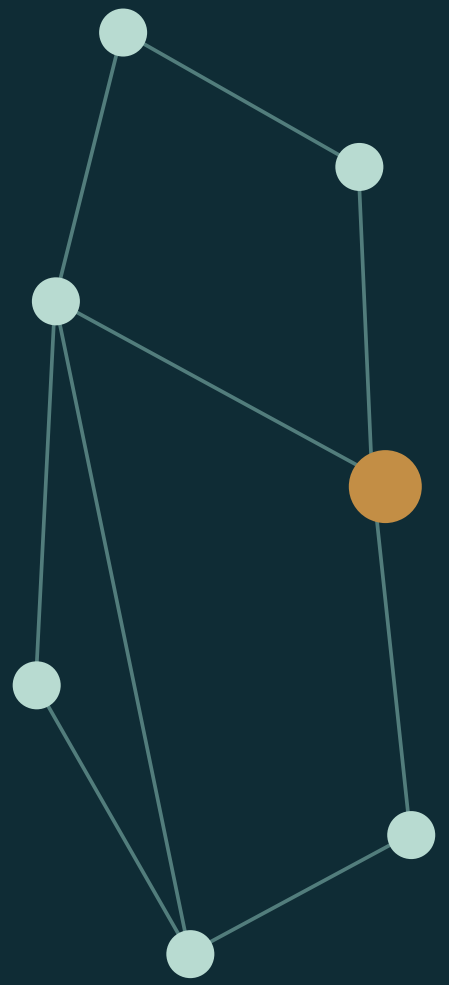
IPS FORUM 2026 • PANEL 3

From Online Vulnerability to Civic Resilience



Research to dialogue: practical lessons for reducing bias

Sajid Amit | Center for Enterprise and Society, ULAB

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Reducing bias is not the same as policing disagreement

Outcome of interest: a better way of examining claims, hearing others and handling disagreement.

EXPOSURE ≠ ENDORSEMENT	Encountering inflammatory content does not imply agreement with it.
DISSENT ≠ EXTREMISM	Political or religious disagreement should not be conflated with advocacy of violence.
CONTACT ≠ CONVERSION	What matters is how people interpret claims, interact and revise beliefs.

From evidence to practical intervention design

Three distinct methods pointed to complementary curriculum and dialogue responses.

600

STUDENTS

University survey

600 undergraduates
Online exposure & social buffers
→ Source literacy + dialogue

Amit, Mannan & Islam · 2020

15

EXPERTS

Digital strategy mapping

112 items + 15 expert interviews
Mapped strategies and risks
→ Human review + safeguards

Amit, Barua & Kafy · 2021

81

ARTICLES

Systematic review

81 articles reviewed
Resilience spans social levels
→ Peer + campus engagement

Amit & Kafy · 2022

Heavier internet use tracked weaker protective buffers

Observational student survey (2020), not a causal test. The design response was to strengthen critical literacy and trusted dialogue.

7+

HOURS PER DAY

High-use group in the 2020 study

01 More encounters with radical or offensive material online

02 Weaker reported influence of family, faculty and community

03 Less access to learning resources that may support resilience

Narratives matter because identity and belonging matter

Possible process shaping receptivity to biased claims—not a proven pathway or a deterministic sequence.

1

Grievance framing

A contested event is presented as evidence of collective injustice.

→

2

Identity cues

In-group and out-group boundaries make the narrative personally salient.

