(Grant Agreement 101093921)

Deliverable D3.5 - Digital Academy against Climate Change Disinformation

WP3 – Living Digital Environment for Knowledge Co-Production

June 2024

HORIZON-MISS-2021-CLIMA-02-05 - Local engagement of citizens in the co-creation of societal transformational change for climate resilience

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1. Executive Summary

This deliverable presents the website of the Digital Academy against Climate Change Disinformation, developed under WP3, Task 3.5. The "Digital Academy against Climate Change Disinformation" aims to provide citizens with trustworthy information on climate change. This project focuses on creating and maintaining a digital platform that offers reliable resources and fact-checked information from credible sources. The website is available at https://agoraclimatedisinfo.eu.

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2. Introduction

Visitors to the Digital Academy against Climate Change Disinformation will have access to a) Reliable information, including articles and scientific publications; b) Fact-checks that debunk climate change disinformation; c) Relevant resources, such as media literacy materials from Task 5.3; d) Bi-annual reports on the state of climate change disinformation.

The website targets a diverse audience, including citizens, journalists, public and private entities, and NGOs interested in the latest developments in climate change and disinformation. The content will be in English, written in a simple and understandable style, and will also include multimedia content such as infographics and videos to enhance understanding. Additionally, the website will feature hyperlinks to other deliverables created within the AGORA project such as the Digital Academy to access and use climate data and monitor Climate Risks, promoting a comprehensive approach to empowering local communities to address the climate crisis.

The leading partner for this task is Athens Technology Center S.A. (ATC), in collaboration with Fondazione Centro Euro-Mediterraneo sui Cambiamenti Climatici (CMCC), Agenzia per la Promozione della Ricerca Europea (APRE), and Fundación Ibercivis (IBE). The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) will also contribute within the framework of Task 5.3.

3. Design and evaluation

To ensure the best design for the Digital Academy website on climate disinformation, a comprehensive roadmap was created. The primary purpose of this roadmap (*Figure 2*) is to present information and modules in a meaningful and organized manner. In particular, three distinct designs were developed, focusing on the structure of the website, user flow, and wireframe design for the content and configuration of each webpage.

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3.1 Website structure

In the early stages of the task, a detailed structure was drafted (*Figure 1*) to organize the content to be included in the Digital Academy. The content was proposed to be divided into the following main pages:

1. Homepage
2. About
3. Climate Change [1]
4. Media Literacy
5. Resources

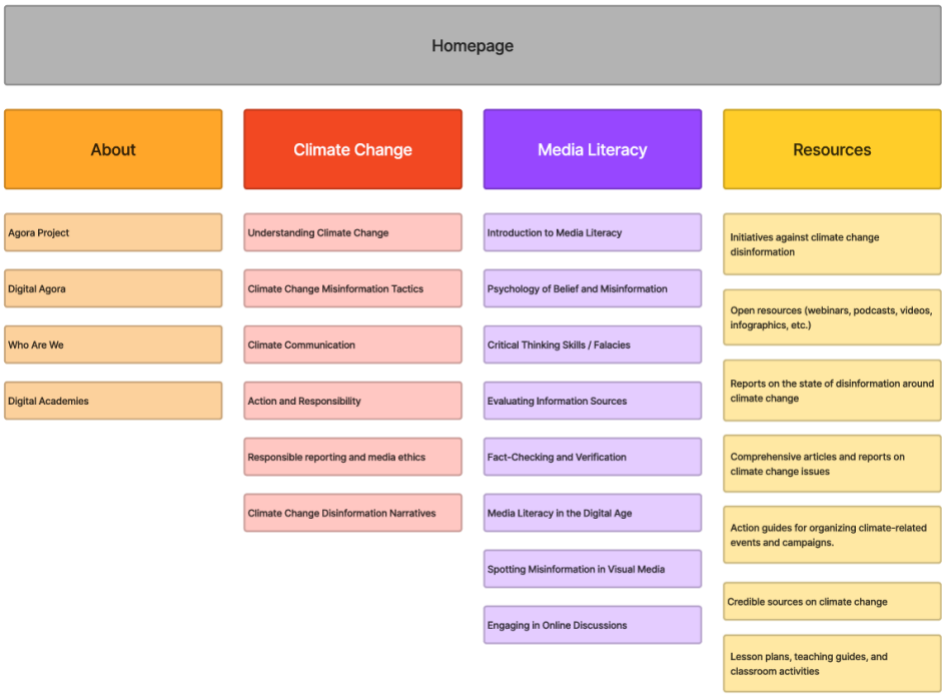

Figure 1: Digital Academy's against climate disinformation proposed structure.

[1] The Climate Change page has been renamed to "Climate Disinformation".

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3.2 User flow

Based on this structure, two user flows have been drafted (*Figure 2*) to allow users to navigate easily through the Digital Academy's content and reach the main flow destinations: Narratives, modules on Climate Change, Media Literacy, and Resources.

