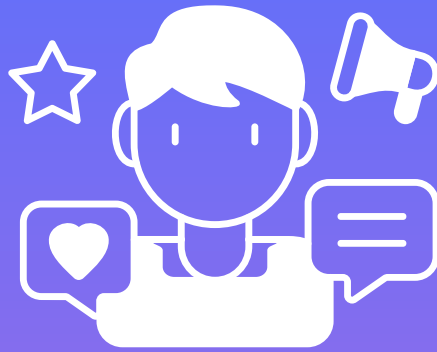




TOOLKIT

for empowering youngsters in critical thinking and media literacy for prevention of negative impact of social media influencers



TITLE:

Toolkit for empowering youngsters in critical thinking and media literacy for prevention of negative impact of social media influencers

PROJECT:

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- Centre for Non-formal education and Lifelong learning, Serbia
- LINK DMT s.r.l., Italy
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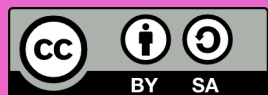
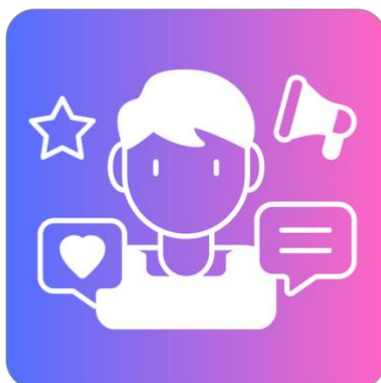


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SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

While some argue that influencers can inspire and motivate young people to pursue their goals and aspirations, others suggest that they can have a negative impact on the mental health and wellbeing of young people. On the positive side, some influencers use their platforms to promote positive messages and provide a sense of community for their followers. They can be role models for young people, inspiring them to follow their passions and reach their goals, promote healthy lifestyles or even share tips for managing stress and anxiety.

However, there are certain concerns about the potential negative effects of social media influencers on young people. Some influencers may promote unrealistic beauty standards or unhealthy diet and exercise habits, which can contribute to certain body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. Additionally, the pressure to present a perfect image on social media can lead to anxiety and depression, particularly for young people who are still developing their sense of self.

The motivation of the partners with this project is to recognise the potential benefits and drawbacks of social media influencers for young people, but at the same time to put an accent that youth organisations also have a strong role to play within this process, as they should encourage young people to critically evaluate the messages they see on social media and develop a healthy relationship with technology. It's also important for the wider community to be aware of the impact social media can have on young people and use their platforms responsibly.

The goal of our project is to prevent the negative impact and influence of social media influencers on youth. This specific goal is part of the general efforts towards responsible use of the internet both by young people, but also the responsibility to provide online safety from the public institutions and private companies. It is the role of young workers to accompany young people through building competences of critical thinking and media literacy. It is also their role to advocate based on the EU standards protecting young people on the internet.

Project objectives:

- To empower youngsters in critical thinking and media literacy through developing a toolkit with a set of innovative workshops and tools.
- To empower youth workers in creativity for prevention of negative impact of social media influencers on youth, through developing curriculum.
- To build the capacity of youth workers to advocate towards local and national governments on implementing the European standards protecting young people on the internet such as Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), Digital services act and the European strategy for a better Internet for children.





INTRODUCTION AND STRUCTURE OF THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit aims to contribute to the youth work sector through innovative approaches in youth work. The toolkit contains an explanatory part with some of the key concepts, 10 educational workshops for youth workers to use when working with young people in this topic, followed by an escape room game.

In specific, the workshops are developed for implementation in the local level activities with youngsters on topics of critical thinking and media literacy, containing recommendations for youth workers and a step-by-step approach. In addition, the toolkit has an escape game scenario for educational purposes which can be organised with low budgets – in order to make it more accessible to underdeveloped communities and organisations with smaller budgets, interested in the use of the proposed methodology. All the workshops in the toolkit, as well as the escape room scenario, are based on non-formal education approach in learning.

Some of the topics of the toolkit's workshops cover issues such as navigating social media's unrealistic standards, understanding the impact of social media and influencers, creating healthy social media habits, spotting and countering negative messages, making informed decisions about social media trends, developing media literacy skills for the digital age.

The toolkit with creative and innovative workshops and the escape room proposes some attractive and appealing activities that the project partners believe youngsters nowadays will actually like and want to participate in. Through participation of youngsters on the activities based on the toolkit, youth work can significantly contribute to development of critical thinking and media literacy of youngsters, especially in relation to their resilience when it comes to the potential negative impact of social media influencers on those youngsters and their peers.

The main impact of the toolkit is on young people - the workshops and escape room are developed for empowering youngsters and building their critical thinking skills and media literacy skills to make them aware of the negative impacts of the influencers and social media on their well-being and be able to resist the negative impacts.

The structure of this toolkit is organised is the following way:

- It starts with key theoretical concepts on social media, influencers and content creators and their impact on society;
- It continues with 10 practical workshops and activities which are easy to use in different countries;
- It ends with an interactive escape room game.





Part I: Concepts and recommendations on critical thinking and media literacy for prevention of negative impact of social media influencers

Social media has become an integral part of modern life. It is becoming the source of information and the space that shapes societies. It facilitates communication, connection, and self-expression, but it also harbours the subtle pressure to present a perfect life. This often leads to self-doubt and confusion for a lot of people. This toolkit and the activities proposed, aim to explore the impact of social media on our well-being, offering spaces to discuss how to navigate this created digital lifestyle. Social media platforms are designed to keep users engaged through custom feeds, notifications, and filters. This design allows users to showcase an idealised version of themselves by sharing selective highlights. However, constant exposure to others' seemingly perfect lives can lead to harmful comparisons and self-doubt. Influencers, who often use digital enhancements to portray unattainable perfection, intensify these issues, creating unrealistic expectations for appearance and lifestyle.

This toolkit is designed to cover key aspects on social media influencers. While this term is popular among us, it is important to initially understand the term Social media influencers. A potential definition of social media influencers can be the following:

*"Social media influencers are individuals who have built a significant following on social media platforms and have the power to affect the purchasing decisions or opinions of their audience due to their authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with their followers. They often collaborate with brands to promote products or services, leveraging their influence to drive engagement and sales."*¹

While both social media creators and influencers generate content, their primary focuses are different:

- Social Media Creators: These individuals primarily focus on creating original content, such as videos, blogs, artwork, or photography. Their main goal is to express their creativity, share their expertise, and engage their audience through high-quality, often niche content.
- Social Media Influencers: Influencers, on the other hand, focus on leveraging their platform and following to influence their audience's behaviour. They might create content, but their primary aim is to promote brands and products, often through sponsored posts and collaborations.

In essence, while all influencers are creators, not all creators are influencers. Influencers specifically aim to impact their audience's decisions, often for commercial purposes, whereas creators might prioritise content creation and audience engagement without the direct intent to influence purchasing behaviour.

The rise of social media influencers has significantly transformed various facets of modern life, impacting social behaviours, economic structures, cultural trends, and political landscapes. These individuals, who command large followings on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter, have harnessed their reach to shape opinions, drive consumer behaviour, and even influence political outcomes.

¹ Tax Deductions for social media Influencers Archives - JMS Accounting. <https://jmsaccounting.com/tag/tax-deductions-for-social-media-influencers/>





Social, economic, cultural, and political impact of influencers

Social media influencers profoundly affect social behaviours and interactions. Their curated online personas and lifestyles often set trends and establish new social norms. Influencers play a key role in setting fashion trends, beauty standards, and lifestyle choices. They often act as role models, especially for younger audiences, showcasing idealised versions of daily life. This can lead to aspirational but sometimes unrealistic expectations among followers.

Following the social norms and trends, the impact grows into mental health and self-perceptions among people, as well in building communities who share similar interests. Regarding the mental health and self-perception, it can be discussed that the pressure to match influencers can impact followers' self-esteem and mental health. Constant exposure to perfect images and lifestyles can lead to feelings of inadequacy and anxiety. However, some influencers advocate for mental health awareness and body positivity, providing support and fostering inclusive communities.

Moreover, it should be noted that influencers often build strong, loyal communities around shared interests, be it fitness, gaming, fashion, or food. These communities provide a sense of belonging and connection for followers, bridging geographical and cultural gaps.

The economic influence of social media influencers is substantial, as it reshapes traditional marketing and business models. Influencers are having a full-time job, when they do not have a full-time job. They set the trends of lifestyle, launch products and guide consumerism. They also do influencer marketing, new revenue streams, and grow small businesses. Influencer marketing has become a cornerstone of modern advertising. Certain brands collaborate with some influencers to reach target audiences more authentically and effectively than traditional advertising. Influencers' recommendations can drive significant sales and brand loyalty. On the other hand, influencers have created new economic opportunities for themselves and others. Beyond brand deals, they monetise their content through sponsored posts, merchandise sales, affiliate marketing, and even launching their own product lines. As for the impact on small businesses' growth, it can be emphasised that influencers can play an essential role in the success of small businesses and start-ups. By promoting niche products to their engaged followers, they help small brands gain visibility and credibility, often resulting in substantial growth. The influencer industry has expanded beyond themselves in the economies, providing opportunities for content creators, photographers, videographers, graphic designers, and social media managers. This ecosystem supports various freelance and contract-based employment opportunities.

Social media in general have a strong Cultural Impact, as culture is also consumed online. Influencers are key players in the dissemination of cultural trends, affecting everything from entertainment to social movements, for instance:

- Cultural dissemination - Social media influencers contribute to the global spread of cultural trends. Music, dance, fashion, and slang often gain international popularity through influencers' content, leading to a more interconnected cultural landscape.
- Cultural appropriation and sensitivity - The global reach of influencers also raises issues of cultural appropriation. Influencers must navigate the fine line between appreciation and appropriation, as missteps can lead to backlash and cultural insensitivity accusations.
- Representation and diversity - Influencers have the power to challenge stereotypes and promote diversity. Many influencers use their platforms to highlight underrepresented communities, fostering greater awareness and inclusion.





- Entertainment industry: Influencers have revolutionised the entertainment industry, created new forms of content and used platforms like YouTube and TikTok for innovative entertainment, from vlogs and tutorials to short films and music videos.

Finally, influencers also have political impact and can be used as allies to specific social causes, or as threats that jeopardise the development of human rights and dignity. An example to this is the case of Andrew Tate, and the amount of sexism, machoism and normalisation of rape-culture that he has brought back in the discussion spaces. Social media influencers have increasingly become significant players in the political arena, shaping public opinion and political discourse, such as:

- Political advocacy and activism - Influencers often use their platforms to advocate for political causes and social justice. They raise awareness about issues such as climate change, anti-racism, LGBTI rights, and mobilise their followers to act.
- Political endorsements - Influencers' endorsements can sway public opinion and influence election outcomes. Politicians and political parties increasingly collaborate with influencers to reach wider audiences and humanise their campaigns.
- Misinformation and accountability - The influence of social media also poses risks related to misinformation. Influencers spreading false information can have a severe impact on political life and sometimes not a lot of accountabilities for this.

