RAN POLICY PAPER

Developing a local prevent framework and guiding principles

Introduction

Tackling radicalisation and preventing violent extremism is a major challenge for safeguarding security and democratic values. It is one of the pillars of the EU's counter terrorism policy and increasingly a priority for the EU, national governments and local authorities, especially in the aftermath of successive terrorist atrocities, the scale of radicalisation and the resultant increasing polarisation within our societies.

In particular, the scale and scope of the foreign terrorist fighter issue with several thousand men, women and children travelling to join ISIL represent an unprecedented security challenge. The impending collapse of ISIL governance in the so-called Caliphate raises the prospect of foreign terrorist fighter return to their countries of origin within the EU. ISIL-directed or inspired terrorist atrocities within several EU Member States are designed to sow fear, panic and societal division which extremists can exploit to mobilise further support for their cause.

In addition to strengthened cooperation and targeted interventions in the security field, enhanced efforts are needed on early detection of radicalisation and the prevention of violent extremism (CVE/PVE) at the local level.

Confronting the challenges of radicalisation and violent extremism requires a sense of collective responsibility and ownership across national and local government levels. It requires close-knit collaboration between

national and/or local government agencies with different responsibilities, mandates and focus areas. Multiagency collaboration becomes essential in tackling radicalisation and violent extremism cases effectively. Developing targeted intervention methods together with partnership with civil society are other essential ingredients in the prevention of violent extremism.

Local municipalities, together with and supported by national governments, are key frontline defence against radicalisation and violent extremism. Individuals at-risk, who radicalise and become violent extremists or engage in terrorist activities, do so for diverse reasons and through different pathways. They do, however, all live locally and interact with extremist milieus embedded within some local communities. It means that it is at the local level that prevention and early detection can be most effective. Frontline practitioners such as teachers, community police officers, youth and social workers play a key role in detecting radicalisation and preventing violent extremism.

Often the coordination of these local frontline practitioners is a major challenge for sustained and effective prevention work. How does one cooperate efficiently when there are different mandates, missions and confidentiality barriers between government agencies? How do you establish trust in information-sharing and how do you structure and coordinate efforts? Similarly, what methods exist across different intervention levels of general prevention, individuals at risk and those who have already become violent extremists? How do you most effectively engage with local communities and civil society organisations on the issue of radicalisation and violent extremism?

There are no silver bullets in the prevention of violent extremism. Instead it requires a sustained, adequately resourced and holistic prevention approach; one that revolves around multi-agency cooperation and is tailor-made to local circumstances and ideally multi-layered in design. Moreover, it is crucial that the local authorities work and their prevention engagement is well-anchored and supported within the local communities.

Today there exist a wide variety of local approaches across Europe, each influenced by different local circumstances, governance structures and politics, resources, risk assessments and traditions. These local approaches are also informed, influenced and necessarily guided by national prevention strategies. Despite a multitude of differences there are also many commonalities. Some of the more advanced and successful local municipal prevention programmes contain similar features. They have all created a local action plan or strategy around a prevention framework that revolves around three basic processes: 1) Multi-agency structure (which involves information-sharing/confidentiality issues); 2) Selection of concrete prevention methods; 3) Engagement with local communities and civil society organisations.

Every local municipality, from big metropolises to small towns, from regional to subnational authorities, is indispensable for early threat detection and for effective prevention work. Developing local prevention frameworks requires structuring multiagency cooperation appropriately. There is a need to set out a framework for engagement with different actors, including civil society, to establish cooperation mechanisms and procedures and to decide on the areas and forms of intervention. The following potential components for a local action plan/strategy are further addressed in this paper:

- helpline/hotlines
- the role of mentors
- psychological support
- family intervention
- gender-based interventions
- handling returnees of foreign fighters
- rehabilitation from prison
- social media (the role of alternative-/counter-narratives)
- how to engage with communities and civil society actors

Scope and focus of the paper

This report focuses on how to develop the necessary framework and components of local prevention action plans. What are the principal challenges involved in this work and what are the guiding principles? The report is the synthesis of a wide range of practical experience drawing on the collective wisdom of select local municipal coordinators and/or frontline practitioners working with radicalisation and violent extremism from more than twenty cities across Europe:

- Austria (Vienna)
- Belgium (Villvorde, Antwerpen)
- Denmark (Aarhus, Copenhagen)
- Finland (Helsinki)
- France (Strasbourg)

- Germany (Augsburg, Dusseldorf, Hesse)
- The Netherlands (Rotterdam, Zoetermer, Delft, the Hague)
- Norway (Oslo, Larvik, Fredrikstad, Larvik)
- Sweden (Gothenburg, Malmö, Örebro)
- United Kingdom (Leicester)

These cities were selected on the basis of their involvement with RAN CoE Working Group on LOCAL alongside the Nordic Safe Cities initiative of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Also, the European Forum for Urban Security provided useful advice of cities for consultation[1] The responses have been anonymized for several reasons. It provides openness in response. As this is a synthesis of relevant practitioner contributions it is important to point out that the frontline coordinators or fieldworkers do not necessarily agree on all the proposed principle guidelines. Cross-representation of local coordinators and frontline practitioners and their perspectives provides a useful starting point or 'checklist' in the identification of priority issues. Rather than being the end-point for practitioner advice it should be viewed as the first building blocks of practical advice, identifying key challenges and guiding principles in local prevention work. In this sense, it does not claim to be exhaustive list but rather a 'living document' that provides a useful entry-point for reflection on challenges and specific prevention practices.
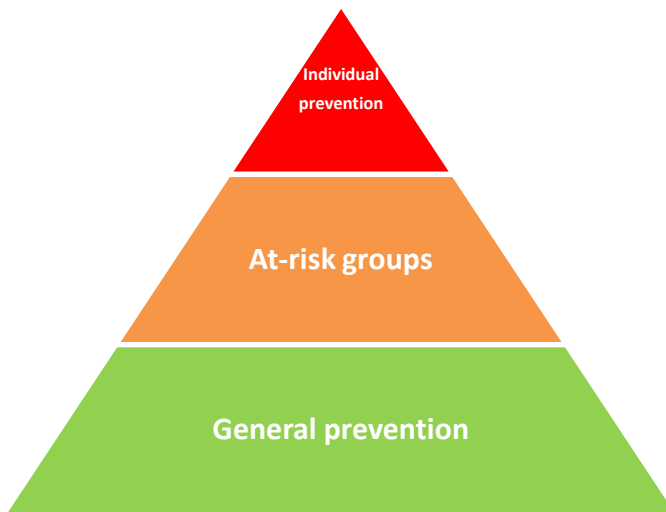
The purpose of this report is multi-fold and it provides:
- the **overall framework** for structuring prevention and action points in developing a local strategy or action plan;
- **practical advice** on concrete prevention issues;
- concrete practitioner experience **identifying challenges and guiding principles** that may further serve as a 'checklist' of issues to deal with for practitioners in the process of developing their own action plan or strategy.

The overall goal of a prevention strategy/action plan is to provide clear mandate for prevention work and to allocate responsibility for specific intervention to individual agencies. The process of co-creation of a local strategy or action plan is inherently useful for diverse local government agencies with different mandates and responsibilities. Taking the lead in developing a local strategy or action plan requires first and foremost the willingness and backing of the political leadership and requisite resources. Getting the right stakeholders around the table to discuss their individual responsibilities and mandate provides the opportunity to create a holistic approach, creating synergies of cooperation and unity of purpose.

Most municipal strategies or action plans operate with the so-called prevention triangle which categorises prevention across three intervention levels:

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[1] European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS) published *Preventing and Fighting Radicalisation at the Local Level* (2016) which provides general advice and recommendations based on the work and insight of ten cities.

Radicalisation Awareness Network

This report focuses on prevention of at-risk groups (orange level) and individual interventions (red level) and *not* general prevention (green levels).

General prevention is a crucial component and the foundation of most prevention intervention but the target group is broad-based. This level of general prevention is primarily concerned with developing social skills, involvement in society and sense of responsibility among children and young people. Activities include issues such democracy-promoting, critical-thinking skills in educational settings and strengthening general protective factors within society. Measures are designed to strengthen social resilience in society.

