CEE Prevent Net

Central and Eastern European Network for the Prevention of Intolerance and Group Hatred

10+1 Good Practices in Preventing Intolerance, Discrimination, and Group Hatred in Central and Eastern Europe

Imprint

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The CEE Prevent Net Consortium

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Preface

This compendium was created by the consortium members of the CEE Prevent Net project. Its development is the result of a robust exchange of good practice methods among various organizations and civil society actors in the areas of youth work and (non-formal) education aimed at preventing intolerance, discrimination, and right-wing populism and extremism in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The compendium contains good practices for and from practitioners from this region, in which liberal democracy, tolerance, human rights, and civil society are currently acutely threatened. It intends to mainstream and amplify these approaches while highlighting Central and Eastern European perspectives more broadly, especially since approaches from Central and Eastern Europe are still frequently overlooked in EU-wide prevention discourses and networks.

Initially, this volume was supposed to present 10 good practices for working with young people directly; however, the CEE Prevent Net consortium decided to expand this initial enterprise gratuitously. This additional section provides youth workers, educators, and other civic actors with recommendations and advocacy strategies for youth work that fosters tolerance, facilitates dialogue, and prevents discrimination and far right ideologies. These advocacy recommendations have been formulated by the CEE Prevent Net consortium in a process of intense research across Central and Eastern Europe, including (Eastern) Germany, that involved more than 150 interviews with practitioners,

policy-makers, and public authorities.* The most important results of this research are included here because it has been found that advocacy, support, and awareness-raising for prevention; skill building; and youth work on a local, national and European level is of crucial importance if these good practice methods are to be brought to fruition. In areas where civic spaces are shrinking and schools and youth facilities are becoming more hesitant to cooperate with external partners that offer democracy and human rights education, reaching out to all actors and imparting on them the need for a peaceful future among young people is paramount.

This compendium neither claims to offer a comprehensive overview of good practices in youth work and education in Central and Eastern Europe nor can it possibly present the approaches in a way that enables other practitioners to implement them instantly in their own work environment. All of the compendium's good practices have been subjected to national or international transfer before, and any party interested in learning more about one of them is encouraged to contact the CEE Prevent Net project or the organization that developed the practice. The consortium members hope that the practices and recommendations presented in this volume will help and inspire youth workers and educators, particularly those from Central and Eastern Europe, to continue their efforts to prevent intolerance and promote democracy and human rights in the region. Moreover, this compendium should show these practitioners that they are not alone in their endeavors, even when the local political environment fails to acknowledge their important contribution to peaceful and prosperous communities and especially when efforts are actively undertaken to counteract these goals.

* A more comprehensive version of these recommendations has also been published in a separate paper (see Tatár et al. (2019): Advocacy to Prevent Intolerance, Discrimination and Group-focused Enmity of Youth in Bulgaria, Germany and the Visegrad Group [CEE Prevent Net Working Paper]. URL: http://ceepreventnet.eu/files/Publications/Regional%20Report%20Final_web%20version.pdf).

The CEE Prevent Net Project and its partner organizations

CEE Prevent Net

Central and Eastern European Network for the Prevention of Intolerance and Group Hatred

The CEE Prevent Net project

Background

Central and Eastern Europe has become a hotspot in the current resurgence of nationalism, illiberalism, and intolerance worldwide. In this region, strong far right and populist forces not only threaten the rights and freedoms of minorities and marginalized groups, they are also shaking the foundations of the judicial-political framework of the region's democratic systems and, subsequently, causing the democratic civil society's spaces to shrink. Despite the fact that this situation necessitates concerted action, network structures that focus on preventing group hatred and far right extremism are under-developed in Central and Eastern Europe,* and perspectives and needs from this region are still not receiving sufficient attention and space in Europe-wide prevent networks and discourses.**

* See Budapest Centre for Mass Atrocities Prevention (2017): Capabilities of the Visegrad Countries in Preventing Extremism. Budapest: Foundation for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities – Hungary.

** See Weilnböck, Harald and Oliver Kossack (2019): The EU's Islamism bias and its "added damage" in Central and Eastern Europe. URL: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/global-extremes/the-eus-islamism-bias-and-its-added-damage-in-central-and-eastern-europe.

Goals

Against this backdrop, the CEE Prevent Net partners have worked together to halt the surge of illiberalism and far right populist forces and strengthen and protect democratic values and human rights in Central and Eastern Europe. The CEE Prevent Net project is part of a larger bottom-up initiative of multiple civil society organizations from the region dedicated to building a sustainable regional grassroots network. This network exchanges knowledge, practices, and ideas and jointly advocates for democracy and human rights, and does so with experience gleaned by practitioners and active citizens who deal with these issues on a daily basis.

As part of this process, the specific objectives the CEE Prevent Net project comprise:

- building skills and capacity of practitioners from social work, youth work, and non-formal education to deal with intolerance, group hatred, and far right tendencies among children, adolescents, and young adults;
- facilitating an international exchange of good practices, common challenges, and strategies to deal with them among practitioners from the CEE region;
- creating a forum for multi-agency cooperation in the project countries and across the CEE region;
- raising support from policy-makers and public authorities that transcends political partisanship and societal rifts;
- raising awareness for perspectives in Central and Eastern Europe and approaches in European and international prevention networks.

With these objectives, the project contributes to the larger goal of strengthening democracy and human rights in the region. It combines local action and a national and European outreach based on the principle of subsidiarity.

Activities

International exchange of good practices

The CEE Prevent Net project enables youth workers and educators from Central and Eastern Europe to exchange their experience and transfer their good practices to their peers. For this purpose, the project organized an international summer school for 50 practitioners from 6 countries. This event gave the practitioners the chance to offer and receive initial trainings in various good practice approaches. After that, the individual CEE Prevent Net partners could select one of their peers' practices for which they would receive additional coaching regarding an implementation of the chosen practice via workshops with young people in their standard, local work environment, e.g. at youth clubs or schools. In this way, the project multiplies good practices from the region, improves the practitioners' capacities, and helps young people who attend the youth workshops build resilience against intolerance, discrimination, and group hatred. Furthermore, these good practices are published in this compendium in both English as well as Bulgarian, Czech, German, Hungarian, Polish, and Slovakian.

Local inter-agency cooperation

CEE Prevent Net connects capacity building and training activities with a strategy of community engagement and inter-agency cooperation that brings together practitioners, local authorities, and other community stakeholders. In all consortium countries, the partners have initiated a local inter-agency forum for exchange on the topics of preventing intolerance, discrimination, and right-wing extremism and promoting democracy and human rights. Both of these involve different stakeholders, such as youth workers and educators; policy-makers and public authorities; NGOs; or local media. Additionally, the project

offers "Prevent Seminars,"* which have a dual purpose. On the one hand, the seminars educate these stakeholders to increase their understanding of intolerance, group hatred, and right-wing extremism in the partner countries; on the other hand, the stakeholders are introduced to strategies that help develop common action plans to prevent these phenomena in their communities.

Advocacy research and initiatives

The CEE Prevent Net project conducted research to identify good advocacy and political communication practices for garnering support for prevention work from different societal and political actors at local, national and European levels. Based on the current status quo and following interviews with practitioners, policymakers, public authorities, and academics, the experts and researchers published a CEE Prevent Net working paper. The paper identified current challenges for successfully and sustainably implementing youth work and education to prevent intolerance, discrimination and right-wing extremism in Central and Eastern Europe. It also provided recommendations for dealing with these issues while simultaneously earning support for sustainable prevention work from across the political spectrum. These recommendations, including a more narratological and less confrontational communication strategy, have been implemented in targeted advocacy initiatives in the project such as inter-agency roundtables involving local stakeholders.

* The concept of the Prevent Seminars is based on the established "Hako_reJu" training format that has been developed by staff at Cultures Interactive e.V. in Germany, the CEE Prevent Net project coordinator. This training has been designed for youth workers who deal with right-wing extremist attitudes from the young people they work with. It contains training modules on how to recognize and address this phenomenon and how to develop sustainable strategies for prevention and intervention.

Anti-discrimination Education Society

Poland*

The Anti-discrimination Education Society (TEA) was founded in 2009 by practitioners of non-discriminatory education. TEA brings together several dozen specialists including anti-discrimination trainers, initiators of equality and diversity projects, and members of organizations that provide support to groups and individuals faced with discrimination, among others. TEA's mission is to develop and disseminate anti-discrimination education so that each person can create a world without discrimination and violence. TEA's activities are directed at individuals and institutions in both formal and non-formal educational settings in Poland. TEA provides solutions to teachers, educational institutions, the Polish Ministries of National Education and Science and Higher Education, education superintendents, teacher training centers, trainers of adults and youth, and institutions in the non-formal education sector.

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* TEA works nationally, but does not have an office in a centralized location.

Foundation for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities

Budapest, Hungary

The Foundation for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, including its operational body The Budapest Centre for Mass Atrocities Prevention, is an international non-governmental organization active in the fields of conflict prevention, human rights, and international and humanitarian law. It was founded in January 2011 and closely works together with international experts, researchers, international lawyers, and diplomats. It acts globally as an impartial partner for the United Nations, the European Union, federal governments, regional organizations, and other international actors. The Foundation focuses on improving international capacities and capabilities in countering extremism and perpetuation of mass atrocity crimes through awareness raising, risk assessments, studies, and trainings.

For the last few years, the Foundation has paid particular attention to radicalization trends in Europe. It has implemented projects aimed at improving young people's ability to resist threats both on- and offline.

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Center for Community Organizing

Zvolen, Slovakia

The Center for Community Organizing (CKO) is a non-governmental organization that has implemented its programs in Slovakia since 1999. CKO provides assistance to activists of civic initiatives and to communities to ensure better that they become a part of the decision making processes in local, regional, and national governments. CKO wants to accompany changes in Slovak society as it transforms into a society of active citizens in which the "voice of people" is both requested and heard. CKO is also a leading organization in Slovakia's fields of countering extremism and radicalization. It works primarily with schools, local municipalities, and grass roots activism organizations.

The organization consists of 5 main programs:

1. Community Organizing activities in several mostly vulnerable communities across the Banská Bystrica region;
2. the Not In Our Town platform, which counters and prevents violent extremism in Slovakia;
3. Schools for Democracy, which promote non-formal human rights education and support active citizenship in more than 30 schools around the Banska Bystrica region;
4. the Citizen Center OKO, which provides a safe space for active citizens in the city of Zvolen; and
5. the Professional Fellows Program, which supports community leaders by coordinating 6-week-long internships in the USA.

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Center for the Study of Democracy

Sofia, Bulgaria

Founded in late 1989, the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) is a European public policy institute dedicated to the values of democracy and market economy. CSD is a non-partisan, independent organization fostering the reform process through impact on policy and civil society. CSD's work combines research excellence with policy advocacy for piloting social innovation and institutional reforms in a number of areas in both Bulgaria and Europe. The most notable of these areas include social inclusion of vulnerable groups, migration, human rights, economic and legal reform, organized crime, anti-corruption, and radicalization. Bringing cutting-edge solutions to transition problems is CSD's way of keeping the middle ground between academia and social practice.

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Cultures Interactive e.V.

Berlin, Germany

Founded in 2005, Cultures Interactive e.V. (CI) is a Berlin-based NGO that conducts various projects and works in networks nationally and internationally. CI's goals are to promote democratic and human rights values and to prevent group hatred, discrimination, and right-wing extremism.

The methodological basis of CI's work is a non-formal education concept that combines creative practices, historical foundations, and current developments in youth cultures and (social) media with political education and social learning to address topics such as empowerment, conflict management, anti-racism, gender roles, and equality. This low-threshold approach of prevention work is designed to reach young people from every social background.

In the past few years, narrative group work has become an important addition to CI's youth culture method portfolio. Narrative group work creates a safe space for young people freely to discuss their personal experiences, to listen, and get to know one another better. This enables them to discover first-hand how a person's biography shapes their attitudes and actions, which in turn has direct consequences for themselves and others.

CI's work pursues three main objectives:

1. Piloting and implementing good prevention and intervention practices with young people in different settings. CI offers workshops and training programs for young people from different social backgrounds, including those who are often hard to reach through formal education. CI pursues this goal through a variety of programs such as one or two-day projects in schools, youth culture workshops customized for open youth work, and

extensive training programs. These programs may target mixed groups of adolescents or be designed for specific target groups.

2. Capacity building. CI offers extensive training for youth and social workers, teachers, probation officers, and other stakeholders in youth work to support professional and effective prevention. With its community-oriented approach, CI works to build local practitioners' capacities for promoting human rights and empowering young people as well as building up resilience against group hatred, right-wing extremism, and violence.

3. Sharing knowledge and stimulating progress. In order constantly to improve its concepts and realize its vision of successful human rights-based, cultural youth work on a larger scale, CI participates in (inter)national discourses and networks on democracy and human rights education, youth work, prevention, and deradicalization (e.g. RAN, OSCE, DARE, Efus, etc.).

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Partners for Democratic Change Hungary

Budapest, Hungary

The Partners Hungary Foundation's (PHF) vision is a multicultural, inclusive, and open society that lives in harmony with its environment. This society should be able to integrate different cultures' values at personal, communal, and societal levels alike. It should have structures of equal opportunity available to everyone for self-fulfillment and for a harmonious communal life. In alignment with its vision, PHF's mission is to sow a culture of cooperation, to apply and disseminate methods of alternative conflict management, and to contribute to the development of a participatory democracy.

PHF's work is thriving in the following areas:

- Strengthening community dialogue;
- defining change as an opportunity for all; and
- Strengthening inter-sectoral cooperation.

