# European synthesis

# on the experimentation of training modules combating hate speech and discriminations

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The European project BRICkS– Building Respect on the Internet by Combating Hate Speech – aims to combat the spread of online hate speech against migrants and minorities through media literacy and active involvement of web users and web content producers. This project is developed by Cospe, Zaffiria (Italy), Média Animation (Belgium), Grimme Institute (Germany) and MKC Multicultural Center (Czech Republic). The first step of this project was a national research combining study cases and interviews that led to a European study comparing the situation of hate speech in online press forums in the four countries involved in the project. This European study is available here (http://www.bricks-project.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/relazione_bricks_eng2-1.pdf). The second step of the project was the development of four media education modules (one in each country) to raise awareness about fighting online discriminations and hate speech. These training modules were implemented in schools and youth centers between September 2015 and November 2016.

This report provides a synthesis about the design and the experimentation process of these training modules in each national context. It has been elaborated thanks to the materials produced and also collected by each national team: modules description, logbooks from trainers or teachers, quantitative data, examples of students' productions and finally, some pictures from the workshops.

This report is structured in five parts. After introducing to the variety of contexts of experimentation, a general educational scenario will collect media education activities coming from the four training modules. Thereafter, an overview of the methodologies used and the topics addressed will complete the analysis of the training modules supplemented by some comments through the media education perspective. The third part of this report will summarize the most significant learning situations and the students' participation during the experimental workshops. It will be followed by some suggestions coming from the students to fight online hate speech. Finally, some challenges and open issues will be identified before the final conclusion.

## Introduction –The diversity of the contexts

The four countries involved in Bricks project have of course different contexts in terms of educational structures and goals or concerning hate speech. In this respect, a European synthesis about online hate speech in Belgium[1], Czech Republic, Germany and Italy has been produced during the first phase of Bricks project (available on the website www.bricks-project.eu ). We won't therefore develop further this point. Nevertheless, we can still point out some significant situations of hate speech that affected the way each training module was built in the four countries. Hate speech has always existed on the internet but we can say that it has increase with the high mediatisation of the arrival of refugees from Syria in summer 2015. The terrorist attacks in France (Charlie Hebdo attacks –January 2015) or in Belgium (March 2016) had also a significant impact on online hate speech comments against Muslims:

"By early summer 2015, hate speech comments were increasingly directed at refugees, especially Muslim refugees, and at people acting in favor of them, like civic supporters, volunteers, politicians, activists. This development was clearly related to the European refugee crisis, which not only led to a surprising amount of civic support but regrettably also to an increase of hate speech in social media. Online media forums, comments on articles, and the Facebook pages of national and local newspapers are the virtual place in which hate speech that targets refugees and citizens of foreign origin has spread."[2]

This context obviously influences educators' and teachers' needs in terms of educational support and tools related to the fight against hate speech, and most widely to education for citizenship. It's why participatory workshops were organized in the four countries in order to identify the needs and expectations of teachers, trainers and educators concerning hate speech.  The outcomes of these participatory workshops vary from one country to another.  In Belgium teachers and trainers pointed out the problem of conspiracy theories and the need to develop critical mind of young towards media. They also highlighted that young people had not a clear understanding of what freedom of speech covered and how to use it wisely. In Germany, the participatory workshop organized with teachers helped to refine the target groups and confirm the methodologies to use with the students of 13 years and older. Social media professionals also attended a German participatory workshop and helped to clarify the difference between hate speech and cyber-bullying and give support to finalize the choice of suitable counter hate speech methods. In Czech Republic, the participatory workshops were the opportunity to organize a pre-test of the modules and to adapt and review some parts when necessary. In Italy, the participatory workshops with teachers highlighted the strong link between hate speech and cyber-bullying.

Finally, four modules were designed:

- • "*Educational Program focusing on Hate Speech on the Internet*" by MKC Multicultural Center (Czech Republic).

- • "*Together Against Hate Speech!"* by Grimme Institute (Germany)

- • *"Draw me freedom of Speech"* by Media Animation (Belgium)

- • *"Media education and hate speech: handbook of activities"* by Zaffiria and Cospe (Italy)

They were all implemented and tested within schools or youth centres, even in various ways.  For instance, In Italy and in Germany, the module were implemented by members of the project teams or from media education or youth organisations after a training of several days, reflecting on hate speech and the use of active methodology and media education. In Czech Republic, the trainers were recruited by open call and trained by MKC in a three days training exploring the phenomenon of hate speech (why it is important to educate students about this topic, why it is important to discuss the freedom of speech in this context, why it is important to combat hate speech, which tools

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[1] The BRICkS project only concerns the French part of Belgium (Brussels and Wallonia), however for better convenience we use the mention Belgium in this report seven if it doesn't cover the whole country.

[2] Maneri, M., 2016, *Study on hate Speech Online in Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany and Italy*, p.6, University of Milano Bicocca.

people can use to do so) with the intervention of a specialist on hate speech. In Belgium, the module was designed « ready-to-use » directly for teachers or educators (theoretical book accompanying didactical media education activities). It's why most of the teachers who tested the modules in their classrooms didn't express the need to participate to the training dedicated to the module.

Many schools were interested to participate in the experimentation of the modules, especially in Germany and Italy where hate speech is a hot topic. In Belgium and Italy, as the module was longer (from 12 to 15 hours), it was not always implemented fully, but partially by teachers who have very busy educational program to follow.

In summary, the following table presents the quantitative data of these experimentation[3].

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of young people involved in workshops | 1604 |
| Age of young people involved | Belgium: 12-25 years<br>Czech Republic: 11-18 years<br>Germany: 11-19 years (+ one group of one group 19-40)<br>Italy: 13-18 years |
| Total number of workshops (one module) | 81 |
| Total number of hours of workshops | 538 |
| Total number of teachers, trainers and trainers from the partner organisations involved | TOTAL: 52<br>    Teachers: 12<br>    Trainers from the organisation: 9<br>    Trainers: 31<br>*All were trained by the partner organisations except 10 teachers and trainers in Belgium.* |
| Percentage of school types and youth centers | Secondary schools: 79.25%<br>Youth Centers: 7.5%<br>Universities: 3.25%<br>Others: 10% |
| Period of experimentation | September 2015 – June 2016 |
| Average number of young people per group | 20 |

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[3] The present data takes into account the experimentation implemented during the period of September-June 2016. More experimentation were implemented during the period of July-November 2016 but are not included in this report, as it was drafted during July and August 2016.

## Part I – The training modules
### I.    Overview through a synthetic educational scenario

The training modules developed differ from one country to another both in the contents and the methodologies as each country had to face different contexts. The Czech module uses role-play and debate to make young people aware of the implication of stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination and hate speech and motivate them not to generate hate speech. It is composed of three training units of 1h30 each that must be implemented in totality (4h30 for the whole module). In Germany, the module is mainly based on creativity and media production starting from young people's reflection about their media practices. It also uses netiquettes and examples of hate speech and voices that counter hate speech to give young people a better view of its various dimensions. The German module is made of 5 units that may last from 3 to 9 hours depending on the media production of youth. The Italian module starts from students' media practices and help them exploring their feelings and personal experiences concerning hate speech using media analysis and production. It also approaches the notion of perspective and helps students building their own point of view. The whole module takes 10 hours to be implemented and is composed of 6 units. As for the Belgian module, it addresses the issue of hate speech through caricatures using media analysis, media production, role-play and creativity to approach various topics as freedom of speech, stereotypes, points of views, interactivity and decontextualization of pictures. It is composed of 6 units (2 hours per unit) that can be implemented fully as a path or partially.

Reporting all activities included in these training modules would not make sense in this report, we prefer to present a "general educational scenario", as a puzzle, combining the most significant activities from the four modules.

### a)    *The starting point: collecting students' experiences and feelings towards discrimination and media*

Most of the training modules start with an introductory activity that aims to collect feelings and experiences of the young people about the addressed topic.  This allows teachers and educators to have an overview about the relationship between his group and the topic. If some training modules start directly with hate speech and discrimination (as MKC multicultural Centre), other prefers to enter to the topic through the media environment (Grimme institute, Zaffiria and Media Animation).