1. Thematic Navigation: Users can browse the site using a well-structured navigation menu that reflects the Academy's layout.
2. Content oriented navigation: Users can quickly access the main content areas directly from the homepage.

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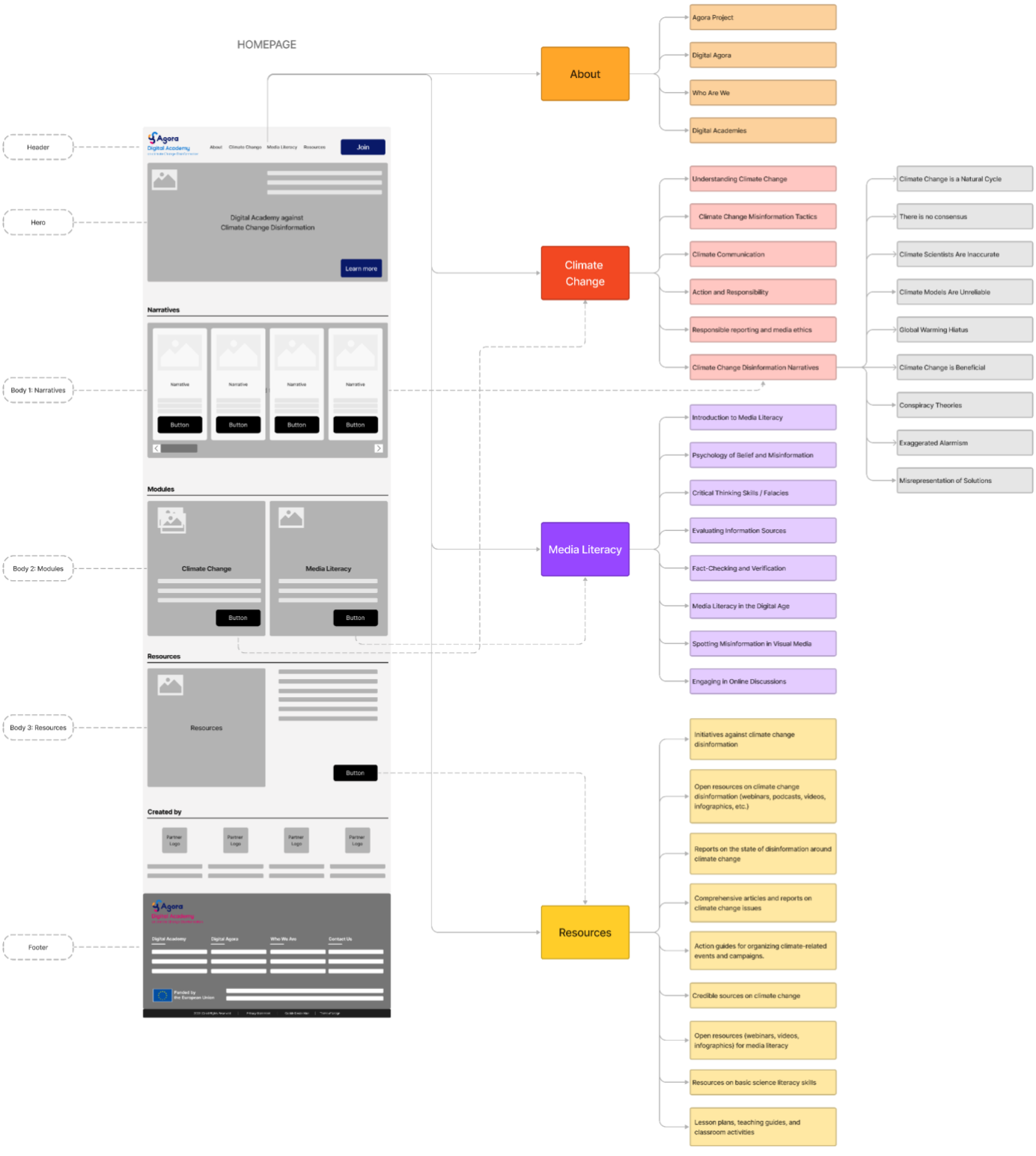

Figure 2: Digital Academy's proposed user flow.

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3.3 Wireframe design

Wireframe designs were created to illustrate the content and layout of each webpage within the Digital Academy website. Starting with the Homepage, these wireframes extend to its four main subpages and additional pages further down the site hierarchy. The aim was to provide details on how content will be organized and presented in each page. Additionally, they assisted in planning a user-friendly navigation.

Further details concerning each page's information will be provided in Chapter 5.

Figure 3: Digital Academy's proposed wireframe design.

