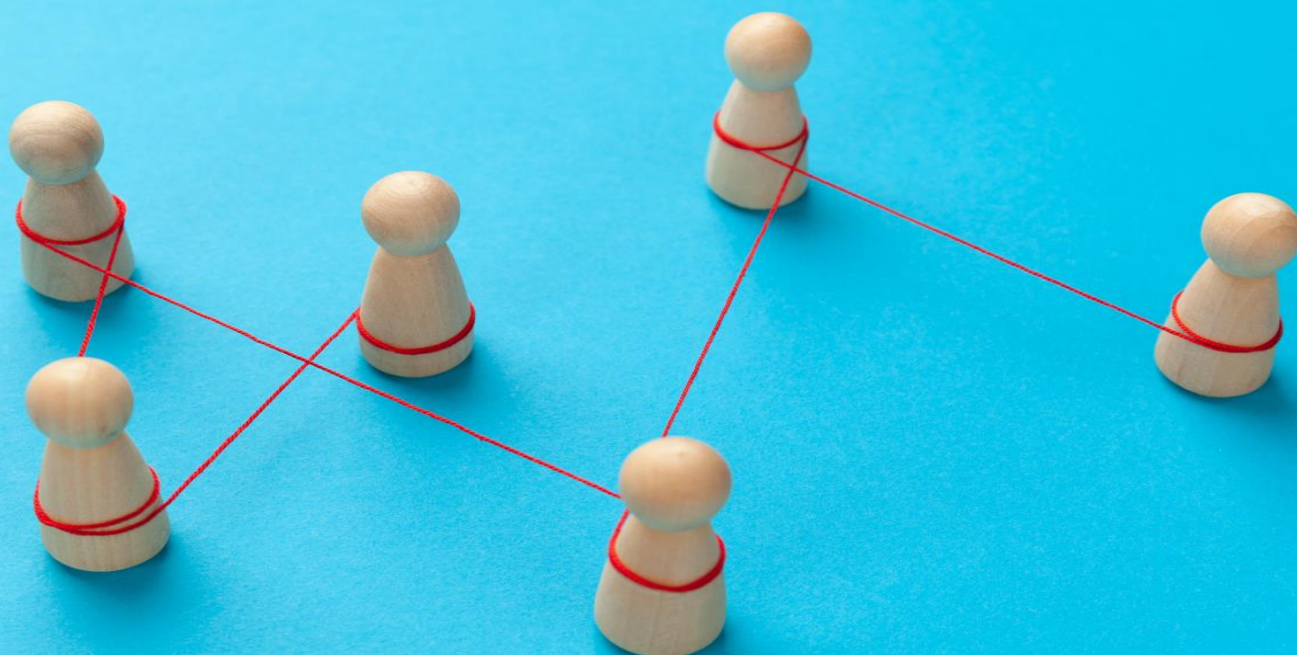


INTEGRATION OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT



Bosna i Hercegovina
Regulatorna agencija za komunikacije



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Executive Summary

With the increase in the amount of time that both children and young people spend online, as well as the number of media and platforms available and in use, the risks to which children are exposed have also increased. Some of the risks include: susceptibility to advertising messages, cyber bullying, sexual harassment or exploitation, imitation of inappropriate and/or aggressive forms of behaviour, addiction to social media, video games, and others.

There is no doubt that in the digital age, the influence of media and social media platforms on the socialization of children has grown significantly. Even though media and social media platforms have become key factors in shaping the socialization of children in the digital age, the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina has yet to fully adapt to the need for media and information literacy among students. Despite the call for education in media and information literacy from students, teachers, and parents, public institutions have been slow to respond. Their support for integrating media and information literacy into education at all levels tends to be mostly limited to statements, rather than actual implementation.

Despite the need for teachers to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to address the challenges of education and upbringing in the digital age, their formal education does not currently include a subject that would provide them with adequate training in this area. This is a significant issue as the absence of formal education in media and information literacy cannot be adequately addressed by short-term or ad hoc training.

The position of media and information literacy in the educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in stark contrast to its integration into the education systems of developed countries in Europe. The approaches and goals of media education for children and young people vary among European countries, but as a general trend, it is incorporated as a mandatory, cross-curricular subject in primary schools, and offered as an elective separate subject in secondary schools.

In the 2018 Resolution of the European Parliament on media pluralism and media freedom in the EU, member States were advised to incorporate media and information literacy into their national education systems and to enhance MIL across different groups of people through formal, non-formal and informal education, as part of a lifelong learning approach. The resolution also highlighted the importance of providing special attention to initial and ongoing teacher training.

Adding to that, a reason for education reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the inadequate level of media literacy skills of young people in the country. Despite spending a significant amount of time using digital services, they do not utilise the full media potential and lack an understanding of how to evaluate the credibility of media content. To address this, certain initiatives have been taken, such as the implementation of a course called “Digital World” for

second and third grade students in the Republika Srpska, with plans to expand this course to fourth and fifth grade students in the future.

In addition, there are plans to introduce elements of media and information literacy across subjects in high schools in the Republika Srpska. However, the integration of MIL into formal education in the decentralized education system of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is progressing at a slower pace. Recently, the Sarajevo Canton has adopted a Strategy for the Development of Media and Information Literacy in Education Systems that aims to incorporate MIL into all levels of education including pre-school, primary, secondary, higher education, and adult education programs as part of the lifelong learning system.

