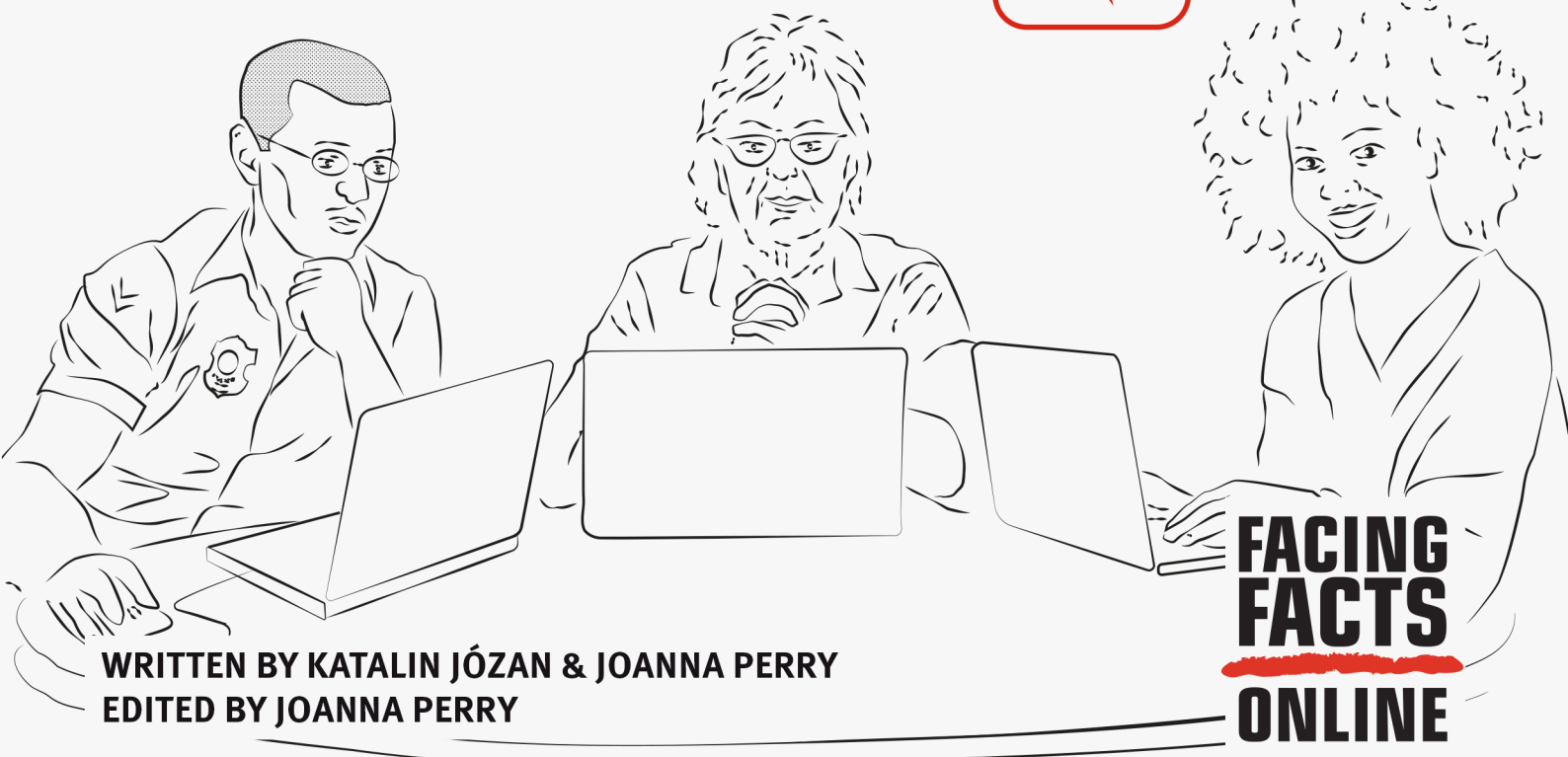# LEARNING ABOUT HATE CRIME & HATE SPEECH ONLINE:

NEEDS & MOTIVATIONS OF A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

WRITTEN BY KATALIN JÓZAN & JOANNA PERRY
EDITED BY JOANNA PERRY

FACING FACTS ONLINE

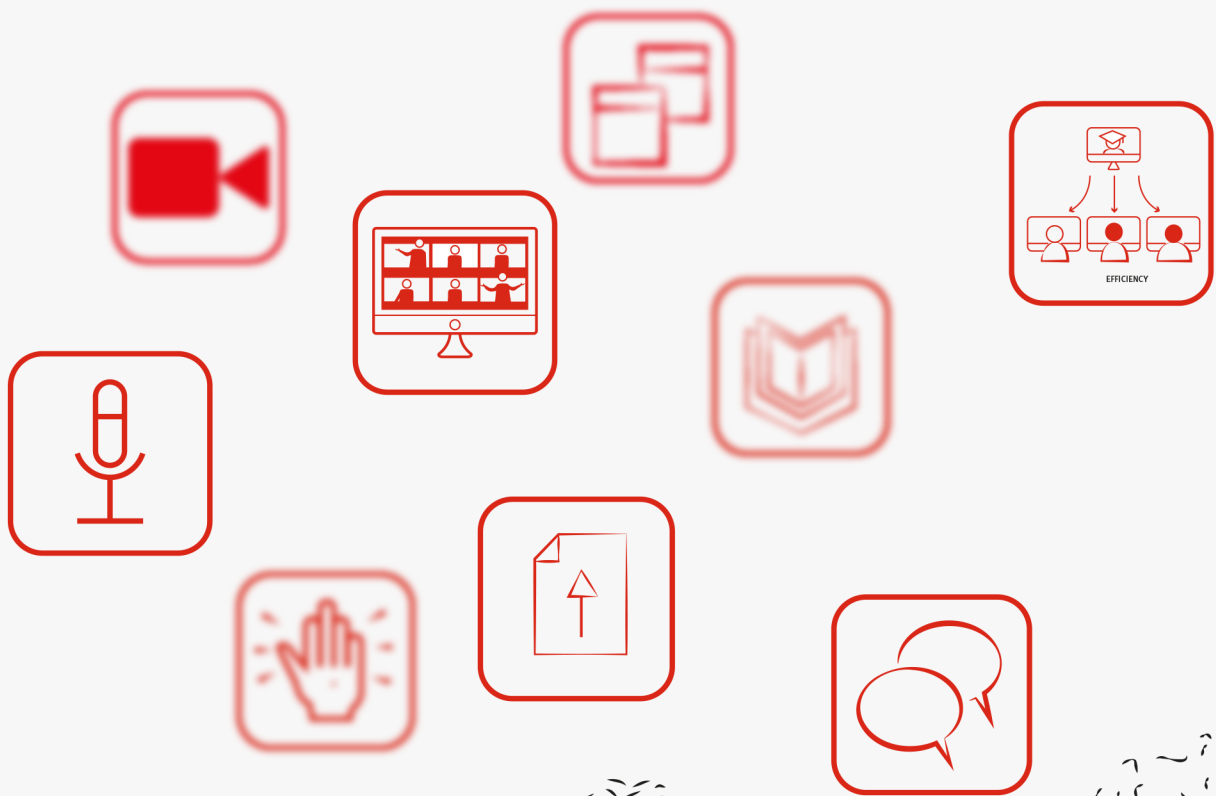Since 2022, CEJI manages the Facing Facts Network.

LEARNING ABOUT HATE CRIME & HATE SPEECH ONLINE: NEEDS & MOTIVATIONS OF A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

WRITTEN BY KATALIN JÓZAN & JOANNA PERRY

EDITED BY JOANNA PERRY

GRAPHICS & DESIGN BY JONATHAN BRENNAN

Key words

Hate crime, Hate speech, Online learning, Training, Capacity building, Multi-stakeholder learning, Technology enhanced learning, Law enforcement, Civil society

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Effective hate crime and hate speech response systems are driven by the daily efforts of law enforcement, victim support providers, prosecutors, monitoring specialists, policymakers and others who share a professional commitment and, for many, a personal motivation to understand, address, and prevent these complex and harmful phenomena. Strengthening and empowering this multi-stakeholder community of practice is central to the values and mission of the Facing Facts Network and Facing Facts Online.

This report aims to set out what we have learned about how to best support and motivate our learners. Drawing on interviews with experts in the field, relevant policy and empirical evidence, and Facing Facts Online's own data, we aim to inform practitioners who are responsible for creating effective hate crime and hate speech online learning programmes. Beginning by exploring the European Union's (EU) digital education policy, we show that training providers such as police academies and multi-stakeholder online learning platforms such as Facing Facts Online are outside its priority focus on traditional educational settings. On the other side of the coin we show that existing guidelines on hate crime and hate speech training do not consider online learning methods in any depth. This disconnect reduces the reach of the benefits of digital advancements and investment to the training providers that are key to strengthening hate crime and hate speech response systems.

Interviewee and empirical evidence reviewed in Section two suggests that an initial strategic decision to pivot towards online learning followed by sustained leadership support is crucial to the success of online learning programs. One key indicator of such support is that management understands online training and in-person programmes as having equal value. Such institutional commitment to online learning programmes also entails a commitment to constant evaluation and learning from others. We argue that the lack of evaluative and empirical data on hate crime and hate speech training in various forms contributes to misconceptions about online learning's costs and effectiveness, and could limit its broader adoption. Programmes need robust evaluation strategies to assess engagement, knowledge retention, and practical application. Rare empirical studies such as that carried out by Groß et al. (2023) of a pilot project using VR technology in sensitising police officers to victims' experiences of hate crime should be widely disseminated. Where possible, evaluation data should be shared across platforms and regular exchange should aim to improve overall online learning methods and outcomes.

The report finds that variations in digital literacy and infrastructure, particularly among law enforcement, impact the adoption and effectiveness of online learning. For example, some agencies operate with restricted internet access, complicating efforts to stream multimedia content or fully utilise online platforms. Constraints like internet use quotas and restrictions on accessing official emails force learners to rely on personal accounts, raising concerns about data privacy and security. Current EU policies, such as the Digital Education Action Plan, emphasise improving digital

skills in traditional education settings but do not adequately extend this support to public authority training, including police academies. Aligning policy to incorporate digital literacy development across different sectors would help address these skill gaps and ensure consistent digital learning experiences for law enforcement and other professionals.

A second major theme more specifically concerns instructional design. Social learning–including tutor support, peer networking, and interaction– is critical for online learning success, especially on sensitive topics like hate crime and hate speech. This suggests the need for cohort-based models that incorporate interactive components including tutorials and group projects rather than purely self-paced learning.

Understanding and aiming to cater to the diversity of learners' motivations is also key. Our analysis suggests that police officers may be more extrinsically motivated by institutional requirements to complete mandatory online training. In contrast, civil society members may be more likely to be intrinsically motivated by personal commitments to equality and justice. Drawing on interviews from previous research conducted by Facing Facts, our analysis was able to bring a consideration of a third group of learners, best described as "change agents" who champion and drive improvements in hate crime and hate speech response systems, working across institutional and community boundaries, including police and other public authorities. These agents often face significant barriers, such as resistance from colleagues, political hostility, or lack of institutional support, yet they are key to driving meaningful change. Our analysis led to the proposal that online learning communities can uniquely support these change agents by providing them with a network of peers, access to best practices, and a safe space to exchange ideas and strategies.

Connected to the importance of supporting change agents, our analysis suggests that differences in understanding, status, and professional cultures in multi-stakeholder learning communities can hinder collaboration. While various guidelines from the European Commission, the UN, and other international bodies encourage collaboration between law enforcement and specialist civil society organisations, expert monitoring and victim support services, there remains a lack of specificity about how to implement sustained cooperation, particularly in facilitating peer learning and information exchange between these groups. This ambiguity can lead to challenges in integrating specialist victim support services and expert monitoring services as co-trainers and especially as co-learners.

Linking back to the need for policy integration and leadership support, more explicit guidance at the EU and national level could help institutionalise multi-stakeholder learning, ensuring that non-governmental specialists are recognised not just as occasional participants but as integral partners in hate crime and hate speech response systems. Interviewees also highlighted the value of platforms that enable professionals to connect and share challenges and best practices with their peers regarding online learning generally and in the area of hate crime and hate speech in particular.

Finally, we find that sustained attention must be paid to innovation through developments in technology-enhanced learning, such as virtual reality tools, which

can bring the victim experience closer to learners and mobile apps which can make national investigation guidelines immediately available. As explored elsewhere by Facing Facts, artificial intelligence drives transformational applications for the design and delivery of online learning, which need constant monitoring and experimentation.

Recommendations suggest that future efforts should focus on policy alignment, robust evaluation frameworks, strengthened multi-stakeholder collaboration, strategic leadership support, and, innovative, learner-centred design.

Acknowledgements

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AGS	An Garda Síochána
CEJI	CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
CoP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FF	Facing Facts
HC	Hate Crime
HS	Hate Speech
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
LMS	Learning Management System
MS	Member States
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OL	Online Learning
SME	Subject Matter Expert
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

CONTENTS

⋮ 1. INTRODUCTION

Online learning, also known as e-learning and digital education, is here to stay. It is also growing. A recent survey carried out to support the development of the European Union's Digital Education Action Plan found that ninety-five percent of the respondents consider that **"supply and demand of digital content for education purposes have significantly increased in recent years, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic."**[1] Awareness of the need for training to support effective responses to hate crime and hate speech is also increasing.[2] Recent strategic training needs assessments carried out by CEPOL, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, revealed that forty-two percent of surveyed Member States rated training on hate crime and hate speech as the most urgently needed topic.[3]

The research presented here shows that those with strategic responsibilities to implement online learning see the benefits of and the need to pivot towards comprehensive online learning and capacity-building strategies. This position could be better supported if EU educational policy, and its priority focus on digital education, were to more explicitly encompass public authority training bodies such as police academies and multi-stakeholder online learning providers such as Facing Facts Online. This research aims to explore these gaps and build some policy and practice bridges so that those at the centre of efforts to understand and respond to hate crime and hate speech have access to the most effective online learning and capacity-building.

