THE FUTURE IS OURS

Hyperlocal Action in the ~~Global South~~ Larger World*

Gender, Journalism, Communities

Meedan

This document was produced by Meedan's Check Global team to celebrate the work of our partners since 2020; we include them here with their consent.

To all those we could not explicitly mention for security reasons, we appreciate your work and are grateful to have been able to collaborate with you over the past several years.

Check Global is Meedan's flagship program. It has been running since 2011 with support from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and in collaboration with researchers based at the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research at Birmingham City University.

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Our team has gone through many discussions about the different ways we can talk about the people we work with and the regions where we are based. What we call things matters, so we have started using 'Larger World' in 2023 - a term coined by the Numun Fund (numun.fund) founding team. We use it here with their consent.

May 2023

Meedan is a technology not-for-profit working towards building a more equitable internet where all people, regardless of their language, location or income, can access the most relevant information, evaluate the quality of that information, and make the decisions they want, and where public voice is enhanced through open-source tools for journalism and data projects, and through media literacy training and skills development, ultimately strengthening fundamental freedoms and human rights.

Our program is over a decade young!

Check Global started in 2011 as the Arab uprisings swept through Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen. Twelve years later our friends and partners continue to work tirelessly to counter disinformation and government-led propaganda, challenge dominant narratives, and defend civil rights and liberties.

Launched in North-Africa and Western-Asia (NAWA), we grew from five to 22 countries, and from eight to 26 partners based across NAWA, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and Asia-Pacific (APAC).

We are now a proud network of over 130 community-led organizations focusing our work on gender, journalism and community-building efforts. This booklet celebrates the last three years of our 10+ year-old program; we felt there was a lot to be grateful for since we published our first zine 'Viral Politics: Tales from the Pandemia' back in 2020.

→ **Viral Politics: Tales from the Pandemia**
Artists from throughout the Global South illustrated the ways the pandemic has affected digital surveillance, freedom of speech and gender-based violence in their home countries, and how they resist.

Our work with the amazing organizations whose stories you will discover here is very diverse. For some, we focus on skills and capacity building efforts, through co-designing training sessions and workshops on issues such as digital literacy and security, fact-checking, open source intelligence (OSINT) and investigative reporting. With others, we have co-designed and delivered election monitoring initiatives, including coalition-building efforts, programmatic activities, tech support, training on annotation, content moderation, and dataset design and distribution.

We have also co-created Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), online toolkits and resources which the organizations (and their communities) needed in crisis response settings, during electoral periods, or in their day-to-day practice. We have launched a number of microgrant awards to respond to timely needs in a variety of contexts, and sometimes with a "hands-off" approach, offering partners core funding to support the growth and sustainability of their grassroots organizations.

In each of these situations, we tried to listen to what they told us. We hope we have succeeded in co-designing and delivering, with their valuable help, context-led responses to some of the greatest challenges our world faces today.

We hope these stories inspire you to join us!

Latin America and the Caribbean
LAC

Women-Led Media Network

Latin America and the Caribbean

Chicas Poderosas' network has so far engaged with over 6000 women across 16 countries in Latin America and focuses on promoting women's leadership and gender equality in the media.

Human Rights in the Digital World

Colombia and Brazil

In Colombia and Brazil, CodingRights and Fundación Karisma design and lead projects which aim to advance the enforcement of human rights in design and digital technologies.

Independent Impact-Focused Media

Mexico and Brazil

We continue to work with Animal Politico in Mexico and Agência Mural in Brazil to produce news, data, and analysis for a predominantly young audience.

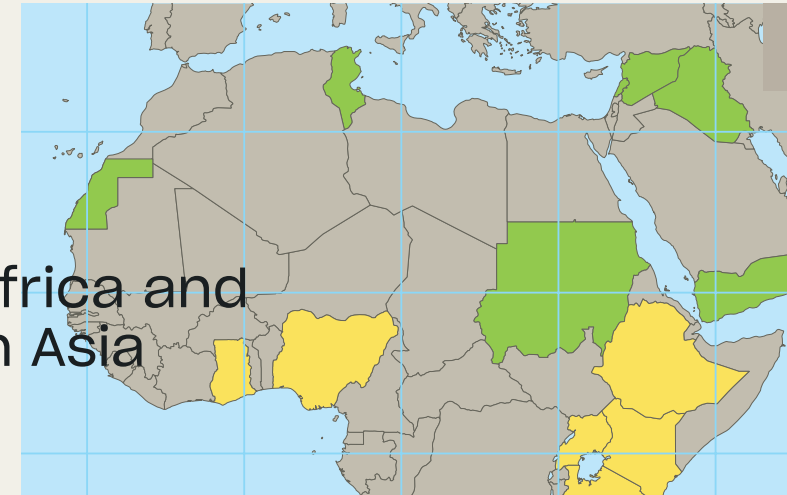**Brazil's Presidential Elections**

Brazil

Five newsrooms partnered with Brazil's top court to collect 347,000 anonymous questions from voters throughout six WhatsApp tiplines, and responded to those questions with fact-checks using Meedan's platform, Check.

North-Africa and Western Asia
NAWA

Investigative Journalism in Times of Crisis

Lebanon and Iraq

In Lebanon and Iraq, we supported our partners The Public Source and the Network of Iraqi Reporters for Investigative Journalism (NIRIJ) to uncover systemic injustice, corruption and violations against vulnerable groups.

Media Freedom Festivals

Western Sahara and Tunisia

We continue to work with and support our partners, Nawaat in Tunisia and Watching Western Sahara in the occupied Western Sahara, in their multi-disciplinary efforts to document and report human rights violations and attacks against journalists, civil society organizations and communities.

Supporting a Network of Archiving Projects

Syria, Yemen and Sudan

We continue to work with our long-time partners Mnemonic and VFrame, building on the Syrian Archive, Yemeni Archive and Sudanese Archive projects, which have been instrumental in documenting war crimes.

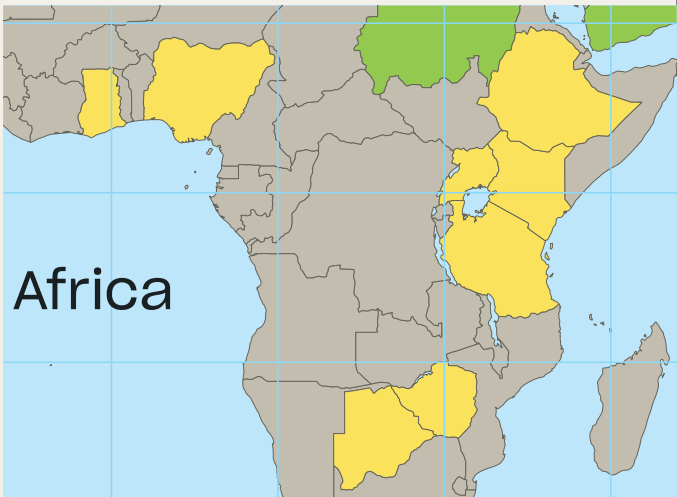**Journalism Students Develop a Media Credibility Index**

Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Egypt and Sudan

For two consecutive years, the Media Credibility Index has shown how limited journalistic standards and political motives can further exacerbate the rise of misinformation online. The Index was developed in collaboration with Check Global's NAWA student newsroom which has been active since 2018.