For the purpose of developing this document, thorough research was conducted and specifically aimed at providing a deeper understanding of the legal framework and especially the competences and obligations of relevant actors involved and with a stake in the education of children and young people in media and information literacy. This document identifies good policies and practices in other European countries, and their potential in the specific context of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Last, the document identifies the goals and tactics of the communication strategy for the inclusion of the media and information literacy in the education of children and youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina, proposing to:

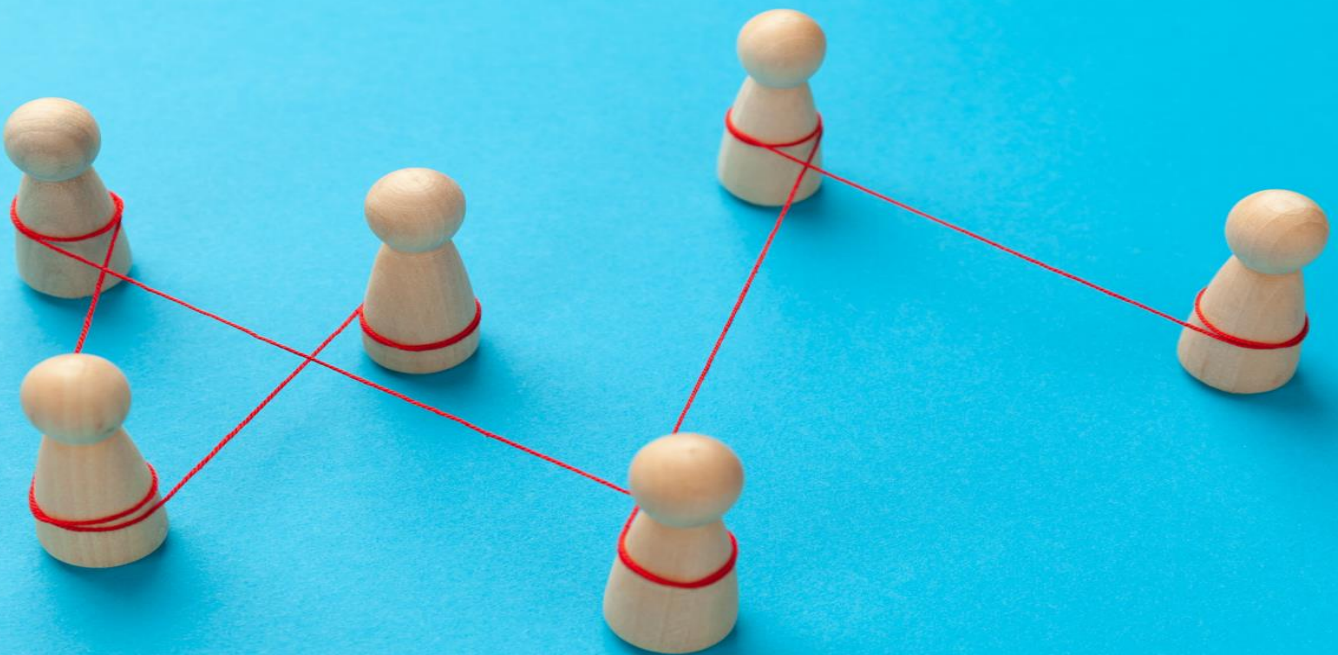
- sign cooperation agreements with educational institutions (preschool education, primary and secondary schools and faculties), in order to institutionalize cooperation;
- survey parents through the parents' councils in schools on MIL topics;
- organise a meeting with representatives of the relevant entity and cantonal ministries and pedagogical institutes in order to advocate the inclusion of MIL in curricula;
- promote research results on media habits and needs of children and young people, through organising presentations, media releases, informational materials for journalists;
- organise a workshop with librarians to inform them about the role and capacities of libraries in the information literacy of children and young people;
- hold occasional panel discussions in primary and secondary schools with students and teachers on current MIL topics;
- provide educational materials to teachers, encouraging them to discuss MIL topics with specific recommendations in classes;
- develop lesson plans for media-related lessons to language teachers;
- organise workshops in schools on specific media topics;
- engage experts to develop didactic materials on selected topics;
- equip schools with the necessary technology;
- involve a YouTuber/influencer in the distribution of key messages of specific MIL activities (not primarily in education, but in the promotion of events and activities);

- involve the media, especially public broadcasters in the production of programs in the field of MIL (such as the impact of screen time on children's development or etiquette in online communication);
- institutionalise the informal network of actors active in the field of MIL;
- continue to develop the educational site www.medijskapismenost.ba;
- promote existing specialised portals concerning MIL topics for children and young people, such as www.sigurnodijete.ba, and provide cross-referencing among web portals.

The general goal of this communication strategy is the inclusion of media and information literacy in educational systems in BiH through the curricula of existing subjects or as an independent subject by 2028. As for the tools and tactics for achieving this goal, the two crucial ones would be the establishment and institutionalization of direct cooperation with schools and advocacy with relevant ministries for the inclusion of MIL in formal education.

The purpose of this strategic document is to detect the role and capacity of numerous relevant actors in the process of media and information literacy of children and youth in BiH, mapping of good policies and practices in other European countries, defining long- and short-term goals of that process as well as proposing tactics for achieving those goals.

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