---

1 For example, Ninety-five percent of the respondents of the Open Public Consultation of the European Union's Digital Education Action Plan consider that "Supply and demand of digital content for education purposes have significantly increased in recent years, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic."; European Commission. 'Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027).' European Education Area, last modified 2023. https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan.; European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan (Update)." *European Commission - Public Consultations and Feedback,* accessed October 23, 2024. https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12453-Digital-education-action-plan-update-_en.
2 CEPOL European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, "Strategic Training Needs Assessments", 2023. https://www.cepol.europa.eu/training-and-education/training-needs-analysis/strategic-training-needs-assessments.; CEPOL European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, "New EU-STNA Report: Enhancing Digital Skills of Law Enforcement Officials Is Imperative.", last modified 2023. https://www.cepol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/new-eu-stna-report-enhancing-digital-skills-law-enforcement-officials-imperative.
3 Topics included such as data protection, rights of children and minors or victims' rights, see CEPOL. CEPOL European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, "Operational Training Needs Assessment: Fundamental Rights and Data Protection", 2023. https://www.cepol.europa.eu/api/assets/CEPOL_OTNA_Fundamental_Rights_and_Data_Protection.pdf.

1.1 About Facing Facts Online and the need for this report

Facing Facts, coordinated by CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe,[4] is a multi-stakeholder partnership of civil society organisations and public authorities that works to better understand and address hate crime and hate speech through research, training and advocacy. Facing Facts' digital learning platform, Facing Facts Online, offers a mix of online learning options, including self-paced courses, cohort-based learning, and customised courses and programmes, aiming to equip learners with the knowledge and tools to effectively and appropriately respond to hate crime and hate speech in their context.[5]

Effective responses to hate crime and hate speech rely on robust training and capacity-building for all stakeholders involved. This 'community of practice' includes professionals such as law enforcement officials, criminal justice practitioners, policymakers, and specialist victim support providers and monitoring experts. A defining characteristic of this group is their shared professional commitment—and, for many, personal motivation—to understand, address, and combat hate crime and hate speech across Europe and beyond. Strengthening and supporting these response systems is central to Facing Facts Online's learning strategy.

Facing Facts Online is regularly cited as a primary online learning programme dedicated to hate crime and hate speech. For instance, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' report *Encouraging Hate Crime Reporting – The Role of Law Enforcement and Other Authorities* highlights Facing Facts' online platform as a promising practice, noting that the "research-informed courses primarily focus on developing the necessary knowledge and skills for culturally literate engagement with victims and communities, improving reporting, and ensuring support."[6] While this recognition is encouraging, we see a clear need to enhance our own knowledge base and practices, while also advocating for a more stable and supportive policy framework to foster the growth of effective online learning programmes for our community of practice overall.

In 2022, CEJI published a policy briefing setting out gaps and opportunities in research, policy, and practice regarding digital learning for police, criminal justice, and civil society professionals, specifically in the context of hate crime and hate speech.[7] The paper concluded that while online learning programmes in this area have grown in recent years, they have been developed in an empirical and policy vacuum. For example, until now, research on "what works" in online learning has almost exclusively focused on school and university students, teachers, and educators.

---

4 "Promoting social cohesion through training, education, dialogue and advocacy", CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe, accessed December 13, 2024, https://ceji.org/.
5 "Facing Facts Online.", Facing Facts, accessed June 3 2024, https://www.facingfactsonline.eu/.
6 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Encouraging Hate Crime Reporting – The Role of Law Enforcement and Other Authorities", 2021, https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/hate-crime-reporting.
7 Facing Facts. "Understanding and meeting the needs and motivations of online learners for tackling hate crime and hate speech", accessed October 18, 2024. https://www.facingfacts.eu/policy-briefing-hate-speech/.

The policy briefing identified several key areas of exploration to develop the evidence base on what supports anti-hate crime and hate speech online learning communities, which guided the framing of our research objectives. First, while current research predominantly focuses on formal educational settings such as schools and universities, there is a lack of attention to online learning and capacity building within non-formal, informal, and professional contexts. This gap underscores the need to map and evaluate existing EU policies and strategies to determine how effectively they address the specific needs and motivations of multi-stakeholder communities of practice—such as law enforcement, civil society, and equality bodies—in combating hate crime and hate speech. Second, variations in definitions and understandings of 'online learning' combined with the limited research on non-formal and professional settings, highlight the need to better understand and cater to the experiences, needs and motivations of communities of practice, such as those of Facing Facts. Third, the policy briefing identified a need for innovative practices in online learning and cohort-based social learning, particularly in diverse communities of practice tackling hate crime and hate speech. Exploring these practices is essential for developing new approaches to capacity building and online engagement.

1.2 Research objectives and methods

The research had three main objectives:

Objective 1: To map existing policy and guidance regarding online learning on hate crime and hate speech for multi-stakeholder communities of practice, and to understand how these frameworks support or limit learners' capacity to engage effectively.

Objective 2: To document the experiences, perceptions, needs, and motivations of communities of practice, such as Facing Facts, when learning and connecting online, in the context of diverse interpretations of 'online learning' and 'online capacity building'.

Objective 3: To ask how innovative practices such as multi-stakeholder learning design can support both online learning and capacity building for diverse national communities of practice on hate crime and hate speech.

The objectives were pursued through data collection, including from Facing Facts' own online learning management system (LMS), interviews, and a literature review. The scope of this research project is mainly centred around empirical evidence from within the European Union and its Member States, extending to relevant international and global actors when conducting the policy review. Appendix B provides further detail of the research methods.

Figure 1. Interviewees' professional background.

1.3 Limitations

Certain limitations were identified at each phase of data collection. The main constraint regarding the literature review was the scarcity of available information on multi-stakeholder online learning communities in the area of hate crime and hate speech. As a result, articles on online learning that addressed some members of the multi-stakeholder community of practice such as the police were classified as 'highly relevant', even when focused on topics outside of hate crime and hate speech or human rights. In terms of the learner groups, the literature almost exclusively focused on police learning in an online format. To broaden the scope, certain papers that discussed digital aspects of adult learning and life-long learning more generally were also included.

The data review and analysis from the Facing Facts Online LMS platform were also limited by the lack of availability of some data for some courses. In addition, the statistics functions of the particular LMS – Moodle – are also limited by design. Lastly, differences between evaluation questionnaires across courses also affected the comparability of some data. While certain distinctive questions provide valuable insight into particular courses, more consistent design of future evaluations would contribute to more effective and comparable analysis in the future.

In the absence of existing relevant empirical studies, data gathered from expert interviews was central to this study. It would have also been beneficial to follow up with certain interviewees and/or identify new interviewees to further explore and probe arising themes during the analysis stage. However, this wasn't possible due to time constraints of the interviewing phase and the interviewees' availability. Six further interviewees were contacted, including experts from a national police academy, an IGO online capacity-building programme, public authorities and NGOs, but they were unable to take part in the research at this time.

Recommendations for further research in this area are suggested later in the report.

One particular complexity that was present both in the literature review and interview phases was the differing definitions of online learning. This aspect was found to be very significant and became an important theme in our findings, as presented later in this report. Lastly, the entire research was conducted in English, resulting in the unfortunate exclusion of national practices that were not published in English.

As a result of these limitations, the original research objectives were slightly modified, and as the research evolved, additional focus areas were identified. For instance, we removed a fourth research objective and question regarding the details of current online offers given the lack of specific data provided on current courses of interest. Additional fields of focus emerged during the data collection, such as the understanding and expectations of online learning among experts, not only learners.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 Policy context

Our review covered multiple policy domains because the Facing Facts Online community of practice spans institutional, community and national boundaries. As set out in the methodology, areas researched included 'adult' and 'professional' learner groups, different roles such as police and victim support specialists, various learning methods including 'online' and 'multi-stakeholder' approaches, and key topics such as 'human rights', 'hate crime', and 'hate speech'. Our goal was to explore potential connections and opportunities across these areas to better recommend policy approaches that sustainably serve the learning needs of those involved in national and international hate crime and hate speech responses.

Overall, we identified a significant disconnect between the strong focus of EU's *Digital Action Plan* on improving digital skills within the education sector—targeting teachers, educators, and students—and the lack of integration of these advancements into other critical policy areas, such as training for police and public authorities on human rights, non-discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. While digital education has been prioritised in the educational domain, there seems to be little recognition of how these developments could enhance capacity-building and training for public authorities and multi-stakeholder online learning programmes such as Facing Facts Online, leaving a gap in leveraging digital tools for addressing these pressing harms.

2.1.1 EU Digital education policy

Adopted in 2020, the European Union's *Digital Education Action Plan* sets out its ambitious aim to "reset education and training for the digital age". Supporting broader EU priorities, including the *Digital Decade*, *European Education Area* and the *European Skills Agenda*, traditional primary, secondary and tertiary education are the *Plan's* clear targets. Although "vocational educational training" (VET) and "training institutions" are mentioned, public authority training providers such as police academies appear to fall outside its purview. This could be a lost opportunity to serve a variety of professional learners who would benefit from this generational investment in digital skills and infrastructure.

The *Plan* sets out two strategic priorities and 13 Actions.[8] *Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training*, under Action 1, 'Structured Dialogue', notes that advancing technological change requires

---

[8] Priority 1 is Fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem. Priority 2 is enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation.

"people-centred digital transformation" and advises Member States to facilitate this digital transformation by

> "promoting evidence-based scaling up of good practice by recognising early-adopter institutions that have improved teaching and learning through innovation and digital technologies, and supporting peer-to-peer exchanges".[9]

The Recommendation also urges Member States to foster "a continuous dialogue between education and training institutions and industry on development and training needs and opportunities, exchanging experience and providing feedback on products and technologies used in teaching and learning".[10]

Our interviews echoed this need for exchange and dialogue. The establishment of a common platform for strategic support and the sharing of best practices in online learning was identified as a key mechanism for enabling professionals to connect with like-minded and experienced peers. One interviewee likened a recent EU-level meeting of online learning and LMS experts to "therapy," illustrating the value of such connections.[11]

Action 3 *European Digital Education Framework* recognises the rapid increase in demand for digital content for education purposes and the need for "continuous professional development" for educators and trainers. Action 5, *Digital transformation plans for education and training institutions* details the needs and necessary steps to support the professional development of digital educators. The recently updated *European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators*,

> "is directed towards educators at all levels of education, from early childhood to higher and adult education, **including general and vocational education and training**, special needs education, **and non-formal learning contexts**. It aims to provide a general reference frame for developers of Digital Competence models, i.e. Member States, regional governments, relevant national and regional agencies, educational organisations themselves, and public or private professional training providers."[12]

The Framework is an immensely useful guide for any educator or trainer who wants to identify their current level of knowledge and skills in the area of "designing, planning and implementing the use of digital technologies in the different stages of the learning process".[13] It also covers the use of digital learning to support collaborative learning, which Facing Facts online has found to be fundamental to supporting multi-stakeholder learner communities (see Section 2.5). Finally, the Framework underpins a new *European Digital Skills Certificate*,[14] which should also be drawn upon in future efforts to set out competencies and standards relevant to online capacity building on hate crime and hate speech.

9 "Council Recommendation of 23 November 2023 on the Key Enabling Factors for Successful Digital Education and Training", Official Journal of the European Union, (2023), http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/1115/oj/eng.
10 "Council Recommendation", 2023.
11 Interviewee 16, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 21, 2024.
12 European Commission: Joint Research Centre, Redecker, C. and Punie, Y., "European framework for the digital competence of educators – DigCompEdu", Publications Office, 2017, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/159770.
13 Redecker and Punie, "European framework for the digital competence of educators", 20.
14 European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan – Action 9." European Education Area, last modified 2023. https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan/action-9.

Action 4, *Connectivity and digital equipment for education and training*,[15] highlights "infrastructure gaps" in broadband availability and the overall adoption of digital technology, based on an EU-wide survey of schools. This action aims to support schools to access resources under existing EU programmes to address these gaps. Section 2.2 of this report highlights similar challenges suggesting that infrastructural gaps in training institutions such as police and judicial academies should also be addressed.

Action 10 encompasses the *Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training*, which once again highlights the urgency of "the need for digital skills and competencies across the economy and society, in the face of evidence from the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) that 'only 54% of the EU population can perform basic digital tasks such as connecting to Wi-Fi or using websites'".[16]

The European Union Skills Agenda has a more 'lifelong learning' focus, with improved employability as a priority outcome. Action 10, *A European approach to micro-learning* explains, "Training courses are becoming shorter and more targeted and are often online. We will create European standards that should help recognise the results of such training."

Current EU digital learning policy appears to prioritise traditional education settings over professional training for public authorities like police academies. This exclusion limits the potential benefits for police and public authorities in improving their digital and online learning capacities.

2.1.2 Policy and guidance regarding training and online learning on hate crime and hate speech

As explained in Facing Facts' 2023 policy brief, the current focus of publications from EU structures such as the High Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime is centred on how to support national public authorities to plan and implement training on hate crime and hate speech in any form[17] with an additional interest in how to involve specialist victim support organisations and affected communities in these initiatives.[18] Several guidance documents and reports have acknowledged the existence, and, in some cases the potential of online learning and capacity-building. However, there have been no evaluations of online learning programmes and there is a general sense that online learning is a poor substitute for the in-person experience (see also Section 2.2).

15 European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan – Action 4." *European Education Area*, last modified 2023. https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan/action-4.
16 European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan – Action 10." European Education Area, last modified 2023. https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan/action-10.
17 See for example a recent mapping report Mapping Hate Crime Training for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Authorities in the European Union revealed the patchy nature of training on hate crime whether online or in-person, explaining that despite numerous efforts undertaken in hate crime training by Member States, "these efforts are fragmented and of an ad hoc nature", concluding that national authorities lack a comprehensive strategy for designing and implementing their training programmes in general.; European Commission, EU High Level Group on Combating Racism, Xenophobia, *"Mapping Hate Crime Training for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Authorities in the European Union"*, 2021, https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-04/wg_hate_crime_training_report_mapping_national_activities.pdf.
18 See for example the same report which explained that cooperation with civil society actors is one of "the areas in which national authorities present most gaps and thus require setting up further policy attention, improvement and support". European Commission, "Mapping Hate Crime Training", 2021.

There are some useful references to online learning in various guidelines and manuals, however some points are contested by our interviews. For example, *Hate Crime Training for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Authorities: 10 Key Guiding Principles* identifies the broader reach and lower costs of online formats compared to in-person training delivery.[19] While some interviewees cited reduced training costs as an advantage of the online format compared to in-person delivery,[20] those with significant experiences of implementing large-scale online learning programmes challenged the assumption that online learning is low cost, describing the resource-intensive nature of moving to online learning formats at the initial stages.[21] Experts further argued that the perceived cost-effectiveness of online learning is overstated, noting the hidden expenses associated with outsourcing.[22]

The 'Key Guiding Principles' also maintain that participants find online learning less effective and insufficiently interactive enough, however no specific study to support this position is cited.