The rise of social media influencers can be seen as a new era of social, economic, cultural, and political transformation. The influencers can shape trends, drive economic activity, influence cultural norms, and affect political outcomes. As their influence continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important to develop critical thinking and media literacy to ensure that their impact remains positive and inclusive.





Social media influencers psychological impact and their own wellbeing

Besides numerous positive impacts that social media influencers have, it should be noted influencing as a concept and social media influencers' activity and posts have also some negative psychological impact on the general public. The main issue in this area is linked with lowered self-esteem and body image.

Influencers often present idealised versions of themselves, which can negatively impact the self-esteem and body image of their followers. Constant exposure to curated, perfect images can lead to feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction with one's own appearance and life. Social media is all about social comparison, especially when all of its users are not prepared to use it and to take care of themselves. Followers frequently compare their lives to the seemingly flawless lives of influencers, resulting in increased anxiety. This can create a sense of pressure to live up to unrealistic standards, exacerbating feelings of stress and anxiety. Seeing influencers participating in exciting events, travelling, and enjoying luxurious lifestyles can trigger FOMO (Fear of missing out), leading to feelings of exclusion and dissatisfaction with one's own experiences. Influencers can significantly affect their followers' behaviours and decisions, from purchasing products to adopting certain lifestyle choices. This influence can be positive, such as promoting healthy habits, or negative, such as encouraging harmful trends or behaviours.²

The impact is also back on influencers themselves, for example through a performance pressure to produce new content and satisfy sponsors. Influencers often feel immense pressure to maintain their image and continuously produce engaging content. This pressure can lead to burnout and mental health issues, as they strive to meet the high expectations of their followers and sponsors. Being in the public eye makes influencers susceptible to intense scrutiny and criticism. Negative comments and cyberbullying can significantly affect their mental well-being. Influencers often sacrifice their privacy as they share significant portions of their lives online. This can lead to a sense of vulnerability and stress, as they constantly feel watched and judged. The need to create a marketable online persona can lead to a disconnect between influencers' public image and their true selves. This discrepancy can cause internal conflict, identity issues, and a sense of inauthenticity.

The psychological impact of social media influencers is profound and complex. For the general public, it often involves issues related to self-esteem, social comparison, and anxiety. For the influencers themselves, it includes pressures related to performance, public scrutiny, loss of privacy, and maintaining authenticity. Both groups must navigate these challenges to foster a healthier relationship with social media.

² The Double-Edged Sword: Social Media and Mental Health - Mental Health & Fitness. <https://mentalhealth.fitness/the-double-edged-sword-social-media-and-mental-health>





Social media platforms' role

Social media platforms play an important role in shaping user experience. Starting with algorithmic feeds, which tailor content based on user preferences, can create echo chambers and reinforce existing beliefs. Platforms must ensure fair and transparent algorithms while actively managing harmful content. They should empower users with tools to customise their feeds, monitor their usage, and promote safe online practices.

Apart of the legal limitations which societies need to impose on social media platforms, to ensure safety of their users, there are also other competences that young people should have to be able to use social media with the needed care. These competences are:

- Managing emotions and treating themselves with kindness, accepting their imperfections. Young people should be aware and constantly reminded that social media is a tool and not an end result. Therefore the access to information should be limited and there should be a focus on other positive aspects of daily life to counteract feelings of inadequacy.
- Managing social media detox by staying present and aware of society, friendships, work and study, family and other groups we belong to. Maintaining balance is essential and young people should learn to diversify their activities and not rely only on social media.
- Ask for support by knowing how to reach out to trusted individuals or professionals when social media impacts the wellbeing. In this case, the role of youth workers is highlighted as well, to offer more interactive programmes and direct young people to a more community life.





Part II: Practical activities/workshops

In the following part, the toolkit presents several practical workshops and activities to be held with young people in different youth work and non-formal education settings. The activities should be well prepared and run by a youth worker or trainer who is familiar with the topic and principles of non-formal learning. Below is an overview of the workshops proposed in this toolkit. At the end of the toolkit there is also the proposal of an escape room game to implement with young people.

Workshops	Competences addressed
Workshop 1: New and Better – understanding anxiety caused by unrealistic standards on social media	Critical thinking, dealing with anxiety and stress, ability to analyse social media content.
Workshop 2: The impact of unrealistic social media standards on the quality of life of young people	Critical thinking on social media content, awareness of the threats from unrealistic standards of beauty and lifestyle.
Workshop 3: influencer - a full time job?	Understanding of social rights such as the right to employment, reflecting on the work-life balance of those content creators.
Workshop 4: Career or anti-career?	Critical thinking on employment, work, jobs and social rights.
Workshop 5: My social media profile is a show	Ability to recognise and counter online violence and cyberbullying, showing solidarity and empathy
Workshop 6: Social media page	Critical thinking and media literacy, awareness about perceptions of influencers on social and conventional media
Workshop 7: Media literacy recommendations	Media literacy and information biases
Workshop 8: Online data protection	Data protection and privacy on the internet
Workshop 9: Deepfakes	Deepfakes as a threat to security and privacy, data protection and critical analysis of social media.
Workshop 10: Social media influencers for the good	Ideas on working with influencers to promote social causes.





Workshop 1: New and Better – understanding anxiety caused by unrealistic standards on social media

Workshop title: New and Better – understanding anxiety caused by unrealistic standards on social media

Duration: 90 minutes

Background: Social media creators are always pressured to respond fast to trends and create something new and better. This workshop showcases the pressure that one might experience by trying to “catch-up” with the social media developments. The discussion also can focus on the instant consumerism of social media content, without critical reflection or analysis of the messages, the knowledge behind this content, the intention of the creator or the possible impact this might have to the general public. To prepare for this session, youth workers should check the chapter 2 of this toolkit so that they have some background information and can manage the discussion. There is no specifically required preparation for youngsters to take part in the activity. However, the activity can be emotionally strong as it might raise the level of anxiety while delivering the tasks, therefore, it is important to know how to observe the group and if needed interrupt the task.

Aim of the workshop: The general purpose of this workshop is to open a discussion on the unrealistic standards on social media and the anxiety these might cause to content creators.

Objectives:

- To discuss the challenges that social media creators face when they are asked to produce content which is always new and better;
- To debate around unattainable and unrealistic standards which are set by the social media content creators towards society.

Competences addressed:

- Critical thinking;
- Teamwork;
- Communication;
- Analytical;
- Creative thinking;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Group work – interactive activity;
- Discussion and debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (5 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. The trainer explains that the workshop will be done through the realisation of an activity which altogether





with the debriefing lasts approximately 80 minutes. The focus of the workshop will be on understanding anxiety caused by unrealistic standards on social media. Then, he/she invites participants to introduce themselves.

II. Introduction to the activity (10 minutes)

The trainer introduces participants to the activity and uses the first 10 minutes to give detailed instructions. First, he/she divides participants randomly into three sub-groups:

- Social media creators
- Judges for New content
- Judges for Better content

Once the group is divided, each smaller group gets more specific instructions on what they should do. The instructions given by the trainer for each group are:

Role of social media creators (influencers)

It's a photo taking activity – you should take a photo of the surrounding nature and yourselves. After you have a photo, show it to the InstaJudges who will decide if this photo is new and better and if it can be shown or not on Instagram. You should produce a new photo for the judges every 3 minutes (they will time you).

Role of Judges:

One sub-group of the judges are those who will look and judge if the photo is new, and the other sub-group will look and define if the photo is better. They should also time the social media creators to show them a new photo every 3 minutes.

Both groups of judges should never be satisfied with the photos shown and should say that they are now new and not better enough. Exceptionally, when they notice that the photo is really good, it can happen that a judge from one group is partially satisfied but the other judge must not be happy at all.

III. Group work activity – Step 1 (15 minutes)

After completing the instructions phase, the trainer starts the activity by creating trios of participants - one social media creator with two judges (one from each sub-group). He/she gives approximately 15 minutes for the creators to produce social media content which is new and better. At the same time, the groups of InstaJudges also meet and enter in their roles based on the descriptions above.

The trainer gives an instruction to the social media creators or influencers to: create a new and better photo of the surrounding nature and themselves. They have 3 minutes to create the photo and show it to the InstaJudges who will decide if the photo is good enough to be published on social media. The judges allow only photos which are new and better to be published online.

The definition of what is new and better should be left to the content creators (influencers) to decide on themselves. In case needed, you can explain that new means something which is not seen on social media before, and better means that it has a higher level of quality than what exists on social media. The social media creators or influencers work individually but it is not forbidden to help each other.

IV. Group work activity – Step 2 (20 minutes)

Once the creators or influencers make their photos they go back to their InstaJudges. There are groups of 3 people - one creator meets with one judge who checks if the photo is new, and another judge who checks if it is better. Each 3 minutes the creator should bring and present a new photo.

The trainer should observe the process and in case he/she notices that the participants get upset too fast, the activity can be announced as being done earlier. After 5 rounds (around 15 minutes) the trainer can pause the activity and invite the participants to debrief.





V. Debriefing (40 minutes)

The trainer starts a debriefing session by initially asking participants if they completed their tasks successfully. After this, he/she encourages them to share their current feelings at the moment.

When all participants share this, the trainer invites participants who felt tired or demotivated to share more about their experience and their reasons. Furthermore, the following questions/mini-tasks are used for the debriefing session:

- What would success look like in this task? Would it be realistically possible to achieve it?
- Participants are asked to de-role from their roles. This is done by a simple activity where they shake off their hands and are asked to jump off their roles symbolically.
- What makes a social media content successful? Which are the criteria that influencers are following?
- Are these posts realistic and attainable? In what way do they impact standards of what is new and what is better?
- What are the impact of these standards on everyday life and society in general?
- Does you have a personal social media story related to unrealistic standards promoted through content that you would like to share?
- What are the possible ways to maintain good mental health in this context? What can be done by young people and youth workers to promote responsible social media use?

Materials needed: Printed descriptions of the roles - make sure there are enough copies for the participants, a place that makes it easy to take photos (a park, some small square, a garden could work better than a room without windows), papers, pencils and pens, post-its for debriefing session.

Background documents and further reading:

- Rifat Ara Bonnhay, The Impact of Social Media's Unrealistic Expectations, published on Socialplug on 5 November 2023, <https://www.socialplug.io/blog/social-media-unrealistic-expectations>
- George Ortiz, [The Dark Side of Social Media: Unreal Expectations and Their Impact on Mental Health](#) published on Medium on 29 March 2023.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The workshop can be heavy and produce frustration with the group who are content creators or influencers. The youth worker implementing this activity should notice if the group gets too frustrated and stop the activity on time.
- Possible variations of the workshop include making a more specific task for the photos to be produced - for example a photo of the person's face, clothes, or a travel photo. In case this variation is implemented, the debriefing should focus on unrealistic beauty standards or eventually to connect with another activity on this topic.





