A. CONTEXT OF COVID-19 IN VIETNAM

The World Health Organization declared the new Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) as a pandemic on 11 March 2020, with more than 300,000 cases worldwide. Originating in China, new cases of the disease continued to pop up in several countries including Viet Nam, which shares a substantially long border with China, and had significant reasons for concern of cross border spread of the virus.

The first case of Covid-19 was publicly announced in Viet Nam on 23 January 2020. The case was of a 25-year-old Vietnamese woman who had been in Wuhan for a 2-month business trip and had returned to Vietnam on 17 January 2020. In Wuhan, she had lived with two other Vietnamese colleagues. They did not visit the Huanan market, identified as a source location for the virus and was located 20 km from where they were staying. They couldn’t recall any direct contact with anyone exhibiting influenza-like symptoms. All three individuals returned to Vietnam on the same flight.

This public announcement about the positive case occurred two days prior to the Tet holidays, one of the most celebrated annual events in Viet Nam, when many people return to their home town and spend time with family. The timing meant that fortunately schools, universities and most offices were closed until early February. Nevertheless, the Vietnamese government decided to extend these closure dates until mid-February, as little was known of the new infectious disease at the time. The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training subsequently proposed to extend the holidays for a further week. A national isolation order requiring people to remain at home became effective on April 1, and consequently Vietnamese students did not attend school during the spring semester of 2020. The start of the new Vietnamese primary and secondary school year has been delayed by a month and academic institutions have since been adopting online teaching platforms at a gradual pace.

Because of this new online educational approach, it can be argued that there has been an increasing flow of online traffic as more people are curious and actively searching for information about the new virus - its origin, treatment and preventive measures. While established traditional
print media have been occupied with reporting and updating the latest information to meet the general public’s demands, social media platforms have served as an easy-to-consume medium for people to share what they believe to be correct among their social circles. This high demand for updated information has inflated the amount of misleading information or misinformation available to the general public.

In the context of the pandemic, this spread of misinformation amplified to a larger scale creating harmful impacts on the safety and health practices at both personal and communal levels. Such different, and at times conflicting, information can impact the views of the general public, and heighten anxiety and fear as they make important decisions about their responses and safety provisions, based on this new imbalanced influx of information.

On social networks, the reach and effects of information spread occurs at such a fast pace and can be so amplified that distorted, inaccurate or false information acquires a tremendous potential to cause real-world impacts, within minutes, for millions of users (Alvaro Figueira, 2017). This is exemplified in the posting of an article on the 1st of July 2020 in Viet Nam, as the country was on the verge of a second wave of covid-19 cases. The article, titled; “A case of Covid-19 is able to bypass Tan Son Nhat airport, and visit Binh Duong, the city issues an emergency announcement” was quickly disseminated. Within the first couple of hours, this post had 1000 likes, 223 comments, 431 shares. It was later confirmed as misleading news and the mentioned case was negative to Covid-19.

Figure 1 - Article dated 1 July 2020: ‘COVID-19 confirmed cases entered airport and travelled around Binh Duong’.
B. GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE TO THE MISLEADING NEWS

The Vietnamese government acted swiftly and strictly to deter the spreading of fake news online. Local law enforcement agencies enforced monetary fines ranging from 10 million to 12.5 million Viet Nam Dong (approximately 300 to 400 GBP) and required those posting the disinformation to delete the post immediately. This was a challenge for the team early within the media monitoring process, as some of the recorded finding links became inactive, and news couldn’t be verified further.

Figure 2 – A local citizen paying the fine of 10 million for posting on Facebook about the inaccurate development of 50 new cases in An Giang Province.

An example of a less serious case of the spread of misinformation was also seen in Ha Noi, Viet Nam’s capital. A senior female citizen wrote on the social board in her ward that: “Group 13, Ngoc Thuy ward, has a family of 4 infected with Corona virus. It is recommended that everyone go out to wear a mask to protect themselves and avoid infection”. However, while her action was well-intentioned, the local authorities reacted and reminded her of the importance of verifying that the information was correct before sharing it throughout the community, as she had falsely accused the family of being covid-19 positive, and the social impacts of this could be harmful to others if isolated by their community.
There were also cases of local celebrities posting misinformation about the climate of the pandemic on their official Facebook page. Representatives of the Department of Information and Communications of Ho Chi Minh City took action according to the Law on Cyber Security for organizations and individuals that gave inaccurate information about the epidemic.
C. PROJECT SUMMARY

Recognizing the impacts of misleading or fake news on the actions and behaviours of the community, this media monitoring project aimed to monitor and document fake news related to Covid-19 in Vietnam, and to develop positive responses countering such news through available Public Engagement communication platforms and existing partnering networks.

