



Africa Fact Checking Fellowship  
**#AFFCameroon**  
NOVEMBER 18 & 19, 2022  
HOTEL DJEUGA PALACE YAOUNDE

**CONCEPT NOTE**



**Data Cameroon**  
*L'information citoyenne au service de la cité*



## CONTEXT

The democratisation of the use of ICTs in Cameroon has greatly facilitated access to information and its corollary, freedom of expression. This has improved the production of information by actors who do not often possess the technical, ethical and professional know-how. This is also influenced by the intrinsic nature of the internet and social media in particular. The access and use of ICTs evolve in the absence of a standardised restrictive, regulatory and legal framework, which can considerably limit the ability of an internet user to influence the information, socio-political and security agenda of a community or a State.

Today, disinformation, hate speech and stigmatizing speech online and even in mainstream media are very much in the news. François-Bernard Huyghe affirms that most often, behind this fake information relayed, are hidden media strategies aiming at manipulating public opinion and serving the interests of its instigators. The objective is either to weaken a State; or in a logic of economic competitiveness, to hamper the competition; or still, aims at tarnishing the image or the reputation of an individual (e-reputation).

Despite the efforts of various actors, the phenomenon continues to take on disturbing proportions against the backdrop of tribalism attacks and their corollaries. In such a context, the confusion that ensues has a corrosive effect on living together in harmony, social trust, critical thinking and deteriorates the citizen-State relationship, and even bilateral/multilateral State relations.

## JUSTIFICATION

Given this situation in Cameroon, for the past two years, #defyhatenow initiated the Africa Fact-checking Fellowship - #AFFCameroon quarterly program, which aims to train media professionals in online fact-checking and hate speech detection. #AFFCameroon aims to promote fact-checking, data journalism and digital rights among journalists, bloggers and content creators in Africa. This initiative comes in an environment marked by a proliferation of misleading speech, fabrication of information, photos, videos, deep fake, troll sharing, creation of fake accounts, online scams, slanderous, hateful and dangerous speech on social media aimed at individuals and/or inter-ethnic communities.

To date, more than 100 people residing in various regions of Cameroon have received technical, pedagogical and functional support for advanced information verification. The goal is to create a critical mass of fact checkers, information defenders, curbing online and offline hate speech and digital rights advocates.

In order for the work of these information professionals to have a greater impact, it is therefore important to harness the efforts of different actors in society on the one hand; on the other hand, to promote information verification practices and media and information literacy to a wider audience (especially within public and private organizations and institutions) in order to foster good governance and to enhance social trust. The fight against mis/disinformation is today a challenge for the promotion and preservation of freedom of expression and also of the press, the promotion of democracy and good governance based on Open Governance, the promotion of the responsible use of ICTs for harmonious and sustainable development.

## MAIN OBJECTIVE

Create and strengthen a synergy of actions to reduce the negative effects of mis/disinformation on lasting peace and social cohesion.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 1- Group all the Fellows from the different cohorts of #AFFCameroon to define new perspectives for action and coordination in the fight against mis/disinformation in a meaningful way by collaborating with public and private institutions.
- 2- Increase awareness and commitment of public authorities, organizations and companies in the fight against mis/disinformation.
- 3- Initiate an action plan for a coordinated response against mis/disinformation, defining joint responses between the different stakeholders.
- 4- Share new ideas and practices to advance fact-checking in Cameroon and Africa to better combat mis/disinformation and online hate speech.
- 5- Reduce the gap between perceptions and reality as observed on the ground while tackling the challenges of mis/disinformation as threats to peace.
- 6- Promote digital, media and information literacy among public and private entities and open access to information of organizations.
- 7- Initiate advocacy for a legal framework and regulatory mechanisms on mis/disinformation and personal data protection.

**DATE:** The ALL #AFFCameroon Conference will be held from 18 to 19 November 2022 at Hotel Djeuga Palace in Yaoundé.

**STRUCTURE:** The Conference will be articulated in different formats: round table discussions, presentations, workshops.

## EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS

- Public and private institutions
- Diplomatic missions
- International and regional organizations
- Civil society organizations
- Educational institutions
- Media professionals and associations
- #AFFCameroon Fellows

## EXPECTED OUTCOME

- The existence of a synergy of actions of all #AFFCameroon Fellows.
- Collaboration between organizations/institutions and #AFFCameroon Fellows to fight against mis/disinformation (integration of Fellows in communication cells)
- The opening of cells to fight against misinformation within the organizations/institutions invited.
- The collaboration (through the signing of partnership contracts and / or funding) between #defyhatenow and the communication cells of organizations / institutions in the fight against misinformation.
- The participation of about 300 actors concerned in one way or another with the issue of disinformation and hate speech.
- The realization of an advocacy with public authorities to better fight against disinformation and to promote greater access to information.

# COMMUNICATION PLAN

The communication of the ALL #AFFCameroon Conference will take place on two dimensions:

- Digital communication via the various online channels of #defyhatenow, #defyhatenow\_WCA, Civic Cameroon and partners.
- Traditional communication via radio and television reports and the publication of articles in leading newspapers.

Hashtags: **#AFFCameroon #Tech4Peace #Factchecking #ThinkB4UClick #HateFreeCameroon #defyhatenow #UnCameroonSansHaine #SafeDigitalSpace**

[1] François-Bernard Huyghe (Directeur de recherche à l'IRIS), Désinformation : les armes du faux, 2016

## About Civic Watch

Civic Watch is a community-based organization registered in Cameroon as a non-profit youth led group. Its main goal is community mobilization to counter hateful rhetoric among young people both online and offline. It addresses questions of incitement to violence, tolerance and peacebuilding in relation to social media. Civic Watch offers a unique portal of relevance and significance in the quest for solutions to conflict situations by promoting social cohesion and growth locally. Believing in the power that young people have and the impact they create. Civic Watch has been networking with similar community based organizations for an inclusive strategy for peace. Civic Watch is implementing the #defyhatenow initiative in Cameroon, aimed at countering hatespeech, violence and violent extremism with funding from the German Federal Foreign Office through the Berlin-based NGO, r0g\_agency for Open Culture and Critical Transformation. More information available on <https://civicwatch.cm/>

## About #defyhatenow

#defyhatenow is an initiative implemented in Cameroon by Civic Watch, that aims to provide community-based, data-driven solutions to the problem of hate speech, misinformation and fake news. Our work focuses on creating a framework for building trust among stakeholders by mobilising civic action against all forms of hate speech and incitement to violence. #defyhatenow seeks to help voices against online-induced conflict go 'viral' within and outside affected regions by engaging youth, community leaders, grassroots organisations and other civil society actors in a framework of peace in media and information. Bridging the gaps in knowledge and awareness of social media mechanisms between those who have access to technology and those who do not. Finally, #defyhatenow is a growing network of online and offline peacekeepers. [https://defyhatenow.org/defyhatenow\\_cameroon/](https://defyhatenow.org/defyhatenow_cameroon/)