Workshop 2: The impact of unrealistic social media standards on the quality of life of young people

Workshop title: The impact of unrealistic social media standards on the quality of life of young people

Duration: 100 minutes

Background: The activity focuses on the impact caused by unrealistic standards promoted on social media on the well-being of young people. Social media has considerably influenced the lives of young people, offering a platform for connection and self-expression. However, it also sets unrealistic standards, particularly regarding physical appearance. The activity is based on 2 examples - case studies which the participants should analyse and propose ways how to support the people concerned by these examples. To prepare for the workshop, the youth workers could do a small research on the existing ways to support young people's mental health, school psychology services, organisations or youth clubs that can help with stress, anxiety or depression.

Aim of the workshop: To raise awareness about the impact of unrealistic standards of beauty, health, physical appearance set by the influencers on social media.

Objectives:

- To analyse the impact of the social media influencers on young people's mental health and their wellbeing;
- To reflect on strategies which can be used to support these young people to counter the negative effects of social media influencers and content creators;
- To understand the role of young people to support others struggling with unrealistic standards of beauty and lifestyle promoted on social media.

Competences addressed:

- Critical thinking;
- Communication and cooperation;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Citizenship competence;
- Analytical.

Methodology and methods:

- Case study analysis;
- Group work;
- Discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (10 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. Then there is some space for each participant to introduce himself/herself.





The trainer then explains that the activity and agenda of the workshop is designed on the following way:

- Exploring in 2 smaller groups the case studies of Emma and Alex which are very similar, based on the unrealistic standards of beauty and lifestyle.
- Analysis of the case studies to understand their impact and damage they can cause.
- Development of strategies to counter the negative impact of these unrealistic beauty standards.

II. **Small group work – Case study analysis (30 minutes)**

The trainer divides participants into two groups. each group is given one case study to explore. Then, he/she gives about 20-30 minutes for each of the smaller groups to read and understand their case study.

They are instructed to also focus on the following guiding tasks:

- Analyse the example and the ways how in this situation it creates negative impact on the person, their surrounding and the society as a whole.
- Think about if there are other similar examples of social media unrealistic standards.

They should prepare for a short presentation afterwards.

The case studies are:

Case study 1: Emma

Emma is a 16-year-old high school student, who uses social media as a way to connect with friends, share her interests, and keep up with the latest trends. She started with Facebook and Instagram, later adding Snapchat and TikTok to her repertoire. At first, Emma enjoyed the creative expression and the ability to stay connected with her peers.

However, as time passed, Emma's interaction with social media began to change. What started as a fun way to stay in touch with friends and showcase her life became a source of constant comparison and anxiety. Emma followed a variety of influencers and celebrities who embodied what she perceived as the ideal life. Their feeds were filled with images of perfect bodies, luxurious vacations, designer clothes, and seemingly flawless lives. Emma couldn't help but compare herself to these images. She started to feel inadequate, wondering why her life didn't measure up to the polished perfection she saw online. One influencer, in particular, a 19-year-old fitness model named Lily, became Emma's benchmark for beauty and success. Lily's posts, filled with images of her healthy meals, and glamorous lifestyle, seemed unattainable to Emma. Despite knowing that these posts were curated and often edited, Emma still felt a growing sense of inadequacy.

Emma's self-esteem began to decline. She started to scrutinise her appearance more closely, feeling that she was too plain, too average. She compared her body to the fitness models she followed, feeling increasingly dissatisfied with her own. This led to negative self-talk, with Emma often thinking, "I'll never be as pretty or fit as they are." The comments and likes that influencers received also played a role in Emma's declining self-esteem. Seeing the adoration and validation that influencers got from their followers made Emma feel insignificant. She began to crave that same level of validation, which led her to post more frequently, hoping to receive likes and positive comments to boost her self-worth. In her quest for perfection, Emma started using photo-editing apps to alter her appearance before posting pictures online. She would smooth her skin, slim her waist, and whiten her teeth, trying to mimic the influencers she admired. While these edited photos often received more likes and positive comments, they made Emma feel even more disconnected from her real self. She felt like she was living a double life – the one on social media, where she was perfect, and her real life, where she felt flawed. Emma's obsession with social media also affected her daily routine. She would spend hours scrolling through her feeds, often staying up late into the night. This not only affected her sleep but also her school performance and real-life relationships. She became more withdrawn, preferring the virtual validation over face-to-face interactions.





Case study 2: Alex

Alex, an 18-year-old student, began using social media to keep up with friends and stay informed about trends. He followed fitness influencers on Instagram and YouTube, inspired by their impressive physiques and workout routines. Initially, these platforms served as motivation for Alex, who enjoyed sports and staying active.

However, as Alex spent more time on social media, his relationship with these platforms changed. What started as inspiration soon turned into a source of anxiety and self-doubt. Alex admired several fitness influencers, particularly those who showcased chiselled bodies and extreme workout regimens. He began to feel immense pressure to look like them. Despite being fit, Alex felt his body didn't measure up to the hyper-muscular physiques he saw online.

He constantly compared himself to influencers like Jake, a 22-year-old bodybuilder with over 100 thousands followers online. Jake's posts, filled with images of intense workouts, perfect abs, and a seemingly perfect life, made Alex feel inadequate. He wondered why he couldn't achieve similar results despite his efforts at the gym.

The constant comparison led to a significant decline in Alex's self-esteem. He started to obsess over his appearance, spending hours scrutinising his body in the mirror and feeling disappointed with what he saw. His internal dialogue became increasingly negative, filled with thoughts like, "I'll never be as muscular or attractive as they are." This anxiety permeated other areas of Alex's life. He began to feel anxious about going to the gym, fearing judgement from others. He believed everyone was comparing him to the standards set by social media influencers, which made working out a stressful experience rather than a healthy outlet.

In an attempt to transform his body, Alex adopted extreme measures. He started following restrictive diets and intense workout plans he found online, many of which were unsuitable for his body and fitness level. These drastic changes not only affected his physical health but also his mental well-being. Alex's obsession with achieving the perfect body led to social withdrawal. He spent less time with friends and more time in isolation, consumed by the need to meet unrealistic fitness standards. His grades began to suffer as he prioritised workouts over schoolwork, believing that a muscular body was the key to happiness and social acceptance.

III. **Presentations (30 minutes)**

Once the groups are done, the trainer invites them to present their findings. There are 10 minutes per group to present.

IV. **Discussion (30 minutes)**

After the presentations, the trainer starts a discussion session structured into two steps presented below. The overall time needed for this part is 30 minutes.

Step 1: Mapping the impact from the two cases

The trainer asks participants of both groups to create a list of all the potential and real negative effects caused by the unrealistic standards of beauty and lifestyle presented in these cases. Once the groups make these lists, he/she asks them to present it and discuss all the common issues which appear in both groups. Potential questions to ask for this part are:

- What are the negative consequences from these examples that impact the person, their friends, or society as a whole?
- Have you experienced such pressure from social media on doing something in a specific way? What was it about?





- Do you know how to best react or respond in these situations?

Step 2: Discussing ways to counter the negative effects of unrealistic social media standards

In the second phase, the trainer opens a brainstorming activity on ways to support those who are struggling to cope with unrealistic social media standards online. The trainer structures the brainstorming on two major blocks:

- List of ways to support the person who is experiencing anxiety or depression because of the social media standards
- List of ways to react to this phenomena in society (wider awareness-raising ideas).

He/she continues with mapping responses and makes sure that for each response there is a discussion of potential help that can be offered, services available to support young people's mental health, peer-support etc.

In the end, the trainer summarises the discussion with the two steps outlined above. He/she makes sure it is clear for everyone and that each example is explained and clarified. The last few minutes are to be used for conclusion and the invitation for all participants to take action. The concluding speech by the trainer can be the following:

Emma and Alex's story illustrates the profound impact social media can have on a young person's self-esteem. While social media offers chances for connection and self-expression, it also presents significant challenges, especially when it comes to comparison culture and the pursuit of perfection. By recognizing the unrealistic standards often portrayed on social media and seeking help, young people can develop healthier relationships with these platforms. It's crucial for youth workers, educators, and family members to support young people in navigating social media, promoting self-compassion, and encouraging authentic self-expression. Through these efforts, we can help mitigate the negative psychological impacts of social media and foster a more positive online environment.

Materials needed: Printout of the two case studies, pencils and pens, post-its for debriefing session, A3 and A4 papers.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- Youth workers can invite a mental health professional also on the workshop to talk more about the impact of social media on self-esteem and to give directions on where to find support, existing local or national level services and how to provide peer-support to someone struggling with similar issues.





Workshop 3: Influencer - a full time job?

Workshop title: Influencer – a full time job?

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: The activity aims to explore the conditions and lifestyle of the social media influencers and the impact this might have on their lives. To prepare for this activity the youth workers should read the section on defining social media influencers. The workshop is designed especially to tackle the understanding of social rights such as the right to employment and creating a profession, as well as to create space for reflecting on the work-life balance of those creating online social media content. It is important to note that for preparations it is needed to read [this article at Forbes](#) about the time needed to produce a social media post by influencers.

Aim of the workshop: To explore the conditions and lifestyle of the social media influencers and the impact this might have on their lives.

Objectives:

- To understand the economic impact of the tasks of influencers and their work as an actual job;
- To reflect on their wellbeing and work conditions as a result of the lack of recognition of their income as a full-time employment.

Competences addressed:

- Entrepreneurship competence;
- Citizenship competence;
- Analytical;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;

Methodology and methods:

- Input;
- Small group work;
- Presentations and discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (10 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. Then there is some space for each participant to introduce himself/herself.

II. Input (10 minutes)

Participants are given a set of facts about social media influencers – the number of followers and engagement needed to receive income, types of investments it takes to constantly produce content and catch followers etc.

III. Small group work (40 minutes)





The trainer divides participants into small groups. He/she emphasises that based on the input received in the first part of the workshop participants are asked then to produce a typical work week schedule of a social media influencer. The trainer gives each group one of the following Profiles of a social media influencer to use for more practical approach.

Profile 1

You have a YouTube channel with some 7000 subscribers. Ideally, you'll notice your channel is starting to earn some revenue after every 1000 views on your videos. But this is only after your channel gets accepted to the YouTube Partner Program. To make good earnings out of YouTube, you'll want to start crossing 100,000 views per video and then you can earn around 2000 EUR. ³

Profile 2

You are having an Instagram account with some 15000 followers. As known, Instagram does not pay creators directly for views, whether 1,000 or one million people watch the content. How much money you make on Instagram depends on the number of followers you have, your engagement rate, and the monetization strategies you use. As a micro influencer, who tends to have 10,000 to 50,000 followers, you earn about \$100 - \$500 per post from promotions and advertisements.

They are given 20 minutes to do the schedules. They have to take into account all the stages to produce videos or Instagram posts and plan the necessary time to do this. They should also have in mind the economic aspect for the influencer to succeed and meet the followers' preferences from the advertisements. Once the groups are done, they can also give each other feedback if the weekly schedule is realistic and then adjust it. When the schedules are made, participants receive a list of other roles which people have as members of society, including roles in emotional and personal life, culture, leisure and education. The roles are presented in the table below.

