



Participation

Gap & Solutions Technical Report Deliverable D5.4

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Summary of the Project

The overarching objective of **PARTICIPATION** is to identify future perspectives and trends of polarisation, extremism, and radicalisation as well as the social composition of the group at risk in Europe by a participatory and provisional methodological strategy, that permits to co-create with social actors, stakeholders, and policy-makers effective strategies for prevention. The specific objectives of **PARTICIPATION** are:

1. **Multidimensional modelling to understand current and future trends of extremism, polarisation and radicalisation:** to develop a holistic multidimensional model based on participatory fieldwork and mixed-method approaches, in order to better understand the different drivers of violent radical ideologies, how these are organised in different pathways and, complementary to that, which mechanisms, factors and strategies contribute to support non radical attitudes and behaviours, nowadays and in the future.

Sub-objective (a): targets: analysing and discussing, using a strategy based on the principles of action research involving young people in different parts of Europe, the socio-psychological mechanisms, such as social marginalisation, alienation, and polarisation, that lead to radicalisation, with a special focus on gender, sexuality, and regional differences.

These objectives will be achieved by milestones M2 ("requirement of analysis and methodologies") [month 6], and by M6 ("Models on radicalisation and extremism") [month 35].

2. **Communication dynamics:** to develop an analysis of extremism, polarisation and radicalisation online dynamics by ICT tools (as semantic analysis) and to co-create with the involvement of civil society strategies to contrast and preventing these phenomena. This goal will be achieved by milestone M3 ("Communication analysis") [month 9] and D.4.5. ("Analysing different communication strategies against extremism and radicalisation") [month 25], D.4.6. ("Projecting counter-narrative campaigns involving young people") [month 33], D.4.7 ("Methodological tools for evaluating counter-narrative campaigns and validation") [month 35].

3. **Co-creation:** fieldwork to analyse and to generate with the involvement of the social actors in different social spheres, strategies of contrasting polarisation, radicalisation, and extremism. Thus, the research processes supporting the achievement of the following sub-objectives:

Sub-objective (b): Resilience: developing communicative tools, education approaches and community-based strategies, with the involvement and cooperation of practitioners, stakeholders, and young people (with particular attention to gender balance), in order to improve the resilience of the communities and people at risk.

Sub-objective (c): Empowerment: to improve the awareness of young people and communities as well as the society at a whole, toward the risks of extremism, hate discourses and radical ideologies, contrasting the processes of marginalisation, self-marginalisation, and alienation of ethnic, religious, gender and sexualities minorities.

4. **Tools:** to develop methodologies and policies recommendations for improving the action of policymakers also on the basis of the previous fieldwork.

Sub-objective (d): Methodologies for supporting decision-makers: to realise databases and a systematic set of indexes and early-warnings, based on previous holistic multidimensional model and fieldworks as well as a testing phase on its practical usability involving decision-makers, in order to support them in decisions, improving effectiveness and social acceptability.

Sub-objective (e): Policies recommendations: developing a set of policies recommendations with the participation of stakeholders, policymakers, and targets, in order to optimise strategies and interventions against extremism, hate cultures and radicalisation, at micro, meso, and macro level of the governance process.

5. **Dissemination:** to disseminate step-by-step the results toward civil society, stakeholders, policymakers, social groups, schools, experts, and scientific communities through their active involvement in discussion and forum, both on-line and off-line, as well as workshops and focus-group discussions. These objectives will be achieved by the whole work in WP7.

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List of abbreviations

Acronym	Description
CSO	Civic Society Organisation
D	Deliverable
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
OT&ENA	Operational Training and Needs Assessment
P/CVE	Preventing and Countering Violent extremism
PARTICIPATION	Analyzing and Preventing Extremism via Participation
ST&ENA	Strategic Training and Needs Assessment (ST&ENA)
T	Task
T&ENA	Training and Educational Needs Assessment

Introduction

Davide Lauretta, EFD.

PARTICIPATION aims to analyse, through a participatory approach, different contexts, such as prisons, municipalities, schools, religious communities, and online platforms. Furthermore, the project aims at improving knowledge on the use of education and training for challenging and preventing radicalisation and violent extremism as well as strengthening social inclusion through educational programs, especially (but not only) targeting young people. Regarding this specific goal, the main beneficiaries are local authorities, educational institutions, teachers, school staff, NGOs, sports associations, and private actors (social workers, psychologists, law professionals, etc). Accordingly, one of the macro-objectives of Work Package 5 is to increase the capacity of the above-mentioned actors to identify effective (general, formal, non-formal, online) education and training practices and indicate best practices to reach at-risk groups. The overall aim is to improve social inclusion, resilience and prevention of radicalisation in the educational environment, by developing and testing a set of comprehensive learning tools and resources.

This deliverable

This deliverable (D) is a technical report that captures the results of Task 5.4 (T5.4), which has been specifically devised to conduct a comprehensive analysis of gaps and potential solutions in the field of education and training. The analysis builds on the findings of previous deliverables and aims to address the following questions:

1. What are the main needs in education and training practices in Europe in order to increase the capacity of local authorities, educational institutions, teachers, and civic organisations to improve social inclusion, resilience, and prevention of radicalisation and polarisation?
2. What are the main challenges in education and training practices in Europe that currently constitute an obstacle to attaining those needs?
3. What are the main ways forward to achieve the abovementioned goals?

Accordingly, this report will address these questions by examining the responses gathered and formulated in previous deliverables of the project.

More specifically, the deliverables that have been selected to achieve the objectives of this report are the following:

- ❖ Deliverable 3.4 focused on the main challenges, and the main polarising and contentious topics that teachers are confronted with, as well as to what responses teachers may put in place to address these issues. Research activities and fieldwork with teachers in secondary schools were conducted in six EU Member States (Belgium, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Romania). D3.4 provided explorative research aimed at collecting data and experiences on the ways in which polarising views enter and spread in the classroom and in the school environment in order to facilitate the creation of tailored measures in terms of possible policies and interventions in those environments.

- ❖ Deliverable 5.1 focused on the existing approaches to preventing violent extremism through education and on identifying the main providers and targets of these approaches. Its output consists of a comprehensive review of the existing resources, lessons, and experiences useful to raise awareness, improve skills and better inform future practices. Furthermore, D5.1 aimed at providing effective tools for challenging and preventing radicalisation and violent extremism and strengthening social inclusion in educational settings.
- ❖ Deliverable 5.2 focused on the local educational and training needs that should be met to help stakeholders to prevent radicalisation and polarisation and to strengthen social inclusion through a series of activities carried out in five EU countries: Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Romania. The outcomes of D5.2 consist of a fine-grained understanding of local educational and training needs, experiences, and recommendations. Moreover, D5.2 also highlighted the existing gaps and barriers to implementing effective “Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism” (P/CVE). These contents have been shared by practitioners on the basis of their work ‘on the ground’, but also collected from other sources like the ‘Training and Education Laboratory’ through participatory community consultation, case studies, interviews, and a survey.
- ❖ Deliverable 5.3 focused on developing more effective educational and learning policies and interventions in Greece, Italy, and Romania. D5.3 operated on two complementary levels. First, it critically analysed the status of available P/CVE training and education programmes as well as previous projects outputs. Second, it gained inputs from Working Groups implemented with the involvement of a broad range of key stakeholders (teachers, psychologists, researchers, law professionals, social workers, first-line practitioners, etc.).

To summarise, D5.4 is a 'gaps and solutions technical report' that aims to offer comprehensive insights into the challenges and controversial subjects that stakeholders involved in education may encounter. The selected stakeholders who have been involved in the research activities during the implementation of tasks 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 are the main beneficiaries of this deliverable and its outputs concerning general education and training programmes, including formal, non-formal, and online education. They include local authorities, educational institutions, teachers and school staff, social workers, NGOs, sports associations, psychologists, and law professionals (Table 1). This deliverable also provides recommendations on which approaches should be embraced or discouraged to address these issues, along with identifying the needs and deficiencies that should be addressed.

Involved partners for P/CVE activities in the educational environment			
Local authorities	Educational institutions	Teachers and school staff	Social workers
NGOs	Sport Associations	Psychologists	Law professionals

Table 1. List of involved partners for P/CVE activities in the educational environment

This deliverable is composed of three main sections. Following an introductory chapter, the first section offers an overview of the key challenges and controversial topics that professionals in the education environment face as part of their work. The second section analyses the educational and training requirements and needs. The third section examines the gaps that exist in enhancing skills and capabilities to address polarisation, radicalisation, and violent extremism, and promote social inclusion. These sections are based on research conducted during the implementation of the aforementioned and previously executed tasks within the 'PARTICIPATION' project. Lastly, the concluding remarks present a set of recommendations and potential solutions for local authorities, educational institutions, teachers, school staff, civic organizations, and professionals such as psychologists and law experts to enhance their ability to effectively engage with at-risk groups and improve social inclusion, resilience, as well as actions to prevent toxic polarisation and radicalisation from gaining a foothold in this context.

Method

Considering the wide range of actors operating in the educational environment, the analysis of needs, gaps, and potential solutions, based on the results of the abovementioned tasks of the project 'PARTICIPATION', encompasses multiple dimensions of education: general, formal, non-formal, and online. For the same reason, as previously mentioned, the key involved stakeholders are not limited to the school. Moreover, in addition to the different kinds of education, training programmes and practices have been considered as well.

