



DHRLab

Teaching Fact Checking - Guide



Training Uganda's fact-checking trainers

Across Africa, people make decisions every day – decisions that impact public health, human rights, development issues, business and daily life. Whether they are civil society members, policy makers or the public, people make decisions based on the information available to them. But often that information is misleading or wrong. A lack of access to reliable, accurate data in an easily understandable format creates an information vacuum in which false information thrives.

The impact of half-truths, hoaxes and misleading information can be life-threatening, ranging from the misapplication of funds and poor policy making to misdiagnosis and even violence and death. Misinformation can spread quickly – often faster than factual information – ultimately weakening democracy.

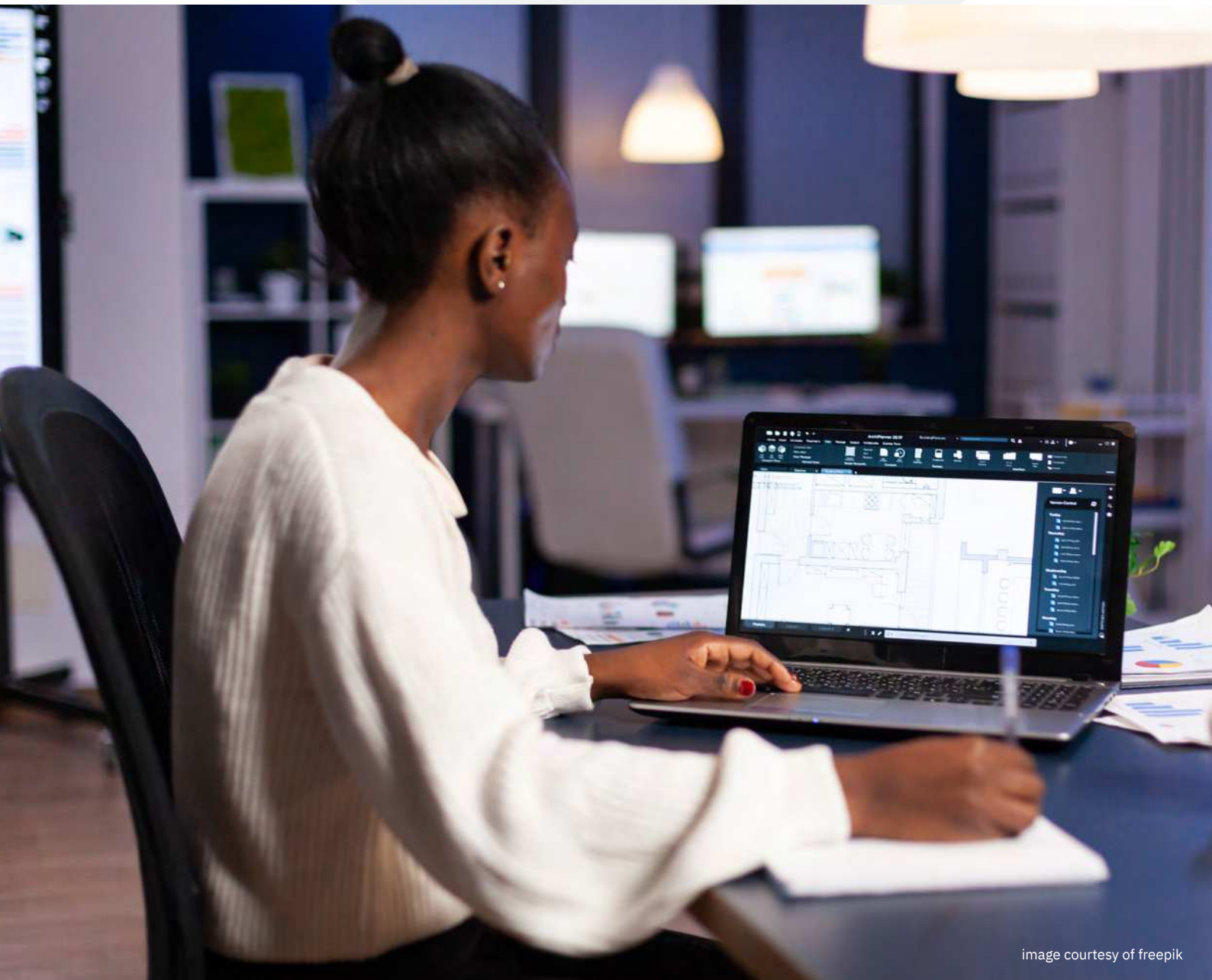
It is against this background, and as the world was in the midst of its battle against the Covid-19 pandemic, that Digital Human Rights Lab (DHRLab) partnered with Africa Check, the continent's first independent fact-checking organisation, in a training-of-trainers project for members of the data and digital verification community in Uganda.

