

Empowering Young People to Create Positive Change in the Digital World



Peace INfluencers

A Practical Toolkit for digital youth work, media literacy and peacebuilding.

Acknowledgment

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This toolkit was born from the shared knowledge, lived experience, and passion of the educators, activists, youth leaders, and youth workers who took part in this project and beyond. The authors express their deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to this collaborative journey and guided us to a stage where we could collectively produce this learning tool.

Our heartfelt thanks go to those who dedicate their time and energy on the ground to promoting peace, fostering dialogue, and raising awareness in local communities. We hold a special gratitude for practitioners and community leaders working directly in environments affected by “negative peace,” social polarisation, or active armed conflict. Your resilience and commitment inspire every page of this work.

We extend our appreciation to the advocates of media literacy worldwide. Thank you for championing the critical role of media in nurturing understanding and intercultural dialogue, while warning against its potential to fuel division and hostility.

At the end, our most profound thanks go to the young people who stepped forward to engage with these complex issues. To those who felt a personal responsibility to become active in their communities and directly shaped the insights within this toolkit: thank you.

This toolkit belongs to you.



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Author and editor: Hamza Al-Shayeb

Contributors: Vanja Mladenovic, Ekateryna Vyshnevskaya, Tsira Erkvania, Karolina Wawro, Alexis Bretonnière, Nour el Houda Hammouda, David Grelaud, Muhammad Abeer Khan, Mia India Nimmerfeldt, Anett Mikfelt, Betim Ibraimi, Dilara Baysan, Juan Cancela, Maria Alesia Hodorogea, Candela Cabezón, Hugo Gordillo Sánchez, Alejandro López Iglesias, Carolina Hernández Muñoz, Tahsin Yaşar, Elio Monjanel Alonso, Reelika Jöuram, Maïa Fleury, Temenuga Hristova, Noelia Hernando, Dawid Chojnacki, Ognjen Aleksic, Anja Petkovska.

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Introduction

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Today's world is marked by interconnected crises, including escalating conflicts, climate anxiety, forced displacement, and increasing social polarisation. These challenges are not confined to digital spaces; they are amplified through social media, shaping public opinion, fuelling division, and undermining the cohesion of our communities. In this context, strengthening young people's ability to think critically, engage constructively, and build peace has become an essential task for youth work.

This toolkit is the direct result of an international initiative coordinated by Stowarzyszenie Jeden Świat - SCI Poland in partnership with youth organisations across Europe and neighbouring regions: Peace Influencers: Empowering Youth Agency through Creating Digital Content for Peace.

Media Influence:

40% of Europeans lack basic competencies needed to identify misinformation to engage safely online.

The project brought together youth workers, educators, community activists, and young leaders to examine how digital tools can be repurposed for peacebuilding, social cohesion, and climate justice. By combining non-formal education with hands-on digital media production, the project established an international network of practitioners committed to fostering digital resilience and peace advocacy among young people.

Purpose & Structure of the Toolkit

The primary objective of this toolkit is to provide a practical, evidence-based methodology for integrating media literacy, conflict transformation, and digital content creation into daily youth work practice. The toolkit is organised into 5 core modules:

MODULE 1: MEDIA LITERACY & CRITICAL THINKING.

Information ecosystems, bias recognition, fact-checking, and algorithmic agency.

MODULE 2: PEACEBUILDING & CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

Positive vs negative peace, UNSCR 2250, Non-Violent Communication, and de-escalation.

MODULE 3: INCLUSION, DIVERSITY & BELONGING.

Combating hate speech, inclusive language, accessibility, and bystander intervention.

MODULE 4: YOUTH WELLBEING & SELF-DEVELOPMENT.

Digital burnout, sleep neurobiology, JOMO (Joy of Missing Out), and nature grounding.

MODULE 5: YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & CREATIVITY.

Public Narrative framework, ethical media production, and municipal policy partnerships.

MODULE 6: MODULE 6: FACILITATION AND

PEDAGOGICAL. Practical non-formal learning activities, facilitation methods, and ready-to-use session plans.

This toolkit is designed for youth workers, facilitators, educators, NGOs, youth policy makers, and young leaders who want to strengthen media literacy, digital citizenship, youth participation, and positive social change through digital tools and storytelling.

How to Use This Toolkit

This guide is designed as an adaptable, modular resource rather than a rigid curriculum. Practitioners can navigate the content according to their specific organisational needs and local community realities:

1. Modules can be delivered sequentially as a complete training course or selected individually to supplement existing youth programs.
2. Each module provides theoretical grounding, evidence-based research, step-by-step facilitation guides, and reflection prompts.
3. Facilitators are encouraged to adapt the case studies, scenario cards, and media examples to reflect the cultural, linguistic, and socio-political dynamics of their participants.

THE DIGITAL POLARIZATION CYCLE

Social Consequences

These dynamics contribute to distrust, social division, reduced dialogue, and weaker community cohesion.

Algorithmic Amplification

Social media algorithms often amplify outrage, polarisation, and misinformation by prioritising highly engaging content.

Local and Global Crises

Conflicts, climate anxiety, migration, polarisation, and economic instability are increasing pressures on communities worldwide.

Module 1: Media Literacy & Critical Thinking

Young people are constantly bombarded with information from countless sources. It's increasingly difficult to distinguish between reliable facts, biased opinions, and deliberate disinformation. Algorithms create "filter bubbles" that limit exposure to diverse perspectives.

This module equips young people with the critical thinking skills to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. They will learn to question information, identify bias and manipulation, and become conscious consumers and creators of media.

1.1 Understanding the Information Ecosystem

The digital information ecosystem is no longer a one-way broadcast from professional journalists to a passive audience. It is an interactive, decentralised network where information is produced, modified, monetised, and amplified at unprecedented speed. For young people, navigating this landscape requires more than knowing how to open an app. It demands an understanding of how information is constructed, who controls its flow, and how personal feeds shape perception.

In youth work and non-formal peacebuilding, unpacking the information ecosystem helps young people realise that content is never neutral. Every article, video, or social post reflects specific choices, economic incentives, and structural biases that directly influence public opinion and local community dynamics.

What is "News" and Who Decides?

Traditionally, "news" was defined as verified, timely information reported by professional journalists adhering to editorial standards. Today, the boundary between professional journalism, political commentary, user-generated content, sponsored material, and propaganda has blurred.

TRADITIONAL GATEKEEPING

Events / Realities



Professional Editors & Journalists
(Gatekeepers)



Public Audience

ALGORITHMIC GATEKEEPING

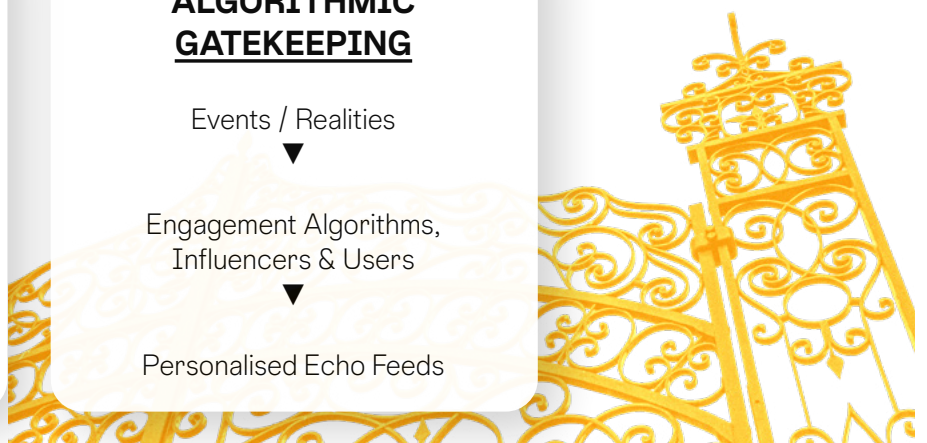
Events / Realities



Engagement Algorithms,
Influencers & Users



Personalised Echo Feeds



Media Influence:

Studies indicate that directly confronting someone with facts when their identity is tied to a belief often triggers defensiveness (the “backfire effect” or identity-protective cognition).

Facilitator Guidance

Avoid public “call-outs” or combative debates in youth groups. Frame media literacy around shared inquiry (e.g., “Let’s explore where this photo came from together”) rather than judgment.

Gatekeeping Theory in the Digital Era

In communication science, Gatekeeping Theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009) describes the process by which information is filtered for dissemination.

Traditional Gatekeepers: Editors, news directors, and publishers historically acted as primary gatekeepers, deciding which stories met the threshold of “newsworthiness” based on editorial guidelines, civic value, or commercial interest.

Algorithmic and Participatory Gatekeepers: In digital networks, gatekeeping has shifted to automated recommendation algorithms, platform policy managers, social media influencers, and peer shares.

Agenda-Setting and Controlling the Public Conversation

Under Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), the media does not necessarily tell people what to think, but it forcefully dictates what to think about. When platforms or media portals elevate specific stories, such as local crime or identity-based disputes, they set the public agenda.

If peacebuilding initiatives, cross-cultural cooperation, and structural solutions are consistently excluded from this agenda, young people absorb a skewed view of their community as inherently hostile and irreconcilable.

Non-Neutral News Portals & Recognising Bias

A foundational principle of media literacy is acknowledging that unbiased, 100% objective media does not exist. Human beings create media and hold values, assumptions, and economic constraints. Recognising bias is not about dismissing all news as fake; it is about evaluating content within its structural context.

Types of Media Bias in Local and Global News

- **Selection / Omission Bias:** Choosing to report certain stories while ignoring others. For example, focusing exclusively on youth crime in a specific neighbourhood while omitting successful community-led youth programs.
- **Framing Bias:** How a story is presented to shape audience interpretation. Framing an event as a “violent clash” versus a “peaceful protest suppressed by authorities” fundamentally changes public perception.
- **Source Selection Bias:** Relying predominantly on official authorities, corporate spokespersons, or specific political figures while excluding community members, youth, or independent experts.
- **Sensationalism & Tone Bias:** Using loaded, emotionally charged language (“flood of migrants,” “devastating blow,” “outrageous demand”) designed to provoke immediate affective responses rather than rational analysis.

Echo Chambers vs. Filter Bubbles

While often used interchangeably, Echo Chambers and Filter Bubbles describe distinct social and technological phenomena that weaken community dialogue and deepen polarization.

Feature	Echo Chamber	Filter Bubble
Primary Driver	Human Agency & Social Dynamics: People actively choose to associate with like-minded peers and ideological groups.	Technological Agency & Algorithms: Predictive software automatically curates content without user consent or awareness.
Mechanism	Self-selection, confirmation bias, and social sorting in offline or online spaces.	Automated tracking of clicks, watch time, location, and behavioural data by platforms.
User Awareness	High: Users are generally aware of the groups and channels they choose to join.	Low: Users are often unaware that their search results or feeds differ from others.
Impact on Peace	Creates “us vs them” group solidarity; validates extreme views through peer repetition.	Invisible isolation deprives individuals of shared facts, making cross-divide dialogue difficult.

1.2 What is MIL?

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is frequently misunderstood as merely a technical skill, the ability to use digital tools, operate social media platforms, or spot poorly edited photos. In youth work, non-formal education, and community peacebuilding, MIL is defined far more broadly: it is a foundational civic competence and a human rights-based framework for democratic participation, mental well-being, and social cohesion.

When young people navigate digital spaces, they are not just consuming content; they are participating in a complex information ecosystem that actively shapes their identity, worldviews, and relationships with others. Media literacy equips youth to transition from passive, algorithmically directed consumers into active, critical, and ethical digital citizens.

Definition of Youth Work Practice

Media Literacy is the capacity to access, analyse, evaluate, create, and act through media content and technological systems. It enables young people to understand how media messages are constructed, recognise the economic and political interests behind information, and use media responsibly to foster human rights, intercultural dialogue, and peace.

Media Influence:

Cognitive research (Nickerson, 1998) shows humans naturally seek information that confirms pre-existing beliefs and ignore contradictory evidence, regardless of intelligence.

Facilitator Guidance

Frame critical thinking around self-awareness of emotional biases rather than intelligence. Ask youth: “Why do I want this post to be true?”

Before developing media literacy and digital citizenship skills, it is important to understand the key competencies that enable individuals to navigate, critically assess, and actively participate in today’s digital world. The following five areas provide a practical framework for engaging with media and technology in a responsible, informed, and impactful way. (Table: The 5 Core Pillars of Media Literacy).

The 5 Core Pillars of Media Literacy

Pillar	Focus Area	Youth Work & Peacebuilding Application
1. Access	Technical capability, digital safety, and information retrieval.	Ensuring equitable access to reliable information while practising basic digital hygiene and privacy management.
2. Analyse	Deconstructing media framing, semiotics, ownership, and structural bias.	Recognising how algorithms, editorial choices, and sensational headlines shape “us vs them” narratives in local contexts.
3. Evaluate	Assessing credibility, evidentiary standards, and contextual validity.	Applying systematic fact-checking tools to verify claims before resharing mitigates the spread of panic or hostility.
4. Create	Producing constructive, inclusive, and ethical digital content.	Harnessing audio, video, and text to share diverse youth perspectives, counter stereotypes, and humanise marginalised groups.
5. Act & Engage	Exercising digital rights, intercultural dialogue, and civic participation.	Utilising digital channels to advocate for social justice, challenge hate speech, and advance peaceful resolution to community conflicts.

Media Literacy in Youth Work

1. Building Critical Thinking & Metacognition

Critical thinking in the context of media literacy is not cynical scepticism; it is structured, reflective inquiry. It encourages youth to practice metacognition (thinking about their own thinking) when interacting with online content.

- Media literacy trains young people to interrupt their immediate emotional reactions (rage, fear, moral superiority) triggered by sensationalised content.
- Youth learn to ask structural questions: Who produced this? What business model supports it? Whose voice is missing? What reaction does this content seek to provoke?
- Research in cognitive psychology (e.g., Pennycook & Rand, 2019) demonstrates that susceptibility to misleading content is often driven by “lazy processing” rather than partisan conviction. Fostering analytical habits significantly improves the accuracy of information processing.

2. Strengthening Civic Participation & Social Cohesion

Media literacy provides the toolkit required for constructive democratic engagement, especially in polarised environments.

- Unfiltered exposure to polarising media can lead to either digital cynicism (believing nothing is true) or digital hostility (engaging in online harassment). MIL shifts youth toward active civic agency.
- Rooted in the Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), MIL reinforces values of human dignity, equality, and democratic dialogue over hostility.

3. Supporting Digital Storytelling & Podcasting

Media literacy is not solely protective (preventing harm); it is empowering (enabling voice).

- Teaching youth to produce podcasts, short videos, and digital campaigns helps them reclaim their narrative agency.
- Instead of merely attacking hate speech or misinformation (which can unintentionally amplify it), young creators learn to build positive alternative narratives that centre on shared community solutions, empathy, and common ground.

4. Navigating Misinformation, Disinformation & Malinformation

To address information disorder effectively, practitioners must use precise concepts established by international frameworks (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017 / Council of Europe).

Media Influence:

Research on “Inoculation Theory” (van der Linden et al., 2020) shows that exposing individuals to micro-doses of manipulation techniques before they encounter them online builds psychological resistance (“prebunking”).

