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Summary Report: WP5- Democracy Co-Creation Labs & Local Awareness Campaign Design – Greece

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“Democracy Co-Creation Labs & development of local campaign action plans in Greece”

Action Summary

On **Monday, April 7** and **Tuesday, April 8 2025**, the **European Public Law Organization (EPLO)**, in collaboration with **Mandoulides Schools in Thessaloniki**, implemented the activities of **Work Package 5 of the EU-Childocracy project**.

Mandoulides Schools, along with their staff and students, were valuable partners of EPLO, contributing significantly to both the organization and the success of the two-day educational workshop. The **coordination and oversight of the activities** were undertaken by **Ms. Lola Lyberopoulou, Director of EPLO's Department of Technical Cooperation and Head of European and International Programs**, together with **project managers Ms. Lea Stavrou and Ms. Elena Psalti**, who facilitated the implementation and actively supported the participation of all involved parties.

On the first day, students and invited speakers engaged in an open dialogue, during which critical social issues were presented and analyzed. These included **smoking, school bullying, harassment, cyberbullying and the necessity of learning first aid (CPR)**. These topics had already emerged from the educational workshop on identifying and discussing local needs and challenges, conducted in November 2024 as part of Work Package 2.

The 60 students from Thessaloniki (Greece) (37 female and 23 male participants) had the opportunity to hear from experts in psychology, medicine, criminology, digital security and local governance, gaining valuable knowledge and inspiration for action.

Notably, the **Mayor of Pylaia-Chortiatis, Mr. Ignatios Kaitezidis**, and the **Member of Parliament for Thessaloniki, Mr. Efstratios Simopoulos—who is also the Chair of the Permanent Special Committee on Research and Technology in the Hellenic Parliament—**highlighted the **role of local and national authorities in promoting social responsibility and inclusion**. They shared with students the **"secrets" of success from their own election campaigns**, presenting real-life examples of how to create messages addressed to the citizens and align with social values, presenting strategies still used to effectively communicate with the public.



The speakers also discussed the **broader institutional framework and EU initiatives** relevant to each topic. They emphasized the importance of coordination between governments, schools, and civil society, sharing practical examples and best practices from both Greece and other parts of Europe.

The first day concluded with a presentation by **Professor Vasiliki Artinopoulou, Criminology Professor at Panteion University and Chair of the Committee on Youth Violence and Delinquency (an advisory body to the Greek Prime Minister)**. Professor Artinopoulou is also **Director of the EPLO Institute for Crime and Criminal Justice**.

The **second day** focused on the **design of local awareness campaigns** by the students themselves, supported by experienced mentors. Each group worked on creating a campaign tailored to the communication medium they selected, aiming to convey their message effectively to their peers. The chosen media included: **video, poster, podcast, social media post and public debate**.

Guided by the **fundamental values of the European Union**, students combined creativity with social sensitivity, demonstrating in practice that democratic participation begins within the school community. **Each team was mentored by a professional** with extensive experience in their campaign's domain. These professionals, with backgrounds in law, digital marketing, journalism, and the arts, offered valuable insights and guidance to the students. Their role was to assist in developing each campaign, providing practical advice based on their personal and professional expertise.

Mentors worked closely with the students, helping them refine their ideas and strategies, ensuring they understood how to communicate their messages effectively to their peers. They guided the students in exploring communication techniques, crafting effective messages and building a communication strategy to reach their intended audience.

The atmosphere was highly collaborative and creative, with students contributing actively with ideas. The students reported that working on their own campaigns and engaging with experts helped deepen their understanding of the issues that concern them. The workshop highlighted the power of participatory learning and collaboration, leaving students with a clear message: **change begins with ourselves**.



Day 1- Experts' Presentations

Harassment and Bullying

The session opened with psychologist **Ms. Olga Zikopoulou**, who addressed the issues of **harassment and bullying**, topics that students had previously identified as major concerns during the Needs Assessment Workshop in November 2024.