The choice to provide needs, gaps and potential solutions by differentiating education in general, formal, non-formal, and online is based on theoretical reasons. At first, it is coherent with the structures of some of the consulted tasks which were useful for the writing of this deliverable. Secondly, this approach makes this deliverable more readable for users because they can directly focus on the specific sections they are interested in (e.g., teachers can directly read sections based on general and formal education; CSOs, instead, those sections concerning non-formal education, and so on).

Coherently with this framework, the categorisation of the stakeholders in different clusters in the section concerning final recommendations follows the same approach. Indeed, recommendations are more readable and identifiable by users exclusively focusing on those paragraphs dedicated to their role and on those insights that fit with their educational environment.

Linked to the abovementioned aspects, the idea of reporting needs, gaps and potential solutions based on the kind of education and type of clusters is given by the same methodological basis (research of elements depending on category and role of users – teachers, CSOs, local authorities, etc - and dimension of educational environment they worked in – formal, non-formal, online).

This setting explains why authors followed different criteria by those used in deliverable 5.1, based on the different wholes (whole-of-society, whole-of-community, whole-of-government, and so on): the structure based on the wholes, indeed, would have not let users directly identify the insights contained in the deliverable depending on the specific environment they would have searched for or the role played. Moreover, needs, gaps and potential solutions would have been repeated more and more times because common to many wholes, making the understanding of the technical report more complex and challenging.

Finally, specifically referring to the deliverable as an output, its brevity and schematics are given by its nature as a technical report and it is coherent with it. Moreover, many insights collected in the other deliverables linked with this one are based on case studies referred to specific countries that are often different deliverable from deliverable. For this reason, this technical report provides needs, gaps and potential solutions that are common to the involved countries in this activity, if not at the EU level in general, in line with the objectives and requests of the task inspiring this deliverable. To gather the necessary data, both primary sources (including interviews conducted during participatory community consultations and working groups, and responses collected through surveys in T3.4, T5.2, and T5.3) and secondary sources (relevant academic and grey literature in T3.4 and T5.1) were utilised. The data analysis in this technical report specifically examined the actions implemented in the corresponding deliverables, and specifically:

1. A desk research and analysis of the existing literature published in the last two decades; the analysis of an online survey administered to teachers in Belgium, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Romania; and the workshops that were held with teachers in each of the above-mentioned countries under investigation (D3.4).
2. A comprehensive review based on both desk-research and in-depth interviews concerning educational programmes for later primary through secondary schooling (e. g., students' age between 5/6 and 11/12) as well as training programmes for youth between 12/13 and early 20 years old (D5.1).
3. Empirical research on local education and training needs¹ that has been conducted 'on the ground' through both Strategic Training and Needs Assessment (ST&ENA)² and Operational Training and Needs Assessment (OT&ENA)³ methodologies (D5.2).
4. Analysis of the potential gaps detected in the available P/CVE training and education programmes through meetings and working groups based on the participatory and experiential approach (D5.2).
5. Development and formulation of more effective educational and learning policies and interventions (D5.3) by providing recommendations for all the stakeholders and other ones specifically per category of targets (D3.4, D5.3).

¹ In this regard, researchers resorted to the Training and Education Needs Analysis (T&ENA). It can be defined as *"a method of determining if there are specific training needs determining the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve maximum results in the P/CVE area, and if so, what training is required to fill the current gap"*. T&ENA is developed on two levels (strategic and operational) looking at secondary data and conducting workshops, target surveys and interviews. The discrepancy between the current state and the desired state is helpful to understand and indicate problems, and translate them in training needs. This process allowed identifying and prioritising training requirements. Deliverable 5.2, *Participation Project*, 2023, p. 19.

² According to the *ratio* of this work, Strategic Training and Education Needs Assessment (ST&ENA) is a process that allows *"set suggestions on how education (formal, non-formal and online) and training currently addresses polarisation, radicalisation and violent extremism and support prevention, social inclusion and resilience amongst at-risk demographics, then deepened by lessons learned and good practices identified by practitioners (including: first-line prevention workers, educational institutions, civil society organisations, local authorities and at risk demographic groups), experts, educators and trainers; and then prioritised"*. Deliverable 5.2, *Participation Project*, 2023, p. 11; the Strategic Assessment has been carried by reviewing *"academic as well as grey literature, previous and on-going EU-funded radicalisation projects as well as international learnings and publications from outside the European Union"*. Deliverable 5.2, *Participation Project*, 2023, p. 10.

³ The Operational Training and Education Needs Assessment (OT&ENA) is a similar process but its related activities have been carried out through *"relevant local stakeholders in each (partner) locality, allowing a more in-depth, participatory assessment of local training needs"*. Deliverable 5.2, *Participation Project*, 2023, p. 10.

1. Overview

Education plays a key role in guiding individuals through a safe journey of personal growth and development, a responsibility that has become even more critical and pressing in our present era. As **societies become increasingly complex and interconnected**, young people may encounter numerous challenges in finding direction and shaping their cultural foundation and values (Deliverable 3.4, p. 11). To address these difficulties, effective programmes, strategies, and practices within the educational realm are necessary to empower young individuals to actively participate in a democratic society. This process of learning is ongoing and solidifies over the years, where schools and universities not only serve as pivotal transitional periods towards adulthood, but can also be regarded as "places of vulnerability" (Deliverable 5.1, p. 17).

Furthermore, the **disruptive influence of the online realm on daily life** has further heightened the aforementioned complexity and the associated risks and challenges (Deliverable 5.1, p. 12). Without adequate training, individuals of all ages may struggle to differentiate between reliable and deceptive sources of information, making them exposed to **fake news, disinformation, hate speech**, and **extremist viewpoints**, both online and offline. The outbreak of the **COVID-19 pandemic** has added to these difficulties, exacerbating societal divisions due to contentious topics surrounding vaccines, mask usage, the legitimacy of vaccine passports (green pass), and the emergence of conspiracy theories concerning the origin of the virus. Furthermore, political discourse has become increasingly acrimonious and polarised. Within this context, children and young people have also faced significant stress and strain over an extended period due to the necessary measures implemented to contain the pandemic (Deliverable 5.1, p. 37).

The **Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism of the United Nations** (United Nations - General Assembly, 2015) included educational actors in the list of stakeholders that each member state should involve in order **to develop national action plans for the prevention of violent extremism through a multidisciplinary approach**. The same report has highlighted the role of education for preventing purposes and the importance of implementing *"education programmes that promote "global citizenship", soft skills, critical thinking and digital literacy, and explore means of introducing civic education into school curricula, textbooks and teaching materials"* and *"Build the capacity of teachers and educators to support this agenda"* (United Nations - General Assembly, 2015). Moreover, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognised **education as a process to enforce individuals' defence mechanisms and adherence to democratic values, strengthening their commitment to non-violence and peace** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017).

In this context, the **school can be seen as a microcosm of society**, encapsulating diverse perspectives, ideologies, and lifestyles, which can give rise to conflicts and the dissemination of controversial topics, despite its intended role (Deliverable 3.4, p. 20). These issues not only manifest among students but frequently extend to teachers or arise between them and their students. Consequently, teachers themselves may adopt polarising stances or lean towards conspiracy thinking, rather than effectively addressing conflicts among students (Deliverable 5.1, p. 18).

For these reasons, **it is crucial to comprehend the needs of all stakeholders engaged in the educational environment** in order for them to feel adequately trained, resilient against polarising and extremist narratives and viewpoints, and equipped to address controversial topics and challenges in their work with young individuals. **Similarly, understanding the existing gaps that hinder the attainment of these objectives is equally fundamental.**

Finally, providing **a list of potential solutions and recommendations** is pivotal to increase the awareness of those actors and improve their capacity to best reach at-risk groups and guarantee social inclusion, resilience, and prevention of toxic polarisation and radicalisation.

Glossary

In order to delve deeper into the discussion regarding the aforementioned topics, it is essential and beneficial to establish a clear understanding of the key terms related to formal, non-formal, and online education and training used in this deliverable.

The term **'education'** indicates a broadly defined and non-specific process aimed at developing and improving knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding relating to each aspect of life through a series of activities and programmes, rather than selected ones for a limited field (Manpower Services Commission, 1981).

Differently, **'formal education'** is a very specific, institutionalised, intended, and planned process that is provided by both public and recognised private entities. According to this definition, formal education corresponds to a systematic and organised education model which is regulated by a given set of laws and norms. It is based on all those pathways and programmes that are recognised as part of the formal education system by the relevant national education authorities like education provided by the school curriculum, but also the vocational one as well as the adult education (UNESCO-UIS, OECD, EUROSTAT, 2018).

Even though this deliverable is not focused only on young people, these are one of the main at-risk targets of radicalisation, polarisation, and violent extremism pathways. For this reason, it is equally important to provide a definition of **'higher education'** as *"an important space for critical engagement with challenging issues (where) [...] preparing for and participating in debates enables students to develop critical thinking skills, alongside a variety of oral presentation and discussion skills"* (Healey, 2012).

