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Promoting ACTIVE and Responsible Citizenship in Schools



Guidelines for ACTIVE and responsible citizenship in schools



GYMNÁZIUM
JOSEFA RESSELA

Sukromna základna
škola
Felix



Slovakia



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1. Purpose of the Guidelines

The guidelines are providing the experience with the implementation of the innovative ACTIVE approach based on the ACTIVE Toolkit with the goal to inspire broad range of secondary schools to introduce the methodologies and activities in their curricula.

2. Content of the Guidelines

The guidelines are presenting following topics:

Project goals and content

- scope and goals of the project

Methodology applied

- summary of the Methodology and the ACTIVE approach (The ACTIVE Toolkit)

The pilot phase – implementation in schools

- description of the activities implemented in the schools
- type of schools involved
- suitable subjects for implementing the activities

Experience & evaluation outcomes

- the evaluation of the pilot action outcomes
- the major findings and experience gained
- experience from the teachers
- the skills gained

Model ready to be used in schools

- sustainability of the methodology and its tools
- the way all the material can be used by other teachers and schools
- recommendations for the schools



3. The main goal

Empower pupils to enable them act as active and responsible agents in democratic society. Only active and responsible citizens that are open to communicate despite possible differences in values and needs and are able to reflect up on (possible) impacts of their decisions and actions can ensure sustainably of democratic values and democratic society

Responsible action represents a conscious response to the situation where the actor is aware of and accept her/his role and is open to reflect impact of his/her action. Responsible action in this sense is opposed to unconscious reaction to situation without self-reflection. This is why we will pay attention to topics like biases, making sense of the situation and information, values and impact.

4. Content of the project

- Development of the ACTIVE Toolkit
- Learning and training activities for teachers
- Piloting – implementation of the Toolkit in schools
- Evaluation of the piloting in schools
- Development of the Guidelines

5. Methodology applied – the ACTIVE Toolkit

The Toolkit is composed of three parts:

- I. Methodology for teachers
- II. Activity book for teachers
- III. Working materials for activities&students

I. Methodology for teachers (*this document*) consists of explanation the principles and terms and concepts to be used when implementing the Toolkit. The goal of the methodology is to provide background and set the common ground and understanding for teachers so they are ready to take the Toolkit in to the classroom.

II. Activity book for teachers is a set of working activities (step by step scenarios) that the teachers can take in to the classroom. The activities correspond with the topics of the Methodology so teachers can easily find appropriate activity for the topic covered in the methodology. There at least one activity for a topic covered in the Methodology.

III. Working materials for activities&students provide materials to be used with students during the activities. Materials consists mainly of templates that teacher can hand over to students to better structure the activity.

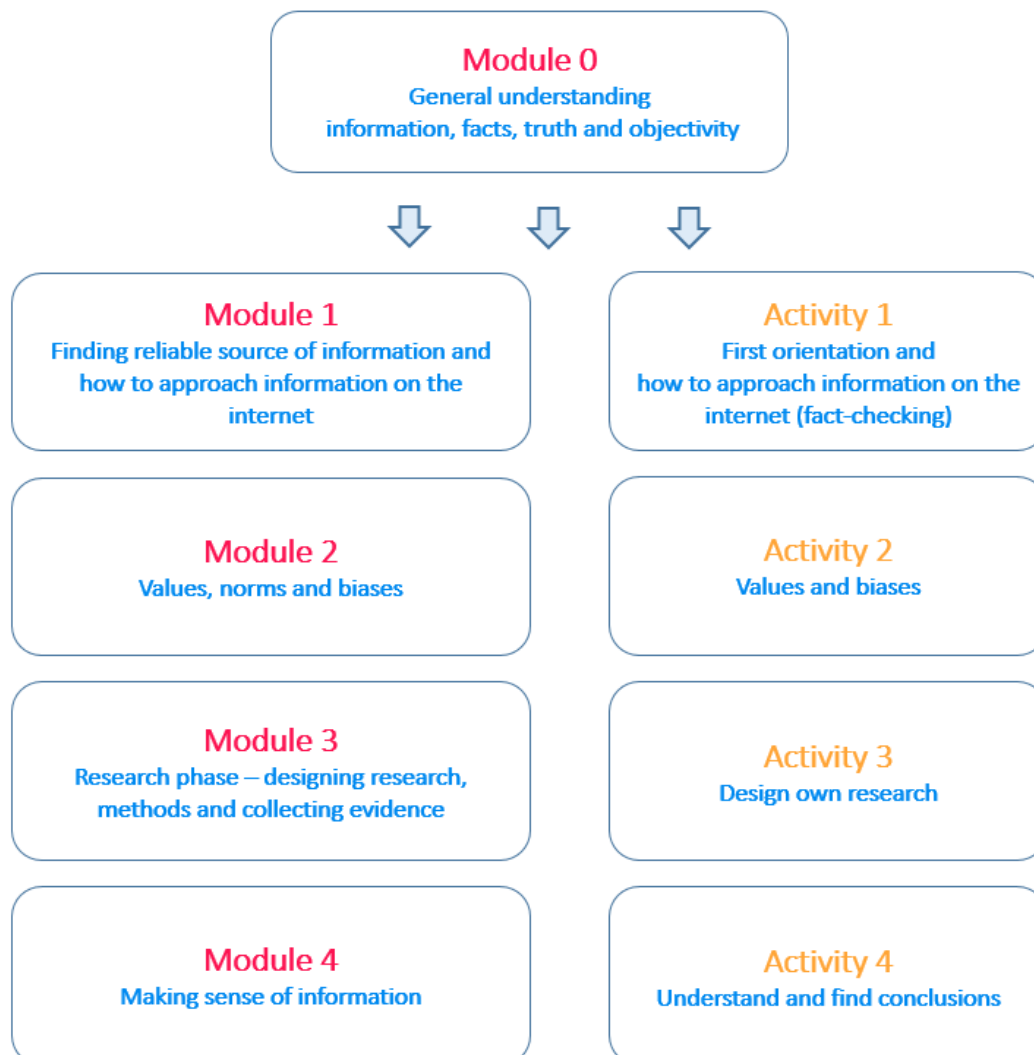


6. The main topics covered by the ACTIVE Toolkit

The main topics covered by the ACTIVE Toolkit are:

- understanding the concepts of facts, truth and objectivity,
- working with information on the internet (how to judge the quality of information),
- how to deal with disinformation and fake news (how to identify it and how not to be manipulated),
- understanding the role of values, norms and prejudices in our decision-making,
- designing your own research to gather relevant information,
- evaluating the information (evidence) and formulating conclusions for our decision making.

