

Barbershop.

The project creates an innovative safe space where young people can have open, honest discussions about challenging issues without fear of judgement.

Who is it for?

Young people between 14-19 years of age who may be exposed to gangs, crime, drug misuse and extremism within their community.

What is it?

The project creates an innovative safe space where young people can have open, honest discussions about challenging issues without fear of judgement.

What it involves?

Young people often find it difficult to speak openly about divisive issues within school or other formal environments. The local barbershop has long provided a safe space where discussions freely take place on a plethora of topics, so we use this concept to encourage open debate and conversation.

- We provide a space where young people can come of their own volition to be part of and listen to conversations that are guided by trained facilitators;
- Young people interact with their peers on a wide range of topics, from gang violence and extremism to drug abuse and mental health;
- Debate is guided by a trained facilitator who will steer the conversation to explore vulnerabilities and develop counter narratives to extremist messaging.

How long does it take?

For the duration of about eight weeks, pop up barbershops will be located in prime areas where young people congregate within a community afterschool and during the evenings.

What it achieves?

Through honest, measured debate and conversation, young people learn that discussion helps to redress polarized thinking.

Over the course of the programme participants will gain:

- Critical Thinking Skills – an ability to think critically and confidently about themselves and others as well as personal, social and political conflict and its consequences;
- Awareness of the Myths About Extremism – a deeper understanding of how people can be drawn towards groups and ideologies;
- Awareness of Counter Narratives – the ability to both identify and challenge persuasive extremist views with their own alternative narratives;
- Communication Skills - an ability to critically challenge what they are told and confidently engage in debate and discussions.