AltED

Cognitive Resilience
through **Information Literacy**

Annual Report '24-25

Mission & Vision

In today's dynamic information landscape–shaped by attention-driven economics alongside challenges such as misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, cyberbullying, trolling, and online scams–critical media awareness is essential.

AltED is dedicated to equipping students and young adults with robust media and information literacy skills, fostering informed citizenship and cognitive resilience. We work closely with community-based organizations and schools, with a strong focus on underserved communities, to ensure that every individual gains access to the knowledge and critical thinking tools necessary to engage with the digital world responsibly and thoughtfully.



Our Journey at a Glance

In May 2024, **AltED** embarked on an year of collaboration and impact. We began our journey by partnering with government schools and soon extended our reach to community-based organizations, such as the **Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity**, and a diverse network of civil society organizations. Two intensive engagements at the **Sambhaavnaa Institute of Public Policy** in Himachal Pradesh further enriched our approach.

Our outreach included partnerships with nonprofit-run schools like Future Hope School, Dakshini Prayas Schools, and Kolkata Education and Cultural Trust School. At Naihati Pallimangal School, we integrated theater and creative arts into the curriculum to stimulate innovative learning and critical thinking. Our flagship event, **Misinformation Matters**, hosted at GD Birla Sabhagar, brought together more than **200 teachers and civil society leaders** for an in-depth discussion on media literacy.

Additionally, our collaboration with the **Seagull Foundation for the Arts** positively impacted students and educators across **18 schools** in North and South India. We also worked with educators from Mahadevi Birla World Academy and engaged college students from Azim Premji University, Ashoka University, Flame University, and others in partnership with the Karta Initiative.

School Stories

Narendra Ramakrishna Mission
At this prestigious residential school in Kolkata, we engaged 150 eighth-grade students in a session on the economics of attention. The discussions captivated the students and laid the groundwork for a nuanced understanding of digital content.

Naihati Pallimangal Uccha Vidyalaya
At this institution, 28 students participated in a comprehensive 20-hour workshop that fused theater and creative arts with media analysis. The students collaborated to conceptualize and write a play that critically examined how media represents issues of development and urban displacement.

Madurdaha Dakshini Prayas
Situated amid the wetlands on the southeastern fringes of the city, Madurdaha became the setting for an intensive 15-day workshop with 36 students. Through guided activities, the students explored personal stereotypes and examined how these biases affect their relationships and perspectives.



Naihati Pallimangal Uccha Vidyalaya



Madurdaha Dakshini Prayas

Community Collaborations

Our work with communities has underscored that misinformation and disinformation impact those with limited access to accurate information more severely. Recognizing this, **AltED** has expanded its focus beyond the classroom to include adult education in digital citizenship.



Workshop with
Paschim Banga Khet Majoor Samity

Our community initiatives follow a two-pronged approach:

1

Adult Media and Information Literacy Programme

Supports adults in understanding and navigating digital spaces.

2

Community Champions Programme

Trains local leaders to drive media literacy initiatives within their own communities.

Our collaboration with the **Paschim Banga Khet Majoor Samity** has empowered young adults from various districts of West Bengal, building their capacity to act as media literacy champions.

Additionally, in partnership with the **Sambhaavnaa Institute of Public Policy**, we organized two residential workshops in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, with 41 civil society leaders from six states. These workshops delved into key concepts such as information perception, newsworthiness, manipulation, social and mainstream media business models, fact-checking, and digital citizenship. Several participants have already begun replicating and tailoring these learnings within their own organizations.

The Traineeship Diaries

To nurture the next generation of media literacy advocates, **AltED** launched the Satyashodhak Traineeship–a year-long program dedicated to intensively building critical media awareness among school students and civil society members. Trainees work hand in hand with our team to design innovative classroom resources and lead interactive workshops that explore how media shapes our emotions, beliefs, and actions.

The program features **two key interventions**:

School Intervention

Trainees design lesson plans, conduct workshops, and document their progress while engaging with school communities.

Community Intervention

Focuses on enhancing digital literacy and media awareness among broader community stakeholders.

This initiative fosters creativity, collaboration, and the development of true media literacy champions who understand the real-world implications of misinformation.

Meet our Satyashodhaks!



Snigdha
Gobardanga, West Bengal

I was trained as a journalist and storyteller. Right now focusing on media's impact on the adolescents from under-served communities.



Mantu
Shibpur, West Bengal

Understanding classrooms from the lenses of gender excites me. I'm drawn to understand how children learn critical thinking skills.



Niloy
Jadavpur, West Bengal

I'm interested in learning how Media Literary could be taught in schools by creating empathetic and empowering classrooms.



Sourab
Kalyanpur, Tripura

I've been working in broadcasting for a decade. Classroom innovation and fostering a mindset of exploration is my focus area.

Our Year in Numbers

AltED numbers for May 2024 - April 2025

751 Students

935 individuals reached

128 Community

56 Teachers

309 classes taken

209 Students & Teachers

&

100 Young Adults

Partners who made it possible

Rohini Nilakani Philanthropic Initiative

Seagull Foundation for the Arts (History for Peace)

Sambhaavnaa Institute for Public Policy

Karta Initiative

Pickle Factory Foundations

Moments that moved us

One of the highlights of our year was our collaboration with Pickle Factory to host **Misinformation Matters: Ideas to See Through False Narratives**. This flagship event addressed the urgent need for media literacy among youth by featuring diverse formats and voices.

A standout performance by As We Are from Luxembourg–exploring the photographer's gaze and the dynamics of narrative construction–set the tone for reflective dialogue. Panel discussions with educators, journalists, and the director of As We Are provided valuable insights into pedagogical tools for media literacy.

Adding to the event's dynamism were a student-led skit, an exhibition, and case studies showcasing **AltED**'s work in schools, all designed to foster critical thinking and equip students to navigate misinformation in a digital world.



Panel Discussion at **Misinformation Matters**



Play by **Naihati Pallimangal Uccha Vidyalaya**



Exhibition by **Naihati Pallimangal Uccha Vidyalaya**

To further understand the digital habits impacting youth, we conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students, educators, and caregivers. These sessions revealed a growing concern—children are increasingly exposed to screens at very young ages, with many spending extensive hours on games like Free Fire and consuming short-format content on social media and YouTube. For example, FGDs at Dhulomati, a free rural preschool by Adhiti Education Trust, highlighted that children as young as six months are introduced to screens, with caregivers noting increased aggression when screen time is reduced.

These findings are already guiding the refinement of **AltED**'s Media and Information Literacy (MIL) curriculum, and we plan to conduct additional FGDs across diverse contexts.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with **Dhulomati, Adhiti Education Trust**



Our work has resonated deeply with our partners. Many schools, including government institutions, have sought further collaboration based solely on word-of-mouth recommendations. This organic growth reinforces our confidence in a decentralized, bottom-up model of scaling media literacy. Looking ahead, we are excited to build a robust network of teachers and form district- and state-level resource groups dedicated to capacity building and advocacy in media and information literacy.

Director's Note

AltED remains steadfast in its commitment to empower communities through strategic partnerships and innovative educational programs.

This past year has demonstrated the transformative power of media literacy education in fostering resilient, informed citizens. As we build on our successes, we look forward to expanding our impact, deepening our collaborations, and continuously refining our approach to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing digital world.



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