Society	• Community Service: 2-4 hours per month. • Attending Town Meetings: 1-2 hours per meeting. • Staying Informed on Current Events: 30 minutes daily.
Emotional and Personal Life	• Maintaining Relationships (Family/Friends): 10 hours per week. • Self-Care (Mental Health Practices): 30 minutes daily. • Exercise: 30-60 minutes daily. • Personal Reflection/Meditation: 15-30 minutes daily.
Culture	• Attending Cultural Events (Theater, Concerts, Art Exhibits): 4 hours per event. • Participating in Cultural Traditions: Varies; typically 3 hours per event. • Learning about Other Cultures: 1 hour per week. • Engaging in Cultural Hobbies (Cooking, Crafting): 3 hours per week.
Leisure	• Reading: 1 hour daily. • Watching TV/Movies: 2 hours daily. • Hobbies (Sports, Music, Gardening): 5 hours per week. • Socialising: 6 hours per week.
Education	• Self-Study (Online Courses, Reading): 3 hours per week. • Skill Development (Workshops, Practice): 2 hours per week. • Professional Development (Seminars, Networking): 2 hours per week.

Participants are instructed add all these roles in the already programmed working week using approximately 20 minutes as well as finalise their schedules.

³ How many YouTube views do you need to make money and how much does YouTube pay? - Dexterto.
<https://www.dexterto.com/entertainment/how-many-youtube-views-you-need-to-make-money-2148014/>





IV. Presentations (30 minutes)

The trainer invites participants to present their schedules and see if their influencers can manage to do everything within a week. The approximate time for all schedule presentations is 30 minutes.

V. Discussion (30 minutes)

The trainer continues the session by reflecting on the experience in putting together a schedule. He/ she asks participants the following questions:

- Was it easy/difficult to create the schedules? Did everyone agree? What were the major issues of disagreement?
- The final table, does it provide a good balance of different tasks for work and private life?
- Which tasks require more time? Can this time be found at the expense of other tasks? Which tasks seemed easier to “sacrifice” so as to save time?
- Is it easy to achieve a balance of professional and private tasks? What are the strategies to do so?
- What would happen if the influencer in this case would be sick? How would they get sick leave coverage?
- Which social rights are at stake for the influencers (employment, healthcare, housing, education, transport, culture, creation of trade unions)?
- Is being an influencer a job? If so, what should be done to recognise it as a job? If it is not a job, how can this work be defined?

Materials needed:

Printed profiles of influencers, pencils and pens, post-its, A3 and A4 papers.

Background documents and further reading:

- Read this article by Michael Beverland - The dark side of social media influencer work to see the negative aspects of work and private time balance for influencers: https://digit-research.org/blog_article/the-dark-side-of-social-media-influencer-work/
- Also this article on Teal has the positive examples and recommendations: <https://www.tealhq.com/work-life-balance/social-media-influencer>

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- It is important to note that for preparations it is needed to read [this article at Forbes](#) about the time needed to produce a social media post by influencers. He/she can even quote this influencer as an opening of the activity:

““I spend about 2-3 hours per day on Instagram,” says Fink, who focuses on health and wellness under her eponymous channels. Fink says most of this time is spent replying to direct messages and comments, but because YouTube is her primary channel of focus, she also spends significant time producing and editing videos for that channel. “It’s easy to see a final YouTube video and to think that it looks so simple,” says Fink, who has been creating content for 10 years. “But the actual act of putting a video together from start to finish is a full-on process that has taken me years to master.” Forbes article from Natalie Zfat, 22 August 2019⁴

⁴ Here's How Long It Takes Your Favorite Influencer to Create An Instagram Post. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nataliezfat/2019/08/22/heres-how-long-it-takes-your-favorite-influencer-to-create-an-instagram-post/?sh=6614a2ec3f46>





Workshop 4: Career or Anti-career

Workshop title: Career or Anti-career

Duration: 130 minutes

Background: It can be discussed that social media creates pressure and standards on what it is to be successful. This activity looks at work not only as employment and career, but also as a social construct with economic, social, educational and cultural elements. Participants will have the chance to reflect on what are realistic standards of work and career and analyse it against what is being promoted on social media. For this activity the read of the article of Sabina Wex in further reading 'Corporate America wants you to fail' is essential as the article talks about Quiet quitting, which is when employees continue to put in the minimum amount of effort to keep their jobs, but don't go the extra mile for their employer. This might mean not speaking up in meetings, not volunteering for tasks, and refusing to work overtime⁵.

Aim of the workshop: To raise awareness about the impact of unrealistic standards of employment and success set by the influencers on social media.

Objectives:

- To discuss work and social rights standards promoted online, and their impact on expectations and imagination of success;
- To speak about the job insecurity in technology driven economies.

Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Critical thinking on employment, work, jobs and social rights;
- Citizenship competence;
- Digital competence;
- Communication and cooperation.

Methodology and methods:

- Small group work;
- Presentations;
- Discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (10 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. Then there is some space for each participant to introduce himself/herself.

II. Small group work: Career or anti-career (40 minutes)

⁵ Quiet Quitting: A Proper Guide to a Very Real Trend. <https://www.personio.com/hr-lexicon/quiet-quitting/>





The workshop starts with an activity which lasts about 40 minutes as it contains several steps and group work. The activity is based on a list of tasks that social media influencers are expected to do. The trainer divides participants in small groups of 4-5 people. They are asked to discuss the list of tasks that a social media influencer should do, and then decide if the work of influencers fits as a career or a hobby. The trainer has prepared a list of 10 career or anti-career advices. Once the division of participants in small groups is done, the trainer hands them the following list of tasks:

LIST of TASKS:

Content Planning and Strategy:

Develop a content calendar.

Research audience preferences and trending topics.

Align content with brand goals and objectives.

Content Creation:

Write engaging captions, posts, and articles.

Create visually appealing graphics, images, and videos.

Edit photos and videos for quality and consistency.

Platform Management:

Schedule and publish content on various social media platforms.

Monitor and respond to comments and messages.

Engage with followers and build community.

Analytics and Reporting:

Track key performance metrics (likes, shares, comments, etc.).

Analyse the performance of content and campaigns.

Prepare reports and suggest improvements based on data.

Collaboration and Communication:

Coordinate with marketing teams and other stakeholders.

Collaborate with influencers and other content creators.

Participate in brainstorming and creative sessions.

Trend Monitoring:

Stay updated with the latest social media trends and tools.

Adapt strategies based on changes in platform algorithms and user behaviour.

Campaign Management:

Plan and execute social media campaigns.

Monitor the progress of campaigns and adjust tactics as needed.

Ensure campaigns are on-brand and meet objectives.

Audience Interaction:

Engage in real-time conversations with followers.

Address customer queries and issues promptly.

Foster a positive community and brand loyalty.

Advertising:

Create and manage social media ads.

Monitor ad performance and optimise for better results.

Manage advertising budgets effectively.

Compliance and Best Practices:

Ensure all content complies with legal and ethical standards.

Follow platform-specific guidelines and best practices.

Maintain consistency in tone and voice across all platforms.

The groups should decide, based on these tasks, if a social media influencer is a job or not. Then depending on their decision they should do the following:

- If it is a job, create a list of 10 advices for a career development
- If it is a hobby, make a list of 10 anti-career advice, such as how to maintain time for themselves and enjoy their hobby.

They are given 40 minutes to do this and prepare for the presentation of their work.





III. Presentations (50 minutes)

Once the groups are done, they present their work. Each group uses up to 10 minutes to present their work and then provide space for feedback, clarification, or adding new ideas. The trainer facilitates the session.

IV. Discussion (30 minutes)

After the presentations the last 30 minutes are reserved for discussion. This part is also facilitated by the trainer. The discussion session starts with general impressions of the list of tasks continuing with more detailed questions. The following questions are used for this part of the workshop:

- Was it realistic the amount of tasks that influencers have in order to create online content?
- Based on which criteria do we decide if some tasks are a job or a hobby? Was it easy in this case?
- What expectations and imagination of success are promoted through these lists of tasks? Based on this discussion, is it realistic?
- Is there time for other things besides doing the job and/or the hobby? Which of these pieces of advice can be applied to more people than just social influencers?
- How do we keep job motivation today? What are the successful strategies and factors to have high job motivation?
- Is social media promoting quality work and jobs that encourage motivation? What is needed or missing in the online space?

Materials needed: Printouts of tasks, flipcharts and markers to write the advices and present them.

Background documents and further reading:

- Sabina Wex, 'Corporate America wants you to fail' in YahooNews, 13 February 2024, <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/corporate-america-wants-fail-anti-131900556.html>





Workshop 5: My social media profile is a show!

Workshop title: My social media profile is a show!

This activity is adapted from Compass, Manual for human rights education of the Council of Europe, Activity: [My life is not a show](#)

Duration: 100 minutes

Background: The activity is on cyberbullying of influencers and by influencers. On one side it speaks about the right to freedom of thought, opinion and expression, freedom from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence and freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment. On the other side it speaks about rights for data privacy and control. The activity consists of a moving debate with questions related to cyberbullying, data protection and security. Preparation for youth workers includes the tips for facilitators and reading a broad overview of what cyberbullying is, how it is manifested, the ways of addressing it. Research so you have a basic idea of the laws against cyberbullying in your country⁶.

Aim of the workshop: This activity aims to contribute to developing people's awareness about abuses of communication done on social media in general, and cyberbullying in particular.

Objectives:

- To widen awareness about the abusive use of mobile phones apps and social media;
- To develop skills to think creatively and find ways to counter "cyberbullying";
- To foster empathy and solidarity online.

Competences addressed:

- Citizenship competence;
- Digital competence;
- Creative and critical thinking;
- Communication and collaboration;
- Analytical.

Methodology and methods

- Brainstorming;
- Barometer exercise;
- Discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (10 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. Then there is some space for each participant to introduce himself/herself.

⁶ Front page - Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/front-page>





II. Brainstorming (20 minutes)

The trainer starts with a brief brainstorming session on bullying. He/she asks participants to take a couple of minutes to think about this phenomenon, what it is and how it is manifested. Then, collects their answers and write them on a flipchart paper.

After this, the trainer repeats the activity but on this round asking participants about cyberbullying, what it is and the forms it takes. The whole session lasts 20 minutes.

III. Barometer exercise (30 minutes)

The trainer marks a line on the floor with tape or string that is called the "yes line". He/she asks participants to line up in two straight lines, one on either side of the "yes line". Then, it is explained to them that in the next phase the trainer is going to read some statements about cyberbullying. Participants are asked to respond to each statement, but without using any words. If they can answer "yes" to a statement, they should take a step sideways onto the "yes line." They should respond honestly.