Prevention efforts targeting **at-risk groups** are directed at people who are vulnerable to radicalisation and at risk of recruitment for terrorist or extremist purposes. Typical initiatives are contact points for support services, mentors and parental coaches. The focus is on intervention in cases where there are clear indications that a person is at risk of being radicalised. This level does not work with broad target groups, as the general preventive level does, but with specific problems, groups and individuals. The objective is to reduce the number of people at risk of radicalisation through activities that strengthen the individual's social skills and positive relations.

Individual prevention efforts are directed at individuals who are active in extremist environments and are at risk of becoming violent or involving themselves with other criminal activities. The focus here is on individuals and typical initiatives involve preventative dialogue, rehabilitation from prisons and exit strategies.

Chapter 1: Establishing an Action Plan or Strategy

A municipality may want to develop tailor-made local prevention action plans or strategies according to context, priorities and resources. There are some common features of action plans/strategies that provide specific guidance to local municipalities. Following the below guiding principles can provide useful action-points in developing the local prevention action plan/strategy:

- The local action plan or strategy should be in alignment with the national strategy (where such a strategy exists).
- Establish contact with national authorities and other municipalities to engage in dialogue and receive support.

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- Be clear about definitions in the action plan/strategy as there are multiple perceptions about terminology. Defining what is meant by radicalisation is essential as it means different things to different people. This can lead to misconceptions across different agencies and civil society actors. Clarifying concepts facilitate a common understanding about goals and approach of the action plan/strategy.
- Be clear about mandate and do not confuse or conflate prevention of violent extremism with counterterrorism (which is responsibility of the state).
- Provide a commonly-agreed situational picture of violent extremism in local neighbourhoods. This needs to be regularly updated and discussed in a local multiagency setting.
- The process of creating a local action plan is valuable exercise that will clarify individual and collective needs of government agencies, focus and define responsibilities among different partner actors, create an understanding of different mandates and work. It will be a good investment as it builds and strengthens relationships across local government 'stovepipes.'
- Use existing structures of cooperation and avoid invention of new structures or layers of bureaucracy.
- Focus on individuals at-risk of radicalisation and violent extremism *as well as* their families and the supporting environments (family dynamics and possible dysfunction, siblings at-risk, and social network, including neighbourhoods and communities)
- Identify positive resources persons and specialised expertise among staff members and individuals within the local communities that will be key to network and cooperate with.
- Establish priority areas, goals with intervention, the target groups and courses of action/methods. It is also useful to provide clear explanation of action to be taken and the rationale behind it.
- Integrate evaluation processes from the outset of specific intervention measures.
- Develop a clear communication strategy for the action plan. Produce a 2-3 page brochure providing advice to the public, other relevant actors and institutions what to do when there are concerns of radicalisation and violent extremism.

RAN CoE Collection of Practices

The RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices presents a set of seven practitioners' approaches in the field of prevention of radicalisation, each of them illustrated by a number of lessons learned and selected practices and projects. The Collection supports the actions proposed in the EU Commission Communication "Preventing Radicalisation to terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response." The Collection should be considered as a practical, evolving and growing tool, where practitioners, first liners and policy makers may:

- Draw inspiration from,

- Find examples adaptable to their local/specific context, and

- Identify counterparts to exchange on prevention experiences

To date the Collection of Practices contain over 100 promising practices. As a work in progress, the RAN Collection will continuously be adjusted and enhanced with new practices from EU/EEA Member States.

Chapter 2: Creating a multiagency structure (incl. information-sharing issues)

Multi-agency structures and working processes are crucial for early and effective identification of individuals at-risk, improved information sharing, joint decision making and coordinated action. This cooperation between multiple agencies needs to be clearly structured with regular meeting points and discussions on cases on an individual basis to agree on appropriate courses of action for individuals vulnerable to radicalisation or involvement in violent extremism.

