

NEWSLETTER

APRIL - JULY 2026

MAIDEN EDITION

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

It is with immense pleasure that I welcome you to the inaugural edition of the International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI) Newsletter. Since IMILI's official launch, the journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, transforming a shared vision to advance Media and Information Literacy (MIL) into a vibrant global movement.

This first edition not only highlights the significant milestones we have achieved but also celebrates the growing partnerships we are forging and the collective future we are shaping. In an era defined by the rapid evolution of digital technologies, the persistent spread of misinformation and disinformation, and the transformative impact of artificial intelligence, Media and Information Literacy has moved beyond its traditional role as an educational concept. It has become a critical strategic imperative for fostering democratic governance, strengthening social cohesion, driving economic development, and sustaining global peace.

Over the past several months, IMILI has diligently pursued its mandate as the world's UNESCO Category 2 Institute exclusively dedicated to MIL. Our key initiatives include the successful launch of the Africa Against Xenophobia Project (AfAX-P), contributing to global conversations on AI governance, strengthening cross-sector partnerships, and engaging with regional and international stakeholders. We remain committed to ensuring that trusted information, critical thinking, and ethical communication remain at the heart of the global digital future.



Sharon Omotoso PhD

None of these achievements would have been possible without the support of UNESCO, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, our host institution; the National Open University of Nigeria, our development partners and collaborators, and the many individuals who believe in the transformative power of MIL. I express my sincere appreciation to every institution and partner that has joined us on this journey.

As we look ahead, our commitment remains steadfast. We will continue to expand research, strengthen policy dialogue, build institutional capacity, empower young people, and foster collaborations that promote information integrity across Africa and beyond. The challenges before us are significant, yet they also present unprecedented opportunities to build a more informed, resilient, and inclusive society.

I invite you to continue this journey with us, whether as a partner, researcher, policymaker, educator, media professional, or advocate. Together, we can build an information ecosystem in which truth prevails, diversity is celebrated, innovation serves humanity, and every citizen is empowered to navigate the digital age with confidence and responsibility.

Thank you for your continued support. I sincerely hope you find this inaugural edition insightful and remain inspired by the profound collective impact we are creating.

THE LAUNCH: IMILI COMES ALIVE IN ABUJA



April 29 and 30, 2026, marked the groundbreaking for the Category 2 International Media and Information Literacy Institute (C2 IMILI) under the auspices of UNESCO, which was officially launched in Abuja, Nigeria.

On Wednesday, April 29, at a landmark ceremony at the Banquet Hall, Aso Rock Villa, His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, represented by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator George Akume, officially launched the International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI), the world's first UNESCO Category 2 Institute dedicated to Media and Information Literacy.

In his welcome address, the Honourable Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, underscored the occasion's significance, highlighting IMILI as a testament to Nigeria's readiness to lead in promoting informed citizenship and safeguarding information integrity. He recognized the contributions of key partners, staff, and international collaborators and reaffirmed the government's commitment to IMILI's autonomy, sustainability, and global excellence.

Speaking at the launch on behalf of UNESCO, Ms Mariya Gabriel, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, said, "The launch of the International Media and Information Literacy Institute is not just the creation of a new institution. It is a shared commitment to ensure that people globally, in Africa and in Nigeria, are not only connected to information but also equipped to understand it, question it, and use it responsibly."

In his words, the president said, "This is a historic moment, not only for Nigeria and Africa but also for the global community. Today, we open the first UNESCO Category 2 Institute for Media and Information Literacy anywhere in the world, at a time when the need for it has never been greater."

Tracing the journey to the Institute's establishment, the President highlighted Nigeria's commitment since hosting the 10th Global Media and Information Literacy Week in 2022 and the fulfillment of its pledge to create IMILI. He recognized the dedication of government officials and Nigeria's Ambassador to UNESCO, as well as the unanimous endorsement by all 194 UNESCO Member States at the 43rd General Conference in Samarkand.

He added, "Let this Institute stand as a beacon of truth, critical thinking and responsible communication. It is my honour to formally declare the International Media and Information Literacy Institute officially launched."

The launch included the signing of a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding among the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, UNESCO, and IMILI, as well as the presentation of the Institute's Strategic Plan (2026–2030), which sets out its roadmap for research, policy dialogue, and capacity building across Africa.

