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ROLE OF UNESCO IN PROMOTING MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY BETWEEN 1982−2016

Introduction

The main goal of the article is to analyse data based on strategic documents, research papers and conferences related to UNESCO's activities in the field of media information literacy. The specific goal is to identify the internal differentiation of MIL (media and information literacy) definitions and to recognise how these definitions have evolved over the years and how major postulates and outcomes have influenced today's understanding of media literacy. The basic research method that will allow to achieve the above goals is the analysis of the works through a chronological approach, divided into three decades. The analysis begins with the 1982 "International Media Education Symposium" in Grünwald, Germany and ends in 2016 with the "Second European Media & Information Literacy Forum" in Riga, Lithuania. Declarations, strategy papers and manifestos are important instruments, both political and promotional. They define the rules and standards that can influence the community. Production of such documents is the result of discussions between governments, civil society and field experts. Summarising presented content as such allows for the representation of national and international consensus on how the problem can be solved locally, regionally and, consequently, globally. Later, governments, non-governmental organisations, international institutions, companies from the business sphere, training companies and educational entities use the collected knowledge.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is an organisation that was established as a branch of the United Nations in 1946. The main goal of this institution is to strengthen ties between member countries. At the beginning of its activities, UNESCO only dealt with international cooperation related to education. During the work on the main concepts, the planned activities were expanded to include actions for culture, science, art and human rights. Initially, tasks of this committee were to check the current state of education. The organisation protects natural and historical assets and cares for intercultural

dialogue (Stankiewicz, 2012, p. 152). The International Commission for Development Education was established in 1971. Important from the perspective of the topic of this article is the fact that the organisation is also considering the topic of media competences. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Art. 19, there is the following provision: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the freedom to have independent views, to seek, receive and disseminate information and ideas by all means, regardless of borders" (UNESCO, 1948, p. 3).

The history of competency research shows that concepts and initiatives related to media competences (media literacy), information literacy and media education have developed and evolved separately. The term "media education" was first used in 1960, and "information literacy" in 1974. In the last decade, these concepts have come together to consolidate the concepts. The first of these terms was used and propagated by UNESCO.

As a result of the definitional chaos related to explaining what media and information competences are, it seems necessary to analyse the sources, in this case documents related to UNESCO's activities. Inaccuracies in definitions are often the result of incorrect translations, specialised language and synonymous overlapping of concepts. There are many typologies and ways of categorising competences in the literature, e.g. digital, information, IT or network competences. Although the ways of defining are different, they are not contradictory (Tarkowski et al, 2015, p. 56).

UNESCO's goal is to provide all citizens with the necessary competences that will allow them to function freely in the modern society. UNESCO is committed to making MIL a prerequisite for sustainable development and media literacy, information and ICT tools. In a further step, this will allow citizens to take full advantage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular in the field of freedom of speech and access to information (UNESCO, 2013b, p. 9).

MIL competences and their promotion by UNESCO

Media and information literacy is essential to increase access to education, information and knowledge, as well as to freedom of expression. According to the authors of the publication entitled "Media literacy and information literacy: policy and strategy guidelines" MIL skills help develop attitudes toward today's media. MIL is a complex concept that unites information skills with media literacy and provides users with the right to freedom of expression and access to information through information and communication technology (ICT) (UNESCO, 2013b, pp.

7–8). Today, UNESCO does not separate media competences and information competences. It treats them jointly and, in this form, they are disseminated in strategic documents.

We define "media information literacy" as "a set of competences that enable citizens to access, retrieve, understand, evaluate and use, create and share information and media content in all formats, using various tools, in a critical, ethical and effective way to fully participate in personal, professional and social activities" (UNESCO, 2013b, p. 17).

MIL policy and strategy is conducive to the creation of knowledge-based, pluralistic, democratic and open societies (Hobbs, 1998, pp. 18–23). UNESCO stands out in the context of media education activities. This is evidenced by numerous conferences and developed strategic documents, which I will try to describe in the table below.

Media literacy and information literacy (MIL) has been developing concurrently all over the world right from the start. The original interest in the concept of media education in the 1980s led researchers to media literacy and information literacy in the 2000s. We consider these skills to be the outcome of the media education process.