Exact composition of who is involved in multiagency structures varies due to different legal and statutory requirements. Often it involves collaborative structure between local authorities, police and other statutory partners (such as education, social services, child protection services, youth service and even offender management services). Importantly these collaboration structures often pre-exist and it is essential that one agency chairs the meetings to ensure the efficiency and coordination of case-handling process within this multiagency approach. This requires that the participants in the multiagency structure have situational awareness and knowledge about other agencies' mandate and work process. It allows for the establishment of a common perspective of opportunities and limits to multiagency collaboration on specific cases.

Although there are different multiagency structures some common challenges affect all. A major issue is legal barriers to information-sharing on individuals. Another is lack of cooperation between different agencies. It is therefore important to have an agreement on information-sharing and established mutual goals for cooperation. There is in many instances a need to communicate and coordinate activities between agencies. Such communication and coordination can be facilitated by securing a common understanding of goals, roles and procedures. It is useful to explore if changes are necessary to the overall national legislation on confidentiality and sharing of information in relation to violent extremism cases. Establishing limits and opportunities for cooperation in multiagency structures is important.

Challenges

Political backing on a local level (preferably on a national level as well)
- Getting a city council to agree on objectives, target groups and budget.

Legal basis
- Establishing the legal umbrella under which information can be shared between municipality and police.
- Establishing which rules apply to different forms of intervention: Investigation, social services, employment, education etc.
- Lack of clear procedures and structures (directives) that ensure effective communication across multiple agencies.
- Limited legal means of compelling participation for individuals who are 18 years old or over..
- Data protection and privacy regulations may complicate information-sharing
- The different professional and ethical frameworks and goals may make information sharing difficult.

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Organization
- Handling the balance between security concerns and goals of prevention/intervention/treatment, including flow of information between the actors.
- Providing the resources necessary to tackle the problem.

Radicalisation Awareness Network

- Getting the right mix of people around the table, including stakeholders with different and possibly diverging approaches, interests and competences.
- If there are too many actors, it´s sometimes hard to work on a specific topic.
- Some partners may be reluctant to share information about a young person with other authorities.
- Professionals not trusting each other and not understanding each other's work processes and thus, not trusting how information, if shared, will be used. People "hide" behind legislation even when legislation would allow for information sharing.
- Lack of guidelines and support by management on information sharing.
- Continuity of the personnel and trust issues as those responsible for radicalization within their organization, often change organization or change job within.

Guiding Principles

Political backing on a local level (preferably on a national level as well)
- The city council votes on a common agreement to direct budget towards prevention which provides unity of purpose that the city stands together against radicalization and violent extremism. It serves as the overall node from the city council to the municipal department's expenditure on preventing radicalization.
- Beneficial to have the city council allot certain amounts to specific tasks in preventing radicalization, for example innovation of new methods or expansion into new areas of preventing radicalization. Allocating specific funds allows flexibility to change focus on emerging prevention issues. It is important to make prior arrangements with partners on what type of information is shared and how it should be shared. Cooperating on concrete projects is useful as it develops a common understanding of concepts, aims and objectives.
- It is important that the core partners have the determination to tackle violent extremism together and that they receive full political backing.
- Useful to establish a strategic group that become link between politicians and intervention partners.
- Invite local politicians to attend meetings occasionally; they may well decline, but a rejected invitation is better than no invitation! The strategic group should feedback to local politicians. Provide feedback to the political leadership through close and frequent updates on the situation and annual reports about achievements and challenges. This secures political agreement and support, ensures that the measures remain focussed and targeted and that there are the necessary resources.

Legal basis
- Appointing specialized caseworkers who then get the necessary training and experience in dealing with radicalization and violent extremism issues, both individual and in families. If necessary contacting national legislators about making necessary changes in the respective judicial areas.
- Establish clear cut agreements about respective roles and limitations to these roles for all actors involved.
- Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) should be signed by all organisations and departments represented at the multi-agency group. There may be legal obligations for information sharing that you can incorporate (i.e. prevention and detection of crime, safeguarding young people). If there is no existing legal framework, then you will be reliant on the enthusiasm and commitment of the group's members to sign up; this can prove difficult.
- Test the agreement/agreed process with a made-up case.