The milestone event was attended by the Minister of State for Education, Professor Suwaiba Sa'id Ahmed; the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, Dr. Binyerem Ukaire; Nigeria's Permanent Representative to UNESCO, Dr. Hajo Sani, OON; Vice Chancellor, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Prof. Uduma O. Uduma; Resident Representative, UNDP Nigeria, Elsie Atafuah; Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO, Ms. Mariya Gabriel; Director of IMILI Nigeria, Dr. Sharon Omotoso; United Nations Representative in Nigeria and President of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Dr. Ike Neliaku, among other dignitaries.



CONTINENTAL ACTION AGAINST XENOPHOBIA



The International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI) has intensified its commitment to promoting social cohesion and information integrity across Africa with the launch of the Africa Against Xenophobia Project (AfAX-P), a one-year flagship continental initiative featuring a series of activities designed to combat xenophobia, hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation through Media and Information Literacy (MIL).

Officially launched to mark the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, AfAX-P unites governments, researchers, media professionals, civil society organisations, youth leaders, and development partners across Africa to address the growing threat of digitally amplified xenophobia.

As part of the initiative, IMILI has launched the AfAX-P Call for Papers, which invites scholars, researchers, policymakers, media practitioners, and innovators to contribute evidence-based research on combating xenophobic misinformation across Africa. Rather than merely documenting the challenges, contributors are encouraged to present practical, innovative, and policy-relevant solutions that can strengthen information integrity and support informed decision-making. The call reflects IMILI's belief that effective responses to hate speech and misinformation must be grounded in rigorous research, informed public policy, and collaborative knowledge sharing. Selected papers will contribute to a growing body of evidence that supports continental efforts to build resilient and inclusive information ecosystems.

The initiative aims to strengthen regional integration, promote peaceful coexistence, and equip citizens with the knowledge and skills to identify and counter harmful narratives before they escalate into conflict. At the launch, IMILI Director Sharon Omotoso described the project as "a continental call to action," emphasising that safeguarding Africa's digital information ecosystem requires collective responsibility and cross-border collaboration.

Complementing this creative engagement is the Digital Storytelling for Peacebuilding Call for Participation, inviting young Africans ages 15 to 30, both on the continent and in the diaspora, to serve as ambassadors for peace through creative digital media.

Participants are encouraged to produce original short videos, documentaries, animations, podcasts, audio dramas, visual stories, and other digital content that promote tolerance, diversity, inclusion, and Pan-African solidarity. Beyond recognizing outstanding entries, the program will identify 50 finalists, with the top 20 receiving mentorship, visibility, and opportunities to amplify positive African narratives across regional and international platforms. By harnessing the creativity of young people, the initiative seeks to replace divisive narratives with stories that celebrate shared identity, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence.

Together, these activities demonstrate IMILI's holistic approach to addressing one of Africa's most pressing information challenges. Through AfAX-P, the Institute is creating a platform where knowledge, innovation, creativity, and partnerships converge to foster a more peaceful, inclusive, and media-literate world, one where diversity is celebrated, and digital spaces become instruments of unity rather than division.



IMILI AT THE UN GLOBAL DIALOGUE ON AI GOVERNANCE

Through the Institute's Director, the International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI) participated in the historic United Nations Global Dialogue on AI Governance, held in Geneva, Switzerland, on July 6–7, 2026, reaffirming its commitment to keeping Media and Information Literacy (MIL) central to the future of artificial intelligence governance.

The landmark Dialogue brought together representatives of all 193 UN Member States, international organizations, civil society, academia, and the technology sector to shape the world's first inclusive framework for global AI governance. The meeting marked a significant milestone in the international community's efforts to establish shared principles for the responsible, ethical, and human-centered development of artificial intelligence.

For IMILI, the dialogue underscored three critical priorities that will shape the future of the global information ecosystem: Bridging the Information Safety Gap, Balancing Innovation with Protection, and Closing the Global AI Divide.



Participants also emphasized the need to ensure that the benefits of artificial intelligence are shared equitably across all regions of the world. Delegates advocated substantial investments in capacity building, digital skills development, and inclusive access to AI technologies, particularly for developing countries. The Dialogue stressed that linguistic diversity, cultural inclusion, and ethical considerations must remain integral to the global AI agenda.

