

EX POST PAPER

Successful and effective engaging with communities

Summary

The RAN POL meeting on “**Successful and effective engaging with communities**” took place on 6-7 April 2016 in Oslo (Norway). The starting point for the meeting is the notion that families and communities should be seen as partners and victims, more than as suspicious hotspots. Police needs good relations with the communities they are supposed to serve. But how to do this? What skills and capacities are needed to be engaged and be trusted?

Introduction

Oslo was the scene for the first RAN Pol meeting in 2016. Police officers from almost all European countries looked into the important, but not always easy task, to engage and network with minority communities. This topic was on the agenda following the outcome of the kick off meeting in Aarhus (Denmark) where there were two crucial findings. The first is that countering violent extremism (CVE) and prevention of radicalisation cannot be done without the local police being involved, local is key. The second key finding is that we should not overestimate the chances for police officers to see the signals of potential radicalisation themselves, but that these signals and information will come to the police through people working for the municipality and members of the community. So being seen as a trusted partner, who can help keep the public safe and safeguard the youth in communities at risk, is key. Since jihadist recruitment is targeting mainly, but not solely, on ethnic or religious minority communities, engagement with minority communities is pivotal.

As part of the programme, the Oslo police showcased approaches and projects to inspire their colleagues.

This ex post paper builds not only on the Oslo meeting, but also on the Aarhus meeting (November 2015) and other resources. In this ex post paper we highlight some promising practices and share the lessons learnt on the following topics:

1. Polarisation
2. Training
3. Balance repression/intervention and prevention
4. Build networks in peace times
5. It's all about communication and dialogue

Projects presented – Promising practices

Dialogue police

The use of dialogue is of importance within the Norwegian police, and is used as an approach to preventive policing. The Oslo police district has dialogue officers, that are specialised in the use of dialogue in their work. The form of dialogue that is being used depends on the concerns received. Two different forms are: the clarification and the empowerment conversation. The clarification conversation focuses on the person's intentions and is more confronting. The empowerment conversation focuses on the life the person would like to have, and what steps the person should take to get there. After a conversation like this, the route will be mapped out and a follow-up takes place. It is of importance in the police work to work with dialogue, to listen, to have conversations and build up relations.

More on the Norwegian approach for dialogue as a tool for police can be found in the RAN Collection of Projects and Approaches¹

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/ran-search/rc_0024_a_guide_to_police_empower_en.htm

WildEx

WildEx is an organisation that engages with potentially vulnerable youngsters from deprived areas, aged 12-25. This is done through introducing youngsters from different backgrounds to the Norwegian tradition of fishing and hunting. Youngsters leave their normal life in the city, to go to the forest with WildEx. In the forest, youngsters have to rely on each other in a whole different way. Their identity is not important anymore, since a common ground is needed for youngsters to be able to survive together. Youngsters with totally different and sometimes opposing identities get a chance to find out what coexistence and cooperation means. WildEx takes youngsters in this way away from the heated debates and conflicts with which youngsters are confronted in their every day life. WildEx has already reached out to about 2000-3000 youngsters, and is still running. It invests in self esteem, empowerment and leadership. Some of the participating youngsters made choice to join the Oslo police.

Minotenk

Minotenk is a Norwegian think-tank focusing on issues that minorities in Norway face, but also on challenges for minorities at global level. Minotenk is both a platform and provides for knowledge. Its main tool is to have open and tolerant debates, based on dialogue and normalisation. Minotenk empowers youngsters and shows them alternatives. The police cooperation with Minotenk is an example of a strategic partnership between a think-tank and the police. As part of Minotenk's work, schools were visited by formers and police officers, to share the different faces of extremism and to open the dialogue at school. There is a close, longstanding cooperation with the Oslo police.

Oslo police on working with minorities and dealing with hate crime

The Oslo police tries to build contact at places where people are, for instance at festivals and on new media. You need to work on the themes that people in society care about. For instance domestic violence. Mothers are the most concerned and trusted female police officers can make a difference.

A very important decision was to invest in a hate crime unit. The communication was 'please report and we will follow up'. Police is with this information on pages of NGO's. The main message is: we are here for you, to serve and protect you. It is not us and them, but 'us and we in Oslo'.

