

FAKE kNOw MORE

Evaluation Summary Report

During the implementation of the FAKE kNOw MORE project – from February 2023 to June 2024 – an external research team¹, commissioned by the program's leader, the School with Class Foundation, supported the process of developing educational materials and identifying the needs of the project's target in Poland, as well as conducting on going evaluation. These activities covered the key stages of the project and were carried out using qualitative and quantitative techniques, providing a broad perspective and allowing the knowledge gained at various points to be deepened.

First, in February 2023, focus group interviews were conducted with representatives of Polish day support centers, which provided valuable information on the specifics of their operation and the needs of their charges. The results of these interviews influenced the adaptation of educational materials, taking into account the needs of children with special educational needs and the preferences of the educators.

In Poland, training sessions for educators were held in June and September 2023, and a feedback session was held in October 2023, which were crucial for gathering feedback on the materials and their final refinement. An evaluation survey conducted in May 2024 in Poland provided in-depth information on program implementation and evaluation of the materials. In addition, an evaluation survey in the form of a questionnaire was conducted in June 2024, with the participation of individuals representing partner organizations from Poland, Czechia, Romania and Spain. The purpose of the survey was to gather opinions on the course of cooperation between partners in the project.

¹ From February 2023 to May 2024, cooperation with the Ciekawość research and development center, from May to June 2024 with the Empowermind research laboratory. The research team responsible for implementing research activities remain the same.

In this report, we present a summary of each of the above-described activities, according to the chronology of their implementation.

Before we get to it, we want to emphasize that the FAKE kNow MORE project was rated very highly at every stage of the evaluation.

Respondents appreciated the substantive concept and the problems it addresses, the high level of materials provided to educators, and finally the course of cooperation between partners.

Group Interviews with Educators from Day Support Centers

The first research activities carried out in February 2023 in Poland included two group interviews (FGI) with representatives of day support centers, who talked both about the specifics of the operation of their workplaces and the needs of their charges, as well as provided comments and recommendations for the first version of educational materials created by the School with Class Foundation and Demagog Association team. Nine female educators and one male educator from day support centers in large Polish cities took part in the interviews.

The result of the study was a report containing the characteristics of day support centers and the specific challenges of implementing the project in this type of institution. The report also contained recommendations related to further work on educational materials, which were taken into account and implemented by the School with Class Foundation and the Demagog Association.

From the perspective of the School with Class Foundation and partner organizations, a key part of the study was the identification of the digital practices of day support center charges, and thus also the educational needs in the area of disinformation and fake news. Conclusions from the research also allowed the team working on educational materials to adapt them to this special group of recipients, which are young people attending day support centers.

Digital Practices of Wards of Day Support Centers

The wards of the day support centers have widespread access to the internet, mainly through desktop computers available in the centers, which are used for both educational and entertainment purposes. Children, from about the age of seven, have their own smartphones, and the rules for their use are regulated by the institutions' internal arrangements. Usually the use of phones is prohibited during classes, and sometimes the devices are taken away and stored in a visible but inaccessible place.

Respondents noted that most children have accounts on various social media platforms, despite official age restrictions. Parents rarely supervise their children's digital activity. Often, the primary leisure activity of youngsters is the use of smartphones, and their social life has largely shifted to the online world. Our interviewees claimed that almost every day they resolve conflicts arising from the online activities of their wards, who often face heckling,

blackmail, cyberbullying on closed groups on Messenger or are themselves the perpetrators.

” Groups on Messenger, where children, as children do, write various things and by themselves are blackmailed by what they wrote, screenshots that were taken in conversations. That someone insulted someone, someone said something specific. They talk less and less with each other in person, and write more and more on groups. Everyone with a given emotion reads what the person wrote and may read it in a completely different way than the author's intention. Out of this arises a mass of conflicts that need to be resolved. (FGI 1)

According to the respondents, young people are often unaware of the impact that social media has on their psyche. For example, girls with eating disorders may be particularly susceptible to the influence of content that promotes unhealthy eating habits and an excessive focus on outward appearance. Caregivers engage in regular conversations with their children about what they are watching and the people they consider authority figures online, but their charges often uncritically accept everything they see online, failing to distinguish fiction from reality.

” There is a girl with us who has an eating disorder. She came to me for an interview and showed me her Instagram. There was a lot of death-related content, but also content about weight loss, diets, that it's very important to count calories, to be skinny. I'm sure this has an impact on her. (FGI 2)

As the interviewees said, day support center wards are very susceptible to disinformation, e.g., they believe in fake news spread by influencers. Caregivers have to regularly explain to children that information on the internet is not always true and that they should check its credibility.

