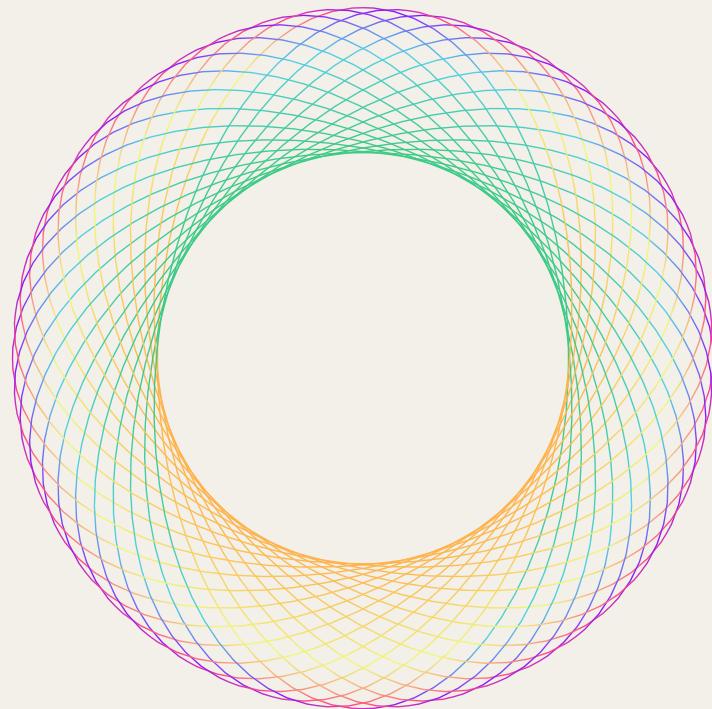


CHECK GLOBAL



Interim Report 2022
Executive Summary



By Dr. Dima Saber, Dr. Jerome Turner
and Reina Angoujard

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Foreword by the Check Global Director

It has been another great year for our Check Global Program! A lot has happened, and there were many lessons learned, which I hope this report does a good job of describing.

I thought a lot about what my foreword should focus on, as my entire team worked really hard to pull together all the metrics and qualitative assessments to describe in only a handful of pages the amazing results of the past year.

Self, team, and community care is the main thread that kept coming to my mind.

There are several reasons why this makes sense: we work in extremely unstable ecosystems; our partners are at the forefront of the battle for equality, social justice and freedom in some of the most fraught contexts across the Global South; problems of access, accountability, misinformation, and regime-led propaganda and repression persist, and in many cases continue to worsen despite the great efforts of civil society organizations, activist groups and grassroot communities.

That being said, another important reason why community care stood out for me this year is I, we, somehow thought we were finally 'past-Covid'; we thought our team would be able to pick things up where we had left off in January 2020, that our partners would be able to reorganize in-person training sessions, to travel and reconvene for long-awaited community events, and that we would get back to the way we ran the Check Global Program before the pandemic had us change our intervention logics and program strategies.

While most of our partners have actually managed to resume their programmatic activities, I realized early on in the year that it would take our team, and our entire network, much longer to get back to 'normal'. I realized that we all still had a lot to grieve, get used to, and learn to move past. As a result, a lot of conversations we had



internally, and with our partners, have focussed over the past year on community care, mental health, vicarious trauma(s), solidarity networks and the many ways in which we can and should learn from our individual and collective experiences. A key result of these conversations was us deciding to create a new area of focus for the Check Global Program as part of our four-year planning: 'media literacy' would no longer stand as a separate core area of focus for us, but would always be, from here on, coupled with 'community engagement and care'. We still have a lot to learn about how the two go hand-in-hand: I, as the Director of a growing program still have a lot to learn on how we can reach our targets and expand our impact, while also keeping an eye on the mental and physical health of our regional program managers, our interns, students, and partners across the world. I look forward to doing that with Sida's support over the next six months of our current extension, and beyond.

Dr. Dima Saber
Program and Impact Director

Check Global VII

January 2022 – December 2022

This section presents the results to date as well as project highlights.

Results Framework to Date

In the following, we report back on the outputs achieved to date, based on the regional logframes which you can see detailed in the next section. There are six months remaining in this cost extension period; we are expecting the partners to complete, and in some cases, exceed their planned targets.

2022-2023 Indicators

45

Planned: 35

Reports, articles published by partners

38

Planned: 57

Training sessions

270

Planned: 321

Beneficiaries involved in training sessions

84,738

Planned: 2000

Records of open source content archived (reporting Human Rights violations)

300,000

Planned: 600

Sources of open source content verified and archived

393

Planned: 585

Fact checked claims

269

Planned: 268

Fact-checking, verification and debunking reports

2

Planned: 3

Research outputs

84

Planned: 104

Multimedia content

Project Highlights 2022

Independent Media Response Fund

Check Global's Independent Media Response Fund (IMRF) focused on climate misinformation, considering applications from media practitioners, independent media newsrooms, fact-checking groups, citizen journalism projects, human rights defenders, researchers, and technology and digital literacy advocates in our four regions.