The most important events related to the promotion of media and information competences include the declaration from Grünwald, Toulouse, Seville, Paris, Prague, Alexandria, Fez and Moscow. Selected UNESCO-led conferences, projects and research activities related to the dissemination of MIL knowledge and practice in the scientific community are described below. The goals, main demands and results were also presented. The selected examples are listed in chronological order.

Events related to the promotion of media competences in the years 1982–1999 (Symposium in Grünwald, Conference in Toulouse, Conference in Vienna)

The International Symposium on Education in the Media (Altun, 2009) can be considered the first event related to the dissemination of knowledge about media competences. The event was held in the Federal Republic of Germany in Grünwald in 1982. It was found out that there is a need to systematise education that promotes critical understanding of communication phenomena.

The declaration insisted that the development of technology should not be ignored, that information should be provided to citizens by means of textual, audio and audio-visual means. This symposium was the first event of this type in Europe (Madden, 2018, p. 182). The Grünwald declaration on media educa-

tion has been published. The authors of the declaration argued that media consumption is increasing day by day and developed media competences prepares citizens to use media responsibly. The most important postulates of the event include:

- Governments should initiate and support comprehensive communication education programmes from pre-school to university education as well as adult education;
- Media should be used as a means of creative expression, effective use and participation in available media channels. Development of training courses for teachers and intermediaries;
- Information literacy should become education for all and be in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Support and promotion of activities that encourage international cooperation;
- Creation of research and development activities on media education in areas such as sociology, pedagogy.

It is worth noting that the media was already ubiquitous long before the advent of the Internet. Their significance penetrated the culture and habits of modern people, who began to demand the development of media competences in critical way. Researchers agreed that the most appropriate term for media competence is "media literacy". It has been established that it is the ability to read and process information that will enable full participation in society. However, the term was problematic since in some countries the term "media education" was ingrained. This definition was used and promoted, for example, in England and Australia. The declaration was signed by signatories from 19 countries.

Another important event was the 1990 Toulouse Conference. Experts discussed the future of media literacy around the world and together considered how to provide the appropriate guidelines needed to develop specific curricula. The conference was to be an opportunity to learn about media literacy in different countries and to share good practices. According to the document, in the last 50 years, modern society has moved from the age of language skills to the age of electronic skills. The Toulouse Document represented a new approach to understanding and practicing the concepts of media literacy. According to specialists, in order to become a full citizen, one must acquire appropriate media competences. Researchers agreed that even the future of democracy may depend on it. 180 delegates from 40 countries took part in the conference. Most of the participants were media education teachers or government officials. There was a lot of discussion at the conference about the terms "media education", "media literacy" and "media awareness". Recommendations developed during the conference in Toulouse were directed to UNESCO (Tornero and Varis, 2010, p. 61) and approved during a conference in Vienna in 1991.

In 1999, the conference "Education for the media and the digital age" was held in Vienna, Austria. The aim of the event was to create recommendations for creating media education programme and creating media spaces for young people. The principles and definitions taken at previous conferences in Grünwald and Toulouse have been confirmed and updated. UNESCO is committed to facilitating various forms of research both locally and internationally. The need for ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity of educational programmes was also mentioned. According to specialists, UNESCO should play the role of media observatory and facilitate coherent tasks on the international arena (UNESCO, 2011). 43 representatives from 33 countries took part in the conference.

Prague Declaration, Alexandria Conference, Colloquium at the Library of Alexandria (2003–2010).

Another milestone in promoting media competences was the so-called Prague Declaration of 2003. The event included the National Forum on Information Literacy (MIL) and the Information Literacy Meeting of Experts. As a result of the meeting in Prague, the document: The Prague Declaration – Towards an information literate society was created. UNESCO made an explicit reference to information literacy for the first time. The declaration presented a definition of information competences understood as information needs, the ability to identify, evaluate, organise, create, use and transfer information in order to solve problems. The presented postulates were a requirement for effective participation in the information society. It was underlined that governments should develop interdisciplinary programmes to promote media literacy. This is essential in order to bridge the digital divide.

