VIOLENT YOUTH RADICALISATION:
Youth-led evidence from the UK, Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Portugal, Sweden and Italy

YEIP was developed in response to the Call for proposals EACEA No 34/2015 Key Action 3: Support for policy reform - Initiatives for policy innovation – [European policy experimentations in the fields of Education, Training and Youth led by high-level public authorities]. The project is co-funded under Erasmus+ Grant Agreement N° 2016-2927 /9.
The IARS International Institute

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The IARS International Institute is a leading, international think-tank with a charitable mission to give everyone a chance to forge a safer, fairer and more inclusive society. IARS achieves its mission by producing evidence-based solutions to current social problems, sharing best practice and by supporting young people to shape decision making. IARS is an international expert in restorative justice, human rights and inclusion, citizenship and user-led research.

IARS’ vision is a society where everyone is given a choice to actively participate in social problem solving. The organisation is known for its robust, independent evidence-based approach to solving current social problems, and is considered to be a pioneer in user-involvement and the application of user-led research methods.

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<td>ROMANIA</td>
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ABOUT THE PROJECT

There is a need for more effective youth policies that enhance young people’s social inclusion and minimize the risk of radicalisation with greater ‘buy in’ from youth themselves. YEIP will construct and test an innovative policy intervention that will generate a set of actions that will help address this need at the local, national and European levels.

The Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project (YEIP) is a 3-year Erasmus+ funded programme that aims to design a youth-led, positive policy prevention framework to tackle and prevent marginalisation and violent radicalisation among young people in Europe. The project started in March 2017 and will run for 3 years.

YEIP is implemented through the construction of innovative tools (YEIP PREVENT model/ interventions, toolkit, training) and field validation in the 8 participating EU member states in 4 environments; schools, universities, prisons, and online.

YEIP will lay the foundations for systemic change at the national and EU levels. The ultimate objective is for the project to help implement the EU Youth Strategy’s objective of preventing the factors that can lead to young people’s social exclusion and radicalisation.

The project is also in line with the EU’s 2005 Counter Terrorism Strategy (revised in 2008 and 2014).

The success of this youth-led project will demonstrate to European citizens the leadership and determination of EC institutions in rooting out the reasons that lead young people becoming marginalised and subsequently radicalised, firming up in this way trust and confidence.
FOREWORD

Dr. Theo Gavrielides
YEIP Coordinator
Founder & Director of the IARS International Institute

It is not surprising that over the last few years, the terms violent radicalisation, hate crimes, xenophobia, extremism and terrorism have become central features of our political, policy and public debates, social media, academic writings and research, TV, radio, paper and online news. Indeed, much has been written and said about these terms; the beliefs and perceptions that feed them, as well as the criticism, sensitivity and controversies that surround them. It is not my intention to repeat them here.

In fact, the purpose of this ebook is to help move the debate forward by helping all those interested in the topic of violent youth radicalisation to see it from a new prism. It is with this hope that I applied to Erasmus+ to fund the Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project (YEIP) that has informed this publication.

Einstein once said: “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting a different result”. And we have been repeating ourselves in our fight against radicalisation.

It is our conviction that there is a social need to have more effective youth policies that can enhance young people’s social inclusion and minimize the risk of violent radicalization with a greater ‘buy in’ from youth themselves. YEIP and this e-book prove that there are innovative solutions to violent youth radicalisation. These can be found within the normative and practical dimensions of the Good Lives Model and through a positive approach that does not treat young people “as risks” who need to be manged. By researching, validating and testing this belief, this e-book and the wider framework within it, aim to ultimately develop an innovative, youth-led policy measure that will help address and prevent the factors that can lead to young people’s social exclusion and radicalisation.

The data that informed this e-book and the longer version that is available in the participating languages were collected through youth-led research. The NGO partners in each participating country, recruited and trained a total of 74 young people in order to empower them to carry out the research themselves. As a youth-led project, YEIP did not want to replicate the methods that have been used to understand violent youth radicalisation. Below you can see a breakdown of the demographics of the young people who led on the research and who continue to support the project through other activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Young Researchers</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Romania/Poland</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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</table>

The data that emerges from the youth-led research and which included 400 research participants (see table 2) conclude that our current approach to violent youth radicalisation and marginalisation is leading international society and young people towards becoming more polarised than ever, while the “them” (criminals - terrorists) and “us” (victims) rhetoric dominates political speeches and media presentations (see also Gavrielides, 2016;).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
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<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Origin</th>
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<td>Uni: 3</td>
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<td>Uni FG: 10 Native/3 non-Native</td>
<td>Age demographics for school doesn’t add up to number of participants. Missing one.</td>
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<td>8: 18-24</td>
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<td>Total: Uni: 18</td>
<td>Uni: 24</td>
<td>Total: F 42</td>
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<td>YOI: 11</td>
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<td>YMC: 10</td>
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This conclusion makes me ask: what will it take for society to finally raise the mirror of responsibility and look well into its reflection?

Every time I look into this mirror, I see nothing but myself and a thousand other fellow citizens. We are the real architects of the social fabric that generates the extremist ideologies, which then gradually corrupt universal values such as tolerance and the respect of life, dignity and brotherhood. The extremist ideology that leads those young men, men and women, to act inhumane is not an alien virus of unknown origin. It is a product of our way of living.

I will conclude this short forward by giving my gratitude to the authors of the chapters and their young research teams for their diligence and patience. I am grateful to the young people and the professionals who attended the various seminars that allowed us to collect the original data that was needed for this e-book as well as the organisations and individuals who helped our partners. I am particularly grateful to my team at the IARS International Institute, as well as Rita Seneca for designing this e-book and indeed all the YEIP material and publications. Her excellence and speed are comparable to none. Finally, special thanks go to our funder the European Commission.

**References**


UNITED KINGDOM
This report is the second output of the Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project, which consists of the fieldwork and research completed by young researchers in our four fields of interest; schools, prisons, universities and online. The report summarises the findings of the research to identify the needs and attitudes of young people in these environments. We will focus on the unique methodology and analyse how the themes that emerge will affect the future tools of the project.

The present report aims at mapping the views of young people (16-29 years old) in the United Kingdom about radicalisation, marginalisation and sense of belonging. The study was based on primary data gathered through field research at universities, schools, online and youth offending institutions. Data from focused discussion groups (focus groups) and interviews with people from the four were collected.

The online results can be found in a separate chapter produced by three partners from the project; although this report will look at some of the overarching findings in relation to the United Kingdom. This report was developed in the context of the Work Package (WP) 2 “Field Research Phase 1” of the European project “Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project - YEIP”, aiming to create a policy tool for the prevention of marginalisation and violent radicalisation of young people in Europe.

Specifically, the aim of the three-year programme is the development and pilot testing of innovative policy intervention models, based on Restorative Justice values, positive psychology and the Good Lives Model (GLM) that emphasise on the notion that people search for “goods” in order to increase or improve their psychological well-being (Ward, Mann and Gannon 2006; Foresee Research group 2016). The present report constitutes the foundation for the creation of this innovative model, in context of the YEIP programme.
KEY OBJECTIVES

IARS’s objectives for this output are to:

a) Test the underlying hypothesis of the Good Lives Matter based policy intervention

b) To construct the tools to implement YEIP’s policy measure

The Young Researchers Team

Research Training

This project was unique because it engaged young researchers as the leaders for the research; overseen by IARS staff members, who are experienced in youth work and research methods. All countries delivered the training based on the CPD accredited youth training workshops created by IARS for another Erasmus + project and so it ensured a high quality delivery. These workshops were also accredited and the young researchers received CPD certificates as well as Youth Pass certificates.

Eight young researchers (all researchers were female, including seven university who were aged between 16-26 and one school student, aged between 16-17) were trained, and two further young researchers contributed to one focus group (trained by the young researcher). This was completed in two sessions. The first included an introduction to the project; the parameters were explained and an opportunity to ask questions. Then they were given reading materials to consider on research methods and the YEIP project reading.

The second session was interactive and focused on how to run a focus group and an interview. Basic safeguarding rules were included. Feedback from the researchers suggested that they found the communication methods training really interesting and they felt prepared to engage a group following a role play session.

8 young researchers contributed to the conduction of qualitative research to investigate young people’s views on radicalisation, marginalisation and identity formation. The research included (14 (@15/8/18)) interviews with high school students, (3 @15/8/28) with university students and (13 (@15/8/18)) with young people from a Youth Offending Institution or Pupil Referral Unit. 2 focus groups with 24 young people took place in school, one focus group with 13 people took place in the university and one focus group with 6 took place in the pupil referral unit.

The YOIs and PRUs are in London, as is the University, Buckinghamshire New University (BNU). One school/further education college was in Newham, London and one was in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. We felt this range, 6 different establishments in total, gave us a varied and more national picture of attitudes of young people. This was also increased by the online survey which was world-wide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Total/Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1 Male, 12 Female</td>
<td>3 Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/non-native (not obligatory)</td>
<td>10 Native/3 Non-Native</td>
<td>3 Non-Native</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Total/Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>9 – under 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 – 16 – 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 – 18 -24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>14 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/non-native (not obligatory)</td>
<td>7 Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 Non-Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRU/YOI</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Total/Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>6 - 16-17</td>
<td>13 – 16 - 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>3 Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/non-native (not obligatory)</td>
<td>Native/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Young people in the YOIs were given a questionnaire designed by the young researchers, as they were not able to enter a controlled environment. This is attached at Annex 2.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING**

**QUALITATIVE STRATEGY**

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to capture deeper insights into key areas critical to the delivery of WP2 of the project. The choice of interview questions for the interviewees was driven by the nature of the information needed to answer the research question, i.e., the intended questions aimed at focal topics exploring the lived experiences of young people, and how they feel about violent radicalisation prevention. This method complemented the research by allowing the interviewees to answer more on their own terms than the standardised interview permits while still providing a greater structure for comparability, as there is a variation in the quality of information that is generated in each interview (Wengraf, 2006). See template questions for semi-structured interviews attached as Annex 3.

As this was delivered and designed by young people, they were supervised to ensure the safety and effective delivery of the project. The project coordinator did not interfere with the focus groups, or interviews and did not interrupt or guide their sessions. As a result the exchanges and results were very unique as opposed to transcripts produced by expert researchers.

As one of the main types of non-probability sampling, convenience sampling was considered the most suitable sampling method, as the sample is simply available to the researcher by the virtue of its accessibility (Ritchie and Lewis, 2014; Bryman, 2004). In other words, this sampling method allows the sample to be
self-selected, as the participants themselves can decide whether to participate in the research (Bryman, 2004; Gray 2018). In terms of the sample size, a number of factors were considered, such as available time and resources, relevance to the research, non-response rate and ethical considerations (Silverman, 2011; Bryman 2004). The young people who were selected for the focus groups were self-selected, with the following caveats.

1 – Young offenders and PRU students took part in the project in a controlled environment and did not have the same choice to participate in the project. They all, as a result, did not give consent to release their names, and the data is completely anonymous.

2 – Students at the Huntingdon School were given an incentive to participate in the project (through their extra-curricular reward system at the school) as a result, many of them did not participate in the optional individual interviews afterwards.

Following the interviews and focus groups, transcripts were written and a thematic analysis took place. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process included reading through each interview transcript, identifying relevant points of information, reviewing these points, and then analysing the commonalities to identify any major trends (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012).

RESEARCH ETHICS

As a general rule, and as a research based organisation, IARS always engages the following structures for all research programmes: (1) IARS Research Ethics Handbook (2) Data Protection Law (3) Confidentiality & Consent Forms where appropriate (4) User Engagement Policy (5) Lone worker policy.

IARS is committed to ensuring that all research conducted by its employees and interns is carried out to generally accepted ethical principles. As an expert in evaluation and research, we have developed research protocols for gathering and making sense of evidence from our work. We quality control all our projects through internal procedures as well as through independent scrutiny.

The Research Ethics Application process is managed by IARS Publications through its Editor-in-Chief, Professor Theo Gavrielides. IARS Publications is a member of COPE, and thus adheres to high ethical standards in research and publishing. The process also aims to ensure that the applicant project conforms to research ethics and high standards when conducting fieldwork with vulnerable individuals.

As the phase of the project involves human participants, the project proposal has undergone the Research Ethics Application process and approval was obtained in advance of the research (see Research Ethics Application Approval attached as Annex 1).

KEY FINDINGS

From the research conducted in this phase a number of key findings can be identified with respect to the young researchers:

- Young people who were trained as researchers responded well to training, and took an active, leading role in the project fieldwork
- They were not completely impartial, often sharing their experiences, other individual’s answers and finishing respondent’s sentences
Where some environments would be inaccessible to young researchers, such as prisons, they wrote questionnaires specifically for the environment to ensure they were still leading the project.

From the participants who

- Participants from each field had very different views on their own circumstances and future prospects.
- Participants from a diverse ethnic background were much more likely to have multiple strong influences on their lives; faith, family, community and friends. Whereas white British participants only cited their family as their biggest influencer.
- White British participants answered questions in an academic and theory-based form, focusing on the hypothetical, whereas participants who were exposed to a more diverse city such as London, were individual in their answers.
- Young people are very likely to engage with strangers and form relationships online through gaming and streaming. Some are even willing to meet them in person, and have done so.
- 62% online respondents said that they had felt discriminated against; 50% of these were because of their appearance, 43% gender.
- There was a high level of engagement in discussions around gender, feminism and radical beliefs regarding gender in both school environments.
- Most young people understood radical beliefs and had had interventions in school. The Young Offenders were the majority of those who singled out Muslims as the definition of radical.
- All of the environments saw a solution to their problems in education, relocation, or having more control over their future. Many of them cited opportunity or choices as the most important part of their future.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE YEIP TOOLS

This research has identified some theoretical approaches, which may contribute to the development of policy interventions:

- From the responses given, we can infer that young people are more likely to be engaged if given a sense of ownership in improving their lives.
- As a result, the Good Lives Model (GLM) framework may have reasoning that could assist young people in developing and implementing meaningful life plans.
- In relation to the use of young researchers, we may deduce that they are better able to demonstrate insights to the participants due to the narrow age gap.
- The use of youth-led research method can be an attribute to the positive responses from the participants across all four environments i.e. all of the environments saw a solution to their problems thus might denote the utter importance of linking youth and community development.
REFERENCE LIST


Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (2014). *Qualitative research practice*. London [u.a.]: SAGE.