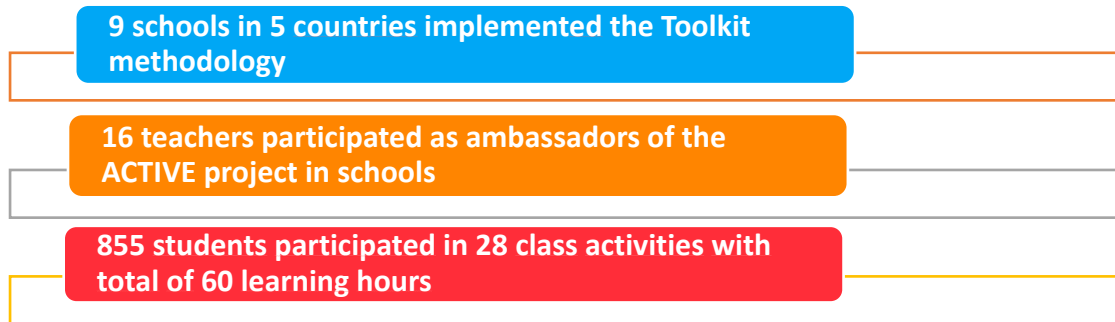
Modules & Activities





7. Implementation in schools

The activities were directly implemented during the school year 2022/2023 in 5 countries Austria, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Czech Republic. Altogether 855 students were involved in 60 hours of class activities.



The activities were realized during regular school classes mainly in language classes (Italian, English), geography and history and human/citizenship studies.



8. Implementation and activities done in schools

Below you can find description how the ACTIVE Toolkit have been implemented and tested in schools in 5 countries participated in the project.

8.1. Slovakia

The piloting phase of the project at Felix School involved at least thirteen members of the teaching staff with varying levels of input depending on the nature of the activity. Two members of staff represented the school at transnational partners meetings and coordinated the overall implementation of the programme. An additional two teachers, one from primary and one secondary school, attended both the in-person training and online workshops for teachers and were entrusted to cascade knowledge and understanding resulting from such training to an additional ten colleagues within the school. Time was allocated during staff meeting for this purpose and teachers discussed the project's implementation less formally during planning meetings. The teachers agreed on six main activities that aligned with the project toolkit and which, they believed, would best raise awareness of fake news, misinformation and disinformation across a range of year groups.

Approach and contents of the activities

Activity 1 - World Economic Forum conspiracies

Two teachers in the English Language department created an eighteen-page booklet of activities designed to illustrate the kinds of conspiracy theories, or otherwise, that surround the World Economic Forum. These activities included reading tasks, gap-fill activities and discussion topics. As students worked through the booklets, they were encouraged to question the theories and pose alternative explanations to the proposed arguments.



Activity 2 – Students explore conspiracy theories

Having completed the tasks contained within the WEF Booklet, the students were asked to work either alone or in pairs and explore one conspiracy theory in more depth. Their task was to decide for themselves whether their chosen theory had any substance or credibility. Their research was then presented as a written report which



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would form the narration for a single segment in a longer video documentary. This phase of the activity was led by members of the ICT department.

The written reports were copied and pasted into Parakeet so as to be converted into audio, voiceover files which were then uploaded to the students' choice of video editing software. Royalty-free video clips were then sourced and downloaded from a number of platforms and uploaded into the video editing suites in order to enhance the original narration. The result was a twenty-minute documentary that covered such topics as fifteen-minute cities, cashless society and the future of medicine. In all cases, the students concluded that the conspiracy theories that they had researched did not stand up to closer scrutiny.

Activity 3 - Fake News magazine

Teachers in Grade 8 worked with their students to create a Fake News magazine. The students were required to research stories that were either untrue or hard to believe while others wrote their original stories of their own. Those students who decided to contribute fake news stories were asked to include elements such as misspellings, grammar mistakes or contradictory information that might lead the reader to conclude that the story was untrue. Images were sourced to enhance the texts and teacher helped in the formatting of the magazine using iStudio Publisher.



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Activity 4 - Students for themselves which were true or fake

The completed magazine was printed, and copies distributed amongst students in Grades 6 and 7. Teachers in these classes asked students to read the stories and decide for themselves which were true or fake. A short questionnaire, which was attached to the magazine, was then completed by the readers to help others understand the reasons for their choices.

Activity 5 - Slovaks conspirators

The new Humanities teacher, working with Year 1 Secondary school students carried out an extended role-play activity. The classroom was divided to three groups. The main goal was to analyse one of the most well-known Slovak conspirators. Students carried out research using videos, social networking and referring to Slovak conspiracy magazines. Following their research, students were asked to scrutinise, compare and contrast the research of other pupils, their speeches, financing, credibility and use of social networks.



The next phase of the activity was designed to simulate an international court. The students were divided into two large groups, advocates and prosecutors. A third smaller group was elected to be judges. Students tried to find proof that Muammar al-Kaddafi was a tyrant. Advocates tried to find credible evidence that he was a dictator. In final output (trial) they summoned witnesses (students) to impress upon the judges and persuade them. Ultimately, the court made the judgement that there was no evidence to be found.

Activity 6 - Revealing the basic methods of manipulation

Teachers in Grade 7, led by Monika Láslopová, presented students with a fictional article and asked to think about why the text is not true. They focused on the underlined passages of the text and led a discussion on the following questions:

On what basis did you discover the incorrectness of the information?

What is the meaning of the text, what should it lead the reader to?

Can you think of any instances where you read something online and the text led you to buy something?

Activity 7 - Identifying manipulation in the text and evaluating information from historical sources

Students in Grade 9 were asked to look at historical posters and identify signs of propaganda, or as many propaganda tools as possible (e.g. negative labelling, gaining sympathy with nice words, identifying with the group as "one of you",...)

Activity 8 - Working with historical sources and identifying hoaxes, working with hoaxes

Children in Grade 5 worked with information that is publicly known to be a hoax or worked with information about events that actually happened but are disputed. The task was to find several sources, compare them and select information that matched, learn to work with sources and be able to distinguish true information from false information



Activity 9 - Media work with people's emotions

Students in Grade 9 were asked to critically evaluate information; to recognize the tools with which non-serious media manipulate readers. Students looked at images from various sources and asked to consider the emotions each picture evoked in them? - Why is it important to choose an appropriate image when spreading news? What can, on the other hand, cause the selection of an inappropriate image? - Did they think that some media choose emotionally coloured images on purpose? Why? Are such media trustworthy? - Did they think it is fair when the media use strongly emotionally charged images? Why yes, why not?

Activity 10 - Verify the authenticity of images and videos

Students in Grades 7 and 8 were shown how to verify the authenticity of images and videos using such devices as Google Reverse Image search, InVID online video verification and France 24 – The Observers website. Students



were then given a number of images and asked to decide whether they were genuine, fake or misleading. Using the above tools, the students researched the origins of the images to see if their initial perceptions were accurate or not.

8.2. Czech Republic

The pilot phase of the project in the Czech Republic took place at a secondary school: Gymnázium of Josef Ressel, Chrudim. Three human studies teachers were actively involved in the activities, and subsequently other social science teachers, in total nine people, were extensively introduced to the project. The entire teaching staff - thirty-nine people - was also familiar with the project.

194 students actively participated in the project, when they tried various activities based on the didactic material from the project - see below. The rest of our students (473 in total) were introduced to the project through distributed leaflets and also as part of the celebration of 160 years of our school, when one room was dedicated to the project for its presentation. This presentation was widely attended not only by current students, but also by former students and friends of our school.

