



Media Literacy with One World in Schools Methodology

**A brief overview of One World in Schools methodology
application for Media Literacy, critical thinking skills and
disinformation resilience in the context of Eastern Partnership
and Balkan countries.**

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m e m b e r o f

Alliance 2015

towards the eradication of poverty

One World in School Methodology

One World in Schools (OWIS) is an innovative teaching methodology that combines critical thinking and civic engagement with the visual power of films. It is one of the educational programmes of the organisation People in Need developed in 2001 to build on the organization's One World human rights film festival. Its vision is to contribute to the education of responsible young people who are oriented in today's world, openly and critically approach information and are empowered to become active citizens who strive for inclusive societies, democracy and human rights.

OWIS introduces range of topics via documentary films, accompanying exercises and practical projects. The core of the methodology are audio-visual materials, mostly documentary films, that tell stories about particular problem or situation. The combination of a story and audio-visual experience helps the audience to connect with the main character and with the presented issue on more emotional and empathetic and thus deeper level. Nevertheless, a film screening serves as an opening for follow-up discussion, exercises and reflection. And it is the interactive part after watching, when the stereotypes, perceptions, opinions are touched and shaken. Via the OWIS documentary film methodology, the saying "seeing is believing" becomes reality by fostering the critical thinking skills of youth and providing them with concrete examples of the power of individuals to make a change in their society. The methodology thus does not stay in the classroom but transform the passive audience experience into youth-led community projects, OWIS Film Clubs, student community leader awards, civic journalism projects and mock elections. These initiatives build on the momentum created by the OWIS films and support youth to make a change in their community via a range of actions from public awareness raising and education campaigns to local-level advocacy.

The methodology is constantly upgraded to meet changing needs by PIN's Prague-based OWIS team with emerging themes such as Media Literacy and climate change. Special emphasis is placed on the practical usability of the materials and therefore all of them are created in cooperation with educators and youth workers. Since 2001 OWIS has been used in 3 900 primary and secondary schools in Czech Republic and in 14 countries worldwide, including Serbia, Kosovo, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia.

OWIS in Media Literacy

In recent years, the dramatic growth in citizens' exposure to fake news and propaganda via social media and online sources has highlighted the need for youth to have the knowledge and tools to objectively analyse the myriad of information available. PIN recognizes that Media Literacy is a prerequisite for active citizenship and understands the critical role a media literate population plays in development of a fully democratic society. To respond to this need, PIN developed the OWIS Media Literacy program in 2016. The OWIS Media Literacy program in the Czech Republic expanded to Moldova and Serbia in 2018, and in 2020 to Georgia.

The OWIS Media Literacy program in the Czech Republic is comprehensive and covers topics such as:

- News and Journalism
- Fake news and disinformation
- Social networking and internet
- Online safety
- Advertisement and marketing
- Propaganda

Among the main activities and tools developed and used by OWIS Media Literacy department in Czech Republic are:

More than 60 audio-visual lessons and accompanying teaching materials and manuals

- <https://www.jsns.cz/projekty/medialni-vzdelavani/materialy/lekce> (in Czech, possible to Google translate the page)

“5 Questions” tool to help students determine the credibility of news plus an ongoing analysis of current news using this methodology with the analysis being published online for teachers



Educational posters - simple, attractive and eye-catching posters with various messages or rules for critical Media Literacy:



MQtester - gamified web application to measure Media Literacy on three levels for individuals as well as school classes



Monthly Media Literacy **Bulletin**, teacher **conferences and seminars**

The Media Literacy program can also include OWIS Media initiatives grants to translate the participants' heightened awareness of media activism and the role propaganda plays in public life into concrete media-related activities. Such OWIS Media initiatives can include: investigative journalism pieces, media activism, public awareness raising campaign focusing on fake news, among others.

Where and How to Apply OWIS Media Literacy?

Although the OWIS methodology is primarily designed for students within the formal education frame, it originates from the film festival and emerged along with community film clubs and found success outside the classroom via youth centres, youth clubs and grass-root organisations. The power of a story narrated via an audio-visual media does impact audience in classrooms as much as in cinemas or youth houses. Therefore, with sensitive adjustment of methods, it can be applied in a range of settings for various target groups with the objectives to enhance critical thinking skills, provide new insights into a particular issue and inspire audience to create their own activities that would contribute to positive change in their community. **Thanks to the shared experience of transformation and mutual gap in Media Literacy in EaP, Balkans Central European countries, OWIS Media Literacy has a great potential for regional projects engaging youth and educators across borders into discussions, online sharing, online media competitions and field trips.**

OWIS Media Literacy in Formal Education

OWIS Media Literacy introduced into schools has great impact thanks to 1) number of students who are exposed to the subject, 2) targeting youth with various economic, social and ethnic background included in compulsory education system, and 3) knowledge ownership by trained teachers and sustainability of the developed materials without a need for an external financial support. Moreover, continuous work of a teacher with a constant group of students creates environment for deeper impact on attitude and values and has high potential for behavioural change. OWIS Media Literacy is usually first piloted in selected schools and later on the evidence of impact can support incorporation of the methodology into national education curricula.

Currently, there is available more than **60 interactive audio-visual lessons** for Media Literacy for students aged between 7-24 years old that are easily transferrable to EaP and Balkan context. In addition, OWIS Media Literacy component can become a core of an innovative **Media Literacy school / university curricula** in order to integrate digital skills and Media Literacy into national education plans to reflect actual educational priorities and provide necessary competences that students should be equipped with. Simultaneously, OWIS Media Literacy team prepares **Training for teachers in Media Literacy and OWIS methodology** to bridge the knowledge gap of teachers and improve their teaching competences for digitalised world. This proved to be very urgent during COVID-19 when many students and teachers were forced to switch for online learning without previous experience with digital tools and knowledge of cyber security, healthy use of social media and internet.