The term 'non-formal education', instead, refers to an organised educational activity that is developed outside the established system of formal education (schools and other institutions), and inside social groups and other civic organisations and associations (Chadha, 2009). It is the product of the environment where individuals acquire specific knowledge and skills through different activities carried out in their daily routines.

Because of the increasing importance of the online dimension and the related platforms and their dangerous exploitation for radicalising and extremist purposes, it is important to clarify the meaning of the term **'online education'** as well. This term indicates teaching and planned distance learning activities, which are conducted in two different places from each other so that particular

communication through technology and a special institutional organisation is required (Moore and Kearsley, 2012).

Finally, the term **'training'** means a short-term process based on systematic and organised procedures (Memoria, 2000) that let individuals develop their life and professional competencies through many and various learning processes and methods, also complemented by practical and hands-on experiences (Hughey and Mussnug, 1997), and improve their work efficiency thanks to the transfer of those necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to perform specific tasks (Truelove, 1992).

1.1 Main contentious topics related to polarisation, radicalisation, and violent extremism in the educational environment

In order to correctly provide an analysis of the main issues and problems concerning polarisation, radicalisation, and violent extremism in the educational environment, it is important to have a clear idea of what the expression **'contentious topics'** means in this deliverable. By adopting the definition of Stradling *et Al.* (1984, p. 9), 'contentious topics' are *"those issues on which our society is clearly divided and significant groups within society advocate conflicting explanations or solutions based on alternative values"*.

Concerning the purposes of this work and P/CVE activities, as Soley stated (1996), *"Teaching about issues that are controversial is a responsible and appropriate way for students [and people, in general] to learn about values and to study value conflicts"*. According to the author, improving critical thinking skills gives the tools to recognise and evaluate both own values and those of others.

As already mentioned in both sections called "Introduction" and "Method", the main contentious topics have been identified through desk-research based on grey and academic literature as well as feedback collected from involved stakeholders during workshops, online surveys, and interviews.

With the aim to facilitate the understanding of these contentious topics, they have been divided into the following categories: **general contentious topics** (which are cross-cutting to more than one specific extremist, discriminatory and/or violent behaviour); **violence potentially linked to criminality**; **racial, ethnical and/or religious issues**; **violence and discrimination based on gender**; **anti-government issues**; and **youth-related issues**.

General contentious topics

In this deliverable, general contentious topics are defined as those issues that are **cross-cutting to many specific sub-categories of polarising, discriminatory, extremist, and violent behaviours** (Stradling *et Al.*, 1984, p. 9). For this reason, they could also be included in several other macro-areas that will be listed below. The general contentious topics identified through research conducted within the previous activities of the project 'PARTICIPATION' relate to the following:

- Both offline and online Radicalisation, violent extremism, terrorism (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3).

- Narratives based on an 'Us vs. Them' or a 'Them vs. Us' division of the world (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1).
- Change of social identity and discourse (Deliverable 3.4).
- Lack of social inclusion, poverty, lack of social support (Deliverables 3.4, p. 43).
- Various types of discrimination, including those based on prejudices and stereotypes (Deliverable 3.4, p. 25; Deliverable 5.1, pp. 39-40).
- Hate speech (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).
- Totalitarian ideologies (Deliverable 3.4, p. 49).
- Conflicting and polarising interpretation of sensitive historical events; for instance, the Holocaust, the Nazi and the communist dictatorship, and the Second World War (Deliverable 3.4, p. 25).

Violence potentially linked to criminality

The following detected **contentious issues** are **based on generical violent attitudes, sometimes linked with the criminal environment**. These are:

- Physical or verbal violence among pupils (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2).
- Bullying and Cyber-bullying (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).
- Vandalism (Deliverable 3.4, p. 24).
- Hooliganism (Deliverables 3.4, 5.2, 5.3).
- Drug use (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).
- Risky games that could endanger the well-being and lives of students (Deliverables 3.4, p. 25).

Racial, ethnical and/or religious issues

Discriminatory, hatred-based and violent behaviour attitudes concerning race, ethnicity and religion are not new phenomena in society, but they appear to have increased significantly in the last years (Deliverable 5.1, p. 4). Their growth can be attributed to several factors: the **impact of the migrant and refugee crisis**; the issues of **returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs)**; the state of terror provoked by **Jihadi terrorism** in certain European countries (France and Belgium in particular, but also the United Kingdom); the **Covid-19 pandemic**, and the spread of a wide range of **conspiracy theories**, including those concerning religious plots. These events and especially the related polarising and extremist narratives that have flourished appear to have increased the fragmentation of society. For example, Muslim communities have been oftentimes targeted by right-wing violent extremist groups, who exploited sentiments of fear of ordinary citizens to justify their hate and violence through narratives that concern an alleged upcoming '**Great Replacement**' to the disadvantage of white people and Christians. Consequently, some segments of Muslim communities feel discriminated against, stigmatised, and marginalised. Moreover, following the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, polarising narratives denouncing preferential treatment for Ukrainian refugees when compared to other categories of refugees (e.g., those coming from North Africa and the Middle East) have started circulating.

Finally, especially with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, **Jewish communities** have increasingly become **targets of discrimination**. This can also be attributed to the rise of conspiracy theories associated with the QAnon movement, leading to tensions among religious, civil, and political institutions.

Consequently, these conflicts have also affected the educational sphere.

Considering this context and the findings from the research conducted under the project 'PARTICIPATION,' it is possible to outline the primary categories of racial, ethnic, and/or religious challenges that have been identified within the educational setting:

- Antisemitism (Deliverable 3.4).
- Racism, xenophobia, and intolerance (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).
- Grievances regarding the perceived preferential treatment of Ukrainian migrants compared to other migrants from the Middle East and North Africa (Deliverables 3.4, 5.2, 5.3).
- The issue of the Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters – FTFs (Deliverable 3.4, p. 49).
- The use of religious symbols (Deliverable 3.4, p. 25).
- Conflicts between religious authority and school authority (*Ibidem*).
- Unexpected new eating habits or clothing styles linked to religious practices (*Ibidem*).

Violence and discrimination based on gender

The gender dimension has become more and more a sensitive object of discussion and discrimination, as well as hatred and violent behaviours in society. Conservative, radical and extremist views concerning gender come equally from violent extremist groups and so-called ordinary citizens who may adopt **homophobic and misogynist views** but have no ties with violent extremists. Against this backdrop, in the educational environment, selected stakeholders have reported to have faced issues relating to the following contentious topics:

- LGBTQI+ discrimination (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).
- Gender inequality (*Ibidem*).
- Toxic Masculinities / Healthy Masculinities (Deliverable 5.1, p. 47).
- 'Me-too' related discussions (Deliverable 3.4, p. 199).
- Online predation and grooming (Deliverable 5.1, pp. 36-37).
- Sexual exploitation and abuse (*Ibidem*).
- Sexual harassment (Deliverable 3.4, p. 25).
- Forced marriages (*Ibidem*).
- Misogyny (*Ibidem*).
- Pathological forms of jealousy (*Ibidem*).

Anti-government issues

As already mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic played a role in exacerbating the fragmentation of society, as well as hostility and public discontent against the EU and the various national governments. Moreover, extremist individuals and groups have capitalised on the occasion by fostering **hatred narratives against authorities** online which, in some cases, overflowed into real-life violence. In this regard, the stakeholders involved in the research conducted by the above-mentioned activities of the project 'PARTICIPATION' confirmed the presence of polarising anti-government issues as part of the challenges they need to handle in their work in the educational environment. These issues can be clustered as follows:

- Anti-government sentiments (Deliverable 3.4, p. 95).
- Distrust towards government and authority (Deliverable 3.4, p. 25).

- Disinformation, fake news, conspiracy theories, propaganda concerning plots orchestrated by power elites in the political and governmental establishment (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).
- Discussions about the government's measures to counter the COVID-19 pandemic (Deliverable 3.4).

Youth-related issues

Some behaviours and attitudes potentially leading to radicalisation and violent extremism seem to be particularly linked to young people because of a **wide range of factors that affect their delicate phase of life, or given the impact that certain crises, like economic crises and the pandemic**, had on them. In this regard, research undertaken within the project 'PARTICIPATION' has highlighted the following issues and contexts as linked to the most recurrent contentious topics:

- Juvenile delinquency (Deliverable 3.4, 5.1).
- Conflicts with parents/family (Deliverable 3.4, p. 25).
- The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on young people's mental health (*Ibidem*).
- Youth unemployment (Deliverable 3.4).

As far as the school environment is concerned, the main reported contentious topics that the involved stakeholders declared to have faced **during their work with pupils** are the following (Deliverable 3.4):

- Students' membership in, or support for, groups advocating for the use of political violence.
- Increase in physical aggression from students against teachers.
- The influence placed on students 'from the neighbourhood' over how they should act at school, with whom they should socialise, and how they should dress.
- Early school dropout.

A major highlighted matter of concern has been found in an increased trend of physical aggression from students against teachers (*Ibidem*).

1.2 Main challenges in education and training practices addressing polarisation, radicalisation, and violent extremism, and building social inclusion.

