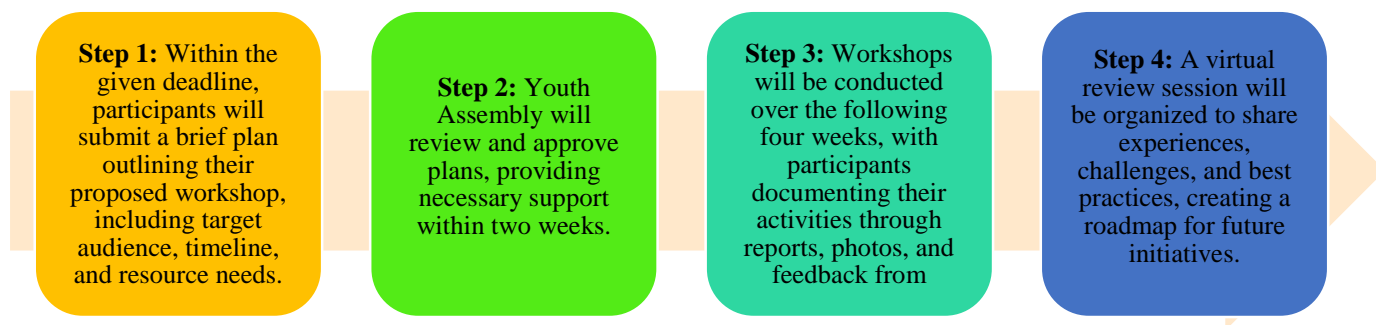
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Execution Timeline



Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness of the dangers of misinformation in diverse groups.
- Knowledge Multiplication in critical fact-checking skills.
- Formation of a network of informed youth actively combating misinformation.

In a rapidly changing world, where technology continues to redefine communication, fact-checking is a fundamental tool for youth to drive positive social change and build a more informed, inclusive society. We aim to bring these positive changes through our training and various activities.