Ms. Zikopoulou emphasized the **importance of child participation** in decision-making, referencing the [EU Children's Participation Platform](#) and **Article 2 of the EU Treaty**, which mentions the EU values of **dignity, freedom, equality, and solidarity**—all foundational to combating bullying.

She provided a comprehensive definition of bullying, outlining its individual and social consequences and she presented statistical data from European studies showing its prevalence in schools. Her focus then shifted to tools and strategies for prevention and intervention:

- The "[Live Without Bullying](#)" platform, offering direct support for children and parents.
- The "[Stop Bullying](#)" platform, developed by the Greek government, offering guidance to students, parents and teachers.
- The [European Anti-Bullying Network \(EAN\)](#), which promotes cross-border collaboration and exchange of best practices within the EU.

One of the most impactful points in her speech was the **presentation of school mediation**, as implemented in Mandoulides Schools. Mediation, conducted by trained student mediators, helps resolve conflicts and prevent escalation. Teachers may also act as mediators in more serious cases. While optional, mediation is actively applied from primary to secondary education within the school, aiming to reduce incidents and foster dialogue.

Ms. Zikopoulou concluded with practical advice for students on how to respond if they are victims or witnesses of bullying, emphasizing the steps to seek help and ensure safety. She also guided students in planning their awareness campaigns, advising them to keep messages **simple, sincere and engaging** and to encourage **active participation from their peers** to promote real change.





Smoking

Dr. Ioanna Philippou, specialist pulmonologist, delivered a detailed presentation on the serious health risks of smoking, covering both traditional cigarettes and heated tobacco products. She emphasized that smoking is the leading cause of chronic respiratory diseases, such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and is responsible for 90% of lung cancer deaths and 25% of deaths from cardiovascular diseases.

She also highlighted the dangers of passive smoking, citing alarming statistics: 40% of children and 35% of women are regularly exposed to passive smoke, making smoke-free environments a critical public health goal. Dr. Philippou discussed the addictive nature of nicotine, both physically and psychologically, and expressed concern over the rising number of young smokers, particularly those using electronic cigarettes, often in combination with traditional tobacco.

She outlined the **European anti-smoking strategy**, which upholds the **right to a smoke-free environment** by enforcing **strict bans** in indoor public areas, workplaces, and public transport. The strategy also addresses exposure to secondary aerosols, which are toxic and especially harmful to children and adolescents. A central theme of her presentation was that **the right to health is inalienable and universal**. Dr. Philippou called for the implementation of preventive and cessation programs, with a strong focus on youth and vulnerable groups, to safeguard long-term public well-being and ensure that the next generation can thrive in healthy, tobacco-free environments.

Cyberbullying

Dr. Athanasios Dimitriadis, specialist in digital forensics, delivered a presentation on **cyberbullying**, emphasizing both its growing prevalence and the lack of awareness among young people about what constitutes abusive online behavior. He explained that victims—and often even perpetrators—may not realize they are involved in legally and ethically problematic situations.

He outlined various **forms of cyberbullying**, including insults and degradation of personal dignity, repeated threats, blackmail, racial or discriminatory content. Based on data from the World Health Organization (2024), he highlighted that **1 in 6 students in Europe has experienced cyberbullying**, a rate that continues to rise alongside social media usage. A national survey by





the Greek Safer Internet Center showed that **1 in 8 victims feel isolated and have no one to turn to**—underlining the **urgent need for support systems**.

Dr. Dimitriadis stressed the importance of reporting such incidents and educating both students and adults on how to use platform-specific reporting tools (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Discord). He underscored that **observers have ethical responsibility**: remaining passive in the face of bullying makes one a silent accomplice. Active support from observers can be crucial in empowering victims and stopping harm.

From a legal side, cyberbullying is a **criminal offense** in Greece. It includes acts such as defamation, threats, harassment, and extortion, as described in Articles 361–362, 333, 385, and 370 of the Greek Penal Code. If the perpetrator is a minor, legal responsibility extends to their parents, who may face both civil and criminal consequences.