According to the data gathered during the research conducted by the activities of the project 'PARTICIPATION', the main challenge for the involved stakeholders that work in the educational environment concerns a perceived **lack of knowledge and effective training in P/CVE**. Considering the feedback received through the surveys, working groups, and workshops in the previous tasks, this perception appears to be motivated by **the lack of P/CVE programmes in the official school curricula**. Moreover, many stakeholders stated that the teaching methods and pedagogical approaches developed in some European countries seem to not fit the youth learning and developmental psychology needs, and are not effective in engaging students in P/CVE activities. For instance, they do not seem adequate to appropriately address issues and challenges concerning radicalisation, polarisation and violent extremism and provide young people with a safe space for their development and understanding of the world of today (Deliverable 5.1, pp. 5-6).

Additionally, **issues relating to the cut of funds for the educational environment** means that the related institutions, organisations and associations are not supported enough to effectively foster resilience in students against extremist ideologies and narratives (Deliverable 5.1, p. 16).

Another aspect that surfaced through the desk research and on-the-ground activities with relevant stakeholders is the presence of a perplexing **terminological ambiguity** when it comes to defining radicalisation and violent extremism. This lack of clarity further complicates the task of differentiating between the two and understanding the various approaches that need to be adopted, considering the distinct aspects and characteristics of the phenomena in question.

Difficulties in defining and understanding these issues also imply the **difficulty in detecting possible signs of radicalisation**, recognising how deeply rooted radicalised and violent extremist convictions are in some individuals, and **understanding boundaries between educational intervention and security intervention** against radicalisation and violent extremism. About this last issue, some stakeholders denounced a tendency to consider radicalisation only as a security matter (Deliverable 3.4, p. 11). As a consequence, many educators and teachers are reluctant and unsure about reporting potential cases of radicalisation, being concerned about the **risk of compromising their relationship with young people** or ruining their pupils' life (Deliverable 3.4).

The educational environment presents a set of challenges for local authorities, educational institutions, teachers, school staff, NGOs, sports associations, and private actors (such as social workers, psychologists, and legal professionals), which are increasingly complicated by the emergence of new factors. Foremost, the **significant and escalating exposure of children and youth to social media and gaming platforms** contributes to this complexity. In the realm of online interactions, the risks and threats of cyberbullying, violent extremism, and disinformation are exceptionally high. Extremist groups find it effortless to reach out to young individuals, leading them toward perilous spaces and making them vulnerable. Consequently, these groups can captivate the attention of youth, enticing them with pathways that can lead to radicalisation (Deliverable 5.1, p. 168). Furthermore, the gamification of extremist content partially contributes to the emergence of a **dangerous fascination with acts of killing**, which serves as a new catalyst for mass violence. This phenomenon is further fuelled by the constant media coverage that highlights the names, faces, motivations, videos, and images of mass shooters, inadvertently providing inspiration to vulnerable individuals who may perceive them as 'martyrs'. Additionally, this coverage can also contribute to instances of bullying, particularly in sensitive contexts like schools, which can potentially pave the way toward radicalisation pathways (Deliverable 5.1, p. 35).

Despite the pressing need to provide comprehensive training to all key stakeholders actively involved in the educational environment, a noticeable lack of policies addressing the ongoing development of skills and capabilities of the same stakeholders related to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) remains apparent.

Main challenges in formal education

As stated in the "Overview" of this deliverable, school can be seen as a microcosm of society where different worldviews and ways of thinking and living may also generate conflicts that need to be addressed. Several challenges affect this necessity. The initial challenge in implementing policies,

programmes, and methods for P/CVE interventions lies in the **difficulty of translating legislation and national guidelines into practical educational approaches** within the educational setting. Additionally, promoting specific programmes and facilitating discussions on these topics can be problematic when institutions and educators fail to maintain **impartiality in managing certain conversations**. It is worth noting that many existing curricula, apart from P/CVE activities, already exhibit bias by adopting ethno-centric and racial perspectives, while neglecting content related to marginalised groups, for instance referring to anti-Roma and anti-Hungarian discourses in some Romanian schools (Deliverable 3.4, p. 90).

Indeed, what emerged from the research, workshops, and interviews carried out for Deliverable 5.1, education can foster extremism through:

- *"Fostering ethno-nationalist chauvinism;*
- *Embracing (overly or subtly) classist, culturalist, sexist, chauvinist, racist education tropes, discourses, symbols and imagery;*
- *Linguistic and ethnic exclusion of diverse communities;*
- *Segregated learning and schools*
- *Racism – in texts, what's included or excluded from curricula, authors list, imagery, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of students, educators, administration."* (Deliverable 5.1, p. 16).

Consequently, the lack of diversity in educational materials may lead young individuals to develop a biased worldview favouring their own social group and excluding others. This issue is particularly relevant when it comes to defining and identifying radicalisation and extremism, as a neutral stance is often absent, with a sole focus on Islamism while disregarding other forms of extremism such as right-wing, nationalist, left-wing, and others. (Deliverable 5.1, p. 15).

Managing conversation on contentious issues without promoting their own views in the comfort of their position of authority, and accepting deviant or provoking worldviews, is another major challenge for teachers (Deliverable 3.4, p. 22). In other cases, **educational actors themselves may promote radical or extremist narratives** which can intensify conflicts at school or leave students even more vulnerable to extremist influences (Deliverable 5.1, pp. 31-33).

Research activities conducted within task 3.4 of the project 'PARTICIPATION' highlighted a number of other challenges affecting teachers dealing with contentious issues and topics in the classroom, starting from the difficulty in **changing their role from "transferring knowledge" to "moderating a conversation"** (Deliverable 3.4, p. 20). Indeed, getting out of the teaching routine by putting judgments and evaluations aside has been reported as challenging, as it also involves managing the tensions that arise among young individuals from diverse backgrounds and the necessity to de-escalate these tensions. The concern of many teachers to avoid certain sensitive discussions also stems from their apprehension about losing control, instigating verbal conflicts, and unintentionally harming their students. Additionally, they worry about receiving criticism from parents and the community, and potentially facing disciplinary measures from school authorities (*ibidem*). These concerns are equally valid when teachers are required to address sensitive topics such as sexuality and religion.

The concerns regarding potential reactions from students, parents, the community, school management, colleagues, policymakers, and politicians can also give rise to **fear for their personal safety** (Deliverable 5.1, p. 77). Moreover, it amplifies the apprehension surrounding public performance and the emotional toll associated with these relationships. When it comes to peer-to-peer interactions among teachers, many of them experience a **lack of collaboration** with their colleagues when navigating contentious topics that arise within the school environment (Deliverable 3.4).

On top of that, the main reported challenge is given by **the difficult relationship with students' parents**. Many factors determine this difficult interaction (Deliverable 3.4, pp. 23 – 24):

- Lack of time from both sides.
- Linguistic and cultural barriers.
- Parents' lack of interest in the role that school may have in educating their children.
- Lack of trust in the school system and teachers and consequent reluctance to meet them and solve specific issues or conflictual position on the methods that teachers use.
- Conflicts between parents and teachers in terms of the students' performance assessment and the tendency of the former to justify their children's behaviour.
- The limits imposed by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules that do not allow teachers to interact with parents directly without the presence of a mentor, making slow and complex the communication process.
- The tendency of some parents to exclude women from the discussion.
- The ban from some parents to let their children participate in certain sport activities or outings.

Another challenge teachers may face in the school environment is a decline in the importance and prestige of the teaching profession, which has an impact on both students' and parents' behaviour, according to the teachers interviewed during the implementation of Task 3.4 of the project 'PARTICIPATION' (Deliverable 3.4, p. 177). In other cases, some teachers have also denounced the fact that their authority is questioned because of the existence of certain prejudices and misogynist views concerning the role of women in society (Deliverable 3.4, p. 104).

2. Analysis of the educational and training needs in the P/CVE and strengthening social inclusion context

As highlighted in the “Introduction”, this deliverable is aimed at improving knowledge on the use of education and training in challenging and preventing radicalisation and violent extremism as well as strengthening social inclusion through educational programmes, especially (but not only) targeting young people. For these purposes, **the identification of needs** coming from all stakeholders involved in the educational environment **is a fundamental requirement** for a timely and precisely implementation and/or improvement of the related strategies and practices for P/CVE and strengthening social inclusion activities (Stockard, 1997) due to the key role these actors play in this field. Training needs assessment can be an effective measure to build tailor-made responses to address radicalisation, polarisation, and violent extremism as well as strengthen social inclusion. It would make it possible **to estimate the discrepancy between the current and the desired states and levels of training and knowledge** among stakeholders in P/CVE activities and close these gaps.

Moreover, understanding their needs enables on the one hand practitioners to provide policymakers with recommendations about the necessary measures to be taken to improve the skills and capabilities of those stakeholders in addressing polarisation, radicalisation, and violent extremism; on the other hand, it supports policymakers in the implementation and development of the required policies and programmes for stakeholders to achieve P/CVE goals.

Concerning this specific activity, the identification of needs was based on the interviews, working groups, workshops and surveys carried out in those countries targeted in the previous tasks (Belgium, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Romania).

As already mentioned in the section titled “Method”, some activities carried out in the previous deliverables were about only a few countries among all the ones that have been involved in the whole related Work Package. For this reason, based on the objectives of task 5.4, all those needs potentially adapting to the different contexts and countries and the EU general level have been reported here, but without totally renouncing the important insights coming from the Operational Assessment locally carried out (Deliverable 5.2).