The outcomes of the Geneva Dialogue will inform the next United Nations Summit on AI Governance, scheduled for May 2027 in New York. As global conversations on artificial intelligence continue to evolve, IMILI remains committed to advancing policies and partnerships that place MIL, human oversight, ethical innovation, and algorithmic transparency at the core of AI governance.



According to IMILI's Director, the Institute will continue to champion an inclusive digital future through active engagement in international policy dialogues, guided by the principles of informed, empowered, and resilient societies.



IMILI Participates in a Media and Civil Society Roundtable on Electoral Integrity



Discussions focused on addressing structural and operational challenges in electoral reporting and on identifying practical measures to foster a more coordinated, transparent, and secure information environment before, during, and after elections. Participants emphasized the critical role of collaboration between the media and civil society in combating misinformation, promoting responsible journalism, and enhancing public trust in electoral processes.

The International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI) participated in the Media and Civil Society Roundtable on Building Stronger Media and CSO Partnerships for Credible, Peaceful, and Inclusive Elections, held on June 16, 2026, at the United Nations House in Abuja.

The event, convened by Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), brought together media professionals, civil society organizations, broadcast institutions, election observers, and communication experts to strengthen collaboration and safeguard Nigeria's democratic process. Dr. Patience Achakpa -Ikkyo represented IMILI.



The Roundtable reaffirmed a shared commitment to promoting a free, safe, adequately resourced, and professionally equipped media environment, a cornerstone of credible elections and democratic governance in Nigeria. Participants also endorsed a communiqué with key recommendations for immediate action by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, media regulators, civil society organizations, media proprietors, and development partners. IMILI's participation reflects the Institute's ongoing commitment to advancing MIL as a tool to strengthen democratic resilience, promote information integrity, and support peaceful, inclusive, and credible elections throughout Africa.

IMILI CHAMPIONS MIL AT THE AFRICA SOCIAL IMPACT SUMMIT 2026 WEDNESDAY, 22 JULY 2026 | EKO CONVENTION CENTRE, LAGOS

IMILI participated as a Technical Partner at the 2026 Africa Social Impact Summit (ASIS), one of Africa's premier platforms for advancing sustainable development. Held in Lagos under the theme "Financing for Development: Building Resilience and Transforming Emerging Economies," the Summit brought together more than 2,000 delegates from over 50 countries, including government leaders, development partners, investors, policymakers, and private-sector stakeholders.

As part of its contribution to the Summit, IMILI convened a high-level side event, "Media and Information Literacy for Development: Harnessing Film, Creativity and Digital Innovation to Finance Africa's Future," in collaboration with the British Council. The session, moderated by Lily Adimefe, CEO of the BusinessDay Foundation, featured distinguished speakers from the British Council, the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Alliance, the Sierra Leone News Agency, the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority, Zuri24 Media, and IMILI.



The Honourable Minister, Idris Mohammed, represented by Director, Regulations at the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria, Dr. Emme Akande



Representing the Honorable Minister of Information and National Orientation, Dr. Emme Akande, Director of Regulations at the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria, delivered an opening remark reaffirming the Federal Government's commitment, under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, digital transformation, and the creative industries. The Minister, Mohamed Idris also emphasized the vital role of trusted information and responsible storytelling in driving national development, strengthening Nigeria's identity, attracting investment, and promoting narratives that reflect the nation's resilience, diversity, and aspirations.

IMILI CHAMPIONS MIL AT THE AFRICA SOCIAL IMPACT SUMMIT 2026 WEDNESDAY, 22 JULY 2026 | EKO CONVENTION CENTRE, LAGOS

The discussion explored the critical role of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in strengthening Africa's creative economy, promoting trusted information ecosystems, and enabling informed investment and sustainable development. Panelists emphasized that while infrastructure and financial capital are essential for growth, lasting development also depends on citizens' ability to access, evaluate, and use information critically in an increasingly complex digital environment.

The session concluded with a shared commitment, known as the Lagos Call to Action, urging governments, development partners, educational institutions, and the private sector to place Media and Information Literacy at the heart of Africa's development agenda.