The training programme equipped participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach fact-checking and thus enable others in the media, civil society organisations and the general public to check the accuracy of claims themselves. This will ultimately promote accuracy and honesty in public debate and the media in Uganda.

Course content

The project consisted of one two-day workshop that introduced participants to the practice of fact-checking and verification followed by a hands-on four-day training-of-trainers workshop in which they learned how to prepare for and facilitate fact-checking workshops themselves.

Each participant had to present a training session to ensure that they gained not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills. Participants were provided with several fact-checking resources to use for fact-checking training going forward, including a customised training-of-trainers manual for Ugandan fact-checkers.



Fact-checking in the Ugandan context

With acts of intimidation and violence against the media being a regular occurrence in Uganda¹ and the country being ranked no. 125 on the 2021 World Press Freedom Index, working as a journalist or a fact-checker can be challenging at the best of times. When there's a countrywide internet shutdown at election time² – which is exactly the scenario that fact-checkers faced during Uganda's general elections in January 2021 – it becomes even more difficult.

Since fact-checkers often rely on online verification and geolocation tools, not having access to the internet can slow down their work immensely. This is problematic at a time when one has to pull out all the stops to prevent the spread of false information.

As fact-checkers we can learn several lessons from the way fact-checking organisation PesaCheck went “back to the basics” to beat the spread of false information during Uganda's internet shutdown³. Instead of relying on open-source tools and online information, the fact-checkers were in touch with their contacts to assess the situation on the ground and physically visited locations that they received information about. Meanwhile their colleagues in neighbouring Kenya were doing online fact-checking and verification and sharing relevant information with them.

Besides being prepared to go into the field to do so-called “old-school” fact-checking, workshop participants were reminded that as fact-checking trainers they should also be able to provide trainees with practical advice about working under difficult circumstances. They should be aware that the challenges that fact-checkers in rural areas face might be different from the challenges experienced in cities. They learned that they have to be prepared to train their trainees in the most relevant and valuable way possible for the circumstances they find themselves in.

¹Reporters without Borders: rsf.org/en/uganda

²Committee to Protect Journalists: cpj.org/2021/01/internet-access-cut-social-media-banned-during-uganda-elections

³Code for Africa: medium.com/code-for-africa/debunking-election-disinformation-during-ugandas-internet-shutdown

Useful fact-checking resources

The resources listed below were shared with workshop participants.

Fact-checkers, fact-checking trainers, journalists, civil society organisations and members of the public with an interest in fact-checking will find these useful.

An introduction to fact-checking and why it is important

- [Africa Check: Who we are](#)
- [Oxford Research Encyclopedias: Fact-checking as idea and practice in journalism](#)
- [World Health Organization: An explanation of the so-called “infodemic”](#)

Types of false information, and why and how it spreads

[Africa Check video: When in doubt, check it out](#)
[Cornell University Library: Seeing our biases](#)

Identifying false information online

[Africa Check guide: How to stop falling for fake news](#)

Online tools for verifying images and videos

[Google reverse image search](#)
[TinEye](#)
[RevEye Reverse Image Search \(Chrome\)](#)
[Amnesty International’s YouTube DataViewer](#)
[InVID Verification Plugin \(Chrome, Firefox\)](#)
[Google Earth](#)
[Google Maps \(Street View\)](#)
[worldlicenseplates.com](#)

Online verification guides

[Africa Check guide: Where was that photo taken? How to locate \(almost\) any place on Earth](#)
[Africa Check guide: How to verify images on your smartphone](#)
[Africa Check guide: How to spot cheap, out-of-context and deepfake videos](#)

The fact-checking process

[Africa Check: The five-step fact-checking process](#)
[UNESCO Series on Journalism Education: Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation](#)

Finding accurate information and online data from credible sources

[Africa Check: We need science journalists not press release cheerleaders](#)
[Africa Check guide: How to craft accurate science journalism out of press releases](#)

General fact-checking and information resources

[Africa Check fact-checking tips](#)
[Africa Check fact-checking guides](#)
[Africa Check factsheets](#)
[Info Finder](#)
[Poynter's CoronaVirusFacts/DatosCoronaVirus Alliance Database](#)
 Article and research report about legal responses to misinformation in sub-Saharan Africa: [Governments in Africa have doubled 'false news' laws, to little effect. Another way is possible](#)



A screenshot of Africa Check training facilitators Anim van Wyk and Carina van Wyk and some of the participants in the training-of-trainers workshop



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