

# Understanding Youth Perspectives through Event-Based & Applied Qualitative Research: Insights from the GIZ - PREVECA Project in Kyrgyzstan



by:  
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# Overview

1. Introduction
2. Main Findings
3. Two Key Takeaways

# Introduction



# The PREVECA Project: Prevention of violent extremism in Central Asia

- Partner: Ministry of the Interior
- Duration: 2020-2027
- Approach:
  - promotes conflict-sensitive, human rights-based & gender-equal strategies
  - collaborates with state & civil society to foster social cohesion & citizen-focused measures
  - practical: vocational training, personal development & trust-building in public institutions

# Methodology

- Approach: **blended event** of (project management) skills-training & researching (starting from youth project ideas).
- **Sample**: 24 youth (18-25 years old); 15 females & 9 males; predominantly ethnic Kyrgyz.
- Data collection: 24 individual **interviews** (guideline), 3 focus group discussions (**FGDs**).

# Main Findings

# Violence & safety

- Perception that **societal safety** has increased @ national-level (e.g., due to better infrastructure, more effective police presence).
- However, regular mentioning of everyday **instances of local non-safety** (e.g., domestic violence, school bullying).

# Violence & safety

“Well, women’s safety in Kyrgyzstan is a separate issue altogether. Walking alone at night feels very, very unsafe. Taking a taxi alone at night is really not recommended, not even during the day sometimes...Yes, in some areas there’s lighting and cameras, but that doesn’t guarantee that they’ll work.” (female, Osh)



# Social media & ambivalence

“There was exactly this kind of intense discussion on social media, because a girl wore a revealing dress to a festival and everyone started taking sides, literally split into two camps. There were guys who said she was wrong to dress like that, and the second group was saying she has the right to choose... Even though many people tried to explain, tried to build dialogue, tried to provide a platform for them to discuss it, in the end nobody changed their opinion.”

(female, Naryn)

# Trust & social cohesion

- ‘People’ have become **more open** to communicate and towards diversity (e.g., across ethnicities, regional identities, gender).
- Still, youths share that they are **cautious and need to be aware of risks** (e.g., digital fraud, misinformation, fabricated content).
- But eventually, openness and general trust do **not necessarily translate into tangible social exchange** or ‘close relationships’ (e.g. mutual support).

# Gender & generation gaps

- Gendered social media: harmful content distributed differently to young men and women, e.g. girls victims of ‘culture of blame’.
- Youth see tendency among older generations to be less tolerant and have stereotypes along gender, racial and ethnic lines.
- But: older generations that ‘properly’ use social media could close this gap.