Sub-Saharan Africa
SSA

Asic-Pacific
APAC

Supporting Women-Led Media Initiatives
Kenya and Uganda

We worked with women-led media organizations to identify and report on gender, women's health and development issues, using civic education, inclusive participation, and access to digital tools.

Supporting Public Interest Journalism and Investigative Reporting
Ethiopia and Botswana

Our partners conducted investigations centered around matters of public interest, highlighting underreported stories and training citizens to become better government watchdogs.

Election Monitoring
Kenya, Ghana and The Gambia

Our partners worked to debunk election mis- and disinformation before, during and after elections, introducing fact-checking as a long term intervention that journalists can use beyond the election period.

Training Journalists and Journalism Students
Ethiopia and Zimbabwe

Our partners trained journalists, journalism students and independent media stakeholders on the foundations of research, evidence and data in reporting.

Supporting Women-Led Initiatives in the Media
India and Indonesia

We worked with women-led independent media to enhance feminist reporting and strengthen women leaders' contributions to issues of representation in their communities.

Countering Misinformation Among Migrant and Diaspora Communities
Taiwan and Philippines

Our partners developed media literacy programs and used tech tools to address the spread of misinformation among Taiwanese and Filipino migrant communities.

Civil Rights Defenders
Pakistan and Myanmar

We worked with our partners to equip journalists and activists with digital safety strategies and to document human rights violations in crisis settings.

Philippines Election Coalition
Philippines

We supported a coalition of fact-checkers, civil society organizations, academics and legal groups to fight for election integrity. This has become a model for multi-stakeholder collaborations in election monitoring efforts worldwide.

Building Awareness on Misinformation and Fact-Checking
Indonesia

Through wikithons and fact-check training we collaborated with our partners to raise awareness around the spread of misinformation.

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Journalism

Media literacy on and offline
·
News deserts

**Latin America and the Caribbean
North-Africa and Western Asia · Sub-Saharan Africa**

The Public Source

In-depth and uncompromising independent journalism in the public interest

"We are building a model for local and independent in-depth journalism — in practice and structure — that disrupts partisan coverage of contentious matters that impact the lived realities of people across the country." (The Public Source)

In April 2023, the editor-in-chief of The Public Source, Lara Bitar, was summoned by Lebanon's Anti-Cybercrime Bureau following a complaint by a Lebanese party about an article on environmental crimes committed by the then-militia during the Lebanon civil war. The investigative feature, "The 'Ecological Time Bombs' Unloaded at the Beirut Port Decades Ago", was listed as one of the Global Investigative Journalism Network's 2022's Best Investigative Stories from the region. This summoning by a security apparatus testifies to the impact of The Public Source's investigative work.

In 2022, The Public Source also published their most-read investigation, which was also accepted into the Global Investigative Journalism Network, a first for Lebanese journalism. They won first place in the Katherine Schneider Journalism Award for Excellence in Reporting on Disability, in the Small Media category, for their story "'And What Would You Like Me to Do About It': How the Lebanese Government Disabled Hundreds of People – And Left Them to Pay for Its Crime." This investigative feature about survivors of the Beirut Port explosion who were disabled by the blast was shortlisted by the Fetisov Journalism Awards in the "Contribution to Civil Rights" category.

Lebanon was ranked 130th out of 180 countries in the 2022 Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index.

→ **The Public Source**
"And What Would You Like Me to Do About It?": How the Lebanese Government Disabled Hundreds of People — and Then Left Them to Pay for Its Crime

INK Foundation

Creating opportunities for journalists working in the public interest

"We strive to be fair and we aggressively edit every story we plan to publish, to assure its accuracy and fairness." (INK Foundation)

Botswanans are increasingly getting their information from unregulated online sources and social media, leaving them vulnerable to misinformation and disinformation. Additionally, many young journalists lack basic training and access to an effective network of news media organizations and stakeholders.

In response to this, INK Foundation provides basic investigative reporting skills training to young reporters in newsrooms that have significant budget constraints and are struggling to maintain investigative journalism desks. INK also creates opportunities for journalists through internships and training sessions on practical and impactful journalism practices. INK has six publishing partners who collaborate to ensure that the content reaches a greater audience.
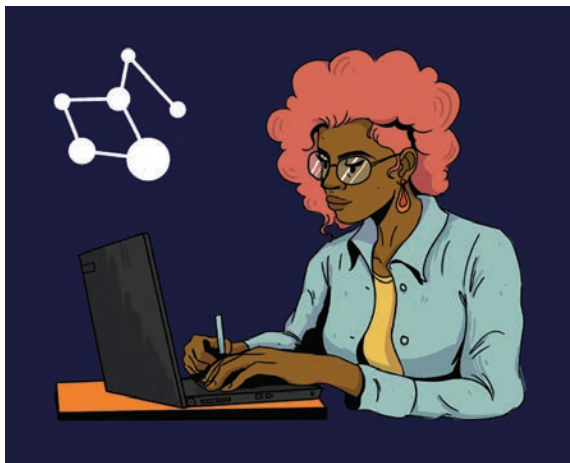
Agência Mural

Serving underrepresented communities in Brazil's metropolitan areas

"Our target audience are the younger inhabitants of low income, underserved and underprivileged communities because we believe they can become multipliers and amplifiers of the news and stories we publish." (Agência Mural)

Agência Mural is a Brazilian non-profit organization which serves communities on the outskirts of urban metropolitan areas. The metropolitan area of Grande Sao Paolo is made up of 39 cities; the urban outskirts are all news deserts.

Throughout 2022, Agência Mural has been delivering, through their online platform Clube Mural, journalism and media literacy training for hyperlocal correspondents and media activists covering the urban/rural peripheries in Brazil as well as students and graduates.

↑ **The Public Source**
Intra Investment Company: The "Lebanese State's Best Kept Secret"

← **Agência Mural**
Clube Mural

Network of Iraqi Investigative Journalism (NIRIJ)

Journalism network in Iraq investigates 'war by other means'

"Many politicians and administrative officials in Iraq are filing lawsuits against journalists for publishing information implicating them in cases of corruption or negligence." (NIRIJ)

NIRIJ
Investigation: The story of real estate theft in Mosul

War casualties often extend beyond military occupation and, as communities are devastated, cities are destroyed and social order is compromised. In this unstable and unsafe environment, Nirij continued its missions since 2011 to uncover the 'war by other means' whether it is large-scale corruption, discrimination, or forced migration of minority groups.