Long-term, the project will explore ways to share the findings of the media monitoring with a national expert’s panel to potentially build a joint platform to provide accurate, trustworthy news sources and promote evidence-based knowledge for the general public related to Covid-19 and future pandemic, and to explore ways to utilise public engagement tools to address instances of fake news - whether by developing a community guidelines on misinformation as a preventive action for future similar situations, or to educate the younger generation about the forms of news and validating information. The purpose of this work is to identify and debunk the fake news and circulate positive news among the communities by using various Public Engagement tools.

D. METHODS

The Vietnam project team commenced monitoring and documenting contentious news related to Covid-19 at the start of February, and with a structured approach across the three countries of Viet Nam, Nepal and Indonesia, the monitoring for this project covered a period from January – July 2020.

The Viet Nam team screened news on 3 online Vietnamese news websites with the most traffic locally according to a website traffic statistics & analytics site called similarweb. The team also screened stories and posts on Facebook, the most popular social media channel and online community in Viet Nam.

The identification process of fake news consisted of two segments: project team manual search and crowdsourcing findings:

1. Project team manual search
   - The team actively scanned the two mentioned platforms using the following terms, Covid-19, corona, coronavirus, NcoV, Sars-coV-2, and Co Vy which is the term that is used locally within Vietnam to refer to Covid-19
- Suspicious content was reverse searched to verify the origin, authenticity, and language of translation
- Quantitative and qualitative aspects were recorded
- Data then was recorded and categorized in a table form

As the process continued, the team decided to expand the data collection context to explore a more diversified scope of findings. Colleagues, friends, and family members were invited to share any fake news they had encountered to the team to be added to the analysis.

2. Crowdsourcing search
- Misinformation related to Covid-19 was sent in via text messages in the form of screenshots of fake news or outrageous headlines from the above mentioned group of people.
- Data was then also added to the media monitoring log sheet.
E. KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Combining the findings from both monitoring sources, it can be seen that the rate of Covid-19 fake news circulating continued to increase from late January to February with the peak in the month of March, when Viet Nam saw an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases and was heading into a period of social lockdown. A further increase was evident in July as a second wave of positive cases within the community emerged after an almost 100 day period of no community transmission within Viet Nam.

Figure 7 - Covid-19 fake news monthly online findings

It is evident that the increase in the amount of fake news circulating has correlated with periods of time when there has been an increase in Covid-19 cases in Vietnam. With the unknowns of how the corona virus will develop in Viet Nam still dominating this second wave climate, it is natural that people are anxious to share any information they come across. After the first coronavirus cases were diagnosed; people began to spread false information about the number of positive cases, and streets were locked down because of suspected cases which had been highlighted on social media accounts. This is evidence of the impact of the circulation of misinformation in the community and on people’s fears and anxieties.
This is an inaccurate post reported by a website to generate likes. It is worth mentioning, after this news page posted the above information, the page "Quê Minh Quang Nam" with more than 200,000 likes has linked the source. In the public comment section, many users showed a rather laid back reaction, congratulating "COVID-19" patients on discharge from the hospital.

Analysis of the media monitoring period, indicates that the platform for the most widespread dissemination of fake news during the documented period was clearly social media (73%) compared to online newspapers (20%) and community message circulation (7%).
There were numerous types of fake news that the team identified and were able to document. From the total number of findings, the most popular theme of misinformation was content related to Epidemiology at nearly half (44%), followed by Prevention (21%), Government management (11%), Treatment (9%), Government announcement (6%), Other life areas (8%), and lastly Discrimination and xenophobia (1%).

![Figure 10 – Fake news content category types](image)

Among the findings documented, the team also classified findings according to the intent of the post regarding misinformation (47%) or disinformation (51%), with a slightly higher number of articles falling within the disinformation category, with the intent to share incorrect information with the community.

