

Key Action: Learning Mobility of Individuals  
Action Type: Mobility of youth workers

## Project Title

# Fighting islamophobia and preventing the rise of far-right extremism

## Project Coordinator

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## Project Information

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**EC Contribution** 60,134 EUR  
**Partners** Mediterranean Forum For Social Development (MA) , Budapesti Egyesület a Nemzetközi Sportért (HU) , INTERNATIONALE ARBEIDSVERENIGING (NL) , SDRUZHENIE WALK TOGETHER (BG) , EVROPSKE CENTRUM MLADEZE BRECLAV EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE BRECLAV Z. S. (CZ) , Mediterranean Youth Foundation for Development (EG) , Toulouse Youth Network (FR) , PEWOBE GEMEINNUTZIGE SOZIALE BETREUUNGSGESELLSCHAFT MBH FRANKFURT/ODER (DE) , MESOPOTAMIA YOUTH GROUP (TR) , AL-EMAD ALKABEER FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT CO. (JO)  
**Topics** Preventing racism and discrimination ; International relations and development cooperation ; Media literacy and tackling disinformation

## Project Summary

### Objectives

Anti-Muslim sentiment is rising, and the internet constitutes a main sphere in which this anti-immigrant and especially anti-Muslim sentiment is disseminated and proliferated. In addition, online and offline radicalization shall not be conceptually and empirically dissociated as they reinforce cognitive frameworks that can result in physical ramifications of ideological assumptions, i.e. in the context of anti-Muslim hate crimes. Considering this, it is this project's explicit goals to challenge any form of intolerance and discrimination addressed to Muslims or individuals perceived as such, specifically addressing the proliferation of anti-Muslim narratives online. The action develops an evidence-based intervention designed to question and challenge Islamophobic online narratives to serve the ultimate goal of diminishing the offline and online discrimination Muslims face in Europe today. The project specifically aims to enhance understandings of the driving factors of anti-Islamic sentiment in the partaking countries and how social media platforms are used to disseminate and reinforce negative perceptions of Muslims in Europe. On the basis of that, the project will produce videos and a final handbook with practices which enhance the existing knowledge on the profile of perpetrators, their digital footprints and modus operandi. Owing to this newly accumulated knowledge, the project would organise two trainings able to enhance critical thinking and digital skills among youth workers who work with youth at risk of falling in the trap of anti-Muslim narrative. The trainings will further teach practitioners how to address the psychological, emotional and physical needs of victims of anti-Muslim hate speech/crime, after hearing their stories and providing them with a platform to raise their voices. The involvement of politicians, scholars and decision-makers in the trainings would additionally serve as means for raising awareness on the phenomenon of anti-Muslim hate speech and debunking myths regarding refugees and asylum seekers. Finally, the project's long-term viability will be strengthened by enhancing the involvement of important stakeholders via weighted online activities.

Specific objectives:

to encourage youth workers to research into trends in far-right extremism and evaluate existing practices.

to enhance their media literacy skills and competences for the purposes of recognizing suspicious contents and behaviour online.

to train youth workers how to work with victims of anti-Muslim hate speech/crime

to ameliorate youth workers competences on national legal frameworks related to tackling Islamophobia

To train youth workers how to approach youth at risk of far-right radicalization with empathy and compassion, in order to develop relationships that will help the latter avoid radicalization.

To exchange best practices and experiences between organisations to encourage mutual learning and intercultural awareness

to expand the networks of individual organizations for the purposes of planning future initiatives based on their respective target groups and fields of activity.

### Activities

The 11 countries taking place in this project are Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Czechia, France, Bulgaria and the Netherlands. Each partner organization will send 3 participants, while keeping in mind the preservation of a gender balance. Among those, there will be individuals belonging to the following groups:

- Refugees/IDPs
- Migrants
- NEETS

- Participants from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds

The project will organize two trainings with an evidence-based intervention in mind, designed to question and challenge Islamophobic online narratives to serve the ultimate objective of diminishing the offline and online discrimination Muslims face in Europe today. The project specifically aims to enhance understandings of the driving factors of anti-Islamic sentiment in the partaking countries and how social media platforms are used to disseminate and reinforce negative perceptions of Muslims in Europe. Therefore, the first training in Denmark will discuss the use of social media by targets (profiling perpetrators, describing modus operandi, distinguishing channels used and examining push & pull factors) in the spread of Islamophobic behaviour in selected online areas, and how they influence offline behaviour. Partners will do preliminary research and prepare case studies. Thus, the training in Denmark will enhance youth workers abilities in recognising signs of far-right extremism and how to adequately address them. The second training, in Jordan, will examine the experiences of victims of anti-Muslim hate crime and hate speech and how they should be tackled. That will include learning how to provide psychological, emotional and physical support. Particular focus will be placed on the intersectional manifestations of anti-Muslim sentiment (e.g. homosexual Muslim men tend to be targeted more). The training will consequently have a clear intersection focus on Muslim identities (e.g. ethnicity, migration status, sexuality, gender identity). Activities such as forum theatre will be specifically used to describe those experiences on behalf of partners.

## Impact

Participants in the training courses will experience the positive impact of being acquainted with potentially unfamiliar until then matter and contemporary geopolitical realities, which influence the proliferation of right-wing ideologies and Islamophobic sentiments. They will get a better knowledge of concepts and theories linked to hate speech, hate crime, far-right extremist indoctrination, radicalisation, propaganda, and misinformation, as well as successful measures for avoiding falling prey to such phenomena. They will learn about the push and pull factors, motivations, modus operandi and digital footprint of far-right extremists who engage in anti-Muslim hate speech. They will learn how to address the psychological, emotional and physical needs of victims of Islamophobia. In addition, they will learn about the intersectionality of Islamophobia. Hate crimes are often intersectional, discriminating the individual for more than one of their identity categories. Hate crime legislations often fail to account for this, resulting in an incomplete picture not just of why discrimination takes place but also how discrimination takes place.

Given the huge role social media plays in the proliferation of far-right and anti-Muslim messages online, youth workers will learn how to build up comprehensive media literacy skills; how to think critically about extremist messages; how to question and compare information sources; how to conduct independent and objective online research; how to detect fake news, censorship, and bias; and how to examine texts, audio, and visual information that may be radical and provoking.

Participants will be encouraged to put their creative problem-solving abilities to the test and will be challenged to come up with new ideas. Furthermore, given the diverse background of participants and their differing perspectives, the trainings will function as a platform for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge. Consequently, participants will gain skills such as critical thinking, improved communication, empathy, delegation of tasks and duties, collaboration, and developing a shared identity with other members of the group. In addition to that, participants will receive the opportunity to improve their language and communication skills given the international milieu of the TCs.

The youth project further intends to inspire youth workers to incorporate this knowledge later after the project lifetime in their respective occupations, sharing their experience with their colleagues, networks and other concerned parties. We further hope that the trainings will grant participants with new outlooks and vistas which

would further motivate them to pursue the field of media literacy in a professional setting.

However, more importantly, the project intends to reduce and prevent cases of anti-Muslim hate speech and hate crime by stimulating participants to analyze the threats present on social and mainstream media and recognizing signs of far-right and Islamophobic indoctrination amongst their target groups, ultimately building a framework that emphasizes the critical role of democratic values, PVE knowledge, and media literacy skills in fostering human rights, social contributing to long-term international development and peace.

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