For instance, the MKC Multicultural Centre introduces the young people to the topic of hate speech through a role-play aiming at making aware young people about discriminatory situations. Then as debriefing of this role-play, educators ask about feelings of students and lead a reflection about the experience (how was it) and real situation (did they ever lived discrimination in real life?). Trainers ask also for students' opinion about the term "discrimination" and from these explain to them the definition of discrimination with examples.

In Germany, as first activity, participants reflect on their own media consumption habits and learn to recognise social media as an experimental space that contains its own rules of communication (possibilities, benefits, risks of digital communication). Young people interview each other on their Internet use: How often do you use the internet? Which devices do you use for that? How important is the internet for you? What is it good for? What is not good about the Internet in your opinion? In a similar way, the activity proposed by Zaffiria "Think social media: introduction to start reflecting on its own relationship to media" allow young people to speak about the place media have in their lives. It creates an atmosphere of trust in the group and make them curious about the work that will be proposed to them next. Starting from four videos[4] about various topics related to media (love and friendship,

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[4] Marracash, *Sindrome Depressiva Da Social Network*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkmXBw7AGFU
This song is from the rapper Marracash who expresses judgments on his girlfriend addict to social media.
Treehouse, *I social network a tavola*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rQkGH-lf3g
This video produced by Treehouse presents the classic familial scene with young people using their smartphone while their father ask them to pass him the pepper.

relation to family, public-private dimension, and self-representation), the trainer asks to young people to ask them-selves:

- To which element of the video do I identify myself?
- What do I agree on?
- To what element didn't I actually think before?

Once it is done, young people make small groups, confront their answers and then report to the rest of the group the synthesis of their exchanges. This activity allow young people to start observing their own media practices, the relation between their own lives and social media and will be the base to explore where online hate speech nest.

### b) *Exploring and analysing dimensions of hate speech and media*

From an activity immerging young people in a reflection about discrimination and their use of media, the second step of the learning scenario could consist in exploring the various dimensions of hate speech and media. It allows teachers to go deeper to some topics related to the general issue of online hate speech. We describe below some examples of activities related to various topics like the notion of point of view and its link with emotion, the freedom of speech, the stereotypes and representations. Often activities of analysis are suggested. To dissect the mecha-nism of media discourses and therefore online hate speech is essential to go to the step further: to act against!

**Viewpoint and emotion**

The activity "Understand the notion of viewpoint" created by Zaffiria aims at making young people aware of the existence of different point of views and at mastering arguments to defend a point a view. It starts with a video from the Guardian[5] showing a story very easy to understand whose conclusion changes according to the point of view taken. The trainer stops the video before each change of viewpoint and asks young people to write their interpre-tation of the situation. At the end, they discover how easy it has been to mislead them and how far away from reality their interpretation was.

Once they get to this conclusion, they can easily enter the topic of viewpoint as they concretely experienced it. The trainer then proposes them to browse through the book "Zoom"[6]. From a progressive widening of the field of vision this book reveals new contexts and surprising illustrations come from a close-up of the crest of a cock up to a view of the earth from space. The book teaches young people to look at pictures, imagine what it can be around, to look for unexpected developments, to pay attention to what point they are looking at. It is a poetic way to exercise watching more carefully. In our case, the continuous change of perspective on each page requires students to reposition themselves regarding the image.

After exploring the book, the trainer proposes another video to student: an extract from the animated movie "Inside Out" showing the various emotions fighting because they have different viewpoints on the situation happening to a little girl. In the extract selected they can see how Joy and Sadness have completely different viewpoint on the rain: Joy is happy because she can use colored umbrellas and jump into puddles; on the other hand Sadness think that rain will cause a cold and soaked shoes.

The activity follows with a video telling the story of Gaetano[7], a boy who is considered by his classmates as a "loser" and is mocked. They put pictures on the Internet showing him victim of his classmates' jokes. Their classmates organize a new joke, Maria, an important mate for Gaetano, gives him an appointment in the afternoon with her.

Centro Zaffiria, *#Rigobitch*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqb7X6XX6Ew
This video gives advices to have a good profile picture.
Centro Zaffiria, *Siate vigilanti*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aEiKiyuen8
This Belgian video draw attention on the online diffusion of personal information.
[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJd1X5a5L4E
[6] Zooom is an illustration book realized by Istvan Banyai.
[7] Sicuri in Rete, *Storie di ordinario Cyberbullismo 1 - L'amica*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwIb22Ydguk
This video show the story of Gaetano, a newcomer in the school, but integrating is not always easy. I could help him, but how?

He trusts her but at this love meeting, the whole class is invited to surprise him and make another joke. After watching the video, young people pick a colored cart with an emotion and have to interpret the video following the emotion they picked. Each student completes the work anonymously, they take the role of a classmate of Gaetano and take a decision on what to do: go to appointment to make the joke, not to go or do something else. The trainer then read all propositions out loud and debate with young people each strategy proposed. This last exercise makes young people aware of the relationship between emotion and viewpoint and how emotions can influence our interpretation of a situation. To understand hate speech, it is very important for young people to be able to distinguish different viewpoints on the same situation. Beside rational arguments and sources (more or less reliable), it is also important to let a space to emotions which can influence not only the idea of a situation but also the reactions that will be explored later as possible (or probable) to manage online hate speech.

**The issue of freedom of speech**

The issue of hate speech is intrinsically linked to freedom of speech and its legal limits. As emphasized by Bart Cammaerts, a Doctor of Social Sciences at VUB (Brussels), "Inevitably the hate-speech debate also brings into question ideological differences in relation to how absolute the freedom of speech is, the nature of democracy and how or to what extent a balance needs to be struck between different rights, including respect for and recognition of difference and the right not to be discriminated against."[8] (Cammaerts, 2009) For these reasons, letting a space for young people to debate about freedom of speech is important to after be able to define what hate speech is. Its why the Belgian team has developed an activity which aims at making young people understand the principle of freedom of speech and the limits it underlies but also the sensitivity of judgments to pass on media pieces as caricatures in their satirical and critical dimension. From keywords[9] given by the trainer, young people try to build in small groups a definition of freedom of expression using creativity (posters, drawings, etc.). When they have achieved this task, they report to the rest of the group their definition and build a new one from all definition presented and with the correction of their trainer. To do so, it is as much about preserving freedom of speech in the method (ensure debate and expression of views of each) than to discuss it in terms of content.

After this first exercise, the trainer distribute to young people caricatures from different countries about freedom of speech. Young people choose a few caricatures and start analyzing them, answering these questions: What elements are presented? What do they mean? Who is the author? In which country does s.he live? What is the message of the author in relation to freedom of speech? Once they have answered these questions, they replace the caricatures they chose on a big world map and try in small groups to draw up a list of the main issues related to caricatures and freedom of speech as censorship, self-censorship, threats on freedom of speech, fights for freedom of speech, etc. To end this activity, the trainer proposes to young people to identify in a few words the role of caricature in the field of freedom of speech: defend it, take an opposite stance to dominant discourses, inform on situations, get aware of taboos (which doesn't mean it requires to transgress them automatically - self-censorship), denounce censorship situations, etc.

After having listed issues related to freedom of speech, the trainer distributes caricatures that have created controversy in different countries. Young people are divided in four groups:
- The "whistleblower": those who believe that the cartoon oversteps the limits of freedom of expression (what legal category, what arguments?);
- The "defenders": those who take defence of the cartoonist and / or the newspaper that published the cartoon and do not consider that it exceeded the limits;

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[8] Cammaerts, B. (2009). Radical pluralism and free speech in online public spaces: the cases of North Belgian extreme right discourses. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*(12), pp. 555–575.

[9] The keywords given are: Principle - Freedom of expression - Right - International - All materials - For all - Censorship - Humor - Provocation - All media - Limits - Act - Tolerance - Privacy - Image rights - Honor - Slander - Defamation - Discrimination - Racism - Sexism - hate speech -Blasphemy - Caricature

- The "moderators" (only 1-2 people): they invite each other to put their arguments and they cannot have an opinion;
- The "observers": they attend to the role-play without taking sides and note the main arguments.