Indeed, the simplistic position that online learning "doesn't work" is contradicted by Facing Facts Online's own data and our expert interviewees (see Section 2.2).

The Working Group on hate crime training and capacity building for national law enforcement paper on *Mapping Hate Crime Training for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Authorities in the European Union* considers the post-COVID landscape of online learning, highlighting the flexibility offered by online learning and the potential it offers to tailor experiences to various learner types. Interviewed experts echoed this point that flexibility is particularly valued by professional groups with responsibility to address hate crime and hate speech.[23] However, an interviewee for this research indicated the need for stronger guidance in this area, for example to address the observation that "management needs to equate e-learning with classroom training" in order to ensure police learners are not required to go on patrol or undertake other duties during time that has been allocated to online learning.[24]

A recent publication by the European Commission, *Strategic Approaches to Embedding Hate Crime and Hate Speech Training in National Training Programmes for Law Enforcement: a Compass* recognises that online participation might be easier given that no travel is necessary, but raises concerns about whether online formats can effectively facilitate 'safe spaces' that are often needed in hate crime and hate speech training. While this is an important consideration, such studies should also explore how 'safe spaces' can be set up online. For example both expert-facilitated tutorial sessions and moderated discussion forums can be relevant tools. The publication also highlights the importance of collaborating with CSOs in training development and addresses some technical considerations when selecting

19 European Commission, EU High Level Group on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Intolerance., "Hate Crime Training for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Authorities: 10 Key Guiding Principles", 2017, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/368d9475-fa57-42b1-bf9f-81a092927a54_en?filename=hlg_conclusions_paper_hate_crime_training_final_rev_43050.pdf.

20 Interviewee 10, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 7, 2024.; Interviewee 4, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 27, 2024.

21 Interviewee 6, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 29, 2024.; Interviewee 13, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, April 9, 2024.

22 Interviewee 6, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 29, 2024.

23 Interviewee 8, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 1, 2024.; Interviewee 17, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 23, 2024.

24 Interviewee 17, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 23, 2024.

Learning Management Systems.[25] Lastly, the *World Programme for Human Rights Education* sets standards for the development of human rights training programmes for professionals, including civil servants and law enforcement officials, and makes reference to the use of information technologies and e-learning.[26]

Addressing hate speech through education: a guide for policy-makers published by UNESCO, mainly focuses on the university context as well as on professional development for teachers; vocational education and lifelong learning are also acknowledged. Education authorities are recommended to prioritise the "implementation of specific educational interventions aimed at explicitly addressing hate speech at all levels of education, with a lifelong learning perspective".[27] However, the contribution of online learning is outside the scope of this study, which seems untimely.

From Planning to Impact: A Manual on Human Rights Training Methodology by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights includes a one-page consideration of the benefits of technology, such as increasing outreach, accessibility, content retention, and lower costs.[28] However, the claim of lower costs is not evidenced and technology is presented as a support to in-person learning, rather than explored as a site for effective online learning and capacity-building *per se*. The paper concludes, "online platforms or social media networks can create communities of practice post training, allowing participants to build on the learning and exchanges that took place during the course".[29] However, social media and online platforms are not 'creators' or 'builders' of such communities. They are tools to host such communities, which require skilled and resourced facilitation. This work should be further developed to identify the success factors of online learning in all its forms, as well as online communities of practice as part of efforts to support those working in human rights education.

The *Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation on the European Convention on Human Rights in University Education and Professional Training* stands out in making recommendations on and proposing national good practices for online training programmes specifically for criminal justice professionals. Foregrounding the Council of Europe's programme for 'Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals', the recommendation encourages Member States to use various learning and training methods, including "e-learning and the use of the HELP methodology". Relevant online learning examples from national programs are also highlighted, such as from Sweden, where "the Judicial Training Academy produces online training sessions for judges and non-judges within the courts", or Armenia's distance learning system with "several courses for judges and prosecutors have

25 European Commission, "Strategic approaches to embedding hate crime and hate speech training in national training programmes for law enforcement: a compass", 2022, https://commission.europa.eu/document/ee29b47f-fe11-47bb-8da1-f981fe5d8f2c_en.

26 United Nations, "World Programme for Human Rights Education", *UN iLibrary,* accessed November 13, 2024, https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/series/29592682.

27 UNESCO, "Addressing Hate Speech Through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers", Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021, accessed November 13, 2024, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384872.

28 According to the publications, other ways technology can be used include facilitating interaction among learners and their trainers through video conferencing, support training through visual aids, deliver a virtual portion of a course before its in-person component, or support course evaluations.

29 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "From Planning to Impact: A Manual on Human Rights Training Methodology", New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2019, 10, https://cambodia.ohchr.org/en/content/planning-impact-manual-human-rights-training-methodology.

been developed at the Justice Academy." The use of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands and the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium are also referenced.[30] However, while the process for collecting information about 'good practices' is explained, the criteria for what qualifies a practice as 'good' is not specified.[31] HELP certified trainers are mentioned, but not the certification process. Principle 9 *Appropriate training methods based on need* does not detail how needs are or could be assessed or how training methods are designed accordingly. Finally, evaluation is not included as a 'principle' and there is no evidence that the HELP programme has been evaluated.

2.1.3 Definitions of online learning

A challenge in advancing online learning in this field are the numerous, overlapping definitions, which impede research efforts and the effective implementation of learning programmes. Facing Facts, for instance, uses the term *online learning* to refer to both self-paced and cohort-based course delivery methods. However, terms like *e-learning*, *distance learning*, *digital learning, digital education,* and *virtual learning* can be used interchangeably for these approaches by practitioners and in the literature. Interview data revealed that even when using the same terminology, such as *online learning*, the underlying concepts and expectations can vary across practitioners. One interviewee, for instance, used *online learning* to describe only the digital components of a blended training programme, while others applied it more broadly to include both synchronous and asynchronous learning. This inconsistency has been noted in other studies, where the meaning of 'virtual learning' differed among practitioners: "When asked to describe their understanding of virtual learning and BL [blended learning], it became clear from the responses that the term virtual learning meant slightly different things to different people."[32] Individuals may associate 'online learning' with a particular experience, without recognizing the variety of formats it encompasses, such as webinars, standalone courses, or cohort-based programmes with tutorials and group work. The reviewed literature and expert interviews support the conclusion of Facing Fact's policy briefing that numerous and overlapping definitions of online learning cause confusion among policymakers, practitioners and learners.[33] As technology advances, the definition of online learning should align accordingly.

2.1.4 The need for policy integration

EU digital education policy and strategy remain disconnected from its hate crime and hate speech training frameworks. Explicitly expanding EU digital education initiatives to include public authority training would create a valuable opportunity to bridge this gap. By aligning the Digital Education Action Plan with hate crime

30 Council of Europe. "Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)5 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Convention on Human Rights in University Education and Professional Training." Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2019. Accessed November 18, 2024. https://rm.coe.int/enseignement-universitaire-et-formation-professionnelle-en/16809ecdbc.
31 See Council of Europe. "Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)5.", 2019, 15.
32 Jyoti Belur and Clare Bentall, "Reviewing the 3Cs of Blended Learning for Police Education: Assessing Capacity, Building Capability, and Conquering Challenges", Police Practice and Research, 2024, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15614263.2023.2210249.
33 Belur and Bentall, "Reviewing the 3C's of Blended Learning for Police Education", 2023; Jyoti Belur et al., "What Do We Know about Blended Learning to Inform Police Education? A Rapid Evidence Assessment", Police Practice and Research, 2 January 2023, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15614263.2022.2073230.

and hate speech training efforts, the EU could enhance the digital skills of police academies and other stakeholders, maximising the use of available resources. Partnerships with the private sector are also crucial to foster connections and investment across all relevant actors, also ensuring that innovations in artificial intelligence and other cutting edge developments are effectively adapted.

To achieve a unified and effective approach across Member States, the EU should develop international standards and guidelines for online hate crime and hate speech training. This effort should include the creation of platforms that support collaboration, resource sharing, and the exchange of best practices among different professional groups and countries. EU funding programmes should also incentivise national institutions to implement high-quality digital and online learning standards for hate crime and hate speech training. Integrating these policy areas will support the development of comprehensive, high-quality, and future-proofed training for professionals responding to hate crime and hate speech.

2.2 Experiences and perceptions of online learning

2.2.1 Introduction

This section moves on to examine the evidence on experiences and perceptions of online learning among multi-stakeholder learning communities. Drawing on data from published studies, the Facing Facts Online platform, and interviews, four key findings emerge. First, there are several evidenced advantages and challenges of online learning. Second, there is a clear trend showing that increased familiarity and knowledge about online learning lead to more positive attitudes towards it. Third, a distinction emerged between 'online learning' and 'technology-enhanced learning'—such as mobile apps or virtual reality—with the latter viewed more favourably than traditional online methods. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic shaped attitudes toward online learning both positively and negatively.

2.2.2 Evidence of the benefits and challenges of online learning

Two key advantages of online learning emerged from our analysis: the flexibility it offers for learners and its efficiency in reaching a wide(r) audience. Experts highlighted that learners value the flexibility of online learning,[34] especially the ability it offers to access materials at any time.[35] Its flexibility could also prove beneficial when participants are unwell or unable to train at a specific time, allowing them to complete the sessions at their own convenience.[36] For example, a digital learning project at the French Gendarmerie officers' Academy[37] between 2012-2015 found that seventy-five percent of cadets surveyed reported that "e-learning is one of the best ways to manage their learning efficiently."[38] An interviewee identified

---

34 Interviewee 14, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 21, 2024.
35 Interviewee 2, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 14, 2024.
36 Interviewee 2, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 14, 2024.
37 Ecole des officiers de la gendarmerie nationale — EOGN
38 European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Laurent Chapparo, "Digital learning: how to improve knowledge and skills for law enforcement managers", European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin Special Conference

asynchronous elements of online learning as particularly beneficial for working professionals who complete learning in their free time.[39] An interviewee from a law enforcement training agency praised online learning's feature in reaching many learners in a rapid way.[40] Beyond the flexibility and efficiency of online learning, participants find the most engaging aspects to be exploring victim perspectives and engaging in tutor-led discussions with their peers (*Figure 3*).

A current challenge in online learning development shared by those at the centre of developing and delivering online learning programmes are the—often unrecognised and unplanned—costs of the initial investment. This point is discussed further in Section 2.4.
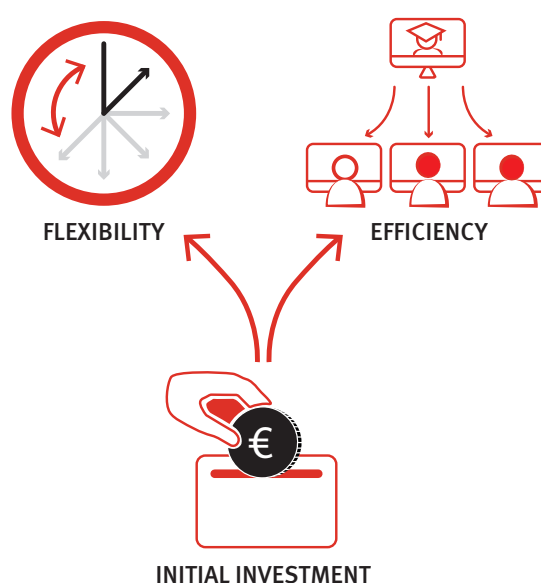

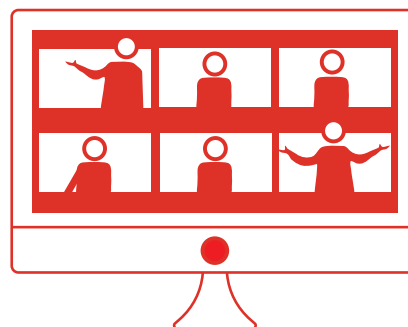*Figure 2. Main advantages and challenges of online learning.*

39 Interviewee 10, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 7, 2024.
40 Interviewee 14, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 21, 2024.

VICTIM CENTRED APPROACH   **LIVE TUTORIALS**

Figure 3. Most engaging course elements (according to expert interviews and Facing Facts written course evaluation data).

2.2.3 Conclusions

Currently, there is a lack of empirical data on what makes online learning successful, which arguably contributes to persistent misconceptions about its value. For example, a 2016 study found limited evidence suggesting no significant differences in learning outcomes between classroom and online police training, provided the online design was enhanced with video content.[41] Other studies, like Trickett and Hamilton's research on police experiences with hate crime training, highlighted negative perceptions, noting that feedback on existing online learning was "overwhelmingly negative in terms of personal benefits for officers".[42]

Despite these insights, there is still a gap in evaluative data. Sharing such data from established programmes such as the Council of Europe Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) programme, which delivers human rights training, including on hate crime and hate speech, across multiple countries and Facing Facts Online should improve training effectiveness and help to identify best practices.

2.2.4 Perceptions of and attitudes toward online learning

In the absence of objective evidence on what is effective in online learning and what is not, perceptions of its benefits and drawbacks seem to be shaped by factors such as individuals' understanding of what online learning entails and the degree of their direct experience with its design and delivery.

For example, for some, 'online learning' consists of webinars. Such formats were considered less engaging than in-person learning because learners may become

41 Anderle, Jonlee S, "Procedural Learning: A Comparison of Skills Acquisition between an Online Environment and Traditional Classroom Training", (PhD diss., University of Wyoming, 2018).
42 Dr Loretta Trickett and Dr Paul Hamilton, "Hate crime training of police officers in Nottingham: a critical review. Research report for external body." Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University, 2016, 74, http://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/28089/.

passive, with some reportedly "tuning out" by letting the session play in the background without fully paying attention.[43] A similar theme was found with learning design which relies heavily on instructor-directed visual content such as powerpoint presentations, again resulting in low engagement.[44] While these challenges can be common in many online learning programmes, they are mainly caused by poor learning design, rather than drawbacks of online learning programmes per se.