” We are not quite able to admit that we believed something too soon and made a mistake. Well, and our children are the same way. They come with the information that the school year will be shorter or it will be longer because they heard it from some TikToker. Or that from Monday there will be remote learning and no going to school. And how do you know that? They don't check the date and it turns out to be some viral from two years ago. That's what we need to teach them – to check everything and teach them reliable sources. (FGI 1)

Young people, not just those in the care of day support centers, often aspire to be influencers or YouTubers, seeing them as people having ideal lives. However, as one interviewee noted, in the case of children from dysfunctional homes, the gap between the worlds shown on social media and the reality in which their function is much wider. The caregivers note that the children do not understand that the content presented on social media is often created and does not reflect real life.

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The problem is also that as they watch Instagram or TikTok and see what a great life these people have, it seems to them that what their life, their world, their situation is like is completely hopeless, and this pits them even more. They don't understand that it's not always real, that it's made up, that these people often have serious problems. They think that what they see on social media is the truth. We talk to them, we tell them it's not, but they don't believe it. For them, that's where the truth is. (FGI 2)

In view of the above characteristics of the digital practices of the project's target group, the interviewees pointed out that the FAKE kNOw MORE project is much needed. This is because in their interactions with their charges, the educators note the susceptibility of children and youth to disinformation and the frequent lack of basic competencies related to verifying information from the internet/social media.

In the context of adapting materials to the needs of recipients from day support centers, our interviewees pointed out that varied forms of activities, exercises containing elements of drama/role-play, as well as involving discussions of emotions – naming and identifying them – are highly desirable. Attention was also paid to ensuring that the scenario and supplementary materials for educators are not formulated too scientifically, as this will require additional work on the part of those implementing the activities.

All recommendations from this part of the research were taken into account and implemented at a further stage of the work of the team responsible for creating educational materials.

Observation Of Training (Tot) For Educators

The next stage at which the research activities were implemented was the participation of the researchers in trainings for educators interested in the project's topics, held in June and September 2023 in Poland. During the trainings, the research team collected feedback from participants on the organization of the training and on the educational materials.

During the trainings, the participants – 20 teachers and employees of day support centers from all over Poland – learned the theoretical basis supporting the subsequent implementation of the FAKE kNOw MORE project, as well as implemented specific lesson scenarios together with the team responsible for their preparation from the School with Class Foundation and the Demagog Association. During the training, the participants had the opportunity to ask questions to those responsible for creating the materials, to consult any uncertainties, but also to share their experience of working with children and young people. In addition, during the September training, participants had already tested single or even more scenarios created in the FAKE kNOw MORE project and had the opportunity to share their insights on their implementation and point out possible areas that posed the greatest challenge from their perspective.

Observation of the course of the training allows us to conclude that both the leadership organization – the School with Class Foundation and the partner organization Demagog Association provided the participants with the opportunity to become comfortable with the materials, understand the theoretical basis (including psychology, information competence, mechanisms of disinformation) and practice some of the scenarios on themselves. Each participant was provided with educational materials and aids necessary for the project implementation. Participants' comments/recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the educational materials available online, on the project website.

Participants spontaneously shared their impressions of the training, appreciating above all the project's subject matter, noting that such activities are very much needed for today's children and teenagers who use the Internet and social media en masse, and that it is extremely important to address issues related to emotions with children and teenagers – naming them, identifying them and understanding how they affect action and perception of reality.

Many participants appreciated that the program takes into account day support centers, as many other project related to, for example, internet safety are dedicated to schools (e.g. in Poland Mega Misja of the Orange Foundation dedicated to school day care centers). Participants appreciated the high substantive level of training, contact with the leading team from the School with Class Foundation and the Demagog Association, as well as the opportunity to exchange experiences and networking.

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Day support centers are always overlooked, they are struggling financially, we can't afford materials for classes. I liked the topics very much. The only thing I missed was how to verify fake news, how to deal with it, what to do with it next. (Summary of training, June 2023)

I didn't have expectations. If I did this training exceeded them. You have given a lot of material and knowledge. The range you have given here is great. Our kids will definitely not be bored. (Summary of pilot training, June 2023)

At the September training, participants who had implemented activities using the materials they received in June reported the need to prepare support in the form of short multimedia presentations for each exercise, containing the most important steps of each scenario. There were also voices regarding the need to create a video tutorial for the 'Octogram' game to facilitate learning its rules with young people. These recommendations were also taken into account and implemented by the team responsible for the materials. The participants also spoke positively about the involvement of the mentees in the activities, rating them as interesting from the perspective of the children, although sometimes challenging – as in the case of the exercise requiring the deletion from the phone of the app used most often. The trainees pointed out that the exercises are engaging, stimulate reflection and discussion, and that the tools provided (e.g. the wheel of emotions) facilitate conversation about our emotional states, for example.

