**Silence Hate – Alternative narratives in work with young people**

## Introduction

We live in a world filled with different narratives, i.e. stories about people, things and phenomena. We hear them from our friends or from the media, but we also create them based on our own experience, thoughts and ideas. Narratives reflect our way of seeing and making sense of the world, they convey emotions and trigger emotional reactions in others. Some have a positive message, others are rooted in stereotypes, bias or hate.

Narratives concerning refugees that can be found in private or public space (e.g. in conversations with friends or on the media, respectively) often show the world in black and white, dividing people into 'good' (us) and 'bad' (refugees). Such narratives are lacking in facts from credible sources. Their message is dominated by emotional opinions showing a polarised world. These narratives often influence our own way of perceiving and interpreting reality: we identify with them, we shape our convictions based on them, discover ourselves and our reactions regarding subjects we often don't understand or know little about.

Hate speech is a narrative that tries to dehumanise and degrade people because of who they are, using words, films and images. It also reveals our fears, which often appear when ideas and fantasies that have nothing to do with reality are given a platform.

Online hate speech is an alarming, complex phenomenon with far-reaching cultural and social roots, which gives rise to new questions about freedom of speech on the Internet. Research shows that hate speech targeting migrants and refugees is on the rise in Europe. The number of comments that infringe upon the boundaries of free speech, and the intensity of online hate, have led to a situation where it is imperative to find solutions and tools that prevent this form of debate.

Social mobilisation in the culture and education sectors contributes to fighting hate speech, promoting freedom and social engagement. Importantly, the media and so-called 'ordinary people' should all voice their objection to hate speech.

Objection can be expressed by creating and promoting so-called alternative narratives – narratives that show a world in which the human rights of all people are respected, in which the life of all human beings is valuable, in which there are no simple answers or solutions to problems, in which nothing is black and white.

The following document is an introduction to creating alternative narratives concerning refugees. It contains information on alternative narratives and sample exercises that can be done with young people to prepare them to create their own alternative narratives.

# Alternative narratives

## What is a *narrative?*

A narrative is a word you've most likely often heard at school during Language and Literature classes. This is probably how you know that a narrative is a story with a beginning, middle and end, which all share a single thread that binds them together. A narrator is someone who tells the story, communicates – through words or otherwise – a certain worldview to recipients or transmits information that enable them to interpret reality. The manner of presenting this reality affects our way of thinking, because the story is subject to our interpretation, and each interpretation depends on a number of factors: our knowledge about the given subject, our emotional attitude to the content, our mood, or the kind of social and political reality we live in. Consequently, a narrative is something that exists beyond mere words or images, but takes shape in a text or another form. It doesn't have to be a literary text – it can be a journalistic article, a post on social media, a meme, a series of images or photographs. All these forms can 'tell' a story which has its own context, its protagonists and content. Sometimes everything is expressed clearly, at other times, we have to work things out for ourselves using our own resources: what we already know about the subject or what experience we've already accumulated. A narrative doesn't only provide us with information required to build an image of reality, but can also cause a number of emotional reactions, for instance towards its protagonists. A narrative may provide arguments (not necessarily rational) that shape our attitudes towards a certain group of people described in the story or that may lead to changing or solidifying our beliefs about a certain problem or manner of solving it. As a result, the narrative's recipient may then repeat the story he or she has heard – a story that need not be based on facts or scientific knowledge. Such actions are aimed at influencing other people's way of thinking and promoting values that, for some reason (not necessarily a noble one), are important to the sender or recipient.

**Narratives concerning migrants/refugees**

1. Migrants are mortally dangerous (they rape women, they spread disease).

2. They do not assimilate.

3. Let's take them in, but only Christians.

4. You have to distinguish between refugees and economic migrants.

5. These are just elderly/young people, they'll be of no use here.

6. Women and children can stay, but men should return and fight for their country.

7. They represent a threat to our culture and social order.

8. These groups include terrorists posing as refugees.

9. We cannot afford to take in refugees.

10. Other Muslim countries should deal with them.

11. The solution is ending the war in the Middle East and in other countries, from where people are fleeing to Europe.

12. We should help, but in the refugees' countries of origin.

Based on: https://szostkiewicz.blog.polityka.pl/2015/09/07/hejt-przeciw-uchodzcom-10-nonsensow/

**Hate speech as a narrative**

*Hate speech* stands for all forms of expression that are meant to abuse, humiliate or incite hatred/violence against an individual or a group of people based on certain (perceived) characteristics of this person or group, such as age, religion, sex, origin, sexual orientation, gender orientation, nationality, disability or any other aspects of their identity. Hate speech is also a narrative. What are the elements of a narrative that constitutes hate speech towards refugees?