General education and training programmes

According to the analyses conducted within tasks 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, general education and training programmes should strive to **enhance citizens’ awareness** of what the phenomena entail,

and how to be critically alerted and able to protect themselves, as well as how to intervene at a local level (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 56-62.).

For this reason, the needs of stakeholders concerning the general education and training programmes for P/CVE and strengthening social inclusion activities are valid for all kinds of education (formal, non-formal, and online) due to the fact they are very generic and applicable in each specific context and dimension (offline and online). Trainings, specifically, are more effective if conducted in person, rather than in online environments (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 57-58).

As a starting point, all the stakeholders involved in the educational environment need to **understand the existing situation** concerning polarisation, radicalisation and violent extremism in their context, especially at the local level, and consequently acquire knowledge about the different definitions of these phenomena. Then, stakeholders need to be aware of the purposes of extremist groups depending on their ideology and position across the political spectrum.

In more practical terms, the key actors operating in the educational environment would benefit from training aimed at developing the ability **to recognise the initial signs of polarisation and radicalisation** to timely and promptly prevent or tackle them. Starting from these steps, they can recognise what the best responses, approaches, practices, and techniques for P/CVE and strengthening social inclusion are (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).

At the same time, all stakeholders need to directly work with their targets, especially young people, by promoting reciprocal understanding and mutual respect, empathy, tolerance and non-discrimination, freedom of speech and critical thinking as well as developing all the effective protective factors into a well-defined safe space to build or keep **social cohesion**. In this regard, they would benefit from acquiring specific skills for a healthier communication culture such as methods to ensure active listening, peer-to-peer democratic open discussion, conflict resolution, and mediation. Moreover, they also need to support victims, being a conscious recipient of information (*Ibidem*). Economic interventions (for instance, programmes for job searching and policies for improving salaries) to let people overcome stigmatisation and isolation are actions to be strongly encouraged as well (Deliverable 5.2, p. 77).

Without renouncing to a community-based approach, it is important that stakeholders receive proper training for individual learning development as well as **educate people and youth on self-awareness, self-empowerment, and self-reflection** (Deliverables 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).

The use of education and training in challenging and preventing radicalisation and violent extremism as well as strengthening social inclusion through educational programmes is not limited to a stakeholders' intra-group perspective (e.g., teachers exclusively with teachers and school staff, psychologists with their colleagues, etc). Indeed, they need to exchange their expertise, good practices, but also resources and support, among each other and **build a strong network for collaboration and cooperation based on mixed and multidisciplinary approach**. Thus, understanding the role of the other stakeholders in preventing polarisation and radicalisation as well as the way they can be best equipped to identify and answer contentious topics and issues is another need to be met. This mutual exchange might increase the capability to develop more effective tools and guides for actions to be taken when relevant incidents occur and/or early-

interventions – more challenging to carry out - are required. In doing so, dissemination of existing programmes and provision of feedback on what has been done are encouraged and the topics of the programmes need to be regularly updated. This practice also facilitates the understanding of the existing policies in the P/CVE framework. Interventions need to be carried out more in-depth and focused on the root causes with the aim to understand what makes people adopt extremist ideas (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 60-63).

As far as focusing on the targets themselves is concerned, educational programmes need to be **multiculturally oriented**, adapted to specific clusters of individuals and groups based on their origin, different regions, and cultures (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 57-60). Moreover, there is an urgent need to directly **involve targets to play an active role** and intervene when needed, for instance through volunteering. This option is useful not only to help at-risk peers not to fall into polarisation, radicalisation and extremist pathways, but also to be increasingly resilient themselves, especially referring young people and concerning activities they may experience in their daily routine. This is particularly important in their work with young people. They cannot just be the targets, but also active contributors, agents and decision-makers. To correctly engage them, stakeholders need to understand the difference between ‘being participated’ and ‘effectively participate’, between ‘filling a slot’/ ‘being at the table’ and ‘being authentically and actively involved’ by having their own voices heard and shaping decisions, policy and practice (Deliverable 5.1, p. 48). To achieve this goal, it is also necessary that stakeholders be trained and receive adequate tools and strategies to prevent or address potential burnouts experienced by involved young people because of an ‘overload’ of their additional activities (Deliverable 5.1, p. 38). Most important, stakeholders must be prepared to protect young people from becoming – for their peers - targets of aggression, bullying or hate (including both in-person, physical as well as online) as a direct result of programmes, because of their efforts (Ibidem). When targeting parents, instead, the programmes should focus on ways to catch moments, contexts or groups in which radicalism may intensify, so that they can also influence their children and educate them on how to talk to children. Additionally, it is necessary that target groups can have a say on the topics to be addressed in such an educational programme (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 69-72).

Education and training programmes for P/CVE and social inclusion can be mainly provided by state actors, as they have experience connected to the field; in this regard, it is possible to refer to the official educational system, the Ministry of Education and other Ministries and Deputy Ministries, the National Centre for Public Administration & Local Government, Teachers’ Training Centres, Municipalities, the Institute of Educational Policy, Parents’ Associations, the police, border guards and the Internal Security Agency. Nonetheless, non-state actors, like NGOs, associations, pedagogical and psychological counselling centres, anti-terrorist cells in individual law enforcement institutions, and Youth, Vocational, and Lifelong Learning Centres, play a key role too (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 33, 34, 63, 79).

The next subparagraphs analyse additional needs based on specific kinds of education (formal, non-formal and online), highlighting who are the main actors involved in those specific dimensions.

Formal education

In this sub-section are listed the main identified needs for stakeholders working in the formal education environment.

‘Formal education’ concerns an institutionalised and organised education model provided by public authorities and recognised private entities and regulated by a given set of laws and norms. In this regard, education provided by the school curriculum, but also the vocational one as well as the adult education fall into this category.

The main stakeholders operating in this environment are local authorities, educational institutions, teachers and school staff, and law professionals. Social workers and psychologists are involved as well, in case of their formal affiliation with institutions and authorities, but they can also operate in non-formal education dimension.

Not surprisingly, the most part of collected needs for P/CVE and social inclusion in the educational environment from the involved stakeholders are referred to formal education, due to its nature of official institutionalised education model and the main attention reserved to it.

Starting from the school environment, as underlined in Deliverable 3.4, a major part of teachers interviewed in the six countries do not feel well trained in preventing polarisation and radicalisation (Deliverable 3.4, p. 126). This is an important aspect in the P/CVE context concerning the school environment. Indeed, they highlighted the need to receive more specific guidance on challenging issues facing some students, including issues around human rights, integration, gender roles, and democratic values and norms. Indeed, a failure of their actions in preventing radicalisation and polarisation may lead to increased teachers’ frustrations and burnout as well as reduced or loss of trust/confidence between teachers/trainers and some or all of the students involved (Deliverable 5.1, pp. 41-42). In this regard, they expressed the necessity to create a network with local authorities, by organising effective training courses that address the issues not only theoretically, but by proposing concrete strategies and approaches, with the use of real-life examples (Deliverable 3.4).

Due to time constraints and a lack of skills and resources, teachers and school staff highlighted the importance of **receiving training by anti-radicalisation practitioners and experts representing the civil society sector about contentious topics in the classroom**. This opportunity can be satisfied through face-to-face meetings and debates considered as very beneficial for these stakeholders (Deliverable 3.4, p. 171). In addition, they need to receive experts’ material on P/CVE activities and strategies like, for instance, the prevention material provided by the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) and/or practical handbook created by EU-funded projects like ‘EUROGUIDE’ (Deliverable 3.4, p. 201). Moreover, teachers and school staff also claimed the importance of receiving **support by school psychologists** in addressing controversial issues in the school environment (Deliverable 3.4, pp. 130, 159). These kinds of training allow the abovementioned stakeholders to offer students an alliance to create a constructive dialogue and organise appropriate educational pathways (Deliverable 3.4, p. 11). **Communication is fundamental** for these pedagogical purposes: indeed, other needs concern the empowerment of conversation skills to better support and motivate the pupils, and the use of a scientific approach to clarify students’ doubts and answer their questions (Deliverable 3.4, p. 107).

The training courses should be tailored to different students' age groups and for the various disciplines that teachers teach. Concerning students, something else that emerged from the discussion with teachers and school staff is the need to put in place also measures that can make pupils be actively more resilient to polarisation and radicalisation: in this regard, it has been expressed the opportunity to **provide techniques and videos for building up the capability of students to 'control elements' in their environment** as well as exercises and games to develop empathy, the knowledge of 'the other' and their participation in teaching (*Ibidem*). Going more in-depth with the description of these exercises and games, it is possible to mention role-playing, case studies, simulations, group work, sports and art-based activities, real-life examples, art therapy – focusing on improvisational theatre -, workshops, experience exchange, peer discussions, crafts and project-based learning methods, dialogue/ discussion clubs, Nansen Centre's methods and movie screenings. Nonetheless, presentations and lectures were also found useful (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 53-54; 68-69; 83-84; Deliverable 5.3, pp. 18, 26, 27).

Due to the challenges in the welcoming and integration of the persistent influxes of migrants and refugees, school environment is called on to play a key role in developing effective measures to integrate foreign pupils. In this regard, teachers and school staff highlighted the need to receive clear guidelines to achieve this goal, as well as **more interpreters and cultural mediators** to better overcome linguistic and cultural barriers (Deliverable 5.2, p. 81).

