Network of Issues and Opportunities in East Africa's Misinformation Landscape

A Critical Assessment of Stakeholders' Perspectives on Gaps, Challenges and Opportunities

Network of Issues and Opportunities in East Africa's Misinformation Landscape

A Critical Assessment of Stakeholders' Perspectives on Gaps, Challenges and Opportunities

FACTCHECK AFRICA **iEARN** **Meta**

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Executive Summary

The proliferation of misinformation in East Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, poses significant challenges to public health, political stability, and social cohesion.

The proliferation of misinformation in East Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, poses significant challenges to public health, political stability, and social cohesion. The region's information ecosystem is contaminated by a mix of misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, propaganda, fake news, and hate speech, disseminated through traditional media, social media, and government channels. The behaviours of instigators, agents, intermediaries, and interpreters in the misinformation ecosystem exacerbate the spread and impact of false information. Fact-checking efforts in East Africa involve collaborations and tools aimed at combating misinformation, with key players including local fact-checkers, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and media platforms like Meta. These efforts focus on enhancing verification processes, promoting digital literacy, and developing innovative technologies to detect and counter false information.

This backdrop provides the framework for further investigation of the region's misinformation problem through a qualitative approach and a philosophical research design that uses in-depth interviews and subject matter experts as research methods. The samples for the market assessment were the attendees of the roundtable discussions that took place in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania in August 2023 and January 2024, as well as the experts that were interviewed during the year.

Several key findings highlight the urgency of addressing misinformation in the region, which shows the importance of a multifaceted approach to create a more informed and resilient information ecosystem. The fight against misinformation in the region relies on the creation and enforcement of strong policies and frameworks. This needs to be done collectively by state and non-state actors, with the adoption of a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down approach. These actors should consider the inclusion of critical stakeholders in the misinformation business in the processes leading to the development of policies and fact-checking control or containment frameworks. Providing digital civic education and critical thinking skills that aid in the application of cognitive and emotive domains is equally significant. This will enable citizens' ability and capability to be resilient against purveyors of misinformation and their sponsors. A socio-civic engagement reorientation programme needs to be initiated and pursued vigorously by state actors. This will help raise awareness about the reputational and societal implications of spreading false and misleading information.

Our analysis has also led to the discovery of 22 opportunities in eight areas of the misinformation market in the region for supply-side and demand-side stakeholders. These opportunities are within the people, processes, and technology components of the market. Governments, research institutions, academics, non-government organisations, civil society organisations, and technology developers are all expected to explore these opportunties. Meta should increase its contributions to empowering stakeholders at the meso, micro, and macro levels through evidence-based interventions in order for the recommendations to be implemented successfully and opportunities explored.

Focus Countries

1. Ethiopia
2. Kenya
3. Tanzania

Analysis Result

22 opportunities in eight areas of the misinformation market in the region for supply-side and demand-side stakeholders.

People — Processes — Technology

→ Ethiopia has seen a significant rise in fact-checking efforts, with around 1,315 claims received by Ethiopia Check between August and November 2021. The dominant formats used to disseminate misinformation include texts, pictures, and videos, with human verification being the most common method employed to authenticate claims.

→ Kenya has been a major focus of fact-checking efforts, with 2,039 fact-checked contents containing the keyword "Kenya" on Africa Check. Kenya has seen a higher volume of fact-checks compared to Ethiopia, with a focus on text-based and picture-based content.

→ Tanzania has received relatively less attention from fact-checking organisations, with only 188 claims fact-checked. The low frequency of claims for Tanzania could be attributed to the limited attention given to the country by fact-checking organisations.

1 Introduction

East Africa is experiencing significant technology growth and digital transformation in political participation and civic engagement.

East Africa is experiencing significant technology growth and digital transformation in political participation and civic engagement. Digital technologies have enabled new forms of participation, such as social media and online petitions. One of the negative consequences of the adoption and use has been the spread of false and misleading information. This is known as misinformation, which is common during disasters, accidents, and crimes, political conflicts, election cycles, spreads through different routes, including traditional media, social media, and governmental settings, affecting many sectors. Misinformation propagation is driven by the behaviours of five categories of participants in the misinformation ecosystem: instigators, agents, messages, intermediates, and targets or interpreters[1].

Misinformation propagation

is driven by the behaviours of five categories of participants in the misinformation ecosystem:

INSTIGATORS

AGENTS

MESSAGES

INTERMEDIATES

TARGETS / INTERPRETERS
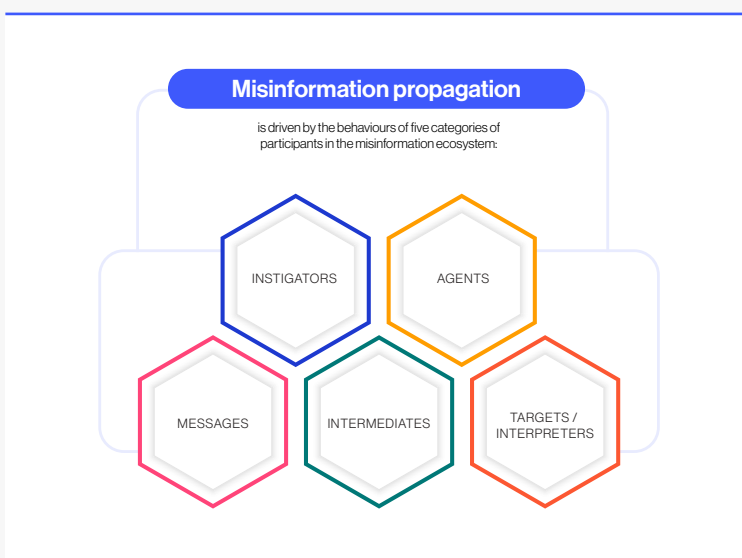
The Big Questions

→ how best can stakeholders address this scourge?

→ What are the alternative strategies and tactics for fact-checking the claims of the participants

→ If there is a need to continue with some of the existing approaches to address the problem, how best can we refine them to deliver the expected outcomes?

For years, the relentless pursuit of participants to minimise the impact of their activities on personalities, businesses, and society has been a daunting challenge. The unpredictable nature of the strategies and tactics employed has led to a cat-and-mouse game between state and non-state actors, each trying to outmanoeuvre the other. Despite these efforts, the region continues to struggle against the tide of misinformation, with the rate of creation and dissemination showing no signs of slowing down. The questions remain: how best can stakeholders address this scourge? What are the alternative strategies and tactics for fact-checking the claims of the participants? If there is a need to continue with some of the existing approaches to address the problem, how best can we refine them to deliver the expected outcomes?

In this report, to answer these questions, we explored East Africa's misinformation landscape using Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. In these countries, the war on misinformation has been consistently fought using online solutions more than offline ones. Fact-checking efforts have also remained fragmented and underfunded, while the digital divide limits access to various literacies needed to build resilient systems against the purveyors and platforms being used for spreading false information. These gaps are potential opportunities, such as expanding fact-checking initiatives and media literacy programmes and strengthening media independence and journalist safety, for stakeholders on the supply-side and demand-side of the misinformation market in the region. In line with this, we considered the countries and our data emerged from a series of roundtable discussions and interviews held in August 2023 and January 2024 in each of the countries, which helped us establish different narratives on the misinformation problem and existing opportunities for stakeholders, especially those in the control and containment segments of the information sector.

→ *Fact-checking efforts have also remained fragmented and underfunded, while the digital divide limits access to various literacies needed to build resilient systems against the purveyors and platforms being used for spreading false information.*

2 Methodology

The study aimed to understand the views of stakeholders in Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia on misinformation and its impact on the East African region.

The research employed a qualitative approach, using subject matter experts and in-depth interviews to gather data. The study involved 44 stakeholders, including academics, media professionals, information literacy experts, civil society members, fact-checkers, and citizens, who participated in roundtable discussions and in-depth interviews.

The data was analysed using an analytical framework that combined the What is the Problem Represented to Be (WPR) approach with the Actor Network Theory (ANT). The WPR approach helped to understand how stakeholders framed and represented the problem of misinformation, while ANT was used to map the network of actors involved in the misinformation landscape. The four concepts of ANT—translation, punctualisation, depunctualisation, and socio-technical—were used to analyse the data.