Participants called for stronger collaboration, greater investment in trusted information ecosystems, and expanded efforts to equip citizens with the skills to navigate misinformation, emerging technologies, and the evolving digital landscape.



At the end of the event, the dialogue reinforced a powerful message: Africa's future will be shaped not only by the capital it mobilises, but also by the quality, integrity, and accessibility of the information that guides how that capital is invested. Through its leadership at ASIS 2026, IMILI reaffirmed its commitment to advancing Media and Information Literacy as a catalyst for innovation, inclusive growth, democratic resilience, and sustainable development across Africa.



MENTORSHIP

22–24 JULY 2026 | EKO CONVENTION CENTRE, LAGOS

At IMIL, we believe that expanding Media and Information Literacy (MIL) across Africa requires strategic collaboration and continuous investment. That is why we were proud to support SMILC's participation at ASIS 2026, where critical conversations about the continent's digital and information ecosystem took center stage.

Beyond the Classroom: MIL as a Continent-Wide Investment

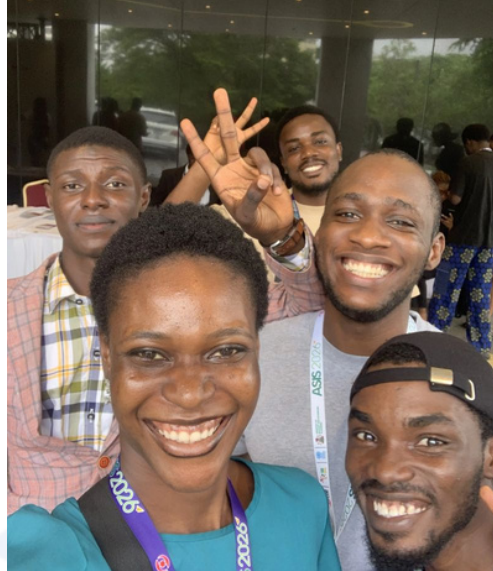
The discussions at ASIS 2026 challenged us to reimagine MIL not just as an educational subject, but as a vital investment in Africa's democratic and economic future. Equipping citizens—particularly young people—with the tools to navigate information responsibly strengthens public institutions, supports informed decision-making, and builds resilient communities.

Moving forward, key implementation questions must be addressed:

- Expanding Access: How do we scale MIL through community-led and professional training programs?
- Private Sector Role: What responsibilities do private platforms and corporations have in safeguarding Africa's information ecosystem?
- Sustained Investment: How do we direct greater resources toward the people and platforms shaping daily public discourse?

Supporting Creators & Ownership of African Narratives

As digital platforms and creative industries become the primary spaces where Africa's stories are told, investing in storytelling, documentary filmmaking, journalism, and digital content creation becomes essential. Supporting these fields is not merely about funding the arts—it is about ensuring African voices remain at the center of African narratives.



Concurrently, policy and ethical frameworks must keep pace: Data Privacy & IP: Protecting creators and securing intellectual property.

Responsible AI: Promoting ethical digital practices to foster trust.

- Digital Economy: Establishing a secure, sustainable environment for innovation.

