

# BBC Young Reporter India

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The *BBC Young Reporter India* programme was launched by the BBC News, World Service in partnership with Internews and in collaboration with DataLeads as the implementing partner. The programme adapts components of the already successful *BBC Young Reporter programme* in the UK and the global BBC Beyond Fake News project to help grade 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> (age 13 plus) students learn to critically evaluate digital information. The programme aimed to provide a framework to understand media in broad terms, and misinformation in more detail, including definitions, why it exists, how it spreads, and who is behind it. All workshops included guidance on avoiding wider online harm.

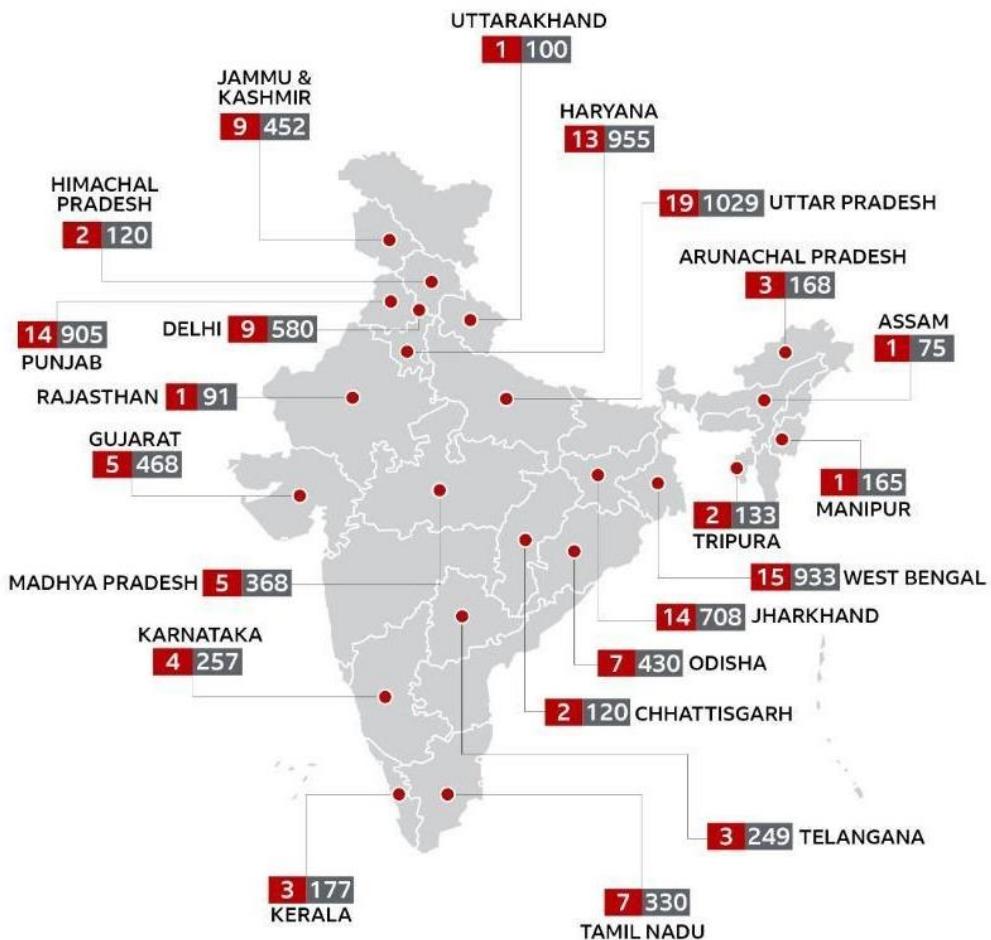
## Snapshot of achievements

- 51 trainers selected and trained, including 24 media educators, 13 teachers, 3 journalists and 11 others.
- 150+ hours of learning in Training of Trainers.
- 8000+ students trained.
- 180+ teachers benefitted.
- 160 schools, including 16 government schools in 27 states participated.
- 250+ hours of media literacy training conducted.
- Comprehensive training materials developed/ collated (training decks, videos, interactive quizzes, tip-sheet deck).
- Students learned about critical thinking, fact-checking and digital safety.
- BBC YRI newsletter reached 100+ schools.
- 120+ newsletter submissions (posters/assembly clips/slogans/letters) received.

