

GO  
RAD  
NO  
MAD!

## WE STAND FOR:

- PEACE
- NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION
- INTERCULTURAL LEARNING
- RESPECT

## WE WORK AGAINST:

- HATE SPEECH
- VIOLENCE
- FUNDAMENTALISM
- EXTREMISM

## FIND US AT:

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## **Project Description**

The Training Course “Youth Radicalization” aimed to tackle the radicalization of young people, offering training in the field of strategies of de-radicalization, prevention and promotion of cooperation between youth organizations. The participants realized activities on youth inclusion, social cohesion, integration and intercultural dialogue, conflict management. The main objective of this project was to address one of the most pressing concerns of European society - the problem of radicalization of young people. On the one hand, young people, often affected by unemployment and other negative consequences of the economic and social crisis, they are increasingly susceptible to radicalization (both online and as a result of the pressure of their peers). On the other side, an increase in terrorist and radical religious extremists that lead to increase the social tension between different groups within societies, with minority representatives often wrongly blamed and stigmatized by the representatives of the majority. These problems are mostly visible in the Western European countries and the Balkans. All this is evident in a context of greater social introversion. People seem to be interested in the personal lives, separating themselves from others with "walls or indifference". Our project has addressed these challenges de-constructing the problem, promoting educational solutions and strategic cooperation between youth organizations, organizing a training course for youth leaders and youth workers on preventing radicalization strategies.

The project provided the participants with the necessary skills in the field of inclusion of young people for social cohesion and integration, intercultural dialogue and conflict management, such as instruments for preventing the radicalization of young people. Through the course, participants have gained knowledge of the root causes of youth radicalization, and they are able now to use these skills in their daily work enhancing also the skills of their peers and young people they work with.

The project has allowed us to develop cooperation between youth organizations and local actors on this troubling issue. This project is built around the objectives of the Erasmus + program, and the promotion of European values, in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men. In fact, the overall objective of this project is precisely to reach marginalized young people by promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, the common values of freedom, tolerance and respect for human rights through media literacy and critical thinking of young people. In addition to these main objectives, this project provided skills and methods needed for the transfer of common fundamental values of our society to prevent violent radicalization. Hate crimes, radicalization and recruitment of extremists have increased in number and severity of the phenomenon across Europe will continue to represent a major challenge to democratic societies.

Community organizations as well as social entrepreneurs or no-profit NGOs can play an important role in preventing polarization and violence. However, to achieve these goals youth NGOs need to: (1) professionalism, (2) adherence to the standards and quality control, (3) the methodological transparency, (4) advisory support, (5) international exchange of good practice, (6) a more stable

relationship with government agencies, so that their knowledge, skills and services can be systematically developed, and finally of course, they need a stable and sustainable financial base.

Thanks to our partners from Xano Channel Asociación para el desarrollo comunitario (Spain), Fiatalok az ÉlhetőKörnyezetértEgyesület (Hungary), Informal group "Over the Fence" (Greece), Asociacia "Apkabink Europa" (Lithuania) and Twinning Committee "Colletorto in Europe" (Italy) we reached the following set objectives:

- Analysis of the behavioral reaction to the phenomenon of violent extremism;
- Study of the most attractive tools among young people for the fight against radicalization: music and social media
- Creating tools to produce authentic messages of de-radicalization;
- Creating a safe discussion space to tackle issues such as terrorism and violent extremism;
- Facilitate and support the use of counter-narrative methods within youth organizations;
- Provide tools and skills to help young people face new and diverse social pressures;
- Developing flexibility and creativity in counter-narrative design;
- Facilitate the development of critical thinking on the issues of extremism and radicalism;
- Provide the tools for understanding and identifying the recruitment approach by groups or individual extremists.

The following focus areas are related to the theory of what makes an individual vulnerable to extremism.

Through these areas of purpose are aimed at mitigating the risk of emotional fragility, disinformation, excessive dogmatization, social isolation and hence vulnerability to extremist narratives and extremism.