Example: Refugees are a threat to our culture

Narrative structure: as has been stated above, a narrative has a beginning, middle (climax, dilemma) and end, which usually represents a resolution. In the above statement, not all of these elements are visible in the text layer, but we ought to remember that a narrative also represents everything that is hidden beyond the words of the given text. Therefore, it could be stated that the story begins with the (potential) arrival of refugees in our country. The central part of the narrative is recounted literally in the text: if refugees do come, our culture

will be in danger. The narrative doesn't elaborate on how it will be in danger or what exactly will happen when refugees appear in our country. We usually supplement the content ourselves, and its form results from our knowledge on the given subject or previous experience. The ending of the story isn't clearly shown either, but since refugees represent a threat, the solution is usually clear – we have to defend ourselves, which in this case may take on the form of preventing the arrival of refugees in our country.

Characters: Each narrative usually features antagonists – opponents or enemies, and protagonists – those who are the main characters of our narrative that can bring about a change. In our narrative about refugees, its recipients are the protagonists that can act, i.e. prevent the arrival of refugees in our country. Refugees are the antagonists.

Context: Each narrative is rooted in a specific social, cultural or political context. In our case, this context is weaved from several elements: increased migratory movements in Europe, parliamentary debates on taking in refugees, slanderous statements about refugees given by politicians.

Meaning: What image of reality does a person creating such a narrative want to convey? If we want to defend our culture, and thus save ourselves, we must do everything to prevent refugees from coming to our country. Refugees represent a direct threat to us.

As can be inferred from the above narrative analysis of hate speech, it has a clear emotional (fear resulting from a threat), temporal (things used to be better before refugees started coming to Europe; things are bad now; things may get better if we do something) and spatial dimension (we are here and we have to defend ourselves, they are over there, and if they come here, we will be in danger). This narrative fails to provide any facts. We don't find out anything about refugees – we don't know if they really pose a threat to us, what is the scale of this phenomenon, or who are the people coming to Europe. This is all meaningless – what's important is the projected worldview, which divides people into ones of our own (us) and strangers (them). They have no right to settle in our country, while we have the right to defend our identity and culture. This is a very oppressive narrative in that it limits other people's possibilities of exercising their human rights. It presents a very one-sided view of

the world and focuses on showing the things and people against which/whom we are allegedly fighting.

**What are alternative narratives?**

*Alternative narratives* are narratives that try to prevent hate speech by discrediting and deconstructing it, and by offering an inclusive vision of a world based on human rights values, such as openness, freedom, equality, tolerance and respect for diversity. The main objective of alternative narratives based on human rights values is building alternative ways of thinking and living in societies by challenging a message that is popular in society, but exclusionary and oppressive for certain social groups. While hate speech is an instrument of oppression, alternative narratives are instruments of emancipation.

| <mark>Alternative narratives:</mark> |
|---|

- Enable to address the underlying causes of hate speech.

- Enable to see the world people using hate speech know little about.

- Focus on showing the values we support rather than what we're fighting against.

- Tend not to focus on reactions to individual events, but on shaping a manner of thinking that supports the new, changed perspective on the given matter that they propose.

- Should take into account the opinions of people who experience hate speech.

Consequently, alternative narratives propose a different image of the world than the one often seen on the media or in conversations with friends. They enable us to demonstrate our attitudes and express values that are important to us. Rather than polarising societies – dividing them into 'us' and 'them' – they focus on giving a critical view of reality and offering an alternative way of thinking, which takes into account facts and emotions.

One ought to remember that alternative narratives aren't always the best reaction to hate speech. If hate speech is very powerful, its consequences may be dangerous to a particular person or group of people, or when it's against the law (e.g. it contains unlawful threats), the

best solution will be taking care of persons experiencing hate speech and notifying the relevant law enforcement authorities. In such cases, alternative narratives won't work. Alternative narratives make use of a number of forms and strategies, often quite surprising ones. These may be:

- texts,

- media campaigns,

- films,

- personal life stories,

- funny and humorous anecdotes,

- photographs.