Our Program Team ranked applications based on 1) Originality and Significance 2) Achievability 3) Impact and Dissemination 4) Rigor, and 5) Match to Funder. We look forward to seeing and sharing the resulting projects, including investigations and written pieces, podcasts, toolkits, awareness campaigns, offline training, and digital archives.



Project: [Independent Media Response Fund](#)



Blog post: [Meedan supports hyperlocal efforts to tackle climate misinformation](#)

Applications

 **450+** applications received

Breakdown

 **93**

grassroot collectives

Outcome

 **29** grantees

 **68** countries

 **167**

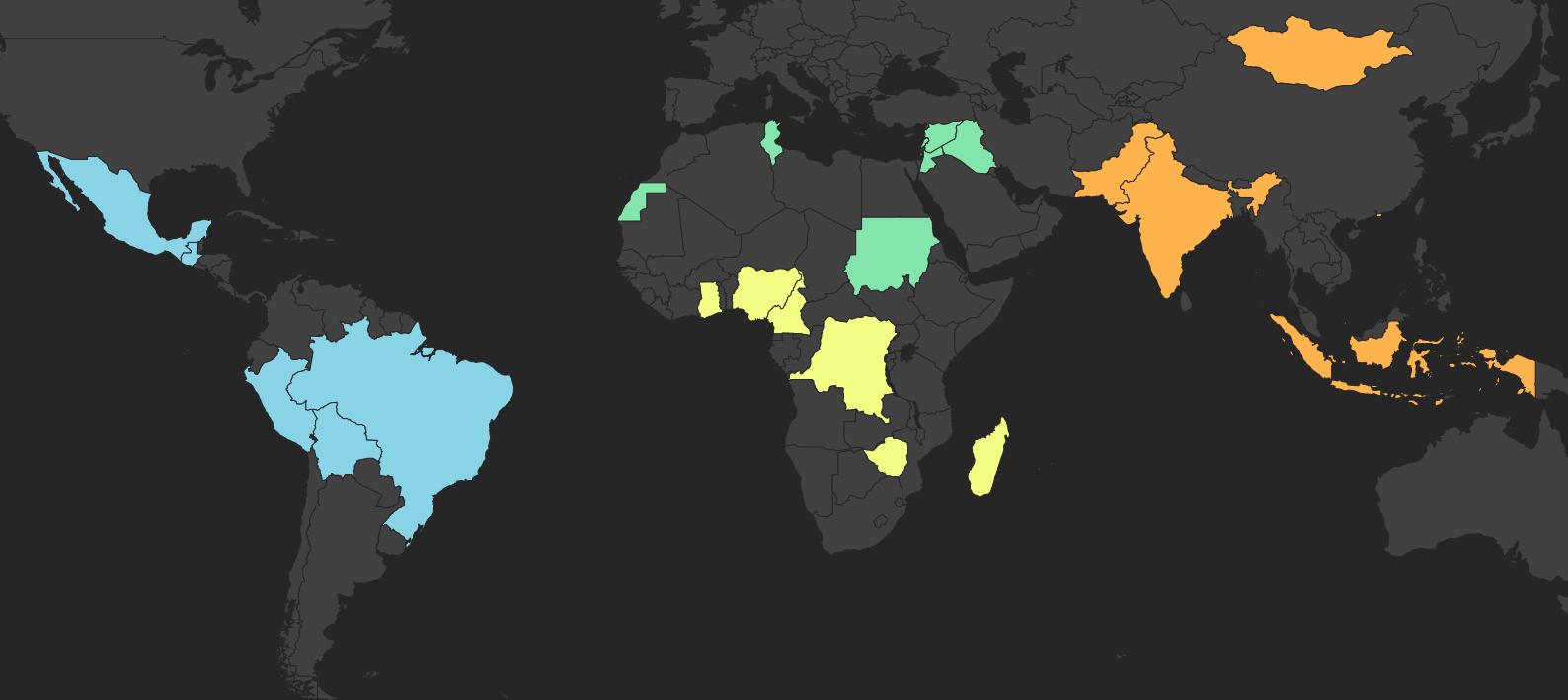
individuals

 **24** countries

 **204**

registered organizations

 **\$160,000** awarded



Countries with grantees awarded from the Independent Media Response Fund

●
Latin America &
The Caribbean

●
Sub-Saharan
Africa

●
North-Africa
Western-Asia

●
Asia-
Pacific

Analog Games/Media Literacy Pilot Project

Birmingham City University is organizing a pilot with academics at six Brazilian institutions, with shared interests in the use of offline games in education contexts. The two-day event in Rio will explore themes of media literacy and misinformation education, but through novel application of game 'playtests', workshops, re-imagining games, and role-playing games. This addresses issues of digital infrastructure and inclusion in our partner regions, but also use of games in education contexts; school teachers and pupils will participate in the event alongside researchers and game developers. The pilot is intended to develop a network and ongoing activity such as educational resources, research outputs and funding bids.

