

Collaborating with Local CSOs to Strengthen Digital Media Literacy in the Mekong Region



Figure : Participants of the PRIME training stand with a banner smiling.

In the Spring of 2022, under the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded project, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems led an intergenerational relationship-building training on digital literacy. With the collaboration of five civil society organizations (CSOs), IFES strengthened media literacy skills to counter COVID-19 mis- and disinformation throughout local communities in Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam. While COVID-19 misinformation affected many communities worldwide, IFES identified five disproportionately impacted communities including, older persons, women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+) persons of all ages.

IFES developed a four-module media literacy curriculum titled "Promoting Resilient and Inclusive Media Education (PRIME)," based on CSO partners' feedback and research. The four modules of the PRIME trainings include media literacy, critical thinking, disinformation, misinformation and hate speech, and responding to incorrect information, in addition to an interactive roleplay simulation exercise for participants to apply the knowledge they learn through different scenarios. After undergoing trainings on Do No Harm principles and cyber protection to ensure sensitivity and safety remain in the political space, led by IFES, the CSO partners delivered the PRIME curriculum trainings to over 520 community members. The basis of the curriculum includes interactive group activities and accessibility components, such as designing pamphlets with easy-to-read language tailored to the five communities IFES identified. The CSOs also conducted independent online and in-person trainings to strengthen the media and digital literacy skills of members of all ages in their communities.

"The knowledge is very useful as we face fake news every day. Yesterday I used some fact-checking techniques from the course and applied it to the type of medicine I was about to buy, and I found out that it has a high possibility of being a knock-off. I am glad that this course came at the right time."

- PRIME training participant, Vietnam

To address various barriers to digital literacy among generations, the CSO [Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Development Project \(SAYDP\)](#), successfully trained a total of 109 Indigenous women, girls, and young members of the LGBTQI+ community. Through the activities as part of their training, "Digital and Media Literacy Education for the Empowerment of Indigenous Women, Indigenous Youth, and Indigenous LGBTQI+ Youth in the Time of COVID-19," SAYDP achieved its three main goals. These goals include strengthening capacity building for Indigenous women and young LGBTQI+ persons, growing their knowledge to advocate for change and creating opportunities for these communities to be at the center of advocacy among their communities. The multi-day training brought generations of Indigenous people together to strengthen their critical analysis of news, advertising, and mass media regarding mis- and disinformation while also building their skills in using social media and the internet. To learn more about one of their many activities, check out this [video](#) to see how their digital literacy camp for Indigenous youth strengthened the community. To further create intergenerational relationship-building

in the Mekong Region, another local CSO, the Foundation for Older Persons' Development (FOPDEV), collaborated with young students and faculty at Chiang Mai University to engage young people with older members of their community. These activities included facilitating workshops, designing pamphlets and teaching the basics of digital literacy and knowledge on how to identify misinformation. A significant barrier to intergenerational solidarity is the lack of access to knowledge and information, as well as knowledge sharing, as stated by the President of the Elderly Club. Following the training provided by the young community, the older persons expressed that they would share this knowledge with their peers and community members to strengthen intergenerational solidarity even further. For more information on the trainings that IFES conducts for young people in the Asia-Pacific region, follow along with the team [here](#). Learn more about intergenerational solidarity by engaging with [IFES' Youth Engagement team](#), as they highlight their efforts to bridge the generation gap in celebration of the United Nations' International Youth Day.