



Countering Oppositional Political  
Extremism through Attuned  
Dialogue: Track, Attune, Limit

# Five Country Methods Handbook

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## **Deliverable D5.3**

# **Five Country Methods Handbook on principles for multi-method, multi-disciplinary social dialogue interventions**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



Innovate  
UK

**Project name** OppAttune: Countering Oppositional Political Extremism Through Attuned Dialogue: Track, Attune, Limit.

**Project acronym** OPPATTUNE

**Grant agreement ID** 101095170

**Deliverable number** D5.3

**Deliverable name** Five Country Methods Handbook on principles for multi-method, multi-disciplinary social dialogue interventions.

**Due date** 31 March 2025

**Submission date** 4 April 2025

**Type** Handbook

**Dissemination level** Public

**Work package** 5

**Deliverable Leading Partners** Özyeğin Üniversitesi and Cultures Interactive






**Contributing Partners** Universidade De Coimbra, PRONI, ISAC, Open University

| HISTORY OF CHANGES |                  |   |
|--------------------|------------------|---|
| Version            | Publication date | Changes   |
| 1                  | 28.02.2025       | WP5 team internal review and Quality Assurance  |
| 2                  | 07.03.2025       | Submitted for Scientific Coordinator internal review and Quality Assurance  |
| 3                  | 25.03.2025       | Scientific Review (OU-KM) proposed title should be reduced, summary to include outcomes of handbook's proposed processes/tool-kit in relation to attunement and EE throughout handbook. |
| 4                  | 2.04.2025        | Submitted to Scientific Coordinator – final review  |
| 5                  |                  | OppAttune template formatting, proof-read – Sign Off Scientific & Administrative Coordinator  |

Views and opinions expressed within this framework paper are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, the Horizon-Europe programme or Innovate UK. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. Grant Agreement No. 101095170.

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## Executive Summary

This handbook shows how to limit everyday extremism through multi-method, multi-disciplinary social dialogue interventions grounded in ethnography, which we conceive broadly as observing and participating in people's daily lives over an extended period of time, to understand their practices, narratives, and interactions. Specifically, we build on case studies from five countries (discussed in D5.2) that used collaborative ethnography, autoethnography, ethnographic gamification, narrative group work, psychoeducational workshops, and capacity-building training for non-violent conflict resolution. **These methods foster attunement—a dynamic dialogic interaction limiting everyday extremism—within diverse communities.**

In this handbook, we describe how to implement the method via context-specific adaptations:

### Collaborative Ethnography and Autoethnography

Emphasize co-creation of knowledge with community insiders, reflexivity, and the use of personal narratives to deepen understanding.

Key principles include: nurturing individual and team reflexivity, combining interviews with autoethnography, using social dialogues for transformative Participatory Action Research, and recognizing limitations.

### Ethnographic Gamification

Uses game elements to transform ethnographic findings into interactive tools for self-reflection and social and political dialogue.

Key principles include: collecting ideas, fostering arguments, and reflexivity on feelings, organizing questions effectively, and designing balanced gameplay.

### Facilitating Narrative Group Work

Focuses on building trust and relationships through narrative communication and fostering emotional intelligence.

Key principles include: inclusive practices, voluntariness, open-ended dialogue, and the creation of safe spaces.

### Psychoeducational Workshops

Designed to enhance participants' cognitive, emotional, and social competencies through participatory learning, identity building, and media literacy.

Key principles include: Using a multi-sectoral, holistic approach that is context-specific, with an emphasis on emotional regulation and perspective-taking.

### Capacity Building Training

Provides youth workers with knowledge and skills in non-violent communication and conflict resolution, which is particularly useful in post-conflict societies.

Key principles include: prioritizing interactive learning, intercultural approaches, and creating safe spaces for development

The second part of the report then presents an "**Attuned Social Dialogue Toolkit**" featuring **tools that address community work in Living Democracies**, including collaborative and autoethnography tools, gamification tools, tools based on the method of Narrative Group Work and non-formal educational and leadership programs tools.

The toolkit also:

- highlights the need for **safe and skilled facilitation**, which involves creating secure spaces for social dialogue and developing strong facilitation skills.
- stresses the need for an **adaptive and ethical approach** that recognizes the limitations of research and action and prioritizes the safety and well-being of participants.



The toolkit advises users to always adapt methods to local conditions, prioritize safety, be open to feedback, and encourage continuous learning.

**Successful application of these tools can foster the following outcomes:**

#### Collaborative Ethnography and Autoethnography

These tools lead to a **deeper, more nuanced understanding of the roots of everyday extremism** within specific contexts and has impact on the community.

Applying the suggested reflexive and co-creation processes can foster **greater empathy and self-awareness** among researchers and community insiders contributing to an increased capacity for attuned dialogue and potentially facilitate identifying **prepolitical or parapolitical interactions** that drive everyday extremism.

#### Ethnographic Gamification

Ethnographic gamification transforms ethnographic findings into engaging, interactive tools which allow for both social intervention and science feedback. This can result in **enhanced self-reflection on biases and assumptions** related to extremist narratives and foster **dialogical thinking** among participants.

By addressing misinformation in a fun and accessible way, ethnographic gamification can contribute to **increased critical thinking skills** and a greater capacity for democratic engagement (democratic capacity) while promoting attunement around contested issues, also constituting itself into a participatory action research methodology

#### Tools based on the Narrative Group Work in Schools® method (NGW)

By building trust and relationships through the facilitation of narrative communication in small groups, this method creates **safe spaces for open-ended dialogue** and **conflict transformation**.

NGW can foster social and **emotional intelligence** among participants, enabling them to better understand diverse perspectives and experiences and thus **diminish hostile attitudes** and attune polarization rooted in



**Non-formal  
Educational and  
Leadership Program  
Tools**

everyday extremism. This can contribute to a stronger sense of community and **enhanced social dialogue skills** crucial for a resilient democratic society.

Programmes designed to enhance participants' cognitive, emotional, and social competencies lead to **improved emotional (self-)regulation and perspective-taking**, as well as strengthened **inclusive social identities**.

Workshops can build resilience against extremist narratives (reduced extremism) and empower individuals with the skills needed for **informed and constructive participation in democratic processes** (democratic capacity), fostering attunement through enhanced understanding, empathy, and self-reflection.

Providing youth workers with knowledge and skills in non-violent communication and conflict resolution equips them to **address conflict constructively** within their communities, particularly in post-conflict societies. This can directly contribute to **reducing the potential for escalation towards extremist behaviors** and fostering environments where dialogue and mutual understanding (attunement) are prioritized. By empowering youth leaders, this method also strengthens **local capacity for democratic engagement and peacebuilding**.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 WP5 Aims and Objectives



Building on a transdisciplinary collaboration between social scientists, humanities scholars and practitioners from the fields of anthropology, psychology, politics and international relations, and cross-community dialogue, WP5 takes an ethnographic approach to everyday extremism. Titled ‘Extremism and Living Democracies’, this WP studies narratives embedded in what is considered by most people to be the common-sense or accepted notions of “daily life.”

More specifically, we focus on narratives and patterns of thought and behaviour which we consider examples of “everyday extremism” as they (re)produce hostile oppositions against the ‘other’ implying their fundamentally lesser value. Through in-depth research in five different national contexts, we obtain a grounded understanding of how these narratives and patterns emerge and flourish, as well as strategies to counteract them – and perhaps even to reduce and dissolve them.

By focusing on local systems of meaning and practices that address disengagement from or engagement with the ‘other’, WP5 aims to support possibilities for social dialogue and attunement. Thematically, this WP focuses particularly on immigration, inter-community relations, group-focused enmity (Zick et al. 2011, 2023), and political mistrust as case studies in each country as these issues have all been particularly salient in our fieldwork and connect with OppAttune’s broader themes.

WP5 has the following objectives:

01

Map the field anthropologically, through ethnographic case studies, in Turkey, Portugal, Germany, Serbia and Bosnia, and develop an empirically informed theory of emergence of opposition drivers.

02

Develop, employ and test co-constructed dialogical interventions that create resilience against polarised us/them oppositions.

03

Develop evidence-based innovations that amplify local voices into policy strategies and feed into Attunement Model.

FIGURE 1. WP5 OBJECTIVES



#### Our goal in brief

WP5 aims to identify, understand and support possibilities for social dialogue in cases of heightened polarisation across selected local ecologies in Turkey, Germany, Portugal, Serbia and Bosnia.

## 1.2 Aims and Scope of the Report

The major aim of this report is to provide a **Handbook** of practices for multi-method, multi-disciplinary social dialogue interventions that can be broadly applied in Europe and beyond. The core objective of the methods is to **facilitate social dialogues that transform destructive oppositions into constructive forces, thereby strengthening living democracies.**

This handbook guides users in implementing evidence-based strategies built on ethnographic practices that examine, prevent and limit everyday extremism.

Specifically, we provide guidelines for using collaborative ethnography, autoethnography, ethnographic gamification, narrative group work, psychoeducational workshops, and capacity building training for non-violent communication and conflict resolution.

**In 5.2, the team identified and described 6 practices that can limit tendencies of polarising and everyday extremism:**

- 1) Collaborative Ethnography:** the practice of ethnographic work with one or more insiders in/of the community being studied to co-create knowledge
- 2) Autoethnography:** the ethnographic study of a culture through a process of self exploration, with the goal of providing an insider perspective
- 3) Ethnographic Gamification:** the transformation of the results of ethnographic work into context-based participatory and co-constructed games that feedback into both research and action, fostering self-reflexiveness, dialogical thinking and democratic engagement.
- 4) Narrative Group Work:** the practice of building emotional political intelligence and social skills for group-dynamic dialogues
- 5) Psychoeducational Workshops:** structured learning sessions designed to develop and strengthen essential cognitive, emotional, and social skills in participants, with the goal of addressing specific psychological or social challenges, such as preventing youth radicalisation and promoting resilience.
- 6) Capacity Building Training for Non-violent Communication and Conflict Resolution:** provides young people with knowledge in the field of youth work, youth activism, and conflict resolution, to empower them to engage in their communities as youth social workers.

Case studies using these methods were presented in 5.2. In this handbook, we provide specific guidelines for applying them in other contexts with the idea that they are likely to be effective because they are widely applicable, adaptable to local conditions and address both global, and also local contexts. **Yet, these methods are always dynamic, flexible and contextually-based, and thus our handbook should be considered a “Living Collection” that each researcher or practitioner should tailor to their community.** The final section of the report is an **Attuned Social Dialogue Toolkit** based on the principles.

The methods detailed in this handbook are designed to **revitalize and cultivate living democracy** by promoting inclusive, prosocial engagement and participation within a dynamic, evolving space that exists outside of traditional power structures. This concept of living democracy is rooted in the idea of an interconnected perspective on society that sees it as constantly evolving. We argue that life within a democratic society involves “fundamental interconnectedness” (Asenbaum 2023) and banks on cultivating instances and structures of “social resonance” (Rosa 2020). Realities and individuals’ aims within a living democracy are thus not static, but continuously changing. **Living democracies are thriving, transforming, ever-evolving assemblages formed of the constantly changing perspectives of their participants (Asenbaum 2023), who are all included on an equal level with equal rights.** By providing tools and methodologies for social dialogue, this handbook shows how to nurture an environment where living democracy can flourish, adapting to the ever-changing needs and perspectives of its participants.



**The Relationship Between Living Democracy, Social Dialogue and Everyday Extremism:** The evolution of extremism stems from impaired social dialogue. Living democracy is a space created by interventions which reinvigorate social dialogue and attune situations of faltering social dialogue.

## 2. Operationalizing Attunement

The purpose of this handbook is to describe methods that are helpful for identifying everyday extremism on the ground and developing social dialogical interventions that achieve attunement. A key objective is thus to operationalise ‘attunement’ by developing community-level and classroom-level tools for attuned social and political dialogue.” **Operationalising attunement means promoting and practicing living democracy through engaging in various forms of social dialogue in non-violent ways via self-reflective and socially transformative tools.**

Attunement is a relatively lesser-used concept in the social sciences that is intended to be further specified and developed via the OppAttune project itself. **The current working definition of attunement for the project is:**

**Attunement** can be understood as a dynamic relational interaction between oppositional entities, whether individuals, groups, parties or nations. Attunement mitigates extremism, it involves the democratic capacity to take up a number of positions, to sustain dialogue, in terms of new positions, accords, discords and the development of emerging shared political narratives (Mahendran and English, forthcoming in *D6.5 Attunement Model: Game, Set and Attune: A Political Attunement Model for Limiting Extreme Narratives and Building Democratic Capacity*).

In WP5, we use the following working definition:



Attunement can be understood as a **dynamic relational interaction between different persons holding oppositional views, whether as individuals or as groups, parties and nations.** Attunement mitigates (everyday) extremism, anti-democratic attitudes and group-focused enmity. It does so through **involving the democratic capacity to take up a range of positions,** based on understanding, empathy and introspection, **to sustain dialogue in the face of misunderstanding, conflict and destructive/disingenuous (inter)action,** and to arrive at new positions and shared political narratives, resulting from processes of practiced social dialogue.

**We further assert that attunement has the following characteristics and can be described by the following metaphorical allusions:**

- Attunement refers to a process of bringing elements into harmony or alignment. It can thus be likened to musical harmony, involving elements of **coordination and improvisation** where diverse voices come together in a **creative and productive** way. It’s not about achieving a single, common note but rather about recognizing and integrating the unique contributions of each instrument, melody or voice which may come together dynamically in a continuous and more or less improvised musical flow.

- Attunement is not a static state but an ongoing process of interaction and adjustment. It involves **sustaining a relationship** between persons, groups, parties or communities holding different and oppositional views. Sustaining a relationship requires **empathy and curiosity** - a willingness to understand and relate to the experiences of others. Citizens in living democracies must have the capacity to understand and share the views and feelings of others and have a genuine interest in exploring different perspectives. Like a river, which is characterized by its continuous flow and movement influenced by different factors like rainfall and drought, attunement is similarly a **dynamic, ongoing process rather than a static end-point**. Just as a river adapts to the terrain it flows through, attunement requires an ongoing **adjustment** to different contexts and situations. A river flows around obstacles in its path, and attunement similarly requires the ability to navigate the inevitable conflicts and challenges that arise in community life. It isn't a straight line but requires maneuvering around "bends" in the terrain of social relationships.
- Attunement involves the democratic capacity for individuals and groups to see beyond their own perspectives and engage with others in a way that recognizes the validity of different viewpoints. Self-reflection, cultural and social awareness and critical thinking are vital skills in attunement processes as they enable actors to recognize and reject narratives that promote exclusion, devaluation of others and group-focused hostility. From a developmental psychology perspective, attunement highlights the **value of difference** in children's learning. This perspective sees a certain level of **"strangeness"** as important, where attunement involves bringing diverse perspectives into a shared interactional space. The goal of interaction is not to reach consensus, but rather to create an environment of **recognition, alertness, and kindness**. Attunement in this context means coordinating complementary views in a way that enriches the whole experience for everyone involved.
- **Communication and negotiation** are needed to attain attunement. In a thriving living democracy citizens must be willing to listen to and to consider the perspectives of those with whom they disagree and they must enter interpersonal rapport and intense exchange with them. **Transference** in psychoanalysis can be related to the relational and emotional aspects of attunement. Attunement has to do with emotional and psychological development, and with building emotional intelligence.
- Attunement facilitates the development of shared political narratives, implying a move towards a common understanding and a shared perspective on the future. It involves arriving at new positions via processes of practicing social dialogues. However, **attunement is not about finding common ground as much as "finding the other"**. It requires a deeper engagement with difference than is possible with a search for surface commonalities. Like a musical jam session, attunement emphasizes the value of diverse perspectives rather than seeking a singular song (or consensus).
- Attunement seeks to **transform destructive oppositions** into constructive forces. It is ultimately intended to promote social justice and societal integration. Like a biosphere, where all living organisms and their environment are interconnected and interdependent, attunement emphasizes the **interconnectedness of individuals and groups within a community**. A biosphere thrives on the relationships and interactions between different species and elements, while attunement seeks to foster



positive relationships and understanding between diverse and potentially conflicting perspectives within a community. A biosphere relies on biodiversity for its resilience and health, just as attunement thrives on a **diversity of perspectives and experiences**.

In summary, attunement is a complex and multi-faceted concept that involves a dynamic process of interaction, the capacity for dialogue, orientation toward others, and a commitment to rejecting and dissolving everyday extremism. It is about finding ways to navigate differences and create shared political narratives that support living democracies.

The two next sections examine two important concepts for our handbook: **social resonance** and **ethnography**.

## 2.1. From Social Dialogue to Social Resonance

Building on the work of Hartmut Rosa and other relevant authors, WP5 incorporates the concept of “social resonance” as a theoretical backdrop against which the concept of social dialogue as a means of achieving attunement can be better explained and operationalised. We define social resonance as the interpersonal, relational and dynamic communication of individuals with others and in groups, based on dialogical processes of listening and speaking, using both verbal and non-verbal forms of articulation, operating at different levels of (un)consciousness. The communicative acts and phenomena of social resonance between people are subject to the biographical histories and mental patterns of the individuals involved - and to the narratives within their cultural and social contexts.



**Social Resonance:** The interpersonal, relational communication of individuals within groups, facilitating understanding, empathy, and self-reflection. It serves as a theoretical framework to explain social dialogue as a means to achieve attunement.

**Social resonance can facilitate the emergence of heightened interpersonal understanding of the views of others across wide differences, as well as emotional empathy - and self-reflection/inter-reflection - in relation to their personal situation(s) and lived biographical trajectories.** It can thus also serve to moderate various types of opposition, conflict and instances of dissonant interaction. However, certain moments of social resonance can also lead to misunderstandings or to (inter)actions of a destructive or antisocial nature. Yet, these can be seen as integral elements within an overarching long-term process of facilitating further resonance of a prosocial, constructive and democratic kind through social dialogue and attunement, which can moderate and compensate for the destructive (inter)actions.