The facilitator attends the role play as observer without intervening. After the debates, he invites the observers to reformulate the main arguments conducted by some and by others: are they all valid? Which would take the road more than others? The goal is not to judge whether the caricature finally bypassed or not the limits but to raise awareness of the multiple dimensions that must be taken into account. The facilitator then asks the group to express their feelings and feedback from the position they have taken in this role play, including their personal opinion /embarrassment about the cartoon if they feel the need. The roleplay can be done with different caricatures to allow young people to change roles. By alternately defending or attacking a caricature with reasoned arguments, the young people will have the chance to defend opinions that are not especially theirs and enlarge their view to better understand what freedom of speech is.

**Stereotypes and representations in media**
Exploring the media discourses leads naturally to the issue of stereotypes and representations in media. Almost all the four training modules developed within Bricks project have addressed this topic.  Students often misunderstand stereotypes: they only see their negative function (stereotypes can lead to prejudices and discrimination) and not the useful role they play in media (fast and easy understanding, as it has an evocative power) and in society (social cohesion). But negative stereotypes repeatedly used can do harm if they are taken for granted and not for what they are, i.e. a simplification of reality. This is why it is important, in the framework of combatting hate speech, to reflect on the question of stereotypes and representations in media.

To do so, we could be inspired by one activity from the Belgian module that aims to approach the concept of stereotype as conveyed by caricature including its definition, its functions, and its effects. It also allows young people to consider the role of the stereotype in communication and its dual mode: as simplistic message, does he have a negative or discriminating impact? The trainer shows therefore a series of caricatures representing people from different social categories or nationalities (for example: Catholics, Americans, terrorists, politics, women, men…) and ask them to classify them in two columns: are the stereotypes used to represent the social category/nationality problematic or not? Why? Students classify the caricatures according to their personal opinion and give arguments. If some students disagree with one's choice, they can give their opinion too, develop their arguments and debate. This activity helps young to realize how necessary stereotypes are for understanding the representation but also how subjective can be the appreciation of a stereotype from one person to another. To keep reflecting on stereotypes, young people are proposed to choose one social category/nationality and to write on a board all the adjectives that come to their mind thinking about this category in a brainstorming. Finally, they read everything they have written on the board and note all the stereotypes that came out. They discuss the adjectives they selected and reflect on alternatives.

**Analysis of media materials & hate speech messages**
To offer methods and tools to young people to support them in the understanding of media messages is prominent in media literacy.  The four modules anchor media analysis activities in one way or another.  For instance, in Italy, Zaffiria and Cospe suggest one activity to teach young people to recognize hate speech in media messages: the trainer introduces the activity by presenting four emoticons representing the various attitudes in online forum towards hate speech[10]:
- Right-thinking comments (gooders)
- Angry comments
- Aggressive comments

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[10] See the national study "Hate is not an opinion. Study on hate speech, journalism and migration" by COSPE and the University of Florence : http://www.bricks-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/study_italian_EN.pdf

•   Resigned comments

The trainer proposes to student to give a definition of these four categories using brainstorming and starting from their experiences and considerations.  At this point, the trainer shows young people the case study they will analyze: a playbill published on Facebook that gave rise to more than 100.000 comments. By couples, students receive four cards with the four emoticons and a selection of published comments: they are asked to sort the comments under the emoticons.  Once they are done, they hang it on a wall and the group is divided in 4 subgroups (one per emoticon). Their instructions are to find the five more frequent sentences for the emoticon they have. At the end, they all share their conclusions and comments.

To conclude, young people are proposed to rewrite comments feeding hate speech to modify it in the form (at the linguistic level), and with reasoned arguments in order to avoid hate speech. By focusing on the analyse of media content at a linguistic level (paying attention to the words used, the construction of the argumentation), young people do not debate about their own opinion on the subject but take the role of analysts cooperating to decode better hate speech.

The media analysis method was also widely used in the module "Draw me hate speech" in Belgium.  Media Animation has built a method of caricature analysis to use with students as a first step before the debate about the message and the potential presence of hate speech or discrimination within this message.  This method aims ultimately to identify the views of the author but also the function of the caricature in context. The various questions to ask oneself are:

1.   The author: Who is s.he? What do we know about him/her? Do we know him/her specificity?
2.   Representations: What shows the caricature? By focusing only on drawn elements, what do they represent? First, in general, and then particularly in the current context? Compared to the situation caricatured, what are the elements that have been chosen to be highlighted? What are the missing elements of this situation / events (those whose caricature does not speak)?
3.   Language: What are the figures of styles and processes used? Is there any text (speech bubbles, captions ...)? Does it help to understand the caricature? What role does it play? How would you describe the level of humor (gag, black humor, satire, etc.)?
4.   The context: Do you know the publication context of this caricature? If it appears in a newspaper or website: what is its place (location)? Is it linked to other editorial content? If so, what relations are there between the point of view of the drawing and the information of the article?
5.   The audience: From the context of publication, what would be the readership / audience of the media? About the drawing, what are the pre-knowledge needed to understand it? On what complicity with his audience does the author play (intellectual, cultural, social ...)?

In the end, thanks to elements identified above, it is possible to determine:
• The vision adopted in the caricature: is it the vision of the author, journalist and/or the newspaper, or perhaps the political powers represented on the event? What is the "charge" or the denunciation made through this caricature?
• The selection of the elements depicted in the caricature: Why the author has represented these specifics? What is said and what is not said?
• The role of the caricature is it to inform, to entertain, to attract attention of the reader, to illustrate the article, to provide additional information, to criticize, to put into perspective the opinion of the author, to question the reader, etc.?

From this first step of analysis, students will get an understanding of the media object that allow them to take into account the context and discuss if there are discrimination or hate speech in the caricature. It will also give food for a collective debate.

### c) From a collective and plural understanding of hate speech to activism against hate speech

All these first steps of collecting personal reaction and analyzing media and hate speech mechanisms lead the teachers and their students to come to a collective but also plural understanding of hate speech in the (online) media. From this understanding, young people can enter into the "activist" phase of the learning scenario: detecting hate speech and reacting to it by making people aware of the situation, reporting a problematic situation or finding new solutions.

For this purpose, the German module, for instance, after an activity of collective definition of hate speech, invites students to come up with ways and means of acting against hate speech (legal, on a professional level (institutions/companies), on a private level). These solutions are then discussed and analyzed. The trainer has also resources[11] he can propose to students like *chatiquettes* and *netiquettes* from heavily frequented websites, news sites and online communities, such as Facebook and Instagram. These can be used to show the students what is deemed as hate speech, what are possible consequences for breaking the rules etc. Some legalities can be discussed as well and it helps to illustrate counter measures. Moreover, the students are invited to make a step further to counter hate speech: to produce media, to develop a campaign against hate speech. They start working on creative media activities: designing and painting posters, conceptualizing a website, writing a song, producing a video. Young people might also develop a "What happens if…" story, which is a multiple choices story made as an online photo novel where the reader can choose what will happen next.[12]

In the Italian module, participants are also proposed to develop a video (or another media production) against hate speech to make people aware of this issue. The Belgian module proposes to create an online campaign against hate speech using caricatures to denounce discriminations. The results of these productions is analyzed hereafter in this report.

Finally, in order to conclude this educational scenario, we suggest to open the project outside the classroom: young people can present the results of their creative work and reflection to others. The students can explain how they have made their media product, how they have felt doing it and where they would like to see it disseminated (social media, school website, etc.). This phase offers opportunities of feedback for young people: they can voice positive/negative criticism and talk about their experiences in dealing with both the topic itself as well as with the media they used. Trainers and participants come to an agreement on how to publish the results. To go further, students could also choose to spread their production by showing it to other groups of the school or as a starter to open debate about the issue.