→

3

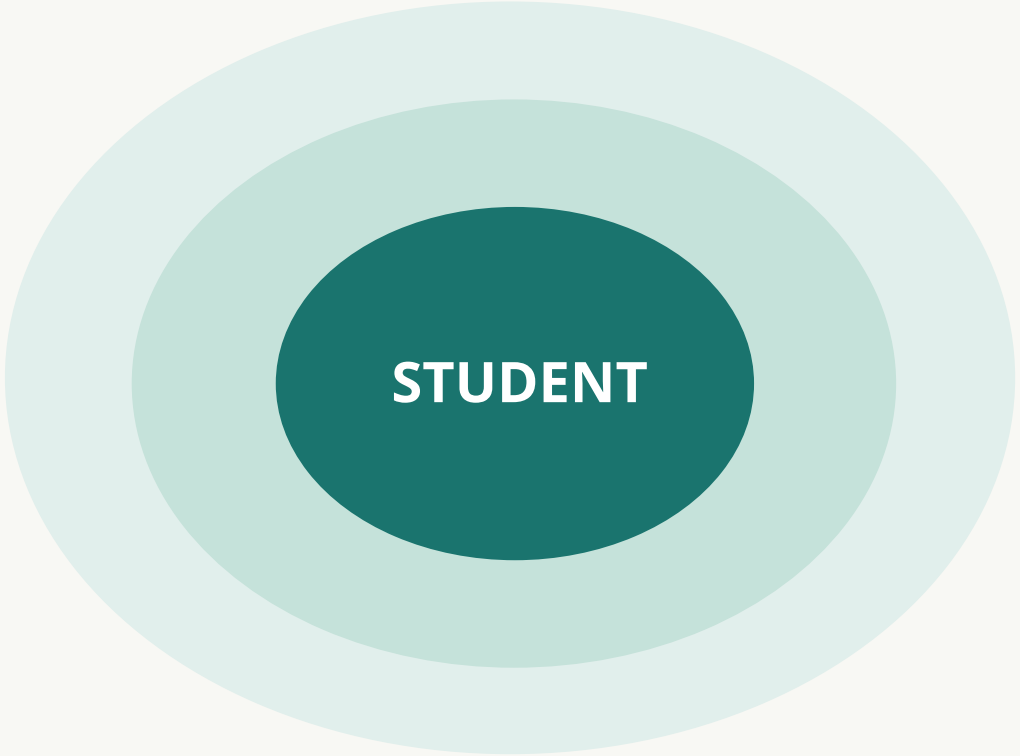
Social reinforcement

Peers and repeated content may normalise a single interpretation.

DIALOGUE INTERRUPTION: ask for evidence • examine generalisations • listen to a competing account

Why guided dialogue might reduce bias

The review suggests a multi-level theory of change. These are intended mechanisms, not measured causal effects.



INDIVIDUAL

Evaluate claims and counterexamples → challenge untested stereotypes

RELATIONAL

Hear lived experience and credible alternatives → practise perspective-taking

INSTITUTIONAL

Repeat dialogue through courses and peer groups → normalise respectful dissent

From digital evidence to face-to-face dialogue

Digital access expands reach; structured human exchange helps learners question and apply what they encounter.

RESEARCH IMPLICATION

- Credible, contextual alternatives
- Scalable, accessible learning
- Bring questions into dialogue

DELIVERY RESPONSE

- 14-lecture self-paced MOOC
- Faculty- and expert-led exchanges
- Student projects + peer networks

Design safeguard: protect legitimate dissent; challenge claims without labelling identities.

Inside the intervention: what students did

Documented 2022 workshops with MOOC graduates from five Bangladesh universities; formats varied by event.

01

PREPARE

14-lecture MOOC: diversity, tolerance and pluralism.

02

GATHER

Graduates from five universities met faculty and guest experts.

03

DIALOGUE

“Power” and “Diversity and Tolerance” sessions; students shared experiences.

04

CONTINUE

Faculty ambassadors, student research, films and podcasts.

Intended mechanism: shared concepts → perspective-taking → questioning assumptions → ongoing civic action.

Reach, perceptions and the limits of our evidence

Indicative programme data; no verified causal attitude or behaviour change.

~100K
ESTIMATED TOTAL REACH
Across digital and in-person initiatives

~10K
IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT
Classroom and co-curricular engagement

8–10
UNIVERSITIES
Approximate institutional coverage

4–5
HIGH SCHOOLS
Approximate school coverage

80%
WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE
Indicative feedback: expressed interest in activities

88%
BELIEF IN POSSIBLE BENEFIT
Indicative feedback: felt activities could improve attitudes

Evidence ladder: reach → feedback → demonstrated learning → behavioural change. Final two remain unverified.

Three lessons for science-backed dialogue

01	**Design dialogue**	Use lived experience, competing accounts and guided evidence checks.
02	**Sustain contact**	Link MOOC learning to discussion, faculty support and student projects.
03	**Measure impact**	Distinguish reach and satisfaction from measurable attitude change.

SELECTED RESEARCH

Amit et al. (2020), Conflict Studies Quarterly • Amit et al. (2020), JPIC&T
Amit et al. (2021), Heliyon • Amit & Kafy (2022), Journal of Adolescence