Feedback Session

One feedback session in the form of an individual interview was also held in Poland in October 2023, during which in-depth opinions were collected on the implementation of educational materials in the elementary school. The respondent implemented the FAKE kNOW MORE project in an elementary school with a class of seventh graders, as well as in individual classes with students with special educational needs. As in the case of the participants of the training, the respondent declared high satisfaction with her work using the materials developed as part of the FAKE kNOW MORE program. Among the strengths of the materials were clear instructions for the activities, exercises that included role-playing, allowing participants to look at the issues at hand from different perspectives (although according to the respondent, this is feasible in well-integrated groups, where participants are not ashamed of how they will fare in front of their peers). Among the most important recommendations resulting from the feedback session were: the development of a video-based introductory theoretical part for each section, the preparation of a package of materials for each activity and support in the form of multimedia presentations containing the most important elements of the scenario, and the dissection of activities with the division of time into lesson units (45 min or double lesson – 90 min). The recommendations were in line with the voices gathered at the September training for educators and were overwhelmingly implemented.

Evaluation Survey Distributed to Educators Implementing the FAKE kNOW More Project

In May 2024, an evaluation survey was conducted among female educators implementing the FAKE kNOW MORE project in Poland. The survey aimed to evaluate the educational materials and their impact on the development of students' competencies, such as critical thinking and ability to recognize emotions. The results of the survey indicate a high level of satisfaction among educators participating in the project, as well as a positive impact of classes implemented using the provided educational materials on students' critical thinking competencies and understanding of disinformation mechanisms, as well as on the development of their emotional intelligence.

Sample characteristics

The survey included 306 respondents, 94% of whom were women and 6% men. Most of the participants (53%) were aged 44–64, and 39% were aged 25–43. Respondents were mainly from the Mazowieckie (19%), Śląskie (13%) and Wielkopolskie (10%) provinces. The largest number of respondents lived in cities of less than 10,000 residents (34%), indicating that the program is also widely distributed in smaller towns.

Evaluation of educational materials

The educational materials of the FAKE kNOw MORE project, including the publication 'Understand Emotions. Become Resilient to Disinformation' and the 'Octogram' game, were rated very highly by educators. As many as 92% of the survey participants rated the publication and the game 8-10 points on a scale of 1-10, stressing that they were well suited to the needs of students. This was also reflected in the answers to an open question about the strongest point of the educational materials.

The materials are very clear and easy to understand, which makes teaching simpler and more effective.

” *Activity scenarios and materials for the teacher, which led step by step through the activities. They were comprehensively described, the activities for students were varied, interesting for them.*

Educators emphasized that the materials are not only substantively valuable, but also attractively designed, which increases the involvement of students in the learning process. The publication was particularly appreciated for its clarity of message and practical application in the classroom.

New information and student involvement

72% of respondents estimated that their students gained a great deal of new information from the educational materials. The majority (87%) felt that the materials significantly increased their students' ability to recognize emotions, and 84% noted an increase in critical thinking skills.

The strongest point of the materials are interesting and engaging tasks for students. A big help is the additional information for instructors supplementing knowledge.

” *I believe that the materials present the topic in an innovative and modern way. I notice in them knowledge of the situation of young people and their problems.*

The children were highly engaged in the lessons, which testifies to the high effectiveness of the educational methods used in the program.

Respondents noted that the materials allow students to better understand themselves and the mechanisms of disinformation, and to develop skills for critical analysis of media content. As a result, students became more resilient to disinformation.

Resilience to disinformation

The vast majority (85%) of respondents felt that the FAKE kNOw MORE project materials significantly increased students' resilience to disinformation. 88% of respondents said that classes using these materials were very engaging.

” *In my opinion, the strongest points are scenarios and board game, because they increase the awareness of young people how they are manipulated by information, emotions and views published online.*

Continuation of the project

97% of survey participants plan to continue using the educational materials they received. 93% of the respondents would recommend them to other educators. This shows that the program was highly appreciated and is seen as a valuable tool to support the educational process.

Strengths of materials

Respondents appreciated the high level of content and attractive graphic form of the materials. They also pointed to their topicality and relevance of the subject matter, as well as ready-made scenarios for the implementation of activities.

” *The materials provide ready-made scenarios for implementing lessons, which is extremely valuable for teachers.*

Educators emphasized that the materials were comprehensive and versatile, making them suitable for use in a variety of educational contexts. The content of the publications and game was tailored to the students' perception level, allowing for easy learning.

The evaluation survey showed that the FAKE kNOw MORE project's educational materials are highly rated by educators for their content, engaging format and effectiveness in developing students' key competencies related to critical thinking and emotional intelligence. The educators express their willingness to continue using the materials and recommending them to others, which demonstrates the success of the project. In the context of the continuation of the project, the educators noted the need for additional trainings and workshops to deepen the knowledge and skills of educators in the use of educational materials and effective teaching about disinformation and critical thinking.