## II.   Analysis of the training modules

Each training module reveals the orientation of the four partners of the BRICkS project and the field they are expert in. It is thus not surprising to have a certain variety of approaches for combatting hate speech through the training modules. For example, MKC which is a Multicultural Centre in Czech Republic has focused its module on the intercultural understanding, exploring discriminatory situations and decrypting stereotypes. The Italian module, made by Zaffiria (Center of Education to Mass Media) and COSPE (Organization for the Development of Emerging Countries) have taken the path of exploring young people's feelings and attitude toward hate speech by making

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[11] The charts for trainers consist of ca. 20 single worksheets that deal with topics such as cyber-mobbing, online communication, trolling, unethical online behavior, dealing with haters, professional handling of hate speech (from the point of view of editors), use of apps, benefits and downsides of app use, hate propaganda, "genuine" hate speech, online privacy, legal aspects of hate speech, "shitstorm" (online backlash), possible solutions for handling hate speech, hints & advice for dealing with hate speech, comparison between cyber-mobbing, "shitstorm", hate speech and hate propaganda, and a list of available online materials for introduction to the topic. Most of these worksheets come equipped with a variety of questions and work tasks for the participating pupils that serve to get them involved and to create their own (possible) solutions for the problem at hand.

[12] For more information on this concept of workshop : http://www.bricks-project.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/what_happens_if_concept_bricks_english.pdf

them reflecting on their own media practices. The Grimme-Institut (Germany), a Center of Media Education and Research has based its training module on the issue of moderation using netiquette and media production. As for the Belgian module made by Média Animation (Resource center of Media Education), it takes a proper media object – the caricature- to drive young people to exercise their critical thinking towards media. Instead of pointing the differences between the four training modules, we chose to identify the commonalities regarding the methodologies used and the topics addressed. We will supplemented this analysis by some comments from the media education perspective.

### a) The methodologies used

Among the interesting diversity of methodologies used in the training modules, we can point out six methodologies that appear in all of them and that we develop hereafter, giving one or two examples on how they are actually implemented.

**Active learning**

Active learning consists in starting from the knowledge and experiences of pupils to help them building new knowledge. As seen before, this methodology is often used as starting point of the activities to better involve students and have an overview of their knowledge, skills and possible questions on a topic. For instance[13], the Belgian module starts with a brainstorming with young people on the basis of a caricature they remember and that has touched them and to explain why. From there, the group identifies the common features and develops a common definition of what is a caricature and what issues the group associates to it. This method assumes also to activate the pre-knowledge of the students and start the activity from where they are.

**Case studies and analysis**

Analysis of case studies appears as an unavoidable method when it comes to hate speech: it enables young people to take a step back, putting their emotions, controversies and debates away, the time to rationally reflect on hate speech and understand its mechanism and the issues that come around. Analysis grids offer a framework to think about hate speech beyond his emotional aspect and give the chance to student to develop reasoned arguments instead of immediate strong reaction. For instance, the fourth unit of the Italian module (see the *Summary of the training module developed* above) presents to students a case study to analyze by classifying with emoticons the comments of a Facebook post.

**Simulation and role-plays**

Simulation and role-plays are very interesting to make young people aware of situations that differ a lot from what they know but that other people live every day. It can develop empathy and better understanding of the others and of their arguments but it also enable participants to understand social and psychological mechanisms of a group. The Czech module, for instance, uses this method in its first unit, to let students feel how it is to suffer discrimination (see the *Summary of the training module developed* above). The Belgian module implements also role-play to make participants defend different viewpoints in order to better understand what freedom of speech is (see the *Summary of the training module developed* above).

**Media resources and testimonials**

In the four training modules media resources and testimonials are used as examples and illustrations. Testimonials are also used as means to give a voice and a face to victims of hate speech. It can trigger empathy and it may free speech among young who have been also victim of hate speech. It enables them to relate their situations and experience to others'experiences. In the Grimme Institute's module, many videos and testimonials of socially relevant personalities who voices on hate speech are shown. As well as in the Italian module who takes the testimonial of a YouTuber well known by young people, Francesco Sole, who was victim of hate speech and denounce it in a

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[13] Other examples mentioned in the section *a)The starting point: collecting students' experiences and feelings towards discrimination and media*

video. Videos often serve to launch a debate, as the video "Entropa" from the Czech module who presents stereotypes about states that are discussed among students after watching. Obviously, media resources are also used as media object, center of the analysis and the debate as the caricatures for the Belgian module.

**Debate and collective appropriation of concepts**

Debate has a central place in all modules: hate speech being a sensitive issue it is necessary to free speech among young people. It is also primordial to teach them to express their feelings quietly and their opinions with reasoned arguments and also to treat with respect the ones of the others. In the first unit of the Italian module about the relationship young people have with media, participants have to express their opinion and position themselves in relation to four videos pointing various topics related to media (see the *Summary of the training module developed* above). In the fourth unit of the Belgian module, participants receive several caricatures and debate about how problematic they thing stereotypes in these caricatures are. This activity make them take position but make them also understand that other viewpoints exist and are receivable. Most of all, by debating about concepts (as stereotypes, media practices…), young people appropriate without even noticing new concepts.

**Media production**

Media productions enable students to integrate many knowledge and expertise. Besides learning the technical aspects needed to produce media content, they have to reflect on the content they want to communicate including the target audience. This step can be done with the support of a storyboard for instance. This kind of activity is much appropriated to conclude a training module since participants have to gather all the knowledge acquired during learning scenario to communicate and produce a media content to combat hate speech. For instance, all along the scenario about caricature and hate speech of the Belgian module, students are invited to develop step by step an awareness campaign made of caricatures against hate speech. The Italian module ends with the production of a video and the German module is based on the creation of an online campaign against hate speech.

### b) The topics addressed

Hate speech in online media is a very complex issue surrounded by various notions that are also complex to understand. Therefore the four trainings modules took different path to get to the heart of this problematic. However, some of the notions addressed to combat hate speech were present in all of the four modules as freedom of speech, stereotypes, media environment and moderation.

**Hate speech**

Hate speech is of course a common topic to all modules. However its presence vary in intensity from one module to another. For example the German and the Czech module approach the issue frontally by giving examples of hate speech, defining with young people hate speech, dangerous speech, hate propaganda and hoax, and finding solutions to counter it. In the Italian module, hate speech is very linked to cyberbullying and the experience of young people, helping them to express themselves and counter it. In Belgium, the approach is less direct as it takes the angle of freedom of speech to later define what hate speech is, choosing to reflect with young people on what can be said or not online and in a democratic society.

**Stereotypes and representations**

The question of stereotypes and representation is raised in all modules since it's about how we perceive others and how others are represented in media. The issue of stereotypes is very complex as it has positive and negative aspect. Its positive side creates cohesion within a group and facilitates communication within a society but it can also turn into prejudices and make us see some people as not belonging to the same category of ourselves, leading to discriminations. It is why the Belgian module focuses on stereotype using the caricature as media support to approach the dual aspects of stereotype and exploring its role in media and communication. The Czech module, on his side, shows mostly the negative aspect of it, focusing on their simplistic effect and on discriminations.

**Media environment**

The analysis of media environment is present, even differently, in each module. Mainly, it's about the Internet specificities playing a key role in hate speech spreading (viral video, anonymity, etc.) and the impact it might have

on people and society. In the Italian and German module, for instance, young people take a step back from their media environment to reflect on their social use and practices of media and their relationship to media. It might be also like in the Belgian module about the news media coverage or about the notion of viewpoint. The Czech module takes the angle of media manipulation to approach the opinion making process by demonstrating that the language used in some types of media (tabloid, right wing media) spread simplified one-track view point.

**Moderation and comments**
Moderation is a common topic when it comes to counter hate speech. To address this topic, various path are taken: the German module introduces the rules of *netiquettes* and *chatiquettes* to show young people good practices in the use of media, and what the possible consequences for breaking the rules are and to give them ideas and suggestions to combat hate speech. In Italy, young people are proposed to analyze Facebook comments using a typology of commentators and comments and are after asked to reformulate the comments in order to avoid hate speech (linguistic level). Belgium module also proposes to analyze Facebook comments, by identifying the roles taken by commentators, the topics of comments and the moderation reaction among commentators.

### c)   *Comments through the media education perspective*

These methodologies and topics identified above are not new in the field of media education. Besides, most of them can be transposed to other media objects than Internet or other fields of citizenship education. And yet, they still raised some issues or tensions from a media education perspective.  We identified some of them and mention here below as food for thought.

**Education to or through media**
Firstly, it seems that the border between education to media (media literacy) and education through media stays blurred.

