



GET INTO GAPMIL

Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy

29 July 2020

The Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL) was launched by UNESCO in 2013. It focuses on both raising the profile of media and information literacy as an area of teaching, as well as providing materials and supports for teachers, media and information professionals and others.

It focuses on actions, looking to build partnerships, improve the ability of the Media and Information Literacy (MIL) community to speak with one voice, and provide a platform for further cooperation and development of tools and standards. It is supported by the [Media and Information and Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue \(MILID\) Network](#), which focuses more on research issues.

Around 400 organisations from more than eighty countries are members of GAPMIL, including international bodies such as UNICEF and the European Commission, and agencies such as IREX and the Open Society Foundation. [Read more about GAPMIL](#). IFLA is an active member, and currently co-chairs the International Steering Committee.

Why Is This Important for Libraries?



Libraries have long experience of helping people understand how to deal with information, from newspapers, books, journals or otherwise. This is not only the best way of ensuring that everyone can realise the potential of increasingly ready access to information, but also provides a strong counter-argument to calls for censorship.

Indeed, at a time that some question the value of libraries, given how easy it is to obtain reference information online, it is through helping their users take a critical, empowered approach to what they read that libraries make a unique contribution. Once people leave formal education, libraries may be the only source of help. Evidence shows that exposure to library-led information literacy courses produce positive results for users, from students in the US to school children in Uganda. Media and information literacy is a fine example of where libraries, both through exchanging information and ideas, and through collective action, can make a difference.

How Will Engaging in GAPMIL Help?

Public awareness of the importance of media and information literacy has never been higher, thanks to concern about 'fake news'. There is a need for coordinated action both to counter calls for censorship, and to ensure that people have the skills they need to navigate an information-rich world.

GAPMIL is one of the primary world forums for discussing issues around media and information literacy. It is behind a wide range of materials, events and support, which can serve to raise awareness of the value of libraries. But GAPMIL's relevance and success is dependent on what its members can contribute. More library voices are needed. These will not only raise awareness of the role our institutions play, but strengthen the case for ensuring libraries are included in any discussion about MIL policy at the global, regional, national or local level, from the start.

How Does it Work?

GAPMIL works through chapters – there are ones for [Europe](#) and [North America](#), Latin America and the Caribbean and [Asia Pacific](#). These meet on an annual basis, although some are more active than others. It is worth being in touch with them in order to establish what is planned and how to get involved.



There is also an annual global feature-conference. In 2019 it will be held on [24-26 September](#) in Gothenburg, Sweden. There will also be a Global MIL Week at the end of October. This week has formally been recognised by UNESCO, and so is on the official UN calendar. Finally, the global GAPMIL network has a mailing list for [members](#) that can be a good means of sharing information and ideas between events.

How is IFLA involved?

IFLA is a member of GAPMIL, and is represented on the International Steering Committee (and some regional Chapter committees). Given libraries' role in developing information literacy (both in academic and community settings), this is a natural fit, and our contribution is particularly valued.

In addition to supporting the ongoing work of GAPMIL, IFLA also works with UNESCO in preparing Global MIL Week, and encourages its members to plan events around this. At a time that there has never been better understanding of the need for media and information literate citizens, this is a very good opportunity to underline the contribution of libraries.

What Resources are Available?

The [UNESCO Website](#) contains many relevant background papers and studies, [curricula and assessment frameworks](#). In particular, the [MIL Clicks](#) site provides social media-ready materials on media and information literacy. Librarians have been involved in much of this work.

Get Involved!

- **Join GAPMIL!** Both individuals and organizations can join by submitting [this membership form](#). See also IFLA's [guide to filling in the GAPMIL form](#). Membership is free, and will give voting rights.
- **Engage in GAPMIL Chapters** at a regional level. Ask [IFLA Headquarters](#) for more information about contacts. You can find out more from members of the [International Steering Committee](#) on GAPMIL.
- **Get in touch with local organisations working on MIL Issues** – education charities, media NGOs, academics, law makers – what are they doing? What can libraries do to help?
- **Keep an eye out for engagement opportunities with [the dedicated international conference and feature events](#)** during the annual Global MIL Week. In 2020, these events will be held online.
- **Write to the press and government during Global MIL Week, highlighting what libraries are doing.** If your country is currently discussing reforms to education, press and Internet regulation, digital or communications policy, libraries should be involved!
- **Hold information literacy events during the Global MIL Week** (24-31 October 2020) and register them on the [UNESCO website](#). You can find some ideas on the [UNESCO site](#).
- **Let IFLA know what you've done!** Send your stories to Stephen.Wyber@ifla.org