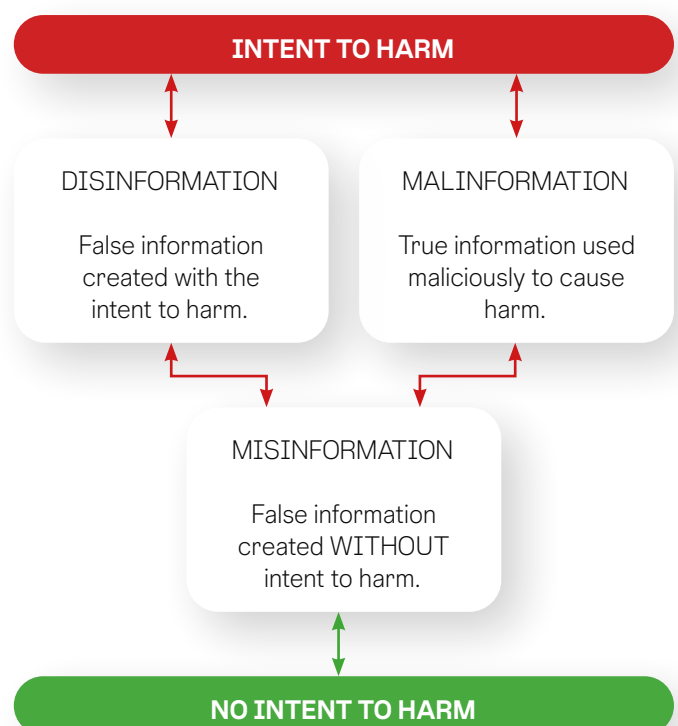
Facilitator Guidance

Shift workshop focus from merely debunking specific fake news stories to teaching young people how to identify common manipulation techniques (e.g., scapegoating, emotional escalation, fake experts).

Misinformation: Incorrect or misleading information shared without malicious intent (e.g., a peer sharing an unverified rumour about a local event, thinking it helps others).

Disinformation: Information that is deliberately fabricated or manipulated to cause harm, generate profit, or deceive (e.g., targeted smear campaigns against minority groups).

Malinformation: Genuine, private, or contextual information moved into the public domain to cause harm (e.g., doxxing, revenge porn, or leaking private chats out of context to inflame local tensions).



Media Influence:

Psychological research (Pennycook & Rand, 2019) shows that individuals share fake news primarily due to a lack of cognitive reflection

Facilitator Guidance

Emphasise the “STOP” phase of SIFT. Train youth to treat strong emotional reactions (anger, excitement, fear) as a physical trigger to pause before liking, commenting, or resharing.

1.3 The Art of Fact-Checking

Fact-checking was once considered the exclusive domain of investigative journalists and professional newsroom copy editors. Today, in an information ecosystem shaped by generative AI, synthetic media, and rapid viral distribution, fact-checking has become an essential civic competence and a frontline peacebuilding tool.

For young people, fact-checking is not merely about proving someone wrong or winning an argument online. In community contexts characterised by social polarisation or fragile peace, unverified rumours, manipulated images, and decontextualised quotes can ignite real-world hostility. Fact-checking acts as a circuit breaker: it interrupts the rapid spread of emotionalised narratives, restores a shared baseline of objective reality, and enables constructive civic dialogue.

The 5 Core Pillars of Fact-Checking

Effective verification requires moving away from “vertical reading” (examining only the content presented on a single webpage) to “lateral reading”, opening multiple browser tabs to evaluate what independent, credible sources say about the claim, the author, and the media provided (Wineburg & McGrew, 2019).

1. Source Verification

Establishing the origin, identity, and credibility of the entity making the claim.

- **Trace the Original Publisher:** Is the claim originating from an accredited newsroom, a registered NGO, an eyewitness, an anonymous account, or a satire site masquerading as news?
- **Domain & Infrastructure Inspection:** Examining URLs for subtle typosquatting (e.g., .co additions designed to mimic legitimate news domains) and checking “About Us” sections for transparency regarding funding and editorial leadership.

2. Evidence Evaluation

Testing whether a claim is supported by verifiable data or merely restated as a personal opinion.

- **Primary vs Secondary Evidence:** Does the source link directly to official public data, peer-reviewed scientific studies, court documents, or primary records?
- **Cherry-Picking & Sample Bias:** Determining whether statistics have been isolated from a broader trend line to fabricate a sense of crisis or scapegoat a specific group.

3. Context Checking & Cross-Referencing

Determining whether genuine information has been weaponised by stripping away its original context (a primary form of malinformation).

- **Temporal & Geographic Re-attribution:** Checking if a genuine photo or video clip from a past event or a different country is being falsely presented as evidence of a current local dispute.
- **Triangulation:** Comparing the claim against multiple independent, credible local and international sources. If an extraordinary event occurred, multiple independent entities should be reporting on it.

4. Logical & Emotional Bias Detection

Deconstructing how a message is structured to bypass analytical reasoning and exploit human psychology.

- **Affective Triggers:** Identifying loaded adjectives, sensationalism, and outrage bait designed to provoke panic, anger, or moral superiority.
- **Logical Fallacies:** Spotting common deceptive arguments, such as Ad Hominem (attacking the person instead of the argument), False Dilemmas (forcing an “us vs them” choice), or Straw Man arguments (misrepresenting an opponent’s view to make it easy to attack).

5. Multimodal & Visual Verification

Applying technical verification methods to digital media (photos, audio, and video).

- **Reverse Image Searching:** Utilising tools like Google Lens, TinEye, or RevEye to find when an image was first uploaded to the internet and how its context has changed over time.
- **Visual Forensics:** Examining environmental cues, shadow directions, weather patterns, license plates, language on street signs, reflections, and facial proportions (to spot AI generation glitches).
- **Video Keyframe Analysis:** Breaking down viral video clips into individual static keyframes (using tools like the InVID/WeVerify extension) to trace their original publication source.

The SIFT Framework

Developed by digital literacy expert Mike Caulfield (2019), the SIFT framework provides a simple, memorable protocol for young people and practitioners to evaluate information in real time.



[S] STOP Pause immediately when content triggers a strong emotional reaction.

[I] INVESTIGATE Look laterally to see who the source is and what their motives are.

[F] FIND Look for trusted, independent coverage to see if consensus exists.

[T] TRACE Trace claims, quotes, and media back to their original context.

1.4 The Rise of Algorithms

Youth workers and educators frequently hear young people say things like, “The algorithm isn’t pushing my posts,” or “If you use this trending audio, the algorithm will show your video to more people.” These observations reflect an intuitive awareness that online visibility is managed by automated systems. However, intuition alone does not equip youth to understand how algorithms shape their worldviews, influence identity formation, or alter civic participation. Algorithms are no longer just technical backend code; they act as powerful, non-neutral curators of public discourse. They dictate what information is elevated, what is hidden, and who gets heard.

How Algorithmic Curation Works

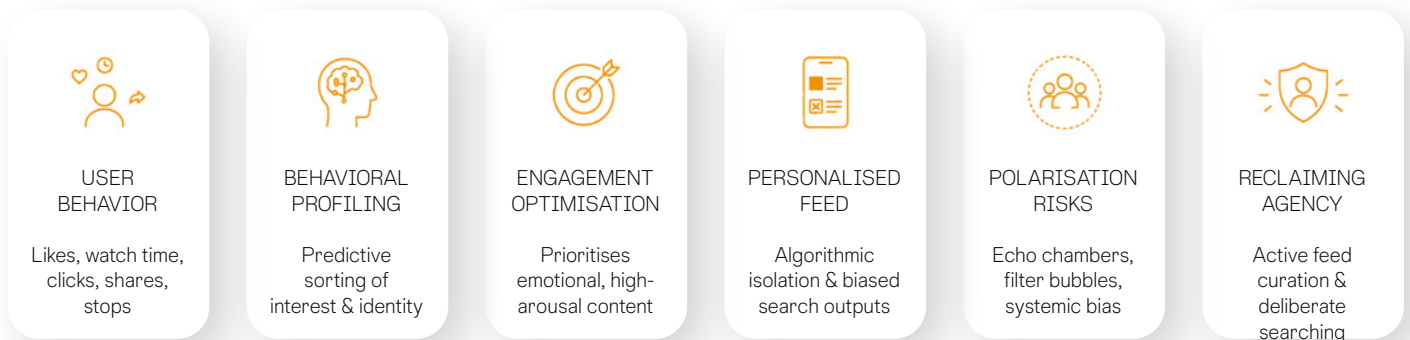
An algorithm is a finite set of mathematical instructions used by platforms to process data, rank content, make recommendations, and predict human behaviour. Modern social media platforms operate on engagement-optimisation models: *their primary goal is to capture and retain user attention for as long as possible to maximise monetisation.*

Media Influence:

Studies on youth algorithmic literacy (e.g., Harvard Misinformation Review, 2025) show that raising algorithmic awareness without offering practical strategies can lead to cynicism and passive disengagement. Youth feel their individual actions cannot overcome system manipulation.

Facilitator Guidance

Always combine critical algorithmic analysis with concrete “feed customisation” tactics. Frame the algorithm as a tool that can be actively “retrained” rather than an omnipotent force.



1. How Platforms Decide What You See First

Platforms use ranking algorithms to determine feed order. Instead of chronological feeds, users see content scored by automated probability metrics. Content predicted to generate immediate engagement (comments, shares, long watch times) is pushed to the top. Cognitive science demonstrates that high-arousal negative emotions such as outrage, fear, and moral indignation drive the highest engagement rates. As a result, systems structurally favour polarising content over nuanced dialogue.

2. Recommendation Engines ("What's Next")

Systems that tailor content to user behaviour rely on predictive recommendation engines. By tracking subtle micro-behaviours (e.g., pausing for two seconds over a video without liking it), these engines build detailed psychological profiles. They continuously feed users content that aligns with their predicted emotional states and ideological leanings, creating feedback loops that can gradually drift users toward extreme viewpoints.

3. Algorithmic Bias: Biased Data -> Biased Outcomes

A common misconception is that algorithms are mathematically objective. Algorithms are designed by humans and trained on historical datasets. If the underlying training data contains societal prejudices, systemic discrimination, or cultural omissions, the algorithm learns, reproduces, and amplifies these exact biases at scale.

- **Racial and Gender Profiling:** Empirical studies demonstrate that search and recommendation algorithms frequently reinforce gender and racial stereotypes (Noble, 2018), for example, by displaying lower-wage job advertisements to female users or disproportionately associating certain ethnic names with criminal records in automated searches.
- **Marginalisation of Local Languages:** Algorithms prioritise high-volume language data (e.g., English), often suppressing localised, regional, or minority languages and thereby excluding smaller communities from global digital dialogue.

4. Filter Bubbles & Non-Neutral Platforms

Coined by internet activist Eli Pariser (2011), a Filter Bubble is an individualised ecosystem of information created automatically by personalisation algorithms. Unlike an "echo chamber" (where users actively choose to surround themselves with like-minded peers), a filter bubble occurs passively without the user's explicit consent or awareness.

When platforms curate entire realities for individuals, they act as non-neutral gatekeepers. This isolation impairs a young person's ability to develop perspective-taking skills, empathise with opposing views, and acknowledge shared community realities.

When addressing algorithms in youth work, practitioners must balance technical understanding with actionable agency to ensure youth do not fall into digital disengagement or helplessness.

Media Influence:

Sociological research (Noble, 2018; Eubanks, 2018) demonstrates that algorithmic outputs systematically marginalise underrepresented and vulnerable groups.

Facilitator Guidance

Encourage youth to conduct "algorithmic audits" of search engines and social platforms to identify structural biases in automated suggestions and autocomplete features.

Module 2: Peacebuilding & Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a natural part of human interaction, but young people often lack the skills to manage it constructively. Misunderstandings, prejudice, and an inability to communicate effectively can escalate tensions.

This module provides a foundation for building peaceful relationships. By developing empathy, learning non-violent communication, and practising perspective-taking, young people can become powerful agents of peace in their communities. Build understanding and skills for non-violent communication, empathy, and intercultural contact, the foundations of peace.

NEGATIVE PEACE (Unstable)

- Absence of direct physical violence
- Unaddressed hate speech & fear
- Self-censorship & exclusion
- Quiet, underlying tension

TRANSFORM STRUCTURES

POSITIVE PEACE (Sustainable)

- Active inclusion & belonging
- Human rights & dignity
- Mutual respect & justice
- Safe digital & physical spaces
- Participatory democracy

2.1 Youth as Peacebuilders

Young people are frequently mischaracterised either as vulnerable victims of social conflict or as instigators of violence and online radicalisation. Grounded in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (UNSCR 2250) on Youth, Peace, and Security, this module operates on an alternative premise: young people are essential co-designers of peace, social justice, and community resilience.

Youth-led peacebuilding is uniquely powerful because it is peer-to-peer, authentic, and rooted in lived experience. Youth contribute to conflict transformation across five key dimensions:

1. Creating Safe Dialogue Spaces: Establishing inclusive physical and digital environments where difficult

conversations can occur without fear of judgment, harassment, or marginalisation.

2. Challenging Stereotypes: Disrupting “us vs them” narratives by facilitating authentic intercultural exchanges that humanise the out-group.

3. Narrative Shifting: Utilising digital storytelling, short-form video, podcasts, and creative media to elevate messages of solidarity, shared humanity, and equity.

4. Peer Mobilisation: Translating digital awareness into local, offline community action, advocacy campaigns, and volunteer initiatives.

5. Relational Transformation: Building long-term bridges across social, ethnic, or political divides

PEACEBUILDING (Systemic)

Addresses root causes, transforms relationships, builds just structures

CONFLICT RESOLUTION (Interpersonal)

De-escalates disputes, meets needs, repairs immediate harm

- through structural empathy and active perspective-taking.
- Negative peace is inherently unstable because the root causes of conflict remain unaddressed, and tension continues to build beneath the surface.

2.2 Peace: Negative vs Positive

To address community conflict effectively, practitioners and youth must understand that peace is not merely the absence of open fighting. Based on Johan Galtung’s foundational peace theory (1969), peace exists on a continuum between Negative Peace and Positive Peace.

Negative Peace in Youth Contexts

Negative peace describes a state where direct physical violence may be absent, but underlying systemic harm, fear, and polarisation remain unaddressed. For young people, negative peace manifests as:

- Pervasive online harassment, cyberbullying, or microaggressions.
- Self-censorship and fear of expressing opinions in classrooms or youth clubs.
- Identity-based exclusion and segregation between peer groups.
- Structural barriers that prevent marginalised youth from participating in civic decisions.

Positive Peace in Youth Contexts

Positive peace is the active, intentional creation of social structures, cultural attitudes, and institutional norms that promote human dignity, equity, and mutual respect. Youth build Positive Peace when they:

- Co-create anti-discriminatory community norms and digital safety guidelines.
- Establish peer-led restorative justice processes in schools and youth spaces.
- Advocate for equal access to resources, education, and civic representation.
- Engage in ongoing intercultural contact that dismantles systemic prejudice.

2.3 Youth-Centred Peacebuilding & Conflict Resolution

While often used interchangeably, Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution are complementary approaches that operate at different levels of conflict intervention.

Dimension	Conflict Resolution	Peacebuilding
Focus	Specific disputes, interpersonal clashes, and immediate disagreements.	Root causes, structural inequalities, and historical grievances.
Primary Goal	De-escalate tension, identify underlying needs, repair harm, and reach a mutually acceptable resolution.	Transform relationships, alter unjust systems, build resilience, and establish a culture of peace.
Key Actions	Mediation, non-violent communication, restorative circles, active listening.	Creative advocacy, policy change, digital campaigns, intercultural dialogue programs.
Youth Application	Resolving a dispute between peer groups in a local youth centre or online comment section.	Designing a long-term media campaign challenging systemic discrimination in the municipality.