Education through media is here understood as using media (films, videos, radio spot, advertisings, newspaper, etc.) to support the learning of a topic which is not the media itself. For instance, it can mean using a documentary to approach a particular topic in a history class. In the BRICkS training modules, video is often used to launch debates or introduce new topics. For instance, the Italian module uses the video testimony of a YouTuber victim of hate speech to launch reflection on hate speech and opening debate. As well as the German module who uses video and testimonies to make young people aware of the issues and debate. In these cases, the video as a media object is not the subject of the learning but a support serving the learning.

Education to media means that media themselves are the object of the study. This approach focuses on the media piece: who is the author, how was it build, produced, streamed, received? « It is about questioning the reception terms of the different media messages and seeking to understand the nature of their effects by commenting and adopting a position on the ideas, values and perspectives they convey. Inviting students to an educational approach "to" media is leading them to question the nature of the relationships we build with media, individually and collectively."[14] This goal is present in many activities of the trainings modules as the analysis of Facebook comments proposed in the Italian module using typology of commentators (with emoticons) and analysis of the language used in those comments. The Belgian module addresses the issue of media dissemination and target audience with the activities about the decontextualization of online pictures. The Czech module approaches the question of simplistic representation of European states in an activity starting from a video (Entropa).  The German module invites students to understand and uses the mechanisms of Internet in their online production.  For instance, by developing an online campaign to counter hate speech, young people have to choose the appropriate media to support the message they want to diffuse and to consider the impact it will have on their target public. They have to master the various settings of the media (technical dimension) and need to get information about the context of publication in which their media product will be disseminated, identifying the ethical aspects linked to this context, questioning the impact of their production, evaluating the risks, etc.

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[14] Free translation of Jacques Piette, *Education « par les médias » ou « aux médias »*, in Vie pédagogique, n°140, September-October 2006, Canada (Quebec), http://www.cahiers-pedagogiques.com/Education-par-les-medias-ou-aux-medias

This distinction between media education and education through media doesn't hierarchize one or the other moreover they are quite connected. To give more importance to one or to the other depends on the goals and the outcomes to achieve and, in the Bricks project it's about developing critical thinking and activism skills towards media and hate speech.

**Starting from media practices of young people**
To anchor the media education outcomes in daily life and help young people navigating through media, it is essential to know what their media practices and environment are. It would be meaningless otherwise.

Designing media education courses based on students' real-life experiences leads to more focused teaching sessions. We have to avoid the generalisation that occurs when the adults who plan the course only use their own expertise and knowledge, relying on their own ideas and theories. As Letizia Caronia writes, "[...] I believe this is the way things are, more or less: the media and its representations of the world are offered up as potential cultural objects, segments of the world that could become part of the social world, by which I mean the world as it is constructed and deconstructed through everyday interaction. But it cannot be taken for granted that they will enter this world; to do so, they must become objects of discussion or the focus of a shared attention, vectors or mediators of shared actions between social actors"[15]. Media teachers work with media activities which are part of and shape daily interactions; they are the focus of shared attention in a particular school class or group of young people. Each class-group creates games, roles, rituals and stories. The view put forward by the media is not always taken up and reused in the classroom in the same way; only a precise, careful interpretation presented to the group of students can provide specific instructions for their workshop activities. Only in this way can we precisely identify and define the "problem" that the teaching activity aims to tackle[16].

Starting from media practices of young people also enables the trainer to involve them in the activities from the beginning and let them take some critical distances towards their own habits. Young people do not often have a space to discuss their media practices in schools and reflect on it with an analysis method to enlarge their view and to reflect. Moreover, getting to know more and sharing about the media practices may help developing an atmosphere of trust within the group and give to the trainer precious indicators on which issues are more relevant to be addressed in the learning module.

However, exploring less known media objects has not to be considered as secondary. It opens minds of young people especially when they are invited to "go behind" the media object or to compare with other media practices or media contents.  In some modules, young people got the chance to discover media objects they are not used to deal with, as satiric newspapers, but also to re-discover or see from another perspective media that they are using daily. For example, in Belgium, many students had heard a lot about the satiric newspaper Charlie Hebdo without ever having it in their hand. All they knew about it was coming from other media, the module was thus an opportunity to let them discover it, express their questions and make their own opinion.

**Critical attitudes towards media VS demonization of media**
Developing a critical attitude towards media is part of media education, but the trainer should be very cautious not to fall in the trap of demonization. Indeed critical analysis of media must not be confused with detraction of media. It is therefore important to approach media with a holistic perspective and to let young people make their own opinion of media through analyses and decoding without trying to influence their judgments.

To come out of this drift, Jacques Piette, a Canadian Media Education expert, advises to find theoretical elements that help to develop a structured educational approach. He also proposes to acknowledge the principle of "non-transparency of media" which establishes that "messages should not be approached as a simple reflection of reality, but considered as 'constructions', 'representations' of reality. Media are neither 'windows on the world' or 'mirror' which only reflect images of what is happening. Their messages always express specific views on the sport, the

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[15] Caronia L., La socializzazione ai media, Guerini, Milan, 2002, p. 14.
[16]De Smedt T., Mille e una educazione ai media: l'importanza della valutazione e dello sviluppo del pensiero critico, Fulmino, Savignano, 2006.

politics, culture, etc. This conception means that media are constantly engaged in a process of selection, arrangement and distribution of information, that is to say an active process of representation of reality. Neither neutral nor impartial, the media always express a particular view on ideas, values, beliefs or specific conceptions about the subject they are talking about."[17]

### Debating the role of stereotypes in media discourses

In some activities of the modules, the role of stereotype in media discourses could have been more developed, as it is a much more complex issue that one may think at first sight.

In social sciences, stereotypes are defined as a simplified representation of a social group or of a concept that is commonly shared by a culture, a group. They are based on some alleged representative features of the group or the concept they represent and are products of social learning. They include inherited characteristics of social and cultural environment in which one grows up with one's own life experiences but also representations constructed or filtered by the media discourse. Stereotypes are also linked to roles or social status conferred to those groups. Perceived at first in common language as negative, stereotype yet has the particularity of being ambivalent. It is negative (or harmful) when it becomes element of tension and division in intercommunity and interpersonal relationships. It is positive as social cohesive factor since it inevitably resolves social interactions with high efficiency (Leyens, 1996) and facilitates communication (using categorization to enable our brain to process information and simplify reality).

The stereotype is a double-edged sword, having as positive side its mnemonic storage capacity and as negative side its reducing to prejudice. The role of media education towards stereotypes is not to combat them, at least not their stereotyping process as it is inherent to the human brain and necessary to the media discourse as it simplifies a speech. The evocative power of the stereotype has a particular utility in telling a story, whatever the media (storytelling, comics, cinema ...). Indeed, it enables the author, the director to avoid a long description[18]. In other words, we cannot work without stereotypes.

On the contrary, media education will seek to decode and perceive stereotypes: not to consider them as fact but as speech elements giving indications on the content but also on the context of production and reception. To take a step back from stereotypes but also to diversify those in media representations probably avoid this reinforcing effect and the additional distortion they could induce.

In addition, the judgment about what would be a problematic or non-problematic stereotype is often unclear and always involves a minimum of subjectivity - or an agreement within a group -. Media education aims thus also to put stereotypes in debate to learn arguing about what is problematic and what is not.

### Media production and media activists

Developing an active and critical attitude towards media is one of the purposes of media education. This active attitude can be implemented through media production, giving young people a chance to understand better how media works and to develop many skills. However, we can wonder if media production goes always along with an understanding of how media works and with the developing of competences in media literacy, as critical distance. It work sometimes "and in a striking way, but this is not systematic. It all depends on the pedagogic context."[19] It is therefore very important to think deeply to the method used in producing media with young.

