

HATEFUL DISCRIMINATORY DISCOURSE ONLINE IN SERBIA

Annual Report 2024

LIFE Project

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Hateful Discriminatory Discourse Online in Serbia

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The aim of Living Safely in a Digital World (LIFE) project, proposed by this consortium is to increase the resilience of the young generation on facing the risks of the digitalization and its impact in their everyday life through empowering youth organizations to be involved in policy dialogue and use non-formal learning in their work with the young people.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The LIFE – Living Safely in a Digital World project has made significant strides in addressing the pervasive issue of hate speech among youth in Serbia. This report presents a comprehensive overview of the findings from surveys, focus groups, and qualitative case studies collected throughout the project. The primary aim has been to enhance awareness, resilience, and media literacy among young people while fostering a culture of respect and understanding in digital spaces.

Overview:

The report's main findings indicate that hate speech is a prevalent issue encountered by the majority of young people on social media platforms, particularly Instagram and TikTok. Approximately 80% of survey respondents reported using social media multiple times a day, with many experiencing daily encounters with derogatory comments based on gender, ethnicity, and appearance. The emotional toll of these experiences has been profound, with participants expressing feelings of anger, helplessness, and frustration.

Despite the recognition of hate speech as a significant problem, the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms on social media remains inadequate. About 70% of respondents felt that their reports went unaddressed, highlighting a critical gap in accountability for online behavior. Furthermore, qualitative insights from focus groups revealed a concerning lack of media literacy among youth and educators alike, underscoring the need for targeted educational initiatives.

The project has achieved notable successes in raising awareness and fostering dialogue around these issues. Educational workshops have empowered young participants to recognize and combat hate speech actively. Collaborative efforts with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and local stakeholders have laid the groundwork for future advocacy and policy development.

Key Highlights:

Prevalence of Hate Speech: The survey revealed that 80% of respondents encounter hate speech regularly on social media platforms, primarily targeting women and marginalized groups.

Ineffective reporting mechanisms: Approximately 70% of participants reported that their complaints about hate speech were often ignored or inadequately addressed by social media platforms.

Media Literacy deficiencies: Focus group discussions indicated a significant gap in media literacy among both youth and educators, with many unable to discern credible sources from misinformation.

Empowerment through education: Participants expressed increased confidence in addressing hate speech after engaging in educational workshops organized by the project.

Collaboration with Stakeholders: The project successfully engaged educators, media professionals, and NHRIs to foster a collaborative approach to tackling hate speech.

Recommendations for Future Action:

- Expand educational initiatives focused on media literacy and digital citizenship.
- Strengthen partnerships with NHRIs to advocate for more robust legal frameworks against online hate speech.
- Develop comprehensive reporting tools for easier reporting of hate speech incidents.
- Foster community dialogues to address experiences with hate speech collaboratively.
- Promote positive online campaigns that counteract hate speech narratives.

Introduction

Project background

The LIFE – Living Safely in a Digital World project is a two-year capacity-building initiative funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ program. It involves collaboration among five partner organizations from Serbia, Bulgaria, Italy, Tunisia, and Albania. The primary goal of the LIFE project is to enhance the resilience of the younger generation against the risks associated with digitalization, particularly in relation to hate speech and online harassment. By empowering youth organizations to engage in policy dialogue and utilize non-formal learning methods, the project aims to equip young people with the tools necessary to navigate and address the challenges posed by digital platforms.

This project is significant as it addresses a pressing issue faced by youth today: the pervasive nature of hate speech in online environments. With young people increasingly relying on social media for communication and information, understanding and combating hate speech has become essential for their mental well-being and social cohesion. The LIFE project seeks not only to raise awareness but also to foster a supportive environment where young individuals can express themselves freely while being protected from harmful content.

