

Safe Spaces and Youth Resilience

Title: “The Line Between Us”

Description of the Drama Focus

The mini-drama “*The Line Between Us*” focused on **school discrimination as a risk factor for violent extremism**. Through the story of a student who experiences exclusion, bullying, and social isolation in the school environment, the performance explored how repeated discrimination can create feelings of anger, frustration, and lack of belonging.

The drama highlighted how these emotions, when left unaddressed, can make young people more vulnerable to manipulation by extremist narratives — especially through online spaces that offer a false sense of acceptance, identity, and power. By presenting the character’s internal struggle between choosing revenge or choosing dialogue and inclusion, the play demonstrated that radicalization often begins with social exclusion rather than ideology alone.

The performance also emphasized the responsibility of peers, teachers, and the wider school community in recognizing early signs of discrimination and intervening before isolation turns into resentment. Ultimately, the drama promoted inclusion, empathy, and active support as protective factors against violent extremism, reinforcing the message that belonging and respect are key to prevention.

Characters:

- **Ardi** – 16-year-old student, feels isolated and discriminated against
- **Elira** – Ardi’s classmate, empathetic and observant
- **Marko** – Student who bullies and excludes Ardi
- **Teacher** – Represents authority and institutional response
- **Online Voice** – Symbolic character representing extremist manipulation
- **Narrator**

Scene 1 – The Classroom

(Students are chatting in small groups. Ardi sits alone at a desk.)

Narrator:

In a school like any other, silence can be louder than words. And exclusion can build invisible walls.

Marko: *(whispering loudly to others)*

Why does he even try? He's not like us.

(Some students laugh.)

Ardi: *(quietly, to himself)*

Maybe they're right.

Teacher:

Group project! Form teams of four.

(Everyone quickly forms groups. Ardi remains alone.)

Teacher:

Ardi, you can join... *(looks around, hesitant)* ...maybe that group?

Marko:

We're already full.

(Awkward silence. Teacher moves on quickly.)

Narrator:

Sometimes discrimination doesn't shout. It simply ignores.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 2 – The School Corridor

Elira:

Hey... are you okay?

Ardi:

I'm used to it. It's easier if I don't expect anything.

Elira:

You shouldn't have to get used to being invisible.

Ardi:

Invisible? No... They see me. Just not as someone who belongs.

(Elira looks concerned.)

Scene 3 – Online World

(Lights dim. Ardi sits with phone. A spotlight reveals the "Online Voice.")

Online Voice:

They will never accept you. But we will.

Ardi: *(looking up)*

Who are you?

Online Voice:

Someone who understands. Someone who sees your anger. Your pain. It's not your fault. It's theirs.

(Pause.)

Online Voice:

Why stay silent? Why not fight back? Join us. Be strong. Be respected.

Narrator:

When exclusion meets anger, manipulation finds opportunity.

(Ardi hesitates.)

Scene 4 – The Breaking Point

(Back in classroom. Marko bumps into Ardi intentionally.)

Marko:

Watch where you're going.

Ardi:

You pushed me!

Marko:

What are you going to do about it?

(Tension rises. Ardi clenches fists.)

(Elira steps in.)

Elira:

Stop! This isn't funny anymore.

(Teacher enters.)

Teacher:

What's going on?

Elira:

It's been going on for months. The jokes. The exclusion. The bullying.

(Teacher looks surprised — then reflective.)

Teacher:

Ardi... I didn't realize.

Ardi:

That's the problem. No one does.

Scene 5 – Turning Point

(Spotlight on Ardi alone.)

Online Voice:

They'll never change. We offer power.

(Spotlight shifts to Elira and Teacher.)

Elira:

You're not alone. But you have to let someone in.

Teacher:

We failed to see it. That changes now.

(Pause. Ardi looks between the two sides.)

Narrator:

Radicalization doesn't begin with violence. It begins with isolation.

(Ardi slowly puts his phone down.)

Ardi:

I don't want revenge. I want respect.

Final Scene – A New Start

(Classroom setting again. Students seated differently. Ardi is included in a group.)

Teacher:

Today we talk about belonging. Because school is not just for learning subjects — it is for learning respect.

Marko: *(quietly to Ardi)*

I... didn't think it was a big deal.

Ardi:

It was.

(Small nod. Not full reconciliation, but awareness.)

Narrator:

Violent extremism feeds on division.

Inclusion builds resistance.

The line between them is thinner than we think.

(All characters step forward.)

All Together:

No one should feel invisible.

(Lights fade.)

The project “*Safe Spaces and Youth Resilience*” is being implemented by IRCA in the Municipality of Vlora, as part of the sub-granting scheme under the project “*Strengthening Local Structures and Government Institutions to Prevent Violent Extremism and Support the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Process in Albania.*” The project is funded by GCERF and implemented by Nisma-ARSIS in full coordination with the Coordination Center against Violent Extremism (CVE) and ACPD