

**VALUE THE
DIFFERENCE -
PREVENTING
YOUTH
RADICALISATION**



Erasmus+

-

**THEORY & PRACTICE
OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK**

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INTRODUCTION

According to the European Agenda on Security (2015), the OSCE report “Working with youth and for youth” (2015) and the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (2016), nowadays young people are increasingly confronted with the threat of radicalisation.

The process of radicalisation affects the European youth equally encompassing political, social, or religious affiliations and leads to the same outcome: a militancy based on a radical ideology of hate and exclusion, on which for instance both young neo-Nazis and young Muslim extremists draw. This phenomenon originates mostly from political and/or religious organisations promoting radical value systems among young people, which are appealing in as much as they offer to paint the complexity of the world black and white.

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

The project **Value the Difference – Preventing youth radicalisation** consisted of two training courses and dealt with the macro-topic of the prevention of the youth radicalisation.

The project was granted by the **German National Agency for Erasmus+ (JUGEND für Europa - Nationale Agentur für das EU-Programm Erasmus+)**, coordinated by the German **NGO DIALOGOS e. V.** in collaboration with the Italian organisation **East-West Lab / Laboratorio Oriente-Occidente** and the partner organisations: Mellem Education, Asociatia PLURAL, Bulgarian Youth Forum, Transforma, Głogów Młp – Polonia, Art Mine - Verein zur Förderung des interkulturellen Austausches und Dialoges, Generation 2.0 – second generation/ Institute for Rights, Equality and Diversity and the Tamaszpont MOPKA.

- **Value the Difference – Preventing youth radicalisation – Volume I** took place in the dates 7-15 May 2017, in Rovereto (Italy) and gathered 28 Youth workers, Trainers and Youth leaders from Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Romania.
- **Value the Difference – Preventing youth radicalisation – Volume II** took place in the dates 29 October - 5 November 2017, in Berlin (Germany) and gathered 28 Youth workers, Trainers and Youth leaders from Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Romania.

GOALS

We opted to carry out two training courses in the frame of the same project, since this way we could contribute to make a leap in quality for our network's youth workers as well as their organisations, other partner NGOs and youth centres in regard to the prevention of youth radicalisation.

MAIN ADDRESSED NEEDS

The **first need consisted of opening up a critical, structured reflection on youth workers' ways of dealing with radicalised youth knowing that “non-formal educators” urgently need innovative knowledge, skills and methodologies to deal with youth radicalisation.**

The **second need was complementary to the previous one and was about youth workers' necessity of questioning their attitudes and behaviours as educators, being embedded in certain value systems, yet working with youth having perhaps different reference values.**

The **third need concerned the urgency to critically assess the youth centres' and NGOs' capacities and strategies to cooperate with other public and private stakeholders within and beyond the youth sector on the aforementioned issue.**

METHODOLOGIES, THEORIES USED IN VALUE THE DIFFERENCE – PREVENTING YOUTH RADICALISATION (Volume I and II) TRAINING COURSE

Over the course of Value the Difference – Preventing youth radicalisation - Volume I the organisers designed a mixture of interactive exercises and related reflection exercises in order to trigger a learning process focused on the youth workers' modus operandi with radicalised youth in order to make them acquire knowledge, new methods and skills through experiential learning on this issues. We simplified and translated sociological and pedagogical theories on youth radicalisation into a non-formal education learning setting to enhance participants' understanding of this complex phenomenon.

Over the course of Value the Difference – Preventing youth radicalisation - Volume II we also combined interactive exercises and related reflections putting focus on the problematic question of the coexistence of diverse value systems in the frame of a democratic and peaceful society and the role of youth work to achieve this goal. We made use of theories of pedagogy and sociology to enrich standard non-formal exercises especially during the stage of debriefing.

- **INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES** such as exercises, role playing, discussions, brainstorming etc.
- **FEEDBACK SESSIONS & REFLECTION GROUPS** participants have an opportunity to reflect upon material that was discussed
- **THEORETICAL PRESENTATIONS & INPUTS** trainers provide participants the intellectual frame of the topic which is discussed
- **PRESENTATIONS** participants share what has been worked out either individually, or in small groups
- **EVALUATION** as process relevant for both trainers and participants, since it has a determinative impact on their professional and personal development

...Specific theoretical models and explanations related to political and religious radicalisation and extremism will be discussed in detail in the following chapters...

PART 1 Understanding radicalisation and extremisms

There are conceptual difficulties to agree on an unique definition of **radicalisation** and **extremism** on both policy and research level, however a general consensus converges on three elements key for these phenomena:

(1) process taking place by stages (2) adoption of extremist ideology/belief system (3) advocating / practising violence

Radicalisation and Extremism: definition(s)

... **Radicalisation** is usually a **(1)** gradual process which entails **(2)** interiorisation of extremist ideology or belief system that **(3)** sets the stage for violence even if it does not make it inevitable...

... **Radicalisation (1)** the process by which individuals (or groups) **(2)** change their beliefs, adopt an extremist viewpoint, and **(3)** advocate (or practice) violence to achieve their goals ...

Radicalisation can be seen as a PROCESS which leads to extremism which in turn can be seen as an OUTCOME

Extremism: cognitive and behavioural typology

COGNITIVE EXTREMISM → **GOAL** holding an extreme ideology or belief system which are diametrically opposed to mainstream (democratic) core values

and / or

BEHAVIOURAL EXTREMISM → **MEANS** pursuing goals through violence = **VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

THE DRIVERS: PUSH- AND PULL FACTORS IN THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

RADICALISATION MECHANISMS as a result of *interplay* between **PUSH-** and **PULL-FACTORS** within individuals:

