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CASE STUDY

Groundswell Project Communities Countering Hate

 Email

 Website

ABOUT

Communities Countering Hate is a schools-based radicalisation awareness project targeting classrooms and assemblies of secondary and further education students (aged 14–18). The project employs a workshop model centred on video storytelling that portrays the real-life experiences of two former extremists. The videos depict how these individuals entered and ultimately exited the far-right and Islamist extremist movements. Through the workshops, beneficiaries learn about the radicalisation process, the cross-ideological push-and-pull factors that encourage extremism and how to report radicalisation concerns.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Radicalisation Awareness Workshops – These 1-hour workshops use video storytelling to explain the radicalisation process to classrooms and assemblies of 30–100 students. Beneficiaries watch three short vlog/TikTok-style videos reenacted by actors appropriate to each of the former extremists, which chart their entry and exit into extremism. Alongside the videos, the students engage in discussion-focused activities exploring the emotions and thought processes of the characters while critically engaging with their radicalisation journeys.

PROJECT RESULTS

19%

awareness and concern about the radicalisation process, the warning signs of radicalisation and radicalisation's effect on individuals and society

BENEFICIARIES

- **4,370** secondary and further education students
- **4** schools
- **4** boroughs

TESTIMONIAL

In separate classes, two students who sympathised with the Divya character from the Islamist extremism story claimed that she was 'right' to be outraged by the perceived injustices she mentioned. In both instances, the students felt that the Divya character was correct in her assessment of the conflicts in the Middle East and the anger she felt towards Western countries because of them. The facilitator patiently listened to them and then gently questioned them about the value of hatred as a legitimate and useful mindset or an effective mechanism for producing change. The facilitator also explained how Divya might have given up her rigid us-vs-them mindset, rejecting the extremist group she had become attached to, but that it is still legitimate to feel outraged by conflicts throughout the world. The students were asked if positive activism was a better output than extremism and hatred which they both agreed it was.