Organization

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- Overcome interdepartmental division: Prevention is done in a specialized department, while punitive measures such as criminal investigation, pursuing, seizing of passports, deportation etc. is done by other departments.
- Combine a strategy based on centralized expertise and widespread awareness. Invest in a selected group of individuals with specialised expertise to do risk evaluations and interventions, while ensuring that awareness is spread throughout the organizations and the public, including rudimentary knowledge of radicalization, what to look for and who to approach for help with risk evaluation, advice, counselling or intervention.
- Make use of the existing cooperation models benefitting from established networks, collaborative relationships and routines.
- Establishing a multiagency coordination unit with relevant authorities, involving persons with particular qualities required for constructive cooperation:
  - o If the structure is strategic (e.g. municipality heads) then you need personalities who can unblock difficult situations and drive policy change within the organisations. They need to be 'invested' in the CVE strategy, even if they have been brought to the table unwillingly – this may require sharing restricted information with them to make them fully aware of the local threat / risk. This can be a persuasive tactic with strategic leads. They need to know what risk they carry and what the impact of not addressing it would be.
  - o If the structure is operational (day-to-day operations), then these personalities must be dynamic and self-motivated. Take the time to find the right people and try not to appoint based purely on role; one apathetic personality can slow down progress for the whole group. The structure must be representative of the departments and organisations relevant to delivery of your CVE strategy: health, mental health, police, municipality (community safety), safeguarding (social welfare, adults and children), education (from early schooling through to University) representatives, CVE manager / coordinator, prisons, youth services.
- Develop a strategic partnership board that involves representatives from multiagency structure and other outside intervention partners (NGO's, etc).
- Develop an Action Plan with specific tasks attributed to individual persons/departments. Ensure that the plan is approved by the strategic partnership board. Where possible, make this plan (or its general themes, names removed) public so there can be no accusation of secrecy / lack of transparency.
- Provide an organisational chart. Establish a processing plan on how cases are handled within this multiagency structure.
- Some invest in multi-professional work instead of multi-agency work, as the best work method when it comes to helping offenders or other at-risk individuals. The distinction is important to make. Multi-professional usually refers to professionals working together as a team whereas multi-agency work usually refers to professionals coming together when needed, but otherwise work in their separate organisations.
- Ensure that funding to programs is not spent only on coordination but also on implementation.
- Provide resources for networking events bringing together prevention partners.
- Set your goals in the beginning – this will help your evaluation afterwards.
- Establish a strategy for specific evaluation of effect. Effect goals for intervention is that the client is employed within a year; has started education within a year; has ended affiliation with risk environment; has reconciled differences with his family, etc.

Case Study: IMPACT

IMPACT Europe is an EU-funded project consisting of 14 European partners between 2014-2018 focusing on evaluation methods and an online knowledge base on radicalization. The project provides practitioners methods for designing, planning, implementing and evaluating interventions. IMPACT identified a number of lessons in evaluation:

- The necessity to differentiate between prevention and de-radicalization goals.

- The discrepancy between behavioral and attitudinal objectives.

- Short-term intervention goals sometimes hinder long-term effectiveness.

- Intervention may yield unintended outcomes that may be counterproductive.

IMPACT emphasize that these lessons learned are present across different phases of the CVE project life cycle and their evaluation design and mechanisms take into account these lessons. Practitioners is encouraged to think about what kinds of evaluation they need and IMPACT tool provides them with the mechanism to think through evaluation methods and apply these from the outset of the specific

Chapter 3: Local Action Plan – Possible components

1. Contact and Advisory Point (Hotline/Helpline)

Establishing national or local hotlines, or support line/helplines, can provide important psychological support and advice to families, relatives and friends of individuals who are linked to violent extremism. Supporting families is essential for practical reasons and as a protective factor. Deep emotional bonds and supportive relationships within families are important tools to deal with radicalised individuals. Often families feel alone and without support in dealing with the situation.