GREECE
ABSTRACT

In context of the YEIP-Youth Empowering and Innovation Project, 11 young researchers were trained and 3 of them contributed to the conduction of qualitative research to investigate young people’s views on radicalisation, marginalisation and identity formation. The research included 27 interviews with high school students, 24 with university students and 11 with young people from a Younth Offending Institution, as well as 2 focus groups in each of the three environments. Even though young people were not familiar with the term of radicalisation and were able to define some of its characteristics. The lack of trust towards the government reported by young people in in line with findings from previous work in the context of YEIP, indicating that radicasation in Greece is usually of political nature. It also demonstrated the need for an innovative tool to contribute to the elimination of the phenom-enon.
KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE COUNTRY REPORT

The present report aims at mapping the views of young people (16-29 years old) in Greece on about radicalisation, marginalisation and sense of belonging. The study was based on primary data gathered through field research at universities, schools and youth offending institutions. Data from focused discussion groups (focus groups) and interviews with people from the three environmental targets (students, students and young ex-offenders) were collected. This report was developed in the context of the Work Package (WP) 2 “Field Research Phase 1” of the European project “Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project - YEIP”, aiming to create a prevention framework of (policy tool for the prevention of) marginalisation and violent radicalisation of young people in Europe. Specifically, the aim of the three-year programme is the development and pilot testing of innovative policy intervention models, based on Restorative Justice values, positive psychology and the Good Lives Model (GLM) that emphasise on the notion that people search for “goods” in order to increase or improve their psychological well-being (Ward, Mann and Gannon 2006; Foresee Research group 2016). The present report constitutes the foundation for the creation of this innovative model, in context of the YEIP programme.

THE YOUNG RESEARCHERS TEAM

Eleven young researchers (Table 1) with a background in sociology were recruited and attended the training seminar. Since they were all familiar with qualitative and quantitative research methods, the training lasted one day. They expressed their interest, as they were provided additional information and conveyed their willingness to voluntarily participate in future research. Three of them were selected to contribute and conduct interviews and focus groups in the three chosen environments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Date of Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sociologist</td>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sociology student</td>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sociologist</td>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sociology student</td>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sociology student</td>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sociology student, volunteer</td>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sociology student</td>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>28/03/2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Sociology student</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sociology student</td>
<td>28/03/2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The young researchers team

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING

In context of Work Package 2, primary research was conducted, using structured interviews and focus groups in three environments: 1) Universities, 2) Schools and 3) Young Offenders Institutions (YOI), in order to investigate young people’s (16-29) views on radicalisation, matters of identity and inclusion. The research focused on politics, based on the conclusions of the preliminary research that was conducted the previous year in the context of YEIP (Ioannou, 2017) which demonstrated that radicalisation in Greece is usually of political nature.
Snowball sampling was considered to be appropriate to reach participants from the aforementioned environments. In total, six focus groups were held, two in each environment, along with 27 interviews with high school students, 24 with university students and 11 with former offenders (Table 1). There was a great dropout of participants in last environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>YOI</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>18 (2 groups: one with 7 and one with 11)</td>
<td>27 (2 groups: one with 13 and one with 14)</td>
<td>11 (2 groups: one with 4 and one with 7)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age</td>
<td>22 yrs old</td>
<td>17 yrs old</td>
<td>20 yrs old</td>
<td>19.6 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>21 Females 3 Males</td>
<td>18 Females</td>
<td>3 Females</td>
<td>42 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 Males</td>
<td>8 Males</td>
<td>20 M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Demographics of the participants

**ANALYSIS**

Content analysis was used to analyse the results. Structured questions contributed to the comparative analysis on the three environments that followed and assisted in the detection of similarities and differences amongst the involved groups, coming from unique backgrounds.

**KEY FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD RESEARCH**

**1. DEFINITION OF RADICALISATION AND VIOLENCE**

More than half of the university students were familiar with the term of radicalisation, defining it as the adoption of non-conforming beliefs and the desire of change. The second most common interpretation was fanaticism and the adoption of extreme notions, while some associated it with the attachment to a political party or institution. High school students seemed to be unable to define the term, but linked it with innovation, attempt to change the existing systems and embracing ideas, which are different from the dominant notions. Young ex-offenders talked about adopting extreme notions to demand one’s rights and achieve one’s goals.

Almost the entire sample categorically denied violence to be a legitimate way to attain goods and achieve goals, though some young people from the YOI and one sociology student stated that it may be used when everything else fails. The majority of the high school students and young people from the YOI did not consider radicalisation to only have a negative aspect or to always lead to violence. Although sociology students did not accept radicalisation as something bad, most of them reported that it usually leads to violence. Most
of the young participants supported that violent and non-violent radicalisation should not be linked at all.

If someone they knew was becoming radicalised, they would discuss with them their beliefs and would try to understand what led them to radicalisation. Only a few mentioned that they would try to change their mind or criticise them if they used violence.

All participants agreed that lack of education can make young people vulnerable to extremist messages. High school students added mass media, society, lack of critical thinking and socialization, as well as tendencies to escape as other factors that contribute to that. Moreover, university students also talked about marginalisation, social problems, need of acceptance and family neglect.

Regarding discriminative treatment, there were incidents reported by all environments. Nevertheless, the positive answers of the university and YOI participants raised up to more than 50%, while the younger students’ relevant cases were less than 25%. Victims of such behaviours explained that they did not change themselves at all, or they tried to persuade the perpetrator to treat them better.

2. FEELING OF BELONGING AND SENSE OF IDENTITY

Approximately half of the university students felt they “belong” to Greece, due to the common culture, traditions and origin and also feel safe where they live. A smaller percent stated the opposite, mostly because of the loose institutions, racism and insecurity. For the participants of the other two environments, the sense of belonging is found in their family, friends, the community and everyday activities. High school students (48%) feel safe in Greece, because of the frequent policing patrols, criminality rates decrease, and absence of extreme incidents, while 37% do not feel secure due to the opposing reasons.

Some of the young people from the YOI mentioned that the family and the place where someone grows up, directly influence their personality and identity. Education, friends and experiences were also considered as factors that affect their characteristics. However, they highlighted that the formation of identity is an endless process that is held back by the economic and humanitarian crisis.

3. POLITICAL CONCERNS AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE

Approximately one quarter of the university students believe that the government may contribute to young people feeling they belong in Greece, by providing equal opportunities, combating inequalities, essentially assisting to financial growth and taking young people’s views into account. The vast majority of the total sample is not satisfied with the government, or with the political developments.

4. VALUES, PERSONAL IMAGE, SELF-ESTEEM

Injustice, lack of reward and respect, devaluation, rudeness and dogmatism are some of the common traits that irritate young participants. Worth mentioning is the fact that some of the young people of the YOI stated
that they are also irritated by “drugs”, since they have the ability to disorient people without them understanding it. Family and friends are reported to be important for the vast majority of the sample, because they support and love them.

**REFLECTIVE SECTION**

None of the three environments was fully familiar with the term of radicalisation, which was not expected especially from the university students, since it is relevant to their university subject. However, they could somewhat approach it, defining it as the adoption of ideas, different from the dominant notions, which enable people to claim a potential change.

The vast majority of the participants does not perceive radicalisation to have a negative connotation, confirming the above definition. It seemed important to them that violent radicalisation is separated from the term of non-violent radicalisation, since a radicalised person will not necessarily exhibit violent behaviour, nor will they be criticised negatively about their opinions.

Family remains one of the most important factors contributing to socialisation, along with friends and extracurricular activities. A feeling of insecurity prevails amongst young people, due to the social, economical and political changes, making them vulnerable to extreme behaviours and sometimes blocking the development of their identity.

Other factors that make young people vulnerable to extreme messages are the lack of education, the influence of the mass media, marginalisation, need of acceptance, neglect from the family and social problems. It is widely accepted that education may contribute to the elimination of such problems.

Young people should familiarise with the phenomenon and understand the differences between violent and non-violent radicalisation. Moreover, they should attain the skills to recognise and evaluate such incidents, with the support of the school and the community.

The lack of trust towards the government and the disappointment of young people, the loose institutions and the need to demand their rights that were reported, is in line with the findings from last years’ study in the context of YEIP, which indicated radicalization in Greece is mostly of political nature. It is now evident that the state and the government are not able to assist in the formation of young people’s identity, in the development of the sense of belonging, or in combating marginalisation. A new, innovative tool needs to be built in order for the youth from being marginalised and violently radicalised.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE YEIP TOOLS**
**NATIONAL LEVEL**

- School needs to provide relevant to the phenomenon information, so that young people familiarise with it from an early age.

- Improvement of the educational system to cultivate students’ critical thinking. Experiental seminars are concerned to be an additional method, through which students will attain skills and learn non-violent ways to demand their rights.

- Educators should be trained to recognise violent phenomena and assist in their elimination.

- Since social turbulences were reported to be a factor that may make young people vulnerable to extremist messages, a psychologist should permanently provide their services for free, on a community level.

- Interventions to the mass media should also be organised, regarding the correct use of the terms and the manipulative content they promote.

- Activity groups should also be established, on a community and school level, that will work as integration and socialising groups and will contribute to identity formation and development of a sense of belonging.

**EUROPEAN LEVEL**

- In addition to the aforementioned suggestions, a guide with experiental activities should be created, which will be common for all European countries and will be implemented in all school classes. Students will have the opportunity to understand the phenomenon and create stronger bonds.

- A variety of peer-to-peer educational group activities could contribute to further acceptance of diversity, identity formation and development of the sense of belonging.

- Lastly, experts working with young people should create interventions for the prevention of marginalisation by providing activities and opportunities for skills’ development.
REFERENCES


CYPRUS
“ONLY FOOLS AND THE DEAD CANNOT CHANGE THEIR MIND”

YOUNG PEOPLE’S VIEWS ON PREVENTING YOUTH RADICALISATION IN CYPRUS

ABSTRACT

In the context of the YEIP, this report describes the youth-led research conducted in Cyprus with 68 young people (ages 15-16) at a school and Youth Migrant centre concerning the topic of youth violent radicalisation. Amongst the participants 17 were female and 52 were male (35: Native and 33: Non-native- Greek, Syrian, African). The methodology adopted was qualitative comprising of focus groups and one-to-one interviews led by 11 young researchers. Analysis was centred on seven categories; Definition of Radicalisation, Identity and Belonging, Values and Self-concept, Challenging extremist messages, Stigma and Marginalisation, Community and Environment and Life Aspirations. In relation to prevention of youth violent radicalisation, the Cypriot youth discussed the role of family, school and society, the need for personal empowerment, and the importance of open-dialogue. The Migrant youth discussed the role of education, the importance of religion, and the need for open discussions. National and EU recommendations are made on the basis of the aforementioned with support of national and European research. In terms of the tools that the YEIP model can work with we conclude that based on the Cypriot research the main focus should be on Youth-Led Awareness Campaigns, amendment of School-based practices and establishing Open Dialogue.
KEY OBJECTIVES

In Cyprus, violent radicalization has not been officially reported yet amongst young people. There have been tendencies that relate to radicalization such as racism, intolerance and hate crime (Office of Analysis and Statistics, 2015). According to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Cyprus has yet to take actions so as to integrate non-nationals (ECRI, 2016). Similar tendencies have been noted in the educational system in that Turkish-speaking children enrolled in Greek-Cypriot schools tend to be ethnicized (Zembylas, 2010). Zembylas (2010) argues for a structural transformation that will alter the racism and nationalism currently present in the discourse of Greek-Cypriot teachers. The latest policy paper by the Youth for Exchange and Understanding Cyprus (YEU, 2017) regarding social solidarity found that Cyprus has the following issues:

- insufficient information & multiple sources of misinformation that recreate long-held prejudices from mass media
- non-promotion of multi-cultural education in schools
- lack of expert staff that can handle Migrants’ rights
- lack of education from teachers and parents
- lack of multi-cultural campaigns in schools that promote diversity and awareness

In terms of moving forward, the Cyprus Youth Organisation has highlighted that the Youth Strategy 2017-2022 will focus on offering cultural and educational opportunities and empowerment to young people so that they can reach the maximum of their potential and develop their strengths and talents (2017).

The objectives of this country report are to:

- Present the findings of youth-led research in a School and a Youth Migrant centre regarding youth radicalisation
- Explain the youth-led research methodology and sampling for Cyprus
- Describe the overarching methodology
- Provide a qualitative analysis on the key findings
- Give recommendations for developing the YEIP tools at both national and EU-level

YOUNG RESEARCHERS TEAM

RECRUITMENT

In order to recruit young researchers, CARDET posted social media announcements regarding the ‘Young Researchers’ training event to which a total of 14 young people expressed interest. In total, Cyprus had 11 Young Researchers (university students, social workers, youth workers) who led the research conducted for the fieldwork.

TRAINING
The training took place on the 7th June 2018 and was led by a social sciences expert from CARDET. The content of the training was adjusted based on the original sent by IARS so as to include topics such as youth-led research, focus groups and interviews, qualitative data analysis and report writing. Provided that some of the participants didn’t have a background in research it was necessary to carry out some examples of qualitative analysis and conduct short role-playing interview activities. Participants were debriefed on the strategy that would follow regarding the fieldwork (i.e. consent forms, information forms, etc.). After the training, participants received CPD Accreditation (see Appendix A).

**FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION**

Young researchers’ feedback on the overall experience was positive as reported in their evaluation forms. Regarding whether the training they received was helpful in carrying out research with young people for the YEIP Project 85.7% strongly agreed, whilst 14.3% agreed. 85.7% strongly agreed that they felt supported throughout the research process while the 14.3% agreed. Furthermore, 71.4% strongly agreed that their involvement in the YEIP project enhanced their research skills and knowledge whilst 28.6% agreed.

Finally 71.4% described their experience as Young Researchers for YEIP as ‘inspiring’, 57.1% described it as ‘empowering’ and 71.4% described it as ‘change-making’. None reported it as ‘disappointing or dissatisfying’. Overall they felt that they obtained great insights and that it was a positive empowering experience.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING**

**SELECTED ENVIRONMENTS:**

**SCHOOL AND YOUTH MIGRANT CENTRE**

For Cyprus the two environments that were targeted for the YEIP fieldwork were Schools and an independent Youth Migrant Centre (YMC) where two translators were present; one Arab and one French translator.

**ETHICAL APPROVAL**

In order to access the young people at the YMC it was necessary to obtain ethical approval from the governmental Social Welfare services. A formal letter of ethical approval was sent to the Head of Ethics at the Social Welfare department, to which they responded positively (see Appendix B).

Ethical approval was obtained by the Head of School and the parents of the students in the form of written consent (see Appendix C)

For both environments ethical approval was given on the basis that none of the sessions would be recorded (Young Researchers took detailed notes for the research). In compliance with ethical guidelines, the Young Researchers informed all participants about the study aims and their overall participation in the project. An informational sheet was provided and participants were asked to sign a consent letter prior to taking part in the focus groups and the interviews. It was made clear that they could withdraw at any time without stating any reason. In the case where young people did not speak English (such as at the YMC), a translator was
present so as to fully explain the process and the questions in the participants’ native languages. Full data administration was handled by the Young Researchers team supervised by the expert researcher of CARDET. In order to protect research data all notes have been stored in a secure, password-protected computer and will not by any means go outside agreed terms in an unauthorised cloud system.

