

Media literacy in MENA: Moving beyond the vicious cycle of oxymora. Mapping World Media Education Policies

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Abstract

At a time when the region of MENA (Middle East & North Africa) is full of potential for capacity-building, social unrest, political agitation and poor civil liberties are still plaguing the population. The status of media education is low in MENA countries, preoccupied by many other vital issues, and yet the lack of it is detrimental to civic engagement. Current literacy practices in MENA countries have poor standards for critically assessing the media and research findings show a widening gap between the general public and the journalists, which further impairs media literacy. The analysis deals first with MENA countries and their tensions and contradictions that characterize media literacy in the region. It then attempts to provide a political and media-related context to explain the current situation. It also uses research data to explore the challenges and opportunities to change the current dim picture in MENA, and concludes with several crucial implications for policy-making about media literacy in MENA.

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