

Key Action: Learning Mobility of Individuals
Action Type: Mobility of young people

Project Title

Youthful Approaches Towards Combating Islamophobia

Project Coordinator

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Address Diyarbakır , TR

Project Information

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Partners JORDAN YOUTH INNOVATION FORUM SOCIETY (JO) , JOVESOLIDES Egypt (EG) , SDRUZENIE AKTIVNO BALGARSKO OBSHTESTVO (BG) , DRUŠTVO AKADEMIJA ZA RAZVOJ MLADIH - ARM (SI) , UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE (EL)
Topics Preventing racism and discrimination ; Bridging intercultural, intergenerational and social divide ; New learning and teaching methods and approaches

Project Summary

Objectives

Illuminating the true nature of Islamophobia: This project intended to demystify Islamophobia as a subcategory of xenophobia and uncover its authentic portrayal, which often gets misrepresented in the media. The objective was to dismantle the constructed narratives and stereotypes that feed prejudice.

Diminishing prejudices and hatred: By promoting understanding and appreciation for diversity, the project aimed to significantly reduce ingrained biases and hatred against Muslims and other marginalized communities.

Promoting awareness about discrimination and racism: One of the primary objectives was to raise societal awareness regarding the prevalence and detrimental impact of discrimination and racism, highlighting the importance of acknowledging and challenging these issues.

Facilitating interfaith understanding: The project aimed to enable young people to identify commonalities between Islam and their personal beliefs, thereby fostering mutual respect and understanding.

Providing digital tools against racism: This initiative also aimed to educate youth about various digital platforms and tools they can leverage to actively combat racism, spreading awareness and promoting tolerance online.

Implementing eco-friendly project practices: The project underscored the importance of sustainability, illustrating how impactful initiatives can be both socially transformative and environmentally responsible.

Encouraging debates and discussions: The project created a safe and open space for people to discuss and challenge stereotypes about Islam, fostering critical thinking and encouraging empathetic understanding.

Launching social media campaigns: The creation of videos and social media campaigns was another objective, with the goal of using these powerful platforms to fight against Islamophobia and reach a broader audience.

Rediscovering Islam: By offering accurate information and diverse perspectives on Islam, the project aimed to facilitate a process of rediscovery, dispelling misconceptions and promoting a more nuanced understanding of the religion.

Prioritizing experiential learning: The project prioritized empowering young people to learn from their own experiences and those of others. The use of experiential and non-formal learning techniques was encouraged, recognizing these as effective methods for teaching and learning about complex social issues.

Evaluating discrimination problems affecting youth: The project also sought to evaluate and address the specific discrimination issues that impact young people, paving the way for more targeted and effective intervention strategies.

Emphasizing the importance of human rights and democracy: By highlighting the integral role of human rights and democracy in preventing hate crimes, the project aimed to inspire a deeper understanding and appreciation for these essential societal pillars.

Implementation

The project comprised an intensive series of daily activities, carefully designed to fulfill the objectives we set out. These activities, as outlined in the attached info pack and summarized here, included:

Day I: Establishing a Collaborative Space and Introduction to the Programme

This day was dedicated to building rapport among participants and setting the stage for the project. Activities included an ice-breaking session that allowed everyone to get to know each other. This was followed by a comprehensive introduction of the project's program, expectations, and technical information about the training. A significant portion of the day was devoted to team-building exercises and a discussion on the European Union's Youthpass certification. Additionally, participating organizations presented their profiles and work, providing

context and background for the event.

Day II: Exploring Prejudices and Stereotypes

On the second day, participants explored the concept of phobia, focusing particularly on its manifestation as xenophobia. This day also included a drama activity aimed at breaking down prejudices and encouraging empathy. Participants shared examples from their countries, fostering cross-cultural understanding and revealing how discrimination is manifested globally. The day concluded with a 'bomb-safe space' activity, designed to challenge and dismantle stereotypes, followed by an intercultural night, where participants could share and appreciate their diverse cultural backgrounds.

Day III: Understanding Islam and Digital Activism

The third day featured a 'Rediscover Islam' workshop, conducted by the Turkish delegation, aiming to demystify misconceptions about Islam. The day also involved sessions about digital tools that could be used to combat Islamophobia, followed by activities focused on creating impactful videos and digital campaigns to spread awareness and challenge stereotypes.

Day IV: Mid-Training Evaluation and Cultural Exploration

The fourth day began with an evaluation of the mid-training period and task sharing related to cultural discovery. This was followed by a sightseeing excursion, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Diyarbakır, giving participants a first-hand experience of the local history and traditions.

Day V: International Collaboration and Sharing

This day was reserved for country workshops, with the participants from Slovenia and Bulgaria leading their respective sessions. These workshops were opportunities for delegates to share insights into their cultures and societies, potentially dispelling misconceptions and promoting understanding.

Day VI: Continuing the Dialogue

The workshops continued on the sixth day, led by the teams from Egypt, Greece, and Jordan. An open space for questions and answers was also provided, allowing participants to delve deeper into the topics discussed.

Day VII: Concluding the Programme

The final day involved discussions on future plans for international cooperation. A Youthpass ceremony recognized participants' contributions, and the project was officially concluded with an evaluation session. Preparations for the farewell night and the celebration itself served as a memorable end to the week-long project.

Regarding participant profiles, the project targeted young individuals aged between 18 and 30 from six different countries: Turkey, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Egypt, Greece, and Jordan. This diverse group represented a variety of cultural and social backgrounds, enriching the dialogue and promoting a broader understanding of the topics discussed.

Achievements

Acquisition of Non-formal Methods and Techniques: Participants gained knowledge of non-formal methods related to the project themes. They learned new techniques which are not only applicable in this specific context but are also transferable skills that they can utilize throughout their lives. These methods provide a dynamic, creative, and effective approach to dealing with complex social issues, enhancing their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

Increased Awareness Against Xenophobia and Islamophobia: The project successfully fostered an understanding

of the importance of combating Xenophobia and Islamophobia. This awareness was achieved in a friendly and non-threatening environment, ensuring that participants felt comfortable engaging with these difficult topics.

Enrichment of Cultural Competence: Participants had the opportunity to interact with individuals from different cultures and contexts, enhancing their ability to embrace and appreciate these differences. This exposure fostered tolerance and discouraged judgement, equipping them with the skills to navigate an increasingly diverse global society.

Exposure to Different Geographical and Cultural Contexts: By visiting different places, particularly the culturally rich and historically significant Diyarbakır Province, participants gained a new perspective on the Islamic context of the area. The chance to practice and present their holy days enabled them to gain insight into other religions and practices, fostering interfaith understanding and respect.

Deeper Understanding of Islam: Central to the project was the objective to dispel prejudices and misconceptions about Islam, and it successfully provided participants with a more nuanced understanding of the religion. This newfound knowledge equipped them to effectively combat Islamophobia within their own communities.

Digital Literacy and Advocacy: The digital skill sessions organized during the project trained participants on how to use digital tools for creating content that spreads the results and learnings of the project. This not only increased their digital literacy but also empowered them to become advocates for tolerance and understanding in the digital space.

Community Impact Through Study Visits: A study visit to the local youth center in Diyarbakır provided participants with tangible, real-world examples of efforts to combat Xenophobia. Seeing these initiatives in action offered inspiration and practical insights into how they could replicate similar practices in their own communities.

Overall, the project had a significant impact, not just on the participants but also, through their continued efforts and increased awareness, on their respective communities. This serves to amplify the project's impact, creating ripples of change that reach far beyond the original scope of the project.

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