Translation focused on how information was translated and reinterpreted as it passed through the network, and how new networks were formed around specific narratives or ideologies. Punctualisation was adopted to establish how stakeholders viewed conveyors and media platforms as influencing the trajectory of scientific and technical innovation, often triggering and sustaining misinformation. Depunctualisation was used to examine how stakeholders perceived the failure of certain human and non-human actors to lead and exert influence, which empowered the conveyors of misinformation and the platforms they used.
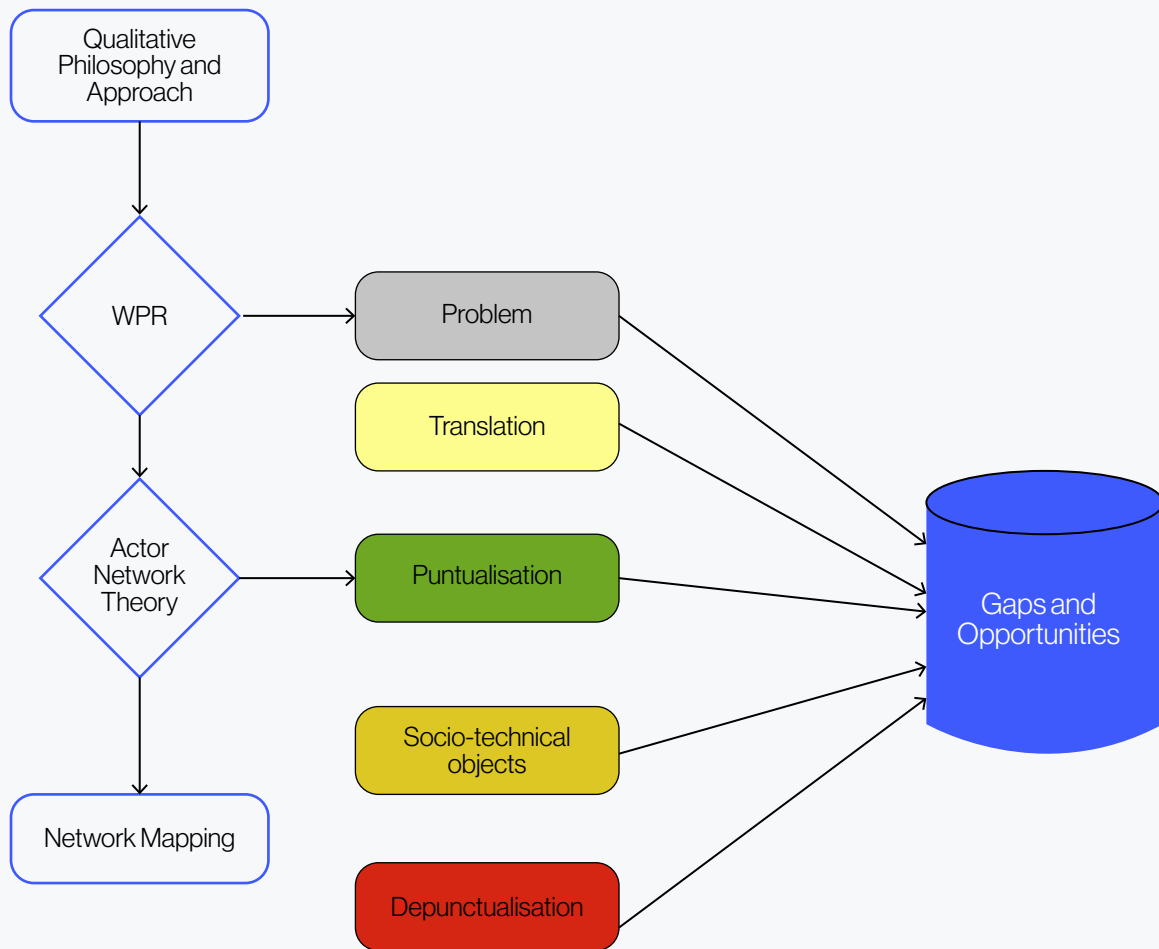
ILLUSTRATION: Methodological progression

Meanwhile, the study's results should be interpreted with caution because our methods are confined to comprehending stakeholders' perspectives using an interpretivism approach, which often allows for participant and researcher subjectivity in expressing opinions and interpreting data, respectively. However, this does not imply that the findings are ineffective for making informed decisions about combating misinformation in the region. It suggests that its usage should be limited to the countries we considered.

3 East Africa's Misinformation Landscape

Meta defines misinformation as false information shared without intent to deceive.

It can be unintentional or intentional, influencing opinions and decisions. Its alignment with individual beliefs and emotions amplifies its impact, as people seek information reinforcing their existing beliefs[2]. A recent global study by the World Economic Forum suggests that the "biggest" short-term threat to the world economy in the next two years would be disinformation, particularly those powered by artificial intelligence. The study concluded that it would have a significant impact on elections and government[3]. Based on the outcomes of this study and existing knowledge about the nature and patterns of misinformation in East Africa[4], we believe that this is the right time to once again make and remake strategies and tactics that would address the misinformation problem in the region. This is necessary, as over 69% of the 13 countries in the region will go to the polls between 2024 and 2026. While Kenya has just held its general election and experienced several forms of misinformation, Ethiopia and Tanzania would have elections in 2026 and 2025, respectively[5].

69%

of the 13 countries in the East Africa region will go to the polls between 2024 and 2026

In Ethiopia's information ecology, misinformation has flourished and continues to flourish, much as in other countries. The most prevalent area in the ecosystem for the generation and dissemination of false information is still online[6]. It has increased violence and conflict and heightened tensions that were already present. Individuals, fact-checking procedures, and government measures have all been used to combat the problem. The Ethiopian government has responded with the enactment of Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation (2020), Media Proclamation (2021), and Cyber Army Development Institute Establishment Council of Ministers Regulation (2017). However, there have been some questions about the government's response to the situation[7]. Non-state actors, foreign groups, and local politicians have opposed the government's legal approach, claiming that it undermines free speech and media pluralism, both of which are democratic virtues[8]. On the other hand, stakeholders who believe in the scourge's absolute extinction argue that existing rules and regulations have been ineffective because of inadequate implementation by the government's security and social control authorities[9].

The truth in mainstream media among Kenyans, who get news from numerous sources, varies according to their education level and social standing[10]. Personal interest, social network resonance, and importance all influence whether or not Kenyans engage with misinformation. News literacy tactics include using different sources and verifying them. In Kenya, stakeholders argued for self-regulation rather than government involvement to combat misinformation. The Kenyan government has responded with the Kenyan Penal Code, Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2018), Communications Authority of Kenya (2017), Section 22 of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act, and Section 23 of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act. Some of these laws are described as reactionary responses, similar to those in Ethiopia. In 2019, the Kenyan government enacted legislation criminalising social media abuse and the propagation of false

information, with a fine of up to $50,000, two years in prison, or both imposed on anyone who willfully publishes false information[11]. Instead of legal remedies, stakeholders advocate for long-term solutions such as enforcing media literacy education in schools[12].

Tanzania saw its greatest web of health misinformation during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the government denied the virus's existence while announcing absolute control[13]. As a result, citizens generated and propagated various types of infodemics, both consciously and inadvertently. Beyond health misinformation, climate, political, governance, and personality misrepresentation are also harmful to Tanzanian society. As a result, a shared feeling of responsibility among individuals and organizations is critical for preventing misinformation from spreading[14]. Over time, the Tanzanian government has addressed the issue through legal means, both directly and indirectly. The National Cohesion and Integration Act, the Information and Communications (Amendment) Act, and the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act were all recently passed. Earlier legal solutions have partially addressed the issue[15]. For example, the 2010 Electronic and Postal Communications Act and the 2015 Cybercrimes Act criminalise the transmission of false information with the intent to annoy, abuse, threaten, or harass another person. The 2016 Media Services Act prohibits intentionally falsified information that threatens defense, public safety, order, economic interests, public morality, or public health, or injurious to others' reputation, rights, and freedom. The 2018 Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations make it illegal for providers of online services to publish content that threatens national security or public health and safety, except when it is clearly pre-stated as satire, parody, fiction, or not factual. The 2020 Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations also prohibit publishing content that threatens public security and national safety.

Country	Prevalent Areas	Impact	Actions
Ethiopia	Online	• Violence and conflict • Heightened tensions	• Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation (2020) • Media Proclamation (2021) • Cyber Army Development Institute Establishment Council of Ministers Regulation (2017)
Kenya	Mainstream Media	• Personal interest • Social network resonance	• Kenyan government has responded with the Kenyan Penal Code, Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2018) • Communications Authority of Kenya (2017) • Section 22 of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act • Section 23 of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act
Tanzania	Online	• Health misinformation • Climate • Political • Governance • Personality misrepresentation	• The National Cohesion and Integration Act • The Information and Communications (Amendment) Act • The Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act • The 2010 Electronic and Postal Communications Act • The 2015 Cybercrimes Act • The 2016 Media Services Act • The 2018 Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations • The 2020 Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations

3.1 Nature of Information Pollution: A Brief Comparative Analysis of Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania

After a brief analysis of the landscape, it has been established that Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania face unique challenges in addressing information pollution due to their limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and the need for more effective regulations and policies. Understanding the nature and extent of information pollution in these countries is crucial for developing targeted strategies to mitigate its negative impacts and promote a more informed and healthy population. We investigated this utilising several data sources. Our first data source was the public's Internet search interest in the three nations, which we obtained from Google Trends. Google Trends enables researchers to compare search volumes for various topics, thereby offering a credible indicator of public interest and awareness. This can assist in identifying locations where public interest in information pollution is highest when polluted messages are disseminated across many media platforms, as well as where awareness campaigns may be most effective. Our second source of data was academic empirical investigations. We selected research that investigated the nature and dynamics of developing and maintaining polluted messages in the three countries.
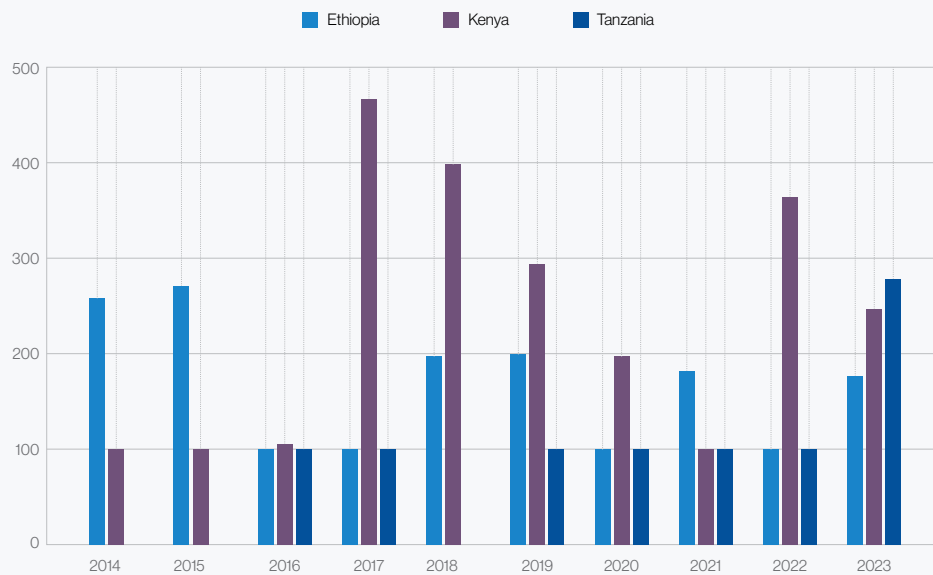
FIGURE 1:   Public volume of search interest in information disorder/pollution by country per year

Source: Google Trends, 2014-2023

Figure 1 shows public search interest in information disorder in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania. The analysis of public search interest in information disorder in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania from 2014 to 2023 reveals several significant trends and insights. One of the most striking patterns is the consistent increase in search interest in Kenya and Tanzania over the years, with a notable spike in 2017 and 2018. This suggests that the public in these countries is becoming increasingly concerned about the spread of misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and hate speech. In contrast, Ethiopia's search interest in information disorder has remained relatively stable, with a slight increase in 2018. This could indicate that the public in Ethiopia is less concerned about these issues or that there are other factors at play.

When comparing the countries, Kenya stands out as having consistently shown the highest search interest in information disorder. This is particularly evident in 2018, when search interest peaked. Tanzania also shows a steady increase in search interest, with a peak in 2023. The yearly comparison also reveals interesting patterns. The early years, 2014 and

2015, saw low search interest in information disorder across all countries. However, 2016 and 2017 marked a significant increase in search interest in Kenya and Tanzania. This trend continued in 2018, with a peak in search interest in Kenya and a slight increase in Ethiopia. The following years, 2019 and 2020, saw a slight decrease in search interest in Kenya and Tanzania. However, 2021 and 2022 saw a steady increase in search interest in Tanzania, culminating in a peak in 2023.

The consistent increase in search interest in Kenya and Tanzania suggests that the public in these countries is becoming increasingly concerned about misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and hate speech. This could be due to factors such as the rise of social media, political instability, and economic uncertainty. Kenya consistently showed the highest search interest in information disorder, particularly in 2018, which might be related to significant political and economic events. Tanzania's steady increase in search interest, culminating in a peak in 2023, could be linked to growing economic and political instability, as well as the rise of social media.
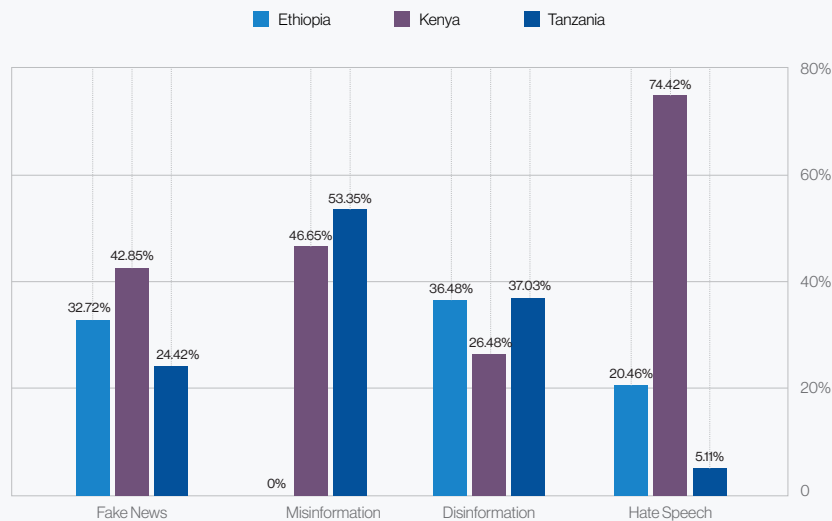
FIGURE 2: Public interest in key information disorder/pollution in 10 years

Source: Google Trends, 2014-2023

The public interest in information disorder is further investigated using the data shown in Figure 2, which indicates the volume of searches for each type of information disorder. According to our statistics, 2,104 searches were done for fake news, making it the most searched information disorder type during the last ten years. With 1,955 searches, hate speech followed fake news, while disinformation (n = 540) and misinformation (n = 538) are in the third and fourth positions, respectively. Our analysis further reveals that, in Ethiopia, fake news and disinformation are significant issues, with 32.72% and 36.48% of searches, respectively. Hate speech is also a concern, with 20.46% of searches. However, misinformation does not appear to be a major concern, with 0% of searches. This suggests that Ethiopians are more concerned about the spread of false information and hate speech, which can have severe consequences for social cohesion and political stability.

In contrast, Kenya stands out for its high search interest in hate speech, with 74.42% of searches related to this type of information disorder. Misinformation is also a significant issue in Kenya, with 46.65% of searches.

However, fake news and disinformation are less searched for, with 42.85% and 26.48% of searches respectively. This highlights the importance of addressing hate speech in Kenya, as it can contribute to social unrest and political polarisation. Tanzania, on the other hand, has a higher search interest in misinformation compared to other forms of information disorder, with 53.35% of searches. Disinformation is also a significant issue in Tanzania, with 37.03% of searches. Similar to Kenya, fake news and hate speech are less searched for in Tanzania, with 24.42% and 5.11% of searches respectively. This suggests that Tanzanians are more concerned about the spread of false information, which can undermine trust in institutions and contribute to social and economic instability.

Bloggers, people, vested interest groups, politicians, social influencers, and traditional media are important creators and distributors of polluted information. Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter have played an important part in the propagation of misinformation in these three countries, as they have in others throughout the world[16]. Over the years, these players have participated in the misinformation business.

1. Ethiopia

Ethiopia has seen relatively stable public search interest in information disorder over the years, with a slight increase in 2018. While fake news and disinformation are significant concerns, misinformation does not appear to be a major issue. The public is more concerned about the spread of false information and hate speech, which can have severe consequences for social cohesion and political stability.

2. Kenya

The Kenyan public consistently shows the highest search interest in information disorder, particularly in 2018. The public is deeply concerned about hate speech, with 74.42% of searches related to this type of information disorder. Misinformation is also a significant issue, with 46.65% of searches. Addressing hate speech is crucial to mitigate social unrest and political polarisation in Kenya.

74%
of searches related to hate speech

47%
of searches related to misinformation

3. Tanzania

Tanzania has seen a steady increase in public search interest in information disorder, culminating in a peak in 2023. The public is more concerned about misinformation, with 53.35% of searches. Disinformation is also a significant issue, with 37.03% of searches. The rise of social media and economic and political instability may contribute to these concerns, which can undermine trust in institutions and contribute to social and economic instability.

53%
of searches related to misinformation
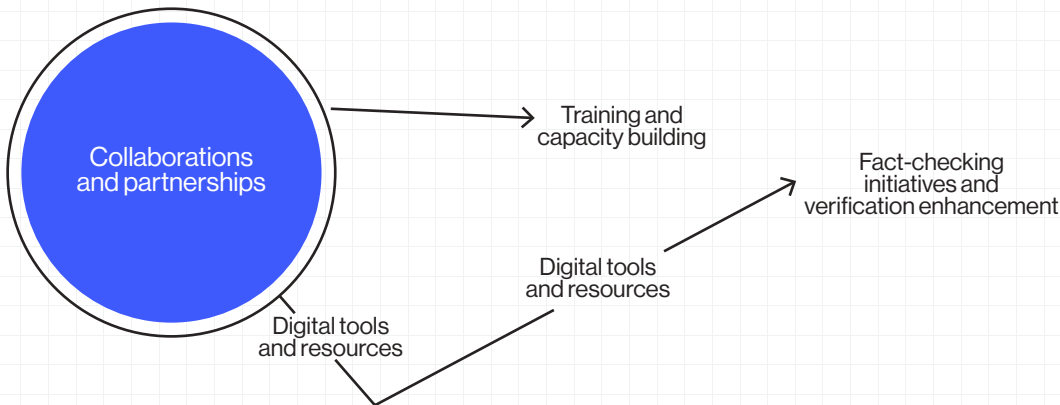
37%
of searches related to disinformation

Fact-Checking Landscape in East Africa

The fact-checking landscape in East Africa is marked by a multitude of initiatives, collaborations, and tools aimed at combating misinformation and promoting digital literacy. One of the key themes is the proliferation of fact-checking initiatives, which have become crucial in the region's fight against disinformation. Africa Check, a prominent fact-checking organisation, has been conducting fact-checking and training projects for news organizations in several countries, including South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal. Similarly, PesaCheck, East Africa's first fact-checking initiative, focuses on public finance and media reportage, helping the public distinguish fact from fiction in public pronouncements. HaqCheck, a local fact-checking initiative under Inform Africa, monitors stories in English and four local languages across social and mainstream media. It aims to create in-house verification and data-analysis tools adapted to the Ethiopian context, setting an example for other African countries to follow.