## BBC YOUNG REPORTER INDIA PROJECT HAS COVERED 27 STATES ACROSS INDIA

State wise demographics of workshops (Aug 2021 to Dec 2021)

■ Number of Schools trained in each state ■ Number of students trained in each state





BBC Young Reporter (hybrid mode) at Vivekanand Kendriya Vidyalaya, Arunachal Pradesh (L)

Hybrid session in progress at ST. Lawrence School, Maharashtra (R)

## Executive Summary

India is home to over 400 million children (below 18 years of age). More than 250 million of these receive some type of formal education<sup>1</sup>. In the last year, (2021) most of these learners pivoted to the online and digital learning space. Online education brought along a plethora of opportunities, but also exposed these learners to risks and harms. One in three adults are online while 10% have faced cyber bullying. Two out of every five (27 %) stated that they accepted friendship requests from strangers<sup>2</sup>.

The project exceeded its targets despite challenges brought by the Coronavirus pandemic. The enthusiasm and tenacity of the teams ensured that workshops were delivered at a crucial time when harmful misleading information about vaccinations and fake cures were being widely circulated in India. The workshops received a positive response from schools, teachers, and students.

*“It was very informative. In present situation students depend on cell phones for their self learning as well as when they navigate through social media which may mislead them. So it is very important to make aware of what is real and fake news. We wish that such type of workshop should reach many more students and get benefitted in future.”* - Maria Hema Bangera, SMS English Medium School , Karnataka.

*“This webinar has been Very helpful and very informative. It made me more conscious about Fake news and all. We should Have such types of webinars in the future.”*

*“It was a very informative and Productive webinar which helped us to differentiate between fake and real news.”*

- students from BD Memorial School, West Bengal

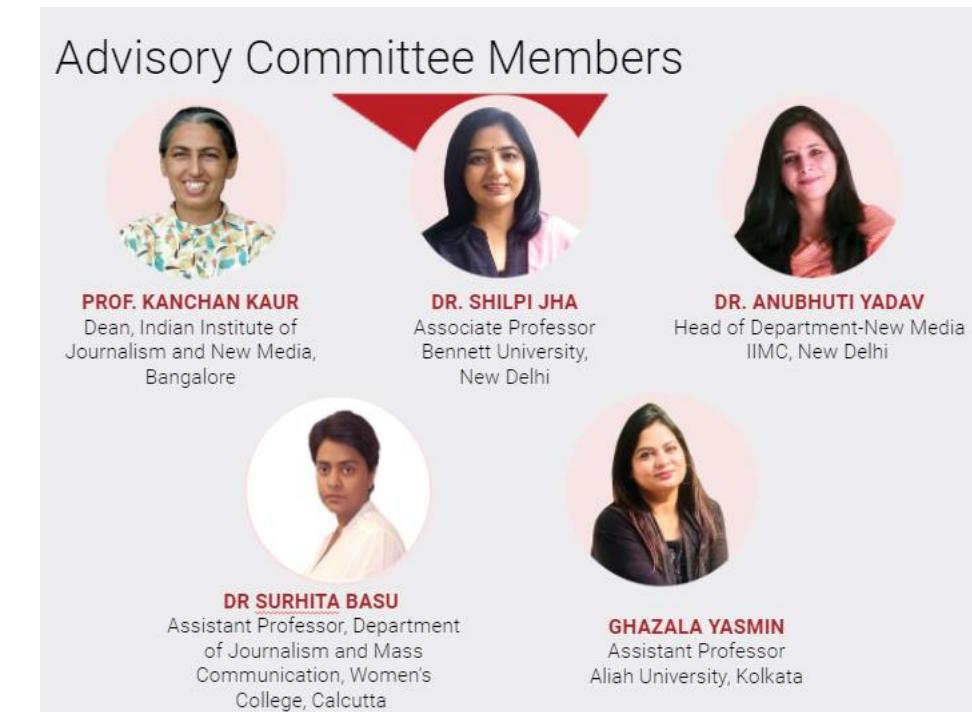
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/india/reports/catalysing-transformational-change-school-education>