As part of the project, several activities took place at our school:

Activity "recognizing fake news and disinformation"

Students were given a set of news and their task was to recognize which one was fake. Students worked in groups and each group had messages with different content. We, means teachers, tried to include news that could not be immediately identified as the fake news. Students had to demonstrate that they were familiar with the topic and acquired the skills to recognize fake ones. The activity took place within one lesson in several classes, students between the ages of 16 and 18 were included. The students' performance can be considered excellent.



Activity "creating your own fake news and disinformation"

Based on the acquired skills from the first activity, the students progressed to a more complex activity in which they themselves were the creators of fake news and disinformation. As before with the teachers, the task here was also to create news that could not be immediately identified as fake. The students were again divided into groups, which this time competed against each other for greater success in recognition. The task of the activity was to teach the students the principles of creating fake news and disinformation in the form of a game, and

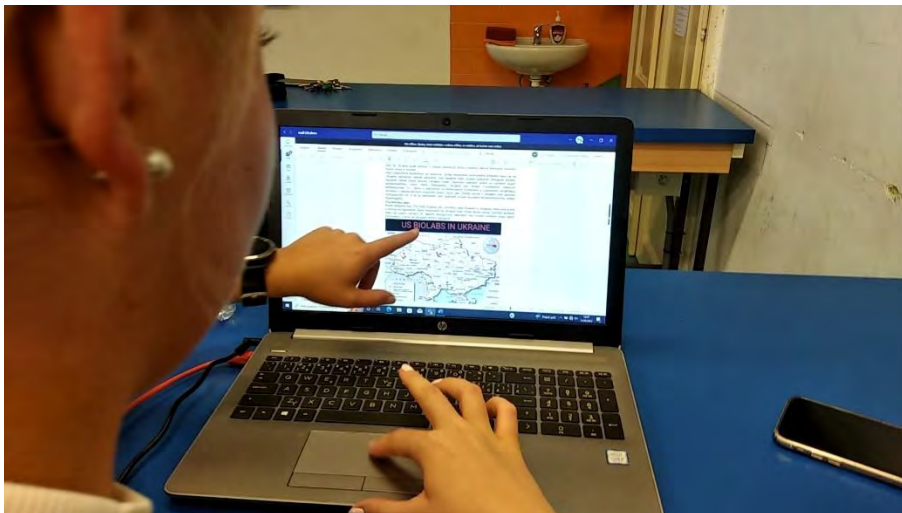


subsequently make it easier for them to recognize them on other occasions. Students of the same age participated in the activity and again their success rate can be described as outstanding.



Activity "Working with the real world of fake news and disinformation"

In this activity, students were introduced to the real world of fake news and disinformation. Students normally get in contact with this world through social networks or the Internet. The students were shown the works of leading Czech creators of disinformation, and the students' task was to find out where in the text these authors used this disinformation. For the given task, the students had to use the skills acquired from previous activities, but also the knowledge they acquire while studying at our school. Again, the age of the students was the same and their work can be described as perfect.





8.3. Austria

The activities in Austria have been implemented at the **Gymnasium und Realgymnasium Klagenfurt, Lerchenfeldstraße** directly involving 2 teachers (having as subject *Religion and Ethic* the first and *English language* the second) and 131 students in the age 11 to 16 y.o.

The two teachers had anyway the opportunity to share their activities and results with other 13 teachers in the same school, also using the reporting sheets provided by the project for each single activity.

Approach and contents of the activities

The various class activities had different approaches and objectives which can be resumed as follows, grouping the several actions into specific subjects:

Activity 1 - Dismantling fake information - Poisonous Corona Test Swabs?

The key goal was to learn a strategy for dismantling fake news, being able to find enough information and facts to inform/convince someone who believes this fake information of the opposite (*i.e. that test swabs are not poisonous and not harming anyone using them*).



The students have been asked which steps they would take to find information underpinning their believe that the information that the corona test swabs are poisonous must be fake, going then step by step finding reliable information on reliable websites. The class also came across semi-reliable information/videos and double checked the backgrounds (as for example a video of an Austrian politician addressing the problem in the Austrian parliament). In the end students presented their findings and reflections on outcome and on sources of information.

Activity 2 - Huntington's Clash of Civilizations – Dismantling Huntington's Theses

The key goal was to make students aware that what seems to be facts, or the “truth” does not always have to be the truth or the whole truth. Moreover, student shall always question themselves whatever they get presented at facts – even if they come from politicians or university professors.

The activity has followed several articulated steps: 1) defining the meaning of ‘culture’, 2) dividing the population of the world into cultural entities stressing how complicated it may be, 3) mapping the world according to cultural entities, 4) presenting Huntington’s division of the world into cultural entities to be compared with theirs and



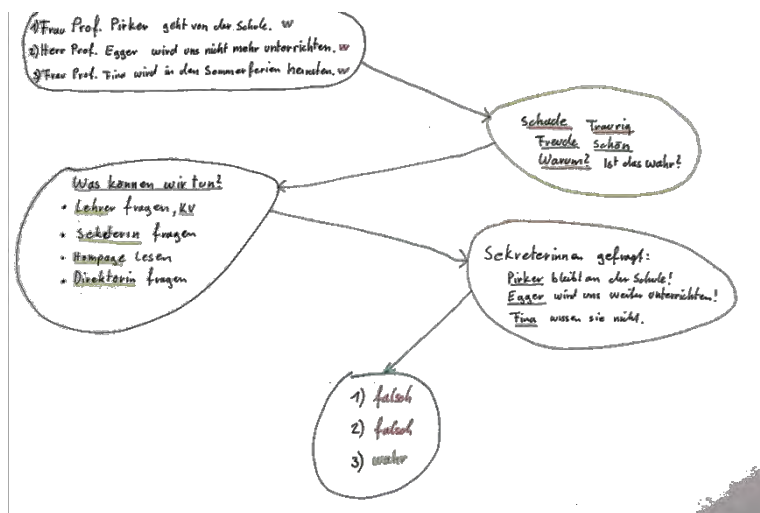
copied with the major thesis which suggests that people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world, 5) bringing students to rate how far they agree with his statements, 6) grouping the students into the 4 Huntington's thesis searching for findings to confirm or contradict it and finally 7) presenting their outcomings in a general discussion about Huntington's theses and the dangers of taking them as a genuine truth.



In the end the students found out that a division of the world's population into cultural entities is very difficult. They also noticed that minorities were not included in the divisions. Moreover, they found that Huntington's theses needed to be handled with care as most of them figured out that he did not always say the truth or that he omitted facts.

Activity 2 - Is it true that...?

In this activity the students were confronted with tree rumors about teachers in the school with a key goal to realize that not all rumors must be true and to think critically and find their own answers.