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4. Responding to feedback and linking to Agora outputs

The information designed and presented above served as the foundation for the website's creation. Some changes were necessary, primarily involving the names of certain categories and the layout of specific pages, such as the presentation of narratives. These changes, which will be detailed in the next chapter, were made to improve user experience and enhance engagement without altering the overall structure of the website.

We also ensured the integration of connections between the Agora Community Hub and other deliverables of the project. Specifically, users will be able to navigate to other websites created within the project framework and learn about the Agora Community Hub. Special emphasis is placed on the Agora Community Hub website and the other AGORA project Academy to access and use Climate Data and Monitor Climate Risks (T3.4), which will provide free modules, supporting citizens and stakeholders in accessing and utilizing high-quality, open-source climate and risk data.

5. Digital Academy against Climate Change Disinformation Website

5.1 Header and footer

The header (*Figure 4*) created for the platform identifies its four main pages: About, Climate Disinfo, Media Literacy, and Resources. Detailed descriptions of these pages will be provided later in this report. Additionally, a "search" option has been added, allowing users to easily explore all the material posted on the website using keywords. The header remains fixed at the top of the screen as the user scrolls, enhancing navigation.

Figure 4: Digital Academy's header.

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The footer (*Figure 5*) contains a brief description of the Agora Community Hub, the other Digital Academy, and the AGORA Project, along with contact and social media details. It also includes the EU's disclaimer of responsibility for the content of the program, and information on the Privacy Statement, Cookie Declaration, and Terms of Use.

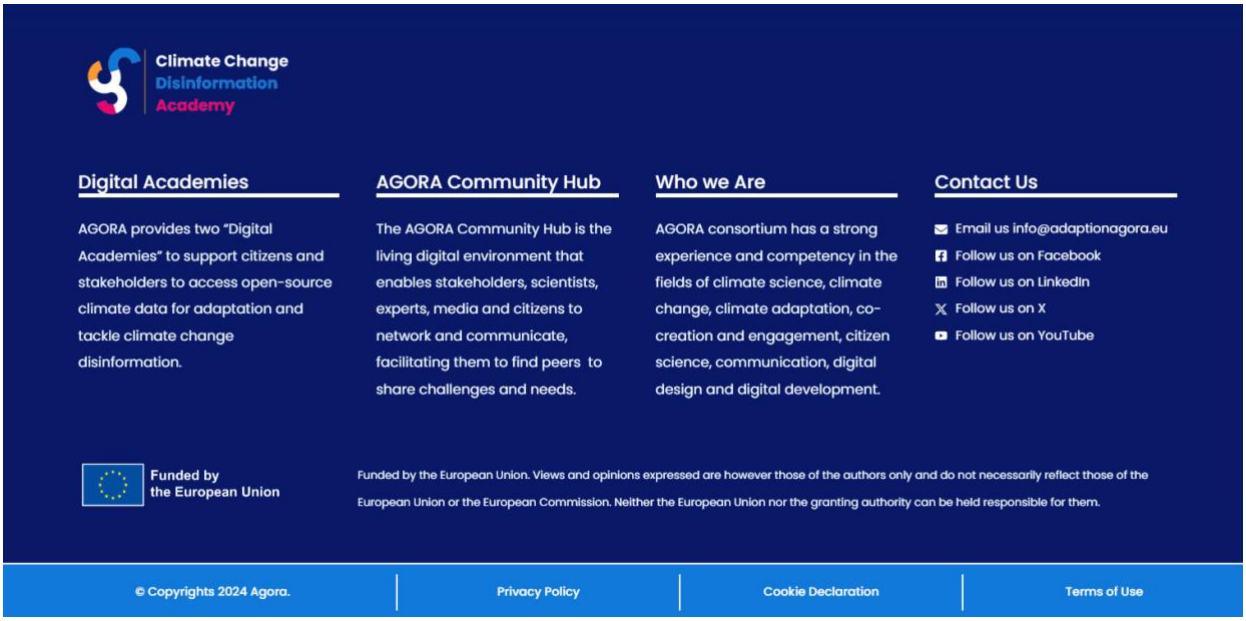

Figure 5: Digital Academy's footer.

5.2 Homepage

The homepage (*Figure 6*) allows visitors to access all created pages. It features a carousel with the debunked climate disinformation narratives, followed by shortcuts to the climate change and media literacy modules. Below, there is a text section with information about available resources and a link to access them. The page also displays the logos of the organizations involved in tasks 3.5 and 5.3, specifically ATC, CMCC, APRE, IBERCIVIS, and IIASA.

