

**Final Impact Report:**

*(An impact report is a short statement that explains the significance of your project. The strategy used to convey the change created by your training and how it was made)*

<b>Participant's name:</b>	<b>MARIAMA DANSO (Fact Check Center-The Gambia)</b>
<b>Country:</b>	<b>THE GAMBIA</b>
<b>How many training sessions did you hold?</b>	<b>4 SESSION &amp; 1 RADIO PROGRAM</b>

**Trainings metrics:**

**Please include in the table below, all information regarding each training session held (if more rows are needed, feel free to include it)**

Training Session	Training date (MM/DD/Y Y)	Duration of training in minutes	Type of training (in person or virtual?)	# total participants	Gender breakdown		
					# women	# men	# other
1	24/05/2024	420	In Person	40	25	15	-
2	25/05/2024	420	In Person	40	25	15	-
3	11/05/2024	60	On Air	Nation wide coverage	-	-	-
4	26/06/2024	120	In person	40	19	21	
5	23/07/2024	240	In Person	20	18	2	
		Total			87	53	

**Was there any additional coverage from media organizations, NGOs or CSOs for the training? Either to help promote the training session or an impact story was written about the training...**

Name of organization	Type of organization (Media, NGO, CSO)	Link

**About the training:**

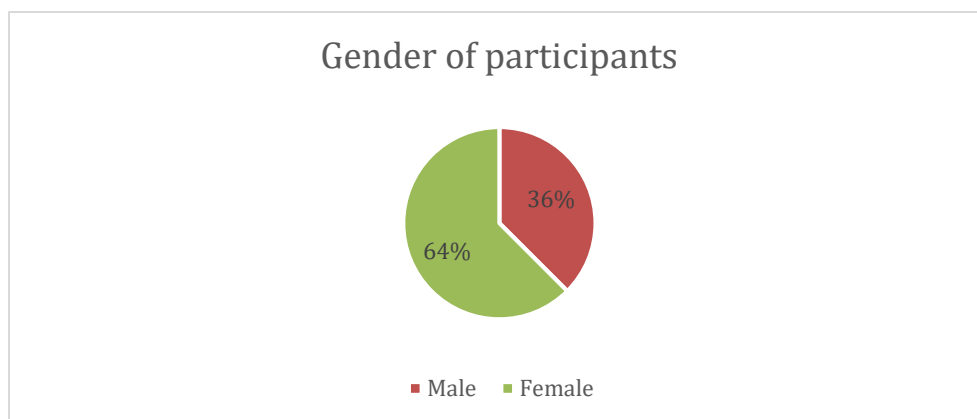
**What was your overall audience profile?** *(Teenagers, young people, adults or elderly people? Students or professionals? From rural or urban areas?...)*

The training was conducted in three different schools across the country: one in the urban area and two in rural Gambia. The schools were Mayork Senior Secondary School in the West Coast Region, Davinci Senior Secondary School in the Greater Banjul Area, and Soma Senior Secondary School in the Lower River Region. A total of 140 students benefited from the training. Additionally, a nationwide one-hour radio talk show was organized to discuss disinformation and misinformation with the general public, which was a huge success.



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### Cross-section of participants at Davinci Senior Secondary School



*Majority of the participants that were trained are female 64% while 36% are men. This showed how young females are interested in the field of journalism and fact checking as a career.*

The training audience consists of teenagers and young adults who are primarily between the age of 14 and 18 years old. They are highly motivated and possess a strong interest in media literacy and journalism. This age group is especially lively and inquisitive, which makes them ideal for delving deeply into the media and the information landscape.

Students make up the majority of our audience members; they are able to balance their academic obligations with their enthusiasm for sharing important stories and finding the truth with their fellow students. Their background in rural places gives them a distinct viewpoint in their work. Their upbringing in these places has given them invaluable perspectives and life experiences that are frequently lacking.

When asked what they think of information they come across, many of them call out sites they trust and explained why, with so much excitement. Interestingly most of them never know of scam sites, clickbait's and cloak sites, this made the training overwhelmingly interesting for both the trainer and the trainees.

Although the difficulties they encounter is having less access to good internet connectivity and mobile phone resources like their peers do but most of them do use what is available at the family level to access the internet when at home and at school. Evidently their keen attention and stories shared showed they learned from the training and were eager to be part of the exercises.