More in details this activity has been addressed to the youngest target group (aged 11 and 12) and also prepared together with the 3 target teachers who have been addressed with the 3 rumors to be checked: one teacher is leaving the school the very next year, a second one is not teaching in the class anymore starting from the following semester and a third one is getting married in the summer break. The same teachers provided a story to support their rumors and the students, gathered into groups, defined three methods on how to check those rumors and started to investigate accordingly. The picture

shows the chart prepared by a group and shared with all the class representing every step of their research activity.

In the end students found out that they should discuss what they believe is likely to be true, finding ways how to check these rumors and who they could ask besides the teachers.

Activity 2 - Identifying the different points of views in the Israel conflict¹

¹ This activity has been performed during the second semester of the 2022-2023 school year therefore well before the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 and its aftermaths.



In this activity the students have been asked to look up sources of information on the internet on the Israel conflict, distinguishing between social media and non-social media sources and evaluate all the sources discovered and used.

The activity started by asking the students what they already knew about the conflict and, divided into two groups, they were given the task to look up information on the Israel conflict on the internet. One group was allowed to use social media only, the other group only non-social media. After having presented their sources, they have been split into other two groups, one investigating the point of view of the people of Israel the other the point of view of the people of Palestine. In the end each group presented their arguments supporting their point of view as the right one. With the teacher as the sole moderator the students were brought to reflect on how they felt in their role speaking for their side. Finally watching an objective documentary on the topic provided the class with a better picture of the whole issue.



In the end the students have been brought to experience how media can be one sided regarding one party of the conflict and to understand the reason for their point of view in this conflict. Better knowing the history and true facts of any conflict it is fundamental even if it remains most of the times very hard to build an opinion on who is at fault since both sides have good and bad arguments.

8.4. Italy

The pilot testing in Italy has been conducted in three different secondary schools: LICEO ARTISTICO "F.MENGARONI" and Liceo "T. Mamiani" located in Pesaro, Istituto di Istruzione Superiore "F. Seneca", located in Fano.

In total, 5 classes with a total of 111 students ranging from 14 to 17 years old, and 3 teachers have been involved. Most of the activities took place during the classes of Civic Education hours and in the Foreign language (English) class.

Two out of the three secondary school teachers involved had the opportunity to share the results and details of the project with the entire school during class council and teacher assemblies.

Approach and contents of the activities

Activity 1 Artificial intelligence and Chat GPT

The "Activity 1 Artificial Intelligence and Chat GPT" engaged third-year secondary school students from the Linguistic area, involving 13 students aged 16-17.

The activity explored Artificial Intelligence as a relevant topic with significant implications in science, economics, culture, and society.

It aimed to raise students' awareness not only of the phenomenon itself but also of the various perspectives through which it has been presented and evaluated. This encouraged them to critically comprehend the



intentions behind communication. Particularly, focusing on Chat GPT, students explored its potential profound implications, even in the educational field.

The activity lasted 2 hours and followed these steps:

1. Step 1: Assignment of the topic and grouping of students.
2. Step 2: Brief discussion based on questions outlined in Activity 1.
3. Step 3: Students tasked with finding 2 to 4 sources on the assigned topic from the web.
4. Step 4: Individual groups evaluating the reliability of information using provided questions.
5. Step 5: In-depth analysis of information, considering credibility, validity, and completeness.
6. Step 6: Discussion with students based on the analyzed information to identify criteria for reliable information.
7. Step 7: Exploration of additional elements related to information interpretation, focusing on confirmation bias.

In preparation for the activity, a file was created containing questions designed to assess the reliability, credibility, authorship, perspectives, validity, and completeness of the information.

The students concentrated on specific criteria deemed crucial for evaluating information discovered on the Internet. They particularly highlighted aspects such as the language used in documents, the presence of reliable links and the necessity to verify them. Concerning the author, they emphasized the importance of accurately verifying the author's identity and the perspective from which they observe and evaluate the topic on which they express an opinion.

Here is a list of the documents used:

https://blog.osservatori.net/it_it/storia-intelligenza-artificiale

[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/intelligenza-artificiale#:~:text=Si%20chiama%20intelligenza%20artificiale%20\(IA,%2C%20dell'intero%20pensiero%20umano](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/intelligenza-artificiale#:~:text=Si%20chiama%20intelligenza%20artificiale%20(IA,%2C%20dell'intero%20pensiero%20umano)

Activity 2 Fake news? The 8th March and the International Women's Day

The "Activity 2 Fake news? The 8th March and the International Women's Day" involved Year 10 students (aged 14-15) totaling 26 participants.

The activity aims to raise awareness of key concepts such as Disinformation, Misinformation, Prejudices, and Bias, as well as distinguishing between Facts and Opinions.

The students conducted fact-checking related to the reasons behind choosing the date of 8th March each year to celebrate International Women's Day. During the analysis of articles, they considered factors such as distinguishing between facts and opinions, evaluating the reliability of the source, and assessing the credibility of the authors and actors involved.

The activity lasted 4 hours and followed these steps:

- Step 1: Initiate a brief class discussion guided by the teacher on the primary reasons for celebrating International Women's Day and the various theories behind the date's selection.
- Step 2: Conduct a brief presentation covering key concepts such as Fake News, Disinformation, Misinformation, Biases, and Prejudices, as well as introducing terms like actors, agents, facts, opinions, and the role and impact of media in society.
- Step 3: Provide guidance on how to find and verify information, specifically on the internet.



- Step 4: Organize students into small groups of two or three for the task of finding and examining websites.
- Step 5: Have students fill out Module 1-1-IV "Source and its Relevance and Credibility" using the provided template for the classroom.
- Step 6: Conclude the activity with a final discussion to share findings and insights.

The teacher prepared materials for the activity, including a list of websites related to the topic from various Cultural International Institutes, Trade Unions, Institutes of Historical Studies, Universities, Women's Rights Organizations, etc.

After being informed about the diverse answers to the questions, students were tasked with independently searching for alternatives on the topic using the internet, without any specific recommendations, ensuring a balanced perspective with at least one supporting and one opposing viewpoint. Their objective was to explore and understand the reasons behind the different points of view related to the subject matter. This approach encouraged independent research, critical thinking, and the ability to analyze varying perspectives on the given topic.

As a final result, the students were required to assess the sources they found. For each article, they had to investigate the reasons behind it and the intentions of the author or actor. This step aimed to develop their critical thinking skills by evaluating the motives and perspectives underlying the information they encountered, fostering a deeper understanding of the sources' reliability and potential biases.

Recommendation: Providing a brief introduction to the topic ensured that all students had a clear understanding of their task. Setting a specific limit on the number of sources for evidence proved to be beneficial.

Activity 3 Fake news and disinformation regarding Climate change and Global warming

The "Activity 3 Fake news and disinformation regarding Climate change and Global warming" engaged Year 10 students (ages 14-15) with a total of 20 participants.

The aim of the activity is to enhance awareness of key concepts such as Disinformation, Misinformation, Prejudices, and Bias, as well as distinguish between Facts and Opinions. The activity includes training on fact-checking through the analysis of selected websites that discuss theories related to climate change and global warming. This involves examining articles to discern between facts and opinions, evaluating the credibility of the source, identifying actors and authors, and assessing the reliability of both the site and the text.