He further explained how **cyberbullying undermines European values and human rights**, including human dignity and personal integrity, freedom of expression, democratic participation, privacy and data protection. Dr. Dimitriadis shared a **real-life case involving a minor** who was targeted online, guiding students on how to respond if they or someone they know face similar abuse. He reminded them that **“the internet remembers, but we have power”**, highlighting the need for quick action and support-seeking.

He closed his presentation by advocating for ongoing awareness, communication, and collaboration among students, teachers and families. He encouraged students to design their awareness campaigns with **authenticity, simplicity and clarity**, aiming to speak directly and effectively to their peers.

First Aid Education and CPR Training

Ms. Despina Lygoura, certified first aid trainer and volunteer with [KIDS SAVE LIVES](#), addressed the crucial role of **first aid education and CPR training** in safeguarding public health and empowering citizens. She stressed that the ability to respond effectively in emergencies—particularly through **resuscitation techniques** and the proper use of an **Automated External Defibrillator (AED)**—can literally save lives. Central to her message was the importance of **public awareness and accessibility**. Ms. Lygoura highlighted:

- The **National AED Map**, developed by the Ministry of Digital Governance, which catalogs AED locations throughout Greece.



- The [iSAVElives app](#), a digital tool enabling users to quickly locate nearby defibrillators and contribute to community safety.

Moreover, she conducted a **live demonstration** of first aid techniques, including **artificial respiration** and **AED use**, using a medical training dummy. This **hands-on approach** provided students with practical skills that could be vital in real-life emergencies. She emphasized that **first aid reflects core European values** like **solidarity and humanitarianism**, and highlighted **volunteerism** as a key part of **active citizenship**. She also pointed to **European initiatives** that promote cross-border cooperation in first aid training. Ms. Lygoura concluded by urging the creation of a **culture of preparedness**, especially among youth.

School Bullying

Dr. Ioannis Koziakis, psychologist from the child protection NGO "**The Smile of the Child**", began his presentation by introducing the organization's mission and origins, dating back to 1995. He highlighted the organization's nationwide support network, including 10 specialized Child Intervention and Support Centers, designed to provide rapid response in cases of violence, abuse or missing children.

A particular focus was given to the **Center for Violence and Bullying**, which offers targeted interventions, individual psychological support and counseling for children, parents, and teachers. This center serves as a critical resource for addressing school bullying, providing a safe and structured environment for tackling such incidents.

Dr. Koziakis defined **school bullying** and differentiated between **two types of victims**:

- **Passive victims**, who suffer silently, often overwhelmed by fear and anxiety.
- **Aggressive victims**, who respond to bullying with hostility, masking their vulnerability.

He underlined the **key role of observers**, many of whom hesitate to report bullying due to fear of retaliation or social exclusion, yet their intervention can be decisive in prevention. Collaboration emerged as a central theme, since Dr. Koziakis emphasized the importance of joint action between schools, families and society, promoting awareness, early detection and effective responses. He also stressed out the role of **cooperative initiatives**, such as the **European Anti-Bullying Network (EAN)**, and the importance of institutional support through mechanisms like the **1056 helpline** operated by the organization.



Citing recent data, he revealed the scale of the issue:

- **1 in 3 children** has experienced bullying.
- **1 in 3 children** who spend extensive time on screens faces bullying.
- **1 in 4 children** feels their school does not effectively teach respect and anti-bullying values.

Dr. Koziakis emphasized that **silence and inaction enable bullying**, which in turn damages **mental health, social inclusion, and core European values such as human dignity, freedom of expression and of course democracy**. To inspire students as they design their awareness campaigns, he proposed to students to watch the short film “Nefeli’s Thoughts”, produced by the organization in 2023. The film explores the internal world of a bullied child, giving emotional depth to the often invisible suffering of silent abuse.

Dr. Koziakis concluded by urging students to recognize their collective strength and to work together to defend children’s rights, uphold European values, and create schools where no child feels unprotected or unheard.