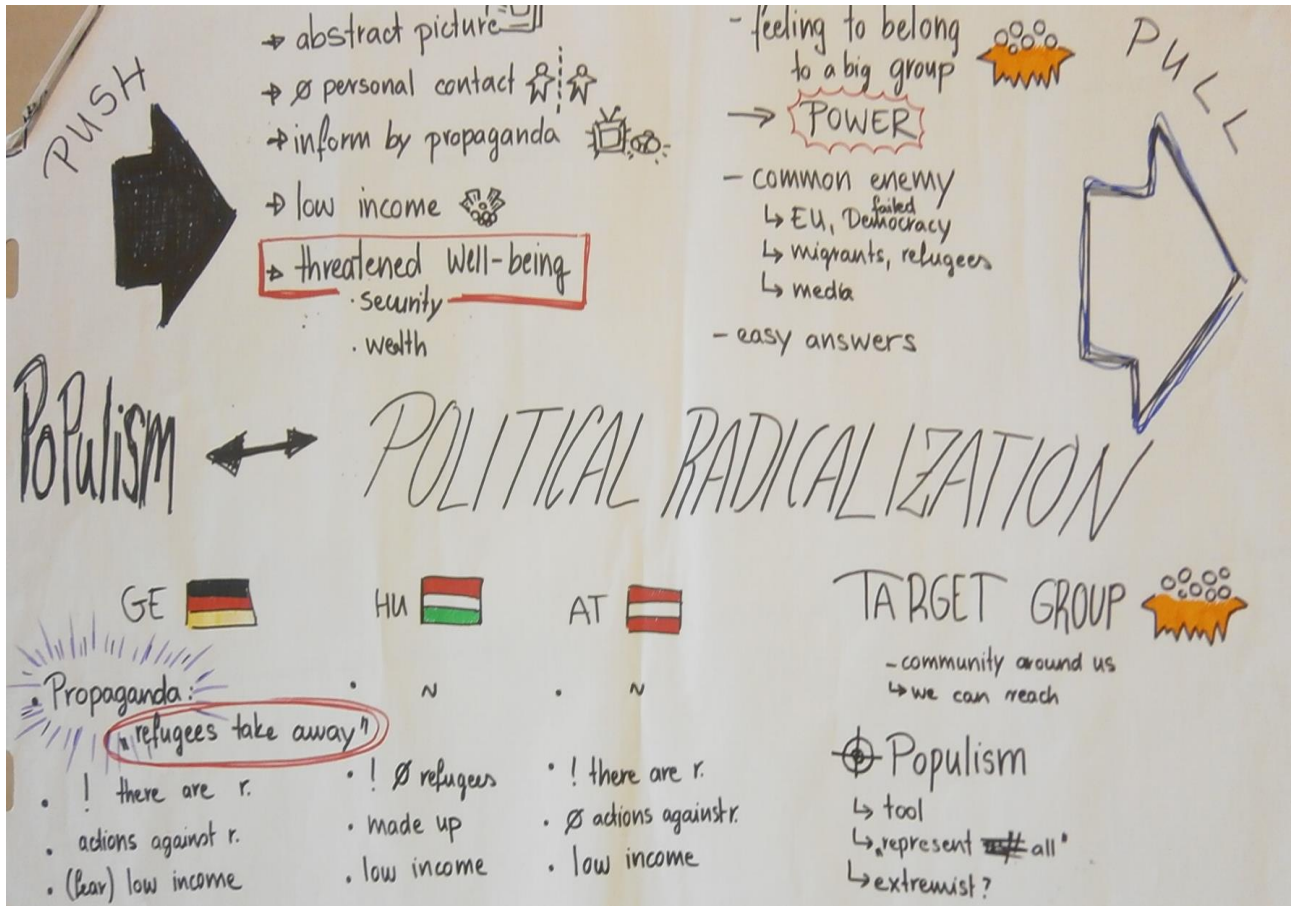
- **Push-factors:** particular disadvantaged condition OR disappointing experience individuals want to overcome: e.g. marginalisation and social exclusion...
- **Pull-factors:** desirable condition OR experience for individuals offered by other individuals/groups, institutions or ideology

As effectively summarised in the **RAN ISSUE PAPER 04/01/2016 - The Root Causes of Violent Extremism**

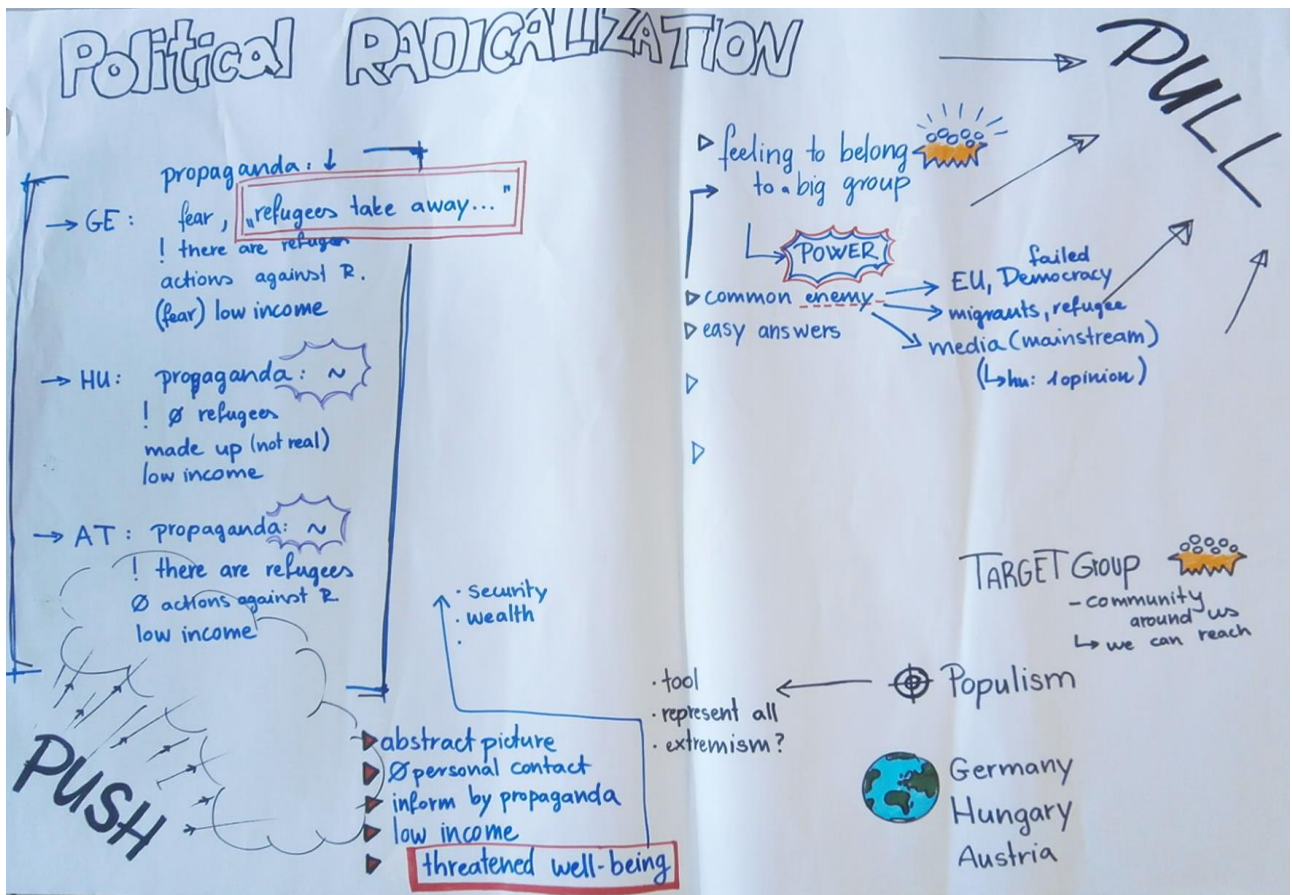
... The **push-factors** involve: social, political and economic grievances; a sense of injustice and discrimination; personal crisis and tragedies; frustration; alienation; a fascination with violence; searching for answers to the meaning of life; an identity crisis; social exclusion; alienation; marginalisation; disappointment with democratic processes; polarisation, etc.

... The **pull-factors** are a personal quest, a sense of belonging to a cause, ideology or social network; power and control; a sense of loyalty and commitment; a sense of excitement and adventure; a romanticised view of ideology and cause; the possibility of heroism, personal redemption, etc.