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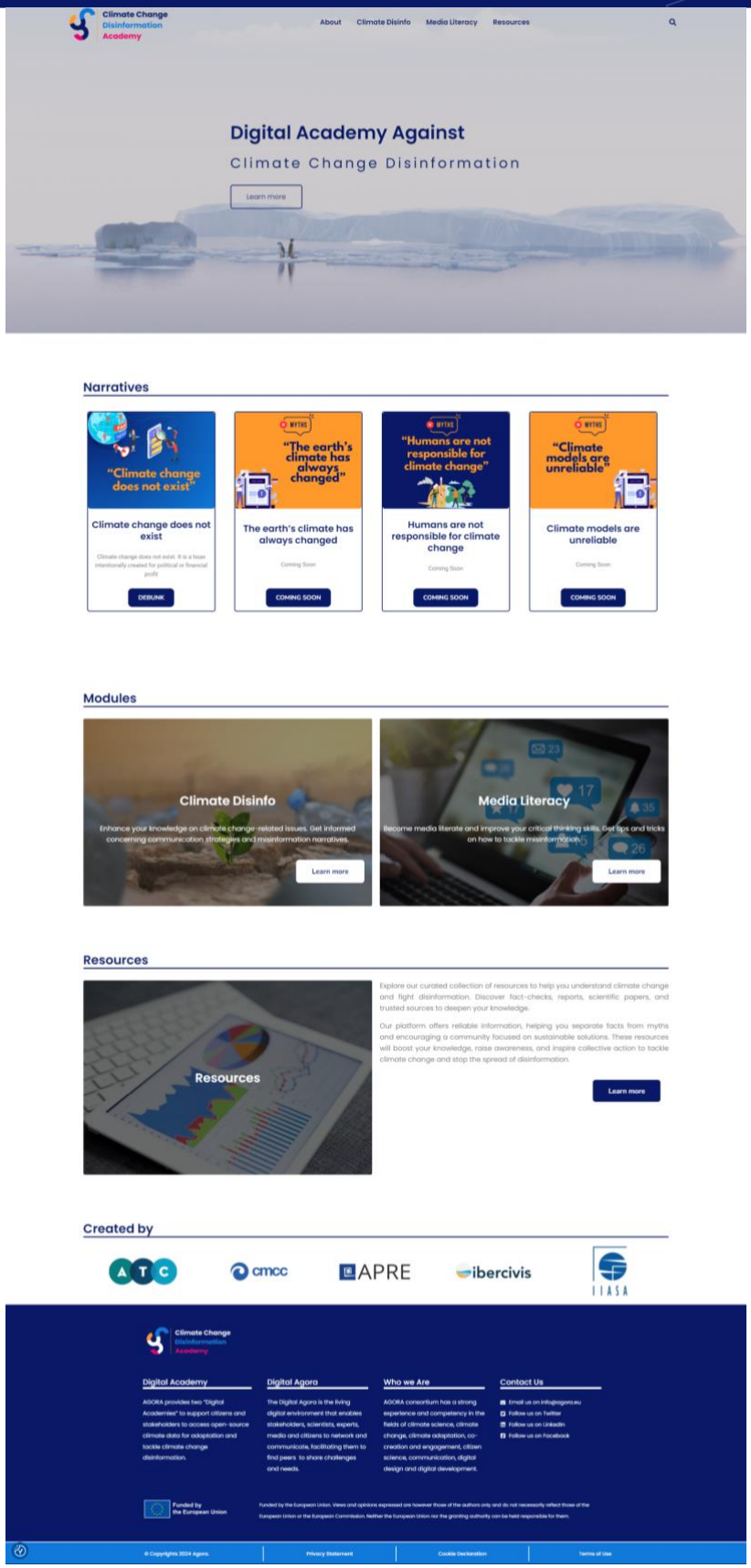

Figure 6: Digital Academy's Homepage.

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5.3 About page

At the top of the About page (*Figure 7*), users will find information about the Digital Academy against Climate Change Disinformation, including its content and goals. Below this, there is a brief description of the Digital Academy for accessing and using Climate Data and monitoring Climate Risks, with a hyperlink to its website. Further down, you will see a summary of the AGORA project, details about the consortium, and a hyperlink to the project's website. Lastly, we have included a description of the Agora Community Hub along with a hyperlink to the community hub.

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Figure 7: Digital Academy's About page.

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5.4 Climate Disinformation page

The Climate Disinformation page (*Figure 8*) begins with a brief introduction to the concept of climate change. Following this, there are listed the modules that will be accessible before the end of the project:

1. Understanding Climate Change

This module explores the basic concepts of climate change and its impacts, including the importance of the scientific consensus on the responsibilities of human activities as the cause of unprecedented climate conditions. The module provides references to reliable sources of climate information, empowering the learners to build their own climate literacy and be able to pre-bunk disinformation. It also focuses on the solutions available to address climate impacts and underlines the importance of integrating mitigation and adaptation solutions for an effective climate action. Centro Euro-Mediterraneo sui Cambiamenti Climatici (CMCC) will be responsible for developing this module.