The list is open-ended and up to our imagination.


<u>EXAMPLE OF AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE</u>

'Let us offer each other a sign of peace' campaign ([http://znakpokoju.com](http://znakpokoju.com)), to which LGBT organisations invited representatives of Catholic groups. The campaign is addressed to believers and aimed at reminding them that Christian values communicate the need to adopt an attitude of respect, openness and friendly dialogue with all people, including homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals.

PRZEKAŻMY SOBIE ZNAK POKOJU

EXAMPLE OF AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

Amnesty International's WELCOME campaign (https://amnesty.org.pl/kampanie/witamy/) was developed in response to problems experienced by refugees, which are mainly related to the lack of willingness to take them in on the part of many heads of states and political leaders. The campaign also draws attention to distorted views of reality offered by the media and politicians, who often dehumanise refugees, describing them as 'illegal' or anonymous 'invaders', representing 'a security threat'.

The campaign focuses on human values – accepting people who experience injustice or violence and suffer as a result of persecutions. The campaign makes use of tools such as videos of refugees telling stories about the friendly welcome they received in their host communities. We recommend watching *Look Beyond Borders*, one of the films made as part of the campaign: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=121&v=f7XhrXUoD6U
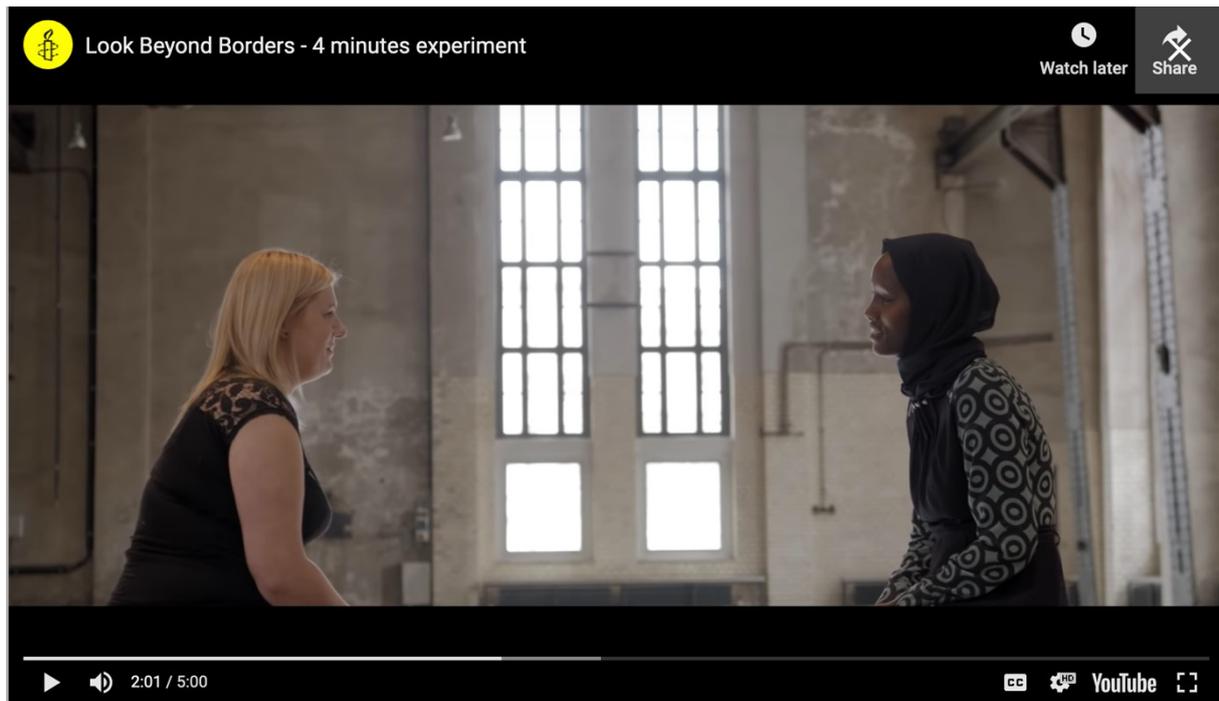
## How to create alternative narratives?