PUSH- AND PULL FACTORS IN EUROPEAN LOCAL COMMUNITIES



Some outcomes of the TC sessions concerning the definition of radicalisation and extremism on the youth worker level:



CONSIDERATIONS of the GROUP WORK OUTCOMES

The group work outcomes show what the majority of the training course participants consider as main **push-factors** the **European youth work** has to focus on in the frame of the **design and implementation of youth programmes**:

- **lack of personal contact**
- **disinformation of media propaganda**
- **low incomes for youth population**
- **real or perceived threats of well-being, security and wealth**

As for the **pull-factors**:

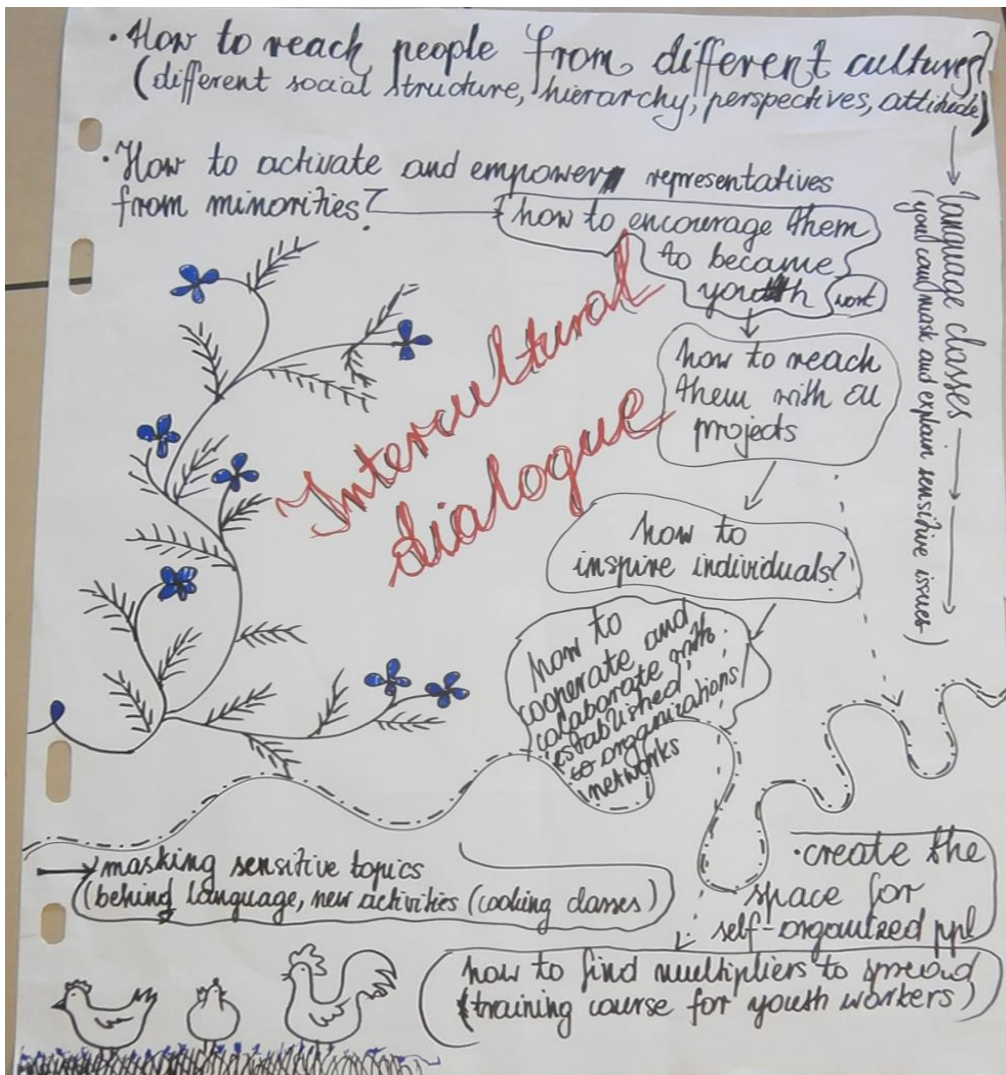
- **feeling of belonging to a group / community**
- **power**
- **easy-answers**
- **common enemies (EU, “failed democracy”, migrants/refugees, media..)**

PART 2 TRAINING COURSE THEMATIC FOCUSES – VOLUME I

In the frame of the training courses main topic – **the prevention of the youth radicalisation** - thematic focuses linked to this topic were put on:
- How to reach the youth with a migration background? - Democracy education, - Peer education and - Youth workers & children.

HOW TO REACH THE YOUTH WITH MIGRATION BACKGROUND

The outcomes of the TC sessions concerning the thematic focus “How to reach the youth with migration background” on the youth worker level:



The group work outcomes show what the **European youth work has to focus on in order to reach more effectively **youth with a migration background**:**

- **offering **language classes**, this way youth workers are able to deal with sensitive issues with youth with a migration background**
- **activating and empowering young representatives within communities with migration background**
- **this way a positive **multiplier effect** within communities with migration background is triggered (inspiration of role models)**
- **trust within community members towards public and civil society's established institutions is strengthened**
- **a better **cooperation** between different majority and minorities is ensured**

DEMOCRACY EDUCATION

The outcomes of the TC sessions concerning the thematic focus "Democracy education" on the youth worker level:

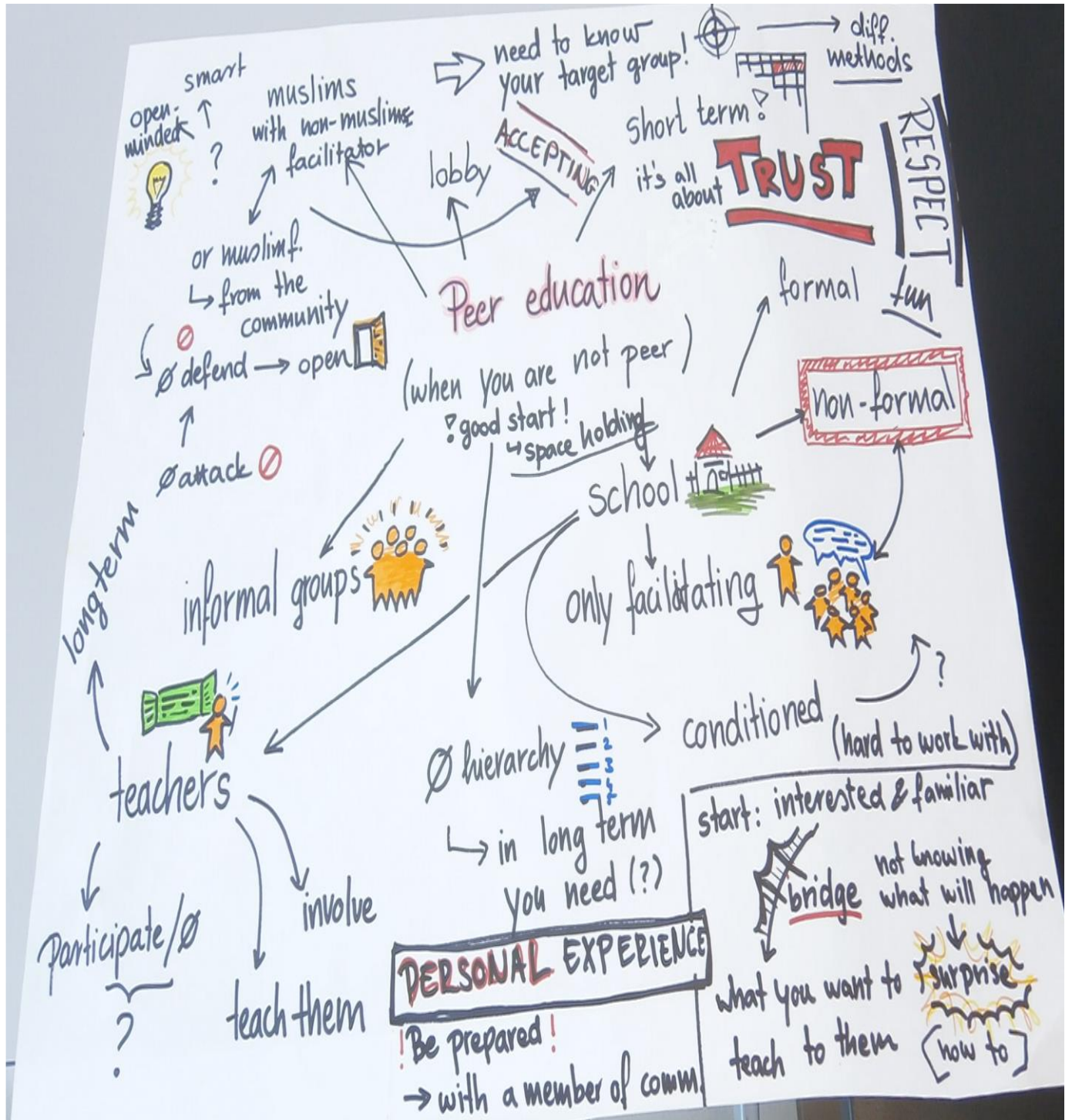


The group work outcomes show what the **European youth work has to focus on in order to offer more effectively youth programmes of **democracy education**:**

- **valuing the positive contribution of complex methodologies of democracy education such as **Betzavta****
- **relativising the concept of **right** and **wrong** in the learning process enabling non-formal and formal learners to experience diverse positions and **dilemma situations****
- **connecting more the role of youth workers or trainers on the youth work with the personal level so to gain deep insights (personal, professional), this way one can cope better with frustration or disappointment in educational working settings**
- **reflecting on the **ideal-typical youth worker** who can provide high quality democracy education: it require theoretical preparation, control of the emotions, skill to pose the right questions in the participant group (especially provocative questions), skills to organise the proper learning arrangements (big group, small working groups, individual learning...).**

PEER EDUCATION

The outcomes of the TC sessions concerning the thematic focus "peer education" on the youth worker level:

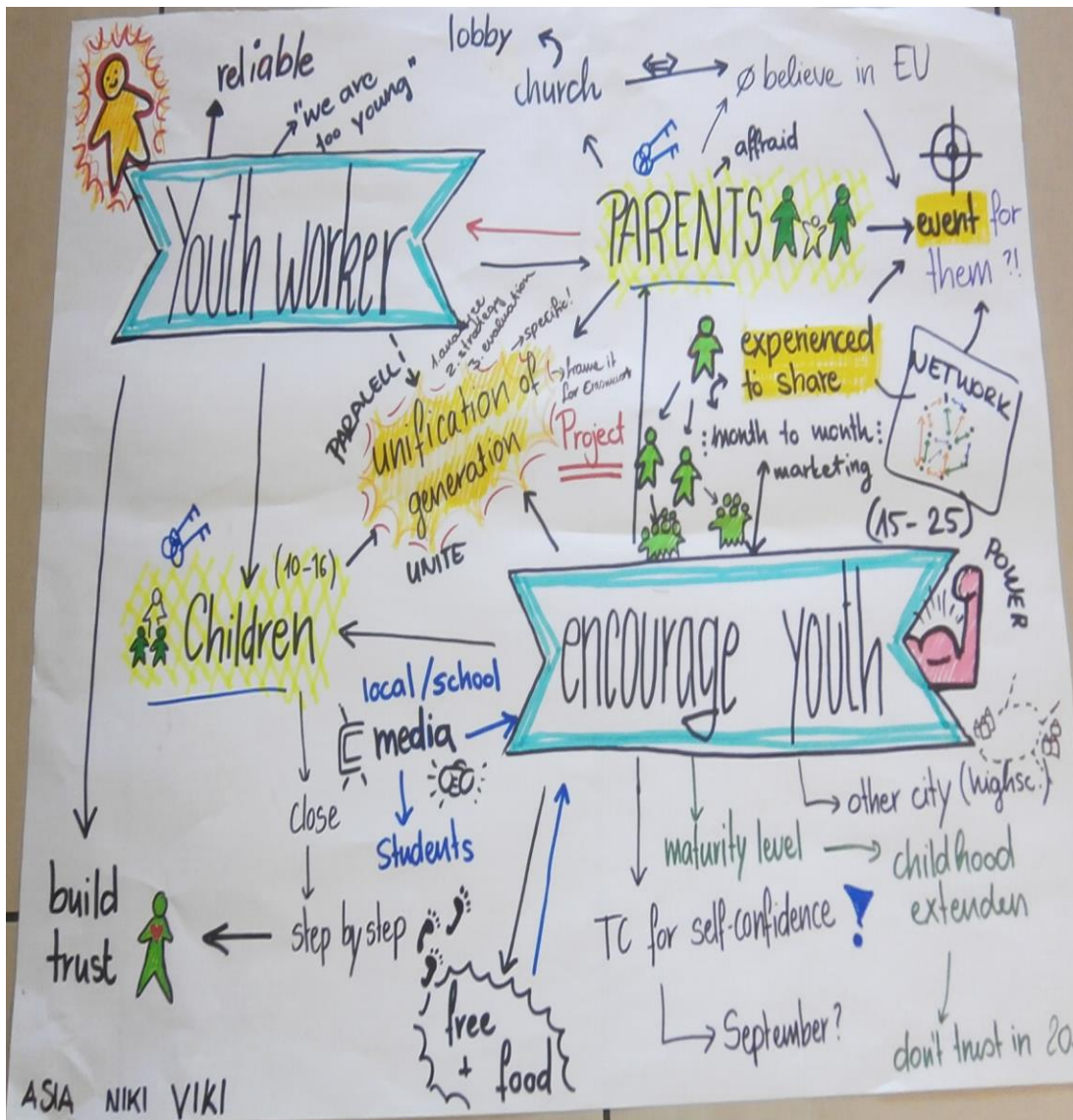


The group work outcomes show what the **European youth work has to focus on in order to offer more effectively youth programmes based on **peer education**:**

- **starting to question to what extent actors involved in teaching / learning processes can self-defined as **peer****
- **considering in the short-, middle and long term the (invisible) **hierarchy in the teaching / learning processes****
- **concentrating the attention of youth workers on **Muslim community** as well as aware of cultural and religious **diversity** of the learners**
- **strengthening the **cooperation between formal and non-formal education** especially in the design of youth programmes based on peer education**

YOUTH EDUCATION & CHILDREN

The outcomes of the TC sessions concerning the thematic focus “Youth workers & children” on the youth worker level:



The group work outcomes show what the **European youth work** has to focus on in order to offer more effectively **youth programmes with children** as main target group:

- taking into account the need and preferences of youth especially **aged 10-16**
- strengthening the cooperation between **youth workers and parents** whose voices are often substituted by more institutionalised ones (religious or well-established educational institutions)

- **encouraging aged 15-25 youth to interact in learning arrangements provided by youth workers**
- **starting to rethink the childhood and youth as more flexible and extended life phase**
- **shaping educational programmes based on trust building with all actors involved in teaching and learning activities for youth aged 10-16.**

PART 3 Participants' best practises: Germany, Italy and Romania

The **German TC** participant **Dennis Kirschbaum** is one of the coordinator of the non-profit organisation **I-SLAM** which is based in **Berlin, Germany**. **I-SLAM** is an organisation active in the formal and non-formal educational field as well as in the frame of **radicalisation prevention and contrast of Islamophobia**.