SAMPLE

All in all, 11 Young Researchers conducted the fieldwork research with a total of 68 young people aged 15-19 (Mean: not available; 17 female, 51 male). The demographic data for the School and YMC environments are indicated below in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Demographic data for School Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Two focus groups with total of 24 students</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>11 Female</td>
<td>6 Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 Male</td>
<td>9 Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/non-native</td>
<td>22 Native</td>
<td>13 Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Greek</td>
<td>2 Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Demographic data for Youth Migrant Centre (YMC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Two focus groups with total of 19 Migrants</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>16-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>All Male</td>
<td>All Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/non-native</td>
<td>Non- native (Syrian &amp; African; Cameroon, Somalia, Congo)</td>
<td>Non- native (Syrian &amp; African; Cameroon, Somalia, Congo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis is divided according to the categories of the YEIP Model for prevention as indicated in Figure 1. For the sake of providing clarity we separately discuss the findings from the School and the YMC.

**Figure 1: Youth Radicalisation Prevent Model shared by YEIP consortium**

**CATEGORY 1: LANGUAGE AND DEFINITIONS**

**SCHOOL**

*Radicalisation: Societal and political examples*

In defining the term ‘Radicalisation’ the Cypriot young people used the term ‘fanatical’ as well as phrases that relate to negative and/or violent behavior at a societal level. Some students were not aware of the term, but when explained were able to identify it and described it as “disrespectful acts towards others” as well as a “sense of superiority and racism against foreigners”. Some examples given were ‘ELAM’, ‘Golden Dawn’ (both extremist right parties) and ‘AKEL’ (left party).

In terms of societal examples of radicalization, students also made reference to football fanaticism, and its connection to political parties, as well as homosexuality.

**YMC**

*Radicalisation: Violent and non-violent attitudes*

The Migrants expressed the term radicalization as the overall approach adopted by Western countries such as the US and the G8.
“Radicalisation? Trump is Radicalisation. The G8 are radicalisation! If I were to be living in these countries...I am Black, I am a Muslim...for them I would be a criminal”

Again here, examples were given such as ‘ISIS’, ‘Idaz’, ‘Jabja’ and ‘El Nashra’. Participants distinguished between the first two terrorist groups and the latter stating that the former adopt violent methods while the latter focus on defending people’s rights and try to support people rising up against the state. For them both these groups are radical but the approach is different.

**CATEGORY 2: IDENTITY & BELONGING**

**SCHOOL**

*Identity- the role of culture, family and school*

In response to defining their identity, Cypriot students referred to cultural traditions, family, ethnicity and the overall societal behaviour which is not always as ‘civil’ as they would like it to be. A specific aspect of their culture which young people felt characterised their identity was ‘religion’ as a guide towards their moral and civil character.

*Improving the sense of ‘Belongingness’ for youth: The role of School, Family and Society*

The young students referred to the feeling of ‘belonging’ as something that the Government should implement through the school setting. They gave examples such as the need for more culture-based school trips, more awareness regarding disabled/diversity in school and even referred to the need of improving their physical environment (e.g. dull colours in school, restoration of old parts of building). Another aspect which most young people referred to as important to their feeling of ‘belonging’ was the role of family. Parental support, love and trust that come through the family environment is a very important feature in young people’s lives. A student explained that after experiencing bullying in school due to this ethnicity he resorted to his parents for support (*See Case Study*). Second to that, is the role of peers:

“with them I can discuss things that I wouldn’t feel comfortable discussing with my parents”.

However some explained that they feel internal conflict as they don’t know which of the two sources of support (family or peers) is right in relation to a concern or a question that they have.

*Young Cypriots’ needs related to personal and social empowerment*

For young Cypriots their needs were related to enhancing their personal and social opportunities, such as better adjustment methods for later adulthood.

**YMC**

*Mixed perceptions about having an Ethnic Identity*

The young group from Syria argued that because they belong to the Ethnic Identity of Syria they will never feel that they belong in Cyprus:

“Whatever the Cyprus government does I won’t feel better- Unless they take me to see my relatives...Here I don’t feel good- I don’t have anyone here”
They stressed that even if they were to obtain the same rights as Cypriot people they would still never feel at home. This is mainly because they are away from their family.

On the other hand the young people from Africa explained that having an ethnic identity is not always a good thing:

“For some people their ethnic identity does not portray a good character. Due to their genealogy...those that have ancestors who have had bad attitudes towards others and followed a bad path, will probably adopt that same route of their ancestors. So it depends on who takes lead of the ethnicity, which eventually shapes the identity”

Young Migrants’ perception on needs: The right education and fear of God

While the Cypriots expressed that their needs are related to personal and social empowerment the Migrants focused on education and religion:

“Of course we have different needs to other young people. First we need the right to education and rights to our basic needs... where to sleep, where to eat”.

“I believe what young people need today is morals- people need to fear God”

“Education! But not all education is good- some education can be teaching you bad things. Like what happened in Africa where the whites were taught to hate the Blacks.”

“What young people need is respect to their religion. All religions are good; they have good morals you know. All should work and live in fear of God- that will change society”

**CATEGORY 3:**
**VALUES, SELF-CONCEPT AND SELF-ESTEEM**

**SCHOOL**

*Values based on family, education and religion*

Young people decide what is right based on their peers’ opinions, the consequences of their actions, the individual and collective interest, the intuition, and judging by reason. Essentially their decisions are taken by the environment which is directly related to education, religion and family. At a certain age they question and challenge these sources of support merely out of curiosity or for a different perception.

*Anger driven by injustice, corruption and lack of freedom*

In terms of what makes them angry they referred to lack of meritocracy in society, school oppression (outfit, schedule), racism and lack of freedom of expression. Some mentioned the high public visibility of homosexuality, the politicians’ arguments on television, the inability of adults to become positive role models for young people, vandalism and overall not being able to have what they seek for.

*Mixed perceptions of control*

Not all young people felt that they have control over their lives. It was mainly argued that their parents are the ones who give the final approval as to their actions and what is more, the pressure to “follow the crowd” takes away the liberty of choice.
Values determined by critical thought and parents

The Migrants explained that deciding what is right and what is wrong is largely determined by their parents’ opinions and their own logic.

Anger driven by discrimination, death and injustice

A young person from Syria explained that unfair death due to the war is causing him anger and frustration.

“So many people are dying...Why should a four year old die?”

Discrimination also fuels anger for them:

“We are not given the same chances for jobs or any other social opportunities”.

CATEGORY 4: RECOGNISING AND CHALLENGING EXTREMIST MESSAGES

SCHOOL

Extremist groups offer attention and recognition to weak characters

According to Cypriot youth the reasons other young people join extremist groups are to satisfy the need of revenge (perhaps he/she is a victim of bullying), to obtain a sense of wider recognition and attention, to combat social isolation, weakness of character, peer pressure, withdrawal from family, and the adoption of violent practices from the family (i.e. using violence instead of dialogue to resolve conflicts).

School-based practices to counter extremist messages

Young people suggested that the school should initiate early prevention messages (i.e. at primary school) and should encourage the creation of respect and friendliness between students. They also stressed the need for radicalisation awareness workshops with support from their teachers.

Youth-led practices

Students argued that a way to counter extremist messages is through the use of open dialogue on a peer-to-peer level so as to encourage reflection and critical thinking.

YMC

Extremist groups offer opportunities to the vulnerable youth

Amongst the Migrants, the Africans explained that in their country young people join extremist groups with the “right intentions” such as,

“To fight for their family, their generation, their freedom”

“They think it’s a good thing”.

However the Syrians explained that in their country a majority join these groups for recognition and opportunities that would otherwise not been given to them due to their lack of education or lack of belonging in
“Most of these people lack education- they just follow social media- They dont think for themselves”

“Because they are desperate and with the type of message that is passed onto them they think they can make a name for themselves. They see radical groups portraying how they are renowned, and are making a change..they see how they control the world. They want to become like them, like the people in these groups”

Additionally they explained that young people are convinced to join based on religious benefits (i.e. they will go to heaven), technical know-how (i.e. they will learn how to make bombs), and peer influence.

**Countering those at risk of radicalisation: Governmental support and personal empowerment**

Although the role of government and local services was mentioned,

“If I see someone going in that direction I feel it is my responsibility to re-direct them- but the leader must make a change first. The Government! The Government must teach young people that humanity comes first!”

“The Government must offer alternatives to these young people... work on their talents, or get them to enter a club or a team”

emphasis was placed on personal empowerment regarding countering those at risk of radicalisation:

“The best advice can only come from within you”

“Local services can help, but you must eventually decide for yourself”

"If somebody has made a decision it all depends on convinced he can be. It all depends on mindset- the point which you raise with that person to make him change his mind. A conscious mind can change... Only fools and the dead cannot change their mind! ”

**CATEGORY 5: UNFAIR TREATMENT, STIGMA AND MARGINALISATION**

**SCHOOLS**

Unfair treatment from Government and stigma related to external appearance

Students argued that unfair treatment and stigma is usually due to external appearance, health problems, accent, football team, and ethnic origin. A Greek student said that:

“I have felt unfairly treated due to my ethnicity, so I am fighting to prove otherwise and change what they think of me”.

Overall they expressed that their voices are not heard in society and they urge the Government to seek out for active collaboration so as to not feel undermined.

Unfair treatment and Prejudice against Turks

One student expressed how:

“I have not been unfairly treated myself, but I have a prejudice against Turks for all that is
Another student had a more neutral stance on the matter and acknowledged that there may be biases which cause conflicts between Turks and Cypriots, but that ultimately no one is to blame as there is no real knowledge of what happened in an objective manner.

**YMC**

Defence of Ethnic origin in case of unfair treatment

Although there were no instances reported of unfair treatment and/or stigma the young Syrians shared that in the case where they were to face such treatment they would strongly stand up against them because of their Ethnic pride:

“Syrians don’t allow anyone to offend them”

**CATEGORY 6: COMMUNITY/ENVIRONMENT**

**SCHOOL**

Youth-led Recommendations

Students made several recommendations for combatting radicalisation at a community level:

- Offering opportunities for young people to become active in society
- Establishing Racism Awareness Days
- Cultural-based school trips
- Engagement in theatrical plays with anti-radicalisation messages
- Active participation in European projects to increase sense of unity

The importance of compassion

One student in particular explained that the most important aspect of a community that is strong against radicalisation is ‘compassion’:

“People should not be so evil- we need to understand that each person had their story, their problems. So what we need is not to judge but to understand”.

Similarly another student explained that

“For society to improve, racism needs to be reduced, hate and injustice eliminated. We need to focus less externally and more internally. We must all work with ourselves to increase each person’s value in this world”

**YMC**

The importance of family

The majority of young Migrants agreed that for them family is the most important source of support in their environment. Even in terms of what they would like the Government to provide them they explained that they would like their families to be given citizenship and brought to Cyprus.
CATEGORY 7: LIFE ASPIRATIONS AND GOALS

SCHOOL

Positive reinforcement

Most participants referred to financial support, counselling and positive reinforcement as the three basic factors necessary for them to achieve their life aspirations and goals.

“For us to feel capable we must be told and shown that we are so”.

Job-related aspirations

Others focused more on the external factors that could lead them to achieve success such as assistance on CV writing, job applications, classes that will help them find jobs in later life and more funding for student financial support. Some mentioned strong financial support for the family as a way of increasing their chances of success.

YMC

Social integration

When asked about their life aspirations both the African and Syrian young people explained that these are related to all aspects that would help them integrate and have a good life here in Cyprus. Some of these include passport, citizenship, medicine, equal opportunities, chance to play in football teams, shelter, learning Greek language and social support.

Importance of religion

Some others relied on religion for their life aspirations:

“With God’s help all can be done”

“Young people need to go into more spirituality- they need a source of love if they are to succeed in life. They need to be encouraged by justice. Universal justice can only be recognized in church.”
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE YEIP TOOLS

KEY FINDINGS: MAIN THEMES

For a summary of the main themes identified in the School and Youth Migrant Centre environments please see Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of Main themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>School: Main themes</th>
<th>YMC: Main themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Language and Definitions</td>
<td>a) Radicalisation: Societal and political examples</td>
<td>a) Radicalisation: Violent and non-violent attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Identity and Belonging</td>
<td>a) Identity- the role of culture, family and school</td>
<td>a) Mixed perceptions about having an Ethnic Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Improving the sense of ‘Belongingness’ for youth: The role of School, Family and Society</td>
<td>b) Young Migrants’ perception on needs: The right education and fear of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Young Cypriots’ needs related to personal and social empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Values, Self-concept and Self-esteem</td>
<td>a) Values based on family, education and religion</td>
<td>a) Values determined by critical thought and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Anger driven by injustice, corruption and lack of freedom</td>
<td>b) Anger driven by discrimination, death and injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Mixed perceptions of control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Recognizing and challenging extremist messages</td>
<td>a) Extremist groups offer attention and recognition to vulnerable youth</td>
<td>a) Extremist groups offer opportunities to the vulnerable youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) School-based practices to counter extremist messages</td>
<td>b) Countering those at risk of radicalisation: Governmental support and personal empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Youth-led practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Unfair treatment, stigma and marginalisation</td>
<td>a) Unfair treatment from Government and stigma related to external appearance</td>
<td>a) Defence of Ethnic origin in case of unfair treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Unfair treatment &amp; Prejudice against Turks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: Community/Environment</td>
<td>a) Youth-led Recommendations</td>
<td>a) The importance of family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) The importance of compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Life Aspirations and Goals</td>
<td>a) Positive reinforcement</td>
<td>a) Social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Job-related aspirations</td>
<td>b) Importance of religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section we will critically analyse the key findings and make National and EU recommendations for developing the YEIP tools.

CATEGORY 1: DEFINING RADICALISATION

In terms of defining radicalization, the Cypriot students had a generic picture of the phenomenon, whereas the Migrants, perhaps due to their experience of extreme political situations (i.e. Syria, Cameroon, Congo, Somalia), were able to differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ radicalization. They acknowledged the importance of rising up against the status quo in ways that can encourage positive change, but do not believe in violence as a means of achieving that. Furthermore, there was a noticeable difference between the Cypriot and Migrant youth in terms of what they consider radical. While the former group gave more social examples, such as homosexuality and football fanaticism, the latter group focused on political movements, such as ISIS. It seems that in Cyprus ‘radical’ behaviour is thought of as anything that is extremely different to the normative social behaviour. Onoufriou (2009) found that in the cultural milieu of Cyprus there is hardly space for diversity and specifically, those who are homosexual seem to be ostracized by the society.