![Figure 11 – Fake news types](image)
F. RESPONSE TO THE MEDIA MONITORING

In response to the identified Covid-19 related fake news circulating within the community during the pandemic, OUCRU-VN developed a number of public engagement responses as follows:

1. Covid-19 Truths and Myths Facebook Livestream

**Time:** 09-06-2020

**Summary:** Alongside the Global pandemic caused by the coronavirus, the world is also tackling an ‘infodemic’ – of false information and fake news related to the coronavirus and this could also be putting lives at risk. We all play an important role in stopping the pandemic and basing decisions on reliable and verified information. It is important to separate fact and fiction and dispel the myths around Covid-19.

This livestream took place on 09 June 2020, featuring the British Consul-General in Vietnam, Ian Gibbons, and two health experts – Professor Jeremy Day and PhD student Nguyen Thanh Ha from the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit (OUCRU) based in HCMC, Vietnam. The session addressed the harmful popular myths related to Covid-19 prevention and treatment in Vietnam, clarified information about vaccines, and proposed suggestions on what people could do to protect themselves in the event of a second wave of the virus. During the livestream, the
audience also had the opportunity to directly ask questions about the Covid-19 pandemic and infodemic.

The livestream was able to reach 8400 views on Facebook as of August 1st, 2020 and the post also had a share of 53 counts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Event time</th>
<th>Live stream link</th>
<th>Quantitative aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>09-06-2020</td>
<td>Link</td>
<td>Views: 8400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shares: 53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13 – Quantitative aspect of the live stream

**Evaluation:**

The livestream also saw an active participation from its audience, who posted numerous questions for the two experts with some examples as follows:

- Could pets get infected and transmit the virus to humans?
- Does wearing a facemask really help?
- When will the vaccine be ready?
- If I smoke cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or vape, am I at risk for serious complications of Covid-19?
- Beyond the physical health impacts, there's also the mental health impacts, Ha, can you comment on this and is it something you've touched upon in your research work?
- Returning to chloroquine, a few weeks ago, OUCRU announced that it was researching this as a potential treatment. Dr. Day, you mentioned that it's not showing to be effective in humans. Is this conclusive yet?

The audience also expressed their appreciation with comments as follows:

- Good to see you, Ian, Ha and Jeremy.
- Look forward to hearing from OUCRU experts.
- Great sharing! Thank you all!
- Ha and Jeremy - thank you for answering these questions so clearly.
- Thanks everyone for a very insightful session
- Great job Jeremy and Ha! I will be sharing this with everyone to watch again
2. Media Literacy workshop

**Time:** 25-07-2020

**Summary:**
A Media Literacy workshop was organized for young people to develop the essential tools to recognize fake news on social media and online media channel. The main audience were university students and young working adults.

![Workshop Poster](image1)

![Participants with Workshop Token of Appreciation](image2)

**Facilitator:**
M.Sc. Nguyen Thi Minh Nguyet, Media and Communication Officer. University of Social Science and Humanities Ho Chi Minh City.

The workshop had two sections. In the former section, the speaker detailed how to increase personal awareness of the nature of information, to develop basic skills to see hidden traps in
the flow of information with real life Covid-19 fake news examples that the team had identified and verified. In the second section, participants of the workshop joined in a role play as different groups of reporters to present about a multifaceted story scandal. The short hands on experience allowed participants to look at scandalous news through the lenses of reporters helping them to realize that news often has misleading and catchy headlines encouraging media consumers to share in their social circles. Without the proper research and time to understand, we often fall into this trap and this is especially dangerous in the context of a global pandemic. (See Appendix 1 for details of the roleplay for this workshop).