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[17] Free traduction of Jacques Piette, *Education « par les médias » ou « aux médias »*, in Vie pédagogique, n°140, September-October 2006, Canada (Quebec), http://www.cahiers-pedagogiques.com/Education-par-les-medias-ou-aux-medias

[18] Daniel Bonvoisin, *Les stéréotypes au cinéma,* 2007, http://www.media-animation.be/Qu-est-ce-que-le-stereotype.html

[19] Evelyne Bevort, *Media literacy and production by young people: an old response to increasingly up-to-date questions* in *EuroMeduc. Media Literacy in Europe – Controversies, Challenges and Perspectives*, Brussels 2009, p.151

Media producing is easily recommended as it allows students to express themselves on various subjects and to make aware other people when they can disseminate their productions. Moreover, media production aims to teach the media mechanisms and media functioning "from inside". In other words, learning by doing. For instance, in the German module, young people were proposed to create a "What if… happens story". On one hand this activity aims to convey the handling of multimedia contents and on the other hand participants became aware of the consequences of their actions and the impact these actions have. The "What if… happens story" shall be achieved by means of a serial story during which the reader, viewer, listener or observer (depending on the medium) will have to make decisions at specific points in order to change the course of the storyline. Each story has different endings that take a completely different turn depending on the decision made. This principle is often used in computer games and provides the user with the option to immediately make his or her impact on the path the story takes. The stories can be produced in different formats depending on the available time frame, age of participants and technical options (like previous knowledge and equipment). Purely text-based stories can be produced as well as audio stories, slideshows or short films.

Letting young people have the choice of the media is also very important, as some will feel more comfortable with some media rather than others.  It is why in Italy, the collection of young people of media production is quite diverse (video, avatar, poster, etc.)

Related to the fight of online hate speech, the media productions are often transformed into a general online campaign aiming at reaching more audience. However, we can wonder about this dissemination phase: could they be given added value by being disseminated out of the classroom? In some Italian schools, the videos produced by students were shown to other classrooms in order to open debate on hate speech.  What about wider audience like online? Did the trainer take all the necessary measures during the making-process to allow online dissemination (Image and author rights, consistency of the message, etc.)? Classrooms too rarely make this step from media-maker to media-activist.

Other ways of media activism might be launched with classrooms like working about moderation in Facebook pages or news forum. A first step will therefore consist to analyze *Chatiquette* or *Netiquettes* or to elaborate new ones in order to make young people reflect on needs and challenges of moderation as in the German module. In the Italian and the Belgian module, students can also develop a better understanding of moderation by detecting moderation attitudes within users' comments under a Facebook post and by proposing responses or reformulating comments to combat hate speech.

**Freedom of speech in media**
When it comes to hate speech and to media production, another very important notion in media literacy is the notion of freedom of speech: exploring what it covers, what is its role in a democracy, what are its limit in Europe and in other parts of the world… The debate on how to combat hate speech without obstructing freedom of speech is very necessary in the current context and need to be put on the table with young people. It enlarges the debate on what is a democracy and its limits and to what extend media contribute to democracy. This very important notion could be more investigated in the training modules.

Part II – The experimentation

## III.    Learning situations

The training modules have generated many learning situations among young people however we chose to report the most significant ones that were common to all modules.

**Reflecting on the relationship with media**

In all experimentation, trainers reported that young people had reflected on their own relationship with media through several activities. They could reflect personally and collectively on how much they are using media, how and for what. For example, in Italy some young people realized they were very dependent to social media and tried not to use it for one week as a challenge with their classmates. In Belgium, young people could analyze in what type of media they were getting informed.

**Taking a step back from media and hate speech**

Through analysis and decoding of media, young people could take some distance from media. They learned to identify the point of view expressed by the author, to take into account the influence of the context in the production and in the reception of a message. To be aware of the need of verifying the source and if it is reliable was also a great learning to get a critical stance toward media. They learned also to read information media with critical approach by paying attention to the words used to describe situations.

Young also learned to identify hate speech and haters in media and to classify them. Through examples of hate speech situations they enlarge their view on hate speech and its issue and from linking these examples to their personal experience they could develop strategies to counter hate speech. Regarding this, a significant learning was a better awareness of being responsible of what they write on the Internet. In some cases, students could also have a better understanding of the links and differences between hate speech and cyberbullying.

**Decoding emotions, developing empathy and reflecting on the relationship to others**

In the four modules, many activities developed empathy with others, helping young people to put themselves in the victims of discrimination's shoes. In the Czech module, young people realized that some of their regular posts or comments on Facebook could be really offensive for some people and that combating hate speech was also a question of interpersonal respect. In the Belgian module, the activities on stereotypes and discriminations helped young people expressing their experiences of discrimination, getting how stereotypes could be harmful in certain situations and also understand some of the mechanisms leading to discriminations. In the Italian module, young people could as well express themselves about hate speech experiences and understand the terrible impact of hate speech through the testimony of the YouTuber Francesco Sole. In Germany, debates about situation of immigration, homosexuality, sexism, immigrants, the disabled people and Islam were held with students.

**Identify viewpoints and express personal opinion**

Through all activities of the module, young people were encouraged to talk, discuss and debate on the several topics proposed. In activities related to freedom of speech and viewpoints, students were given a space to reflect, develop their opinion with reasoned arguments and express it. In a school context, expressing opinion without trying to find the "right" answer is sometimes difficult for young people, but by creating a climate of trust, they could build little by little their opinion and express it even if it was not the mainstream opinion. Confronting their opinion to others was also a way to learn debating without hate and with tolerance and respect of others'freedom of speech.

## IV.    Students' participation

Student participation is depending on the context of experimentation: size of the group, preparation or not to the module, presence of their teacher in the class, identity of the trainer (someone they know or not), insertion of the activities into their school learning path. The first point to highlight in students participation is the positive reception of young to the participative methods proposed in the four modules. Especially in Czech Republic, these methods were even more welcome by young people as they are not used to active learning, even if they were getting sometimes too excited from this change to focus on the activities.

For the modules that were taught, in most cases the students responded to the methods used rather than showing immediate interest in a topic as problematic as hate speech; the students were motivated and stimulated and felt that their points of view were valued by the teachers, both during tutorials and discussions and in collective analyses, as well as in the media production carried out in the four countries.

In addition to the participative methodologies used, it was also useful to communicate using different types of language: artistic mediation, writing, creating media, etc. In many cases, media production was considered as the most meaningful experience: "The comic strips were a real discovery, they loved the program and worked on their project non-stop for nearly two hours. They also felt valued and even a little apprehensive when they found out that they had to present their work to their classmates" (extract from the Italian national report). When asked to evaluate the work they had done, the students associated the course with the hashtags "satisfaction, personal growth through group work, learning, happiness, freedom, fun, socializing, participation, group and light-hearted".

On the other hand, in classes used to traditional methodologies, it was harder to get students to participate; they were used to listen to the teacher but not take part, discuss things amongs themselves or get involved in a working group. The hands-on methods confused the students in these cases, as they were asked to act as co-constructors of the knowledge and not just as recipient of it. In some instances it seems that the topic of "hate speech" itself (and everything associated with it) was not seen as their concern or related to their own lives: *"[…] Students do not perceive stereotypes against Roma people or elderly people like their problem."* (Extract from the Czech national report).

The students started getting really involved in the topic when they began working on "hate speech ad personam"[20] i.e. cyberbullying: "One of the activities that was very engaging for the students was to deal with cyberbullying; they could probably relate to it more through their own personal experiences." (extract from the Italian national report).

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[20] Giovanni Ziccardi, *L'odio online - Violenza verbale e ossessioni in rete – Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan 2016* p.14

## Part IIII – Combatting hate speech on the Internet
### V.    Synthesis of suggestions from students and examples of practices.

About 1600 young people took part in the European testing. Using this sample of secondary school students and young people from youth centers enabled an initial exploration of the strategies that young would employ to respond to hate speech. The European project BRICkS involves students, on an experimental basis, to understand how they can become active participants in constructing a dialogue and an intercultural communication that respects the rights and the dignity of the individuals: "Workshops in upper secondary schools and youth centers aimed at identifying and react to hate speech manifestations with web tools and positive actions."[21]

The media education approach offers a number of general premises regarding the relationship between the individual, the tools and the communication environments, which enables the students to focus on three strategic aspects when devising an active role in combatting online hate speech:

1. Awareness of their own role within the overall concept – the importance of the role that teenagers and young people can play in raising public awareness: young people are prolific social network users ("*Interesting topic, because we are online a lot*" quotation from the German National Report) and online hate speech is a phenomenon they have experienced. Deciding whether to share it, spread it, discuss it or criticise it becomes a public duty and not just an individual linguistic action. The experimentation in Prague, however, revealed the polar opposite: the reaction of some students was that it was not their concern. As trainer from the Czech Republic explained: *"I think that students did not perceive the topic on a personal level so they were not able to think about what to do for any minority by themselves." (extract from the Czech national report)*

2. Awareness of their own role in relation to specific situations – assuming responsibility: some students felt that it was their duty to deal with hate speech and take action on social medi; about the social media. This goes a step further with regard to the point above: it is not just about awareness of the hypothetical role they could play ("if I did X...", "if I were Y...") but specifically about assuming responsibility for it that motivates the person to take action. Media education here affects active citizenship: it brings the individual into the dialogue with the possibility of changing and altering the situation. The possibility that the reaction could be total indifference should also be taken into account: "*However students did not perceive the topic (hate speech) on the personal level so they do not feel the need to fight it actively".* (extract from the Czech national report).