These hotlines/helplines are often operated by different actors, such as municipalities, government agencies or civil society organisations. This means the contact and advisory point functions vary according to specific mandate - whether they operate with police involvement or they operate independently as part of civil society initiative. Operating these hotlines/helplines require linguistic and cultural skillsets to create trust and psychological support, to provide expert counselling how to act and who to turn to in a given situation. Often the first phone call is crucial when concerned family members seek to establish contact to seek support and advice. It often has the character of emergency advice. Follow-on calls take the form of assessing family background and dynamics, advice and family counselling.

Important differences exist between hotlines and helplines. Hotlines function as a way to signal concern about the possibility of radicalisation of individuals or groups of people which are then assessed by expert teams. Helplines provide the opportunity to provide guidance to professionals and local civil servants about radicalisation and courses of action.

Challenges

- To receive information from the public about people at risk of radicalisation it is necessary to have a contact point or hotline. When setting up such hotlines, the question is whether every local authority should have its own hotline or whether this can be better organised at national level.
- Necessary budget requirements for sustained work.
- Credibility, especially amongst different ethnic/cultural communities
- Lack of trust by local communities to turn to local authorities (including police but also social services) for fear of prosecution of family members or fears that children are removed from parental custody.
- It is important to make a clear distinction between helpline and hotline as it conflates risk assessment and general advice to professionals.
- Establishing procedures for risk evaluation and intervention. In a multi-agency setting this means making representatives from different organisational cultures working together.
- Local communities may not be aware that the hotline/helpline exists.
- A municipality-run helpline is a good centralised point, but some communities may not want to reach out to an 'official' body and would prefer to speak to a community organisation. This in turn represents a significant challenge as a Somali parent might not ring a helpline run by a Moroccan NGO.
- Handling information volume can be challenging in time of crisis or social tension. Also, reciprocal information flows with other agencies when cases are referred.

Guiding Principles

Structure and actors

- Look for existing structures (e.g. existing helpline for social concerns/safeguarding for parents). A generic single point of contact (e.g. a multi-agency safeguarding hub) can deal with a range of issues, radicalisation being just one of them.
- Another option is to create a multi-agency partnership network (schools, counselling centres, detention work, etc) – use existing networks to make contact within communities.
- Create one entry-point rather than several which makes risk assessment and guidance easier.
- All helplines work on the principle that in cases of immediate danger, law enforcement agencies are notified and cooperated with.
- Avoid, if possible, installing hotline/helpline within security structures. This will be important in order to establish trust to call helplines/hotlines.
- An NGO can become a useful 'intermediary' advisory contact point to provide parents access to local government institutions, from the police to social services.
- Beyond helpline/hotline, establish parallel contact points within the community and faith-based organisations which will be valuable during social tensions.
- Networking can create trust in communities using existing crime-prevention network and expanding from there into communities and minority-communities.
- Finances for helpline/hotline should cover at least three years. This sustained resource period will provide longevity and stability of intervention efforts including necessary staff costs.

Toolbox and advice for the management/implementation of hotlines/helplines

- Staff should be properly trained and have specific professional competences
  - To recognise signals: provide trainings to current first liners, professionals

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- o Foreign fighters are often traumatised and suffer from PTSD and mental health issues. Ensure staffs have experience with support calls and treatment of trauma and torture victim support.
  - o First call is critical – build trust. Be transparent about what happens next, provide feedback. Focus on trust-building and gradually introduce extremism issues.
  - o Be precise about what you can and cannot do (also practical, e.g. hours of contact). Consistency is crucial to ensure trust – say what you do, do what you say.
- Develop dynamic risk assessment tools that balance risk factors and protective factors on individual personal level, family situation, social factors, motivational factors and ideological/cultural factors.
- Establish clear guidelines and agreements on how to deal with serious cases when NGO-operated helplines/hotlines are approached.
- Family counselling should focus on parents to avoid them feeling lost or alone. Support to families should avoid 'tooling up' parents so they can argue with their children on theological grounds. Instead they should try to coach the parents to ask and be curious rather than be judgemental.
- Course of action dealing with minors differ per context, with some countries providing for the possibility for parents to ask for an exit-ban which will prevent their children from leaving the country.
- Wide, consistent and sustained awareness raising campaigns to ensure member of the communities and individuals know where to go for help
- Invest in local marketing campaigns about what the helpline/hotline is all about in different languages and through different community events, local press and seminars. Think through distribution points.
- Be transparent about what happens when someone calls the helpline/hotline, especially with regards to the possibility of anonymity and the level of police involvement. Callers must be made aware that in serious cases police involvement may be necessary.

