

CZECH THE FACTS OUT!

BRNO, 1.-10.6.2016

BOOKLET FOR YOUTH WORKERS
IN MEDIA LITERACY



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MEDIA LITERACY, FACTCHECKING, HOAX AND PROPAGANDA

This booklet was created by participants of TC "Czech the Facts Out" which took place in Drahonín, Czech Republic, between 1. -10. 6. 2016

INTRODUCTION

Trying to understand the media and its role in society is a bit like **trying to capture fog in a box**. The media are **everywhere** and are completely intertwined with our society, our politics, and our lives. Separating out the media from our own belief systems, attitudes, and perceptions is very difficult. One enduring truth about media, though, is that the greatest power of media is its ability to be anywhere in the world and beyond. As we all have



become part of truly global society, we rely on the media to provide us the most vital form of currency in the world today: **information**.

Program of the project is designed to **helped us understand, that we all live in media reality**, which is affecting our opinion, our decision making. This booklet contains information acquired in **practical workshops** with experts from the field, helping us to orientate in complex **media world, feedback and outcomes of the training course**.

CZECH OUT OUR PROJECT!

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Brno for you (www.facebook.com/brnoforyou)

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Brno for you Spolek

DAY 3: NONFORMAL EDUCATION BLOCK - LIMIT 20

-“Limit 20 is a game, that opened my eyes and changed my perception of our society forever.” Tereza, Czech Republic

Limit 20 is an activity to help **participants explore manipulation, discrimination and exclusion, inequality of life chances, witness injustice and unfair competition.**

Duration time: 2,5 – 3h

No. of players: 20-30

Level of complexity: 4/4

Topics: manipulation, unequal chances

The game gives participants an illusion, that's a game about fun, friendship and competition. In reality, they are being manipulated whole time and **revealing is a real eye-opener.**

Simulation of social injustice is arranged by various activities with unequal conditions for discriminated group. Discussion after the reveal of the true topic of the activity was spontaneous. Participants saw the analogy with real social or political injustice. Just as in media, where the level of injustice in the media differ from country to country. Not everyone has the same starting line and it can be also applied to the media literacy.

The game has very complex rules and we divided participants into three teams. We created the illusion of that the game is about fun and competition. **Truth is, that it was manipulated from the beginning and it lead participants to realize how easily one can discriminate others because he is the fortunate one, he doesn't see others situation.** The game itself took 3 hours and we played all stages (6 in total) where the gap between winning and last team (discriminated one) is getting bigger and bigger.

During evaluation, all participants agreed that this was the best activity of the day. This roleplay had very strong impact on the participants, because they acted naturally since they didn't know about they are actually playing the roleplay. Participant came to talk to Czech team and they expressed their gratitude for this experience. Also on last day of evaluation, they said Limit 20 was the best activity of whole TC.

The game is used from Education Pack “all different - all equal” and can be find on <http://www.eycb.coe.int/edupack/42.html>

DAY 5: PUBLIC HAPPENING

Participants are divided into groups to prepare the public event called **The fake news**.

Time: 2-3h

Topics: media manipulation, media literacy, hoax

Group size: 20-30 pax

Main idea: participants create a hoax and approach citizens to ask about their opinion to this hoax. After citizens believe it and discuss, the truth is revealed and they highlight the importance of factchecking.

Participants divided into groups according to digital competence - doing video and writing the script (video group, 1st group), 2nd group management group facilitating the happening (preparing the structure) and 3rd group - journalist group, who will work on the fake news and its structure. Each group also researches on the internet information about topic and recent event closest to the fake event. The fake itself is agreed and developed by participants themselves. The **participants approach citizens asking them on opinion on the event happened the day before (which is made up, but strangers are not aware of that fact)**. After short conversation and asking on the opinion of the stranger, they reveal that the event is not real. They lead the contesting person to the kiosk, where they highlight the **importance of fact checking**. They explain the aftermath of hoaxes and manipulated informations and other processes learned in the previous days. They **discuss the topic on how our opinions are shaped by false information and how it affects us and they explain concrete tools and mechanism how to be resistant to false information, how to demask it**.