3. Awareness of themselves in relation to others – learning to recognise themselves, their personal emotions and their own reasoning in order to form their own point of view: it is crucial to form an opinion about this topical phenomenon that affects everyone's social media experience. Taking the time to look back through your own posts and publications enables you to find your position and recognise yourself.

The main strategies mentioned by the students themselves or noted by the teachers to combat hate speech are the following:

**Raising awareness of hate speech and getting people to talk about it.**
This is the principal course of action identified. It consists in focusing on the necessary awareness to combat the hate speech phenomenon: bringing it to the attention of their classmates, their parents or the general public, making videos, cartoons, avatars and other media to introduce the topic, arousing interest and expressing a particular point of view towards it, and discussing this point of view by raising it in the local community are the strategies the students used. The communications products they made (posters, turning-point stories, videos, cartoons, avatars, etc.) were largely designed to raise awareness as reported a German trainer: *"During the last two hours we were involved in active work: each group was able to decide whether to work on a poster, a speech, a film or similar products dedicated to the topic of "No Hate Speech". This was when the class became downright creative. At the*

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[21] Strategies and Objectives from the BRICkS project - see the website www.bricks-project.eu

*end we had: two posters, a netiquette, a film, a video commentary, a video speech and a video netiquette. The best choice was the title of one of the posters: „Be great – don't hate."* (extract from the German National Report).

**Developing a critical mindset and not following the herd**
"This experience was an eye-opener," as one German student remarked. The aim of the methods adopted was to create a space to think and reflect on the subject, and to compare points of view and emotions which turned out to be diverse and multicultural. One of the objectives of media education is to help students to analyse, interpret and understand media content by developing and maintaining an active approach (asking themselves questions, defining concepts, working on different sources, finding information, challenging, reflecting, expressing themselves, etc.), which in this case was closely linked to action: what do I do when I see online hate speech?

**Giving support to victims.**
The third strategy they suggested centred on support for minorities, allowing a different kind of communication to be opened up and triggering other channels of support, awareness and discussion that made victims and potential victims feel less isolated. "Also, from their point of view, it is essential to report it and give the victim support, to take action personally or inform an adult. It is also important to determine the legal situation" (extract from the Italian national report). As the Czech report highlights: *"They had idea to make a project where the oppressed group meets regularly to engage their activity which they would present to public to combat prejudice."* (extract from the Czech national report).

**Replying to hate speech comments.**
Students' opinion varies greatly with regard to this strategy. Some say they would never get involved in online comments because it would just be counterproductive. These students say that they might become another victim and become the target of the hate speech, or not succeed in influencing the online discussion because, unfortunately, "*people are only interested in spiteful comments and anything else is disregarded*". Other students, however, were highly motivated to oppose online hate speech because they felt it damaged part of their own identity, for example in the case of an Albanian student who often visited anti-Albanian groups on social media with the aim of counteracting negative attitudes.

## VI.   Open issues: identified challenges, risks, changes

The experimentation with the four modules confirmed how useful the media education approach is when dealing with an issue such as hate speech, forcing the educators involved to reflect and suggest educational strategies on how to:

- Recognize and identify hate speech;

- Analyze cases and past experiences of hate speech;

- Be more aware of and better informed about the phenomenon.

The four modules designed and tested provide a wide range of educational activities that any interested educators could modify or reorganize according to their own personal timelines. They can also address their various requirements by devising hybrid modules and creating an educational course that employs the educational activities used in the four countries, but not necessarily in the suggested order. It should be stressed, however, that any educational projects should take into account the expectations and interests of the target students to ensure that the subject is not met with indifference, which would prevent positive implementation and involvement. For instance, it is important to choose case studies capable of rousing the students'interest.

Often, the content initially poses many questions for teachers and educators: is it appropriate to show the students this material? Is it right to let them know about certain cases of hate speech, thereby distributing it even further? There are ethical considerations and judgements that individual educators must decide for themselves, depending on the maturity of their students and the working environment that they have been able to establish. In any case,

the modules are designed for secondary schools and youth centers, where the young people and students are more mature and better equipped to handle complex and controversial topics that may provoke strong emotions.

Educators must also be equal to the challenge of introducing topical themes and issues that are not easy to apprehend and which can be difficult to get to grips with, such as online hate speech. The complexity of the theme can greatly affect the educator's teaching style: planning the learning experience involves knowing how to "contain" the complexities, contradictions and strong emotions that will inevitably come out during the activities and in the reflections that ensue. The teacher or educator must start with the premise that there are topics (and aspects of topics) that are complex and cannot be broken down. In the four countries where we carried out the experimentation, we limited ourselves specifically to the difficulties posed by two themes: stereotyping and diversity.

We have already mentioned above the risks, and yet the necessity, of using stereotypes for media storytelling (page 10). This is one of the traditional approaches for media education: identifying, analyzing, understanding and being able to use stereotypes in media communication allows us to be more aware as consumers of information, as sensible, constructive citizens and as content producers. It is important that our educational efforts with students retain this complexity so that the role of stereotypes is not trivialised and dangerous shortcuts are not applied, as this could prevent more extensive and in-depth analyses.

The other extremely sensitive topic which we tackled was diversity. Diversity involves difficulties, misunderstandings and a continual debate around awareness and expectations. Diversity is inextricably linked with online hate speech; there are differences between individuals and alleged "communities" or hypothetical "groups" that are perceived as threatening and dangerous. These are "disturbing differences" that are not easy to confront, discuss or manage, as they provoke powerful emotions and dangerous primordial reactions such as hating someone in order to reinforce one's sense of belonging to one's own community.

When hate permeates online speech and debate, when it threatens to become a socially-accepted reaction to the fear of diversity, then online hate speech becomes the platform where diversity starts to be wiped out. This is the challenge that Europe is now facing and in which every educator must be prepared to play a part and decide which side he or she is on. The BRICkS project has chosen to test educational module where the topic, and the analysis and understanding of it, can be broadened and deepened through a series of activities, so that the students can find the time and the place to stop and reflect on this important topical issue.

We consider young people to be the fundamental protagonists as regular social media users who are aware of the existence of hate speech and can play an active role in establishing an open, tolerant society within the complexity of contradictions. It is essential that young men and women understand the responsibility that inhabiting this virtual world entails. The pleasures of talking about themselves, demonstrating their experiences and skills, making new friends and sharing the collective diaries they build with all their shared posts and publications are just one side of the coin.

They are also frequently called upon to tackle bullying, hate speech, racism and offensive behavior. Individual responsibility is required; the establishment of ethic relationships must be reinforced.

They must learn to do some very difficult things.

This is why the difficulty and complexity of the topic and its individual components rely on teaching methods: those who organize educational courses must be capable of creating a welcoming and sharing environment to facilitate discussion and motivate every student, of making everyone feel involved in the plethora of viewpoints that can sometimes lead to tiresome and difficult debate or outbursts of strong feelings.

It is essential that the students do not feel they are being judged or that they are wrong.

The work should focus on reasoning, and students should be requested to be precise in their choice of language and to expound on their viewpoints. They should consider the information given, along with the experiences and the knowledge or pseudo-knowledge that enters the debate, so that it can be verified; "teaching them to think."