7 academic research institutions in our organizing committee

25 academic / games developer partners and participants

25 education sector attendees (including teachers and their students)

Confirma 2022, a fact checking coalition during the Brazil Elections

In preparation for Brazil's presidential election in October 2022, Meedan brought together a coalition of five fact-checking newsrooms to provide quality information to voters for a closely-contested election that ultimately needed to go to a run-off phase. The project, called Confirma 2022, was supported by funds from WhatsApp at Meta, and consisted of several broad workstreams: technology, data governance, mental health, and academic research.

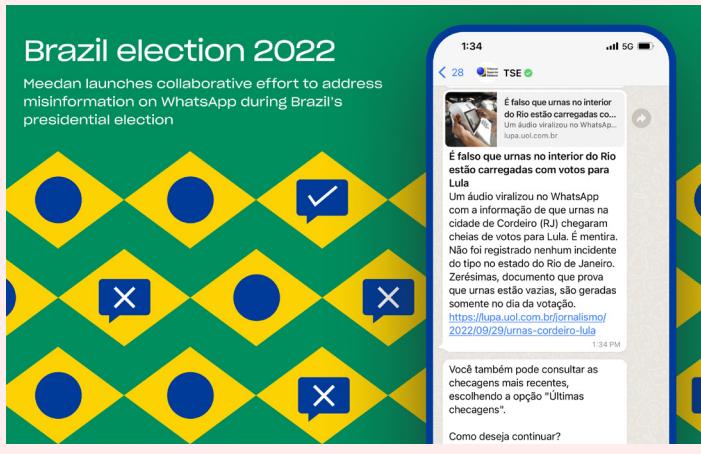
347,000 anonymous questions and requests collected across **6** WhatsApp tiplines

144,000+ fact-checks from media partners distributed through TSE's WhatsApp bot

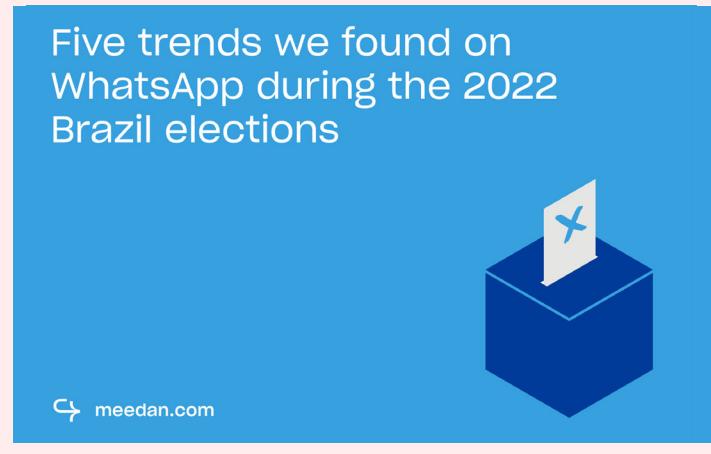
5 data processing agreements signed between Meedan and Brazilian fact-checking newsrooms

20 Brazilian journalists participated in mental health workshop

3 Brazilian academic researchers received academic grants to study election period data



Blog post: [Meedan launches collaborative effort to address misinformation on WhatsApp during Brazil's presidential election](#)



Blog post: [Five trends we found on WhatsApp during the 2022 Brazil elections](#)

Election Monitoring Project - Philippines

Anticipating a rise in disinformation in cyberspace in the lead up to the 2022 Philippines elections, Rappler worked with Meedan to launch **#FactsFirstPH**, a unique, multi-layered and multi-sectoral movement to address the problem of disinformation and harassment on social media. A first-of-its-kind initiative, over 143 groups from media, church, academia, civil society, business, and legal sectors led the work from January to July 2022, consisting of four major complimentary activities: fact-checking; widening the distribution of these fact checks; flagging disinformation narratives and actors in social media and disinformation networks; holding online perpetrators accountable. At the largest gathering of fact-checkers, Global Fact 9, the **#FactsFirstPH** coalition was **awarded Most Innovative and Impactful Collaboration** – a testament to the power of collective action.

NAWA Newsroom

Six years after its launch, the **NAWA Newsroom** continues to provide journalism students with tools and context to commit to quality journalism. The training sessions included advanced lessons on the media landscape, misinformation, open source investigations, verification tools, media trends and new technologies. After completing the training, students pitched ideas as they engaged in various activities and investigations including individual and collective projects, focusing on climate misinformation.

Through the Check Global Program, microgrants were made available to selected projects. Students from Egypt also contributed to the NAWA Media Credibility Index, annotating data on news websites in Egypt, while focusing on climate misinformation, to capture insights related to the credibility of climate-related news published by Egyptian media online.



