



training course

# fight the fake

Lisbon, Portugal

24 - 31 July 2022



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## the project

This booklet has been carried out in the scope of the Training Course *Fight the Fake* which is funded by Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission.

The project took place in Lisbon, Portugal, from the 24th to 31st of July 2022. The Training Course was hosted by the Portuguese organization *Bué Fixe* and facilitated in collaboration with the Georgian organization *Umbrella*.

## the goal

The goal of the project was to bring together 21 participants from 10 different countries – Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Georgia, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine – to explore the power and role of youth work in addressing fake news issues.

The aim was to analyze the role and impact of **mass media** messages in creating a stereotypical image of vulnerable social groups. The main objectives of the project are as follows:

- *Equip youth workers with creative tools, activities & methodologies exploring media literacy;*
- *Share the experience of addressing the fake news at the national level among participants;*
- *Develop participants skills to analyze and evaluate the power and impact of media images and messages;*
- *Equip youth workers with the tools to combat the fake news both in online and offline spaces;*
- *Carry out and disseminate a handbook for youth workers for combating fake news;*
- *Explore further possibilities of projects and cooperations on this topic within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme.*

## the method

The booklet provides information regarding fake news and their impact on larger **societal issues** related to discrimination and hate speech.

It also provides specific tools to combat the spread of fake news under various forms (e.g. articles, images or videos) in online spaces as well as tools to **sensitize** members of society on the topic in question through offline experiments that can be reproduced in the local context of the participating youth workers.

## the contributors

The booklet has been created by the **participants** of the Training Course and has been designed by the team of facilitators. The participants' names and countries are provided below.

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Búé Fixe, Portugal  
CHI Cultural Heritage Institute, Bulgaria  
Development and Initiative, Ukraine  
Europahaus Klagenfurt, Austria  
FYCA – Federation of Youth Clubs of Armenia, Armenia  
ZSPM – Zveza Slovenske Podeželske Mladine, Slovenia

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local youth organization

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# definitions

## fake news

- Inaccurate or **misleading** information presented as news created in order to gain attention, mislead, deceive or damage a reputation;
- Relies on preying on vulnerable groups, utilizing harmful stereotypes and hate speech to discriminate and isolate **minorities**;
- Commonly used by politicians and organizations to further their own agenda and promote **segregation** for personal gain.

## discrimination

- Rooted in recognition and understanding of the **difference** between one thing and another;
- Results in the unjust or **prejudicial** treatment of different categories of people, especially regarding race, age, sex, or disability;
- Discrimination is a **human rights violation** that can have catastrophic effects.

## human rights

- Rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status;
- The European Union defines human rights as the right to freedom of speech, health, privacy, life, security, liberty, and a decent standard of living.

## hate speech

- Commonly defined as public speech that expresses hate or encourages **violence** towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation;
- It is usually thought to include communications of animosity or disparagement of an individual or a group on account of a group characteristic.

# online experiment

The online experiment provided the participants with specific tools openly accessible on the internet that can be used to verify information online. It was not only explained on how to check facts, such as the ones presented in articles, but also images and videos by making use of a reverse image search. The latter allows us to check the sources and get further metadata of specific images and videos.

After a small presentation on how to use a variety of online tools, we received a document with 6 challenges to practice fact checking with the respective tools. These challenges were very diverse:

- At first, we were asked to check the veracity of facts presented in an article;
- We also had the task of collecting information about the various elements on an image;
- Lastly, we needed to find the sources and the title of a video using a screenshot of the video or check if any elements have been photoshopped into images.