2. Climate Change Disinformation Tactics

The module on Climate Change Disinformation Tactics aims to discuss common tactics used to spread misinformation about climate change. It provides clear examples and offers strategies to counter these misleading narratives to enhance critical thinking and foster informed discussions. It also outlines counterstrategies, including critical assessment of sources, understanding scientific information, identifying credible information online, and verifying information before sharing, providing real-world examples to help learners recognize and counter these tactics. The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) will be responsible for developing this module.

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3. Climate Change Communication

The Climate Change Communication module aims to enhance the skills of individuals interested in or employed in fields related to communicating climate change issues. It seeks to strengthen communication strategies that promote authoritative sources and ensure the proper dissemination of information to the general public. By improving these communication strategies, the module aims to contribute to combating disinformation and fostering a well-informed public. The module will cover effective communication techniques, the use of clear and persuasive messaging, the importance of transparency and credibility, and methods to engage diverse audiences. Agenzia per la Promozione della Ricerca Europea (APRE) will be responsible for developing and delivering this module.

4. Disinformation Campaigns: Case Studies

This module will provide an in-depth examination of some of the most well-known disinformation campaigns that have successfully misled the public. It will detail the tactics and means used to disseminate these campaigns. The aim is to equip participants with the ability to identify the patterns and strategies used in these campaigns, enabling them to recognize similar tactics in future instances. Additionally, the module will highlight the global dimension of the issue, demonstrating how the same disinformation narratives can be propagated through different channels and in multiple languages. Athens Technology Center (ATC) will be responsible for developing this module.

5. Climate Change Narratives

The Climate Change Narratives module will present the most prevalent climate change disinformation narratives. These narratives will be selected based on data collected and presented by global organizations dedicated to addressing climate change, as well as research papers and widely disseminated narratives debunked by fact-checking organizations. The module aims to deepen participants' understanding by showcasing the wide range of disinformation narratives, from outright climate change denial to misleading claims about renewable energy sources. By

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examining these narratives, participants will gain insights into how disinformation is crafted and spread, enabling them to critically assess and counter such falsehoods in their own contexts. ATC will be responsible for developing this module.

The modules will also include multimedia resources such as infographics and videos to enhance understanding.

Next, the page features a carousel showcasing debunked climate disinformation narratives, presented using the truth sandwich technique. Finally, the page includes a section for bi-annual reports on the climate change disinformation landscape.

The layout for the Climate Change Disinformation Narratives (*Figure 9*) page has been designed. Each page will feature a combination of text and multimedia materials, including infographics, diagrams, and other visual aids, incorporating the latest data. This multimedia approach aims to enhance understanding and engagement by providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on each narrative. Additionally, an anchor menu has been created and positioned on the right side of the webpage. It remains fixed as the user scrolls, enhancing navigation and making it easier to access different sections of the page.

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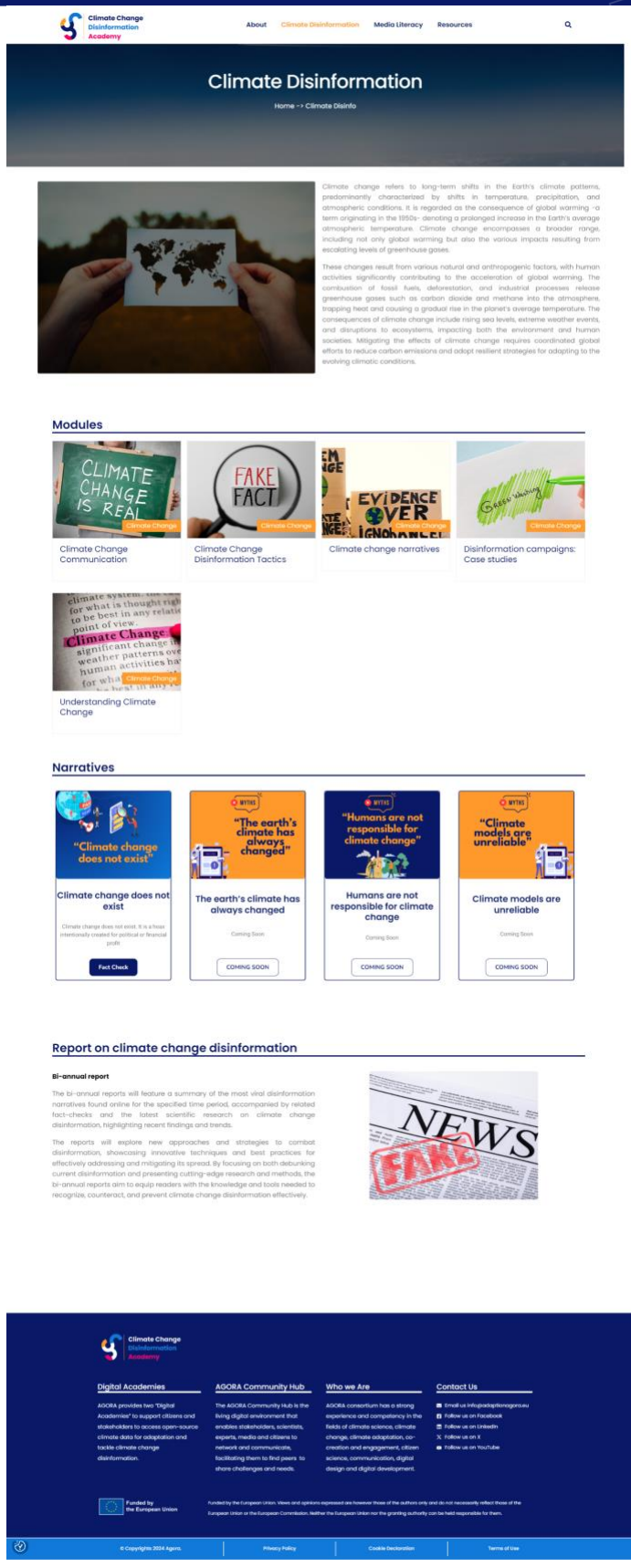