- Focus on building personal resilience and a positive sense of identity to support young people to be emotionally resistant to social pressures and able to promote a positive sense of self, for example, through the positive thinking or through conflict management techniques.
- Development of critical thinking skills, through analysis of alternative perspectives, with guided discussion approaches and multimedia didactics. Development of teamwork skills for the development of transferable skills in work daily with young people.

## Results

### *Day 1*

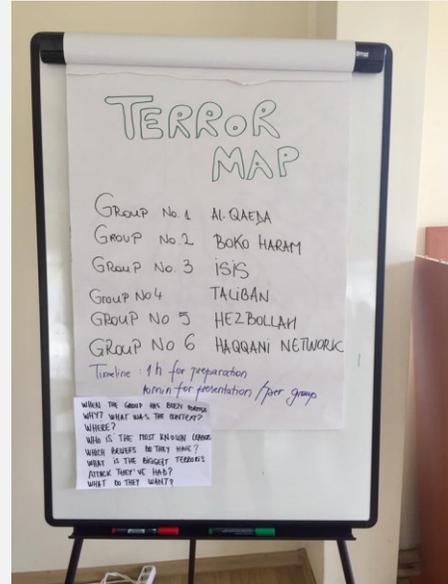


Our first day in the project began with new acquaintances: with new people, new ideas, and new cultural landscape. The day was devoted to **getting to know each other and the surroundings and team – building activities**. So, after we shark-surfed a bit and learned everybody's names (what a challenge!), we were asked to complete a mission. While working in groups we learned about Bulgaria, Bansko and ourselves, created a logo, a motto for the project and even a project's anthem. Afterwards, we learned about what is ahead of us during the upcoming week: learn about youth radicalization context, prevention, intervention, community engagement and awareness raising. Even after a long day of new experiences, the participants still had lots of energy to contribute to at the evening activity – the NGO fair. Our first day brought a lot of excitement and curiosity.

### *Day 2*

The day started with the **8 key competences relating to Youthpass and Life Long Learning**. That could help participants to recognise since the beginning their learning process, what we have learned and how they are related with the key competences.

During the next activity, we created a **map of terrorist groups** Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Isis, Taliban and Hezbollah. We discovered **Mogh Addam's staircase of terrorism**, which is a *psychological model that identifies the 6 floors of becoming a terrorist*. Then we got familiar with **roots for extreme behavior** and information about how **men and women tend to get involved in radicalized groups**.



During our breaks we were gathering to get to know more about each other's personalities, hobbies, songs and life styles.



Day 3

After we learned about at the most dangerous terrorist organisations and identified the roots of radicalization and of extreme behavior, it was time to take action and to see **what our role as youth organization is in the prevention process**. For that purpose, the participants started to create a **Gallery of national interventions and to identify with available strategies and**

**approaches at the national level in regards to prevention of radicalization process**. It was time to share good practices and to learn from each other’s experience and national policies. Each national group presented how they apply the interventions plans proposed by European Commission in their countries.

Given the guidance of the trainer, we had creativity activation game called **„20 ways to use a spoon”**. We discovered that this is a brainstorming methods used by *Walter Disney and his team in order to activate the creativity and imagination of his team members in order to create new stories*. In four rounds, each group managed to find out more than 50 weird, funny and unique ways to use a spoon. We realized that creativity has really no limitations and everything is possible when you think out of the box and you are open in redefining terms and beliefs. The results of the activity were to learned how to accept other’s ideas, make a group planning and brainstorming process, how to actively listening and, not last but not least, how to give and receive a feedback based on ideas, not on personality. It was an important activity, which linked with the following task – The Lotus Blossom Diagram.