Their latest series of reports highlighted the plight of minorities in Iraq devastated by violence, discrimination and continuous migration exacerbated by war and political instability since 2003.

in one of their recent investigative reports, NIRIJ also uncovered how militias, political parties and high-profile individuals seized more than 20,000 public and private properties in Mosul, northern Iraq, by forging records or forcefully taking hold of them. This large-scale land grab happened in the aftermath of Mosul's liberation from ISIS militants.

Nawaat

Leading by example in Tunisia's nascent democracy

"Our media is known for its audacity, its independence, its innovation and its differential treatment of current affairs. It established itself as a trusted provider of coverage specialized in topical news, with a focus on democracy, transparency, accountability, justice, civil liberties and rights." (Nawaat)

Created in 2004, Nawaat has grown into a multi-awarded independent media platform and print magazine and a pioneer of alternative journalism in Tunisia.

Nawaat also organizes a yearly media and cultural festival where debates are held around independent media, its evolution and prospects in Tunisia, and its positioning within the Arab region.

Nawaat's team aims to transform Tunisia into a more pluralistic and democratic society to allow the media landscape to better act as a watchdog of power within Tunisia's nascent democracy.

NAWAAT
Nawaat Festival #2: Breaking Boundaries (June 16-19, 2022)

Big Tech and Media Freedom

Content moderation
·
Take downs
·
Sustainability of archival records

Latin America and the Caribbean
North-Africa and Western Asia

Coding Rights

AI is a feminist issue

"The 'Not My AI' project, aims to expand the critical debate through a feminist perspective on the implementation of artificial intelligence systems by the public sector for the purpose of managing health services, education, distribution of social benefits, the judicial system and public security"
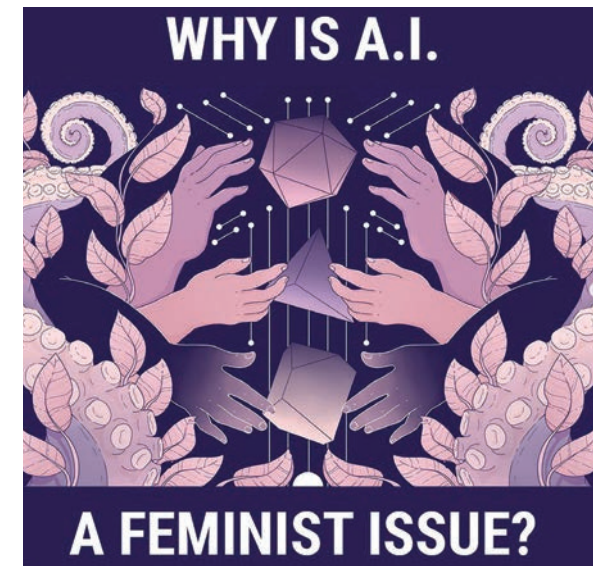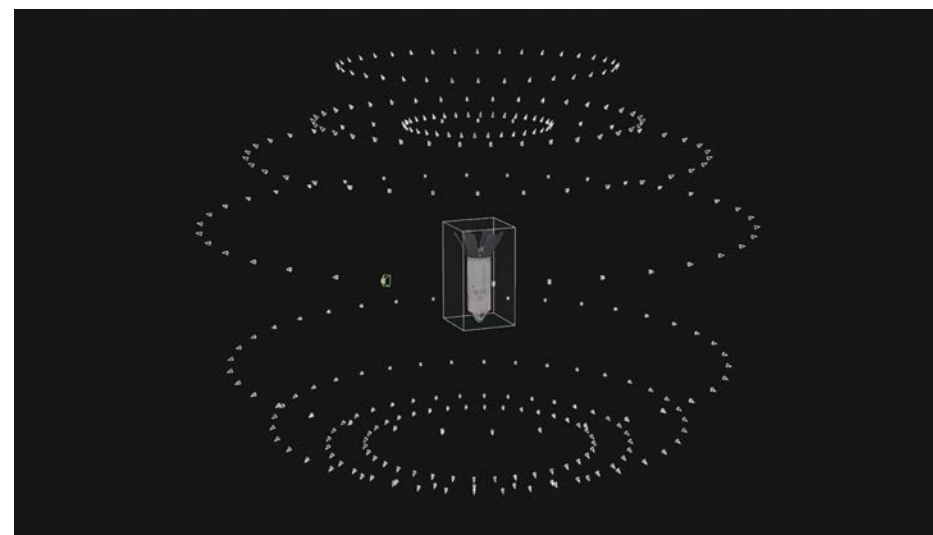(Coding Rights)

Coding Rights is a Brazilian women-led think tank aligned with intersectional feminist values. Their work is focused on the development of artificial intelligence systems, taking into account the ways in which gender, power, race and other social inequalities are reinforced or replicated by technology.

Coding Rights contributed to the feminist technology ecosystem, through FOIA requests about AI projects being deployed by the federal public sector in Brazil. They improved their critical framework of analysis of AI systems, considering possible harms caused by its implementation in public policy, such as: surveillance of low income people; reinforcement of structural racism, sexism and gender and non-binary discrimination; as well as digital colonialism and neoliberal policies of automatization.

Coding Rights
'Not My AI' project

WHY IS A.I. A FEMINIST ISSUE?

SOLIDARITY	DECENTRAL IZATION	SECURITY	RESILIENCE	QUEERNESS
OPEN SOURCE	PLEASURE	NON BINARY	MULTI ESPESCIESM	INTUITION
INTER OPERABILITY	INTERSECTION ALITY	EMPATHY	HORIZON TALITY	EMBODIED NESS
DE COLONIALITY	DIVERSITY	AGENCY	CONSENT	AUTONOMY

Coding Rights
The Oracle For Transfeminist Technologies: A hands-on card deck designed to help us collectively envision and share ideas for transfeminist technologies from the future.

VFRAME
Photogrammetry scan of the 9N235 submunition by VFRAME in collaboration with Tech 4 Tracing. 9N235/210 submunition image.
Image license: © Adam Harvey / VFRAME.io

VFRAME
Detection test image and score for the real 9N235/210 submunition image.
Image license: © Adam Harvey / VFRAME.io

VFRAME

Innovative AI techniques empowering human rights researchers and journalists

> *"VFRAME aims to function as a toolkit designed for the human rights researchers analyzing large visual media archives, redacting faces and sensitive visual data, and detecting and classifying objects in images and videos coming from areas of conflict."* (VFRAME)

Many journalists and human rights researchers struggle with adapting and making use of recent advancements in artificial intelligence; VFRAME developed a model for NAWA-wide collaborations between archivists, journalists, and technologists, to collect and annotate large-scale data and make sense of it. VFRAME is leveraging recent developments in artificial intelligence and computer vision towards improving the capabilities of small, specialized research groups such as the Yemeni Archive and the Sudanese Archive, allowing them to seamlessly analyze large quantities of media collected from conflict zones.

