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## WORK PACKAGE N° 3

### WORKSHOP “HOW TO DISTINGUISH THE RIGHT AND THE FAKE” IN CYPRUS

Delivered By



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EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	1st		
Event name:	How to distinguish between the right and the fake		
Type:	Workshop		
In situ/online:	In Situ		
Location:	Nicosia, Cyprus		
Date(s):	17/05/2025		
Website(s) (if any):			
Participants			
Female:	16		
Male:	39		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [name]:	Cyprus		
From country 2 [name]:			
From country 3 [name]:			
...			
Total number of participants:	55	From total number of countries:	1



## Part I: Presentation of the initiative and methodology

### *Introduction*

This report presents the structure, methodology, content and impact of the interactive workshop titled “***How to distinguish fake news from real news***” which took place in Nicosia, Cyprus in collaboration with the sports club Peoples’ Athletic Club Omonoia 29<sup>th</sup> of May.

The aim of the workshop was to strengthen the critical thinking of the participants against misinformation and fake news, through an interactive, participatory process.

### *Objectives of the workshop*

- Increase awareness about disinformation and fake news
- Empower participants to critically assess news sources.
- Offer interactive learning through a board game specifically designed under MEDMAS.
- Engage diverse members of the local community in media literacy.

### *Format and structure*

The workshop lasted approximately 3 hours and was structured as follows:

Time	Activity
0’–15’	Welcome and introduction to the topic
15’-60	Participants share their experiences and challenges in discerning real from fake information
60’–95’	Presentation of real vs. fake news examples



95'-  
155' Group play of the **MEDMAS board game**

155'-  
185' Group debrief, discussion and evaluation

### ***Materials used***

- View examples from news articles
- Printed excerpts from fake/true news
- Board game: A participatory game where players must identify fake news among headlines, articles, scenarios, facts, videos etc.
- QR code to download the app for the game
- Interactive discussion with journalists
- QR code for the internal Media Masters questionnaire
- QR code for the European questionnaire

## **Part II: Participant feedback and community impact**

### ***Profile of participants***

- Number of attendees: approx. 80
- Demographics: A mix of students, journalists, educators, young professionals and community members aged 18-50

### ***Key observations***

- ***Engagement and reactions***

Participants were highly engaged, particularly during the game phase, which was met with real enthusiasm and excitement. Many commented that they were surprised by how much fun they had while learning and some even asked for the game to be repeated in other settings such as schools or community centres. The game created an atmosphere of collaboration, curiosity and laughter, allowing participants to explore serious content in a



relaxed and empowering way. Also, some of them mentioned that this was the first time they encountered media literacy tools in such a playful and accessible form.

- ***Discussion phase: experiences and challenges***

During the group discussion, participants shared personal stories of being misled by fake news, especially via social media platforms, messaging apps and clickbait websites. Many expressed how difficult it can be to verify information, especially when it aligns with emotions or pre-existing opinions. Others reflected on the speed with which misinformation spreads, especially when forwarded by trusted friends or family. The group discussion revealed a collective desire for better public education media literacy and more tools to navigate everyday information chaos.

- ***Reaction to fake vs real news presentation***

In the introductory section, when participants were shown real and fake news headlines side by side, many were visibly shocked by the volume and persuasiveness of fake stories, especially those drawn from local or regional online portals with limited journalistic standards. There was a strong reaction to the realization that many of these stories had been widely shared, often with little scrutiny. Several participants admitted that they had seen or even believed some of the fake stories in the past prompting self-reflection and thoughtful discussion. This phase of the workshop set a strong foundation for the game and helped participants feel the urgency of the developing critical filters for the information they consume daily.

- ***Results from evaluation forms***

***Quantitative highlights: (based on 40 feedback forms)***

- ❖ 65% would recommend the workshop to others
- ❖ 53% enjoyed their participation to the activity
- ❖ 76% found the board game “very effective” as a learning tool



- ❖ 55% overall satisfaction with the content and knowledge you gained during the Media Masters activity

### ***Qualitative feedback from participants:***

Through the workshop and especially during the debrief and evaluation phase, participants shared spontaneous and thoughtful reflections. Their comments reflected both a sense of personal awakening and collective recognition of the challenges posed by fake news in their daily lives.

### **Participant quotes & reflections:**

- “I really didn’t expect to enjoy this so much. The game made it fun, but also stressful — in a good way! Some fake headlines looked very real and made me doubt my judgment.”
- “Honestly, I’ve seen some of these headlines on my feed before. I probably believed them. It’s scary how easy it is to get tricked when you don’t take the time to check.”
- “I would love to do this again in a school or youth group. It’s such a great way to talk about serious things without making it boring.”
- “What shocked me most is that even the obviously fake ones were shared thousands of times. It shows how important it is to teach people how to pause and verify before they repost.”
- “I realised how little I actually know about verifying news sources. I usually just go with my gut — but now I see that’s not enough.”
- “This was the first time I talked openly with others about how hard it is to trust what you read. It made me feel less alone in that confusion.”

