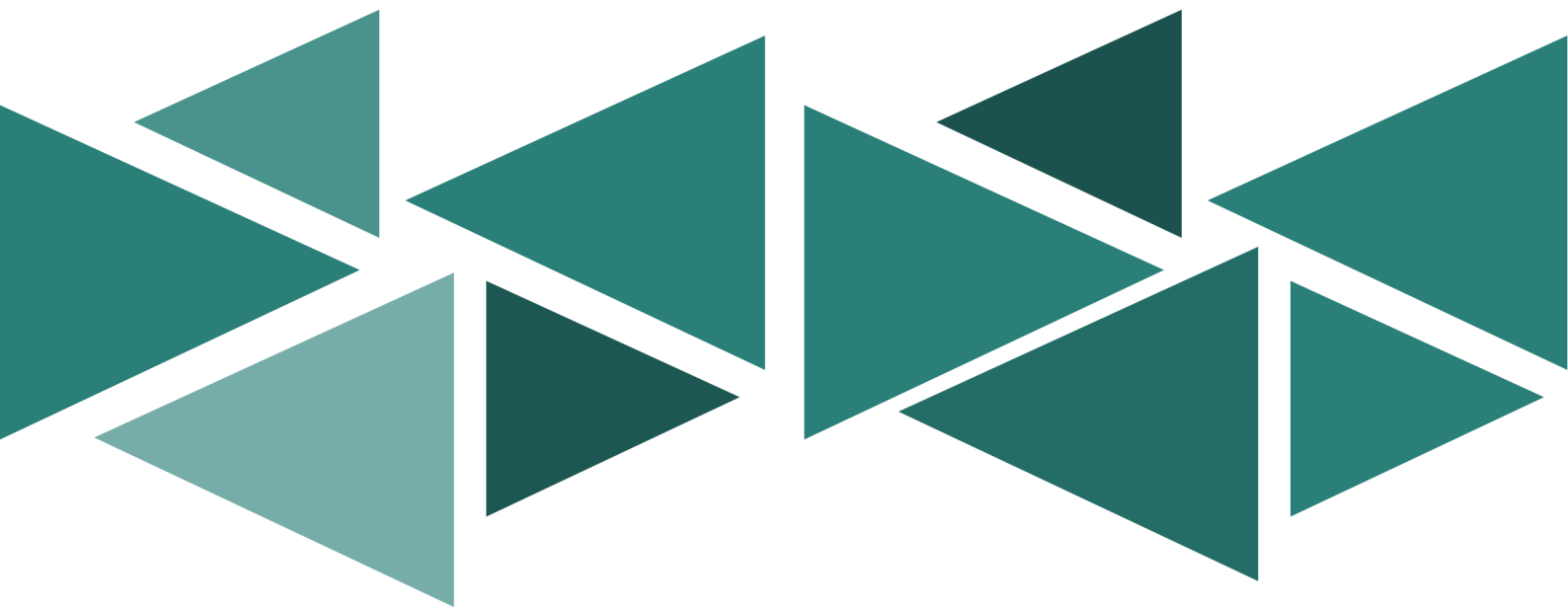


# FINAL PROJECT REPORT

VOICE UP! INFORMATION FOR PEACE (VIP)



PREPARED FOR | PREPARED BY  
Internews | Tikvah Ethiopia

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Voice Up for Information for Peace (VIP Project)* successfully concluded its four-month implementation period, achieving and exceeding the expected project outputs and outcomes. The project strengthened Ethiopia's resilience against the rapidly escalating threat of AI-generated misinformation by equipping a diverse cohort of university students and journalists with high-quality fact-checking, verification, and digital literacy skills.

A total of **24 fellows** were enrolled, and **22 (92%) successfully completed** the full mentorship and training program. Collectively, participants produced **45 fact-checking reports**, surpassing the target of 44. These reports generated valuable insights on Ethiopia's evolving misinformation landscape, especially related to synthetic media and politically motivated manipulation.