Purpose of the report

The purpose of this annual report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the findings from various activities conducted under the LIFE project, particularly focusing on the survey results regarding hate speech among youth. This report aims to convey key insights into the prevalence, forms, and impacts of hate speech encountered by young people on social media platforms. Additionally, it seeks to highlight the effectiveness of current reporting mechanisms and identify areas for improvement.

By documenting these findings, the report intends to inform stakeholders—including policymakers, educators, and youth organizations—about the urgent need for interventions that protect young people from online harassment. It serves as a tool for advocacy, aiming to influence policy changes and promote best practices in addressing hate speech within digital spaces.

Scope and Methodology:

The scope of this report encompasses data collected through multiple methodologies aimed at understanding youth experiences with hate speech online. The following methods were employed:

Survey: A comprehensive survey was conducted among young people in Serbia, targeting individuals aged 15 to 24. The survey aimed to gather quantitative data on their experiences with hate speech on social media platforms. It included questions regarding the frequency of social media usage, types of platforms used, specific encounters with hate speech, the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms, and the emotional impacts associated with these experiences. The demographic data collected provided insights into the age, gender, and location of respondents, which helped contextualize the findings within the broader youth population.

Focus Groups: Focus group discussions were held with young participants to explore their perceptions and experiences related to hate speech in greater depth. These discussions were structured to encourage open dialogue about personal experiences, feelings towards online interactions, and the perceived effectiveness of current measures against hate speech. The insights gathered from these sessions complemented the quantitative data from the survey, revealing nuanced perspectives on how hate speech affects youth in their everyday lives.

Round Table Discussions: Engaging with key stakeholders such as school psychologists, pedagogues, representatives from school parliaments, and media professionals allowed for a multi-faceted understanding of how hate speech is perceived and addressed within educational settings and media landscapes. These discussions focused on defining the problems associated with hate speech, sharing existing practices for managing such issues in schools and media, and identifying areas that require improvement. The collaborative nature of these discussions fostered a comprehensive approach to understanding the challenges faced by young people in navigating hate speech.

Desk Research: This involved mapping cases of hate speech across various media outlets and analysing them through case studies. The desk research aimed to identify patterns in how hate speech is reported in the media and how it influences public perception. By examining specific instances of hate speech coverage, this research provided context for the survey and focus group findings, highlighting discrepancies between reported incidents and public awareness or response.

By employing these diverse methodologies, this report aims to present a holistic view of the issue of hate speech among youth. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data offers a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence, impact, and responses to hate speech in digital spaces. This multifaceted approach not only enriches the analysis but also lays the groundwork for actionable recommendations based on thorough data analysis.

Data and Analysis

Quantitative results – Survey:

Demographic information

The survey included responses from a diverse group of participants predominantly aged between 15 and 24 years, with approximately 70% identifying as female. Most respondents were from Niš, Serbia. This demographic profile highlights the survey's focus on youth experiences and perspectives regarding online interactions.

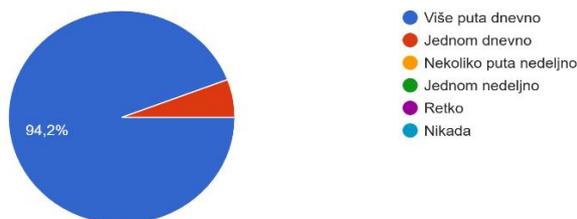
Frequency of social media usage

Over 80% of respondents indicated they use social media multiple times a day.

The high frequency of social media usage among respondents suggests that these platforms are integral to their daily lives. This constant engagement increases their exposure to both positive and negative interactions. Given the prevalence of hate speech reported in this survey, it is concerning that young people are navigating these digital environments without adequate support or resources to address harmful content.

