



## Game as a strategy to approach deradicalization: the Synthesis report

At the beginning of this year, partners gathered information about local research on de radicalization paths for social inclusion (IO2) delivering a questionnaire to experts on deradicalization. Each partner collected answers from 5–8 participants, experts in social inclusion/deradicalization questioning about general demography in the deradicalization process, national deradicalization approaches, and experts' opinions and experience with existing PVE initiatives.



The results are delivered in a **Synthesis report** that revealed valuable insight into national initiatives and their effectiveness. While some countries have well- thought out and implemented initiatives on a governmental level (Belgium, Denmark, Italy), others either have legal frameworks that focus on some aspect of the problem (Bulgaria, Slovenia, Cyprus) or rely almost solely on Projects independent from the government (Greece). What is surprising is that Greece, which is combating many types of radicalizations (anarchist far-left, Islamist,

far-right) at a larger scale, has not implemented a strong legal basis for preventing such behavior.

### **Initiatives play a huge role in preventing radicalization**

however some interviewees reported the lack of a common public guide in preventing and resisting radicalization. The reason for that can be that only a few cases of radicalization get reported, and the issue is not further addressed; plus the majority of the cases can also be labeled as “extremism” rather than radicalization. Differences and similarities between these two concepts are as follows: extremism being a person or a group using fear/violence/terror to

achieve change, while radicalization being the process by which individuals enter into extremism.

The survey considers the most common factors for pushing people towards radicalization as the lack of



information, ignorance and social exclusion (anger), a quest of a sense of belonging. As a result, the education system, law and justice system, activities/values of political parties and organizations of civil society that focus on socially beneficial activism all influence young people and are directly responsible for their development regarding radicalization. Otherwise, families can prevent



radicalization and help de-radicalize, although an exaggerated involvement and sheltering can have the opposite effect – youth can become fragile, sensitive and incapable of facing difficulties. The survey depicts as well the **skills that young people need** to be equipped with to resist radicalization. Those are: constructive dialogue, tolerance of diversity, empathy, patience, critical thinking, and acceptance will create a more open minded person, more likely to be resistant to radicalization.

Circumstances that help with gaining the above mentioned skills are the possibility of being confronted with concrete (and real) case studies, a favorable family environment, school, friends and the community, which affect an individual's value system and socialization. Open Minds project wants

to develop innovative game and training materials to foster social resilience and inclusion in youth.



**Games as a strategy to approach deradicalization**, it was considered an innovative and possibly effective method. The prevailing view was that we should approach issues by thinking about whom we are addressing. Given that computer games are the biggest part of young people'

entertainment and communication, it is very smart to try to radicalize and prevent extremist violence through an educational game. Video games can be a useful tool in achieving that if they teach indoctrination, empathy, tolerance, critical thinking, respectful dialogue, solidarity, responsibility and conflict resolution under supervision. It must include non-violent techniques for fostering cooperation among players while providing practical reasons for fair play. Role-play games might train empathy in understanding someone else's struggles and obstacles or might be an instrument for experiencing the point of view of a different culture and therefore help increase empathy, patience and acceptance.