Insights from Representatives of Institutional Bodies

Mr. Efstratios Simopoulos, Member of the Greek Parliament for Thessaloniki and Chair of the Permanent Special Committee on Research and Technology of the Greek Parliament, emphasized the **critical importance of youth participation in public affairs**. Mr. Simopoulos linked this participation to key values such as **social responsibility, inclusion, innovation**, and respect for **freedom of expression, equality and human rights**—core principles of the European Union. He argued that these values can only be strengthened when young people are **actively engaged in public life**.

He offered students a clear and accessible explanation of the Hellenic Parliament function, including the stages of drafting, consultation and voting on legislation. He stressed the importance of transparency and the citizen’s role in shaping public policy, reinforcing democratic legitimacy.

Particular focus was given to the role of Parliamentary Committees, especially the one he chairs. He described how the Research and Technology Committee addresses critical issues such as scientific advancement, innovation, linking research with the labor market and technological trends that influence both policy and daily life. Mr. Simopoulos emphasized that understanding



how institutions work is essential for developing critical thinking and social awareness and encouraged students to become informed and active citizens.

In conclusion, he turned his attention to the students' awareness campaigns which will be designed as part of the EU-Childocracy project. Drawing from his experience in public life, he urged students to **communicate with simplicity and empathy**, noting that “What is obvious to one person may be invisible to another.” He highlighted that the most successful campaigns are those that **speak directly to the heart** of the public. **Honest, clear and human-centered messages** have the greatest power to inspire reflection, dialogue and real change.

The next speaker was **Mr. Ignatios Kaitezidis, Mayor of Pylaia-Chortiatis** with nearly three decades of experience in local governance, who offered to students a practical and engaging overview of **municipal structures** and the **democratic role of local authorities**. Mr. Kaitezidis explained the organization of local government, the division of municipalities and how mayors and city councils are elected. He also walked students through the workings of municipal council meetings, which range from everyday operational issues to urgent matters impacting citizens' quality of life. He also emphasized how in recent decades, local authorities have moved closer to the people, driven by advancements in technology and communication, as well as the growing demand for transparency and public participation in decisions affecting daily life.

He presented the **“Help at Home”** program as a model of effective social policy. Targeting elderly and mobility-impaired individuals, this initiative provides home-based assistance to those who cannot rely on consistent help from family or caregivers. He noted that the program played a vital role during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to uphold dignity and quality of life for vulnerable citizens. Through this example, the Mayor illustrated the fundamental role of local government in defending citizens' rights—particularly access to health, social care, and basic services—making municipalities a frontline institution for social protection.

The Mayor also underscored the importance of **inter-municipal cooperation** both nationally and at the **European level**, which fosters the **exchange of best practices**, supports **innovation and sustainable development** and leads to more **inclusive, functional cities**.

In closing, Mayor Kaitezidis offered advice to students preparing their awareness campaigns. He encouraged them to focus on **clear and persuasive messaging** and to take full advantage of **digital media**, which he described as the **most powerful tool for spreading ideas and mobilizing society** in today's world.



Prof. Vasiliki Artinopoulou, Criminology Professor at Panteion University and Chair of the **National Committee on Juvenile Violence and Delinquency**, closed the first day of the workshop with an interactive session. Prof. Artinopoulou also serves as **Director of EPLO's Institute for Crime and Criminal Justice**.

She began with a **recap of earlier presentations**, then introduced the work of the **Committee on Juvenile Violence and Delinquency**, which advises the Greek Prime Minister and is responsible for shaping a **National Strategy** to prevent and address youth violence. Supported by expert researchers and unlimited direct access to national data sources, the Committee provides input on legislation and policy-making.

Through hypothetical scenarios, students were invited to reflect, solve problems and participate in dialogue, creating an atmosphere of active engagement. Professor Artinopoulou stressed out that **reporting violence is essential but not sufficient**. The **state must be prepared to respond**, offering victims access to free and comprehensive support—medical, psychological, legal and shelter-related—through a coordinated system of trained professionals.