Visualization:

Koliko često koristite društvene mreže?
52 одговора



Most used social media platforms

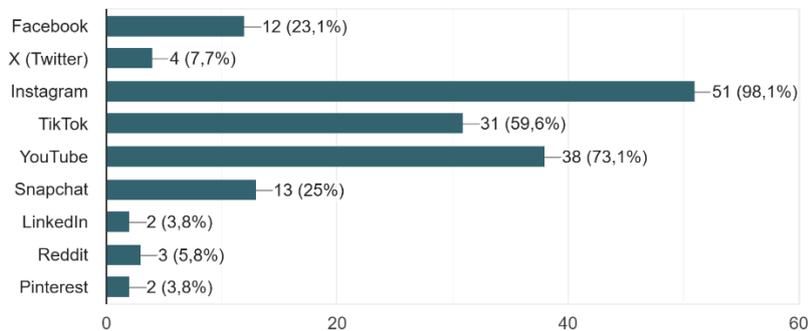
The most frequently mentioned platforms were Instagram (90%), TikTok (85%), Facebook (60%), and YouTube (75%).

Instagram and TikTok dominate the social media landscape for this demographic. These platforms are not only popular for entertainment but also serve as spaces where hate speech can proliferate. The choice of platforms underscores the need for targeted interventions to combat online hate effectively.

Visualization:

Koje društvene mreže/medije najčešće koristite?

52 одговора



Frequency of encountering Hate Speech

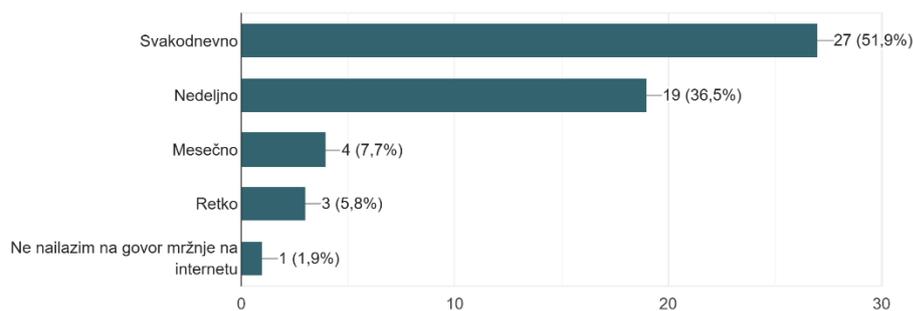
Approximately 60% reported encountering hate speech daily, while about 30% experienced it weekly.

The alarming frequency with which respondents encounter hate speech highlights a significant issue within digital spaces. With more than half experiencing it daily, there is a clear indication that hate speech is a pervasive concern affecting many young users' experiences online.

Visualization:

Koliko često nailazite na govor mržnje na internetu?

52 одговора



Forms of Hate Speech observed

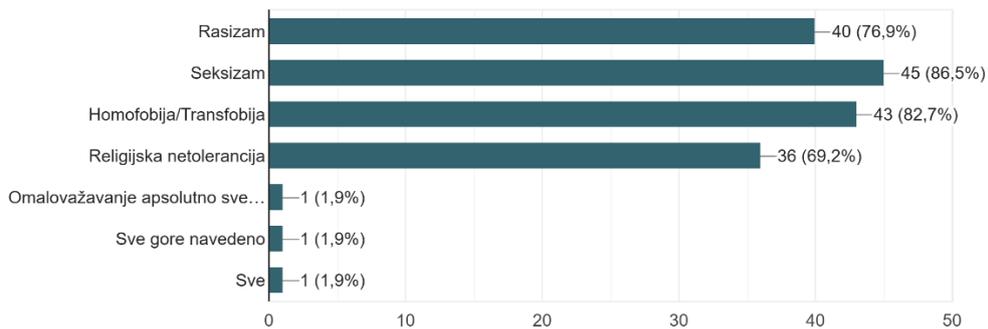
Common forms included sexism (40%), homophobia/transphobia (30%), and racism (50%).

The diversity of hate speech forms reflects deep-rooted societal issues that manifest online. The prevalence of sexism and racism indicates that these themes are not only prevalent in society but are also amplified in digital spaces where anonymity can embolden negative behaviour.

Visualization:

Koje oblike govora mržnje ste uvideli na društvenim mrežama?