In terms of training and capacity building, Africa Check and UNESCO have hosted advanced fact-checking and digital verification training for regulators, media professionals, peace builders, and civil society organizations in Kenya. This training helps identify and address disinformation and hate speech online. Code for Africa (CfA) offers intensive fact-checking fellowships to develop a network of citizen fact-checkers that can recognize and combat false information in Ethiopia. This initiative not only enhances the skills of the participants but also fosters a culture of fact-checking among the general public. Already, the Ethiopian information market is open up to freelance fact-checking with hundreds of freelance fact-checkers, most previously practised as journalists and general media practitioners.

Collaborations and partnerships

Training and capacity building

Fact-checking initiatives and verification enhancement

Digital tools and resources
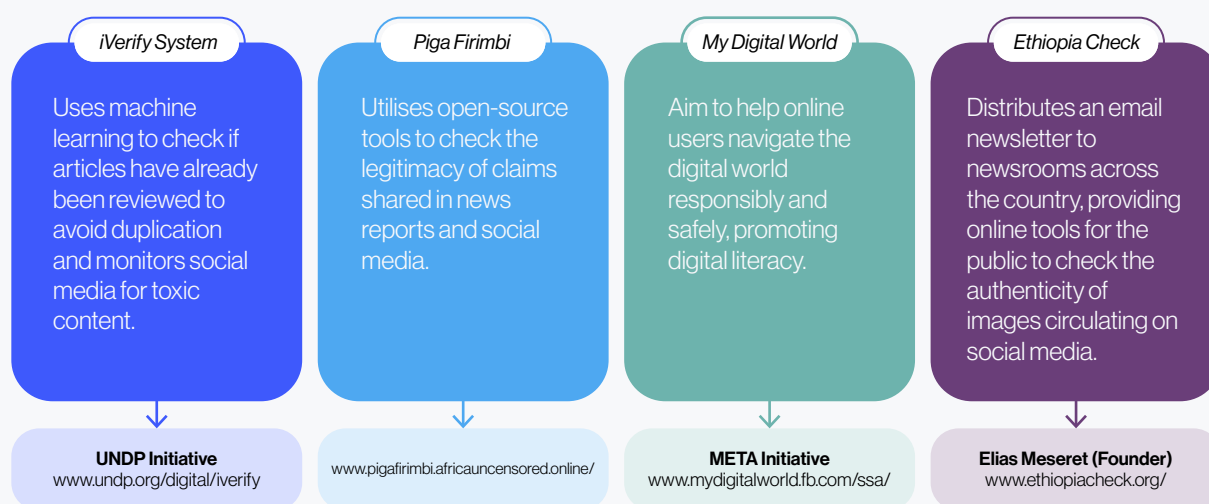
Digital tools and resources

Representation of the fact-checking misinformation operational activities in East Africa

Collaborations and partnerships are another crucial aspect of the fact-checking landscape in East Africa. Meta, for instance, hosts on and off-platform campaigns focusing on misinformation literacy and supports the Fact Checker Incubation Programme. This programme trains and mentors fact-checking institutions in Francophone sub-saharan Africa to support capacity building in indigeneous languages through peer-to-peer mentorship.

→ In order to support the digital literacy skills of users, Meta hosts on and off platform campaigns, focusing on misinformation literacy. The "How to Fight Misinformation" campaign aims to help people spot false news online and take action against it. As part of this campaign, we also partner with local radio stations to run commercials about how to spot misinformation and what people can do about it.

Digital tools and resources are also playing a vital role in the fight against misinformation.

iVerify System	Piga Firimbi	My Digital World	Ethiopia Check
Uses machine learning to check if articles have already been reviewed to avoid duplication and monitors social media for toxic content.	Utilises open-source tools to check the legitimacy of claims shared in news reports and social media.	Aim to help online users navigate the digital world responsibly and safely, promoting digital literacy.	Distributes an email newsletter to newsrooms across the country, providing online tools for the public to check the authenticity of images circulating on social media.
UNDP Initiative www.undp.org/digital/iverify	www.pigafirimbi.africauncensored.online/	**META Initiative** www.mydigitalworld.fb.com/ssa/	**Elias Meseret (Founder)** www.ethiopiacheck.org/

According to all indicators, the fact-checking landscape in East Africa is characterised by a wide range of efforts, collaborations, and tools aimed at combating misinformation and fostering digital literacy. These efforts not only improve information accuracy, but also promote a fact-checking culture among the general public, resulting in a more informed and responsible online community.

∞ Meta

How to fight misinformation

Pause before you share

A trusted source is your safest option

Get the whole story, not just a headline

Share facts, not rumors

Learn how to fight misinformation

VISIT

∞ Meta
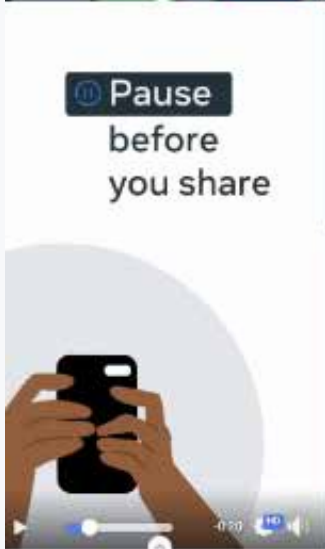
Kenya Media Literacy Campaign 2022

Get the full context from credible sources

Ethiopian Misinformation Landscape:

Trends , Prevalence and Recommendations

Trends and Prevalence

The prevalence of misinformation in Ethiopia is a significant concern, particularly in the context of social media. Some of the users consciously or unconsciously share information without adequate verification of sources and messages. This has led to a rise in the spread of false information, hate speech, and disinformation, which can have severe consequences for social cohesion and political stability. This trend is evident in the analysis of public search interest, which shows that fake news and disinformation are major issues. Hate speech is also a concern. Fact-checked claims play a crucial role in combating misinformation. At the time of conducting our research, there were 100 claims fact-checked contents that had Ethiopia as a keyword on Africa Check. Additionally, between August and November 2021, Ethiopia Check received around 1,315 claims from followers on the three platforms asking verification of rumours, social media accounts, and news items. Examining the claims' form reveals that they primarily deal with politics, health, elections, security, the economy, and education. Creators and purveyors of false information are focusing their attention on the travel and aviation industries, according to new data from the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative. The most common types of claims are text, videos, photos, and graphics.

The most prevalent area for the generation and dissemination of false information is still online. Bloggers, individuals, vested interest groups, politicians, social influencers, and traditional media are important creators and distributors of polluted information. Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter (X) have played an important part in the propagation of misinformation in Ethiopia. The law and regulatory response to misinformation in Ethiopia have been mixed. While the government has taken steps to combat the problem, there have been questions about the effectiveness of these measures. For instance, the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA) has set Proclamation 1185/12 to control hate speech and disinformation, but critics argue that the measures are insufficient.

Platform responses have also been significant. Meta, for instance, hosts on and off-platform campaigns focusing on misinformation literacy. In addition to hosting the campaigns, Meta has also enabled the ability and capacity of Ethiopians to use digital space responsibly and responsively through My Digital World. This programme trains and mentors fact-checking institutions in Francophone sub-saharan Africa to support capacity building in indigeneous languages through peer-to-peer mentorship. Code for Africa (CfA) offers intensive fact-checking fellowships to develop a network of citizen fact-checkers that can recognise and combat false information in Ethiopia. In addition to Ethiopia Check's efforts to tackle the scourge through real-time fact-checking activities, AFP Fact Check Africa and PesaCheck contribute significantly to the country's healthy information landscape. The two organisations are implementing a variety of soft and hard methods, as well as tools, to check official and non-official statements across various social media platforms and non-digital communication channels.

→ Meta, for instance, hosts on and off-platform campaigns focusing on misinformation literacy and support media literacy programs. . In addition to hosting campaigns, Meta has also enabled the ability and capacity of Ethiopians CSOs, learners and teachers to use digital space responsibly and responsively through My Digital World program.