2.4 Core Skills for Youth Peacebuilders

- **Non-Violent Communication**

Youth practise expressing observations, feelings, needs, and requests without blame, which is essential for both online and offline interactions.

- **Emotional Intelligence**

Helps youth regulate their reactions, understand triggers, and respond with awareness rather than impulsively.

- **Empathy Building**

Youth learn to understand others' experiences, reducing prejudice and opening space for dialogue.

- **Intercultural Contact**

Youth engage across differences, challenge stereotypes, and build inclusive communities.

- **Perspective-Taking**

Youth practice seeing situations from multiple viewpoints, a key skill for de-escalation and collaboration.

- **Online Conflict Resolution**

Youth learn to navigate digital disagreements, misinformation, and polarisation with clarity and care.

To move from theoretical understanding to practical agency, young people require a core set of socio-emotional and communicative competencies:

1. Non-Violent Communication (NVC)

Developed by Marshall Rosenberg (2003), NVC provides a structured, 4-step framework that allows youth to express themselves honestly without provoking defensiveness or blame in others:

{Observation} -> {Feeling} -> {Need} -> {Request}

- **Observation:** Stating concrete, objective facts without evaluation, judgment, or generalisation ("When I see this comment stating that our group shouldn't be allowed here..." instead of "You are being racist").
- **Feeling:** Expressing authentic emotional states without assigning blame ("I feel anxious and hurt..." instead of "You make me angry").
- **Need:** Identifying the universal human value or

Media Influence:

Cognitive studies (Mazzocco et al., 2010) show that exposure to narrative storytelling creates "transportation," allowing listeners to experience life from another's perspective and lowering prejudice.

Facilitator Guidance

Use personal, first-person digital storytelling (such as Human Library formats) rather than abstract ideological debates when addressing identity-based conflicts.

need driving the emotion ("...because I value safety, respect, and equal inclusion").

- **Request:** Formulating a concrete, actionable, and positive request ("Would you be willing to sit down with us to discuss how this statement impacts our group?").

2. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) & Trigger Regulation

Based on Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence framework (1995), youth learn to recognise their personal emotional triggers (what provokes immediate defensiveness or outrage) and practice impulse regulation. By creating a cognitive gap between stimulus and response, youth transition from reactive behaviour to conscious, intentional peacebuilding actions.

3. Empathy Building & Perspective-Taking

Empathy is operationalised across two distinct dimensions:

- **Affective Empathy:** The emotional capacity to feel compassion for another person's pain.
- **Cognitive Empathy (Perspective-Taking):** The intellectual ability to reconstruct another person's internal mental model, understanding why they hold a specific belief without necessarily agreeing with it. Perspective-taking is an essential de-escalation skill in polarised disputes.

4. Intercultural Contact

Rooted in Gordon Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory (1954), the theory holds that bringing diverse groups together reduces prejudice only when four structural conditions are met: equal status, Common goals, Intergroup cooperation, and Institutional support. Unstructured contact in competitive or unequal environments can inadvertently reinforce pre-existing biases.

5. Online Conflict Resolution & Digital De-escalation

Digital communication lacks facial expressions, vocal tone, and body language, making misinterpretation and rapid escalation frequent. Online conflict resolution involves slowing down communication, moving private disputes out of public comment threads, and calling peers in (private, restorative dialogue) rather than calling them out (public shaming).

Amplifying Counter-Narratives: Constructing compelling digital narratives that highlight shared human experiences, cross-divide cooperation, and local solution-building.

Digital Bystander Intervention: Interrupting online hate speech and harassment by flooding toxic threads with neutral, humanising, or fact-checked content.

Building Transnational Solidarity Networks: Connecting youth leaders across conflict zones to share peacebuilding methodologies, resources, and mutual aid.

2.5 Youth Navigating Online Peacebuilding

Commercial social media platforms are primarily engineered to maximise user engagement and retention. Because algorithms systematically favour high-arousal, emotionally polarising content, these platforms are fundamentally designed to capture attention rather than foster deep reflection or complex dialogue.

Strategic Repurposing of Digital Platforms for Peace

Despite structural platform constraints, young people can strategically repurpose digital spaces to advance real-world peacebuilding:

Rapid Offline Organisation: Leveraging the speed and accessibility of digital channels to organise local dialogues, community service projects, human rights rallies, and cross-cultural workshops.

Media Influence:

Meta-analysis of Contact Theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) confirms that intergroup contact significantly reduces prejudice when structured under Allport's optimal conditions.

Facilitator Guidance

Never organize unstructured “debates” between polarized youth groups. Instead, structure encounters around shared collaborative tasks (e.g., co-producing a podcast or community mural).

THE DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING PARADOX

PLATFORM DESIGN (Challenges)

- Optimised for attention & ad revenue
- Amplifies outrage & conflict
- Rewards binary “us vs them” narratives
- Short formats discourage nuance

REPURPOSE FOR PEACE

YOUTH REPURPOSING (Opportunities)

- Rapid offline mobilisation event coordination
- Counter-messaging & fact-checking
- Transnational solidarity & creative storytelling

Module 3: Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging

Many young people feel excluded, marginalised, or unsafe because of their identity, culture, or background. Hate speech, both online and offline, is a growing concern.

This module aims to create safe, welcoming, and equitable spaces for everyone. It focuses on understanding and celebrating diversity, recognising and combating hate speech, and using inclusive language and practices.

3.1 Youth Experiences of Exclusion & Belonging

Exclusion experienced during youth profoundly impacts identity formation, psychological well-being, civic participation, and trust in democratic institutions. In youth work, exclusion must be understood as operating across two distinct levels: interpersonal (daily interactions) and structural (institutional policies and social hierarchies).

Key Drivers of Youth Exclusion

1. **Microaggressions:** Brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to individuals based on their marginalised group identity (Sue et al., 2007). While often unintentional, their cumulative weight causes significant psychological harm.
2. **Stereotyping & Out-Group Flattening:** Reducing complex individuals to simplistic, culturally biased caricatures, limiting their self-expression and opportunities.
3. **Tokenism vs Authentic Belonging:** Inviting marginalised youth into decision-making spaces merely for visual representation without granting them real agency or decision-making power.
4. **Linguistic & Cultural Isolation:** Systemic failure to accommodate minority languages, accents, dialects, or cultural norms in educational and youth settings.

Belonging defined for youth work:

Belonging is not merely “fitting in” (which requires changing oneself to be accepted). Belonging is the feeling of being accepted, valued, and safe as you authentically are, with your full identity recognised and celebrated.

Media Influence:

Research in clinical psychology (Sue et al., 2007) demonstrates that cumulative microaggressions generate chronic stress responses similar to overt discrimination.

Facilitator Guidance

Establish explicit group agreements (ground rules) at the start of youth programs that address microaggressions and establish a “calling-in” culture.

3.2 Digital Inclusion & Online Safety for Youth

Digital environments are central to how young people form identities, express creativity, and organise civic action. However, digital platforms also replicate and accelerate real-

world patterns of discrimination, hate speech, and exclusion.

Algorithmic Erasure & Systemic Bias

Algorithms are not neutral (Noble, 2018). Automated content moderation and recommendation algorithms often reproduce societal prejudices:

- 5. Automated Shadowbanning: Content produced by minority, LGBTQIA+, or indigenous youth is frequently flagged or suppressed at higher rates due to biased training data in moderation AI.
- 6. Targeted Hate Campaigns: Micro-targeting mechanisms allow hostile actors to direct coordinated harassment against vulnerable youth groups with alarming precision.

Repurposing Platforms for Digital Inclusion

To counteract these harms, youth workers must guide young people to move from passive consumers to intentional digital citizens. Youth leverage platforms for inclusion by creating accessible content (alt text, captions), amplifying underrepresented voices through digital podcasts, and organising local, offline inclusion drives via online networks.

3.3 Language that Includes and Excludes

Language is a fundamental instrument of power, social categorisation, and symbolic boundary-making (Bourdieu, 1991). The words, labels, and metaphors we use signal who

belongs, who is tolerated, and who is excluded.

Key Dimensions of Inclusive Language

1. Gender-Neutral & Non-Binary Language

Language should accommodate individuals of all gender identities without enforcing rigid binary assumptions.

- Pronoun Normalisation: Encourage introducing oneself with pronouns (e.g., they/them, she/her, he/him) in group settings and on digital profiles to create a sense of safety for gender-diverse and non-binary youth.
- Binary-Free Phrasing: Replace gendered greetings (e.g., “boys and girls”, “ladies and gentlemen”) with collective terms (“everyone”, “folks”, “participants”, “esteemed guests”).

2. Navigating Language in Digital Spaces

Online text communication lacks tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language.

- Deconstruct Memes and Slang: Memes often disguise racist, sexist, or ableist tropes behind irony or humour. Youth need skills to critique what a meme normalises beneath its humour.
- Pause Before Posting: Encourage youth to evaluate digital posts using three questions: Is it true? Is it necessary? Does it respect human dignity?

Domain	Exclusive / Problematic Terminology	Inclusive & Affirming Alternative	Underlying Rationale
Disability & Ability	Ableist language: “handicapped”, “wheelchair-bound”, using medical conditions as insults (“that’s insane/lame”).	Person-First: “person with a disability”, “wheelchair user” or Identity-First (when preferred by the community, e.g., “Autistic person”).	Separates the individual from their condition; respects self-determination and avoids viewing disability as a tragedy.
Culture & Ethnicity	Colonial/Othering language: “minorities”, “foreigners”, “uncivilised”, asking “Where are you really from?”	Explicit, self-identified origin terms: “person from a racialised background”, “ethnic minority community member”, “migrant background”.	Rejects the assumption that white or dominant cultural identity is the default baseline.
Socioeconomic Status	Classist language: “ghetto”, “underclass”, “paupers”, blaming individuals for poverty.	“Systemically under-resourced community”, “low-income background”.	Shifts focus from individual moral failing to structural economic barriers.

Media Influence:

Research in clinical psychology (Sue et al., 2007) demonstrates that cumulative microaggressions generate chronic stress responses similar to overt discrimination.

Facilitator Guidance

Teach the 5 Ds explicitly so youth have a concrete menu of non-confrontational choices rather than freezing due to panic.

3.4 Building Inclusive Skills & Practices for Youth

Practitioners must equip young people with concrete, actionable intervention skills rather than relying on abstract concepts of tolerance.

Recognising and Responding to Hate Speech

1. Gender-Neutral & Non-Binary Language

According to the Council of Europe, hate speech covers all forms of expression that spread, incite, promote, or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, or other forms of hatred based on intolerance.

To combat hate speech safely, youth learn the 5 Ds of Active Bystander Intervention (Right To Be framework):

- 1. DISTRACT:** Interrupt the situation indirectly (e.g., ask for time/directions).
- 2. DELEGATE:** Find an authority figure, facilitator, or platform moderator.
- 3. DOCUMENT:** Record or screenshot the harassment safely (never post without consent).
- 4. DELAY:** Check in on the targeted person AFTER the incident to offer support.
- 5. DIRECT:** Speak up directly if it is safe to do so: "That behaviour is unacceptable."

CORE COMPETENCIES FOR INCLUSIVE YOUTH

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Affirming, person-centred expression
Short formats discourage nuance

HATE SPEECH RECOGNITION

Spotting incitement

INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

Value differences & universal accessibility

ACTIVE BYSTANDER

The 5 Ds Intervention Framework

ACCESSIBILITY

Universal design for physical/digital

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Ethical, safe online engagement

Module 4: Youth Wellbeing & Self-Development

Constant online exposure can lead to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. The pressure to follow trends and compare oneself to others can be overwhelming.

This module empowers young people to prioritise their mental and physical health. It encourages a shift away from passive consumption of online content toward active engagement with the real world, nature, and personal growth.

THE DIGITAL WELLBEING BALANCE MATRIX



4.1 Understanding Digital Wellbeing

Digital wellbeing is not about eliminating technology or demanding total abstinence from digital spaces. Rather, it is the capacity to maintain an intentional, self-regulated relationship with digital media that aligns with personal values, mental health, and real-world relationships.

The Impact of Social Media on Youth Mental Health

Social media platforms are engineered around intermittent variable rewards (unpredictable likes, comments, and shares). This design leverages Skinnerian operant conditioning, triggering dopamine spikes that encourage compulsive feed-refreshing and habitual platform checking.

Media Influence:

Studies on digital detoxes (e.g., Radtke et al., 2022) show that total, permanent bans on technology cause anxiety and social resistance. However, short, periodic micro-detoxes combined with intentional boundary-setting significantly improve mood and focus.

Facilitator Guidance

** Avoid demanding total technology bans in youth programs. Instead, establish clear "tech-free windows" (e.g., during meals, outdoor sessions, or group discussions) and frame them as shared community agreements.

- **Upward Social Comparison Theory:** Developed by social psychologist Leon Festinger (1954), this theory posits that individuals determine their social and personal worth by comparing themselves to others. On social platforms, where content is selectively filtered and curated, young people compare their unedited, daily realities to the hyper-sanitised “highlight reels” of peers and influencers. This dynamic systematically drives feelings of inadequacy, body dissatisfaction, and low self-esteem.
- **Crisis Fatigue & Doomscrolling:** Continuous, unfiltered exposure to distressing local and global

overwhelmed by continuous information processing. Key warning indicators for youth include:

Screen Time, Sleep, and Neurobiology

Blue light emitted by digital screens suppresses the pineal gland’s secretion of melatonin, delaying the natural onset of sleep. Chronically disrupted sleep cycles impair the prefrontal cortex, the brain region responsible for executive functioning, emotional regulation, impulse control, and critical reasoning. Consequently, sleep-deprived youth become significantly more vulnerable to emotional manipulation, digital impulse buying, and online reactivity.

Domain	Signs of Digital Overload & Burnout
Emotional	Persistent irritability, heightened anxiety, emotional numbness, increased envy, and existential fatigue.
Cognitive	Reduced attention span, brain fog, difficulty absorbing information, and impaired decision-making.
Physical	Eye strain, chronic headaches, altered posture (“tech neck”), and disrupted sleep architecture.
Social	Withdrawal from face-to-face interactions, preference for asynchronous messaging over direct dialogue, and feelings of isolation.

news, a behaviour known as doomscrolling, overloads the nervous system. This constant state of alert leads to elevated cortisol levels, psychological numbing, and a pervasive sense of existential helplessness.

Recognising Digital Burnout & Information Overload

Digital burnout occurs when cognitive capacity is

Media Influence:

Psychological research (Twenge & Campbell, 2018) indicates that shifting from passive scrolling (consuming others’ feeds) to active creation or real-world skill-building reduces depressive symptoms and builds self-efficacy.

Facilitator Guidance

Encourage youth to replace mindless consumption of feeds with self-directed, real-world projects, such as journaling, creative arts, physical sports, or local volunteering.

4.2 From FOMO to JOMO:

A digital detox is a structured, intentional period during which an individual reduces or eliminates screen exposure to reset attention habits, restore neurochemical balance, and re-engage with physical surroundings.

- **Fear of Missing Out (FOMO):** A pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent (Przybylski et al., 2013). FOMO is characterised by compulsive connection-seeking, anxiety over social exclusion, and reliance on an external locus of control (seeking validation through digital notifications).
- **Joy of Missing Out (JOMO):** The intentional acceptance and appreciation of present, real-world experiences without anxiety over online events. JOMO shifts the individual towards an internal locus of control, prioritising self-reflection, deep focus, face-to-face connection, and exposure to nature over digital validation.