Interviewees with significant experience in online learning delivery highlighted other specific challenges. For example, implementing certain exercises online, such as role-plays or collaborative learning projects, can be challenging and might require participants to be prepared on how to confidently engage.[45] Discussions may also be dominated by a vocal minority, leaving more reserved participants less engaged, making moderation difficult.[46] However these problems can also take place during in-person training due to low quality learning design or poor moderation. There is evidence that with thoughtful learning design, it is possible to create engaging and interactive exercises online. For example, Facing Facts Online data indicate that 83% of participants felt confident engaging in tutor-facilitated Zoom discussions that also involve small-group discussions in break-out rooms.

There is an open question about whether and how addressing sensitive issues like prejudice can be best achieved in an online learning environment. One interviewee with significant experience of online learning with police indicated that online learning can bring a risk of emotional distance and challenges in moderation and facilitation. Using the example of watching a video of an interview with a victim he explained that it is less impactful than meeting someone face-to-face: "the more distanced you are (..), the less effective it is".[47] On the other hand, videos can bring experiences to the viewer that they would never have in-person. This is an area for further research and evaluation.

Lack of direct experience in designing and delivering online learning programmes can result in outdated expectations of online learning and a more general resistance to technological advancements in this area. For example, French Law Enforcement Agencies cited distrust in technology and the perception that remote trainees were less engaged as significant reasons for lack of leadership support and institutional buy-in for strategic adoption of digital learning programmes, "The lack of trust in the technology itself and the perception that a distant trainee was a lazy student were unmovable hurdles to digital progress". There was also an entrenched belief of decision-makers that "a police course could not be performed without physical presence".[48]

In contrast, positive attitudes toward online learning appear to be a function of increased exposure to and knowledge of its benefits and potential. As pointed out by an interviewed online learning design expert, understanding of e-learning may only evolve when the institution goes through the process of transforming its training

---

43 Interviewee 5, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 27, 2024.
44 Halford, E., and Youansamouth, L. "Emerging results on the impact of COVID-19 on police training in the United Kingdom." The Police Journal, 97(1), 105-130, 2024, https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258X221137004.
45 Interviewee 1, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 13, 2024.
46 Interviewee 8, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 1, 2024.
47 Interviewee 1, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 13, 2024.
48 European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Cédric Carré, "The Challenges of E-Learning in the French Police Nationale", European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin, Special Conference Edition Nr. 6, 2023, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/publications/special-conference-edition-nr-6-european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin.

programmes into a digital format.[49] As shown in Figure 4, professionals with more direct experience with online learning were also clearer about its challenges and drawbacks. For example, those with limited to no direct experience in designing and delivering online trainings understood online learning as a preparatory step for in-person training or a substitute that was only necessary during the pandemic and might only continue to exist as an add-on. Others with some experience could clearly identify certain positive elements as well as limitations of this method. However, they might still be hesitant to invest in technological development. As explained by the authors of the French research introduced above, "... hard habits die hard, and the Police administration is still reluctant to fund e-learning material and useful–if overly expensive–web software that could improve trainers' creativity while enhancing the relevance of courses for trainees."[50]

EXPERIENCE

EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE

"I'm a believer in online learning, and I think that the tools for doing it well are only improving. That's not to say we can't make it better"

SOME EXPERIENCE WITH CERTAIN FORMATS

"You need interaction. But simple webinars do not allow for this"
"Online learning is easier and less costly, a good combination of the scope and resources"

LIMITED DIRECT EXPERIENCE

"The use of online trainings is more as a preparatory step for in-person training"

Figure 4. Experiences with online learning impacting perceptions.

Experienced practitioners were enthusiastic about the opportunities that online learning presents while acknowledging its challenges and limitations. Those with expertise in delivering online learning anticipated its growing importance, and pointed to the strategic importance of committing substantial resources to expanding their online learning portfolios. Experts at CEPOL highlighted the tensions in acknowledging the benefits of in-person training in decisions to pivot towards expanding their online programmes,

> "Obviously, people prefer to attend face-to-face events just simply for the fact that the training is also a kind of motivation. So if you can travel to the headquarters or to any support representatives, and you can meet your colleagues, then it is a high-prestige exercise. Now, obviously, from the efficiency point of view, if you would like to reach multiple learners in a

---

49 Interviewee 13, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, April 9, 2024.
50 Cédric Carré, "The Challenges of E-Learning in the French Police Nationale", 2023.

rapid way, with a consistent message, we really came to the conclusion that we want to have a massive online portfolio.”[51]

An interviewed expert from a digital learning department of a national law enforcement agency also stated that e-learning “is definitely only going to improve” in the future.[52] The conclusions of a pilot project on training digitalisation conducted by the Bavarian Police between 2019 and 2021 recommended its roll-out noting that “. . . the question for the future of police training – at least for the Bavarian police training – is not whether digitally supported teaching should take place, but with which digital tools, in which way and which administrative departments should be in charge and should work with which means.”[53] The French Gendarmerie Officers’ Academy (EOGN) started its first digital learning project in 2012, after which it continued to develop and expand its digital tools, including simulations and ‘serious games’.[54]

Providing clear guidance and implementing low-commitment trial or pilot programmes could be highly effective in overcoming initial obstacles to adopting digital learning approaches and programmes.

2.2.5 Technology-enhanced learning

In contrast to the varying views of online learning and its role in police training, certain digital tools that supplemented the learning process were more positively regarded by interviewees and in the literature. These approaches appear to be distinguished from ‘online learning’ and are possibly best described as forms of *technology-enhanced* or *technology-enabled learning* in the sense that they enhance existing practices and training programmes. For instance, the Bavarian Police’s strategic decision to equip all its teachers and trainees with digital devices such as mobiles and ipads[55] was grounded in an internal evaluation which found that such devices positively influenced the performances of trainees.[56] An interviewed expert noted that digital tools accessible on a device might have a greater impact than when the same information is presented in a training module, explaining that such tools can be used “not to raise your awareness in your spare time, or when you have time . . . but really as a tool to directly support you in a moment of need.”[57] The authors of this paper also observed that a national police app designed to assist investigations and evidence-gathering was welcomed enthusiastically by experts at an EU-level meeting with strong law enforcement attendance, in contrast to the evidence of general attitudes towards online learning.[58]

---

[51] Interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan.
[52] Interviewee 17, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 23, 2024.
[53] European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Micha Fuchs and Kristina Ott, “The Influence of Digital Devices on Learning Interest, Engagement and Academic Performance in Basic Police Training”, European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin, Special Conference Edition Nr. 6, 2023, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/publications/special-conference-edition-nr-6-european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin.
[54] Laurent Chapparo, “Digital learning: how to improve knowledge and skills for law enforcement managers”.
[55] Micha Fuchs and Kristina Ott, “The Influence of Digital Devices on Learning Interest, Engagement and Academic Performance”.
[56] European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Micha Fuchs, “Challenges for Police Training after COVID-19: Seeing the crisis as a chance”, European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin, Special Conference Edition Nr. 5, 2022, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/scientific-knowledge-and-research/european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin/special-conference-editions.
[57] Interviewee 9, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 5, 2024.
[58] The researchers also participated at a 2024 mini conference on Hate Crime and the Joint Meeting of the Working Groups under the High Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime, organised by the European Commission

Pilot project using VR technology in sensitising police officers to victims experiences' of hate crime in Hamburg

In a rare empirical study, Groß et al. (2023) found virtual reality technology to have a positive impact on police attitudes and empathy towards victims of hate crime.[59] Developed in collaboration with Greater Manchester Police and conducted at the Hochschule der Akademie der Polizei Hamburg as part of the 'Immersive Democracy Project',[60] this study used a quasi-experimental design with 25 police students who completed empathy assessments before and after a VR-based training session. Students were immersed in scenarios of bias-motivated incidents, including antisemitism, transphobia, and disability hate crime. Through these reenactments and interviews with actual victims, students had a more immediate experience of the psychological and emotional impacts on those targeted by such crimes.

Post-training assessment found: (1) increased agreement with the statement "Hate crime should be a priority in police work."; (2) decreased agreement with the statement "Victims of hate crime should be more resilient and able to deal with the situation without reporting it to the police."; 3. Increased agreement with the statement "I believe that my way of interacting with a victim of a bias crime can influence that person's ability to deal with what has happened."; and 4. Increased agreement with the statement "The way I deal with a victim has the potential to improve the victim's experience."[61] Participants also positively reflected on the use of the technology itself, as illustrated through this quote, "This method is a good way to gather people's points of view, which is important when they come into contact with the police. I immediately felt a tension that I'm sure those affected also feel, as they know it could happen again."[62]

2.2.6 The COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact on perceptions of online learning

Attitudes towards online learning were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which required a sudden shift to the online space for many aspects of working life, including training. While for some, this change has only accelerated the process of relying on already existing digital initiatives, others were not yet prepared or equipped. Some law enforcement agencies were initially not ready for the challenge COVID-19 brought, stating that this change was "short of an earthquake for Police Training",[63] while also recognising its contribution to digital development ". . . the quality of learning in police training suffered noticeably in the beginning of the pandemic . . . However, the COVID-19 pandemic helped to fuel the engine of the digital transformational process, because it showed where

and CEPOL.

59 Eva Groß, Ulrike Zähringer & Anabel Taefi, "Police Handling of Hate Crime".
60 "About Us" Metaverse Research Network, accessed November 18, 2024, https://metaverse-research-network.info/about-us/.
61 Eva Groß, Ulrike Zähringer & Anabel Taefi, "Police Handling of Hate Crime", 4-6.
62 Eva Groß, Ulrike Zähringer & Anabel Taefi, "Police Handling of Hate Crime", 6.
63 Cédric Carré. "The Challenges of E-Learning in the French Police Nationale".

the strengths and weaknesses of police training lie in regard to digitalisation"[64]. One interviewee observed the negative relationship between online spaces and the COVID-19 pandemic. Although online learning existed prior to the pandemic, once conditions allowed for in-person interactions many were glad that "there is no more Zoom".[65] Other sources also noted that due to the prolonged limitations in all areas of life during the pandemic, in-person interactions became even more highly valued than before, and both learners and trainers found it to be a relief to interact in person once again when conditions allowed.[66] Further attention might be needed to assess whether digital fatigue resulting from conditions during the pandemic has impacted attitudes towards online learning today. In essence, it is clearly observable that COVID-19 impacted the online learning space and contributed to the acceleration of practices and improving learning experiences. It was also evident from the literature review that the pandemic generated more research on online learning in various contexts and for learning groups not often assessed before, such as the police.

2.2.7 Conclusion

Online learning is here to stay, but it requires rigorous evaluation, with data shared to enhance awareness, transparency and training effectiveness. Currently, a lack of empirical evidence on what makes online learning successful contributes to misconceptions about its value. To address this, initiatives like Facing Facts Online should implement a robust evaluation strategy that examines various aspects of training, engages multiple stakeholders, and considers the broader context of human rights education, including factors such as reallocated funds from travel for in-person trainings and increased investment in essential infrastructure, including personnel and technology. These efforts should align with clear international frameworks that emphasise the role of online learning in capacity-building for hate crime, hate speech, and broader human rights education. By gathering and sharing comprehensive data, best practices can be identified, misconceptions dispelled, and more effective online learning solutions developed. Furthermore, creating and disseminating guidance on best practices for online learning programmes in these areas would enhance their overall impact.

2.3 Learners' needs and motivations

2.3.1 Introduction

This section explores the evidence and gaps in understanding learner needs and motivations which are critical to effective learning design, particularly in the context of training that aims to strengthen hate crime and hate speech response systems. 'Social learning', a term that aims to encompass human connection, tutor support, and peer-to-peer networking, emerged as a key need. Understanding and addressing digital learning preferences also emerges as essential for successful

---

64 Micha Fuchs. "Challenges for Police Training after COVID-19: Seeing the crisis as a chance"
65 Interviewee 4, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 27, 2024.
66 Cédric Carré. "The Challenges of E-Learning in the French Police Nationale".

learning design. Insights from previous research conducted with 'change agents' with significant experience of combating hate crime are drawn to help shed light on the broader motivating factors for our community of learners. Overall, the evidence echoes our policy findings in section one and points to the growing need for professional standards and competencies in hate crime and hate speech response training, including in the online space.

2.3.2 Social learning

The phrase 'social learning' was developed as an umbrella term incorporating three distinct needs that were identified from the learner perspective based on the literature, direct data from the Facing Facts Online platform, and expert interviews: human connection and socialisation, tutor support and interaction, and peer to peer networking.

Particularly in the post-COVID reality, "the need for real life interactions became even more fundamental".[67] In contrast, another study in a different context related more broadly to workplace training found that "knowledge is established and occurs when students interact and collaborate regardless of being physically or virtually present in a class".[68] Studies acknowledge the role of virtual training methods as essential options, "but not in themselves a sufficient condition for successful learning in the future", for example, "deep social learning" was identified as an essential factor for law enforcement training.[69] Several expert interviewees also regarded "in-person", "human contact", or "physical meeting" in some form as essential to online learning's success. Drawing on their own data, one interviewee shared that self-paced courses without designed interaction achieved low completion results, and concluded that the social interaction offered by physical meetings gave "a boost" to the learning experience".[70]

Further research, potentially through controlled comparative studies, is needed to explore the qualitative differences between online and in-person social interactions and their effects on learning experiences and outcomes. It is important to determine which—if any—outcomes are exclusive to in-person learning and cannot be effectively replicated within digital learning environments.

Personalised support from tutors was identified as a second, more specific social learning need. For example, ninety-one percent of participants who evaluated Facing Facts' online cohort-based courses agreed with the statement, 'Tutors encouraged participants' participation in the course'. A publication discussing lessons learned in The French Gendarmerie Officers' Academy (EOGN)'s online learning practice emphasised the necessity of tutors' leading role in online learning, sharing that "only 11 % of cadets surveyed felt alone when tutoring and tracking[71] was driven

---

67 Cédric Carré. "The Challenges of E-Learning in the French Police Nationale".
68 Fotios Mitsakis and Theodosis Karageorgakis, "E-learning: A Temporary 'By-Product' of Covid-19 Pandemic or a Contemporary Solution to Workplace Training and Learning?" In: Loon, M., Stewart, J., Nachmias, S. (eds) The Future of HRD, Volume I. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52410-4_7.
69 European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Detlef Nogala and Detlef Schröder, "Pandemic Effects on Law Enforcement Training and Practice — Introduction to conference findings and perspectives", European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin, Special Conference Edition Nr. 5, 2022, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/scientific-knowledge-and-research/european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin/special-conference-editions.
70 Interviewee 6, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 29, 2024.
71 The paper defines tutoring as "learning relationship and actions between teachers and learners', while tracking as

by teachers" proceeding to state that "e-learning without tutoring is doomed to fail. Indeed, effective tutoring and tracking not only allows teachers to galvanise learning but also prevents learners from dropping out."[72] In addition to a general sense of being supported by a person they recognise, human contact was also deemed to be necessary during more sensitive topics such as where direct victim experiences were shared. As one interviewee explained, "maybe at those stages, the human contact would have been good".[73] Interviewees reported learners' positive reception of synchronous sessions and kick-off webinars led by tutors and experts as evidence that these activities contributed to meeting learners' need for human support throughout the course. As one interviewee explained, "there is always someone holding your hand".[74]

"TUTORS ENCOURAGED PARTICIPANTS'
PARTICIPATION IN THE COURSE"

| 6% | 10% | 82% STRONGLY AGREE |

Figure 5. Facing Facts Online course evaluations regarding tutors' role. Evaluation data is from six cohorts.