EU recommendations

- Create awareness towards radicalization as a multi-faceted phenomenon that can also carry positive change when conducted without violence.

National recommendations

- Reduce likelihood of ostracism by developing ‘diversity awareness’ seminars in schools in order to create space for cultural heterogeneity.

CATEGORY 2: IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Regarding Identity and Belonging again there were differences between the two groups. For the Cypriots, the main components of their identity are family, peers and school, while for the Migrants this was ethnicity. However, having an ethnic identity was described as not always a good thing due to the misinformation that can occur through it, such that older generations attitudes can wrongly shape younger generations’ attitudes towards negative long-held prejudices and violence. Research that examined the relationship between cultural backgrounds and negative social behavior (Karakulak & Dimitrova, 2016) found that unique social and cultural components of an ethnic identity may not always be an asset and so there is a need to develop a novel way of ‘healthy’ identity formation. The Radicalisation Awareness Network (2017, p.14) argues that young people should be educated on “citizenship, political, religious and ethnic tolerance, non-prejudiced thinking, extremism, democratic values, cultural diversity, and the historical consequences of ethnically and politically motivated violence”.

In terms of what young people perceive as ‘needs’ both groups referred to personal empowerment but with a slightly different focus. The Cypriots discussed their need for confidence, motivation and positive role models, while the Migrants discussed the need for young people to be educated and to develop a sense of respect towards God.

EU recommendations
Implement spirituality and religion in schools as a way of developing young people’s morals.

Establish a contextually differentiated view on ‘healthy identity-formation’ for youth by teaching them how to extract the positive and adaptive aspects of their cultural and ethnic practices.

Provide education that is based on political, religious and ethnic tolerance

Provide education that fosters non-prejudiced thinking, cultural diversity and consequences of historically and politically motivated violence.

National recommendations

Implement personal development programmes as part of the school curriculum

**CATEGORY 3: VALUES, SELF-CONCEPT AND SELF-ESTEEM**

For the Cypriot population the main driver behind their values and their overall decision-making is the support of their parents. This is in line with research that shows how young adults in Cyprus are well-supported by their main caregivers thus leading to adult healthy functioning (Demetriou & Christodoulides, 2011).

In terms of what fuels anger both groups referred to injustice, although the former group focused on school injustice, while the latter focused on political and war injustice. For both groups it was clear that young people have a need to discuss matters that trouble them in school and in the wider society. Creating a space for dialogue is therefore critical to prevent development of radical ideas and attitudes fuelled by mismanaged anger (Aiello, Puivgert & Schubert, 2018).

EU & National Recommendations

- Involve parents in school programmes so as to strengthen the youth-parent relationship in a manner that promotes positive empowerment for the youth.
- Foster youth-led open dialogue practices in schools and in the community

**CATEGORY 4: RECOGNISING AND CHALLENGING EXTREMIS MESSAGES**

Young people emphasized that being vulnerable is a risk factor in terms of youth radicalisation. Both the Cypriot and Migrant group strongly discussed the role of personal empowerment as a way of combating this. The new EU Youth Strategy supports youth empowerment through boosting their innovation and confidence through capacity-building activities (European Commission, 2018). Young people explained that besides interventions at a local and governmental level, the next most important aspect is ultimately the young person’s mindset. Having a “conscious mind” enables youth to strengthen the nature of their decision-making as well as their critical thinking.

EU & National Recommendations

- Invest in young people’s personal empowerment by setting in place opportunities for them to feel motivated and valued by parents, teachers and the wider community.
- Include youth mentors both in school and in the community for young people to engage in open-dialogue on a peer-to-peer level that encourages critical thinking and reflection.
CATEGORY 5: UNFAIR TREATMENT, STIGMA AND MARGINALIZATION

The main component addressed by both groups as a trigger of marginalization is the lack of opportunity to get their voices heard. In examining the role of dialogue for prevention of youth radicalisation, Aiello et al. (2018) encourages young adults to raise their opinions and doubts concerning current issues.

On the other hand, the Cypriot students expressed the need for objective education regarding historical facts which they believe can eliminate stigma. Zembylas (2010) found that Turkish-speaking children in school tend to be racialized and marginalized within the dominant discourse of Greek-Cypriot teachers. The author argues that without structural transformation of the educational system in Northern and Southern Cyprus, the practice of racism and nationalism will not change in schools.

EU Recommendations

➢ Creation of Youth-led open dialogue spaces where young people can explore and resolve topics that currently trouble them (i.e. radicalisation, violence, unfair treatment, etc.)

National Recommendations

➢ Structural and contextual transformation of educational system that changes the nature of discourse in class towards a non-nationalistic direction.

CATEGORY 6: COMMUNITY/ENVIRONMENT

Amongst the suggestions listed by the Cypriots regarding what they believe should be implemented at a community level to prevent youth radicalisation the idea of intercultural awareness and compassion was included. These coincide with the new EU Youth Strategy (European Commission, 2018) such that young people should be connected across the EU to promote solidarity and intercultural understanding. The young Migrants on the other hand focused on the importance of family as their most important source of support in their environment.

EU & National recommendations

➢ Establish Racism Awareness Campaigns
➢ Connect national and Migrant young people in theatrical plays with anti-radicalisation messages
➢ Increase participation of young people in European initiatives.
➢ Strengthen efforts for young unaccompanied Migrants to connect with family members/relatives.

CATEGORY 7: LIFE ASPIRATIONS AND GOALS

While the Cypriot youth discussed the need for positive personal and career development, the Migrant youth discussed the need for social integration and stronger religious beliefs. Despite their differences it seems that young people’s general life aspirations relate to living more socially integrated and fulfilling lifestyles which is in line with the Good Lives Model (Ward, Mann & Gannon, 2006).

EU & National recommendations

➢ Adopt a multi-agency approach that includes all those who interact with youth directly or indirectly; youth workers, mentors, educators, parents, youth organisations, and community service workers. All should work with the aim of creating opportunities and building on young people’s strengths so as to help them lead more fulfilling lives.
Invest in young people’s spiritual, personal, academic and career development as these are protective factors in the face of youth radicalisation.

CONCLUSIONS

In terms of the tools that the YEIP model can work with we conclude that based on the Cypriot research the main focus should be on Youth-Led Awareness Campaigns, amendment of School-based practices and establishing Open Dialogue. Youth-led Awareness campaigns should focus on: a) social, gender & cultural diversity, b) youth radicalisation, c) healthy identity formation, d) objective understanding of ethnicity and e) political, cultural and historical issues in national and EU context. Schools should establish a) open dialogues for youth to discuss contemporary societal phenomena, b) spirituality and religion as a way of enhancing young people’s morals, c) personal empowerment programmes, d) youth mentors to set positive role models, e) the involvement of parents in all initiatives, and f) structural transformation of the educational system to promote objective non-racial transferring of knowledge.

Establishing an open-dialogue approach with young people will create a space that is non-threatening and where they can raise concerns, share doubts and form critical thinking. As stated by one of our youth “Only fools and the dead cannot change their mind” – establishing a critical mindset is the ultimate tool that can prevent a young person from engaging in violent radicalisation.
REFERENCES


Onoufriou, A. (2009). ‘Falling in love with someone from your own sex is like going against Cyprus itself …’ – discourses towards heterosexual and female-to-female subjectivities at the University of Cyprus, *Journal of Gender Studies, 18*:1, 13-23, DOI: 10.1080/09589230802584196


ITALY
AN OPINION ISSUE

THE POINT OF VIEW OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE ISSUE OF VIOLENT RADICALISATION PREVENTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABSTRACT

After the first phase dedicated to the literature review on the theme of violent youth radicalisation in Italy (WP1), the YEIP project entered in its second operative phase: the field research work (WP2).

According to the opinion of 78 Italian students, aged 16-29, the project will create some tools for the prevention of violent youth radicalisation, based on the principles of positive psychology, Good Lives Model and restorative justice.

This national chapter analyses the results of 53 semi-structured interviews and 4 focus groups conducted, with youth-led methodology, by 9 young co-researchers selected for taking actively part to the YEIP project under the guidance of professional researchers.

The conclusive analysis of the field research activities, which gave voice to the thoughts of 69 young students coming from the 3 universities and 3 high school, highlighted gaps, issues and main needs from which we developed some recommendations aimed to prevent violent radicalisation among Italian youths.
KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE COUNTRY REPORT

The YEIP project has the aim to prevent youth violent radicalisation through the use of tools based on Good Lives Model, positive psychology and restorative justice. The other way round, the opinion of a total of 78 Italian students, that took part in the project as co-researchers or as participants in focus groups and/or interviews, will help to construct these instruments. The results of the first phase of the project (WP1), which consisted in a review of the literature on violent radicalisation in Italy, have affected the choice of the sample for the second research phase (WP2), that involved young people coming from different socio-economic, cultural, religious and ethnic background. Objective of this national chapter is to analyse the results of 4 focus groups and 53 interviews occurred from March to April 2018 in Italy, taking into account the point of view of 9 young co-researchers selected for conducting the YEIP experimentation together with professional researchers. The final purpose of this second project phase is making some suggestions for creating youth-led prevention tools, designed according to the opinion and needs of Italian young people. This choice is the result of a trend inversion that will permit creating policies more suited to youths.

THE YOUNG RESEARCHERS TEAM

DESCRIPTION

One of the main innovative characteristics of the YEIP project is the use of a youth-led methodology, that find concrete expression thanks to the active involvement of young people in every part of the YEIP research.

Youth-led research is the approach that can be used to study society and move it forward in a progressive manner. Youth-led research also can serve as a methodological approach for bridging disciplines in search of comprehensive strategies for improving the lives of youth, particularly those who are marginalized in this society and find themselves without a “legitimate” voice in helping to shape their destinies (Delgado, 2006, p. 28).

With the purpose of reaching this aim, we selected 9 young co-researchers for helping us in conducing focus groups and interviews, and analysing YEIP field work results: we chose 4 students in the school environment and 5 students in the university environment (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1 - Demographic table of young co-researchers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. OF STUDENTS TRAINED</th>
<th>No. OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND</th>
<th>TOT. OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 females, 2 males</td>
<td>20-26</td>
<td>Law University, Education University</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 females, 2 males</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>Scientific High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECRUITMENT METHOD

Thanks to the collaboration of the Law Department of Modena and Reggio Emilia University\(^1\) with several high schools in the Emilia Romagna Region, it has been possible to take contacts with a high school, proposing to its students to participate in the project.

The school identified a class available for taking part in the project: 18 students presented their candidature as co-researchers and the class voted democratically the 4 co-researchers, with the only limit of equitable a pair gender representation.

As for the university environment, thanks to the collaboration with CRID – Interdepartmental Research Centre on Discrimination and vulnerabilities of Modena and Reggio Emilia University and the use of social networks, we spread the call for co-researchers.

TRAINING RECEIVED

According to IARS international Institute, coordinator of the YEIP project, through the right type of empowerment activities, young people can be facilitated to influence decision-making.

In view of that, starting from their experience in the field of youth empowerment and youth-led methodology, IARS provided prototype materials for co-researchers' training to every project partner.

Taking inspiration from the IARS general training structure, we designed two different training courses for school students (2 days training in February 2018, with more legal and basic knowledge) and university students (1 day training in March 2018).

At first, we presented the YEIP project and its objectives, including co-researchers tasks. Then, we provided for basics in social research (research methodology, qualitative and quantitative research, focus group and interviews). Successively, we examine in depth the theme of ethics in research, including confidentiality and anonymity. Finally, we discussed the young people's right to participate, starting from the revolutionary approach of the UN Convention on the Right of the Child 1989 (CRC)\(^2\), and about the youth-led methodology.

The method used for the trainings included a mix of theory and practice (simulated focus groups and interviews; observation, transcription and analysis) that was extremely appreciated by students, together with the use of multimedia tools (PowerPoint presentations, videos, audios, images).

Feedback summary
The evaluation of the training and co-research path was overall very positive.

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 is the minimum and 5 is the maximum), 7 students rated the training as 5, 2 (university students) as 4 and only 1 (a school student) as 3. The most appreciated aspect was the use of the mixed-method of theory and practice.

The YEIP project has been evaluated positively by the school and university co-researchers, who were really happy to having taken part in it. They particularly appreciated conducing focus groups and interviews and the use of the youth-led methodology.

University students thought that one of the positive aspects of the co-research path was that it permitted them to grow as persons. They believed that the YEIP project could be extremely useful for young people.

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\(^1\) The Law Department, through the CRID - Interdepartmental Research Centre on Discrimination and vulnerability has signed a memorandum of understanding with ANS to carry on projects in fields of common interest.

\(^2\) For the first time, the CRC recognised children as subjects of their own rights, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to their age and level of development.
The second phase of the YEIP project consisted in a field research work that involved 69 young people aged 16-29, including students of foreign origins\(^3\), who participated in a total of 4 focus groups and 53 individual semi-structured interviews, carry on with the help of the 9 young co-researchers from March to April 2018.

The YEIP experimentation was approved by the bioethics committee of the Bologna University on March 14th 2018.

All participants were informed about the project and the experimentation and signed an informed consent form. In case of minors, both parents also provided informed consent.

### School sample (Tab. 2)

The sample was composed by students from 3 high schools, selected also thanks to the help of Law Department, in contact with several schools of Emilia Romagna Region. A total of 18 students was involved in 2 focus groups and a total of 28 students was involved in individual semi-structured interviews.

#### Tab. 2 - Demographic table of school sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Total/Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>18 participants</td>
<td>28 participants (18 also participated in the focus groups)</td>
<td>28 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>16-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>- 12 females, - 6 males</td>
<td>- 18 females, - 10 males</td>
<td>- 18 females, - 10 males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>- 17 Italians, - 1 with foreign origins</td>
<td>- 23 Italians, - 5 with foreign origins</td>
<td>-23 Italians, - 5 with foreign origins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### University sample (Tab. 3)

The sample, coming from different Italian Regions and aged 19-29, was selected through the help of both the Law Department of Modena and Reggio Emilia University and young researchers. A total of 22 university students participated in 2 focus groups and a total of 25 took part in individual semi-structured interviews.

#### Tab. 3 - Demographic table of university sample\(^4\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Total/Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>22 participants</td>
<td>25 participants (6 also participated in the focus groups)</td>
<td>41 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>19-29</td>
<td>19-29</td>
<td>19-29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\)For the purpose of this report, the term “foreign origins” includes:
- students born in a foreign Country and with one or both the parents being foreigner
- students born in Italy but with one or both the parents being foreigner

\(^4\)The demographic information was collected through anonymous questionnaires. Some students didn’t fill in the questionnaires and this implied the impossibility of knowing the “total” regarding gender and origins.
### KEY FINDINGS: DATA DISPLAY

#### FOCUS GROUPS

- **Definitions**
  
  Both school and university students were confused about what **radicalisation and extremism** mean. However, they associated these two concepts mostly with negative terms such as violence, imposition, lack of acceptance of others’ points of view and ideas.