Kenyan Misinformation Landscape

Trends, Prevalence and Recommendations

Trends and Prevalence

Until this year, social media was a powerful tool in the hands of individuals and groups who manufactured and spread false information. They continue to develop and spread false information in a variety of situations, utilising the media as strategic tools. Public interest in misinformation is also a significant issue in Kenya. In contrast to Ethiopia and Tanzania, Kenya public stands out in their high search interest in hate speech. However, fake news and disinformation are less searched for. One of the most striking patterns is the consistent increase in search interest in Kenya over the years, with a notable spike in 2017 and 2018.

The rise in public attention could be linked to the previously mentioned increase in the number of claims for various forms of information disorders. Participants frequently target diverse areas of Kenyan society. According to latest BBYDI statistics, the types of claims span the country's socio-political and economic landscape, with a focus on destabilising security architecture, political, social, educational, and corporate institutions. The data also show a concentration on inciting a cold war between Kenya and other nations through deceptive foreign policy and deportation narratives. These claim types have mostly been propagated using textual, vocal, and graphical representations of themes incorporated in the claims and targets (individuals, countries, and organizations).

In response to these challenges, the Kenyan government enacted legislation in 2019 criminalising social media abuse and the propagation of false information. However,

stakeholders advocate for long-term solutions such as enforcing media literacy education in schools. Social media platform owners like Meta have also taken steps, hosting on and off-platform campaigns focusing on misinformation literacy. This groundbreaking initiative has significantly contributed to a better understanding of the information ecosystem, enabling citizens to critically evaluate and combat the spread of false information.

Kenya is home to AFP Fact Check Africa and PesaCheck that verify suspicious photographs, videos, official statements, and other falsehoods found online, as well as budgetary and financial numbers presented by Kenyan politicians. Additionally, Africa Check and UNESCO have hosted advanced fact-checking and digital verification training for regulators, media professionals, peace builders, and civil society organisations in Kenya.

→ In order to support the digital literacy skills of users, Meta hosts on and off platform campaigns, focusing on misinformation literacy. The "How to Fight Misinformation" campaign aims to help people spot false news online and take action against it. As part of this campaign, we also partner with local radio stations to run commercials about how to spot misinformation and what people can do about it.

Tanzanian Misinformation Landscape

Trends, Prevalence and Recommendations

Trends and Prevalence

The Tanzania public interest in seeking information about misinformation has been consistent over the years. This trend suggests that the public is becoming increasingly concerned about the spread of misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and hate speech. Over time, players in the misinformation market have prioritised creating and spreading false information about politics, governance, health, education, and other topics with the goal of destroying personalities and causing targets to suffer financial losses as a result of public ostracization of products and services. Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter (X) have played a crucial role in spreading misinformation in Tanzania. Meanwhile, because the techniques for establishing the number of social media users are not uniform, there is no universal number of users per medium.

As noted previously, the public's growing concern about misinformation is evident in the consistent increase in search interest in Tanzania. This trend suggests that citizens are becoming more aware of the need to verify information and are seeking reliable sources to combat the spread of misinformation. The spike in search interest in 2017 and 2018 is particularly striking, suggesting an intense sense of urgency among the public. The Tanzanian government has addressed the issue of misinformation through legal means, both directly and indirectly. The National Cohesion and Integration Act, the Information and Communications (Amendment) Act, and the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act were all recently passed. Earlier legal solutions have partially addressed the issue. For example, the 2010 Electronic and Postal Communications Act and the 2015 Cybercrimes Act criminalise the transmission of false information with the intent to annoy, abuse, threaten, or harass another person. The 2016 Media Services Act prohibits intentionally falsified information that threatens defense, public safety, order, economic interests, public morality, or public health, or injurious to others' reputation, rights, and freedom. The 2018 Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations make it illegal for providers of online services to publish content that threatens national security or public health and safety, except when it is clearly pre-stated as satire, parody, fiction, or not factual. The 2020 Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations also prohibit publishing content that threatens public security and national safety.

Meta has launched on- and off-platform campaigns focusing on misinformation literacy. These initiatives aim to empower users with the skills to identify and combat misinformation.

Recommendations

01 Implement comprehensive media literacy programmes to educate the public on identifying and evaluating credible sources of information

02 Platforms should also downrank incorrect information and prevent algorithms from amplifying misinformation

03 Establish and support fact-checking organisations to verify information and provide accurate data.

04 Implement robust moderation policies and mechanisms to prevent the spread of harmful content.

3.3

The Epigram of Fact-Checking Activities

It has already been shown that information disorder is the most pressing problem among stakeholders in East Africa's information ecosystem. It has been established that attempts have been and continue to be undertaken to combat the scourge. In this part, we look at the results of fact-checkers' operations over a few years to determine the number of claims fact-checked in specific countries. As at the time of conducting this research, there are 2,039 fact-checked contents that had Kenya as a keyword on the Africa Check[19], 100 claims for Ethiopia[20] and 188 claims for Tanzania[21]. According to additional evidence, between August and November 2021, Ethiopia Check received around 1,315 claims from followers on the three platforms asking verification of rumours, social media accounts, and news items. Seventy-seven fake news and accounts were identified. Ordinary citizens, journalists, political and social activists, as well as ministers and officials made the calls[22].

Moving beyond string searches on fact-checking organisations' websites and exploration of information received by fact-checking entities to determine the current level of claims fact-checked in the region, we also explored Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative's Africa Information Pollution Database (AIPOD). The database contains a series of indicators that examine misinformation, disinformation, fake news, hate speech, and violent extremism, among others, especially in the West Africa sub-region. Meanwhile, in our exploration of the database, we found claims related to Ethiopia and Kenya fact-checked by some of the leading fact-checking organisations in Africa. Out of 632 claims selected by the BBYDI, 284 claims were created and disseminated to target individuals, groups, and governments (national and county) in Kenya. We only found five claims for Ethiopia (see Figure 3). In terms of specificity of information pollution, we found 251 claims related to fake news associated with Kenya from a total of 466 claims of fake news recorded by the BBDYI, while for misinformation (n = 83), Ethiopia has 4 and Kenya has 1. However, the low frequency of the claims could be attributed to the fact that the BBYDI does not have enough claims for the two countries based on its inclusion and exclusion criteria. The lack of data for Tanzania can also be linked to the low attention given to the country by fact-checking organisations.
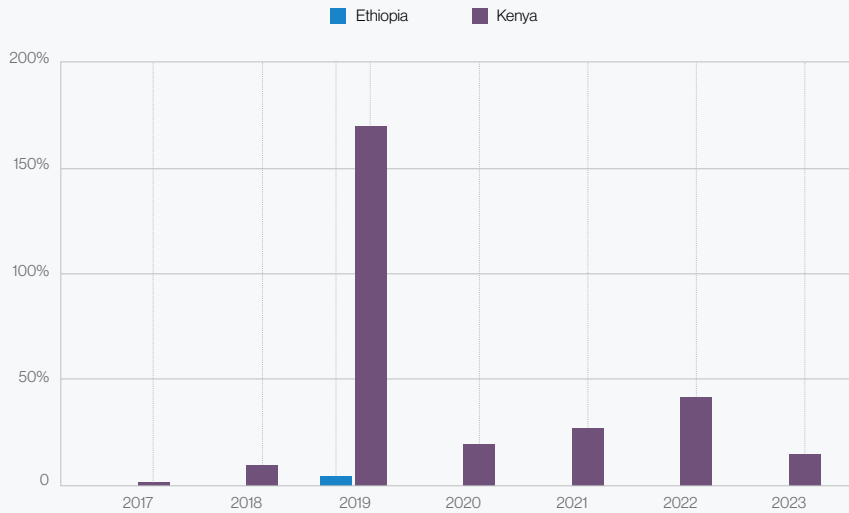
FIGURE 3:   Volume of selected information disorder/pollution claims fact-checked between 2017 and 2023

Source: Africa Check, Dubawa, Fact-Check Hub, PesaCheck, 2024; Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2024

The BBYDI's database reveals that texts, pictures, videos, audio, and graphics are the dominant formats used by conveyors of polluted messages. According to the database, 248 claims were produced using texts. Pictures are also discovered as a means of transmitting 133 claims. The data also indicates the use of videos (n = 7), audio (n = 1), and graphics (n = 24) in different proportions while targeting Ethiopia and Kenya. These insights suggest that fact-checking organizations are actively engaged in verifying claims related to Ethiopia and Kenya, with a focus on text-based and picture-based content. The significantly higher volume of fact-checks in Kenya compared to Ethiopia could be due to a variety of factors, such as the size of the media ecosystem, the prevalence of misinformation, or the priorities of the fact-checking organisations
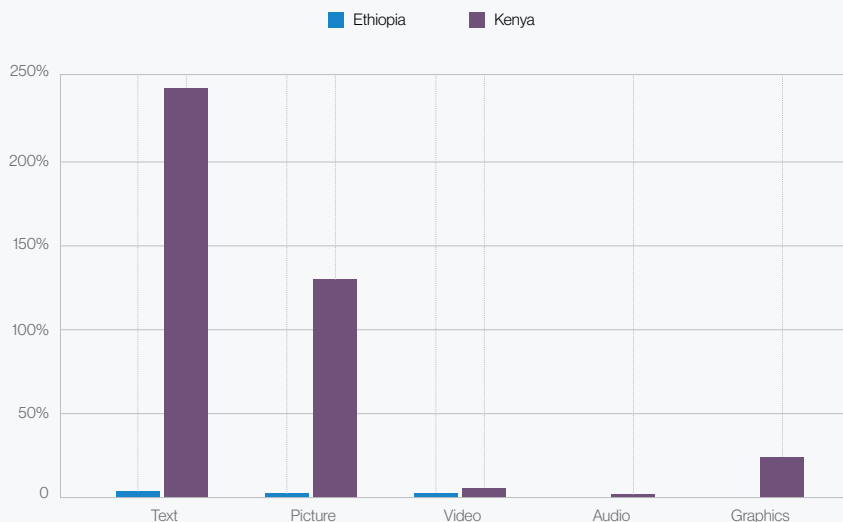

