



MENRE

Strengthening the mental resilience
of youth in dealing with crises
presented on social media

Project Findings



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The MENRE project – Strengthening the mental resilience of young people in dealing with crisis-related content on social media – shows how young people can be better supported through media literacy, emotional well-being and digital resilience.

Supporting Young People in a Crisis-Driven Digital Environment

MENRE responds to the growing presence of crisis-related content in young people's everyday digital lives. Social media is one of the most important sources of information for young people, but at the same time it exposes them to emotionally intense content — including war, disasters, violence, bullying, personal crises, mental health struggles, disinformation and other distressing topics.

The project explored how such content affects young people emotionally, socially and mentally. It also looked at how youth workers, educators, other professionals in education and youth work, as well as organisations, can support young people in dealing with such content in a critical, informed and healthy way.

A Collaborative European Approach

The project brought together partner organisations from Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Through desk research, field research, partner exchange and local workshops, the partners collected insights into how young people encounter crisis-related content and what kind of support they need.

An important project step was the partner meeting in Prague, hosted by CARITAS / Young Caritas. There, the partners discussed the findings from the first project phase and laid the foundation for the development of practical pedagogical materials.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned

MENRE research showed that young people frequently encounter crisis-related content linked to personal crises, wars and armed conflicts, as well as mental health topics such as anxiety, depression or exhaustion. Many young people reported sadness, emotional overload, fear or worry after consuming such content. The surveyed youth workers and educators also observed related effects such as doomscrolling, emotional exhaustion, restlessness and reduced concentration.

The project confirmed that crisis-related content is not only a matter of information, but also has an emotional and social dimension. Young people see a lot of difficult content online, but

without support they often lack the necessary tools to understand it, verify it, respond to it or emotionally stabilise themselves afterwards.

MENRE also highlighted the connection between emotionally charged content and fake news. Manipulative or misleading content often uses strong emotions to attract attention and increase interaction. Strengthening source verification and fake news literacy can therefore help young people respond to emotional overstimulation in a more reflective and informed way.

Pedagogical Approaches and Practical Activities

The main project output is the document Pedagogical Practices and Practical Activities. It translates the project findings into practical methods for youth workers, educators and other professionals in education and youth work who support young people aged 12 to 25.

The toolkit is structured around four main modules:

1. Emotional Awareness helps young people recognise and reflect on emotions triggered by crisis-related content.
2. Fake News Literacy strengthens critical thinking, source verification and the ability to recognise manipulation, disinformation and emotionally misleading content.
3. Emotional Well-being and Emotional Regulation introduces simple coping strategies, grounding techniques, media hygiene and healthy digital boundaries.
4. Digital Empowerment supports young people in moving from passive consumption towards active, responsible and constructive participation online and offline.

The activities use participatory and non-formal methods such as reflection, group discussions, storytelling, quizzes, mind maps, peer exchange and small action plans. They strengthen knowledge, skills and attitudes related to media literacy, emotional resilience, critical thinking, self-care and responsible digital behaviour.

Safe and Reflective Learning Environments

Because crisis-related content can be emotionally demanding, the project places particular emphasis on trauma-sensitive facilitation and safe-space principles. Activities should be educational, not therapeutic. Sharing personal experiences should always remain voluntary, and facilitators should avoid explicit depictions, shocking content or highly realistic examples.

The project recommends using age-appropriate, non-explicit, fictional or carefully selected examples and creating space for respectful discussions, emotional reflection and mutual support.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Partner organisations will continue to use and adapt the pedagogical practices in their work with young people, especially in activities focused on media literacy, emotional resilience, critical thinking and digital well-being.

Professionals in education and youth work need practical guidance on how to deal with emotionally charged online content, fake news, algorithmic influence, doomscrolling, emotional overload and safe group discussions.

Future initiatives should further develop accessible methods for youth work and non-formal education providers. The aim is to support young people in better understanding crisis-related content, critically checking information, regulating emotions, setting healthy digital boundaries and finding constructive forms of participation.

When crisis-related topics are sensitive, facilitators should address them through balanced moderation, source verification, respectful dialogue and independent reflection.

Outlook

MENRE confirmed that crisis-related content is a regular part of the online environment of many young people. At the same time, the project showed that support systems are not always sufficiently prepared to combine media literacy with care for mental well-being.

By translating research findings into practical pedagogical activities, MENRE contributes to strengthening young people's long-term resilience, critical thinking and confidence in navigating complex digital realities.

Visit <https://www.mmt-academics.de/ERASMUS-PROJEKTE/MENRE/> for more information on the MENRE project and to access its educational materials.



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