EDIN

UNAOC
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)

EMPOWERING DIALOGUES & INTERFAITH NETWORKS (EDIN)

SNAPSHOT

Pilot Evaluation Snapshot

The Empowering Dialogues & Interfaith Networks (EDIN) Project is a collaboration between the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)/the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT).

EDIN equips young religious leaders and young media makers with skills to promote interreligious understanding, prevent sectarian violence, and counter terrorist narratives.

EDIN participants take part in capacity-building sessions and subsequently design and run social media campaigns intended to (i) defuse sectarian tensions, (ii) counter extremist and hateful narratives, and (iii) promote social cohesion.

The EDIN Pilot ran from January 2021 to February 2022 online, with one in-person convening during February 2022. Participants received a $1,500 grant to run their social media campaigns.

20
participants* took part in the EDIN pilot

young Jewish religious leaders

young Muslim religious leaders

young media makers

11
countries** represented

spanning the Middle East, North Africa and Europe

20-35
age bracket of participants

young Christian religious leaders

*Participants were from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Norway, Saudi Arabia, UK and Ukraine
*20 participants completed all program elements (11 females, 9 males); overall, 24 were selected to participate in the EDIN Pilot

Key Achievements

The evaluation was conducted to help stakeholders understand how well the EDIN pilot built participant capacity to use social media for PCVE and to generate insights about how to improve EDIN in the future.

1 The EDIN Pilot prepared participants to engage in interreligious dialogue and run social media campaigns.

2 The EDIN Pilot facilitated collaborations and interpersonal relationships between young religious leaders and young media makers that are likely to continue post-project.

> "I've been putting some of what I've learned about peaceful communication into practice writing articles about interfaith topics in France."
>
> – PARTICIPANT

> "I really liked everyone in the group and found such meaningful connections with them, even online, that it gave me a renewed energy and enthusiasm for interfaith work."
>
> – PARTICIPANT

82% developed an improved understanding of religious dialogue.

71% gained knowledge about how to use social media to support interfaith understanding.

75% gained knowledge of how to use social media to prevent hateful and terrorist narratives.

Key Success Factors

1 The decision to jointly brand the EDIN Project allowed EDIN to capitalize on each agency's comparative advantages, but also resulted in operational challenges.

2 In-person convenings prior to EDIN's social media campaigning phase are important for building the trust necessary for participants to conduct joint social media campaigns.

3 Grant funds acted as an equalizer across participant social media capabilities, allowing participants of all levels of experience to reach sizeable audiences.

A participant with 1.5 million followers prior to the EDIN Pilot reached 443,000 people by running a campaign that cost $1000. Meanwhile, a group of three participants with no social media following prior to EDIN ran a joint campaign. With their pooled funds of $4500, they reached 1.1 million individuals over a few months of online audience building and paid advertising.

All statistics are from participant surveys (n=17)

Areas for Improvement

1 More engagement with social media influencers/companies would benefit EDIN.

2 EDIN requires additional human and financial resources as well clarification on roles and responsibilities.

3 Participants desired more peer-led capacity-building sessions.

4 A clearer UNAOC and UNOCT/UNCCT joint strategy on how to leverage the UN network as a door opener for EDIN participants could help EDIN have maximum effect.

5 More systematic data collection processes are required to strengthen documentation of EDIN's outputs.

Conclusion

Participants, project managers, and trainers unanimously agreed that EDIN should continue and grow.

Establishing systematic data collection processes and a monitoring and evaluation plan would help document EDIN's outcomes.

Recommendations

1

Continue funding EDIN
Increase the EDIN budget to support two in-person convenings, guest experts' inperson participation, and dedicated project management staff. Continue providing $1,500 social media campaign grants to EDIN participants.

2

Dedicate more time to peer-to-peer learning and discussion
Incorporate more participant-led sessions and engage social media influencers as mentors for social media campaigns to provide technical support and mentoring for social media campaign development. Engage social media companies as roundtable speakers. Dedicate group learning time to relationship-building and discussion; readings and lectures can be provided as take-home material for individuals to review on their own.

3

Clarify stakeholder roles and responsibilities
Clarify UNAOC and UNOCT/UNCCT's distinct responsibilities, legal requirements, and approvals procedures and timelines prior to project launch. Commence all communications, branding, administrative and procurement processes prior to EDIN's launch to ensure that these materials are available by the time participants launch their social media campaigns.

4

Invest in evaluation to measure the impacts of EDIN
Build an evaluation plan based upon a theory of change and established indicators at the outset of any future EDIN iterations so that data collection processes are in place from the start and EDIN's impact can be fully assessed. Design data collection tools prior to project launch.

5

Raise EDIN's profile
Establish a joint Communications Plan that includes a strategy for involving other United Nations agencies, Under-Secretaries General, and media contacts prior to project launch to support participants in increasing their campaigns' reach and engagement.

6

Formalize relationships
Formalize the relationship between EDIN participants, EDIN trainers, and the United Nations. Provide additional written and verbal guidance on this relationship so that participants can make use of the UN network when establishing partnerships.

Find out more at edin.uncct.unaoc.org