### THE LOTUS BLOSSOM DIAGRAM

CONCERT	CULTURAL EVENTS	NON-PROFIT FAIR	PARENTS MEETING AT SCHOOL	CONFERENCE FOR TEACHERS	PEDAGOGY COURSE FOR	PUBLIC CAMPAIGN	SEMINAR	COOPERATE WITH INSTITUTION
TV CAMPAIGNS	COMMUNITY F DEVELOPMENT	TEAM BUILDING	SEMINAR	GUIDANCE FOR C FAMILIES	TV COMMERCIAL FOR HELP LINE	FACEBOOK CAMPAIGN	STRATEGIC G ALLIANCES	COOPERATE WITH NGO
REUNION OF VOLUNTEER	FREE COURSE TO FORM PEOPLE	PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR COMMUNITY	FREE PSYCHOLOGY SUPPORT	TRAINING COURSE	SENSITIZATION ABOUT TOPIC	INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	INTERCONTINENTAL COOPERATION	
TV CAMPAIGNS	ORGANIZE CONFERENCE	TEAM BUILDING	F	C	G	BOOKS	FACEBOOK PAGE	COURSES
TO RELEASE A BOOK	GUIDANCE FOR B INDIVIDUALS	TO DO WORKSHOPS	B	TO PREVENT YOUTH RADICALISATION	D	PUBLIC EVENT	GUIDANCE FOR D OTHER PARTIES	CONFERENCES
TO MAKE A FILM	TO MAKE A DOCUMENTARY	HANDOUTS	E	A	H	UNIVERSITY	HANDOUTS	ERASMUS +
BOOKS	UNIVERSITY COURSE	SUBJECTS AT HIGH SCHOOL	ORGANIZE TRAININGS	ORGANIZE SEMINARS	COACHING	FACEBOOK GROUP	BLOG	COURSE
CONFERENCES	MENTORING & E COACHING	SEMINAR		YOUTH A WORKERS	PUBLIC EVENTS	TWITTER ACCOUNT	SOCIAL H MEDIA	ERASMUS +
EVS	MASTERS	ERASMUS +	EVS	VIDEO BLOGS	E-LEARNING	YOUTUBE CHANNEL	WEBSITE	FLIGHTS FOR JOURNALISTS

*What exactly is this brainstorming method and how can we use it to discover and propose new ways to interfere and be active to tackle and fight against radicalization?*

**The Lotus Blossom Diagram** is a structured brainstorming method that helped us to put all our

*ideas in order and in big chapters. Therefore, we've identified 8 types of intervention that we can make in our community: A. Youth workers; B. Guidance for individuals; C. Guidance for families; D. Guidance for other parties; E. Mentoring and coaching; F. Community Development; G. Strategic Alliances; H. Social media and Media.*

By the end of the activity, the teams presented the results of their work and more than hundred ideas to tackle extremism and radicalization among young people.

Please, check our website to see what exactly the proposals are: <http://youthrad.weebly.com/>

The day concluded with a very interesting game called “**Game of Thrones**”, based on Prisoner Dilemma Theory. This was an activity when the youth workers had the opportunity to work in groups for a bigger purpose – the peace in their big land. The participants discovered more information about conflict management, improved their negotiation skills and learned how important is to cooperate with other NGOs and Institutions on the topic.



## Day 4



Wednesday began with many smiles and positive energy because it was our first sunny day in Bansko. As usual, we enjoyed our breakfast and gained energy for the rest of the day. The Italian group presented a great energizer and we had the chance to learn a traditional New Zealand dance called Haka. Afterwards, we reflected on Tuesday's activities and detected the competences we have developed. We completed the rainbow (for reflection on learning, it was presented the rainbow method for self-evaluation) with some new competences and we discussed in groups about the activities in which we participated. The day continued with sessions about conflict and peace building, non – formal activities and interesting tasks.

## Day 5

We have started with a typical dancing from Lithuania which we learned and we really liked it, so we decided to use it as an energizer.

In the first session, we had to **self-define seven aspects and values that have built our personality**. This activity has been very difficult for most of the participants because no one has ever thought before on selecting values that describe his / her personality. The activity became even harder when we have been said to dismiss many of the written examples because we were thinking that it is impossible to live without those key aspects. The result of the activity was to make you reflect on who you are, what your values are and not last, to understand what do people feel when someone forcibly take their values away and change their individuality. In the debriefing time, we realized as a group that many of the youths may turn to radical movements because they are in a situation of defoliation.