<sup>2</sup> Child Rights and You (CRY), 2020, “Online Safety and Internet Addiction (A Study Conducted Amongst Adolescents in Delhi-NCR)”, February 2020; New Delhi

| Milestones | Task  | Target  | Achieved   |
|------------|---|---|--|
| 1          | <b>Training of Trainers</b>                                   | 30 trainers   | 51 trainers were selected and trained.   |
|            | <b>Child safety guidelines and outreach material prepared</b> | All communication material such as e-mail, consent forms, social media promotion and other content prepared and vetted by BBC and Internews | Only approved material was circulated and used by trainers. Child safety guidelines were communicated to schools. It was mandatory for school representatives to participate in all trainings. |
|            | <b>Preparation of training deck</b>                           | One deck with elements of critical thinking, fact checking and online safety to be produced   | One short (one hour) and one long (two hours) decks were prepared for delivering training.   |
|            | <b>WhatsApp Group for mentoring trainers</b>                  | One group created   | The group is still functional, serving as an exchange and mentoring platform for trainers.   |
|            | <b>Tip-sheet deck prepared</b>                                | 20 <a href="#">slide run-through of curriculum deck</a>   | 20 slides were prepared by Internews and approved by BBC.  |
| 2          | <b>Training of School Students</b>                            | 100 trainings in 100 schools<br>5000 students   | 160 trainings were conducted in 160 schools for 8000+ students.  |
|            | <b>Newsletters prepared and circulated</b>                    | Five editions published and circulated among consenting schools   | Material received for submission to newsletter were collated and shared for next edition.  |
|            | <b>Monthly e-meets with trainers</b>                          | Trainers to give feedback for enhancing curriculum and navigating problems faced while training   | Feedback was used to suggest solutions. For example, certificates were introduced to incentivise students who attended training.   |
| 3          | <b>Project Completion</b>                                     | Town Hall event   | No Cost Extension was approved. Project was completed.   |

## I. Activities and Achievements

Internews and BBC worked together on adapting existing Beyond Fake News curriculum (used in the UK and India) with the support of DataLeads. Local experts were consulted to create curriculum material for online use and for training in English in Indian schools. A curriculum advisory group was formed to advise on adapting the content of BBC Beyond Fake News UK and BBC Young Reporter to Indian needs



### Training Trainers:



- The need for and importance of media literacy for children
- BBC's approach to misinformation
- Identifying fake news
- What is a good source?
- Understanding evidence
- REAL test
- Social media, photo, and video verification
- Critical thinking
- Online safety
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Asking Questions

### Testimonial from trainers:

*"I wish to convey big thanks to BBC, DataLeads and Internews for making me a part of this initiative. This was my first training with DataLeads and indeed proved to be wonderful learning experience. Feeling excited to contribute my bit. Looking forward to be similar programmes in future too." – Jayati Sharma, Rajasthan*

*"The workshop gave clarity about the nature and extent of disinformation and misinformation. I liked the way 'fake news' were classified in text, photographs and videos. The method of educating the children in more entertaining ways is the element I liked most about this workshop." – Vidyabhushan Arya, Maharashtra*



### Outreach and Training

The material of the training was English, but trainers used local examples or explained concepts in local language for clarity wherever required. The trainers approached the schools and a designated point of contact (PoC) nominated by each school principal helped organise the trainings (Annexure 1 - [List of trainings-BBC.xlsx](#)).

### Child Protection Measures

Direct communication between the trainers and students was not permitted before or after the training. In order to ensure that all trainings are monitored for quality and safety of participants, it was mandatory for the PoC and a programme team member to sit-in in every single training.

### Post Workshop Activities

Post-training, the trainers were requested to share the feedback from schools through an online form. Schools were encouraged to submit activities for newsletters. Selected material from students was showcased in newsletters that were sent to schools post-workshops.

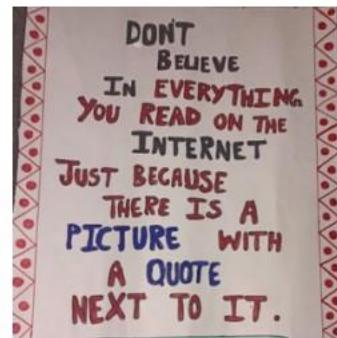
Great posters with slogans from you!



DPS Newton School, West Bengal



M V International, Jammu, Kashmir



Patanjali Rishikul School, Uttar Pradesh

### Response to Training

*Student response:* There was considerable interest and motivation among students to share their understanding about the training with friends and family. They were encouraged to share videos, posters, slogans, poems etc.

Here is one such video [drama](#) (screengrab on the right) encapsulating the concepts learned by BBC Young Reporter India by students of Patanjali Rishikul in Uttar Pradesh.