Observation of Classes

In Poland, a participatory observation of classes conducted with the materials of the FAKE kNOw MORE project was also conducted in June 2024. The observation took into account feedback from the participants. It resulted in a document containing a description of the course of the classes, as well as the most important conclusions and recommendations. The observation was carried out in the sixth grade class of an elementary school in Warsaw. The group consisted of 11 people (9 boys and 2 girls), who were exposed to the program materials for the first time. The classes lasted 45 minutes and were conducted by an experienced educator – a computer science teacher. The scenario ‘Who do you Agree With?’ from the section ‘The Way I See the World?’ was implemented. The class consisted of three parts: an interactive part based on evaluating statements about

various dilemmas and indicating which statements the participants agree with, a theoretical part about the aureole effect and the Golem effect, and a summary. The interactive part, based on the evaluation of various dilemmas, was more engaging, as it required reflection and personal involvement of the students. The theoretical part was a lecture, which reduced the interest of the group. In conclusion, the participants expressed the opinion that the introduction of video materials could increase the attractiveness of the classes. Students' evaluations of the attractiveness of the classes were mixed. Most rated them 6-7 on a 10-point scale, one child found them very interesting (9 points), and four rated them low (1-3 points). As for new knowledge, most students felt that they did not gain any new information (1-3 points), with the exception of one person who rated it 6 points.

In summary, the class lasted 45 minutes, although the scenario stipulated 60 minutes. The lecture format was less effective in keeping the group's attention. Most engaging was the analysis of dilemmas, which made the students think. Additional audiovisual materials could have increased the participants' engagement and concentration. The educator also shared this opinion. However, it seems that the knowledge from observation is not conclusive in evaluating the project, given two major issues: the fact that these were the first classes implemented in this group, and therefore the participants were not introduced to the project, and the timing of the school year – June, already after the final grades were given – which significantly reduced the students' motivation to be active in school.

Evaluation Survey Distributed to Representatives of Partnership Organizations of the FAKE kNOW MORE Project

In June 2024, the School with Class Foundation conducted a survey among representatives of partner organizations implementing the FAKE kNOW MORE project. The survey included 14 respondents from Poland, Romania, Spain and Czechia.

Evaluation of cooperation in the project

The overall assessment of cooperation between partners was very positive: 11 people rated it as very good, and 3 as good. Communication between partners was also highly rated – 10 people rated it as very good, 2 as good, and one person had a neutral opinion. The effectiveness of cooperation was rated as very good (9 people) and good (5 people).

Evaluation of cooperation with the leader

The vast majority of respondents (12 people) were very satisfied with the cooperation with the leader, and 2 people were rather satisfied. All people felt that they received the necessary information to carry out the tasks, and the representatives of the School with Class Foundation created a space for expressing opinions and took them into account in the implementation of

the project. The project leader presented the tasks in a clear and lucid manner, and all people surveyed felt that they had support from the School with Class Foundation and other partners. The responsiveness of the leader was rated very good (11 people) and good (3 people).

Evaluation of cooperation between partners

Cooperation between project partners was also highly rated. 8 people were definitely satisfied, 4 were rather satisfied, and 2 could not assess it. The project partners' meetings were considered necessary and constructive, and the majority of respondents (10 people definitely, 4 rather) felt that they had enough time to complete their tasks. The project was a learning opportunity for the participants, and the implementation of tasks was not stressful or overly demanding.

Strengths of cooperation

Respondents particularly appreciated the high quality of communication, regular meetings and proactivity of the leader. The program coordinator on the part of the School with Class Foundation was always available, open to feedback and ready to help. Good organization of paperwork, schedules and a positive work atmosphere were key to the effectiveness of the project. Survey participants noted the strict deadlines and timetable, which enabled the tasks to be carried out efficiently.

The overall evaluation of the cooperation in the FAKE kNow MORE project is very positive. The School with Class Foundation received high marks for its coordination and communication efforts. Respondents emphasize the support of the leadership organization and partners and the positive atmosphere of cooperation.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the FAKE kNow MORE project was found to be needed and very well prepared in terms of content. The ongoing evaluation made it possible to minimize the areas that would require improvement or radical changes after the implementation of the project in educational institutions/schools. Educators implementing the project declare a high level of satisfaction with the classes conducted using project materials and want to use them in the next school year as well. The evaluation confirmed that the project significantly supports the development of important competencies among children and young people, providing valuable educational tools.

The School with Class Foundation proved itself in a leadership role, both at the level of cooperation with partner organizations from Poland, the Czechia, Romania and Spain, and with local educators involved in the project.



Report was developed as part of FAKE kNOW MORE led by the School with Class Foundation in collaboration with the Demagog Association (Poland), Fakescape (Czech Republic), Smilemundo (Spain), and Adfaber (Romania) with the support of the EMIF managed by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

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