



Contribution by the Georgian National Communications Commission (ComCom)

Georgia - Country contribution to the Council Working Group on Child Online Protection

Purpose

This report is intended to provide an overview of the child online protection Initiatives and the implementation of the COP Guidelines in Georgia

Action required

This report is transmitted to the CWG-COP **for information**.

References

<https://comcom.ge/uploads/other/11/11972.pdf>

The amendments made to the Georgian Law on Broadcasting in 2017 mandated the Georgian National Communications Commission (National Regulatory Authority) with the responsibility of promoting media literacy in Georgia. The following year, international expert Martina Chapman was invited to create a media literacy development strategy and its action plan. Consequently, the Media Literacy Development Department and the Media Academy were established to undertake this ambitious endeavour. Since 2018, the Media Literacy Development Department, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science and its subordinate agency – the Teachers Professional Development Centre, has been promoting and raising awareness of media literacy among students, teachers, and parents through various projects and activities.

While empowering our citizens, with a specific focus on students, teachers, and parents, our primary objective is to protect children from online risks and potential harm and simultaneously empower them to fully benefit from online opportunities.

Through research, policy development, and capacity-building initiatives, we aim to equip our society with the knowledge and tools needed to make informed decisions in the digital era. We recognize that by fostering media literacy among students, we empower them to navigate the online landscape safely. By providing resources and support to teachers, we enable them to effectively guide and educate their students in this digital age. Additionally, by actively involving parents in our efforts, we ensure that families are well-informed and capable of safeguarding their children online.

Up to 2023, ComCom has trained around 8000 school students and 2300 teachers. Some of our projects include:

- **Integrating Media Literacy into Formal Education** – In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and UNICEF, we launched a project aimed at integrating media literacy as an elective course into formal education. The project commenced with a comprehensive needs assessment involving 1,500 students and 500 teachers. Subsequently, the initiative developed an educational standard, a guidebook for teachers, and a training module that was used to train over 600 teachers from various regions of Georgia.
- **Challenge of Disinformation: Developing critical thinking in schools** - The project was funded and implemented with the support of the EU Delegation to Georgia. Its primary objective was to increase awareness regarding the detrimental effects of disinformation, cultivate media literacy and critical thinking skills, and enhance teachers' knowledge of countering disinformation.
- **Digital Adoption Program** - aims to facilitate the use of digital services and promote digital inclusion in rural communities across Georgia. The Program promotes use cases of improved connectivity such as e-learning, e-health, digital financial services, e-commerce, as well as e-government services in the project areas. To achieve this objective ComCom holds informational meetings and training on digital literacy and safe use of the internet, drawing insights from population needs assessments conducted in project target regions.
- **Media Key** - An online platform that promotes the development of critical thinking among adolescents through the analysis of films.

- **Truth or Fiction** - A competition aimed at developing adolescents' critical thinking, analysis, and fact-checking skills.
- **Media Economics** - A project recognized throughout Europe, involving the study of the principles of digital media financing and media economics for high school students.
- **Hello Ruby** - A Finnish series of books about technology and computing that provides tools for kids, educators, and parents to understand programming in a fun and creative way.
- **Happy Onlife** - An online app for adults that aims to teach children through play about the safe and responsible use of digital media, critical evaluation, and analysis of online content.

Our overarching goal is to create a media-literate society that not only understands the potential risks of the online world but also harnesses its vast opportunities for the betterment of our citizens. For this purpose, in collaboration with the Council of Europe, the Communications Commission has established an online platform designed to function as a central hub for various organizations in Georgia, including Civil Society groups, NGOs, and public agencies dedicated to advancing media literacy. This platform provides open access to the most up-to-date educational materials and informative resources related to media literacy in Georgia. Additionally, the platform offers various applications aimed at assisting children, parents, and teachers in acquiring the skills necessary for safe and responsible use of digital media. These tools also promote the development of critical thinking and the ability to analyse online content.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for its exceptional efforts in promoting online child protection globally. The Guidelines for Parents and Educators on Child Online Protection (2020), which is available in Georgian, has been uploaded on the Media Literacy web page for our target audience.

We eagerly look forward to strengthening our collaboration with ITU to further enhance online child protection initiatives in Georgia and around the world. Through our collective efforts, we firmly believe that we can establish safer and more empowering online environments for children and youth, ultimately contributing to a brighter digital future for all.