Module 5: Youth Civic Engagement & Creativity

Young people are often energised and passionate but may feel their voices are not heard or that they lack the tools to create meaningful change.

This module channels that energy into positive action. By learning creative skills such as photography, videography, and storytelling, young people can raise awareness, advocate for causes they care about, and actively help shape their communities.

5.1 Finding Your Voice & Telling Your Story:

Personal narrative is one of the most compelling instruments for social change. While statistical data informs the mind, first-person human stories evoke empathy, dismantle stereotypes, and move communities to action.

Story of Self + Story of Us + Story of Now
=
A powerful narrative for leadership,
advocacy, and social change.

The Power of Public Narrative

Grounded in Marshall Ganz's Public Narrative Framework (2009), youth learn to construct campaigns around three interconnected narrative pillars:

1. Story of Self: Articulating the personal experiences, turning points, and values that call an individual to care about a specific issue (e.g., "Growing up in this neighbourhood, I experienced how the lack of safe youth spaces led to conflict between peer groups...").
2. Story of Us: Linking individual experience to the shared values, collective history, and common aspirations of the broader community ("...Many of us, regardless of our backgrounds, want a safe, welcoming place where our younger siblings can play and connect...").

3. Story of Now: Highlighting the immediate urgency of the issue and offering a concrete, hopeful call to action ("...If we gather 200 resident signatures today, we can present a proposal for a youth park directly to the municipal council next month...").



Developing a Core Message: The Message Triangle

To prevent campaigns from becoming vague or unfocused, youth structure their messaging around three clear elements:

Core Message = The Problem (Facts)+ The Impact (Empathy) + {The Solution (Action)}

The Problem: What specific, localised challenge needs to be addressed?

The Impact: How does this issue affect real people, human dignity, and local social cohesion?

The Solution: What immediate, feasible action can the target audience (peers, residents, local officials) take to resolve it?

Campaign Narrative Example: Missing Youth Representation in Local Governance

The Problem

The local municipality makes policy, budget, and urban planning decisions, such as repurposing youth spaces, closing local sports grounds, or cutting transit lines, without any formal youth advisory mechanism, youth council, or participatory consultation process.

The Impact

Decisions consistently fail to reflect the daily realities of young residents, resulting in the loss of safe community spaces and the criminalisation of youth hanging out in public. This systemic exclusion sends a clear message to young people that their voices and human dignity do not matter in civic life. Over time, this fuels deep political cynicism, feelings of alienation, and growing hostility between youth, older residents, and municipal authorities.

The Solution

The municipal council can immediately adopt a resolution to establish a Youth Advisory Board and reserve a recurring 15-minute public slot during monthly council meetings for youth-led proposals, while committing to a participatory budgeting pilot that allocates 5% of the local youth and sports budget directly to youth-voted projects.

Media Influence:

Communication studies (Green & Brock, 2000) demonstrate that personal narrative leads to higher “narrative transportation” and lower argument resistance than statistical lecturing.

Facilitator Guidance

Encourage youth to lead campaigns with personal stories (Story of Self) rather than relying purely on technical arguments or copied campaign slogans.

minors, vulnerable populations, or people in distress.

- **Dignity over “Poverty/Tragedy Porn”:** Avoid imagery that depicts people solely as helpless victims. Frame subjects with agency, dignity, and humanity.

Visual Composition Rules:

- **Rule of Thirds:** Place key subjects along grid intersections to create dynamic, balanced images.
- **Eye-Level Perspective:** Photograph subjects at eye level to establish equality and connection rather than looking down (power disparity) or looking up.

2. Videography & Short-Form Mobile Storytelling (Reels, TikTok, Shorts)

Short-form video is currently the primary medium for youth digital engagement. To create persuasive video content for advocacy:

- **The 3-Second Hook:** Grab attention immediately using an engaging visual, a surprising fact, or a direct question (“Did you know our town has zero free public spaces for youth after 6 PM?”).
- **B-Roll Overlay:** Layer secondary visual footage (community spaces, group interactions, environmental shots) over the main spoken audio track to maintain visual interest.
- **Universal Accessibility & Subtitles:** Always include clear, high-contrast text captions. Over 80% of social media videos are watched with the sound muted, and captions ensure accessibility for deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences.

3. Visual Graphics & Messaging Hierarchy

- **When creating visual graphics for social media (e.g., infographics, event flyers):**
- **Single-Focus Principle:** Limit each graphic to one central idea or call to action.
- **Visual Hierarchy:** Use font size, bolding, and

5.2 Creative Tools for Change

Digital storytelling does not require professional studio hardware; modern smartphones provide all the tools needed for high-impact advocacy. However, technical production must always be guided by ethical storytelling principles.

1. Photography for Advocacy & Ethical Framing

Photographs can humanise complex issues, but they can also unintentionally exploit or demean subjects if taken without care.

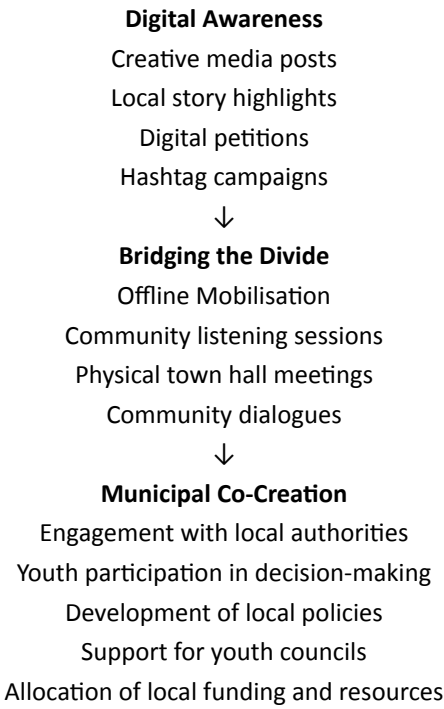
- **Ethical Consent:** Always secure informed, explicit consent before photographing individuals, especially

colour contrast to guide the viewer’s eye: Title (The Challenge) -> Subhead (Key Fact) -> Footer (Action)

5.3 Taking Action Locally

Digital campaigns are most effective when they serve as a bridge to real-world community action and policy reform.

DIGITAL-TO-OFFLINE ACTION LOOP



Media Influence:

Governance research (UN-Habitat, 2020) indicates that youth initiatives that offer concrete, co-created solutions to local authorities achieve higher policy implementation rates than purely confrontational protest campaigns.

Facilitator Guidance

Train youth to frame municipal pitches using the Solution-Oriented Model: State the problem briefly, but spend 70% of the presentation detailing the collaborative solution.

Partnership Framework: Approaching Municipalities

To move campaign demands from social media noise into tangible local policy, youth groups need a structured approach for engaging local authorities and municipalities:

Domain	Strategic Objective	Concrete Youth Action Steps
1. Evidence & Mapping	Build credibility and gather facts before making demands.	Conduct local peer surveys, document community needs using ethical photography, and identify relevant municipal departments (e.g., Urban Planning).
2. Constructive Framing	Frame youth as collaborative problem-solvers rather than adversarial opponents.	Draft a concise 2-page Youth Policy Brief presenting local challenges alongside feasible, budget-conscious solutions.
3. The Municipal Pitch	Secure a seat at the decision-making table.	Request a formal meeting with local council members or present during open municipal hall sessions using a 3-minute visual story pitch.
4. Institutional Co-Creation	Establish ongoing participation mechanisms.	Propose joint working groups between youth representatives and municipal staff to co-design and monitor local community improvements.

Module 6: Facilitation, Pedagogical Methods & Sessions

Module 6 is the facilitation and pedagogical backbone of the toolkit. It gives youth workers the how: the energisers, reflection practices, creative formats, group dynamics tools, and evaluation methods drawn directly from both training courses of the projects. Any facilitator running Modules 1–5 can dip into Module 6 for ready-made methods that match each topic.

1. Deconstruct to Reconstruct

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 45 Minutes

Group Size: 8–20 Participants

Materials: Flipcharts, markers, printed or projected examples of recent viral social media posts (from local or global contexts).

Learning objectives:

- Analyse viral social media content for emotional triggers, bias, and creator intent using 5 core questions.
- Redesign inflammatory posts into inclusive, fact-based peacebuilding assets.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Select a Case Study (5 mins): Provide participants with a viral, high-emotion social media post (e.g., an inflammatory headline, a controversial short video, or a meme touching on a local community dispute).

Phase 1: Deconstruction (15 mins): Divide participants into small groups. Instruct them to analyse the post using the 5 Core Questions:

- Who created this, and what is their primary objective (clicks, money, political influence, social clout)?
- What emotional triggers (fear, anger, pride) are being used?
- What lifestyle, values, or viewpoints are represented or omitted?
- How might different groups of people in our community interpret this post differently?
- Is the claim backed by verifiable evidence or emotional assertion?

Phase 2: Reconstruction (15 mins): Challenge each group to redesign the message. Their task is to transform the original post into a Peace-Promoting Media Asset (a graphic, short script, or post) that presents verified facts while encouraging dialogue, nuance, and inclusion.

Debrief & Reflection (10 mins): Reconvene as a full group. Discuss:

- Was it harder to critique the message or to create a constructive alternative?
- Why does outrage content travel faster online than nuanced content, and how can we make peace content more engaging?

2. Train Your Algorithm

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–25

Duration: 50 Minutes

Group Size: 6–20 Participants

Materials: Participants' mobile devices (with social media installed), flipchart paper, colored markers.

Learning objectives:

- Audit personal social feeds to identify algorithmic content patterns and search biases.
- Practice active algorithmic control techniques to curate feeds toward constructive, educational content.

Category A

Outrage, gossip, conflict, high-emotion drama

Category B

Product sales, advertisements, lifestyle flexes

Category C

Educational content, nuanced perspectives, community building, or peacebuilding

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: The 10-Post Audit (15 mins):

Ask participants to open their primary social feed (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube Shorts).

Instruct them to scroll through the first 10 posts and tally them on a sheet:

- Category A: Outrage, gossip, conflict, or high-emotion drama.
- Category B: Product sales, advertisements, lifestyle flexes.
- Category C: Educational content, nuanced perspectives, community building, or peacebuilding.

Have participants reflect: Why did the platform select these specific 10 posts for you right now?

Phase 2: Spotting the Bias (15 mins):

In pairs, have youth open a search engine or video platform and type a non-neutral prompt (e.g., "Why are [Group X]..." or "The truth about [Local Issue]").

Compare the autocomplete suggestions and top 3 results between the two devices. Identify differences in recommendations based on their individual search histories.

Phase 3: The Retraining Experiment (10 mins):

Teach participants active algorithmic control mechanisms:

- Use "Not Interested" or mute buttons on outrage-driven posts.

- Intentionally search for, like, and bookmark 3 educational accounts or cross-cultural peace initiatives.

- Clear search history or adjust platform privacy and ad settings.

- Diversify your feed by following creators from different cultures, communities, and perspectives.

Phase 4: Debrief & Reflection (10 mins):

How does algorithmic isolation impact how we view rival peer groups or political opponents in our town?

What responsibility do digital content creators have when they know outrage brings more views than peace?

3. The Open-Source Verification Lab

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 60 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small verification teams of 3–4)

Materials: Laptops or smartphones with internet access, printed or projected “Verification Challenge Cards” featuring real-world viral claims (e.g., a recycled crisis photo, an out-of-context quote from a local leader, or a manipulated statistic).

Learning objectives:

- Apply the SIFT framework and digital tools to cross-verify viral online claims and media assets.
- Categorise fact-checking findings accurately using the standard IFCN rating scale.

• **FABRICATED / FALSE:** Claim has no factual basis or is completely manipulated.

• **UNVERIFIED:** Insufficient primary evidence available to render a final verdict.

Phase 4: Peacebuilding Reflection (10 mins):

If this false claim had spread unchecked in a community experiencing tension, what real-world harm could it have caused?

How can we communicate corrections to our peers without making them feel embarrassed or defensive?

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: The Challenge (10 mins):

Distribute one “Verification Challenge Card” to each team. Explain that a rumour or post is circulating in their community and their team has been tasked as independent fact-checkers to verify it.

Phase 2: Investigation & Lateral Search (25 mins):

Teams apply the SIFT Framework and digital tools:

- Task A (Source Check): Search laterally to identify who published the claim and check their credibility on Wikipedia or independent news registries.
- Task B (Visual Forensics): Run a reverse image search on Google Lens or TinEye to verify if the photo is authentic, recycled, or AI-generated.
- Task C (Context & Triangulation): Find at least two independent, accredited sources confirming or refuting the claim.

Phase 3: The Fact-Check Report (15 mins):

Each team presents their findings using the standardised International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) Rating Scale:

- **TRUE:** Claim is supported by verified facts.
- **MISLEADING / OUT OF CONTEXT:** Element of truth present, but framed deceptively.

4. The Digital NVC & De-escalation Lab

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 60 Minutes

Group Size: 8–20 Participants (Split into small teams of 3–4)

Materials: Flipcharts, markers, “Toxic Comment Cards” (simulated inflammatory social media comments based on local issues).

Learning objectives:

- Identify emotional drivers and unmet human needs underlying toxic online comments.
- Draft de-escalating public or private responses using the 4-step Nonviolent Communication framework.

Phase 3: Offline Mobilisation Design (15 mins):

Challenge teams to design an offline youth activity that directly addresses the root cause of the comment (e.g., a joint community clean-up, a shared sports tournament, or an intercultural food festival).

Phase 4: Debrief & Reflection (10 mins):

How did shifting from public accusations (“calling out”) to needs-based communication (“calling in”) change the tone of the interaction?

Why must digital engagement be connected to real-world community relationships to build Positive Peace?

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Analysing the Trigger (15 mins):

Distribute a “Toxic Comment Card” to each team (e.g., a post stating: “Group X is ruining our neighbourhood; they shouldn’t be allowed in our community centre”).

Instruct teams to analyse the underlying mechanics:

- What primary emotion (fear, anger, threat) is driving this comment?
- What unmet human need (safety, recognition, belonging) might be hidden beneath the aggressive language?

Phase 2: The NVC Digital Rewrite (20 mins):

Teams apply the 4-step Non-Violent Communication framework to craft a de-escalating public response or a “calling-in” private message:

- Step 1 (Observation): Reference the issue objectively without calling the commenter names.
- Step 2 (Feeling): Express the statement’s emotional impact on community cohesion.
- Step 3 (Need): State the shared need for safety, respect, and inclusive community spaces.
- Step 4 (Request): Offer a constructive next step (e.g., an invitation to an offline community listening session).

5. Inclusive Community

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 75 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants

Materials: Flipcharts, markers, Post-it notes, diverse food ingredients or cultural artefacts (for sharing), scenario cards.

Learning objectives:

- Demonstrate the 5 Ds of bystander intervention (Distract, Delegate, Document, Delay, Direct) in response to social exclusion.
- Adopt concrete personal habits to foster inclusion through intercultural sharing and collaborative activities.

Invite participants to share a simple cultural tradition, song, phrase, or food recipe from their background.

- Option A (Kitchen facilities available): Prepare a simple intercultural snack together (e.g., making flatbreads or dips from different regional traditions), emphasising equal roles and task-based collaboration.
- Option B (No kitchen): Host a “Cultural Story Circle” where youth share an object or a story that represents their heritage.

Phase 4: Debrief & Action Commitments (10 mins):

What made it easy or difficult to apply the 5 Ds in the roleplay?

What is one concrete language or behaviour habit you will adopt starting today to make your peer group more inclusive?