![Figure 15 – Post Workshop Group Picture](image)

**Evaluation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Key Evaluation</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Feedback</td>
<td>What was the most useful content of the workshop for you?</td>
<td>- Readers’ psychology when finding out information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Very fond of role-playing games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- The game introduces how to evaluate fake information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Understand reality from many perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Speaker sharing on ways to select the truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- steps to assess news, practice situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- The criteria for finding out news content: 5W + 1H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| What needs to be improved in this workshop? | - Classification of newspaper pages, news sites, newspaper parasites  
- Interesting role play exercise  
- How to recognize fake news and how to write news  
- Which newspaper is the most reliable  
- Practice theory is both helpful  
- How to verify information and how to verify press agencies  
- Identify the source of information  
- Find out the origin and reliability of network information (online newspapers, websites and websites, press parasites)  
- An overview of how to identify a trusted authority for a source  
- Things to doubt when reading a newsletter, a Facebook claim  
- Immersive situations  
- Types of information  
- "How to receive and understand information  
- Introducing authentic, reliable news sources  
- Notes on information gathering about sources, titles, names, and informants "  
- "The process of getting news in reality through role-playing games.”  
- With my experience as a reporter and a file editor, the activity helps me expand my personal experience "  
- Have an overview of fake news  
- Information evaluation steps |

| In your opinion, should the project continue to hold other workshop topic similar to “Media Literacy”? | - More examples of fake news information and its evaluation process analysis should be included  
- Interesting practical exercises, should promote  
- Short message writing time after role play, there should be more time  
- Spend more time discussing with the speaker  
- Workshop time is too short  
- Get more time to engage in different real-life situations  
- The workshop should include a more diverse group of audience next time |

| | - 100% of the participants agreed for the project to hold another workshop |
3. Science Against Fake News Workshop

Time: 26-06-2020

Location: Lawrence S. Ting High School, District 7, Ho Chi Minh City

Participant: 32 Grade 8 high school students

Content Summary:

Acknowledging that amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the community is desperate for information, and accessing accurate and science-based information can be critical to how people respond.

This workshop was aimed at developing a critical understanding of science-based media and information literacy in secondary and high school students to help them identify the reliability of information on the internet.

Led by a group of experienced experts from the project “Science Against Fake News”, the exchange created an opportunity to help students increase awareness about information issues on the internet and equip them with skills of analysing and evaluating information on the Internet, especially scientific information to effectively serve learning activities.

The workshop consisted of 3 main activities:

1. UNDERSTANDING HEADLINES

   Objective
   Students understand the differences of headlines in different types of media and acknowledge that facts can be interpreted in different ways.

   Method
   Students play games and have peer discussions to match headlines with different types of media. Feedback provided for students by both Ambassadors and guests after each activity.

2. CHECKING FACTS

   Objective
   Students develop a critical mindset when reading information online and checking their reliability using I’M VAIN rule.

   Method
   Students use tools provided by the Ambassadors to work in groups evaluating accuracy of information in different news articles. Feedback provided for students by Ambassadors and guests after each activity.

3. DEBUNKING CONSPIRACY THEORIES

   Objective
   Students are able recognize a conspiracy theory through its language and features.

   Method
   Presentations to introduce about some conspiracy theories provided by guests (researcher and media expert) for students. Q&A between students and guests after each presentation.
Evaluation:

a. Students' expectations and feelings before and after participating in “Science against fake news” activity

Figure 16: Students’ expectations and feelings before and after participating in “Science against fake news” activity

Figure 17 - Please tell us your opinion about today's "Science against fake news" workshop?

(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

As students from a highly respected high school, they came to the workshop with high expectations and were engaged in discussing ways to distinguish fake news from real news. At the end of the activity, the students assessed that they were provided with new and useful knowledge that can be applied in everyday practice.
b. How students search for information online

Following the workshop, the students’ evaluation of reliable sources of communication saw an increase in their trust of information channels such as: textbooks, reference books, electronic newspapers, social media networks. They also indicated that they sourced information from Google or by asking their parents and teachers. They were more confident when searching for information online when they understood how to distinguish fake news, true news and verify information. In addition, the students were asked to list the criteria they used to verify information from online sources, which included: reviews from others, trustable websites with little advertisements, reliable sources of news, well-known authors, information cited on other sites, experts, information from the government, science sites, date posted sites, number of views, and use of language.

c. Confidence changes in searching online information

Students Feedback

"I have understood the methods, but it takes more time to practice"

"Very confident because there is a lot more useful information on how to find official information"

"Know how to ask critical questions to verify information, keep the suspicions from falling into the media trap"
After participating in the activity, the confidence level of students looking for information online increased by 30%, indicating the effectiveness of the workshop.

4. SciTalk video series

SciTalk was developed to create a virtual platform that brings the most accurate scientific information about Covid-19.