I-SLAM gathers youth workers, teachers and artists offering a wide spectrum of innovative workshops such as:

- **POETRY SLAM**

In the **Poetry Slam Workshop** **I-SLAM** provides, apart from basic knowledge about **Poetry Slam**, techniques that help one to create texts and then introduce them performatively.

- **CREATIVE WORKSHOP - CREATIVE TECHNIQUES**

In creative workshops, the participants should to find out which type of creativity they are and how they can fall into a creative phase.

- **MEDIA AND MANIPULATION**

The media world is a trickery as every author of an article with simple techniques (whether consciously or unconsciously) can direct in which direction the reader should think.

- **PROJECTWORKSHOP - FROM THE IDEA TO THE SUCCESSIVE PROJECT**

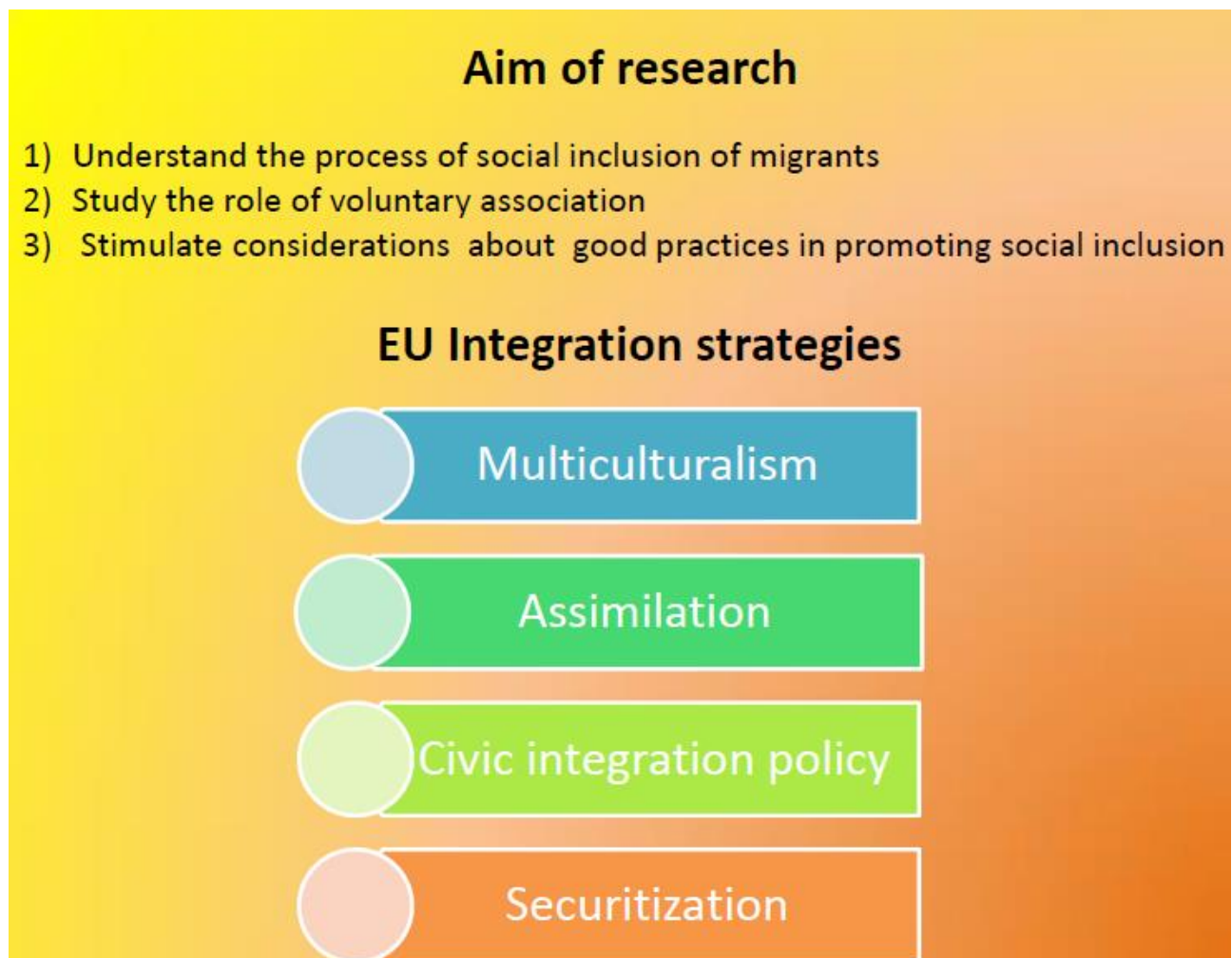
Everything started with a word is **I-SLAM** slogan. It takes only one simple idea to change the world.

- **ARGUMENTATION TECHNOLOGIES AND RHETORICS**

Speaking is an art and can decide the outcome of many situations. Whether for a panel discussion, a speech, a job interview or other situations.

Web page of I-SLAM: <http://www.i-slam.de/>.

The **Italian** TC participant **Yuika Aurora Uchiyama** presented her academic research on an Italian language school in Rome for migrants and refugees run by an association of volunteers, called **Casa dei Diritti Sociali**.



Both two major strategies adopted by EU countries, the **difference-friendly multiculturalism and the **universalistic assimilation**, did not promote an effective integration.**

The first one remark excessively all the cultural differences and expect that citizens with foreign origins would maintain their original cultural characteristics through generations. Consequently, the border between different “ethnics” is more underlined and the distance between them became more and more visible.

The second strategy expect immigrants to completely accept values and practices of their country of adoption, something which many of them do not accept to do, as it would mean giving up their identities.

In one way or another, the result was the birth of ghettos and of social segregation, which created social space for the growth of radicalisation.

Even the new strategy adopted by European Union, called **civic integration policies**, considers as indicators of social inclusion of immigrants only the employment and economic status, and the knowledge of basic values and laws of receiving countries.

Also, all the policies adopted in the last years are marked by a strong **securitisation**, considering immigrants as dangerous people. The focus of all these policies is on duties and obligations of migrants, and not on their rights; it is on a kind of “education” of immigrants, and not on intercultural communication.

If the base of preventing radicalisation is social inclusion, all the policies above are going in the opposite direction.

In Italy, where the state funding for social inclusion is poor, associations of volunteers and private initiatives are the main supporters of social inclusion and intercultural communication. For example, **in Rome over 60% of free Italian language classes are managed by associations of volunteers** or of social promotion, cultural associations and parish churches.

Language lessons

Lessons are often focused on everyday life needs, Italian culture, Intercultural communication and cultural relativity. In this way, is possible to teach grammar and new words talking about interesting topics, and also stimulate the memory of students (context-related memory).