One of the main areas of development over the past year has been to work with organizations with access to actual objects found in conflict zones. This has the ultimate impact of creating more accurate object detection algorithms for analyzing large archives of visual media.

Mnemonic

Working with archives: Now is the time to preserve the future

> *"The verification, documentation, analysis and categorisation of records of human rights violations committed by all parties as part of the Syrian war is a prerequisite to achieve any form of transitional justice and to ensure proper engagement with the history of this uprising in the years to come."* (Mnemonic)

NAWA's last decade has been marked by a long series of popular upheavals and armed conflicts. These violent events were largely documented by citizens using smartphones to record incidents and uploading them to social media platforms. Millions of media items now have the potential to incriminate state and non-state actors. But what if these were lost?
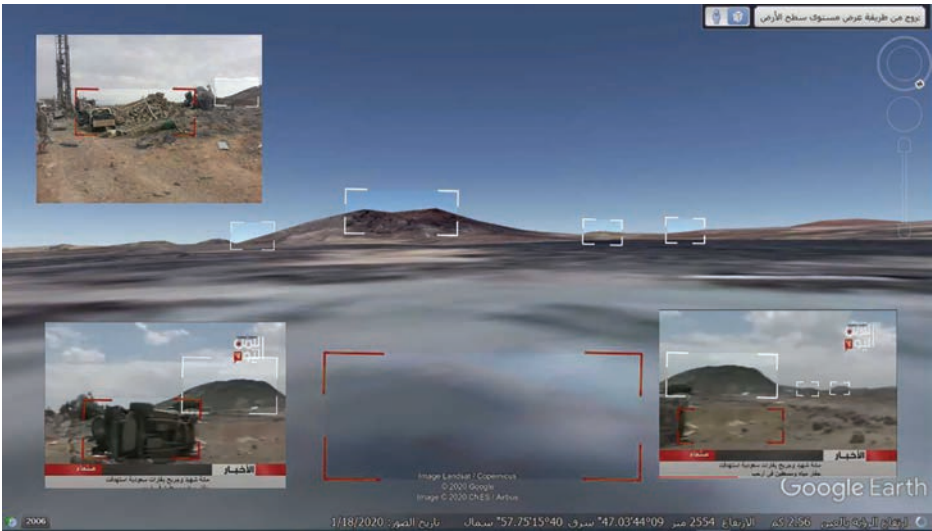
Mnemonic brings together human rights defenders, archivists, technologists, and open-source investigators devoted to maintaining, memorializing, and valorizing publicly accessible material on human rights abuses. For this purpose, Mnemonic engages in activities on multiple fronts. First, it archives digital information to ensure that potential evidence is not lost and remains accessible and usable for future accountability mechanisms. Second, the organization trains human rights defenders to maximize the impact of digital information and empower those working with it.

In two of their recent flagship collaborations, the Yemeni and Sudanese Archives, Mnemonic's team aimed to transfer the knowledge and skills acquired through their successful Syrian Archive model, to document violence committed by the military junta against protestors in Sudan, and human rights violations committed by the different parties of the war in Yemen.

→ **Yemeni Archive investigation**
Bombing a water rig in Sana'a governorate

↓ Geolocation techniques used to locate the incident

Democracy at Risk

Media security and plurality
·
Internet shutdowns
·
Election monitoring

Asia-Pacific · Latin America and the Caribbean
North-Africa and Western Asia · Sub-Saharan Africa

Digital Rights Foundation

Cross-country collaborations by Pakistan's leading civil rights defenders

"Under the Check Global program, Digital Rights Foundation has been able to conduct digital security training workshops with human rights defenders in Pakistan and India to enhance resources for digital safety in the South Asian context, thus expanding advocacy and programming at a regional level."
(Digital Rights Foundation)

In Pakistan, Digital Rights Foundation supports activists and independent journalists, peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. They advocate for safe practices online and work to equip activists and journalists with digital security measures, through training and toolkits.

The Digital Rights Foundation's cross-country digital safety training for journalists and activists in South Asia is a perfect example of a collaborative initiative among organizations working to tackle similar issues, thus showing the potential and high impact of cross-border collaborations.

Chambal Media

India's first rural media network

"Through Check Global's mentorship, access to digital safety training and support to create our first toolkit for rural women and girls, Chambal Academy has been able to strategically move one step further in achieving its mission." (Chambal Media)

Chambal Media's mission is to bring the perspectives and involvement of women on the margins into the digital revolution in India.

Research and experiences of journalists show disturbing trends of online violence against journalists, particularly aimed at undermining public trust in fact-based and public interest journalism. Because of their race, caste, sexual orientation and religion, some women journalists face even more frequent and vitriolic attacks; Chambal Media seeks to strengthen their understanding of digital security, and they've achieved this through the creation of a digital safety toolkit for rural women and girls.

Rappler
2022 Philippine election investigation:
Female candidates Leni Robredo, Sara
Duterte face gendered attacks online

With this initiative, now, if a woman notices even one other woman getting online education, she will want her own daughter to learn online too.

Chambal Media
A still from the Chambal Academy
introductory video

Rappler

Driven by uncompromising journalism

"The long-term impact of our fact-check mentorship program is the knowledge and skills that the mentees gained and will continue to use in verifying news and campaigning for what is true." (Rappler)

"The battle for facts needs the collective strength of groups and individuals promoting truth in the public space and exacting accountability from those who harm it with lies." (Rappler)

Headed by Nobel laureate Maria Ressa, Rappler is a leading independent media organization in the Philippines known for its hard-hitting and investigative journalism.

In the months leading to the Philippines national elections in May 2022, and with Meedan's support under the Check Global program, Rappler started several programs, including webinars, online mentorship training, a fellowship program, and a media information literacy series, aimed at building a culture of fact-checking and a community around fighting disinformation.

In 2022, over 120 media organizations, civil society groups, business organizations, and research and legal groups banded together to form #FactsFirstPH, a first-of-a-kind initiative that aimed to debunk dubious claims online, make facts spread faster and farther than hate and lies, flag disinformation narratives and actors, and hold online perpetrators accountable.

