

# EX POST PAPER

## The school needs partners

### Introduction

**The RAN Education working group** focuses on better equipping teachers, school leaders, and the rest of the school staff, so they can play a crucial role in preventing radicalisation. The aim is to raise awareness of the topic, but moreover to empower and build capacity to prevent and deal with radicalisation in educational settings. The educational sector needs a diversity of partners in this for different needs. This paper describes how it takes a village to support a school. It also identifies actors who can support schools to tap into this wealth of resources and partners. Moreover, three inspiring local approaches are being described that show the way for local authorities to support schools.

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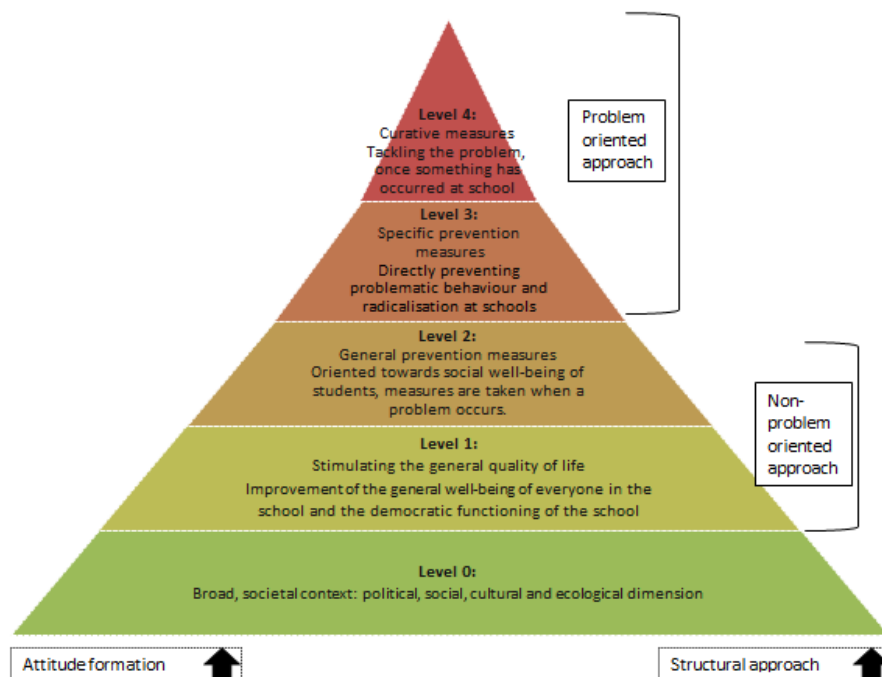
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## Most urgent needs

Schools can play a role in prevention of radicalisation of youth. To fulfil this challenging task, teachers and schools need support. Some needs are however more urgent than others.

For discussions about actions, needs and school policies RAN EDU learned that it is beneficial to do this against the background of the *Prevention Triangle (or pyramid<sup>1</sup>)*. To the right you see a small version (the larger is at the end of this document). Level 0 cannot be influenced by schools. Level 1 and 2 is the non-problem oriented phase. Generally speaking, schools are mainly working on this general level of prevention. They aim at creating an environment in which students are able to develop individually and socially, gather critical thinking skills and are inspired by positive role models.

These basics need to be in place, before schools can take steps to deal with the problem oriented approach when schools are actually been confronted with radicalisation and recruitment in phase 3 and 4.



Especially in phase 3 and 4 the most urgent needs for schools are:

- The need for resources. Schools need money and time to reflect and to learn from others, but also time to invest in partnerships.
- The need for lessons and methods to hold challenging and engaging conversations. It is of importance to organise training for school staff and to continuously practice with those acquired skills. Training could take place in a multi-agency setting in order to also strengthen the partnerships and increase the levels of trust between partners. It would be good if training could also contribute to the professional ethos of school principals and teachers, to be open for moral dilemmas.
- The need for a tailor-made curriculum. Participants mentioned amongst others to teach history from a non-ethnocentric viewpoint and to have a curriculum based on inclusivity and equal conditions.
- The need for multi-agency partnerships.
- Expertise on radicalisation, extremism, safeguarding and the role for schools
- The need for courage and confidence. Courage to be there for all students, also for the vulnerable ones. Confidence will increase if schools receive more trust.