**Cross-section of participants at Mayork Senior Secondary School**





### **Cross-section of participants at Soma Senior Secondary School**

The radio program was conducted in the Lower River Region, with nationwide coverage in three major local languages in The Gambia. As part of the program, we discussed issues around information disorder in The Gambia, how to verify facts, relative issues about misinformation, malinformation, and disinformation. The radio show received positive feedback from listeners who called in to share their views and personal experiences with fake news in The Gambia.

A caller from Kiang Nema expressed his gratitude to the panelists, stating, "From my own view, this program should be a continuous program. I have learned from Mariama's discussion that I have been spreading malinformation all these past years, but I never knew about it. Thanks to this program for helping me know this' people sjpuld really listen to this program to learn on the harm we cause because of how we pass information".

Another caller, a native of Brikama and a listener of Soma FM, also expressed her concern and asked a question regarding disinformation. She said, "I am part of a WhatsApp group, and I always forward messages whenever I receive them. Am I part of the people creating fake news?"



Presenting at the radio station in Soma

**What were your lessons learned from this process? How can you further improve and help your community to fight against disinformation? And how did you improve as a trainer?**

**Lessons Learned:**

During the training process, the key lesson I learned is the importance of adapting training methods that suits the audience's aspirations. Engaging with young people from different background and from rural areas required accommodating more interactive and relatable examples to make the training slides resonate with their experiences. I also realized the power of fostering a cooperative learning environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their views and challenging information.



**Improving and Helping the Community Fight Against Disinformation:**

In improving and supporting our community in combating disinformation, I plan to implement these two strategies;

**Local Partnerships:** I intended to create a WhatsApp platform, where I will have members of the press club to mentor them and they will be sharing information in that group for me to give them feedback, proofread their fact checks, help them publish their fact check after publishing at their school level, this is to create a network of informed individuals who can spread accurate information. Currently all trainees are on different WhatsApp groups and we are looking into combining the most interested ones that have been asking questions ever since their training ended. For Davinci we have already helped them create a press club at their school, which we are looking to further develop as the students and the school principal have shown keen interest.

**Accessible Resources:** I plan to have a manual that would serve as a guide for this young aspirants to be using across the country. In order to have easy-to-understand guides and resources on identifying disinformation, tailored to the rural context.

**Personal Improvement as a Trainer:**

As a trainer, I have significantly improved in several areas:

**Adaptability:** I've become more adept at adjusting my teaching style to meet the needs of different audiences, especially in resource-limited settings.

**Communication:** My ability to explain complex concepts in simple, relatable terms has improved, making the sessions more effective and engaging.

**Listening Skill:** My listening skills have developed immensely as I listen to my students from different backgrounds share their thoughts on things that affected them with regards to false information and things about their community and how their parents share information. We laughed and joked about so many things but overall it helped me develop my listening skills.

**Feedback Utilization:** I've learned to actively seek and incorporate feedback from participants, which has helped refine my approach and address specific concerns.

**Identified challenges faced during the project. How did you overcome them? If you could not completely overcome them, how did you respond to them strategically?**

**1. Limited Access to Resources:**

In the countryside of The Gambia, a bad network connectivity resulted into us struggling to show them practical examples of disinformation online, as we change to several networks.

**How We Overcame It:**

As a solution, we provided offline resources such as printouts handouts containing relevant information. Additionally, as I traveled with the mobile internet, and my small WiFi which we inter changed when the need arises where the handouts couldn't make them understand clearly. In this scenario we did organize an open event held at the premises of certain schools where all participants could access supportive devices alongside required assistance.

**2. Engagement and Participation:**

It was challenging keeping young people consistently engaged for all whole day especially in longer sessions (We spent almost the entire day about 430 minutes presenting and engaging).

**How We Overcame It:** Interactive activities such as group work, discussions on their opinions and multimedia enhanced our sessions to be more dynamic and interesting too. Periodic informal meetings also ensured that we maintained our energy levels thus focus was well kept.

**3. Disinformation Sensitivity:**

Maintaining equilibrium while addressing sensitive topics related to disinformation so as not to make them uncomfortable or defensive is very important; One good example is that one time when some information circulated about a teacher who impregnated Foni's brightest student in the district hence during my presentation I made sure that I involved the pupils but did not harm anyone on the topic.