Fundacíon Karisma

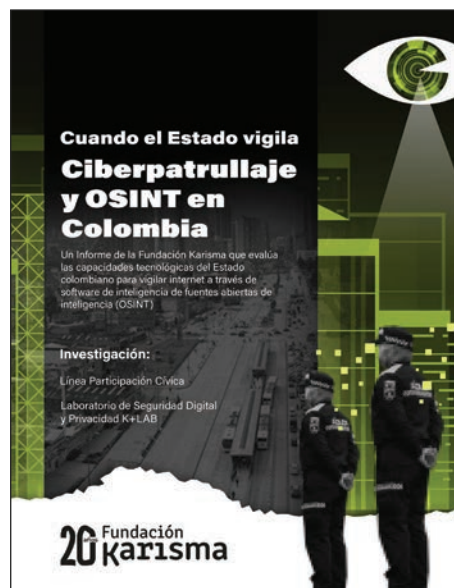**Ensuring digital technologies protect human rights and promote social justice**

"During 2022, with the support of Meedan, we were able to strengthen the capabilities in digital security with a focus on protection in the context of protests and demonstrations. These training sessions paid special attention to the issue of cyber patrolling carried out by the government in the context of the 2021 strike, in order to generate correct recommendations for the participating people who are effectively part of the population that the K+Lab intends to impact." (Fundacíon Karisma)

Fundación Karisma is a Colombian civil society organization that aims to protect and promote human rights and social justice in relation to the design and use of digital technologies.

Their focus is to increase the capacity of activists and journalists to exercise their rights in an increasingly monitored environment. Through the Check Global program, they created a methodology to explain the risks of cyber patrolling during protest, and shifted to support journalists and grassroots social organizations in territories of environmental importance through workshops, communications and legal advice. Through a digital security awareness workshop, they strengthened the organization's internal process and increased its digital capabilities in personal and day-to-day scenarios.

→ Fundacíon Karisma
When the state is watching: Cyber patrol

FactSpace West Africa

Closing digital/misinformation literacy gaps on the continent

"Check Global continues to play an instrumental role in our evolution as an organization by directly sustaining our work streams - fact-checking, pursuing investigations and training. We launched our flagship project in Ghana and are now expanding across four countries in West Africa."
(FactSpace West Africa)

FactSpace West Africa is a research and fact-checking organization working to curb the spread of mis/disinformation and propaganda and to close the digital literacy gap in the region. They produce fact-checks and informative multimedia posts for publication on various platforms, and conduct training on misinformation, fact-checking and verification for key groups such as social media influencers and media regulators in West Africa.

They have taken part in a collaborative project on fact-checking disinformation triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and in the first live fact-checking initiative of a presidential address in Ghana.

Under the Check Global program, the FactSpace West Africa team worked with the European Digital Media Observatory and Africa Check to deliver virtual training programs for participants from a dozen African countries. They partnered with the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions to facilitate a regional training for Electoral Commission officials from The Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In partnership with the International Fact-Checking network, the team also trained editors and journalists in Liberia and Sierra Leone and launched fact-checking networks in both countries that would work collaboratively to tackle mis/disinformation during elections in 2023.

Watching Western Sahara

Countering news blackholes and military occupation

"Watching Western Sahara continues to equip Sahrawi human rights defenders, journalists and activists with the digital skills and tools to document everyday human rights exactions in their communities." (Watching Western Sahara)

Western Sahara's more than 40-year conflict is also one of the world's most invisible crises. A team of activists are committed to fighting state-sponsored disinformation in this news blackhole.

In addition to its investigative and fact-checking work, Watching Western Sahara held, with support from the Check Global program, the 17th edition of FiSahara, its annual human rights film and cultural festival, in October 2022 in the Sahrawi refugee camps near the Algerian city of Tindouf. The multidisciplinary event combines culture, the arts and journalism to share ideas and insights and run workshops related to human rights and news verification.

Watching Western Sahara has also held several side events and workshops for Sahrawi women, activists and international journalists focusing on how to work collaboratively to cover human rights violations inside the Morocco-occupied part of the Western Sahara, a territory closed to human rights monitors and international journalists that Reporters without Borders calls a "news black hole."

FiSahara Film Festival 2022
Photo credit ©Gonzalo Cases

FiSahara Film Festival 2022
Program cover

❤️ Gender

Violence against women
·
Hate speech
·
LGBTQ+
·
Offline communities

**Asia-Pacific · Latin America and the Caribbean
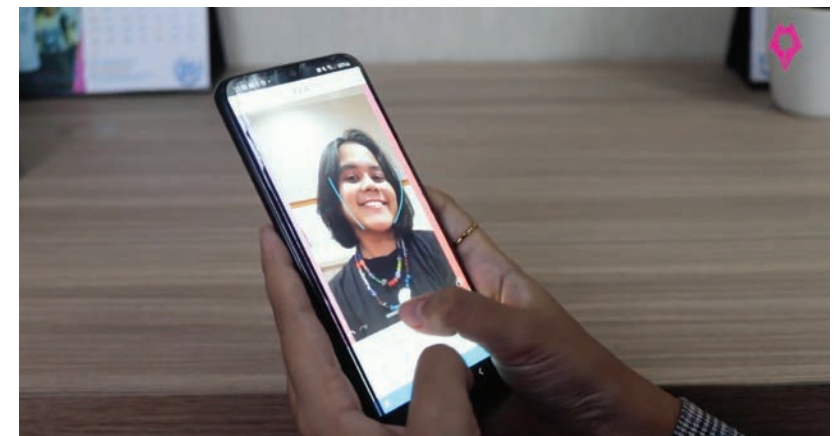North-Africa and Western Asia · Sub-Saharan Africa**

Magdalene

Indonesia's feminist publication

"The media's constant portrayal of 'ideal beauty' and comparisons of body image greatly impact people's perceptions of their appearance." (Magdalene)

In a context where there is a lack of media organizations that cover issues from a feminist perspective, Magdalene's work and stories intend to empower women in a patriarchal society. The publication provides content and perspectives that are inclusive, critical, empowering and entertaining.

Under the Check Global program, Magdalene investigated misinformation related to beauty on social media throughout 2022. Their project, titled "Beauty and Technology", highlighted the intersection of technology and body image. As part of this project Magdalene produced content that looks at the impact of influencers and beauty filters on users' self-esteem. "Beauty and Technology" is the second of two Magdalene projects in partnership with Meedan. Magdalene's first project, Breaking Bias, addressed gender biases that impact women in the workplace, education, medicine, technology, financial sector and public spaces.

Magdalene
A still from their video about technology and our obsession with beauty

Sadbhavana Trust

Developing leadership among marginalized and minority groups

"Existing leadership models are limited in their approach, focusing primarily on skill building, without any perspective-building component. We are developing the leadership skills of young women from marginalized communities so that they can work with their communities beyond a restricted number of stereotyped issues, and challenge dominant narratives."
(Sadbhavana Trust)

A community based non-profit in India, Sadbhavana Trust works with Muslim women and adolescent girls in lower-income areas in the old city of Lucknow. It is a women-led organization focused on building capacities for women in non-traditional skills such as filmmaking.