The activity lasted 4 hours and followed these steps:

- Step 1: Commence with a brief class discussion, guided by the teacher, on the impact of climate change globally and within our country. Discuss its causes and potential solutions or mitigation strategies.
- Step 2: Present key concepts such as fake news, disinformation, misinformation, biases, prejudices, actors, agents, facts, opinions, and the role of the media in society.
- Step 3: Educate students on how to find and verify information in the media.
- Step 4: Organize students into small groups of two or three, assigning them the task of finding and examining websites.
- Step 5: Have students fill out the "Module 1-1-IV Source and its relevance and credibility" template provided for the classroom.
- Step 6: Conclude the activity with a final discussion, allowing students to share their findings and insights.



In preparation of the activity, various websites on climate change and global warming were explored, encompassing perspectives from international organizations and diverse scientists. The sources included both supportive and opposing viewpoints on these issues.

Students were instructed to independently search the internet for evidence without specific website recommendations. They were required to find two to three sites, including at least one supporting and one opposing viewpoint on the given topic. These websites served as resources for students to explore and gather information during the activity, promoting a diverse and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The variety of sources aimed to encourage critical thinking and analysis among the students as they engaged with different perspectives and information from reputable sources.

As a final result, the students were required to assess the sources they found. For each article, they had to investigate the reasons behind it and the intentions of the author or actor.

Recommendation: Providing a brief introduction to the topic ensured that all students had a clear understanding of their task. Setting a specific limit on the number of sources for evidence proved to be beneficial.

Activity 5 Artificial Intelligence and Fake News

The "Activity 5 Fake news and disinformation regarding Climate change and Global warming" involved 25 students (ages 14-15).

The aim of the activity is to enhance understanding of new technologies associated with Artificial Intelligence and to identify misinformation and fake news through research from official sources.

The activity lasted 3 hours and followed these steps:

- Step 1: The class was divided into 3 groups, each assigned one of the images generated with artificial intelligence:
 - The Pope with trapper attitudes
 - Trump's arrest
 - Salvini in bed with a black boy
- Step 2: Using Model A1, students discussed the deceptive nature of news stories that, at first glance, appear realistic but are unlikely.
- Step 3: Students conducted research on the sources, both of the software creating the images and the fake news associated with the images.
- Step 4: Students presented their findings to their classmates, and with the teacher's support, shared their discoveries on the whiteboard.

Materials prepared by the teacher for the activity included: Introduction to artificial intelligence and Research on prominent images created with artificial intelligence software (e.g. midjourney, chatgpt).

Students employed their personal devices, including PCs, tablets, and smartphones, to conduct internet searches throughout the activity.

The results of the activity include the evaluation of both provided and online sources. Students engaged in discussions on each identified topic, supported by gathered evidence, showcasing their ability to identify biases and accurately pinpoint misinformation hidden behind the images.

The same Activity was replicated in another class, engaging 27 students aged 16-17.



8.5. Poland

The pilot testing in Poland has been conducted in three different schools:

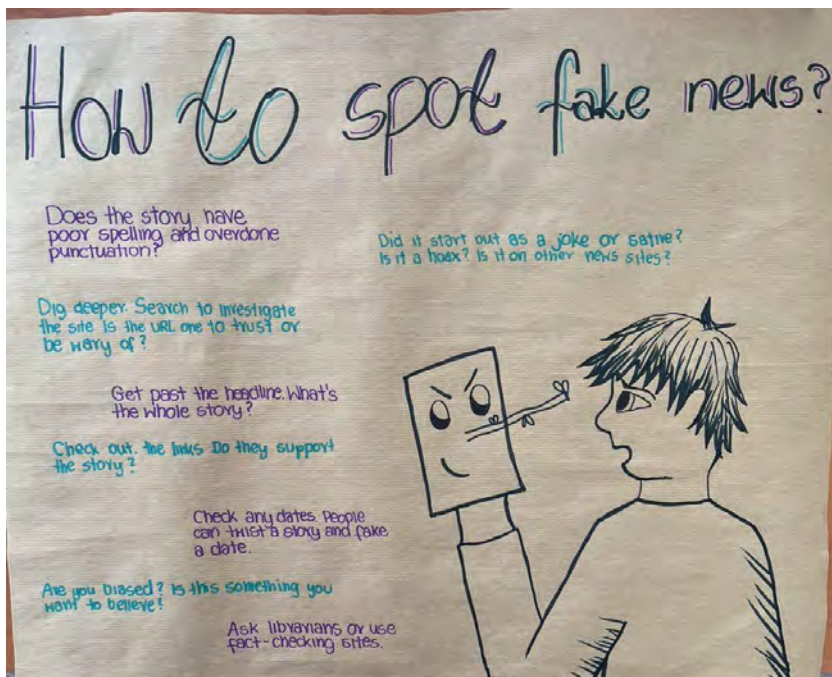
- 1) III High School with bilingual departments in Zabrze;
- 2) Primary School No. 20 in Katowice;
- 3) Primary School No. 9 in Gliwice.

In total, a total of 313 students ranging from 10 to 18 years old, and 18 teachers (of various subjects: Polish language, History, Mathematics, Italian, French, Biology, German, Geography) have been involved.

III HIGH SCHOOL WITH BILINGUAL DEPARTMENTS IN ZABRZE

Activity 1

About one hundred and twenty students aged 15 to 18 took part in the "Active" project at III High School in Zabrze as part of English lessons. Each group involved in the project first learned about the project's objectives and goals and then prepared presentations on fake news in groups of three/four. Each group was allotted three lessons (125 minutes) to work in groups and prepare presentations. Then, in the next two lessons, students presented their work and discussed fake news.





Step 1

- participation of students from the first, second and third grades of high school in English lessons (about 100 students)
- Introductory lesson on FAKE NEWS
- what they are
- where we can come across them
- listening comprehension
- searching for examples of fake news

Step 2

- presentation of the project and its main objectives and goals
- division of students into groups of three/four people
- choosing any topic (biology, geography, animals, diet, history, etc.)
- preparation of presentations on a given topic (two real information, one fake news)
- working in groups in class about 3 lessons

Step 3

- presentation by each group
- task of the rest: catching fake news from each presentation
- discussion: what made the students easy and what was difficult, students' evaluation of the presentations
- discussion: how to be more attentive to fake news, how to check sources





Activity 2

28.02.2023 9 teachers of various subjects (Polish language, History, Mathematics, Italian, French, Biology, German, Geography) took part in a training on the project (2 hours). The teachers learned about the main assumptions and goals of the project. Some of them tried to introduce elements of the project during their classes.

Feedback

In the groups where the project activities were carried out, the students were very involved in their work and preparation of the presentation. They rated the project itself as very interesting and developing. Moreover, thanks to the project activities, the students expanded their knowledge and awareness of fake news. In addition, thanks to the project tools, they were able to develop their ability to think critically, understand context, verify information sources, and build a culture of dialogue and conduct their own research. Also, the teachers who rallied to the project rated the project as very interesting and developing. No doubt they will use project activities in their educational work in the future.