### Testimonials from students:

*“Today I got the opportunity to attend the workshop (BBC YRI) by BBC. It helped me to step into the shoes of a reporter, it helped me practice critical thinking. Confidently choose information and reject online misinformation. With the explosion in the volume of content these days, it is extremely important that we develop skills to filter fake from the truth. Navigating the online world requires skills that must be developed over time so that we do not get carried away by efforts of vested interests to spread misinformation. We should think twice before sharing any information or news or forming an opinion based on online information. We should avoid sharing such information to add to the rumour mill. Fortunately, there is a lot we can do to avoid this.” – DPS Newtown, West Bengal*

*School response:* The training was also well received by schools. Almost all school representatives stated that they would like to have a follow up session with students from lower grades. More than half (54.7%) of school representatives rated the trainings as excellent, 27.3% stated it was good. The curriculum was given the top rating of 5 by 50.53% of schools. The trainers also found the curriculum simple and adaptable. The modules offered flexibility and facilitated the trainers to calibrate the sessions as per the needs of the group being trained. The trainers could choose to dwell on examples or quiz or discussions around videos in the deck as per requirement.

### Testimonials from Principals/PoCs:

*“The workshop was very fruitful and it really educated the participants about the importance of factual news and how to effectively prevent of fake news on social media platforms. During the workshop the*

*participants were educated how to filter and check the veracity of a news item whether it is real or fake by employing scientific tools i.e whether a particular news item in circulation is being attributed to a designated authority or it is source based. The students were informed to rely on official sources rather than unverified social media updates. Overall the workshop was very engaging and provided a first hand opportunity to young minds to learn the nuances of news making in digital world.” - Deepti Kandhari, Delhi Public School, Jammu & Kashmir*

*“The topic that you have discussed is pertinent in today's environment, where fake information and misinformation is creating social havoc. Your effort in enabling the students to deal with this social menace by accepting credible information through real check, will help them and the community at large. In fact many students were so moved by your brilliant programme that some of them even planned to become future journalists.” - Srabani Dasgupta, Pramila Memorial Institute, West Bengal*

*“With about 40% of school children being on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, etc., where news travels like wildfire, it becomes imperative that they are equipped with skills to discern fake news. workshop was a welcome step as it trained the students at assessing online information acutely. The workshop commenced with a fun yet pertinent activity where the students had to identify whether the new shared was real or fake which also proved to be an eye opener. The students were also educated on the various terms such as disinformation, misinformation, fake news, information paradox, etc. most of which are used loosely not only by them but by adults as well, for the lack of knowledge of the same. They were encouraged to develop a critical mindset and examine the evidence before they decide to pass on something unreliable as it may result in fatal consequences. The students were made aware of their role in tackling this challenge as combating fake news and other such concerns is our collective responsibility.” - Ruchi Sharma, Vivek High School, Punjab*

#### [Student / Teen Media Literacy Champion Network](#)

Students used multiple ways to share their experience (such as skits, assembly speeches, short videos, posters, cartoons, slogans, poems, letters, and jingles) and educate the world outside about fact-checking and debunking misinformation.



*“I come across Fake news often. I can detect fake news..... Here are some quick tips for everyone. Read, think and then share.” -*

[Glendale Academy International, Telangana \(short video\)](#)



*“Don’t spread rumours. Listen and spread only truth. Tell this to others as well. Let us change our thinking and uproot such problems (of fake news). Let’s verify everything before saying and sharing.”*

[Delhi International School, Delhi](#) (poem)

They used a creative approach to train their peers by way of banners and posters which were displayed on school notice boards. The students went beyond their immediate circle to sensitize more people about perils of misinformation.

*Students at Delhi Public School, Hisar, Haryana displaying their posters (R)*



Five editions of the monthly newsletter were produced and circulated among 100+ schools. They carried quick tips, quiz, among other things. Over 120 submissions in the form of posters, slogans, letters, videos, and poems were received for the newsletter. The teachers also used the newsletter submission as a motivation for students to continue to work on media literacy.



*Posters by RSJ Public School, Uttar Pradesh (L) and Patanjali Rishikul, Uttar Pradesh (R)*

## Virtual Townhall on Media Literacy

The Townhall was a befitting culmination of the programme. Trainers, school representatives, students and the programme team came together to reflect on the successes, learnings, and way forward in a virtual meeting.