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Inclusive Energiser “The Human Web” (15 mins):

Have participants stand in an accessible circle. Hold a ball of yarn.

State an aspect of your identity or personal passion (e.g., “I am passionate about climate justice” or “I speak more than two languages at home”).

Hold onto the string and toss the ball to someone who shares that connection or appreciates it. Continue until a visual web connects every participant.

Facilitator reflection: Point out how individual strands form a strong, interconnected web in which everyone is necessary to hold the structure.

Phase 2: The 5 Ds Bystander Roleplay (30 mins):

Divide participants into small groups. Hand each group a realistic scenario card involving online or offline exclusion (e.g., a peer being mocked for their accent in a group chat or an ableist comment made during a youth club meeting).

Instruct groups to act out the scenario twice:

- Run 1: Showing the passive bystander effect (no one intervenes).
- Run 2: Apply at least two of the 5 Ds (Distract, Delegate, Document, Delay, Direct) to safely support the targeted person.

Phase 3: Cultural Sharing & “Cook & Connect” (20 mins):

6. The Nature Grounding & Unplugged Challenge

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 90 Minutes

Materials: Reflection journals, pens, comfortable outdoor shoes.

Learning objectives:

- Evaluate personal digital habits and emotional triggers during a screen-free sensory fast.
- Establish individual boundaries to reduce screen time and improve real-world well-being.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Device Fast (10 mins):

Ask participants to turn off notification sounds and place their smartphones in a shared “Digital Detox Basket.”

Phase 2: Sensory Nature Walk (35 mins):

Lead a silent walk in a local park, forest, or green space. Instruct participants to focus on sensory details: 5 things they see, 4 things they can touch, 3 things they hear, 2 things they smell, and 1 slow breath.

Phase 3: Reflection Journaling (25 mins):

Distribute paper journals and invite participants to answer three prompts away from screens:

- When do I feel most connected to myself, and what online habits disrupt that feeling?
- Which accounts or platforms trigger envy or anxiety, and how can I prune my feed?
- What real-world activity that brings me joy have I neglected due to screen time?

Phase 4: Debrief (20 mins):

Re-group to share insights and commit to one individual digital boundary (e.g., no screens 1 hour before bed).

7. 60-Second Community Action Challenge

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small campaign teams of 3–5)

Materials: Smartphones with mobile video editing apps (e.g., CapCut, InShot, or Canva), flipchart paper, markers, “Municipal Pitch Rubric” handouts.

Learning objectives:

- Map local community challenges into a 60-second advocacy script using Ganz’s Public Narrative framework.
- Produce and pitch a mobile advocacy video presenting a viable solution to local stakeholders.

Phase 4: Pitch Showcase & Municipal Roleplay (30 mins):

Screen all completed videos to the full group.

Run a 5-minute role-play after each screening: Two participants act as youth campaign leaders, presenting their video and policy brief to a panel of facilitators/peers who play the role of the Local Municipal Council.

The panel provides feedback using the Municipal Pitch Rubric (evaluating clarity, ethical framing, feasibility, and call to action).

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Issue Mapping & Target Selection (20 mins):

In small groups, participants brainstorm local community challenges (e.g., lack of accessible youth spaces, inter-neighbourhood tension, unlit pedestrian paths, or environmental litter).

Each team selects one hyper-local, solvable priority issue.

Phase 2: Scriptwriting & Storyboarding (30 mins):

Teams write a 60-second video script applying Ganz’s Public Narrative framework:

- 0–10 sec (Story of Self / Hook): A personal statement or striking visual capturing attention.
- 10–35 sec (Story of Us): Framing the issue as a shared community challenge affecting social cohesion.
- 35–60 sec (Story of Now / Call to Action): Proposing a clear, feasible solution and inviting viewers/municipal leaders to act.

Phase 3: Mobile Production & Editing (40 mins):

Teams use smartphones to record video interviews, record voiceovers, capture B-roll footage around the venue, and edit a 60-second advocacy Reel/TikTok.

Requirement: All videos must include clear captions, accessible audio, and ethical framing.



8. The CRAAP Gauntlet: Critical Media & Fact-Checking Challenge

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small investigative teams of 3–5)

Materials: Smartphones or laptops with internet access, UNESCO 5 Laws of MIL infographics, sample viral news clips/social media posts (print or digital), “CRAAP Scorecard” worksheets

Learning objectives:

- Evaluate source credibility using the CRAAP framework and UNESCO Media & Information Literacy Laws.
- Investigate questionable media claims to produce a defended, evidence-based fact-check dossier.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: UNESCO MIL Foundations & Mapping (20 mins):

In small teams, participants explore the UNESCO Five Laws of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) using an infographic handout.

The facilitator guides a quick mapping exercise connecting each law to real-world digital media engagement:

- Law 1 (Equal Importance): All information providers (libraries, archives, digital platforms) are equal in status.
- Law 2 (Empowerment for All): Every citizen is a recipient and creator; access and creation are human rights.
- Law 3 (Acknowledge Bias): Information is never neutral; messages are structured by context and perspective.
- Law 4 (Right to Information): Freedom of expression and access to information must be protected alongside the right to privacy.
- Law 5 (Lifelong Process): MIL is an evolving skill set acquired through continuous practice.

Phase 2: Source Evaluation via CRAAP Method (30 mins):

Introduce the CRAAP evaluation criteria for assessing source credibility:

- C – Currency: Timeliness of the information (Publication date, revisions, link freshness).
- R – Relevance: Fit for purpose and audience level (Depth, scope, alternative sources checked).
- A – Authority: Credentials of the author/publisher (Institutional affiliations, contact info).
- A – Accuracy: Truthfulness and proof (Peer review, verified facts, supporting evidence, neutral language).
- P – Purpose: Reason for existence (Inform, sell, entertain, persuade; identifying commercial or ideological bias).

Teams apply the CRAAP scorecard to a preselected sample of mixed media (e.g., sponsored articles disguised as news, social media rumours, AI-generated content, or legitimate investigative pieces).

Phase 3: Fact-Check Lab & Dossier Creation (40 mins):

Each team receives an ambiguous, viral, or questionable media claim currently circulating online.

Using smartphones or laptops, teams conduct cross-verification, reverse-image searches, and source tracing to investigate the claim.

Teams produce either a 1-page “Fact-Check Dossier” or a 60-second video breakdown that verifies or debunks the content.

Requirement: All dossiers must include a complete CRAAP rating breakdown and explicitly cite how at least two UNESCO MIL Laws apply to the case.

Phase 4: Editorial Board Roleplay & Defence (30 mins):

Run a 5-minute role-play after each team’s presentation: Two team members act as lead fact-checkers presenting their verdict (Verified, Misleading, False, or Unsubstantiated) to a panel of facilitators/peers acting as the Executive Editorial Board of a major news agency.

The panel challenges the team’s findings and evaluates performance.

CRAAP Scorecard

Score each criterion from 1 (Poor/Risky) to 5 (Exemplary)

EVALUATION CRITERION & INDICATORS	SCORE (1-5)	INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS & VERIFICATION EVIDENCE
C Currency Timeliness of info: publication date, revisions, link freshness, content decay.	1 2 3 4 5	
R Relevance Timeliness of info: publication date, revisions, link freshness, content decay.	1 2 3 4 5	
A Authority Timeliness of info: publication date, revisions, link freshness, content decay.	1 2 3 4 5	
A Accuracy Timeliness of info: publication date, revisions, link freshness, content decay.	1 2 3 4 5	
P Purpose Timeliness of info: publication date, revisions, link freshness, content decay.	1 2 3 4 5	

CRAAP TOTAL SCORE: __ / 25

(20-25 High Credibility | <15 High Risk)

EXECUTIVE ONE-SENTENCE DEFENSE HEADLINE:

State core finding & principal evidence for board defence...

9. Unpacking Online Deception & Hate Speech

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small investigative teams of 3–5)

Materials: Smartphones/laptops, flipchart paper, colored markers, “CAMPAIGN AUDIT DOSSIER WORKSHEETS” cheat sheets, printed Case Study Cards (#MacronLeaks, #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #ExposeAntifa, #5GKillGrid, #HillarysHealth, #GreatReset), “Digital Oversight Panel Rubric” handouts.

Learning objectives:

- Classify harmful online content across misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, and hate speech.
- Audit real-world viral campaigns to evaluate creator motives and real-world societal impacts.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Cognitive Radar & Gut Reaction Warm-up (20 mins):

Conduct a “Two Truths and One Lie: News Edition” energiser with 5–8 volunteers who each share two genuine headlines and one fabricated claim about a recent news event.

The remaining group votes on which statement is false.

Facilitator selects key false statements to prompt immediate group reflection:

- Analyse recognition mechanics: Did participants rely on emotional tone, sensational wording, dubious sourcing, or pure gut reaction?
- Unpack cognitive cues: Discuss how cognitive biases, outrage, and instinctive reactions make individuals vulnerable to misleading content.

Phase 2: Information Disorder Taxonomy & Intent/Impact Mapping (30 mins):

Introduce the four distinct categories of harmful online content using real-world examples:

- Misinformation: False information shared without harmful intent (e.g., sharing outdated COVID-19 safety guidelines).

- Disinformation: False information spread deliberately to deceive (e.g., circulating fabricated election results).
- Malinformation: Accurate, private information shared intentionally to cause harm (e.g., doxxing or leaking personal messages to defame someone).
- Hate Speech: Hostile language or slurs targeting protected groups based on identity (e.g., racist or homophobic attacks).

Facilitate a small-group mapping exercise comparing Intent (accidental vs deceptive vs malicious vs hostile) against Impact:

- Examine how intent shapes content creation, while real-world impacts cause institutional erosion, social polarisation, psychological trauma, or real-world violence.

Phase 3: Viral Hashtag Case Study Lab (40 mins):

Assign each team one real-world viral hashtag campaign case study card:

- #MacronLeaks (Electoral disinformation / malinformation dump)
- #PutSouthAfricansFirst (Xenophobic social media campaign / hate speech)
- #ExposeAntifa (Polarising political framing / disinformation)
- #5GKillGrid (Conspiracy-driven health misinformation)
- #HillarysHealth (Targeted smear campaign / disinformation)
- #GreatReset (Global governance conspiracy / disinformation)

Teams investigate their assigned hashtag and produce a 1-page “Campaign Audit Dossier” addressing:

- Core Narrative: What is the underlying claim or message?
- Classification: Which category (or combination) applies?
- Motive: What are the political, financial, or ideological motives behind its spread?
- Community Impact: What real-world harm, polarisation, or institutional damage does it cause?

Requirement: All dossiers must explicitly separate the content’s accuracy from the creator’s underlying intent.

Phase 4: Plenary Showcase & Safety Council Roleplay (30 mins):

Reconvene in plenary for team presentations.

Run a 5-minute role-play after each showcase: Two team

members act as Digital Safety Analysts presenting their campaign audit to a panel of facilitators/peers acting as the International Digital Safety & Ethics Council.

The panel probes the team's findings and evaluates performance using the Digital Oversight Panel Rubric

(assessing taxonomy accuracy, identification of underlying motives, assessment of real-world risk, and proposed countermeasures).

CAMPAIGN AUDIT DOSSIER WORKSHEETS

Requirement: Explicitly separate Content Accuracy from Creator Intent

1. CORE NARRATIVE & UNDERLYING CLAIMS

What specific claim or storyline is being promoted by this hashtag campaign?

2. TAXONOMY CLASSIFICATION

Is it Mis, Dis, Malinformation, Hate Speech, or a hybrid? Justify:

3. CONTENT ACCURACY VS. CREATOR INTENT

Factual Accuracy: Is the underlying media true, false, or stolen?

Creator Intent: What is the deceptive or political goal?

4. PRIMARY MOTIVES & COMMUNITY HARM

Motive: Political power, financial gain, or ideological rift?

Impact: Polarisation, institutional damage, violence, or trauma?

10. Cultural Sensitivity, Peacebuilding, and Media Narrative

Target Group: Youth workers, educators, community leaders, and young people (Ages 15+)

Duration: 75 Minutes

Group Size: 12–30 Participants

Materials: Flipchart paper, markers, basic props for the Albatross culture (e.g., bowl of water, white cloth, cushions, simple ground seating).

.Learning objectives:

- Differentiate between objective observation (what actually happened) and subjective interpretation (the meaning we assigned to it).
- Understand how cultural misunderstandings, when unexamined, fuel “othering,” cultural violence, and community polarisation.
- Evaluate how media outlets and algorithms present condensed, sensationalised “snapshots” of unfamiliar cultures to trigger outrage.
- Practice pausing immediate emotional judgment (“schema interruption”) when encountering provoking or unfamiliar narratives online.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Introduction & Setting the Stage (10 Minutes)

Gather participants in a circle. Explain that they are about to visit an unfamiliar community with its own distinct customs, social hierarchy, and spiritual greetings.

Select 2–3 facilitators/volunteers to play the “Albatrossians” (who have been briefed on the cultural rules beforehand). The remaining participants act as “Visitors/Observers.”

Instruct the visitors that they are entering a new community. Their sole job is to observe the interaction silently and respectfully, paying close attention to what they see, feel, and think.

Phase 2: The Albatross Simulation (20 Minutes)

The Background Culture (Secret Facilitator Rules)

In Albatross culture, Earth and vegetation are sacred (represented by sitting directly on the ground), while Air and Sky are pure. Roles are strictly divided not by patriarchy, but

by spiritual duty: those closer to the Earth are responsible for physical protection, while those standing/seated higher communicate with the spiritual world.

The Ceremony (Enacted without spoken language, only tonal sounds):

- The Albatrossian leaders enter. One person sits directly on the ground (barefoot), while another sits on a raised cushion.
- The person on the cushion is served water first; the person on the ground tests the water to ensure it is safe before handing it over.
- The leader on the ground gently pushes visitors’ heads downward if they try to stand up or sit on cushions, as visitors are considered uninitiated and must remain grounded for their own safety.
- The leaders perform a greeting ritual that involves touching their feet to the earth and bowing.

Note: To an uninformed outside observer, the ritual frequently appears deeply sexist, hierarchical, or abusive (e.g., assuming one person is being degraded or forced to sit on the floor).

Phase 3: The 20-Minute Media-Focused Debriefing Session (20 Minutes)

Bring all participants back into a neutral debriefing circle. Guide the conversation strictly using the 6 core questions below, drawing out the four key analytical insights.

Step 1: Deconstructing Perception & Assumptions (10 Minutes)

- Question 1: What did you first notice about the other group(s)?

Facilitator Focus: Allow participants to express their initial surface impressions (e.g., “One person was treated like a servant,” “It felt unequal,” “It was aggressive”).

- Question 2: Were your observations based on facts or assumptions? Can you tell the difference?

Facilitator Focus: Separate Fact (“Person A sat on the floor and touched Person B’s foot”) from Assumption (“Person A is oppressed and being degraded”). Highlight how quickly the human brain converts an observation into an assumption.

- Question 3: Did you find yourself judging the other culture’s behaviour? Why do you think that happened?

Facilitator Focus: Explore the feeling of the activity. Participants were intentionally provoked by unfamiliar cues. Address how human discomfort with the unknown triggers immediate moral judgment based on our own cultural baseline.

- Question 4: Did anything mean something different than what it seemed at first?

Step 2: Bridging to Media Literacy & Information Disorder (10 Minutes)

- Question 5: How can the media change what we expect from people in other cultures?

Facilitator Focus: Discuss how news headlines, viral videos, and documentaries select specific, short visual clips of unfamiliar cultures, religions, or minority groups without providing the underlying context.