  School students associated radicalisation and extremism mainly with ISIS. (S. “*If you only know certain type of ideas, as for example in those Countries where there is ISIS, if young people grow with specific ideologies, and they do not have an open mind, and they do not know other ideologies, it is logic that they [...] become radicalised. Instead, if they would be adequately educated maybe they would choose another path*”).

  Compared to school students, university students mainly associated radicalisation and extremism with more general political and “religious” issues.

- **Identity and Belonging**

  Overall, school students answered that they did not feel they belong to the Italian **State** or not feel represented, because they thought that Italy is a closed, narrow-minded country, with discriminatory attitudes against foreigners. Rather, they felt they belong to the **community**, even if someone felt excluded by the society because he/she thought that his/her opinion was not taken into consideration.

  Students affirmed that young people are not interested in politics because of the lack of positive examples in adult figures (adults also are not interested), and because of the school education system, where contemporary historical and political aspects are not treated in the study program.

  Concerning the specific theme of **native culture**, on one side school students reported that knowing the culture of origin is important; however, on the other side they reported that it can also negatively influence people.

- **Values, self-concept, self-esteem**

  Some of the most important **values** identified by school students were loyalty, family and friendship. They reported that these values could help young people to counter radicalisation.

  For university students, most important values were respect, sincerity and freedom.

  Concerning the “**right and wrong**” choice, school students stated that this decision depends on one’s
personal background and that, however, it is possible to decide what is right or wrong thanks to the dialogue with others.

Similarly, university students reported that “right and wrong” decision is based on the education received and on the family values.

Concerning the topic of emotions, school students affirmed that anger causes pain, and very strong anger feelings could bring people to commit extreme gestures. Falsehood, lack of respect, contradiction, personal failures and selfishness are the things that make young people most angry.

On the contrary, personal successes, freedom, being loved and love, feel good about themselves make young people particularly happy.

Concerning university students, lack of respect makes them angry, together with contradiction, rudeness and violence. On the contrary, knowing new things and, in particular, helping other people make them happy.

- **Recognising and Challenging Extremist Messages**

  School students reported the following causes of radicalisation:

  - The need to belong to something and to identify with something, the necessity to follow a group for feeling accepted (S. “We all need to feel part of a group. Even a radical group can give this sense of belonging. If I do not belong to a group I feel more vulnerable and maybe, just to belong to something, I do not care if this radical group commits criminal actions [...] because my need is to feel part of something”);

  - The influence of culture and family education (S. “I do the example of mafia: people that were born and live in that context are, in quotes, obliged [to that violent behaviour] and so I see in radicalisation something similar”);

  - Social exclusion;

  - Lack of self-security and lack of certainties and points of reference;

  - Anger turned into evil (S. “A person that feels bad [in a society] then reacts transforming the bad in anger against other people, cling to some ideologies that [...] are like an outburst for the pain suffered”).

  University students also reported the following causes: psychological problems, need for attention, request for help, need to find a way to externalise an inner uneasiness.

  **Solutions** identified by school students were, in particular, the use of dialogue with the purpose of showing (but not imposing) other perspectives and offering opportunities for discussion. Spreading knowledge about radicalisation to all people (included young people and parents), and trying to involve people in society for increasing their sense of belonging were also important for them.

- **Unfair Treatment, Stigma and Marginalisation**

  School students reported that is important to be a positive example for other people in order to counter unfair treatment in the society. For them, (formal and informal) voluntary work represents the primary way to be active in the society.

  Similarly, for university students also voluntary work was extremely important for being an active part of the society.
Community/Environment

The main landmarks identified by both school and university students were family and friends. In addition, school students also identified the school as an important point of reference.

Concerning community, most school students thought there is a lack of justice and tolerance in Italy, and highlighted the need for a more meritocratic society.

Life Aspirations and Goals

Concerning the theme of support by institutions for achieving life goals, school students reported a need to feel more listened, supported and understood. They highlighted the need for a society that treats all people in the same way, giving more to those with difficulties. They also need more knowledge on political issues. However, they reported that, for achieving life goals, it is also important to be personally responsible for one’s choices, and even if something bad happens, it is important to focus on its positive aspects.

University students reported the absence of the State, asking for more stimulus, help, support and encouragement in learning, new opportunities (job, activities and spaces dedicated) and certainties.

INTERVIEWS

Definitions

Interviews in school and university confirmed a lack of clear knowledge about the topics of radicalisation and extremism.

However, compared to findings from the focus groups, the reported typologies of radicalisation were more variegated (political, religious, ideological, etc.). The reference to ISIS terrorism was reported, in particular, by school students (S. “I think to political radicalisation, if I’m not mistaken there was it in Italy for a period in some political parties and it led also to attacks, and […] other radicalism like the Islamic one with the attacks of ISIS in the name of religion”).

Identity and Belonging

School and university students associated the concept of identity firstly with the family, but also with the cultural origins.

Humanity, sensitivity, listening, being available and help other people, respect towards others were the main characteristics of identity reported by university and school students (S. “I try to always do the right thing in general for others, not only for myself; I try to do the morally right thing even though it is not the one I would prefer and the one that I would make”)

Concerning the concept of belonging, university and school students interpreted it not only as belonging to Italy, but also to the family and friends groups. However, some students stated that they mostly felt to be “citizens of the world” (3 from university) or European citizens (1 from university and 1 from school).

For university and school students “being Italian” meant, mostly, to be born in Italy, to know Italian language, history and traditions, and to have the Italian values, mentality and way of life. For creating a sense of belonging in Italian people, university and school students reported that it is important to spread more initiatives that directly involve individuals in the community (U. “So if there is a project and you exclude a person, he/she will never feel part of that project, that team”) and make people feel
accepted and appreciated (S. “I think it’s important to be in a community where you feel appreciated, because a community in which you feel appreciated can help a person avoid radicalisation. If you feel accepted you do not need to find something wrong that will make you feel more accepted”).

### Values, self-concept, self-esteem

School and university students had similar values: honesty, sincerity and respect; family and friendship; education; justice and democracy; tolerance, sharing and helping other people.

Most school and university students were happy to be what they are and to the question “what do you think you are good at?”, the most frequent answers were: helping other people, studying and following their passions. However, as to things that could improve their life, both groups cited having more time, self-esteem and self-confidence, and realise themselves.

About factors that make young people angry, both groups reported injustices, intolerance and prejudices, dishonesty and disrespect. On the contrary, things that make them happy were, in particular, family and friends but also, for school students, being listened to and fairly treated, and, for university students, realising their life objectives and helping other people.

### Recognising and Challenging Extremist Messages

The majority of school and university students do not legitimise the use of violence. They prefer the dialogue solution.

School and university students proposed the following solutions against radicalisation:

- Creating occasions of open talking and discussion with other people
- Giving young people the possibility to talk about their problems
- Improving the education system (U. “Sometimes we should look critically at the history [...] certainly looking and studying critically our past mistakes can lead us not to repeat them [...] you must always study and learn about what happened and what is happening”) and promoting critical thinking at school
- Not excluding (U. “We all count, society is not composed by few people, but society is composed by many people. We are like a mosaic, we are many small tiles that that, individually, are useless [...] but it is together that these tiles create a beautiful mosaic and when a person opposes the idea of collaboration all the mosaic collapses, instead as good citizens we must include, we must be an unicum”).
- Learning to respect and feeling more respected and involved by the authorities
- Being happy with knowing yourself and finding a way to express yourself (U. “To prevent radicalization we need to create a context in which each of us can feel free to be who he/she is and to carry forward his/her own desires”)
- Removing wrong beliefs, showing different points of view (U. “We must show him a different point of view. For showing him a different point of view we must bring to light the things that he does not usually see, let him see things from another point of view”). Teachers and educators should encourage young people to have an open mind.
- Paying attention to the terminology used, also by media, and how the information is spread, avoiding misinformation

### Unfair Treatment, Stigma and Marginalisation
20/28 school students and 21/25 university students stated that they had been unfairly treated or even discriminated (especially during the school by other students). Participants also reported serious episodes of bulling, discrimination based on sexual orientation, racism, etc. (S: “Often [I felt unfairly treated] because the elementary schools, the first schools, for a fat boy [...] are not always the top, you are bullied [...] This is also one of the causes that leads you to become a bullet in your turn, [...] It makes you feel bad, makes you feel marginalised, empty”).

12/28 school students reported having an active role in the society (doing formal and/or voluntary work or simply acting positively). On the contrary, 10 school students declared to not be active for lack of time or not having the age for voting yet.

13/25 university students reported having an active role in the society (doing formal and/or informal voluntary work, exercising the right to vote, having a job). On the contrary, 9 university students declared to be not active for lack of time or being not interested.

**Community/Environment**

For school and university students family, friends and school are the main landmarks.

Concerning the topic of security, most school and university students stated feeling safe where they lived, referring in particular to the city where they resided.

The students’ advices to those in charge of local services in order to help young people engage as citizens and lead positive lives were:

- Involving young people in every context
- Creating initiatives, dedicated places and opportunities for youths
- Listening to youths, creating dedicated help desks
- Improving school environments
- Enhancing merit

**Life Aspirations and Goals**

Concerning the support of the environment for achieving goals, school students would like more support in learning, more initiatives dedicated to youths and more access to information. University students asked for more job opportunities and support, more meritocracy and equity, more opportunities for discussion and personal growth.

**KEY FINDINGS: DATA ANALYSIS**

Focus groups with school students were more actively participated, compared to focus groups with university students. School students appeared more at ease in talking and discussing with their peers.

Young people and especially school students ask for being listened by adults, being involved and participating in the society.

Family is an important landmark for Italian students, as it is conceived as a safe and supporting place.

Most students feel unfairly treated or even discriminated, especially during the school period.
Not all students are unaware of the possibility of being actively engaged in the society besides having a job and the right to vote. The primary ways to be active in the society for Italian students are the formal and informal volunteering and socially engaged jobs.

Students asked for a tolerant and equal society and thought that radicalisation and violence in general could be countered with dialogue and confront, and through the learning of respect and critical thinking at school and university.

Most young people need to feel accepted, appreciated, listened to and taken into consideration by adults. They report a need to live in a society that allows them to live happily, because, as a university participant said, “if a person is happy, he/she will never commit extremist acts”.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE YEIP TOOLS**

According to the interpretation of the results, which was conducted with the help of young co-researchers, the YEIP prevention instruments will have:

- To fill in the gap of knowledge on the present and “the past, as a warning for the future” (Gavrielides et al., 2018, p. 102), starting from a broad definition of radicalisation phenomena “that takes into consideration every possible form of violent extremism, all of which are considered equally dangerous” (Gavrielides et al., 2018, p. 93).

  Tools suggested: Cineforum5, videos, images and testimonies of authors and victims for stimulating young people interest and empathy

- To teach the skills of respectful listening and discussion through regulated moment of dialogue and respectful debate, mediating eventual conflicts occurred.

  Tools suggested: Forum Theatre6, focus group technique and mediation restorative practices

- To stimulate critical thinking that allows to question mass thinking, recognising when information and behaviour are not correct

- To promote activities aimed to strengthen the personality of young people, giving space and implementing their own individuality, for encouraging them to oppose to wrong messages.

  Tools suggested: activities based on the principles of positive psychology

To reach these objectives, professionals working with young people who will apply the YEIP instruments, need:

- To be adequately trained on the themes of radicalisation, extremism and marginalisation

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5 Public debate on a film just showed.

6 The Forum Theatre is a tool from Theatre of the Oppressed where the “spect-actor” has the possibility to explore and try possible actions for transforming the outcome of a staged situation. It is an exercise of democracy because anyone can speak and act.
To become able to listen and taken into consideration young people’s opinions, mediating conflicts and promoting the implementation of youths’ personal skills

To approach to non-formal and media education (not common in Italy)

NATIONAL LEVEL

Also, at the national level should be considered the following recommendations:

- To strengthen non-formal education as a moment of personal growth for young people and to implement strategies that allow developing responsibility, a leading role in the society and the citizen attitude in young people. Formally introducing Human Right Education in the study curriculum should be a priority.

- To teach young people (in school and university) what radicalisation is and how, through tolerance and dialogue, it is possible to create a barrier towards violence and towards refusal of “the different”.

- To establish moments of listening for young people (in school and university, but also in the local community) and giving them space of expression in the society, making them feel an active part of the community, with the aim of making young people feel part of the society and taking responsibility for it. Some important means could be the volunteering and the political activism.

EU LEVEL

In addition, at the EU level is critical,

- Spreading a culture of youth participation and protagonism in the community with the aim of stimulating a positive cycle that increases the attention of the politic and the society toward young people’s problems, and promotes the self-empowerment of youths towards their needs and those of the society. Promoting the direct involvement of young people in the society, for example through volunteering and recognition of the acquired competences is necessary.

- Spreading knowledge on radicalisation and marginalisation and disseminating the culture of tolerance, dialogue and knowledge of the “difference”: promoting activities that facilitate the knowledge of other cultures and different ways of living and thinking, breaking down national barriers, is necessary.
REFERENCES


SWEDEN
ABSTRACT

There is a social need for more effective youth policies that can enhance young people’s social inclusion and minimize the risk of marginalization and radicalization with greater “buy in” from youth themselves. This text is part of an international and Erasmus+ financed project called the Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project (YEIP), in which original youth-led, action research has been carried out in four environments: schools, universities, young offender institutions, and online. This report and the results from the research group in Sweden focus on the school environment. Following YEIP’s youth-led research methodology, junior researchers from Sweden, that is, university students, were involved and carried out interviews with grade-school students at the secondary-school level. Two group seminars and twenty-six individual interviews were carried out. The results show a relatively nuanced view of marginalisation and radicalisation processes, and that these phenomena are largely understood as being distinct from each other. Concerning ideas about counteracting youth radicalisation, the students’ stories point to the importance of dialogue. Taking the students’ stories as a starting-point, the paper proposes that tolerance teaching be developed, focusing on youth alienation and the risk of radicalisation, and that schools’ responsibility for education about democracy issues be expanded.
KEY OBJECTIVES

There is a social need for more effective youth policies that can enhance young people’s social inclusion and minimize the risk of marginalization and radicalization with greater ‘buy in’ from youth themselves (Pisori & Ahmed 2016). This text is part of an international and Erasmus+ financed project called the Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project (YEIP), in which original youth-led, action research has been carried out in four environments: schools, universities, young offender institutions, and online. This report and the results from the research group in Sweden focus on the school environment. In its implementation, the project has been inspired by the Good Lives Model (GLM), restorative justice and positive psychology, assuming that people seek certain ‘goods’ in their lives to increase or improve their psychological well-being (Gavrielides and Worth 2014; Foresee Research group 2016).