Portraits comissioned by illustrator Amy Chiniara of this years **Newsroom team**

In 2022, NAWA Media, in collaboration with Maharat Foundation's Fact-o-meter, joined the Lebanese elections pop-up newsroom, coordinated by Maharat, and with the participation of 15 local organizations to verify claims ahead and during the elections. The collaboration aimed to give NAWA Media alumni trainees real-world experience in the context of elections and fact-checking.

27 Students

5 countries

3 articles and reports produced to date

1 major interactive study

15 local organizations involved in the pop-up newsroom

3 NAWA Newsroom alumni involved in the pop-up newsroom

Regional Evaluations

This section presents the regional assessments for 2022. The Program Managers introduce their regions by sharing what in their opinion has been the strongest takeaway from the past year relevant to their area, and we explain how the different interventions map against the global challenges we had set out to address during this reporting period.

Interventions mapped against the global challenges

Global challenge/ Region	Access to information	Democracy at risk	Big tech and media freedom	Gender equality and inequalities	Misinformation
APAC		●		●	●
LAC	●	●	●	●	●
NAWA	●	●	●	●	●
SSA	●	●		●	●



Access to information

Partners in NAWA and SSA produced in-depth, critical reports, tackling issues such as land-theft by authorities, and discrimination and violence against minority communities. One partner was enabled to focus on quality investigations, resulting in their 'most read' work of 2022; this was recognised by their audience, but also credited with awards by journalism platforms. In some of these partnerships, journalists were supported through internships and training sessions on new skills such as data reporting.

In the LAC region, access to information was provided through a new platform delivering journalism and media literacy training for hyperlocal correspondents and media activists, with an ultimate goal of eventually targeting multilingual news deserts. The themed training sessions supported college students and graduates in their professional development and networks.



Gender equality and inequalities

Many of our partners specifically address gender imbalances when designing their training activities and recruiting participants. SSA and NAWA partner workshops trained women to document human rights violations and gender violence in their communities, as well as offering other support, led by professionals from a range of disciplines. Differing in approach, one of our LAC partners created a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on journalism, project management and communication, aiming to register women and people from vulnerable minorities to use the resource.

Partners were also supported in creating content such as podcasts to address gender inequalities, such as our APAC and SSA partners exploring how women are trying to make a space for themselves in politics in those regions. Another partner investigated the intersections of beauty and technology, and the influencer culture on social media, resulting in successful articles, surveys and digital campaigns to highlight gender biases and health impacts.

Some of these activities focused on researching and documenting experiences of women. In the APAC region, one partner is conducting interviews with local women political leaders, to better understand the challenges and ultimately encourage more participation. Another partner in the SSA is instead focusing on online violence against women, addressing concerns of media independence, responsible journalism and freedom of expression.



Misinformation

Our partners combat misinformation through fact-checking work. SSA partners produced fact-checking reports and investigated the sources and trends of misinformation in their own country, but one also collaborated with international networks to address global crises and resulting misinformation. One of our LAC partners experimented with new multimedia methods of reporting their fact checks of environmental and political misinformation.

Specific technologies such as public tiplines helped to counter misinformation, as powered by Check and then deployed by one of our APAC partners; migrant workers were thus enabled to access verified news from their home countries during elections. Meedan's Product Team similarly supported a NAWA partner in creating a Facebook messenger tipline to serve their followers. Another innovative approach from APAC involved creation of a comic book on health misinformation.

Some partners addressed misinformation through training interventions. In the NAWA region, journalism students developed their media monitoring expertise by focusing on the theme of climate misinformation, with their report due in 2023. Another partner in SSA established an internship program, resulting in the participants' ongoing commitment to work with the partner on monthly trend analyses and weekly recaps of dis/misinformation.



Democracy at risk

Many of our partners are concerned by the threat to democracy during elections. APAC partners provided fact-checking platforms and tiplines to inform migrants while they were away from their home countries during elections. SSA partners addressed elections and related misinformation through: online journalism training in a dozen African countries in the lead up to elections; roving newsrooms used to monitor and live blog from polling centers; use of platforms to stream council meetings and hold authorities to account; post-election workshops, including anti-bias training.

Journalism was also protected through research, training and development of toolkits. Two APAC partners promoted safe online practices by equipping activists and journalists with digital security measures. Another partner in the LAC region delivered workshops, communications and legal advice to address the risks of cyber patrolling during protests and enable activists and journalists to exercise their rights in an increasingly monitored environment. Two of our partners in the NAWA region addressed human rights concerns through workshops and activities at events.



Big tech and media freedom

NAWA partners focused on documenting and archiving violence against protesters and human rights violations during conflicts. This was achieved through training and use of open source tools to monitor, collect, verify and annotate archive material, which then resulted in investigative reports. Another partner assisted the work by creating a model for region-wide collaborations between archivists, journalists, and technologists, applying new assistive technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and computer vision.

