DISMANTLING FAKE NEWS
to stop hatred: Education for the inclusion of adult women in risk of exclusion.

FAKE NEWS

OPERATIONAL MANUAL

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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PRESENTATION:
WHY AN OPERATIONAL MANUAL?

Concern about fake news is growing in the main democratic institutions across Europe, given its destabilising effect and the rise of hate speeches that use it as a vehicle for propagation. In the background, processes of economic crisis and increasing social inequality explain this vulnerability to the political and institutional disaffection that is eroding our democracies. In order to respond to this pressing issue, the European Commission and other bodies are proposing lines of work such as those contained in this manual. Empowering women through popular education and participatory methodologies with a gender focus is a key strategy for social inclusion.

This has been done by increasing the demand and participation of lower skilled adults in the Adult Education programme through effective outreach, counselling and motivation strategies. This project aims to combat the hate speech that is often spread through fake news, addressing racism, xenophobia, sexism, etc., as well as facilitating the inclusion of women at risk of exclusion.

The aim of this operational manual is to enable the tutoring of entities interested in replicating the project "Dismantling fake news to stop hatred: Education for the inclusion of adult women in risk of exclusion", especially by establishing a protocol for those institutions and associations that want to generalise, update and disseminate the Read-Think-Act methodology. As well as the materials, videos and other elements generated.

In this way, through a process of cooperative and participatory learning, this manual guides teachers and professionals, especially in the field of social intervention and participation, in the empowerment of women on the recognition of fake news, the detection and response to hate speech and the acquisition of competencies, always starting from the experiences and experiential starting point of the participants themselves, to build meaningful learning from group dialogue and cooperative work.

The manual proposes a learning design combining practical content with the theoretical dimension of the aspects dealt with. It is focused on the group's active and participatory development of two specific products, through which it aims to increase their capacity to influence their immediate social and territorial environment:

1. A participatory diagnosis of the fake news, news and articles proposed, so that they are capable of detecting and reflecting on them.

2. Collaborative action aimed at making the results of the participatory diagnosis visible and increasing their capacity for collective organisation and political advocacy.

It is an innovative proposal that combines learning from diverse experiences in participatory democracy, participatory research with women, adult education and digital deliberation, among others. The proposal focuses on adult women at risk of social exclusion (migrants, refugees, autochthonous, precarious), with the aim of opening a process of individual and collective empowerment that favours their inclusion in the social, cultural, economic or educational spheres.

Moreover, in the aftermath of the coronavirus crisis, there is an even greater need to incorporate digital tools to support the processes. The handbook takes into account the specific needs to ensure the accessibility of digital participation, bearing in mind that although there has been a process of digital literacy in the context of the health crisis, there are still social and digital divides that hinder full accessibility.

This handbook and the project as a whole has been led by the Foundation for a Europe of Citizens (FEC) in Spain, with the support and contributions of various partners: March 8 Institute (Slovenia), Nicos Poulantzas Institute (Greece), Cooperativa Culturas do Trabalho e Socialismo, CRL (Portugal), Transform! At (Austria) and Women in Development Europe+ (WIDE+), a leading feminist organisation in Belgium. It has also been co-funded by the European Commission with Erasmus+ funds.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There is plenty of evidence to show that fake news is a problem for European citizens. Data collected in a study conducted by Simple Lógica and the Complutense University of Madrid shows that only 14% of Spaniards are able to distinguish fake news, although 59.5% of people believe they can do so. The Reuters Institute states that 58% of Spaniards use social networks as their main source of information about European society, second only to Portugal with 62%. This issue is persistent in the populations of many other countries, Sweden with 51%, Austria with 45%, France with 38% and Germany with 29%.

Research has been carried out to show which groups are most at risk from problems related to misinformation in the media. Extrapolating from EU data, the percentage of over-55s who cannot distinguish fake news is close to 92%, while young people are much less vulnerable to this problem. These findings helped to develop and identify target groups, and educational tools to combat fake news focused particularly on the groups of adult women most likely to be excluded.