A major achievement of the project was the establishment of a **permanent digital infrastructure** that will continue serving practitioners, journalists, and the wider public at no additional cost. This includes:

- **15-Module LMS Course:** <https://concepthub.net/course/1>
- **Digital Library:** <https://concepthub.net/digital-library>
- **Professional Fact-Checking Guide:** <https://concepthub.net/guide>

In addition, findings from the project informed a **national stakeholder consultation** on digital resilience in the age of AI-driven misinformation, demonstrating the project's strategic relevance and national-level impact.

The VIP Project is now formally closed, having met all deliverables, strengthened national capacities, and established sustainable knowledge platforms that will support future capacity-building initiatives.

## 2. IMPACT SNAPSHOT

A high-level visual summary of achievements at a glance.

- Program Reach
  - 24 fellows selected
  - 22 fellows graduated (92% completion)
  - 2 community outreach sessions (beyond core fellowship)
- Verified Content Produced
  - 45 fact-checking reports (target: 44)
  - 3 monthly briefings

#### Top themes:

- 36% → AI-driven misinformation
- 35% → Political misinformation
- 26% → Scams
- 3% → Health misinformation

#### National Digital Infrastructure Delivered

- 15-Module LMS: [concepthub.net/course/1](https://concepthub.net/course/1)
- Digital Library: [concepthub.net/digital-library](https://concepthub.net/digital-library)
- Fact-Checking Guide: [concepthub.net/guide](https://concepthub.net/guide)
- All permanent & free for 3+ years

#### Skills Improved

82% achieved top scores (4/5 or 5/5) in verification

95% accuracy in final assessments

Significant improvement in monitoring, sourcing, and evidence use

#### National-Level Impact

- Findings informed the national consultation: “*Building Digital Resilience in the Age of AI-Driven Misinformation.*”
- Project recognized for relevance in combating the rise of synthetic media

#### Sustainability Focus

- Fully functional alumni network
- Continued access to learning platforms
- Ongoing publication opportunities for all fellows

## 3. PROJECT CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVE

### 3.1 Background and Problem Statement

The rapid rise of AI-generated misinformation poses a critical threat to Ethiopia’s information ecosystem, democratic engagement, and public trust. Synthetic images, fabricated narratives, and algorithm-amplified falsehoods increasingly shape public discourse.

Students and journalists—key information multipliers—lack systematically structured training to detect, verify, and effectively communicate against emerging misinformation trends. This creates an urgent need for targeted capacity building, professional mentorship, and practical learning environments that strengthen digital resilience.

The VIP Project directly addressed this gap by developing a multi-layered initiative focusing on fact-checking, digital safety, ethics, and the responsible use of technology in information production.

### 3.1 Objectives and Expected Outcomes

| Objective Area    | Objective Statement   | Status   |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| Capacity Building | Train 24 fellows and provide online training for selected local groups.           | Achieved |
| Output Production | Produce a minimum of 44 fact-checking reports and monthly briefings.              | Exceeded |
| Resource Creation | Develop a sustainable LMS, Digital Library, and professional Fact-Checking Guide. | Achieved |
| Public Engagement | Conduct national engagement and establish a formal Alumni Plan.                   | Achieved |

These objectives were fully met through structured mentorship, dedicated learning platforms, and strong participant commitment.

## 4. PROJECT EXECUTION AND MONITORING

### 4.1 Beneficiary Profile and Commitment

The mentorship cohort consisted of **24 participants** (students and journalists). Their commitment and performance demonstrate the project’s relevance and strong design.

| Indicator             | Target | Result      | Analysis   |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|--|
| Program Completion    | 100%   | 92% (22/24) | High retention; curriculum design and mentorship model proved effective. |
| Assignment Submission | 100%   | 88%         | Accountability strategies improved consistency.                          |
| Fact-Check Outputs    | 44     | 45          | Target exceeded; demonstrates participant engagement.                    |

Participants consistently showed discipline, initiative, and adherence to professional standards.

## 4.2 Implementation Methodology

The project utilized a **blended digital mentorship model** combining structured learning modules, live expert-led sessions, peer learning, and practical assignments.