Moreover, some resolutions were made. They related to literacy rules in the context of the use of information. The most important of them included the need to co-create the information society, which is the key to social, cultural and economic issues, as well as the development of nations and communities. According to the authors, informational literacy should be recognised by the international community. The researchers recommended that the developed document should be assessed by the International Information Skills Congress.

In 2005, Egypt held the High-Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Education at the Library of Alexandria, Lighthouse keepers of the information society (Garner, 2005). During the meeting, media literacy and the ability to use information were introduced and explained. Also emphasising the essence of permanent education in the context of media education. Participants confirmed

that the ability to use media and information is not only a necessity, but also a fundamental human right. Governments and international organisations were called upon to implement policies and programmes that promote information literacy and lifelong learning, as they are essential to the development of society. These fundamental rights, principles, and goals were contained in a one-page document called "Beacons of the Information Society: The Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning".

Abdel Aziz Abid, Senior Program Officer for UNESCO said that "information literacy is the basis of lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education, while recognising the differences in learning styles and the nature and development of literacy in different countries" (Garner, 2005, p. 21).

Based on the results of the meetings, it was proposed to conduct a series of thematic meetings focusing on individual socio-economic sectors (including education and training) and to organise a World Congress on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning (The Alexandria Proclamation). The organisers invited 30 participants from 17 countries representing six major geographical regions. This served to assess the progress and the possibility of implementing the recommendations contained in the report. In addition to UNESCO, the event was organised by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the National Forum on Information Skills (NFIL).

In 2005, a project of the media literacy expert group (Skills) was carried out in Brussels. The project focused on three main aspects: a) audio-visual skills (needed to receive commercial information); b) media and internet literacy; c) education and awareness of copyrights in media.

As a result of the project, the European Commission joined in and initiated public consultation. Their intention was to identify general situation of the media in Europe and to properly guide practices that could be introduced at the global level. 25 experts from Europe participated in works on the project. Thanks to this initiative, UNESCO and the European Commission have established a cooperation in the context of research on media literacy (Communication).

An expert meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, was held in 2010 and was entitled "Towards Media and Information Literacy Indicators – Information Document" (Moeller et al., 2011, pp. 1–53). The meeting resulted in a document focused on the development of literacy structures through media literacy. This document provides a basic conceptual framework for measuring information literacy. It is intended to serve as a reference to facilitate the development of information literacy indicators. Media and information literacy (MIL) indicators are presented there. The document was adopted by IFLA. It provides a conceptual framework

for the identification of information skills (IL) indicators and proposes a path for profitable and timely development. It includes a description of IL standards in education and a definition of IL, understood as model that combines information literacy with other adult competences, including ICT skills. IL equality issues and cultural diversity implications were also identified there. In addition to UNESCO, the event was organised by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). This expert meeting was intended to discuss indicators for the assessment of MIL.

UNESCO, through its Information for All Program (IFAP), has decided to engage in the development of an international framework for measuring information literacy to demonstrate achievement at both international and national level and to better focus future efforts.

International Media and Information Forum, Moscow Declaration, Doha Declaration, Paris Declaration, Mexican Declaration, Riga Declaration (2011–2016)

In 2011, Fez, Morocco, hosted the Forum on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) (UNESCO, 2011a, pp. 1–3). After the meeting, a report was created describing 11 main goals related to the need to organise this event. The most important of these are: a) reaffirming the commitment of UNESCO and the event partners to MIL-related initiatives; b) inclusion of MIL in educational programmes in the formal and non-formal system; c) carrying out a survey on the state of media literacy; d) developing dialogue between partner organisations; e) ensuring that media and information ethics is incorporated into all curricula; f) confirmation that the providers of communication, information and media also accept this value; g) convening international events.

Event attendees supported a far-reaching vision of today's digital age and the convergence of communication technologies that require combination of media and information literacy. This is necessary in order to achieve sustainable human development. The forum's partners were organisations such as: the United Nations for Education, Science and Culture, Organization (UNESCO) as a lead partner, Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), Arab Gulf Education Bureau (ABEGS) and the Alliance of Civilizations United Nations (UN-AoC), European Viewer Interest Association (EAVI); International Association for Media Research and Communication (IAMCR). 200 participants from 40 countries took part in the forum.