**This long-term process relies on an infrastructure/culture of social dialogue, attunement and living democracy - i.e. a dialogical infrastructure of practicing living democracy that ensures that social resonance does not only occur in one-off instances or singular encounters but is embedded in an ongoing process of facilitating 'resonant communication' in multiple instances and social settings between many different individuals and groups, groups and social actors.**

This understanding of social dialogue and attunement corresponds to the epistemological purpose of Rosa's concept of 'resonant communication' - which aims to theorise a sociology of 'the good' in dialectical opposition to alienation.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2 Why use Ethnography to study Everyday Extremism?

Ethnography is a valuable method for studying and addressing everyday extremism because it offers a unique lens into the subtle, daily interactions and cultural practices that other research and practice methods might overlook. It allows for a deeper understanding of the social environments where extremist narratives take root. Here are some of the specific ways we have found ethnography to be valuable for working on and against everyday extremism:

### Understanding Context

Ethnography is a holistic method that takes in the widest possible picture of social and political life, rather than focusing on one specific domain, such as economics or religion. Unlike other work on extremism that is focused solely on political engagement or economic deprivation, ethnography has **a broader scope for examining “the everyday spaces and political infrastructures that make populism possible” (Featherstone and Karaliotas, 2019)**. It also emphasizes the importance of local places in driving narratives. Therefore, it shows how the meanings of everyday **extremism can be understood within specific places**, which is crucial for reducing the driving factors of everyday extremist narratives. Ethnographic work facilitates the development of site-specific and contextualized interventions that counteract the emergence and spread of extremist narratives in a tailor-made fashion. By providing an in-depth understanding of specific contexts, ethnography enables the development of effective, localized strategies.

### Revealing Daily Micro-interactions

This is vital for understanding the often-unnoticed ways that extremist sentiments become embedded in everyday life. Ethnographic research can reveal the "everyday spaces of sociopolitical reproduction" and the "generative role of space in producing political positions and feelings and the quotidian conditions, consequences and processes underpinning the politics of hate" (Santamarina 2021). Ethnography is also useful in capturing the flow of extremist ideas and movements between political centers and peripheries. The location of ethnographic research on “the margin” or the “cultural hinterlands of modern societies” (Wilson 2022) is part of its usefulness.

### Analyzing Narratives

Ethnography is useful for mapping narratives of everyday extremism, understanding their emergence and spread, and assisting with deconstructing and transforming them. **It is especially useful for identifying narratives that dehumanize and foster moral disengagement (Bandura, 1986, 2002, 2015)**. Anthropologists have shown that narrative provides "ethical and moral directions and religious or political explanations of what holds the world together" (Gotsch & Palmberger, 2022).

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<sup>1</sup> Rosa's main assumption is that there is a “modern crisis of burnout, environmental problems and mass alienation” – and “resonance” is seen as key element of a solution to problems and symptoms of “alienation caused by modernity”, in that resonance can bring about a “transformative, responsive and affective relationship with the world”.



### Identifying "Silent Narratives"

Ethnography can reveal "silent narratives," which are not explicitly extremist, but function to normalize exclusionary attitudes (for more on silent narratives, see WP4 reports by Askanius, Haselbacher, Reeger and Stoencheva 2024). Researchers who use ethnography “are good at paying attention to dispositions and practices that other social scientists would generally dismiss as prepolitical or, at best, parapolitical” (Mazarella 2019). The everyday prepolitical or parapolitical interactions in neighbourhoods may be the decisive drivers for eventual political action or violence. **Ethnography can help identify the ways in which everyday extremism is articulated through silent narratives and thereby enable researchers to develop more effective interventions.**

### Exploring Lived Experiences

**Ethnography allows researchers to capture participants' lived experiences and perspectives.** This provides insights into the broader social and structural contexts that shape their realities. Ethnographic work can reveal how context and personal experience shape individual worldviews and attitudes.

### Challenging the Ordinary/Extraordinary Binary

**The ethnographic approach challenges the idea that the everyday is separate from the extraordinary (Totschnig, 2016), by drawing attention to the micro-disruptions that rupture everyday ordinariness.** It reveals how what is considered "ordinary" can become a breeding ground for extremism.

### Understanding Emotional and Psychological Aspects

**Ethnographic work can help researchers and practitioner to examine the feelings and psychodynamic phenomena associated with political rituals, recording both the variable levels of intensity projected by extremist leaders and groups and the variable ways in which audiences respond (Blee 2007).** It can also provide insights into how traumatic experiences, problems of socialization, discrimination, and problems of social capital can influence the adoption of extremist ideas (Beaujouan et al. 2024; Harpviken 2020).

### Combining with Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Ethnography is particularly effective when combined with a self-reflexive and dialogical PAR, which allows for the subjects participating in the research to contribute to the research design, the direction of the questions, and the outcomes of the research.

### Examining Place Attachment

Ethnography is ideal for examining place attachment and belonging, which can be powerful influences on identity, with perceived threats to identity being one possible explanation for everyday extremism. For example, as we explore in 5.2, research with Syrians in Turkey has found that loss of comfort public spaces in the sense of common-sense images, meanings and symbols of “Turkishness” is a key reason for xenophobia (Saracaoglu and Belanger 2019). **Thus, ethnographic research can suggest the roots of xenophobia in the cognitive and emotional bonds to places that may not be immediately evident via less in-depth methods.**

In summary, ethnography provides a nuanced, in-depth understanding of everyday extremism that is essential for developing effective interventions and promoting social dialogue and attunement. It goes beyond surface-level observations and delves into the complex interplay of

social, cultural, and personal factors that contribute to the rise and spread of extremism in everyday life. Ethnography also can serve as a baseline for the development of other innovative methods.

### 3. Multi-method, multi-disciplinary social dialogue interventions in place-based living democracies

#### 3.1 Overview

In this section of the report, we review the key principles that need to be taken into account for each of the six methods discussed as case studies in 5.2: 1) collaborative ethnography 2) autoethnography, 3), narrative group work, 4) ethnographic gamification 5) psychoeducational workshops, 6) capacity building training for non-violent communication and conflict resolution. The methodological approaches discussed were developed in our five country case studies. For more information about the selection of sites, samples and management of research, see **5.2: Five Country Good Practice Case Studies Report**.

#### 3.2 Collaborative Ethnography and Autoethnography

Collaborative ethnography and autoethnography are closely related ways of researching and positively impacting communities. Both methods involve long-term close relationships and in-depth reflection from participants. Both can also be considered a form of participatory action research (PAR), which aims to achieve greater equality between researchers and participants than standard research approaches.



**Participatory Action Research (PAR)** is an approach to research that emphasizes collaboration, co-creation, and social change. Unlike traditional research methods, where researchers often study participants as external observers, PAR actively involves participants as co-researchers in all phases of the research process. This includes defining the research problem, designing the methodology, collecting data, analyzing findings, and implementing solutions (Aiiazi et al. 2021; Holmes and Marcus 2008).

Collaborative ethnography and autoethnography were used for the OppAttune case study in Turkey for which we created a 5-member collaborative team and also arranged for 3 members to conduct autoethnography. Collaborative ethnography and autoethnography were found to be useful both for understanding everyday extremist narratives as described in Deliverable 5.2 (add title) and also - as discussed below – for fostering social dialogue and attunement in democratic communities. We consciously chose to work with researcher-participants from diverse personal and professional backgrounds as we felt this was essential for ensuring a holistic and nuanced approach to everyday extremism.

The boundaries and composition of the “field” and the nature of observations and interview questions to be used in our research were delineated collaboratively by each co-researcher (Salih, Ugras, Kanal) together with Susan Rottmann and Samarjit Ghosh at regular meetings. Our team meetings (over Zoom) were recorded and later transcribed, and these meetings form part of the analysis that follows.

## Researcher Backgrounds for Turkey-based research in OppAttune

As described in Deliverable 5.2, the Turkish team is led by **Susan Rottmann** (an American assistant professor of anthropology) and **Samarjit Ghosh** (an Indian assistant professor of international relations). Rottmann and Ghosh recruited three individuals - Salih, Ugras, Kanal - with diverse backgrounds and differing insider-outsider connections to our localities to work with us as ethnographers. **Yousef Salih** is a Syrian refugee living in Istanbul since 2013; **Ibrahim Ugras** is a Turkish citizen of Kurdish descent from Sanliurfa; and **Maria Kanal** is a Polish national whose in-laws are Alevi Arab Turks from Hatay. Salih has an elementary school education, while Ugras and Kanal are pursuing PhDs in political science and psychology, respectively. Each co-researcher's fieldwork was followed closely by the team leaders with Rottmann also conducting fieldwork in the cities of Istanbul and Hatay. With regards to field and team languages, we all spoke Turkish and English, with Arabic spoken by Kanal and Salih and Kurdish by Ugras. Each researcher draws on "ethnographic knowing" (Pink and Morgan, 2013), which includes a wealth of experiences far beyond the scope of OppAttune and which allows us to rapidly understand, analyze and intervene in the ethnographic context. The diverse nature of the team itself and the self-critical reflexivity and shared debating of ideas we implemented means that we achieved a major PAR objective with the team.

**Power always matters** Although our process was highly inclusive and open, we do not assert nor expect that it was completely free from inequalities and power dynamics among our fieldworkers (Salih, Ugras and Kanal) or even between the more senior members (Rottmann and Ghosh). Rottmann and Ghosh are full-time academics and long-term project personnel, while Salih, Ugras and Kanal were hired on a contract basis, meaning their position was temporary. Further, the topic of research was not fully undetermined for the team, but rather specified as part of an EU-funded project (OppAttune). Although we refined important concepts for our own field sites, we were not free to completely change the topic of research and were constrained by funding, time and other tangible and intangible constraints.

In the sections that follow, 4 key principles for collaborative ethnography and autoethnography are outlined, including: 1) Nurture Individual and Team Reflexivity 2) Develop Ethnographic Interviews with Autoethnography 3) Create Transformative PAR Through Social Dialogues 4) Recognize and learn from what is not possible. These are principles that worked well in our context, and which we consider to be broadly applicable in other communities. Importantly, they come from "pulling back the curtain" on the research methodology so-to-speak to show how real research is done. We do not simply describe the method or findings, but the principles that all researchers should consider and reflect upon while implementing collaborative ethnography and autoethnography.

### Nurture Individual *and* Team Reflexivity

Reflexivity is now widely used – even seen as essential – for most ethnographic research, because it mitigates potential biases of qualitative researchers. It also deepens the researcher's capacity to engage with participants in ways that are sufficiently sensitive, respectful and ethical.



**Reflexivity:** refers to awareness of one's privilege and disadvantage in comparison with an "other" and according to respective positioning within structures of powers. The goal of reflexivity is to account for how researcher's points of view and positions impact results, which is important for explaining the limitations and strengths of interpretations (Davis, 2014; Rice, Harrison, Friedman, 2019).

Although reflexivity is essential to ethnographic work, it is usually based on each individual researcher reflecting on the components of their own identity, such as race, ethnicity, class and gender and then thinking about how this positioning might affect their field relationships or interpretations of research findings. Here, as a living principle, we build on prior work (Rottmann and Nimer, forthcoming) that calls for the use of reflexivity within collaborative teams.

Thus, throughout the research process, **our team continuously reflected together on how their identities—as outsiders/insiders, and as individuals from various gender, ethnic, racial, class and other social groups—shaped their access to participants and influenced their interpretations.** This reflexive group approach helped to mitigate any individuals' biases and ensured that we as a team could gain a deeper understanding of the socio-political landscapes of everyday extremism.

### Empowering Teams with Shared Reflexivity

In our view, team reflexivity fosters empowering relationships because each member is open about and also aware of others' positionality, privilege, experience, identity and socio-cultural knowledge. Thus, power differentials are acknowledged and to some extent reduced for the team members.

A good example of team reflexivity happened during one of the team's zoom meetings, when Salih compared himself to Kanal. He stated his opinion that he is more of a member of the community he is studying (Syrian and Turkish locals in Istanbul) than she is because he is a Syrian migrant living in Istanbul, while she is a Polish national who comes and goes occasionally to her field site in Hatay. He explained,



"I know the people I will be interviewing very well. They see me as a friend or a neighbour. They know me and my background. For example, I even talked with a Turkish man who was very "nationalistic" and concerned about Syrians being in Turkey. I've found it is easy to talk to even people like him because they're familiar with my perspective too, which might not be the case for Maria, since she is not from the same circle as the people she researches. Maybe she has to explain much more in the first place to be able to talk with people."

Salih reflexively notes that he will be perceived as an insider, which might make it easier to access certain views. He thinks Maria is more of an outsider. Team members responded to Salih by agreeing with him, but also pointing out that there are a variety of ways that each researcher is going to be perceived. Maria is also an insider to some extent as she is married to

a member of the community she will study, speaks Arabic and Turkish fluently and has known her interlocutors for many years as a family member. Rottmann said,



“Yes, it’s important to consider how participants might perceive our research based on your identities and positions. [Salih], your challenge is that people might tailor their responses based on what they think you want to hear as a Syrian. Maria might seem more neutral for them since she is not in the community directly like you are.”

By acknowledging the fluid and multifaceted nature of insider-outsider dynamics, our team was able to gain a more holistic and accurate understanding of lived realities within these communities.

The team also reflected on how to accurately interpret what they were finding. For example, personal reflections shared by Uğraş (as a member of the Kurdish community in his field site, Şanlıurfa) helped team members to understand some cultural norms that locals and Syrian migrants might share and which should be taken into account when analyzing narratives. He noted,



“When we obtain certain data, we might think it’s specific to the identity of Syrians, but since it also happens to local citizens there, it may not be exclusively related to being Syrian or to those who have migrated from Syria. For example, Şanlıurfa has a very traditional societal structure, and in the minds of the local community, being a young single man - whether Syrian or not - is perceived similarly. That is, the problems faced by a young single male refugee may overlap with the problems I face as a local.”

Uğraş’ personal reflection on his gendered experience and the local gender norms highlights how migrants and locals can share societal perceptions and challenges. Thus, some narratives that migrants confront might be shaped by (shared) cultural ideas and not result from anti-immigrant sentiment due to their migration status. By sharing his reflections with the team, Uğraş helped us to reflect on the fact that it is important for each researcher to attend to the intersectionality of their own identities and also to be aware of the local traditions that shape experiences. As a principle for collaborative ethnographic work, shared reflexive practices help to underscore the need for each researcher to be attuned to the interplay of positionality, cultural norms, and power structures when interpreting data.

#### Develop Ethnographic Interviews *with* Autoethnography

Ethnographic interviews aim to capture participants' lived experiences, cultural practices, and perspectives and offer insights into the broader social and structural contexts shaping their realities. Autoethnography, on the other hand, allows the researcher to critically examine his/her own experiences and positionality and to situate his/her own narrative within a wider cultural framework. We argue that combining ethnographic interviewing and autoethnography fosters even deeper insights. It enables researchers to uncover shared patterns, tensions, and intersections, thereby enhancing the accuracy and authenticity of the research.



Thus, as a living principle, we encouraged all of our fieldworkers to contribute autoethnographically, by sharing emotional insights (Smith & Watson, 2010) and theoretical conclusions based on their personal experiences and interpretations. We also specifically developed our ethnographic interviews with autoethnographic insights. When ethnographic interview methodologies and autoethnography are combined, they provide a powerful means of exploring everyday extremism via both personal and collective lenses.



**During one of our meetings, Ghosh explained to the team how we would develop ethnographic interview questions:**

“To do interviews with an ethnographic sensibility means to not have interviews be a straightforward question-and-answer session, like “Here’s the information I’m trying to get, so let me ask the question just like that.” It means understanding that sometimes, to get to a question, you have to come at it from different angles. People will give you different responses based on what they understand your question to be, and if you’re close with them—if you’re present in the context, if you spend time with them—you get a sense of how people like to approach questions. You get a sense of how people are responsive to questions.

As a key step towards autoethnography, we asked all of our fieldworkers to keep a personal memory journal, recording memories, stories, and conversations in a timeline format. This journal included:

- Self-reflexive writing on daily experiences,
- Participant observation notes about the local community,
- Sensory data from interactions,
- Conversations and interviews with locals and migrants,
- Memos on internal conflicts, reflecting their own struggles and those of the participants.



**The merits of autoethnography**

The merits of autoethnography for studying everyday extremism are numerous. It can provide insights that may remain hidden through other research methods, particularly regarding sensitive subjects like identity and marginalization. By capturing the individuality of participants while reflecting broader cultural and social dynamics, autoethnography illustrates diversity within populations. Finally, it democratizes the research process, allowing individuals with varying levels of academic training to engage in cultural interpretation and analysis, enriching the study with diverse perspectives.

An illustrative example of useful autoethnographic reflection for us can be found in the reflective writing shared by Salih, which makes clear how Syrians experience everyday extremism and how interview questions and attunement should be aimed:



“People want information about Syrians, but they are not getting their answers from the news. For example, I know that they want information because I am constantly asked:

- Do Syrians get money from the Turkish government?
- Do Syrians get free health insurance?
- Do Syrians want to stay in Turkey or will they go back to Syria after the war?
- Why don't more Syrian women work outside of the home?
- Why do Syrians have a lot of children? Given that they fled war and are poor, why are they still having children in Turkey?

These are questions that no one from the government has answered. In fact, these questions are not even asked to the government; they were asked to the Syrians themselves, who in turn had no idea what was going on. I was one of those Syrians who were being asked, and I had to respond to everyone one-by-one, telling them what I thought about my situation, focusing on what had happened over the past 10 years. While answering these questions, I realized that lack of information has created everyday extremism.”

During OppAttune field research, Salih was able to reflect upon, confront and clarify stereotypes and rumors about Syrians. Like Salih, Uğraş also used autoethnography to delve into common rumors and stereotypes. As someone who had briefly dated a Syrian woman, he reflected on gossip about Syrian women marrying Turkish nationals only for money. Salih and Uğraş' reflections ultimately enabled us to incorporate interview questions about (mis-) information, stereotypes and gender norms.