The purpose of the paper is, firstly, to describe secondary-school students’ attitudes toward and conceptions of youth alienation and marginalisation and the risk of youth radicalisation. Secondly, the report brings together the interviewed students’ ideas about prevention and what they think they themselves, and schools, can do to promote social inclusion. The report should primarily be seen as foundational information on which to subsequently develop, within the framework of the YEIP project, suitable tools by which to counteract youth marginalisation and potential violent radicalisation.

YOUNG RESEARCHER TEAM

As an initial step to recruit young researchers to the project, the Chairman of the Department of Social Work at Linnaeus University was contacted. When formal consent was required, time was allowed to present the YEIP project to a social work class, in which ten students (who will from this point on in the present text be referred to as the young researchers) expressed interest in participating. Among the young researchers nine were female and one male (aged between 21-30).

Utilising the IARS prototype material, methodological training was carried out primarily on two occasions. On the initial occasion, a presentation was given about the project and what the young researchers’ participation would entail. Fundamental epistemological assumptions regarding the qualitative method and focusing specifically on the opportunities and limitations of the interview form were also discussed. The second occasion focused more specifically on the methodological craft – the interview technique itself. The interview guide that IARS provided was translated and revised so as to suit the national context and the particular environment (schools) that was the focus of the working group in Sweden. The revision was led by the young researchers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING

In the selection phase, senior researchers, with the support of the Kalmar County Administrative Board, contacted certain selected secondary schools in southern Sweden to recruit potential student participants. The project was presented to interested school classes and the implementation of the project was described for potential participants. Students who participated represented a relatively wide range in terms of educational
programme. They included students in both applied and academic programmes, students with a high rate of absence and young immigrants in preparatory classes.

As an initial step, two group seminars were held, attended by 15 and 13 students, respectively (28 students in total). The seminars were semi-structured in that the young researchers ensured that they dealt with central themes such as fundamental values, understanding of concepts and ideas about inclusion/exclusion, marginalisation and radicalisation. A more overall theme in the discussions involved potential prevention measures. As a second step, a total of 26 individual interviews, based on a structure similar to that of the seminars, were carried out (see table 1 for stats).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Total/Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>28 participants</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>16-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>13 female / 15 male</td>
<td>7 female / 19 male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/non-native</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>17 native / 9 non-native</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Demographics of participants

Good practice requires that participants are aware of what will happen to them or what is required of them in the course of a study. Accordingly, all participants signed an informed consent letter prior to being interviewed by the young researchers’ team. It was also ensured that the participants were clear that their involvement in the procedure(s) was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage, without providing a reason. The data gathered in the project has been kept at the Linnaeus University in a locked and password protected place. Ethical approval was obtained from the ethical review board in Linköping, Sweden.

KEY FINDINGS

YOUTH ALIENATION AND MARGINALISATION

Judging from the interviews it would seem the young respondents have given a lot of thought to the question of what it means to be part of society. They may not always use concepts such as marginalisation or alienation, but they nevertheless express an awareness of the actual problem. The following quotations show how one student grapples with ideas of who is responsible for people’s alienation – society or the individual.

On the outside, you could say – that’s when you have been placed outside society. But if you are only on the outside you might not fight for it – it’s not something you’d do automatically. Society has to do something, but you yourself have to do something as well, to have the right to be part of society.

In the interviews there is a considerable range in the way in which marginalisation issues are discussed. With some of the students we find they have their own experiences of feeling alienated.

Me, I’m not that motivated, because I don’t know what’s going to happen to me. What is the Migration Agency going to decide for me? If I knew I could stay in Sweden, I’d really work hard, I wouldn’t waste a single hour. Sure, I work hard anyway, but it’s difficult. When you see your friend going away for summer vacation or working during the summer break, it’s tough – you feel different.
It does not seem unusual for the students in preparatory classes to experience difficulties in integrating with and feeling like part of society. Being able to enter and go through the Swedish education system is by many people seen as the only possible route by which to achieve established goals. There are also other, less formal, conditions that may be seen as entailing limitations.

There are always obstacles. I am a second-generation immigration and sometimes I feel the effects of that. When I wanted to be Lucia and couldn’t, because of my having brown hair. You can also feel excluded because of your name, and your gender, too. I work in a factory in the summer, and there’s a lot you have to carry, and just because I’m a girl and I’m short and thin, it doesn’t mean I’m not strong. So there’s a lot about my future in Sweden I can decide, but not more than the power I have. Studies are not just about me – it’s a system you have to follow – the admissions system. I live in the EU so I can study abroad. I have various opportunities thanks to Sweden being a member state of the EU.

In sum, the students see a number of obstacles to their integration and participation in society, but they also identify opportunities and the importance of agency. The problem lies – according to the young people – in both society/societal structures and in young people’s agency and desire to change their lives.

**RADICALISATION AS A CONCEPT AND PHENOMENON**

There is considerable breadth in the interview data as regards views on radicalisation as a concept and phenomenon in Swedish society. Most of the students have a fairly vague understanding of radicalisation processes. Above all, few of them have personal experience of finding themselves in the proximity of ongoing recruitment to different extremist movements.

For me, radicalisation is mainly linked to IS and stuff like that. They talk about Islam, and if I’m a Muslim it’s no problem. IS uses the name of Islam to get or recruit many people to make war. /.../ It’s basically terror marketing. They use the name of Islam to do things and say it’s right to do a lot of stuff. But it’s not right.

If you can’t see that other people have different views and not realise that it’s okay that other people have them, and you feel you have to change their opinions and use violence, then you’re well on the way to becoming radicalised. There’s a lot of “us versus them” feeling.

Several students speak about the importance of informing and educating people who are on the way to being drawn into extremist and violent movements, to help ensure the individual doesn’t fall for the terror marketing and become radicalised. By talking about and obtaining knowledge about the phenomenon, there is a chance that we will be able to combat radicalisation. The significance of a social context that strengthens one’s own perceptions and stands in contrast to the (perceived) Other is often brought up as an explanation for radicalisation.

**PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE SCHOOL’S RESPONSIBILITY**

In this section we look more closely at the “solutions” that appear in the interviews.

I think we should first give them space – if we simply censure them, their opinions are left unchanged and may grow. But if we given them space, people will realise that it’s an extremist group and wants something pernicious, and has nothing helpful to offer. People can see how radical they are, and I don’t
think they make a good impression in public debates – they just don’t have much to offer. So they end up shooting themselves in the foot, I think.

The above narrative highlights importance of having an open dialogue and conversation with a person who “represents” the extreme. In many ways the students’ stories constitute a call for a type of tolerance teaching. Again and again they stress the importance of having an open dialogue, of refraining from making judgements, of listening and making counterarguments and trying, in this way, to reach individuals in the “risk zone”.

Radical individuals are disrespectful toward some people, so schools need to address this – to accept an opinion but not accept disrespect toward someone – it should not be one and the same. If someone becomes radical, we can question the person and ask him or her to come back.

The young people’s stories reveal the image of a good teacher – a teacher who listens, enters into dialogue and tries to teach social values to students who may be on the way to becoming radicalised. Another student continues in this vein.

Tell people about it, all the time. You must never forget that you are being heard by many people who perhaps lie low and don’t say very much. Plus, maybe you shouldn’t bring it up directly with a person – maybe you cannot bring it up. You can’t bring it up and judge someone, and say “Your opinions are wrong”. You have to keep it cool and be, like, reasonable.

Several of the young people also refer to the importance of creating shared perspectives and promoting respect.

I’m the only one from Eritrea in my class. Many others are from Afghanistan, Syria, Albania, Kosovo and many other places. You can learn from them. It’s good to have many in the same class. You can learn about other cultures and you learn the language.

Interviewer: But maybe it’s a shame there are no Swedes in the class. They could also learn from being in this kind of setting.

Yes, true – it should be that way. Then you could learn things. I could teach others what it’s like to travel through the Sahara. I could teach him. And he could tell me how things work in Sweden.

A number of interesting ideas are expressed here about the importance of creating opportunities for people to interact with each other. Segregation, however, is a fundamental problem. The importance of dialogues, access to the language, and interpersonal interaction is a strong theme in several interviews.

ANALYSIS

In sum, the students demonstrate a relatively nuanced view of marginalisation and violent radicalisation processes. Correctly, these phenomena are, however, often treated as being separate – that is, the young people see no direct causal relationships between these phenomena. When the young people discuss strategies for helping individuals at risk of being drawn into violent movements, they often bring up arguments about how teachers and adults, by entering into dialogue with at-risk young people, can counteract radicalisation processes. There is strong emphasis on what may be called “tolerance teaching” – which is about listening, creating dialogues and thus also good conditions for favourable learning processes.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE YEIP TOOLS

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:

- Developing youth “meeting-places” were a tolerance perspective is promoted through dialogue, both on- and offline.
- Expand implementation of schools’ responsibility for democracy issues.
- Initiate a critical discussion to scrutinise the Swedish school system and culture with a view to revealing how norms that include and exclude people are created and maintained, for example, through language.

AT THE EU LEVEL:

- *Education and teaching a culture of democracy:* Young people need to be provided with opportunities to learn about segregation, marginalisation, radicalisation and the mechanisms that create alienation. This can be facilitated through the creation of different kinds of meeting places (for example summer school camps).

- *Clarification of context and knowledge area:* Based on students’ stories and in relation to the above point, we discern a need to clarify the difference between, on the one hand, a broad societal problem involving issues of young people’s marginalisation and segregation, and on the other, the more specific area of knowledge that deals with young people’s radicalisation and radicalisation processes.

- *Dialogue:* The interviews reveal the importance of listening to young people’s stories and experiences and including them in research and education. Youth-led research also increases the possibilities of promoting empowerment, democratization processes and young people’s active participation.
REFERENCES


ROMANIA
ABSTRACT

This report outlines the results of a youth led field research carried out with 71 young people in Romania and Poland, including 16 with migrant background with the aim to collect their views on violent radicalisation and to inform the development of prevention tools for radicalisation based on the meaningful contribution of restorative justice, positive psychology and the Good Lives Model. The research was conducted in the framework of the The Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project (YEIP) project funded by Erasmus+. Based on an initial training in qualitative research methods, 16 young researchers organized three focus groups with 38 peers and 33 semi-structured interviews. The data collected was analysed based on seven elements that would form the basis of the YEIP preventive tool: Radicalisation, Identity and Belonging, Values and Self-concept, Challenging extremist messages, Stigma and Marginalisation, Community and Environment, and Life Aspirations and Goals. In conclusion, a number of recommendations to prevent violent radicalisation among Romanian, Polish and migrant youth are made targeting both the national and EU levels.
OBJECTIVES OF THE FIELDWORK IN ROMANIA AND POLAND

The report highlights the results of the action research carried out by a group of young people in high-schools and universities in Romania and Poland in April—June 2018. The aim of the research was threefold.

Firstly, to assess the conceptualisations of marginalisation and violent radicalisation and among young people.

Secondly, to collect young people’s input on the prevention of these phenomena.

Thirdly, to inform the development of prevention tools for radicalisation based on the meaningful contribution of restorative justice, positive psychology and the Good Lives Model (GLM) for rehabilitation of offenders (Ward and Brown, 2004; Gavrielides and Worth, 2014)

The research was carried out as part of The Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project (YEIP) project, a three-year youth-led programme funded by Erasmus+. The aim of the project is to design a youth-led, positive policy prevention framework – YEIP PREVENT model– for tackling and preventing the marginalisation and violent radicalisation among young people in Europe.

In order to build the evidence base for the policy measure, the findings in Romania will be analysed along the findings carried out by the project partners in the UK, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Sweden.

THE YOUNG RESEARCHERS TEAM

The fieldwork was carried out in Bucharest, Romania and Warsaw, Poland by a group of 16 young people, including 12 Romanian students and 4 refugees aged 17-23. The process was guided by the project team.

Out of the 12 students, 5 were high-school students and 7 were students in political science and social work at the University of Bucharest.

The selection process of the students was carried out by teachers and university professors, respectively. The selection criteria included good communication skills, gender balance and student’s interest for the research topic. Two of the university students have been involved in the first stage of the project, which focused on analysing the current state of the art in Romania looking at marginalisation and radicalization prevention policies, research and practice.

The refugees involved in the research included three men (two Syrian and one Afghan) and one woman (Syrian). They were selected directly by the Foundation using the same selection criteria.
To introduce participants to the research methodology of the YEIP project, the meaning of qualitative research and data collection methods, three training sessions were organised, one for each group (high-school students, university students and refugees). Each session had a duration of one day. The training materials used were the *Research Ethics and Data Management Handbook* developed by IARS for the YEIP project as well as adapted material for training young people using qualitative methods and techniques (van Reeuwijk, 2013).

The first part of the training outlined the project and the findings of the country report carried out initially. The second part focused on the meaning of qualitative research, the semi-structured interview technique but also focus group and observation. The content was tailored to the different ages of the participants but also their educational background and experience in conducting qualitative research. In the case of high-school students and refugees, the second part of the training was mostly based on experiential learning.

The interview guide of the project was translated in Romanian and Arabic and adapted to the specific profile of the interviewees in the school and university environments with the help of the young researchers. To carry out the interviews with the Polish group, the interview guide was translated in Polish with the help of Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej (SIP), a former NGO project partner.

Involving young people all stages of the research is in line with YEIP philosophy. Building the research skills of the unexperienced young people had an empowering effect on them: it boosted their self-confidence to talk about sensitive issues with peers (radicalisation, identity, belonging, values etc.) and increased their understanding of the social issues that negatively influence young people’s thinking and actions. In addition, it improved their motivation to contribute to the development of a preventive measure that would change things for their future. Also, they developed research skills which are useful social skills and good for any future job.

Equally important, their involvement in data collection led to more reliable results considering that interviewees feel more comfortable and free talking about sensitive issues to people of their own age compared to adults.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING**

In order to carry out the research, the lead researcher obtained ethics approval from the president of the Schottener Foundation. In Romania there is no official body responsible for ethical regulation of research carried out by NGOs in different disciplines, including social sciences. For collecting data from both young students and migrants ethical approval was given on the condition that the focus groups and the interviews would not be voice or video-recorded. As a result the sessions took longer than envisioned as the young researchers had to take detailed notes of the answers, including quotes.

Both the focus groups and interviews were carried out based on the written consent of the participants following a description of the project, their rights to withdraw at any time, and confidentiality rules. In the case of the young migrants, the young researchers used their native languages to explain the ethical guidelines and carry out the focus groups and interviews. Their notes were then translated in Romanian. For the Polish participants SIP translated the notes in English for the purpose of interpretation. The findings are analysed and presented separately from the ones of the Romanian groups.
The selection of student interviewees was completed with the help of teachers and professors based on protocols between the Foundation and the high schools and University of Bucharest whereby young students would volunteer to take part in the research. The selection criteria included age, gender balance, school attendance (both students with high attendance and students at risk of dropping out) and socio-economic background (from high, mid and low-income families).