The trainer starts reading out the first statement. He/she gives participants time to think and respond. Then, asks them to look around and take a note of how many there are on the "yes line". After each statement, the trainer asks participants to return to the starting lines and read out the next statement. The statements used for the activity are:

- Has anyone ever sent you insulting messages, nasty pictures or videos, either to your mobile phone or email?
- Has anyone ever sent information / pictures / videos of you to someone else without your consent?
- Has anyone ever posted pictures or information about you on a website or social network site without your consent?
- Has anyone ever manipulated / transformed or AI generated any of your pictures or videos without your consent?
- Has anyone ever made inappropriate comments on your social media spaces which are also about you?
- Has anyone ever sent false / nasty information / rumours about you?
- Have you felt insecure about yourself because of what influencers post online?
- Have you ever felt anxiety about achieving certain lifestyle standards which are promoted online?
- Do you know anyone who is a victim of cyberbullying?
- Do you know that there are special laws for this kind of violence?
- Do you think there should be limits to what people can place in social media?⁷

IV. Reflection and Discussion (30 minutes)

At the end, the trainer invites everyone to join the plenary and continue with reflection and discussion. He/she starts with comments about the statements and people's experiences and then about how common the different sorts of cyberbullying are and how to tackle them. The following questions are used for this session:

- What did you know about cyberbullying before you did this activity? Are social media spaces safe in general?
- Are all the statements serious enough to be labelled cyberbullying? Why? Why not?
- Are there other ways of cyberbullying that have not been mentioned?

⁷ My life is not a show! - Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people.
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/My-life-is-not-a-show->





- How common is cyberbullying on social media? Are influencers standing up against cyberbullying?
- Are social media profiles using bullying as a way to attract attention? If yes, what are the consequences?
- How much do you think violence is promoted through different social media content?
- Why do people bully online? Who can be a victim of cyberbullying on social media?
- What can be done to stop cyberbullying? By the victim? By others?
- What can you do to protect yourself against cyberbullying?

V. Input (10 minutes)

The trainer concludes the workshop with a short input on the topic. The following input is given to participants:

“Bullying and cyberbullying are sensitive issues, and you should be prepared for some participants to become emotional as they remember bad experiences. People who have been bullied feel guilt and shame; they do not see themselves as victims and those who bully may not fully realise why they are doing it. Thus, before tackling the topic of cyberbullying, prepare yourself well and consider whether or not you want to call on someone with expertise in the area to assist you.”

Then the trainer included some input about examples of how to respond to bullying.

Materials: Flipcharts and pens, List of statements, papers and pencils, tape or string to mark a long line along the floor.

Background documents and further reading:

- My life is not a show! - Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people.
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/My-life-is-not-a-show->





Workshop 6: Social media page

Workshop title: Social media page

This activity is adapted from Compass, Manual for human rights education of the Council of Europe, Activity: [Front Page](#)

Duration: 150 minutes

Background: This activity speaks about the right to freedom of thought, opinion and expression online, but also about narratives and how these can have interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence. It looks at social media content in the same way as traditional media - powerful to shape perceptions and guide ideas of right and wrong. This workshop is a simulation of a group of journalists working to prepare the front page of a newspaper. Participants in this workshop have the chance to work in small groups as they explore issues about bias, stereotyping and objectivity in the media in representation of social media influencers, as well as images and the role of media in speaking about influencers and setting perceptions of success.

Aim of the workshop: To give space for participants in analysing the importance of social media page and its content through simulation activity and input.

Objectives:

- To widen awareness about the perception of social media influencers and their framing of sense of achievement;
- To create space for presenting existing examples of social media pages for practical learning;
- To cultivate a sense of responsibility and a commitment to critical thinking on what is being presented in social and conventional media.

Competences addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Media literacy,
- Citizenship competence;
- Entrepreneurship competence;
- Digital competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Simulation/role play;
- Debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (15 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. Then there is some space for each participant to introduce himself/herself. Then he/she uses the opportunity to introduce the main activity of this workshop, which is a simulation of a meeting in a newspaper office





where a group of journalists are working on the front page of their newspaper. The trainer emphasises that although these are local papers serve the community, this edition will be about social media influencers. Therefore the newspaper should write about influencers and their role in society.

The trainer have already prepared the following materials which will be used for the workshop and displayed to participants:

- 20-30 photos from social media influencers and / or their posts. (Note: there are three sets of the same 20-30 pictures, one set for each small working group. You will therefore need to print the same photo 3 times.
- Display one set of photographs on a table.

II. Social media page (85 minutes)

After giving a short introduction on the activity, the trainer shows an example of a front page of a newspaper and point out the features and layout of a typical front page. Then, he/she divides participants into three working groups of six to eight people. Each group is to imagine that it is an editorial group working on a different newspaper. Their task is to design and lay out the front page of the special edition about influencers. The trainer asks each group to choose a name for their newspaper.

When all groups have their names, the trainer invites them to join a table and start their work as an editorial team. Each group is given a set of working materials such as paper and pencils, glue and scissors to each group - but not the photographs yet. The trainer goes over instructions once more time, to specify that they need to design the layout for the front page of their paper.

They have one hour to select four or five news stories that they wish to present. They should focus on the impact the front page makes. Rather than actually telling the full stories, choosing a picture and writing the headline, by-line and introduction are sufficient. They do not have to write the body of the article.

Furthermore, the trainer suggests that they start by discussing the themes or issues they want to include in their reports about social media influencers. They are further instructed that after ten minutes they will receive the photos of the influencers from the "print department". When the groups have been working for about ten minutes, the trainer hands out the sets of photos, one set per group.

Participants have the chance to see the display of pictures from influencers or their content. The trainer asks them to walk around the table in silence and not to make any comments at this stage. He/she explains that these are the images that they have to work with; they may use them and interpret them as they wish⁸.

III. Exhibition (15 minutes)

When the teams have finished, the trainer tells them that they should lay their work out for everyone to read. This simple exhibition lasts about 15 minutes.

IV. Debriefing (35 minutes)

After the exhibition all participants are invited to join the plenary for a debriefing and evaluation. The trainer starts with a review of the activity itself and then go on to discuss the social media, influencers and their impact. The following questions are used for this session:

⁸ Front page - Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/front-page>





- How did the groups organise the work? Was there a leader, or did they share the decision making? Did everyone feel they could participate and contribute?
- How did people choose the issues to work with? Which came first, the issue or the picture? Was it more balanced, focused on the positive achievements such as promoting healthy lifestyles and travels, as well as the threats from the influencers towards unrealistic standards in society? Or was it just one side?
- What themes or issues were presented? What is the impact of these themes to the wider society? Were there issues that anyone would have liked to have used, but which they had to drop?
- How do the different front pages of the different papers compare? Have the same themes or photos been used?
- Have different groups used the same image, but in different ways?
- How do people follow social media? What is the actual power of social media influencers?
- What sort of news dominates about social media influencers? What do people think about social media in general?
- How often are there stories covering the positive and negative aspects of social media?
- How do we learn to consume social media and to think critically about it?
- Are there important themes or issues missing from the set of pictures about social media influencers?

Materials: A large room with enough space for two or three small working groups and plenary; Some 20-30 printed pictures from different social media influencers pages (you can search for these online); Paper and pens for making notes and large sheets of paper (A3) the size of flipchart paper and markers for the final front page; Scissors and glue for each small group and tables with a working surface large enough for the working groups to spread all their papers out.

Background documents and further reading:

- Front page - Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people.
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/front-page>

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The trainer should encourage the group to be creative in their ideas and the way they present them. They can write, crop the pictures and draw cartoons. Their papers may be serious, humorous or ironic. Depending on the group, the trainer will have to decide how much to say about this or whether to just let them go and see what they come up with.





Workshop 7: Media literacy recommendations

Workshop title: Media literacy recommendations

Duration: 110 minutes

Background: This activity opens a reflection about media literacy and some basic issues to reflect on how to find a way to filter the information reflecting on its content. Today's access to information is instantly possible, so the ability to choose and think about the information before accepting it as reliable is very important. This activity serves as a basis to think about the different issues that constitute media literacy.

Aim of the workshop: To create space for discussing the media literacy importance and its impact on accessing information through interactive discussion activities.

Objectives:

- To open a discussion on media literacy and understanding different media continents and facts;
- To promote teamwork and communication when presenting different viewpoints on certain topics;
- To create space for stimulating critical thinking on social media topics.

Competences addressed:

- Critical thinking
- Media literacy,
- Citizenship competence;
- Entrepreneurship competence;
- Digital competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Small group work;
- Discussion;
- Debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (15 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. Then there is some space for each participant to introduce himself/herself. Then, the trainer explains the structure of the workshop. He/she informs participants that this is a discussion activity which opens different themes in small groups. Participants are informed that they will be divided into small groups (ideally some 5-6 people per group) and have to go through 6 stops and discuss the texts they find in these corners. At the end the main conclusions are collected and discussed in debriefing.

II. Small group work – Discussion activity (60 minutes)





The trainer divides participants into small groups. Once the groups are set, they move in the following six corners. In each corner they should read the text and respond to the question(s) at the end of it.

Corner 1: Young people, as well as adults, are continually swamped with a mass of information through all the different media. Some people realise this, others don't. If books and encyclopaedias before were the source of information, now you access it all on your phone. What do we do with this information? Does it mean that we are all better informed, or not necessarily?

Corner 2: The media are becoming more and more commercialised and the simplification of the message; stereotyping and sensationalism are alarming developments. Media, including social media, is privately owned, or if it is public, it follows a specific political frame set by the government. At the same time, there is a lot of fake media, sensational and click-bait news. Is it becoming increasingly difficult to find quality news? Is there objective news?

Corner 3: Finding quality news is especially difficult in relation to news about inequality issues, particularly where developing countries are concerned. Non-western news is often seen only through western eyes. This very often results in negative and dismal news. One-sidedness and negativity is the norm. Do you agree?

Corner 4: The rise in the use of the Internet has led to the decline of journalism. Neil Henry, former Washington Post correspondent, now a professor of journalism at the University of California at Berkeley states, "I see a world in which the pursuit of truth in service of the public interest is declining as a cultural value in our society amid this technological tumult; a world where professional journalism, practised according to widely accepted ethical values, is a rapidly diminishing feature in our expanding news and information systems, as we escape to the Web to experience the latest 'new' thing. Meantime, I can't help but fear a future, increasingly barren of skilled journalists, in which searches for "news" turn up not news, but the latest snarky rants from basement bloggers, fake news reports from government officials and PR cleverly peddled in the guise of journalism by advertisers wishing only to sell, sell, sell." What is the future of journalism online?

Corner 5: Content creators and influencers on networking sites promote many developments and information from things happening around the world. Raw material is powerful; consider the immediacy and impact of these personal videos and postings on social networking sites. However, not all influencers are ethical and take into consideration human dignity when reporting and sharing content. Do we need to make regulations for influencers and content creators?