"TUTORS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN FACILITATING
MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE COURSE CONTENT"

| 9% | 18% | 72% STRONGLY AGREE |

Figure 6. Facing Facts Online course evaluations regarding tutors' role. Evaluation data is from six cohorts.

The intention to establish new connections and 'networking opportunities' among peers was repeatedly referenced during interviews as a main factor for participating in courses. While some interviewees saw online learning as limiting these opportunities compared to in-person learning,[75] others shared that networking opportunities of their online programmes were "quite highly ranked" in course evaluations.[76] This again points to the need to better understand what learners view as effective networking opportunities and whether these can be fully catered to in the online learning environment.

'pedagogical exploitation and use of LMS data and statistics from the learner's activity".
72 Laurent Chapparo. "Digital learning: how to improve knowledge and skills for law enforcement managers".
73 Interviewee 12, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 26, 2024.
74 Interviewee 6, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 29, 2024.
75 Interviewee 6, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 29, 2024.
76 Interviewee 14, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 21, 2024.

For the Facing Facts learner community the evidence suggests that the key ingredients of a social learning approach–human connection and socialisation, tutor support and peer networking–are not limited to in-person learning only and can be supported in the online learning space. Regular tutorials, tutor support, access to experts, networking and collaboration through small group work, opportunities to share social media connections and professional resources are all effective tools to integrate social learning that are suited to the digital space. As a general approach, learning with peers in cohort-based formats is likely to be more successful compared to entirely self-paced content. However, much more needs to be understood and tested regarding how to best integrate the principles and approaches of social learning for this community of learners. The bias against online learning explored above and the lack of supporting policy infrastructure present barriers to these efforts.

2.3.3 Digital learning needs and infrastructure

Differences in technological skills and IT familiarity impact attitudes towards online learning as well as learner needs. Overall, the reviewed literature suggested that learners' needs vary based on their age, digital literacy and profession.[77] For example, younger police officers tend to have a preference and potential need for a digital format that allows for more independent learning.[78] A clear generational divide in attitudes toward the use of technology in learning was identified in a study on French law enforcement training which concluded that law enforcement officers, who are 'digital natives,' use – and as the article suggests possibly *need* – technology both in their private and professional lives, leading to blurred lines between these digital spaces.[79] This was reiterated by a study on Bavarian police training "Gen Z is driven by a different learning style and social practices than previous generations; they embrace new opportunities brought to them by digitalisation and changing learning environments."[80] Another article discussing the police training in Bavaria concluded that "the new generation of police officer trainees tends to prefer to be taught via digital devices and digital teaching material."[81] An expert interview noted that perceptions and experiences of learning differ across age groups, and suggested that following a course on a smartphone may not provide older generations with an adequate "sense of learning".[82]

Digital literacy and varying levels of IT skills within the police were also raised as distinct needs. As explained by one interviewee who ran a recent online course with police "I was really surprised by the very low level of IT knowledge of people that were doing the trainings. There were a lot of issues about . . . how to control the mic level, the headphone level, how to plug in, how to resize the window, things that you would not expect from people nowadays".[83] The interviewee further stated that police officers' digital literacy is related to their role. "Criminal investigators do [are

77 Micha Fuchs. "Challenges for Police Training after COVID-19"; Laurent Chapparo. "Digital learning: how to improve knowledge and skills for law enforcement managers".; Micha Fuchs and Kristina Ott, "The Influence of Digital Devices on Learning Interest, Engagement and Academic Performance".
78 Micha Fuchs. "Challenges for Police Training after COVID-19".
79 Laurent Chapparo. "Digital learning: how to improve knowledge and skills for law enforcement managers".
80 Micha Fuchs. "Challenges for Police Training after COVID-19"
81 Micha Fuchs and Kristina Ott, "The Influence of Digital Devices on Learning Interest, Engagement and Academic Performance".
82 Interviewee 4, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 27, 2024.
83 Interviewee 1, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 13, 2024.

able to work with computers] because they have to take memos of interviews, but if it's a patrol officer going on the street, they will not work with computers, most of them."[84]

Some institutions do not have the necessary infrastructure for successful online learning. Issues such as internet use quotas and restrictions on accessing official email addresses, can force users to rely on personal emails and mobile devices, raising data protection concerns. Additionally, technical barriers can hinder the learning experience when the Learning Management System is not user-friendly, although kick-off meetings and introductory tutorials that focus on technical aspects are found to help to mitigate these challenges. Geographical considerations also play a role; for learners in the Global South, streaming multimedia content can be prohibitively expensive, further complicating access to online training.[85] Together, these factors create a complex landscape that can impede the effectiveness of online learning initiatives.

2.3.4 Motivations

....

There is some evidence that online learning environments better suit intrinsically motivated and self-regulating learners. These factors can also be bolstered by effective learning design. In a study on online learning for police education, Stöhr et al. (2016) conclude online learning contains an, "inbuilt risk that the more independent learners do better and less confident learners do worse".[86] Data from interviews and literature suggest that police officers are likely to be motivated by more extrinsic, institutional factors such as institutional instructions for mandatory course completion, whereas CSO learners suggest more intrinsic motivations. Indeed, one police interviewee emphasised that efforts to increase police officers' engagement should be prioritised over course completion, noting that "the important thing was that they engaged and that they learned not that they completed it."[87] This insight is echoed by Mitra and Beenen (2019): "results also suggest that incorporating strategies for increasing intrinsic motivation, and mastery, rather than performance orientation (i.e. getting learners to think less about how well they are doing and more about the learning itself) will help learners benefit more from a virtual learning environment."[88] However, it is important to note that police-only courses are more likely to be compulsory, with little data on police attitudes and participation rates for non-mandatory online learning on hate crime or hate speech.

One source of data that indicates motivation to engage in learning on hate crime is from responses in course evaluations to the statement 'This course has increased my interest in the field of hate crime'. The figure below shows that the vast majority of respondents from two online cohorts agree or strongly agree with this statement,

---

84 Interviewee 1, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 13, 2024.
85 Interviewee 10, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 7, 2024.
86 Jyoti Belur, Helen Glasspoole-Bird, Clare Bentall, and Julian Laufs, "What Do We Know about Blended Learning to Inform Police Education? A Rapid Evidence Assessment." Police Practice and Research, 2022, 24 (1): 32–52. doi:10.1080/15614263.2022.2073230.
87 Interviewee 12, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 26, 2024.
88 Sinjini Mitra and Gerard Beenen, "A comparative study of learning styles and motivational factors in traditional and online sections of a business course." 2019, INFORMS Transactions on Education, 20(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1287/ited.2019.0211. Quoted in Jyoti Belur, Helen Glasspoole-Bird, Clare Bentall, and Julian Laufs, 2022. "What Do We Know about Blended Learning to Inform Police Education?".

suggesting that taking part in online learning on hate crime can be a motivating factor to learn more about the topic. It is recommended that future evaluations include this topic, adding follow up questions where appropriate.
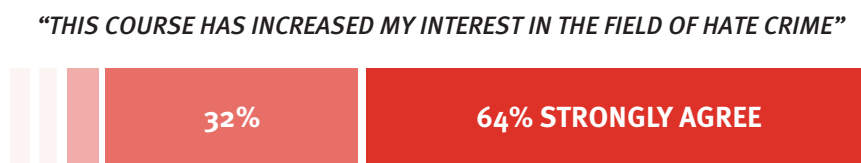
"THIS COURSE HAS INCREASED MY INTEREST IN THE FIELD OF HATE CRIME"

	32%	64% STRONGLY AGREE

Figure 7. Facing Facts Online course evaluations regarding changing interest.

Precise evidence and data on what motivates online learners to dedicate their time and energy to online learning in general and online learning on hate crime and hate speech in particular can be elusive and rarely conclusive. Barriers of time, technology and language can undermine the most motivated learners whatever their professional background. An interplay of additional factors discussed in other sections of this report such as opportunities for social connection, digital learning preferences and negative or positive attitudes towards online learning itself can each influence individual learner motivation. Much more needs to be understood about the various motivating and mitigating factors that govern individuals' personal motivation to join and commit to an online learning programme on hate crime and hate speech.

2.3.5 Professional and personal motivations of national hate crime change agents, lessons from Facing all the Facts Research

The motivation to engage in online learning on hate crime and hate speech can also be examined in the context of learners' more general professional drive to effectively counter and combat these harms. Research carried out by the Facing All the Facts project between 2017- 2019[89] found that many individuals working in public authorities and civil society organisations (CSOs) view their roles as more than just professional obligations, perceiving them as personal commitments to uphold democracy, equality, and justice. This sense of duty might drive them to seek new knowledge and skills, including through online learning opportunities. Furthermore, the desire to achieve tangible outcomes, such as improving victim support and building trust in institutions, could fuel their interest in ongoing professional development. This section reviews key interviews from the research to explore these points.

Factors that relate to 'professionalism' or 'professional interest' were expressed more frequently by public authorities as personal motivators. One interviewee who has worked with professionals from a range of perspectives over several years commented,

> "What motivates [change agents]? I think that it is quite personal. I think that it is the perception of their duty...I have seen police who want to change

---

89 Thirty five individuals at the heart of efforts to improve hate crime responses across 6 countries (Greece, Ireland, Hungary, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom). These 'change agents' were almost evenly spread between CSOs and public authorities (16 and 13 respectively) and 6 researchers across six countries.

the police and perceptions of police. I have seen officials do their job because they believe in democracy and equality. I see people trying their best and reading books to better understand the phenomenon and I am seeing also people who are good at what they do, and so that is their image of themselves."

This motivation was echoed by several other interviewees. One commented on the importance of, "professional commitment to doing a quality job, no matter the victim's background". Another commented, "for me it is vocational". One interviewee observed that some change agents in the police and prosecution service, "forgo pay increases for a very long time because they care about challenging hate crime". Several interviewees reflected that they were motivated by the fact that they found the topic of hate crime professionally interesting and intellectually challenging.

The motivation of effecting change and seeing the visible impact of their work was expressed by many interviewees, especially those from a civil society background. As explained by the following interviewees,

"It is important to see some progress, some results. That at the end of the day, victims feel more secure, catered to, assisted."

"What motivates us is success… if you manage to achieve at least some success then that really makes your work meaningful in that way…I think that we are quite lucky in that way. Every few months we have some success, maybe in a particular case. Maybe in convincing the police to do something differently. So that keeps the momentum going so that you meet the goals that you want to achieve."

A factor that appeared to be particularly important for public authorities was having support from senior management. As explained by one interviewee,

"It is very important for me that [my organisation] has invested time, personnel and resources in the issue to address racist violence in [my country]. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to do this. The same goes for other organisations. The same goes for public institutions. So even if you don't have the political will…at least you have the support of your department, your unit."

Other interviewees pointed to the challenges of pushing or coaxing change in public institutions without the backing of leadership. Another described their role as, "stretching boundaries… carefully". One interviewee highlighted the mix of caution and ambition that can characterise change agents in public authority settings, "Be bold but don't be silly. Don't get yourself hurt. If you can make small instrumental changes then go for it….you may only be able to chip away at things at the moment but things change…". Pointing to the challenges of operating in an environment where the political situation can be hostile to the hate crime agenda, one interviewee maintained, "You keep going. You don't give up. You try to find another way". One interviewee pointed to the significant barriers that face some change agents working in public authorities, "Colleagues don't want to be working with an activist and managers don't want activists as staff… sometimes you have to wait for an entire layer of hierarchy to leave before change comes".

These findings suggest that online learning design and implementation should be informed by and aligned with these potential motivations—professionalism, visible impact, and institutional support. Indeed Facing Facts Online bases its learning design on learning personas that were directly informed by this research.

2.4 Shifting from the classroom to online learning design, transforming design, development and implementation processes in technology

It is well documented that designing effective online learning programmes differs significantly from traditional classroom or training contexts due to the inherent nature of online environments.[90] However, each element and role is not always fully institutionally integrated or resourced in current programmes. Many online learning providers, including Facing Facts Online, use the ADDIE approach to online instructional design and delivery. In online learning, the **Analyse** phase requires a deeper consideration of learners' technological proficiency, access to resources, and potential barriers such as internet connectivity. The **Design** phase requires the creation of interactive and engaging course flow, which must account for the absence of physical presence and includes multimedia self-paced modules, asynchronous discussions, live tutorials and group projects. In the **Develop** phase, digital assets are created that are accessible and user-friendly, complementing the overall learning design. The **Implement** phase involves the deployment of content via Learning Management Systems, which must be tested for usability across different devices and platforms and the engagement and support of learners. Finally, in the **Evaluate** phase, online learning programmes have access to data analytics and digital assessments to measure learning outcomes, engagement, and satisfaction. This data-driven approach allows for more frequent and precise adjustments compared to traditional settings, where evaluation might depend more on in-person observations and delayed feedback mechanisms. Evaluations should include questions on the user experience, including accessibility and ease of navigation, which can all affect engagement levels, especially in self-paced elements of online learning.

90 Robert Maribe Branch, *Instructional Design: The ADDIE Approach* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2009); Michael W Allen, *Michael Allen's Guide to e-Learning: Building Interactive, Fun, and Effective Learning Programs for Any Company* (Wiley., 2016); Annabelle Betz, Melissa Sonnino, Joanna Perry, Daniel Heller, "Embracing the Digital Classroom – our experience with the Digital Learning Institute", 2024, https://www.facingfacts.eu/blog/embracing-the-digital-classroom-our-experience-with-the-digital-learning-institute/.