Autoethnography necessitates significant exposure and vulnerability, which makes it challenging. It “requires that we observe ourselves observing, that we interrogate what we think and believe, and that we challenge our own assumptions, asking over and over if we have penetrated as many layers of our own defenses, fears, and insecurities as our project requires” (Ellis and Adams 2020, p. 10). **This is not always an easy or comfortable process and we feel that working together to navigate this collaboratively is very helpful.** Ultimately, the use of autoethnographic insights to develop ethnographic interviews democratized the research process because it meant that we valued the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of all team members. It also deepened our eventual analysis of everyday extremism, as our researchers were able to situate their individual narratives within the broader complexities of communal identities and marginalization in society.



## Create Transformative PAR through Social Dialogues

A goal of OppAttune and specifically, WP5 was for our researchers to conduct PAR in the sense of: 1) thinking critically about their communities, 2) discussing oppressive everyday social and political forces, 3) initiating positive, transformative action (Freire 1973). Thus, we wanted Salih, Kanal and Ugras to identify and challenge extremist narratives via projects of attuned social dialogue. The first two goals were achieved via the first two principles described (Nurturing individual and team reflexivity; and Developing ethnographic interviews with autoethnography). However, the third goal was more challenging for us. **How could we achieve transformation or attunement via an action, event, or activity?** We discussed possibilities like a podcast, an art exhibition, a short film, a piece of creative writing or a community performance. However, from the very beginning we struggled with how we could create an effective action or transformation that would attune narratives in our communities. Kanal related that she found PAR based on such an action-transformation model to be at odds with our grounded theory methodology. She explained,



“I struggle with the concept of PAR, especially since the initial step involves introducing some change to the community. Are we assuming that the narratives we’re researching are something we need to change or offer a counter-narrative to? For example, if I know that Hatay has a strong anti-Syrian narrative, is our purpose to change this narrative or offer a counter-narrative? My experience suggests that the first phase of our research should be similar to grounded theory. You need to be aware of your assumptions and remain critical of them, keeping your questions open-ended. The context - like post-earthquake Hatay versus Istanbul - will differ, and you need to be critical of your own assumptions and avoid steering the conversation too much.”

Kanal describes how the combination of grounded theory and PAR creates a methodological tension: while grounded theory emphasizes openness and minimizing assumptions, PAR seeks to initiate action and transformation.



**Grounded Theory:** Grounded theory is a way of incorporating "methodological self-consciousness." It is a research process that involves changing course and adapting concepts and approaches to the particular data collection situation (Charmaz, 2017).

This juxtaposition was a challenge for the team. We wanted to find a way to balance flexibility in discovery with the intentionality of creating change.

Eventually, we decided it could be possible to start with grounded theory and then transition to participatory action research via an activity that would be implemented in a second phase of field work. Thus we planned to make a podcast (discussed below). However, we also wondered if an effective methodology could involve researchers engaging in attuned social dialogues during the process of field research. **Our conclusion is that it is possible to create transformative PAR through social dialogues, and this is thus our fourth principle.** Throughout the process of research, our researchers sought opportunities to challenge the everyday narratives of extremist hate that they confronted.

We can show how such transformation happens by describing a discussion and an attuning intervention that happened during an informal gathering around coffee of 5 local women during Kanal's fieldwork in Hatay. One of the women present mentioned the common stereotype that Syrian women have too many children. In response, Kanal shared a story of a Syrian friend of hers who was denied an abortion. Here is her account in her fieldnotes,



I told the story of a Syrian friend who already had three children, but was refused an abortion. She was devastated by the reality of having to have another child that she couldn't afford to bring up. The woman who had previously commented on Syrians having too many children commented that my friend probably went to the doctor too late. But then some of the other women began saying that getting an abortion had become difficult for all women in Turkey under the current government.

This example shows that sharing a Syrian woman's experience eventually led some of the women to think about their shared experience as women. Although one woman still blamed the Syrian woman for bad decision-making in waiting too long for an abortion, many of the others reconsidered their claim that Syrian women willingly have high numbers of children. One of the women present even said repeatedly: *"We always think about the Syrians from our perspective but we never think how they see it from their perspective."* Kanal's intervention in the discussion about Syrians and stereotypes demonstrates the potential for narratives to reveal overlapping structures of oppression that encourage participants to see beyond national or ethnic divides. Kanal's intervention can be considered an attuning social dialogue. Such actions like this in the field - in which participants are encouraged to empathize with marginalized groups - illustrates the potential for incremental transformation during the research as a form of PAR.



Even small moments of perspective-taking in informal conversations can be considered a PAR intervention that disrupts everyday extremist narratives with a shared story.

In sum, our research addressed a critical methodological debate: Is PAR inherently about initiating change, or can it focus on fostering reflection and dialogue that might later inspire other community actions (and thus, change)? The narrative intervention – attunement – by Kanal that we describe are at the micro-level of interpersonal social dialogues. An important question is how to scale them up into broader social interventions or collective actions: How can we empower people to find ways to challenge everyday extremist narratives in their daily lives?



Empowering people to recognize their capacity for social dialogue could be a key avenue for scaling up PAR interventions.

## Recognize and Learn from what is Not Possible

From the beginning of the project, we wanted to undertake a collective endeavor to bring about change in the widespread everyday extremist narratives we confronted, but we were not sure how to do so. At first, we thought that a podcast could work well. However, we eventually decided that it was not safe to implement an activity like this, which involved discussing everyday extremism openly in the context of Turkey, even in a somewhat anonymous way. Our eventual decision not to proceed with the podcast highlights the ethical responsibility of PAR to prioritize the safety and well-being of participants over the desire for public engagement or activism. It reflects our awareness of the political and social risks associated with addressing sensitive topics in such a precarious environment. **Therefore, our last key principle for ethnographic work and PAR that aims at attunement is to recognize what is not possible and to learn from this realization.**

The impetus to create a podcast came from one of our researchers, Salih, a Syrian community member who can be considered a major insider in the project. From the very beginning, Salih informed us that he was eager to employ PAR by creating a podcast in Arabic and English that would examine and challenge everyday extremism in Turkey. He explained,



“While conducting interviews, it became clear that the concept of “Everyday Extremism” was unfamiliar to the participants. I took the time to explain it to each one, and while some understood it right away and related it to their own lives, others found the term uncomfortable or challenging. The topic seemed risky to discuss openly, with a real possibility of being misunderstood, which raised questions about whether it was safe to bring such an issue into the public eye. This led me to the idea of starting a podcast to discuss Everyday Extremism.”

Salih was aware that the topic was risky, however it also seemed important and worthwhile for that reason. As a Syrian himself, he confronted everyday extremism on a daily basis and wanted to combat it. He created the following episode plan:

1. A general explanation of everyday extremism,
2. Discussion of the impact of everyday extremism on shaping the daily life of refugees
3. Discussion of the impact of everyday extremism on a family’s fears and future plans
4. Discussion of how everyday extremism can turn into physical violence

Salih wanted to make a podcast because he said, “*a podcast is the easiest way to reach people who are interested in the topic. Verbal interaction is always easy for people to understand. In the digital space, we can also use podcast interactions to understand what people think about everyday extremism.*” He created two episodes that can be accessed here:

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/7BILGyTPxgaaRrht8Kpjej?si=11741b6a2f76469d>  
and Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/monologueiyet?igsh=MmppenU2eDFiYWts&utm\\_source=qr](https://www.instagram.com/monologueiyet?igsh=MmppenU2eDFiYWts&utm_source=qr)

However, Salih eventually decided to cancel the podcast because it was simply too dangerous to make in the context of his own and other Syrian’s insecure status in Turkey. The first clue

that it might be dangerous to make was the difficulty that he faced finding someone to make the podcast with him. He explained,



“I reached out to a few friends to see if they’d be interested in collaborating. They were open to the idea, and after a productive planning meeting, we agreed on the name “Exposed Talk,” decided on the topics, and even set a location and timeline to get started. But just before we were ready to begin, I received a call from one friend. After sharing the podcast idea with his parents, they were strongly against his participation. They even discouraged him from seeing me anymore, fearing that discussing such a sensitive topic publicly could have consequences”.

Still, Salih felt that given the importance of the topic and the difference that a ‘dialogic’ approach makes, it was worth the while to try and find a partner for this venture. As he continued,



“Undeterred, I continued looking for a co-host, as having a conversation partner would make it easier to explore the topic. However, each time I reached out to someone new, the answer was the same. They declined, expressing discomfort or outright concern about discussing Everyday Extremism in Turkey. Eventually, I found someone who was genuinely eager to talk about it and seemed committed. But just two days before our planned recording date, he was unexpectedly deported by the police for residing in Istanbul while registered in a different city. This was a sign for me to rethink the project. The challenges and fears people had around this topic were real and valid. It raised important questions about whether it’s possible—or safe—to openly discuss sensitive issues like Everyday Extremism in a public forum in Turkey.”

Although he had begun to question the viability of making a podcast, he didn’t immediately give up on the project and chose to proceed on his own, renaming it “Monologue” since it would now be a solo effort where he’d be speaking directly to the audience. However, after reflecting more about the deportation of the potential co-host and other possible consequences, he started to have doubts about whether he should make a podcast at all.



“The potential impact on my family weighed heavily on my mind. I have children, and my family lives here, so I didn’t want to risk putting them in a difficult or unsafe situation. I didn’t fully know what might happen if I publicly discussed Everyday Extremism, especially with a focus on Syrians in Turkey. I realized I felt uneasy about speaking on this topic, and one of the reasons was my reluctance to address it in Turkish. Perhaps that reluctance shows that I wasn’t entirely ready to open up about Everyday Extremism in a way that would feel accessible—and potentially more exposed—in the Turkish language. This hesitation made me pause and reflect on how best to approach a topic that could be sensitive for everyone involved, including those who had already turned down my invitation to participate.”

Instead of doing the podcast, he decided that discussions with Syrians and Turks in daily life about the concept of everyday extremism (as discussed above) could be a useful intervention. **Salih’s pivot from creating a podcast to engaging in one-on-one conversations represents a methodological adaptation in PAR.** While less public, these smaller, personal dialogues still serve as meaningful interventions, fostering understanding and attunement. When he meets Turkish people and gets to know them well, he will purposefully bring up the topic of everyday extremism with them. He explained,



“When speaking with Turkish people about everyday extremism, I try to show how we sometimes share similar feelings. For example, I once asked a Turkish friend where she was from, and she mentioned that she doesn’t like that question. I explained how, as a Syrian, that question carries a heavier weight for me and can sometimes feel invasive. I also draw comparisons, like how Turks in Germany might feel like outsiders or how people from rural areas might feel uncomfortable when they move to Turkish cities. Making these connections helps Turkish people understand the issue on a more personal level.”

Through personal stories and comparisons, Salih is able to create moments of empathy and understanding, underscoring the power of storytelling to build bridges between people with different lived experiences. **When formal, large-scale attuned interventions are not feasible, such conversations can create moments of mutual understanding about everyday extremism in ways that feel safe and personal.**

The inability to safely produce a podcast demonstrates how political and social contexts shape what is possible or ethical in research. In environments of insecurity and surveillance, public-facing interventions may need to be replaced by more discreet, interpersonal approaches. Researchers must always critically consider language, audience, and medium when addressing sensitive topics. Our goal with PAR activities must be to support marginalized groups by facilitating or amplifying their voices, but we also have to listen when they tell us that it is not safe to have a voice in a particular space.



PAR requires a dual commitment to amplifying marginalized voices and respecting their boundaries. When participants express that it is unsafe to have a voice, researchers must adjust their methods to align with those realities. Silence, when rooted in concerns for safety, is a valid response and must be respected within the framework of PAR.

The challenges we faced in producing the podcast in Turkey demonstrate the need to redefine what "action" means in terms of PAR in high-risk settings. Rather than large-scale initiatives, small-scale, everyday interactions and social dialogues can serve as impactful and ethically responsible actions for attuning everyday extremism.



### 3.3 Ethnographic Gamification

Gamification is a widely used technique for science communication and the dissemination of research results, being also applied for several other purposes including for education, research and citizen engagement or as a democratic innovation.



**Gamification:** It is generically defined as using game elements in non-game contexts to engage the audience and contribute to problem-solving or to an enhanced understanding of scientific concepts and processes (Deterding et al., 2011; Werbach and Hunter, 2012; Takacs et al, 2021).

The notion of ethnographic gamification was developed in the scope of WP5 to refer to the transformation of the results of ethnographic work into context-based participatory and co-constructed games that feedback into both research and action, fostering self-reflexiveness, dialogical thinking and democratic engagement (D5.2). The dual purpose of ethnographic gamification in the context of studying everyday extremism is related with its double potential as a Participatory Action Research (PAR) tool. On the one hand, it is designed as an active tool for data collection, contributing to enhance and scale up the results of research by exploring deeper the main topics which arose from ethnographic interviews in the form of a game which is both competitive (in between groups) and collaborative (within groups). On the other hand, it aims to intervene with participants to promote attunement through social dialogue, constituting itself into a strategy for social transformation.

#### Our Inspiration and Rationale

During our ethnographic interviews, our interviewees often expressed ideas, judgments, narratives or facts that were at odds with reality. Even though we often kindly asked them to further elaborate or clarify in many of these issues, we carefully avoided adopting a “lecturing”, judgmental stance. In these cases, our aim was always to understand how people made sense of the conditions they themselves described as being under. However, we did take notice of these “snippets” of everyday extremism, believing that addressing them would be important towards attunement. The idea of gamifying our research and developing a quiz game was born out of necessity and creativity. First, we wanted to develop a method that could promote social dialogue and attunement in a relaxed, easy-going setting that could reach wider audiences. Secondly, we wanted these attunement processes to feedback into our own research on everyday extremism. We believe that ethnographic gamification serves well these purposes. In the following pages we explore some of the principles involved in the process of ethnographic gamification, so that readers might develop their own work while taking into consideration some useful pointers and lessons learned, which might help make this process smoother and enjoyable.

#### Collecting Ideas, Arguments, Thoughts, and Feelings

Ethnographic fieldwork provides its fair share of unexpected, often surprising moments. When studying everyday extremism, the content of and reasoning about issues such as immigration, security, politics and social roles and values occasionally demands some effort on the part of the interviewer, to keep a poker face. We argue, nonetheless, that these events provide insightful material. **It is paramount for researchers to maintain an open-minded, non-**

**confrontational stance towards those being interviewed, regardless of what they say, think or stand for.** We acknowledge this is no fresh insight, but we deem worthful stressing its importance.

Given the extensive quantity of data obtained from ethnographic interviews, what constitutes good source material for developing a quiz game? First, we advise researchers to focus on data containing information that directly or indirectly (but always relevantly) supports narratives of everyday extremism. Useful elements for gamification can be found in statements that constitute one, or several, of the following:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Misinformation</b>                                      | Factually wrong information which is reproduced and disseminated without intent to deceive by actors who trust its content.  |
| <b>Disinformation</b>                                      | Deliberately created factually wrong information which is reproduced and disseminated.   |
| <b>Statements or Thoughts containing logical fallacies</b> | Argumentative patterns that are pervaded by logical fallacies (e.g. non-sequitur fallacies; ad hominem attacks; straw man fallacies; overgeneralization, false dilemma or slippery slope fallacies). |
| <b>Social Prejudices, Preconceptions or Misconceptions</b> | Widely shared and diffused and historically grounded tropes and ideas about certain social groups.   |

The list above is not exhaustive but rather a snapshot of our own research work. However, we do believe that those wishing to reproduce such a methodology would gain from paying special attention to the elements we presented above. **The purpose of data collection is not the classification of errors of thought or speech per se: we are not in the business of lecturing. Our main effort is to help unravel and dispel building blocks of everyday extremism by showing their impossibility and error in a frank, open and, above all, fun environment.** Given the fact that this process might impact the way people think about themselves, especially due to the “evaluation” character that a quiz game always entails, it is essential to ensure people remain comfortable during gaming sessions.

Another useful element to absorb from the non-judgmental stance and principles researchers ought to adopt is not to judge discourse as “too dumb” for gamification. When exploring discourse on everyday extremism, actual knowledge on different issues varies widely and, from our experience, is often disconnected from traditional categories of age, education, employment, place of residence and political leanings and preferences. **It is important to address all sources of narratives of everyday extremism regardless of who says it and whether it seems too stupid. It is important to respect the audience and to develop a game that can be used and enjoyed by all: not a small minority, but especially a large group of often uninterested individuals.** Furthermore, the collection and classification of data representing what we might call different degrees - or levels of knowledge about the “world” - is a valuable effort for the creation of cards with different playing levels of difficulty, a core element of game mechanics, that allows an enjoyable gaming experience for differently skilled players.



Another useful source of data collection can be found on websites dedicated to fact-checking. Fact-checking has developed in the past years as an effort to disseminate truthful and accurate information by examining the statements of political officials, institutions, public personalities and social media (Walter et al., 2020). **Fact-checkers provide interesting material for gamification, especially because they delve in information published in social media platforms that may reach wider audiences.** Questions based on fact-checking are also potentially useful in filling the gap between the issues identified in ethnographic work and issues shared and diffused within the broader public/audiences. Finally, fact-checking websites help populate the pool of questions with greater variety and depth.

### **Researchers' own experience and context can constitute important sources of data too.**

Without completely taking off the scientist's hat, the researcher might be well equipped to provide no small number of examples of narratives of everyday extremism which stem from his own experience. Even if everyday living might make it harder to pinpoint the origin, or exact formulation, of such material, the researcher might objectively identify and assess them within the realm of her own life-experience. Widely shared tropes, anecdotes or "urban legends" constitute some of these sources of material, which can and should be put to good use.

Data collection is the core process for ethnographic gamification. However, and given that our approach of ethnographic gamification is coupled with PAR principles, we not only admit but welcome question revision. Researchers should be open to feedback from players about questions, as issues of coherence, formulation, specificity and scope that might naturally appear. What matters is the *process* not the *product*. The next section explores good principles for question development and classification, and how these operate with this methodology.

### Question Organization: Hints and Tips for Collection, Classification, and Presentation

The process of data collection is followed by the organization and development of questions. Quiz games traditionally make use of two types of questions: multiple choice and true-or-false questions. While multiple choice questions confront players with deciding which among the possible(s) answer(s) is(are) correct, which can make decisions easier or harder depending on how questions are formulated, true-or-false questions have simpler dynamics. This does not mean the latter are easier than the former: that depends on the actual content of each question.