Every SciTalk video has 2 parts. In the first part, the scientists explain scientific information about Covid-19 and they answer questions sent in from the audience in the second part.

The project was able to invite two health experts to speak on the two concerning subjects related to Covid-19 which had emerged from our media monitoring.
1. **Speaker 1 – Ms Hoang Minh Tu Van, MD, PHD. Post-doc researcher in Oxford Clinical Research Unit, Vietnam**

Dr Hoang Minh Tu Van spoke on the subject of lifestyle and epidemiology and answered related questions from viewers about the myths in preventing Covid-19

Myths debunked:

- Keeping warm by taking a hot bath, sauna or sun exposure can kill the Covid virus.
- When Covid-19 enters the nose and throat, it stays in the throat for 4 days. Therefore, it is necessary to wash the nose and rinse the throat 3 times a day to kill Covid-19 virus.
- Put essential oils on your mask to prevent corona virus.
- Apply ointment to the nose to limit the corona virus from entering the respiratory tract

Questions from the viewers:

- How to distinguish Covid-19 from the common cold?
- Can you tell how Covid-19 is transmitted?
- What can we do to prevent Covid-19?
- Doctor, wash hands with soap and with dry hand sanitizer, which one is better?
- Hello doctor, I have seen people advertise N95 masks with 99% protection against viruses. So, do I need to buy and wear the N95 every day? 
- Doctor, I am planning to raise 2 cats, my parents prohibit me from doing so because Covid is transmitted from animals. Can dogs, cats and other pets spread Covid to humans? 
- It is said that smoking can seriously complicate a person with Covid? So, do I need to quit smoking? 
- Will Covid end when the weather warms up? 
- Expert, I heard it is possible to check for Covid infection by holding your breath. If we can hold our breath for 10 seconds easily without coughing, tighten our chest, then our lungs are healthy, cannot get Covid-19. I did, seeing no problem so I was reassured, but I really don't know how bad it is.

2. Speaker 2 - Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Thuong, MD. Traditional Medicine in Traditional Medicine hospital, Ho Chi Minh City

Dr Nguyen Thi Kim Thuong spoke on the subject of nutrition and traditional medicine and answered related questions from viewers about some of the more popular myths in preventing Covid-19

Questions from the viewers:

- Can using ginger, garlic or turmeric prevent me from getting Covid-19? 
- Can I drink alcoholic beverages to prevent Covid-19? 
- Should I follow a macrobiotic diet to purify my body and prevent me from getting Covid-19? 
- Can a vegan or vegetarian diet prevent me from getting Covid-19? 
- I read on the internet that there is information to always keep the mouth and throat moist, let the virus enter the throat to drift down the stomach and be destroyed by the acid in the stomach. Is this true? 
- "Doctor, I see on the Internet that taking Vitamin C to improve resistance is to prevent COVID-19. Please tell me if it is correct for me to buy for my husband and children".
5. **Không Quặng Đò Articles**

Không Quảng Đò is a teen magazine with the main targeted audience being secondary high school students. They are also one of the largest educational magazine distributors to high schools in Viet Nam.

The team intended to post these articles to increase the awareness and basic concepts about the Corona virus for young people and to encourage them to begin to develop the tools to recognize misinformation.

With the help of some experts, six articles were prepared with topics revolving around Covid-19 composed with easy-to-understand language and content for secondary aged students.

In order to maximise the reach of distribution, this series of articles will be posted from the second week of September, the period when high school students start to return to school.

See the table below for the article details and posting schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article title</th>
<th>Posting Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotion Trap in Consuming News in the Pandemic</td>
<td>08-09-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Misunderstanding in the Pandemic Context</td>
<td>15-09-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical Modelling. What is it? And How can it help alleviate the Pandemic?</td>
<td>22-09-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 unknowns about Covid-19</td>
<td>29-09-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the smallest living organism in the world?</td>
<td>06-10-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Consumption</td>
<td>13-10-2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 1 - ROLEPLAY

Instruction:

The participants are randomly divided into small groups of reporters.

Each group has a responsibility to ask questions and come up with a short presentation/report at the end of the exercise.

This exercise also requires 7 volunteers to act as a character of the story.

Initially, each of the 7 characters must not know what the roles of each other are.