Figure 8: The ADDIE Approach

Most educational providers including Facing Facts Online use Bloom's taxonomy for creating effective learning objectives, adjusted for the digital environment where interaction can be asynchronous, and students may engage with content independently or collaboratively through technology. For instance, an online learning outcome might ask students to 'analyse' by engaging with digital content such as podcasts, videos, or interactive simulations, followed by the creation of a digital artefact such as a blog post or a video reflection. This adaptation ensures that students are developing higher-order thinking skills while also mastering the digital literacy necessary for effective online communication and collaboration. In the online environment, learning outcomes must also be clearly measurable and designed with specific digital assessments in mind. For example, instead of simply expecting students to 'understand' a concept, an online learning outcome might require students to "demonstrate understanding by creating an infographic or digital presentation." This not only aligns with Bloom's Digital Taxonomy—where verbs like 'design,' 'construct,' or 'produce' are emphasised—but also ensures that students can showcase their learning through the creation of digital content.
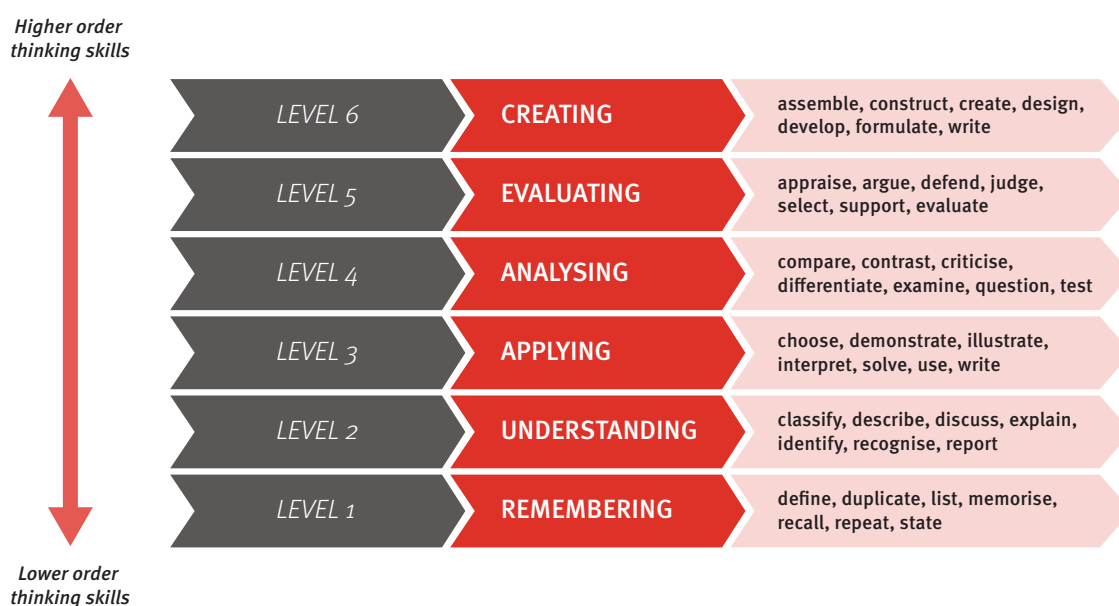
Figure 9: Bloom's Taxonomy

The implications suggest a necessary re-orientation of educational and training strategies for learning providers, a shift that has not yet been fully addressed in online learning contexts. Expert interviews and consulted literature indicate that the transition from offline to online environments often begins in an organic and urgent manner, lacking adequate knowledge of industry standards and their adaptation to local needs. This is typically followed by a gradual period of adjustment, during which more efficient and tailored online activities are developed. For example, initial attempts, such as pre-COVID online learning modules that consisted of many pdf-based courses on an LMS, [91] were found to be ineffective. In contrast, shorter, more engaging, and awareness-focused pieces have since received more positive feedback.[92]

The shift to online learning for capacity building in the anti-hate crime and hate speech community of practice, therefore, demands new approaches and methodologies. It also requires investment in new roles, such as digital learning developers and community managers, to effectively design, implement, and sustain these online learning experiences. With these challenges come new opportunities for working across subject matter experts, instructional designers, and to engage creatively with videographers and graphic designers.

Public institutions' reliance on private companies and third-party service providers to develop online learning on human rights can break the chain of relationships between those with expertise (for example, subject matter experts) and those that create the digital assets (for example digital developers).[93] Finding a balance should not come at the cost of content quality. As one interviewee summarised "Online tools should be adapted for the content, do not adapt the content for the online tools."[94] Overall, having an integrated approach to each element of the ADDIE process, including close engagement between SMEs, instructional designers and developers–whether internal or external–is essential for successful course design.

---

91 Cédric Carré, "The Challenges of E-Learning in the French Police Nationale".
92 Interviewee 17, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 23, 2024.
93 Interviewee 11, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 8, 2024.
94 Interviewee 13, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, April 9, 2024.

2.4.1 Institutional and leadership support

Lastly, the research identified several structural and institutional gaps that should be considered during the design of online learning. For example, the perceptions of online learning held by institutions and learning providers significantly influence their level of trust, commitment, and investment in this instructional method. Interviewees emphasised the responsibility of institutions to invest in the development of online learning "as they should".[95]

As previously noted, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the adaptation of all training programmes to an online format, and many of these continue to be delivered fully or partially online. However, despite the widespread adoption of digital learning in the fields of hate crime and hate speech, it often does not receive the same level of recognition and prioritisation from leadership as traditional in-person training.[96] This results in a lack of strategic funding to implement the necessary infrastructure as explained above, it also presents difficulties for learners, who are often not allowed the same amount of time and focus for an online course as they would have when attending an in-person training of the same subject. This point is made clear by a Facing Facts training police participant who noted, "I have found it almost impossible to get the time off from taking calls in order to view the training package". However, in the case of in-person training, it is more broadly accepted that the officer is off their duties on the given day especially when the training takes place at a training centre away from their station. "Management probably needs to equate e-learning with classroom training" as summarised by an interviewed digital learning expert from a police college.[97]

An essential factor for the success of online learning programmes within institutions is strong leadership support. However, merely authorising a programme is not enough to ensure positive outcomes; continued strategic backing is crucial.[98] When leadership maintains long-term, sustained commitment to online learning, it alleviates one extra burden on professionals responsible for designing and delivering these programmes.

2.5 Supporting multi-stakeholder learning

Numerous standards and guidelines emphasise the importance of a 'partnership' or 'multi-stakeholder response' to hate crime and hate speech; however, interpretations of what multi-stakeholder learning entails, and specifically the role of civil society organisations, vary significantly. This section explores these differing perspectives and proposes a collaborative approach to online learning that integrates all components of hate crime and hate speech response systems, that should support a cohesive and inclusive framework for capacity building.

95 Interviewee 11, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 8, 2024.
96 Interviewee 17, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 23, 2024.
97 Interviewee 17, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 23, 2024.
98 Jjoti Belur and Clare Bentall. "Reviewing the 3Cs of Blended Learning for Police Education"; Interviewee 10, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 7, 2024.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) advises Member States to establish systematic cooperation frameworks between law enforcement agencies and civil society.[99] These frameworks should include information exchange, collaboration on guidance and training for hate crime reporting. Guidelines from the Commission-coordinated High Level Group on hate crime and hate speech also recommend collaboration in hate crime training, emphasising the unique expertise of civil society organisations (CSOs) regarding victim support and in identifying and responding to new and emerging manifestations of hate crime and hate speech.[100] *Addressing hate speech through education: a guide for policy-makers* published by UNESCO, calls for a multi-stakeholder response to combat hate speech. "The development and enforcement of long and medium-term policies to combat hate speech . . . must be a multi-stakeholder effort including, in addition to the police and other law enforcement officials, teachers and other professionals, such as social workers, youth workers, counsellors, nurses and doctors; lawyers, court judges, public officials and politicians; and business and industry, in particular the technology producers and digital platform owners, all of whom can contribute by adhering to their own codes of conduct and anti bullying policies."

Interviewed experts largely acknowledged the importance of multi-stakeholder learning, with one stating that "it should be a must" for addressing challenges.[101] The potential benefits of multi-stakeholder learning in hate crime and hate speech were most clearly identified by interviewees in the case of police, prosecutors and judges as co-learners. The main advantages highlighted for this community's co-learning were chances for sharing information and networking given the lack of opportunities for these professionals to meet and exchange.

However, while recognising the virtue of involving members of civil society in the learning phase, this format also raised interviewees' overall concerns. Various challenges were articulated, including "different levels of understanding" and "different perspectives" among law enforcement and criminal justice professionals in contrast to civil society.[102] Results from an international survey among law enforcement agencies in the context of online training on illegal trafficking found that the most important factor for the online training's success was "participants skills and experience on the topic(s)", interpreting the result as "a homogeneous and harmonised group of learners is considered an asset for the law enforcement environment".[103]

An interviewee experienced in delivering multi-stakeholder trainings admitted being sceptical given their challenging experiences when involving "critical NGO voices" which resulted in a situation that was difficult to manage.[104] Another challenge raised was the police's reluctance to share sensitive information or internal issues

99 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Hate Crime Recording and Data Collection in the European Union: A Comparative Review of the Law and Practice", 2018, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-hate-crime-recording_en.pdf.
100 European Commission, "Key guiding principles on cooperation between law enforcement authorities and civil society organisations", 2023, https://commission.europa.eu/document/455f4633-d8eb-4d5c-a98f-dd157c67f141_en.; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Hate Crime Recording and Data Collection in the European Union", 12.
101 Interviewee 5, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 27, 2024.
102 Interviewee 4, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 27, 2024.
103 European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Mara Mignone and Valentina Scioneri, "Training and Education during the Pandemic Crisis The H2020 ANITA project experience", 2022, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/scientific-knowledge-and-research/european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin/special-conference-editions.
104 Interviewee 1, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 13, 2024.

in the presence of civil society[105], or be "too much on their best behaviour"[106]. Interviewees with experience involving these groups of learners added that "it might be intimidating, but otherwise, if they don't mix, they would never learn the limitations or the frustrations of the others." However, they warned that this might not work in practice, where eventually "you might end up just managing conflicts and traumas".[107] In contrast, an interviewee responsible for police training that included a 'dialogue day' with civil society representatives expressed strong support for multi-stakeholder training, stating they are a "big advocate" for this approach. The interviewee noted, for example, that police officers began to recognise aspects of situations from the perspective of CSOs that they had not previously considered. Similarly, CSOs admitted that before the "dialogue", "All [they] ever saw was the uniform," highlighting how the training helped bridge understanding between the two groups.[108]

Civil society's participation in police trainings with the specific purpose of sharing their expertise in victim support was generally well-received. The interviewed trainer who had poor experiences with police and civil society as co-learners emphasised that police were usually interested in sessions delivered by CSOs, based on their work with victims and generally wanted to know more.[109] Raising awareness of victim impact and addressing bias by civil society were also found to be valued training elements, and strengthened police's understanding of the rationale for the given trainings.[110] CSO's involvement as co-trainers is valuable, police responded positively about learning of victim impact.

Facing Facts has implemented several practices designed to facilitate meaningful, though sometimes challenging, conversations among various elements of the hate crime and hate speech response systems, in its learning design. For instance, its registration process requires participants to agree to terms and conditions that promote respectful conversation and tutor-supported discussions. It also includes clearly defined learner personas that outline the background and experience of target learners, regardless of their current professional roles.[111] In the case of civil society, learners typically include specialist victim support services who regularly collaborate with police to ensure victim safety and support. These individuals may offer critical perspectives during engagements with police but remain committed to building constructive working relationships, focusing on resolving conflicts and problem-solving to secure victims' support and participation in investigations and, where applicable, criminal proceedings. One police interviewee observed that while co-learning was found to require "managing conflicts", on the other hand, both parties gained a better understanding of each other's work and perspectives as a result of the training.[112]

Police and CSO learners also have different knowledge gaps. Interviews with experts experienced in designing or delivering online training for police noted that police tend to appreciate legal terms and practical application of concise learning content.

105 Interviewee 7, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 29, 2024.
106 Interviewee 17, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, May 23, 2024.
107 Interviewee 5, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 27, 2024.
108 Interviewee 12, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 26, 2024.
109 Interviewee 1, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 13, 2024.
110 Interviewee 12, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 26, 2024.; Interviewee 2, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 14, 2024.
111 Interviewee 11, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 8, 2024.
112 Interviewee 12, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 26, 2024.

Multi-stakeholder cohort-based courses delivered by Facing Facts also indicated that police do not always have a clear understanding of victim experiences. However, Facing Facts' course evaluations and expert interviews emphasised that police wish to learn more about victim experiences, appreciating hearing directly from victims, often identifying this course element as most engaging. An interviewee with experience in designing and delivering online courses for civil society members noted that this group of learners tends to appreciate detailed content and sometimes "enjoy being treated as scholars."[113] However, while they often have extensive experience in victim support, they may lack knowledge of the police's role and responsibilities in responding to hate crimes. Accommodating diverse learning needs and institutional perspectives can be challenging due to resource constraints; recognising different learner categories and providing customised methods, content, and support requires additional time and structure. These findings underscore the importance of including digital preferences and support needs in the training needs analysis and learning design process.

It is important to note that in some circumstances, various factors can present barriers to full multi-stakeholder learning design. One interviewee observed that "in areas where general victim support is more developed, the gap between stakeholders will be less present, while in other areas this will be a bigger problem".[114] Other contextual factors such as where there is no political or institutional commitment to addressing hate crime, or where there is evidence of institutional collusion in police discrimination and/or brutality, will also determine whether police- CSO cooperation, including in the learning environment is at all feasible.[115]

Where it is possible, Facing Facts online aims to create a safe environment where professionals can "put the challenges on the table.[116] Bringing together diverse stakeholders responsible for addressing hate crime and hate speech, and engaging them across institutional and identity divides—both during the design phase and in participation— is a core aim of its learning design. It is essential to gather more data on what works to integrate the concept of systems-based responses into effective e-learning design, as well as a data gathering strategy to support it.

