A UNDP Governance Response to Information Pollution and COVID-19

June Newsletter

Opinion piece published

A joint op-ed between **Achim Steiner** and the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation, **Peter Eriksson**, has been published on Devex titled, 'Curing the world of the 'infodemic.'' Supporting the outreach on this, a short advocacy video was produced by UNDP titled, 'Governments Must Lead the Fight Against Coronavirus Misinformation and Disinformation.'
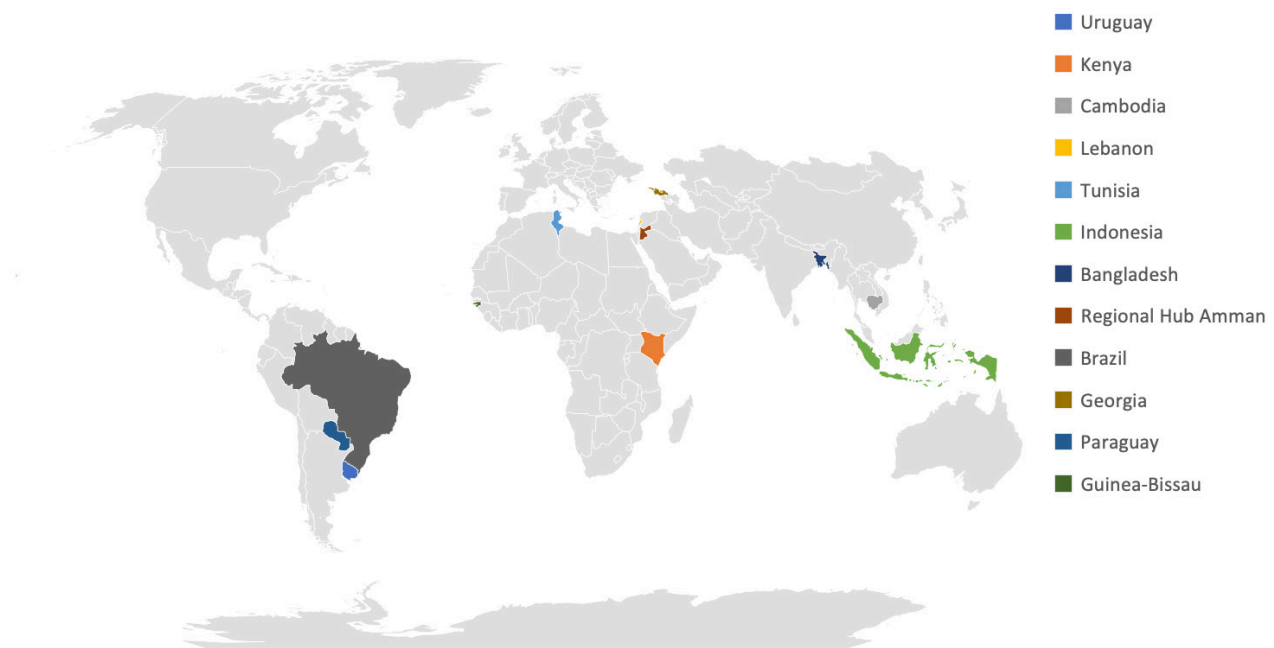
Webinar series finishes

- June 3rd: Press freedom, journalism standards, and regulation in a time of Covid-19 information pollution. *Watch webinar recording*.

Country office support

In June we provided support to Brazil, Bolivia, Bangladesh, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau and Paraguay as well as provided follow up support with Tunisia, Kenya, Indonesia and Cambodia. We also contributed information pollution guidance to UNDP's social media guidelines.
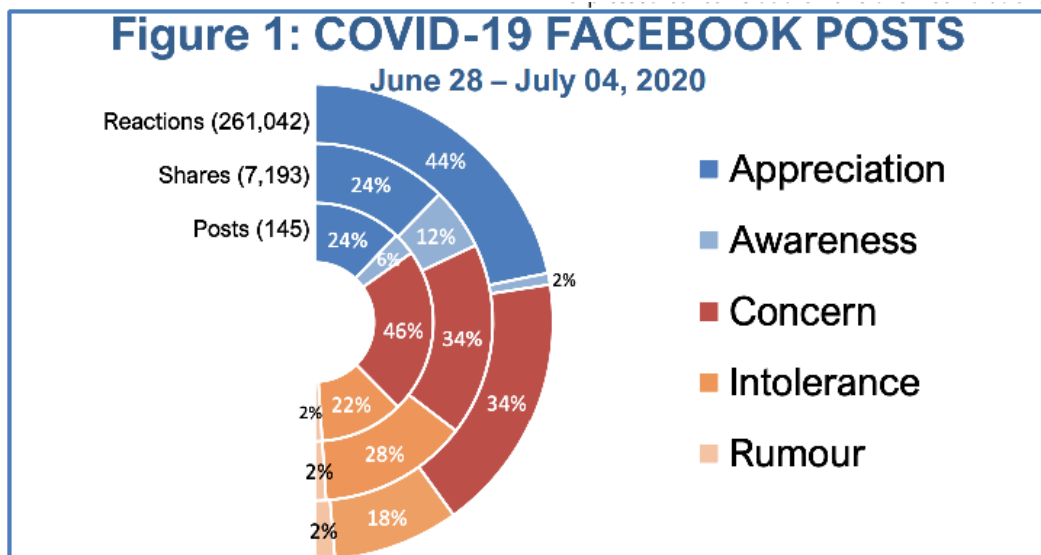
Country Office Support

Legend:
- Uruguay
- Kenya
- Cambodia
- Lebanon
- Tunisia
- Indonesia
- Bangladesh
- Regional Hub Amman
- Brazil
- Georgia
- Paraguay
- Guinea-Bissau

External consultation

We had consultations with International Media Support and International Fact Checking Network, and represented UNDP at the GlobalFact7 Conference and WHO infodemiology conference.

Case study: Bangladesh

The Bangladesh country office has been working hard to tackle discrimination and extremism in the online landscape. During the pandemic they stepped up their reporting efforts; producing weekly summaries ('Covid-19 Rumor and Intolerance Monitor') of news articles and social media content on Covid-19. This is creating valuable insight and data analysis. For example, by illustrating how disinformation attempts to provoke anger against governments and health institutions, or whether more people are inclined to share posts applauding healthcare personnel (Sec Dev).

Figure 1: COVID-19 FACEBOOK POSTS
June 28 – July 04, 2020

Reactions (261,042)
Shares (7,193)
Posts (145)

■ Appreciation
■ Awareness
■ Concern
■ Intolerance
■ Rumour

This report was prepared by the Cox's Bazar Analysis and Research Unit (CARU) of the UNDP Partnership for a Tolerant and Inclusive Bangladesh Project. Its findings are based on media reports and publicly available material, and do not necessarily reflect the views or analysis of UNDP or of the United Nations.

Furthermore, the Bangladesh office is putting together an application to focus on a digital literacy. This project hopes to address issues of identity and inclusion, and the citizen's ability to distinguish between trustworthy and untrue content online. This involves a critical engagement with Bangladesh's online environment, helping citizens to identify and question any misleading or incendiary online content they may encounter. If Bangladeshis are able to engage more skeptically and safely in cyberspace, UNDP expects they will become more resistant to divisive, exclusionary and violent rhetoric.

Press release: Governments must lead the fight against Coronavirus misinformation and disinformation

On June 10th, a press release was published on UNDP's website warning of the danger of the proliferation of dangerous misinformation and disinformation which threatens to undermine public health emergency response during the pandemic. Combatting information pollution cannot be achieved without good government leadership, according to Achim Steinar.