Creating alternative narratives may seem difficult at first. Before we start creating them, one ought to remember that:

- alternative narratives have to be… alternative – in terms of both form and content.
- you shouldn't copy methods used by people employing hate speech. When you decide to do so, your narratives must make use of alternative communication methods, e.g. by employing humour;
- alternative narratives do not humiliate others or make fun of them;
- alternative narratives focus on promoting human rights values – you don't have to do this openly, but the message should be clear and promote values that are important to you;
- alternative narratives aim to counteract polarisation – they refrain from thinking along the lines of 'us' and 'them'
- alternative narratives don't give arguments to people employing hate speech – if we respond to a negative message with a contrary (positive) one, this may either result in even greater hate speech directed against the hate speech target or turn us into the target of hate speech.

Alternative narratives aren't just a simple response to attack. They create possibilities of looking at a problem, situation, group or person from an entirely different perspective. Creating alternative narratives requires knowledge about human rights, which is why it is very important to find out more about them or the situation of refugees before trying to spin an alternative narrative. This publication includes several examples of workshops on the subject.

Creating alternative narratives can be divided into several stages:

STAGE 1: Analysing hate speech

- − What is hate speech?

- − Whom does it concern?

- − Does the content constitute facts or opinions?

- − How is the social and political situation conducive to the creation of hate speech?

- − What image of the world does it promote?

- − What emotions does it provoke?

STAGE 2: Creating a message/narrative

- − What values do we want to promote?

- − What kind of a world do we want to show?

- − Whom do we want to reach through our message?

- − What is the content of our message?

- − What will be the tone of our message?

- − Whom should we engage in our work?

- − What form is most suitable for our message? (video, memes, images, text, etc.)

- − Where will we publish our message?

We ought to remember that alternative narratives look at the problem presented in hate speech in a thorough way. What they strive to do is show an alternative manner of seeing the world rather than focus on responding to a specific Facebook post. It is worthwhile to

include other people, such as journalists, media workers or YouTubers, in the creation of alternative narratives.


STAGE 3: Plan of action

- What is the schedule of our events?
- Who will be responsible for individual actions and when?
- How will we begin and end our actions?


STAGE 4: Monitoring and evaluation

- What should be improved/corrected?
- How should we extend the reach of our actions?
- How should we promote our actions?
- What have we learned?
- Should we continue our actions? How?

## Before you start working with young people

Alternative narratives that show a different image of the world than that presented in hate speech are based on human rights such as freedom, equality, justice, non-discrimination and solidarity. Therefore, in order to prepare such alternative narratives, young people have to understand the essence of human rights. Consequently, it is advisable to start creating alternative narratives with a workshop teaching them about human rights.

*Human rights* are the rights vested in all people of the world, irrespective of who they are and what they do, enabling them to lead a dignified life. The rights and liberties include the right to life, the right to security of person, freedom from torture and inhuman treatment, freedom from discrimination, the right to a fair trial and the right to decent living conditions. You don't have to meet any requirements to be entitled to them – these rights are vested in every single person simply because they are human. They are the same for all people, irrespective of their skin colour, sex, sexual orientation, religious denomination, ethnic, social or national background, or political beliefs. On the one hand, human rights are legal guarantees enshrined in a number of international, regional and national documents (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights); on the other, these are values such as freedom, equality, justice and non-discrimination. Human rights are indivisible and universally applicable to all people. They are the pillar of democracy, of civil societies, freedom, justice and peace.

**Human rights education** stands for various actions aimed at communicating knowledge about human rights, shaping attitudes based on human rights values and developing the skill of acting to protect them. According to Amnesty International, human rights education should be understood as:
- education about human rights (documents, principles, basic norms),
- education for human rights (exercising human rights in everyday life, standing up for one's own human rights and those of others),
- education through human rights (pursued through inclusive actions based on respect and active participation).

Thanks to human rights education workshops, young people will be able to build their alternative narratives in response to online hate speech. However, the workshop also serves as an opportunity to increase their media competencies, helping them gain a critical view of digital media.

Nowadays, media education is changing very fast to keep up with the changing nature of the Internet and digital media. It used to be referred to as media education 1.0 – when the Internet wasn't as widely accessible, and websites were rather static. Then, with the advent of social media, when the online sphere turned interactive, media education had to respond to this changing reality (media education 2.0). Now we're already talking about media education 3.0, which takes into account the development of artificial intelligence, algorithms, the Internet of Things (intelligent objects) or Big Data. The contemporary approach to media education departs from developing strictly technical skills, and tends to focus on the skill of performing a critical analysis of the media or even the entire media ecosystem (online and media companies) and skills related to managing one's privacy online.

