

[www.armourproject.eu](http://www.armourproject.eu)

## #6 HIGHLIGHTS

ARMOUR research stage is officially finalized!

Our Experimental Labs are ready to launch validated by first-line practitioners!

Our view of the ARMOUR interdisciplinary learning model is shared with experts around Europe!

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## ARMOUR - A radical model of resilience for young minds



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Learn more about the project, its design and structure, the partners involved and the most recent news at [www.armourproject.eu](http://www.armourproject.eu)!





# ARMOUR research stage is officially finalized!

In July 2019, [ARMOUR delivered the methodology for the Experimental Labs](#) – a key project tool towards achieving its goals to provide individuals in the community and practitioners the know-how and tools to create, test, and promote psychological and community behavioural and communication strategies aimed at correcting reactions and, thus, promoting resilience to push and pull factors involved in advancing radicalization and violent extremism.

The **ARMOUR Experimental Labs** are designed to represent a safe chamber where participants can experience alternative ways of responding to push and pull factors of social polarisation and extremism. Each Lab is to accommodate 14 to 21 participants, including vulnerable community members, civil society, teachers, social assistants, psychologists, law enforcement and security experts, for a duration of up to 8 hours. It is then to be followed by individual practice and active feedback collection.

Based on this methodology, the ARMOUR Team started to work on the Experimental Labs’ curricula and content over the summer. Key competences to be developed included:

Social competence	Problem solving	Emotional competence and autonomy building	Mediation and negotiation
responsiveness to other conceptual and intellectual flexibility caring for others good communication skills sense of humour	ability to apply abstract thinking ability to engage in reflective thought critical reasoning skills ability to develop alternative solutions in frustrating situations	positive sense of independence emerging feelings of efficacy high self-esteem impulse control planning and goal setting belief in the future	group problem solving and consensus-base groups stop and think before acting to bullying

Based on the set of notions above, ARMOUR designed seven Experimental Labs, each of which provided a framework, scenario, and detailed set of exercises and simulations that can assist participants in experimenting with the respective topic.

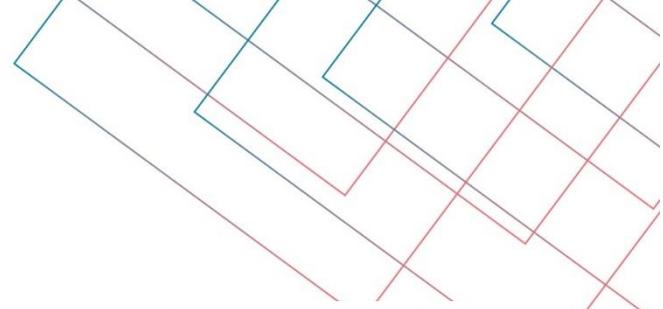
**Coaching and Parenting Lab** focuses on coaching and parenting strategies with the aim to help first-line practitioners in tailoring parenting and coaching skills and strategies to help young people and/or their family members better understand triggers, behaviour, decisions, and reactions, enabling them to prevent them from becoming an active part of the radicalization/polarization process.

**Critical Thinking Lab** encourages the development of critical thinking skills for children and youth. The aim is to subsequently equip children and youth with the capacity for self-guided, self-disciplined thinking, empowering them to think independently, to make sense of the world based on personal experience and observation, and to make critical well-informed decisions in the same way.

**Anger Management Lab** investigates how to better teach anger management as a form of psychoeducational intervention. It comprises a series of exercises that, if used in convergence, can help first line professionals working with young people vulnerable to radicalisation use anger management strategies and techniques to help divert them from violent a disruptive behaviour.



This project was funded by the European Union’s Internal Security Fund — Police, under Grant Agreement No. 823683.



**Narrative and Cultural Awareness Lab** assists participants in understanding the role narratives play in our identity formation, the way they can spot dysfunctional or toxic narratives and, as well as the way in which they can use narratives to employ promising psychoeducational intervention practices in their professional daily routine. It comprises a series of exercises that, if used in convergence, can help first line professionals use narrative therapy strategies and techniques to help divert young people from a negative image of self and others. It also offers solutions to encourage in young people positive and empowering ways of self-expression and self-affirmation.

**Debate and Simulation Lab** provides tools applicable in interventions targeted at young individuals that are either vulnerable to or in the process of radicalisation. It targets the internalisation and further replication of practical, hands-on strategies and personal skills desirable in debate which may equip individuals with necessary self-affirmation and self-expression skills, while fostering their critical thinking and resilience to underlying motives of radicalisation and allegiance to extreme ideologies.

**Conflict Resolution Lab** offers techniques applicable in interventions targeted at young individuals that are either vulnerable to or in the process of radicalisation. It approaches conflict resolution as a form of psycho-educational intervention in which the teacher, counsellor, or any person of influence and legitimate authority for the target group can advise, promote, and assist participants in internalizing the skills necessary for positive resolve of tensed situations and conflicts. This form of intervention creates the premises for behavioural change while offering a safe space to exercise new ways of handling tensed and conflicting situations and social interactions.