Another challenge is the quality of the media productions: the limited time available, a lack of technical and technological expertise, and also a simplistic and/or feel-good discussion of the topic, could end up trivializing the work. Students need to be guided through their media productions; time must be devoted to the structure used in a particular medium or genre so that they have enough time to discuss the content. The educator should not interfere in this, but should insist on a focused, quality effort.

The project does not envisage any formal assessment of the educational impact the modules have on students and teachers. An external assessment of the skills and knowledge that can be gained from the modules is the priority for a subsequent follow-up to the project: focusing on changes that may occur in perception, reasoning, reflection and analysis is an important step in redeveloping new educational activities and further refining them. This first experimentation gave priority to participation, sharing, and the inclusion of different people, aspects and points of view: school heads, social media managers and second-generation activists who contributed to designing the learning module. The teachers and educators who pick up the modules and use them in their own contexts should therefore work towards bridging the gap by adopting self-assessment tools in their classes.

The final challenge is the effective roll-out of the modules: presentations, conferences, seminars and website statistics can give an overall impression of how usable they are, but there is no device that can tell us exactly what is used, how, by whom, and in what context.

Face-to-face contact, however, will be an important part of the training; it not only enables the work that has been done to be explained in details, it is also an opportunity to discuss with the educators how they will use and reproduce it so that it can be sustained over time. Only if the modules are used in many schools and youth centers across Europe as possible activity guidelines, experimental training and in traditional analyses, will the BRICkS project have played a part in combatting online hate speech; paradoxically, the more important work is just beginning – putting the training into practice and allowing the modules to be replicated, rewritten and modified.

## Conclusion

Discussing and testing ways of combatting hate speech also requires us to consider how to educate for the "common good". The outbursts of hatred caused by certain news events demonstrate how hate is not just a linguistic problem - it can also have tangible effects. It then becomes a "common good"[22] to take responsibility for mutual respect and establish a social environment that is not polluted by hatred: "a visible assurance from society for all its members that they will be protected from abuse, defamation, humiliation, discrimination and violence based on ethnicity, ethnic origin, religion, gender or sexual orientation."[23]

The right to live, the right to dignity, and the right to reputation in a digital society are the issues that technology has to deal with. As far back as the 1980s, Joshua Meyrowitz explained the impact that electronic media have on our day-to-day behaviour in his book "No Sense of Place." Today we are still asking ourselves how far the media and communication experiences made possible thanks to technology have influenced and shaped new kinds of behaviour: "how influential might the development of new online phenomena be, such as likes, the desire to exhibit oneself and gain public acceptance, the pressure to "be there" and, conversely, the fear of "not being there" that could mean online "death" and consequently entails the use of crude expressions to attract attention or views?"[24]

What we need, then, is a digital citizenship that can develop only where people are educated in citizenship and social media to avoid "arriving at a *social consensus* of hatred, a *normalisation* of aggression, a high level of *tolerance* to extreme language." (G. Ziccardi, 2016). The consensus on the fundamental role of education is unanimous; at the international conference *Together against Hate Speech and Hate Crime* in Madrid in 2014, *educating* was one of three key terms, along with *preventing* (which has a lot to do with educating) and *sanctioning*. Respect for diversity and the promotion of tolerance and human rights must go hand in hand with complete awareness of the role that media and technology play in society and in everyday life.

The UNESCO underlines this concept and suggests: "*the importance of media and information literacy and educational strategies as effective means to counteract hate speech*"[25].

 If citizenship education must take responsibility for involving people and raising their awareness to "do something" to combat hate speech, then media education can provide the strategies and some working tools "*The concern of citizenship education with hate speech is twofold: it encompasses the knowledge and skills to identify hate speech, and should enable individuals to counteract messages of hatred. One of its current challenges is adapting its goals and strategies to the digital world, providing not only argumentative but also technological knowledge and skills that a citizen may need to counteract online hate speech*"[26]. The objective of media literacy for each citizen becomes essential: "*the core objectives of media and information literacy aimed at developing technical and critical skills for media consumers and producers and which connects them with broader ethic and civic matters*"[27]

The key to addressing the problem, the most tangible way of implementing counter-strategies against hate speech, post by post, comment by comment, therefore lies in empowering individuals: "*Many are arguing that the package of competencies within media and information literacy can empower individuals and provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to respond to perceived hate speech in a more immediate way. Such skills can also be particularly important, given the emphasis that social networking platforms are placing on individual reporting of cases of abuse, incitement to hatred, or harassment*"[28].

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[22] A. Tesis, *Hate in cyberspace: Regulating hate speech on the Internet,* in the San Diego Review, 38, 2001, pp. 817-874

[23] J. Waldron, *Dignity and defamation: the visibility of hate,* Harvard Law Review, 2010, pp. 1597-1657

[24] Giovanni Ziccardi, *L'odio online - Violenza verbale e ossessioni in rete – Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan 2016* pp. 69-86

[25] Iginio Gagliardone, Danit Gal, Thiago Alves, Gabriela Martinez, *Countering online hate speech - Unesco series on internet freedom, Paris, 2015, p. 48*

[26] Ibidem, p. 46

[27] Ibidem, p. 46

[28] Ibidem, p. 48

Media education offers learning tools and situations for identifying, recognizing and analyzing hate speech, and for considering response strategies: "The expectation is that these media and information literacy competencies can enhance individuals' ability to identify and question hateful content online, understand some of its assumptions, biases and prejudices, and encourage the elaboration of arguments to confront it."[29]

The UNESCO recommendation is a road map for all media educators in Europe, and it locates the BRICkS testing, with their modules tested in various countries, in the stream of potential educational actions that facilitate the implementation and sustainability of activities aimed at combatting online hate speech, and their inclusion in the system: "Initiatives promoting greater media and information literacy have begun to emerge as a more structural response to online hate speech. Given young people's increasing exposure to social media, information about how to identify and react to hate speech may become increasingly important. While some schools have expressed interest in progressively incorporating media and information literacy in their curriculum, these initiatives, however, are still patchy and have often not reached the most vulnerable people who need the most to be alerted about the risk of hate speech online and offline. It is particularly important that anti-hate speech modules are incorporated in those countries where the actual risk of widespread violence is highest. There is also a need to include in such programmes, modules that reflect on identity, so that young people can recognise attempts to manipulate their emotions in favour of hatred, and be empowered to advance their individual right to be their own masters of who they are and wish to become. Pre-emptive and preventative initiatives like these should also be accompanied by measures to evaluate the impact upon students' actual behaviour online and offline, and on their ability to identify and respond to hate speech messages"[30].

"*Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the Internet and social media, so as to develop resistance to all forms of discrimination and indoctrination"* is the *"noble challenge"* that the Ministers responsible for education in the European countries have established in March 2015 in the framework of the "Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education"[31].

Two work plans can be identified which highlight the need for the media education approach because of its themes, strategies and methodologies: the European program and the local/regional/national program.

The European program calls for media education to focus on new technologies, enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, in order to develop resistance to all forms of discrimination and indoctrination[32]

National policies should have the following objectives:

- "Strengthening children's and young people's ability to think critically and exercise judgement so that, particularly in the context of the Internet and social media, they are able to grasp realities, to distinguish fact from opinion, to recognize propaganda and to resist to all forms of indoctrination and hate speech (point 3 of the Recommendation);
- Empowering teachers so that they are able to take an active stand against all forms of discrimination and racism, to educate children and young people in media literacy, to meet the needs of pupils from diverse backgrounds, to impart common fundamental values and to prevent and combat racism and intolerance" (point 3 of the Recommendation)"[33].

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[29] Ibidem, p. 48

[30] Ibidem, p. 58

[31] Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, Informal meeting of European Union Education Ministers, Paris, Tuesday 17 march 2015

[32] Ibidem, p. 4

[33] Ibidem, p. 3

This confirms the importance of an approach to media education which brings the theme of hate speech to the forefront, giving the discipline a key role in shaping an active and committed population, starting with the responsibility of every individual, that motivates the educators and trainers and can also involve key media and social network figures in an essential sharing of educational responsibilities.

In its analysis of the phenomenon of hate speech the Council of Europe considers training in topics linked to human rights, aimed both at citizens and at mass media operators, to be essential, and the BRICkS project has followed the same logic by involving both the media and schools, with specific actions for each.