52 одговора



Reporting

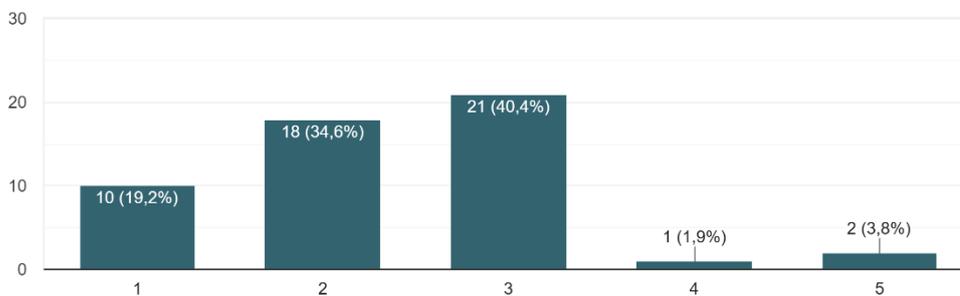
Approximately 70% felt that their reports were ignored by social media platforms.

The ineffectiveness of reporting mechanisms contributes to a culture where users feel powerless against hate speech. Respondents expressed frustration over the lack of action taken by platforms when they report incidents, highlighting a significant gap in accountability measures employed by social media companies.

Visualization:

Kako biste ocenili efikasnost društvenih mreža u rešavanju problema govora mržnje?

52 одговора



Impact of Hate Speech

Feelings of anger or frustration were noted by about 50%, while feelings of helplessness were reported by around 40%.

The emotional impact of hate speech is profound, with many respondents feeling anxious or angry when encountering such content. This emotional toll can lead to broader mental health implications for young users who regularly engage with these platforms.

Qualitative Insights

The qualitative insights gathered from focus group discussions with young participants, as well as round table discussions with experts, educators, and media professionals, provide a deeper understanding of the challenges surrounding hate speech and media literacy among youth in Serbia. These discussions highlighted several critical themes that reflect the current landscape of digital engagement among young people.

Lack of understanding of Hate Speech

One of the most prominent observations from both focus groups and expert discussions is that young people often lack a clear understanding of what constitutes hate speech. Many participants expressed confusion about the boundaries between free expression and harmful speech, indicating a need for comprehensive education on this topic. For instance, focus group participants noted that derogatory comments based on physical appearance or gender are often dismissed as "just jokes," which further complicates their ability to recognize hate speech.

Educators echoed this sentiment, noting that many teachers also struggle to define hate speech adequately. This lack of clarity hampers their ability to educate students effectively about online behaviour and the importance of respectful communication. The consensus among professionals was that enhanced training for educators is crucial to equip them with the tools needed to address these issues in the classroom.

Media literacy deficiencies

The discussions revealed a significant deficiency in media literacy among young people. Many participants admitted to being unable to distinguish between credible news sources and misinformation or propaganda. This issue is exacerbated by the current media landscape in Serbia, which is perceived as increasingly constrained and biased.

As a result, young people often lack access to reliable information that could help them navigate complex social issues, including hate speech.

Focus group responses indicated that many youth rely heavily on social media for news consumption, leading them to encounter sensationalist content without proper context or critique. Experts emphasized that this deficiency in media literacy is not limited to youth; many educators also struggle with identifying credible sources and understanding media manipulation tactics. This shared gap in knowledge highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions aimed at improving media literacy across all age groups.

Media Freedom

Concerns regarding media freedom in Serbia were prevalent in the discussions. Participants noted that the decline in independent journalism has led to a scarcity of trustworthy news sources. Young people are particularly affected by this environment, as they rely heavily on social media for news consumption. The lack of quality journalism means that youth are exposed to sensationalist content and hate speech without proper context or critique.

This situation creates an environment where misinformation can thrive, making it even more challenging for young people to discern fact from fiction. Experts called for initiatives to promote independent journalism and encourage critical thinking about media consumption among youth.