The priorities set by this project are important for EU growth, and are in line with the objectives highlighted by the European Commission and the Erasmus Plus programme. Read-Think-Act and REAd REAct are linked to the project priority "Open education and innovative practices in the digital age", as they develop innovative educational tools and methods used for teaching, learning and assessment, and help educators and learners to use digital technologies in creative, collaborative and efficient ways. The project specifically targets groups that are considered to be more exposed to exclusion and more vulnerable to fake news, such as women in difficulty and at risk of exclusion.

These priorities fit well with the European Commission's objectives of higher quality and more effective lifelong, innovative and mobile education, as well as the promotion of equality and active citizenship for adults. Similarly, the Erasmus Plus programme aims to promote the development of innovative digital tools and educational processes for professionals, and to focus on the inclusion of most-at-risk groups to tackle general problems such as discrimination, segregation, racism and fake news through the creation of a network of European members.

This project aims, through this handbook, to further replicate the tangible results in order to make further progress. One of these results is the website that facilitates the visibility of the project and its results in a way that is easy to access. The website reports on all project activities to facilitate replication of the project by other entities. This operational manual and a campaign to fight against fake news and to banish hate ideologies, which will rely on social media and the EPALE and GATEWAY platforms to raise awareness of fake news among the educational community, are also foreseen.

Throughout the project, many innovative tools were used to better serve the target group, adult women at risk of exclusion. Adaptations were made to better serve these women and attention was paid to their educational needs to establish a new educational process that is flexible, open and inclusive through contemporary and personally relevant topics, taking into account the abilities, interests and needs of the target group.

More generally, our methodological strategy is based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015 by the United Nations (UN). In particular, it is articulated around three main processes:

1) Global recognition of women's rights as human rights.

2) Growing institutional recognition of citizen participation as an indicator of social inclusion and sustainable development.

3) Recognition of the promotion of women's direct participation as an effective strategy for women's empowerment and political advocacy.

The 2030 Agenda has been a significant milestone in terms of two public policies that are considered strategic to guarantee full and inclusive sustainable development: gender equality and citizen participation. On the one hand, it represents the consolidation of the gender equality strategy emanating from the Beijing Conference (1995); on the other hand, it incorporates the direct participation of citizens in the planning and management of public policies as a development indicator, through SDG 11.

For an effective deployment of the 2030 Agenda to ensure its transformative nature, the multi-stakeholder and multi-level nature of its implementation is recognised. This, beyond calling on the various institutions, implies a call to civil society and its organisations.

The participatory localisation of the SDGs aims to synthesise a road-map that recognises civil society as a relevant actor, whose participation, action and influence on public policies is essential to effectively achieve the development and inclusion goals proposed by the 2030 Agenda.

The Report of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, entitled *Empowering people and achieving inclusion and equality*, provides reflections and recommendations for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and continuously emphasises the need for political participation to "empower individuals and groups to eliminate marginalisation and discrimination, and ensure that no one is left behind" (Falck, 2019).

Multilateral agreements and documents also provide concrete examples of vulnerable groups whose participation needs to be promoted in order to generate inclusion in development processes. To this end, the UN proposes a model for analysing five factors of exclusion that operate in an intersectional manner: discrimination, vulnerability to risks, governance, socio-economic status and geography (Falck, 2019).

The relationship between social inclusion and the perceived quality and legitimacy of democratic functioning has been discussed by many authors. Approaches vary on this issue, but there is a consensus that the ability to participate socially and/or politically marks a cut-off point between inclusion and exclusion, as is evident from most definitions provided (Falck, 2019):

Gómez and Trujillo (2016) define social exclusion in this way:

Most definitions of social exclusion take into account problems of access to the goods and rights enjoyed by the society of which the excluded person is a part. Goods include housing, food, economic and energy resources, and rights include health, education, employment, social relations and participation in public decisions (Gómez and Trujillo, 2016, cited by Falck, 2019).

Martínez Monje (2006) points out the following:

Social exclusion is both the result and the process over time by which a plurality of people and social groups fail to fully access, voluntarily and/or by social closure, and participate in several of the areas (economic, cultural-educational, political, social and spatial), socially necessary and statutorily established as civil, political and so-

cial rights of citizenship for the development of an integrated life in the society taken as reference. (Martínez Monje, 2006 cited by Falck, 2019).