PHF intervenes strategically in the following directions:

- Roma integration through the development of local communities;
- dissemination, application, and development of alternative conflict management methods, especially mediation and restorative practices;
- development, design, and implementation of different training programs in the education sector; and
- democratization of education through the dissemination and implementation of the Step by Step program and its child-centered, cooperative, and community-based methodology.

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Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia

Bratislava, Slovakia

Founded in 1991, Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia (PDCS) is a non-governmental organization that provides professional training and facilitation, consultancy, and advisory services in the areas of conflict resolution, societal dialogue facilitation, citizen participation, and civil society development in Slovakia and abroad. PDCS is the initiator of the European Network for Non-Violence and Dialogue (ENND), a grassroots network established to counter polarizing trends in Central and Eastern Europe.

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Ratolest Brno z.s.

Brno, Czech Republic

Ratolest Brno z.s. (Ratolest) has been operating in Brno and the surrounding area since 1995. Ratolest provides social and preventive services to children and young adults in need, as well as their families. Ratolest's activities are based on prevention, and they successfully address both the causes of problems as well as their consequences. They include supporting and coordinating volunteering opportunities. Ratolest's mission is to help socially disadvantaged children, young adults, and families address the disadvantages preventing them from having an equal chance at living a good life and integrating well into society.

Ratolest Brno operates several programs and services:

- The low-threshold club for children and youth Likusák;
- the low-threshold club for children and youth Pavlač;
- the Center for Prevention and Resocialization;
- the Center for Endangered Families;
- the Volunteer Center; and
- the Ratolest Gallery, a charity art project.

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REACH Research and Education Institute

Bratislava, Slovakia

Based in Bratislava, Slovakia, REACH Research and Education Institute o.z. (REACH) is a non-governmental organization that develops deradicalization strategies while simultaneously focusing on issues of extremism and radicalization in public opinion. Founded by a group of young researchers and analysts, REACH's primary aim is to provide expertise in the discussion on current political and social events, mediation in multi-actor dialogues, and research, analyses and recommendations for both policy-makers and civil society representatives in order to increase the quality of policy decisions and the state of civil society.

REACH promotes a research-driven and evidence-based policy making process in order to strengthen the cooperation between independent research institutions, academia, civil society, and policy-makers. REACH works to implement interdisciplinary research methods to achieve positive change in civil society, intra-societal relations, and political culture.

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YMCA Dobrich

Dobrich, Bulgaria

YMCA Dobrich is an inclusive, non-governmental youth organization that works to improve the intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and physical development of children and adolescents through a variety of cultural, educational, and sports-based projects. YMCA Dobrich has a proven track record of successful citizenship education through creative methods that involve the fine arts, theater, music, and the performing arts. YMCA Dobrich organizes projects around various topics such as participatory citizenship, democracy, human rights, anti-discrimination, migration, radicalization, social inclusion, remembrance, and youth participation. The workshops are designed to appeal to children, adolescents, young adults, and youth workers. YMCA Dobrich's motto is: "We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities."

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Good practices

Schools for Democracy

CENTRUM KOMUNITNÉHO ORGANIZOVANIA

Center for Community Organizing, Slovakia

Key words

Democracy, critical thinking, active citizenship, tolerance, humanity, human rights

Goals

The School for Democracy program's goal can be condensed to following statement: Schools for Democracy lead students – and teachers – to become active citizens, to take care of the environment they live in, to volunteer, to stand up for the oppressed, to ask questions, to think critically, and to discuss issues without bias, all while learning to express opinions politely and help others.

The program* facilitates active citizenship and promotes the non-formal education of adolescents, young adults, and teachers in various topics by implementing educational workshops for and with them while simultaneously familiarizing them with the Center for Community Organizing's (CKO) methods and practices. CKO sees active citizenship as an active engagement in one's community, be that in form of environmentalism or democratic processes. It promotes volunteering as part of active citizenship. Moreover, this compendium's entry serves as a collection of all the methodological materials that have proven to be the most useful throughout the program's implementation thus far.

The program seeks to present current hot topics and addresses them in the classroom. Adolescents and young adults discuss current issues on a daily basis, yet their sources of information are diverse and can vary widely even among similar demographic groups such as their families or school classes. The program introduces them to both relevant websites and serious newspapers with advice on how to read and understand texts of this nature. Moreover, the program provides them with a relevant historical background and discusses the socio-economic context of the present. Particular attention is paid to parallels with the past.

Beyond that, the program fosters empathy in school-aged students, and it utilizes living libraries as the best tool to do so. By experiencing living libraries, students have the chance to meet with people from different religions, races, sexual orientations, and various backgrounds including refugees, homeless people, and asylum seekers. Through living libraries, the participants can address their fears or prejudice with an actual human being in their immediate vicinity. They may ask him or her questions, speak with them, or just sit and listen to their story.

* Contrary to other practices in this compendium, the Schools for Democracy program has a much wider scope and a more solidified institutional structure. For this reason, the word program will be used here instead of the term practice found in this compendium's other entries.

Target audience

The primary target group of the program are students at elementary and high schools from 10–18 years of age. Elementary school students are the social group most susceptible to radicalization. A majority of them come from standard home environments, but there is also a small number of children who are Roma, handicapped, members of the LGBTI+ community, or from other socially disadvantaged groups. Statistically speaking, there is roughly a 10% average of students per class in Slovakia at high-risk of radicalization. The program does, however, also work with teachers, local universities, NGOs, and municipal and regional authorities as secondary multipliers.

General description of the practice

Schools for Democracy is a year-long educational program aimed at countering youth radicalization. It acts preventively, working in one class per school throughout the whole school year.

Schools for Democracy was established in 2017 and is both the most intense and one of the most innovative and interdisciplinary programs of its kind in Slovakia. The program aims to prevent both youth radicalization and any other manifestations of extremism. The program's most crucial asset is its ongoing synthesis of interdisciplinary best practices from human rights education and critical thinking methodology. The program has made good use of the living libraries approach* as well as highly effective deradicalization practices developed by the German organization Cultures Interactive e.V.

* More information and a general introduction to the living library approach can be found at https://humanlibrary.org/.

At its inception, the program was introduced in only 8 schools. In the 2019/2020 school year, 32 schools from across the Banská Bystrica region are participating. The trustees of the program with a supervisory function are: The Faculty of Education at Matej Bel University (MBU) in Banská Bystrica; Alexandra Bitušíková, associate professor and vice-rector for science and research at the Faculty of Natural Sciences at MBU; Lucia Galková, university instructor at the Faculty of Education at MBU; and Dr. Harald Weilnböck, expert on extremism, and co-founder of both Cultures Interactive e.V. and the EU-funded Radicalization Awareness Network.

Successful radicalization prevention with adolescents and young adults necessarily means cross-sector collaboration that is intense, constructive, and systematic. Schools for Democracy represent a vital interconnectivity between the non-governmental (creator of the program), academic (research on the values and attitudes of the involved students), educational (medium of implementation), regional (support and cooperation) and civil sectors. The program runs throughout the entire school year and adheres to a schedule made prior to the school year's start in cooperation with the homeroom teacher or the director of the respective schools. As the lead organization, CKO considers the specifics at each school, as well as the requirements individual teachers or students may have. The program's results on the participating students' values have been positive thus far.

When both young people and the larger public do not understand or insufficiently understand the effects of growing radicalization, democracy, civil society, and human rights standards are put at risk; however, democracy can be stabilized and strengthened by reducing and eliminating radicalization and simultaneously deepening the understanding of and trust in democracy's tools and institutions. The program leads children, adolescents, and young adults alike towards an active civil participation. It is based on the scientific knowledge about preventing radicalization currently available.

The program's activities are based on participatory, non-formal, and experiential learning principles, which are regularly updated in collaboration with the participating schools, experts in the relevant topics, and in light of current events. At the same time, their functionality is evaluated through the Association Experiment. The results thus far indicate that the implemented methods and activities have been successful.

Experiences and evaluation

During the conception and implementation stages of the program's activities, measuring attitudes and values played a central role in the program's preliminary research. An association experiment was conducted by CKO in cooperation with the MBU's Faculty of Education. In addition to methodological assistance in creating a list of words for use in the association experiment, the Faculty of Education has also helped CKO evaluate the data obtained by soliciting initial and final value and attitude measurements and preparing commentary on and a detailed explanation of said data.

The data for the 2018/2019 school year show that of the 27 schools involved, all schools showed a positive shift regarding the key words on which the association experiment focused. During the 2019/2020 school year, the Schools for Democracy focused on a list of 42 words. 14 of these words indicated the terms most frequently used in the program, e.g. the topics addressed. These words were: Jew, disabled, Christian, activist, lesbian, EU, racist, NGO, gay, Roma, Muslim, democracy, refugee, and Kotleba. All of these words (except for "EU") have experienced a positive shift in the reaction time (the time interval during which students responded with their first association to the word spoken), as well as the associations that students said. Compared to the initial measurements, the decrease in reaction time in the final measurements and the students' expression of increased positive and neutral associations indicates a clear shift to more positive associations.

Transferability

The program can continue developing in two main areas. The first is the transferal of the tools in use to teachers and peers. It is essential that every school have access to a pool of experts who participate in the respective school's program. Due to the inability to find and hire good, qualified trainers, the only way to keep the program and its activities running is the multiplication effect. By familiarizing as many teachers as possible with the program's non-standard educational methods, they can implement them in various subjects like history, ethics, or civics. Moreover, peer-to-peer education has proven to be an important and successful educational tool. Addressing current societal issues through discussion and attending interactive workshops solely conducted by peers has shown that it has a major impact on students. This does not mean, however, that trainers should not attend the workshops, but rather that a combination of engagement by trainers, teachers and peers is the most promising.

The second area is a scaling of the program to a national level for cross-country implementation. An adequate pilot phase for this scale would be a minimum of two school years with Schools for Democracy in every school's curriculum. Even at a national scale, it is important that the schools and coordinating institutions consider the students' different backgrounds and demographics and that they adjust the activities to meet these students' needs. Working at this scale would however require a large number of experts involved in the project, and, of course, financial and ideological support from the state. CKO believes that starting with the kind of education Schools for Democracy promote should begin as early as kindergarten with adjusted tools, and by involving university students from programs like education, philosophy, political science, or international relations. CKO is confident that once the Schools for Democracy program is implemented nation-wide, students' aptitude with skills

such as critical thinking, reading comprehension, and an understanding of human rights will increase significantly.

Requirements for implementation

Thus far, the program's coordinating parties have generally striven to conduct activities that do not need any special equipment beyond what is generally available most classrooms, e.g. laptops/desktops, projectors, blackboards, etc. Up until the date of publication for this compendium, the trainers involved have prepared their own materials based on the program's methodology, and they have adjusted the material as needed to fit to the chosen topic or current affairs. If, however, the program is to be scaled up to a national level, it may merit consideration to have one of the coordinating parties assume responsibility for publishing standard material and distributing it to the schools with the request that they adjust it for their specific needs as necessary. Depending on the chosen activity, each workshop can take anywhere from one to three hours of preparation. Trainers with skills in non-formal education or experience in the fields of critical thinking, human rights, law, social work, or other similar fields are typically very successful. The more trainers available to conduct the program, the better, since preventing burnout and ensuring the trainers' wellbeing is crucial to the program's success. CKO recommends that each trainer focus on a small number of schools (max. 4) and stick with the same schools for an entire school year. The program has thus far shown that trainers feel most comfortable working with smaller groups of students (between 15 and 20). If this is not possible, the activities can be adjusted to serve larger groups while retaining the goal of activating a majority of the class and enabling participation for them.

Romantic Violence – Toolkit for Teachers on the Secondary Schools

People in Need Slovakia

Key words

Right-wing extremism, youth radicalization, prejudice, discrimination, identity, active citizenship

Goals

The Romantic Violence toolkit presents innovative activities for teachers and educators in non-formal education by addressing the sensitive issues of right-wing extremism and youth radicalization. The activities focus on secondary school students' attitudes towards these issues. Conducting activities from the toolkit serves as a reflective outlet for the

book *Romantic Violence: Memoirs of an American Skinhead* written by former neo-Nazi Christian Picciolini. The toolkit also offers students a safe space to talk about their identities and views on the issues addressed in Picciolini's book.

Target audience

The toolkit primarily focuses on secondary school teachers and it is designed as a collection of classroom activities. Ultimately, secondary school students aged 14–19 years profit the most from these activities. The target audience is quite broad, since the activities primarily focus on reaching students who are not yet radicalized, and it includes both students from the demographic majority and various minorities including marginalized children, adolescents, and young adults. The more diverse a group is, the more potential the activities have for an enhanced positive impact. The activities can be also adapted for non-formal education setting with participants in the same age group.

General description of the practice

As aforementioned, the toolkit draws inspiration from former neo-Nazi Christian Picciolini's book *Romantic Violence: Memoirs of an American Skinhead* and contains 10 activities available for use both inside and outside of the classroom. The activities address issues related to identity, the reasons for and consequences of right-wing extremism, prejudice, and labeling, as well as active citizenship. Each activity focuses on a specific issue, and they develop skills and foster dialogue and discourse about the issues. Identity is the first topic the activities address, followed by the issues of prejudice and polarization before lastly addressing the topic of discrimination and its manifestation through right-wing extremism.

As creator of this practice, People in Need Slovakia highly recommends conducting an initial training to provide educators with the necessary skills to address sensitive issues. Teachers who have worked with the toolkit have emphasized the opportunity using Picciolini's book presents. The practice's methodology is based on the book and reading it can multiply the activities' effect while simultaneously drawing the students' attention to Picciolini's story. There are short videos including a TED talk given by Picciolini that can be used as a starting point.

The toolkit includes excerpts from the book and can therefore be used independently of the whole book. Each activity can be conducted individually, though this should be dependent on which topic educators want to address.