The Schottener Foundation selected of refugees and migrants, the only criteria being age and gender balance.

Using broad selection criteria we ensured that the data collected from the pool of potential interviewees was representative for all groups, limiting the influence of outliers or extreme observations.

In total 71 young people were involved, 62 from Romania (46 native Romanians and 16 migrants) and 9 from Poland. Three focus groups were organized considering the different ages and languages spoken by the participants.

The first focus group was organized in Bucharest and involved 14 university students. The second was organized in Warsaw and involved 8 Romanian high school students and 9 Polish participants (high-school and refugees). The third focus group was organized in Bucharest and was attended by 7 young refugees.

Following the focus groups, the young researchers carried out 33 semi-structured interviews.

Data interpretation was done by the researchers with assistance from the project staff.

Table 1. Demographic table of the school and university sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>2 focus groups with total of 31 young people (Romanian and Polish)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>17-23</td>
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<td>Male 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female 14</td>
<td>Female 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/non-native (not obligatory)</td>
<td>29 Native</td>
<td>All native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 non-native</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Demographic table of the migrant youth sample

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>One focus group with 7 young migrants</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>17-22</td>
<td>17-22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>5 male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 female</td>
<td>4 female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/non-native</td>
<td>Non-native (Syrian, Iraq, Afghanistan; Eritrea)</td>
<td>Non-native (Syrian, Iraq, Afghanistan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY FINDINGS: DATA DISPLAY

ON RADICALISATION

In general, both school and university students as well as young migrants were familiar with the meaning of violent radicalisation which was mostly associated with violence and religious extremism:

“[Radicalisation] is a process whereby someone’s thinking and behaviour changes from good to bad to draw attention on something through violence.”

“Radicalisation is a process that involves changing your thinking, your values, your identity as a result of external influence or exposure to certain environment and becoming drawn to using violence to pursue your thinking.”

“It means pursuing violent behaviour to other people perceived as being against you. Clearly to be able to be violent, your thinking becomes violent first.”

“Actions undertaken by people with extremely strong beliefs, usually religious or against humankind, that may lead to mass destruction.”

Some participants defined radicalisation in the light of a cognitive change that evolves around concepts of “hatred” and “otherness”.

“Radicalisation means becoming part of a right-wing group which you find better or more in line with your thinking as opposed to other groups, beliefs or ideas. [...] You become to hate the ones who are not part of your group”.

“It means being exposed to some ideas about some self-salvation if harm is done to others.

“It is mostly religious and involves a change from good to bad thinking... like terror-based thinking”. 

“It means being manipulated in the way you think about society and being drawn to a right –wing group. It is a brainwash; you slowly start hating others for not thinking like you.”

The answers from six Polish respondents indicate that radicalisation is perceived mostly as a process that involves a cognitive change: “strong beliefs that no arguments can reach” or “adopting extreme right-wing beliefs “.

“Radicalization this is all kinds of nationalistic groups with racist beliefs.”

A path to hate that is caused by strange untamed love to country.

ON IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Out of the 33 interviewees 27 explained that identity is linked to a certain set of values, norms, language and common history, be born in a country but also belonging to a family or to groups sharing common interests, activities etc. Among these, five Romanians and four refugees referred to it in relation to national identity and patriotism.

Only four Romanian participants identified religion as part of their identity whereas all refugees except for one mentioned it. The rest explained that every person is different and that personality and actions is what shapes one’s identity.

The student participants discussed about those issues and stressed that kinship bonds, the sense of belonging to a group and duty to actively participate in the society defines one’s identity:
“It means to have certain core values, to have some history, know the language and the traditions, be born here but also do something for your kind...reach out to others. Romanians are generally this kind of people”.

During the focus groups discussing the issue of identity, the refugee participants realised that the concept is linked to their ethnicity and sense of belonging to their country of origin first, regardless of the number of years they had lived in Romania. One refugee stated that “I work, learn the language and do the best to continue my life in this country but I am Syrian first. I’m proud of my language, my land, my family.” When asked about the importance of belonging, most answers reflected this statement: “It is not important what racial group you belong to. It is important to have certain values, to respect who you are and who others are.”

In terms of the needs they have, the Romanian respondents shared a common view on the need to have their voice heard, improve their community, and continue their education regardless of their age. However, the majority of high school students said that people have the same needs, while the university students recognized that “One’s needs can be different depending on the place that person comes from and the environment she/he lives in.” We may share common needs, but in general people have different needs. Those with migrant background put their daily needs first and then referred to their need to be safe.

In relation to identity the answers of all Polish participants state that history, language, culture, traditions are related to their identity but three also mentioned religion and patriotism.

“Being Polish means to have a huge history.”

“To be Polish means to know Polish tradition, language, history and respect them. Patriotism.”

“For me Polish person is a person who feels that he/she identifies with his/her nation, citizens, language, culture.”

 “[It means ]To love your homeland, to be loyal to your homeland, to defend it (…)Poland is the most important.”

The majority of respondents perceived family or group belonging as critical. One statement encapsulates this view:

“The most important aspect for me is friends and family, because human being without a contact with other human being begins to go crazy. Family, because I’m not able to exit it. Scouting, because this is my passion and friends.”

Two refugees among the Polish group made similar statements linking identity with their motherland stated: “I feel that I found myself in this country, but I will never belong to it, because my motherland is somewhere else. Another said “I feel that I belong to another country, family and religious group.”

The question about the needs people have was answered by the majority of Polish respondents said that people do not have different needs while the refugees in the group said that they had different needs than their Polish peers.

ON VALUES, SELF-CONCEPT AND SELF-ESTEEM

When discussing about the process of decision making, most participants emphasised the importance of considering all possible consequences and alternatives but also the opinion of family or friends: “I always think of the possible consequences. If it harms someone then it is wrong. If it helps it is good.”; “Whenever I have a dilemma, I talk to my parents, siblings or friends. Their opinion is very important for me”.

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Some also mentioned considering their feelings, morals and principals when making a decision about right or wrong. Discussion about the issues affecting the group evolved mostly around the issues of “being lied to”, “fake people and ignorance”, “people who take everything for granted”. University students gave more elaborated answers regarding corruption, conflicts, people who a suffering etc.

Within the Polish groups answers were similar: “I analyse it if is good or wrong matter for a society or “I decide whether it has negative or positive influence on me and my environment.” The issues affecting them were related to:

“Lack of logic, corruption, ignorance, inefficient politicians in Poland, who cannot manage the state and who give new taxes.”

“Human stupidity. Ignorance. Language barrier.”

“When someone ignores me or doesn’t understand me I mean the language barrier.”

The majority of participants believed that family and friends were the most important elements in their life. They also felt in control of their life and were happy about their achievements but also recognised things they want to improve to get a better sense of their life.

**On recognizing and challenging extremist messages**

All respondents in Romania condemned violence as a means to achieve a goal. One Polish interviewees said that violence is legitimate “if there is no other solution”.

In terms of reaction to and action against radicalisation messages few respondents said that ignorance is the way to respond to these messages: “If the person is a stranger, I ignore him. If is a person from my social group I will stand up for myself.”

However, the majority of them would take action if confronted with extremist mainly through dialogue:

“I would try to talk to them [friends] without being to obvious, to see what their beliefs are. Talk to my parents and ask for advice.

“I would try with all my forces... those of others...to make him understand [that] he is getting towards the wrong way”

Similar responses were received from the Polish participants:

“I would talk to them from heart to heart. And I would let them know what it is.”

“I would try to “convert” him. Explain to him that what he’s doing is wrong.”

“I would help him or notify the relevant institutions.”

According to the participants’ answers, the main trigger factors for young people to become vulnerable to extreme messages are: low self-esteem, the influence of TV, the Internet, mass-media, violent movies and online games. In addition, the Polish participants mentioned:

“Propaganda, fascination, group affiliation”

“Media, stereotypes, unwillingness to think on your own and to make an effort to get to know somebody/something, to check information.”

“Maybe lack of knowledge. It is difficult to say.”

In terms of challenging extremist messages and preventing violent radicalisation of young people, all participants (Romanian, Polish and migrants) identified the key role of education:

“Teach them about the good in the world, having someone a psychologist who can help them dis-
cover what is good in them and how they can pursue it whatever they do.”

“Have lessons about what it means to do good in life and succeed and related subjects. This should be part of the curriculum but teachers have to be prepared to answer any questions. This is not the job for only one teacher; all should be aware and cooperate on this issue. Also, parents should be involved. I have studied abroad and there the parents were part of our schooling and very much involved in the process of education.”

“[Have] classes on politics eg. every day; to make them see that such a behaviours lead to nowhere.”

“Have conversation on stereotypes. Meeting people from discriminated groups is very important.”

“To provide help, physical or mental.”

Another issue that was raised by some respondents was the need to focus on learning through direct interaction:

“Learning theoretically about these issues (ref radicalisation and extremism) is one thing. I think it is very important to get some actual experience on how to prevent this issues...say summer-camps or activities that bring people together and get to know and learn from each other about their differences.”

ON UNFAIR TREATMENT, STIGMA AND MARGINALISATION

In general the Romanian participants and the Polish ones have not been subject to marginalisation. The answers of the those with a migrant background, however, revealed a different experience:

“Yes. Now less than before, but I felt discriminated by my peers because of my origin.”

“Sometimes, because I’m a girl. Because I know Muslims. And sometimes I have different views.”

ON COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Out of the total of 71 respondents, 67 stated that family are the two main factors that influence their decisions:

“I discuss anything with my friends but I always turn to my parents before I make an important decision”. 17 believed that friends can also have a negative impact on one’s choices or life path.

When discussing the role of local services, the student participants belived that “schools should change the national curriculum. We learn a lot but we know that we will not use half of the information. We know there are exchange programmes in our school but only the good students can participate (...) those with good grades.

“Teachers and schools should listen to what we need (...) to be prepared to make the right decisions and struggle less to succeed.”

Life Aspirations and Goals

The answers of the participants in the two environments were different. While Romanian and Polish expressed their need to continue their education in order to find better jobs and have a better financial situation. The migrant participants believed that “I just want to become somewhere so that people do not look at me differently. I want to learn the language so that I can get a good job and support my family”.

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KEY FINDINGS : DATA ANALYSIS

The key findings are presented below based on the main points addressed in order to inform the development of the YEIP preventive tool.

RADICALISATION

Addressing the conceptualisation of violent radicalisation among Romanian students and migrants showed that most participants understood radicalization as wholly malevolent pointing at extremism and terrorism. In general, responses were linked to a process involving both a cognitive and a behavioural change and the display of violence and terror to pursue an idea or belief. Most believed this process takes a religious or nationalistic form and results in antisocial behaviour and violence.

Most migrants gave answers linked to Islamic radicalisation and violence, mostly likely considering their personal stories and exposure to fundamentalism in their countries of origin.

The Polish respondents perceived violent radicalisation mostly as a process that involves a cognitive change which can be pursued through violence.

No respondent made any reference to non-violent radicalism.

IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Addressing the issue of identity posed some challenges on the Romanian participants. Most found it difficult to explain what defines their identity. The overwhelming majority of Romanian and Polish respondents defined their identity in relation to a certain set of values, norms, language and common history, the condition of being born in Romania or Poland but also belonging to a family or to groups sharing common interests, activities etc. The Polish respondents emphasized patriotism as an essential element of their identity. In contrast to the Romanian and Polish groups, the young migrants stressed that their ethnicity is the core element of their identity.

In terms of the needs they have, the majority of the Romanian respondents shared a common view on the need to have their voice heard, improve their community, and continue their education regardless of their age. They also believed that the environment shapes one’s needs in relation to his/her identity and sense of belonging and that this can have a positive or a negative impact. The conclusion was that the state should have a more active role in listening the voice of young people and design programmes to positively shape one’s identity so that people can make positive contributions and improve society based on common democratic values. Those with migrant background put their daily material needs first and then referred to their need to be safe.

VALUES, SELF-CONCEPT AND SELF-ESTEEM

The participants interviewed in Romania mentioned explicitly that analysing and thinking through alternatives and consequences of their decision and asking the opinion of parents and friends was very important in making a decision about right or wrong. Discussion about the issues affecting the Romanian and Polish groups evolved mostly around the issues of “being lied to”, “fake people and ignorance”, “people who take
“everything for granted”, corruption, inefficient politics, conflicts, people who are suffering. The young migrants, however, stressed that language barrier is a key trigger for frustration and sometimes anger. The focus groups clearly reflected that young people need spaces for dialogue to reflect on their own values and identity, diversity and intercultural understanding in light of their real life challenges.

RECOGNIZING AND CHALLENGING EXTREMIST MESSAGES

All respondents in Romania condemned violence as a means to achieve a goal and one stated that violence is legitimate only as a last resort if all other peaceful alternatives have failed. In terms of reaction to and action against radicalisation the majority of respondents underlined the power of dialogue while ignorance was an alternative for only one participant. The main trigger factors for young people to become vulnerable to extreme messages are: low self-esteem, the influence of TV, the Internet, mass-media, violent movies and online games, stereotypes and prejudice.

In terms of challenging extremist messages all participants (Romanian, Polish and migrants) identified the key role of education and teachers in preventing young people from becoming radicalised. It was made clear the importance of bringing young people together and raising awareness while building their capacity about the risks of becoming subject to violent radicalisation. Another issue that was raised by some respondents was the power of example and good practices, that is the need to focus on learning through examples or situations where young people challenged extremism and not only theoretically.

UNFAIR TREATMENT, STIGMA AND MARGINALISATION

Based on their answers, it can be concluded that in general the Romanian or Polish respondents have not been subject to marginalisation. However, the answers of the those with a migrant background, however, revealed a different experience. They all claimed that felt marginalised and excluded because of their ethnicity, religion and poor language skills.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The overwhelming majority of participants mentioned family and friends as the most significant pillars in their life involved in any important decision-making process. They also stressed that sometimes friends or one’s social network may have negative influences on their life choices but family members and sometimes teachers are very important to be involved in important making life decisions. In their opinion, the role of local actors should be to consult young people and involve them in educational programmes that respond to real life challenges and prepare them for succeeding in life professionally.
LIFE ASPIRATIONS AND GOALS

The answers of the participants in the two environments were different. While Romanian and Polish respondents talked about education and professional accomplishments, the young migrants stressed the need of becoming members of the community, learning the language and getting a good job.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE YEIP TOOLS

National and EU level

- Build young people’s knowledge and ability to discern violent from non-violent radicalisation and understand that radicalisation can occur for both good and bad causes
- Prevent tools for teachers and parents: awareness trainings and e-learning tools to help them identify potentially vulnerable young people and know when an intervention may be necessary and how to support them
- Development of practical tools on Internet filtering systems for parents and school teachers to prevent or block young people’s access to unsuitable material.