#### **Multiple-choice questions**

Concerning multiple choice questions, we opted to create questions with 4 different options for players to choose from, with only one correct answer. Overall, question development followed a somewhat similar pattern, although it is advisable to mix choice patterns to make the game less predictable. In general:

- 1 of the possible choices is clearly wrong, and that can be asserted even with no knowledge about the issue at hand. This can be made by providing an answer that is off topic or that patently represents a highly implausible answer. Humor can be a useful source for making the game more interesting, and resorting to satire, exaggerated oversimplifications or generalizations might constitute good options. **Our aim was to help narrow hypothesis, thus making players focus on other alternatives, which we believe is useful for engaging with uninterested or less knowledgeable players.**
- 2 of the possible choices overlap in some way, and often one of them is the correct one. The purpose here is to force players to deal with more concrete reasoning, which can force

them to clarify meaning, search for deeper knowledge or information on the subject, and to weigh between alternatives.

- The remaining choice answer, which can be either correct or wrong, contrasts with the two previous choices in the general direction given to the answer. Regardless of whether it is right or wrong, the choice must appear sensible in its wording.

**In game development, we tried to eliminate all multiple-choice questions that might be perceived as *tricky* or dishonest to players, e.g. playing with semantics or fuzzy meanings. The purpose of ethnographic gamification is to make sense clear, not the opposite, and given the nature of the issues being approached, the different individual sensibilities the activity aims to reach, as well as the PAR principle of openness and honest dialogue, we believe that practice would be highly counter-productive.** This does not mean questions cannot be hard: it means that difficulty levels should rest on knowledge, argumentative and reasoning skills, rather than strict attention to semantic details or doublespeak. A core concern raised in ethnographic research was the way groups, e.g. the media, politicians and government officials, abuse the use of rhetoric and play language games instead of speaking plainly to the people. We tried to develop a way of fostering dialogue about complex, nuanced issues without falling into the pitfalls identified during our research work.

### True-or-false questions

True-or-false questions have a more direct approach, and many have been used to ask players to identify whether specific social media posts and publications were true or false. Besides question cards, we developed a support booklet with a series of online news articles, tweets, posts and publications from different social media platforms. Once again, making use of humor, we inserted some highly implausible, yet true, examples of this type of material. **Our purpose was to stress the need for critical thinking skills when approaching social media material, not to disseminate disinformation or misinformation.** Therefore, it was our priority to point out the need for further research on implausible, sometimes outright bizarre, news that might, however, be true.

**An important element of question-building is the development of questions with different levels of difficulty, and the need to ensure a balanced mix of questions (both in terms of categories and difficulty level) for better user experience.** While excessively difficult questions might discourage uninterested or shy players from engaging and enjoying the game, easy ones might give the wrong idea to knowledgeable individuals, i.e. being immune to everyday extremism. It is important to strike a balance between both fields.

**Finally, variety is important to keep players interested, and to allow them to showcase their knowledge across different domains.** Creating categories, and ensuring a proper balance between them, is important to avoid issues such as gameplay fatigue, and to provide a balanced picture of the existing narrative landscape. Everyday extremism is a diffuse phenomenon that permeates across social classes, political ideologies and territories, being part of what we usually refer to as commonsensical thinking. It is important that such diversity is represented in the questions database: questions should be representative of everyday extremism wherever it might be found, even if the phenomenon is more salient in certain political groups or locations, thus avoiding unwarranted calls of partiality.

## Game Rules and Gameplay: Striking a Balance between Competition and Dialogue

The purpose of ethnographic gamification is to foster dialogue and attunement in an entertaining way, while feeding back research in a PAR framework. This mandates that game rules and gameplay sessions are designed, and adaptable, to achieve these objectives. If, on the one hand, game rules provide a set of *a priori* conditions for the game, and are useful as pointers to players, game sessions might deviate from these strict, abstract frameworks, insofar as that benefits dialogue, attunement and research. Overall, game rules should have three priorities in mind: first, to ensure the game is fair and playable; second, to potentiate dialogue and attunement; and third, to create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere among players.

### Fairness and playability

To ensure fairness in gameplay, players and/or teams of players all answer the same questions, with scores being publicly recorded by the game facilitator. Teams have the same time for in-team discussion and deliberation on each question, with extra time given for inter-team dialogue. Overall, rules should ensure no player or team has an unfair advantage over competitors, and that all have a clear understanding of the games' rules before actual playing starts.

### Fostering dialogue through rules

Secondly, we designed rules to promote both intra- and inter-team dialogue, thus fostering open discussion and argumentation between participants. This was made by tinkering with the reward-points system. First, we have established that the winning side can only achieve victory if a minimum, relative, threshold of correct answers was achieved by the lowest scoring player/team. **This incentive aims at making higher performing teams care about how others respond and globally fare. We believe this principle is in line with the ideas of living democracy, social dialogue and attunement, insofar as it makes individuals care about how others think, act and behave in society, as well as to recognize their influence on their own lives. In addition, players/teams that successfully engage in dialogue that results in achieving correct answers receive extra points. Our aim is to foster non-zero-sum game reasoning into gameplay, thus mirroring the principle of healthy dialogue.**

### A positive gaming experience

Playing a quiz game, especially against unknown individuals and when the game concerns everyday issues and knowledge, can be an intimidating experience, especially if one regularly fares worse than others. To prevent «scoring shaming», we devised a system of points which attributes a score even to wrong answers (by default, 50% of the points attributed to a winning answer). We believe this mechanism also shifts attention and focus away from scoring and towards dialogue, as the competitive nature of gaming is relegated to the background. Concurrently, the implementation of differentiated awards at the end of the game, besides the recognition of a sole winner, helps frame user experience in positive and constructive ways. A badge system, which includes distinctions such as “The most convincing team” for players/teams that gained more points through dialogue, or “The most open-minded team” for teams with most points won by changing their answers after dialogue, constitutes a way of highlighting the positive side of engaging in gaming.

Finally, in our ethnographic gamification we developed a system of rules which allows players to dispute questions and/or answers. Because disagreement is a cornerstone of dialogue, the game facilitator's purpose, and that of the game itself, is not to subjectify players as passive actors. Given the contested nature of many narratives of everyday extremism, the importance

of context and issues of interpretation, we devised a framework for players, alongside the game facilitator, to delve into the meaning and interpretation of questions, and, democratically, to establish an accepted interpretation, for the duration of the gaming session.

The role of game facilitator requires some characteristics which allow for a smoother gameplay experience and the promotion of dialogue. First, it is important that the facilitator is well versed in the game questions and answers, and she has some familiarity with the issues at hand. This helps to address contestations and doubts that naturally emerge throughout gameplay. A humble, open-minded and non-judgmental attitude towards players goes a long way for promoting dialogue across teams. The game facilitator should adopt positive and constructive stances towards the game, especially if disputes about questions and answers arise.



**The dialogical dimension of ethnographic gamification tends to become more salient as the competitive dimension fades into the background. This is because the game turns into a fun way of promoting positive social and political dialogue, instead of hostile oppositional behavior, which is the basis of everyday extremism. Therefore, ethnographic gamification is an efficient tool to promote attunement and deconstruct the attitudes that tend to generate oppositional political thinking and polarization.**

Being the promotion of attunement the main purpose of gaming, rules should be eased if that contributes to greater dialogue. From our experience, greater dialogue leads to cooperative, rather than competitive, logics in gaming, with opposite teams arguing and trying to convince their adversaries (something we noticed even prior to concluding in-game rules). If participants end up being more interested in discussing the issues and questions brought before them, rather than actually competing for prizes or distinctions, then we would argue the purpose of ethnographic gamification becomes entirely achieved. Due to its potential for lowering both rational and psychological defences, related with its playful dynamics, ethnographic gamification has proven itself to be very efficient in achieving this aim. It is for the game facilitator to be sensible to these dynamics and to let them flourish when they occur, even if that means disregarding the game rules and structure altogether.

### 3.4 Narrative Group Work in Schools

#### Introduction

The method of facilitating social dialogue with Narrative Group Work in Schools® is based on the assumption that successful living and acting in democratic societies – and contributing to the vitality and resilience of these societies – is based on the essential ability to talk to each other, in all kinds of constellations with all kinds of persons, about all kinds of issues both personal and factual/political, and especially in situations and with people that pose personal and/or political challenges for oneself – and may require mediation and attunement. This ability – to talk to each other – is not a given; it has to be learned early, already in schools, and maintained throughout life, individually and socially, through a democratic and human rights-based culture of social dialogue, in which a society talks to itself, so to speak.



Methodologically, **Narrative Group Work® (NGW)** is based on proven principles of narrative, biographical interviewing and self-awareness group sessions from social therapy.

By talking about individual experiences and relevant issues from a personal point of view, NGW through dialogue groups strengthens young people's ability to build trust and relationships and to engage in respectful dialogue with others, even if they come from very different backgrounds and hold starkly different views. In doing so, students strengthen their sense of fairness, i.e. democratic and human rights values, stimulate inclusive processes in groups and generate tolerance, empathy and the ability to experience and handle “social resonance” – also practising conflict resolution and attunement where necessary (2025b). While sharing individual experiences, students are also encouraged to reflect on discriminatory and hostile impulses and their underlying personal motives and experiences, including those from their immediate social context and family history. In this way, narrative dialogue groups regularly create heightened self-awareness and increase the capacity to 'do democracy, inclusion and citizenship'.

#### The Basic Setting – for facilitating Narrative Social Dialogue in Schools

In operational terms, students are invited to engage in open conversations in a safe space during school hours with trained NGO practitioners from outside the school, with guarantees of confidentiality and voluntary participation, i.e. informed consent, with the option to withdraw at any time. In the planning phase with the schools, it is emphasised that the dialogue groups should run parallel to social, language and creative subjects, and that they are not only completely different from, but equally important as, the lessons taught, and are therefore offered as part of the curriculum.

For one hour a week, for at least one term, the groups involve existing classes, from which up to four smaller subgroups can be formed, each with its own room. The basic settings are the two half-class groups, each facilitated by two NGO practitioners. A fifth practitioner hosts the rest zone in a separate room which is available to allow pupils to withdraw temporarily when they deem it necessary or helpful or to protect the flow of the group conversation. Preferably, these practitioners are of mixed gender and socio-culturally diverse backgrounds, so that



subgroups can be formed spontaneously, reflecting gender or other social criteria, or even group dynamics.

#### Methodological Elements of facilitating Narrative Dialogue Group Work

NGW's out-of-school dialogue practitioners are specially trained to facilitate open-process, narrative group conversations in which only the students in their group negotiate and decide on the spot what kinds of experiences and thoughts they want to raise and share, thus suspending all external agendas, controls and taboos. For example, the dialogue practitioners begin each session with the basic question: "So, how are things going?", "What's on your mind, here at school or beyond?", "What would you like to share and/or hear from others?", "How has it been since last week?", etc., or: "What would you like to talk about here today?" or at the beginning: "We are here to provide you with an open space so that you can talk to each other within the school – and we will just make sure that things go well and we can all talk as we like!".



Experience has shown that despite, or perhaps because of, the complete openness of the subject matter, students naturally come to talk about experiences and issues that also touch on current socio-political topics, questions of social interaction – and phenomena of everyday extremism (e.g. different prejudices and emotional attitudes among young people, homophobia/sexism, bullying / hate speech, regional right-wing populism/ neo-Nazism, etc.).

Technically, the practitioners of NGW dialogue groups effectively facilitate narrative exchange and sharing, as opposed to argumentative discussion, by asking students 'situation questions' and 'narrative questions', as opposed to expressing reposts, corrections, clarifications or rebukes. For example, a 'situation question' might be: 'You just mentioned that you love Germany and want to defend and protect it. Can you think of a situation in which you have felt the need to protect Germany? Likewise, practitioners avoid why-questions and instead ask narrative how-questions: "Please tell me exactly what the situation was like?", "How did it happen that ...?", "Can you please describe in more detail how things started and then developed – and how it affected you?", "Can you remember another experience that was similar or very different to this one? What was it like?"

**The most important overarching element of the skills of dialogue practitioners is that they are able to facilitate a new kind of civic dialogue in groups, in which it becomes possible to set aside the usual patterns of (counter-) argument and discussion that we have internalised from a pervasive culture of debate and civic education – and instead cultivate an attitude of mutual curiosity, joint narrative exploration and relationship building – across various barriers and differences. In this way, students – or participants more broadly – are given a space in which they can quietly become aware of each other's experiences, circumstances and personal views.** They will also learn to be more understanding and honest with each other and with themselves – and to attune and mediate different kinds of emotional escalation and expressions of everyday extremism and devaluation of others.

## The Group Dynamic factor in the NGW Method

The fact that NGW is basically practised in groups – although of course narrative dialogue can and is also used in one-to-one interactions (e.g. in the time-out space) – and the fact that it engages in open-ended and maximal inclusive and action **underlines its potential to have pro-democratic and pro-human rights impact. It also underlines its ability to effectively attune and moderate (everyday) extremism, devaluation and hostility towards others, most of which occurs in small or large groups.**

For example, when the narrative dialogue between a facilitator and a student who has articulated harsh hostile attitudes of devaluation of others and expression of group-focused enmity (Heitmeyer et al. 2009, Zick et al. 2011, 27-42) has reached a certain point of dialogic exploration or needs to pause, facilitators can and should involve the whole group (Weilnböck 2024a,b). This is usually recommended as early as possible in order to avoid a dyadic ping-pong conversation and/or to defuse and at the same time benefit from dynamics of polarisation or emotionalisation that the intensive dialogue with one person may have created with the others. Ideally, this is done by asking questions that are as open as possible and that appeal to narratives of personal experience (and avoid the level of comments, opinions and arguments):

- "What can you others say about all this?"
- "What related personal experiences can you think of?"
- "Where else do you encounter such situations/issues?"
- What happens in these situations?
- How do they unfold?
- Who are the people involved?
- What have you experienced with these people in other situations?" etc.



The approach of working in narrative dialogue groups thus provides young people with a space that is free from set agendas and taboos – encouraging and enabling them to talk about and listen to individual thoughts and experiences – as opposed to discussing issues.

## A Community-Focused approach to Attunement

Similarly, narrative dialogue groups are not just about groups of students or particular school classes. Rather, NGW is a community-focused approach to civic education and community building through bottom-up social dialogue – i.e. building on youth participation and engagement – that is able to create and support community-wide dialogue skills and attunement of non-conductive oppositional – so called extremist (Weilnböck 2023a,b) – behaviour. This community impact is harnessed through a number of interfaces provided by the student groups in the classrooms.

### The impact of a Community-Focused approach in school settings

First, there are two direct interfaces with the school itself: **Pedagogically, the subject teaching in the regular classes can effectively pick up and benefit from what has been raised as issues in the students' life experience through the group work (while of course keeping personal details and contexts completely confidential and unidentifiable).** Such themes and topics – be they from the media, local or national history, current politics, community issues,

family issues, etc. – gain a high level of learning motivation through the group dynamic in which they arise; this can then be built upon by regular subject teaching to ensure the optimal educational impact of regular classroom teaching. For example, if the topic of the Holocaust and/or the Third Reich comes up in the group in the context of personal experience, the facilitators can suggest to the students that a teacher be asked to give an extra history lesson on this topic and that it be included in the curriculum, regardless of how the topic came up in the group in the first place.

The other immediate interface with the school itself concerns **the possibility of providing advice to the school as an (educational) institution; the groups can provide a kind of "bottom-up school counselling" in that the NGO practitioners can bring to the attention of the school management observations made by the students and general issues of conflict and concern that have emerged in the group, and encourage further counselling and institutional change.** It has often been observed that schools often face multiple challenges, including from the attitudes and behaviour of teachers and school staff, who may, for example, be openly or unintentionally inclined towards forms of everyday extremism, or otherwise fail to act in a fully professional and educational manner.

Secondly, and most importantly for individual students and their families, **there is an important interface between dialogue groups and community youth and family services which provide forms of psychosocial intervention (e.g. mental health, suicide prevention, violence/sexual assault, substance abuse, etc.), including deradicalisation/exit counselling – since all these issues regularly come up in group work and long before the threshold at which school social workers are approached.** Also it has often been observed that such needs for psychosocial counselling often coincide with high levels of (everyday) extremism and non-conductive oppositional behaviour (IPIP – Institut 2024, Nexus 2023, Veritas – Halle 2022, Weilnböck 2025b) – so that such counselling by community youth and family services can also indirectly contribute to reducing and even reconciling (everyday) extremism – thus providing attunement in the sense of the Oppattune project's aims.

Thirdly, **interaction between the students of the group and their immediate social environment and community and feedback from the community can be directly encouraged by suggesting certain tasks as homework to students**, e.g. ask students to interview persons in family, neighbourhood, community and organisations about certain observations and topics which have come up in the group – and then bring back to the group what has been collected from these community interviews. Such interview exercises being safely anchored in the dialogue group in school, can serve as a multiplier effect of building dialogue and attunement skills among students of the school.

Needless to say, all methods of furthering social dialogue and attunement are especially valuable for hard-to-reach youth and fractions of community, i.e. for students and groups who have been alienated from, or who have never experienced much social dialogue or democratic and human rights-based ways of life but rather live in spheres characterized by high levels of everyday forms of group focused hostility; since these individuals and groups we urgently need to win back into the social dialogue.



## Principles of good practice in Social Dialogue to Attune – through Narrative Group Work

**Building Trust and Relationship – Interpersonally and Mentally**

The facilitation of Social Dialogue to Attune in Narrative Group Work and other attunement methods is first and foremost based on the principle of building trust and relationships - between and within the individuals involved. This means that the facilitation of social dialogue focuses on building trust in various others as well as trust and confidence in oneself with each of the interlocutors. Building trust and (self-)confidence through various good practice methods and approaches – as practiced, for example, in WP5 – is primarily aimed at enabling participants to successfully manage high levels of difference, while at the same time safeguarding them in moments of great personal challenge vis-à-vis difference in dialogue. Difference in dialogue is understood to mean both social diversity of various kinds and internal, mental diversity, as manifested in thoughts and feelings of ambivalence, insecurities as well as inspiration, new ideas and personal growth, conceived in a developmental perspective of lifelong learning with regard to cognitive, social and emotional intelligence.