Sadbhavana Trust's most recent online event on women in politics in India highlighted some of the struggles of women entering this male dominated sphere. Their project aims to conduct interviews with local women leaders to better understand the experiences and challenges they face, with the objective of encouraging more women to take up such leadership roles. A challenge that they encountered during this project was to get women leaders to speak about their experiences on camera. Such was the fear and resistance from the patriarchal society that Sadbhavana Trust members had to recalibrate their strategy to ensure that they could capture voices of women without putting their security at risk.
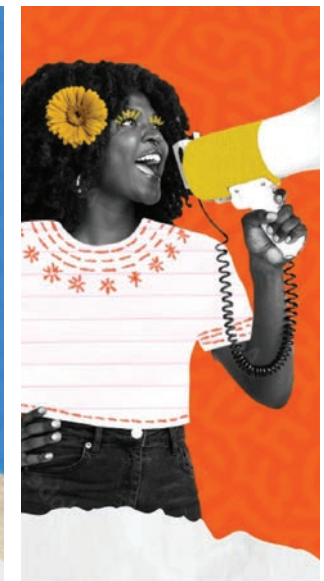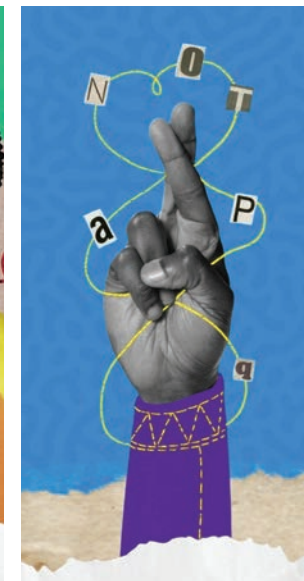
Chicas Poderosas

Promoting equity and inclusion in the media in Latin America and neighboring countries

"We believe that changing the narrative in the media does not only mean highlighting certain voices, but also requires a paradigm shift and the creation and preservation of personal and collective stories to sustain the memories, present and future, of lives and voices that are still invisible." (Chicas Poderosas)

Chicas Poderosas is one of Meedan's longest-standing partners under the Check Global program in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Their mission is to transform the media so it becomes more representative and inclusive. Their MOOCs address a wide range of issues from employment and funding opportunities during the pandemic to journalism and project management. These online courses have been designed for women who work in the media and journalism fields so they can acquire and strengthen their leadership skills and learn from professional practices of other women leaders. Chicas were able to reach over 2,000 women through these MOOCs.

This year, in partnership with Meedan, Chicas Poderosas developed a third MOOC focused on financial sustainability, fundraising, project management, collaborative leadership, and anti-colonial narratives. This course is aimed at Spanish and Portuguese speakers, particularly women, indigenous people, people of African descent, migrants, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, activists, and people with disabilities.

Chicas Poderosas
Illustrations from the latest virtual course #DiversidadesAlMando

Africa Women Journalism Project (AWJP)

Amplifying the voices of female journalists

"We are working to create interventions that will change newsroom cultures and practices on the continent towards the retention and advancement of women journalists and sustained evidence- and data-based journalism." (Africa Women Journalism Project)

AWJP was set up with support from the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) by ICFJ Knight Fellow Catherine Gicheru in July 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. AWJP first focused on highlighting the impacts of the pandemic on women, children and other marginalized and under-represented groups. It also provides support, training and mentorship to women journalists on the continent to push for sustained in-depth and evidence-based reporting on gender and other under-reported issues.

AWJP
Womens story: VERBAL ABUSE:
The toxic words that destroy...

AWJP is conducting workshops on reporting around gender-based violence. They have adopted Meedan's monitoring and evaluation toolkit for their own use, and set up internal impact metrics based on this. Our team has also worked with AWJP on capacity building efforts, including project management and communication tools, which has allowed them to continue working seamlessly as a team.
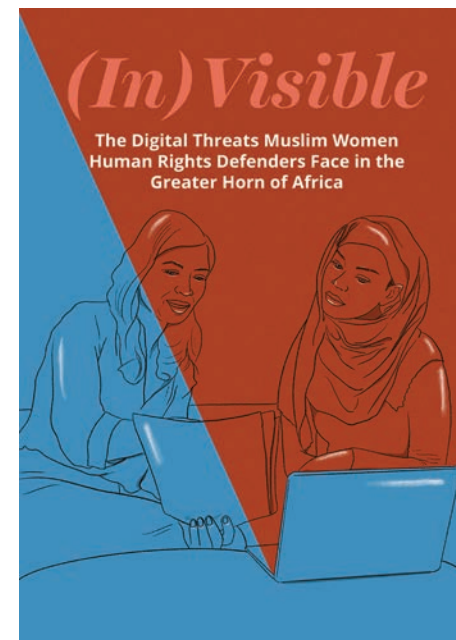
Pollicy

Working at the intersection of data, design and technology

"Pollicy continues to spark debate through researching how the internet will affect the future of work, particularly for African workers. African feminists now have access to crucial spaces for advocacy and movement building, thanks to the rise of the internet and social media as important platforms for social justice activism." (Pollicy)

Pollicy is an award-winning feminist civic technology collective in East Africa whose work and research spans across the use and implementation of data and technology to engineer social change. For the collaboration under Check Global, Pollicy focused its activities on countering online violence against women working both in mainstream (print, TV, and radio) and alternative media (bloggers, YouTubers, influencers, podcasters).

Over the past year, Pollicy has worked to explore the application of creative multimedia to address new risks and challenges in the hybrid workplace, including digital safety and security and gender discrimination. Their work on this subject is contributing to media independence, responsible journalism and freedom of expression in Uganda.

Pollicy
(In)Visible report exploring the threats Muslim women human rights defenders face while working on gender and family law in the Greater Horn of Africa.

Debunk Media

Covering people, politics and pop-culture

"Debunk Media is founded on the premise that every society deserves good stories — stories which we use to make sense of the lofty, the mundane, and everything in-between."
(Debunk Media)

Debunk Media is a Nairobi-based independent media house whose work includes data-driven storytelling around major issues in society cutting across the three P's - People, Politics and Pop Culture.
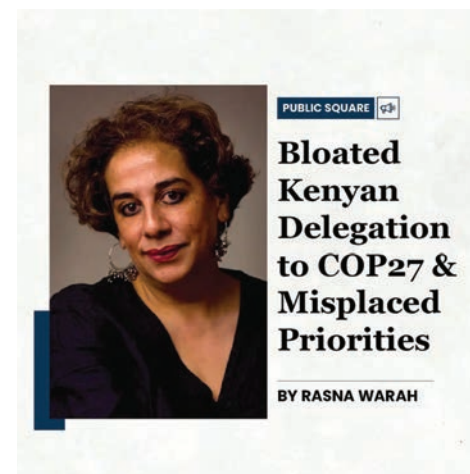
Debunk Media's work covers marginalized sections of the population, including women, intersex persons and young people. Their content encourages the public to think broadly about the place of these groups in Kenyan society, which in-turn informs their overall editorial approach.

