

8TH IARS ANNUAL  
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# YEIP FINDINGS IN ROMANIA

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Youth Empowerment  
and Innovation Project



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# YEIP project in Romania

Project partners: National Council on Combating Discrimination  
Institute of Education Sciences and The Ministry of Education

Duration : 2017-2020

Selected environments: schools, universities and Migrant Integration Center in Bucharest

# KEY NUMBERS

16

Young researchers involved (nationals and migrants)

134

Young people in schools, university and migrant integration centers involved in fieldtrials

62

Professionals involved in fieldtrials



# Research design- 4 building blocks / WP

WP 1 Build the foundations

WP 2. Test the underlying hypothesis of the GLM-based YEP policy measure

Develop YEP PREVENT model and toolkit

WP 3. Test the YEP model through field trials

Identify changes occurred in the selected environments

WP 4. Contribute to triangulation of findings through dissemination of online surveys

““ *The phenomena of radicalization and auto-radicalization are beginning to manifest among the Romanian citizens converted to Islam (...) There are cases of people in various stages of radicalisation, most of them incipient or intermediate.*” ”

Annual Report of the Directorate of Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism, 2017).

# KEY FINDINGS

## WP 1. Building the foundations : state of the art in violent radicalisation

### Research methods: analysis of secondary research & user feedback (2017)

- Scarcity of academic or grey sources on the topic; no clear definition of radicalisation
- Violent radicalisation in Romania is mostly linked to jihadism and it is not a widespread phenomenon
- The National Defense Strategy (2015/19) tackles the importance of prevention through education and awareness raising on issues such as human rights, social inclusion and democratic values but no clear measures are put forward.
- Positive psychology and GIM– based practices have been very feebly developed in the justice system and the NGO sector- no impact studies available. No restorative justice practices were identified.
- User feedback (seminar w young people & professionals)
  - prevention of radicalisation by promoting participation of young people and a sense of belonging – engagement in activities of their interest
  - Develop clear measures on targeting the leading factors/causes to social exclusion

“

# KEY FINDINGS WP 2

## WP 2. Building and testing the YEIP tools

Research methods: 16 young people involved in fieldwork research groups and interviews in schools, universities and MIC in Romania and Poland (2018)

- Scope : develop new tools that could be used in schools, universities and MIC
- 71 young people aged 17- 23 were involved, including 16 with migrant background – 3 focus groups and 33 interviews

# KEY FINDINGS WP 2

- Radicalisation was mostly associated with violence and religious extremism
- no knowledge on prevention programmes .
- Migrant participants placed a stronger emphasis on community links and religion than Romanian and Polish youth who identified family and friends as being the key elements.
- Using violence to achieve goals is not justified in any way .
- 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 .

The data collected was analysed based on seven elements that formed the basis of the YEIP preventive tool:

- Radicalisation
- Identity and Belonging
- Values and Self-concept
- Challenging extremist messages
  - Stigma and Marginalisation ,
  - Community and Environment
- Life Aspirations and Goals.

- Social media is a key tool for interaction and exposure to radical messages, discrimination and recruitment . Ignoring messages – the best option
- Migrants had experienced the feeling of being marginalised and discriminated . especially based on gender as opposed to RO&PO nationals
- 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



# KEY FINDINGS WP 3

## 1. TOOL 1: YEIP TOOLKIT FOR PROFESSIONALS

- Field trials in selected environments: schools , universities & Migrant Integration Center in Bucharest (March – July 2019)

## 2. TOOL 2: YEIP TOOLKIT FOR POLICYMAKERS

Training with 24 policy makers (public officials, legal counsellors and other bureaucrats active in the field of migration and integration but also social workers and professionals working with young people (July 3, 2019).

