

# RAN Collection practice template

## Name of the practice

Please note that by practice we mean an activity/method/tool that has been used or is in use by professionals and/or community members.

## Managing Controversy: Developing a Strategy for Handling Controversy and Teaching Controversial Issues in Schools

### Description

(max. 300 words)

Short description of the aim and working method of the practice. Please note that in this description, it must be clear that there is an explicit connection to preventing and/or countering radicalisation and/or violent extremism. This means that in the aims and/or the activities/methods/tools of the practice, there is a link to preventing and countering radicalisation and/or violent extremism. Practices without this link cannot be included in the RAN Collection.

This training pack is a self-reflection tool for school leaders, leadership teams, and teachers, offering guidance on how to handle controversial issues in schools and educational settings. The tool helps practitioners reflect on the way controversy is managed in their schools/settings and offers practical suggestions on how it might be handled more proactively and strategically. The pack can be used alongside the companion training pack, 'Handling Controversy'. It is aimed at school leaders and teachers but can also be used by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community organisations. The pack is a response to a call from policymakers and practitioners in a number of European countries for more effective training for school leaders and teachers in the handling of controversial issues, as a matter of educational urgency.

The pack contains nine sections, each dealing with a different area of school life or setting that could have an impact on the management of controversy and controversial issues.

Every section contains a description of the area of school life, an explanation of that area's role in relation to the handling of controversial issues, a case study from a European school and a practical suggestion for application in schools/settings.

A scoping paper also provides the background to managing controversy.

	<p>The pack helps strengthen the role of education in promoting the core values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It also advances the concept of education being on the frontline in countering social evils such as violent extremism and the radicalisation of youth, xenophobia and discrimination, as well as violence and hate-speech.</p>
<p><b>Key themes</b></p> <p>Please <u>choose</u> 2 key themes most corresponding with the practice.</p>	<p>Formal/informal education</p> <p>(Early) prevention</p>
<p><b>Target audience</b></p> <p>Please <u>choose</u> a minimum of one target audience most corresponding with the practice.</p>	<p>Educators / Academics</p> <p>Youth / Pupils / Students</p> <p>Local Community Organisations / NGOs</p>
<p><b>Geographical scope</b></p> <p>Please indicate where the practice has been/is implemented (countries, regions, cities).</p>	<p>Across all 51 member states of the Council of Europe. Countries involved in developing the tool include the UK, Ireland, Cyprus, Austria, Montenegro, Albania, France and Sweden. The tool has been used most recently with countries in the Baltic region and the Nordic region. However, a number of new countries across Europe have worked with it since 2019 including Denmark, Belgium and Luxembourg. The pack is not country-specific and is suitable for use on a Europe-wide basis.</p>
<p><b>Start of the practice</b></p> <p>Please indicate when (year) the practice was developed and implemented to indicate the maturity of the practice. In case the practice is no longer active, please indicate when it ended.</p>	<p>Starting year: 2015</p> <p>The practice was developed and piloted from June 2015 to June 2016, and the tool was published in November 2016. The practice is ongoing, with translation of the tool into major European languages.</p>
<p><b>Deliverables</b></p> <p>Please indicate if the practice has led to concrete deliverables, such as (links to) handbooks, training modules, videos.</p>	<p>Concrete deliverables from the practice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-reflection tool available online, downloadable from the Council of Europe website;</li> <li>• tool translated into the main European languages, available online;</li> <li>• tool adapted for Nordic countries and translated into the main Nordic languages;</li> <li>• supporting website at the Council of Europe with further details about the practice, its origins, aims and outcomes;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tool promoted by the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) in Oslo as part of its training to combat extremism, hate speech, racism and xenophobia.</li> <li>• Tool used in Luxembourg in 2023 to develop training and supporting manual on Addressing Controversial Issues for all new teachers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evidence and evaluation</b></p> <p>Short description on <u>performance measures</u> of the practice, including</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>qualitative views and quantitative (statistical) data</u> e.g. measure of the success of your project or intervention.</li> <li>2. <u>evaluation and feedback</u>, including surveys and/or anecdotal evidence e.g. have you done either an internal or external evaluation, have you encouraged any feedback from your target group?</li> <li>3. <u>peer review</u> which feedback did the practice receive in the RAN working group and/or study visit where the practice was discussed.</li> </ol> <p>Please elaborate on the outcomes of your monitoring and evaluation efforts.</p>	<p>The tool promotes an open and collaborative approach to managing, teaching, and learning about controversial issues, with an emphasis on self-reflection and thoughtful, informed action.</p> <p>The tool encourages users to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• familiarise themselves with the major issues and outlooks in the area;</li> <li>• evaluate the current situation in their school;</li> <li>• plan further development;</li> <li>• guide professional development.</li> </ul> <p>A short appendix also provides a checklist of practical action that school leaders and leadership teams might take when developing a strategy to deal with controversy and teach controversial issues.</p> <p>The tool was piloted in five European countries by policymakers and NGOs with school leaders, teachers, and policymaking leaders. Both qualitative and quantitative feedback was received from over 400 people. The final tool was produced, taking into account this feedback.</p> <p>It was recently subject to an evaluation after being used in training for educators from the Nordic countries in Utoya, Norway. The evaluation highlighted its practical use in schools and education settings, and its role in helping those who have been trained to train others in using the tool at their schools/settings. This helped to spread the impact and reach of the tool within and across countries.</p> <p>The training pack was subject to expert peer review by both the RAN Young People (YP) working group and also by Karin Heremans and RAN Education working group co-chair and expert. The reviews took place in 2020/21. Both peer reviews were very complimentary about the pack and its uses to support the work of RAN. As Karin Heremans noted in her expert review conclusion:</p> <p><i>'The pack deals on a very proactive and professional way with prevention of radicalisation. It offers tools that can be used in every context and every European country. One of the strengths is that this is an ongoing process based on real</i></p>