In the case of alternative narratives, developing critical thinking skills seems to be crucial. Owing to the Internet, we are each day bombarded with a vast amount of information and data. All this should be subjected to a critical evaluation and verification, which is where critical thinking comes in, for instance, to be able to discern between accurate and false information. Critical thinking is also crucial for analysing hate speech, as it enables one to evaluate the convictions or stereotypes it carries. Thanks to critical thinking, we can verify the accuracy of media messages, including their content and sources. The aforementioned method of creating and analysing narratives may be used as a method of developing critical thinking skills.

Creating alternative narratives and posting them online is not just an opportunity to develop the media or digital competence of young people. This is also a self-education opportunity for people working with youth. Here: https://emels.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/emels-handout-en.pdf you'll find the European Media Literacy Standard for youth workers, prepared by organisations from seven European states that deal with these issues. Read it

and assess your competence – find out what you should be focusing on and think about how to plan your own process of acquiring new skills.

**Exercise 1**

**Chamber and bubble**

Objectives:

- learning and understanding the terms 'filter bubble' and 'echo chamber'

- developing the skill of using social media in a critical manner

- reflecting on the role of media in our lives

Instructions:

1. Tell workshop participants that during this exercise, they will have an opportunity to express their opinion on the media, including social media.

2. Prepare the room: the exercise should take place somewhere where there is a lot of available space – this can be a classroom without chairs and desks or the corridor. Place a piece of paper saying I AGREE on one end, and a piece of paper saying I DISAGREE on the opposite end of the room.

3. Explain you're going to read out subsequent statements, and the participants will have to take their places along the I AGREE – I DISAGREE axis. They can stand wherever they want, depending on the extent to which they agree or disagree with the given statement. When taking their place, the participants shouldn't consult anyone. This part of the exercise should be performed in silence.

4. Read out each statement separately. After you read it, give the participants some time to take their place. When they're done, ask volunteers to explain why they picked this particular spot. Tell the participants they're allowed to change their position if they change their mind during this part of the exercise. Continue the exercise by reading out subsequent statements.

5. Explain the notions of filter bubble and echo chamber to the participants.

**Filter bubble** is a situation when an Internet user receives personalised information (or search results) on various online sites (search engines, social media). This information is

provided to the user by algorithms that adjust the resulting content based on the given person's prior online behaviour. As a result, people mostly see what the algorithms think they want to see. For instance, if they are looking for a certain political party on social media, after a while, they mostly get to see information concerning this particular political faction. Consequently, we lose access to other information and our perception of reality is drastically disturbed.

**Echo chamber** is a consequence of our own actions – contrary to a filter bubble, which results from algorithms. We create an echo chamber by only browsing through sites that offer us information strengthening our point of view. This is how we want to confirm that our view on a given situation is accurate and valid. We can do it by visiting certain websites or social media groups that unite people who think like we do and repeat the same opinions. Consequently, we join discussions that enable us to strengthen our stereotypes and bias.

6. Talk to the participants after the exercise. You can ask the following questions:

- Which statement did you find the most difficult? Why?

- Why do the media influence what we think about the world?

- How do the media influence our way of seeing the world? Give examples.

- How do the media strengthen stereotypes and bias?

- Were you aware of the existence of a filter bubble? Do you experience it?

- How may the filter bubble and echo chamber influence our way of seeing the world?

- How can you protect yourself against these phenomena?

STATEMENTS:

– Most of what we know about the world today comes from (social) media.

– The media enable us to understand the world.

– The media present an accurate picture of reality.

– People mostly turn to the media for information confirming their own point of view.

– What we find in the media reflects the point of view of their owners.

– Social media are a credible source of information.

– Most violence nowadays takes place on the Internet.


**Exercise 2**

**Young Wikipedia**


Objectives:

– analysing hate speech

– building the skill of performing creative work based on collaboration

Instructions:

1. Ask workshop participants whether they use Wikipedia. If so, how often? What are they mostly looking for? When do they use it? Do they believe Wikipedia is a credible source of information?