**(Inter-)acting in Maximally Inclusive Ways**

Thus, social dialogue is, in principle, at once social/societal and personal/psychological – and seeks to be as socially and psychologically inclusive as possible. Therefore, the facilitation of social dialogue must take into account this dual perspective on both the social and personal dimensions of dialogue.

**Voluntariness in All (Inter-)action**

In addition, social dialogue requires, in principle, that voluntary consent be given and/or a certain degree of intrinsic motivation on the part of each individual be fostered, apart from any other pre-existing strategic motivations, interests or pressures that may lead him or her to participate in the dialogue. Given that extremism studies have overwhelmingly shown that most people seek belonging, we can assume that intrinsically motivated, voluntary engagement in social dialogue can be successfully promoted even under difficult circumstances if adequate settings are provided.

**Open-endedness of Dialogue**

Social dialogue is fundamentally an open process and open-ended. It has no pre-established topics and agendas – other than the personal focus of each individual on the self in his or her community of shared social life, even in its broader social contexts (e.g., national, global). Thus, open-process social dialogue means that practitioners do not pre-determine a topic for dialogue, but merely facilitate a process in which the interlocutors reach a level where they can find their personal voice and topics, temporarily agree on one, and are willing to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings about it. Only when this level is reached can a specific topic be proposed and argued for by the practitioners, but agreement and consent must be reached.

**Freedom of Personal Expression**

Open-process social dialogue also means that there are no restrictions on what can be said and what thoughts, experiences, opinions and views can be shared. There are no red lines for unacceptable statements per se. Therefore, facilitators always signal and practice a basic appreciation for every person and every thought or statement expressed. However, adequate precautions must be taken to moderate highly challenging dialogue situations and to prevent and resolve any insults, devaluations, dishonest/strategic or cynical interventions, and

overburdening of individuals (e.g. the 'rest zone'/ special attention for individuals outside the group, momentary division into subgroups/sub-settings, etc.).

### **Sharing Personal Experiences through Narrative Accounts**

In principle, Social Dialogue to Attune places particular emphasis on narrative communication, which encourages sharing and listening to personal experiences rather than debates, arguments, theories or even counter-speech (or so-called "counter-narratives", which are not really narrative in nature according to WP5's definition of narrative interaction). Narrative communication thus differs from what has often been promoted as the practice of "difficult conversations" or "debate training" in the context of preventing radicalization, as these tend to use argumentative rather than narrative modes of communication. It also often differs from preconceived ethical notions of dialogue in constellations that emphasize the demands of diversity, equity and identity – while these ethical dimensions are valid as an overall framework for social dialogue. Methodologically, the shift from debate to narrative communication implies that the facilitation of social dialogue benefits from dialogical techniques such as narrative-biographical interviewing and similar methods of dialogue facilitation and group (dynamic) talks.

### **Building Social and Emotional Intelligence**

This emphasis on narrative communication and trusting dialogue also entails that social dialogue, in principle, builds social and emotional intelligence – especially in the areas of anger, shame/guilt, and fear – which increases its potential to attune everyday extremism, polarization, and chronic community conflict. In addition, narrative communication also has the effect that the experiences and observations of the participant's personal biography and family history, as well as his or her social environment and community, play a major role in social dialogue.

### **Creative Methods to Enhance Social Dialogue**

In order to enhance social dialogue in its effect of attuning to everyday extremism, among other phenomena that undermine the resilience of a democratic society, it has proven effective to use creative methods – whether from the field of music, theatre, drawing/spraying, creative writing/slam poetry, etc. – from both high and sub/youth cultures. For creative activity can stimulate memories, thoughts, new observations and ideas, and thus help to make the unspoken or unconscious more expressible. Such an additional enhancement of social dialogue can be particularly helpful on issues that are not easily articulated, or with groups of interlocutors who have little experience of participating in social dialogue.

### **Safe and Confidential Spaces prepare for Public Settings**

Consequently, the facilitation of Social Dialogue to Attune is in principle greatly assisted by the availability of a "safe space", i.e. a stable setting in which interlocutors are guaranteed confidentiality and protection of personal data, as well as the precautions of moderation and protection mentioned above - before advancing into the open space of public social dialogue. The experiences, lessons learned and personal growth gained in such safe spaces/settings can then be used and specifically adapted and calibrated in any given situation of public, potentially contentious and emotional discourse, which, however heated and polarized, can thus receive impulses of dialogical moderation from individuals experienced in practicing "Social Dialogue to Attune".

### Skill of Facilitating Relationship

With regard to the facilitators of social dialogue – in a framework of building trust, confidence, lifelong learning of cognitive, social and emotional intelligence in liberal democratic societies – it needs to be emphasized: The facilitation of Social Dialogue to Attune requires skills and practices of professional relationship work. It relies on the ability to engage in high levels of personal honesty and transparency, and the ability to manage both personal engagement with and differentiation and, at times, detachment from others.

### Likely Key Issues

While "Social Dialogue to Attune", as mentioned above, has no pre-set topics or agendas, beyond the basic objective of building trust and relationships – between and also within the individuals involved – certain key issues in today's democratic societies have been identified as being of particular relevance to social dialogue and therefore deserving of special attention:

All issues and personal experiences related to real or perceived grievances, whether of an individual, social, political/religious or community nature, have proven to be highly relevant and effective for engaging social dialogue – as is the case with issues related to real or perceived foreigners/refugees. In addition, all issues and phenomena of exclusion and/or group hatred (i.e. "group-focused enmity" Zick et al., "generalised devaluation constructions", Möller et al.) and real or perceived victimization and violence tend to be highly relevant. This also applies to issues of gender and sexuality, which is not surprising given that gender role issues around masculinity and femininity – more specifically, sexism and homo- and trans-phobia – have proven to be at the core of virtually all forms of violent extremism.

**In facilitating social dialogue in liberal democratic societies, it is therefore advisable to pay particular attention to these often contentious and emotionally charged issues – and to the personal thoughts and experiences of each individual associated with them.**



In closing, given that practicing Social Dialogue to Attune means to facilitate the building of trust and (self-)confidence, the fostering relationships and connections at both the social and psychological levels, the prioritizing narrative communication about personal thoughts and experiences – including the participant's individual biography, family history, and social environment – and the building of social and emotional intelligence, it becomes clear how social dialogue can help attune everyday extremism, for example in relation to the contentious issues mentioned above.

### 3.5 Psychoeducational Workshops



**Psychoeducational workshops** are structured, interactive learning environments designed to enhance participants' cognitive, emotional, and social competencies. These workshops integrate psychological insights with educational methods to foster resilience,

In addressing Everyday Extremism, normalized forms of intolerance that pervade daily interactions, these workshops provide tools for identifying and challenging discriminatory attitudes, stereotypes, and microaggressions. By fostering empathy, perspective-taking, and constructive dialogue, participants are better prepared to counteract exclusionary ideologies in their personal and community spaces, thereby strengthening social cohesion and reducing the appeal of extremist worldviews.

In the context of radicalization prevention and countering everyday extremism, psychoeducational workshops serve as primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions that empower individuals to recognize, resist, and counteract extremist narratives.

Drawing from best practices in Serbia and other national contexts explored in the *D5.2 Five Country Good Practice Case Studies Report*, this section outlines core principles for designing and implementing psychoeducational workshops that promote attunement, resilience, and democratic engagement.

#### Multi-sectoral and Holistic Approach

Psychoeducational workshops must integrate insights from psychology, pedagogy, sociology, and conflict resolution studies. As demonstrated by the *Building Youth Resilience to Violent Extremism (BYRVE) Program* in Serbia, an effective workshop goes beyond knowledge transmission, fostering critical self-reflection and social awareness (Tatalović, 2021). This multi-sectoral approach ensures that young people are equipped with the cognitive and emotional tools to resist extremist ideologies.

#### Context-specific Adaptation

Workshops must be tailored to the socio-political and cultural realities of participants. In Serbia, radicalization risks vary significantly between urban and rural settings due to differences in economic opportunities, social networks, and exposure to diverse perspectives. Urban youth, particularly in Belgrade and Novi Sad, tend to be more influenced by online extremist content and global ideological movements, whereas rural youth are more susceptible to localized radicalization pathways, often linked to ethno-nationalist narratives, traditional authority structures, and economic disenfranchisement (Milošević & Pajvančić-Cizelj, 2020).

Ethnic and socio-economic differences further shape radicalization risks. Research by Krstić and Stakić (2021) highlights that ethnic minority communities, particularly Roma youth, face exclusion from mainstream educational and employment opportunities, which can create a sense of marginalization and susceptibility to radicalized narratives promising social justice or empowerment. Meanwhile, youth from war-affected communities in southern Serbia may have heightened vulnerabilities due to intergenerational trauma, unresolved historical grievances,

and nationalist rhetoric that reinforces in-group loyalty and out-group hostility (Maksimović, 2022).

#### Identity, Belonging, and Social Inclusion

A core theme in psychoeducational interventions should be identity-building and social inclusion. The BYRVE Program, for example, focused on strengthening self-confidence, assertive communication, and cultural awareness to create an inclusive social identity (PIN, 2020b). Identity politics are often exploited by extremist groups, making it essential to provide young people with a positive framework for identity construction that does not rely on exclusionary or hostile ideologies.

#### Skill Development for Emotional Regulation and Perspective-taking

Workshops should prioritize the development of emotional intelligence and perspective-taking. The *D5.2 Five Country Good Practice Case Studies Report* highlights how resentment and perceived injustice fuel radicalization pathways. By incorporating cognitive-behavioural techniques, workshops can help participants regulate emotions, deconstruct black-and-white thinking, and build empathy towards out-groups. Techniques such as cognitive-behavioral strategies can help participants manage emotions and develop empathy (Beelmann & Heinmann, 2014). This focus on emotional regulation can mitigate feelings of resentment and injustice that may lead to extremist behaviors.

#### Experimental and Participatory Learning

Traditional lecture-based approaches are insufficient for addressing the complex psychological and social dynamics of extremism. Instead, workshops should incorporate:

- **Role-playing and simulations:** To help participants experience multiple perspectives.
- **Theatre-based methods:** As seen in previous projects in Serbia, theatre exercises help youth process identity conflicts and confront dogmatic beliefs (Petrović, 2018).
- **Storytelling and personal narratives:** Sharing lived experiences fosters emotional connection and trust-building.
- **Gamification and scenario-based learning:** Increasing engagement through interactive activities that simulate real-life challenges.

#### Addressing Everyday Extremism and the Role of Media

A key focus should be on deconstructing extremist narratives that permeate everyday life. Research in Serbia has shown that the media plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards migrants, religious minorities, and political opponents (Ludescher, 2021). Workshops should critically analyse media representation, teaching participants how to identify manipulation, misinformation, and polarizing discourses.

#### Balancing Prevention and Intervention

Workshops should be designed for different levels of prevention:

- **Primary Prevention:** General education programs that build resilience against extremist narratives (e.g., school-based programs on critical thinking and media literacy).
- **Secondary Prevention:** Targeted interventions for at-risk groups, addressing grievances that may lead to radicalization.
- **Tertiary Prevention:** Rehabilitation and reintegration efforts for individuals who have engaged with extremist groups.

The *D5.2 Report* underscores the need for state and civil society collaboration in implementing these approaches effectively.

### Continuous Evaluation and Adaptation

Ongoing evaluation is critical for ensuring the effectiveness of psychoeducational interventions. Incorporating pre- and post-intervention assessments allows for measuring changes in attitudes towards violence and inter-group acceptance (Murphy, 2013). Longitudinal studies can provide insights into the long-term impact of these programs.

Psychoeducational workshops are a critical tool in countering Everyday Extremism and fostering attuned, inclusive societies. By emphasizing identity-building, emotional resilience, critical media literacy, and participatory learning, these workshops provide individuals—particularly youth—with the skills needed to resist extremist ideologies and contribute to democratic engagement. The principles outlined here, based on empirical findings from Serbia and comparative case studies, offer a methodological foundation for adapting these workshops across different socio-political contexts.



### 3.6 Capacity Building for Non-Violent Communication and Conflict Resolution

In post-conflict societies like Bosnia and Herzegovina, different civil society organizations often assume the role of peace builders. **They create safe environments for young people to communicate and address issues such as ethnic tensions, share ideas, and enhance ethnic relations in communities impacted by conflict. Through these actions, they help to reduce the ethnic distance among young people.** The war had halted most communication between different ethnic groups, casting "the others" as the enemy and removing the motivation for communication between ethnic groups. It took several years post-war before the first signs of communication re-emerged. As the time passed the contacts among people in Bosnia and Herzegovina have increased and different NGOs have realized that people, especially young people (who were the main target group for many NGOs), need places where they could be safe and where they had the opportunity to learn, cooperate and fulfil their potential in order to impact the lives in their community in a positive way.

NGOs, such as PRONI Centre, have started to establish youth clubs, youth centers and similar facilities where young people gathered and developed different sets of skills through non-formal education methodology which enabled youth worker to adjust their work to individual young people, but also to different groups of young people. Young people have planned and implemented activities and projects that were in line with their needs. In order for young people to exchange ideas and meet peers from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina residential trips were organized (sometimes even abroad) with the aim to take groups of different ethnic background out of their everyday surrounding and provide them with opportunity to discuss issues of their concern.

Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina started just after the war (1992-1995) ended, which meant that it was important to empathize with wounds that people in Bosnia and Herzegovina felt that were still fresh and to adopt methodologies accordingly. Bringing people together from all sides that were few years back in a bloody conflict was challenging and difficult. **The social distance and animosities among people were still strong, so bringing people together could also mean danger, so it had to be taken step by step.** It also meant that youth workers had go through certain education period that provided them, not only with knowledge and skills that enabled them to deal with certain situations, but also with theoretical and scientific knowledge needed to fulfil their task, mainly taken from sciences such as Social Pedagogy, Sociology, Psychology and similar social sciences and humanities.

**The war and later political arrangement have left Bosnia and Herzegovina split among the ethnic lines which were combat lines that remained after the war.** Taking this fact into consideration NGOs, such as PRONI Centre for Youth development, had to act in areas that were on the first front line in order to reach young people from both sides of the line. This is the main motivation and reasoning for opening offices and youth clubs on both sides of the lines. For example, first PRONI youth club was established in the town of Brčko which was a municipality split between Bosniak and Croat majority in the south par of the municipality and Serb majority in the north. Needles to say that there was almost no communication between the two sides of the municipality. Working in that type of context PRONI has, in the very beginning of the peace building processes, opened offices/youth clubs in both parts of the municipality.



### Effective methodologies

Already in the beginning stages of peacebuilding processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina youth workers from PRONI Centre and other NGOs have established following methodologies as milestones of their work that have, during time, proven to be most effective in establishing inclusive societies, supporting young people to thrive and promoting a positive social change:

- Interactive way of learning
- Intercultural approach
- Creating a safe space for development
- Encouraging responsibility and creativity
- Raising awareness among young people about challenges in their communities, but also about rights and obligations of the citizens.
- All done in non-formal education methodology since it has proven to be most effective methodology when it comes to involving young people in different activities.



As the experience of implementing various projects and activities have shown it was crucial to offer young people a different narrative than the one offered by the various radical and extremist organizations. It was important to contribute to building a society where human rights will be respected, where laws will be applied, negative influences will be prevented, positive energy will be spread through youth activism, volunteerism, travel, getting to know others and those who are different, a world in which young people will be willing to learn from others and selflessly transfer their knowledge, a world in which young peoples voices will be heard, ideas will be realized, success will be valued and efforts will be rewarded.

### Educating Youth Workers in Post-conflict Societies

In terms of peace building and mitigating the consequences of war young people were recognized by international community and local stakeholders as crucial force for mitigating extremism, radicalism, nationalism and similar phenomena that was main discourse and narrative after the war and is also nowadays. **Still, combating these narratives was difficult since young people who wished to do so lacked education, skills and knowledge to respond to these challenges properly. That is why PRONI Centre for Youth Development in 1998 in cooperation with Jonkoping University started a university course which lasted for two academic years.** In the year 1999 first group of young people all three main ethnic backgrounds and others started the course.

**First year of the course (A-level) was called “Leadership and Youth Work” and was comprised of following subjects:**

- Youthwork practice
- The life stage of adolescence
- Working with individuals
- Working with groups
- Reconciliation and conflict resolution in youthwork
- Management
- Practical work

The aim of the course was to produce trained youth leaders who can operate in countries where there is a conflict situation. The course also aimed to produce youth leaders who will be equipped to carry out reconciliation with young people in countries where there is a conflict situation. The course will provide students with a reflective, analytical approach to their work with young people and at all times to operate in a professional manner and support the establishment of youthwork structures in countries where there is a conflict situation.

**The second year (B-Level) was named “Leadership and Developmental Youth Work” which was meant to create trainers of youth worker and spread the network of youth work trainer in Bosnia and Herzegovina.** As practical part of the course participants had to, in pairs, plan and implement 10 workshops with groups of young people under supervision of lecturers and more experienced youth workers.

**The second year (B-Level) “Leadership and Developmental Youth Work” comprised of following subjects:**

- Principles of training
- Training program: approaches and methods, group dynamics
- Training program: goal setting, preparation, implementation and assessing!
- Training: practical application in actual environment; co-working and use of training materials
- Conflict, conflict transformation and mediation
- Training issues: i. e. gender, violence, drugs ethnicity...

The aim of the course was to further extend the skill and knowledge of youth leaders who can operate in countries where there is a conflict situation. The course aims to produce youth leaders who can train other voluntary youth leaders in other countries where there is a conflict situation. The course will provide students with a reflective, analytical approach to their work so that they operate in a constructive professional manner as trainers.

Each subject was designed as a course that lasted for approximately a week where participants gained theoretical and practical knowledge about the topic that was covered. Lectures were implemented in non-formal education methodology which is generally defined as an organized educational activity that takes place outside the formal educational system. It is usually flexible, aimed at students, contextualized and uses a participatory approach (Dib, 1987).