	<p><i>practices, tested in several countries and based on a lot of research. It is also very well structured and practical to use.'</i></p>
<p><b>Sustainability and transferability</b> (maximum of 200 words)</p> <p>Short description on the sustainability and transferability of the practice, including e.g. information on the costs of the practice. <u>Please elaborate on which elements are transferrable and how.</u></p>	<p>The tool is becoming more well-known and is being used alongside the training pack 'Living with Controversy'. Following its launch, the tool is used in participating countries, in European training programmes in Baltic and Nordic countries organised by the Council of Europe and the EWC, as well as in other countries such as Luxembourg, Denmark, Germany, Cyprus, and Greece. Translation into other European languages continues so as to increase accessibility.</p> <p>The Council of Europe and European Commission sponsored a new project for 2018-19, which aimed to capture and promote the lessons learned from use of the tool within and across European countries. The outcomes were published and shared in 2022 by the Council of Europe in a new publication entitled <i>Learning How to Handle Controversial Issues in Schools and other Education Settings: A Good Practice Guide</i>. This new publication compliments this training pack.</p>
<p><b>Presented and discussed in RAN meeting</b></p> <p>Please note that to be included in the Collection, the practice is preferably nominated through one of the RAN meetings. Add name of the RAN Working Group/event, date, place and subject of meeting.</p>	<p>Name: RAN EDU</p> <p>Date: 01/02/2021</p> <p>Place: Helsinki</p> <p>Subject: The Right Training for the Right People</p>
<p><b>Linked to other EU initiatives or EU funding</b> (maximum of 100 words)</p> <p>Please indicate how your project was funded, if your practice is linked to other EU initiatives or projects, AND explicitly note if it is (co-) funded by the EU, and if so, by which funds? Such as Erasmus +, Internal Security Funds (ISF), European Social Fund (ESF), Horizon 2020, etc.</p>	<p>The practice was developed through a partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission, as part of the actions both before and after the Paris Declaration of 2015 on strengthening democracy, human rights and combating violent extremism and terrorism across Europe. It was co-ordinated by the Council of Europe to strengthen work in democracy, cooperation and inclusive approaches in education.</p>

<p><b>Organisation</b> (enter maximum of 100 words and select organisation type)</p> <p>Please briefly describe the organisation behind the practice including the legal status e.g. NGO, governmental, limited company, charity etc.</p>	<p>Young Citizens (YC), (formerly the Citizenship Foundation (CF)), is the leading NGO in the field of citizenship and legal education in the UK. YC inspires young people to take part in society as equal members. It helps them to understand the law, politics, and democratic life. YC promotes participation, helps teachers to teach citizenship and works with young people on issues that concern them. It strives for a democracy in which everyone has the knowledge, skills and confidence to engage as effective citizens.</p> <p>This practice was jointly funded by the Council of Europe (CoE) and European Commission as part of an Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) DISCO Pilot Projects Scheme.</p> <p>Type of Organisation: <b>NGO</b></p>
<p><b>Country of origin</b></p> <p>Country in which the practice is based.</p>	<p>EU or EEA country: Choose from list of EU and EEA countries.</p> <p>or:</p> <p>Non-EU country: United Kingdom</p>
<p><b>Contact details</b></p> <p>Please provide contact details of who can be contacted within the organisation, with name and email address.</p>	<p>Address: UK37 Heneage St, London, E1 5LJ, England Contact person: David Kerr Email: david.kerr@youngcitizens.org Telephone: +44 7867 301960 Website: <a href="http://www.youngcitizens.org">http://www.youngcitizens.org</a></p>
<p><b>Last update text</b> (year)</p>	<p>2024</p>