

INTRODUCTION TO ORPHEUS

ORPHEUS - Offline and online Radicalization Prevention Holding back Extremism and Upholding Security

An international project on how to foster resilience in youth: new approaches within online and offline prevention

1 Introduction

In response to ongoing societal concerns about violent extremism in Europe, in 2019 ORPHEUS (Offline and Online Radicalization Prevention, Holding back Extremism and Upholding Security) was awarded funding by Interreg 2Seas for a 4-year project to develop a new integrated prevention model to tackle the risk factors for violent extremism in democratic societies, regardless of ideological background, by fostering resilience in young people and professionals supporting them.

Partner agencies in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the UK – including local governments, youth work and educational organisations and universities – worked together to develop and test the new model, a summary of which is presented below, with advice on how regions can adapt and incorporate it into local prevention policy and practice.

If you would like to find out more about the ORPHEUS consortium partners, please see the '[Who We Are](#)' page on our website or read the Strategic Report.

2 The ORPHEUS Prevention Model

It is essential for young people to have a solid base within the community where they feel they belong and that they have a voice, the absence of which can be a risk factor for violent extremism. The ORPHEUS model promotes an innovative, grassroots *wellbeing*-oriented approach to prevention. It emphasises a co-creation approach between young people and youth workers / educators, promoting the agency of young people as equal citizens in democratic societies and supporting them to be part of the solution.

ORPHEUS targets the interplay of risk factors for violent extremism, always with a wellbeing perspective in mind, by seeking to:

- strengthen positive networks for young people;
- offer legitimate channels to young people for the public expression of their grievances;
- promote positive alternatives to violent extremist narratives.

You can read more about the theories and evidence behind the ORPHEUS model in the [ORPHEUS Position Paper](#).

3 In Co-Creation With Young People

❖ Safe Spaces

“Safe Spaces” are an integral component of the ORPHEUS prevention model. A safe space is both a location and a set of core principles, co-created between young people and professionals they trust, to support young people to:

- foster connections between young people and their family, friends and institutions, strengthening their social bonds;
- engage in open dialogue;
- be empowered to publicly express their grievances.

The co-creation of safe space is not easy or straightforward, and involves a lot of dialogue back and forth between frontline workers and young people, but the aim is to create space and support young people to feel confident within this space. It must be more than just listening to young people, but also enabling them to act. Safe space sessions were piloted in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the UK, with over 400 young people taking part. Learning from the safe spaces pilot sessions informed the development of training and guidance for professionals to increase their skills and confidence in facilitating safe spaces in the future.

96% of young people who completed a survey after taking part in a safe space session reported decreased levels of social alienation.

You can read more about Safe Spaces pilots, methodology and evaluation in the [Strategic Report](#).

You can learn more about running Safe Spaces in your region by reading the guidance and training manuals available in the [ORPHEUS Toolkit](#).

❖ Online Safety Training

Empowering young people to be safe in online spaces, with the critical literacy skills to identify propaganda and build resilience to attempts at ideological grooming, is a key component of the ORPHEUS model. The project developed a training course on online safety and cyberawareness aimed at supporting young people to more effectively evaluate information they encounter online, understand the impact of cognitive bias and think more critically about free speech, privacy and the role of the media. This training was piloted in all the project regions, with over 500 young people taking part.

95% of young people who participated in online safety / cyberawareness training who completed a survey indicated they had increased their levels of cyberawareness.

You can learn more about the development and evaluation of our Online Safety training for young people in the [Strategic Report](#).

You can access the Online Safety training for young people in the [ORPHEUS Toolkit](#).

❖ **Alter-narrative movies**

ORPHEUS emphasises the promotion of positive alternatives to violent extremist narratives. A series of 12 short 'alter-narrative' movies have been developed, aimed at young people, with the intention of raising critical awareness and stimulating debate, exploring topics such as immigration, youth culture, critical literacy and race and ethnicity, which will be available to watch on the ORPHEUS website. Additionally, a guidance manual was developed to support content creators to develop their own alter-narrative films.

You can access the [alter-narrative movies](#) and the [guide to creating alter-narrative content](#) on the ORPHEUS website.

❖ **The ORPHEUS Toolkit - Supporting Professionals (Frontline Youth Workers and Educators)**

It is essential for the success of the ORPHEUS model that frontline professionals working with young people, such as youth workers and educators, have the necessary skills and confidence in relevant competency areas. We have developed a range of tools to support the ORPHEUS model, to help train professionals and build fertile ground for the politicisation and democratic citizenship of young people.