One of our LAC partners applied Freedom Of Information requests to address their concerns regarding the potential harms of governments using AI systems. This helped the partner improve their critical analysis of the use of these technologies in public policy, for example, in surveillance of low income people and reinforcement of structural racism and gender discrimination.

Asia-Pacific Region

Takeaways by Meedan Program Manager for APAC Region, Sneha Alexander

The projects our partners have undertaken in the region have demonstrated how it is important for our interventions to adopt hybrid - offline and online - strategies and facilitate collaborations across borders and stakeholders.

Notably, two of our fact-checking partners devised a cross-country project along with offline and online strategies to combat the spread of misinformation among the target community. This multi-partner project was also testimony to Check Global's efforts to strengthen the network and encourage partners working on similar issues to work together.

It is important for Check Global to facilitate interactions - virtual and in-person, and exchanges between partners to give way to more innovative collaborations among partners.



Sneha Alexander,
Program Manager, APAC

APAC Logical Framework

APAC Overall Goal

Strengthen democratic processes by enhancing independent and marginalized voices in the media, and by promoting gender equality in news and information creation through fact-checking, investigative reporting and content moderation initiatives.

APAC Objectives

Support women-led newsrooms to produce independent and feminist content.

Create opportunities for strengthening online security skills for journalists and activists.

Seek greater accountability from social media platforms.

Enhance media literacy skills through training and networking initiatives.

Support newsrooms and civil society in building records of human rights violations by governments and other actors.

27

Planned: 9

Reports, articles, and videos published by partners capturing current issues in the region

393

Planned: 585

Fact-check claims

148

Planned: 200

Students, journalists and activists trained in media literacy and digital security

5

Planned: 6

Media literacy and digital security training sessions

Expected in 2023

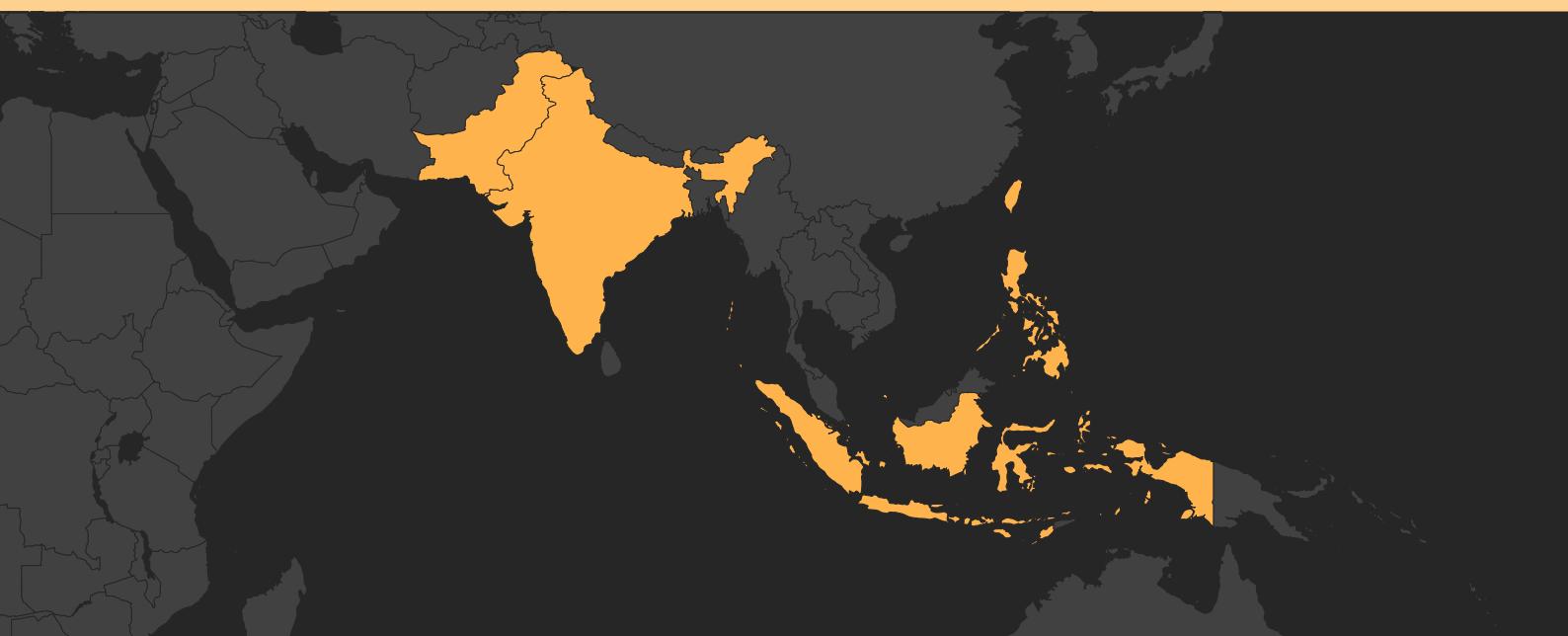
Planned: 6

Regional Check Global Network events highlighting partners' work and sharing best practices