**Each of the sessions included principles and methods such as:**

- learning experience
- non-formal learning
- multiethnic composition of the group
- gender balance among the group members
- exchange of experiences, ideas, visions
- active involvement of all participants
- personal development of the participants
- individual work with participants and working and learning in small groups.



Providing the participants with a safe place for expressing their thoughts and feelings, involving them in discussions during the sessions, providing them with opportunity to meet peers of other ethnic background proved over time to be an efficient method for decreasing ethnic (social distance) among young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Puhalo 2013, Pehlić 2019, Majstorović & Turjačanin 2013, Pečković 2018).

#### **The life cycle of each session during the courses consisted of following parts:**

- 1) Needs assessment: finding out what are the needs of the participants in terms of learning
- 2) Preparation of the sessions: preparing the program for the session
- 3) Running the study session: usually sessions last for 6 hour a day
- 4) Evaluation: trainers evaluate the session according to the set learning objectives of the session
- 5) Reporting.

In the year 2004 PRONI Centre in cooperation with Jonkoping University PRONI Centre Bachelor level university studies that included 17 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. It was a continuation of previously mentioned A and B level courses and comprised all together 180 ECTS.

Practical parts of the studies were split in two parts. First part, in the duration of one month, was held in youth clubs or youth centers in one of the participating countries and implied planning and implementing trainings and sessions in chosen youth organizations, and the second part implied three-month engagement in youth clubs or youth centers in United Kingdom where the engagement and activities were agreed with the hosting institution.

#### **The Degree consisted of following courses:**

- Community Youth Work and Society
- Global Environment and Survival Issues
- Learning and Development
- Special Education
- Research Methodology
- Community Youth Work in Practice
- Practical Work

The above-described education of youth workers had evolved into the PRONI Academy of Youth Work that was comprised in three levels:

- 1) A-Level (Basics of Youth Work),
- 2) B-Level (Training of Trainers in the Field of Youth Work) and
- 3) B+-Level (Management of Youth Organizations).

Each of the courses lasted for 6 months and included practical work of participants and writing essays after each module of the course.

## Basics of Youth Work

**The course "Basics of Youth Work" aimed to provide young people with basic knowledge in the field of youth work in order to contribute to the personal and social development of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to include them in various socio-political processes that concern young people.** It was intended for young people (18-30 years of age) who have the desire to influence various socio-political processes in their communities through youth work.

The course on the basics of youth work consists of six modules, essays that each participant will write after completing each module, as well as a practical part where participants will plan and implement five workshops with young people from their communities in pairs.

The best essays are published in an [essay collection](#) on PRONI Centre website to promote the stories of the participants to the wider public and promote youth work.

### **The course "Basics of youth work" consists of the following modules:**

- Introduction to youth work
- Youth work in practice
- Individual work with young people
- Basics of working with groups and team building
- Conflict transformation
- Radicalism and extremism among young people in contemporary society

During the course, all participants in pairs will plan and implement 5 practical workshops lasting 2 hours in already existing youth clubs with the help and supervision of PRONI youth workers with a group of young people from their communities. The workshops last for two hours, and for an additional two hours the course participants will plan, prepare, evaluate, and write a report on the workshop. Course participants will attend trainings and meetings between modules related to practical work, such as: Introduction to practical work, writing a project proposal for practical work, writing a workshop plan and reporting. The participants of the "Basics of Youth Work" course were selected by a committee made up of the staff of the PRONI Center for Youth Development and the local organization where the course is held.

The requirements for attending the course were as follows:

- ✓ The candidate is at least 18 years old
- ✓ Minimum knowledge of the English language
- ✓ Desirable (not eliminative) experience in youth work
- ✓ Expressed desire of the candidate for engagement in youth organizations

## Training of Trainers in the field of Youth Work

The course "Training for Trainers in Youth Work" aims to **provide young people with knowledge, skills and experience in the field of implementing youth work training for future youth workers in order to contribute to the personal and social development of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to educate future youth workers in a quality and responsible manner.** It is intended for young people (18-30 years old) who have successfully completed the course "Basics of Youth Work" and have a desire to influence the development of the youth sector in their communities through the education of future youth workers.

The "Training for Trainers in Youth Work" course consists of six modules, essays that each participant will have to write after completing the module, as well as a practical part where participants in pairs will plan and implement training sessions with young people from their communities.

**The "Training for Trainers in Youth Work" course consists of the following modules:**

- Basics of Youth Work Training
- Promotion of Tolerance and Acceptance of Diversity
- Public Communication
- Management and Organization of Work in a Youth Club
- Protection and Safety of Youth
- Conflict Transformation (Advanced Level)

During the course, all participants in pairs have planned and implemented 2 youth work trainings on topics that they consider important for young people in their communities for a duration of 1 day in existing youth clubs with the help and supervision of PRONI youth workers with a group of young people from their communities.

Participants of the "Training of Trainers in Youth Work" course will be selected by a committee consisting of staff from the PRONI Center for Youth Development and the local organization where the course is held.

The requirements for attending the course were as follows:

- ✓ The candidate is at least 18 years old
- ✓ Minimum English proficiency
- ✓ Completed the "Basics of Youth Work" course or at least one year of engagement in youth organizations
- ✓ The candidate's expressed desire to engage in youth organizations

#### Management of Youth Organizations

The course "Management in Youth Organizations" aims to **provide young people with basic knowledge in the field of quality leadership of youth organizations in order to create future leaders in the youth sector who will lead youth organizations in a quality manner, strengthen the youth sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thus influence the improvement of the position of young people in society.** It was intended for young people (18-30 years old) who have a desire to lead youth organizations.

The course "Management in Youth Organizations" consists of six modules, essays that each participant will have to write after completing the module, as well as a practical part where students have planned and implemented five workshops with young people from their communities in pairs.

**The course "Management in Youth Organizations" consists of the following modules:**

- Development of Interpersonal Skills
- Project Management
- Social Network Management

- Counseling Skills in Working with Youth
- Lobbying and Advocacy
- Human Resources Management

All participants will participate in the planning and implementation of the course "Basics of Youth Work" together with the trainers of the PRONI Center for Youth Development in a way that they will conduct trainings together with the trainers of the PRONI Center during the above-mentioned course, after which the trainers will give the final assessment of the participants.

#### Presentation and Assessment of Practical Work

Each of the sub-courses ends with a final exam, which is reflected in an essay of at least 1000 and a maximum of 1500 words. Through the essay, the course participants analyzed the topics covered in the completed module, and thus demonstrate that they have acquired the knowledge, values and skills necessary to pass the module.

In addition, the participants will receive a list of required reading for each of the modules, and will have to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of it, as well as their knowledge of essay writing techniques, through an essay.

It is important to say that all three courses mentioned above were implemented onsite and in a hybrid version. Participant for the courses were chosen from different towns of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Both entities and Brčko District) in order to cover most of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they were participants of all ethnic backgrounds. While choosing the participants it was important to keep the gender balance which was always close to 50 % of mails and 50% of females.

#### Peace-building in Practice

As peace-building practices, various innovative methods had to be used and adjusted to young people. **Promotion of importance of coexistence through sports, art, music, youth work, youth clubs, peace camps, workshops, trainings, online and offline campaigns, research, membership in international networks of youth organizations, partnerships with other non-governmental organizations was crucial.**

**In the context of phenomena such as radicalism, extremism, nationalism and similar following approaches were used:**

- Approach 1: Working with Those Directly Affected to Discuss Honestly the Impacts of Mass Violence
- Approach 2: Interethnic Dialogue amongst Post-War Generation Youth
- Approach 3: Developing Integration among Post-War Generation Youth
- Approach 4: Learning About Inclusion and Social Healing

In order to mitigate narratives such as islamophobia, nationalistic narratives and similar PRONI, as the first organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina, **created amateur documentary films for the purpose of preventing radicalism and violent extremism among young people.**



**POTRAGA (The Pursuit)**

One of them is the film [“POTRAGA” \(The Pursuit\)](#), which tells the story of a young person from the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina who, in her teenage years, was exposed to the ideas of one of the world’s most wanted terrorists, as well as a general picture of extremism in the Brčko District. The film presents the reasons why young people go to foreign battlefields, who works on prevention and in what way, how all this affects young people, and what the situation is like in the Brčko District of BiH today. The protagonists in the documentary movie are religious leaders of all three main religions Brčko District, youth workers, representative of the Brčko District police department in charge of the mitigating terrorism and extreme violence and relevant governmental officials. The documentary was promoted in various cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as: Sarajevo, Zenica, Brčko, Neum and other.

Discussing experiences of going to foreign conflict zones or experiencing issues such as islamophobia like one of the protagonists in the documentary did, PRONI felt the need to share their experiences with wider public with the aim of raising awareness of these phenomena among the public. Since these types of narratives argue that issues like terrorism, extremism and radicalism is connected with religion, especially with Islam as a religion, **it was important to include priest of all religions (Islamic, Catholic and Orthodox) as well as police and other agencies that mitigate terrorism, extremism and radicalism.**

**During the production of this film following steps were taken:**

- 1) Creating a scenario
- 2) Creating interview questions
- 3) Finding protagonists: young people that experienced indoctrinations by some radical groups, scientists, relevant religious and governmental bodies, police in charge of mitigating terrorism and other
- 4) Production of the documentary
- 5) Dissemination of the documentary

Creating this documentary and other project led to PRONI involvement in cooperating with governmental bodies in creating strategies for mitigating terrorism, extremism and radicalism on local and state level.

Bringing young people together from various cities and villages and isolating them from outside influences and narratives by providing them with the opportunity to meet peers from various geographical areas, ethnic and religious background. One of the methods that is used in Youth Work to achieve above mentioned goals are **peace camps where young people leave their place of residence and are accommodated, in a way, in places foreign to them.**

In a peace camp held three times in a village Brka near town of Brčko District participated nearly 150 young people from various town of Bosnia and Herzegovina who after the camp has finished had the obligation to plan and implement peace building activities in their communities.

**Topics covered during the camps are:**

- Conflict resolution: Personal approaches to conflict and differences, understanding perceptions and prejudices and developing knowledge, skills and attitudes for creative work with differences.
- Critical thinking and media literacy in local communities in BiH: the way we promote the media that include, a relationship to the 'other and different'.
- Human rights - familiarity with basic human rights: priority - narratives that promote cooperation between marginalized minority groups from different ethnic communities, including LGBT people, Roma and others.
- Basic advocacy skills: Improve case advocacy practices by teaching participants how to advocate for their local community, improve the organization, feasibility, and quality of their advocacy responses.
- Confronting the past.
- Reconciliation and culture of peace: holding various public forums, lectures, planning and implementing various cultural, artistic, sports and educational programs and projects according to the needs of young people in certain social surroundings.

PRONI staff chose the participants, who applied for participation, according to their place of residence (for geographical coverage of Bosnia and Herzegovina), motivation for peace building and camping, experience in youth work and age. Each day of the camp covered different topics with included also sport activities, team building exercises and evening activities. Camp was implemented with the Red Cross from Brčko who provided first aid trainings for participants and was on site for medical assistance for the participants if needed.

**During above mentioned camps PRONI used three main methods to achieve the goals of the project:**

- Residential setting of the group
- Residential settings allow groups of young people from various ethnic and religious communities to step out of their everyday surroundings and meet their peers from other communities or even different countries.
- Educating the group about a specific topic in theoretical and experiential sense
- During the camps trainers and youth workers provide theoretical knowledge about the topics that are covered, but participants had the opportunity to learn through experience and doing.
- Providing the opportunity to spread the idea of peace and reconciliation among the wider public



In order for the idea of peace building in community and skills and knowledge gained at the peace camps to be spread among the wider public, participants need to plan and implement activities based on the learning during the camps in their own communities.

## Conclusion

### **In all of the above-mentioned activities following methods were used:**

- 1) interactive way of learning,
- 2) intercultural approach,
- 3) creating safe space for development,
- 4) encouraging responsibility and creativity,
- 5) awareness raising which were all implemented according non-formal education methodologies (role plays, small group work, open communication and similar).

## 4. Attuned Social Dialogue Toolkit

### 4.1 Overview

This toolkit is based on WP5's research into everyday extremism and methods for limiting it and is meant to be adaptable to various local conditions.



Each tool is **aimed towards identifying everyday extremism** (be this antidemocratic views and/or views that devalue groups of others) **and developing social dialogue interventions that promote attunement.**

### 4.2 A Set of Living Democracy Attunement Tools

#### Living democracy attunement tools

Our living democracy attunement tools provide key elements for fostering attunement and reducing everyday extremism by nurturing the community and creating social dialogues. Each of the tools provides a way of creating “the ground” or context for social dialogue in the community. This involves adopting a collaborative approach that includes diverse participants and actively involves community insiders in creating change.

Attunement tools should recognize the importance of local knowledge and experience and promote a sense of shared ownership in the process of attunement. Attunement tools also address the need for fostering healthy **relationships that can create social dialogues.**

Attunement tools are directed to building trust-based dialogues where participation is voluntary and motivated by intrinsic interest. They promote transformative social dialogues through Participatory Action Research (PAR), which empowers individuals to critically examine their communities and challenge oppressive actions.

These tools encourage empathy and perspective-taking, allowing individuals to understand and consider different points of view. The tools further highlight the importance of open and narrative communication in which people share personal experiences rather than engaging in overheated discussions and polarised debates.

## Collaborative and Autoethnography Tools

### *A Reflexivity Tool for Diverse Collaborative Teams*



A key way to foster successful collaborative ethnographic fieldwork with a diverse team is via shared, open discussions on reflexivity.

#### The tool consists of the following steps

(I) Each researcher reflects on his/her position, affects and shapes



(II) Reflections are shared with other team members in a group



(III) Reflections are shared across groups

#### (I) Each researcher reflects on his/her position, affects and shapes

Before starting research, **each researcher should reflect on how his/her position** (insider/outside; race/class/gender; level of education/status/power, etc.) **affects and shapes:**

- Access to participants
- Interpretations of participants' attitudes
- Perception of the key concepts used in the research

#### (II) Reflections are shared with other team members in a group

The team members then **share these reflections with the other team members in a group discussion**. The discussion can be facilitated via open-ended prompts, such as:

- i) What do you think it will be like for you to be in the field?
- ii) How does your background or personal experience influence your understanding of the research topic?
- iii) Are there any challenges you expect during the research?
- iv) How do you think people in the field are going to perceive you?
- v) How do you personally/individually define [this concept] we are using in the research?
- vi) What emotions arise for you when discussing this topic? How might these emotions influence your research?
- vii) Can you identify a moment during our discussion of this project that triggered a strong emotional response from you? What was it, and why do you think it affected you?

#### (III) Reflections are shared across groups

**The final step is for the other group members to share their perspectives on the reflections that have been shared by each other.** When possible, evaluative judgment should be kept at a minimum - and identified as such. A trained facilitator, who may also know the team members, is helpful for this step. Team members are likely to point out possible blind spots, challenges or advantages of each other's position and the facilitator needs to repeatedly reinforce the idea that everyone has an equal level of blind spots, challenges or advantages in the group. The facilitator needs to keep the conversation centered on what team members bring to the table and how they can usefully contribute to the project - in spite and perhaps despite

any blind spots, challenges, or (dis)advantages. There is no perfect(ly) diverse or appropriate team - the challenge is to make the best of and bring out the best in the team that one has. It may be worthwhile to ask participants to identify what they learned via the discussion or how their perspectives have shifted during the conversation with team members.

**Regular check-ins should be established throughout the research project to revisit the team's reflections.** This allows team members to adjust their understandings and approaches based on ongoing experiences in the field and with each other, fostering continuous learning and adaptation.



The goal of the reflective sharing among team members is self-awareness and helping team members to become aware of different aspects of each member's position. The process enables recognition of the value of each team member's perspective (based on the position he/she occupies), which can also enhance understanding of the subject at hand.

**The benefit of this tool is a dual-pronged attunement:**

- 1) team discussions become social dialogues and moments of researcher-attunement with each other, which improves the subsequent academic analysis.
- 2) This process lays the groundwork for researchers to engage in positive attunement in the field based on their greater knowledge of how they are perceived in the field and how they perceive the field.

The tool also fosters an understanding that the researchers are not separate from the field, and that academic/policy/project research does not take place in a vacuum or ivory tower, separate(d) from the communities one is involved in. As such, these discussions allow for the 'field' and 'home/work' to inform and support each other, making for a more attuned and iterative dialogue between all participants.

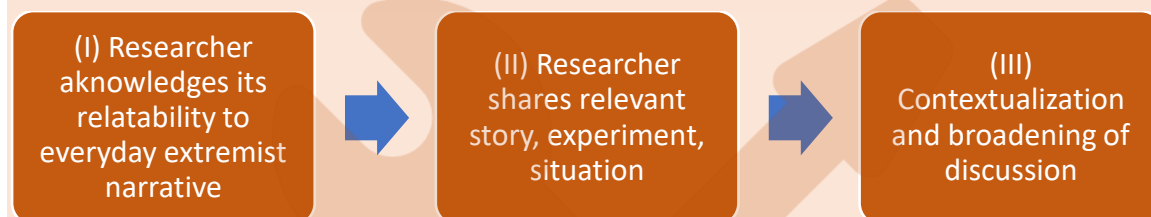


## Narrative Bridges for Fostering Micro-Level Social Dialogues



With this tool, researchers can engage with the everyday narratives of extremist hate that they confront during the process of field research, and, in fact, foster attuned social dialogues.

### The tool consists of the following steps:



When an everyday extremist narrative is expressed, the researcher acknowledges one or more aspects of what has been expressed that they can personally relate, either emotionally or factually, and then shares a relevant story/experience/situation, with the aim of contextualizing and broadening the scope of what is being discussed.

For example, one of our researchers (Salih) who is a member of the group (Syrians in Turkey) that is targeted by everyday extremism explains, *“I try to show how we sometimes share similar feelings - Making these connections helps Turkish people understand the issue on a more personal level.”* Salih shared that he believes he is able to create moments of empathy and understanding, underscoring the power of storytelling to build bridges between people with different lived experiences.