## online tools

**TinEye** is a reverse image search engine that uses image identification technology rather than keywords, metadata or watermarks



**Baidu** is the biggest Chinese search engine, having also a reverse image search option. It's a good idea to use it if you're searching for something relevant to Chinese people



**Yandex** is a search engine with good results regarding face matching and location identification



**Google** is one of the most used search engine, but not everyone knows about its reverse image search functionality



**RevEye** is a Google Chrome extension that allows you to perform an inverse image search by right-clicking on any image in a website



# offline experiment

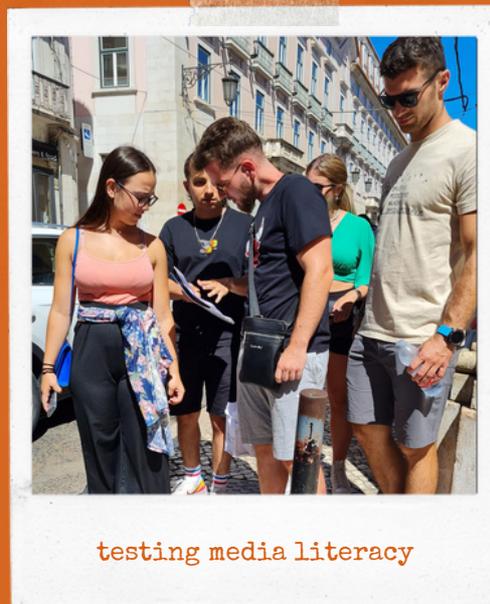
Other than the online experiment, the objective of the offline experiment did not provide the participants specific tools to combat the spread of fake news. Rather, it consisted in raising awareness among the local population on the importance of checking information and news that we are consuming in our daily lives.

All the participants were divided into four groups, each one having to select a topic and create a fake news article. The supposed reliability of the fake news was supplemented by additional **manipulated** statistics, information or graphics.

Some groups even pretended to be representatives of made-up organizations such in order to strengthen their credibility. Once every group created the fake news article , we went out to the streets of Lisbon to approach several people passing by.

The first step consisted of 2 to 3 members of the group trying to convince the people of their fake news. In the second step, the remaining members of the group joined them and revealed the truth to the people by explaining the offline experiment.

The experiment took place in **July 2022**, in the center of Lisbon, with the aim to stimulate some debate on why people believed/didn't believe the news and on how important it is to have critical thinking.



testing media literacy

# polluted tap water

With the fake news of an accident that happened in the waste water system, a high amount of E. coli appeared in the tap water in Portugal we approached two groups of people in the centre of Lisbon. The purpose of this action was to **persuade** people to not drink tap water, but buy bottled water in the shop.

We presented ourselves as members of the *Blue Life Foundation*, a **fictional** organization that is engaged in the fight for clean drinking water.

Our explanation of the situation that the water is infected with E.coli bacteria did not surprise the first group. They thanked us for sharing that information, but didn't take any action to **search** for the news.



ready to start!



talking with locals

The second group listened very carefully when we approached them and **believed** the news. They got concerned about the topic and said that they will not drink tap water until it is safe again.

Once we asked them if they would have believed the fake news if it was another topics as well or if they would have checked the **details**. They said that, yes, they might have believed, but will be more careful from now on and check for more information.

We informed both experimental groups to be careful and always research, even if it seems true. Facts can and should be checked through various online tools built specially for **verification** of news.

# cooking oil shortage

This group shared a **fake article** titled “Supermarkets are already limiting the sale of the cooking oils” and stating that the government announces there will be a shortage of the oil in the near future.

In total 5 local groups were contacted during the **experiment**, including the customers of 2 different supermarkets in the city, both youngsters and adults.

The result of the experiment was very interesting: all the contacted groups and individuals **believed** in the information and didn't ask extra questions and didn't check the information on the spot. Even though none of them bought any cooking oil in that moment, they ensured that will buy the oil later.



There was an **exception** to the majority of the fake news believers, though. At a certain point during the experience, a child, who was listening to the group's conversation with her parent, told her mother that this didn't seem real news and that they were trying to convince her to buy oil.

## covid-19 & masks

The topic of this group's experiment was Covid-19 & masks and their aim was to try to persuade locals to urgently buy face masks because of an alleged new Coronavirus wave and rising cases in Portugal. They prepared fake statistics, graphs, and even newspaper article to make this information seem more **credible**.