Through its collaboration under Check Global, Debunk Media designed an election-focused podcast series to capture the personal stories of women who were running for office, joining the campaigns of these candidates and capturing all the nuances of their political life. Through these interviews and observations, the podcast episodes offered valuable insights into the milestones and challenges that women politicians encounter, especially during the super-charged political years such as during general elections.

Debunk Media mobilized their team to report on election day in Kenya, choosing to use on-ground monitoring of election activities to provide intricate details of the election by setting up a roving newsroom.

→ **DeBunk Media**
Public Square: Intellectual takes, wild stories, introspective reflection and thoughtful opinion on everything People, Politics, Pop-Culture or simply Debunked.

Misinformation

Digital Information Equity
·
Health
·
Environmental
·
Political
·
Social

**Asia-Pacific · Latin America and the Caribbean
North-Africa and Western Asia · Sub-Saharan Africa**

VERA Files

Creative formats to debunk health misinformation

"The comic book reflects how incredibly popular health misinformation is in the Philippines, even before the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not to shame, but to educate netizens, and more importantly, friends and families." (VERA Files)

VERA Files, a long-term partner of Meedan and a signatory of the International Fact Checking Network, adopted different means to address misinformation including fact-check training. Their work highlights the need to use various and creative media formats to make fact-checked content accessible and make the serious task of debunking falsehoods interesting. A comic book to address health misinformation is one such initiative.

Accessible in English, Filipino and Cebuano, VERA Files' comic book is a testament to the importance of presenting verified content in a fun and digestible way for readers to better understand how health misinformation can lead to life threatening situations.

VERA Files
Comic handbook on fighting health misinformation

Animal Político

Championing climate conversations and countering climate misinformation

"An essential contribution of Check Global to the Animal Político editorial team was in the analysis of what is happening with Energy Reform in Mexico in comparison to the processes of other countries and how these discussions take place in the public arena. These external examples are relevant because they illustrate how information is shared and how it contributes to the decision-making process around climate issues."

(Animal Político)

Animal Político is a leading digital journal focused on fact-checking environmental misinformation in Mexico and Latin America, publishing articles and videos to combat misleading scientific information and state corruption through new multimedia narrative formats.

The climate crisis and its consequences are often overshadowed by other issues and are therefore not on the mainstream public agenda nor a priority for the government. The collaboration with Check Global aimed at drawing more attention and generating interest around climate disinformation, through producing explainers and relatable content. The editorial team delivered high-quality content to the audience on how climate change issues impact everyday lives and how the scarcity of factual information has stronger effects on women and minority groups.

Taiwan FactCheck Center

Addressing misinformation among migrant communities

"There is a large Filipino community in Taiwan with over 159,000 migrant workers here. For Taiwan FactCheck Center, it was difficult to reach the Filipino community on our own because of the language and the cultural gap. However, promoting the VERA tipline on Viber, gave us an opportunity to reach out to this community and work with them." (Taiwan FactCheck Center)

During large events such as elections, misleading claims and conspiracy theories infiltrate immigrant and diaspora communities through messaging apps and social media platforms. With little or no access to factual and verified information, it can be challenging for these communities to find trusted messaging sources.

Taiwan FactCheck Center worked with VERA Files in the Philippines on a collaborative project to address misinformation among Filipino migrant and diaspora communities in Taiwan. The project focused on Taiwan FactCheck Center promoting the VERA Files tipline among migrant communities in Taiwan so that they could access verified news and fact-checked content from their home countries during crises.

VERA Files and Taiwan FactCheck Center
A brochure promoting the VERA Files tipline and explaining how to use it.

The Centre for Innovation and Technology (CITE)

Holding power to account and training future female fact-checkers

> *"Check Global helped us create Funda, our MOOC where we conduct hybrid training and workshops. The team also challenged us to provide quality health fact-checking content that will engage with CITE's audiences and at the same time attract new audiences."* (The Centre for Innovation and Technology)

CITE is a digital advocacy and media organization based in Zimbabwe working with media and civil society in the country to disseminate critical information on current affairs, ensure accountability, and enable citizens to fully participate in democratic processes.

Their work focuses on fighting misinformation in Zimbabwe, live streaming council meetings in Bulawayo for the public record, and training journalism students on data journalism, fact-checking and open source investigation tools. They also developed a Promise Tracker that the public can use to debate, critique and hold their elected officials to account. They have also integrated Meedan's flagship product Check into their newsroom workflow to help them address misinformation and disinformation effectively and efficiently.

Inform Africa

Capacity building of local media to combat disinformation

> *"Since the Check Global program's launch, HaqCheck has produced and shared weekly recaps and monthly trend analyses of dis/misinformation on its platforms, as well as a weekly newsletter distributed to various media institutions and professionals throughout Ethiopia."* (Inform Africa)

Inform Africa is a hub for digital rights, media research and development in Ethiopia. They collaborate with local media houses on fact-checking, digital rights advocacy, media literacy training, research, and development.

They run HaqCheck, a multilingual fact-checking initiative, and have established, with support from Check Global, an internship program to train fact-checkers in Ethiopia. Their goal is to develop a variety of media development and capacity building activities to enable journalists and fact-checkers in Ethiopia to counter disinformation.

Inform Africa
HaqCheck fact-check example:
A Facebook page posted two images claiming that Eritrean troops were destroying forests in Adiyabo, a locality in the northwestern zone of Tigray bordered by Eritrea.

HaqCheck looked into the images and confirmed that the pictures don't support the claim. The images were first posted on different websites on Mar 26, 2019, and Mar 27, 2021, respectively.

Fact-checking tiplines on messaging services

Meedan's Check tiplines are designed to make it easy for fact-checking newsrooms to create conversational bots to meet audiences on messaging services and collect messages, videos and audio files, questions and claims directly from users who experience misinformation.

Fatabyyano

Fatabyyano is a fact-checking initiative that verifies Arabic-language content online and debunks fake news spreading on social media and messaging apps. Meedan's recent collaboration is an important milestone as this is the first Check tipline made for an Arabic speaking audience. With over one million followers on Fatabyyano's social media accounts and millions in audience reach, Check's tipline will help improve Fatabyyano's work, including direct end-to-end encrypted communication with followers requesting trusted information.

Kinan
An advert for Kinan, a tipline that was launched by Fatabyyano in response to the huge flow of mis/disinformation after the earthquake in Turkey and Syria.