The activities are listed as follows as well as the main topics they address:

1. **My identity and I** – This activity looks at how identities are created and how they influence attitudes toward others. Each participant creates their own identity pictures, which represent their identities and as such express the qualities, roles, beliefs, personality, looks, or expressions that make each person a unique individual. Everyone has different role models, and everyone feels different layers of identities are important in their life. Comparing and discussing identities facilitates a discussion about the group's diversity.

2. **Personal profile** – This activity investigates what events, people, and influences can change the decisions people make. In this activity groups of students rotate as each group reads specific chapters from the book *Romantic Violence*. It is recommended that copies of the chapters chosen by the facilitator be available, potentially for use in the *Us vs. Them* activity (see 7). After reading about the different stages of Picciolini's life, the participants can discuss what majorly influenced Picciolini's decisions.

3. **Superheroes** – This activity questions how role models shape others' attitudes and what attracts young people to extremist groups. Participants first explore role models and heroes in their own lives and the possible threat of negative role models. They then read part of *Romantic Violence* in which Picciolini yearns to be a hero whom everyone admires or fears. The ensuing discussion can encourage reflection on what role idols, role models and leaders have in people's lives and how they shape others' attitudes.

4. **The more you see, the better** – This activity examines how powerful stereotypes and prejudices are and how they can be critically approached and assessed. Participants begin by discussing pictures they have only just seen for the first time and then brainstorming what they think about them. The discussion should address the danger of using the limited information of first impressions to construct stereotypes or prejudiced views. Participants should also be made aware of what seeing information through a media filter or through other realms of influence means. Subsequently, they analyze parts from Picciolini's book to determine what influenced his stereotypes toward certain minorities and minority groups and how these served as an entry point to extremist views.

5. **Identifying hatred** – This activity explores what hate speech look like offline and online and how it can be addressed. Picciolini was very much influenced by his peers, groups he belonged to, and leaders he met. Hate speech has maintained similar mechanisms between the 1980s and 1990s and the present day, though it is now gaining online visibility. This activity explores what the roots and consequences of hate speech are and how it is manifested in both online and offline environments. It also seeks answers for effectively reacting when one witnesses hate speech.

6. **In the shoes of the excluded** – This experimental activity puts adolescents and young adults in a discriminatory or oppressive situation and subsequently has them reflect on these experiences. The activity requires that a facilitator knows the group and is able to facilitate dramatic methods. It is also good to have few energizer activities and physical icebreakers. This activity is possible with up to four real life scenarios of discriminatory action in which a maximum of four groups conduct short role-playing skits. The participants will not know in advance which role will experience discrimination, so role assignments should be carefully considered. In the reflection that follows the role-play, the discussion should start by having both participants and onlookers describe their feelings from the short scenes before continuing with an analysis on how everyday discrimination affects certain groups or individuals.

7. **Us vs. Them** – This activity addresses how to deal with an *"us vs. them"* mentality and the consequences this kind of view has. Participants begin the activity by identifying groups they belong to and identify with. It is worth emphasizing that while some people usually choose groups freely, groups that do not conform to prevailing societal norms (e.g. ethnic backgrounds, racial, sexual, or gender identity) are often relegated into groups automatically by others. The activity explores how the division between "us" and "them" is the first stage of hatred. The participants then review the events from Picciolini's life in which he built hatred between the groups he belonged to (white supremacists) and "other" groups he hated (racial minorities, LGBTQI, etc.).

8. **Extremism in Slovakia** – This activity studies threats to democracy from the extreme right in Slovakia. This is a very country specific activity, but can be modified to other contexts. It shows that even if a group is not outlawed by the judicial system, it can systematically

work against democracy by pursuing a fascist ideology. This view in Slovakia is represented by the People's Party Our Slovakia, led by Marian Kotleba who has been linked with neo-fascism. The activity analyzes some of Kotleba's speeches and actions within his party and explains why the party is a threat to democracy even though it is part of democratically elected parliament.

9. **Internal and external radicalization factors** – This activity investigates extremist attitudes and behavior and where they come from. It offers short profiles on former neo-Nazi group members from different countries. These short profiles include life events, family backgrounds, and important driving factors in the lives of former prominent extremists who found their way out of an extremist lifestyle. The participants can discuss push and pull factors of radicalization by analyzing the profiles.

10. **Civic participation** – This activity presents the opportunity to find different means or narratives for issues that often push young people towards far right parties and groups. The participants can focus on any issues they are concerned about and discuss possible solutions; explore organizations and websites to conduct research; and compare solutions of extremists to more constructive solutions by using group narrative methods.

Experiences and evaluation

In Slovakia, the toolkit has been introduced at eight regional seminars for approximately 150 teachers and educators from schools and non-formal education institutions. The feedback from teachers was very positive. They found that Picciolini's story grabs adolescents' and young adults' attention through the book's dynamic and accessible use of language. Teachers also appreciated the activities' structure and the availability of the appendixes

and step-by-step instructions. As and added value, the methodology implemented helped improve the participants' skills.

The activities follow principles of constructivist pedagogy, thereby creating a space for students to express genuine attitudes while simultaneously allowing them to shape their own findings. The toolkit utilizes participatory methods such as simulation, dramatization, group work, and methods to enhance critical thinking such as critical reading, problem solving, solution-based tasks, or discussion methods. The activities do not offer simple answers, but rather raise problematic questions that allow the workshop moderators better to work with the students participating.

Transferability

The methodology is useful for both formal and informal education practice. It is structured in such a way that it is not necessary to have read the full book in order to conduct or participate in the activities, thereby making it flexible. In formal education settings, the activities can be led by regular teachers or visiting external instructors or speakers. It is mainly suitable for school subjects such as civics or ethics. If the activities are led by a class's regular teachers, they have the advantage of knowing their students well and being able to make connections to other relevant topics usually discussed in class. Since the activities involve role playing games that can incite strong emotions, some participants may be sensitive to the content discussed, especially those who have experienced violence themselves. It is therefore recommended that the instructor know the participants in the group. If the activities are provided in school with an external lecturer, she or he should be provided basic information and demographics about the participants in advance.

If the activities are conducted with teachers during training sessions, the teachers step into the participants' shoes and participate in the activities

the way their students normally would. In the People in Need Slovakia's experience with this methodology, children, adolescents, young adults and adults have often been deeply moved.

Requirements for implementation

While the requirements depend on the specific activity, each one runs approximately one hour (with reflection). If several are run as a sequence of 3–4 activities, they can be structured to form a workshop that can last a half or full day.

The material and equipment is simple, and all the necessary appendixes are part of the toolkit. Usually the only workshop material necessary is a flipchart and markers. The ideal number of participants is around 20 – 25. Working with fewer than 10 participants is typically difficult and not productive.

It is highly recommended that educators who use the methodology receive training in advance or, at the very least, test run the activities before conducting them with their actual target groups. Issues like identity or discussing discrimination can be sensitive, so it is important that the educator works with groups they already know. Alternatively, the activities can be conducted without addressing personal matters or issues.

Youth Culture Work

Cultures Interactive e.V.,
Germany

Key words

Youth culture, non-formal education, civic education, peer learning, empowerment, participation, primary and secondary prevention, process-oriented

Goals

The Youth Culture Work practice developed by Cultures Interactive (CI) has several goals. Achieving these goals does not follow a standard procedure, since the practice is highly flexible and can be adapted to fit various settings and demographic groups. Since the practice is process-oriented and does not have to be constrained to a single predefined topic, the participants

are the variable in the practice's implementation. Achieving the practice's goals depends both on the demographics and dynamics of the group of adolescents and young adults being engaged and on the topics the participants bring to the workshop. A successful Youth Culture Work workshop ideally: creates a setting in which young people are able to talk about and express their political views and attitudes openly; works at addressing prejudice and misanthropic attitudes amount adolescents and young adults and provides alternatives; enables participants to experience the diversity of subculture forms of expression (through e.g. visualization); and encourages participation by working with empowerment.

Target audience

The Youth Culture Work practice targets adolescents and young adults from 13–21 years of age and can be conducted at schools and youth clubs across a range of workshop settings. Some possible formats include one-off workshops during a regular school day, regular weekly activities at youth clubs, or workshops spanning the course of several days during a vacation camp. The practice can be applied to heterogeneous youth groups with regard to attitudes, social background, education, and socialization. This practice is not suitable, however, for adolescents and young adults with solidified, derogatory views of group hatred or who embrace and act upon idealized right-wing tenets.

General description

CI's Youth Culture Work initiates dialogue on civics and the role politics play in society by using youth (sub)cultures and (social) media such as rap, breakdance, disc jockeying, street art, skateboarding, parkour, YouTube, comics, and blogging. These youth (sub)cultures and media provide points of reference for civic education and can be inspirational when designing activities to conduct with the target audience.

Each workshop deals with one youth culture or medium only. When preparing to participate in a workshop, the adolescents and young adults should be given the opportunity to decide which youth culture or medium they would like to address in workshop format. Youth culture workshops combine praxis opportunities with civic education methodologies and approaches – anti-discrimination, inter-cultural education, narrative work, and mediation to name just a few – and theoretical aspects like the history or technical knowledge of the youth culture or medium chosen.

Workshops are structured into three sections. The first part of the workshop focuses on relationship building and creating a space for the participants to share their interests and views on socio-political issues like racism, sexism, homo-, and transphobia, but also social, political, and cultural participation; human rights; immigration and asylum; and gender identities. In the second phase, the facilitators go more into detail about some of the topics mentioned by the participants. They also make the decision as to which topics should be addressed in greater depth. The low-threshold education setting is easily created through use of both youth cultural and media resources like history, songs, videos, or statements by artists and traditional non-formal education activities. In the third and final part of the workshop, participants can try out creative youth culture or media practices like writing a rap song, shooting a video, drawing a comic strip, or rehearsing break dance choreography. By doing so, the participants find creative ways to express their ideas while experiencing new forms of social participation and self-efficacy. This process is facilitated by the moderators, who also function as role models by representing different lifestyles in a democratic, diverse society by exhibiting how DIY concepts and peer learning can be implemented in everyday life.

The methodology employed during youth culture workshops is as varied as the workshops' content can be. CI has observed that combining theoretical elements such as civic education methodology with a specific youth culture's background or history and practical youth cultural/media activities

is a tried and true method for a successful workshop. Civic education can be easily applied to activities with different methodological backgrounds in non-formal education settings like anti-discrimination work, inter-cultural education, narrative work, and mediation practices.

Since the practice is interest-based and has a low-threshold setting, activities and approaches from civic education can easily be adapted to nearly any youth cultural framework as a means of raising and addressing socio-political issues. This, in turn, allows the participants to share and exchange their views on these topics based on their specific interests. Civic education methods are not set prior to the workshop, since they depend on the interests and issues the participants want to address. Allowing the participants to determine the workshop's structure based on their own interests, experiences, ideas, and questions facilitates a higher relatability and transferability to things present in the participants' everyday lives.

Experiences and evaluation

The youth culture approach is at the core of CI's work. It has been implemented and improved upon for more than 10 years across various projects and can be used in many settings with target groups from 5 – 120 people. The practice can be tailored to fit the specific audience, and the methods can be adjusted to reflect a specific thematic focus. In the European Fair Skills project (2015–2018)*, CI introduced its Youth Culture Work to the project partners, who each then adapted it to match their own resources and environments. All in all, the practice exhibits a wide range of possibilities, and CI's experiences with it have all been positive.

* The European Fair Skills project was funded by the European Commission's DG Home under the ISEC program. Among other things, it aimed at building practitioners' skills in preventing right-wing extremism and strengthening democracy and human rights (see europeanfairskills.eu).

Transferability

The approach of Youth Culture Work was developed more than a decade ago and has since been transferred to different regions and work environments in Germany and Europe. For reasons of quality assurance, CI has introduced a three-step transfer. First, interested facilitators undergo a 5-day train-the-trainer course that combines theoretical knowledge about group hatred, right-wing extremism, human rights, and democratic values; training in non-formal approaches of civic education; and hands-on activities of how to use youth cultures and social media as a door opener for low-threshold educational activities in schools and youth work. Then, the trainers sit in on and assist in a workshop by experienced trainers before the third and final step in which they co-facilitate their own workshops. In this way, CI has trained more than 100 facilitators and can now offer youth culture workshops to schools and youth clubs across Germany.

In addition to the transfer to trainers who specialize in youth culture work, CI has also developed a training format for youth workers, educators, and other practitioners who want to use the educational and creative potential of youth cultures in their everyday work. Called Fair Skills trainings, practitioners become familiar with key elements and activities of Youth Culture Work and the required theoretical and methodological background knowledge to implement them. They learn e.g. how to use rap songs as part of the school curriculum or a YouTube video session in a youth facility to generate exchange about important socio-political issues that move young people.

In the European Fair Skills project, Youth Culture Work was transferred to practitioners in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. These practitioners then conducted their own rap, band, or street art workshops at local youth clubs or with university students. In Hungary, part of the activities and approaches from CI's youth culture work have been successfully combined with their social circus workshops.

Requirements for implementation

2 trainers per workshop for moderation and thematic planning. One should have experience in civic education; the other should have a background in youth culture or (social) media. Both should be well-versed in process-oriented work with young people including experience planning sets of activities, employing various methods for different topics, and being able to respond to group dynamics that can occur.

The recommended maximum number of participants per workshop is 8–15.

The equipment needed for the workshop depends on the praxis part and the youth culture or medium chosen. Some of the most common topics and the specific requirements CI has conducted include skateboards and an outdoor space for practicing skateboarding workshops; pens, paper, and music equipment for rap workshops; paper and pens for drafts, spray cans, canvasses or a wall for street art workshops; and a projector, cameras, microphones, lighting, and a video editing program for YouTube workshops.