FIGURE 4:   Forms of claim fact-checked per country

Source: Africa Check, Dubawa, Fact-Check Hub, PesaCheck, 2024; Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2024

In terms of verifying the claims, the database of the BBYDI indicates the use of human (n=243), technology (n=53) and both (n=23) approaches. Google Reverse Image Search, Yandex Reverse Image Search, TinEye Reverse Image Search and social media accounts are mostly technologies deployed by fact-checkers to authenticate the claims. The distribution of verification approaches used by fact-checking organizations in fact-checking claims targeting Kenya and Ethiopia is similar, with human verification being the most common method employed for both countries. However, a notable difference emerges when examining the instances where both human and technology-based verification are used in conjunction. There was a higher number of cases where fact-checkers used a collaborative approach for claims related to Kenya, combining human expertise with technological tools to verify claims. This suggests that the fact-checkers embraced a more integrated verification process, leveraging the strengths of both human analysts and technological solutions to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of their fact-checking efforts.

In contrast, while human verification remains the predominant approach for verifying claims associated with Ethiopia as well, the data indicates a lower frequency of instances where both human and technology-based verification are used together. This implies that the fact-checkers relied heavily on manual verification methods compared to combining the approaches employed for Kenya's claims. The higher prevalence of collaborative verification approaches in Kenya could be attributed to various factors, such as the high deployment of technological resources by conveyors of the claims, and the expertise of fact-checkers, or the specific needs.
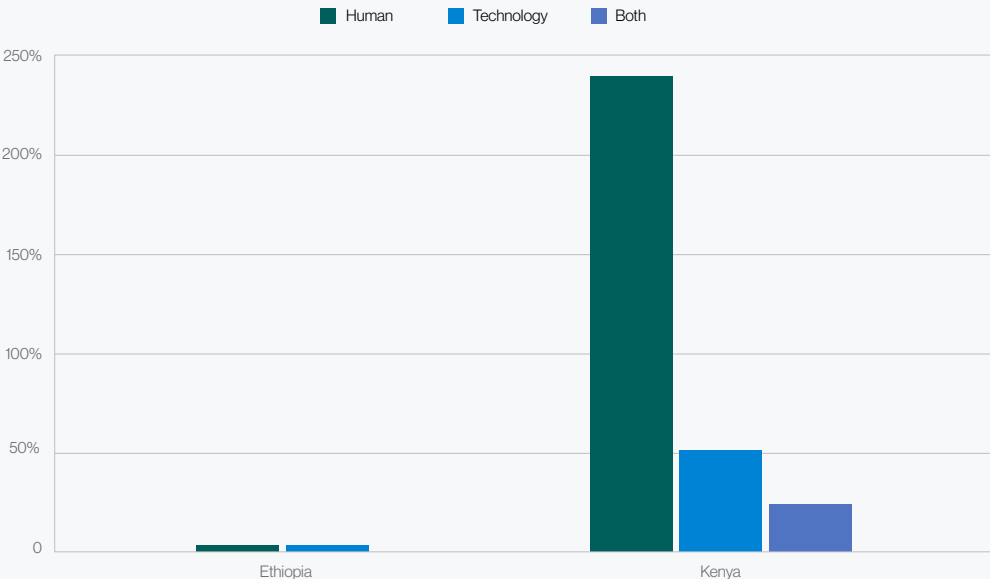

FIGURE 4:   Verification approaches of fact-checking organisations

Africa Check, Dubawa, Fact-Check Hub, PesaCheck, 2024; Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative, 2024

→ Ethiopia has seen a significant rise in fact-checking efforts, with around 1,315 claims received by Ethiopia Check between August and November 2021. The dominant formats used to disseminate misinformation include texts, pictures, and videos, with human verification being the most common method employed to authenticate claims.

→ Kenya has been a major focus of fact-checking efforts, with 2,039 fact-checked contents containing the keyword "Kenya" on Africa Check. Kenya has seen a higher volume of fact-checks compared to Ethiopia, with a focus on text-based and picture-based content.

→ Tanzania has received relatively less attention from fact-checking organisations, with only 188 claims fact-checked. The low frequency of claims for Tanzania could be attributed to the limited attention given to the country by fact-checking organisations.

4 Media Landscape and Stakeholders

East Africa's media systems are shaped by a strong media-politics relationship, with varying levels of media ownership and regulation. The region's political systems range from democratic to authoritarian, while social mobilisation and civil society are strong, with NGOs and community initiatives growing. Media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and cultural identity, with a mix of traditional and modern influences. The region has shifted towards digital media consumption, with increased internet penetration and the growth of online news platforms, social media, and digital storytelling.

From the media system to the information pollution ecosystem, every stakeholder wants to own means of production and distribution. The media players, especially journalists, editors, and owners, want to inform the public about happenings by leveraging their media

functionality and critical roles. Media professionals and individuals both play a significant role in shaping the information that is presented to the public. Media professionals are influenced by their own ideological orientations towards specific issues and subjects, which can affect what they choose to cover and present to the public. Individuals, on the other hand, construct their own social reality and shape public views through their unique socio-economic and political contexts. These contexts influence what gets covered and reported to the audience. Individuals also bring their own perspectives and biases to the information they consume. For the players in the information pollution ecosystem, leveraging existing mainstream media and emerging or alternative media such as social media is necessary for selling ideologies that destabilise society.

Social media platforms like YouTube and Twitter have become key players in the spread of disinformation. The dense, extensive social interconnections across these platforms allow malicious actors to launch numerous falsehoods and

observe which narratives take hold. Social media influencers perform "authenticity labour" as ideological intermediaries, promoting a lifestyle and authenticity that can be exploited for political and economic gain. The ideological domination of misinformation creators and their sponsors is a complex issue that involves the interactions between social media influencers, bloggers, mainstream media, and political actors. Misinformation creators often have a clear ideological agenda and use their platforms to promote specific narratives and beliefs. These narratives can be amplified by their sponsors, who may have their own political or economic interests at stake. Socio-political identity plays a key role in sharing fake news, especially for those on the right. As a result, having production and distribution means is essential to surviving in the information pollution and media systems. But who pays for it? The views from roundtable meetings and in-depth interviews in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania provide answers to this question.

→ *Misinformation creators often have a clear ideological agenda and use their platforms to promote specific narratives and beliefs. These narratives can be amplified by their sponsors, who may have their own political or economic interests at stake.*

5 Results

In this section, we present our findings, in which we employed themes that emerged from participant perspectives to establish overplay and interplay of identified actors in order to pinpoint the complexity of East Africa's misinformation ecosystem.

The data revealed six main themes, all of which are relevant to addressing the people responsible for the spread of misinformation and those who absorb polluted messages. We also observed themes that are consistent with addressing fundamental structural issues connected with regulating and restricting the dissemination of incorrect information. Some themes also remind concerned stakeholders of the importance of improving fact-checking ways as a control mechanism, as well as establishing fact-checking education that is integrated with various literacy education (information and media) and moral sensitivity. We further distilled the participant narratives and topics using WPR into problems and solutions related to the misinformation crisis in East Africa's information ecosystem (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: Problems and solutions representation according to the stakeholders

Country	Problem	Solution
Ethiopia	Limited Fact-Checking Resources	Regular engagement and experience sharing among fact-checkers and other stakeholders
	Poor communication and engagement from fact-checkers	Capacity building and support
	Digital security and safety of fact-checkers	Digital literacy
	Lack of digital literacy	Education and digital literacy
Kenya	Lack of awareness and critical thinking	Enhancing digital literacy
	Amplification of propaganda	Strengthening fact-checking, developing ethical AI
	Emotional appeal of misinformation	Promoting personal responsibility
	Lack of policies and frameworks	Adapting to local contexts
Tanzania	Lack of regulation and verification of information	Develop and enforce regulations
	Targeting of vulnerable groups	Improve critical thinking and fact-checking skills among users, especially youth
	Lack of critical thinking and fact-checking skills	Improve critical thinking and fact-checking skills among users, especially youth
	Evolving tactics and tools used to spread misinformation	Increase control features and content moderation to flag and neutralise misinformation

In Ethiopia, insufficient digital security, poor communication, little resources, and low digital literacy among fact-checkers all contribute to the ineffectiveness of fact-checking initiatives. According to the Ethiopian stakeholders, effective strategies for combating misinformation include regular stakeholder engagement, capacity building and support, digital literacy, and education. Awareness problems, lack of critical thinking, the amplification of propaganda, the emotional appeal of misinformation, and the absence of effective policies and frameworks are associated with the misinformation problem in Kenya.

