THEORY OF CHANGE ███ UNDER ██ PRESS ███ URE

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FONDS 21

What is the problem we are trying to solve?

Democracies are under pressure due to young people increasingly mistrusting mainstream media, democratic values (such as freedom of speech and freedom of press) and rule of law.

Young people are especially vulnerable in a dynamic media landscape where polarizing content and disinformation are widespread. These feed one-sided opinion forming, frustration with the media and (online) isolation and can contribute to polarization in society at large.

Who is the key target group and how do we reach them?

The key target group is made up of young people aged 15 to 24 years old.

We reach them through (in)formal education.

What steps are needed to bring about change?

A tested and functioning methodology combining peer education and gamification, in order to:
1. Strengthen democratic citizenship and counter polarization
2. Strengthen resilience against polarizing content and disinformation.

Therefore, we need to:
- enhance knowledge and appreciation of democratic values
- explain the mechanisms behind disinformation
- explain how media works
- help develop a critical constructive attitude when shaping your opinion
- provide the tools to have a dialogue about your experiences with media and democracy

We disseminate and implement this methodology as wide as possible in the European context, including sharing results with policymakers.

What is the measurable effect?

Young people are able to distinguish fake from factual information and to identify disinformation mechanisms when they encounter them.

What is the measurable effect?

Young people understand the importance of democratic citizenship and respond more favorable to democratic values.

What is the measurable effect?

Young people are enabled and encouraged to engage in a constructive dialogue about media and democratic values.

What is the wider, social impact in society?

Young people become advocates for trustworthy media and decrease the harmful effects of disinformation.

What is the wider, social impact in society?

Young people display more pro-democratic attitudes and behavior, countering polarization and potential radicalization.

What is the wider, social impact in society?

More young people reflect critically on their media behavior.

What is the long-term change we are trying to achieve?

Young people are resilient against polarizing content, disinformation and conspiracy theories.

Young people are supportive of democratic values and rule of law, and constructively talk about their experiences with media.

Young people feel empowered to navigate the ever-changing media landscape with a critical constructive attitude.

Key Assumptions

Disinformation is widespread and young people are most vulnerable to it.

Young people are losing trust in media and feel un- or misrepresented.

Disinformation and online isolation lead to polarization

Key Assumptions

Young people are the driver of change in media behavior.

Education is the way to reach young people about this topic.

Key Assumptions

A combined peer education/gamification methodology is an effective method to influence young people's democratic citizenship and media behavior.

Key Assumptions

Our evaluation methods successfully measure the effects of Under Pressure.

Key Assumptions

The methodology leads to sustainable, long-term change in behavior of young people which impacts society at large.

Stakeholders

- young people
- (peer) educators
- parents
- policy makers at the EU, national and local level
- (social) organizations
- (digital) media