Apart from the conference, UNESCO publishes numerous publications. In 2011, readers received one entitled "Media and Literacy Curriculum for Teachers" (Wilson, Grizzle et al., 2011). In this document, authors explain the concept of the MIL composite. The aim of the publication is to strive to achieve the guidelines contained in the Grünwald Declarations (1982), the Alexandria Declaration (2005) and the UNESCO Paris Agenda (2007). The study is the result of work of many experts in many fields related to the media, ICT and education of the overall MIL curriculum. The curriculum presented in the publication was forward-looking, it drew on contemporary trends towards media convergence (merging newspapers, radio, television, the Internet, digital archives) into one medium. The MIL is shown as a whole. The publication was specially designed with teachers in mind and consists of two parts:

1. Framework for the MIL Curriculum and Competency.
2. Specified modules and the basics of the curriculum.

Conference on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) was held in Moscow, Russia in 2012. Participants identified a set of competencies needed to search, critically evaluate and create new information and knowledge using available tools and channels. During the conference, the scope of definitions of the discussed terms was established.

Media and information literacy (MIL) are a prerequisite for the sustainable development of open, pluralistic, global and democratic knowledge societies and the civic institutions, organisations, communities and individuals that make up those societies. MIL is the combination of knowledge, behaviours, skills and experiences that are required to analyse and evaluate information and knowledge in a consistent and ethical manner. MIL concepts are based on prior concepts and policy documents. Individual governments or organisations should refer to existing and emerging barriers to the effective use of information.

In 2013, a conference was held in Doha, Qatar. Media and information competences – expert meeting (UNESCO, 2013a). During the conference, representatives of the Arab League expressed their support for the activities and initiatives of MIL. Experts pointed out that MIL can be the basis for improving intercultural understanding of people from different backgrounds. The conference resulted in the Doha Declaration on Supporting Media and Information Education in the Middle East. The aim of the event was to support the organisation in the further implementation of MIL in Qatar's educational system.

In 2014, the first European Media and Information Literacy Forum was held in Paris, France. The aim of the conference was for a group of specialists to recognise the possibilities and embed media and new technologies in all aspects of human life and to recognise that media competences complement technological

skills. Participants adopted the Paris Declaration on MIL in the digital age. The declaration confirmed the importance of the MIL. There was a call to re-establish pressure on MIL in today's digital environment. Establishing cooperation between key institutions and a group of researchers was proposed.

In 2016, the 2nd European Media Literacy Forum was held in Riga, Lithuania. According to the participants of the event, media and information literacy give citizens knowledge, skills and approach to critical access to information and media, to critically analyse information and media content, and to cooperate with the media and other information providers for social, civic and creative purposes. This potential was recognised as requiring media and information landscape in which freedom of expression, freedom of the press, access to information, and the right to privacy coexist. It is emphasised that media and information literacy is a code of life that can form the basis of sustainable development. MIL is essential to critical information evaluation process and to building new communication culture and improving the quality of public discourse.

Polish UNESCO Committee and media literacy

The Polish UNESCO Committee presents its position on the need to adopt systemic media education programme in Poland, thanks to which it will be possible to acquire or expand appropriate competences. It would be possible through appropriate programmes of the education system and informal education, which include the immediate environment, non-governmental organisations, libraries and community centres. In the opinion of the committee, it is particularly important to extend the programmes to children, adolescents and elderly people who are at risk of digital exclusion. Polish representatives agree that in the age of new technologies development, media and information competences constitute basic human right and are a necessary condition for improving the quality of life and for sustainable social, economic and cultural development. The above-mentioned competences are one of the priorities of the UNESCO Information for All (IFAP) programme. According to the organisation, the convergence of media and telecommunications driven by the digital age requires the joint consideration of information and media literacy. The Polish IFAP UNESCO Committee supported the ideas expressed in the "Digital Poland of Equal Opportunities" appeal, which emphasised that 13 million adults do not have basic skills in using the Internet and IT devices. This is the cause of the increasing civilisation barrier in the context of the country's development. It also contributes to the exclusion of people over 65 years of age from active professional, social and personal life. The Polish UNESCO Committee deemed the

selected postulates developed in the Fez Declaration to be correct. These include, among others, call for national research to diagnose media competences in order to shape creative attitudes, include media competences in the framework of formal and informal education, which are an expression of new civic education, networks of knowledge institutes on media literacy and establishment of global media and information literacy week (Ratajski, 2015, pp. 23–25).