Kenyan stakeholders, like Ethiopian stakeholders, emphasised the strategic importance of improving digital literacy, strengthening fact-checking systems, promoting personal responsibility, and adapting to local contexts as key strategies for reducing misinformation and promoting sustainable living in the country. Tanzanian stakeholders

emphasise the lack of regulation and verification, which is consistent with Ethiopian stakeholders' perspective on policies and frameworks for taming the issue. Tanzanian stakeholders are also concerned that conveyors and platforms are targeting disadvantaged groups and individuals. They also believe that a lack of critical thinking and fact-checking skills contribute significantly to the spread of misinformation. To Tanzanian stakeholders, the ongoing growth of strategies and instruments used to transmit false information is another element contributing to the creation and propagation of false information, particularly among the weak abused by conveyors and their sponsors. Tanzanian stakeholders, like their counterparts in Ethiopia and Kenya, proposed developing and enforcing laws, improving citizens' critical thinking and fact-checking skills, improving existing control features, and content moderation on media platforms as solutions to misinformation.

Below are some common topics that surfaced during the interviews and roundtable discussions

5.1 Digital Literacy

→ *"Children are curious and they ask questions,"*

Etyang observed, noting that adults are much less likely to be interested in learning and using the taught skills. Nukta shares similar optimism in Tanzania where it has trained thousands on fact-checking and data journalism. The consumption trends and information literacy levels in Tanzania are slightly lower than in Kenya.

→ *"We see trends that tools involving AI are more accessible and so people are able to manipulate visualisation themselves while people can't identify trusted sources. Access to tools is challenging to literacy (as involving constantly) and ways people use to spread misinfo is also evolving all the time."*

(A graphic visualiser, at Tanzania's Roundtable Discussion, 2023)

5.2 Digital Security and Safety

→ *"Fact-checking can be very manual and slow,"*

Mugendi admitted as he blamed tech companies for their destructive algorithms.

→ *"Misinformation will keep being shared and keep going viral because of the way these platforms are designed,"*

Mugendi said. Aside from that, attendees expressed concern about the security and safety of fact-checkers, citing emerging technologies as exposing fact-checkers' names to conveyors and other actors in the misinformation business.

5.3 Critical Thinking

Nuzulack highlighted some progress in Tanzania's curriculum as far as digital literacy is concerned. This optimism was not shared by Kenyan stakeholders who decry the outdated curriculum that leaves learners out of the evolving world of technology. In Etyang's view, this lag in the incorporation of digital literacy skills in the curriculum continues to impede the move towards digital literacy. This is worse for children from low-income households.

→ *"Children are not taught the basic things that they should understand,"*

Etyang said.

5.4 Awareness

→ *"Outside of elections, there isn't much research on regular misinformation. There is an opportunity to go in to analyse what makes misinformation so difficult to address,"*

Mugendi notes.

According to one of the participants in Ethiopia, most of the false information spreads from regional areas so we need to work more on the regional journalists, opinion leaders and religious leaders. Another participant from the country notes that

→ *"We need a platform where we regularly engage — where we have more contextual perspective and experience sharing.*

5.5 Policies and Frameworks

→ *"Government rubbishes ideas even before you explain yourself,"*

Etyang said as he narrated the difficulties in getting permission.

→ *"Programmes on fact-checking and initiatives meant to protect children against online sexual exploitation cannot be rolled out now because of this,"*

Etyang from Mtoto News said.

5.6 Verification Approaches

A discussant during Ethiopia's roundtable discussion pointed out that only two organisations do fact checking in the country.

→ *"The others are not up to the standard at the moment. In terms of fact checking, HackCheck + Africa Check — how we can bring the international standard to Ethiopia."*

Despite documented failures of artificial intelligence in reporting accuracy, it can reduce the dependency on humans. Thus making verification easier and more accurate.

→ *"How can we use AI and other emerging technologies?"*

Mugendi asked. The destructive nature of social networks need to be addressed. Samuel Munyuwiny of the African Institute for Children lauded Meta's attempt to make social media safer by removing the likes button on minors. While that was a safety mechanism meant to protect the mental health of minors, similar measures can be used to limit the amplification of harmful content. Anduvate Jefferson mentioned X's efforts to downgrade harmful comments by hiding them and limiting views.

Verification Approaches

→ *"The disinformation spreader is faster than the fact checker as they lack the ethics and concerns of verification — the moment you are done with fact checking, people already saw the content and engaged with that."*

    - Rebecca

→ *"Approaching the mainstream audience is a must — as they don't understand what is a manipulated content — so we need to target the majority not the elite"*

    - Abel

Problem-Solution Network

Both the problems and the solutions are further mapped as a network, demonstrating that combating misinformation in East Africa necessitates a holistic strategy involving different techniques and parties. The network emphasises the significance of digital literacy, fact-checking, and critical thinking in preventing the spread of misinformation.
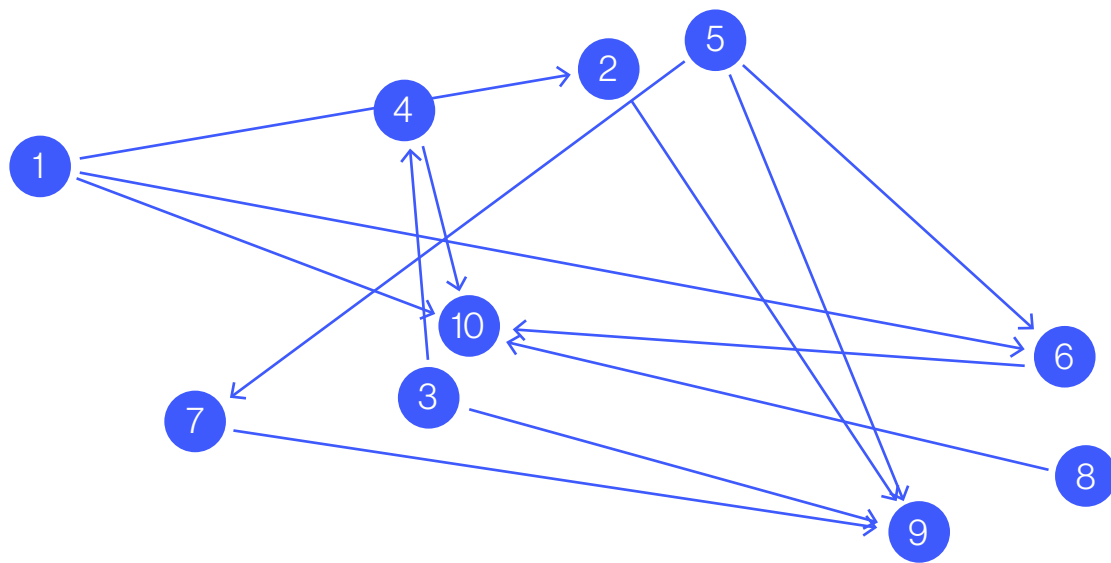

FIGURE 6:   Problem-solution network

Key: *Limited Fact-Checking Resources (1), Poor Communication and Engagement (2), Digital Security and Safety (3), Lack of Digital Literacy (4), Lack of Awareness and Critical Thinking (5), Amplification of Propaganda (6), Emotional Appeal of Misinformation (7), Lack of Policies and Frameworks (8), Targeting of Vulnerable Groups (9), Evolving Tactics and Tools (10)*

First off, the nodes that exhibit the most degree of centrality and power centrality[23] in the network—along with the least amount of resources available for fact-checking, a lack of awareness and critical thinking, and digital security and safety—indicate their considerable influence. Since they directly affect fact-checkers' ability to verify material and the dissemination of false information among users, these problems are crucial in the fight against misinformation in the East Africa region. The targeting of vulnerable groups, changing strategies and instruments, propagandistic amplification, scarcity of resources for fact-checking, and a lack of awareness and critical thinking are just a few of the nodes within information centrality[24] that emphasise how vital it is to solve these problems and the misinformation problem. These nodes show that these issues are not only related to one another but also have a big impact on the dissemination of false information.

6 Conclusion

Our different analyses have revealed that the misinformation problem in East Africa is just as complex as in other parts of the world. We've also discovered that stakeholders may easily identify human and non-human actors who continue to play important roles in developing and maintaining the misleading information market. At the same time, we have learned that certain stakeholders may exert influence on false information perpetrators with negligible results due to the various challenges and issues associated with the processes, people, and technologies they use to shape activities in the region's misinformation market. These views are further reflected in Figure 7, where we show the interconnection of many factors, such as digital literacy, security, policies, conveyors, and verification methodologies, which comprise human and non-human actors. This interdependence implies that a comprehensive approach is required to effectively combat misinformation.

