



“Tagging young people with radicalization is a problematic thing. Young people are more resourceful than that.”
Sanjay Asthana

MEDIA LITERACY: TOOLS FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE TO VIOLENT EXTREMIST PROPAGANDA

*Breakout Session,
 27 April 2016, 11:30-13:00*

SPEAKERS:

Dr. Sanjay Asthana
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Ms. Samia Bibars
 Director, Inter-Civilizations Dialogue Department, League of Arab States

Mr. Alton Grizzle
 Programme Specialist in Communication and Information, UNESCO

Mr. Ali Hasanov
 National Adviser to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Dr. Renee Hobbs
 Professor, University of Rhode Island, and Director of the Media Education Lab

Dr. Maria Ranieri
 Associate Professor of Educational Methods and Technology, University of Florence

Moderator: Ms. Sally Reynolds
 Director, Media and Learning



“Every child should learn how to critically analyse propaganda – recognize it, analyse it and decide whether it is useful or harmful. In determining this, we must ask: Whose perspectives do we value in assessing benefits, risks or harms of a given propaganda?”
Renee Hobbs

The session recognized the prevalence and persistence of online content inciting hate, polarization and violent extremism. It also recognized that addressing this phenomenon through censorship, control of information and a narrow focus on “counter-narratives” was counterproductive. The panellists argued that investing resources in education, more specifically, in media and information literacy (MIL) education, is more effective because it helps individuals to develop critical thinking skills to resist violent extremist propaganda by setting them on their proper social and political framework. Supported by research and best practices, panellists shared the benefits of MIL programmes and resources. MIL positively affects how people engage with propaganda, encourages them to re-think discriminatory and violent media messages and enables them to add positive, socially inclusive and ethical content online as a way to balance the proliferation of divisive and polarizing messages. In developing media and information literacy knowledge, individuals become responsible *digital* as well as *global* citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Promote policies for media and information literacy to be more present in formal and non-formal education, mainstream it in the core curriculum of primary and secondary education and offer MIL university degrees to better prepare future educators.
2. Balance on-line hate speech with socially inclusive content, by empowering young people to produce their own positive digital narratives.
3. Promote a new understanding and critical analysis of propaganda and its pervasiveness in contemporary societies.
4. Promote ethical journalism and a set of core common guidelines and ethical principles.
5. Encourage policy makers and the media corporate sector to include and promote media and information literacy content across the multiple media platforms accessed by citizens.