At the national level:

- Create a space for dialogue in schools where young students could express their concerns, frustrations, fears and learn how to build their strengths based on the GLM model and develop the necessary skills to manage violent ideas or behaviour.
- Improve the existent curriculum on civic education in Romania and Poland with reflective sessions on identity development, the risk of marginalisation, radicalisation and offer specific methods to apply the GLM to violent behaviour.
- Introduce new criteria for school evaluations in relation to the spiritual, moral and social and cultural development of students, in addition to behaviour and safety. Introduce an example of assessment form. This would help mapping out schools and communities at risk at the national level. Based on this assessment, tailored intervention could be determined.


PORTUGAL
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter, integrated in the fieldwork activities of the Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project (YEIP), is to collect the views of youngsters in Portuguese schools with the aim of developing a preventive tool for marginalisation/radicalisation. This paper is a synthesis of the results obtained through the research that was conducted by the team of young researchers under the supervision of INOVA+ researchers and with the support of local partners. The youth-led research actions in the school setting included a combination of qualitative methods, namely two focus groups (engaging 13 participants), semi-structured interviews (with 26 youngsters) and a case study. The final sample was composed of 28 individuals aged between 15 and 27 years old. The fieldwork activities addressed 14 areas of questioning based on previous YEIP’s findings at the transnational and national level. Results suggested that radicalisation is a phenomenon with low relevance in Portugal and that youngsters are more concerned with situations of marginalisation and bullying. Recommendations for a preventive tool include the acknowledgement of the potential of a systemic approach (youngsters, guardians', schools and communities), that starts with awareness raising and capacitation of the different stakeholders and considers specific context needs. Youth-led and positive approaches that acknowledge the pivotal role of talents are considered relevant.
KEY OBJECTIVES

The phenomenon of nonviolent radicalisation has, for now, a low incidence in Portugal. However, the existence of delinquent behaviours, such as vandalism, bullying and inappropriate behaviour in the classroom, highlight the importance of more attention from professionals who work with youngsters (Costa, 2018). Recently, there has been a rise in the development of tools which aim to help government agencies to identify the level of risk for delinquent behaviour (Khanna, Shaw, Dolan, & Lennox, 2014).

The drive of the present study is to gather the view of the youngsters who are in schools to help in the construction of a marginalisation/radicalisation prevention tool. This paper is a synthesis of the results obtained through the youth-led research actions in the school settings, carried by the team of young researchers under the supervision of INOVA+ researchers and with the support of local partners (Câmara Municipal de Oliveira de Azeméis, Agrupamento de Escolas de Fajões and Fundação da Juventude).

The methodological approach included a combination of qualitative methods and addressed 14 areas of questioning based on previous YEIP’s findings at the transnational level and national level, as follows: Definition of radicalisation, identity and belonging, self-esteem and values, recognising and challenging extremist messages, stigma, community and environment, life aspirations and goals, marginalisation, bullying, school’s role in the prevention of marginalisation, caregivers’ role in the prevention of marginalisation, influence of socio-economic situation on marginalisation, support from local community, prevention of radicalisation through social media.

THE YOUNG RESEARCHERS’ TEAM

INOVA+ contacted several universities to disseminate the project and launch a call for youth-led activities to be performed by trained young researchers. Interested participants were asked to apply and send their CV. Based on a curricular analysis and interviews, a team of nine young people aged between 18 and 25 years old and with degrees on human and social sciences (psychology, criminology, and sociology) was assembled.

The selected team attended a two-day training course on conducting research with young people. This course, moderated by INOVA’s team and in line with the IARS (project coordinator) guidelines and materials, underpinned the development of the research tools, namely the focus group and interviews guidelines. During the process (and between April and August 2018), several online and face-to-face meetings were promoted with the support and supervision of INOVA+, aimed to guarantee high-quality of the data collection and analysis. In the end, from the initial group, only three researchers remained and completed the methodological approach.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING

Based on the YEIP’s Research Experimentation Protocol and after participating in the training, the group of young researchers planned their youth-led research action for the school setting. As the first step, they submitted an informative dossier to the INOVA+’s Ethics Committee. The approval of this dossier was compulsory prior to the fieldwork with the target sample groups and the development of required documents such as an information letter for the staff and guardians, and a consent form to be signed by the interviewees and their parents or guardians. More details are provided in the national chapter.
These documents complemented the focus group and semi-structured interview guidelines developed by the young researchers, which focused on the 14 areas previously mentioned and were composed by 23 questions and 10 groups of questions, respectively. The focus group also included a group dynamic (roleplay) and an activity using hashtags and social media (Instagram and Facebook).

With all tools prepared, the young researchers were invited to approach their peers – young people in formal school – using convenience sampling according to pre-defined inclusion criteria. This step of the approach presented a series of challenges as the local school (identified by the Municipality) could only engage five students to participate in the fieldwork activities. Some constraints such as the proximity of the end of the school year can be pointed to as barriers to a greater involvement. To achieve the initial goal and reach out the targets defined in the protocol, the young researchers activated their professional networks and other local organisations (namely, Fundação da Juventude) were mobilised allowing the deployment of the focus groups, semi-structured interviews and case study.

In total 28 young people were engaged in the fieldwork activities. The sample of the interviews was very homogeneous, in terms of social, economic and cultural diversity.

Table 1. Social Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Location</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Caregivers’ Economic Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 urban/18 rural</td>
<td>Average 18.4, Min 15, Max 27</td>
<td>12 M/14 F</td>
<td>All Portuguese</td>
<td>Lower-middle class – the majority is employed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**KEY FINDINGS**

**MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE METHODS DEPLOYED ARE SUMMARISED BY AREA OF QUESTIONING.**

**DEFINITION OF RADICALISATION**

Young people definitions included words such as “extreme”, “different” and “radical” and few were the cases where this phenomenon was related to words like “political ideology”, “religious pressure” and “terrorism”.

**IDENTITY AND BELONGING**

Concerning the participants’ views on “what does it mean to be Portuguese?” the answers were floating between positive (e.g., “friendly”, “someone who always finds a way”), negative (e.g., “pessimist”, “greedy”) and neutral aspects (e.g., “to be in Portugal” and “it doesn’t mean anything”). When they faced the hypothetical scenario (i.e., “if you had come from another country, would you have the same group of friends?”) the majority answered affirmatively, pointing out personality aspects (e.g., “I would be accepted for my personality and not for my nationality”) and cultural differences (e.g., “we like immigrants”). On the other hand, one of the youngsters said: “if I was Brazilian, but if I was Syrian no”.
SELF-ESTEEM AND VALUES

Participants expressed that they value more family and human life, over career and material goods and regarding the individual talents promotion, they reinforced that it could be a source to increase self-esteem, “allowing others to get to know you” and decreasing the rates of school dropout.

RECOGNISING AND CHALLENGING EXTREMIST MESSAGES

More than half of the participants crossed with extremist messages (e.g., racist comments, tweets against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex community – LGBTI – and hate speech on Facebook). They related this experience with feelings like strangeness, shock, anger, and outrage. An example is provided in the national case study (see national chapter), where the narratives of a young woman debating with their Nazi-sympathized friends are described. She ends by saying that “we know history repeats itself and we should learn from it”.

STIGMA

Participants struggled to come out with an answer for what stigma is and associated it with individual differences (e.g., sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, physical appearance and economic situation). In several cases, they mentioned the Roma community, indicating that members of this community are often marginalised in Portugal.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Most of the participants referred they feel good and safe in their community. Nevertheless, they suggested as potential improving or preventive measure the creation of community spaces where they can share experiences and get in touch with other realities.

LIFE ASPIRATIONS AND GOALS

Even though they feel optimistic about their future, the major concern of the sample is to achieve financial stability and to finish their studies. In this sense, the economic situation has a great impact on their capability to be successful.

MARGINALISATION

Youngsters relate marginalisation to bullying. They also point out personality traits (e.g., aggressiveness, low self-esteem, shyness, and arrogance), physical appearances (e.g., race, ethnicity and overweight) and sexual orientation, as risk factors to violent marginalisation. When they were questioned if they had any trait that could exclude them from society, the majority said no. They recognised that marginalisation is present in their context, justifying it by “not being able to deal with differences” and also having “preconceived ideas about other realities”.

BULLYING

Most of the sample affirmed they had been victimised or/and had seen a bullying situation at least once in
their lives. The explanation given for this goes from “being different” to “have different ideas”. For participants a bully is someone in need of help, lacking coping strategies and who perpetuates this behaviour.

Although the totality of the youngsters referred that they accept colleagues’ differences, some responded that differences are not well accepted by their colleagues (e.g., physical aspects, sexual orientation).

**SCHOOL’S ROLE IN THE PREVENTION OF MARGINALISATION**

Research findings suggest that radicalisation is not common in Portugal, but bullying is and relates to marginalisation. More than half of the participants don’t feel the school is ready to deal with these matters since there is a lack of sensibility and surveillance from teachers and school staff. Another problem they enhanced was the fact that the school doesn’t have enough psychologists.

**CAREGIVERS’ ROLE IN THE PREVENTION OF MARGINALISATION**

The family is seen as the greatest protective factor when it comes to preventing bullying, marginalisation, and radicalisation.

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION ON MARGINALISATION**

Youngster’s associated economic deprivation with marginalisation. Regarding their views on the importance of the economic situation in marginalisation, it was said that it could decrease opportunities (e.g., education, health, and living conditions). Because of this, the sample believes that young people with fewer options could join illegal activities. The participants’ views on how to promote integration among young people are related to the reinforcement of the economic situation.

**SUPPORT FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

The majority said that they could count on their local community, although some of them referred their community as “selfish” and “careless”.

**PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

When they were asked about the relationship between new technologies and the easy propagation of radicalisation/marginalisation, the youngsters said that technological expansion has two sides, since it can increase sharing of wrong information, associated with media’s sensationalism and lack of critical thinking of the users. However, the Internet can be a prevention mechanism (e.g., access to the “13 reasons why” hotline, as well as the work made by Tumblr to identify suicidal content).

**DISCUSSION**

Regarding the definition of radicalisation the sample struggle to come up with an answer. In this sense, a minority associated this phenomenon with the most spread causes and types of terrorism, such as political and religious fanaticism. This may be caused by the fact that terrorism isn’t part of Portuguese reality.
When they faced the hypothetical scenario (i.e., “if you had come from another country, would you have the same group of friends?”) what stood out were personality aspects rather than nationality. They considered to be open to differences but in fact, multi-diversity is not a current reality of their contexts, and this is true for rural and urban contexts.

Extremist messages they had contact with were always related to social media posts (i.e., Facebook, Twitter). Although the sample perceived the Internet as the greatest mean to disseminate and engage young people in terrorist activities, they also recognised the positive power it can have on young people’s behaviours.

According to the Portuguese sample, stigma is expressed in different ways (i.e., sexual orientation, ethnicity). The Roma Community was considered an often target of stigma and marginalisation at a national level.

Regarding the community and environment, the sample didn’t show any special information, but they identify the lack of opportunities for young people to get in touch with other realities.

Through young people eyes, bullying is one of the problems that concern them the most. Participants engaged in the study acknowledge the pivotal role schools play in bullying prevention and highlight the relevance of the psychologist’s intervention. However, they alert to the fact that not enough of these professionals are available at schools. Moreover, the sample didn’t show trust in schools’ resources to deal with issues such as marginalisation and bullying.

For participants, families can be a protective factor to prevent radicalisation, particularly if they are not economically deprived and pay attention to children’s/young people’s needs. The sample demonstrated the importance of young people to feel heard.

In the youngsters’ perspective, life aspirations and goals are deeply connected with economic situation or with achieving financial stability. However, none of the participants could imagine being in a critical economic situation which could lead them to violent radicalisation.

Throughout the data analysis, it was underlined that young engaged in this study where not prepared to think critically, discuss and present suggestions related to the macrosystemic issues (role of the government and civil society). This may result from the lack of familiarisation with the topics addressed or some degree of complexity of the questions made by the young researchers. Nevertheless, they embraced a positive approach to prevention and emphasised the importance of the talents in general, pointed out the need for a greater investment of the schools in the young people’s individualities.

Analysing the different strategies for data collection, in this study, the research group considers that the focus group was the one that worked out the best, as it allowed the researchers to create a more relaxed environment through activities like a roleplay. In this research, this strategy was an icebreaker and enable the team to bond with the participants, and to address them in a non-formal way. This bonding it’s important when dealing with youngsters so they can be more comfortable to speak up their minds.
The young researchers’ recommendations could be divided into four groups, such as school, family, community and government. The most relevant need is the urge to raise awareness, inform and capacitate for positive, systemic and sustained intervention to tackle the risks and mitigate and manage situations of radicalisation, marginalisation and bullying. Some actions that could be considered at this level include promoting informative sessions, workshops and training courses targeting professionals working with young people inside and around the school environment.

Better informed and more prepared, these professionals could perform activities with students aimed at critical debating these phenomena and enhancing their “protective skills” and talents, namely emotional, creative and social competences. In this sense, the development of entrepreneurial skills could play a pivotal role, allowing young people to explore their ideas, activate their creativity, develop their professional competencies and boost talents and opportunities. Additionally, young people could benefit from activities designed to enhance their emotional intelligence and critical thinking. Some examples of possible activities include philosophical challenges and dilemmas, production of Vlogs for YouTube with positive content and participation in extra-curricular activities in which students embark in real-life situations and direct contact with different opinions and realities. For instance, creating “open days” where students from different schools could get together and know one another, expanding and readjusting their mindsets regarding stereotypes and prejudice, enlarging their networks and encouraging them to be more unite and defend democratic values.

Here, social media could be perceived as a very powerful and effective tool to empower young people, but more importantly is the collaboration between different actors (multilevel actions). Gathering students, directors, teachers and school staff is an important step to increase and improve the communication flow between all the “ecosystem”, promoting opportunities and time for dialogue and sharing and reducing violence and disruptive behaviours.

This and other actions could be considered in the framework of a preventive tool, which, in the national context, should be also able to address specific cases of marginalisation such as the Roma community, as highlighted by the young participants. Thus, more programmes should be implemented to promote the feeling of belonging and to break the stigma associated with this community.

The team of researchers acknowledges the relevance of youngsters having their voice heard and be taken into consideration in the matters that involve them. As such, considers the YEIP’s youth-led methodology as a good example of an approach that should be considered in preventive tools. To summarise, the team felt very proud of being part of this project and believes that more youth-led, based on positive psychology and restorative justice must be implemented at the national and European level.


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