The facilitator defines the role of each group and volunteers before the start of the exercise.

Time:

The role play session is 90 minutes and divided into three sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Preliminary question</td>
<td>Group of participants asking 7 characters questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Group discussion</td>
<td>Group discussion and write key notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Group presentation</td>
<td>Findings are presented by each group. Facilitator summarises the results from each group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preparation:

The roleplay context is explained by the facilitator to all members of the workshop.

The requirement for each character is given individually and each actor is expected to understand the given guidelines.

Roleplay Context:

An established and successful watermelon business finds itself in a recent scandal that its products use illegal growth hormones and toxic pesticides.

Character

1. Protagonist

The main character, named Mai An Tiem (MAT), is a well-known figure in his village where the business of selling watermelons has been an extremely successful story. He was able to create numerous jobs for the villagers and the quality of life in the village continued to increase as a result.

Acting guideline:

This role is to deny the scandal. The actor has to mention that he is an honest man who works from the bottom of the society to stand as successfully as he is now. If he is asked about the
relationship with the bank, he also has to mention that the business borrows a substantial sum from the local bank, however, this was a voluntary decision from shareholders. He is using this amount appropriately and solely for the business.

2. Antagonist

This is a role of another business watermelon seller, however, who is not as successful as the protagonist. He has to always speak out against MAT. He fabricates the most outrageous lies that damage the reputation of the MAT business.

Acting guideline:

The actor has to act aggressively and be disruptive when answering the questions from groups of reporters. If he is asked about his background, he will state that he is a high school dropout.

3. Local Bank

This is the role of a local bank staffer. The actor has to exaggerate the relationship of MAT with the bank and local government. He amplifies the amount of the loan that MAT has borrowed to hundreds of billions. According to the information that he has, MAT uses this money to invest in real estate and is on the verge of bankruptcy. There’s also information that MAT grows toxic watermelons and his investors are withdrawing their money.

Acting guideline:

The actor has to portray a talkative person who is willing to share anything. Most of the sharing, however, is fabricated for his own entertainment. If he is asked about his official working title, he will say that he is the bank security guard.

4. Doctor

This is the role of an emergency doctor in a local hospital. She had seen an increasing number of admitted cases with digestive problems. Some of these cases ate watermelon from MAT. However, there has not yet been the final diagnosis from the hospital.

Acting guideline:

The actor only agrees to be in the initial interview with the first reporter from any group. After that, she refuses to participate in any subsequent interviews. She also has to post your mobile phone numbers for appointment booking. However, she either refuses to answer calls or denies any further meeting with ‘being busy’ excuses. She has to act with a demeaning and bossy attitude.

5. Food scientist

This is the role of a local independent food scientist. She collects three MAT watermelon samples from different locations in the local wet market for laboratory testing. After the test, she finds out that the three have toxic chemicals that can cause cancer: Xitokinin, gibberellin, auxin. This
prompt her to make a public statement advising MAT to stop selling watermelons and give a detailed explanation.

Acting guideline:
The actor is very welcoming and enthusiastic to meet with reporters. She hopes to promote her professional reputation in these reports.

6. Neighbour 1
This is the role of a senior neighbour who was born and raised in this village. When meeting with different groups of reporters, she states that one of her grandchildren stole a watermelon from the MAT garden and developed a chronic stomach-ache after eating it. She suspects that his products may have problems and she is not buying from MAT anymore.

Acting guideline:
She has to act forgetful and slow to answer questions.

7. Neighbour 2
This is the role of a junior neighbour who was born and raised in this village. When meeting with different groups of reporters, she states that MAT watermelons are the best local delicacy, and she regularly consumes the product. She has nothing but praises for the MAT business and she mentions that MAT creates numerous job opportunities for the local villagers.

Acting guideline:
She has to act youthful and fast to answer questions. If being asked about the relationship with MAT, she will state that she is his younger cousin.

Output expectation:
Each group can come up with a short news presentation for the scandal.

The scandal is reported differently from each group as there are many sides in the story.

Each group will receive feedback from the facilitator about what was achieved and what can be done to improve.

The facilitator summarises and reinstates that different reports of the same story can often be misleading and inaccurate from the truth. Media consumers should be alert and vigilant when encountering and reading news online.
APPENDIX 2 – REFERENCES
