



## **The Peace Tech-Media Literacy Exchange** **A New Hybrid Approach to Media and Digital Literacy Education**

*The PeaceTech Lab (Lab) and the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) have partnered to combine their respective areas of expertise to support media and digital literacy education and training in light of the rising incidence of disinformation, hate speech, and extremist rhetoric that threaten the security of communities and countries across the globe.*

### **About the Lab and NAMLE**

The Lab ([www.peactechlab.org](http://www.peactechlab.org)) is an independent, nonprofit organization located on the campus of the US Institute of Peace in Washington, dedicated to using media, data, and technology to prevent and mitigate violent conflict. The Lab is active in combatting information malpractice through rapid-response implementation of hate speech lexicons in conflict zones. It also carries out workshops (branded as PeaceTech Exchanges, described below) to develop and use technology for peacebuilding, including tools to detect and deter fake news and propaganda as well as combat violent extremism.

NAMLE ([www.namle.net](http://www.namle.net)) is the premier media literacy organization in the US with some 6000 members and a rapidly growing international constituency. Its mission is to be the leading voice, convener, and resource to foster critical thinking and effective communication for empowered media participation. NAMLE brings together educators, academics, activists, and students to advance media literacy education as a necessary element for learning. A non-profit organization, NAMLE eagerly networks with international advocates for media literacy to exchange resources, discuss promising practices, and share lessons learned.

### **The Problem Case**

Media literacy is a response to an exponentially growing problem – the explosion of disinformation, hate speech, and extremist rhetoric worldwide. As this proliferation occurs largely in digital domains, media literacy and digital literacy have become virtually synonymous. The problem has both supply and demand components. There is, on the one hand, noxious content emanating from myriad sources while, on the other hand, consuming publics are largely ill-equipped to discern fact from fiction. What's more, these publics, ordinary people, are themselves often the perpetrators of information malpractice in their social media posts and other online interactions. The result is rising communal distrust and increasingly fractured communities. The risk is loss of social cohesion and even civil unrest.

### **Our Hybrid Model**

As the problem set has both supply and demand sides, the solution must follow suit: it must address both sides. The Lab-NAMLE model is a new hybrid response, merging technology to address supply and education to address demand. Through our combined networks and professional competencies, we have at our disposal a wide range of resources and techniques – diverse media/digital literacy tools chosen for specific applications anywhere in the world. The constant is the combination of both technology and education. Regardless of the specific problem case we have a solution, an integrated solution.



### **Our Teams: NAMLE Members, Lab Network Experts, and Local Practitioners**

Along with the right tools, we recruit industry-leading implementers to use the tools to maximum effect. In many cases, they are the tools' inventors and thus the bona fide best practitioners. NAMLE's membership facilitates access to a vast media/digital literacy expert pool. The Lab's in-house team plus its network of hundreds of technologists in the US and around the world likewise fosters a steady stream of talent. Then we go local to find the best in-country counterparts. Like the tools we use, the experts we employ are equally adaptive and responsive to specific conditions and contexts. Just as we combine tools, we combine talent for critical mass effect. We thus further our competitive advantage with problem-specific hybridization.

### **Our Implementing Vehicle: The PeaceTech-Media Literacy Exchange**

The PeaceTech-Media Literacy Exchange (PT-MLX) is patterned on the Lab's long-established PeaceTech Exchange (<https://www.peacetechnology.org/peacetechnology-exchange>), a workshop implemented locally in countries and communities around the world to train activists, entrepreneurs, journalists, government officials, et al in the use of low-cost, basic technology to strengthen their communities. PT-MLXs similarly bring recognized international expertise to catalyze local media and digital literacy solutions to problems owing to disinformation, hate speech, extremist rhetoric, etc. PT-MLXs equally work with governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as civil society and citizens groups – in addition to indigenous media and digital literacy professionals and associations. PT-MLXs manifest the dual Lab-NAMLE approach combining both technology and education. They are scalable from the standard one week to multiple weeks, depending on need.

### **Customized Design for Local Implementation**

PT-MLXs, as described, are designed for specific local applications anywhere in the world, including the US. Projects are bid on demand. The Lab and NAMLE will work closely with commissioning agencies, funders, and beneficiaries to develop the optimal suite of solutions and team of implementers to address the problem set at hand.