Sensitive topics

- 1) Marriage and divorce
- 2) Abortion
- 3) Polygamy
- 4) Role of women
- 5) Sharia
- 6) Islamic fundamentalism
- 7) Religious differences
- 8) Moral principles as laic values

Functions

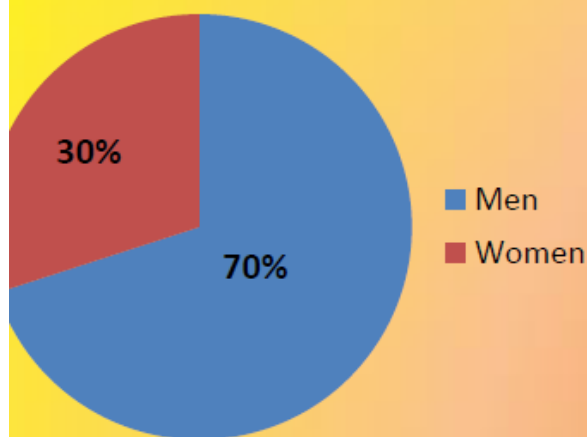
- 1) Avoid stabilization of taboos
- 2) Improve respect of different views
- 3) Inform about laws and rights
- 4) Stimulate intercultural communication, evaluating potentiality of intercultural class
- 5) Offer the right space to express student's emotions, complaints and questions about Italy and Italians.

Casa dei Diritti Sociali (House of Social Rights)

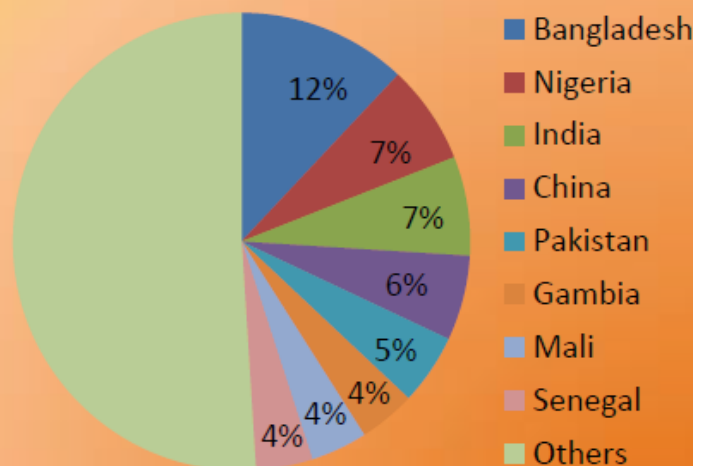
Student's average age (1st June 2015 – 31st May 2016)

Men	Women
28 years	33 years

Gender



Nationalities



Other important nationalities: Guinea and South America
Religion: Mainly Muslims and Christians

Conclusion

Schools– as the *Casa dei Diritti Sociali* – should be the place where everyone feels safe to express his or her thoughts, where different cultures can interact even through debates and disagreements. This is indeed the educational and social arrangement where processes of social inclusion start.

School – as the *Casa dei Diritti Sociali* – should be a shelter for young students, where they establish social connections and networks with school mates with migration background as well as with volunteers.

Once, one student of the *Casa dei Diritti Sociali* said: “...every Italian could be like the teachers of this school...”. This statement implies that young migrants involved in this school activities are seriously frustrated about their social life. They have to face with prejudices on a daily basis and school teachers provide them with both language classes to facilitate the integration and relevant psychological support. This way the social segregation of young migrants does not occur to the extent that may lead to radicalisation phenomena.

The **Romanian TC** participant **Irina Ilisei, Ph.D.**, President of the NGO **PLURAL**, presented her academic research on **Roma in Europe Strategies of Social inclusion / Last Acceptable form of Racism**.

This was of great interest for the training courses as the **Roma community** Europe-wide has always been subjected to **structural racism** as well as of **extremist attacks perpetrated by right-wing movements**.

Roma In Europa



Roma in Europe – Social Context

- **marginalised social position since their arrival in Europe (14th century)**
- **victims of slavery and Holocaust**
- **reproduction of poverty from a generation to another**
- **social exclusion, highest exposure to poverty risk (World Bank, FRA, UNDP surveys)**

Roma in focus of the EU Project

- **Situation of Roma - access criteria for Ro & Bg in EU in 2007**
- **Expulsion of Roma migrants from BG&RO and infringement of free movement of people in Italy and France**
- **Veto against Ro& Bg to enter Schengen Agreement 2012, 2013**
- **Debates on maintaining of the right to work freely inside EU borders for all EU citizens 2014**
- **Distribution of social welfare in EU**

Political Instrumentalisation of Roma Migration

- **Front National (France): Roma Camps**
- **Christian Social Union in Bavaria (Germany): Welfare Fraud**
- **UKIP: Danger for the Security of British people**
- **Italy: Roma as Rapers**
- **Romania: the reason why Romanians are not wellcome in EU**

Strategies of inclusion

Socio-economic factors: Education, Health, Labour, Housing

Culture: Attitude of the majority

Best practises for inclusion

- **Quota system for secondary and tertiary education**
- **School mediators**
- **Mentorship + After-school & tutoring**
- **Non-formal citizenship education**
- **Community facilitation**

PART 4 TC challenges: multiple regional focuses & political and religious conceptualisation of radicalisation and extremism

01 Western and Eastern Europe: challenges of a compared view

The geographic composition of the project partners – Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Romania – was particularly challenging as it reflected various regions within the EU. On one hand, **Eastern and Central Europe** have to deal to a minor extent with Islamic radicalisation and extremism and yet show high rate of Islamophobia paradoxically more than Western Europe. On the other hand, in **Western Europe** Islamistic terrorist attacks and a high number of Muslim characterise not only the public discourse but also the urban image and the social life.

As trainer team we advise trainer and facilitators to focus on the **regional differences** while designing and implementing the training course sessions. Furthermore, it is also relevant to keep in mind the different regional background of participants over the course of **debriefing** and **reflection groups**.

02 Why it MAKES sense to deal with both political and religious radicalisation and extremism in the frame of the very same TC

Living in the same global village, consuming the same mainstream medias and being imbedded in the same supra-institutional frame has led to the establishment of a European public discourse which effects the public policy making process of every and each EU State Member.

The Europeanisation of the political agenda also relates to policy fields such as youth and social policy ones. The decision to involve in the two TCs partner organisations from **Western** and **Central- Eastern Europe** was the attempt to train youth workers to address - **the specific regional problems of the youth population** (right-wing radicalisation trends and/or Islamist tendencies) as well as to strengthen - **the transversal competences needed in every regional context** such as critical media pedagogy or resilience development.

Moreover, in spite of the typology of extremism, be it political or religious, **drivers and development patterns are very similar** and therefore the homogeneity of the participants background played an insignificant role in this regard.

PART 5 Training course thematic focuses – Volume II

01 Three ideal-typical models of radicalised youth

There are three main models of radicalised youth which are related both to the religious and political context:

Why do I join extremist groups?