**How We Overcame It:**

We dealt with delicate themes by giving examples from real life situations which were neither neutral nor controversial. Encouraging open conversation, encouraging safe environments for dialogue, where students felt free to express their views respectfully has been very effective during our sessions.



**2-week impact:**

*Please reach out to your participants 2 weeks after the training session and ask how this training helped them to better understand and be prepared to fight against mis and disinformation, how did it change the community:*

**Please share with us some examples from participants after your 2-week impact reached out.**

The training program proved to be highly successful, across all three schools where it took place. A notable outcome was seen at Davinci Senior Secondary School, where students were motivated to establish a press club following the training sessions. This formed press club is committed not to sharing news but also to engaging in fact checking activities within and beyond the school premises.

At Mayork Senior Secondary School the impact of the training was immediate. Few students presented a fact checking reports during school assembly with one investigation focusing on a report by the Fatu Network about "Aja Majula Hydera's death after consuming a tablet at Dunes Night Club " as confirmed by the police. The student's ability to conduct exercises reflects their acquired skills. Boosted confidence from the training.

Feedback from participants indicates that the training has played a role in helping them discover their career aspirations and sense of purpose. The new found direction and enthusiasm, among students underscore the influence of the training program.

Furthermore a successful nationwide one hour radio talk show was held to address issues of disinformation and misinformation with the audience.

Thanks to ICTJ, for this support we have been able to achieve these milestones. We're looking forward to the impact this training will bring in the future.

**And if you have a few testimonials quotes from participants (1-5) that you can share with us to capture impact story highlights, please do here:**

**Student Testimonial:**

"I had no idea that misinformation could be spread so easily or the way it can affect how people perceive and act on things before I came to this training. I feel more comfortable about spotting fake news now than before the training. For example, there was a video that caused a lot of controversy in our area and I critically analyzed it and shared my findings with class mates which helped them see past the falsehoods. This has boosted my self-assurance as well as reinforced the need for responsible media consumption among peers." Female student Soma SSS

**Student Testimonial:**

"The influence this kind of training has had on me is deep-rooted. I was taught how to assess information sources critically, and verify facts before posting anything on social media. One particular case stood out when rumors about an incident in our locality were being spread widely online. With knowledge acquired through these lessons, I did fact-checking thoroughly hence giving out reliable information to my relatives thereby stopping further propagation of unfounded news. Through this experience, I have recognized the strength behind media literacy education thus making me interested in journalism career as a means of fostering honesty and credibility in media." Female student Mayor SSS

**Student Testimonial:**

"The training helped me to avoid rushing to spread or believe in information sent through social media. I also gained the capacity to advise others. When the issue of the twins broke on social media, I was in Fajikunda. People tried to find out the truth from me because I am a native of Mayork. One of the first things I shared with them was the experience I gained from the training on misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. I also explained that not everything you see on social media, even with a headline from a known source like 'What's On Gambia,' is true. I told them that with some computer knowledge, anyone could create such content. That's all I did, and I'm not sure if it qualifies as a publication at the home level, but it definitely felt like it." Student from Mayork Senior Secondary School male

**Student Testimonial:**

"By taking part in this training, I stopped myself from sharing posts on Facebook sent through other people without checking whether they are true or false or even knowing how they originated, where and to whom they were addressed before." You cannot share these until you find out these details. My expectation is that probably they might have got something from what we talked about." Male Student Soma SSS

Student Testimonial:

“As a student the training as benefited me a lot not only on the school premises but even outside of the school now. I know who to trust and not in terms of information sharing, Thank you Fact Center Center and part donors to building our capacities in the local level” Male student Davinci SSS

Student Testimonial:

“I am able to follow the golden rule, when in doubt checking out with the information I receive since after the training this has become my norms in terms of receiving information. Knowing fully well that everyone is a potential false news spreader in the country” Female Student Soma SSS

Student Testimonial:

“I want to say a very big thank you to the facilitator for inspiring me as young woman aspiring to achieve something big in future I was so happy to be educated by a female and this give me the opportunity to learn more during the training, this will go a long way for me” Female Student Mayork SSS

These testimonials show how useful in practice skills and critical thinking abilities students acquired during trainings that enable them to make sound judgments. Consequently, students are enabled to become more responsible consumers and disseminators of information; a way towards informed and responsible community building process.