Rapid Technological Changes vs. Educational Curricula

Another critical point raised during the discussions was the rapid pace of technological advancement compared to the slower evolution of formal educational curricula. New digital technologies are developing faster than schools can adapt their teaching methods or content, leaving students unprepared for the realities of online engagement.

Professionals noted that while non-formal educational programs could fill this gap by providing relevant skills and knowledge, there is scepticism within local communities regarding these initiatives. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are often viewed with suspicion, perceived as foreign agents attempting to influence or "brainwash" young people. This scepticism poses a significant barrier to implementing effective educational programs that could empower youth with the necessary skills to navigate digital spaces safely.

Need for Non-Formal Education

Given these challenges, there is a clear need for more non-formal education opportunities focused on digital literacy, critical thinking, and understanding hate speech. Such programs should aim not only to inform young people about these issues

but also to engage them actively in discussions about their experiences online. By fostering an environment where youth can share their perspectives and learn from one another, these initiatives could help build resilience against hate speech and promote healthier online interactions.

Focus Group Insights

In addition to the broader themes identified above, specific insights emerged from focus group discussions regarding personal experiences with hate speech:

Frequency of encounters: Many participants reported frequent exposure to hate speech on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. They shared instances where derogatory comments targeted individuals based on their physical appearance or gender achievements.

Emotional reactions: Participants expressed feelings of anger and helplessness when witnessing hate speech directed at others or themselves. One participant recounted feeling "shocked" when they reported a video promoting sexist attitudes but saw no action taken by the platform.

Specific examples: Focus group members provided concrete examples of hate speech incidents they encountered online:

- Comments attacking women for their appearance when they posted achievements.
- Racist remarks aimed at individuals from minority backgrounds.
- Homophobic comments directed at LGBTQ+ individuals.

These examples underscore the pervasive nature of hate speech online and its impact on individuals' mental health and self-esteem.

Conclusion:

The qualitative insights from focus groups and expert discussions underscore a pressing need for enhanced education around hate speech and media literacy among youth in Serbia. Addressing these gaps through targeted non-formal education initiatives could empower young people to navigate digital landscapes more effectively while fostering a culture of respect and understanding online.

Case Studies: Detailed descriptions of specific cases related to Hate Speech and Media reporting¹

The following case studies highlight specific incidents that illustrate the challenges of hate speech, media representation, and the broader implications for society in Serbia. These examples demonstrate the need for improved media literacy, ethical journalism, and awareness of hate speech in various contexts.

1. The Case of Abdulah Šehović

In a notable incident during the “RTS Cross” international running competition for children, Abdulah Šehović, a Bosniak boy from Novi Pazar, won the 500-meter race for first graders. However, initial media reports inaccurately stated that he did not receive his medal due to “only room for Serbia and children” on the podium. This narrative sparked outrage among social media users who perceived it as an example of ethnic discrimination prevalent in Serbia.

Following public backlash, Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) issued an apology for what they termed a “technical error.” However, journalist Miloš Panić later confirmed that Abdulah was indeed on the podium receiving his medal, contradicting RTS's claims. This incident highlights the dangers of disinformation; various media outlets from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina propagated the misleading story without adequate fact-checking. The situation underscores the critical need for responsible journalism that prioritizes accuracy over sensationalism.

This case serves as a reminder of how misinformation can exacerbate ethnic divisions and contribute to societal tensions. It emphasizes the importance of ethical standards in journalism and the role of media in fostering a more inclusive narrative.

2. Sexism in Serbian Politics

A troubling incident occurred in the Serbian Parliament when Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vulin deflected criticism from a female opposition MP regarding his lavish lifestyle by making sexist remarks about women. Instead of addressing her concerns about his expensive car, he trivialized the discussion by stating that “no one should argue with women,” effectively reducing her critique to an issue of gender rather than political accountability.