- The **DEFENDER TYPE**

Youth acquiring the **defence frame**

→ **religious context / Islamic extremism: “I must defend **at any cost** (also through violence) my Muslim brothers and sisters in Syria and Iraq and elsewhere in the world”**

→ **political context / right-wing extremism: “I must defend **at any cost** (also through violence) my Nation and Culture from the Others (mostly religious and/or ethnic minorities)”**

- The **FOLLOWER TYPE**

Need of **social acceptance**

Need of **sense of belonging to a group**

- The **SEARCHING FOR MEANING TYPE**

Need of counter-balancing the own's **Nihilistic worldview through extremist ideologies** → “black-white thinking”

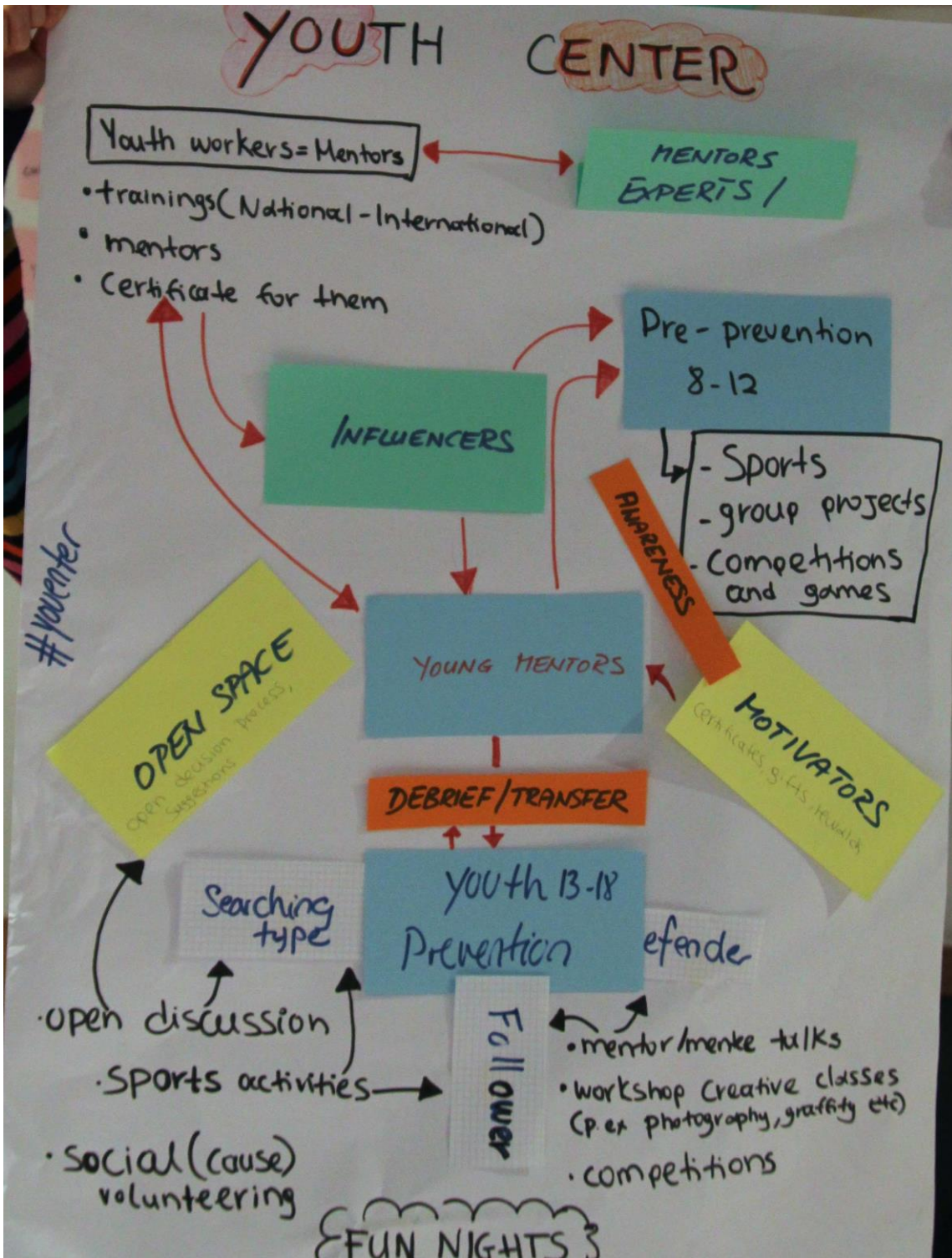
Need to rethink:

→ **social imaginary** (set of norms, laws, institutions, symbols)

→ **worldview** (fundamental cognitive orientation of the individual towards the society) – What is my individual role in the society? + On what values / ethics should the society be based?

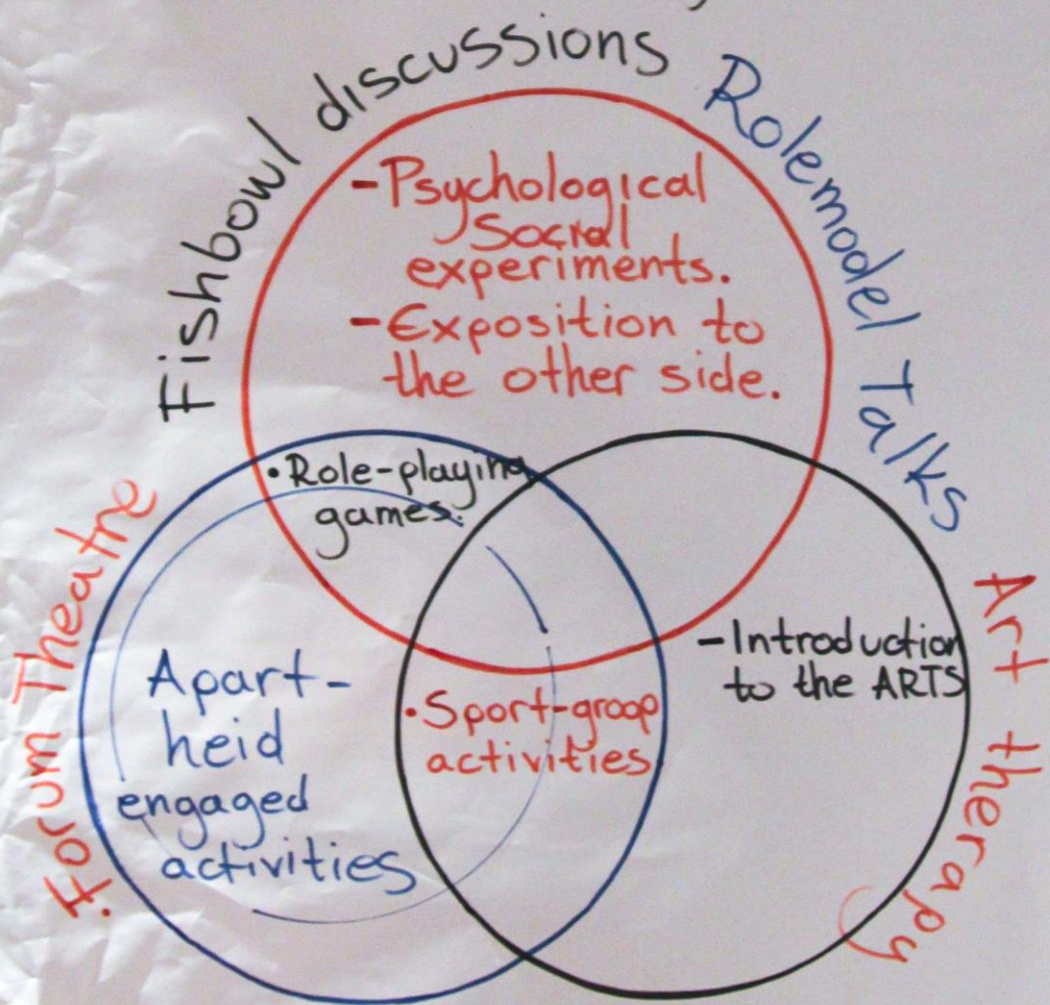
02 Youth work answers to the ideal-typical models of radicalised youth

The outcomes of the TC sessions concerning this thematic:



TOOLS - WAYS TO WORK WITH:

- Defender Type.
- Follower Type.
- Searching for meaning Type.