The already established good relations with communities turn out to extremely important in the situations of an unforeseen serious incident. An example is the situation where the police incidentally killed a Somali woman. The tense and explosive developments that followed could only be managed with the support of befriended key persons in the Somali community.

The Wildex and the Minotenk are just two of the examples of a successful strategy from the Oslo police to work closely with NGO's.

"Most important is not the police, but the municipality, NGO's and others. The police very often makes radicalisation worse."

INSPECT2T

Promising is the INSPECT2T project. It is built by 18 partners from different countries. Instead of focusing on engaging with minority communities, INSPECT2T tries to inspire citizens to enhance community policing actions by the use of an application. INSPECT2T uses social media to build modern channels that contribute to community engagement. More information and updates on the project can be found at the INSPECT2T website².

Lessons learnt

The meeting concluded with lessons learnt on five different topics, which will be described below.

1. Polarisation it's all about 'the grey in the middle'

Bart Brandsma is a philosopher working for the Dutch National Police. His company Pharresia is hired to boost the professional capacity to manage the polarisation in society and inside the police. For police it is important to acknowledge that polarisation is both an internal and external process. There is internal polarisation between groups inside the police force and its teams, tensions between officers and between officers and the management.

Bart Brandsma presented in Oslo for the first time his conceptual framework for polarisation, which was developed for the Dutch police³.

It is built upon *two rules and five roles*:

1. Polarisation is a thought construct, 'us-and-them' thinking, based on identities and groups;
2. Polarisation needs fuel, it thrives on talking about identities in combination with judgment.

In this process there are five roles:

1. The Pushers, trying to create polarisation, acting from the poles;
2. The Joiners, they have chosen sides, for one of the pushers;
3. The silent, the grey, the nuanced. They could be neutral and/or indifferent. Targeted by pusher;
4. The Bridge builder, reaching out to both opposing poles and pushes, and by doing so, adding fuel;
5. The Scape goats, the silent ones in the middle or for instance the bridge builders.

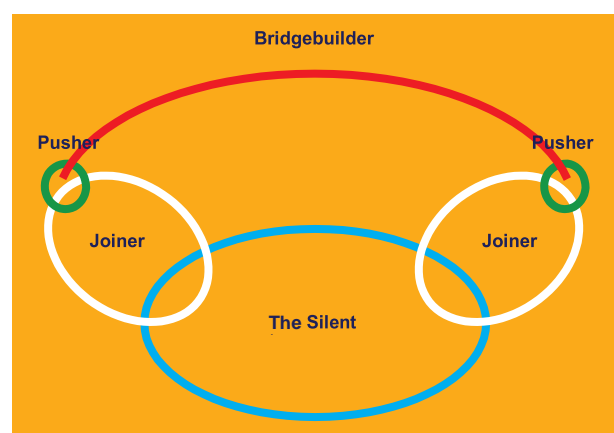


Figure 1 (c) Bart Brandsma 2015

The Pharresia polarisation management approach, developed for the Dutch National Police, promotes to:

1. Target the middle and nuanced
2. Not talk about identities

² <http://inspec2t-project.eu/>

³ Police and Polarisation, An initial guide. Bart Brandsma, Pharresia 2016, info@bartbrandsma.nl

3. Not speak about 'right or wrong' but what is in common

Polarisation management for police (NL)⁴

The above sketched conceptual framework is being implemented in police departments in the Netherlands to manage external and internal polarisation. The police should be aware that they can easily play a role that will result in fuelling the polarisation or causes the police to be used as a scapegoat. There are sessions at local police teams where the team leaders are being supported to start conversations, before polarisation sets in. This is done in the following three steps:

1. Police colleagues are being invited to share their views. This is about exploring not about discussion. There is no moral judgement.
2. A fundamental and generic discussion on the professional role for the police is clear: this is not about personal opinions, not about left or right. *We are neutral and have to treat all citizens equally and offer security and protection to everyone*". And ask with which behaviour will we achieve the professional norm?
3. After accepting the outcomes of step 2, as a last step the colleagues are invited to translate these shared and agreed norms and behaviours into their own specific situation: what does it mean in our town or city? What is going on? How do we approach different actors?