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7403\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7403_en)



- The need for awareness raising.
- The need for an action plan.
- The need for a sense of belonging. For students and school staff.

## Which partner for what? It takes a village... and even more

The following partners (could) help schools to play a role in the prevention of radicalisation: other schools, care professionals, parents, local and national government, police, probation and justice, social community (sport, youth work, cultural), religious partners, victims organisations, expertise partners (academics, universities, material and lessons providers), business (under certain conditions), training institutes, media, teacher unions, student councils and housing companies. And probably this list could be extended. The needs of a school are not set in stone, some are long term and durable, others more incident driven and of great urgency. So, to alter the African verb, it does not only take a village to raise a child but: it takes a village to run a school. For schools in need there is a lot of potential support out there from partners. But, how to get it? How to tap into these resources and partners for schools? Three inspiring practices were invited by RAN EDU to present their approach. These local approaches provide lessons on how schools can benefit from partnerships.

### 1. Belgium approach Vilvoorde and Antwerp

In the city of Antwerp, a group of youngsters was in the process of isolation and possible radicalisation. In order to counter this, the city of Antwerp decided on a personalized and group approach to both empower the youngsters and reconnect them to society. As part of this approach, schools were supported to play a role by raising awareness amongst teachers and counsellors. Existing networks were used in the approach of preventing radicalisation; networks in place were a *central helpdesk* which can be called by professionals only and the *pupil guidance centers* that link schools to nurses, psychologists and doctors. Cases that teachers are worried about will be shared with 'their' social worker at school, then to the PGD and will be discussed (anonymously) if needed. In Vilvoorde, round table discussions started after quite some people left to go to Syria.

### 2. Danish SSP approach (School, Social service, Police)

The Danish approach to preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization, benefits greatly from existing structures. One of them is School, Social Service, and Police (SSP), which was set up in 1977. The basic idea of SSP is that quality of crime prevention work is strengthened by the sharing of information between the professionals. In the SSP-network for schools others partners like parents and youth clubs are involved as well. For each case that is brought into the SSP-network the partners discuss questions like: "What actions need to be taken?", "What partners need to be contacted?" and "What information can be shared – where and with whom?" An action plan will be formed, which is at the center of working with the person. Since there is no one-size-fits all, it is every time a challenge again to form this action plan and to decide which partners need to be involved in what way.

### 3. The UK prevent approach in Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets is an area of London with good community cohesion and good schools, but also an area with extremist activities and therefore a Prevent priority area. As the Prevent duty describes, local authorities have the statutory duty 'to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. In Tower Hamlets,

the prevention of radicalisation was incorporated by providing a self test for the implementation of the Prevent duty (picture in the attachment). The local government is trying to mobilise and empower schools and other local partners. Schools are helped with suggestions for how to implement prevent to each of the courses taught at schools. Therefore, each staff member at schools is involved. Teachers also contribute to developing teaching material. Since the parents are important partners, there are involved as well and the school staff openly communicates about what is being taught to the children.

### ***Lessons learnt from these projects***

- What these three projects have in common is that the local government is investing in the local capacity building. Schools are not only called upon to look for worrying signals of radicalisation, but were also supported with training, expertise and potential partners that might help a school.
- Use existing structures and add the prevention of radicalisation to these, as an extra focus, like happened in SSP.
- For schools talking to police and authorities can be challenging. Especially when the country has a high terror risk level, schools might be concerned about the consequences of referring someone to the authorities. Teachers know stories about police and other reacting too strong to signals. When it is mandatory the partnership feels less equal, because schools might feel they are being forced to operate for the strong arm of security. Teachers who don't trust the authorities will keep telling each other the stories about the overreaction by police about a 10-year old who might have misspelled terraced house<sup>2</sup>. Or a 15 year old Muslim boy who brings a clock to school and is being arrested<sup>3</sup>. Or a misunderstanding about cucumber and cooker bomb<sup>4</sup>. All of these stories are being retold because the lack of trust that the security lens is seeing things not in the right way at school. Trust that is easily damaged. Those approaching schools should take these concerns in account, to be able to build partnerships.