Corner 6: Is objectivity possible or desirable? Is it possible to escape our own ethnocentrism? And can balance – telling "both" sides of the story – actually be a form of informational bias? For instance, despite the consistent assertions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that human activities have had a "discernible" influence on the global climate and that global warming is a serious problem that must be addressed immediately, "he said/she said" reporting has allowed a small group of global warming sceptics to have their views greatly amplified⁹.

III. Discussion and Debriefing (35 minutes)

⁹ Front page - Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/front-page>





After the activity the trainer invites all participants to join the plenary for a debriefing and discussion session. The questions used for this part are:

- How did you find the discussions in each corner? Was it easy to agree on a common viewpoint?
- Which issues were the most difficult to agree on? What were the conflicting sides?
- Has the media landscape changed? How do we get informed and consume media responsibly?
- What would be the best ways to improve our media literacy and engage responsibly with the media?
- The trainer writes down the different recommendations from the group. Once the Recommendations list is done, the trainer asks participants if they have ideas how this list of Recommendations can be put in practice. He/she take notes of different ideas and proposals coming from participants.

Materials needed: Printed individual copies of all the steps (one copy per person) and place them at each step (ideally in different corners of the room), papers, pencils and pens.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- For this workshop, youth workers can also present some efforts from the media to ensure they are objective and ethical. One of them are the Media ethics councils, which exist in many countries, play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity and accountability of journalistic practices. These councils, often composed of media professionals, academics, and public representatives, serve as watchdogs and arbiters of ethical standards in the media industry. Their responsibilities include addressing public complaints about media conduct, reviewing controversial cases, and providing guidelines to promote fair, accurate, and responsible journalism. By upholding principles such as truthfulness, impartiality, and respect for privacy, media ethics councils help to foster trust between the media and the public, ensuring that the powerful role of the press in society is exercised with responsibility and respect for democratic values. Through their work, these councils contribute to the broader aim of safeguarding the public's right to informed and balanced reporting, which is fundamental to a healthy, functioning democracy.





Workshop 8: Online data protection

Workshop title: Online data protection

Duration: 90 minutes

Background: Online data protection is critical for safeguarding young people's rights in the digital age. Young people grow with online presence since childhood and are users of social media, online platforms, and various internet-based media, making them particularly vulnerable to privacy breaches and data misuse. Protecting their personal information involves implementing robust privacy settings, educating them about safe online practices, and enforcing regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which provides specific protections for minors. By prioritising data protection, we can help ensure that young people can explore and benefit from the digital world without compromising their safety and privacy. The workshop motivates participants to be more aware of their digital footprint, understand the risks of data exposure, and be equipped with practical strategies to protect their online privacy. This methodology draws on effective workshop discussions to ensure engagement and practical outcomes for participants.

Aim of the workshop: To motivate young people to take care of their online data safety and protect their data based on the GDPR.

Objectives:

- To introduce the notion of data protection and right to privacy online;
- To create space for learning the key information about GDPR;
- To open a discussion on what rights young people have to protect their data and privacy online.

Competences addressed:

- Digital competence;
- Critical thinking;
- Communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical.

Methodology and methods:

- Self-Googleing activity – online mini-search;
- Input;
- Group discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (10 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. Then there is some space for each participant to introduce himself/herself. He/she explains that this workshop





contains several mini activities, all related to the importance of online data protection. The activities will be developed in different steps as they are interconnected with each other.

II. Step 1: Self-Googleing Activity (25 minutes)

The trainer asks participants to use the next 15 minutes to Google themselves and note what information is publicly available. They should try to alter the search information more often, using different alphabets if applicable, or their home address or other pseudonyms if they have some. Once this is done, the trainer asks participants the following questions:

- What did you find?
- How do you feel about the information available? (Encourage sharing of surprising or concerning findings.)
- Did you know this information is publicly available?

III. Step 2: Checking Cookies (15 minutes)

The trainer shows participants how to check which cookies are stored on their browsers. He/she makes sure to provide instructions for Chrome, Firefox, and Safari, depending on the participants lap-tops or mobile phones. Then, explains what cookies are, their purpose, and potential privacy concerns.

Further on, the trainer asks participants if they see some cookies from websites which they have not visited and they are not sure what they connect with? The potential privacy concerns from cookies and their information is explained afterwards.

IV. Step 3: Discussion (20 minutes)

Following this personal awareness process, the trainer starts a discussion on the dangers of online data exposure for the following 20 minutes. He/she asks participants the following questions:

- Can you think of any risks of personal data being available online? What could happen if this data is being abused?
- Take different examples one by one and write them on the flip chart.
 - Do you know what identity theft is? Are there any examples of identity theft which they heard of or the participants experienced themselves?
 - Are you aware of targeted advertising? How is this being used with the different data we have available online?
 - What other personal security information can be abused with data breaches?

The trainer encourages participants to share their thoughts and any personal experiences.

V. Step 4: Practical steps to enhance data security (20 minutes)

After the discussion, the trainer uses the last 20 minutes for an input on practical steps to enhance data security. He/she uses the projector or a flip chart paper to show these ways to protect our own data. He/she also integrates and discusses how to put these in practice on our phones and computers by emphasising the following measures:

- Using strong, unique passwords.
- Enabling two-factor authentication.
- Regularly updating privacy settings on social media.
- Clearing cookies and browser history regularly.
- Using privacy-focused browsers and search engines.





Materials: Computers or smartphones for participants, flipcharts, pencils and pens, papers, laptop, projector for presenting information.

Background documents and further reading:

- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) includes specific provisions to protect the data of minors, recognising that children require particular safeguards when it comes to their personal information. Key aspects of GDPR related to minors are:
 1. GDPR sets the **age of consent** for data processing at 16 years old. However, member states can lower this age to as young as 13. For children below this age, parental or guardian consent is required for the processing of their personal data.
 2. Organisations must provide clear and age-appropriate privacy notices to children, ensuring they understand how their data will be used. This means using simple language and avoiding legal jargon.
 3. Right to erasure or also known as the "right to be forgotten," this allows minors to request the deletion of their personal data. This is particularly relevant for content they may have posted themselves and later wish to remove.
 4. Organisations are encouraged to consider the privacy of minors from the outset of designing their systems and processes, ensuring that high privacy settings are the default.
 5. GDPR places restrictions on the use of children's data for marketing purposes and automated decision-making, requiring explicit consent and ensuring such practices do not exploit their vulnerability.





Workshop 9: Deepfakes

Workshop title: Deepfakes

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: Deepfakes are synthetic media where a person in an existing image or video is replaced with someone else's likeness using artificial intelligence. Initially popularised for entertainment, deepfakes have raised concerns due to their potential for misuse, such as spreading misinformation, harassment, and fraud. The threat from deepfakes is significant, posing risks across various domains, including politics, security, and personal privacy. Deepfakes can be used to create highly realistic but fake videos and audio recordings that can mislead audiences, spread misinformation, and manipulate public opinion. In politics, they can be weaponized to produce fake speeches or actions by public figures, potentially swaying elections or inciting unrest. In the realm of security, deepfakes can be used for identity theft, blackmail, and fraud. On a personal level, individuals can be targeted with deepfake pornography or defamatory content, leading to severe emotional and reputational damage. The difficulty in detecting deepfakes exacerbates these threats, making them a formidable tool for malicious actors.

Aim of the workshop: To discuss with young people about deepfakes, their implications, and ways to identify and protect themselves from their misuse.

Objectives:

- To explain what deepfakes are and how they are created as well as,
- To learn about the potential risks and ethical concerns associated with deepfakes.
- To provide tools and techniques for identifying deepfakes and encourage critical thinking and responsible media consumption.

Competences addressed:

- Digital competence;
- Media literacy;
- Critical thinking;
- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Citizenship competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical.

Methods and Methodology:

- Group discussion;
- Small group work;
- Presentations and discussion.

Workshop flow:





I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (10 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. Then there is some space for each participant to introduce himself/herself.

II. Group discussion (10 minutes)

The workshop starts with an open question to all participants: Has anyone heard of the term deepfakes? What is that? After participants share their definitions and examples, the trainer provides a brief conclusion as an input using the text provided at the background of this workshop on Deepfakes.

Then, he/she asks participants if they know some of the technology behind deepfakes and if they have used it? For example an app which creates fake images of them with a different age, or an app that can make videos out of photos.

III. Small group work (20 minutes)

The trainer splits participants into small groups to discuss potential risks of deepfakes in different situations. Each group has a specific topic to discuss:

- Group 1 discusses deepfakes in politics
- Group 2 discusses deepfakes in personal life
- Group 3 discusses deepfakes on social media including influencers.

They are given 20 minutes to discuss and draft a list of potential risks and then ask them to present their findings in plenary.

IV. Presentations (40 minutes)

All groups join the plenary to present the outcomes of their discussion. The trainer makes sure that after each presentation to add information on ethical concerns, including misinformation, privacy invasion, and potential legal issues.

Then, the trainer shows examples of deepfakes and real videos, highlighting key differences.



He/she mentions afterwards that some of the key ways for spotting deepfakes, is to look for inconsistencies in facial movements, unnatural eye blinking, and audio mismatches.





V. Existing online deepfakes (20 minutes)

After this, the trainer asks participants to search for a deepfake online and analyse it to find these traces of inconsistencies. In the same groups as before participants should find and share one deepfake to the other groups in the room and how they found the inconsistencies on their facial movement, eyes or audio in case of a video.

VI. Discussion (20 minutes)

The last activity of the workshop is a discussion on ways to protect oneself from the misuse of deepfakes, including maintaining privacy, being cautious about sharing personal information online, and verifying sources of information. Some questions that the trainer has prepared for the group are:

- If you notice a deepfake, what can you do? Where can it be reported?
- How to make sure that we do not share deepfakes on our social networks and to prevent from further spreading them? What are the best strategies?

Materials Needed: Laptop, Projector and screen for presenting the input and the deepfake photo, Computer with internet access to search for online deepfakes.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- Youth workers and trainer can also read more about deepfakes on websites and tools for their detection such as Deepware Scanner, Sensity AI and similar.
- Most countries also have a dedicated organisation or institution that deals with cybercrime and deepfakes are a form of crime, therefore, it might be useful that the trainer shares their contact data with the participants.





Workshop 10: Social media influencers for the good

Workshop title: Social media influencers for the good

Duration: 90 minutes.

Background: The modern equivalent of “With great power comes great responsibility” would be “With great influence comes great responsibility”. From the Tweeter-in-Chief to the indubitably more modest Maria Conde, social media influencers are the new icons of the Internet¹⁰. Apart from the criticism, social media influencers can be a force in marketing and advocacy. Their ability to reach large, engaged audiences makes them valuable allies for promoting some environmental, cultural, and social causes. Influencers can shape public opinion and mobilise their followers to support various initiatives. This workshop looks at how to effectively collaborate with social media influencers to promote good causes in society. By leveraging influencers' reach and credibility, organisations can enhance their visibility and impact in promoting social change.

Aim of the workshop: The aim of this workshop is to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to effectively use social media influencers in promoting social causes.

