

UNESCO

Welcome Remarks

By

Dr. Anna Paolini
Director & UNESCO Representative
UNESCO Office for the Caribbean

on the Occasion of

The Workshop:

“Integrating MIL into the work, lives, play of youth organizations in Antigua & Barbuda”

8:00 a.m. – 8:35 a.m., Monday 8 April, 2024,

Opening Remarks

Mr. Clare Browne, Director in the Ministry of Education,

Dr. Reginald Murphy, Secretary-General, Antigua & Barbuda National Commission for UNESCO,

Ms. Andrea Andrews, Country Coordinator for Antigua & Barbuda, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you virtually for today's opening session.

Digital technologies touch every aspect of our lives, offering unparalleled opportunities for personal and collective growth. However, they also introduce challenges—disinformation, deepening inequalities, stress, and the proliferation of hate and misogyny. This underscores the need for everyone to possess the skills needed to navigate digital societies safely, effectively, and responsibly.

In response to these challenges and with a view to seizing the potential of digital technologies, UNESCO, in partnership with key stakeholders, is organizing this workshop to integrate Media and Information Literacy (MIL) into the activities of youth organizations in Antigua & Barbuda.

This initiative follows the Government of Antigua and Barbuda's 2023 request for the United Nations Development System to support its efforts to craft a National Digital Transformation Framework. This collaborative multi-stakeholder effort led to a Digital Readiness Assessment, which identifying both strengths and areas for growth, thereby kickstarting the design and implementation of follow-up strategic actions.

These MIL workshops are part of UNESCO's contribution to this nation-building initiative.

Digital technologies are pivotal in advancing sustainable development goals, addressing climate change, improving government service delivery and creating new industries. Central to digital transformation is the empowerment of individuals with the necessary skills and competencies. So, developing MIL is critical, fostering critical thinking, digital proficiency and intercultural competencies, empowering Caribbean youth to explore and create global opportunities.

UNESCO is committed to enhancing MIL as a vital tool for personal and societal development. Today's workshop is a step towards embedding MIL in youth policies and practices. Through peer-to-peer learning, we aim to disseminate MIL skills, enhancing problem-solving capabilities, fostering collaboration and encouraging collective action.

By tapping into existing networks within youth organizations, we can spread MIL skills more efficiently and sustainably eventually really all youths and every community.

UNESCO is committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.

Already with the Ministry of Education we have partnered with the School for the Deaf providing MIL training. Over the coming weeks and months, we will also be extending this training to other traditionally marginalized groups.

Our goal is to enable universal, inclusive participation in the digital era, ensuring that everyone can contribute to and benefit from digital transformation.

We are grateful to the Ministry of Education, our UN and NATCOM partners, panelists, and participants for making today's event a reality. We also look forward to creating partnerships with other like-minded organizations and individuals to ensure a safe, inclusive digital future with no one left behind.

Thank you for your attention.