Community stories or historical narratives that resonate with the group can also help to contextualize everyday extremist narratives within a larger societal framework, but personal stories are best. **The goal is not to correct a wrong idea or racist opinion per se, but to set in motion individual reflective processes and new narrative processes in groups and communities.** As with NGW, there is no steering of the conversation in terms of topics or views. It is just about setting the framework that facilitates a much more enriched conversation, which is also more inclusive.

**It is important to keep in mind that this is not often a smooth, easy, or successful process. Each researcher will go through their own learning process to figure out how they are best able to navigate (what can be) challenging conversations.** It is important to always center the significance of the work that one is engaged in - and to maintain a reflexive attitude towards one's interactions, without inflating the importance of an interaction that resonates, and without minimizing the challenge of one that does not.

**A technique used in NGW work can be useful here: the tool of “no but yes”-interaction.** This means that facilitators signal their personal position but do so only modestly, and appropriate to the situation, by placing the emphasis on expressing interest in the interlocutor. “No but yes” can mean: “While I may not fully agree, I am interested in learning more about

what and how you are thinking about this subject” or “I think I can relate to what you are saying, but I’d like to continue hearing more from you” or “This reminds me of a story, which I can share later, so please continue.” The aim is to maintain an openness towards learning more about perspectives, to acknowledge that something has been shared, and to recognize that as significant. So, there is no countering of the narrative at all anymore. According to Harald: “You just bank on collecting narrations of life experiences and what this does to the people involved in the sharing.”

### Researchers as story facilitators

Researchers may also adopt the role of story facilitators (rather than just observers of stories or being themselves storytellers) by prioritizing the voices of those with potential lived experiences and creating an environment where participants feel safe to share their narratives authentically with each other. It is not always necessary for the researcher to be involved in the storytelling process; indeed, a 'foil' or someone who can stand inside/outside the interactive space and can help bring out commonalities between people's lived experiences, can be tremendously impactful.

This tool can also be included as part of an approach to ethnographic interviewing, which does not take the form of rigid question and answer sessions, but rather flexible conversations that allow for deeper understandings for all involved.

This tool is useful in contexts in which public-facing interventions into everyday extremist narratives could put members of the community at risk. When formal, large-scale attuned interventions are not feasible, such conversations can create moments of mutual understanding about everyday extremism in ways that feel safe and personal. **We consider even small moments of perspective-taking and sharing experiences/stories in informal conversations to be an intervention that disrupts everyday extremist narratives.** The tool will be most effective if the person using it has a long-term, close and trusting relationship with the group or community involved, so it may be more applicable in small-group settings. However, this tool need not be limited to researchers, but can also be used in a broader community setting, such as a townhall or other community forum, because such large-scale events or interventions usually consist of small(-scale) moments and interactions.

## Gamification Tools



Contemporary societies are increasingly pervaded by the phenomena of **misinformation and disinformation**, often rapidly spread throughout social media networks, and promoted and subscribed to by political officials, public figures and the media. To address these phenomena and promote attuned social and political dialogue, we propose **challenging existing narratives and misconceptions through a quiz game.**



Picture 1. OppAttune's "The Attunement Game" prototype.

*Choosing your sources: creating a mosaic of everyday extremism*

### Collecting "everyday extremism"

Today, there is no small pool of resources from where to find and collect loaded narratives, snippets of misinformation, erroneous or misleading information or yet full-grown conspiracy theories. There are several useful sources and methods of accessing this data:

- **Ethnographic work is a strong resource given its unmediated, proximate, and contextualized character.** Throughout ethnographic interviews researchers should maintain an open-minded, non-confrontational stance towards those being interviewed, regardless of what they say, think or stand for. Although we acknowledge this is no fresh insight, we nevertheless deem it worthwhile stressing.
- Other primary sources, such as **social media posts, political speeches, news and opinion pieces, media coverage and socially circulated discourse** (e.g. what in some places could be called "coffee talk" or "tavern talk") can be of use. Accessing some of these sources might entail merely living daily life with a small notebook at hand and being ready to anonymously collect these elements.

- **Fact-checkers' websites are an alternative source of information.** Verified fact-checkers are in the business of challenging and assessing information. They often rank statements or arguments on true/false scales and provide additional context and information, which can be useful for the development of questions' solutions.



It is important to address all sources of narratives of everyday extremism regardless of who says it and whether it seems silly. It is important to respect the audience and to develop a game that can be used and enjoyed by all: not a small minority, but especially a large group of often uninterested individuals.

*Organizing, classifying and presenting questions: challenging players correctly*



Quiz games make use of different types of questions. In this tool, for the purposes of clarity and simplification, we advise the use of two of the most used and widely known question-types: multiple-choice and true-or-false questions.

## Tips and guidelines for developing questions

### Multiple-choice questions

For multiple-choice questions, we propose 4 possible answers, **all written in the most unambiguous and clear way, avoiding the use of dubious language.** We advise variations across the following structure:

- One of the answers should be unambiguously wrong
- Two of the answers should share strong similarities between them
- The remaining answer should differ noticeably from the two above

The correct answer might be found in either lines b. or c. above.

Another key concern about question building is properly addressing nuanced and complex issues through multiple-choice answers. **Making use of different difficulty levels - based on either knowledge depth or question complexity - can help address complex phenomena. Nonetheless, difficulty should not be a product of fuzzy language.**



Pictures 2. & 3. Playing the *Attunement Game* with the public at 2024's European Researchers Night, Coimbra, Portugal.

### Making the game funny: making you laugh and developing critical thinking

True or false questions provide an opportunity to explore funny and often unexpected information. **With recourse to social media posts and outrageous claims, but also truthful yet unplausible information, players can be asked to decide whether a post, tweet or news article is true or false:**

- This allows players not only to delve into strange, yet often comic grounds, but also **raises their awareness of the importance of critical thinking and double-checking skills:** reality might be stranger than fiction.
- Pictures of internet posts, news articles and other media elements (including audio/video) can be presented in all kinds of formats (printed booklets; notebooks or tablet screens). It is essential to ensure all elements are properly visible and readable.

### Creating an explanatory answer book: identifying and addressing issues

In quiz games, solutions can be present in game cards or as separate elements. Given the nature and complexity of some of the issues addressed, **we advise the creation of an answer booklet.**

- This booklet allows you to address each question with the appropriate amount of information to justify the right choice/answer. When dealing with complex issues, this requires research work and argumentation greater than the length available at a traditional game card.
- Classifying what is wrong with each issue or question, i.e. pointing out the underlying thought error or misperception is valuable for drafting correct answers and justifying the correct choices. By pinpointing the underlying issue(s) present in each question, the solution can expand upon it. Below we present a short account of the types of errors that might be found:



| Error type   | Description  |
|--|--|
| <b>misinformation</b>                                      | Factually wrong information which is reproduced and disseminated by actors who trust its content.  |
| <b>disinformation</b>                                      | Factually wrong information, which is disseminated purposefully by bad faith actors, with the purpose of fostering everyday extremist narratives.  |
| <b>logical fallacies</b>                                   | Argumentative patterns that are pervaded by logical fallacies (e.g. non-sequitur fallacies; ad hominem attacks; straw man fallacies; overgeneralization, false dilemma or slippery slope fallacies). |
| <b>social prejudices, preconceptions or misconceptions</b> | Widely shared and diffused historically grounded tropes and ideas about certain social groups.   |

### A gameplay tool for promoting open dialogue, experience sharing and attunement

How can gaming become both a fun and also a illuminating experience? **When promoting attunement through gameplay, a balance between competition and dialogue must be achieved.** Because games are fun due to their competitive nature, a balance must be struck between individual incentives and shared goals. In addition, the existence of rules should be relaxed if, or when, dialogue between team members and across teams takes place.

### Designing game rules: priorities and purposes

**Game rules should ensure that the game is both fair and playable and that the ultimate purpose of gamification is achieved.** To ensure this double-purpose, basic game rule precepts should be followed, including:

- Individual players/teams of players should all address the same questions, creating a fairer level playing field across all participants.
- Record keeping is done by a game facilitator and clearly visible to all.
- Teams' members get the same amount of time to discuss and deliberate in each question, extra time is given for dialogue between teams.

Given the purpose of gamification, rules should also potentiate dialogue and attunement. This can be done in different ways, **including through points systems and rewards that balance individual/team interests with incentives for cross team co-operation, distancing the game from a zero-sum game logic.** This can be achieved through different sets of rules and mechanics, including:

- By ruling that the winning side can only achieve victory if a minimum, relative, threshold of correct answers was achieved by the lowest scoring player/team.
- By attributing extra-points when teams successfully convince others to shift their answers.



### Create a welcoming and comfortable gaming atmosphere

Playing a quiz game on everyday issues can be a challenging, intimidating experience, especially for less knowledgeable players. To avoid these outcomes, we can adopt certain methods, including:

- The establishment of a points system that always attributes a score (e.g. attributing wrong answers 50% of the score of a correct one – right answer: 2 pts/ wrong answer: 1 pt).
- Creating a differentiated badge system that rewards individuals/teams for different accomplishments (e.g. *The most convincing team*; *The most open-minded team*), stressing positive outcomes of gameplay (e.g. dialogue and persuasion) beyond simply winning.

Given the nature of questions and issues approached **it is not uncommon for disputes to arise, despite the best of efforts in question development**. By establishing a way for players to challenge established answers, one allows participants (game facilitators included) to interact and dissect issues.

- This can be done by establishing democratic sets of rules of dispute, e.g. a procedure that allows players to challenge established answers throughout gameplay, and that gives all parties involved space and time for argumentation and deliberation.

### The role of the game host

Quiz games often require a game facilitator, or game host, responsible for rules enforcement and game conduct. In addition, **the game facilitator ought to promote and foster dialogue**, possibly even beyond the strict framework of gameplay.

- The game host should incentivize and promote intra- and inter-team dialogue, punctually intervening to clarify doubts or misunderstandings.
- The game host should be well-versed in the questions database and answers' booklet, as well as to be familiar with the issues at hand.
- During gameplay, the game host should strive to integrate individuals or teams in argumentative and deliberative situations and always refrain from adopting confrontational or demeaning tones or attitudes.

Tools based on the Narrative Group Work in Schools<sup>®</sup> method

### For practising social dialogue within the safe space setting of NGW

#### (1) Situation/ challenge: the challenge of starting the dialogue within a given setting

In any defined safe space setting – whether inside or outside schools, with young people or adults – the moment of starting the narrative social dialogue needs to be mastered. How can a narrative social dialogue be initiated in such a way that it is as unlimited and open-ended as possible? How can facilitators set up a dialogue in which only the participants (two or more in a group) come to negotiate and interact independently, from moment to moment, and decide what experiences and thoughts they want to raise and share, thus suspending all external agendas, controls and taboos?

#### Main tool: Forwarding the most open-ended starter questions – and/or give encouragement, motivation and explanation of social dialogue in the NGW setting

The two facilitators of the NGW setting personally concentrate on their basic professional attitude of no-agenda interaction with little to no elements of argumentative debate.

Then they begin each session of dialogue with a most basic and open-ended starter question such as:

- "So, how are things going?"
- "What's on your mind, here – in this place/ institution, on this occasion – or beyond this place and occasion in your life more broadly?"
- "What would you like to share and/or hear about from others here?"
- In case of recurring sessions of dialogue: "How has it been since last time we spoke here?", etc.

#### Additional tool: Giving more explanation and encouragement, both general and context specific!

If the situation requires more explanation and encouragement because participants feel unsure whether to join and what to do in the setting, facilitators provide basic explanation:

- "We are here to provide an open and safe space for you to talk freely and confidentially – in this place/institution, on this occasion. We facilitators will just make sure that things go well and that we can all talk as we like!"
- "The school management has concluded that it is of high educational value to provide you with an open and confidential space to talk to each other – and thus to have space to learn and practice how to participate and share in conversations. The school and we facilitators agree that this is important for both professional success and personal development – as well as being able to learn how to (inter)act within and maintain a free and just society based on human rights and democracy."

*[For more – and more context specific – variations of the tool cf. CI internal guide sheet on how to begin a social narrative dialogue within a defined pedagogical setting as NGW].*

## **(2) Situation/challenge: After effective start, maintain a continuous narrative social dialogue**

Once the social dialogue in group conversation has been successfully set off, it needs to be continuously supported and maintained for the duration of the setting/ session so that it does not get stuck in unresolvable polarisation, chronic escalation, silence and distrust, no-shows/withdrawals by parts of the group, inter alia.

### **Main tool: Ask/ encourage 'narrative questions' and 'situation questions'**

The two facilitators of the NGW setting forward 'situation questions' and 'narrative questions', as **opposed to expressing reposts, corrections, clarifications or debate like arguments is key to maintaining a continuous process of narrative social dialogue.**

For example, a 'situation question' might be: 'You just mentioned that you love Germany and want to defend and protect it. Can you think of a situation in which you have felt the need to protect Germany? How did this come about?'

Likewise, **practitioners avoid why-questions and instead ask narrative what- and how-questions:** "Please tell me exactly what the situation was like?", "How did it happen that ...?", "Can you please describe in more detail how things started and then developed – and how it affected you?", "Can you remember another experience that was similar or very different to this one? What was it like?"

*[For more – and more context specific – variations of the tool cf. CI internal guide sheet on asking 'narrative questions' and 'situation questions'.]*

## **(3) Situation/challenge: Dialogue within the setting seems to be permanently hindered or obstructed, despite facilitators using narrative questions.**

In situations in which an individual is personally challenged and possibly overburdened or in which the group conversation is overburdened or chaotic and doesn't seem to flow easily, fruitfully and inclusively, **safe space settings of narrative social dialogue are prepared for shifts of settings.**

In fact, while facilitators abstain from any defined topics or agenda, they have the mandate and responsibility to secure an open-ended dialogue, hence shift the setting when it appears helpful; the most important of which are:

- a) the temporary setup of two or more subgroups, reflecting gender or other social criteria, or reflecting aspects of the current group dynamic,
- b) the invitation/ proposal to individual participants to use the 'rest zone' for a while in which they can temporarily withdraw when they deem it necessary or helpful or when there is promise that the flow of the group conversation would profit momentarily.

**Tool/ methodological variants: Shifting the setting – e.g. dividing into subgroups and invitation to the ‘rest zone’!**

The two facilitators of the NGW setting give **their impression of the current group interaction and/or the interaction and behaviour of a particular participant and how it may be getting in the way of the main purpose of the dialogue group**, which is to enable mutual talking and sharing – and then suggest a temporary shift in the setting (either by splitting into sub-groups or by inviting individuals into the rest zone). **The participants and the group then discuss, decide (possibly by vote) and help to implement the shift with the help of the facilitators, who have veto power over setting issues.**

The basic elements of this tool are: **dialogue that makes sure that everyone understands why the change of setting is taking place, how this is for the sole purpose of improving social dialogue and mutual understanding in the group, that any such shifts are always temporary and all members will be brought back to the totality of the group, and that no one is excluded.** For example, the facilitators might say:

- "We have the impression that if we go on like this, our conversation in the group will be severely hampered and will remain so. What is your impression? We suggest that we divide the group for about 20 minutes and the girls and boys form their own group with one of us and then come together again. What do you think? Should we do this, or would you rather stay together and see how it works? Don't forget that we always come back together as a group towards the end of the session anyway.

In case of disagreement between the facilitators and the group, or refusal by individuals in the group (e.g. when asked to spend some time in the 'rest zone'), the implementation of the change is suspended, at least for the rest of the session. The facilitators then keep an explicit focus on the impact of such refusal on the group conversation, and may have bilateral conversations after the session that help to create a willingness to try such a change. While the facilitators never force any change or action, they may call on the school if such action is urgently needed – for pedagogical or safety reasons.

*[For more specific variations of the tool cf. CI internal guide sheet on how to shift settings.]*

**(4) Situation/challenge: Difficult personal issues and trauma-related experiences are related (experiences of violence, abuse, mental health issues etc.)**

In situations where an individual is personally challenged/overburdened and/or post-traumatically overwhelmed by sharing certain personal experiences in the group conversation, **both the individual needs to be protected and empowered, and the broader social and political issue behind the traumatic experience needs to be addressed and brought to light with additional relevant experiences from members of the group** – so that the issue is not tabooed and excluded from the conversation.

### **Tool/ methodological variants: Express empathy and awareness, take action to protect – address the political significance**

The two facilitators pursue three aims in their dialogue with the trauma affected person:

- (1) To express sympathy/empathy and understanding for the person – and respect for her/his courage and commitment to share this difficult and traumatic experience with the group,
- (2) At the same time, offer protection from being overwhelmed (re-traumatised) by talking about the incident – and support the person's resilience and strength,
- (3) address the wider social significance of the specific trauma issue (e.g. family violence or sexual assault, etc.).

For example, the facilitators might say:

- "Oh dear, that's terrible. I'm sorry you had to go through that. I think it's terrible when that happens to (young) people. It is forbidden. Because it's very hurtful – and it's against the law. We have to prevent it in the future.
- "It is good that you are talking about this. Thank you so much for that! I have a lot of respect for young people who are open about this kind of thing".
- "It's incredibly important that we talk about things that almost everyone keeps quiet about. This is a very, very important issue for our society. Unfortunately, it happens quite often – and we have to make sure that it is effectively prevented in the future.

*[On more specific variations of the tool cf. CI internal guide sheet on handling trauma issues in social dialogue]*

### **(5) Situation/challenge: practicing confidentiality and handling breaches of confidentiality in safe space settings of social dialogue**

**Confidentiality and trust are intertwined key elements of safe space settings** where personal experiences are articulated and shared with others. **Gaining trust and practising confidentiality as a member of an ongoing group setting is not easy and needs to be learned.** Furthermore, as safe space settings, such as narrative group work, always have an institutional framework and/or social background, such as schools, neighbourhoods or communities, confidentiality is easily challenged and breached. **Such breaches need to be handled in a way that allows for the building and development of confidentiality skills.** This is because mastering skills of trust and confidentiality in a democratic society, which consists of different levels of more or less public or confidential speech, is crucial for both individuals and society.

### **The tool/ methodological variant: Build skills of confidentiality and trust on a continuous manner**

The two facilitators address and continuously work on confidentiality skills, according to the following guidelines:



**The required confidentiality is addressed at the beginning of the group** only briefly without too much emphasis in order to make the statement **but also avoid causing anxieties and stress about rules and sanctions**. For example, the facilitators might say:

- “Of course, this is all between us, you know that!”
- “As always with such things, everything said remains within the group”.