Objectives:

- To understand the role and influence of social media influencers in modern communication.
- To learn how to create and execute impactful social media campaigns with influencers and develop strategies for building long-term relationships with influencers.

Competences addressed:

- Digital competence;
- Media literacy;
- Critical thinking;
- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Citizenship competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical.

Methods and Methodology:

- Brainstorming;
- Group discussion;
- Input

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the workshop (10 minutes)

¹⁰ 5 Influencers Who Are Changing Our World for the Better. <https://www.impacttree.com/blog/influencers/>





The trainer welcomes participants to the workshop and introduces them to the topic and agenda. Then there is some space for each participant to introduce himself/herself.

II. Brainstorming (30 minutes)

The trainer opens the workshop with a brainstorming of the power and potential of social media influencers. The participants in smaller groups discuss different options where influencers can raise awareness about a social cause. Each small group (of 4-5 people) presents their example back in plenary.

III. Group discussion (40 minutes)

Following the introduction, the youth worker opens a discussion on identifying and selecting the right influencers. In specific, participants are asked to work in the same groups they had the Brainstorming activity. Their task is to identify a social media influencer that they would like to engage for their human rights work. They should also write in one sentence which social change based on human rights they would like to promote. Once they have selected an influencer, in groups they should check if the person actually is sharing human rights values. To do this, they can check their posts and answer these questions with Yes, No, Neutral as answers:

- Does their work humanise?
- Does their work promote solidarity and empathy?
- Does their work promote participation?
- Do they encourage intercultural dialogue and diversity?
- Do they promote values of non-discrimination and equality?
- Does their work empower?
- Do they promote human dignity or at least speak in a dignifying way?

When they are done with the work, each group shares in the plenary outcomes of their discussion. While participants share and suggest criteria, the trainer/youth worker organises them into the following categories:

- Technical which evaluate influencers based on their reach, engagement rates, content quality
- Value based which look at the alignment with the cause especially with human rights.

IV. Input (10 minutes)

Finally, the trainer provides an input that working with influencers is understanding the legal and ethical considerations. He/she highlights that it is important to clarify issues such as transparency, disclosure requirements, and ethical guidelines to ensure that collaborations are conducted responsibly and in compliance with relevant regulations. The trainer further emphasizes that one should focus on building genuine relationships with influencers based on mutual trust and respect. When engaging with influencers, it is also important to look at strategies for maintaining long-term relationships with influencers.

Then, the workshop is officially closed by the trainer who encourages young people to take initiative in the community in promoting good causes and influencers' positive impact in the community.

Materials: printed profiles of influencers, papers, pencils and pens,

Example of an influencer profiles for analysis in case some of the groups do not manage to find suitable ones.





Jodie Sweetin - <https://www.instagram.com/jodiesweetin/> is an actress and podcaster. After graduating college, Jodie reentered the world of television, most recently rejoining her Full House castmates in Netflix's Fuller House, winner of the People's Choice Award for Favorite Premium Comedy Series among others. Jodie has 2.4 million followers on Instagram.

Jodie's passions extend far beyond the realm of entertainment: she also has a deep and long-lasting passion for humanitarian and environmental causes. Over the last several years, Jodie has become an outspoken activist in multiple areas, using her influence and platform to draw attention to numerous worthwhile causes. Jodie has publicly advocated for women's rights, BIPOC justice, AAPI violence prevention and awareness, climate change, the unhoused population, LGBTQ+ equality and progressive financial policies.

Background documents and further reading:

- The following Check this blogpost of Jarrod Russell showcasing 5 influencers who are helping and changing the world for the better: <https://www.impactree.com/blog/influencers/>
- Working with influencers sometimes needs professional support. This is an example of a London-based company working to connect businesses with ethical influencers and make sure that the reach and values are fitting with the message: <https://influenceforgood.social/>





Escape game

Title: "Escape the feed: Breaking free of the negative influences of social media". This is an educational escape room scenario that focuses on empowering young people to identify and stand against the negative influence of social media. The escape room scenario can be easily implemented and replicated in various settings, requiring low budget and guidance from the side of the facilitator.

Ideally, the escape room scenario should be played by groups of maximum 6 people to ensure the best learning and overall experience.

To support the work of the facilitator, there are some additional information and instructions

After the finishing of the escape game experience, there should be group debriefing conducted by the facilitator, concluding the learning experience of the activity.

The focus of the debriefing should be:

1. How was the overall experience of the activity?
Note for facilitator: Make sure to give the space and time to more people to express themselves in this regard.
2. How did the participants feel working in the team?
Note to facilitator: In case you are using this activity also as a team-building exercise make sure to also dedicate time to debrief on (1) the different roles that the participants identified within their team and (2) how did they position themselves within the team.
3. What was their biggest learning moment within the activity?
4. Was there any information that they found out that surprised them or makes them reconsider their use or presence of social media?

To conclude the activity, the debriefing should be validated with some main takeaways and lessons learnt, revolving around empowering the participants and equipping them with practical strategies and insights to navigate social media safely and responsibly. The facilitator should emphasize the connections between these main takeaways with real-life experiences on social media.

Some of the key takeaways from the escape game:

1. Critical Thinking and Digital Literacy: Participants learn the importance of critically evaluating information encountered on social media, distinguishing between fact and fiction, and practicing digital literacy skills to avoid falling prey to misinformation and online scams.
2. Self-Confidence and Self-Identity: Through challenges focused on boosting self-confidence and promoting self-acceptance, participants gain a deeper understanding of their worth beyond social media metrics. They learn to cultivate a positive self-image and resist the pressures of comparison and perfectionism online.
3. Online Safety and Privacy: By solving challenges related to online privacy and security, participants develop awareness of the importance of safeguarding personal information and implementing privacy settings to protect themselves from cyber threats and identity theft.
4. Resilience and Peer Support: The collaborative nature of the escape game encourages teamwork, communication, and mutual support among participants. They learn that navigating social media challenges is easier when they work together, seek help from trusted friends and adults, and build a supportive online community.





Storyline of the escape game

(can be found on the Printout 1)

You and your friends are visiting an old tech lab as part of your school trip. While walking with the rest of the group, you suddenly notice a room with some interesting lights at the corner of the lab. Your curiosity wins, and without noticing the 'Do not enter' sign at the door you decide to follow the lights. But as you step inside, you trigger the security system and the door locks behind you - trapping you inside!

In the middle of the room there is a note saying 'Within these walls lies a solution to break free from the negative influence of social media. In order to escape the room, you must go through a set of challenges representing the negative influences and pitfalls of social media. Our Artificial Intelligence system will follow you through the challenges, and will guide you to the next clue once you solve the challenge. The first challenge can be found on the table next to you.'





List of puzzles/challenges

Challenge 1 - Social media platforms use

There are individually printed logos (printout 2) of different social media platforms, scattered on a table. On one side of the table there is an arrow facing upwards, and on the other an arrow facing down. In between the arrows there are 11 empty spaces where the logos would fit.

On the corner of the table there is a booklet with small extracts of information about each platform. (printout 3)

Participants need to put the clues together and make a line of the logos from the most used/popular social media platform to the least.

Once they have the correct order of the logos, the AI (facilitator) gives them access to the next challenge.

As per data on usage and popularity of the platforms in 2024, the correct order of the platforms is: (1) Facebook, (2) Youtube, (3) Whatsapp, (4) Instagram, (5) TikTok, (6) Messenger, (7) Telegram, (8) Snapchat, (9) Twitter/X, (10) Pinterest and (11) LinkedIn.

Challenge 2 - "True or not" wall

Participants are invited to a large wall covered in statements about social media, printed on sheets of paper or written on sticky notes.

On a piece of paper there are instructions which say 'In a sea of messages and content it is important to distinguish the truth from the myth and the real from the fake. However hard to find, the 3 truths will bring you closer to the way out.' (printout 4)

The facilitator needs to prepare the wall in advance, putting different statements (make sure to mix the myths and truths) as a printed and/or hand-written version. The different statements (both truth and myths) can be found in (printout 5).

Once the participants identify the 3 true statements, the AI (facilitator) leads them to their next challenge.

Challenge 3 - Discover yourself

The setting of this challenge is a table/corner with a mirror and a note next to it saying 'In order to discover oneself, one must google thyself.' (printout 6)

Under the mirror another note is available, saying 'The next clue lies in identifying 4 ways on how to protect yourself from someone potentially abusing your data.' (printout 7)

In this challenge participants must google themselves (one of the team members) and see what information is available about them. Based on the information found they need to think of 4 ways to protect themselves from someone who can abuse the data against them.

When finding each way to protect themselves, they (the facilitator) gives the group 1 letter: G _ D _ P _ R, as part of an extract of information (printout 8) on what GDPR is. When they discover all 4 letters / pieces of information they can read the full extract of GDPR information, and they are led by the AI towards the next and last challenge.





Challenge 4 - Breaking the influence

This challenge consists of 3 riddles (printout 9) that the participants must solve in order to reveal one word of the statement 'I am aware!'.

Once all the riddles are solved, and the statement is revealed, there should be an announcement from the AI/facilitator of the success of the group and joint celebration.

Note for facilitator: In order to make things easier, please make sure to add under each riddle (1) the expected letter count (eg. the word riddle would be _ _ _ _ _) or (2) a mix of the letters in the word (eg. the word riddle would show **d e d r i l**).

Riddle 1:

In the land of likes and shares, where stories are told,
You'll find heroes and villains, both young and old.
To find the ones who inspire, here's your quest:
Look for the kind words and actions, that truly are best.
They lift others up, with a smile and a cheer,
Who are these inspiring people, making positivity clear?

Answer: Role models

Riddle 2:

In the world of posts and pics,
Where everyone follows the latest tricks,
You feel the urge to fit right in,
To change yourself, just to win.
It's that force that makes you bend,
What's this pressure from your friend?

Answer: Peer pressure

Riddle 3:

In the digital world where messages flow,
Some words can hurt, much more than you know.
They hide behind screens, with mean things to say,
Making others feel sad, each and every day.
It's the act of being cruel, causing others to cry,
What's this harmful deed, can you identify?