2. Balance prevention and repression/intervention

In the meeting there was a shared concern about the place of community policing within the police. Although there is a lot of talk about the importance of community or proximity policing, the reality is more difficult. The ongoing and in many places growing threat of terroristic attacks inevitably lead to a call for more protection. In many European cities there is more police capacity and funding reallocated to protection and patrolling. In combination with budget cuts, this doesn't make it easier to innovate and invest in community policing. This is also true for crime prevention in general. Another risk is the damaging of the long term relations by other police operations in the area. This cannot always be avoided, but good communication can mitigate the damage. The police needs to keep explaining what they are doing and why.

The police needs a *mind set of prevention*. It is not only the task of the community police officer but should be adhered from the Ministry, the polices chiefs and all the other police colleagues from high to low level. Only through proper community policing, the police will be able to engage with minority communities.

3. Intercultural communication and dialogue are key

In essence local networking and community engagement are all about communication and personal effective communication styles and skills. Whether or not the police will establish a trusted relation, depends on the individual police officer in his or her personal face to face contacts. The police cannot ignore what is going on online or cannot afford not to use it to communicate with members of society. The police need to use all available channels and opportunities to reach different sub groups. The presented

⁴ For more info email Bart Brandsma info@bartbrandsma.nl

project INSPECT2T is an example of a promising project that combines all available on line and off line information channels work with modern techniques in communities.

4. Build networks in peace time

The Oslo police has been successful in engaging with the communities on themes regarded important by the communities, like female mutilation, hate crime and forced marriages.

The Irish police mentioned the local police positioning itself as local expert in safety and security. Police can advice parents and teachers. Or help the mosques and other organisations with escape plans in case of fire or other incidents.

It is also plain beneficial for police officers to have good contacts in situations which are not tainted by crisis or incidents. This can be illustrated with the anecdote that was shared by one of the participants. He told he grew up with young Turkish boys as friends. At that young age the future police officer didn't perceive them as 'them' or different. They were just friends. At a later age, after a couple of years of service in the police force, he was shocked to find out his attitudes and prejudices about 'foreigners' had changed for the worse. This was recognised by many of the other police officers in the RAN POL meeting and led to the conclusion that is it's important for police officers to be confronted with positive experiences and examples.

5. Training

All of the be above should be covered in training for the police, at all levels. This training should cover radicalisation, intercultural qualities and communication attitudes and skills. Training for police officers is a training for the professional role of a police officer, being member of the police force in a democratic society. So training is also about human rights, the rule of law and prejudices in society and within the police.

Inspiration and confirmation coming from over the ocean

A recent research⁵ by Schanzer, Kurzman ea. is reporting from a totally different context: the United States. But they are definitely on the same path. Under the title *The Challenge and promise of using community policing strategies to prevent violent extremism*, they look at the same topics as RAN POL is focussing on. The researchers came with two full pages of recommendations for the local police. They are worth while reading, that's why we put them in Annex 1. To encourage reading and sharing, you will also find the link to the full report.

⁵ The Challenge and promise of using community policing strategies to prevent violent extremism. Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, Duke University, David Schanzer Charles Kurzman, Jessica Toliver, Elizabeth Miller. January 2016.
<https://sanford.duke.edu/articles/report-police-programs-prevent-violent-extremism-us-need-reform>

US Inspiration:

The Promise: Principles for Community Partnerships with Law Enforcement to Enhance Public Safety

- A. Effective Community Partnerships Require Committed Police Leaders and a Community Open to Engagement*
- B. Community Policing Strategies Should Involve the Whole Community, Not Just Muslim Americans*
- C. Community Outreach and Engagement Programs Should Be Separate from Intelligence-Gathering and Criminal Investigation*
- D. Law Enforcement Agencies Should Recruit and Hire a Workforce that Reflects the Composition of the Community*
- E. Successful Outreach and Engagement Requires Multiple Types of Training*
- F. Law Enforcement Agencies Should Conduct a Wide Range of Engagement Activities Designed to Establish Trusting Relationships*
- G. The Police Should Work With Communities to Develop Non-Criminal Law Enforcement Intervention Models*

Conclusion and follow up

Based upon the meeting and the ex ante paper to prepare it, we can conclude that for the effective prevention of radicalisation there are three main components:

1. Awareness and knowledge about **processes of radicalisation** leading to terrorism and violent extremism. This includes signals of the process of radicalisation. Which is slightly different from a history and overview of terrorist organizations, their acts and individuals. It is also about factors that result in **vulnerability**, or protective factors to counter vulnerability.
2. The **awareness, attitude and skills to build relations and individuals in the community**, this is about **communications and networking in general** (not specifically on minority communities).
3. **Diversity, intercultural sensitivity, and knowledge, attitude and skills for engage with minority communities, confronting hate crime and prevent racial or ethnic profiling.**

The next RAN POL meeting: focus on training

All of these elements should be covered in the training for police officers and their management. So the programme for the RAN POL event on training programmes will cover the wider range of training programmes that result in a police which is more effective in preventing radicalisation at a local level, through engaging with communities.