To conclude, all these needs should be adapted to each specific context. If there is a clear awareness of the main contentious issues existing in a specific school environment, training courses should be more focused on those related contentious topics. In this regard, **a consistent framework and a clear vision from the school administration are considered pivotal**.

Non-formal education

In this sub-section are listed the main identified needs for stakeholders working in the non-formal education environment.

The "Overview" section of this deliverable provided a definition of non-formal education too, referring to it as an organised educational activity that is developed outside the established system of formal education (schools and other institutions), but into an environment where individuals acquire specific knowledge and skills through different activities carried out in their daily routines.

The main stakeholders operating in this framework are social groups and other civic organisations and associations, including social workers, pedagogical and psychological counselling centres, NGOs, Lifelong Learning and Teacher Training Centres, and sports associations (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 63-64). However, NGOs and associations have been identified by the involved stakeholders in the previous tasks as the most competent actors to provide such education and training (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 78-79).

Non-formal education and training programmes would benefit from participants' sensitisation through experiential activities and cultivation of empathy to enhance social inclusion, critical thinking and openness to diversity as well as develop an open stance in respect of all democratic values (Deliverable 5.2).

In this framework, all needs already listed referring to general education and training programmes are valid for non-formal education as well, such as: receiving a proper training to recognise radicalisation pathways and their first signs, push and pull factors, violent extremist groups and their related narratives, recruitment techniques and modus operandi, and hate speech; understand the different aspects of the violent extremism's phenomena – including the causes and ways to practically contribute to the prevention and tackling –, and create a more secure environment and a safe space for discussion, also through the implementation of protective factors (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 60-63).

Many stakeholders involved in non-formal education also declared a need to acquire proper skills and capabilities to let themselves and their targets of education interventions enhance their **sense of belonging, assertiveness, resilience, self-esteem, empowerment, self-care and communication skills** (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 73-75).

As in the formal education, also in the non-formal one, stakeholders need to be trained in the implementation of exercises and games to make people resilient to polarisation and radicalisation through **sports and art-based activities, real-life examples, art therapy – focusing on improvisational theatre –, experience exchange, peer discussions, and other recreative activities** (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 69-69; 83-84).

Online education

Starting from its definition that has been provided in the “overview” section of this deliverable, as a teaching and planned distance learning activities, online education play an important role in enhancing people's skills to assess suspicious extremist content and recruitment narratives and techniques (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 69-72).

Differently from formal and non-formal education, it can involve all stakeholders working in the educational environment, in particular individual entities, state institutions, and NGOs. Due to the recent interest in the online dimension, it is necessary that all actors can exchange and share their knowledge to achieve P/CVE goals to quickly fill the existing gaps. In this regard, they need to be especially trained to **properly identify hate speech, symbols and content spreading on social media and understand their boundaries; identify misinformation** to be tackled; and understand what online behaviours and responses can represent an effective ‘weapon’ of countering polarisation, radicalisation and violent extremism (Deliverable 5.2, pp. 60-63). In line with these needs, stakeholders would benefit from having at their disposal online resources for P/CVE activities as videos, documentaries, news and photographs whose content can facilitate the discussion on contentious topics in the classroom.

3. Analysis of the gaps to the uptake of skills and capabilities useful to address radicalisation, polarisation and violent extremism, and building social inclusion

Having identified and collected all needs shared by the involved stakeholders working in the educational environment does not automatically provide ready-to-use tools, toolkits, and products, nor automatically implement practices and programmes. Furthermore, it can happen that meeting needs requires filling certain gaps between an existing state of knowledge, resources, and skills and a desired state defined as better, improved, and more useful in the context of achieving predetermined goals. Education programs and training activities, indeed, are aimed at achieving a specific change (Trutkowski, 2016).

As a premise, it is important to admit that a holistic, targeted and hands-down preventive approach is still missing in a major part of the Member States. At the same time, some countries utilise strategies and programmes that fall under the general umbrella of the promotion of human rights or focus on the minimisation of push factors but are not specifically on P/CVE in the educational environment. Nonetheless, a certain progress has been registered (Deliverable 5.3, p. 8).

In light of this, it is important to define effective practices based on stakeholders' experience and understand what the main gaps to be filled are by analysing what works and what does not in the current training offer. The identification of the gaps is carried out following the same criteria of categorisation in general education and training programs, formal education, non-formal education, and online education.

General education and training programmes

Observing the general framework in which education and training programmes are implemented, it seems that they are more focused on topics which are closely, but not exclusively, associated with P/CVE and strengthening of social inclusion, such as – for instance - the exploration of inclusion, poverty reduction, gender-based violence.

Moreover, despite extraordinary innovations in different fields of pedagogical and educational sciences (e.g., studies looking at child and youth psychology and development, solution-based education, learner and needs-based approaches or student-targeted approaches), these have **not**

yet been implemented comprehensively by most educational systems. Accordingly, the challenge appears to lie in the necessity to close the gap between available teaching methods and their actual adoption by pedagogical institutions (Deliverable 5.1, p.6).

To give an example in terms of pedagogical perspectives, for instance, it is important to educate young people concerning gender-related issues because of the relevance this topic has nowadays. Even though a few countries noted significantly more engagement on gender, diversity and inclusion issues, many others are facing several challenges in addressing these topics in their school curricula because of a lack of skills and knowledge to discuss them with pupils or, even worse, the idea that gender and P/CVE cannot be linked (Deliverable 5.1, pp. 45-46). On the other hand, even when topics on gender and inclusion are included in the national curriculum, they are often limited to one tiny chapter of a module on civic education (Deliverable 5.1, p. 45). Additionally, there is often a lack of awareness that 'gender' does not equal 'women', but refers to the differential impact, roles, objectives of men, women, non-binary and LGBTQIA+ communities (Deliverable 5.1, pp. 46-47). In this regard, educational programmes need to dedicate more space and attention to gender-related issues and also how they are potentially leading to radicalisation and violent extremism (e.g., how gender is utilised in extremist ideologies and the impact that can have on youth).

More generally speaking and as previously mentioned, it is important to operate at multiple levels, providing trainings and programmes that take into consideration specific local issues and frameworks. In this regard, in several countries, **there is still a reported lack of proper material based on localised programmes and strategies and corresponding to the actual needs of the targeted population** (Deliverable 5.3, p. 21).

Another gap to be filled concerns the level of systematicity, consistency and cohesion of training and tools. Accordingly, some stakeholders reported a **strong discrepancy among cities and rural areas in receiving and being involved in education and training programmes** (Deliverable 5.2, p. 17). Moreover, education programmes need to offer more real-life elements and examples that need to be incorporated in the provided courses (Deliverable 5.3, p. 21), overcoming the single and abstract theory.

A major part of teachers was not aware about the existence of several and useful tools for P/CVE activities created through EU-funded projects. Indeed, these tools are spread on the web, but without being collected in a unique platform, and it is challenging for teachers to know about their existence. In this regard, this gap could be filled by creating a **centralised EU online library** which collect and disseminate all the existing tools per clusters, gathering the related material easily accessible for teachers (Deliverable 3.4, p. 210).

Even though school environment seems to play a primary role in people's education, also concerning P/CVE actions to be undertaken for youth, it is equally necessary to **pay attention to activities outside of schools**, in centres that are settings for these youth activities in the extracurricular sphere (Deliverable 5.3, p. 19). The lack of peculiar strategies and programmes in this last environment is a gap to be filled by involving NGOs, sports associations, and private individuals more and more.

Formal education

Formal education represents that environment where most attention is paid in terms of tools and training. Despite this element, however, this kind of education is primarily cognition based, consisting of learning aspects limited to mental intellectual application. The result is a **lack of emotional resilience and skills among students and youth** for addressing stress, anxiety, and loneliness, or properly managing the breadth of emotional issues that come up in interpersonal and societal relations. **This gap between an overload of curricula activities based on cognitive activities and an underestimation of emotional skills needs to be filled** by including and then strengthening the second learning component in the official curricula (Deliverable 5.1, p. 44). Linked to this aspect, the reduction that certain segments of the school curricula have incurred needs to be highlighted: the main subjects affected by this decision and reshaping are those ones that potentially play a key role in developing empathy, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional skills such as arts, philosophy, civics, and religious literacy (Deliverable 5.1, p.17).

The importance of cohesion, coherence, and systematicity as well as the need for collaboration among stakeholders have already been highlighted. Despite this awareness, many schools struggle with the **lack of collaboration with specialists**, such as psychologists and social workers and civic organisations and associations (Deliverable 5.1, p. 68).

Non-formal education

As a mirroring effect, if formal education institutions and entities struggle with a low presence of external specialists outside the system, civic society organisations (CSOs), associations, psychologists, etc, have not managed to transfer their know-how and more effective approaches and methods into the formal school system (Deliverable 5.1, p. 82).