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Figure 8: Digital Academy's Climate Disinformation page.

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Figure 9: Digital Academy's narrative page.

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5.5 Media Literacy page

The Media Literacy page (*Figure 10*) opens with a brief introduction to the concept of media literacy. The selected media literacy modules were carefully chosen to develop essential skills needed to tackle disinformation effectively. The examples within these modules will primarily focus on climate change disinformation narratives, aiming to assist users in distinguishing possible disinformation both online and offline. Recognizing that the majority of people spend significant time online, we have included specific modules on digital literacy. Additionally, a module on the psychology of belief and disinformation has been incorporated to inform participants about the cognitive fallacies that underpin susceptibility to disinformation.

The modules that will be accessible before the end of the project are listed:

1. Introduction to Media Literacy

The Introduction to Media Literacy module aims to familiarize participants with key concepts related to disinformation and equip them with the skills to distinguish between different forms of misleading information. This module will cover cases of disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda, providing real-world examples to illustrate these phenomena. By the end of the course, participants will understand basic media literacy concepts and enhance their critical thinking skills, particularly when consuming news related to climate change. This foundational knowledge will empower participants to critically assess the credibility of information sources and recognize the tactics used to spread false or misleading narratives. ATC will be responsible for developing this module.

2. Psychology of Belief and Disinformation

The Psychology of Belief and Disinformation module will help participants explore the psychological mechanisms that lead individuals to accept misleading messages as true. This module will examine how fraudsters exploit these psychological processes to mislead the public, focusing on tactics such

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as emotional manipulation, cognitive biases, and social influence. Additionally, it will present scientific research on effective strategies for combating disinformation, including the Inoculation Theory, which involves exposing people to weakened forms of misinformation to build their resilience against future falsehoods. By understanding these psychological factors, participants will be better equipped to recognize and counteract disinformation. Athens Technology Center (ATC) will be responsible for developing this module.

3. Critical Thinking Skills / Fallacies

This module equips participants with the tools to critically evaluate information, identify logical fallacies, and understand susceptibility to disinformation. Among the topics covered are critical thinking basics, argument evaluation, logical fallacy recognition, and distinguishing sound arguments from manipulative rhetoric. Real-world case studies will illustrate how fallacies contribute to the spread of climate change misinformation, while additional resources will explore the intersection of media literacy and climate science, enabling learners to apply critical thinking skills to current issues. The module encourages participants to practice their skills in interactive scenarios, preparing them to challenge and correct misinformation in their communities and fields. Fundación Ibercivis (IBE) will be responsible for developing this module.

4. Evaluating Information Sources

The Evaluating Information Sources module aims to enhance participants' skills in distinguishing between various sources used in climate change news. This module will present detailed information on identifying reliable sources and provide tools to verify their reliability. Among the topics covered are criteria for evaluating credibility, recognizing biases, and assessing the expertise and credentials of authors and organizations. Participants will also learn about fact-checking websites, peer-reviewed journals, established organizations and other trustworthy resources. Athens Technology Center (ATC) will be responsible for developing this module.

5. Fact-Checking and Verification

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The Fact-Checking and Verification module aims to develop participants' ability to critically assess information. This course will introduce essential tools and techniques for verifying information, including the use of fact-checking websites, reverse image searches, and cross-referencing sources. Participants will also learn the basic principles of using Boolean operators for more targeted searches in search engines and platforms, enhancing their research efficiency and accuracy. Athens Technology Center will be responsible for developing this module.

6. Digital Literacy

The Digital Literacy module aims to inform participants and enhance their digital literacy skills, focusing on navigating modern technologies effectively. This course will teach participants how to use digital tools for communication and collaboration and critically assess the trustworthiness of information found in digital spaces. Additionally, the module will include an introduction to artificial intelligence (AI) and explore ways to amplify its use to tackle disinformation. The module ensures learners can confidently and competently interact with digital environments. ATC will be responsible for developing this module.