# Sample of the participants in WP3

## Sample of the education professionals involved in field trials

		Intervention group	Control group
64 Education professionals	high school	13	10
	university	13	9
	migrant integration	12	7

## Sample of the young people involved in field trials

		Intervention group	Control group
69 Young people	high school	13	10
	university	13	9
	migrant integration	12	7

# Research methodology WP 3

01

## Before the trials

- Training sessions based on the YHP toolkit with 45 education professionals in schools & universities and 19 in MIC (March 2019)

### Pre intervention questionnaires

- to evaluate professionals knowledge on violent radicalisation of young people in Romania
- to assess young people based on Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale & Brief Resilience Scale

02

## Sampling

- Intervention & control groups (professionals and young people) in each selected environment

03

## Field trials

March – July 2019

schools  
university  
MIC  
In Bucharest

04

## After the trials

### Post intervention questionnaires

to assess the change in the target groups (professionals & young people within selected environments)

# KEY FINDINGS

## on professionals

### Before the trials

- Violent radicalisation among young people is not perceived as a reality in Romania/at their workplace in any of the three environments where trials were conducted.
- No clear perception on age as a risk factor in the case of teachers.
- Main triggers: personal ties, poor economic conditions, certain environments such as prison and gangs, and marginalisation.
- Limited knowledge on violent radicalisation and methods or existing practices to prevent it based on GLM, positive psychology and restorative justice
- 20% of school professionals believed Imprisonment was a solution in case of young people who committed violent actions as opposed to other measures.

### After the trials

- Perception on the diffusion of violent radicalisation did not change.
- Perception on age as a risk factor for the involvement young people in carrying out violent actions changed.
- Perception on main triggers did not change.
- Professionals in school and MIC had increased their knowledge on radicalisation and prevention methods based on GLM, PP and RJ with 84%.
- 38% of teachers in the experimental group in schools have changed approaches in their work and applied the principles of restorative justice and positive psychology whenever conflictual situations occurred in the classroom.
- 12,5% still believed imprisonment is a solution in case of young people committing violent actions

# KEY FINDINGS

## on professionals

### Before the trials

- 76% of participants were willing to involve young people as advisors and part of the decision making processes and 62% would involve them if they were victims and not supporters.

### After the trials

- The role of young people as advisors and part of the decision making process increased by 24%, school teachers & MIC professionals recognizing the importance of their involvement in these processes. No changes in the university sample.
- The majority of professionals perceived the YEIP toolkit as a useful tool to impact attitudes and behaviours of young people not only in relation to radicalisation, improve knowledge on the topic and bring about positive change among young people inside and outside the classroom setting.
- 78% of participants believed that the YEIP toolkit can be efficient and evaluated as being good and very good.

# KEY FINDINGS

## on young people

### After the trials

- High school students and migrants from the experimental group revealed higher scores in all six dimensions of the well being scale. No clear change on the 2 scales was recorded in the university student sample -> it can be inferred that **younger students could benefit more of the YEIP tools.**
- For the young migrants who had direct exposure to violence and radicalisation in their country of origin, the usefulness of these tools is clearly mirrored in the changes in their wellbeing -> **training integration professionals working with young people who are not enrolled in school and applying the principles of positive psychology and the GLM in their work is of paramount importance.**

# KEY FINDINGS

## on policy makers

### Before the training

- limited knowledge about violent radicalisation in Romania or at their workplace or about prevention initiatives
- uncertainty about young people being more involved in these actions than adults.
- knowledge about Positive Psychology but limited awareness on the topics of Restorative Justice and the Good Lives Model.

### After the training

- maintained their opinion about lack of incidence of the phenomenon at their workplace.
- perception about the existence of the phenomenon in Romania slightly changed as they were able to label some actions as being the result of violent radicalisation.
- perception on age as a risk factor for the involvement young people in carrying out violent actions changed.
- their knowledge on the core topics of the YEIP model improved significantly.
- **18% of policymakers mentioned that they have changed approaches in their work and applied the principles of positive psychology. -> *integration officials made it mandatory for all integration professionals working in the Integration Centres throughout the country to use the education program on cultural orientation implemented in Bucharest based on the principles of positive psychology.***

# Recommendations



- Promote greater participation of young people in decision making processes and policies regarding issues they are confronted with.
- At the national level:
  - Put more emphasis on prevention measures and programmes rather than monitoring of instances of violent radicalisation
  - Adopt clear measures/ reporting tools to counter radical messages via online channels with regards to the issue of radicalisation
- It is important that resources are made available to carry out more research on the topic of violent youth radicalisation and emerging trends
- More training opportunities and exchange visits should be promoted on the topic of prevention of violent radicalisation in order to increase the knowledge of professionals on the radicalisation realities and emerging realities but also on prevention programmes in other countries.



# THANKS!

Do you have any questions?

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