### Mentorship Sessions Delivered (9 Total)

1. Foundational Skills
2. Monitoring Emerging Stories
3. Verifying Visuals
4. Identifying Credible Sources
5. Digital Safety & Cybersecurity
6. Ethical Fact-Checking
7. Responsible Misinformation Reporting
8. Reporting on Complex Issues
9. Hate Speech Identification

### Accountability and Quality Improvement

A monthly **“Best Story of the Month”** contest improved:

- Reporting discipline
- Editorial clarity
- Motivation
- Adherence to verification standards

### Community Outreach

Complementary online training sessions were delivered to community leaders, extending the project’s reach beyond the fellowship cohort.

### Monitoring & Evaluation Approach

The project applied continuous M&E through:

- Pre-/post-module assessments
- Assignment scoring and feedback
- Output quality reviews
- Mentor evaluations
- Participation tracking

This ensured real-time quality improvement and evidence-based reporting.

## 5. PROJECT RESULTS

### 5.1 Thematic Insights from 45 Fact-Checking Reports

| Thematic Area                | % of Outputs | Strategic Significance  |
|------------------------------|--------------|---|
| AI-Driven Mis/Disinformation | 36%          | Confirms synthetic media as the dominant threat vector.               |
| Political Mis/Disinformation | 35%          | Shows fast-scaling political narratives amplified by AI tools.        |
| Scams                        | 26%          | Highlights AI-enhanced job scams and impersonation schemes.           |
| Health Misinformation        | 3%           | Lower volume indicates a shift toward digitally generated narratives. |



**Conclusion:** AI-driven and politically oriented misinformation represent the most significant risks, affirming the strategic direction of the VIP Project.

### 5.2 AI Awareness Campaign & National Stakeholder Consultation

Findings from the fellows' reports informed a high-level national consultation titled: “**Building Digital Resilience in the Age of AI-Driven Misinformation.**”

Stakeholders, including media experts, policymakers, and digital rights advocates, validated the project's relevance and emphasized the need for continued national collaboration on digital resilience.

### 5.3 Sustainable Infrastructure Delivered

All long-term digital resources were successfully developed and remain publicly accessible:

- **Professional LMS (15 modules):** <https://concepthub.net/course/1>
- **Digital Library:** <https://concepthub.net/digital-library>
- **Fact-Checking Guide:** <https://concepthub.net/guide>

These platforms provide zero-cost, long-term impact beyond the project cycle.

## 5.4 Mentorship Program – Impact on Reporting Quality

| Focus Area                        | Metric                  | Result             | Status     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Foundational Skills (M1)          | Initial Scores          | 75% scored ≥70%    | Achieved   |
| Verification & Monitoring (M2–M3) | Research & Verification | 82% scored 4–5/5   | Achieved   |
| Systematic Sourcing (M4)          | Source Diversity        | 85% Good/Excellent | Achieved   |
| Methodology Consistency (M5)      | Methodology Scores      | 25% scored 1–2/5   | Developing |
| Bias Mitigation & Ethics (M6–M7)  | Fairness & Balance      | Weak for 60%       | Developing |
| Technical Accuracy (M7)           | Accuracy                | 95% High           | Achieved   |
| Ethical Reflection (M8–M9)        | Ethics Reflection       | 40% scored ≤5/10   | Developing |

### Summary



Participants demonstrated strong technical mastery but require long-term development in ethical judgment, bias mitigation, and reflective reporting—skills that grow with experience.

## 5.5 Digital Awareness Campaign – “Is It AI?”

### Campaign Overview

As part of the broader Voice Up! Information for Peace (VIP) initiative, Tikvah Ethiopia, launched a 15-day digital awareness campaign titled:

#### “Is It AI? - Before You Share, Make Sure It’s Real.”

The campaign supported the VIP Project’s mission of strengthening digital resilience and media literacy among Ethiopian audiences. While the main project focused on empowering journalists and university students through mentorship and verification training, this public-facing digital campaign expanded the project’s reach to wider online communities.

With the rapid rise of AI-generated visuals, cloned voices, text manipulation, deepfakes, and other synthetic media, Ethiopian audiences are increasingly exposed to false or manipulated content online. The “Is It AI?” campaign responded to this emerging threat by helping the public critically examine what they see and share.