7. Engaging in Online Discussions / Online Safety

The Engaging in Online Discussions / Online Safety module aims to teach participants how to contribute to the dissemination of trustworthy information by actively participating in online discussions. This course will cover best practices for engaging in respectful and constructive dialogues, techniques for identifying and countering misinformation, and strategies for promoting credible sources. Additionally, it will provide guidelines on maintaining personal safety and privacy while interacting online. ATC will be responsible for developing this module.

The modules will also include multimedia resources such as infographics and videos to enhance understanding.

The first module developed is Fact-Checking and Verification (*Figure 11*). This module includes a variety of text-based content, multimedia materials, and interactive quizzes.

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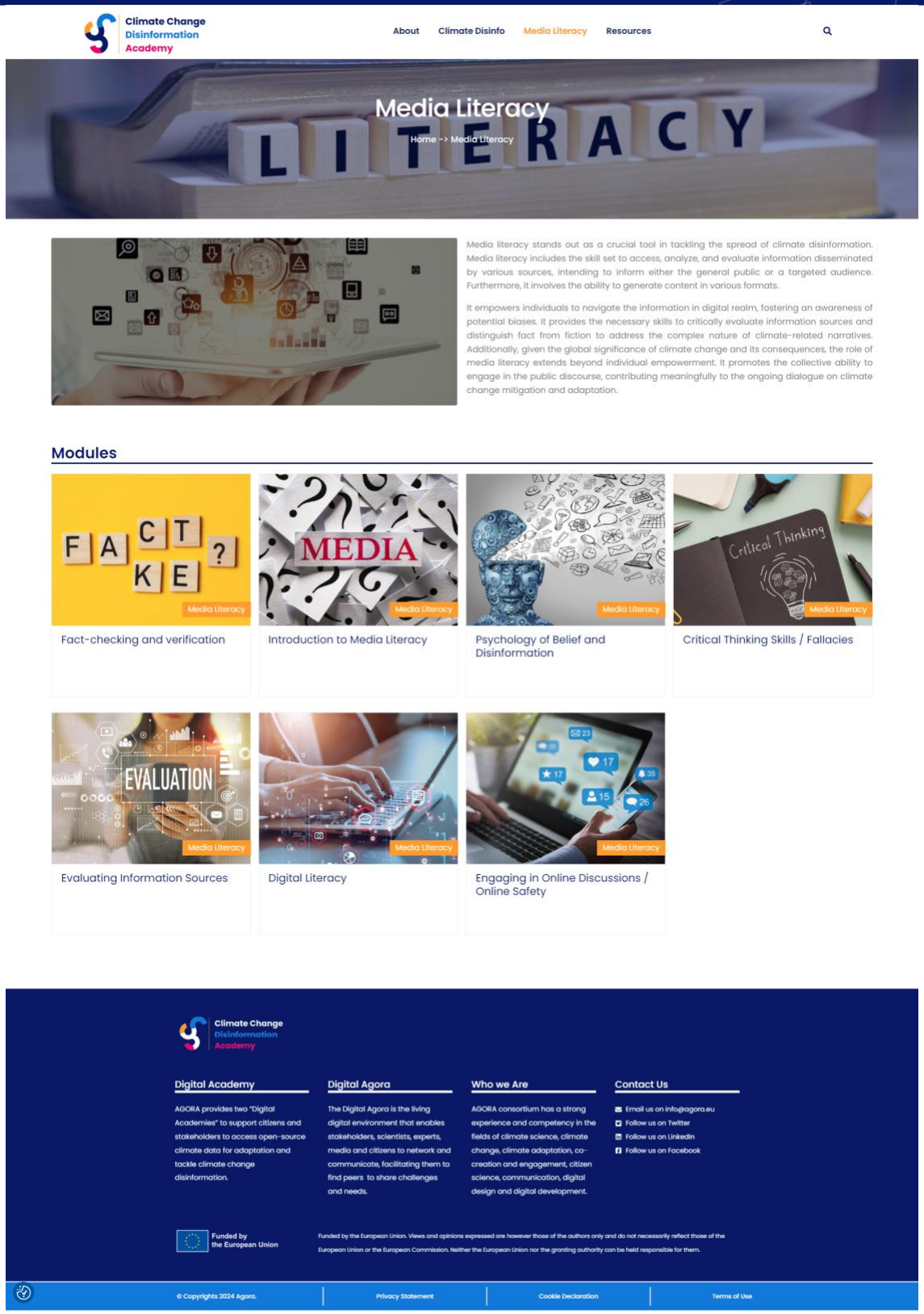

Figure 10: The Digital Academy's Media Literacy page.