In this matter schools and partners should be creative. One way out is offering the schools the opportunity to refer and discuss pupils on the basis of anonymity.

- When schools and others build partnerships, it is worth spending time in understanding each other's culture, missions and ways of working. For instance the word radical, and even radicalisation, might be perceived different by an activist teacher who deal with engaged youngsters, than security officials who equal radical with radicalisation to recruitment, being two steps away from terrorist violence.

### **Many friends, a lot of support available and four strategies**

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-lancashire-35354061>

<sup>3</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/16/us/texas-student-ahmed-muslim-clock-bomb/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/four-year-old-raises-concerns-of-radicalisation-after-pronouncing-cucumber-as-cooker-bomb-a6927341.html>

Within RAN EDU the notion grew that schools in need are best helped with the capacity to liaise with 'friends' and support from outside school. There are at least four strategic ways to support schools in finding partners to tackle the needs the schools have:

*1. Schools learning from schools*

Schools can directly help each other. And schools can point each other to ways that helped them find solutions. This can be facilitated by governments, organised in events and networks, and through platforms like eTwinning<sup>5</sup>.

*2. Local authority and existing local networks*

Most of the partners that can help the school in the prevention of radicalisation can be found at a local level, in the direct environment of the school, or around the corner and out of view for a school. The local authorities and existing local networks of professionals and NGO's very often might have a stronger and wider network. Or just a complementary network. Asking around in these local 'hubs' can help the school find partners and engage with them.

*3. Training institutes and centre of expertise*

Universities, centres of expertise and training institutes might have an overview of examples of partnerships elsewhere. They can help the school with expertise through training, consultation and other ways of dissemination. Governments could support these critical friends and their value expertise, research, advice and support.

*4. National and international networks and organisations*

In some countries there is not much policy priority for prevention of radicalisation. In these countries there might not be much support capacity organised for schools, and will they have to rely on international foundations, organisations and networks like the RAN.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.etwinning.net/>

## Attachment: Checklist to ensure that Prevent issues have been addressed in your school policy and practice, United Kingdom

Below is the self-assessment checklist for schools in Tower Hamlet (London, UK). Another example can be found with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board: [http://www.oscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Prevent\\_within\\_schools.pdf](http://www.oscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Prevent_within_schools.pdf)

### Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalisation.

#### ⊕ Checklist for ensuring Prevent issues have been addressed in your school policy and practice:

	YES	NO	Partially	Further action planned	By Date
Does your safeguarding policy make explicit that the school sees protection from radicalisation and extremist narratives as a safeguarding issue?					
Are the lead responsibilities for Prevent clearly identified in the policy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevent Safeguarding Lead?</li> <li>Prevent Governor Lead?</li> <li>Prevent Curriculum Lead?</li> <li>Responsibility for checking visitors to the school?</li> <li>Responsibility for checking premises use by outsiders?</li> </ul>					
Have all school staff received training on Prevent?					
Has the Designated Safeguarding Officer been trained?					
Have Governors received training on Prevent?					
Does your induction programme cover Prevent issues?					
Does your safeguarding policy make explicit how Prevent concerns should be reported within the school?					
Have you checked that all staff know what they should do if they have a Prevent concern and to whom it should be reported?					
Do you have a clear statement about how the Prevent agenda is addressed preventatively through the curriculum/other activities?					
Have the Prevent curriculum interventions been mapped across the age range and subject areas?					
Is there a clear statement about the range of interventions the school can offer to individuals at risk?					
Is there a clear understanding of when cases should be referred to the Social Inclusion Panel for Channel or other support?					
Has the school ensured its internet security systems prevent access to unauthorised or extremist websites?					
Is there a clear vetting policy on the use of school premises and facilities by outside agencies and groups?					
Is there a clear Visitors Policy that ensures visitors are vetted and adhere to the school's values and promote community cohesion?					