She warned that if bullying at school isn't stopped early, it can continue outside the school, leading to more serious problems in society. One effective way to prevent this is through **school mediation**, which helps solve conflicts and also teaches students important soft skills like understanding others and listening carefully.

Prof. Artinopoulou highlighted the importance of **ongoing education and awareness** for all stakeholders—students, parents, and educators—through training both inside and outside school as well as **prevention strategies**, such as visits to prisons or rehab centers, which can powerfully illustrate the long-term consequences of violence. Particular concern was raised about children who **experience domestic violence and later replicate it**, becoming perpetrators themselves. She stressed the **cyclical nature of violence** and the need to break that cycle through early and holistic intervention in both school and family settings.

Prof. Artinopoulou also addressed the **sensitive issue of elder abuse**, which often occurs in family settings and includes psychological, physical or financial harm. Its invisibility, she noted, makes it especially urgent to raise awareness and strengthen protective mechanisms.

She then shared **practical advice** to the students on how to create a successful awareness campaign. She urged them to **avoid using strong images that cause excessive emotional charge**, as the **emotion must be strong but in moderation**, in order to mobilize **without causing emotional chaos**. Furthermore, she pointed out that the **campaign messages should not be overly dramatic or create moral panic, as this would lead to failure**. On the contrary, the message should be formulated with **calmness** and **reason**.



Finally, she recommended that students consult the **Council of Europe’s handbook** on awareness campaigns, the [stop-bullying.gov.gr platform](http://stop-bullying.gov.gr) (an initiative by the Onassis Foundation and the Ministry of Education), as well as **short films** related to bullying and youth violence, as sources of inspiration and narrative structure.

Day 2 – Awareness Campaign Design and Implementation

On the second day, students were divided into teams based on the communication medium they chose for their topic and worked on designing their awareness campaigns. The five teams formed were:

1. **Group 1 - Harassment – Poster**
2. **Group 2 - Importance of Learning First Aid & CPR Training – Social Media Post**
3. **Group 3 - Smoking – Public Debate**
4. **Group 4 - School Bullying – Podcast**
5. **Group 5 - Cyberbullying – Video**

Each team was supported by a mentor with expertise in the relevant field, who guided them in shaping their campaign strategy and crafting effective, targeted messages to raise awareness and engage their peers.

EPLO project managers were present throughout the day to ensure the smooth running of the workshop and provide support, aligned with the goals of the EU-Childocracy program. The atmosphere was highly collaborative and creative, with students actively contributing ideas and working enthusiastically toward the development of their campaigns.

1st Group- Topic: Harassment, Campaign medium: Poster

The first group focused on **harassment**, creating a **poster** to be displayed in a central area of Mandoulides Schools, visible to all students from elementary to high school.

Under the guidance of **art teacher Ms. Fotini Vogiatzi**, students used **symbolic imagery and color** to craft a powerful visual message, inspired by the idea that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Their goal was to **spark awareness and reflection** through art. The poster features a **young girl trapped by a shadow representing harassment** and her expression is filled with

fear and despair. The central message “**No means no**” emphasizes respect, personal boundaries and the right to safety and self-determination.

The project offered students a creative outlet to express their concerns and inspire their peers to **recognize and stand against harassment**.