2. After a short discussion, tell the participants to imagine they are a team of editors working on the *hate speech* entry for a special Wikipedia edition for young people. You can show a sample Wikipedia entry to make sure the participants are in the clear about what it looks like. Pay attention to the entry itself, but also to links in the text. Say you will be the team's secretary, and your role will focus on organising workflow. You can start with a debate about what constitutes hate speech.

3. Start a discussion with the entire team about different sections that should be incorporated in the entry edited by young people, e.g. general definition, causes of hate speech, forms of hate speech, online and offline hate speech, perpetrators of hate speech, the influence of hate speech on people experiencing it, how to counteract hate speech.

4. Divide the group into as many smaller teams as the number of sections in the entry you chose to include. Remind the participants this is meant to be Wikipedia for young people, so the language and form of communication should be adjusted to this particular group of recipients.

5. Each team works on one section. You can do this on flipcharts or computers (e.g. through shared documents to which each person in the group has access).

6. After around 20 minutes, the groups exchange sections they were working on. Now, their task will be to edit the section written by another group – they can modify, add or delete content.

7. After the work is done, ask groups to read the sections they prepared and start a discussion. You can ask the following questions:

  – Do you like the definition of hate speech you've prepared?

  – Is the definition adjusted to the recipient group, i.e. young people? What indicates that?

  – What problems have you encountered while creating the definition?

  – Is Wikipedia a credible source of information? How often do you use it? What do you mostly look for?

  – What could make information provided in Wikipedia entries more credible?

  – Does working on definitions together help make the information listed there more accurate? What are the pros and cons of this method of creating content?

**Exercise 3**

**Hate speech in action**

Objectives:
  – analysing various examples of hate speech concerning refugees
  – developing the skill of recognising hate speech

Instructions:

1. Divide the group into smaller teams of a few students. The number of teams should be even. Each team should receive an envelope with statements (cut out as separate strips of paper).

2. Each team should discuss the statements they got and arrange them in the form of a diamond ranking. The top place should go to the 'strongest' statement, exemplifying very offensive hate speech. The bottom one – to the weakest statement in terms of message, and the places between them should go to other messages, arranged from the strongest to the weakest one.

3. When the participants are done, join two teams together (if you had 4 teams to begin with, you should now have 2). Participants from two different teams should now compare their rankings and explain why they arranged individual statements in this particular order.

4. After the task is completed, discuss the following questions with the group:

&ndash; How were decisions taken in the group?

&ndash; Were your rankings very different? What surprised you?

&ndash; Why is there so much hate speech concerning refugees, especially on social media?

&ndash; How to recognise hate speech?

&ndash; What world is depicted by the examples of hate speech used in the exercise?

&ndash; How may this affect the perception of refugees?

Diamond ranking

Statements:

1. Send them home! We don't need the dirty bastards here!

   *Comment left by a private person under the Prime Minister's post about refugees on his official Facebook page.*

2. Refugees are only after social benefits. Nothing else!

   *Facebook post published by an MP of the ruling party.*

3. Refugees are like dogs &ndash; the more you give them, the more they want!

   *Title of an article published on the website of a far-right youth organisation.*

4. Soon we'll feel like strangers in our own home. Muslim refugees simply don't belong here.

   *Comment left on a website of a popular newspaper (published by a private person under an article about the situation of refugees in Poland).*

5. We must use all available means to get rid of them!

*Post about refugees published on a blog of a famous female celebrity.*

6. Killing a refugee is not a sin!

   *Tweet published by a private person with 2400 contacts.*

7. The obligation of each government is to protect its citizens and not allow refugees to enter our country.

   *Statement said by the Prime Minister during an interview published on YouTube.*

8. Refugees will never integrate with the Polish society

   *Statement said by a well-known sociologist during a TV interview (the clip is available on YouTube).*

9. We'll turn you into kebab and you'll have to gobble on that!

   *Comment left by a private person on Facebook under a link to an article describing how a bar run by migrants from Turkey got vandalised.*

The statements should be arranged in the form of a diamond ranking:

1

2      3

4      5      6

7      8

9

**Exercise 4**

**Hate narrative/alternative narrative**

Objectives:

−   reflecting on hate speech and the vision of the world it proposes

‒ analysing various examples of hate speech and alternative narratives concerning refugees

‒ understanding what an alternative narrative is

Instructions:

1. Prepare an example of hate speech concerning refugees. You may use one of the examples from the exercise *Hate speech in action.* Prepare some examples of alternative narratives, e.g. the film *Look Beyond Borders* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=121&v=f7XhrXUoD6U).