The next activity was quite well linked to the one above. In metaphorical way, we showed how a person could feel in that case of darkness, no way out, stress, oppression, etc. Both role models, concluded that being in that particular “shoe”, they started feeling aggression and lack of self – control. One of them asked a rational question: “Is not that exactly what people who turn to radicalization feel”.



In the next activity, we had to think about **how to live in an island from zero** by elaboration on how to divide our duties, how to solve problems, what rules we need, etc. It was really nice because we were already formed as a team and our discussion was not based only on imagination, but on really practical things that each of us think that should be changed in their own countries. The metaphor of “imaginary island” for many became a real dream of a place they would like to live in.

In the afternoon, we “**painted**” the **stereotype of people in our own countries**, and we wrote what we think about other’s countries given stereotypes. In this session, there were many broken stereotypes, many emotional discussions of disagreement. In the debriefing, we realized that stereotypes create conflicts not only between people but between nations, too. In that process, non-verbal communication deeper misunderstandings among people and state conflicts.

### *Day 6*

“Let’s go viral!”

We are continuing this amazing journey with **awareness campaigns** dedicated to young people and youth workers. After so many days of receiving information and tools about prevention of radicalization process among young people, it is the perfect time to switch the roles and bring our contribution to the world. In teams, we have agreed to build our awareness campaign around this topic and each of us bring on the table their own expertise. We have started to resume all the ideas and discussions that we have had during this week in various materials which can be extremely helpful for the other stakeholders involved in this process and who are working with young people. Therefore, we have started working on a newspaper where we gather all the content we received and much more, our testimonials about our learning process and how we, as youth workers can get involved on a daily basis on our community. Nevertheless, we have focused also, on what is the European Union strategy to prevent this phenomenon in all European countries.

Another team gathered from their work experience and the non-formal methods used during this training course and created a **booklet**. This material will be very helpful for youth workers, trainers in Youth Motilities, but also, the methods can be applied in our local community youth work. This booklet will be available on Salto-Youth platform. Nevertheless, we have focused also on creating promotional materials and a platform where young people can found more info about this topic. Therefore, we have created a **blog, also a Facebook page**, and many other materials such as stickers and posters. We believe that the dialogue from a young person to another one can be the best approach therefore one of the team prepared a street campaign for the citizens of Bansko. They have had a great idea and they have spread the joy of being together and act as a community through a **free hugs campaign**. Please, check out our video on youtube about the reactions of the locals and what do they think about the role of young people in this community and how to prevent radicalization. Due to the fact, we are spending plenty of time online and a lot of radicalization processes are strengthen in online environment we have decided to create video campaign that encourage peace, cooperation among all the parties of a community. At the end of the day, we have enjoyed the Bulgarian Intercultural evening where we have had the opportunity to discover more about this country, what are their traditions, dances and very good food. We had a great time!



## Day 7

### “Exploring new shores”

The results of our awareness campaigns started to have a concrete shape. We have had many ideas, but only the best remained on the table. Therefore, here we are, after this marathon presenting the results of our work. We are proud with the things that we have proposed and also, we learned many things about planning communication campaigns, what is the process of any successful campaigns and also what channels work better and which ones are performing less.

After we have **presented our campaigns**, we discussed how could we **disseminate the know-how** we gained during the training course in our organization and at national level. Each one of us took responsibility for one action to be implemented when they arrive back home. The most important for us is to share our expertise with other youth workers and we will do this by sharing info about the website of the project, the booklet, and the promotional materials.

In the second part of the day, we have focused on **Youthpass certificate and the 8 key-competences** we had the opportunity to develop during this training course. Also, we concluded an evaluation session when we had the chance to think about our own learning process, what we gave, what we learned during the project and what do we want to take back with us.

In three cultural evening, we present some cultural information about our country, history and civilization. We had the chance to taste traditional food and learn some folk dances from each country.