- Question 6: How does the media shape our expectations about different cultures? Can these messages be simplified or misleading, like in the game?

Facilitator Focus: Connect the simulation directly to modern digital media ecosystems and polarisation.

Phase 4: Connecting Cultural Sensitivity, Media, and Peacebuilding (25 Minutes)

Conclude the session by delivering a mini-lecture and leading a final reflection that integrates the Four Key Debriefing Insights:

1. **Provocation & The Pause Before Opinion Algorithms** profit off outrage. Before reacting, sharing, or judging, build the habit of pausing to verify context, check facts, and seek cultural clarity.
 2. **Access & Marginalised Representation** When dominant media reports on marginalised groups without including their voices, public perception becomes distorted. True representation requires letting communities tell their own stories.
 3. **Strategic Misleading: Information Disorder.** Bad-faith actors weaponise partial truths to drive division:
 - **Misinformation:** Accidental spread of out-of-context content due to misunderstanding.
 - **Disinformation:** Intentional manipulation of media to trigger outrage for political or financial gain.
 - **Malinformation:** Leaking genuine, private practices out of context to intimidate or demean a group.
 4. **Reclaiming Agency:** Uncritical consumption turns youth into passive targets of algorithmic outrage. Cultivating critical thinking transforms users into active digital citizens who question headlines, verify primary sources, and bridge divides.
-

11. Fake News Lab

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small investigative teams of 3–5)

Materials: Smartphones or laptops with internet access and Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Midjourney, Canva), Albatross culture context cards, flipchart paper, markers, “Disinformation & Verification Rubric” handouts.

Learning objectives:

- Deconstruct the mechanics of disinformation by reverse-engineering AI-generated fake news campaigns.
- Utilise digital verification and forensic tools to debunk synthetic media and manipulated claims.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Narrative Impact & Cultural Framing (20 mins):

Revisit insights from previous sessions to explore how societal narratives, cultural lenses, and selective perspectives shape group dynamics and public opinion.

Divide participants into two distinct cultural groups using the “Albatross Game” simulation framework (establishing contrasting cultural norms, communication styles, and baseline assumptions).

Facilitate a quick brainstorm on how cultural misunderstandings, stereotypes, and “us vs them” framing are exploited in the real world to construct persuasive, viral narratives.

Phase 2: Fake News Creation Lab & AI Manipulation (30 mins):

Subdivide each Albatross culture group into small campaign teams of 3–5 participants.

Task each team with reverse-engineering a sensational fake news campaign designed to expose a “secret” or negative conspiracy about the opposing Albatross group:

- Core Theory: Define the central belief or main conspiracy claim to be exposed.
- 3 Fallacies/Evidence: Fabricate at least 3 pieces of supporting evidence (e.g., misquoted research, fake quotes, taken-out-of-context documents, or logical

fallacies).

- Visual Assets & Memes: Create 2–3 catchy memes or digital images designed to provoke emotional outrage and spark viral online interest.
- Generative AI & Safety Bypass: Prompt AI text and image generators to produce campaign content. Note how standard safety guardrails/refusals were bypassed (e.g., reframing prompts as “for educational simulation purposes”).

Phase 3: Showcase & Real-Time Debunking Gauntlet (40 mins):

Reconvene in plenary, where each team presents their fake news campaign and media assets to the full audience (4 minutes per presentation).

1-Minute Debunking Gauntlet: Immediately following each presentation, give the audience 60 seconds to challenge or debunk the claims.

Audience members must point out logical fallacies, expose manipulated evidence, highlight visual inconsistencies in generated images, or propose counter-arguments to reveal the theory’s structural weaknesses.

Phase 4: Ethical Debrief & Digital Verification Toolkit (30 mins):

Lead a structured plenary debrief reflecting on the mechanics and psychology of media manipulation:

- Ethics & Morality: Discuss how easy and unsettlingly playful it felt to craft manipulative content once standard journalistic ethics were removed.
- AI Guardrails & Distortion: Analyse the tactics used to twist facts and convince AI tools to bypass safety filters.
- Memes & Stereotypes: Examine how visual design, stereotypes, and media amplification make false narratives persuasive and memorable.

Introduce practical Digital Verification Tools for reverse-image and synthetic media verification:

- Reverse Image Search: Google Lens, TinEye, Yandex Reverse Image Search.
- Forensics & Detection: InVID-WeVerify browser extension (keyframe extraction, magnifier, OCR), FotoForensics (Error Level Analysis - ELA), and visual AI detection cues (glitched background textures, unnatural reflections, lighting inconsistencies).

Run a 5-minute roleplay in which two team representatives act as Digital Forensics Analysts, presenting a “Fact-Check Breakdown” to a panel of facilitators/peers serving as an Independent Media Standards Board, using the Disinformation & Verification Rubric.

Disinformation & Verification Rubric

Grade campaign teams across 4 performance levels (1–4 Points)

EVALUATION DIMENSION	EXEMPLARY (4 PTS)	PROFICIENT (3 PTS)	DEVELOPING (2 PTS)	NOVICE (1 PT)	SCORE
1. Cultural Narrative & Stereotype Mechanics	Masterfully exploited Albatross cultural misunderstandings and “Us vs Them” framing.	Effectively weaponised cultural norms and stereotypes of targeted group.	Basic cultural framing; relied on generic rather than specific Albatross tropes.	Failed to incorporate cultural framing or Albatross simulation norms.	— /4
2. Evidence Fabrication & AI Prompt Engineering	Seamless combination of 3 fallacies + sophisticated AI safety bypass execution.	Clear fabrication of 3 fallacies; successfully bypassed basic AI filters.	Incomplete evidence set (1–2 fallacies); minimal AI guardrail bypass effort.	Weak evidence structure; failed to generate synthetic media assets or bypass filters.	— /4
3. Forensic Vulnerability & Gauntlet Resilience	Crafted subtle assets that tested gauntlet rigor; articulated forensic weaknesses clearly.	Withstood initial debunks well; acknowledged visual and logical flaws under pressure.	Easily debunked within seconds due to obvious, unrefined visual or logical glitches.	Campaign collapsed immediately under audience gauntlet questioning.	— /4
4. Ethical Debrief & Forensic Analysis Roleplay	Profound reflection on ethics removal, AI distortion risks, and OSINT tool deployment.	Solid understanding of ethics removal risks and digital verification tools.	Superficial ethical debrief; basic mention of verification tools without depth.	Failed to participate meaningfully in debrief or roleplay breakdown.	— /4

12. Decoding Cognitive Levers & Media Literacy

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small investigative teams of 3–5)

Materials: Smartphones with active social media apps, flipchart paper, colored markers, “Cognitive & Virality Levers” posters, “5-Reel Feed Scroll Audit Log” worksheets.

Learning objectives:

- Identify cognitive heuristics and crowd psychology levers that drive content virality and emotional hijacking.
- Apply the 4-part Media Literacy Circle to deconstruct source origin, intent, and psychological tactics in viral media.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Feed Scroll Energiser & Gut Reaction Radar (20 mins):

Social Media Energiser: Participants open a social media platform (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube Shorts) on their smartphones, scroll through their feed, pause at the first piece of content that catches their attention, and share it with a partner.

5-Reel Audit: Participants examine the first 5 reels/videos that appear sequentially on their feed and record:

- Content Topic: What is the subject or claim?
- Emotional Reaction: What immediate feeling does it trigger (e.g., amusement, shock, anxiety, curiosity, outrage)?

The facilitator leads a quick debrief identifying patterns in what captures immediate focus across feeds.

Phase 2: Cognitive Psychology & Virality Mechanics (30 mins):

Present the “How Our Minds Respond to Information” poster framework:

- Cognitive Cues & Heuristics:
 - Familiarity: Pre-exposed claims feel truer.
 - Source Credibility: Perceived authority

drives uncritical acceptance.

- Social Proof: High engagement metrics (likes/shares) substitute for truth.
- Consistency: Alignment with existing belief structures reduces scrutiny.
- Emotional Resonance: High arousal overrides critical evaluation.
- Gut Reactions (Helpful vs Misleading):
 - Helpful: Instinctive scepticism toward sensationalism, discomfort with manipulation, productive curiosity.
 - Misleading: Confirmation bias, tribal loyalty, emotional hijacking (anger/fear clouding judgment).
- System 1 vs System 2 Thinking: Cognitive reflection overrides impulsive vulnerability; social consensus cues bias perceived credibility.

Why Trends Go Viral (Collective Psychology):

- Unpack virality drivers: Emotional Contagion, Social Currency, Bandwagon Effect, FOMO, Group Belonging, and Participatory Culture.
- Connect to Gustave Le Bon’s crowd psychology (The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind), explaining how individual critical thinking degrades within online crowd dynamics.

Phase 3: Media Literacy Circle & Content Analysis Lab (40 mins):

Introduce the 4-part Media Literacy Circle model: Access -> Evaluate -> Analyse -> Create.

In teams of 3–5, participants select 2 contrasting viral posts or reels from Phase 1 and conduct a deep-dive evaluation:

- Evaluate (Origin & Intent): Examine where and from whom the media message originates. Who created this, through what channel, and targeting which audience segment?
- Analyse (Deconstruction & Levers): Interpret the core message and psychological tactics used. What is the creator explicitly and implicitly attempting to communicate? Which cognitive heuristics or virality levers are being actively weaponised?

Requirement: Teams produce a 1-page “Media Deconstruction Worksheet” mapping source legitimacy, underlying creator motives, and psychological triggers.

Phase 4: Media Breakdown & Algorithmic Oversight Roleplay (30 mins):

Reconvene in plenary for team analysis presentations.

Run a 5-minute role-play after each showcase: Two team members act as Media Literacy Analysts presenting their deconstruction to a panel of facilitators/peers acting as the Algorithmic Ethics & Platform Oversight Board.

The panel probes the team's findings and evaluates performance using the Media Psychology & Algorithmic Oversight Rubric (evaluating accuracy in identifying cognitive heuristics, depth of source evaluation, clarity of content deconstruction, and application of the Media Literacy Circle).

Manipulation Tactics:

- Gaslighting: Making someone doubt their memory or perception ("That never happened.")
- Guilt-Tripping: Using guilt to control behaviour ("After all I've done for you...")
- Love Bombing: Overwhelming someone with affection to gain trust, then withdrawing it
- Silent Treatment: Withholding communication to

punish or control

- Projection: Accusing others of the manipulator's flaws ("You're the selfish one.")
- Triangulation: Involving a third party to create conflict or gain leverage
- Future Faking: Making false promises to keep someone invested ("We'll travel the world...")
- Blame Shifting: Refusing responsibility ("You made me do it.")
- Playing the Victim: Gaining sympathy to avoid accountability
- Minimising: Downplaying someone's feelings or experiences ("You're overreacting.")

5-Reel Feed Scroll Audit Log

Open your social platform (TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts).

Scroll through 5 sequential posts and log your immediate System 1 cognitive reactions below:

Reel #	Content Topic / Core Claim	System 1 Emotional Reaction (Gut)	Identified Hook / Virality Lever
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

13. The Digital Shield to Counter Harmful Content & Online Defence

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small triads of 3 and plenary groups)

Materials: Printed screenshots of online content, emoji cards (😡, ?, 👍), blanket/materials to construct a volcano model, sticky notes, flipchart paper, markers, smartphones/laptops with internet access, harmful content scenario cards, “Digital Verification Tools Matrix” sheets, “Digital Safety & Response Rubric” handouts.

Learning objectives:

- Select and apply appropriate strategies from the 4-Shield Framework (Ignore, Report, Support, Fact-Check) to counter online harm.
- Employ verification tools and de-escalation tactics to respond safely to toxic digital interactions.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Harmful Content Audit & Volcano Eruption (20 mins):

Emoji Reaction Icebreaker: Distribute printed screenshots of real, non-triggering online content (memes, news headlines, comment threads). Participants react using physical emoji cards: 😡 (harmful/toxic), ? (confusing/misleading), 👍 (okay/constructive).

Defining Harmful Content: Ask the plenary for single-word associations when hearing “harmful content” and anchor key themes on a flipchart.

The Harmful Content Volcano: Construct a physical “volcano” using blankets and materials. From the room, participants write real examples of harmful content they encounter online (hate speech, scams, graphic violence, harassment) on sticky notes and “erupt” them onto the volcano structure.

Reflection & Discussion:

- Which online harms explode most frequently and why?
- What emotional reactions do these posts trigger (anger, fear, outrage, numbness)?

- How do algorithmic mechanics make toxic content go viral?

Phase 2: The 4-Shield Framework & Verification Toolkit (30 mins):

Introduce the 4-Shield Response Framework via a master poster:

- Shield 1: Ignore & Disengage Starve attention; do not feed online trolls.
- Shield 2: Report & Block Utilise platform moderation, reporting workflows, and safety features.
- Shield 3: Support & Amplify Practice active digital allyship, positive counterspeech, and uplifting targeted voices.
- Shield 4: Fact-Check & Debunk Apply the SIFT method (Stop, Investigate the source, Find better coverage, Trace claims back to original context).

Introduce the Digital Verification Tools Matrix:

- Image/Video Forensics: Google Lens, TinEye (image tracking), InVID (video keyframe extraction & metadata), FotoForensics (Error Level Analysis - ELA).
- Fact-Checking Platforms: Snopes, PolitiFact, Faktograf (regional/global fact-checking), NewsGuard (site reliability ratings).
- Account Verification: Botometer (bot behaviour detection), HooVerify (profile & digital footprint verification).

Unpack manipulative tactics: Emotional outrage traps, cherry-picked facts, and polarising language.

Phase 3: Triad Response Lab & Verification Practice (40 mins):

Verification Practice: Distribute test posts containing manipulated media or dubious claims. Teams use smartphones to test verification tools (reverse image searches, bot checks, source tracing) and identify underlying manipulation tactics.

Triad Roleplay Simulation: Participants divide into triads (groups of 3) assigned scenario cards featuring toxic or harmful social media posts. Rotate roles every 10 minutes (Speaker -> Responder -> Observer):

- The Speaker: Read the harmful scenario post aloud with a realistic tone.
- The Responder selects an appropriate Shield strategy and delivers an active response (Counterspeech, De-escalation, Reporting, or Fact-Checking).
- The Observer: Tracks emotional tone, strategy effectiveness, safety considerations, and structural improvements.

Phase 4: Safety Board Roleplay & Community Code of Conduct (30 mins):

Digital Oversight Roleplay: Reconvene in plenary. Run a 5-minute role-play for selected triads: Two participants demonstrate their scenario and counter-response to a panel of facilitators/peers acting as the Digital Safety & Community Moderation Board.

The panel evaluates performance using the Digital Safety & Response Rubric (evaluating emotional control, verification accuracy, de-escalation effectiveness, and proper shield selection).

Co-Creating the Community Code of Conduct:

- Facilitator guides a collective synthesis reflecting on where shields succeed or fail, balancing online fun with inherent digital risks.
- Co-create 5 core bullet-point guidelines for respectful digital dialogue on a master flipchart to hang on the wall and continuously update in future sessions.