7 Managerial Recommendations

7.1 Building a Resilient Society Against Misinformation Through Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking Skills

The battle against misinformation hinges on the development and implementation of robust policies and frameworks. These measures can significantly enhance digital literacy and security, guiding the dissemination of information and supporting verification efforts. While fact-checking organisations and fact-checkers are necessary in the fight against misinformation, providing digital civic education and critical thinking skills that aid in the application of cognitive and emotive domains is equally significant. Therefore, digital literacy and critical thinking skills for building a resilient society against purveyors of misinformation and their sponsors are important. These skills enable individuals to navigate the information landscape more effectively and protect themselves from misinformation. The significant influence of conveyors like media, politicians, and social influencers underscores the need for these groups to be held accountable and guided by robust policies and frameworks.

Empowering a Vigilant Society: Combating Misinformation Through Awareness and Critical Thinking

Raising awareness among the general public and fact-checkers is critical for combating misinformation effectively. Continuous efforts to promote awareness can lead to a more informed and vigilant society capable of identifying and challenging misinformation. Specifically, addressing misinformation in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania requires a multifaceted strategy that incorporates digital literacy, robust policies, effective verification methods, and active involvement from all conveyors of information. Empowering individuals with critical thinking and awareness is vital for creating a resilient information ecosystem.
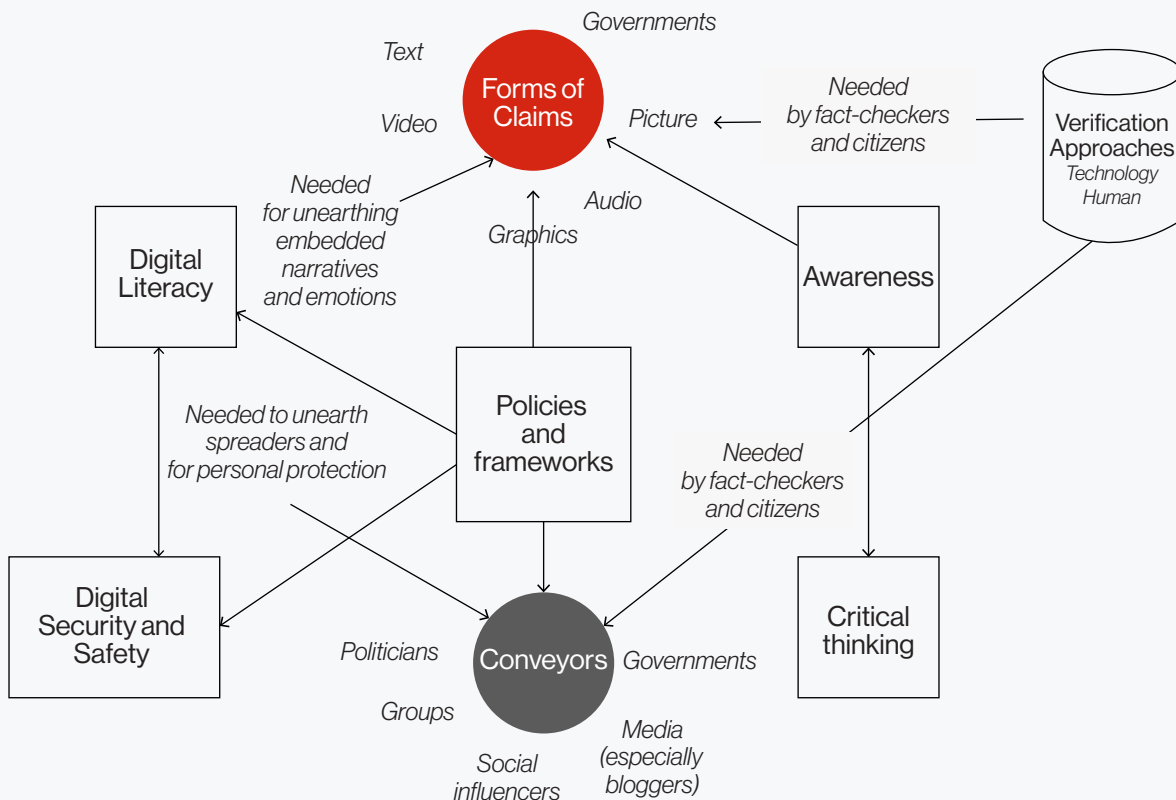

FIGURE 7: Network of actors, issues and opportunities in EKETAN's (Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania) Misinformation landscape

7.3 Unlocking Opportunities in the Misinformation Market

We derived several opportunities for players in the misinformation market based on trends, problems, and solutions supplied by stakeholders. Table 2 shows the prospects for both the supply and demand sides of the market, with increased opportunities for digital platforms such as Meta, which has billions of users on Facebook and WhatsApp. We have identified further opportunities for governments, research institutions, and academics, as well as areas where non-governmental organisations, civil society members, and technology developers must work. Meta should increase its contributions to empowering stakeholders at the meso, micro, and macro levels through evidence-based interventions in order for the recommendations to be implemented successfully and opportunities explored.

TABLE 2: Supply-Side and Demand-Side Opportunities in Managing Misinformation in East Africa

S/N	Supply-Side Opportunity	What should be done
1	Fact-checking initiatives	1. Deepening knowledge, skills and verification processes and technologies 2. Increase experienced fact-checkers and competent fact-checking organisations
2	Digital platforms (Meta and others)	1. Partnership with fact-checking organisations on processes, and technology improvement 2. Increase capacity of employed and freelance fact-checkers 3. Support development of fact-checking friendly tools 4. Improve content moderation and false information detection algorithms 5. Address algorithm bias in detecting and deleting conveyors' false messages
3	Mainstream media and NGOs	1. Develop personalised fact-checking teams and collaborate with existing fact-checking organisations as well as fact-checkers 2. Partner with fact-checking organisations and fact-checkers to enhance verification efforts, promote critical literacies (digital, information, media and thinking)
4	Research institutions and academia	1. Conduct innovative social and natural sciences studies that assess effectiveness of fact-checking initiatives 2. Conduct applied researches towards establishing increased willingness to seek credible sources 3. Partner with fact-checking organisations, fact-checkers in areas of research conceptualisation and dissemination of results and lessons learned
	Demand-Side Opportunity	
1	Digital literacy and critical thinking	1. Empower citizens with essentials and applied knowledge and skills that address biases associated with failure to use cognitive and affective domains while consuming information 2. Promote the knowledge and skills using continuous awareness effort
2	Policy and framework development	1. Create policies from bottom-up approach not top-down approach 2. Formulate policies that support inclusion of all critical literacies and skills in school curricula at all levels 3. Train government officials and employees who manage information ecosystem on media and digital policy making as well as evaluation processes
3	Conveyors of misinformation	1. Inclusive and sustainable awareness campaign that promote responsible information dissemination 2. Strong political and institutional will to hold politicians and social influencers accountable 3. Promote the idea of moral sensibility, a culture of, "Can I accept it if my reputation and personality are being destroyed through false information?"
4	Awareness and collaboration	1. Continuous efforts towards building a vigilant society and a citizen 2. Genuine collaboration among fact-checkers, journalists, digital platforms, mainstream media, NGOs, and research institutions

Appendix

Stakeholders at the Roundtable Discussions held in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania

S/N	Name/Organisation	Organisation /Role
1	Inform Africa/Haq Check	Fact Checking Organisation
2	Ethiopia Check	Fact Checking Organisation
3	Center for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD)	Civil Society Organisation
4	Addis Ababa University	Academia
5	Addis Ababa Science and Technology University	Academia
6	Ethiopian National Media Support	Civil Society Organisation
7	Ethiopian Media Women Association	Civil Society Organisation
8	Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights	Civil Society Organisation
9	UN Ethiopia --Hate Speech Task Force	United Nations
10	Rehobot Ayalew	Private (Niqu Ethiopia)
11	Befekadu Hailu	CARD
12	Eva Sow Ebion	Meta
13	Ece Basay	Meta
14	Sarah Muyonga	Meta
15	David Muya	iEARN
16	Dr Edward Misava	iEARN
17	Beldine Atieno	iEARN
18	Faith Njeri	iEARN
19	Boit Erickson	iEARN
20	Dr James Jowi	EAC
21	Dr Elizabeth Ngumbi	Academia
22	Dr Arnold Mwanzu	Educator and Liberian
23	Dr Charles Kebaya	Educator and Researcher
24	Maxwell Kayesi	Teacher and MDW beneficiary
25	Dr Dorine Lugendo	Educator

S/N	Name/Organisation	Organisation /Role
26	Felix Ranyang	MDW beneficiary
27	Samuel Munyuwini	Institute of Child Study
28	Samuel Bonahya	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
29	Awuor Olero	KBC
30	Jefferson Anduvate	MDW beneficiary
31	Makiniah	Africa Check
32	Daudi Kajigili	
33	Dr Twumbene Mwansisya	Kairuki University
34	Devotha Mlay	
35	Francis Nzozo	
36	Mike Mushi	Jamii Media
37	Ole Esseln	Jamii Forum
38	Lightness Kweka	
39	Catherine Kimambo	
40	Dr Samuel Ngalomba	Lecturer and Researcher
41	Nazarius Kilama	ISOC Tanzania
42	Albert Misilimbo	Youth
43	Judith Laizer	
44	Carol Ndosi	Launchpad