This incident exemplifies how sexism is woven into political discourse in Serbia. Vulin’s comments not only undermined the legitimacy of the female MP’s position but also perpetuated harmful stereotypes about women in politics. Following this exchange, additional sexist remarks were made by other male MPs, further illustrating a culture where women are belittled rather than respected as serious political figures.

The normalization of such behaviour in political arenas reflects broader societal issues where women’s voices are marginalized. This case highlights the urgent need for gender

¹ <https://www.reportingdiversity.org/category/serbia/>

sensitivity training among politicians and advocates for policies that promote respectful discourse in public life.

3. Targeting Journalists and Activists

In recent protests against lithium mining in Serbia, activists faced significant backlash from tabloid media, which labelled them as “foreign mercenaries” working against their country. This campaign of intimidation included not only derogatory language but also physical threats; reports indicated multiple arrests and police interrogations targeting activists.

One particularly concerning case involved young activist Mila Pajić, who was branded an “anti-Serb activist” for her support of a resolution regarding the genocide in Srebrenica. The Prime Minister echoed these sentiments on social media, further endangering her safety and reputation. Such targeting through media smear campaigns is a common tactic used to silence dissenting voices and intimidate those advocating for social justice.

These incidents underscore the intersection between media representation and civic engagement. They illustrate how harmful narratives can undermine democratic processes and stifle public discourse.

4. Obstetric Violence Discourse

In a troubling statement during a morning show on TV Prva, Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski, Serbia's Minister for Family Welfare and Demography, dismissed testimonies regarding obstetric violence as part of a “global agenda against childbirth” in Serbia. Her comments sparked outrage online and highlighted a lack of understanding regarding the seriousness of obstetric violence faced by women during labour.

While she later claimed her words were misinterpreted, this incident reflects how dismissive attitudes towards women's experiences can perpetuate systemic issues within healthcare. The subsequent increase in media coverage surrounding obstetric violence indicates a growing awareness among women about their rights and experiences within maternity care.

This case illustrates the necessity for policymakers to engage with women's issues seriously and empathetically, ensuring that their voices are heard and respected in discussions affecting their health and well-being.

5. Misrepresentation in Sports Media

The reporting surrounding Imane Khelif's participation in sports events showcased rampant transphobia and sexism within Serbian media narratives. Following her victory at an Olympic event, many outlets referred to her as a “proven biological male,” perpetuating harmful stereotypes about gender identity while undermining her achievements as an athlete.

This misrepresentation not only affects Khelif's reputation but also contributes to broader societal misconceptions regarding transgender individuals. The failure of media outlets to correct misinformation or apologize for their inaccuracies highlights a significant lack of accountability within journalism.

Khelif's experience serves as a call to action for media professionals to uphold ethical standards that respect individuals' identities while promoting inclusivity within sports reporting.

Trends and Patterns

The analysis of survey responses, qualitative insights from focus groups, and relevant case studies reveals several significant trends and patterns regarding hate speech and media representation in Serbia. These findings highlight the pervasive nature of hate speech, the challenges faced by young people in navigating online spaces, and the broader societal implications of these issues.

1. Prevalence of Hate Speech

A consistent trend across all data sources is the high prevalence of hate speech encountered by young people on social media platforms. The survey indicated that approximately 80% of respondents use social media multiple times a day, with many reporting daily encounters with hate speech. Specific examples from focus group discussions corroborate this finding, as participants shared experiences of derogatory comments based on physical appearance, gender, and ethnicity.

Key Observations:

- **Social Media as a Primary Platform:** Instagram and TikTok emerged as the most frequently cited platforms for encountering hate speech. Participants noted that these platforms often amplify negative comments, particularly targeting women and marginalized groups.
- **Types of Hate Speech:** The survey results highlighted that sexism, racism, and homophobia were the most common forms of hate speech experienced. Focus group participants specifically mentioned instances where women were ridiculed for their achievements or appearance, reflecting deep-seated gender biases.