**Proportionate Response Lab** addresses the concept of proportionality and provides detailed guidelines to practitioners about what are the appropriate boundaries for state action. It is developed around twelve scenarios, inspired by real cases, in which the state acted to combat radicalization. Participants are asked to debate whether these actions were proportional or not and to provide reasons for their claims with a two-fold purpose. The exercises not only advance participants' knowledge of the issue of state response, but they also improve their critical reading and thinking skills and their ability to speak in public.

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The first Experimental Labs' pre-testing took place in Bucharest on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and was attended by 9 participants, including security experts, psychologists, social assistance and child protection specialists, etc. It was followed by a second pre-testing round organized by the University of Malta on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 that focused on developing skills such as coaching, narrative and cultural awareness and critical thinking among Maltese ethics teachers.

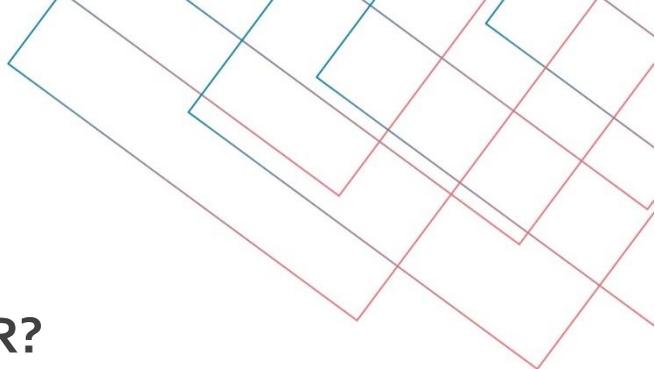


The aim of the pre-testing sessions was to collect **effective feedback** from practitioners who work directly with children aged 10-18, vulnerable to radicalization and polarization phenomena, to recalibrate the proposed exercises to the real needs of the first line practitioners. In this context, the ARMOUR Team presented the concept of each experimental laboratory in terms of context, target group, objective, methodology, expected outcomes and examples of exercise. Participants took part in the exercises, offered feedback, and provided valuable suggestions as

to how the implementation of the labs could be further fine-tuned to the needs of the stakeholders.

**The Experimental Labs will be officially launched in the beginning of 2020.**





## What else had happened in ARMOUR?



An [interim consortium meeting](#) of the ARMOUR Project was held in Granada, Spain on 27-29 November 2019 and was kindly hosted by the Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies (FUNDEA).

During the meeting, the partners discussed and approved key aspects of the project future development including its stages and the overall implementation plan and outlined the dissemination and evaluation strategies and criteria.



ARMOUR was presented in the 27<sup>th</sup> Edition of the [Al-Ghurabá Magazine](#). The article reflected on the ARMOUR aims and activities emphasizing those already conducted and their preliminary results. The upcoming activities on the development of the Experimental Labs have also been discussed to engage the public in this project innovation. To read the full article, please visit [this link](#) (in Spanish).

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019, the FUNDEA's Executive Secretary Inmaculada Marrero addressed the phenomenon of radicalization among young people following the findings of the ARMOUR [research activities](#) at [a seminar on "Youth and Prevention of Radicalization in Morocco"](#), organized by Casa Árabe and CIDEAL Foundation in Madrid, Spain. She presented the ARMOUR design of an interdisciplinary learning model to build resilience to the ideologies and specific behaviours of violent extremism.



FUNDEA also represents the ARMOUR project in a [Euro-Mediterranean Seminar for the Engagement of Youth and Women Against Extreme Violence and Radicalization](#), taking place on 12-13 December 2019, in Rabat, Morocco. The aim of the event was to bring together scientific experts from Europe, Africa, and the Mediterranean to build consensus and dissensus regarding social prevention for youth and women (development, education, gender balance, fighting against radicalization, citizenship, equal opportunities, employability, etc.).





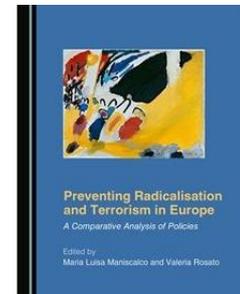
## Tools & guides

*ARMOUR continues building a repository of guidelines, tools, articles, etc. developed by third parties and identified by the ARMOUR Consortium as best practices in the social polarization field for first line practitioners working with children and youth. Some new entries are shown below!*



The MEDEA Network is a multi-disciplinary network of security practitioners, with active links to policy makers and users/providers of security innovations across the Mediterranean and Black Sea countries and focusing on border protection and other security- and disaster-related tasks, including radicalisation. Read more about their activities [here](#).

The EU-funded TRIVALENT project published a new book [“Preventing Radicalisation and Terrorism in Europe – A comparative analysis of policies”](#), which relies on the experience developed within the project and offers critical assessment of the main anti-terrorism and anti-radicalisation policies implemented by five European countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and UK).



**Meanwhile, we continue our work to provide you with an innovative framework and tools for addressing societal polarization.**

**Are you interested in cooperating or taking part?**

**Do you want to know more about the project or any of our activities?**

**Get in contact via [office@armourproject.eu](mailto:office@armourproject.eu) or follow us online @TheARMOURmodel**

