



GDL: “Impact of Misinformation & Disinformation in the Global South” Lab (Influence of emerging technologies such as AI)

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Current global events, such as pandemic/COVID-19-related propaganda, climate change misinformation and political turmoil during electoral periods have highlighted the power and rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation. The high penetration of smartphones, in conjunction with low bandwidth costs, have made access to information on social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and TikTok easy and cheap leading to drastically increased flow and consumption of information. The core of the problem is that most of the information spreading through social media remains unverified and unaudited. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) have made this worse, due to the ability to formulate and distribute fake news and other fabricated information via ChatBots and SpamBots. The malicious usage of video content and the generation of fake localised videos have also become critical issues influencing a lot of social sectors and political views within society at a very fast pace. As a result, unverified information is being disseminated to the masses.

The increased use of emerging technologies such as AI systems in media and broadcasting is causing an ever-greater flow of misinformation and disinformation while most Global South economies lack sufficient general and personal data protection laws. Thus, tech-based misinformation flow remains one of the fundamental challenges for law enforcement agencies. At the same time, new technologies are being used by enforcement agencies in sensitive sectors such as migration or border control while Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) often lack effective and established social security norms to protect the rights of citizens. Low levels of literacy, the lack of professional resources and no institutional capacity to stop the flow of falsified information, along with the fact that ownership lies with the big social media tech platforms, make the situation even worse and are widening the social justice component of society.

This concept note provides a proposed framework for the implementation of a peer learning and knowledge-sharing Lab with use-cases on misinformation and disinformation in the Global South. The Lab shall compare the systemic inequalities in information distribution, control and consumption among the economies of the Global South for [Global Diplomacy Lab](#) members, policymakers and civil society actors with a focus on preventive health, misinformation and disinformation.



The incubator phase of the Lab will be dedicated to generating an understanding through use-cases of current challenges linked to “Misinformation and Disinformation in the Global South”, with a specific focus on digital literacy and social media penetration and misuse. It will target regional stakeholders with a particular interest in misinformation and disinformation and will highlight the implications for local societies. The curriculum will be based largely upon (expert) group interaction, knowledge sharing, and real-life examples from Global South countries. Participants will be presented with information using different formats and methods such as case studies, group activities, slide and audio-visual presentations, as well as hands-on practice and reflection. Emphasis will be given to providing a broad overview of (1) relevance to developmental goals and agendas; (2) inherent risks and challenges regarding misinformation and disinformation and strategies for mitigation and prevention; (3) key issues to consider in regulating misinformation, and (4) the impact of misinformation and disinformation on youths. Participants will apply the **ADIDS methodology** (Activity, Discussion, Input, Deepening, Synthesis). Content and exercises will be adapted to suit an in-person event, as well as to ensure a highly interactive working environment and promote peer-to-peer learning and exchange.

The impact phase of the Lab will centre around a **policy discussion** to identify key themes that should be included in the **online consumption of misinformation**, with a particular focus on lessons learnt from the use of technology-based information flow. An **abductive approach** will be used as the facilitation methodology to provide a flexible framework in which participants can work together while remaining grounded in a set of principles that allows for the emergence of new ideas. In this regard, the abductive method will combine both **inductive** (ideas are generated from the bottom up) and **deductive** (ideas are generated within a prescribed framework) approaches. The anticipated outcome of the policy discussion is that the results generated during the Lab will contribute to an initial draft for **actionable policy recommendations in the Global South for arresting the spread of misinformation and disinformation**. A multi-stakeholder approach, including policy and communication experts as well as civil society representatives, will ensure that a wide range of perspectives and varying interests are incorporated. In addition, sessions dedicated to building consensus, identifying priorities for the group, and establishing how they should be integrated into the information flow and consumption guidelines will be included in the policy drafting and planning sessions.

The results will be presented in a format that can be referred to by policymakers (such as foreign ministries), relevant stakeholders, GDL members and partners, as well as local and global practitioners.