**Facilitators then regularly come back to topics of trust and confidentiality upon occasion;** e.g. when sensitive experiences are shared they do remark the need that individuals are protected and can bank on confidentiality. Yet, in other situations they may also say:

- “By the way, confidentiality doesn’t mean that we are a secret society either and we certainly don’t want to be perceived as such (by others here in the school). We can always tell people who are genuinely interested how this works here in the group and even roughly describe what kind of issues come up. However, this must be done in a very general way so that none of what is related can be traced back to individual participants.
- “As far as we facilitators are concerned, we are not teachers and therefore are bound to professional confidentiality (as in social work). We only share with the school about what has been the issues here if you want us to do so and we all agree what will be communicated”.

On occasion facilitators may want to focus on experiences of breach of trust and of gossip and rumours within the social context and institution that patted participants come from:

- ‘Do you have such gossip often here at school among students?
- What is it about?
- Can you remember situations that occurred around gossip, rumours and breach of confidence?
- What exactly happened? How was it?’

*[For more specific variations of the tool cf. CI internal guide sheet on practicing confidentiality.]*

### **(6) Situation/challenge: Participants express group focused hatred and views that devalue certain groups of people**

The expression of hostility and enmity/hate against particular groups of people and above all the expression of views that some people have lesser value than others is something that is not only to be expected in widely un-restrict and open-ended group conversations as in narrative group work; rather this is even wished for to occur – to the extent that these views and behaviours are authentic among the addressees of the setting. Because if such views and behaviour were to not emerge this would signal that the trust and openness within the group setting has not yet been sufficiently established.



**The tool/ methodological variant: Applying the dialogical ‘No-but-yes’ approach and direct attention to affected individuals (victims)**

The two facilitators address any hostility against and explicit and implicit views of devaluation of certain ‘others’ when they emerge in the group conversation, using various sorts of dialogical responses with the purpose of clarification and reflection – while avoiding moral appeal and reproaches:

- Responses along the pattern of ‘No-but-yes, tell me more about it and about yourself!’

“I do disagree, but tell me how come you think that? Thanks for speaking up, but please also tell me where you get all this from? Tell me about the people that you mix with and share these beliefs with. What is your experiences with these people otherwise? Can you share one particular experience about one particular person?”

- Responses of checking and taking care of participants that may feel offended or directly affected (in case when e.g. slurs against foreigners are uttered and refugee students are in the group; gender views are often relevant, too.): “First of all let me ask you all: Does anyone feel offended by what we’ve heard? I’m quite aware how hurtful such utterances can be. I will keep this in mind while also being interested where this all comes from. Please everybody bring in their thoughts and reactions.”

- Employ shifts of the setting – to protect and mitigate the group and the conversation.

*[For more specific variations of the tool cf. CI internal guide sheet on handling group focused hatred and views that devalue others.]*

**(7) Situation/challenge: Participants systematically act in disingenuous, manipulative and highly strategic ways**

In recent years there have been many observations about strategies of communication in groups and in the public which seem to be disingenuous, misleading or manipulative, as for instance in strategies of so-called gaslighting or, more broadly, in what is called toxic communication.

**Facilitators of social dialogue in groups need to be aware and equipped to handle such strategies – and also handle assumptions and suspicions that such strategies might be employed.**

**The tool/ methodological variant: Focus on and invite to express mistrust and suspicion – and support clarification**

The two facilitators address and encourage the group to express and explain feelings of mistrust and suspicion about a supposed dishonesty in something that has been said in the group. Then ask more specific detail questions about the respective account:

“I don’t know, but I have to admit having a hard time believing that what you told us has really occurred in this way; but maybe that is not razor important. I certainly appreciate your patience but could you elaborate more on the aspect of xyz. How exactly did this happen? How was the scenery, who stood where and did what – and what was said exactly.”

After some enquiry one can always take a story at face value and work with it regardless of the truthfulness of the person presenting it: “We may still be unsure about what Tobias told us about an encounter with the Russian Mafia and how it heroically saved his friend from an attack by foreigners, but tell me, is there anything that comes to mind on your side about Mafia, foreigners and attacks here in the area?”

Employ shifts of the setting – to protect and mitigate the group and the conversation.

*[For more specific variations of the tool cf. CI internal guide sheet on handling disingenuous and manipulative interaction in group dialogues]*

### For practising social dialogue outside safe spaces –

#### Methodological guidelines for dialogical encounters in the public sphere in everyday situations – both offline and online

##### **(8) In the offline sphere: Narrative Attunement First Responder Skills in everyday public situations**

The overarching purpose of the NGW approach is to build emotional political intelligence and social skills of group dialogue in safe space settings especially for young people (in schools). However, **NGW ethnology can also provide helpful strategies for practising – or at least encouraging – social dialogue outside of educational settings in everyday public situations.**

An important methodological spin-off – and side benefit – that the Narrative Group Work method has brought to other possible contexts of social dialogue in the course of the Oppattune project is that it has enabled the development of strategies and related training for **'Narrative Attunement First Responder Skills in Emergency Situations of Democracy' (Cultures Interactive e.V. 2024a/b).**

Such emergencies often arise spontaneously when everyday extremist speech, non-conductive opposition or group-focused enmity occurs in the public sphere, outside of arranged pedagogical settings designed to promote dialogue, moderation and attunement – on public transport, in town hall situations, in media communication (journalism), or in regular teaching settings in schools or universities, inter alia. Even in these situations, some of what is done when facilitating narrative dialogue groups needs to be done, or at least signalled, as much as possible. However, it has to be done in a very short time span, ranging from a few seconds to half a minute – requiring various quick and precise communicative responses.

##### **The tool/ methodological variant: Implement impromptu combinations of the three core elements of first response in situations of everyday extremism and devaluation of others**

Within a very short time span (from a few seconds to half a minute) and amidst many influencing factors which occur in spontaneously emerging public situations, an effective dialogical first response to incidents of everyday extremism will need to encompass three core

elements – i.e. simultaneously communicate the following three messages as a response to whoever has expressed, or is suspected of having expressed, views containing everyday extremism, group-focused enmity or devaluation of groups of others. This first response needs to signal ...

- ... **attention and acknowledgement that the view/ statement/ expression has been heard and recognised as significant**, which is all the more important as these (sometimes shocking, provocative) statements of everyday extremism are often ignored/ "overheard" – and even signal some degree of appreciation of the speaker's honesty, courage or forthrightness in sharing them.
- ... **a brief and carefully calibrated hint of personal perspective and assessment** – however, only to the extent deemed necessary to keep up both the interaction and personal authenticity of the first responder – be it factual correction, critical distance or personal indignation.
- ... **a convincing expression of personal interest in learning more about the other person's individual perspective and motivation behind the utterance** – despite one's own perspective – if only there was some extra time and space and mutual interest to explore this, which unfortunately is not the case in this situation; possibly concluding with a modest restatement of one's own perspective.

For example, in a public situation of everyday extremism and devaluation of others around the expression “crappy foreigners”, one might respond:

- *Did I hear that right? Did you just say that it only takes a strong leader to know what to do with all these 'crappy foreigners'? To be honest, I find this a little frightening but most of all also intriguing. Because I rarely hear that so openly; to be honest, I think that strong leaders have always been quite harmful, sometimes even dangerous; but most of all, I would much like to chat with you and learn more about your views and especially your personal experiences with people who might qualify as strong leaders. Too bad that's not possible here and now, and I don't even know if you'd be interested. So for now, I'll just have to leave it at hoping that this strong leader thing doesn't go too far – and maybe even dissipates.*

Any such dialogical first response to incidents of everyday extremism will be highly fluid, flexible and dependent on the exact context and situation, and can be modified in myriad ways to adapt to that situation and interlocutors, but will need to combine the three elements of: (i) attention and acknowledgement, (ii) personal perspective and assessment, (iii) expression of personal interest in learning more.

## (9) In the online sphere: Chat strategies of attunement for social media and gaming portals

Another important methodological spin-off – and side benefit – that the method of Narrative Group Work has brought to other contexts of social dialogue in the course of the Oppattune project is **that it allows the development of strategies for online chats (Cultures Interactive e.V., 2025)**. This is particularly necessary as many open or closed, i.e. semi-private, chat groups

on social media show a plethora of dialogues that indicate chronic emergency situations of democracy – expressing views and making statements containing everyday extremism, group-focused enmity or devaluation of groups of others. Chat histories that are characterized by violent and anti-democratic accents – whether on social media channels, messengers, Discord servers, gaming portals or in games – and in which people (groups of people) are spoken about in a devaluing and contemptuous manner pose a great challenge to any well-meaning dialogue. **It is not easy for moderate and pro-democracy chat participants to respond in a positive way without becoming a target, reaching their limits and/or being excluded from the chat.**

**The tool/ methodological variant: Apply carefully calibrated combinations of the three core elements of first response to everyday extremism – adapted to the online space**

Strategies for attuning such situations and social media chats need to be adapted to the online context and communication modalities – so that the chat is not immediately cut off and the intervening participant continues to influence the chat dialogue. **Given the volatile and fragile nature of anonymous online communication, as well as the high level of emotional charge, the three core elements of first response to everyday extremism can only be applied with some brevity and great caution.** In such chats, one sometimes encounters blatant right-wing extremism, cynicism and malice, sometimes mixed with depression and deep self-doubt.

- For example, on the gaming portal Steam one chat participant (F) had once posted a picture of a couple watching a movie about Hitler together and complains: “Why can't I find the right woman for this?”, to which participant X replies: “Because you're ugly, I guess”, acknowledged by a: “Son of a bitch” by F; and finally participant P corrects: “Because all women are whores except mom, is the right answer!”.

The attempt to respond, or even just to participate in this chat, **in a carefully calibrated combination of the three core elements of an attuning first response (attention/ acknowledgement; personal assessment; expression of personal interest) must be careful and brief, especially the first line of dialogue entered into the chat dialogue.**

- For example, such a first line might be “I'd also like to see a film – what do you like about Hitler?”, hoping for a response that allows for a narrative question such as “Do you know anyone like that? (Are you in any way like that yourself?)”, which would then allow for more personal experiences to be asked.
- Other opening lines might be: “What does the 'right woman' for this actually look like?”, possibly leading to more personal statements or narratives about 'women', to which one can then respond in a specifically attuned way, which may be unusual but still tolerable within this chat community.

## Non-formal Educational and Leadership Program Tools

### *PRONI Academy of youth work*

#### **Important aspects to consider when organizing peacebuilding educational activities in post-conflict societies**

##### **Geographical representation**

While organizing workshops or trainings with young people youth workers give great attention to geographical representation of participants in order to **cover different regions of the country**. PRONI Centre also gives great importance to rural youth work, so it tries to ensure balance between rural and urban youth as well.

##### **Work with Youth Clubs**

Youth clubs **represent safe places for young people, and they bring together young people of different profiles and identities** with the aim of establishing peace, breaking prejudices and stereotypes towards others and those who are different. This is where young people socialize, spend their free time usefully, and based on their previous experiences, they begin to think outside the framework and shackles of society. They serve as spaces where young people, through workshops, training, meetings, volunteer work, youth activism, exchange, and youth programs of joint creativity, can learn what their common goals are.

##### **Ethnic representation**

Including young people from different parts of the country into activities, also means, ethnic representation of the participants (for example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the country is divided into ethnically homogenous territories, which is a direct consequence from the war during the first half of the 90s). Involving young people of various ethnic backgrounds enables young people to get acquainted with each other, to discuss issues of importance to them and create relations that decrease ethnic distance among them.

##### **Selection of participants**

Participants are selected by a public call and by a board of staff members that chooses the participants for a specific activity. The public calls are spread through TV stations, radio stations, social networks, through the networks of partner organizations and similar means. While selecting the participants, attention is also given to gender balance. It is of great importance to establish equal representation of men and women in the activities.

##### **Outline of workshops and trainings**

In terms of methods that aim to achieve better results and provide learning experience for the participants, but also to provide practical experiences, youth workers use methods such as: **sitting in a circle during the workshops and trainings, working in smaller groups and exercises such as theatre and roleplay exercises, energizers and similar activities.**

- **Sitting in a circle ensures equity and equal participation of all the participants, while working in small groups gives all of the participants the opportunity to share their opinions** on certain subject and to get acquainted with each other. Participants in the smaller groups are usually not the participants that are from the same part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but participants who do not know each other.
- **Practical and theatre exercises are used with the purpose of putting participants in certain situations in order for them to gain practical experience with the situation and**



**understand how it feels to be in that specific situation.** Participants present what they have learned and felt after the exercise with trainers and the group who give them constructive feedback, which provokes discussions that are also a learning opportunity.

### **Volunteerism and activism**

Volunteering is very valuable. PRONI has the largest volunteer network with a monthly average of 50 volunteers who carry out 50 activities per month. PRONI's total amount of volunteer hours in community and youth activities resulted in 400 volunteer hours per month (4,800 volunteer hours per year). Our volunteers receive maximum mentoring support for the implementation of activities and their own ideas. Our program is not limited to performing administrative tasks or any transfer of responsibility from employees to young people, but is based on encouraging the development of each young person, their involvement in various programs that are in the sphere of their interest, and giving freedom to their creativity.

### **Residential settings**

Residential settings allow groups of young people from various ethnic and religious communities to step out of their everyday surroundings and meet their peers from other communities or even different countries. For PRONI, it basically means that young people from various areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of various ethnic background are brought together in an unfamiliar environment in order to discuss issues of importance to them. What is especially significant in residential settings is that these types of settings are not all about workshops or trainings, but also an opportunity for participants spend their free time together and get to know each other outside of the official trainings.

### **Trainers and youth workers:**

Qualified trainers and trained youth workers are important for success. PRONI Centre values skills, values and expertise of their trainers involved in activities. It is the only youth organization that has university educated youth workers and trainers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Educating youth workers started with university courses in cooperation with Jonkoping University from Sweden and continued with PRONI, which organized A (Basics of Youth Work), B (Training of Trainers in the Field of Youth Work) and B+ (Management in Youth Organizations) courses that lasted for 6 months each. PRONI Centre also supports further education of its volunteers and employees by encouraging them to educate themselves further and organizes training and seminars for them and encourages them to visit trainings and seminars organized by other institutions and organizations.



## 4.3 How to use the toolkit



To effectively use the toolkit for attuning everyday extremism, several key principles should be followed, namely: adaptability, safety, feedback, and **continuous learning**., **prioritize safety, be open to feedback, and encourage continuous learning**



**Adapt to Local Conditions** The toolkit is intended be flexible and thus, adaptable, allowing users to tailor it to specific cultural and socio-political contexts. Context is paramount to the success of any good method and while adaptability is crucial, further adaptation at the point of contact is also key.



**Prioritize Safety:** Always prioritize the safety and well-being of participants when implementing any of these methods. Interventions should be implemented in a way that is sensitive to the specific environment and avoids causing harm or distress to participants. For example, in high-risk settings, public-facing interventions may need to be replaced by more discreet, interpersonal approaches. The toolkit emphasizes the importance of creating a "safe space" for dialogue, where participants are guaranteed confidentiality and protection of personal data.



**Be Open to Feedback:** The toolkit should be treated as a "living document" that is continuously open to feedback and revisions. Researchers and practitioners should be open to feedback from participants about the tools, and be willing to make changes to improve their effectiveness.



**Encourage Continuous Learning:** The toolkit should promote a culture of continuous learning and self-reflection among practitioners



### Effective Use of these Tools Requires



**Safe and Skilled Facilitation:** Create safe and confidential spaces for social dialogue, ensuring the protection of participants and their personal information. Develop strong facilitation skills including transparency, honesty, and the ability to manage engagement and detachment.

- Facilitators should address key issues such as grievances, group hatred, and gender and sexuality, as these are often central to social conflict.
- Provide a stable setting with guaranteed confidentiality before moving into public dialogue.



**Adaptive and Ethical Approach:** Recognize and learn from the limitations of research and action, acknowledging that not all planned interventions are feasible due to safety concerns or other constraints. Adaptability is essential for ethical research practice, ensuring the well-being of participants and prioritizing their safety over public engagement when necessary.



These principles of adaptation, safety, feedback, and continuous learning ensure that the toolkit remains relevant and effective in various contexts, promoting attunement in communities.

## 5. Conclusion

**What does it take to actively and systematically support the resilience of living democracies through facilitating high quality social dialogue that attunes everyday extremism?** In the course of its ethnographic study of everyday extremism, OppAttune's WP5, 'Extremism and Living Democracies', has progressed to the point of suggesting answers to the fundamental question of how attunement can be done. Drawing from its transdisciplinary collaboration between social scientists, humanities scholars and practitioners from the fields of psychology, anthropology, politics and international relations, and cross-community dialogue, WP5 has formulated principles for using methods that attune. These will be further developed and refined in the later WPs of the project.

**Facilitating high-quality social dialogue is a means to strengthen living democracies by attuning everyday extremism.**

We argue that ethnography and related forms of participant- and community-focused engagement is crucial for understanding everyday extremism because it enables us to examine the subtle interactions and narratives that normalize exclusion and hate. Ethnographic works helps practitioners to develop tailored interventions aimed at understanding the emotional and psychological aspects of extremism. Ethnography is further isolated according to specific methods and principles that can be further refined in an **Attuned Social Dialogue Toolkit**. Our toolkit provides practical guidance for implementing the principles discussed in the handbook by nurturing the community, creating social dialogue, using attuning methods. The toolkit further emphasizes importance of **safe and skilled facilitation**, creating secure spaces for dialogue, and addressing sensitive issues via an **adaptive and ethical approach**, recognizing limitations and prioritizing the safety of participants

Ultimately, our work highlights the need for **flexibility** and **context-specific adaptations**, being open to feedback, and encouraging continuous learning. The "**Multi-method, multi-disciplinary social dialogue interventions**" and the "**Attuned Social Dialogue Toolkit**" emphasize the need for a nuanced approach that prioritizes collaboration, reflexivity, and ethical engagement in promoting attunement in communities.

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