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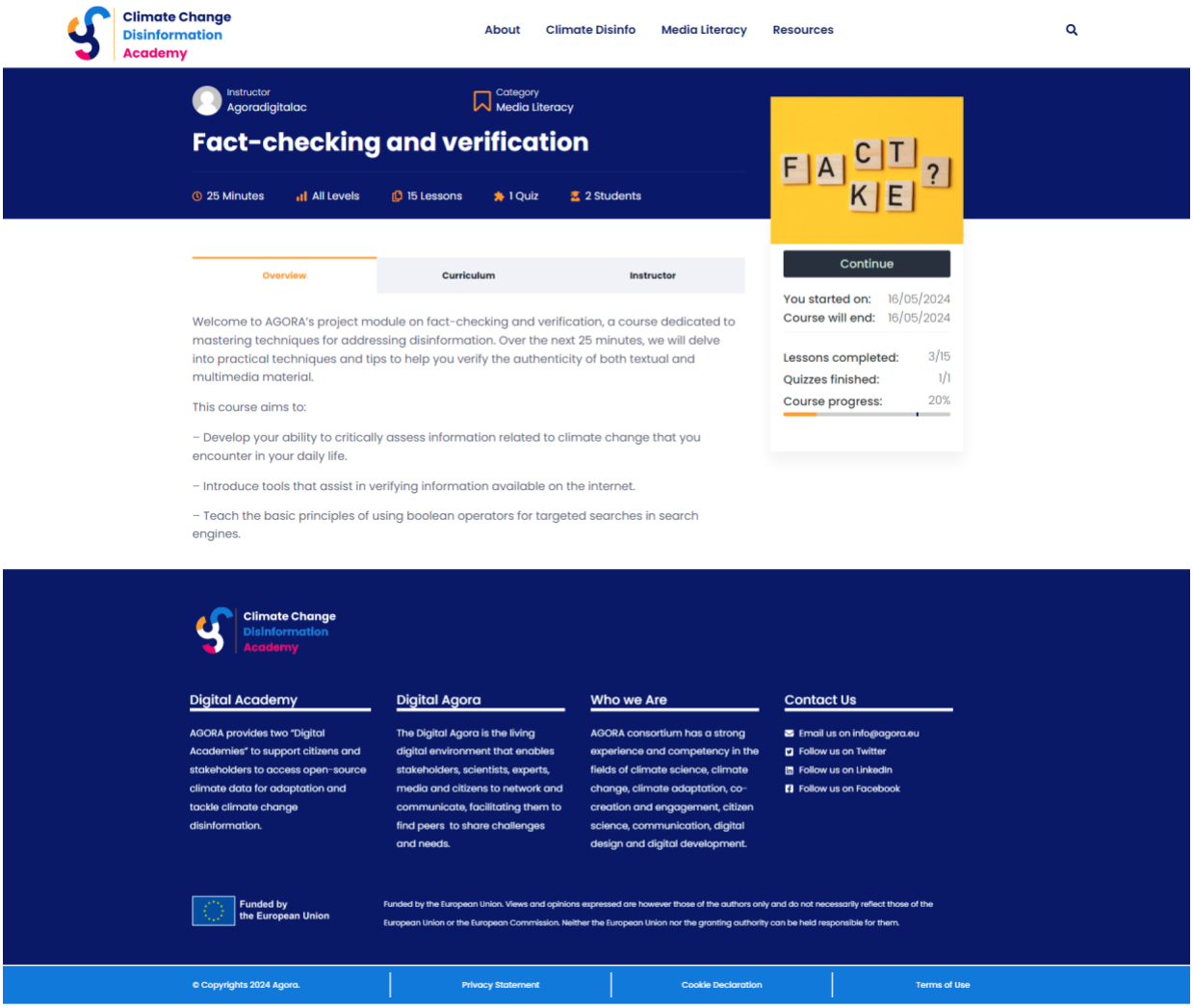

Figure 11: The Digital Academy's modules page.

5.6 Resources page

Finally, the Resources section (*Figure 12*) is a custom-made repository. It includes materials used in the modules, the debunking of narratives, and the bi-annual reports. Additionally, it offers other resources valuable for those interested in learning about climate change disinformation. Here, the users can discover fact-checks, reports, scientific papers, and trusted sources to deepen their knowledge.

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Figure 12: The Digital Academy's Resources page.

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6. Conclusion and next steps

The Digital Academy against Climate Change Disinformation aims to enhance users' skills to tackle climate change disinformation effectively. By providing comprehensive educational resources, users are empowered to critically assess information and identify misleading narratives. Significant progress has been made in this mission, with a fact check debunking the myth that climate change does not exist already created and published. Additionally, the first media literacy module on Fact-Checking and Verification is ready and accessible to users. The remaining modules will be finalized and updated by month 24. By this time, the first bi-annual report on climate change disinformation will also be published. Fact checks will continue to be developed and published until the end of the project. These efforts underscore our commitment to equipping users with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and challenge di

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