DAY 6: EXPERT BLOCK – FACTCHECKING by



“The hunger for truth remains a universal human desire, and that's what gives fact checking its power.” **Angie Holan, PolitiFact editor**

Process to make sure that facts are correct, especially in something that is published. Process to check that all the fact in a piece of writing, a news article, a speech, etc. are correct. **Statement is true**

=> it relays correct information in appropriate context; **false** => it relays incorrect information; **misleading** => correct information is presented in inappropriate kontext.



“Is the climate changing?”

“Global temperatures are steadily rising.”

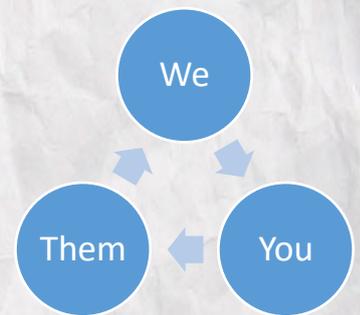
“Global temperatures are stable.”

“It is five degrees colder than yesterday.”

DAY 7: EXPERT BLOCK - MEDIA PROPAGANDA AND HOAX

Propaganda is hacking important evolutionary features of human psyche, such as: family feeling, being suspicious, empathy and others

Be aware if you will recognize „WE – YOU – THEM“ patten: determining an enemy, against who „we“ determine. „Who is not with us, is against us“ mentality. **Propaganda in media contains disinformation: false articles and following features:**



- Conspiracy and conspiracy theories
- Not keeping journalism standards (no correction, no difference between news and commentary)
- Only criticism of one phenomenon with EU or USA
- Anonymous writers, owners, editors, servers
- Linking only to pages within the conspiratory red which links ach other
- Radicalized community

Results of propaganda and disinformation

- Entering mainstream media
- Thousands of shares on social networks
- Creating of illusion, that moral breakdown is attacking from Western societies



DAY 9: FOLLOW-UP

What would our participants say to our friend Johnny, who could not attend the training course?

/MEDIA LITERACY/

Dear Johnny,

Between the first and the tenth of June we have had an opportunity to participate in a Training Course called Check the facts out that took place in Drahonín, Czech Republic. It was a place where young activists from around thirteen countries lived under the same roof and were immersed in the world where predominant roles had the concepts such as media literacy, propaganda, hoax and manipulation.

During the intense and fruitful sessions that we had every day, we have done a great variety of activities that had consolidated our theoretical knowledge about the issue. Nevertheless, despite of the fact that we are dealing with a non-formal education, the formal part was



exhaustively respected. As a consequence, I would like to point you out, my friend, and explain to you carefully about the importance of the media literacy in a modern world.

Propaganda is a form of persuasion used to influence people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. If you think that its a new phenomena, you are living in a falsehood as it is wide known that propaganda has been around for almost a thousand years. However, only recently (last 100 years) with the advent of technologies that allow us to spread information to a mass group it has evolved to a scientific process capable of influencing a whole nation of people.

Our invited experts had shown us clear examples of how it is constantly used even nowadays as a political and social means to influence people's attitudes. This is currently evident with all the election commercials on TV, where the candidates are using propaganda techniques to elevate themselves above their competitor. Modern propaganda uses all the media available to spread its message, including: press, radio, television, film, computers, fax machines, posters, meetings, billboards, speeches, flags, street names, monuments, books, plays, comic strips, poetry, music, sporting events, cultural events.

My dear friend, do you know why is it so fundamental to understand it? The reason is that propaganda is extremely powerful and everyone can be susceptible to it. Obviously, we cannot be expected to recognize and analyze all the aspects in each person, event, and

situation we encounter in even one day. We do not have time, energy, or capacity to process the information. Instead we must very often use our stereotypes, our rules of thumb to classify things. The bottom line is that (excuse me using the Cartesian ontology), we ought to be *res cogitans* and make use of our rational substance, therefore, always question



events, contrast it with multiple sources and ,finally, use our reason to make a conclusion. Why? Usually propaganda includes the reinforcement of societal myths and stereotypes that are so deeply embedded within a culture that it is often difficult to recognize the message as propaganda.