Depending on the scope of the activities planned, the duration of a workshop starts at 5 hours, but can run up to several days for a workshop series.

Narrative Group Work

Cultures Interactive e.V.,
Germany

Key words

Narrative-biographical approach, open process, dialogue, personal and emotional dimensions of group hatred, primary and secondary prevention, non-formal education in schools

Goals

The overarching goal of the practice of Narrative Group Work in schools is to strengthen democratic values and processes among young people and thus prevent all forms of intolerance, group hatred, violence, and far right ideologies. In light of the high degree of polarization in society today, the approach pursues two interconnected sets of objectives:

1. By means of sharing, listening to, and exchanging thoughts and personal experiences in a safe setting, narrative group work improves adolescents' and young adults' social skills and emotional intelligence. In particular, Narrative Group Work enhances young people's ability to express their individual views and experiences, build trust and relationships, and respectfully engage in dialogue with others, even if they come from starkly different backgrounds and hold different views. The practice also creates instances of self-efficacy, since the participants' stories and perspectives are heard and valued.

2. By talking about relevant topics from a personal point of view, narrative group work reinforces democratic and human rights values, replicates democratic processes in groups, and addresses intolerance, discrimination, and attitudes of group hatred or right-wing extremism. Participants are encouraged to reflect upon these impulses and their underlying motives and personal experiences which often results in an increase in participants' self-awareness, both with regard to misanthropic and democratic opinions.

Target audience

The core target group of Narrative Group Work in schools are adolescents in secondary schools aged 13–18. The practice is designed to be conducted in mixed groups, including adolescents from different social and demographic backgrounds. The approach can also be implemented in primary schools, universities, or in youth work settings with minor adaptations.

A secondary target group are the teachers and school principals who can not facilitate or participate in the groups themselves for confidentiality reasons. However, these actors need to be regularly informed about the methodology and the group's key topics in order to be able to support the process and tailor their lessons better to address topics that emerge in the group conversations.

General description of the practice

Narrative groups provide safe spaces at schools and enable adolescents to talk freely about whatever feels important to them, both personally and in their social lives at school. Classes of 20–30 students are divided into two groups, each of which is moderated by two external facilitators trained in narrative interviewing and group dynamics. These groups meet once a week for at least half of the school year as part of the regular curriculum. The facilitators do not impose topics, but instead endeavor to establish and maintain a safe and confidential environment. Moreover, they encourage the participants to share first-hand experiences and observations in a narrative mode of conversation. Implementation in various schools has shown that, even without a set topic, many of the personal issues the adolescents address in their groups concern current societal topics that are part of both Cultures Interactive's (CI) prevention agenda and the school syllabus. The benefit and relevance factor is much higher, though, given that the topics addressed are inspired by the participants' biographies and everyday lives.

Since the topics discussed in the two groups can not be predicted ahead of time, a third facilitator hosts a time-out area participants can walk into if they feel overwhelmed by a certain topic or group dynamic or if they want to share an issue and work through it without the whole group. The group facilitators may at any time invite or refer students who continuously hamper the open group conversation to the time-out area where the third facilitator can then explore the reasons for their behavior with them. In this case, the facilitator works to see what is needed in order for the trouble-maker or disrupting student to rejoin their regular group.

While many other educational activities prioritize information and debates based on rational argumentation, narrative groups shift the focus to talking about and listening to individual issues and subjective observations. This helps participants explore and reflect on the underlying personal experiences and biographical factors that inform their opinions and – in some cases

– induce intolerance or group hatred. Furthermore, narrative conversation is a mode of interaction that enables people with starkly different views to develop trust and a deeper understanding of each other. This sets the stage for a more authentic, in-depth discussion of topics which would typically otherwise be only a short and heated confrontation on polarizing issues.

Methodologically, Narrative Group Work builds on the established fields of narrative psychology, biography studies, and group dynamic therapy. Its use in prevention is based on the finding that a safely moderated process of sharing and exploring individual experiences and telling personal stories can lead to an in-depth reflection on where current behavior and attitudes come from, whether they need to be changed, and how this may be done. Besides strengthening social skills and self-confidence, such in-depth narrative reflection also effectively reinforces democratic and human rights values and induces reflection of one's own prejudices and attitudes.

Experiences and evaluation

Narrative Group Work has been tested and evaluated in several schools in Eastern Germany. The existing evaluation results suggest that a majority of the groups' participants have achieved all of their goals of improving adolescents' social skills (most importantly by engaging in narrative dialogue), strengthening their appreciation for democratic and human rights values, and preventing attitudes of group hatred. CI's facilitators, all of whom are experienced in non-formal education, agree that this approach is well-suited for reaching adolescents who are either marginalized or who ideate radical views. Furthermore, CI's facilitators have stated that Narrative Group Work allows them to have an honest dialogue they did not think feasible in more traditional and theoretical anti-discrimination formats.

It is important that participating schools be aware of the fact that this approach does not function as immediate conflict resolution or anti-aggression training. In the early phases, existing conflicts may even intensify

as they are openly engaged by the group; however, these conflicts will sustainably deescalate once different related perspectives and experiences are shared throughout the group process. CI has developed an additional mode of intervention designed to engage with broader conflicts throughout the school. These may surface in the groups, but can not sufficiently be tackled at the group level. The module utilizes narrative-biographical and mediation techniques similar to the main narrative group practice.

Transferability

The approach has been successfully implemented across various German regions. For this purpose, CI has mobilized a pool of local trainers with prior experience facilitating groups of adolescents and young adults in both educational and mediatory settings and subsequently trained them to conduct narrative-biographical interviews and facilitate dialogue in group settings. When implementing the approach for the first time in local schools, it was essential that these trainers have constant counseling, supervision, and exchange with experienced facilitators. The methodology of this approach is rather uncommon for most facilitators and – when they succeed in building a relation with the students – it has the potential to unveil very intense personal stories.

Narrative Group Work has also been successfully transferred to a primary school in Germany. In this context, it proved useful to cater to the higher (physical) energy levels of 8 to 10-year-olds. This was achieved by adding short physical activities and concentration exercises to the narrative dialogue, since this target group is less accustomed to entertaining longer conversations than adolescents.

Narrative Group Work in schools has also been presented to European practitioners in two meetings of the Education working group of the European Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). It was subsequently included in the RAN Collection of Practices.

Requirements for implementation

Narrative Group Work should be implemented as part of the regular curriculum for a period of at least one school semester in a 45-minute timeslot each week. While it is easily possible to extend the duration of the groups, shortening it is not recommended, particularly not below 6 weeks. The given setting requires at least three rooms, two of which need to be able to host a circle of chairs for 10–15 students comfortably. Ideally, there should be two small additional rooms or designated areas on the school's premises in order to be able to divide a group further into two subgroups for a certain period of time during the session.

The implementation of Narrative Group Work in one class of 20–30 students requires 5 facilitators (2 per group and one for the time-out area). The same team of facilitators should not work with more than two subsequent classes per day. The trainers may have different professional backgrounds, but they should have previous experience in facilitating groups of young people. They need to participate in a two-day training in the facilitation of Narrative Group Work. During implementation, the facilitators should be provided the opportunity to attend regular supervision, have the option to hold individual debriefing sessions, and participate in case-based peer consultancy as needed.

It is critical that the homeroom teachers of the classes involved be kept informed about the main topics and group dynamics on a regular basis. CI recommends doing this bi-weekly. This process must be anonymized to safeguard the participants' confidentiality. Keeping the classes' teachers informed enables them to structure their lessons in a way that reflects the group's progress while simultaneously preventing the teachers from feeling excluded or alienated by the group work.

Assertive Coping Strategies and Anger Management Activities

Ratolest Brno z.s.,
Czech Republic

Key words

Assertiveness, anger management, conflict management, self-awareness, mindfulness

Goals

This activity is mainly focused on honing self-control. It helps the participants understand their own emotions and reactions in conflict situations. It encourages them to reflect on their own coping strategies and help them understand their needs. By reflecting, participants ideally also gain a better understanding of their attitudes towards differences among people. This activity explains the dynamics of conflict and provides participants the

opportunity to learn assertive coping strategies they can implement in conflict situations. Lastly, the participants can also learn different strategies of anger release.

Target audience

The target group of this activity is rather broad. It can consist of adolescents and young adults regardless of their background, age, gender, or any other demographics. The usual target group of Ratolest Brno, the organization to pilot this practice, is children and young adults between the ages of 9–18 with a criminal record or who are at risk of committing a crime. Many of them have history of violence, are quick to lose control of their emotions, or lack assertiveness when communicating with their peers. They often come from dysfunctional families, which means their peer group is the environment with which they most closely identify. Because of this, they more readily give into peer pressure and are unable say no to their friends the way other peers from socially functioning families can.

General description of the practice

This practice is comprised of a set of activities that can either be used individually or as a whole. When conducting all of the activities, the following order is recommended:

1. Roleplaying in conflict situations

Participants are asked to role-play conflicts that could plausibly occur in their lives. Some standard examples include conflicts with parents, friends, strangers, or teachers. Moderators should be prepared to work both with these general conflict situations and with participants' individual ideas. The participants then present their usual reaction in these situations. They should then try to contemplate how they could resolve the situation in a

non-violent manner while still sticking to what they want or need to achieve in the situation (no attack or withdrawal). The other participants (acting as an audience) can then give their own suggestions of how the actors could have (re)acted alternatively. By collecting these suggestions, the moderators can create a list of suggestions on how to assert one's self – e.g. in a fair way, non-violently, without compromising – and how to deescalate the situation in order to improve or maintain the involved parties' relationship.

2. Provocation and anger management

During this practice's pilot phase, many participants often pointed out that they are often overtaken by anger and are either unwilling or unable to control their emotions, even in conflict situations they would prefer to solve assertively. The following example of a provocation simulation is one that proved useful for Ratolest Brno, but the conditions and margin of success will vary from group to group, and individual adaptations may be required.

One participant is asked to build a tower with wooden blocks. While they work, the other participants attempt to provoke them in any way possible except for physical contact. This happens in a clearly marked space on the floor. Their goal is to distract the builder from getting their job done, and provocation may only happen in this space. After each round, the entire group moves from the marked (game) space to the safe space in which standard societal norms and rules apply. This second part of the activity is just as important as the first part. Each individual can then reflect on their experience. When doing so, participants should focus on the effects the provocative comments had, how these comments affected the builder's ability to complete the task, and what the clients felt in different stages of the activity.

The main goal of the activity is to show how quickly one can lose control of a situation when provoked. By discussing various examples from the participants' own lives, the moderators should make it a point to emphasize that

nobody has to endure unnecessary stress, suppress their anger, or pretend that nothing happened. The moderators should also emphasize that understanding one's own anger is key. Anger is not a bad thing per se, but one needs to learn how to release it without hurting themselves or others.

3. Anger monitoring

Every part of this activity is accompanied by discussion. This activity starts with the participants brainstorming what makes them angry. They then share their triggers with the rest of the group. This activity necessitates a basic level of trust in the group in the same way as in the previous activity.

Participants can ask themselves: How does my anger manifest itself? The moderators should provide a list showing various ways in which this happens. Besides identifying how their anger manifests itself, participants also need to evaluate the levels of control they have over their anger when feeling in a given way and categorize them into one of three levels. They should then write down a minimum of two thoughts they have when getting angry. These thoughts should answer the following questions: What do I hear in my head when I am angry? What can I do to manage it?

Participants can first discuss their coping strategies in pairs before sharing them with the whole group. They can create together a list of coping strategies that work for them and upon which they can build.

4. Mindfulness

While piloting this practice, Ratolest Brno presented its clients a simple tool for keeping themselves mindful. This simple relaxation and concentration focuses on one's breathing and hones one's ability to stay cognizant in any situation, realize what is going on, and make a mindful decision about one's actions. It was well received when described as a technique that Special

Forces, elite fighters, and shaolin monks use prior to action. It can also be presented as a challenge: Can the participants exercise full control over themselves for 3 minutes? 5 minutes? 10 minutes? This technique usually works best when practiced over a minimum of 3 group sessions. The moderators should encourage participants to practice at home, at school, or wherever (else) they wish. Reflecting on and encouraging progress typically leads to a solidification of behavior.

Experiences and evaluation

1. Roleplaying in conflict situations

This activity depends very much on the participants' biographies. It is crucial that the moderators pay enough attention to the adjustment and preparations of the surroundings. Participants need enough time, open discussion, and genuine curiosity from the moderators in order to produce their own memories and to share their own experiences. Working in smaller groups of about 4–6 participants tends to produce the best results, since this setting enables participants to be more open and involved in the role-play. The moderators can also participate, especially in instances when an authority figure plays a key role in the story.

Emphasis should be placed on roleplaying the situation in various modes in order to experiment with different strategies. Each participant should be able to experience a strategy that differs from their usual reactions. Moderators should actively encourage participants to try out different strategies. It is paramount to make sure that each participant understands when they need a break from the role-play or if they feel like they are no longer able to cope.

2. Provocation and anger management

Here, again, it is crucial to make sure that each participant understands when they need a break or if they feel like they are no longer able to cope. In the event that participants feel uncomfortable participating in the provocations, a moderator can assume this role instead. In this event, the other moderator(s) should oversee the reflection process and engage with the participants.

Reflection after the simulation is crucial, and each participant needs to have enough time to do so. The moderators should oversee the reflection and give the participants enough space to share the experience while simultaneously reflecting on their emotions. The rule not to use physical violence is also of utmost importance. Emphasis should be placed on the difference between the provocation area and the general area and the fact that different rules apply to these two areas.