Annex 1

Recommendations by the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security (USA)

This Annex is taken from the excellent research by the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, Duke University, David Schanzer and Charles Kurzman, Jessica Toliver, Elizabeth Miller.

We add their set of recommendation as an annex to this RAN Centre of Excellence Paper on police engaging with minorities because we think this is a Must Read for those thinking about effective CVE policies. It isn't only applicable to police and law enforcement, but also interesting for those working at a local level.

They are American researchers advising the United States, but there is a striking resemblance in analysis and the way forward with the findings and recommendations of RAN POL and other working groups.

Recommendations for Local Policing Agencies

- **Establish outreach and engagement units within departments to the greatest extent budgets can support.**
- **Do not use the phrase “Countering Violent Extremism” or “CVE” to describe the activities of these units. We suggest COMPLETE Public Safety (Community Partnerships with Law Enforcement To Enhance Public Safety) instead**
- **Prioritize addressing public safety and other concerns of the community.** Doing so will help build trust and enable police and communities to address more sensitive issues – such as building resiliency to violent extremism – in the future.
- **Conduct outreach and engagement with all communities and sub-communities in a jurisdiction.** Do not focus outreach and engagement activities exclusively on Muslim American communities. Apply outreach and engagement strategies to all forms of violent extremism that impact your community – not only extremism inspired by al Qaeda, ISIS and like-minded groups. Develop methods for engaging with community members who may be targeted for recruitment by anti-government, racist, or sovereign citizen violent extremist groups.
- **Separate outreach and engagement units from intelligence collection and criminal investigatory units.** Departments should develop clear policies regarding when and how information provided to outreach officers should be transmitted to intelligence or criminal investigatory units. These policies should be transparent and shared with the community. Outreach officers should not be involved in any criminal investigations arising from information they obtain.
- **Recruit and hire a workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and religious composition of a community.** These hiring practices should extend to Muslim Americans, especially if the department has an outreach and engagement unit that interacts with the Muslim American community.
- **Mandate that officers receive cultural awareness training with respect to all major ethnic and religious communities within a jurisdiction.** Use community members to provide this training. Ensure that officers are not exposed to anti-Islamic training materials or bigoted presenters that

market themselves as “counterterrorism experts.” Yet materials or programs with knowledgeable authorities and community members

- **Provide basic language training to outreach officers that interact with immigrant communities.**
- **Work with communities to determine the best way to educate officers and communities about the threat of violent extremism and identify behaviors that should be brought to the attention of the police.** Ensure that officers are taught that behavior such as wearing religious symbols or attire is not an indicator of extremism. Consider joint training exercises with police and community members to promote discussion about the types of activities or behaviors that should be brought to the attention of the police.
- **Conduct a wide variety of outreach and engagement activities with community leaders and community members to familiarize them with the police, show them that police are there to serve the community, and build trust.** Work hard to develop relationships deeply into communities. Do not limit outreach and engagement activities to only organizations and individuals that welcome contact with law enforcement. Do not focus solely on male community members – establish outreach initiatives with women. Develop creative ways to engage with young people as well.
- **Educate community members about police policies and practices, including commitments to protect individual civil rights and civil liberties, as a means of demystifying police work and undermining sources of mistrust.**
- **Integrate local government agencies into community outreach and engagement programs.** Encourage schools, public health officials, mental health officials, and other social services agencies to participate
- **Facilitate interactions between communities and federal government agencies.** Such interactions can help to address community concerns with federal issues such as immigration, discrimination, and surveillance policy.
- **Work with communities to develop non-criminal intervention programs for individuals attracted to violent extremism.** Community members should participate in creation and delivery of such programs. They should also be involved in developing guidance for determining when referrals to such programs are appropriate.