PRIMARY SCHOOL NO. 20 IN KATOWICE



„Responsibility for the word” - a series of project activities:

In total, 5 classes with a total of 38 students and 3 teachers have been involved in activities during 5 main meetings. Most of the activities took place during the classes of Polish English language.



Activities:

- Workshop on how to verify information on the Internet
- True or false? Putting knowledge into practice
Pupils independently selected current topics, verified information available on the Internet on various portals and presented the results of their work.
- Testing life hacks of well-known TikTokers
Pupils tested the effectiveness of lifehacks found on TikTok, they made films, they compared the effects of their experiments with the realisation on videos on the Internet.
- Social experiment. How difficult is it to produce fake news?
CREATING YOUR OWN FAKE NEWS - what for?
Pupils learnt about applications and portals which enable the production of fake news
They checked how much energy it takes to create fake news,
They verified how many people in their community are in the habit of verifying information.

Effects of project participation:

While implementing the core curriculum, pupils had the opportunity to discuss issues important to them:

- Together we reviewed information which particularly affected young people;
- Children had the opportunity to conduct an experiment and analyse its results;
- Pupils learned how easy it is to produce fake news and how difficult it is to recognise it;
- Young people drew attention to how often they are subjected to manipulation.





PRIMARY SCHOOL NO. 9 IN GLIWICE

1. Presentation of the program during the staff meeting in September
2. Discussion and action plan during the meeting of the Humanities Team
3. Three language classes of 8th graders (78 students in English) and three lower classes (77 students in Polish) have been involved in the project

The project team consists of three English language teachers and three class tutors of grades 4-6.

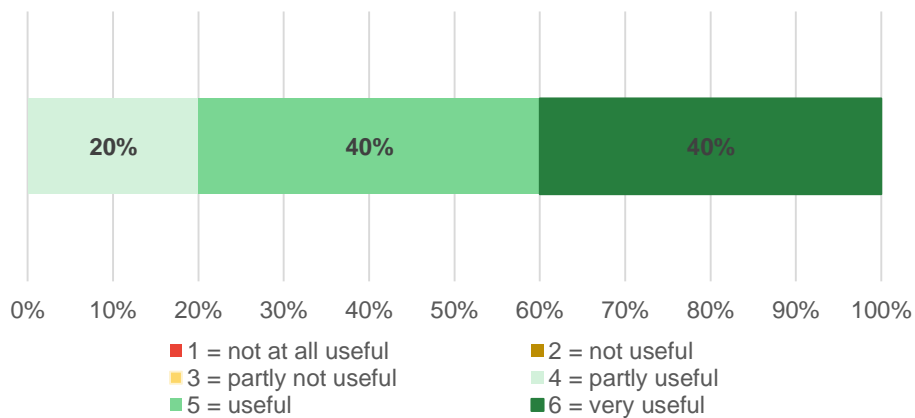
4. The work proceeded according to the following stages (Padlet Materials):
 - i. "Media Literacy Introduction" and Internet Safety workshops
 - ii. Familiarizing students with the terms: fake news, hoax, misinformation, disinformation, advertising, propaganda, satire, clickbait, etc.
 - iii. Analysing well known hoaxes:
 - With what tools were they created?
 - How did people find out it was fake?
 - How did they react?
 - What was the purpose of these actions?
 - iv. Students' research - finding fake news on the Internet.
 - v. Analyzing texts, videos, photos using the How to Spot Fake News? Guide
 - vi. Creating a database for other students - useful pages, procedures. Making posters.
 - vii. Fake or real? exercise: headlines / photos / movies / profile photos (faces)
 - viii. Group work - creating Fake News that sound/look very probable , or finding true stories that sound unreal
 - ix. Presenting these works to other classes that participate in the project, making a class decision: fake or real?
 - x. Discussion: Which elements of these stories inspire trust and which seem suspicious? On what basis do we think so?
 - xi. Discussion in groups - what impact this type of news can have on recipients, ranking from the least harmful to the most dangerous.
 - xii. Teaching activity -the students led workshops for the rest of the students from grades 4-8 using the knowledge and skills they had gained



9. Experience & evaluation outcomes for the teachers

All the teachers found their participation in the project as useful. Very useful was the participation for 40% of the teachers and for 20% partly useful. The teachers for which the participation in the project was only partly useful were those who rated their skills in concerned topics as very high even before the participation in project participation.

Was in general participation in the project useful for you?



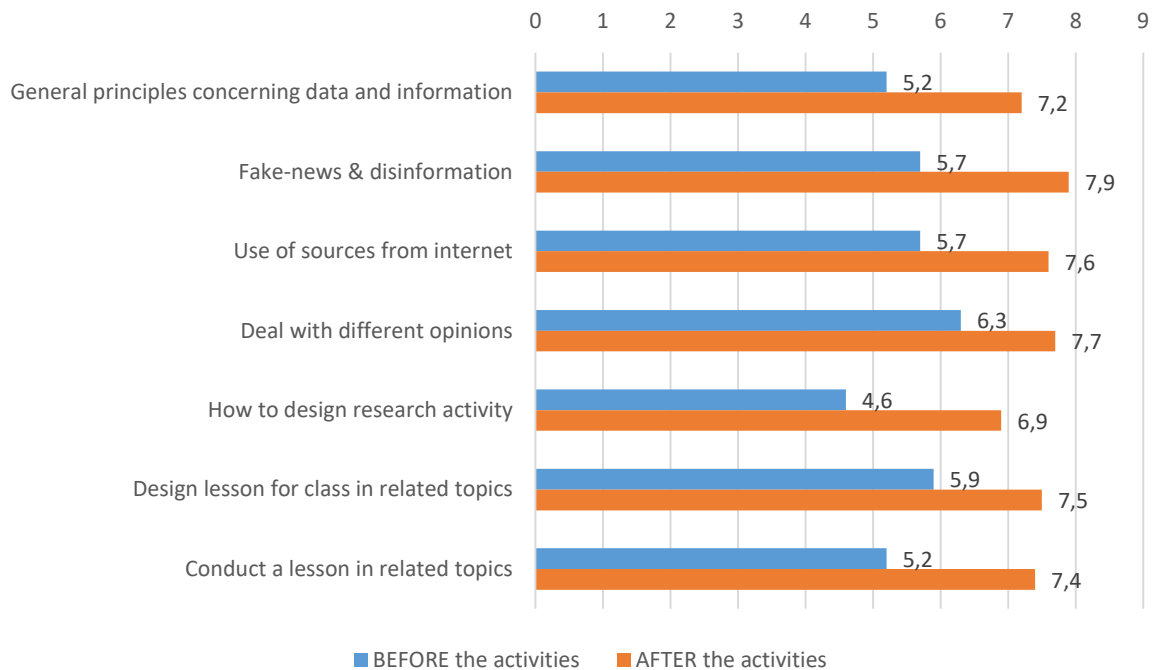
Source: Ex-post evaluation of the implementation of the ACTIVE Toolkit in classes

Based on the outcomes of self assessment the teachers have thanks to the project improved their skills in respective areas (in average from 5,5 to 7,5 on the scale from 1 to 9). The participation helped teachers to improve their skills in following areas:

- understanding general principles concerning data and information
- understanding Fake-news & disinformation
- understanding use of sources from internet
- to deal with different opinions
- to design research activity
- to design lesson for class in related topics
- to conduct a lesson in related topics



Rate your knowledge BEFORE and AFTER participation in the ACTIVE project.