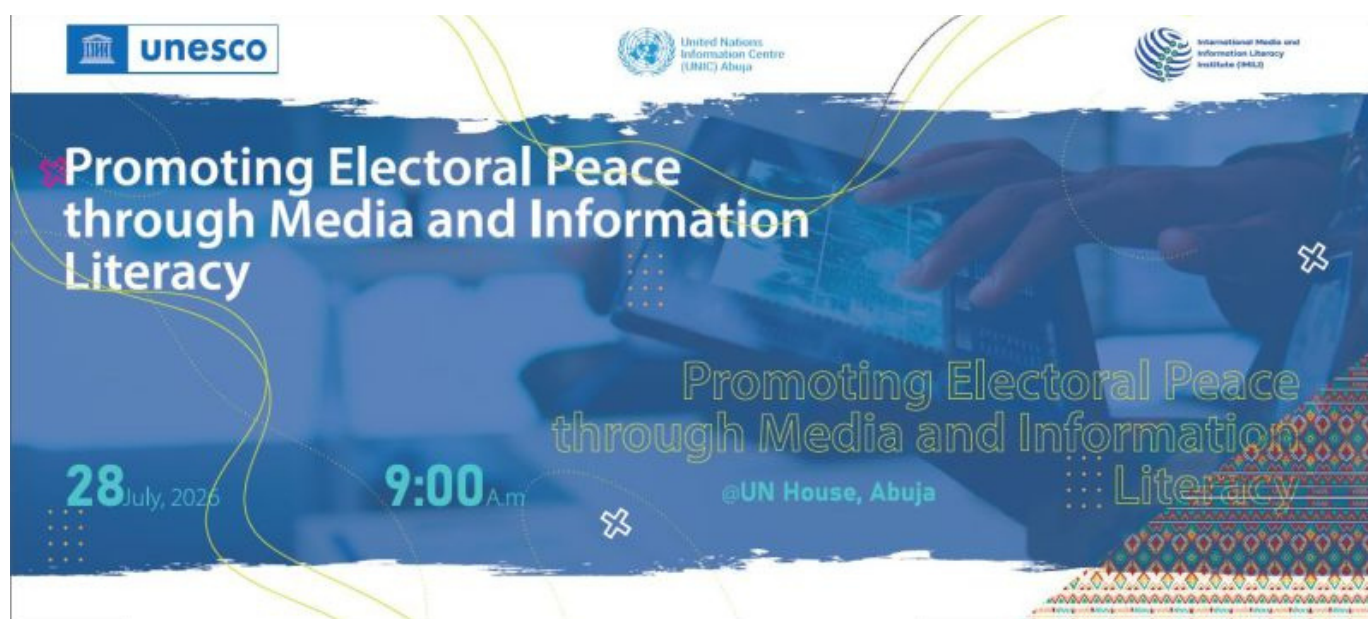
Moving Forward Together

Investing in Media and Information Literacy is directly investing in Africa's future. When we strengthen how people create, consume, and engage with information, we build a foundation for civic participation, innovation, and sustainable development.

We are thrilled to have facilitated SMILC's presence at ASIS 2026 and look forward to partnering with them to translate these insights into actionable, community-focused outcomes.



IMILI REAFFIRMS THE IMPORTANCE OF MIL FOR DEMOCRATIC VALUES



The Workshop on Promoting Electoral Peace Through Media and Information Literacy (MIL) was organized by the UNESCO Abuja Office in collaboration with the International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI), the United Nations Information Centre Abuja (UNIC Abuja), the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

The capacity-building workshop was designed to address emerging challenges in Nigeria's electoral processes, including the spread of digital misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, ethno-political polarization, and the growing need for artificial intelligence (AI) literacy and ethical digital practices. The workshop also aimed to strengthen participants' capacity to promote fact-based communication, responsible online engagement, and peaceful political discourse.

The event gathered youth political operatives, campaign mobilizers, and digital content creators from diverse backgrounds. Through interactive sessions, hands-on exercises, and expert-led discussions, participants examined the impact of emerging technologies, including deepfakes and synthetic media, on democratic processes and electoral credibility.

During a session, the IMILI's Director reaffirmed the importance of MIL as a foundation for protecting democratic values, strengthening electoral integrity, and fostering peaceful civic engagement in today's digital landscape.



At the end of the workshop, participants committed to integrating responsible communication principles into their political activities and digital engagement. They also formed a collaborative network to advance digital ethics, counter misinformation, and promote peaceful political participation across the country.

ART FOR HUMANITY FOUNDATION & IMILI COLLABORATION



UNESCO office in Abuja, IMILI and Art for Humanity launched the Youth Creative Lab to tackle the growing threat of mis/disinformation, altered media, and unverified visual narratives. This pilot initiative equipped 30 emerging Nigerian photojournalists, documentary filmmakers, student journalists, and digital content creators with advanced Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and AI ethics competencies. By bridging youth empowerment with modern media development, the programme will enable creators to produce ethical, fact-based visual journalism that meets international standards and protects public trust.