2. Remind the group of the definition of *narrative* and explain what an alternative narrative is. You'll find the relevant information in the first part of this publication. Divide the group into two teams. Give an example of hate speech to the first one, and an example of an alternative narrative to the second one. If you're working with a large group, divide it into four smaller teams. In that case, two teams will work on a hate speech example and two on an alternative narrative. Tell the teams that their task will be to analyse the examples of narratives using a pattern from the '==Critical thinking in practice' Handout.== The teamwork will be divided into three stages:

   1) analysis,

   2) evaluation,

   3) interpretation.

   Persons taking part in the exercise should try to answer all questions contained in the Handout. Explain that finding answers to some of them may be difficult. Tell the group that there are no right and wrong answers. The participants should simply express their opinions.

3. After the task is completed, ask teams to present their results on a flipchart. Summarise their work – pay attention to the similarities and differences resulting from the analysis.

4. End the exercise with a short conclusion. You can ask the following questions:

   ‒ What posed the most problems during your work?

   ‒ Were your opinions divided or did you tend to agree?

   ‒ What image of the world is conveyed through hate speech? Describe it.

   ‒ What image of the world is proposed by alternative narratives? Describe it.

- Can an alternative narrative concerning refugees change opinions about them? Why do you think it can/can't? When can it successfully change opinions and attitudes?
- Can alternative narratives counteract stereotypes and bias? How?


'Critical thinking in practice' Handout

Try to analyse the example you've got before you in the following way:


**Analysis**

CONTENT:            - What is the message about?

                   - Is the content emotionally loaded?

SOURCE:            - Where does the message come from?

                   - What do we know about the source? What information can we get about it?

CONTEXT:           - In what social, political and historical context does the message appear? (e.g. hateful statements on refugees by politicians, parliamentary debate about refugees)

                   - What feelings does the message evoke in its recipients?


**Analysis**

CONTENT:            - Does the message include facts or opinions?

                   - If there are facts here, how can they be verified?

SOURCE:            - How credible is the source?

                   - Where was the message originally published?

CONTEXT:           - What is the connection between the content of the message and the current refugee situation?


**Interpretation**

CONTENT:            - What values does the message promote?

                   - What vision of the world is contained in the message?

                   - What action does the message encourage you to take?

SOURCE:            - How is the source type related to the main idea behind the message?

CONTEXT: - What is the connection between the content of the message and the dominant refugee narrative on the media?

- Does the message strengthen or weaken the dominant narrative?

Prepared based on: Grzegorz Ptaszek, *Edukacja medialna 3.0. Krytyczne rozumienie mediów cyfrowych w dobie Big data i algorytmizacji* [Media education 3.0. Critical understanding of digital media in the era of Big Data and algorithmisation], (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2019).

**Exercise 6**

**Creating alternative narratives**

Objectives:

- reflecting on the values of alternative media messages
- improving creative workings skills in the team

Instructions:

1. Tell people taking part in the class that their task will involve creating alternative narratives concerning the situation of refugees.

2. Remind the participants about what an alternative narrative is and what it is characterised by. You'll find the relevant information in the subchapter 'How to create alternative narratives?'. Tell them all ideas are welcome. They should be creative, but the message should also be as simple as possible.

3. Do a run through of the process of creating alternative narratives with the participants. As they're looking for answers to questions placed below, they ought to remember that alternative narratives look at the problem presented in hate speech in a thorough way. What they strive to do is show an alternative manner of seeing the world rather than focus on responding to a specific Facebook post.

    – What values do we want to promote?
    – What kind of a world do we want to show?
    – Whom do we want to reach through our message?

- What is the content of our message? (the message may be conveyed through images, you don't have to do it through words)
- What will be the tone of our message?
- Whom should we engage in our work?
- What form is most suitable for our message? (video, memes, images, text, etc.)
- Where will we publish our message?

4. The work can be done in smaller groups, if you think it will be more effective. You can focus on a specific topic, content or form that may be used when creating alternative narratives, e.g. interpersonal relations, emotions, a call to other young people, appealing to sense of humour, etc.

5. After the task is completed, discuss the proposed alternative narratives and talk about how you can implement them.