



Project 2021-1-BG01-KA122-ADU-000035679 Safety and success, Erasmus+



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The acquisition of digital competencies in the fight against radicalism



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Partners:

Association of European Development - Applicant

EOS DEVELOPMENTAL SA – Hosting organization

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Current problems

- ▶ The internet has brought extensive change in peoples' lives. It has revolutionised how we communicate and simplified the way we create networks among like-minded individuals. We live in an era in which 84 per cent of the EU population use the internet daily, including 81 per cent of whom access it from home (Eurostat, 2012).
- ▶ This development has led to important changes in the organisation and functioning of society, and as violent extremists and terrorists form part of this society, it is widely assumed that the internet plays a particular role as a tool of radicalisation (Aly, 2010; Awan, 2007; Friedland, 2009; O'Rourke, 2007; Tucker, 2010).



Current problems (2)

- ▶ The internet creates more opportunities to become radicalized. The internet may enhance opportunities to become radicalised, as a result of being available to many people, and enabling connection with like-minded individuals from across the world 24/7. The internet had been a key source of information, communication and of propaganda for extremist beliefs.
- ▶ The internet acts as an 'echo chamber' for extremist beliefs; in other words, the internet may provide a greater opportunity than offline interactions to confirm existing beliefs.
- ▶ The internet accelerates the process of radicalization- the internet appears to facilitate this process, which, in turn, may accelerate it.





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Digital competencies against radicalization

- Digital literacy is vital to the safety, security, health, and well-being of individuals and communities. The proliferation of social media and applications has increased the volume of information we are exposed to everyday. With the public health measures imposed as a result of COVID-19, individuals are spending more time online – increasing the risk of being exposed to false or misleading information. Becoming digital media literate can help individuals build resiliency and reduce the risk of radicalizing to violence.
- Digital media literacy addresses three types of online content: Misinformation (false, but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm); Malinformation (based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate); Disinformation (deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country). Creating or spreading this type of online content can undermine public confidence in our system of government and its institutions. However, communities and individuals can equip themselves with effective tools, knowledge, and resources that do not impede the free flow of reliable information – a cornerstone of a healthy and functioning society. Every individual plays an important role in recognizing and building resilience to false and harmful narratives.

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Key Steps for Digital Literacy

- ▶ Consider the source- Is this a well-known or trusted news outlet, and are they reputable for the subject at hand?
- ▶ Triple check the source- Sites designed to spread false information often try to mimic legitimate news sources. Check the name, logo, and "About" section to verify.
- ▶ Identify the author- Misleading and false articles often do not include authors. If authors are listed, do a quick search to see if they are trusted sources.
- ▶ Inspect the URL- Webpages that notoriously spread disinformation often have odd web domain names that try to imitate real sources (e.g. nbcnews.com.co)
- ▶ Examine spelling and punctuation- Webpages with misspelled words, unnecessary ALL CAPS, poor grammar, and excessive punctuation are often unreliable.
- ▶ Seek alternative viewpoints- Search for other articles and sources on the same topic. If there are limited or no results, or you find contradicting information, you may want to do further research and fact-checking.
- ▶ Think before you share- Damaging disinformation spreads quickly via shared posts. Emotional and sensitive topics are often used to manipulate readers into sharing without thinking.

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Critical thinking and digital literacy- EU practices

- Critical thinking and digital literacy in pedagogy appear in a number of policies, albeit for different reasons.
- In Portugal, the aim is to develop critical thinking in young people, “involving the sectors of education, training and animation and providing a pedagogical education in citizenship”.
- Finland lends particular credence to the role of education in countering extremism, citing the role of schools in supporting young people to think critically, embrace positive citizenship, fact check, engage in dialogue, and “act in a pluralistic society that values diversity and respects human rights, equality and fairness in accordance with the values and principles of democracy”.
- Denmark cites democracy and citizenship, critical thinking and controversial issues and, in 2018, concluded a major national campaign on democracy in schools and active engagement. Sweden, too, stresses the strengthening of “youth knowledge and skills for active citizenship, including resilience against propaganda of violent extremism”, while the Flemish education system also emphasises active citizenship.
- For Latvia, it is about the education of society, that is “ways of differentiating between objective information, disinformation and propaganda, thus promoting critical thinking in society and the capacity to analyse, evaluate and recognise various informational influence measures that allow the targeted destruction of trust in the Republic of Latvia and its policies”.

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Using the curriculum

- ▶ A successful approach to preventing radicalisation and extremism a school-wide, human rights-based approach that provides tools for participation, active involvement and the building of a sustainable future including skills for resolving conflicts in a peaceful way. The principles require the following:
- ▶ student participation and agency is enhanced through all work;
- ▶ learning can also happen outside the classroom;
- ▶ transversal competencies include cultural competence, taking care of self and others, safety, multi-literacy, ICT competence, and competence in the world of work and entrepreneurship;
- ▶ inquiry-based learning;
- ▶ diversity in learning assessment to enhance participation and responsibility, and the feeling of being able to influence democratic competence and conflict resolution.





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