Expected in 2023

Planned: 2

Pieces of multimedia content



Latin America and the Caribbean Region

Takeaways by Meedan Program Manager for LAC region, Isabella Barroso

The context of 2022 was a continuation of the dismantling of the democratic and progressive wave that decades before swept the region and that had a serious impact on already vulnerable communities. The misinformation and environmental extractivist industry has profited from the debilitation of the region. The Check Global Program strategy for the region was boldly designed to address challenges that, in one way or another, tackle issues such as access to information, democracy at risk, big tech and media freedom, and misinformation.

The need for care and solidarity networks and journalism focused on social justice carries on. Activists, journalists, and civil society that resisted and still do in the majority of the world's fragilized context can't be expected to perform, move and create in spite of the surmounted and constant trauma. To do so is to ignore at their expense the lessons from previous years. As a possible path to mitigate this, a diverse and sustainable funding stream must be created to guarantee direct access to trauma-informed therapy, initiatives, networks, and tools built and developed by the majority of the world.



Isabella Barroso,
Program Manager, LAC

LAC Logical Framework

LAC Overall goal

Support partners at the forefront of the battles for democracy, information and media freedom, with a focus on independent media and diverse communities, including women, LGBTQ+, periferias (urban, rural) and indigenous populations across the region.

LAC Objectives

Train the next generation of independent journalists and media activists working in news deserts and with indigenous communities on media literacy skills and tools.

Support activists and journalists' safety in the region by sharing digital security training and best practice.

Strengthen verification practices and fact checking initiatives.

Support policy making efforts as a response to misinformation.

14

Planned: 7

Training sessions on digital security, media literacy and social media archival practices

Expected in 2023

Planned: 1

MOOCs

Expected in 2023

Planned: 500

Trainees in the MOOC

60

Planned: 120

Trained journalists, activists and civil society activists on digital security, media literacy and social media archival practices

12

Planned: 12

Fact-checking, verification and debunking reports in target countries

Expected in 2023

Planned: 1

Research outputs



North-Africa Western-Asia Region

Takeaways by Meedan Program Manager for NAWA Region, Haramoun Hamieh

As the campaign to release activist and blogger Alaa Abdelfatah intensified during the COP27 climate change conference, the plight of thousands of political prisoners across NAWA was brought to light thanks to the local, regional and international efforts of journalists, grassroots activists, and civil society organizations. This testifies to the urgent need for more freedoms for citizens and journalists, and more accountability for governments.



Haramoun Hamieh,
Program Manager, NAWA

The conference shed light on the devastating impact of climate change on this region and how it is affecting communities in so many ways, from health and welfare to economic crises and security/military tensions. In the face of these recent circumstances, the Check Global NAWA team put a plan together and implemented a fast response strategy by launching in August 2022, with other regions, the Independent Media Response Fund with a focus on climate misinformation.

The NAWA Newsroom also focused in 2022 on climate misinformation, continuing its work on the Credibility Index report.

These activities, in addition to our continuous support of civil society and independent media organizations, aim to increase accountability, freedoms and to expand the informed participation of citizens in the public life and democratic processes.

NAWA Logical Framework

NAWA Overall goal

Strengthen the role of civil society and independent media organizations to seek greater accountability from governments, and the role of women and LGBTQ+ individuals for a more active participation in democratic processes, through media literacy training and access to verified information.

NAWA Objectives

Support media literacy, verification and fact-checking work and efforts.

Develop media monitoring expertise in the region.

Support civil society efforts to counter effects of big tech content moderation policies.

Strengthen the voices of women and LGBTQ+ communities through providing media literacy and fact-checking support.

Support documentation efforts of human rights violations in contexts of war and social turmoil.

NAWA Indicators & Results

1

Planned: 1

NAWA newsroom training sessions

11

Planned: 24

Training sessions

62

Planned: 12

Beneficiaries involved in training sessions

3

Planned: 10

Articles and reports produced by NAWA newsroom students after the completion of the training sessions

18

Planned: 16

Reports and articles published by partners capturing current issues in the region

8

Planned: 5

Regional Check Global Network events highlighting partners and students' work and sharing best practices

17

Planned: 8

Fact-checks

84,738

Planned: 2000

Records of open source content archived (reporting human rights violations)

