

Disinformation and the online risks – why is it important to talk about them in school?

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When I decided to pursue in teaching, I had one clear goal – to help the youth to become critical thinkers and aware citizens, who would be the essence for building a developed and modern society. Today, during the era of digitalization and accelerated globalization, along with its benefits, these processes also hide dangers for our development and mind.

Disinformation is one of the main issues which endangers the basis of our society and values. It is not only distorting the reality, but undermining the trust in institutions, dividing the society and creating a premise for manipulation. Disinformation is one of the largest challenges for the educational system today.

After the training “**Disinformation, risks and how to cope with it**”, organized during the project **GLENS**, I feel a sincere joy and satisfaction of the big interest and active engagement of young people from different parts of Bulgaria. This training made me believe that young people are not left alone to wander in the fog of disinformation. The topics of discrimination, human trafficking and different practical sessions and meetings were particularly interesting and educational.

In my short but fulfilling life and professional experience I communicate daily with people such as students, colleagues, acquaintances, relatives, who are victims of this manipulative activity and as a result they formed a wrong idea of reality, which leads to personal and even social problems and restrictions.

Exactly this training shows students and society that civil position is not only just the rights and obligations or becoming aware of the main problems of the country, but it includes practical life skills as well. It is not just a lesson when the student learns how to check the sources of information or recognize the signs of manipulation. This is a weapon against exploitation and lies. I strongly believe that this training is a big step in the right direction, and it will help a lot with the practices of imposing control through lies and fear.

I am extremely grateful to the organizers of this event and the opportunity to take an active part in it. I really hope that organizing such events will become more common and develop in time by including discussions and practical sessions on these subjects in school as well as outside of it. I wish such initiatives to continue their development and expand their range of participants such as teachers, students, parents and media representatives.

Only with joint efforts we would be able to deal with the challenges of disinformation and build a society, based on truth, trust and responsibility. As a teacher who believes in the force of education, I consider this as our duty and responsibility for future generations.