The programme will guide participants through a comprehensive four-phase learning roadmap. Beginning with a 2-day workshop covering MIL frameworks, generative AI ethics, and synthetic media detection using flagship UNESCO toolkits, this was followed by a field visit to leading media newsrooms and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to observe professional editorial and advocacy workflows firsthand. Participants will then transition into short-term internship placements with partner media houses and CSOs, where they will gain real-world experience applying ethical publishing standards. The initiative will conclude with a public showcase where fellows will present original, fact-checked multimedia stories focused on civic engagement and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

The initiative hopes to achieve significant long-term impact for both the participants and the broader public sphere. Participants are expected to collectively produce five high-quality documentary projects. Their final works will be showcased during live screenings and photo exhibitions at both the 10th Abuja International Photo Festival and the Global MIL Week 2026, reaching an estimated audience of 5,000 to 10,000 people and fostering widespread digital responsibility across Nigeria.



COURTESY VISIT TO NIPS



IMILI Pays Courtesy Visit to NIPS to Explore Strategic Partnership

On June 2, 2026, the Director of the International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI), Sharon Omotoso, led a courtesy visit to the National Institute of Police Studies (NIPS), Abuja.

The delegation was warmly received by the Director General, Prof. Olu Ogunsakin, alongside key members of his team – including Barr. Idris Bawa, who also serves as Programme Director of the Police Reform Secretariat (PRS), a sister establishment under Prof. Ogunsakin's unified leadership. This integration ensures the PRS's strategic policy updates are translated directly into the academic and operational curricula at NIPS.

Inaugurated in April 2026 under the auspices of UNESCO, IMILI represents a major milestone in advancing media and information literacy across national, regional, and international fronts. With both Institutes' mandates shared, parties expressed enthusiasm about the timeliness of the proposed partnership aimed at cultivating information integrity, improved public perception and a media-literate Police Force. Prof. Ogunsakin affirmed his hope that IMILI's programs will strengthen Police reform while also building capacities.

The visit concluded with a tour of the Police Reform Secretariat (PRS) and the Nigeria Police Radio 99.1 FM.

The proposed collaboration marks a promising step toward a more transparent, trusted, and media-literate Police Force.



Police Reform Secretariat; The Nigerian Police Radio and The National Institute of Police Studies, Abuja

COURTESY VISIT TO DW



IMILI Director, Sharon Omotoso with Roslyn Kratochvil-Moore at the DW office in Bonn, Germany

On the 25th June, 2026, Director IMILI visited the Deutsche Welle office in Bonn, Germany, to discuss pathways for collaboration with the organization. This is a continuation of the partnership conversation which began at the Global Media and Information Literacy week 2025 in Colombia.

The meeting discussed possible shared projects across Africa through the project office in Namibia and also the trans-continental aspects.

The Director IMILI was received by Roslyn Kratochvil-Moore and Patricia Noboa-armendariz.

AWARD AND RECOGNITION



ASIS Board Chair, Professor Banji Oyelaran-Oyeyinka presenting the award to IMILI Director, Sharon Omotoso

Impact grows where collaboration thrives. We are proud to have partnered with the 2026 Africa Social Impact Summit as a Technical Partner and humbled to receive this award in recognition of our contribution.

This honour strengthens our resolve to continue championing Media and Information Literacy, promoting informed communities, and building partnerships that drive sustainable social change.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH ASIS 2026



Partners, Convener and Organizers of ASIS 2026

Media and Information Literacy belongs at every table where Africa's future is being shaped.

We were proud technical partners at the 2026 ASIS Conference, where media & information literacy, film, and the creative economy took center stage as catalysts for Africa's transformation.

As AI reshapes how information moves, the conversation is clear; responsible storytelling together with critical thinking will result to resilient societies.

Grateful to have partnered with the British Council and leading creative stakeholders to explore how strategic investment in talent, innovation and storytelling can help finance Africa's future



Panelists with CEO- Sterling One Foundation, Olapeju Ibekwe.

MEDIA

IMILI ON NEWS CENTRAL TV

25 July 2026

IMILI Director Sharon Omotoso appeared on News Central TV to discuss the rise of xenophobia across Africa and the role of media and information literacy in addressing it, the latest in a series of media appearances following the launch of AfAX-P, and part of IMILI's push to keep the conversation on xenophobic misinformation in the public eye.



International Media and Information Literacy

IMILI ON AFRICA INDEPENDENT TELEVISION (AIT)

May 2026

The IMILI Director shed light on the institute, its operations, activities and its future in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large and emphasised the importance of media and information literacy.





International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI)

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Federal Ministry of
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All correspondence should be directed to the Editor

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