### Purpose of the Campaign

The campaign aimed to strengthen public awareness and encourage responsible digital engagement by:

- Exposing how AI-generated images, videos, text, and audio circulate online
- Encouraging audiences to pause, question, and verify before sharing content

- Promoting simple and accessible verification techniques
- Offering basic tools and tips for spotting manipulated or synthetic visuals
- Encouraging a culture of critical thinking and safe sharing across social media
- Supporting VIP’s long-term goal of fostering peace through verified information

The campaign targeted students, journalists, and the general public—groups most active in Ethiopia’s digital information ecosystem.

### Campaign Objectives

- Raise public understanding of AI-generated and AI-manipulated content
- Improve digital literacy around identifying misleading images, videos, and posts
- Promote fact-checking habits among social media users
- Reduce the spread of AI-driven misinformation through awareness and education
- Encourage responsible use of AI tools for positive and productive digital engagement

### Campaign Performance & Reach

Over the 15-day period, eight thematic posts were released across social media, generating significant reach and engagement. The posts combined educational tips, examples of AI-generated content, and guidance on verification tools.

| Post   | Objective   | Target Audience            | Impressions |
|--------|---|----------------------------|-------------|
| Post 1 | Raise awareness about AI-generated images and videos; introduce the campaign              | General social media users | 26,171      |
| Post 2 | Educate audiences on AI-driven misinformation and practical fact-checking techniques      | Social media users         | 266,391     |
| Post 3 | Promote critical thinking when engaging with digital content                              | Social media users         | 30,000      |
| Post 4 | Encourage skill-building to identify AI manipulation and use AI responsibly               | Social media users         | 27,956      |
| Post 5 | Introduce Generative AI and its content-creation mechanisms                               | Social media users         | 26,725      |
| Post 6 | Raise awareness about AI-powered chatbots, their benefits, and limitations                | Social media users         | 31,590      |
| Post 7 | Promote best practices in prompt engineering for accurate and reliable AI use             | Social media users         | 29,160      |
| Post 8 | Educate audiences on the shift from traditional search to AI-driven information retrieval | Social media users         | 27,834      |

**Total Campaign Impressions: 465,827**

This reach demonstrates strong public interest in AI awareness and confirms that Ethiopian audiences actively seek clarity on the impact of synthetic media in their digital environments.

### Contribution to VIP Project Goals

The “Is It AI?” campaign significantly reinforced the VIP Project by:

- Broadening the project’s reach beyond fellows to nationwide audiences
- Bringing attention to the dangers of AI-generated misinformation
- Supporting public understanding of verification practices
- Reinforcing Ethiopia’s digital resilience through accessible online education
- Aligning with the project’s wider themes of peacebuilding and information integrity

## 5.6 Voices of the Fellows: Human Stories

These three testimonials represent the transformational impact the VIP Project had on young journalists and students entering Ethiopia’s rapidly evolving media space.

### Testimonial 1: Student - Abubeker Mohamed

Abubeker, one of our students from the VIP project and a participant who provided a testimonial, expressed his appreciation for the program. He highlighted the quality of the project, the value of the online courses on Concept Hub, the effectiveness of the virtual meetings (mentorship sessions), and the consistent follow-up calls we made to ensure continuous engagement. He noted that these efforts greatly contributed to the smooth and successful continuation of the project.

### Testimonial 2: Student - Yordanos Abay

Yordanos, another outstanding student from the project, mentioned that after completing the course, she developed a project designed to help distinguish truth from AI-generated news and posts. She believes that such a tool is especially valuable in today’s environment. Her experience clearly shows that the course was highly beneficial for her as well.

### Testimonial 3: Student - Dinote Gezahegne

Dinote Gezahegne, one of the highest-scoring and best-performing students throughout the three-month program, also provided a testimonial in this video. He shared that the project has been highly beneficial, particularly in understanding how to use social media effectively, how social media impacts society, and how to manage it responsibly for proper use.