2. Ineffective Reporting Mechanisms

Another notable trend is the frustration expressed by young people regarding the ineffectiveness of reporting mechanisms on social media platforms. The survey revealed that about 70% of respondents felt their reports of hate speech went unaddressed or resulted in minimal action from platforms. This sentiment was echoed in focus group

discussions where participants described feelings of helplessness when witnessing hate speech.

Key Observations:

- **Lack of Accountability:** Many respondents reported that after reporting incidents of hate speech, they often saw no significant changes or consequences for the perpetrators. This lack of accountability contributes to a culture where hate speech is normalized.
- **Emotional Toll:** The emotional impact of encountering hate speech was profound among participants, with many expressing feelings of anger, frustration, and sadness. This emotional toll can affect mental health and overall well-being.

3. Media Literacy Deficiencies

The qualitative data revealed a concerning trend regarding media literacy among youth. Many focus group participants admitted to struggling with distinguishing credible news sources from misinformation. This lack of media literacy is compounded by the current media landscape in Serbia, which is perceived as increasingly biased and lacking in independent journalism.

Key Observations:

- **Educational Gaps:** Both young people and educators expressed a need for improved education on media literacy and critical thinking skills. Many teachers reported feeling ill-equipped to address these issues in the classroom.
- **Misinformation Amplification:** The case studies highlighted instances where misinformation spread rapidly through media outlets without proper fact-checking. This trend not only misinforms the public but also perpetuates harmful narratives that can lead to increased societal tensions.

4. Intersectionality of Hate Speech

The data indicates that hate speech often intersects with other forms of discrimination, including sexism and homophobia. For instance, case studies involving political discourse revealed how women in politics are frequently subjected to sexist remarks that undermine their credibility and authority.

Key Observations:

- **Political Discourse:** The incidents involving Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vulin exemplify how political rhetoric can perpetuate sexism and homophobia within public discourse. Such behavior not only affects individual politicians but also reflects broader societal attitudes towards women and marginalized groups.

- Societal Implications: The normalization of such rhetoric in political arenas can have far-reaching implications for gender equality and representation in Serbia. When political figures engage in discriminatory language without accountability, it reinforces harmful stereotypes and diminishes the legitimacy of marginalized voices.

5. Need for Non-Formal Education

A recurring theme across both qualitative insights and case studies is the urgent need for non-formal education initiatives aimed at improving digital literacy, critical thinking, and understanding hate speech among youth.

Key Observations:

- Community Scepticism: While there is recognition among professionals regarding the need for non-formal education programs, there remains scepticism within local communities about civil society organizations (CSOs) leading these initiatives. CSOs are often perceived as foreign agents attempting to influence youth negatively.

- Empowerment through Education: Implementing non-formal education programs focused on these issues could empower young people to navigate digital spaces more effectively while promoting respectful discourse online.

Conclusion

The analysis of trends and patterns from the survey responses, qualitative data, and case studies underscores a pressing need for comprehensive interventions to address hate speech among youth in Serbia. The findings highlight the importance of improving media literacy, enhancing reporting mechanisms on social media platforms, fostering respectful political discourse, and implementing effective non-formal education programs. By addressing these challenges collectively, stakeholders can work towards creating a safer and more inclusive digital environment for young people in Serbia.

Impact and Outcomes

Impact on Target Groups

The LIFE – Living Safely in a Digital World project is expected to significantly impact its primary audiences, particularly young people, educators, and civil society organizations (CSOs) in Serbia. The project aims to enhance awareness and resilience against hate speech among youth, and anticipated outcomes include:

- **Increased Awareness:** Young participants will report a heightened awareness of hate speech and its implications. Educational initiatives will help them recognize harmful behaviours online, leading to more informed discussions among peers about respectful communication.
- **Empowerment:** Focus groups will reveal that participants feel empowered to speak out against hate speech after engaging in project activities. Many young people are expected to actively report incidents of hate speech on social media platforms, feeling more equipped to address these issues.
- **Community Engagement:** The project will foster greater community engagement among youth organizations and local stakeholders. By facilitating round table discussions with educators and media professionals, the project will create a collaborative environment where participants can share best practices for addressing hate speech.
- **Improved Media Literacy:** There will be a noticeable improvement in media literacy among participants. Many are expected to feel more capable of discerning credible news sources from misinformation, which is crucial in combating the spread of hate speech.