3. Anger monitoring

Each participant should have enough time and space to think about how their anger manifests itself individually. Instructors can facilitate a dialogue with individual participants about various indicators. It is useful to have a list of indicators prepared for those who can not identify their own. This can be especially useful for younger participants. Depending on the age and capabilities of the participants involved in this intense activity, the dialogue about various anger symptoms can be more or less detailed. Emphasis should be placed on explaining how anger intensifies. This is necessary for the participants to understand in order to be able to reflect on their own behavior.

Participants can enrich and inspire each other with their own coping strategies. If progress is slow, the moderators can contribute suggestions. They

should encourage the participants to choose a new strategy they would like to try. Learning to cope with one's anger cannot be done in one session; it is therefore crucial that participants who implement their strategies in real life then have the opportunity to reflect on the experience. This activity is thus more suitable for groups that meet regularly.

4. Mindfulness

In groups with younger participants, this activity works best when presented as a challenge. The reason is that this tends to get the participants more interested and motivated at the beginning of the activity. This challenge should not be presented as a means of relaxation. Participants should also all have the opportunity to abstain or leave the room at any time, particularly if they feel they can no longer stay quiet. This activity can be done repeatedly.

Transferability

This practice exhibits a high potential for transfer to youth work. While piloting the practice, Ratolest Brno was able to transfer one of the workshops to a youth club. Youth club environments are usually less structured than the pilot phase at independent organizations, but the practice was adjusted for the purpose of this activity. It ended up working very well due mainly to the topical relevance for the participants and their motivation to participate.

Ratolest Brno was also able to transfer part of this activity from its pilot phase, where participants met regularly for 2 hour-long group sessions, to a weekend outdoor training, where a large part of the weekend was dedicated to the topic of anger management. Allotting more time to these activities was very helpful, especially when role-playing the provocations and experimenting with coping strategies.

When transferring any of these activities, it should be noted that the most important part of any of them is the reflection. Reflection stems from the participants' unique experiences. Moderators should be able to invite participants to elaborate on their experience, ask leading questions, and enable them to draw on their experiences and implement their findings in their everyday lives.

Requirements for implementation

Duration

These activities are best conducted in two subsequent group sessions; however, the time frame can vary drastically depending on the age of the participants, the group dynamic, number of participants, the discussions had, and the duration of reflection. The following estimates should serve as guidelines for implementation:

- Roleplaying in conflict situations (40–60 minutes)
- Provocation and anger management (15 minutes)
- Anger monitoring (30–40 minutes)
- Mindfulness (5–10 minutes)

Preparation

- Roleplaying in conflict situations – preparation of sets of situations for participants, min. one per participant
- Provocation and anger management – dividing the space in two parts; marking the game space
- Anger monitoring – preparing fill-in forms with suggestions of anger manifestations

Equipment

- Provocation and anger management – wooden cubes or other material from which the participant has to create something
- Anger monitoring – prepared fill-in forms

Trainers

2 trainers for each activity; if the group consists of participants with poor concentration, 3–4 trainers are recommended for these activities

Number of participants

3–10 (for all activities)

Truth and Lies Online

RATOLEST BRNO

Ratolest Brno z.s.,
Czech Republic

Key words

Social networks, fake, online communication, security, social networking risks, anonymity, truths and lies

Goals

The goal of the practice is to help participants realize that content they encounter online may not always be true. The practice teaches participants about the principles of assessing this content and understanding why fake content is created. An additional partial goal is to show participants that how they present themselves online (especially on social networking sites)

and what information they share can have consequences and what these consequences are. The practice also highlights the risks that anonymity poses in online spaces and what precautions are necessary when dealing with anonymity.

Target audience

This practice's target audience is adolescents and young adults in general – especially those who use social networks. The audience best engaged in this practice are young people with low levels of media literacy or who are unaware of the risks social networks and anonymity online pose.

General description of the practice

Collectively, this practice consists of several individual activities. If necessary, however, they can also be conducted independently. The individual activities are made up of two major categories: "Identifying what is (not) true" and "Creating a fake"; their content is as follows:

1 Identifying what is (not) true

Pictures

In this activity, participants look at images that show unusual things. Some images are fake (e.g. they have been changed by a graphics editing software), whereas other are genuine. The participants must then decide whether the image is fake or real. This may be done individually or in groups, although arguing is critical for the success of the activity. This activity is accompanied by a discussion on how to differentiate fake images from real ones. A central point to address in the discussion is the different degrees of falsification that can be applied to images. Adjustments can be made in various and highly sophisticated ways, which means that recognizing what

is genuine and what is false can often be difficult, if not impossible, without the aid of technology. Imparting the necessity of this point is hugely important when analyzing or questioning established media material.

Texts

Much the same way the question of images' authenticity is addressed in the previous activity, this activity entails showing participants several texts, some of which are authentic and some of which are fake. Ideally, the texts prepared should be interesting for the participants both in content and form. The texts should also reflect an appropriate level of difficulty for the participants' age range.

Participants must then decide together which texts they think are true and which are fictional. During this part of the activity, it is important to problematize the fact that it is possible to encounter both modified (unrealistic) pictures and texts, especially on the Internet. The discussion about these topics should necessarily also address why the participants think such texts are created in the first place. One example may be, for instance, the efforts of an established media outlet with a set agenda. This may include generating more income, trying to defame or acclaim a politician, trying to promote a certain opinion or political stance, or misleading their viewers for political gain. If the participants have their own experience with modified or misleading media content – especially on the Internet and social networks – it is recommended that they be encouraged to share these with the group (provided they are comfortable doing so).

Resources for identifying fake content (optional activity)

If this topic is of particular interest to the participants, it is recommended that they be familiarized with websites that collect the most (in)famous fake reports and discuss their truthfulness. Participants can review and use them to assess and confirm or disprove the veracity of the messages they find on the Internet.

Some websites for use in the Czech Republic include:

- https://manipulatori.cz/
- http://www.hoax.cz/hoax/
- http://nebudobet.cz/?cat=hoax

2 Creating a fake

In this activity, the participants will try to create a fake of their own in order to show them how difficult or easy it is to falsify something convincingly enough that others could perceive it as true. They will also learn what purposes creating a fake can serve and what impact their fake product has on others.

Photo

In the first phase, participants will be asked to take a number of photos of themselves – in various forms. An average of four pictures is sufficient. One of the photos will capture the "true form" of the participants, e.g. an unedited photograph without any modifications. Other photos will be customized by the participants according to their own imagination so that they look as good or extraordinary as they want. Any available graphics editing program can be used. When piloting this approach, Ratolest Brno chose to use the mobile application Snapchat and its filters, since its clients knew the app well and it is user-friendly. The application allows users easily to retouch their face, adjust their eyes, nose, or mouth, and add other features to the photo like hearts, dog ears, etc. The resulting photo may be very far removed from the subject's actual appearance.

After the participants have had their photos edited and have downloaded them from the app, they can be transferred to a PC by whatever means are most convenient. The whole group then reviews and evaluates the photos – both modified and original – together. They can choose which photo or

photos they like more and which they would prefer to present on social media. Each participant then prints the photo they selected.

Facebook profile

Each participant will be given a blank sheet of paper to represent their Facebook profile. They can start by attaching their photo to it and then creating and populating the sheet of paper with their own (fictitious) content. The participants can create the content for their profiles completely to get the highest return. This can be understood both in a positive and a negative way. During the activity, the moderators can ask the participants to share their thoughts on making the profile engaging to others. They will be likely to speak about what it is like for them to create a fake profile; some may share whether they have had any previous experience doing so. This can transition into discussions about the creator's attention to detail or the credible impression the profile makes on others.

As the activity progresses, participants can like or comment on each other's profiles by way of sticky notes. This enables the participants to experience others reacting publicly to the content they have created. This phase should only be included if the participants are capable of accepting other people's opinions, particularly contradicting or negative ones. If it is clear the participants can handle the conflict, the moderator(s) can introduce a "hater" role. The hater is responsible for hating the profiles. This can manifest itself by providing negative or derogatory comments, typically directed at the person themselves. After the hater has reacted to several profiles, the group as a whole can discuss how they felt after receiving such negative comments or seeing others receive them. Participants are also welcome to share their own experiences with haters on social networking sites if they feel comfortable doing so. Emphasis can be placed on the fact that fictitious content can have consequences both for the creator and the consumer.

If the group composition and dynamic permits it and there is no risk of offending or negatively affecting anybody, there is one last step in this activity. After collecting the participants' profiles, the moderators tell the participants that because they have placed content in a public space (which a Facebook profile is), anyone with access to it can do with it as they please. The moderators can indicate that they will do something with the participants' profiles that could be unpleasant for them, e.g. hanging them in a neighboring shop's window or sending them to the participants' parents, friends, etc. This typically results in a discussion in which the participants can express how they would feel in this situation. The moderators can then reveal that they did not have any plans to abuse the collected profiles, but that it should serve as a reminder that the content users put on their real Facebook page can be misused or exploited by other users in ways the profile user can no longer influence.

3 Conclusion

To wrap up the activity, the moderators then summarize the activity or activities they conducted with the participants. They emphasize the relativity of truth in an online context and the need for critical access to media content and compliance with security policy. The Facebook activity places particular emphasis on ensuring that the participants understand how their Facebook profiles can be used by other people and how they can adjust their profile's security settings to prevent misuse or exploitation of their personal data.

Experiences and evaluation

During activity 1 – Identifying what is (not) true, the topics of stereotypes and prejudices may alternatively or additionally be addressed. During this approach's pilot phase, moderators from Ratolest experienced participants

making statements like "this picture is fake because a gypsy would never do that" as an argument during a discussion about whether pictures were fake or real. This presented an opportunity to discuss the relationship between the participants' experiences and how stereotypes are formed. Comments like this also provide an opportunity to question whether these kinds of statements are a reliable way to decide whether something is fake or real and which other sources can be used.

During activity 2 – Creating a fake, the topic of how people present themselves online was addressed. It revealed that many participants were not accustomed to taking pictures of themselves without any modifications. They felt uncomfortable looking at unmodified pictures of themselves and consequently didn't want to use them for any kind of presentation; they consistently chose photos with filters every time. A discussion about the feelings the participants have about their appearance and how they see themselves ensued. This also enabled the moderators to confront

the participants with the challenge that many filters – often the ones the participants liked the most – could not be identified without first having seen the original. In the practice's pilot sessions, this led to a discussion about norms of presentation and appearance in the participants' (online) surroundings.

Transferability

This practice has the potential for widespread transferability. Activity 1 in particular can be adapted according to the moderators' needs. The content of the pictures or the text used for identifying fabrication or authenticity can be chosen according to the demographics of the participants or the topics the moderators would like to address. It is recommended that the content be focused on specific phenomena. The practice can be also transferred to younger participants (younger than 11), but this necessarily implies pre-requisites like establishing that the participants have shared experiences with social media, that they understand the basics of how these platforms function, or that this age group uses social media at all.

Requirements for implementation

Group discussions are absolutely necessary, both during and following all of the activities presented above. These should focus primarily on how participants experience and understand the situations they encounter. It is recommended that, where possible, the participants' experiences be directly incorporated into the activity and used as a way of determining the way the activities progress.

It is paramount that participants participate by bringing their own ideas and expectations to the individual activities.

Duration

Activity 1 – Identifying what is (not) true: 30–60 minutes depending on the number of participants and their interest in the topic.

Activity 2 – Creating a fake: Approximately 120 minutes. 30 minutes for the photo shoot; 20–30 minutes for editing, printing, and photo evaluation; 60 minutes for the Facebook profiles and discussion; 10 minutes conclusion and evaluation.

Preparation

Research for pictures and texts that are appealing to the participants. Identifying which ones are real/fake. The difficulty of the texts and photos can be tailored to fit the participants. Experience with and an understanding of photo modification programs or applications.

Equipment

- Ready-to-use images and texts (fake and real);
- blank sheets of paper;
- pens and colored pencils;
- a PC/laptop and a printer;
- a smartphone or camera;
- a photo editing program/app; and
- min. two trainers familiar with or trained in running the activity.

Number of participants

2–6 (ages 11–18)

In which contexts has it been applied/tested?

Ratolest Brno does these activities regularly with their youth club clients (aged 11–18 years). The practice is implemented whenever the situation calls for it. The youth club clients often talk about social media in different contexts and the truths and lies they encounter in online spaces.

Additional information

At the end of Activity 2, it is important to reiterate the reasons for doing the activity in the first place. Participants should understand how to administer with their profiles, so making sure they understood the activity is crucial. It is also recommended that Activity 2 contain several breaks (e.g. when downloading photos from the Internet).

To ensure compliance with data protection regulation, signed approval from the participants will be necessary to keep the photos made during Activity 2. Otherwise, they will need to be deleted when the activity is finished.

Journalistic Skills

YMCA Dobrich,
Bulgaria

Key words

Media literacy, fake news, digital democracy, journalistic skills for prevention of discrimination and hate-speech online and offline

Goals

The goal of the Journalistic Skills practice is to raise awareness among adolescents, young adults, and youth workers about the role of media and the narratives referring to topics such as hate-speech, nationalism, discrimination, racism, homophobia, and other related topics. The Journalistic Skills practice aims at empowering adolescents, young adults, and

youth workers by teaching them journalistic skills. These skills help both identify fake news and increase media literacy and media knowledge. The purpose of teaching these skills is to develop texts and PR material and to disseminate positive news for tolerance-building. By acquiring media and narrative skills and learning about discrimination and hate-speech both on- and offline, adolescents and young adults gain critical thinking skills and broaden their knowledge and awareness of media practices in other countries and the role the media play in relation to nationalism.