CONSIDERATIONS of the GROUP WORK OUTCOMES

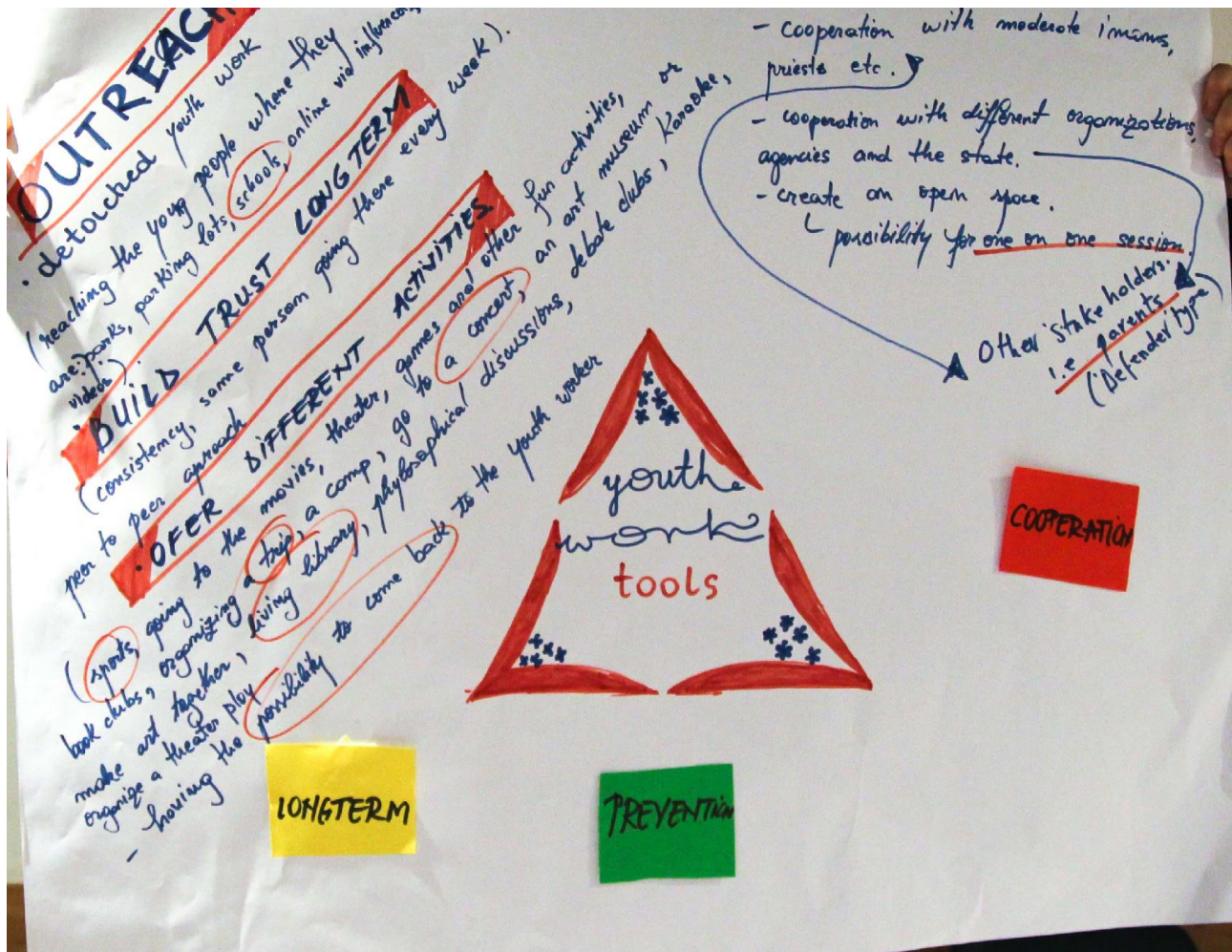
In order to tackle the drivers leading to the three main models of radicalised youth:

- **Youth workers should act as mentors and be trained on national and international level with certified courses**
- **It is relevant to take into account and shape anti-radicalisation programmes based on the relevant influencers of young people: musicians, bloggers, performers...**
- **Youth work should offer integrated anti-radicalisation programmes, including simulations, forum theatre and art therapy**

03 Youth work as a tool to prevent radicalisation

The participants collectively reflected and put forward approaches and strategies to overcome the structural weaknesses and build upon the strengths of the youth work in the frame of radicalisation-prevention.

The group work of this thematic:





CONSIDERATIONS of the GROUP WORK OUTCOMES

In order to prevent effectively youth radicalisation, the youth work has to overcome its limits:

- **Lack of knowledge** concerning psychology, sociology, religious practices as well as to deal with economic and HR difficulties
- **More integrated cross-sectoral partnerships & strategies** should be developed

The main challenges to prevent radicalisation were seen as:

- Addressing effectively the **universal need of young people to answer to the question “where is my place in the society”**
- Integrating various education methods especially concerning the **“value transfer process”**

- **Building trust** between youth workers and young people in the long term
- **Developing a more detached youth work** with a wider and more diversified outreach

PART 6 CONCLUSION

01 Conclusion

The problem of youth extremism and radicalisation will be a serious threat for local communities in Europe and on a global level.

The youth work can and should change to address all the potential social, psychological and even economic drivers leading to radicalisation. The key concepts to build on while developing effective youth programmes to prevent youth radicalisation, both religious and political, are **empowerment and **resilience**.**

Resilient youth can more effectively cope with **traumatic personal experience** which may lead as **driver** to join extremist groups.

Empowered youth are more likely to effectively engage themselves in the society and therefore **make a change in the political an economic sphere. Breaking the social, political and economic exclusion of certain groups of youth** reinforces the societal ties at large and make it more difficult for extremist propaganda to be heard.

02 About the booklet author

Tommaso Galli – Project manager, Trainer & Head of East-West Lab / Laboratorio Oriente-Occidente

East-West Lab / Laboratorio Oriente-Occidente is an officially registered association established by youth workers, trainers and researchers in Italy 2016. The association pursues the following goals: A) to contribute to develop youth, cultural, education and training policies at local, transnational and European level; B) to foster the internationalisation of private and public institutions and organisations in the aforementioned fields of the Region: Trentino Alto Adige – Südtirol; C) to strengthen local, regional and transnational systems of public governance, which enhances societal cohesion, political participation and active citizenship and intercultural dialogues. We organise and carry out various projects – seminars, trainings, conferences – using funding opportunities of local, regional, national and EU funding programmes.

03 Final words

We would like to thank you once again all the project partners, the funding institutions [the German National Agency for Erasmus+ \(JUGEND für Europa - Nationale Agentur für das EU-Programm Erasmus+\)](#) and the other relevant stakeholders which made this project possible!



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