---

113 Interviewee 10, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 7, 2024.
114 Interviewee 4, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, February 27, 2024.
115 See Joanna Perry, "Principles and Practices of Connection" in 'Connecting on Hate Crime Data in Europe'. Brussels: CEJI., 2019, Design & graphics: Jonathan Brennan; see also Amanda Perry-Kessaris, Mohsin Alam Bhat & Joanna Perry, "Conceptual experimentation through design in pedagogic contexts: lessons from an anti-hate crime project in India." The Law Teacher, 57(4), 437–457. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069400.2023.2275496.
116 Interviewee 11, interviewed by Joanna Perry and Katalin Józan, March 8, 2024.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Align Digital Education Policies with Hate Crime and Hate Speech Training Needs

For: European Commission, National Governments.

Recommendation: Integrate hate crime and hate speech training into broader digital education policies, such as the EU's Digital Education Action Plan. Consider using existing funding programmes. This alignment will help ensure that training for public authorities through police and judicial academies or multi-stakeholder programmes such as Facing Facts Online, benefit from digital advancements and consistent funding.

2. Establish Platforms for Cross-Sectoral Exchange and Collaboration

For: EU Institutions, National Governments, Training Providers.

Recommendation: Create and maintain online platforms that facilitate strategic collaboration and peer-to-peer exchanges between law enforcement, civil society organisations (CSOs), and other stakeholders. Such platforms should support the sharing of data, best practices, resources, and innovative learning approaches across sectors and countries.

3. Implement Robust Evaluation Frameworks for Online Training Programmes

For: Relevant training providers with a significant or expanding online learning programme including Facing Facts Online, CEPOL, Council of Europe, Academic Institutwions and national police and judicial training academies.

Recommendation: Develop comprehensive evaluation strategies for online learning programmes to gather data on engagement, knowledge retention, and practical application. Share data as freely as possible through established platforms for exchanges. This will help identify effective practices, address misconceptions, and improve the quality of training on hate crime and hate speech.

4. Strengthen Leadership and Institutional Support for Digital Learning

For: Law Enforcement Agencies, Public Authorities, Civil Society Organizations.

Recommendation: Encourage leadership within institutions to view online learning as an integral part of training strategies, equal in value to in-person programmes. Sustained leadership support is critical for ensuring adequate resources, promoting participation, and securing long-term commitment to digital learning initiatives.

5. Incorporate Social Learning Elements into Online Training Programmes

For: Training Providers, Instructional Designers.

Recommendation: Design online courses with interactive elements that promote social learning, such as group projects, peer networking, and regular tutor-led discussions. This approach can enhance engagement and learning outcomes, especially for sensitive topics like hate crime and hate speech, by facilitating deeper connections and shared understanding among participants.

6. Recognize and Support Change Agents Across Institutional and Community Boundaries

For: Relevant EU institutions, National Governments, NGOs, Community Leaders.

Recommendation: Identify and provide targeted support for change agents who work across institutions and communities to improve hate crime and hate speech response systems. Online learning communities should be developed to connect these individuals, offering them access to resources, peer support, and opportunities for collaboration.

7. Address Gaps in Digital Literacy and Infrastructure

For: National Governments, Public Authorities, Training Providers.

Recommendation: Invest in improving digital skills and infrastructure for all stakeholders, particularly law enforcement officers and other professionals in public authorities. Introductory training sessions, user-friendly digital tools, and better IT support can help overcome existing barriers to effective online learning engagement.

8. Integrate Technology-Enhanced Learning Tools into Training Programmes

For: Training Providers, Technology Developers.

Recommendation: Explore and invest in technology-enhanced learning tools, such as virtual reality, simulations, and mobile apps, to supplement existing online training and in-person training. These tools can also bring the victim experience closer to learners thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of hate crime and hate speech training.

9. Promote Multi-Stakeholder Learning and Collaboration

For: Law Enforcement Agencies, CSOs, International Organizations.

Recommendation: Design online learning programmes that encourage collaboration between law enforcement, civil society, and other public authorities. Structured engagement, clear guidelines, and the inclusion of diverse perspectives can help build trust, foster understanding, and improve multi-stakeholder collaboration, strengthening hate crime and hate speech response systems.

10. Ensure Sustainability of Online Learning as a Core Training Strategy

For: National Governments, Law Enforcement Agencies, NGOs.

Recommendation: Develop long-term strategies to sustain online learning as a core element of training for hate crime and hate speech response systems. This includes strategic investments in digital infrastructure, regular updates to course content, and ongoing support for online learning communities, ensuring they remain adaptable and relevant in an evolving digital landscape.

11. Develop a Competency Framework on digital education for hate crime and hate speech responses

For: European Commission, European Council, National Training Institutions, Law Enforcement Agencies, Civil Society Organizations.

Recommendation: Establish a competency framework for digital education in the field of hate crime and hate speech responses, drawing on the European Digital Competence Framework for Educators. The framework should include competencies related to designing, planning, and implementing digital tools in learning processes and facilitating collaborative learning.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, *Michael W. Michael Allen's Guide to e-Learning: Building Interactive, Fun, and Effective Learning Programs for Any Company*, Wiley, 2016.

Anderle, Jonlee S. "Procedural Learning: A Comparison of Skills Acquisition between an Online Environment and Traditional Classroom Training", (PhD diss., University of Wyoming, 2018).

Annabelle Betz, Melissa Sonnino, Joanna Perry, Daniel Heller. "Embracing the Digital Classroom – our experience with the Digital Learning Institute", 2024, https://www.facingfacts.eu/blog/embracing-the-digital-classroom-our-experience-with-the-digital-learning-institute/.

Belur, Jyoti and Clare Bentall. "Reviewing the 3C's of Blended Learning for Police Education: Assessing Capacity, Building Capability, and Conquering Challenges", *Police Practice and Research*, 2024, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15614263.2023.2210249

Belur, Jyoti et al. "What Do We Know about Blended Learning to Inform Police Education? A Rapid Evidence Assessment", *Police Practice and Research*, 2 January 2023, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15614263.2022.2073230.

Belur, Jyoti, Helen Glasspoole-Bird, Clare Bentall, and Julian Laufs. "What Do We Know about Blended Learning to Inform Police Education? A Rapid Evidence Assessment." *Police Practice and Research*, 2022, 24 (1): 32–52. doi:10.1080/15614263.2022.2073230.

Branch, Robert Maribe. *Instructional Design: The ADDIE Approach*, Springer Science & Business Media, 2009.

Council of Europe. "Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)5 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Convention on Human Rights in University Education and Professional Training." Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2019. Accessed November 18, 2024. https://rm.coe.int/enseignement-universitaire-et-formation-professionnelle-en/16809ecdbc.

"Council Recommendation of 23 November 2023 on the Key Enabling Factors for Successful Digital Education and Training", *Official Journal of the European Union*, (2023), http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/1115/oj/eng.

CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe. "Promoting social cohesion through training, education, dialogue and advocacy", accessed December 13, 2024, https://ceji.org/.

European Commission: Joint Research Centre, Redecker, C. and Punie, Y., "European framework for the digital competence of educators – DigCompEdu", *Publications Office*, 2017, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/159770.

European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan – Action 9." *European Education Area*, last modified 2023. https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan/action-9.

European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan – Action 4." *European Education Area*, last modified 2023. https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan/action-4.

European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan – Action 10." *European Education Area*, last modified 2023. https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan/action-10.

European Commission, EU High Level Group on Combating Racism, Xenophobia. "Mapping Hate Crime Training for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Authorities in the European Union", 2021, https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-04/wg_hate_crime_training_report_mapping_national_activities.pdf.

European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)." *European Education Area*, last modified 2023. https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan.

European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan (Update)." European Commission – Public Consultations and Feedback, accessed October 23, 2024. https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12453-Digital-education-action-plan-update-_en.

European Commission. "Key guiding principles on cooperation between law enforcement authorities and civil society organisations", 2023, https://commission.europa.eu/document/455f4633-d8eb-4d5c-a98f-dd157c67f141_en.

European Commission, EU High Level Group on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Intolerance. "Hate Crime Training for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Authorities: 10 Key Guiding Principles", 2017, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/368d9475-fa57-42b1-bf9f-81a092927a54_en?filename=hlg_conclusions_paper_hate_crime_training_final_rev_43050.pdf.

European Commission. "Strategic approaches to embedding hate crime and hate speech training in national training programmes for law enforcement: a compass", 2022, https://commission.europa.eu/document/ee29b47f-fe11-47bb-8da1-f981fe5d8f2c_en.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. "Encouraging Hate Crime Reporting – The Role of Law Enforcement and Other Authorities", 2021, https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/hate-crime-reporting.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. "Hate Crime Recording and Data Collection in the European Union: A Comparative Review of the Law and Practice", 2018, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-hate-crime-recording_en.pdf.

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL). "Strategic Training Needs Assessments", 2023. https://www.cepol.europa.eu/training-and-education/training-needs-analysis/strategic-training-needs-assessments.

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL). "New EU-STNA Report: Enhancing Digital Skills of Law Enforcement Officials Is Imperative.", last modified 2023. https://www.cepol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/new-eu-stna-report-enhancing-digital-skills-law-enforcement-officials-imperative.

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL). "Operational Training Needs Assessment: Fundamental Rights and Data Protection", 2023. https://www.cepol.europa.eu/api/assets/CEPOL_OTNA_Fundamental_Rights_and_Data_Protection.pdf.

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Laurent Chapparo. "Digital learning: how to improve knowledge and skills for law enforcement managers", European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin Special Conference Edition Nr. 3, 2017, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/scientific-knowledge-and-research/european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin.

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Cédric Carré. "The Challenges of E-Learning in the French Police Nationale", European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin, Special Conference Edition Nr. 6, 2023, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/publications/special-conference-edition-nr-6-european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin.

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Micha Fuchs and Kristina Ott. "The Influence of Digital Devices on Learning Interest, Engagement and Academic Performance in Basic Police Training", European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin, Special Conference Edition Nr. 6, 2023, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/publications/special-conference-edition-nr-6-european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin.

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Micha Fuchs. "Challenges for Police Training after COVID-19: Seeing the crisis as a chance", European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin, Special Conference Edition Nr. 5, 2022, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/scientific-knowledge-and-research/european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin/special-conference-editions.

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Mara Mignone and Valentina Scioneri, "Training and Education during the Pandemic Crisis The H2020 ANITA project experience", 2022, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/scientific-knowledge-and-research/european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin/special-conference-editions.

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Detlef Nogala & Detlef Schröder. "Pandemic Effects on Law Enforcement Training and

Practice — Introduction to conference findings and perspectives", European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin, Special Conference Edition Nr. 5, 2022, https://www.cepol.europa.eu/scientific-knowledge-and-research/european-law-enforcement-research-bulletin/special-conference-editions.

Facing Facts. "Facing Facts Online", accessed June 3 2024, https://www.facingfactsonline.eu/.

Facing Facts. "Understanding and meeting the needs and motivations of online learners for tackling hate crime and hate speech", accessed October 18, 2024. https://www.facingfacts.eu/policy-briefing-hate-speech/.

Groß, Eva, Ulrike Zähringer & Anabel Taefi. "Police handling of hate crime: A pilot project to use VR technology for professional development in sensitizing police officers to the experiences of victims of bias crime in Hamburg", (Project Immersive Democracy, 2024), https://www.metaverse-forschung.de/en/2024/02/13/police-handling-of-hate-crime-a-pilot-project-to-use-vr-technology-for-professional-development-in-sensitizing-police-officers-to-the-experiences-of-victims-of-bias-crime-in-hamburg/

Halford, E., and Youansamouth, L. "Emerging results on the impact of COVID-19 on police training in the United Kingdom." The Police Journal, 97(1), 105-130, 2024, https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258X221137004.

Metaverse Research Network. "About Us", accessed November 18, 2024, https://metaverse-research-network.info/about-us/.

Mitra, Sinjini and Gerard Beenen. "A comparative study of learning styles and motivational factors in traditional and online sections of a business course." 2019, INFORMS Transactions on Education, 20(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1287/ited.2019.0211.

Mitsakis, F. & Theodosis Karageorgakis. "E-learning: A Temporary 'By-Product' of Covid-19 Pandemic or a Contemporary Solution to Workplace Training and Learning?" In: Loon, M., Stewart, J., Nachmias, S. (eds) The Future of HRD, Volume I. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52410-4_7.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). "From Planning to Impact: A Manual on Human Rights Training Methodology", New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2019, 10, https://cambodia.ohchr.org/en/content/planning-impact-manual-human-rights-training-methodology.

Perry, Joanna. "Artificial Intelligence, online learning and Facing Facts online", (Facing Facts Blog, 2024), https://www.facingfacts.eu/blog/artificial-intelligence-online-learning-and-facing-facts-online.

Perry, Joanna. "Principles and Practices of Connection" in 'Connecting on Hate Crime Data in Europe'. Brussels: CEJI, 2019, Design & graphics: Jonathan Brennan.

Perry-Kessaris, Amanda, Mohsin Alam Bhat & Joanna Perry. "Conceptual experimentation through design in pedagogical contexts: lessons from an anti-hate crime project in India." The Law Teacher, 57(4), 437–457. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069400.2023.2275496.

Trickett, L. and Paul Hamilton. "Hate crime training of police officers in Nottingham: a critical review. Research report for external body." Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University, 2016, 74, http://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/28089/.

UNESCO. "Addressing Hate Speech Through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers", Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021, accessed November 13, 2024, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384872.

United Nations. "World Programme for Human Rights Education", UN iLibrary, accessed November 13, 2024, https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/series/29592682.

⋮ APPENDICES

Appendix A. Terminology

Asynchronous learning: students access course materials, engage in discussions, and complete assignments at different times, rather than synchronously with other students. This allows learners to progress through the material at their own pace, accommodating their individual schedules and learning preferences. This method can be used in cohort-based learning where students complete a course over a set period of time including a schedule of modules and (synchronous) tutorials.

Capacity building: As defined by the United Nations Academic Impact, capacity-building is "the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organisations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world."[117] Facing Facts believes that the concept of online capacity-building should be considered alongside, or as part of online learning when considering the learning and development needs of multi-stakeholder professional learning networks such as Facing Facts.

Cohorts and cohort-based learning: a cohort refers to a group of students who progress through a course or programme together, starting and finishing at the same time. Cohorts often engage in a range of synchronous learning activities such as tutorials and asynchronous learning activities such as readings and viewing instructional videos.