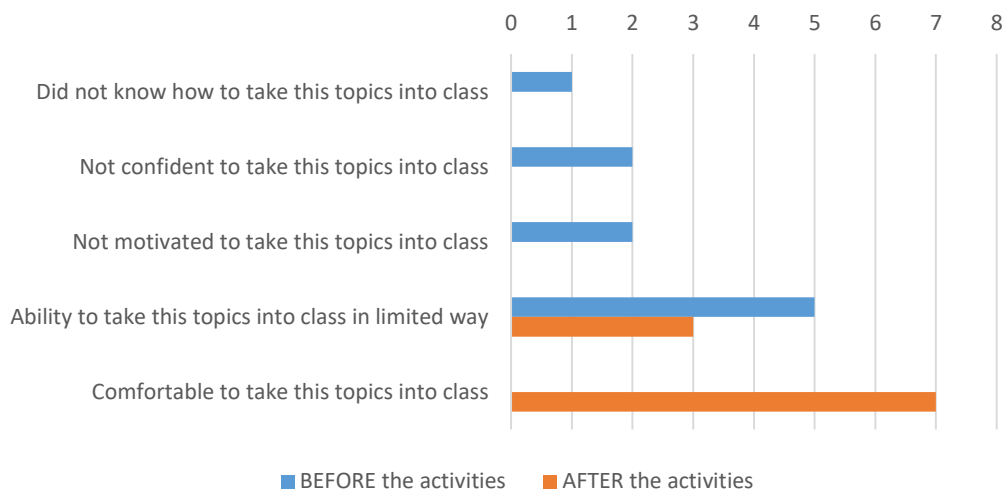
Source: Ex-post evaluation of the implementation of the ACTIVE Toolkit in classes

Note: rated on scale 1 to 9 where 1 corresponds to limited knowledge and 9 corresponds to proficient knowledge



The involvement of the teachers in the project activities and implementation of the ACTIVE Toolkit in the classes had significant positive impact in their ability to bring the concerned topics of fake-news, disinformation and controversial topics into the class activities.

What was your ability to prepare and conduct class lessons in concerning topics BEFORE your participation in the ACTIVE project compared to NOW?



Source: Ex-post evaluation of the implementation of the ACTIVE Toolkit in classes



Qualitative feedback from teachers what they have gained from the implementing the ACTIVE Toolkit in the class with students:

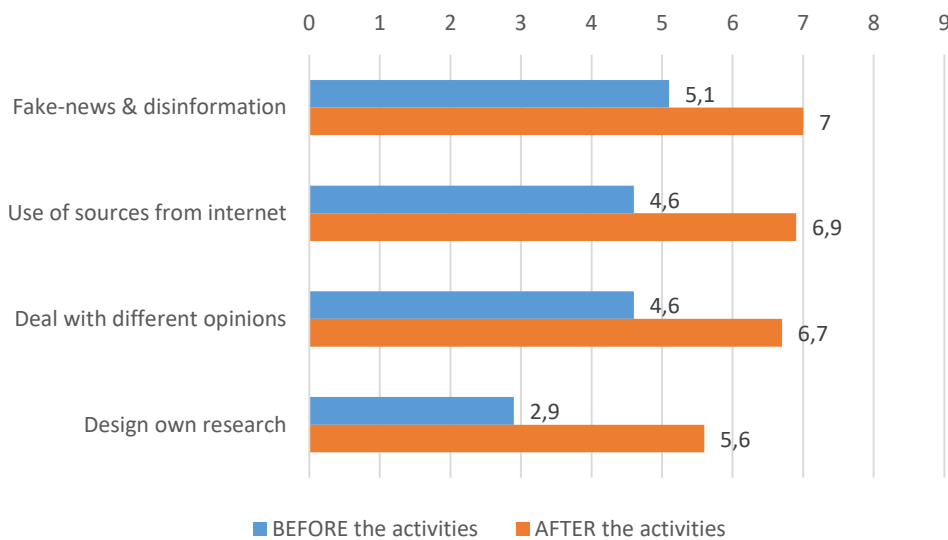
- I have learnt **how to make students more aware of fake news and disinformation**. I also got to know how to design research activity.
- How to **identify biases**
- New examples and **inspiration for my own lessons**. I was forced to **create new activities**, study more sources. And also an experience by participation in international Erasmus project.
- How to conduct lesson, design research activity, **design lesson for class**.
- I got a lot of different ideas of how to implement the critical view on information and sources into a lesson.
- I have **learned not to deliver related activities with preconceived ideas or expected outcomes**. The **students often surprised with their observations** and opinions and it was often difficult to dismiss these in favor of more orthodox beliefs. I also learned that **students were often far more information source literate than the teacher** and were far more able to recognize examples of disinformation, misinformation and fake news.
- I learned **to sort information better** to prepare activities for students. I myself **learned better to understand the individual steps when working with fake news**. I have a better overview of activities that are focused on topics, which are related to fake news and work with information sources.
- A new **inspirations for my lessons, another points of view** (education across participate countries)
- **Considering how the mind works and is subject to prejudices**, biases and "comfort zones" and how they could deceive our reasoning capability and be misleading.



10. Experience & evaluation outcomes for the students

The final target group of the activities are the students. Based on the evaluation assessment by teachers the students that participated in the class activities have benefited from the activities by improving their ability to deal with fake-news and disinformation, use of sources on the internet, deal with different opinions and designing own research. The assessment from teachers shows that students were prior to the activities very little aware with the designing of own research and that the activities helped students to understand basic principles and research methods. On the other hand knowledge how to deal with fake-news and disinformation and with fact-checking was higher prior t

Rate knowledge of the students that participated
in the class activities BEFORE and AFTER the
ACTIVE activities done in the class



Source: Ex-post evaluation of the implementation of the ACTIVE Toolkit in classes

Note: rated on scale 1 to 9 where 1 corresponds to limited knowledge and 9 corresponds to proficient knowledge

Qualitative feedback from teachers what their students have gained from participating in the activities based on the ACTIVE Toolkit:

- My students learnt how to **be more careful** when it comes to fake news and disinformation. They also learnt how to check the information and how to **look for the sources**. Moreover, they are able to **design their own research**.
- **Don't trust everything** you see or hear on the internet.
- One example: **Activity Muammar Khadafi** great trial: Students have learned use different sources from internet (reports, videos, graphs), deal with different options (Khadafi have followers or opponents). Because of their participation in court they **learned how to argue and defend own options**, pass judgement, condemn the dictator.
- **Work with Fake-news, use sources from internet**, deal with different opinions.