300,000

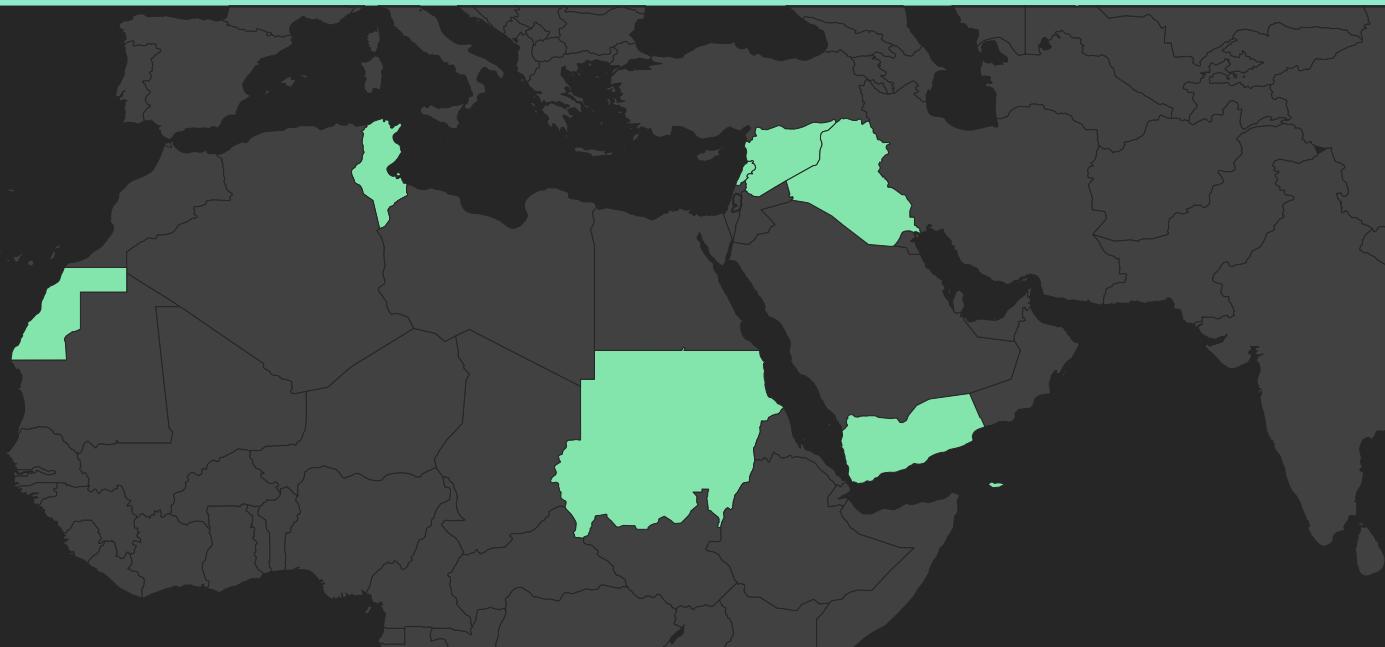
Planned: 600

Records of open source content archived (reporting human rights violations)

2

Planned: 2

Research outputs



Sub-Saharan Africa Region

Takeaways by Meedan Program Manager for SSA Region, Eric Mugendi

One key takeaway is the need to support independent media, especially organizations working in countries with limited press freedoms, because they often fill a gap that mainstream media is either unwilling or unable to address.

The organizations we work with serve audiences that are overlooked and address important challenges such as misinformation and disinformation despite their limited resources and small size, often in the face of censorship and repression from governments and other powerful actors. With our support, these organizations continue to play a vital role in promoting freedom of and access to information, providing a platform for marginalized voices, and ultimately contributing to a free and open society.



Eric Mugendi, Program Manager, SSA

SSA Logical Framework

SSA Overall goal

Enhance media and information literacy knowledge and skills across the region through supporting independent media, journalism programs, activists and human rights defenders working on open source investigations, fact checking and debunking, especially in unrepresented and underrepresented communities.

SSA Objectives

Strengthen verification and fact-checking and content moderation work by independent journalists on various platforms and in different formats across the region.

Support grassroots media organizations and independent journalists conducting open-source investigative work.

Support election monitoring initiatives by organizations working to strengthen democracy and the role of civil society in the region.