The design of most NGO projects and their size does not favour the achievement of policy changes, as projects are short-term, ad-hoc, not systemic, not sustained enough or big enough to achieve real changes in the education system. As there is **no comprehensive implementation**, the impact of such interventions only reaches a few schools, and a few target areas, with no follow-through or take up of what has been done, the models, methods, and materials are usually only utilised for the duration of the project. The short-termism and ad hoc interventions lead to a **lack of cumulative impact**, with many diverse and good initiatives carried out, but from which no effective learning is drawn from the materials, curricula, tools, and experiences that have been developed, and there is no looking at how to implement them systematically, as very often there is no national hub/national leadership/authority/structure/mechanism or process that does that at the national or the European level, to harvest lessons from these prototyping projects, ensuring that what works well is followed up and implemented, and bad practice is learned from and improved (Deliverable 5.1, p. 83).

Online education

Differently from the other kinds, in online education any gap has been identified. This is mostly due to the lack of feedback coming from involved stakeholders referring to this dimension. The inadequate knowledge of online social media and platforms shown by these actors suggests that

the gap between the current state of knowledge and the desired one is significant. The **low number of specific and identifiable gaps** might be given by the awareness that training and education programmes for the online dimension need to be implemented almost from scratch. What has been shared by many stakeholders, especially teachers, is that offline education is preferred to the online one.

However, below we provide several collected and analysed gaps concerning online education.

A first gap concerns gaming or online habits. **There are differences between the skills and actual usage, as well as the consumption of adults compared to that of young people.** For youth, gaming and online habits are much more fluid, while adults do not always keep up with the trends. Thus, **teachers must constantly strive to propose something new, refreshing and relevant** (Deliverable 5.1, p. 11). Another gap could be the **lack of online safety as part of the curriculum** (Deliverable 5.1, p. 55).

Moreover, there are a **variety of online tools and online content countering radicalisation and violent extremism** that could be included in the curriculum to enrich it; however, they **have not been included yet** (Deliverable 5.1, p.79). As already mentioned, a major part of teachers were not aware of the existence of these tools suggesting creating a centralised EU online library that collects all these existing tools per cluster and makes them easily accessible for teachers (Deliverable 3.4, p. 210).

Another gap concerns the **distance between the stringent need to have training on contentious topics expressed by the teachers and their lack of knowledge on a wealth of online training courses that are available online**, for instance, the Living with Controversy: Teaching Controversial Issues Through Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Training Pack, piloted from 2014 onwards, freely available online in all languages of member states of the Council of Europe (Deliverable 5.1, p. 110).

Finally, another gap is the one between **the possibilities of e-education and various e-platforms, and the skills needed to safely and healthily use e-education and various e-platforms**, such as learning how to disconnect from the digital space and understand difference between 'life online' and 'life in person', how online information works and how algorithms can influence online content and their viewpoints implicitly, digital skills and fact-checking (Deliverable 5.1, p. 140).

Final remarks and potential solutions

This last section of the deliverable aims at highlighting some final remarks and potential solutions to meet the needs, fill the gaps and improve the effectiveness of education and training programmes and trainings for P/CVE and social inclusion activities. These elements have been collected from and are based on the feedback, experiences and responses collected during interviews, workshops, working groups, and surveys with the involved stakeholders.

Although we provide recommendations for all stakeholders working in P/CVE activities, some lists of potential solutions are specifically provided targeting local authorities, educational institutions and teachers due to the main roles they play in the educational environment.

General potential solutions for all stakeholders

The following recommendations are intended for all actors involved in P/CVE and the strengthening of social inclusion because are valid in each professional context and for each kind of education (formal, non-formal, online). These solutions can be considered the basis for the implementation and development of proper and effective education and training best practices.

At first, all institutions, organisations, associations, and individuals are suggested to create safe **spaces for positive and democratic dialogues, discussions, and interactions**. In line with this priority, they would benefit from building a **trustful relationship with their targets and audience** by letting them **feel comfortable** in sharing their opinions and difficulties.

Through the activities carried out in the previous tasks, it emerged that an important insight concerns the lack of specific skills and capabilities in managing emotions during discussions and situations concerning contentious topics and issues. Due to this difficulty for both targets and stakeholders, the provision of training practices aimed at **avoiding arousal of emotions, and using de-escalation techniques** when dealing with emotional conflicts, are encouraged. Attaining this objective is crucial in ensuring the creation of safe educational environments and fostering the abovementioned trustful relationships. Consequently, it becomes possible to enhance the resilience of targets in mitigating negative emotional escalations.

After having defined the proper conditions to carry out P/CVE and social inclusion activities, it is important to establish the core aspects of educational and training programmes and tools and develop them (Deliverable 5.3, p. 23).

As already highlighted in the previous pages of this technical report, the complexity of the contentious topics and issues to be faced and the related challenges to solve them stressed the importance to **create effective partnerships among the stakeholders**. In this regard, good practices especially include the involvement of key stakeholders that come to contact/ work with vulnerable groups and can re-implement the training to their colleagues, but also trainers with long experience both on the thematises explored, as well as the tools, activities and methods that need

to be used to achieve the purposes of their activities (Deliverable 5.3, p. 23). A **mixed and multidisciplinary approach** increases the capability to develop most effective tools and guides for actions to be taken when relevant incidents occur and/or early-interventions - more challenging to carry out – are required. Furthermore, this approach enables stakeholders to simultaneously leverage the benefits and advantages of various methods (Deliverable 5.3, p. 22).

The lack of advanced programmes and training based on more practical activities also based on real-life examples stress the urgency to promote **experiential and participatory approaches** (*Ibidem*). In this regard, the inclusion of members of the target audience's communities is encouraged (*Ibidem*), especially at-risk groups to enhance their resilience and support them in implementing the training addressing their peers and other people from their community (Deliverable 5.3, p. 23). Moreover, it is suggested to involve the families of those individuals who experienced incidents related to extremism – despite of whether they were victims or perpetrators – to assist stakeholders in the provision of support to those affected (*Ibidem*). At the same time, because of the great importance that the educational environment plays for young people, the development of education and training programmes would benefit from the involvement of youth with helpful skills and capabilities in reaching out to their peers who are skeptical, angry or isolated and in trouble in participating and sharing their views, if proving to be particularly successful in establishing contact with those students (Deliverable 3.4, p. 28; Deliverable 5.1, p. 79). To concretise this opportunity, it is important to create platforms and spaces which resonate with the youth dimension (Deliverable 3.4, p. 28).

After having established and consolidated the structure and building the network of involved actors, it is possible to focus on material and tools to adopt for programmes and trainings. What is important is the **creation and/or adoption of easily accessible and tailored educational tools**. Concerning the first requirement (easily accessible), its rationale lies in the limited resources and expertise of numerous stakeholders engaged in P/CVE activities. Therefore, minimising complexity would support and enhance their work. Regarding the second one (tailored), it is suggested to develop tools that can be adapted to the specific targets and kinds of education (formal, non-formal, online), but also to the specific local, regional, and national context (Deliverable 5.3, p. 22). Among the useful tools, also the online ones need to be considered. (Deliverable 5.1, p. 79).

Due to the emergence and diffusion of the online dimension, all stakeholders would also benefit from the **incorporation of modern means and technology** to training provision (Deliverable 5.3, p. 23).

In terms of duration, it is suggested the implementation of two days trainings, or over a longer period (series) in order to allow trainees/trainers to also **'test' and apply** the newly acquired knowledge, skills and tools and come back with their experiences (Deliverable 5.3, p. 22). Moreover, programmes and training must be submitted to regular and periodical updates because of the rapid evolution of radicalisation and violent extremism phenomena, focusing on 'cross-extremism' content (Deliverable 5.3, p. 22).

Finally, once programmes and training have been developed, stakeholders are called to start their work with targets. In order to achieve their goals, they would benefit from **turning challenging**

conversations and societal conflicts into productive learning opportunities by agreeing on a series of rules for a positive and fruitful interaction before starting with discussions as well as asking students to express themselves through 'valid' arguments (Van Alstein, p. 5).

Local authorities

Compared to other categories of stakeholders, local authorities have been less involved in previous tasks of the project. Consequently, the collection of needs and the proposition of potential solutions for this group have been limited. Despite these limits, there is no doubt that public authorities **need to take a more active role in P/CVE education and training**, as in many cases they have the tools and resources to enhance and ameliorate existing efforts and reach a wider audience (Deliverable 5.3, Greece, p. 20). Moreover, local authorities can make a significant contribution to the inclusion of key stakeholders from the community in the target audience. This inclusion will empower them to replicate the training at the local level. (Deliverable 5.3, p. 23).

Educational institutions

Educational institutions and teachers play a crucial role in preventing polarisation, radicalisation, and extremism, as well as promoting social inclusion, particularly within the formal education environment. While their role extends beyond the school system, it primarily focuses on it, with a youth-centred approach. In the context of this deliverable, educational institutions refer to structured and organised public and private bodies involved in official educational curricula, such as the Ministry of Education and schools as organisations, rather than individuals (in order to differentiate them from teachers). By providing strategies, resources, and choices, these institutions enable teachers to effectively carry out their activities with students.

Furthermore, educational institutions are suggested to **integrate education for active citizenship into teacher training programs**, particularly in teacher-training colleges. This will equip future teachers with the necessary tools to address polarising and sensitive topics in the classroom (Deliverable 5.1, p. 85). Additionally, promoting strategies that prioritise civic and historical education, and foster civic virtues, inclusivity, tolerance, and historical awareness is crucial in creating an environment that promotes active citizenship.