### **Specific responses to the fake vs. real news discussion:**

During the presentation and discussion of real vs. fake headlines, participants:

- Expressed genuine surprise at how professionally fake news can be written — often mimicking the tone and style of mainstream outlets.



- Pointed out that social media shares and group chats were major channels through which they encounter questionable news, and that the visual layout (clickbait thumbnails, emotional titles) often misleads them.
- Mentioned that less-known local news sites or partisan blogs are often the source of emotionally charged stories that spread fast even when inaccurate.
- Several said they often don't click to read the full article and make judgments based solely on headlines — a habit they recognized and pledged to rethink.

### **Feedback on the board game:**

The game phase was described by many as the most engaging part of the workshop. Key comments included:

- *"I liked how we had to explain our reasoning to the group. It made me notice how often I just assume things without checking."*
- *"Can we do this again in another place? I'd love to run it in my youth centre."*
- *"It was funny how competitive we got — but also useful. I'm more aware of how fake news tricks me now."*
- *"The best part was that no one was judging. We all got things wrong — and learned from it."*

### **Community impact**

The workshop contributed to an informal network of people interested in media literacy. It reinforced the role of grassroots events in promoting civic education outside of traditional settings. The workshop not only achieved its immediate educational goals but also fostered deeper connections within the local community, highlighting the value of grassroots, participatory methods in civic education.

### **Diverse participation and cross-sector interest**

Participants came from a broad range of educational and professional backgrounds, including:

- University students in media, political science and education





- Secondary school teachers and informal educators
- NGO workers involved in youth empowerment, migration and human rights
- Artists and cultural workers with interest in storytelling and social critique
- General community members who had no formal connection to the topic but were curious or concerned about fake news

This diversity of participants enriched the conversation, as people brought different perspectives and levels of media exposure. Teachers reflected on how misinformation affects teenagers and its impact on social movements, while others shared their personal confusion navigating conflicting news narratives. Many commented that they rarely get to discuss these issues across sectors or generations and appreciated the chance to learn and share in a neutral, playful setting.

### **Increased local awareness and demand for replication**

The workshop sparked spontaneous discussions about bringing this kind of initiative to other spaces, such as:

- High schools and youth centres
- Libraries and adult education spaces
- Community festivals and NGO-run events
- Municipal programs for digital literacy or intercultural dialogue

Several participants offered to connect the organisers with schools or local organisations, expressing strong interest in either hosting or helping to facilitate future sessions.

### **Strengthening informal civic education networks**

Through this single event, an informal network of people interested in media literacy began to take shape. Attendees followed up with messages, emails and social media engagement, requesting:

- Copies of the board game materials to test with their own groups
- Access to the scenarios and resources used in the workshop



This indicates a sustained interest beyond the one-time event and suggests the potential to develop community-based trainers or facilitators in the future.

### **The role of the workshop setting**

Hosting the workshop into a relaxed and inclusive environment, contributed significantly to its success. The event atmosphere encouraged:

- Open and non-hierarchical dialogue
- Engagement from individuals who might avoid traditional educational formats
- Trust-building among participants, many of whom did not know each other beforehand
- A redefinition of learning as something that can happen outside formal classrooms, through shared experience, conversation, and play

As a result, the workshop served as both an educational tool and a community-building moment, planting the seeds for future collaborations in civic education and digital resilience.

## ***Part III: Conclusions and recommendations***

### ***Key Conclusions***

- **Game-based methods are effective for learning in diverse groups**

The workshop demonstrated that interactive, participatory approaches — particularly through games — are highly effective for engaging participants of varied educational backgrounds, digital habits, and levels of media literacy. The collaborative nature of the game allowed everyone to contribute, learn, and reflect, regardless of prior knowledge.

- **The board game and mobile app enhance learning through active participation**

The MEDMAS board game has already been translated into multiple languages and proved to be an effective, low-threshold tool for engaging diverse audiences in critical discussions about media manipulation. Participants interacted directly with realistic news scenarios, discussed interpretations in teams and reflected on how they form judgments. Each



country's version includes a curated set of questions and scenarios based on real news headlines, case studies and disinformation trends specific to its national context.

The accompanying mobile app, designed to be used during gameplay, allows participants to scan the game cards and receive instant digital content — such as fact-checks, short video clips, or contextual explanations — that support or challenge the headline presented. This hybrid system ensures that the game remains tactile and social, while also encouraging real-time digital interaction, closely simulating the kind of fact-checking, verification, and online analysis that participants must do in daily life. This augmented experience deepens learning by encouraging real-time media analysis and adds a dynamic layer to the game without replacing the social, collaborative nature of the in-person format.