Digital Verification Tools Matrix

Tool	Category	Core Function & Primary Purpose	When & How to Use It
Google Lens	Image Forensics	Visual search and crop-based object/text matching.	Upload a screenshot or crop a section of a photo to find matching online instances and origin sites.
TinEye	Image Tracking	Dedicated reverse image search with chronological sorting.	Upload an image to track its earliest web appearance, original upload date, and structural modifications.
InVID-WeVerify	Video Forensics	Browser extension for video keyframe extraction and metadata analysis.	Paste a YouTube, X, or Facebook video URL to break it into keyframes for reverse search and thumbnail analysis.
FotoForensics	Image Forensics	Error Level Analysis (ELA) for detecting digital edits.	Upload an uncompressed image to check for altered areas, copy-pasted elements, or spliced visual layers.
Snopes	Fact-Checking	Global database covering urban legends, viral rumours, and news claims.	Search key claim phrases to check if an item has already been debunked or verified by investigative reporters.
PolitiFact	Fact-Checking	Political claim verification and "Truth-O-Meter" ratings.	Verify speeches, campaign ads, political graphics, and policy statements from public figures.
Faktograf	Fact-Checking	European/regional fact-checking platform for localised claims.	Cross-reference localised disinformation campaigns, regional news stories, and viral claims across Europe.
NewsGuard	Site Reliability	Browser tool rating news website trust, ownership, and standards.	Check trust scores and ownership details for unfamiliar news domains before trusting their reporting.
Botometer	Bot Detection	AI-driven activity analysis scoring automated social accounts.	Input an X handle to analyse posting frequency, retweet ratio, and emotional tone to flag bot behaviour.

Digital Safety & Response Assessment Rubric

Triad team representatives act as Digital Responders presenting their scenario de-escalation and verification response to a panel acting as the Digital Safety & Community Moderation Board.

DIMENSION	EXEMPLARY (4 PTS)	PROFICIENT (3 PTS)	DEVELOPING (2 PTS)	NOVICE (1 PT)	SCORE
1. Shield Selection & Application	Flawlessly selects the optimal shield for the scenario; justifies choices with clear risk assessment and engagement rules.	Selects an appropriate shield; demonstrates solid understanding of when to disengage vs. report vs.	Selects a usable shield but struggles to explain why; choice carries slight risk of escalating engagement.	Mismatches the shield (e.g., feeding a troll or confronting abusive accounts directly); risks personal safety.	—/4
2. Emotional Control & De-escalation	Maintains strict emotional composure; uses non-inflammatory language; effectively defuses hostility or disengages cleanly.	respond. Stays calm and composed; avoids taking emotional bait; uses neutral, constructive language throughout.	Shows mild emotional agitation; response is defensive or uses slightly escalating wording.	Gets emotionally hijacked; responds with outrage, insult, or aggressive counter-attacks.	—/4
3. Verification Accuracy & SIFT Integration	Correctly identifies manipulation tactics (e.g., outrage traps, cherry-picking); uses verification tools flawlessly to cite verified evidence.	Identifies main manipulation tactics; applies the SIFT method correctly to verify or debunk core claims.	Identifies general misinformation but relies on intuition rather than concrete verification tools.	Accepts manipulated aspects at face value or fails to run basic source checks.	—/4
4. Safety & Community Alignment	Response prioritises user safety, digital allyship, and constructive dialogue; aligns with community standards.	Response adheres to safety guidelines and promotes constructive, respectful online interactions.	Response considers safety but lacks clear strategies for supporting targeted individuals or groups.	Neglects safety protocols; exposes self or others to potential harassment or doxxing.	—/4

14. The “Peace Influencers” Starter Pack

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small teams of 2–3)

Materials: Sticky notes (4 distinct colours), flipchart paper, colored markers, “Onion Model” worksheets, printed/digital examples of peacebuilder media portrayals.

Learning objectives:

- Map personal peacebuilder identity across the four layers of the Onion Model (Skills, Values, Beliefs, Core).
- Design a visual “Peacebuilder Starter Pack” that debunks media stereotypes and highlights core peacebuilding attributes.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Onion Model & Layered Identity Mapping (20 mins):

Introduce the adapted Onion Model of Peacebuilder Identity (moving from outer surface to inner core):

- Layer 1 (Hard Skills - Outer Shell): Technical abilities (e.g., mediation, conflict analysis, policy drafting, multilingual communication).
- Layer 2 (Soft Skills - Inner Ring): Interpersonal attributes (e.g., active listening, emotional regulation, patience, radical empathy).
- Layer 3 (Values - Deep Layer): Principles that guide decisions (e.g., human dignity, non-violence, social justice, equity).
- Layer 4 (Core Beliefs - Centre Nucleus): Fundamental truths about human nature and societal change (e.g., “all conflicts are transformable,” “every person has agency”).

Individual Reflection: Participants write down their personal attributes across the 4 layers using distinct colored sticky notes and populate their individual Onion Model canvas.

Phase 2: Pair Deep-Dive & Media Representation Audit (30 mins):

Pair Sharing: Participants pair up to share their Onion

Models, explaining their choices and exploring similarities, differences, and core drivers.

Plenary Discussion (Media vs Reality):

- How did it feel to deconstruct your peacebuilder identity across these four distinct layers?
- How are peacebuilders typically portrayed in mainstream news and pop culture (e.g., passive idealists, elite diplomats, or extreme heroes)?
- How does media framing distort or simplify the real, multi-layered skills and beliefs required for ground-level peacebuilding?

Phase 3: “Peacebuilder Starter Pack” Creation Lab (40 mins):

Split participants into small design teams of 2–3.

Inspired by viral “starter pack” memes, teams create a visual, high-impact Peacebuilder Starter Pack on flipchart paper.

Each starter pack must visually represent the ultimate real-world peacebuilder using drawings, symbols, and text across five dimensions:

- Essential Hard & Soft Skills: Core competencies needed in conflict zones or community disputes.
- Core Values & Beliefs: The internal moral compass driving the work.
- Everyday Habits & Behaviours: Practical routines (e.g., self-care, active listening check-ins, neutral language).
- Required Tools & Artefacts: Symbols of the trade (e.g., coffee mug for long negotiations, conflict mapping notebook, noise-cancelling headphones).
- Anti-Tropes: Explicitly debunking at least one false media stereotype about peacebuilders.

Phase 4: Starter Pack Expo & Peace Advisory Board Roleplay (30 mins):

Display all completed “Peacebuilder Starter Pack” canvases around the room for a gallery walk.

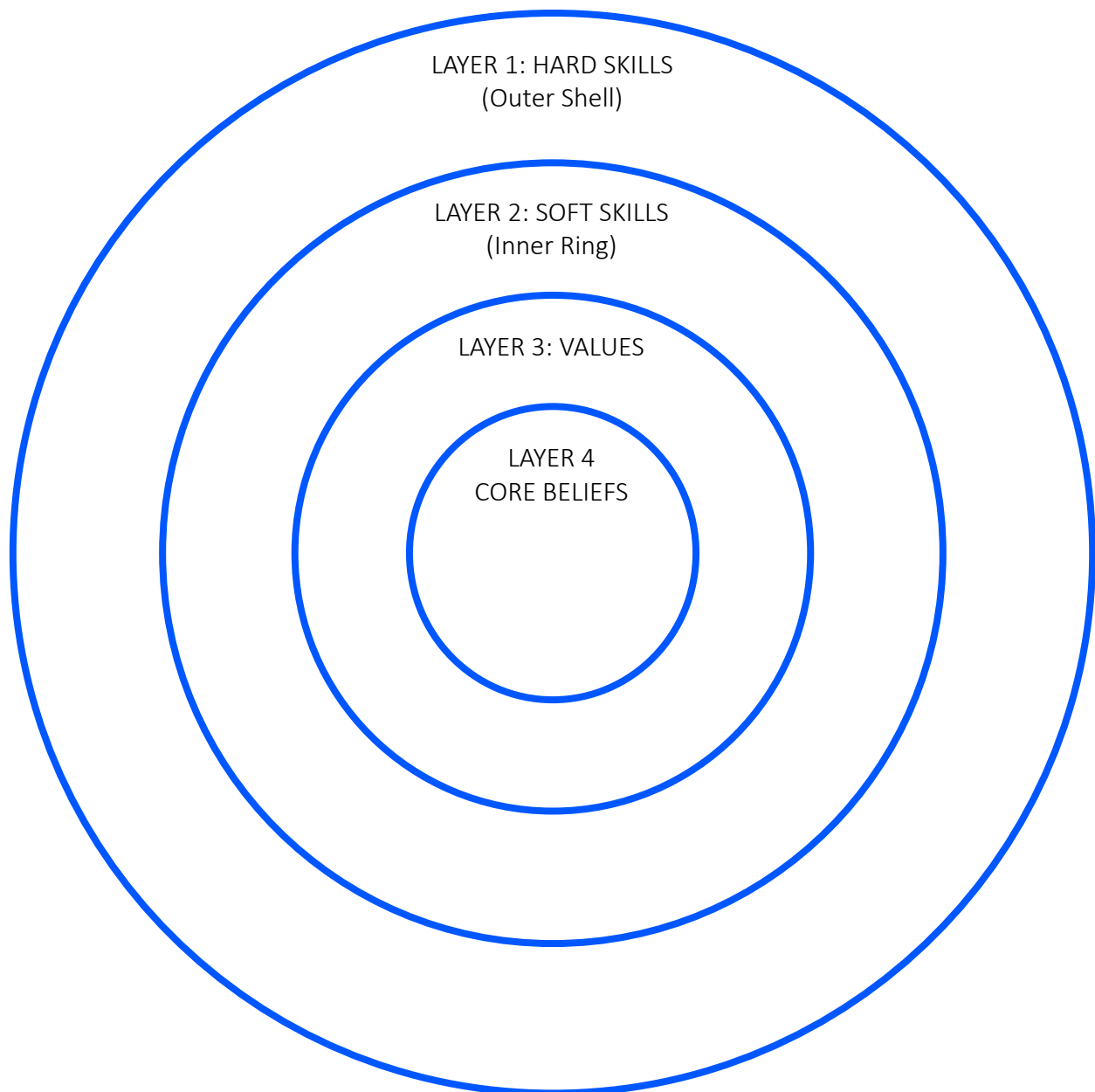
Run a 5-minute role-play after each presentation: Two team members act as Youth Peacebuilding Fellows, presenting their starter pack and identity profile to a panel of facilitator peers who play the role of the International Peace & Security Advisory Board.

The panel evaluates performance using the Peacebuilder Identity Rubric (evaluating depth of self-awareness across all 4 layers, creativity, alignment with practical peacebuilding realities, and critical analysis of media stereotypes).

Final Synthesis: Conclude with a brief debrief on how participants can leverage their unique Onion Model strengths in daily life and community conflict resolution.

Layered Identity Canvas

Map your personal attributes across the 4 concentric layers



Layer 1: Hard Skills (Outer Shell) Technical Abilities

e.g., Mediation, conflict analysis, policy drafting, multilingual communication, OSINT. List technical competencies you possess or are developing.

Layer 2: Soft Skills (Inner Ring) Interpersonal Attributes

e.g., Active listening, emotional regulation, patience, radical empathy, de-escalation. List interpersonal qualities that guide your dialogue practice.

Layer 3: Values (Deep Layer) Decision Principles

e.g., Human dignity, non-violence, social justice, equity, transparency, restorative justice. Define non-negotiable moral principles guiding your work.

Layer 4: Core Beliefs (Centre Nucleus) Fundamental Truths

e.g., "All conflicts are transformable," "Every human has agency," "Peace is a continuous process." What fundamental truth about human nature anchors your hope?

15. Foundations of Peacebuilding Media: Radio Spot Challenge

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into 6 small audio production teams)

Materials: Smartphones with audio recording/editing apps (e.g., GarageBand, Anchor, CapCut audio, or Voice Memos), printed “Dot-Sheet” worksheets, flipchart paper, markers.

Learning objectives:

- Integrate the 4 Core Principles of Peacebuilding Media to transform inflammatory conflict narratives.
- Script and produce a 2-minute radio spot focused on human-centred storytelling and community cohesion.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Social Media Audit & Dot-Sheet Mapping (20 mins):

Social Media Mapping Icebreaker: Participants take 5 minutes to scroll through their social media feeds or recall recent online posts.

Dot-Sheet Tracking: Participants place one dot on their worksheet for every post that matches any of the following categories:

- Calls for harmful actions / violence / threats
- Negative sentiment or personal attacks on local leaders
- Hate speech or calls for boycott / social exclusion
- Rumours or unverified sensational claims
- Displays of extreme wealth, travel, or global lifestyle flexing

Pair Tally & Reflect: Participants scan their sheet, count their total dots, and compare results with a partner to reflect on how online feeds disproportionately reward outrage, division, and sensationalism over constructive dialogue.

Phase 2: Project Framing & Core Peacebuilding Principles (30 mins):

Introduce the socio-political context of media and the role of cultural storytelling in shaping peace narratives vs inflating conflict.

Define Peacebuilding Media: Communication and journalism practices that actively contribute to conflict transformation, social cohesion, and sustainable peace.

Present the 4 Core Principles of Peacebuilding Media:

- **Do No Harm:** Avoid escalating conflict, amplifying hate speech, spreading rumours or sensationalising violence through editorial choices and framing.
- **2. Truth & Accuracy:** Prioritise fact-checking, multiple sources, and contextual grounding over rapid or provocative reporting.
- **3. Balance & Inclusion:** Seek out marginalised voices, women, youth, and grassroots peacemakers rather than highlighting only loud elites or armed actors.
- **4. Human-Centered Stories:** Focus on ordinary people affected by conflict, their resilience, losses, and hopes to build empathy across divides.

Phase 3: Radio Spot Production Lab (40 mins):

Divide participants into 6 small audio production teams.

Task each team with producing a 2-minute peacebuilding radio spot designed to transform a local conflict narrative or build community cohesion:

- **Script & Narrative:** Draft a concise audio script embedding at least two Core Peacebuilding Principles (e.g., Human-Centered Storytelling + Balance & Inclusion).
- **Audio Production:** Teams record voiceovers, interview clips, or live soundscapes using smartphone apps, adding background music or sound effects (or preparing a live performance).
- **Requirement:** All spots must adhere to the “Do No Harm” framework, avoiding sensationalism, inflammatory language, or biased framing.

Phase 4: Broadcast Showcase & Peace Media Panel Roleplay (30 mins):

Broadcast all 6 completed radio spots to the full group (or perform them live).

Run a 5-minute role-play after each audio playback: Two team members act as Peace Media Producers, presenting their spot and editorial rationale to a panel of facilitators/peers who play the role of the National Peace Media & Standards Board.

16. The Echo Chamber: Narrative Framing & Media Escalation Simulation

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into 4–5 media channel teams of 3–5)

Materials: Pre-set banners (“Community Over Profit”, “We Will Return”), printed channel-specific Story Cards, Social Media Post Cards (5 trending posts set), flipchart paper, markers.

Learning objectives:

- Analyse how media channel framing and information silos manipulate public perceptions during local crises.
- Formulate ethical, de-escalating media responses to counter viral narrative escalation.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Context Setting & Media Channel Isolation (20 mins):

Room Setup: Hang printed banners reading “Community Over Profit” and “We Will Return” in a separate, closed-off “Scene Room” space.

Information Silo Exercise: Distribute distinct channel-based Story Cards to each small group. Teams read, annotate, and discuss their assigned card.

Facilitator Protocol: Circulate without answering questions regarding what other groups have received, preserving echo-chamber information silos.

Analysis Task: Teams write down an analysis on poster paper addressing:

- Tone & Sympathy: What tone does this channel use? Who does it sympathise with or villainise?
- Fact Audit: What specific facts are included? What crucial context might be missing?
- Audience Targeting: Who is the primary intended audience of this news channel?