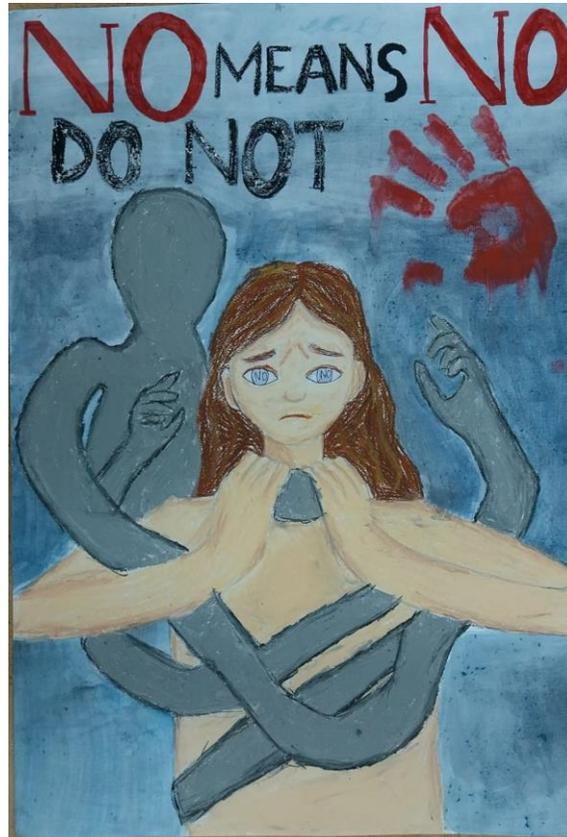


Image 1: The poster created by the students working on the issue of harassment.

2nd Group- Topic: Importance of Learning First Aid and CPR, Campaign Medium: Social Media posting (short video post)

The second group focused on the importance of CPR training and first aid learning, as a life-saving skill and an act of **solidarity and civic responsibility**. They chose to communicate their



message through a **short video post**, designed for **social media platforms** like Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn, leveraging the school's strong online presence.

Under the guidance of **Digital Marketer, Ms. Maria Panayiotidou**, students learned key principles of **digital communication**, including targeting, emotional impact and visual identity. They also gained insights into **ethical online behavior** and platform guidelines.

The video features two realistic scenarios:

1. A **teacher collapses** in the schoolyard and a student trained in CPR provides first aid.
2. A **student faints at a crowded stadium** and a certified adult rescuer intervenes with CPR and an AED.

Both stories highlight how **basic first aid knowledge can save lives**. The students aimed to inspire their peers by showing that anyone can be a lifesaver, and that learning CPR is a **practical expression of care and social responsibility**.

3rd Group- Topic: Smoking, Campaign Medium: Public Debate

The third group addressed the issue of **smoking**, a long-standing public health concern. This format was chosen to **foster critical thinking**, structured argumentation and open dialogue. The group of students who took on this topic decided to reach the audience through a **public debate (discussion)** with the **participation of students from another school**, choosing an interactive and dynamic medium that enhances critical thinking, argumentation and constructive dialogue. Approximately **35–40 students** are expected to participate, either as debaters or audience members, creating a vibrant and interactive environment for exchanging views.

Guided by their **mentor, Ms. Nikoleta Siampali**, law student and experienced debater, the team developed their **persuasive communication skills** and learned how to approach controversial topics with **respect and rhetorical flexibility**. Their preparation began with **creative brainstorming**, during which students mapped out **pros and cons of smoking** from **health, social, psychological and legal perspectives**, turning their notes into a visual guide that fueled the campaign's development.

The initiative aimed not only to inform but also to **empower students to reflect, question and engage actively** with a major public health issue.