By discussing and "producing" fake news online with the help of online tools and games, the journalistic skills approach raises awareness about the threats fake news pose. The approach also teaches how to distinguish fake from real news. The approach raises awareness and increases youth participation on topics such as tolerance, inclusion – including participatory media tools – youth participation, and anti-discrimination. Above all, the basic goal of the journalistic skills practice is not only to equip young people with skills they can refer to throughout their entire lives, but also to sensitize them to what acts of violence, hate-speech, or different types of discrimination on- and offline look like and how to address them.

Target audience

The Journalistic Skills practice is good for adolescents and young adults. Prior journalistic experience is a benefit, but not required, since the practice works well with participants both with or without journalism experience. The practice is recommended for participants aged 12–23 years. It is also relevant for youth workers.

Depending on the audience's level of interest and background, different approaches can be developed and implemented, e.g. Journalistic Skills for beginners, intermediate or advanced target groups. Some of the Journalistic Skills exercises can be adapted and applied to other prevention

programs which are not specifically focused on media literacy, but rather address topics such as youth participation, democracy, social media, digitalization, hate-speech, human rights, or discrimination.

General description of the practice

The Journalistic Skills practice includes a series of workshops and exercises on types of media, communication skills, and basic and in-depth knowledge of journalism. The exercises include studying articles, practicing written, oral, argumentation skills (pro/contra), as well as competitive and interactive group approaches to learning. Participants learn about interviewing and reporting and have the opportunity to interview each other. In the framework of the CEE Prevent Net project, the topics of hate-speech, discrimination and nationalism serve as highlights in learning about the role of media in order to build resilience – e.g. private/public or left/right media, etc. The experience, examples, and knowledge from national settings (especially when the learning process is conducted in an international setting) serve as an asset to the workshop and lead to an exchange between participants from different countries. The in-depth approach includes learning debating skills. The participants have the opportunity to experience one kind of structured debate. This enables them to think critically and learn what it means to debate hot topics or how to defend an opinion they might not necessarily share. The workshop produces immediate and tangible results – e.g. interviews, visual and written materials that can be further disseminated.

The participants can also see how fake news are "produced." They can try an online game on fake news and learn in a playful atmosphere. In order to promote competition and increase participants' motivation, the group can be divided in half and the facilitator can compare the results, "likes" and final "revenue" of both teams. The trial can show which team has produced "better" fake news and why. The game usually precedes reflection on how

fake news can go viral and why. The participants learn how to differentiate between real and fake news and misinformation and disinformation. After playing the online game, the participants can be exposed to examples of real and fake news from the last ten years. This can transition into a debate on which stories are real and which are not.

By experimenting with journalism, adolescents and young adults often better understand what role the media plays and how much it can affect society's mindset, emotions, behavior, and opinions. The approach also provides a space for self-learning. The participants can learn what communication style they have, whether they are extroverts or introverts, and what journalistic approach or job might fit them the most in case they would like to have a career in this field. The methodology is an interactive approach to the role of media and links to the topics hate-speech, nationalism, and discrimination. It is based on work with media and media analysis, developing short texts, semantic analysis, conducting interviews, acquiring basic reporting skills, debating, and writing. The in-depth approach includes insights into investigative journalism, storytelling, and the study of print media, broadcasting, and online journalism. This often leads the participants to feel more comfortable when writing, conducting interviews, and speaking publically. There are also exercises that focus on communication skills, how visual materials and narratives can affect the reader's emotions, and how to address different audiences effectively.

The general aim is to increase young people's resilience toward different forms of intolerance (racism, sexism, homo- and transphobia, xenophobia, etc.), group hatred, and violence resulting from intolerance including violent extremism. Adolescents and young adults can easily put themselves into reporters' shoes, and by acquiring basic journalistic skills, this good practice can lead to real changes in behavior as well as youth empowerment. The practice equips the participants with concrete tools for youth participation and for hate-speech prevention. It can focus on general prevention or more specifically on targeted, at-risk adolescents or young adults.

The approach involves both work online and offline. The methodology is a series of workshops and interactive exercises that require both working alone and in a team. The approach generally addresses group-work with interactive methods. The participants do not need preliminary preparation, but may need to have interest in and basic knowledge of media and national settings. They should also be able to give examples from their own countries or communities.

Experiences and evaluation

Generally, adolescents and young adults respond well to the section on fake news initially. Moreover, the audience can usually relate to most of the exercises. Many participants at workshops run by YMCA Dobrich have reported that the skills they acquired are vital for their lives, since anyone can be considered a reporter on at least two or three forms of (social) media on average. A vast majority of social media users post pictures and

information about events and comment on various posts; at the same time, many users actively seek to grow their subscribers and reader/viewer community. Public media consumption often leads people to report on trending topics and current events. The evaluation results show that young people acknowledge that the skills they acquired are paramount for their everyday lives. Members of the audience who have experienced discrimination admit that they feel more confident, empowered and much more resilient to intolerance and violence against at-risk or marginalized adolescents and young adults.

Transferability

This practice can act as a universal tool to raise awareness about media literacy and journalism. When used to address a concrete topic or within prevention programs for e.g. discrimination, racism, homophobia, or hate-speech, it can serve as an effective tool for detecting discrimination early. It can also serve as an in-depth learning method to explore specific topics, to raise awareness, or to empower young people. The Journalistic Skills tool not only enriches learners, but also empowers them with concrete working tools for successful PR and advocacy for a certain cause.

The practice is very useful when introducing young adults to the topics of democracy and youth empowerment. It is also suitable for work with children, adolescents, and youth workers in both rural and urban areas. It is easily transferable, versatile, and can be implemented without technological support. Parts of the approach – especially the ones focusing on reporting, writing newsletters, visualization of events, and interviewing – can also be implemented separately in youth exchanges and training sessions. The practice empowers at-risk youth to speak out about hot topics or personal problems. It also provides recommendations on which communication channels, platforms, and messages to use in order to share their needs and opinion.

The good practice should consider the learner's talents and interests in order to benefit the participants and use their time efficiently. Some skills to consider are writing, editing, photography, digital fluency, communication skills, social media fluency, or previous journalistic experience. The latter is crucial when evaluating both the group's and the individual participants' level of journalistic competence. If the group contains an influencer on social media, they can be asked to contribute their specific experiences and skills.

It is crucial that the participants' individual circumstances be considered when working on fake news. The examples chosen to illustrate this should be ones the participants can relate to. If a group contains learners with vastly different journalism experience, the group can be split into an intermediate and a beginners group. If the participants are more interested in social media, the exercises can be tailored to focus more on online media. If the group predominantly shows interest in a specific topic like sports, some additional in-depth research may be necessary.

Requirements for implementation

- Writing materials – paper, flipcharts, sticky notes, pens, markers, notebooks, and badges.
- Each participant may need to have a telephone with a camera and recorder options (e.g. for interviewing each other).
- Magazines and newspapers in English (or whatever language is relevant for the participants).
- The online game on fake news "Fake it to make it"* requires an Internet connection. Two computers allows the group to be split into competing teams.
- Internet access.

* http://www.fakeittomakeitgame.com/

- One or two trainers with a journalism background.
- Group size should preferably not exceed 16 people, although the exercises are possible also with larger groups.
- Power point presentations may ease the work and explanation of exercises.

Tools and activities

Having participants create a press badge serves as an introduction to various types of media.

One way to sensitize the participants to different types of print media is to provide them with different newspapers and magazines and ask them to cluster them in categories. They should then discuss the differences between e.g. tabloids and broadsheet newspapers. Alternatively, the participants can cluster the media according to the main sphere of interest/ topic, readers profiles, etc. This exercise introduces the participants to the basics of writing skills.

Storytelling: This exercise begins by outlining basic storytelling guidelines and the use of interrogatives. Each participant should then be asked to produce a catchy title for a personal experience relating to the seminar's topic, e.g. discrimination at school. Giving guidelines as to what the story should include is highly recommended. The participants should then conduct face-to-face interviews in a Living Library method.* This exercise gives the participants the opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of a reporter and of a person being interviewed. A follow-up discussion is typically recommendable.

The online fake news production game "Fake It to Make It": This game demonstrates how fake news functions online and how and why it goes

* https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/living-library

viral on social media. The online game can be played either individually or in a group. By learning how fake news originate, the game can serve as a tool for explaining how to identify fake news and what basic guidelines enable people to double-check a news story.

After being presented a collection of real and fake stories, the participants can be asked to judge which stories are real and which are fake. They should present arguments to support their claims. This exercise is best followed by a reflective discussion on the arguments made.

Reviewing examples for investigative journalism and conducting a discussion on the skills required for a successful investigation is an easy way to engage the participants on this topic.

By asking the participants to create short written stories within a predetermined communication channel and with a specific audience, the participants can produce something tangible for peer review in the larger group. The text can then be edited or analyzed. The exercise enables participants to engage in both individual and group work and receive feedback.

A useful tool for collecting standardized information about the participants are personality tests. These allow for self-evaluation and can help define what type of personality each learner is, e.g. extrovert or introvert. These tests typically also indicate what communication style an individual has.

Cyberscout Training Programme

Applied Research and Communications Fund, Bulgaria

Key words

Online risks and cyberbullying prevention, responsible online behavior, peer-education, safe Internet

Goals

The Cyberscout Training Program's mission is to create a community of cyberscout children* who demonstrate self-aware, responsible, and safe

* The certified cyberscout is a trained student, who: 1) Is an example for responsible and safe online behavior for their peer group; 2) Gives advice to their peers regarding online-related problems; 3) Organizes and conducts public events regarding online safety targeted at their peers.

online behavior and popularize it among their peer groups. The aims of the practice are to help children recognize the risks on the Internet, understand and adopt coping strategies when confronted with cyberbullying, be aware of the available resources for assistance and reporting, advise their peers how to act in the event of an online incident, know where to find additional information and material about safe use of the Internet, impart their knowledge to peers in an informal, peer setting, and organize activities among their peers on topics related to online safety and coping skills. The practice focuses on prevention strategies, awareness raising, and defining and adopting safe and responsible online behavior. This both enhances children's resilience to online expressions of group hatred and enables them to identify hate speech and know how to report it.

Target audience

The target audience is students aged 11–12 years in Bulgarian schools (5th graders). The practice targets all children in this age group, but the selection criteria prioritizes schools that have students from marginalized social groups. The practice has been implemented annually in Bulgaria since 2015. By the end of 2019, more than 1,800 students had participated in the program's two-day training. An additional 3,500 children (aged 11–12 years) have participated in peer training activities conducted by certified cyberscouts.

General description of the practice

As aforementioned, the Cyberscout Training Program's mission is to create a community of cyberscout children and young people across Bulgaria that demonstrates self-aware, responsible, and safe online behavior and popularize it among their peer groups. A certified cyberscout is a trained

student who sets an example for safe and responsible online behavior within their peer group and is capable of giving advice and recommendations to their peers on online-related issues. Cyberscouts organize and implement events for online safety, both for a general public audience and with a tailored approach to their own peer group.

The program's methodology is built upon the principles of autonomy and experiential learning. The program takes place over two consecutive days and encompasses eight hours of instruction and training with the participants each day.

On the first day of the training, through a supportive environment and interactive methods, the participants engage in a series of challenges related to the main online risks and to the ways for combating them. After each challenge, the participants reflect on their experiences and apply what they have learned in the next challenge.

The cyberscouts-in-training are taught the following:

- How to verify newly met online friends and whether or not they are fake.
- Typical indications to identify if the new "friend" could be a pedophile.
- Where and how to report any concerns.
- How to react to extortion or cyberbullying.

On the second day of the training, the participants use their newly acquired skills and knowledge to enter role of cyberscouts by giving advice to their peers and organizing public events in simulated, controlled scenarios. The methodology also develops the participants' teamwork and critical thinking skills. The cyberscouts-in-training are prepared, via simulations and discussions, for three key roles:

- Being a model for safer Internet use;
- helping peers as an advisor; and
- approaching peers and transferring knowledge.

Those who successfully complete the program receive cyberscout certification. In addition to this certification, program graduates receive the opportunity to participate in a national competition with the other cyberscouts across the country for organizing and conducting a public event about the main online risks and the ways for combating them, targeted at their peers. The students divide into cyberscout squads to implement their projects, and the squads compete against each other. A special jury selects the three best projects and awards the participating cyberscouts during *The Safer Internet Day* event which takes place in Sofia, Bulgaria in February the following year. In addition to the competition, the cyberscout squads are invited to participate in monthly gamified missions, which further hone their skills as cyberscouts.

Communication with all of the teams who have successfully completed the training is done via closed Facebook groups. These groups serve as forums for disseminating information about new risks, various initiatives, events, and regularly assigned missions. Students can access these closed groups via their parent's or teacher's accounts.

Experiences and evaluation

By the end of 2018, more than 1,800 children from approximately 65 Bulgarian cities and towns had participated in the program, and 3,500 other children were involved in cyberscout activities and initiatives. This program has been positively evaluated by schools around the country and the number of requests has grown consistently over the past year.

The training program was ranked 9th in the European Crime Prevention Award competition conducted in December 2017. It was selected to represent Bulgaria in the competition of the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) in the field of online safety. It was presented at the Best Practice

Conference organized by the Estonian Presidency of the EU Council in Tallinn. The EUCPN Secretariat and evaluation committee recognized the initiative as a training program that raises the efficiency of prevention and helps the work of the Bulgarian Hotline Helpline and Cybercrime police unit aimed at preventing and exposing sexual exploitation of children online.