The toolkit includes five training modules to support professionals in developing the skills and confidence to create safe spaces. These are designed to be flexible and adaptable according to local needs and contexts. Each course consists of a comprehensive manual to support the individual delivering the training, additional supporting material such as handouts and slides, and a resource pack to be distributed to professionals who complete the training. The topics covered by the training modules are:

- Dealing with Controversial Issues;
- Strengthening Personal Safety in Safe Spaces;
- Moral Panic, Youth and Counter Culture;
- Critical Literacy and Online Awareness;
- Get Up Stand Up: Supporting Young People In Their Struggle Against Injustice.

90% of professionals who took part in a training session and completed a survey reported increased confidence in relation to topic-specific competencies and 83% reported increased confidence in competencies relevant to the ORPHEUS model generally.

Also included in the ORPHEUS Toolkit are:

- A guidance manual to support professionals when engaging in online direct dialogue with young people in chatrooms and chat apps;
- Alter-narrative movies that can be shared with young people, using the films to stimulate debate and critical thinking and to promote positive alternatives to radical narratives;
- A guidance manual to support content creators in creating their own alter-narrative content;
- Webinars – a range of pre-recorded educational webinars covering relevant topics such as Safe Spaces, the extreme right on social media and utilising the positive effects of online gaming in online gaming.

You can read more about the development and evaluation of the professionals' training in the [Strategic Report](#).

You can access the training materials, guidance manuals, alter-narrative movies and webinars in the [toolkit](#) area of the ORPHEUS website.

4 Flexibility, Adaptability and a Cross-Border Approach

The ORPHEUS model has been developed and tested by an international, multi-partner consortium involving frontline professionals, researchers and policymakers, with different regions sharing good practices and innovation from their unique contexts.

Moreover, ORPHEUS has been developed by different types of organisations and agencies. It is not just academia, not just local municipalities and not just schools or youth organisations, but a combination of all these organisations contributing their expertise and working together.

This approach presented a number of challenges including navigating different languages, principles and local working cultures. However, the strength of this cooperative and co-creative approach is that it has ensured that the ORPHEUS model and its supporting tools have been tested in different areas so are flexible and can be adapted to work with and inform local policy and practice, with the prevention model functioning as a guiding set of principles.

5 Using the ORPHEUS Prevention Model in Your Region

The ORPHEUS model has been developed, tested and refined in four different countries and has been specially designed to be flexible and adaptable, to meet local and regional needs.

To help to start planning how to bring the ORPHEUS model to your region, we recommend visiting the [ORPHEUS website](#), which has all the information you need to support you.

6 For Policymakers

If you are in a policymaking or strategic role, we suggest that you take the following actions:

- Read the [ORPHEUS Position Paper](#), which describes in more detail the theoretical underpinnings and evidence behind the ORPHEUS prevention model;
- Read the [Strategic Report](#), which provides a more detailed overview and evaluation of the project and its achievements, to help you envisage how the ORPHEUS model might work in your context;
- Review the contents of the [ORPHEUS Toolkit](#) so that you are informed about the products available to support the frontline professionals in your region who will be using the ORPHEUS model;
- Review the [ORPHEUS roadmap](#) and the [ORPHEUS step by step](#) instructions;
- Read the ORPHEUS Policy Recommendations which include further advice to help you implement ORPHEUS successfully in your region.

7 For Frontline Professionals (Youth Workers, Educators, etc.)

If you are in a role working directly with young people, we advise that you access the [ORPHEUS Toolkit](#) where you will find relevant training courses, guidance manuals and other material to support you in delivering the ORPHEUS model.



<https://www.orpheusproject.eu/>

INTRODUCTION TO ORPHEUS

Authors: Annie Kirby¹ & Hilde Lauwers²

¹ University of Portsmouth

² City of Mechelen

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The ORPHEUS-consortium

City of Mechelen – Belgium
Portsmouth City Council – United-Kingdom
University of Portsmouth – United-Kingdom
Artevelde University of Applied Sciences – Belgium
Greta Grand Littoral – France
Ceapire – Belgium
University College Roosevelt – The Netherlands
ContourdeTwern – The Netherlands

Project Management and Secretariat

Project Manager: Hilde Lauwers, hilde.lauwers@mechelen.be

Administrative and Financial Expert: Kathy Marivoet, kathy.marivoet@mechelen.be

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