

ISD Blog

Why we should trust and invest in Europe's civil society to counter hate.

6th May 2019

By Zahed Amanullah, Resident Senior Fellow at [The Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#).



The Insitute for Strategic Dialogue has been working in collaboration with civil society since it was founded 13 years ago

Communities best understand the nuances around how hate can victimise the most vulnerable among them. They feel the impact of hate and polarisation firsthand and as a result have the drive and motivation to stamp it out. But they need our help – resources, coordination, and insight.

In late 2017, we launched the [£1m Innovation Fund to Counter Hate and Extremism](#) with [Google.org](#). Working in collaboration with 22 civil society projects across the UK, we supported new educational approaches, unique community projects, and cutting-edge technologies to enable more effective, innovative, and cohesive civil society responses at a localised level.

[Watch to find hear from some of the stories from our Innovation Fund grantees.](#)

We were on the hunt for initiatives that offered a truly innovative solution to hate and extremism and had the potential to scale. We accepted proposals between as little as £5,000 to more than £100,000 to make sure organisations both big and small could apply.

In the end, more than 230 projects applied from across the UK applied, totaling more than £15m of requests. After much deliberation from our expert panelists, we whittled the applications down to just 22 projects - and with that, an array of new and exciting local and national initiatives were born.



Limehouse boxing academy hosted educational programmes across London schools, teaching the importance and significance of tolerance and diversity in boxing

The projects that won funding included [a boxing academy](#) that hosted discussions and created content about racism and prejudice after witnessing the far right making inroads into their gyms. We supported the creation of a [virtual reality interactive tool](#) for schools to put students in the shoes of socially-discriminated peers to understand what hate feels like first hand – and how they can respond to it.



A student tests out Open University's Virtual Reality Programme, designed to increase empathy with those who experience hate crime.

Also selected was a [bystander intervention programme](#) that encourages citizens to safely report hate crimes and incidents, making for a safer and more supportive local community.

Now, once again working with Google.org and alongside our new partner [Ashoka](#), we are excited to deliver a fund bigger and more ambitious than ever with [€10m Google.org Impact Challenge on Safety for Europe](#).

These grants will range from €50,000 - €500,000 and are available to organisations throughout Europe – non-profits, social enterprises, academic institutions, and consortiums.

Are you part of a European organisation (including the UK for now) countering hate in your local community that would benefit from funding or do you know someone who is? If so, register for one of our eight introductory workshops throughout Europe and get more information at the [Google.org Impact Challenge website](#).

Applications close June 28th 2019.

Zahed Amanullah is a Resident Senior Fellow at The Institute for Strategic Dialogue. He leads on ISD's civil society engagement, communications, and partnerships, coordinating the public and private sectors with activists, frontline workers, and relevant civil society networks to counter disinformation, hate speech, extremist propaganda and recruitment.