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Role of UNESCO in Promoting Media and Information Literacy Between 1982–2016

Summary

In response to the challenges posed by technological development, the international community attaches more and more importance to the promotion of media and information competences (MIL). UNESCO has been at the heart of global thinking about the impact of the changing information landscape since its inception. The organisation works for culture, science, art and human rights. One of its goals is to provide all citizens with the necessary competences that will allow them to function freely in the modern society. UNESCO is committed to making MIL a prerequisite for sustainable development and media literacy, information and ICT tools. It will allow citizens to fully benefit from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the field of freedom of expression and access to information. The main goal of the article is to analyse data based on strategic documents, research papers and conferences related to UNESCO activities in the field of MIL competences. The production of such documents is the result of discussions between governments and civil society and experts in the field. Moreover, they define the rules and standards that can influence the community. The data presented chronologically reveal how these definitions have evolved over the past three decades and how the main postulates and results have influenced today's understanding of media literacy. The most important events related to the promotion of MIL include the declarations from Grünwald, Toulouse, Seville, Paris, Prague, Alexandria, Fez and Moscow.

Keywords

UNESCO, media and digital competences, MIL, strategic documents, declarations, media literacy, promotion and development of media competences

**Rola UNESCO w promowaniu kompetencji medialnych i informacyjnych
w latach 1982–2016**

Streszczenie

W odpowiedzi na wyzwania, jakie stawia przed nami rozwój technologiczny, społeczność międzynarodowa przywiązuje coraz większą wagę do propagowania kompetencji medialnych i informacyjnych (MIL). UNESCO od początku istnienia było w centrum globalnego myślenia o wpływie zmieniającego się krajobrazu informacyjnego. Organizacja podejmuje działania na rzecz kultury, nauki, sztuki oraz prawa człowieka. Jednym z celów organizacji jest zapewnienie wszystkim obywatelom potrzebnych kompetencji, które pozwolą swobodnie funkcjonować we współczesnym społeczeństwie. UNESCO opowiada się za tym, aby MIL były warunkiem wstępnym do zrównoważonego rozwoju i umiejętności korzystania z mediów, informacji i narzędzi ICT. W dalszym kroku pozwoli to obywatelom w pełni korzystać z Powszechnej Deklaracji Praw Człowieka, w szczególności z zakresu wolności słowa i dostępu do informacji. Głównym celem artykułu jest analiza danych opierająca się na dokumentach strategicznych, pracach badawczych i konferencjach związanych z działaniami UNESCO w zakresie kompetencji MIL. Tworzenie takich dokumentów wynika z dyskusji między rządami a społeczeństwem obywatelskim oraz ekspertami z danej dziedziny. Co więcej, określają zasady oraz standardy, które mogą wpłynąć na społeczność. Przedstawione w sposób chronologiczny dane pozwalają na rozpoznanie, jak definicje te ewoluowały na przestrzeni trzech ostatnich dekad oraz w jaki sposób główne postulaty i rezultaty wpłynęły na dzisiejsze rozumienie umiejętności korzystanie z mediów. Do najważniejszych wydarzeń związanych z promowaniem MIL zaliczamy deklaracje z Grünwaldu, Tuluzy, Sewilli, Paryża, Pragi, Aleksandrii, Fezu i Moskwy.

Słowa kluczowe

UNESCO, kompetencje medialne i cyfrowe, MIL, dokumenty strategiczne, deklaracje, umiejętność korzystania z mediów, promowanie i rozwój kompetencji medialnych