### PANELISTS:

**PROF. ANUBHUTI YADAV**  
Head, Department of New Media & Technology, IIMC, Delhi

**DR. PEER GN SUHAIL**  
Former Director & CEO Jammu and Kashmir Skill Development Mission, Govt of J&K

**PROF. MANISHA PATHAK-SHELAT**  
Professor, Communication & Digital Platforms and Strategies at MICA; Chair, Centre for Development Management and Communication, Ahmedabad

**MS. GARIMA BABAR**  
Head Skills & Education at Adobe India

**MR. ROY DA SILVA**  
Principal St. Stephens School, Togan - New Chandigarh

## Future Possibilities for building outreach, creating impact

- 1) Translation of content into local Indian languages.
- 2) Create an online open access resource repository (on a neutral/independent location) with standalone texts for teachers as well as students that they can use to learn more about the topic.
- 3) Updating content to continue including more about contemporary topics such as fake social media profiles, malicious apps, and other topics.
- 4) Create smaller modules with certificate of completion for each. Teachers and students could pursue modules for self-paced learning.
- 5) A sample bank where trainers could exchange, and access materials created or collected by them. E.g.: a fake message bank in different languages, preferably already debunked by fact-checking sites.
- 6) A forum/helpline for students and teachers to reach out in case they need help on misinformation a few days or months after the session. The trainer may be unable to help, or the school administration may be unable to reach the trainer.
- 7) Refresher webinars for schools and teachers where the trainings were completed earlier to reinforce the learnings – perhaps by BBC staff.
- 8) Small competitions such as Hashtag competitions on twitter/ ‘fake-a-thon’ to debunk popular health misinformation etc. – with nominal prizes may be conducted among schools that participated in the trainings.
- 9) Approaching big educational groups such as Delhi Public School group of institutions, Dayanand Anglo- Vedic society, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan etc. that have over 100 schools under their aegis can be very helpful to scale up.
- 10) It would be helpful to gather evidence in support of positive change felt by participants.
- 11) Students in grades 9-12 are very busy with academic activities. Could, any future programme could benefit students at lower grades (middle school).

## Conclusion

Critical thinking and an ability to evaluate news and information are essential skills for active citizens in our digital era. BBC Young Reporter India gave over 8000 students across India an opportunity to gain vital media literacy skills.

The workshops delivered interactive activities and analytical tools to use beyond the classroom, encouraging curiosity and building student confidence in their ability to spot misleading content.

The workshops demonstrated many of the tools and techniques used by journalists to evaluate information, from simply asking “journalists’ questions” to checking and verifying content.

Students were encouraged to be self-aware about their feelings and reactions to the news and information in their feeds, and to pause before sharing potentially harmful misinformation.

Internews, DataLeads and the BBC ensured that the workshops used local, relevant, and up to date examples. Likewise, the skills taught reflected the most recent trends in online information and the interactive exercises used the latest digital tools. This approach rooted learning in the students’ day to day lives.

We were pleased to see the amount of content that students created to share with their schoolmates, communities, and families, which was showcased in our newsletters.

Media education and fact checking skills broaden and enrich curriculum, providing greater depth of knowledge and confidence.

Trainers learnt how to present these ideas through interactive activities, resulting in a lively and interesting event for all participants.

Teachers were asked to support the workshop process, especially when delivered remotely, to students in their classrooms. In doing so, teachers were able to familiarise themselves with media concepts and practical skills to help navigate the digital space.

BBC, Internews and DataLEADS believe that the future of trusted media is dependent on audiences who understand how to evaluate the news and who value trusted independent news.

The project partners believe these skills deepen the learning of young people as they step into adulthood, creating building blocks for future active citizenship – young people who

can successfully participate in their communities; making decisions about their health, finances and democracy based on factual information.

This programme has demonstrated that, despite the pandemic, there is both a hunger and need for this training in India.

We have created a legacy of powerful workshops, exercises, videos, and teaching notes. It is, therefore, hoped that this project can be taken forward into many more classrooms and benefit the next generation of news consumers across India.

## EVALUATION

Ideally we would like to do some evaluation in partnership with an academic partner.

The recent FactShala project, led by Internews and DataLEADS with contributions from the BBC, used a similar outreach workshop methodology.

It found that people who attended the workshops were less likely to share misleading content, and were more likely to try and verify content shared on social media

<https://internews.org/resource/factshala/>