- That they must **not believe everything** they read/hear/see without questioning it for its source and purpose. How to double-check information/sources. **To be more critical.**
- Students learned how difficult it can be at time to create fake news or spread disinformation although they recognized that if sufficient effort is made in its preparation, **fake news can provide a powerful tool in influencing opinion.**
- Children learned to **better distinguish individual Internet sources** - they learned to look for the author of the text, when the author wrote the text, from which sources he drew information. All the mentioned things taught the children to compare with each other and to evaluate the truth of the texts. Pupils learned **that not all information that is posted on the Internet is true** and learned ways to verify the truth of information. We went through several types of information verification. They also learned to create fake news themselves.
- My students have learned **that every problem can have two sides and we should talk to each other to prevent misunderstanding.** They also try to create own hoaxes and disinformation and watch them how it is easy to spread them and sometimes **hard to prove their evidence.**
- They have learnt to **search information about a particular topic from different sources** on the internet, analyzing different websites, articles, texts on a topic and **observing how the personal interests are expressed in a particular perspective** and how those interests lead the dealing of the topic in the text. They also have learn **how our mind is conditioned by biases, prejudices, convictions, personal interests** and so on, and **how difficult is for us to discriminate the right aspects of our thoughts.**



11. Teachers continuing in the activities

Participation of the teachers in the ACTIVE project inspired them to embed the ACTIVE approach and activities in their class activities and all of the teachers involved in the final assessment (10 out of 13 teachers directly implementing the ACTIVE Toolkit) are continuing or planning to continue with the ACTIVE Toolkit based activities in their classes with students.

This shows and proves the attractiveness of the topics and approaches of the ACTIVE methodology.

12. Model ready to be used in schools

ACTIVE Toolkit has been successfully tested by teachers in the classes during school activities with students. The benefit of implementing the activities for the teachers and students/pupils was clearly shown:

- the **teachers** can benefit from robust theoretical background and practical activities that they can take into the class,
- the **students** can benefit from participating in learning by doing activity and acquire competences needed to deal with complex issues and information on the internet.

After the end of the pilot phase of the project, the collected inputs (*both from the teachers and the students*) have been addressed to better shape the common final **Guidelines** indicating the suggested way to replicate the experience in other schools supporting thus the teachers with the basic instructions and provided them with all the documents and material used.

In the **Project Results** section of the ACTIVE project website [<https://www.active-citizen.eu>] all the tools and material used and tested in classes (*i.e. the ACTIVE Toolkit*) can be easily and freely downloaded², together with these **Guidelines** intended to provide a short narration of the experience with the implementation of the innovative ACTIVE approach based on the ACTIVE Toolkit and to inspire broad range of secondary schools to introduce the methodologies and activities in their curricula.

² All the documents available for download are licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License** and developed under the project ACTIVE financed by Erasmus+ Program, therefore are entirely free but cannot be used for commercial activities and no type of profit can be obtained from their use.



Result 1

ACTIVE Toolkit

Toolkit for promoting ACTIVE and responsible citizenship at schools

DOWNLOAD THE TOOLKIT

Result 2

ACTIVE Guidelines

Guidelines for ACTIVE and responsible citizenship in schools

DOWNLOAD THE GUIDELINES

The Toolkit consists of both Handbooks and Manuals for a detailed comprehension of each activity's specific content, purpose and steps, and a set of Working material to be concretely used in class, according to the structure outlined in Chapter 6.

This chart then reproduces the logic of intervention of the **ACTIVE approach** providing a visual summary of the concrete steps in a logical sequence to better exploit the ACTIVE Toolkit structured as follows:

I. **Methodology for teachers** consisting of explanation the principles and terms and concepts to be used when implementing the Toolkit. The goal of the methodology is to provide background and set the common ground and understanding for teachers, so they are ready to take the Toolkit in to the classroom.

II. **Activity book for teachers** being a set of working activities (*step by step scenarios*) that the teachers can take into the classroom. The activities correspond with the topics of the Methodology so teachers can easily find appropriate activity for the topic covered in the methodology. There at least one activity for a topic covered in the Methodology.

III. **Working materials for activities & students** consisting of materials to be used with students during the activities. Materials are mainly





referring to templates that teacher can hand over to students to better structure the activity.

Before starting with the activities teachers need to get familiar with the relevant parts of the Methodology for teachers and the overall composition and logic of the activities presented in the Activity book for teachers to have the overall idea what topics are covered in the activities.

More in details the document called **Module 0** is providing the general understanding of the ACTIVE model and its process, as well as the first definition of the basic concepts such as information, facts, truth and objectivity.

To be more practical and effective these are some suggested ways (i.e. specific class activities) how to use the tools provided in the Toolkit:

- a. **“Large project activity based on the Toolkit”** - Use the Toolkit as a basis for designing a long term project based learning activity. Implement the whole scope of the Toolkit and its Activities step by step during a long lasting project based learning activity (we will call this as “Large project”)
- b. **“Small project activity”** - Use the Toolkit for small project activity that can be done during one or two class hours.
- c. **“Toolkit implemented during any project activity”** - Use the Toolkit during any project based learning activity designed by other principles or methodology. Apply the principles and concepts presented in the Methodology and choose appropriate activities presented in the Toolkit relevant for your project activities.
- d. **“Use the Toolkit to deal with disinformation”** - You can Use selected Activities very well to deal with just one “interacting/important” disinformation. It can be disinformation you find on the internet (like social media post, YouTube video, article, web site etc.) that would be examined with students (fact-checking, biases, making sense of information).
- e. **“Toolkit implemented during regular class”** - Use selected Activities and/or Working materials during regular class. Choose relevant concepts, activity or template to help students explore and learn about topic/subject matter covered in the classroom.
- f. **“Solving conflict”** - Use the Toolkit and the activities to solve a conflict that arises in the class as the Toolkit is designed to help overcome different viewpoints, beliefs and opinions.
- g. **“Get inspired by the Toolkit”** - Use the Methodology and suggested activities as an inspiration and find your own approach how to bring presented principles and concepts in to the classroom.



13. Conclusions

The ACTIVE Toolkit offers a process for approaching any problem or complex issue in a series of steps to cover the entire process from defining the problem, finding relevant information, confronting conflicting views and assumptions, exploring stakeholder values, to evaluating and formulating conclusions.

The areas covered in the theoretical Methodology are brought into the classroom through ACTIVITIES. These are based on the principles of learning by doing and project-based learning. The activities designed enable students to develop the competences needed to solve complex problems and to understand information in order to make responsible decisions.

The ACTIVE Toolkit can be applied to project-based learning or to a "regular" lesson. The ACTIVE Toolkit is particularly useful when dealing with misinformation and controversial topics, and provides teachers with a unique tool to deal with these issues.

The Toolkit covers issues related to information and focuses on how to use fact-checking and lateral reading to identify misinformation and fake-news. However, unlike most approaches to this issue, it goes further, beyond fact-checking, and brings unique approaches and tools to the overall assessment of an issue or complex topic.