This group waited near a local pharmacy in Lisbon and approached two people who were passing by. The first one was a local woman, she was in a hurry and didn't listen much, so we only showed her the article and she believed our **fake** news.



group & the experiment's subject

The second person was a foreign man who listened to us carefully. He looked at our statistics, then at the article and believed our **information**. He thought he really needed to go buy a mask. When we told him that the information was fake, he was very surprised, it even took him a couple of minutes to get it.

The result of our experiment was that both people believed our fake news and were surprised to learn the truth. We think it was easy for them to believe us because it seemed like we had proof that our article was true.

We advised them to read the news past the headline, check the sources, dates, time, and authors, pay attention to the links and quotes, search in other news outlets, and finally, **think twice** before sharing any news with others.

# hometasks

Before the Training Course, the participants were asked to prepare some hometasks, which were presented during the second day of the project. One of these tasks was to explore good practices on how to tackle fake news and find a few online tools or methods used to combat them in their countries.

In this booklet you can find the tools each country presented, and can access them by clicking on the logo on the right.

## armenia

**AntiFake** is a platform that provides checked and accurate information and aims to raise the accountability and transparency of public figures



**Fact Investigation Platform** is an independent fact-checking media that aims to disclose the fake information published by official bodies



**Fake - Not Fake Think Critically** is project that empowers youth with media literacy knowledge such as how to fact check, how to choose a media source or how to compare the provided information



**Public Journalism Club** is an NGO promoting freedom of expression and build a media literate society with informed citizens



## austria

**Mimikama** is an association that unmasks false reports, identifies disinformation, points out manipulations and offers assistance.



## bulgaria

**Медийно Око** is a project where fake news, defamation, conspiracy theories, hate speech and others forms of unethical media are categorized.

**AEJ** is a non-profit with the goal to improve the quality of journalism and to support journalists who are prevented from performing their work freely.



## georgia

**FactCheck Georgia** is a website that provides you with a metric system that displays whether or not a news article is accurate.

**Myth Detector** was launched in 2014 to uncover truth behind the lies, explore hidden agendas, raise the level of media literacy and inform others about the impacts of disinformation.

**MediaChecker** serves as a media criticism and analysis platform for all types of journalism.



## portugal

**Polígrafo** is a digital newspaper dedicated to the use of new technologies in journalism in order to shorten the distance between journalism and readers.

**Observador** is an online newspaper started on May 19th, 2014 and is a part of the International Fact Checking Network (IFCN).



## slovenia

**SPOTit** is a 2 year long Erasmus+ project that aims to help young people make informed decisions about the information they come across by developing their media literacy skills.



**FI.DO** (Fighting Fake News and Disinformation) is a project in the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership for Innovation programme.



## ukraine

**BezBrehni** is an NGO focused on counteracting the spread of fake news, propaganda and disinformation. They work to improve the methodologies of fact-checking.



**StopFake** is a project which aims to raise the level of media literacy, inform about the danger of propaganda and dissemination of fake information in the media.



**VoxCheck** is a fact-checking project with the goal of uncovering politicians' lies while developing critical thinking among voters.



# conclusion

As a result of the training course "Fight the Fake", the participants improved their competences in critically examining and checking information on the internet and **detecting** potential sources of fake news with the help of the presented tools. Furthermore, the tools given to the participants can be passed on to people from their respective communities in order to tackle the fight against fake news beyond the scope of the project.

Through the offline experiment we reached the conclusion that many young people in Lisbon blindly believe in various kinds of information and don't show initiative in **double checking** it.

Hence, this booklet is a useful tool for youth workers and young people to deepen their **knowledge** in fake news exposure. The book can be shared via social media channels to reach as many people as possible in order to improve their competences in thinking critically and combating fake news.

thank you!



intercultural night

obrigadx!