Answer: Cyberbullying





List of Printouts

Printout 1:

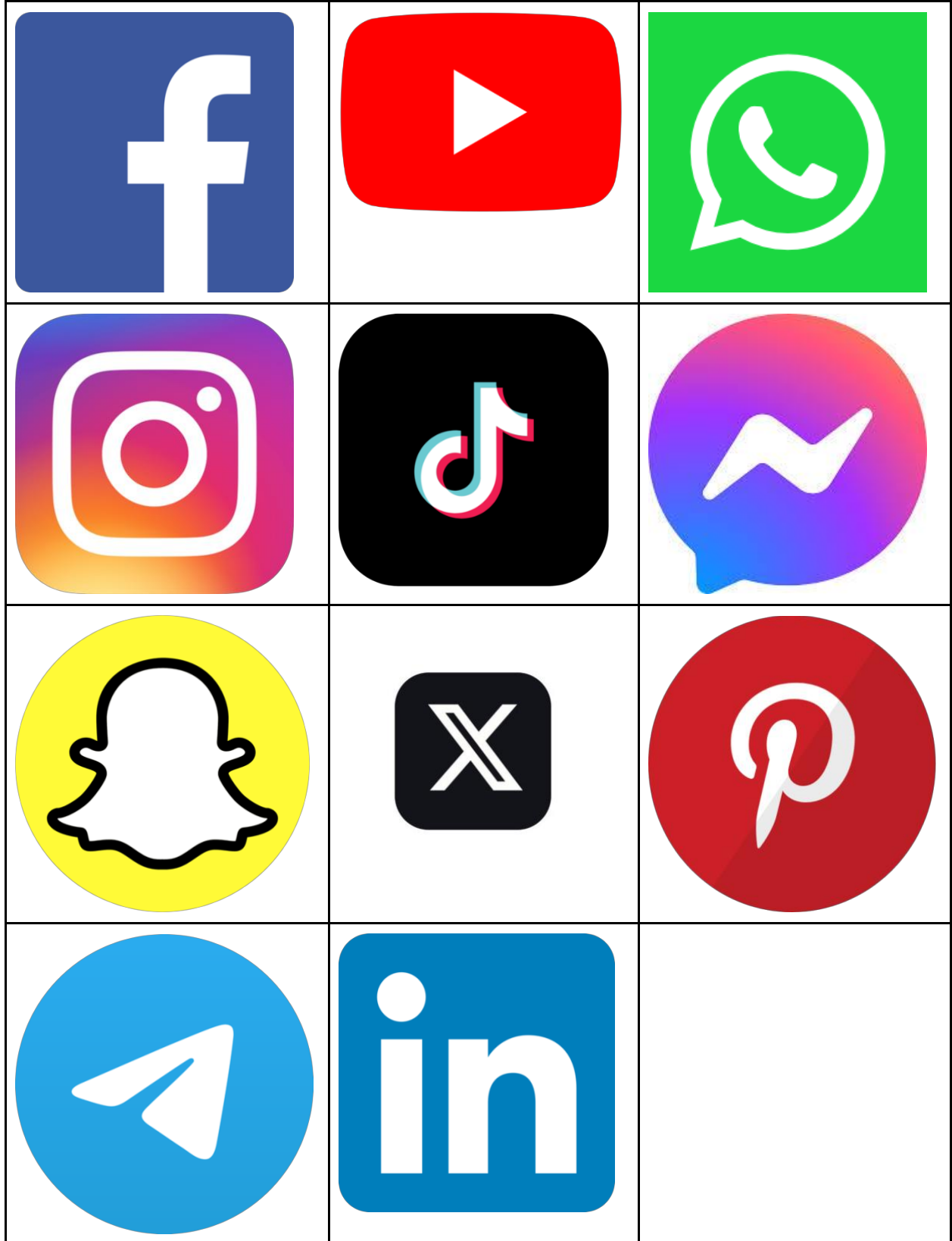
You and your friends are visiting an old tech lab as part of your school trip. While walking with the rest of the group, you suddenly notice a room with some interesting lights at the corner of the lab. Your curiosity wins, and without noticing the 'Do not enter' sign at the door you decide to follow the lights. But as you step inside, you trigger the security system and the door locks behind you - trapping you inside!

In the middle of the room there is a note saying 'Within these walls lies a solution to break free from the negative influence of social media. In order to escape the room, you must go through a set of challenges representing the negative influences and pitfalls of social media. Our Artificial Intelligence system will follow you through the challenges, and will guide you to the next clue once you solve the challenge. The first challenge can be found on the table next to you.'





Printout 2:





Printout 3:

TikTok is a social media app focused on short-form video content, often set to music. With over 1 billion monthly active users, TikTok is known for its viral challenges, creative expression, and strong presence among younger audiences. Users can create and share 15-second to 3-minute videos, participate in trending challenges, and discover content through the For You page, making it a dynamic platform for entertainment and creativity.

Messenger is a messaging app by Facebook that allows users to send messages and make voice and video calls. With around 1 billion monthly active users, Messenger is widely used for personal communication and business interactions. Users can chat with friends, send photos and videos, use interactive features like games and stickers, and even conduct business communication, integrating closely with Facebook's ecosystem.

Facebook is a social networking site where users can create profiles, share updates, photos, and videos, and connect with friends and family. With over 2.9 billion monthly active users, Facebook remains one of the most widely used social media platforms globally. Users can join groups based on interests, follow pages, participate in events, and use the Marketplace to buy and sell items. It also offers messaging through Facebook Messenger, making it a versatile platform for both personal and business use.

Instagram is a photo and video sharing app known for its focus on visual content. With around 2 billion monthly active users, Instagram is popular for sharing photos, videos, Stories, and Reels. Users can follow influencers, discover new trends, and engage with content through likes, comments, and direct messages, making it a vibrant platform for visual storytelling and community building.

Telegram is a messaging app known for its focus on speed and security. With over 700 million monthly active users, Telegram offers robust privacy features and supports large group chats and channels. Users can send text messages, create groups with up to 200,000 members, and enjoy features like encrypted secret chats, making it a popular choice for secure communication.

WhatsApp is a messaging app that allows users to send text messages, voice messages, and make voice and video calls. With approximately 2.3 billion monthly active users, WhatsApp is a dominant messaging platform used for personal and group chats. Users can share photos and videos, use end-to-end encryption for secure communication, and post status updates that disappear after 24 hours, making it a comprehensive tool for staying connected.

LinkedIn is a professional networking site aimed at building and engaging with a professional network. With around 900 million members and over 310 million monthly active users, LinkedIn is the leading platform for professional development, job searching, and industry networking. Users can create profiles, connect with colleagues, share industry news, and participate in professional groups and discussions, making it an essential tool for career growth and networking.

Snapchat is a multimedia messaging app where messages and photos are only available for a short time before disappearing. With about 500 million monthly active users, Snapchat is popular for its ephemeral messaging, Stories that last 24 hours, and fun AR filters and lenses. Users can send snaps to friends, explore content from creators and brands, and enjoy a playful and spontaneous way of sharing moments.





YouTube is a video-sharing platform where users can upload, view, comment on, and share videos. Boasting over 2.5 billion monthly active users, YouTube is a leading destination for video content ranging from vlogs and tutorials to music videos and live streams. Users can subscribe to channels, create playlists, and participate in live streams, making it an essential platform for learning, entertainment, and following creators and influencers.

Twitter (X), now rebranded as X, is a microblogging platform where users post and interact with short messages called tweets. With around 400 million monthly active users, Twitter is a key platform for real-time news, discussions, and social commentary. Users can follow other accounts, like and retweet posts, participate in trending conversations, and use hashtags to join discussions on various topics, making it a vital tool for staying informed and engaged.

Pinterest is a visual discovery and bookmarking platform where users can find and save ideas on various topics. With over 450 million monthly active users, Pinterest is a go-to resource for inspiration in areas like home decor, fashion, recipes, and DIY projects. Users create boards to organise saved pins, follow other users, and explore a vast array of ideas, making it a valuable platform for planning and creativity.

Printout 4:

In a sea of messages and content it is important to distinguish the truth from the myth and the real from the fake. However hard to find, the 3 truths will bring you closer to the way out.





Printout 5:

Misconceptions (myths): [do not not add this line in the printed version for the participants and cut each statement separately]

"Everything on Social Media is Real"
"More Likes and Followers Mean More Value"
"Privacy Settings are Foolproof"
"Social Media is Completely Free"
"Deleting a Post Removes it Permanently"
"Everyone Sees My Posts"
"It's Safe to Share Personal Information"
"Social Media is Harmless Entertainment"
"Social Media Doesn't Affect Relationships"
"I Can Easily Spot Fake News"
"All Influencers are Genuine"
"Social Media Activism is Always Effective"

Truths: [do not not add this line in the printed version for the participants and cut each statement separately]

"Social media is highly addictive."
"Social media can impact mental health."
"Social media is a powerful tool for communication and community building."

Printout 6:

In order to discover oneself, one must google thyself.

Printout 7:

The next clue lies in identifying 4 ways on how to protect yourself from someone potentially abusing your data.





Printout 8:

= G =

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a European Union regulation on information privacy in the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA). The GDPR is an important component of EU privacy law and human rights law, in particular Article 8(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It also governs the transfer of personal data outside the EU and EEA. The GDPR's goals are to enhance individuals' control and rights over their personal information and to simplify the regulations for international business.

= D =

The GDPR 2016 has eleven chapters, concerning general provisions, principles, rights of the data subject, duties of data controllers or processors, transfers of personal data to third countries, supervisory authorities, cooperation among member states, remedies, liability or penalties for breach of rights, and miscellaneous final provisions. Recital 4 proclaims that 'processing of personal data should be designed to serve mankind'.

= P =

These are some cases which are not addressed in the GDPR specifically, thus are treated as exemptions.

Personal or household activities

Law enforcement

National security

When the GDPR was being created, it was strictly created for the regulation of personal data which goes into the hands of companies. What is not covered by the GDPR is non-commercial information or household activities. An example of these household activities may be emails between two high school friends.

= R =

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) includes specific provisions to protect the data of minors, recognising that children require particular safeguards when it comes to their personal information. Key aspects of GDPR related to minors are:

1. GDPR sets the age of consent for data processing at 16 years old. However, member states can lower this age to as young as 13. For children below this age, parental or guardian consent is required for the processing of their personal data.
2. Organisations must provide clear and age-appropriate privacy notices to children, ensuring they understand how their data will be used. This means using simple language and avoiding legal jargon.
3. Right to erasure or also known as the "right to be forgotten," this allows minors to request the deletion of their personal data. This is particularly relevant for content they may have posted themselves and later wish to remove.
4. Organisations are encouraged to consider the privacy of minors from the outset of designing their systems and processes, ensuring that high privacy settings are the default.
5. GDPR places restrictions on the use of children's data for marketing purposes and automated decision-making, requiring explicit consent and ensuring such practices do not exploit their vulnerability.





Printout 9:

Riddle 1:

In the land of likes and shares, where stories are told,
You'll find heroes and villains, both young and old.
To find the ones who inspire, here's your quest:
Look for the kind words and actions, that truly are best.
They lift others up, with a smile and a cheer,
Who are these inspiring people, making positivity clear?

Clue 1: _ _ _ _ _

Clue 2: oerl domles

Riddle 2:

In the world of posts and pics,
Where everyone follows the latest tricks,
You feel the urge to fit right in,
To change yourself, just to win.
It's that force that makes you bend,
What's this pressure from your friend?

Clue 1: _ _ _ _ _

Clue 2: errep sersurpe

Riddle 3:

In the digital world where messages flow,
Some words can hurt, much more than you know.
They hide behind screens, with mean things to say,
Making others feel sad, each and every day.
It's the act of being cruel, causing others to cry,
What's this harmful deed, can you identify?

Clue 1: _ _ _ _ _

Clue 2: bybuylerlnig





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