In the process, it is crucial for educational institutions to increase **the neutrality of the tools** they employ, ensuring that they do not convey specific political messages. It is important to note that these tools may be developed by external entities, typically private companies and organizations. Additionally, educational institutions must be mindful of the potential influence teachers may exert on students regarding certain topics. To address this aspect, it is recommended that **effective monitoring of teaching standards and teacher-mentoring programmes** be implemented, both as a means to evaluate teachers' level of skills and capabilities and to ensure the quality of education provided (Deliverable 5.1, p. 85).

To align with the aforementioned need to develop programs and training that draw from real-life experiences and examples, educational institutions are advised to offer **practical and hands-on training sessions and seminars**. These initiatives aim to enhance teachers' awareness and

comprehension of the relevant issues, enabling them to effectively guide discussions as facilitators rather than being seen solely as holders of knowledge. By adopting this approach, teachers can navigate the exploration of contentious topics in a more interactive and inclusive manner.

Cooperation with other stakeholders has been already repeatedly highlighted on these pages. Also for educational institutions, it is suggested that they:

- **learn rapidly** from current best practices, and from non-governmental programmes that are impactful and well established, and are leading innovation in the field, and use NGOs as a source of capacity building and training providers in schools for educational staff (Deliverable 5.1, p. 83);
- **bridge the formal education sector and the CSO-led community engagement**, by importing the lessons learned and effective methods, more participatory models to the classroom (Deliverable 5.1, p. 73);
- **ensure a wide range of specialists**, including psychologists and social workers, and health care professionals, making them part of the school system on a daily basis, to support teachers (Deliverable 3.4, p. 211).

Teachers

While teachers have been viewed as recipients when considering their relationship with educational institutions, they assume an active role as educators when it comes to students. In the context of P/CVE and social inclusion objectives, it has been emphasized that creating a safe space for discussion is crucial. Specifically in schools, teachers are encouraged to establish an **open classroom environment** or an **‘open classroom climate’** where students feel valued and have the opportunity to express their opinions and form their own conclusions. Teachers should guide students **without imposing their own views**, fostering an atmosphere of **open and non-judgmental interaction**. Additionally, they are tasked with encouraging students to voice their frustrations and concerns within the school setting (Deliverable 3.4, pp. 19, 27 70, 113, 145).

In this context, it is crucial that teachers acknowledge the challenges and complexities inherent in their role, recognising that certain students may still harbour ambiguities. Teaching democratic dialogue is a **gradual process**, and it is crucial to be attentive to **and involve those who may feel excluded**. To address these aspects, it is recommended to engage in discussions with small groups, allowing for better management of conversations with students (Deliverable 3.4, p. 28).

In order to adopt a **‘whole school approach’**, contentious topics and issues faced in the classroom could be discussed during school assemblies as well, shared with other classrooms, to establish a coordinated approach (*ibidem*).

This aspect aligns with the importance of establishing **effective collaboration**, not only with external stakeholders but also within the school environment, involving colleagues and other school staff. Therefore, teachers should demonstrate patience and seek support from their peers and other professionals within the school if they encounter discomfort when addressing certain topics and issues. It is highly recommended to establish regular and participatory cooperation among

teachers, school management, staff, and other stakeholders, while fostering a trusting relationship (Deliverable 3.4, p. 211).

In a previous section we underlined the difficult interaction between teachers and students' parents. In this regard, several potential solutions are suggested to develop and improve **home-school cooperation**.

Teachers would strongly benefit from effective cooperation between parents and the school environment and from (contributing to) establishing a friendly and respectful atmosphere with their pupils' parents. This is crucial in order to engage parents as allies and influential figures in the prevention of youth radicalisation, as they can help identify and report early signs of radicalisation. To accomplish this objective, teachers are encouraged to **reject preconceptions, actively communicate with every parent, and calmly consider any criticism, striving to understand the expectations that parents have regarding the school**. Furthermore, **regularly keeping parents informed on their children's progress at school** can foster a productive and collaborative relationship. In situations where it becomes necessary to deliver unfavourable news to parents, it is advisable to begin by highlighting the student's positive qualities as a good practice. This approach helps maintain a constructive and supportive atmosphere during difficult conversations (Deliverable 3.4, p. 28).

When the family of the student is not supportive, teachers face a heightened need to rely on the school's management and the cooperation among all school stakeholders to implement effective strategies for safeguarding their students (*Ibidem*).

The Train-the-Trainers (ToT) programme

As already mentioned, in order to meet the need of teachers and educators to receive adequate tools and trainings (D3.4, D5.1, D5.2, D5.3), it is urgent and extremely important to promote and implement Train-the-Trainers (ToT) programmes. Based on the research carried out in some of the involved countries (Deliverable 5.3, pp. 22-23), a list of recommendations on how to develop ToT programmes is provided below in terms of general aspects, content, approaches, methods, target groups, expertise, and training and educational tools:

Aspect targeted	Recommendations
General recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of the training in two days, or over a period (series) of trainings to allow trainees/trainers to also 'test' and apply the newly acquired knowledge, skills and tools and come back with their experiences; <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion of member of the target audience's community in the development of the training format and content; <input type="checkbox"/> Development of the training on the basis of egalitarian dialogue, where all opinions matter, irrespective of any hierarchical power; <input type="checkbox"/> Development of multi-level trainings for different professional groups, to overcome stereotypes and prejudice in the workplace.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion of information on core ideas and concepts; <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment of the training to the national context and topical needs; <input type="checkbox"/> Address the 'challenging issues' that trainees face / may face and the ways they can approach them;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on 'cross-extremism' content, as the prevalence of the different forms of radicalisation and extremism might change in different time periods; <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on specific forms of radicalisation and extremism, depending on the national, regional and local context.
Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use of experiential and participatory approaches, letting traditional teaching methods aside; <input type="checkbox"/> Utilisation of a mix of approaches that bring together the benefits and advantages of the different methods; <input type="checkbox"/> Further utilisation of the immersive approach and incorporation of modern means and technology to training provision; <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment of the approach used, based on the participants' needs, prior and during the provision of the training; <input type="checkbox"/> Integration of positive psychology elements in all trainings, to support individuals to later support their communities.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use of a combination of experiential/participatory methods to stimulate and attract the interest of the participants and assist them to understand the phenomena in depth; <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment of the methods used, based on the needs of the participants, supporting them in understanding the core concepts in depth and providing them with tools they can deploy in the organisation of their training actions; <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of examples of activities that the trainees will be able to implement themselves, along with relevant tips for the facilitator; <input type="checkbox"/> Explanation of the core aspects, features and variations of the different methods, in order for participants to be well-prepared for the training implementation; <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion of teaching of phenomena-based teaching models for various ages.
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion of at-risk groups in the training audience, in order to enhance their resilience and support them in implementing the training addressing their peers and other people from their community; <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion of the families of those involved in extremist incidents -may it be victims or perpetrators- in the target audience, to assist them in the provision of support to those affected; <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion of key stakeholders of the community in the audience, who will be empowered to replicate the training at local level; <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion of other key stakeholders that come to contact/ work with vulnerable groups and can re-implement the training to their colleagues.
Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration and experience exchange of NGOs and public authorities, in order to achieve a more holistic intervention and target a wider range of interested parties; <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitation of the activities by trainers with former experience both on the thematisses explored, as well as the tools, activities and methods that will be used.
Training & educational tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Wide exploitation of existing tools for the implementation of trainings and the provision of resources to the participants; <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of tools that will include clear guidelines, steps and tips not only on the issues under research, but also on the implementation of

	<p>training activities, following an experiential, participatory and immersive approach;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Provision of resources to the trainees, in relation to the organisation and implementation of trainings; ❑ Provision of material prior to the training implementation to support trainees' expertise development.
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Source: PARTICIPATION, *Deliverable 5.3* (2023), pp. 22-23.

Conclusion

As also the project title suggests, **fostering inclusive participation of both stakeholders and targets** in P/CVE and social inclusion activities is fundamental. This awareness emerged from all the tasks and activities that were carried out and are linked to this deliverable. As already highlighted, not only do stakeholders need to collaborate with each other despite their different roles, skills, capabilities, and professional context, to improve their ability to prevent polarisation, radicalisation, and violent extremism as well as strengthen social inclusion, but also targets must be actively involved to make them feel heard and build a trustful relationship with institutions, educators, and experts to achieve the desired goals. It is important to **take into consideration the clear difference between 'being participated' and authentic and concrete participation**.

Even though each context and job profile have their specific peculiarities, the main issues, challenges, and needs are common. In this regard, what emerged from the several activities of tasks 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 is a sense of uncertainty and insecurity coming from many stakeholders due to the lack of theoretical knowledge on how to tackle polarisation, radicalisation, and violent extremism and strengthening social inclusion, but also a lack of practical know-how on how to do that. **Reciprocal and mutual support, disposal to share their own skills, and neutrality about discussing contentious topics with their targets** are key elements to fill the existing gaps to gain that desired state of knowledge and know-how.

However, this is possible only if national and local institutions, including related policymakers, put in place all the necessary resources, policies and measures to make education programmes and training effective.

To conclude, **all the collected and reported recommendations need to be analysed by policymakers** to contribute to the implementation of these policies and measures and help involved stakeholders in improving their skills and capabilities for P/CVE and strengthening social inclusion.

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Participation