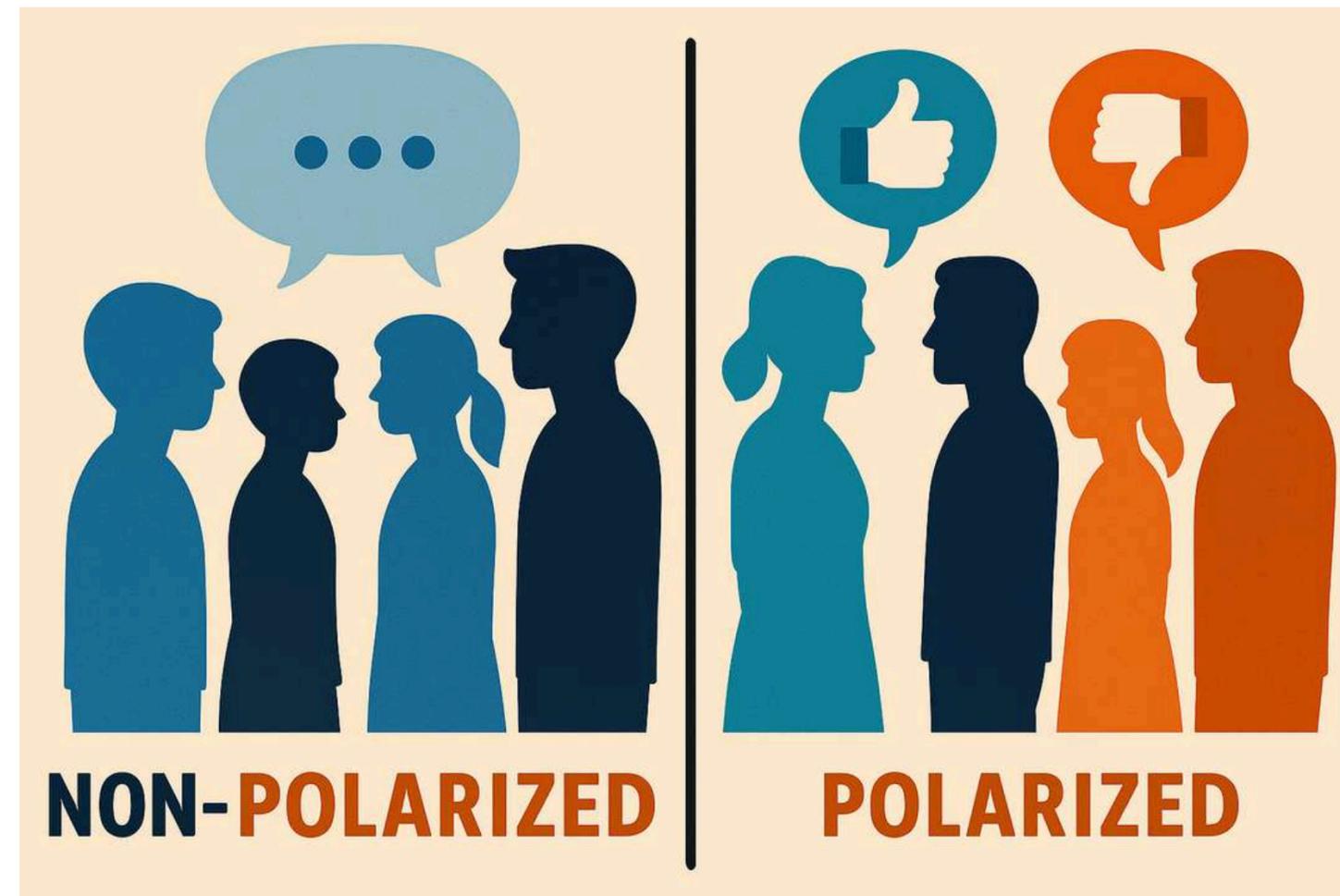
<https://eurasianet.org/kyrgyzstan-meets-population-boom-with-uncertainty-and-confidence>

# Gender & generation gaps

“There was such a case recently of a guy whose entire account was built on making such [hateful] statements [about] women who were literally killed...And he would write things like ‘she's to blame herself’. Her husband stabbed her to death, and he made such hellish posts about it...” (female, Naryn)

# Polarization - isn't an issue?

- 'Extreme' opinions (religion, gender, politics, regionalism) are noticed, but tolerated as long as they do not translate into action.
- Individualization among youth associates with tolerance. Few mention that 'social upbringing' is a necessary condition for social cohesion.



- Instead, individuals with diverse opinions and interests can swiftly find similar-minded groups via social media.

# Polarization - isn't an issue?

“Speaking of ‘very religious’ people: If they keep this opinion to themselves, we don’t [need to] interfere. If their actions go beyond boundaries, then we need to [limit] that...But as long as it doesn’t harm anyone, doesn’t lead anyone astray [to deviate], then we [should] ensure freedom of speech.” (male, Naryn)

# Two Key Takeaways

# Two key takeaways

## First: Individualization & (not vs.) social cohesion.

- Youth note a tendency to be more individualistic, but emphasize that this would not equal lower social cohesion.
- Social media allows to match diverse opinions and has potential for social change mobilization (+ & -).

# Two key takeaways

## Second: Education and skills-development are crucial.

- Trainings, mentoring and **good-quality educational content** matters.
- **Media and information literacy** can address forms of youth violence.
- Selective **involvement of adults** (parents, teachers, school principals) is desired for prevention through attention, care and control.
- External certificate programs & projects: boosting youth's self-confidence and providing validation through **parental and peer appreciation**.

# Limitations

- Preliminary findings.
- Sample: small & biased towards youth who are educated, female & represent ethnic majority.
- Next steps:
  - expand and diversity sample
  - theorization (polarization, social cohesion)
  - integration with quantitative evidence (2025 LiK wave)
  - tracking of youth projects for case studies.



Thank you! Rahmat!

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