Ajangiz (2013) elaborates on the different dimensions of exclusion:

Exclusion is a multidimensional concept that refers to a process of loss of integration or participation of the individual in society, in one or more of these areas: economic (in production or consumption), political-legal (political participation, administrative system, social protection), social-relational (absence of networks or problematic location within social or family networks) (Ajangiz, 2013 cited by Falck, 2019). (Ajangiz, 2013 cited by Falck, 2019).

We can conclude that political exclusion (or political self-exclusion) is a main component of social exclusion and that in order to favour inclusion processes it is key that excluded people can be active subjects who participate in the design, formulation and management of public policies aimed at guaranteeing their own inclusion.

Furthermore, as various academic studies have shown, the use of certain participatory methodologies can favour processes of inclusion, group identity and cohesion, and individual and collective empowerment (Albornoz, García- Leyva and Palacios, 2019).

The use of participatory methodologies favours the development of participation and leadership skills among women. The environment generated by the use of certain participatory dynamics is more likely to facilitate women's participation than representative environments, designed from the values of hegemonic masculinity. With the use of certain participatory methodologies, women, adolescents and girls develop skills of participation, collective decision-making, critical analysis and understanding of the socio-political context in which they live, as well as leadership (García-Leiva and Paño, 2012).

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION.

The READ-THINK-ACT project will be developed in 6 phases:

Phase one includes the registration period where women who want to participate in the interactive platform will be able to access the tools and resources.

In the second phase, users of this platform who detect a fake news article or find a "troll" profile can share their findings with other users of the platform with the aim of generating a process of discussion and analysis of whether it is indeed fake news or a "troll". Experts and teachers can then recommend news and materials as ways of learning exercises.

Throughout the third phase, the platform will distribute resources, methodologies and protocols that give users tools and guidelines to discover objective reasoning that move users to consider a news item as fake or a profile as a "troll". The platform will enable communication tools with experts and teachers to help users in their process of learning digital information, linguistics, problem solving and critical analysis.

Once the participants have generated critical opinions through analysis, the fourth phase allows for a discussion among all participants on the platform with the idea of reaching a common agreement. The exchange of reasoning and thought processes will enable the development of social, cultural and linguistic competences.

After the discussion process, the fifth phase involves the participation of external experts to evaluate the conclusion reached by the users. If no common agreement is reached, the experts will share information to guide users in their decision and conclude whether it is a fake news or a troll profile.

The sixth phase is the evaluation, when experts and teachers decide that the user's learning has achieved the desired results, a digital learning accreditation will be awarded.

Through the 2013/2014 OER Evidence Report evaluation, it is clear that open educational materials are an essential tool for growth and competence development. The REAd-REAct project aims to provide

these tools in a flexible, open and inclusive way, based on self-learning guides that take into account the skills, interests and needs of adult women to support them in their education.

The materials in this project are divided into three main groups: READ, THINK and ACT.

READ includes basic media literacy and contains specific information for the learner to develop competences in the mother tongue, foreign language and the ability to understand the skills needed to understand media communication and misinformation. THINK includes digital specifications for the learner to develop critical analysis skills to evaluate the veracity of news articles. The ACT component contains specifications to develop the values of European citizens, to promote active dialogues of respect.

The methodology designed is based on:

- Training - participatory action.
- Play-pedagogy, popular education and participatory methodologies.

Participatory training-action

Training for participatory action is understood, in the words of Casilla Matheus (2005) as "the capacity to learn in and from interaction, with responsibility and a sense of orientation towards the wellbeing of the sustained collective". This approach allows us on the one hand to give value to communication and reflective dialogue based on the experiences and knowledge of the group, and on the other hand to provide participatory tools that allow participants to strengthen their capacity for impact and intervention in the environment.

Through training for participatory action, the aim is to provide tools and skills based on the experience of concrete actions, allowing the group to (1) assess the causes of the issue to be worked on, (2) analyse factors that intervene in its development and (3) address opportunities for its achievement.

The training process is approached from a constructivist approach to learning, based on the recognition of the women participants as subjects and placing value on their knowledge and experiences. Knowledge is constructed in a collaborative manner through reflection on the issues that the group identifies as sensitive within the

proposed framework. The women contribute their knowledge and previous experiences and build knowledge based on their involvement in the action. The training process is aimed at strengthening the group's skills and helping them to express them, so that they can have a greater capacity to influence and intervene in their environment.

