



Mitigating Online Radicalization and Hate-Speech

FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

This project is supported by



And co-financed by



>> Short description

The project aims to strengthen the resilience of young people from vulnerable communities against radicalisation and extremism by mobilising and activating them in their communities via strengthening critical thinking and raising awareness about online disinformation. The impact of the project will consist of the creation of a network of active future leaders, who will work as multipliers in their respective communities, thus addressing radicalisation and violent extremism in the selected countries. The main objective is activation and strengthening of capacities of young leaders aspiring to become visible actors against radicalisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon and Slovakia. Young leaders will learn how online radicalisation works, “arming” themselves with counter-narratives against its rhetoric/propaganda. They will learn to seek further help to themselves or peers who may be in the immediate danger of radicalisation. Trainings’ curricula (online and also in person in Sarajevo) will also focus on critical thinking, disinformation, strategic communication and leadership. The phenomenon is not a new one, several stakeholders are working on the issue. We look for synergies rather than overlaps with the consortium of partners.

To increase youth’s resilience in project countries against the online-based radicalisation and hate speech. The project will equip young people with critical thinking, knowledge, wit and overview to be able to debunk malicious extremist propaganda, manipulative disinformation and use of hate speech in the online sphere.

This project gathers 60 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia and Lebanon which were selected through an extensive and elaborate selection process.

>> Project activities

- [the Open Call for Applications](#),
- [1st Online Workshop](#),
- [2nd Online Workshop](#),
- [3rd advanced online workshop](#),
- [a study trip to Vienna](#),
- the Study Analysis Report (on project’s [website](#)), and
- small project ideas implemented by the participants (also on project’s website).

>> Results of the activities

- a report on the results from an online qualitative survey how young people perceive the problem of online radicalisation and hate-speech in their respective project countries and in the contemporary context.
- 20 small project ideas implemented by the participants individually or in groups.
- 9 selected small project ideas which received enhanced mentoring and additional support (4 BiH, 4 Lebanon and 1 Slovakian ideas).

The overall aim of the project was to increase resilience of young people in project countries against the online-based radicalisation and hate speech. For these purposes, the participants listened and actively participated in online workshops with topics such as:

- radicalisation and violent extremism: discussing radicalisation based on practical experience
- civic and youth activism against hate speech and radicalisation through examples of BiH
- multiculturalism
- current trends in extremism and radicalisation
- narrative and counter narratives of extremist propaganda in the online sphere
- critical thinking, critical perception and deeper understanding of communication
- civic activism in Lebanon
- stereotypes and prejudices leading to extremism
- hate speech against women and sexist hate speech in particular
- social activism: fight for the rights of the invisible
- argumentation and debating
- preventing youth radicalisation in the Western Balkans
- challenges of radicalisation and engagement in the community

The participants were able to actively use the lessons and skills from all online workshops and replicated them in their individual project ideas, reaching a wide audience in all project countries, for instance they organised lectures on hate speech and tackling it for their peers. A study on radicalisation in the project countries was also researched and elaborated, the survey results are built on a solid dataset. The questionnaire survey was filled out by 1833 young people in total, 292 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 695 from Lebanon and 846 from Slovakia. The survey was published in four languages, in English, in Bosnian, in Arabic and Slovak. The project lead and project partners helped with the dissemination—via direct emailing and social media. The study was also shared by all organisations from Austria that were visited during the Study Trip.

>> The first Specific Objective

Young people from project countries trained in critical thinking, media literacy and strategic communication has been achieved through three workshops which were highly attended.

The online-based Qualitative survey was happening parallelly with the workshops. Initially, the goal was to receive 300 individual responses, yet the survey reached 1833 people who responded to it.

Furthermore, the participants developed their individual project ideas and after the first round of the project ideas and with need to modify the projects, the selected participants continued with their projects ideas to demonstrate that they had been trained in critical thinking, media literacy and strategic communication.

The project ideas were: organisation of lectures on hate speech and hate speech against women in BiH and Lebanon and each online lecture was attended by approximately 60 persons (altogether 120); public activism emphasising the importance of multiculturalism and mutual respect in the divided BiH that reached in newspaper article and social media promotion approximately 1000 people; a campaign on social media advocating for the change of the law against LGBTIQ people in Lebanon that initially reached around 5000 people on Instagram and Facebook; an online and later offline exhibition portraying and explaining stereotypes leading to hate speech – reach out towards 100 people; numerous researches by the young participants to measure the perceptions of hate speech in their communities and hate speech against women in online sphere; a small project advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities and their right to employment in Lebanon; focus group discussion on prejudices and stereotypes against other religions in Lebanon; in Slovakia, a hour-long discussion was organised by project participants which was attended by 32 persons via the online discussion portal Clubhouse, where discussants shared their personal experience with hate speech in the online sphere to manifest

that their experience is not isolated. Overall, the project reached enormously more people than originally planned and since some of the participants' campaigns are still ongoing, the final numbers are not precise at the moment.

>> The second Specific Objective

Young people involved in project activities gained a better understanding of intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Med region has been achieved through the online workshops with the participants from the Euro-Med region. Unfortunately, this goal has not been as enhanced as the first one because the in-person training in Sarajevo, BiH, did not occur due to Covid-19 restrictions.

>> Final outputs of the project

- a report on the results from an online qualitative survey how young people perceive the problem of online radicalisation and hate-speech in their respective project countries and in the contemporary context in Arabic, Bosnian, English and Slovakian languages
- 20 small project ideas implemented by the participants individually or in groups.
- 9 selected small project ideas which received enhanced mentoring and additional support (4 BiH, 4 Lebanon and 1 Slovakian ideas). This is a variation since initially the project did not count with additional and material support for the most promising project ideas. However, the participants with enhanced support committed themselves to their project ideas.