#### Testimonial 4: Journalist- Hana Mengesha

Hana asserts that this project significantly enhanced her ability to investigate and uncover the truth. She notes that the program was not limited to theoretical instruction but provided practical exercises that greatly contributed to her learning. Furthermore, she emphasizes that the certificates and awards motivated participants to perform their practical work more effectively.

#### Testimonial 5: Journalist - Filimon Desta

Filimon stated that participating in this project was a very meaningful journey. He further recommended that this initiative should not be considered a final stage, implying that its continuation or expansion would be highly beneficial.

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED & SUSTAINABILITY

### 6.1 Key Lessons Learned

- AI-driven misinformation requires specialized monitoring skills and ongoing capacity building.
- Incentivized accountability (e.g., monthly competitions) significantly improves reporting quality.
- Investing in digital infrastructure creates long-term impact beyond donor funding cycles.
- Ethical decision-making and bias mitigation require longer-term mentorship and practice.

### 6.2 Sustainability and Alumni Plan

#### 1. Permanent Digital Resources (Already Live)

These platforms will remain active for at least three years without additional donor support:

- LMS: <https://concepthub.net/course/1>
- Digital Library: <https://concepthub.net/digital-library>
- Fact-Checking Guide: <https://concepthub.net/guide>

#### 2. Strengthened Alumni Integration Plan

The Alumni Plan ensures ongoing professional growth and contribution:

- **Continuous Publishing:** Fellows remain verified contributors with ongoing publishing rights.
- **Professional Visibility:** Alumni profiles remain publicly accessible to editors and partners.

- **Skill Reinforcement:** Continued access to the LMS for refresher learning.
- **Peer Learning Network:** A private digital group supports collaboration and alerts on emerging trends.
- **Future Pipelines:** Alumni prioritized for future programs, partnerships, and paid assignments.

This ensures sustainability and long-term sector impact.

## 7. VALUE FOR MONEY AND COST EFFICIENCY

The VIP Project delivered high impact with strong cost-efficiency, ensuring that donor resources produced long-term value far beyond the project period.

### High Impact, Low Recurring Cost

- All digital platforms (LMS, Library, Guide) operate at zero additional donor cost for the next 3+ years.
- Trained fellows continue to publish independently, sustaining results.

### Efficiency Gains

- Every module, training, and digital resource now serves multiple future cohorts without new development costs.
- Expert mentorship was delivered through hybrid digital sessions, reducing physical and logistical expenses.

### Long-Term Return on Investment

- Each fellow was trained once, but their skills will benefit:
  - Future employers
  - media organizations
  - Universities
  - civil society
  - public audiences

### Permanent Assets Created

The donor's investment resulted in permanent infrastructure:

- A 15-module, reusable online course
- A national digital library
- A professional guidebook
- A verified contributor system supporting continuous outputs

This demonstrates excellent cost-effectiveness, transparency, and long-term value.

## 8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

| KPI                            | Target | Result | Achievement |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|-------------|
| Capacity Building (Completion) | 100%   | 92%    | Achieved    |
| Fact-Check Reports             | 44     | 45     | Exceeded    |
| LMS Modules                    | 15     | 15     | Achieved    |
| Sustainable Resources          | 100%   | 100%   | Achieved    |
| Publications (Briefings)       | 3      | 3      | Achieved    |

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF OUR PARTNER

We express our sincere gratitude to Internews Europe and the European Union for their invaluable support and shared commitment to strengthening Ethiopia's information integrity.

Your collaboration made it possible to:

- Equip young journalists with high-impact digital verification skills
- Create a permanent national digital learning infrastructure
- Generate high-quality fact-checking outputs that serve the public interest
- Engage national stakeholders on AI-driven misinformation challenges

This project stands as a testament to what innovative partnerships can achieve. We look forward to continuing this important work together.

## 10. FORMAL PROJECT CLOSURE

The **Voice Up for Information for Peace (VIP Project)** is officially closed. We extend our sincere appreciation to our supporting partners for enabling a project that will continue to strengthen Ethiopia's information ecosystem long after the formal implementation period.



# VOICE UP! INFORMATION FOR PEACE (VIP)