Frankly speaking, a part from acquiring new knowledge about propaganda, the course was remarkable by the people that attended to it. At this point, I do not want to point you out the advantages of multiculturalism, but there is one message that I wanted to trasmit you: the fear is the lullaby of the ignorance. So my dear friend, if

you are still in a horizontal position, full of skepticism, but you are willing to immerse yourself in a new experience and develop your practical skills about certain issues, than I insistently recommend you to apply for Erasmus +.

/FACTCHECKING/

Dear Johnny,

Thanks to this project we learned how to check facts; you might be shocked, but this is a part of media literacy called “factchecking”. You weren’t here so you missed and polite as we are, we are going to provide you with insight of what the term means. In short words, factchecking is the inquiry into the truthfulness of a statement. Facts are divided into two categories: checkeable and non-checkeable. If the statement contents are not quantifiable or just vague, they are considered noncheckeable. On the contrary, specific or quantifiable statement given the right means are usually checkeable. You can use different kind of sources such as internet – Internet, books, newspaper, statistics, previous researches, etc. By using these sources you can mark your finding as true, false or misleading. As you can see Johnny, factchecking helps you not to be easily manipulated and also exposes the lies and debulks myths. You have the tools, you have the knowledge, now it is up to you: to check or not to check!



/HOAX AND MEDIA PROPAGANDA/

Dear Johnny,

I am so sad that you missed the project and I want to tell you what is propaganda and how not to become a victim of it. Propaganda is a form of manipulation, that aims to spread someone's belief in order to convince as many people as you can. I will try to explain it to you with some examples: next time you are receiving some new information, I want you to be aware of what you have in front of you. If someone's idea is spread in a strong and convincing way, it doesn't mean that his idea is right. He might use your emotional state, like fear, panic, anger – to manipulate you in a certain way. Propaganda is mainly in the media, but you can find it almost everywhere – you just always have to factcheck before making any decision. Always try to gather information from as many sources as possible, because it is affecting your life. For example, if one website says one thing, try to find another site and create your own conclusion. News websites these days usually have their sources as well, so that's one more way to check the facts.

If you believe to some propaganda news, you will continue to spread it without even knowing that you spread fake news; after that it is hard to fix it. If fake news become viral, they replace people's perception of reality and trying to convince them they were misinformed is sometimes impossible. This is a very powerful tool for politicians to push their agendas and control the crowd, it was used countless times throughout the history to start wars and normalize violent behavior.



With this project I learned it is really easy to manipulate people and spread propaganda; I realized that I was also victim many times and now I cannot reach out to those people and tell them I was wrong. Maybe even what I am saying right now is propaganda, so you need to check it before you believe anything! I am so sorry you missed the project!

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

-“These past ten days meant a turning point in my life, without any exaggeration. Therefore, I might feel nostalgic, but not sad because I have certainty that our story



finalized with suspension points, not a full stop.” Mila, Spain

-“I have brought home the realization that no matter where I go, I'll always find wonderful persons beyond that horizon of blue. Thank you all for making me feel this way, I'll never forget you, no matter what.” Daniel, Spain

-“I have laughed so hard that my belly hurt. I have witnessed a man's name become a legend in front of my very eyes. I have met a person who has helped me in my decision to become a writer. I have had a long nap in a meadow, under the bluest of skies possible.” Tomáš, Italy

-„This project opened my eyes as nothing did in these 18 years of my life. I have to do something for the sake of my cousin's future. Dear organizers, thank you for giving me the chance of being there.” Vlad, Romania

DO YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE ERASMUS+?

Check NGOs in your country working with Erasmus+ programme. Maybe there is one even in your city! You can attend youth exchanges and as a youth worker, also training courses. You can find them on www.salto-youth.net and Facebook groups: Erasmus+ projects, Youth projects. And of course, on the web pages of NGOs from your country working and sending thanks to Erasmus+ programme.

You do not have to have a status of the student or big amount of money: Erasmus+ covers travel, accommodation, food and programme of a project. After you choose your project, carefully read the infopack for more detailed information.



WHO ORGANIZED THE TC

NGO Brno for you, z.s.

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