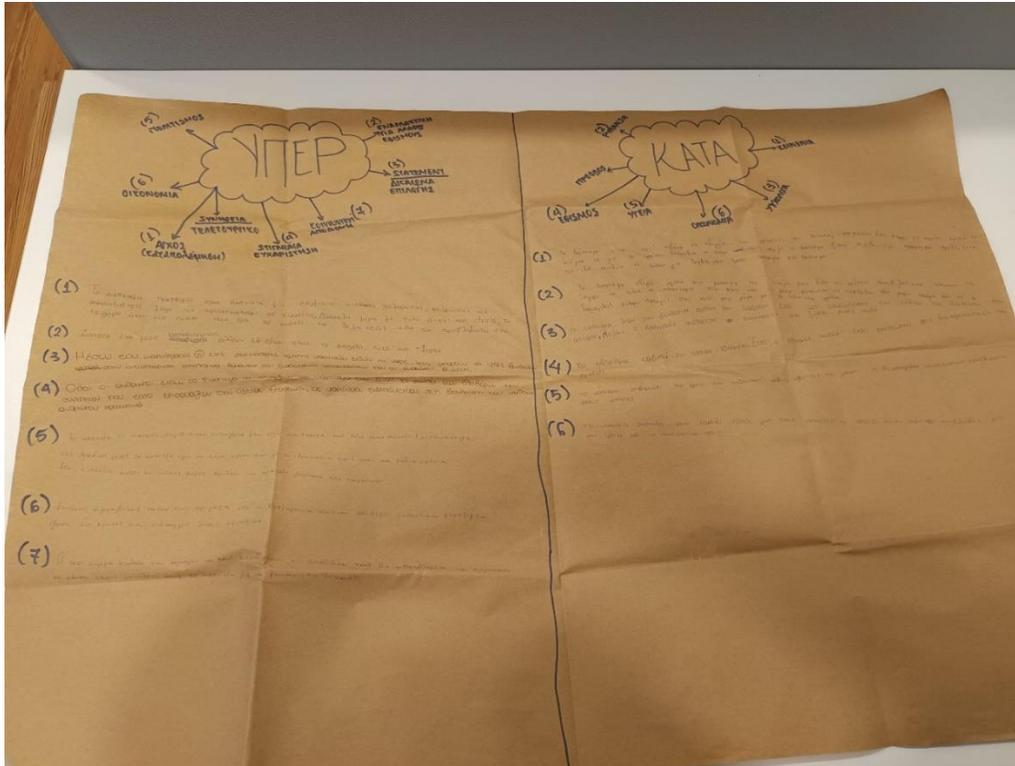


Image 2: List of arguments on the smoking issue.

4th Group- Topic: School Bullying, Campaign Medium: Podcast

The fourth group chose to tackle **school bullying** through a **podcast**, a flexible and engaging medium that allows listeners to connect with the content on their own terms.

With guidance from **Ms. Afroditi Kerameus**, lawyer and experienced podcaster, and her team, students learned the essentials of **podcast production**—from concept development and scripting to recording and editing. They showed great enthusiasm, asking detailed questions about content flow, tools and distribution platforms. In a creative brainstorming session, students proposed inviting a **guest expert**—such as a psychologist or social worker—to explore the **causes, impacts and prevention methods of bullying**. Their goal is to produce a show that **informs, inspires and gives voice to victims**, while promoting empathy and inclusion.



The podcast will be shared via **Mandoulidis Schools' platforms** (website, YouTube and social media) aiming to reach a broad audience of students, parents and educators. With strong interest in the topic and over **1,350 YouTube subscribers**, the show is expected to resonate widely. Through this project, students aim to create **a safe and compassionate school culture**, where **every voice is heard** and bullying is actively addressed.

5th Group- Topic: Cyberbullying, Campaign medium: Video (short film)

The fifth group addressed **cyberbullying**, a growing threat in the digital age, by creating a **short awareness film**. Their aim was to highlight the emotional and social impact of online abuse, particularly through new technologies like **deepfakes**.

Mentored by **Mr. Dimitrios Hatzakis, Philologist and Head of the Cinema Club of the Mantoulides Schools, Mr. Vasilis Iatroudis, journalist** and **Mr. George Michaelides, Cinema club alumnus**, students explored the **storytelling power of video** and learned essential techniques in cinematography, editing and ethical media use.

During his presentation, journalist Vasilis Iatroudis highlighted the transformation of journalism in the digital age, addressing the decline of traditional media, the rise of misinformation and the growing risks posed by AI-generated deepfakes. Through this discussion, students gained valuable **media literacy skills**, learning to critically navigate digital content and recognize the dangers of fake news and manipulated media.

The team chose a realistic scenario: a student creates a deepfake video targeting a classmate, causing social exclusion and emotional harm—until the truth is revealed. The story confronts the dangers of **misinformation, digital manipulation** and the **ethical boundaries of technology**.

The short film will be shared on the **school's website and social media**, aiming to raise awareness about cyberbullying and the importance of digital responsibility and empathy.