Expected in 2023

7

Planned: 10

Articles and investigations published

Planned: 19

Training sessions

240

Planned: 248

Fact-checking, verification and debunking reports

84

Planned: 102

Pieces of multimedia content

1

Planned: 1

Partners and beneficiaries involved in the election monitoring initiatives

Expected in 2023

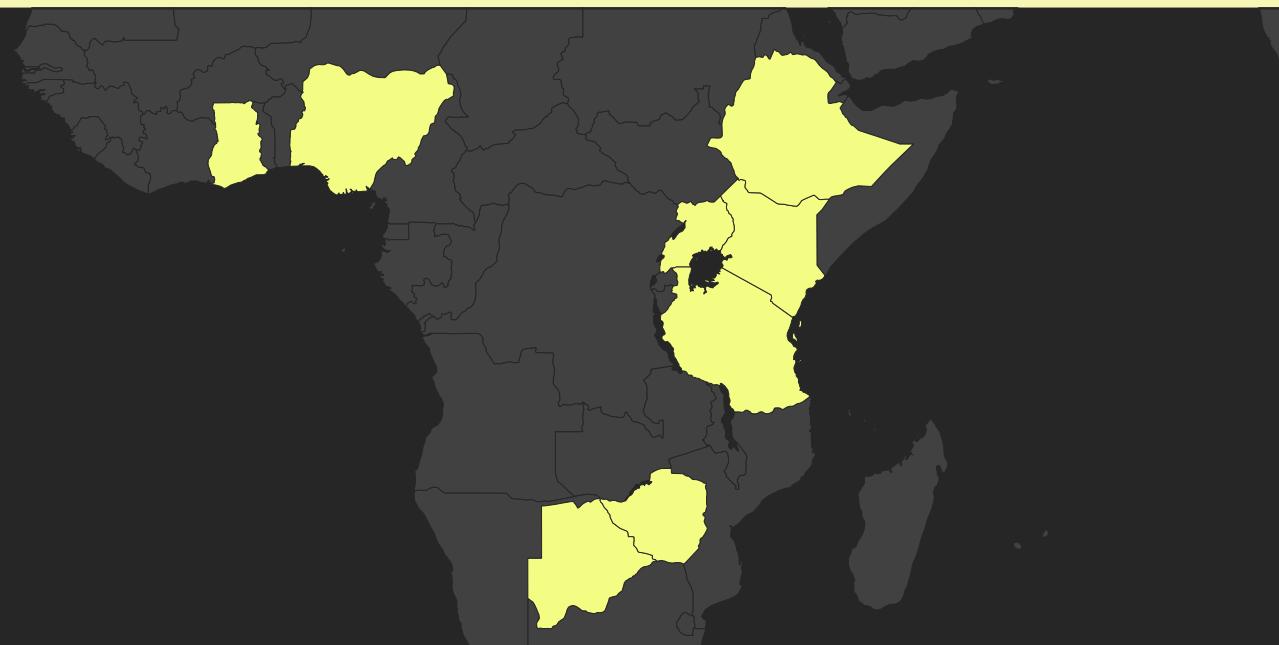
Planned: 1

Popup newsrooms

Expected in 2023

Planned: 6

Regional Check Global Network events highlighting partners' work and sharing best practices



Key challenges and mitigation strategies

The planning conversations for this phase of the project happened at a time when focus countries were going through lockdowns and restrictions, which in turn affected our partners' work, necessitating a variety of response strategies that in turn informed the goals we had set together. We are proud to have helped partners adapt deliverables and work plans.

This was also a time that saw virtual fatigue and low participation in online meetings, events and training sessions. Partners also faced staff shortages. This was exacerbated by internet connectivity issues in some cases, leading to low engagement and increasing discontent.

We supported one of our partners with sessions on grant writing and development, impact assessment and the process of applying theory of change to improve their capacity building as the team sought new core funding.

The lack of data to support reports and investigations is another widespread problem in the Global South. We already have plans to mitigate this challenge in collaboration with our existing partners and new ones.

Throughout this period, we met with our partners monthly to understand their challenges, discuss possible ways to overcome them, and offer any support to achieve the targets. This included networking and training opportunities and promoting their work, encouraging participation in online events in Meedan's network and beyond. A major way of extending our support was to highlight the work of our partners through blog posts and our Checklist newsletter, inviting them as speakers in network and knowledge sharing events around important days, and issuing statements of support during any crisis.

Overall, the partners are on track to meet, and in some cases surpass, the goals that we had set for this project phase, a testament to the commitment of the partners and the alignment between their goals and the objectives of the broader Check Global Program.

Publications

The Check Global Program Managers wrote and published **8 blog posts** in 2022, which can be found on the Meedan [website](#) and below.



Meedan supports hyperlocal efforts to tackle climate misinformation



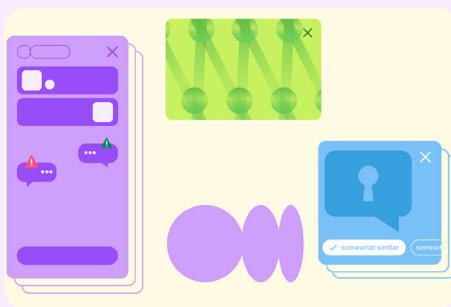
Check Global launches Independent Media Response Fund, tackles on Climate Misinformation



Chambal Media: the feminist storytellers of rural India



Entre Becos: a women led hyperlocal newsletter from the peripheries of Brazil



NAWA Newsroom 2022: Journalism students explore disinformation, open source verification tools and media monitoring



Addressing misinformation across countries: A pioneering collaboration between Taiwan FactCheck Center & VERA Files



Q&A with CITE: A Zimbabwean innovation hub tracking promises by politicians



Save Alaa Abdel-Fatah



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