



YouThink: Media Literacy in North Macedonia

Overview

YouThink is a five-year program that works with youth to help them navigate and shape an information ecosystem that informs and engages rather than divides and polarizes. Building on IREX's Learn to Discern approach to media and information literacy skill-building, YouThink's diverse activity tracks work together, integrating young people's voices for input and leadership, to foster society-wide awareness of media literacy through youth-led campaigns. The tracks also support youth as they demand and produce high-quality, appealing news content that meets their needs and interests.

Image: YouThink Team at the Master Adaptation Meeting, August 2021



Activities

North Macedonia's youth are a force for change— they readily engage with information, act, innovate, and crave greater agency, visibility, and voice. YouThink will empower them with skills and agency to engage with information in a safe, responsible, healthy, critical, and empathy-driven way. The program will work with young people and their environment so that they can improve their communities, build tolerance and cohesion, collaborate, and innovate across the private and public sectors, and proactively engage with local and national leadership.

Specifically, YouThink works with local partners to catalyze systemic change throughout the school system at the primary, secondary, and university levels. The program also provides opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute to national efforts through non-formal learning, youth clubs, online courses, and tailored training for young media professionals.

YouThink aims for a future where youth champion healthy, responsible, and empathy-driven citizenship, through the following objectives:

INCREASE MEDIA LITERACY AMONG YOUTH

YouThink works closely with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Bureau for Development of Education to align with national priorities. The program integrates media literacy education into primary and secondary schools and works with higher education and pre-service teacher training to equip future educators. It also provides opportunities to gain media literacy skills through non-formal education.



INCREASED APPLICATION OF YOUTH MEDIA LITERACY

You Think provides age-appropriate activities and opportunities for youth to apply media literacy and critical thinking skills, boosting agency to navigate information flows in daily life and enhancing resilience to disinformation and propaganda. Activities, such as youth-led talk show and municipal roundtables, amplify youth voices and increase civic engagement, led and monitored. by local youth organizations.



INCREASED QUALITY OF CONTENT FOR AND BY YOUTH

By supporting young people to produce their own content and reach wide audiences through film festivals, helping traditional media better target youth audiences and bring youth voices into their programming through content co-creation, and conducting media trainings for young journalists, YouThink will improve and increase media coverage of issues that matter to North Macedonia's youth.



About IREX

IREX is a global development and education organization. We strive for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world—where individuals reach their full potential, governments serve their people, and communities thrive. With an annual portfolio of \$100 million and 400 staff worldwide, we work with partners in more than 120 countries in four areas essential to progress: cultivating leaders, empowering youth, strengthening institutions, and increasing access to quality education and information.

Expected Results and Impact:



Macedonian youth will be empowered to assess the value, authenticity, authority, and intention of the information they encounter. They will have a deeper understanding of the relationships between media, audiences, and information.



Media literacy will be integrated into education from primary school through higher education as well as pre-service teacher training, and more opportunities will be available for students and other young adults to apply these skills. YouThink aims to educate 43,500 youth through formal and informal education activities.



Media literacy skill-building through non-formal education (e.g., a network of 55 youth clubs, professional development, and young parent resources) and through public media messaging will be increased and reach 22,000 youth.



Youth will apply their critical information engagement skills in their communities through age-appropriate opportunities ranging from debates to open municipal roundtables, championing fact-based decision making and civic engagement.



Young practicing journalists will provide more relevant and higher quality information targeting youth in the media.

Implementing Partners:

Macedonian Institute for Media (MIM)
Institute of Communications Studies (ICS)
Youth Educational Forum (YEF)

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Key National Partners:

Ministry of Education and Science
Bureau for Development of Education
National Examination Center
Universities
Youth Clubs
Media

Project Duration and Funding:

Duration: May 2021 – May 2026

Budget: \$4,420,000

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— Visit our website: www.irex.org —

To learn more about IREX's work and how you can partner with us contact us at communications@irex.org