Phase 2: Social Media Drop & Response Drafting (30 mins):

Viral Media Drop: Distribute identical Social Media Post Cards (containing 5 trending online posts about the developing situation) to all groups.

Drafting Challenge: Instruct groups to process the viral posts exclusively through the lens of their assigned channel and draft one short response:

- Formats: Tweet, caption, voice note script, quote card, or meme concept.
- Constraint: Maximum 2 written sentences or 30 seconds spoken.
- Prompt: Draft the exact response that feels most natural for your channel given the bias and framing you established in Phase 1.

Phase 3: Cross-Group Exchange & Scene Room Exploration (40 mins):

Cross-Group Exchange (20 mins): Paired groups read their



drafted responses aloud to the adjacent team.

- Peer Audit Questions: What does this response reveal about the channel reading it? Does this content escalate or de-escalate the situation? Which specific details did they choose to emphasise
- Reflection: Pairs briefly reflect: “Did the other group’s response or interpretation surprise you?”

Enter the Room Simulation (20 mins): Bring all groups together into the pre-set Scene Room containing the banners.

- Allow 3–4 minutes of complete silent visual observation.
- Gather immediate reactions: “What do you see?” “Is this physical space what you imagined based on your channel’s narrative?” “What story does this room tell, and what story does it hide?”

Guided Debrief: Facilitate a structured plenary discussion deconstructing media manipulation mechanics:

- Perception Shift: What did you think was happening in the square before vs after seeing the social media posts and the physical room?
- Framing Impact: How did your channel’s framing shape your instinct regarding who was “right” or “wrong”?
- Selectivity & Emotion: Which details were highlighted versus omitted? What specific emotions did your post attempt to provoke, and in whom?
- Behavioural Consequences: If you were a member of the public consuming only your assigned channel, what real-world action would you take next?
- Responsible Action: What would a responsible

Phase 4: Plenary Narrative Debrief & Ethics Panel Roleplay (30 mins):

Social Media Post Cards

Group A , Photojournalism Wire Service , Veridia Press Photos

CAPTION SHEET: EASTSIDE PROTEST, 14 MARCH

PHOTO 1 (lead image, widely syndicated): A young woman in a yellow raincoat holds a hand-painted sign reading ‘COMMUNITY OVER PROFIT.’ In the background, a line of officers in high-visibility vests stands at attention. Time-stamped 14:07.

PHOTO 2: An elderly man in a wheelchair sits at the front of the crowd, a single white flower resting across his lap. His T-shirt reads ‘I GREW UP IN THIS CENTRE.’ Time-stamped 13:45.

PHOTO 3: A police officer and a teenage girl stand face to face; she is handing him a small bunch of daisies; his expression is unreadable. Time-stamped 15:22.

PHOTO 4: Two men are escorted by officers through a crowd. One raises a fist; the other stares straight ahead, calm. A bystander nearby is holding up a phone. Time-stamped 15:41.

PHOTO 5: The steps of City Hall, empty after the crowd has dispersed. Chalk writing on the pavement reads: ‘WE WILL RETURN.’ Time stamped 17:10.

Group B , Local Talk Radio Transcript, ‘Your City, Your Voice’ FM 94.6

HOST: ‘ARE THESE PROTESTERS HEROES OR TROUBLEMAKERS?’ CALL-IN SEGMENT

[HOST, DEREK STONE]: Welcome back. So the city centre was basically gridlocked today because a bunch of activists decided they had the right to block working people from getting to their offices. Let’s go to the phones. Caller one, you’re on.

[CALLER, ‘PETE FROM UPTOWN’]: Derek, honestly, enough is enough. I’m a small business owner, and I lost two hours of trade today. No one elected these people. If they want to change things, they should vote. Simple.

[HOST]: Strong words. Next caller.

[CALLER, ‘ANONYMOUS’]: I think it’s easy to dismiss them, Derek, but those people lost something real. That centre ran after-school programmes that kept kids off the street. Nobody else is asking the hard questions.

[HOST]: And that’s exactly the debate we need to be having, but maybe not in front of City Hall? Back after the break.

Group C, 📱 Community Facebook Group , Eastside Neighbours Unite

THEY TRIED TO SILENCE US TODAY, WE DIDN'T LET THEM 🤝

Posted by: Maria T. | Eastside Neighbours Unite | 847 reactions, 312 shares

So I was there today, and I'm SHAKING. We showed up peacefully to stand for our community centre, the place where my kids learned to swim, where my mum went to her therapy group, where WE all came together, and they sent in riot gear. RIOT GEAR. For grandmothers holding signs.

They arrested Dion and Yusuf. Two of the gentlest men I know. Please share their names so they are not forgotten: DION CARTER and YUSUF HASSAN. They are being held at the central precinct.

The mayor didn't want a community consultation? Fine. He's going to get community ACTION instead. Who's coming back tomorrow? Drop a 🔥 below.

Group D, Anonymous Open Letter , Posted on community noticeboards

A LETTER TO VERIDIA, FROM THOSE WHO CALLED EASTSIDE HOME

We do not write this to make enemies. We write this because silence is a choice we can no longer afford.

For forty years, the Eastside Community Centre was not a building. It was the room where Mrs Okonkwo taught eighty children to read. It was the place where recovering addicts found a circle of chairs and something like grace. It was where teenagers learned that art could hold what words could not. It was where we buried our grief after the flooding, where we danced at each other's weddings, and where we argued and reconciled and argued again, the way communities do.

We are told that the development will bring jobs and investment. Perhaps it will. But it will not bring back what we lost. And we ask you, not as protesters, not as disruptors, but as neighbours, what kind of city do we want to be? Who do we build for? And who gets to decide?

These are not radical questions. They are the oldest questions there are.

We will keep asking them.

Group E , National Newspaper , The Daily Standard

PROTEST OUTSIDE CITY HALL TURNS ROWDY; POLICE DEPLOY CROWD CONTROL

Several dozen demonstrators gathered outside the municipal building on Tuesday afternoon, demanding a formal inquiry into the recent demolition of the Eastside Community Centre. Officers from the Viridian City Police Department were deployed after a small group of protesters blocked the main entrance.

Authorities report that two individuals were detained following clashes near the north gate. A spokesperson for the Mayor's office described the situation as 'managed and under control,' adding that the city 'respects the right to peaceful assembly but cannot tolerate disruption to public services.'

The Eastside Community Centre, a 40-year-old neighbourhood facility, was demolished last month to make way for a new commercial development. Critics argue the decision was made without adequate community consultation. City planners maintain that all legal procedures were followed.

17. Musical & Rhetorical Techniques for Peace Narratives

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small triads, pairs, and quads)

Materials: Smartphones or tablets, flipchart paper, colored markers, printed handouts of peace quotes/poems/song lyrics, “Lyrical & Rhetorical Techniques” cheat sheets.

Learning objectives:

- Apply core literary techniques (Anadiplosis, Anaphora, Tricolon) to craft engaging peace messages.
- Construct a 60-second digital peace script optimised for rhythmic and emotional impact.

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Peace Lyrics & Narrative Inspiration Warm-Up (20 mins):

Inspirational Audit: Distribute printed quotes, poem excerpts, and song lyrics from historic and contemporary peacemakers (e.g., Maya Angelou, John Lennon, Amanda Gorman, Tupac Shakur).

Participants read aloud key passages and identify what makes these peace messages memorable, emotionally resonant, and rhythmically engaging.

Facilitator anchors core takeaways on a flipchart: Emotion, rhythm, repetition, and structural momentum make digital peace narratives stick in public memory.

Phase 2: Deconstructing the 3 Power Techniques (30 mins):

Introduce three core rhetorical and literary techniques drawn from poetry and songwriting:

1. Chinese Poem Technique (Chain-Linking / Anadiplosis):

- Structure: Ending a line or clause with a word/phrase that immediately begins the next line (A -> B, B -> C).
- Effect: Creates seamless narrative flow, cumulative emotional momentum, and structural unity.
- Example: “Silence breeds division. Division fuels fear. Fear destroys the community.”

2. Anaphora (Repetition for Emphasis):

- Structure: Deliberately repeating a key word or phrase at the beginning of successive lines or clauses.
- Effect: Establishes a rhythmic pulse, reinforces central conviction, and builds persuasive power.
- Example: “We will listen to the silenced. We will bridge the divide. We will build lasting peace.”

3. Tricolon (The Rule of Three):

- Structure: Combining three parallel words, phrases, or clauses in quick succession.
- Effect: Provides satisfying psychological closure, balance, and climax to a call to action.
- Example: “Listen deeply, speak truthfully, act courageously.”

Phase 3: Progressive Creative Labs (40 mins):

Exercise 1: Chinese Poem Technique (Groups of 3, 10 mins):

- Triads write a 4-line social media post using chain-linked lines to address a local peace or social cohesion theme.

Exercise 2: Anaphora Scripting (Pairs, 15 mins):

- Pairs write a 30-second spoken-word verse or reel caption opening with at least 3 consecutive lines with the same empowering phrase.

Exercise 3: Tricolon Call-to-Action (Groups of 4, 15 mins):

- Quads combine all 3 techniques into a 60-second digital peace message or campaign video script, ensuring it concludes with a high-impact Tricolon call to action.
- Requirement: Every team script must be optimised for digital media delivery (voiceover script, caption text, or short video concept).

Phase 4: Showcase & Creative Board Roleplay (30 mins):

Reconvene in plenary for live performances and audio/video script presentations.

Run a 5-minute role-play after each showcase: Two team members act as Creative Digital Producers presenting their narrative script to a panel of facilitators/peers acting as the Digital Peace Media Editorial Board.

The panel provides feedback using the Digital Peace Narrative Rubric (evaluating rhetorical technique execution, rhythm, emotional resonance, and clarity of the peace message).

Conclude with a brief plenary debrief that reflects on how participants can apply these literary devices to elevate their daily digital creations.

Anadiplosis

Listening creates understanding.

Understanding reveals common ground.

Common ground inspires collective action.

Structural Blueprint:

Clause 1: [Input Action] ->[Concept A]

Clause 2: [Concept A] -> [Concept B]

Clause 3: [Concept B] -> [Final Impact]

Anaphora

We choose to step forward when others retreat.

We choose to hold space when tensions rise.

We choose to rebuild where trust has broken down.

Structural Blueprint:

Line 1: [Anchor Phrase] + [Initial Stance / Baseline]

Line 2: [Anchor Phrase] + [Escalated Challenge / Action]

Line 3: [Anchor Phrase] + [Climactic Goal / Resolution]

Tricolon

To transform a community, we must acknowledge past wounds,
confront present injustice, and design shared futures.

Structural Blueprint:

Opening Frame: [Context or Directive]

Element 1: [Parallel Verb + Noun] (Past / Foundation)

Element 2: [Parallel Verb + Noun] (Present / Tension)

Element 3: [Parallel Verb + Noun] (Future / Resolution)

18. The Visual Lens

Target Audience: Youth aged 14–35

Duration: 120 Minutes

Group Size: 10–25 Participants (Split into small creative teams of 4–5)

Materials: Smartphones/tablets, everyday physical objects brought by participants, printed/projected sample image sets, flipchart paper, markers, “Media Literacy Visual Checklist” handouts

Learning objectives:

- Identify the 6 core building blocks of visual manipulation and framing in media imagery.
- Construct an ethical, object-integrated visual story using a 5-point media literacy checklist.

- Captions & Headlines: Textual anchors that force a specific interpretation.
- Emotional Triggers: Visual cues designed to provoke outrage, warmth, or urgency.

Media Literacy Checklist: Participants apply a 5-point checklist to sample media images:

- Who produced this?
- What is shown and what is omitted?
- What emotion is being targeted?
- Who benefits from this representation?
- What action is the viewer prompted to take?

Cultural Interpretation Reflection: Discuss how culture, personal background, and lived experience alter image interpretation. Facilitator anchors: “Visual literacy is about awareness of how visuals shape and reflect our world.”

Phase 3: “Story Behind the Image” & Object Narrative Lab (40 mins):

Divide participants into small groups of 4–5.

Part A (Image Selection): Teams select one powerful image from a provided deck (themes: peacebuilding, conflict, hope, activism, nature).

Part B (Object Integration): Teams incorporate an everyday physical object brought into the room, making it the central symbolic prop or focal point of their narrative.

Part C (Narrative Construction): Teams craft a 2–3-minute visual story addressing five core structural elements:

- Characters, Setting, Conflict, Emotion, and Core Message.

Output Format Options: Teams choose one medium to present their story:

- A spoken dramatic narration
- A series of staged freeze-frame “living statues”
- A short theatrical skit
- A live-narrated “photo documentary”

Phase 4: Visual Showcase & Editorial Review Roleplay (30 mins):

Teams perform or present their visual narratives in plenary.

Run a 5-minute role-play after each showcase: Two team members act as Visual Photojournalists presenting their narrative breakdown and media analysis to a panel of facilitators/peers acting as the Executive Editorial & Ethics Review Board.

The panel evaluates performance using the Visual Narrative & Ethics Rubric (evaluating awareness of framing tactics, depth of character/conflict narrative, symbolic object use, and critical visual literacy insights).

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

Phase 1: Visual Instincts & First Impressions Audit (20 mins):

3-Second Reaction Exercise: Project a single neutral image. Display three radically different cropped/framed variations of that image, each with a distinct caption, to illustrate shifting audience reactions.

Participants reflect individually on their immediate responses:

- Emotion Triggered: What exact feeling surfaced instantly (e.g., empathy, suspicion, hope, anxiety)?
- 3-Second Story: What scenario did your brain invent in the first 3 seconds of viewing?

Lead a brief plenary reflection on the Picture Superiority Effect, exploring why visual imagery bypasses critical filters, stays in long-term memory longer than text, and exerts immense power in shaping public narratives today.

Phase 2: Visual Literacy Concepts & Checklist Lab (30 mins):

Deconstruct the 6 Core Building Blocks of Visual Manipulation & Framing:

- Framing: What is placed inside the border vs left out.
- Composition: Focal points, balance, and spatial relationships.
- Colour & Lighting: Warmth, contrast, and dark/light mood triggers.
- Cropping & Sequencing: How editing alters original context.

Media Literacy Checklist Worksheet

Examine the image carefully and discuss each question with your group. Record your observations in the spaces provided.

Media Example Title: _____

Source / Platform: _____

1. Who Produced This?

Identify the creator or source of the content.

- Who created or shared this image?
- Is it an individual, organisation, company, government, influencer, or media outlet?
- Does the source seem trustworthy?

Notes: _____

2. What Is Shown and What Is Omitted?

Look for both visible and missing information.

- What people, objects, symbols, or events are included?
- What perspectives or voices are missing?
- What information would help provide a fuller picture?

Notes: _____

4. Who Benefits From This Representation?

Think about who gains from the message being accepted.

- Who profits financially?
- Who gains political influence?
- Who improves their public image?
- Who may be disadvantaged or excluded?

Notes: _____

3. What Emotion Is Being Targeted?

Consider how the image tries to make viewers feel.

- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Happiness
- ☐ Hope
- ☐ Pride
- ☐ Sympathy
- ☐ Excitement
- ☐ Concern
- ☐ Other: _____

Evidence from the image: _____

5. What Action Is the Viewer Prompted to Take?

Identify the intended response.

- The creator wants the audience to:
- ☐ Buy something
- ☐ Share the content
- ☐ Change an opinion
- ☐ Support a cause
- ☐ Vote or take political action
- ☐ Join a group/community
- ☐ Click a link
- ☐ No clear action
- ☐ Other: _____
-

Evidence: _____

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