Case study from Serbia and Kosovo: A Focus on Future Teachers

For the first time outside of the Czech Republic, PIN's OWIS program has targeted over 150 future teachers at universities in Serbia and Kosovo in 2018. By working directly with future teachers as part of their studies, PIN and partners were able to reach a wider audience of young people. The university professors and their students recognized the need to modernize their teaching via the OWIS methodology and were enthusiastic about introducing such a new approach. One participant noted *"By working with film, there are no definitive answers. Students are encouraged to think, and even more so, to think critically about any content, to be free to express their opinion. Thus, by working with film, this program prepares young people to be responsible citizens who build their opinion and are ready to hear others' opinions, to build a world in which human values such as freedom of speech, tolerance, and solidarity are respected."* As a result of PIN's initiatives, the Teacher Education Centre in Belgrade, Serbia has continued teaching the OWIS methodology using their own funds.



Alternative to integrated educational curricula are **Project Days and Media Literacy Week**. OWIS Media Literacy team prepares interactive lessons, workshops, group projects and school projects all focused on various areas of Media Literacy, adjusted to different age groups and easy to adopt by teachers. With the help of prepared materials, teachers and schools can easily organise such projects days when suitable for them. Groups projects does not stay in classrooms but rather creates an excellent opportunity for students to learn more about their community, country, communicate with relevant stakeholders and media actors and create their own projects. At the university level, students of journalism, but not only, do benefit from receiving different perspectives from documentary films available at their institutes and **cooperation with or visits to independent media and fact checking organisations**.

Case study from MOLDOVA: Aspiring Moldovan Civic Journalists Visit the Czech Republic

In 2018, PIN organized a visit to Prague for active youth journalist from the Moldova OWIS Media Literacy program. Over several days, Moldovan youth met with leading Czech civic journalists and media activists such as Demagog and HlídacíPes to learn those at the forefront of the citizen investigative journalism movement. Via hands-on trainings and site visits, Moldovan participants learned what it takes to launch successful civic journalism and media activism initiatives and how to ensure their efforts have an impact and reach a wide audience. Following the Prague visit, the Moldovan participants returned home and shared their experience in peer workshops. While it was just a start, there is more to come from the next generation of Moldovan citizen journalists.



OWIS Media Literacy in Non-Formal Education

OWIS methodology with its interactive and audio-visual components is a great asset for youth clubs, youth houses, civic society organisations (CSOs) and grass-root youth organisation. In general, non-formal educational spaces are not limited with the space and length of a school lesson, nor with the approval from regional or national education authorities to recognise Media Literacy, critical thinking and active citizenship as part of the national curricula. In addition, there is a great potential to link the passive audience experience with group projects, activism, volunteering and advocacy. The core methodological tool for non-formal education are **workshops comprising film screening, interactive exercises and group discussion**. Such workshops are highly interactive and youth-/learner-centered and require good facilitation. To maintain quality and gain intended impact, youth CSOs' facilitators receive **training of trainers in Media Literacy and OWIS methodology** together with adjusted OWIS Media Literacy toolkits that can be continuously used in following years for new groups of youth. Through **youth led media initiatives**, young people are empowered to take an active role in their communities and among their peers and transform their newly acquired knowledge into activism that benefit their communities. Within the initiatives youth groups or individuals received basic training in project cycle, ongoing support of mentors, potentially technical trainings on digital skills from media actors and financial support to realise their ideas. Thanks to such initiatives, broader group of people can benefit from the OWIS Media Literacy programme and youth gain complex experience that helps them to understand and become responsible and active citizens.

Case study from Georgia: Strengthening Democratic Resilience through youth led media initiatives

In 2020, PIN piloted OWIS Media Literacy workshops in four Georgian regions with particular focus on ethnic minorities. Young people, but also women groups and mixed aged groups, from rather remote areas participated in workshops dealing with propaganda, disinformation, marketing and

social media security. Since the major target group does not speak Georgian, they lack additional opportunities for learning and are often targeted by disinformation from Russian language media sources. The project met with a high demand for Media Literacy learning opportunities among all age groups. Groups from OWIS workshops also got financial support to create and realise a small project that targeted Media Literacy in their communities and thus multiplier their learning.

Case study from Czech Republic: “Searching for....?”

“[Searching for....?](#)” is an online initiative that combines competition with educational and debate activities targeting youth in the Czech Republic. In 2019 and 2021, PIN organized “Searching for a Journalist”. Similar to modern reality TV competition shows, there was an open competition to be selected for “Searching for....?” and selected applicants then went on to participate in workshops, had specific tasks and compete with other youth to win. Youth throughout the Czech Republic followed the competition live online and themselves were motivated to engage in civic life like the “Searching for....?” competitors.



OWIS Media Literacy Also for Public

Coming back from where OWIS methodology originates – a film festival – a wider audience can be reached through bringing the documentary films from schools and youth houses into public spaces and community cultural spaces. OWIS participants often feels inspired to share films they just watched with their family, friends, classmates or to continue with the experience of shared watching and fruitful discussion afterwards. Consequently, **film clubs or community film screenings or public film festivals** can be a final component of OWIS Media Literacy initiative. In this sense, Media Literacy as a topic has an advantage of not being highly controversial and being generally recognised as important for all levels of population.

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www.peopleinneed.net