Distributing fact-checks and claims to third parties through Shared Feeds

Shared Feeds are designed to aggregate both fact-checks and claims from existing tiplines into a feed of information that can be delivered to a third party organization.

#FactsFirstPH – Philippines General Elections, March 2022

11 teams from media and academia led by Rappler launched tiplines on Facebook Messenger, Twitter, and Viber in February 2022. The teams created a Shared Feed to share data with one another and create a shared layer of knowledge about trending misinformation. If one organization detected any viral misinformation from their own audience, all organizations in the network would instantly be aware of it, helping them create fact-checks for their own audience. The collective published 1,271 fact-checks between February and July 2022 to their respective tipline (visible on the consortium website #FactsFirstPH).

#FactsFirstPH
View the consortium website here

Shared Feeds

#FactsFirstPH

FACT CHECK: Kris Aquino Didn't Say Filipinos Owe Their Freedom To Dad Ninoy During Leni-Kiko Rally
by **OneNewsPH** – Published on March 29, 2022

FALSE: Participants in CNN PH presidential, VP debates given questions in advance
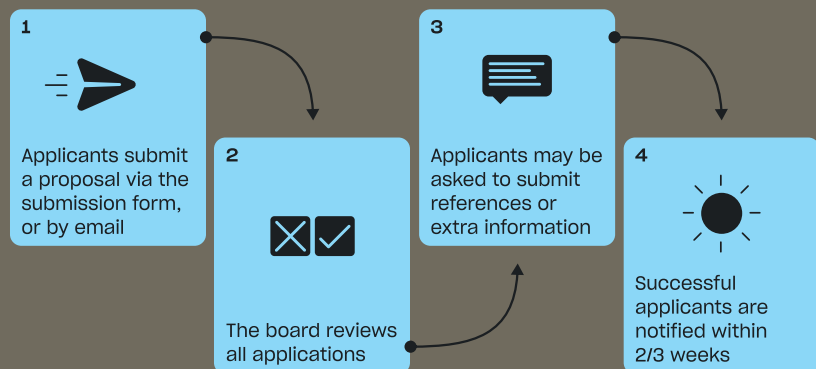by **Rappler** – Published on April 24, 2022

FALSE: NPA rebels surrendered to president-elect Marcos Jr.'s administration
by **Baguio Chronicle** – Published on June 27, 2022

Independent Media Response Fund

The Check Global Independent Media Response Fund is designed to respond to the hyperlocal needs of media practitioners, independent media newsrooms, fact-checking groups, citizen journalism projects, human rights defenders, researchers and technology and digital literacy advocates in in North Africa and Western-Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Asia-Pacific region.

The fund makes available micro-grants of up to $5,000 for individuals, and up to $15,000 for collectives and organizations.
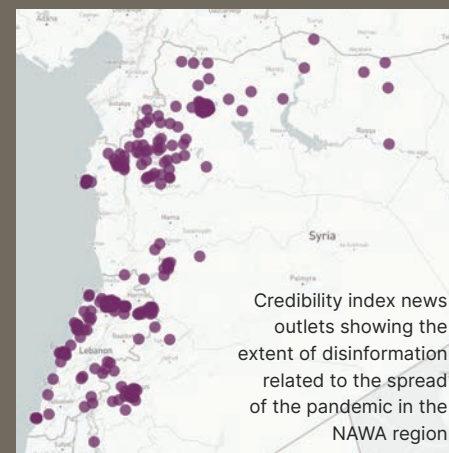
Funding process

1 Applicants submit a proposal via the submission form, or by email

2 The board reviews all applications

3 Applicants may be asked to submit references or extra information

4 Successful applicants are notified within 2/3 weeks

Learn about the application process and eligibility criteria for the Check Global Independent Media Response Fund

Timeline of funds

2017-ongoing

Credibility index news outlets showing the extent of disinformation related to the spread of the pandemic in the NAWA region

NAWA Newsroom

Since 2017 and through the NAWA newsroom, the Check Global program has trained hundreds of journalism students in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Palestine, Egypt, Sudan, and Libya on a variety of skills and topics, including investigative journalism, verification tools, and media monitoring. Subsequently, students were offered microgrants, internships and the opportunity to publish their work on regional media outlets.

★ **103 Students**

2017-2021

NAWA Investigative Fund

The fund supported a new generation of digital investigative journalists in the NAWA region by providing microgrants for investigative work across all media formats. The fund focused on investigative journalism that looks deeper into the region as a whole, and considers the global impacts of events since the 2011 uprisings until today.

★ **38 Grantees**

Independent Media Response Fund

COVID-19 Microgrants Fund

The grants were aimed at supporting fact-checking and verification projects, local watchdog initiatives, documentation of the local reality under quarantine, just after the WHO announced the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic.

⭐ **24 Grantees**

Beirut Port Explosion Response Fund

As an example of how Meedan resoponds to crisis, we reallocated Check Global program funds to support journalists, organizations and students affected by the explosion in Beirut's pier districts, helping them to continue to operate.
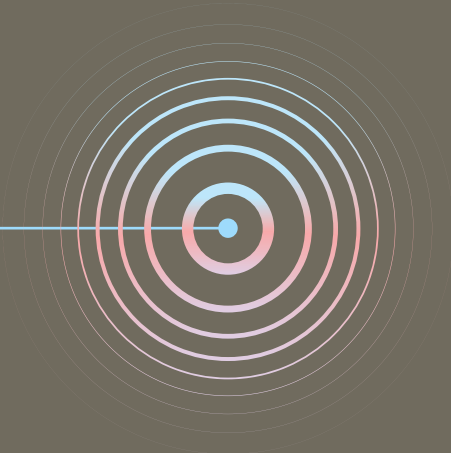
⭐ **4 Grantees**

2023 Climate Misinformation Call

This call was designed to respond to the hyperlocal needs of media practitioners, independent media newsrooms and fact-checking groups eager to tell stories about their communities and how climate change has changed their lives, exacerbated hunger and disease, and created obstacles for their growth.

⭐ **29 Grantees**

Earthquake Crisis Response Fund

As part of our commitment to improving safe and equitable access to quality information during moments of crisis, we launched a Turkey and Syria Earthquake Response Fund to provide urgent support to fact-checking organizations delivering essential information to communities impacted by the earthquake.

⭐ **3 Grantees**

Check Global

Dr. Dima Saber
Program & Impact Director

Shalini Joshi
Asia-Pacific Director
Network and Training

Eric Mugendi
Program Manager
Sub-Saharan Africa

Haramoun Hamieh
Program Manager
North-Africa and Western-Asia

Sneha Alexander
Program Manager
Asia-Pacific

Isabella Barroso
Former Program Manager
Latin America and the Caribbean

Reina Angoujard
Monitoring and Evaluation /
Communications Manager

Kipp Jones
Senior Graphic Designer

Meedan

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