The group that drives the process plays a facilitating role in the learning process of the group itself, adapting to its rhythms, needs, interests and goals. To develop this methodology, the intervention is based on three complementary and interrelated approaches:

Ludopedagogy

Ludopedagogy is an educational methodology that uses play, free expression and collaboration between groups to achieve community and socio-political impact. Through play it is possible to open up reflections on social processes such as exclusion, violence or inequality. In the words of Francisco Mora (2016), "the brain only learns if there is emotion, nothing can be learned without awake, sustained and conscious attention".

This methodology combines spaces for dialogue in which free expression and the exchange of opinions is encouraged with playful activities in a process aimed at the joint construction of proposals in the group. Its implementation goes through three moments inspired by the dialectic methodological conception of popular education, which are interspersed throughout the process:

- Starting from social and cultural practice.
- Building knowledge by reflecting on individual and collective experiences.
- Acting on the analysed reality in order to transform it.

4 READ-THINK-ACT: A PARTICIPATORY LEARNING PROCESS TO EMPOWER WOMEN IN THE FACE OF FAKE NEWS AND HATE SPEECH.

4.1 Preliminary activities

For the implementation of this learning process, it is necessary, first of all, to appoint a group of facilitators to study the didactic units in depth, in order to be able to accompany and guide the group of beneficiaries.

It is important to highlight the importance of horizontal dialogue and peer-to-peer work, especially when we talk about groups such as women at risk of exclusion. For this reason, we insist on the importance of this group not directing or tutoring, but rather accompanying and providing resources and support materials to the group. The planning of activities should follow a sufficiently flexible calendar to adapt to a profile of learners who are particularly prone to suffer from the so-called "double working day".

Secondly, it is necessary to define the scope of intervention and the direct beneficiaries. This will allow us to ground and adapt the course based on previous experiences in their environment. In addition, it will allow us to carry out the work of dynamisation and selection of examples and fakes news on which to work much more in line with the reality of the participants.

Thirdly, we will use all the above information to specify specific objectives, derived from but not necessarily coinciding with the general objectives and strategies expressed in this operational manual. It is essential that, based on these specific objectives, we adapt the contents and sessions.

4.2 Training pathway

4.2.1 Objectives

To strengthen the competences of the participants, especially their organisational, participatory and leadership skills.

Achieve a general approximation to targets 5.2, 5.4, 5.5. and 5.a. of the 2030 Agenda.

Relate fake news to the economic and political interests of the actors involved, as well as to the processes of social inequality, at international and - above all - local and everyday level.

Participatory diagnosis of the main fake news affecting their environment and/or their group.

Brainstorm with your group on some kind of action, physical or digital, to take to help combat fake news and prevent hate speech.

4.2.2. Description of the phases.

READ-THINK-ACT will be a powerful educational tool whose main function will be to generate a sequenced and guided process for digital training and critical analysis through six stages:

STAGE 1. REGISTER ON THE PLATFORM. In order to generate personalized learning and a true peer-to-peer learning process, the adult woman who wishes to participate in this innovative training system must register on the platform. This will allow her to access the private environment with the various tools and resources created.

PHASE 2. PROPOSE A NEWS ITEM OR A PROFILE... IS IT A FAKE NEWS OR A TROLL? By accessing the course you will access a series of topics where, in each one of them, you will have to decide whether it is a fake news or a true news.

PHASE 3. ANALYZE THE NEWS. Through a participatory environment for analysis and debate, users will decide if the news is a FAKE NEWS. In addition, the platform will have multiple training resources, in the REAd-REAct section, which will provide users with tools and guides to find out if the news is a FAKE NEWS.

PHASE 4. DEBATE AMONG PEERS. Once an opinion has been generated, the user will have to check if it is correct by means of a test at the end of each of the course units.

PHASE 5. DISSEMINATION OF CONCLUSIONS. The participants and tutors of the platform will disseminate the conclusions in social networks.

PHASE 6. ACCREDITATION OF LEARNING. When students complete the course, a digital badge will be generated to accredit their learning, validated by the https://www.accredible.com/ system.

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