Content management system (CMS): A content management system is an application that is used to consistently manage content (for example, documents, images, videos) and allow multiple contributors to create, edit and publish content.[118]

Discussion forum: A discussion forum is a digital platform, hosted on the LMS, where students and educators can engage in asynchronous conversations about course-related topics. These forums provide a space for exchanging ideas, asking questions, and collaborating outside of real-time interactions.

Formal learning: formal learning, which follows a syllabus and is intentional in the sense that learning is the goal of all the activities learners engage in.[119]

Gamification: Method of teaching using games principles to enhance learning and engagement. This often involves the application of game-design elements and

---

[117] United Nations, "Capacity-Building", Academic Impact, accessed 3 June 2024, https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/capacity-building.
[118] The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, "Building a Taxonomy for Digital Learning", 2020, https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/building-a-taxonomy-for-digital-learning.pdf.
[119] Council of Europe, "Formal, non-formal and informal learning", https://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/formal-non-formal-and-informal-learning.

principles in non-game contexts, for instance, a set of activities and processes to solve problems by using or applying the characteristics of game elements. Often, this manifests as students being set, and completing, a series of tasks which contribute to reaching an overall goal. The aim of this approach is to maximise students' enjoyment and engagement through capturing their interest and inspiring them to continue learning.[120]

Informal learning: Informal learning takes place outside schools and colleges and arises from the learner's involvement in activities that are not undertaken with a learning purpose in mind.[121]

Learning Management System (LMS): Digital design and delivery platform - usually accessed using devices - which enables various methods of teaching and learning delivery to be used. Through a learning management system, a provider can use, for example, video or podcasts to support and enhance digital learning methods.[122]

Massive open online courses (MOOCs): Short digital courses that students complete digitally, as there is no requirement for any physical attendance at a provider. They are most often open to a wide audience and not limited to those students already registered with an institution. While often based on learning and teaching delivered as part of a degree programme, they are not necessarily component parts of a larger programme and, as such, students who complete these short courses often do not receive academic credit. However, some students, on successful completion of their short 15 course, may be offered advanced standing for entry to a programme at the provider offering the MOOC which does carry academic credit.[123]

Microlearning: Small learning activities to demonstrate a specific skill or focus on a knowledge gap or term.[124]

Facing Facts Network's multi-stakeholder community of practice: This key term refers to the unique community of learners at Facing Facts, including civil servants, law enforcement officials, criminal justice practitioners, and civil society, among others. Given the diverse professional backgrounds of our learners, we foreground the 'learning identity' of the participants (as well as our own 'learning identity' as tutors) to support an equal connection across what can be differences in power and status between public authorities and civil society learners.

Non-formal learning: Non-formal learning takes place outside formal learning environments but within some kind of organisational framework.[125]

Online learning: As discussed in the policy briefing, Singh and Thurman's definition emphasises that "Technology is the most abundant and clearly defined element of online learning".[126] Most authors agree that, regardless of what term they use when they are talking about online learning, technology is a crucial part of the definition.

120 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, "Building a Taxonomy for Digital Learning".
121 Council of Europe, "Formal, non-formal and informal learning".
122 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, "Building a Taxonomy for Digital Learning".
123 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, "Building a Taxonomy for Digital Learning".
124 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, "Building a Taxonomy for Digital Learning".
125 Council of Europe, "Formal, non-formal and informal learning".
126 Vandana Singh and Alexander Thurman,"'How Many Ways Can We Define Online Learning? A Systematic Literature Review of Definitions of Online Learning (1988-2018)", American Journal of Distance Education 33, no. 4 (2 October 2019): 289–306, https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2019.1663082.

Additionally, the themes of time and interactivity are similarly very relevant to the experience of online learning design at Facing Facts.

Scaffolding: support provided by a teacher/parent, peer, or a computer- or a paper-based tool that allows students to meaningfully participate in and gain skill at a task that they would be unable to complete unaided.[127]

Self-paced learning: Self-paced learning is a form of asynchronous learning where students control the speed at which they move through a course. It is more likely to describe learning that takes place outside cohort-based design.

Synchronous learning: students and instructors participate in course learning activities simultaneously, in real-time, typically through virtual classrooms or live chats.

Technology enhanced learning: Technology enhanced learning is an overarching term to describe the use of technology to support learning, teaching and assessment and to enhance the student experience. Technology enhanced learning can support teaching and learning both onsite and remotely. The term web enhanced learning is sometimes used synonymously with technology enhanced learning; although the former is, by definition, a more focused term relating to all technology used to support learning while web enhanced learning focuses on the connectivity and the use of web-enabled resources.[128]

Tutor: Tutors provide support and guidance to course participants—often personalised—to help them improve their understanding and their ability to apply knowledge to their own contexts. In Facing Facts Online courses, tutors offer weekly group sessions in seminars.

Webinar: A webinar is a live, online educational presentation where participants can view slides or other media and interact with the presenter through Q&A sessions, polls, or chat functions. Webinars are often used for lectures, workshops, or training sessions in a virtual setting.

---

127 Brian R. Belland, "Scaffolding: Definition, Current Debates, and Future Directions", https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4614-3185-5_39.
128 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, "Building a Taxonomy for Digital Learning".

Appendix B: Research methodology

The following section details the methods applied at each stage of the research project, such as the data collection from secondary data, Facing Facts Online's data and interviews as well as the process of review and analysis, including limitations that were identified and, at times, influenced the approaches taken.

I. Literature review

Literature review methods included identifying key search terms and databases, listing relevant results and categorising them according to their relevance to the research questions. As research with a specific focus on hate crime and hate speech or human rights in an online learning context for these target audiences is very rare, high relevance was assigned to all papers addressing online learning for at least one group in the examined audience (e.g. police). Those papers that addressed some features of digital learning, blended learning or other innovations that were not directly relevant to the research questions, but discussed these developments in the context of at least one group of the examined audience (e.g. police) were categorised as medium. Low relevance was assigned to papers not directly considering online learning, or not addressing any groups of the target audience. For this project, 91 papers in total were reviewed. Out of these 23 were highly relevant, 29 were categorised with medium relevance and 39 in the low relevance category.

Literature was searched in the following databases: ProQuest, Google Scholar, the database of the European Council, the database of the Council of Europe, the Human Rights Education and Training Database of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UNESCO Digital Library. In addition to these, industry blogs and other relevant websites were reached through search engines to explore innovative methods and industry news.

Key search terms were derived from the four research objectives and respective research questions. These terms were grouped into four categories, referring to the audience, theme and format of online learning programmes as well as the type of education offered. Terms from these categories were used simultaneously to provide comprehensive search phrases.

Audience: Multi-stakeholder community, police, criminal justice, legal professional, legal practitioner, prosecutor, judge, professional, adult learner, life-long learning

Theme: Hate crime, hate speech, human rights

Format: Online, digital, virtual, technology, e-, distance, synchronous, asynchronous

Education: Learning, training, capacity-building, education

The terms 'professional', 'adult learner' and 'life-long learning' were added to the original search terms at a later time to expand results once all relevant initial audience term combinations had been reviewed.

II. Facing Facts Online data review

....

Data gathered through Facing Facts Online's LMS over several years was analysed. Overall, data relating to 49 courses accessible through Facing Facts Online were assessed, which took place either in a cohort-based or self-paced format. The data reviewed included statistics from the LMS, such as activity reports, course completion reports and course evaluations. Registration forms and course reports were also reviewed where available. In addition to providing concrete evidence about the success of various features of online learning, this phase of data collection set the stage for the following interviews through identifying particular areas of interest, such as understanding successful engagement methods in different course formats, or the varying needs within a multi-stakeholder learner group.

III. Interviews

....

Data collection for this research included conducting internal and external expert interviews. Both types of interviews typically lasted for one hour and followed a semi-structured format, which was adapted to the unique experiences and expertise of experts. The interviewing process began with internal interviews involving CEJI staff members, during which current practices were retrieved and interview questions for external interviewees were specified. External interviewees were identified as previous and current partners or stakeholders of Facing Facts, often being involved in the design and delivery of customised online learning programmes along with Facing Facts. Seventeen external interviewees participated in the research, of whom four were part of a CSO, two represented a national police academy, one interviewee belonged to a department of a national government overseeing police training, five experts from international organisations, one interviewee from the European Commission and four interviewees from other EU Agencies. Out of all interviewees, 65 per cent had substantial experience with hate crime and hate speech trainings, 12 per cent were online learning experts, and 23 per cent of interviewees had considerable expertees at the intersection of these fields.

Information about the research project, and guiding questions were shared with each interviewee prior to the interviews. Based on this, informed consent was required from all interviewees, confirming their voluntary participation in the research, and detailing their preference regarding being video- and audiotaped or not. Permissions for being cited at all, with or without their name were also collected. All interviewees were asked to authorise the use and storing of information collected during these interviews in accordance with the relevant General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).
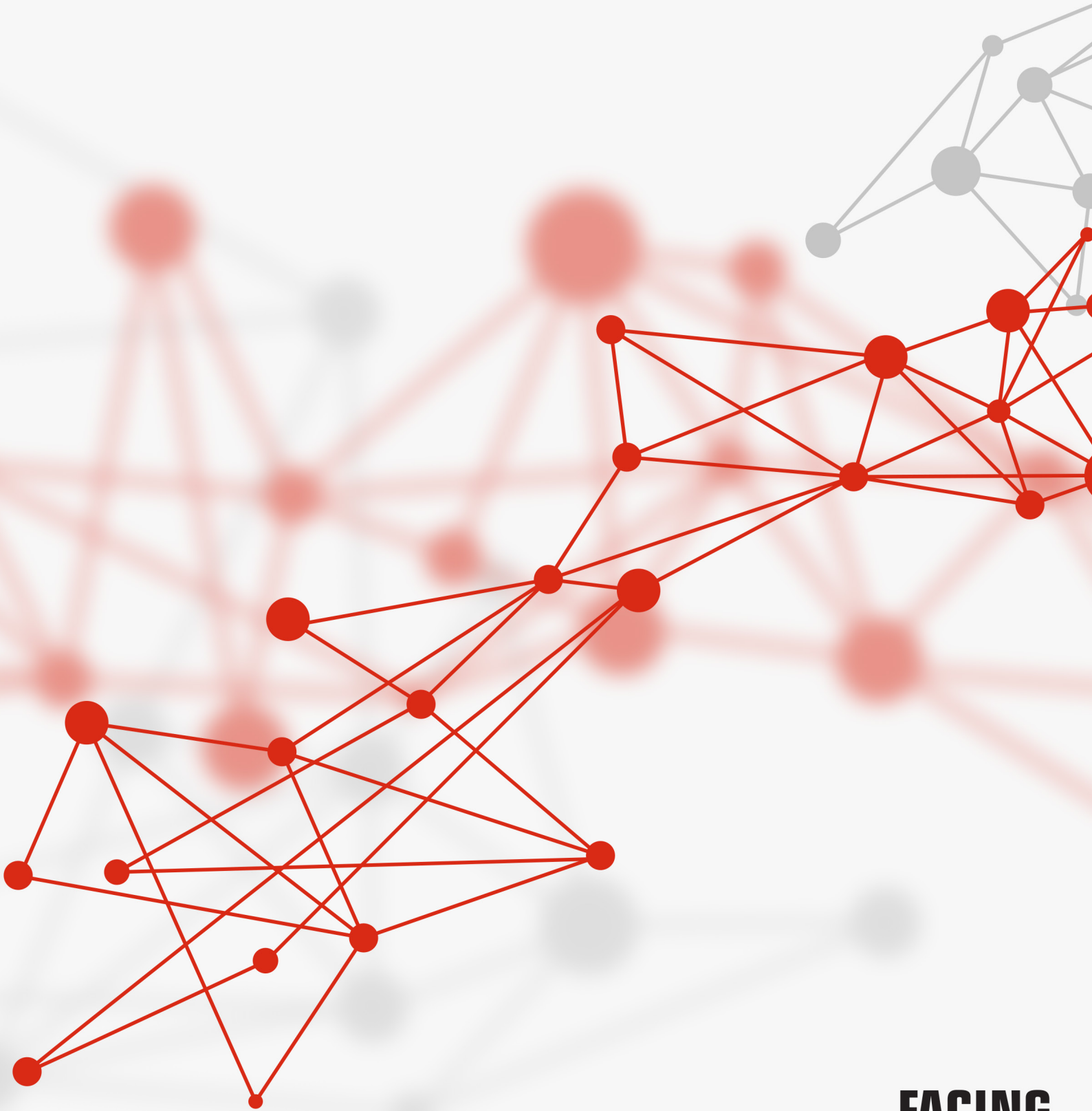
In addition to formal interviews, the researchers participated in the 2024 Conference on Hate Crime and the Joint Meeting of the Working Groups under the High Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime, organised by the European Commission. At this occasion, the researchers shared preliminary findings and collected feedback along with further inputs to the research topics through informal focus group activities.

IV. Analysis

Data analysis took place in two stages. First, upon the conclusion of data collection, all information was reviewed and grouped according to key themes that appeared most frequently or had critical importance to the research objectives. Themes were then further grouped into those presented in the Findings section of this report. The Discussion section highlights thematic overlaps and progresses the analysis to interpret how the overall findings contribute to addressing the overall objectives of this research.

Appendix C: Suggested areas for data collection

1. *Motivations for online learning in hate crime and hate speech.* Ask learners to articulate their motivation before they take the course. In addition to providing valuable data for the learning provider, it also sets the learner up for the course with greater clarity about their own incentives.

2. *Expectations about the course.* Ask learners to describe expectations prior to the course start for important insight for course providers, and for later analysis of how these expectations might change.

3. *First experiences and impressions about the course and its methods.* Collect data about mid-course satisfaction and feelings about the course for longer programmes (between 4-6 weeks). While it might require additional resources, accessing this information would allow for potential mitigation of problems and therefore contribute to greater success and completion rates by learners. Moreover, this data will also aid later analysis of participants' learning journey and the identifying of preventable obstacles.

4. *What supports learners well and what support they discovered they might need.* Ask learners what support they need and make adjustments. This will also provide data on how various sources of support are viewed and prioritised by learners.

5. *Evaluate the online learning experience, including its specific features and methods.* Conduct a post-course comprehensive survey inquiring about the main aspects of the learning experience post-course. In addition to general questions, other relevant programme-specific information shall also be collected. It is important to find a balance between including as many questions of interest as possible, while not discouraging the participant from participating in the survey. An effective method might be to connect submitting a final evaluation to the issuance of certificates.