Transferability

The practice has shown excellent transferability among smaller and larger towns and cities within Bulgaria. In 2015, cyberscout trainings were conducted in Smolyan, Vidin, Kula, Belogradchik, Bregovo, Shumen, Pleven, Milkovitsa, Cherven Bryag, Targovishte, Popovo, Antonovo, Omurtag, and Golyamo Gradishte. In 2016, the trainings took place in Bozhurishte, Elena, Aheloi, Shabla, Panagyurishte, and Stara Zagora. The program successfully continued in 2017 in Pazardjik, Sofia, Oryahovo, Svishtov, Dalgopol, Rakovski, Radomir, Plovdiv, Elena, Belozem, and Kiustendil. In 2018, children from Sofia, Plovdiv, Karlovo, Kalofer, Koprivshtitsa, Asenovgrad, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Kubrat, Yambol, Dobrich, Gotse Delchev, Breznitsa, Ruse, Shumen, Targovishte, and Silistra were certified. The fifth season of the Cyberscout Training Program was launched at the beginning of 2019. By the end of March, 300 students from Axakovo, Sofia, Popovitsa, Plovdiv, Elin Pelin, Vratsa, Montana, Yakoruda, Septemvri and Staro Oryahovo had joined the cyberscouts' network.

The program has the potential for transferability on an international level provided local particularities can be identified and relevant changes to the implementation process instituted. There is also possibility to implement the program in a youth work context, and among children of adjacent age groups (e.g. 9–11 and 12–15). Lastly, the practice was presented at the International Summer School in June 2019 in Ružomberok, Slovakia, organized within the framework of the CEE Prevent NET project.

Requirements for implementation

The cyberscout program's target audience is primarily Bulgarian school students aged 11–12 years. The trainings are conducted over the span of 2 days – 8 hours per day for a total of 16 hours for the whole training. For practical reasons, the number of participants per training sessions is capped at 30. Three trainers lead the activities. The materials used for the activities within the program are not publicly available, but include the following:

- A presentation introducing the Safer Internet Centre and the Cyberscout Training Program in general;
- a presentation containing a quiz about online risks;
- a printed text with examples of cyberbullying for work in groups;*
- handouts containing printed screenshots of Facebook security settings;
- slides of fake news and reliable media information on the "Blue whale"** challenge;
- videos and pictures showing examples of cyberscout activities; and
- slides containing information about the cyberscouts' online groups, cyberscouts and the cyberscout competition.

* Usually, the groups include 4–5 children, but some activities require the participation of the entire group (>10 children)

** In 2017, reports started to emerge about a Blue-Whale suicide game (BWC) which had apparently originated in Russia. Widely reported in the press, the story tells of a game in which young people are given a series of challenges over 50 consecutive days which eventually culminates in suicide. More information on the Blue Whale challenge can be found at https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/bg/web/portal/home/-/asset_publisher/UkbOS3dmMlyU/content/id/1746696;jsessionid=EF7EA6CB608A40FA0BC44F85504C2B2A.

Mediation and Restorative Practices in Schools

Partners Hungary Foundation, Hungary

Key words

Social-emotional learning, community building, alternative conflict resolution, violence in schools, dialogue, facilitated discussion

Goals

Mediation is an alternative method of conflict resolution in which two parties forgo or renounce conflict instead to cooperate, all with the help of a neutral third party – a mediator – who facilitates the communication between them. Throughout the process, the participants are equals, and so the solution that emerges from mediation serves as an authentic one

for all parties involved. When seen this way, conflict is an opportunity for change for the better, renewal, or a redress of balance.

Similar to mediation, restorative practices in schools return the conflict to the parties involved and restore the balance upset by conflict. The goal of the restorative model is to create a supportive community and reinforce relationships, thereby creating a space and an opportunity for the community to warn a member before he or she causes an incident due to a bad decision made. In the event of an incident, provided the safe space and openness are present, the focus can be shifted to a solution-oriented approach or a more positive way for damage control. When working with restorative practices, school communities undergo a learning process, and the communal mindsets typically shift from one of discipline to a solution-driven, inclusive one.

Both practices provide the opportunity and platform for a constructive dialogue, develop empathy, and can induce a change in perspective. By undergoing these processes, members of school communities can begin to find common ground, build relationships, and strengthen communal bonds, which in turn prevents or reduces prejudice and hatred.

Target audience

The primary target audience of the mediation and restorative practices is the community at primary and secondary schools, i.e. both students and teachers. Participating students range from 12–18 years of age. The practice includes all demographic groups of a school's population, as these practices support diversity by cross-sensitizing different groups to one another (e.g.: non-Roma students become more understanding of Roma students and vice versa).

General description

Mediation works by conducting interactive, praxis-oriented training sessions with teachers and students, thereby enabling them to become mediators for issues that arise in their own communities. Once they have been trained, they also receive mentoring from the trainers to help them address actual cases. Co-mediation can alternatively be conducted, but this requires experienced mediators.

Student mediators' roles are: using mediation tools (such as open questions, summarizing etc.) to detect conflicts; alerting teachers that there is a conflict that requires their support; and co-facilitating mediation sessions with a teacher in the event of a student-teacher conflict. It is recommended that a mediation session be conducted when there is an underlying conflict of interests or an emotional issue, yet both parties clearly show a willingness to resolve said conflict.

Teachers and students are trained separately. The training for teachers has three modules; the first two run for three days each, and the final module can be conducted in half a day. The peer mediation training for students is held in two three-day sessions. Having conducted this training many times, Partners Hungary Foundation (PHF) recommends training approximately 15–20 teachers and 15–20 students at once. It is important that more than one person from any given class is trained. In addition to the trainings, a working group is set up at each school and meets regularly (about two hours every other week) to discuss the following:

- How to familiarize school populations with mediation;
- how to find relevant cases;
- who does what if there is a case; and
- how best to share case-related experiences.

When organizing restorative practices, teachers receive training to become facilitators of restorative circles.* They can then be integrated into daily life at the school. In order to be successful at instituting restorative circles, the teachers receive mentoring. Some communication strategies learned and applied in restorative circles are affective statements and questions, active listening, and looking for areas of consensus. During the training on restorative practices, the participating teachers first become acquainted with the principles of the approach and then with solution-oriented restorative practices. These solutions can range from preventing conflict to the resolution of serious transgressions of norms.

There are three types of restorative circles that can be applied: proactive circles, reactive circles, and restorative conferences. The method has proven successful if 80% of the restorative circles held are proactive. The facilitation of proactive circles is very easy to learn, and it is not necessary for all the teachers to have learned how to facilitate restorative circles from certified trainers. The methodology can be shared among colleagues and can thus spread quickly within an institution. Trainers can co-facilitate the circles if necessary. While piloting this practice, PHF trainers were trained by the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), which trains restorative facilitators internationally.

Experiences and evaluation

From 2015 to 2018, PHF led a strategic partnership funded by Erasmus+ with Maltese and Bulgarian partners. The partnership developed and implemented a model program to prevent and tackle aggression and bullying at schools. The model program included both restorative practices and

* A circle is a versatile restorative practice that can be used proactively, to develop relationships and build community or reactively, to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts and problems. Circles give people an opportunity to speak and listen to one another in an atmosphere of safety, decorum and equality. Source: https://www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/5-2-circles.

mediation. In Hungary, it was implemented at three secondary schools in the city of Szolnok. All of the cases at these school that were conducted with restorative practices or mediation participants experienced improvement. In the one case addressed with a restorative conference, the school was able to avoid engaging the police, and no one was expelled from the school. All of the teachers involved reported that their communicative skills improved and they were more empathetic.

PHF has found that mediation can also help in cases of prejudice or ostracism. In one instance in which PHF mediated at a school, students ostracized a Roma girl by saying that she smelled. This girl in turn showed disruptive behavior during class. During the mediation process, it was revealed that the girl's father smoked in the room in which she studied in the evenings. The case was resolved, and the girl and the rest of the class became closer after having gained a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives.

Transferability

PHF has carried out numerous programs involving the training of mediators in the civic, judicial, and business sectors. PHF has also run projects aimed at facilitating the incorporation of mediation practices into institutional cultures. With support from the National Council of Crime Prevention, PHF conducted community mediation programs in 2010, 2011, and 2012 to train young people and the professionals working with them in alternative conflict resolution methods to help prevent juvenile delinquency. In 2011, PHF trained 20 professionals from the social and civil sectors in Szolnok in mediation. The local self-government was highly supportive of this initiative, and they subsequently became members of PHF's network of mediating agencies. They have officially provided mediation services ever since. As aforementioned, PHF implemented mediation and restorative practices in secondary schools as part of an Erasmus+ KA2 project from 2015 to 2018.

When implementing mediation and restorative practices in schools, one of the main challenges that PHF has encountered is finding time for teachers to dedicate to mediation and restorative activities. It has also proven difficult to challenge their mindset from implementing solely coercive measures to supportive or restorative ones. On the other hand, students have had difficulty opening up to their teachers, as many have not been sure whether to trust their teachers in these situations. Neither parties were familiar with conducting structured dialogues, and so understanding why these dialogues were necessary has proven difficult. Generally, it is challenging to facilitate willingness in participants prior to their experiencing the positive impact of mediation or restorative activities.

Requirements for implementation

Gaining the school administration's support for the implementation of mediation or restorative practices in their institution is crucial. This is necessary since ensuring enough time is set aside for the activities, that there is a room the participants can use for the activities, and that the teachers' work recognized are prerequisites for the practice's success. The school administration's support also helps facilitate positive reception from teachers and ensures that the school's student body is informed about what is happening. With institutional support, mediation and restorative practices can be included in the school's pedagogical curriculum, thereby fostering sustainable and systematic use of the methods.

Parental permission has to be obtained.

The sessions need one certified mediation or restorative trainer if there are less than 15 participants, and two if there are more. Mentoring after the training is highly recommended, as participants typically have a high number of questions at the outset of the practice's implementation.

Tools and Activities

Types of restorative circles

Proactive circles

Proactive circles focus on sharing ideas or feelings with the community and facilitate community building while simultaneously preventing potential conflicts or problems. They can be integrated easily into students' everyday lives. They can be used to touch base with students at the beginning or at the end of the day, to create common norms, discuss common issues, etc. Duration: 15–20 minutes, can be a part of the class teacher's lessons.

Reactive circles

Reactive circles can be utilized when there has been an incident, but it is unclear who the perpetrator is. It can be run with the participation of teachers, students, or parents. Duration: One or two 45-minute sessions.

Restorative conferences

Restorative conferences are best applied when it is clear both who the perpetrator is and that they are willing to engage in the process. This is the most rarely conducted and most formal type of circle. During the circle, the facilitator asks questions about what happened and each participant has a chance to express their feelings and thoughts. It can end with a formal agreement of making amends.

Duration:

- 1-hour preparatory interview with each participant. This includes everyone affected by the incident (including parents) and serves the purpose of formulating clear expectations and goals for the circle.
- Approximately 3 hours for the conference itself.

A mediation session

A mediation session in schools lasts around 90 minutes. A maximum of two sessions are held per case. If by the end of the process the parties are able to reach an agreement, they may also agree on how and what to communicate about it to the rest of their class. In case there is a conflict between a student and the rest of the class, the class is represented by one student in the mediation session in order to avoid an imbalance of power.

Philosophy for Challenging Extremism (P4CE) Toolkit / Community of Enquiry

The P4CE Consortium*

Key words

Philosophy, dialogue, prevention, democratic approach, method, toolkit

* This practice and its methodology were developed as part of the project P4CE: Philosophy for Challenging Extremism, funded by the European Commission (2017-1-UK01-KA201-036831) for the consortium consisting of the following organizations and institutions: Liverpool World Centre from UK, Antropolis from Hungary, Institute of Global Responsibility from Poland, Miklos Radnoti school in Hungary, Klonowic school in Poland, and the Education Department in Sweden's Nykoping Municipality.
Thanks to shared learning among teacher trainers – a group of teachers both at educational institutions of all levels and with NGO affiliations that unites formal and informal education – The Anti-discrimination Education Association (TEA) took part in final phase of the project and co-supervised the outreach to a broad education audience by conducting two online seminars summarizing the practice and presenting case studies from teachers who participated in the project. As a part of the practice's sustainability, TEA promotes the Community of Enquiry (CoE) method in the project InterCap in collaboration with Liverpool World Centre and other partners. More information about the project and for materials is available at https://developtogether.eu/en/.

Goals

The Philosophy for Challenging Extremism (P4CE) project's main goal is preventative. The P4CE approach discussed controversial issues including extremism and radicalization by using Communities of Enquiry (CoE) methodologies, with partners in Hungary, Poland and Sweden. To discuss controversies and radical opinions, teachers began by assuming a facilitator role to introduce groups of students to the CoE method. The CoE method is based on philosophical dialogue and goes beyond specific cases or situations by discussing values and abstract ideas. These discussions enable participants to expand their horizons, experience new perspectives, and learn ways to respond to arguments.

Communities of Enquiry give a voice to children and demographic groups that otherwise do not have a means of being heard. Having children lead discussions and control their outcomes has inspired children from all different ages, social backgrounds, and geographic locations to believe that their opinion matters. When creating a space for a dialogue of any topic, it is important that all participants feel equally included and valued in the process. The methodology should always be inviting and engaging, but above all safe.

Participants typically follow a pattern of reflection and self-discovery in the sessions, and each session helps the participants learn to reflect on their behavior. The learners' goal is to see if they can identify whether their own ideas or perceptions could be seen as extremist. Simultaneously, learners develop communication, empathy, and reasoning skills, all of which can be used to counter controversial or extreme behavior.

Target audience

The CoE methodology is directed at young people between 7–14 years of age. It is implemented in a formal educational (school) environment.