Interventions and Collaboration with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

Detailed plan for collaboration with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and other stakeholders was developed and following areas for intervention and methods were discussed:

- **Educational Workshops:** organisation of workshops focused on media literacy, digital citizenship, and the recognition of hate speech. These workshops will be designed for both young people and educators, providing practical tools for navigating online spaces responsibly.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Collaborating with NHRIs will allow the project to advocate for stronger policies regarding online hate speech. By presenting findings from surveys and qualitative research, the project aims to influence policymakers to implement more robust protections for vulnerable groups.

- Resource Development: The project will result in educational resources, including guides on recognizing hate speech and strategies for reporting it effectively. These resources will be distributed to schools and youth organizations to facilitate ongoing education.

- Partnerships with Media Outlets: Collaborating with local media outlets will help raise awareness about the importance of ethical reporting standards. The project will engage journalists in discussions about their role in combating hate speech through responsible journalism practices.

3. Feedback and Testimonials

Feedback from participants, stakeholders, and partners is expected to be overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the project's effectiveness in raising awareness and fostering dialogue around hate speech:

- Participant Testimonials:

- "Before this workshop, I didn't realize how often I encountered hate speech online. Now I feel empowered to speak up against it." – A focus group participant.

- "The discussions we had opened my eyes to the impact of my words online. I want to be part of the solution." – A young participant.

- "I learned how to recognize misinformation better. It's important for us as youth to know what's real." – Focus group participant.

- "I used to think that reporting hate speech wouldn't make a difference, but now I see that every action counts." – A participant from a workshop.

- "This project has helped me understand that I'm not alone in facing these issues; we can support each other." – Focus group participant.

- Stakeholder Feedback:

- "The collaboration with youth organizations has been invaluable. We are now better equipped to address these issues within our communities." – A representative from a local NGO.

- "This project has opened our eyes to the realities of online hate speech and its impact on youth. We need more initiatives like this." – A participant from a round table discussion.

- "Engaging with young people has shown us how critical it is to listen to their experiences when developing strategies against hate speech." – An educator involved in the training sessions.

4. Recommendations

Based on the findings and experiences gathered throughout the current year, several recommendations are suggested for future actions:

1. **Expand Educational Initiatives:** Increase the frequency and reach of educational workshops focused on media literacy and digital citizenship for both young people and educators. This could involve online modules to reach a broader audience.
2. **Strengthen Partnerships with NHRIs:** Continue collaborating with NHRIs to advocate for stronger legal frameworks against hate speech online. Joint initiatives could include public campaigns promoting awareness of rights related to online expression.
3. **Develop Comprehensive Reporting Tools:** Create user-friendly tools or apps that allow individuals to report incidents of hate speech easily across various platforms. This could enhance accountability for social media companies.
4. **Foster Community Dialogues:** Organize community dialogues that bring together youth, educators, parents, and local leaders to discuss experiences with hate speech and brainstorm solutions collaboratively.
5. **Monitor Media Practices:** Establish a monitoring mechanism that evaluates how local media outlets report on issues related to hate speech, ensuring adherence to ethical journalism standards.
6. **Promote Positive Online Campaigns:** Encourage youth-led campaigns that promote positive narratives online as counter-narratives to hate speech, fostering an inclusive digital culture.

These outcomes illustrate the LIFE project's commitment to addressing hate speech among youth while fostering a culture of respect and understanding within digital spaces. By continuing these efforts and implementing the recommended strategies, stakeholders can work towards creating safer online environments for all users in Serbia.