Participants reported that the app enhanced the realism and immediacy of the workshop, simulating the experience of checking a headline on their phone — just as they would in everyday life.

- **Media literacy can be community-based and enjoyable**

The combination of the informal setting of the workshop with meaningful educational content created an inclusive and approachable environment. This setting lowered barriers to participation, encouraged open dialogue, and helped de-stigmatize conversations around misinformation and critical thinking.

- **Disinformation is a shared concern with everyday consequences**

Participant feedback confirmed that disinformation is not an abstract issue — it's a daily challenge that shapes opinions, fuels division and spreads fear. From COVID conspiracies to racist headlines, people recognized the personal and social costs of misinformation and expressed a strong desire for more spaces to learn how to navigate it.

- **Participants want to replicate the experience in their communities**

The demand for repetition of the workshop — in schools, youth clubs and community centres — highlights its transferability and local impact potential. Several participants even offered to host or co-facilitate future sessions using the tools provided.



### ***Recommendations for future workshops***

#### **✓ Utilize and promote the multilingual, country-specific toolkit**

The MEDMAS board game and app are already fully translated and adapted to local media contexts by each partner. Partners should actively disseminate their version in schools, youth groups, and civic spaces. Cross-country exchange of scenarios could enrich understanding of disinformation as a transnational issue.

#### **✓ Highlight the app as an in-game enhancement, not standalone tool**

The mobile app is an in-game companion, allowing players to scan QR codes printed on cards to reveal questions, videos, or real-world prompts. It should be promoted for what it is: a tool that preserves the board game's social and cooperative nature, while adding depth and realism through digital content.

#### **✓ Develop a facilitator training program**

To scale the initiative, it is recommended to create a training kit and short course (online or in-person) for community educators, schoolteachers, and youth workers to run the workshop independently using the MEDMAS toolkit.

#### **✓ Design additional content streams and interactive activities**

Expand the educational toolkit by designing more content streams such as role-play exercises, storytelling scenarios, hands-on group challenges and creative media activities that engage both younger learners (ages 12–17) and adults with limited digital literacy. These activities should adapt the complexity of concepts to suit different audiences while maintaining the clarity and strength of the core messages about disinformation, bias, and media manipulation.

Such additions will make workshops even more inclusive and versatile, allowing facilitators to respond to different learning styles and cultural contexts while reinforcing the game's core learning outcomes.

## ANNEXES (to be attached)

- Photos from the workshop
- Real case studies used
- Workshop materials used

### *Photos of presentation of real vs. fake news examples*







*Photos of playing the MEDMAS game*











### *Photos of group discussions*







### *Photos from the event*



## Real case studies used

### Case Study 1: Migration & Hate Narratives

Social media claim: Viral Facebook post alleging “migrants attacked a woman with a knife in Nicosia.”

Fact-check & context: A user on Reddit debunks the claim:

“This is fake news. Do not listen to this racist liar.”

([https://www.reddit.com/r/cyprus/comments/1dvsb5p/asylum\\_seeker\\_terrified\\_my\\_sister\\_who\\_was\\_alone/](https://www.reddit.com/r/cyprus/comments/1dvsb5p/asylum_seeker_terrified_my_sister_who_was_alone/))

**Background report:** UNRIC documents how such false narratives legitimize hostility toward migrants in Cyprus

### Case Study 2: COVID “Magnet Arm” Hoax

#### Viral clip vs. expert debunking

- Viral video: Clip showing a spoon/magnet sticking to a vaccine site—implying the vaccine is magnetic.
- Fact-check: Snopes and Reuters confirm the claim is false—vaccines contain no magnetic materials (<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/magnets-covid-vaccine/>)

(<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2021/may/17/viral-image/no-these-videos-dont-prove-covid-19-vaccines-conta/>)

- **Media explanation:** YouTube video from NBC News debunks the “magnet challenge” myth (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?extid=SEO----&v=381722163140266>)

### Case Study 3: Migration & Fake “Residence Permit Scam”

#### Misleading crime headlines vs. official news

- News warning: News article reports arrests in a fake residence permit ring—in Limassol and Nicosia
- Potential misinformation: Can be distorted to target migrant communities unfairly.
- **Supporting data:** Need neutral sources confirming legal findings.



#### Case Study 4: Migration Student Fraud – North Cyprus

##### “North Cyprus trap” recruitment scam

- Investigative report: Financial Times exposé reveals deception by agents sending students to Northern Cyprus under false EU education promises (<https://www.ft.com/content/eb55e433-97fa-4412-98d2-5e5a6c511efc>)
- **Analysis:** Shows how credible media can uncover structural disinformation affecting vulnerable groups.

##### Materials used







HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0		Initial version