General description of the practice

The CoE method provides a framework to create safe spaces that also allow participants to disagree. It is revolves around a group asking questions and subsequently looking for answers through analysis, in-depth investigation, and reflection on their opinions and views. The group shares collective ownership for the reflection process, and decisions are made by voting. This ownership extends to philosophical exploration of abstract ideas, topics, or values by using group personal experiences to build on other answers. The goal of the enquiry is not to find a single "correct" answer, but more to explore a given topic. At the end of the discussion, more questions typically arise and stay with the participants as food for thoughts.

The story of the method is rooted in ancient philosophy and dialogues by Socrates in Greece. The method Philosophy for Children was originally developed by Matthew Lipman at Montclair State University, USA in 1974, which in turn was inspired by Dewey's developments on Pierce's thoughts on Communities of Inquiry. According to SAPERE UK, a UK-based foundation that promotes and certifies the Philosophy for Children method, there are 10 typical stages of enquiry.

They are:

1. Preparation
2. Presentation
3. Thinking time
4. Conversation
5. Formulation
6. Airing
7. Selection
8. First Words
9. Building
10. Last Words

Having a non-confrontational approach as a teacher and facilitator is often the most efficient way to deal with controversial issues. Participants and students are thus encouraged to approach their problems in the context of a discussion, not a confrontation. Confrontation has proven to be counterproductive and harmful when difficult or controversial issues are being discussed.

By being non-confrontational, facilitators and teacher typically have an easier time opening a discussion for individual perspectives or disagreements on controversial issues while maintaining the safe space in which the participants can express their views. Being non-confrontational not only allows students to share different views, but also to discuss, analyze, or even challenge potentially controversial questions.*

Experiences and evaluation

CEE Prevent Net's Polish consortium member Anti-discrimination Education Association (TEA) has had positive experiences when utilizing the CoE method to moderate discussions between adults or conducting training sessions for teachers and trainers. The CoE method subverts power dynamics in both the classroom and group by giving the group more responsibility and ownership of the process. The educators and trainers familiar with the practice have had positive experiences with CoE in discussions related to migration, gender, and violence issues (especially bullying at school) with groups of students. For many adolescents, it was invigorating not to have to search for one correct answer, but instead to explore different ways of thinking while also getting acquainted with disagreement. The realization

* The following links provide further information on this topic: Toolkit for teachers and educators "Philosophy for challenging extremism": http://liverpoolworldcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Philosophy-for-Challenging-Extremism-Toolkit.pdf
Two online seminars in Polish and English summarizing the practice and presenting case studies from teachers participating in the project: https://www.youtube.com/watch? (link to online seminar in English).

that not all the people think the same way has been positively received, and has helped participants understand diversity as a value. The discussions conducted were highly structured and very calm due to the broad perspective achieved by abstract or philosophical questions such as, "Why are we afraid of otherness?", "How do I survive in a full world of inequality?", "How can I ensure freedom of speech is enforced?", or "What is the difference between justice and equality?"

Transferability

From TEA's perspective, one challenge of the CoE practice is working with teachers to implement the CoE method in the classroom since Polish schools are very rigidly structured and knowledge takes precedence over learning. Teachers found the method appealing even though they did not think it possible to implement in the classroom due to time and control constraints. The latter concern specifically relates both to teachers' inability to determine what the group ultimately chooses to discuss and their lack of skills or training to facilitate a discussion without introducing their own opinion.

The Institute of Global Responsibility (IGO) has disseminated materials that divide the method into steps and align it with the timeframe at school and teachers' expectations. These materials aim at making the implementation process accessible for interested teachers or schools. Ultimately, though, the perspective for a full scale implementation of the full CoE method is rather low, since most teachers find the method too demanding. According to the evaluation and feedback data TEA has received from its own work with the CoE method, roughly 80% of teachers have tested at least one part of CoE, but the full process of discussion has been conducted by no more than 25%.

The method has great potential when it comes to adults, but up until the publication of this compendium, CoE trials with adults have proven more difficult than with adolescents, since adults have a harder time following the rules and stages of the discussion. Some groups finish without clear answer, others have indicated that they found the exercise a waste of time, and still others found the process either unhelpful or not useful because there is no summary or agreement in the end.

In order to be transferred successfully, flexible CoE or P4C trainers with experience working with various groups are paramount. Success for the practice's transferability also depends on a well-design follow up process with the option for consultations to discuss plans, scenarios, and reflections when facilitating group discussions.

Requirements for implementation

- Teacher or educator experience in CoE or P4CE or any other types of philosophical enquiry.
- 6–28 participants (the higher the number of participants, the more TEA recommends implementing additional rules for speaking, e.g. a limited number of objects to be held by a speaker and then passed on to the next speaker).
- A room with chairs in a circle.
- 45–90 minutes for the discussion. The actual length depends on the group and group dynamics.
- A stimulus for the session, prepared by facilitator in advance.
- Paper, post-its, and markers.

When running a dialogue around a controversial issue, there are several things a facilitator must consider before starting. These include:

- Evaluating the teacher's personal awareness and self-reflection skills;
- understanding and researching the nature of controversial issues and the challenges addressing them poses;
- understanding the class's dynamics and the specific school's environment;
- understanding and being able to use a range of teaching styles and techniques;
- fostering an appropriate classroom atmosphere while supporting a democratic school culture;
- familiarizing students with the frameworks and strategies they will encounter;
- avoiding styling oneself as a knowledgeable expert;
- training students to identify bias;
- knowing how to plan and manage discussions effectively; and
- Involving other stakeholders and teachers.

Recommendations for advocacy work for preventing intolerance, discrimination and group-focused enmity of youth*

Why advocacy matters

Youth and education are of the utmost importance when it comes to the future of modern societies. They require that people talk to each other, attentively and patiently, for that is what society truly means anyway. The CEE Prevent Net project therefore aims, above all, to foster dialogue and cooperation with actors from all sectors of the political spectrum on the following cross-partisan goals in Central and Eastern Europe: safeguarding children, adolescents, and young adults; enhancing their skills; ensuring their wellbeing; and enabling a self-determining future. The project thus places emphasis on advocacy and cross-partisan dialogue. In this context, the project consortium published a report that paints a picture of the activities and opportunities for advocacy in youth affairs in Bulgaria, Germany, and the Visegrad countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia).

The main objective here is to enable successful communication and collaboration between young people, first-line youth workers, education practitioners, and related advocacy actors and a wide array of stakeholders including government agencies. Additionally, young people's potential should be

* This chapter summarizes the findings of the CEE Prevent Net Working Paper on "Advocacy to Prevent Intolerance, Discrimination and Group-focused Enmity of Youth in Bulgaria, Germany and the Visegrad Group" in October 2019 (see http://ceepreventnet.eu/files/Publications/Regional%20Report%20Final_web%20version.pdf).

fostered and cultivated and their resilience built in the face of the challenges they face today, particularly with regard to intolerance, discrimination, and group-focused enmity. This includes strengthening young people's skills in communication and advocacy. All local stakeholders engaged in supporting tolerance and dialogue naturally also become advocates of tolerance and youth issues to a certain extent; in some situations, young people themselves end up assuming this role.

Basic principles of advocacy

Well-devised, coherent, and efficient advocacy follows several basic principles. These include e.g. a well-founded understanding of the importance of building strong individual personal relationships; earning and keeping trust; and using informal channels and interpersonal communication in ethical ways that ensure a high level of transparency and does not alienate formal administrative bodies and governmental agencies. Trust should therefore be built systemically by liaising with a number of members of an organization and following a bottom-up strategy. This means that potential cooperation opportunities should first be discussed with low- or mid-level officials who are closer to ordinary citizens' concerns and thus tend to be both less politically motivated and more pragmatic and goal-oriented. Accordingly, focusing on measures on the local and communal level rather than a national one – and addressing real and obvious needs of the citizens of a particular community rather than propagating general political objectives – is helpful, since such procedures are tangible and transparent, and they may furthermore set a precedent for similar measures in other communities.

An important step for civil society organizations is to join their strengths and collaborate with each other on various levels. For instance, in-depth exchange on the different approaches and methods is very helpful, as is organizations helping each other assess and increase the quality of their work. Moreover, by doing so, increased visibility can be achieved and approachability for

governmental partners improved. However, such close and trustful collaboration may be challenging, since civil society organizations in the field of prevention of intolerance, discrimination, and group-focused enmity tend to be fragmented and encounter obstacles when deciding on a common agenda and setting priorities.

When approaching an institution with suggestions for concrete changes or innovations, local advocates need to be clear on what the institution's precise competences and limitations are as well as its decision making procedures and what the actor being approached is ultimately authorized to do. When addressed in a personal, genuine, and positive way, advocacy partners within governmental administrations may be willing to discuss these procedural suggestions openly, thereby building further trust and providing veritable inroads for cooperation.

The specific changes being advocated should be described briefly, clearly, and simply in a document that defines the key objectives and outlines the concrete measures to be taken step-by-step. This document may also include mitigation strategies for likely obstacles. It is recommendable that all involved parties and contributors always be aware of the need to be realistic and cautious with regard to the initiative's projected success while refraining from asserting overly idealistic assumptions. In general, advocacy for youth and community issues needs a gradual, well-designed, and well-structured approach that includes a constant cross-checking of the current conditions and a readiness to address obstacles which will inevitably arise.

Language, terms and topics

Using positive language and constructive phrases have proven to be most effective. That may, for instance, mean speaking about e.g. "what we are working toward," or "the skills we want to build with young people," instead of listing risks and challenges. Avoiding political jargon, signaling respect for

stakeholders from all walks of life, simplifying communication, and using common terms and easy-to-understand language and examples is helpful. Whereas "anti-discrimination education" may be a controversial term for some, vividly speaking about children's safety and wellbeing in the community, ending violence, (cyber)bullying, and shaming at schools, and preventing juvenile depression and suicide are not only achievable goals but also more concrete ones.

Being as narrative as possible when communicating is always beneficial. Sharing first-hand experiences or recounting a relevant local case often has more impact than a multitude of generalized arguments or abstract, philosophical claims. Using non-activist and non-moralistic language, i.e. depoliticizing and abstaining from partisan vocabulary, further facilitates good communication, irrespective of the political background an interlocutor comes from. This also makes it easier to become acquainted with a partner's opinions, perspectives and interests; their concrete daily work issues; and key concerns, both professionally and personally. This also facilitates a gradual transition toward a common agenda as well as a mutual vocabulary and shared concepts.

Inter-agency and international cooperation

While proceeding bottom-up through low- and mid-level officials who are down to earth is important, combining this with a top-down approach wherever possible is most beneficial. This two-pronged approach facilitates a paradigmatic move towards larger and systemic inter-agency cooperation among a number of institutions. It also fosters the growth of a broader advocacy network among relevant NGOs and other community groups. Further network and coalition building can then evolve over time into a more comprehensive national advocacy structure with a governing body, clear membership, and an ethical code.

This network and coalition building is ideally succeeded by an action plan which identifies needs and resources, and sets an agenda in its short- and long-term objectives. Sound empirical facts about the nature and scope of the identified problem can be provided as a means of equipping local advocates with compelling arguments wherever useful. Lastly, helpful material can be produced and disseminated. This material may be templates for advocacy texts (letters, briefs, case studies, or collections of arguments and debate strategies) as well as annual calendars for advocacy opportunities, visuals and templates for social media advocacy, and a manual on how to organize and implement successful advocacy initiatives.

A well-structured regional network helps relationship building between neighboring countries with similar opportunities and challenges such as the Visegrad states. This makes communication at home much easier, since exchanging views on a regional European level allows advocacy agendas to avoid addressing national or local shortcomings directly while instead emphasizing common perspectives for sustainable solutions. Furthermore, inter-agency relations between NGOs and state actors generally thrive in an international setting. A transnational Central and Eastern Europe advocacy network that supports young people, youth workers, and education practitioners would

be invaluable. Case studies, work experiences, and strategies could be exchanged and relevant skillsets could be refined to prevent intolerance and group hatred and advance non-violent communication and dialogue across all participating countries.

Advocacy under unfavorable conditions

When collaborating with governmental agencies is not feasible or promising, creative strategies can be used to persevere and advance advocacy agendas. One way to do this is to look for new partners at the local practitioner level or at the international level (whichever is more feasible). Other ways may be to revisit one's advocacy objectives and reduce their scope or political ambition or to pursue practical goals such as e.g. implementing teacher trainings. Additionally, focusing more on the colleagues in the civil sector and supporting social movements' resilience is always necessary in order to prevent burn out and provide support for activists including young people, school principals, and teachers. In any event, investing in relationships with opposition politicians, international human rights institutions, academics, private foundations and progressive donors, independent media and, crucially, peers across different movements and sectors is valuable and recommended. In particular, it is recommended that a systematic development and implementation of strategies for coping with and mitigating backlash be instated, since a degree of backlash will likely happen during any advocacy activities anyway, though the probability is especially high under unfavorable conditions.

The advocacy conversation

However difficult or straightforward the actual conditions may be, building advocacy relationships is always a gradual and highly individual process for both parties involved. It requires carefully developing a feeling for the abilities and limits of each conversation. It is thus prudent to start out with general

terms and overarching objectives based on common sense, especially when addressing stakeholders on opposite ends of the political spectrum.

The envisaged goals of an advocacy agenda may first focus on enhancing social stability, working on peace and understanding in the community, and, as aforementioned, safeguarding young people and families in order to strengthen their sense of responsibility for the future. From there, the conversation may gradually become more far-reaching to include supporting dialogue and tolerance, possibly even addressing the need to circumvent intolerance and right-wing extremism while also preventing exclusion. If a conversation partner's response is ambivalent and success seems unlikely, one can always withdraw from one pursuit and approach the topic from another more concrete avenue. This way, it is possible to negotiate a cross-partisan agenda agreeable for most actors in the field.