Case Study: The Austrian Extremism Information Centre (AT)

The centre was established in December 2014 and operated by bOJA – Federal Network for Open Youth Work. This Extremism Information Centre is staffed by a 6-person multi-professional team operating in 5 languages (German, English, Turkish, Arabic and Farsi). It provides advice and referral to family counselling, open youth work, labour market services and offer face-to-face counselling. It is open between 10am and 3pm on weekdays.

Case Study: Hayat (DE)

The German helpline Hayat started in 2012, and has been counselling 290 cases (as of September 1 2016). The program offers consists of advice to parents and close relatives, primarily to ensure that they do not feel lost and alone. They support them on an emotional level and give them advice about what to do and how to talk with their children.

The goals of Hayat are
- Try everything possible to make them voluntarily refrain from traveling abroad;
- If they are already abroad: try to stop them from active combat and make them return;
- Assist persons to return and integrate to a safe social environment that respects universal human rights.

Case Study: Rotterdam Radicalisation Contact and Advisory Point (NL)

The purpose of this initiative is to provide the opportunity for civilians, local civil servants and others to ask questions about radicalisation or to inform the authorities about possible radicalising individuals or group of people. Reports are investigated and assessed by a team of experts. Necessary interventions are then defined in order to create "custom-fit" individual approach.

Case Study: Aarhus Municipality Infohouse (DK)

In Aarhus, the "Infohouse" is both the contact point and the place where there are well-established law enforcement screening procedures. Information is exchanged between the police and various municipal departments, resulting in coordinated risk assessments and intervention plans. .

2: Role of Mentors

Mentoring can play an important part in prevention work for individuals at risk of radicalisation and those already active in violent extremist groups. The role of mentors is to guide and be a positive force, a role model, motivating the individual to turn away from their destructive lifestyle and strengthening their resilience against the allure of violent extremism. Mentors are pivotal providing the ingredients of monitoring and empowering personal change in the extremist. For this mentors require personal qualities such as authenticity, authority and strength to gain the trust and respect of the client. Mentors can be used to guide and support an individual during his/her re-socialisation and re-integration process into society. Of course, parents and siblings around the radicalised youth are key figures that need to be brought into the processes of re-inclusion and disengagement from violent extremism.

Mentorship programs can involve a range of partners, including youth workers, sport coaches, parents, to community police officer or a religious leader – someone the individual places their trust in; where appropriate such partners could include formers. Mentors can be used as individuals are becoming radicalised and when they return from conflict zones in a useful support role to facilitate disengagement/de-radicalisation or when released from prison into the local community.

The role and use of mentors differ across local municipalities. Significant differences exist whether the mentor is attached to municipal structures or functions as part of an NGO or other civil society organisation. One model is not better than the other, they all pose several challenges and issues.

Challenges

- Professionals vs. volunteers, training of the mentors and supervision is crucial.
- Recruiting individuals with right combination of personal and professional qualities for mentor-roles.
- Poor match between mentor and mentee.

- Overcome reluctance to speak to mentor from a different ethnic, cultural or religious background.
- Lack of boundaries surrounding mentoring. Also difficult to enable mentee becoming independent as it can be difficult to finish mentor-mentee relationship.
- Lack of clarity of the mentors role and function and how this is linked to other intervention activities. The mentor quickly becomes a "fix-it-all" solution .
- Developing a consistent, effective methodology to mentors and across mentor corps.
- Inability to recognise mental health issues.
- Make sure these mentors are trusted by everyone, including other professional actors.
- Mentorship is not a career and few are paid full-time employees.
- Transparency issue with NGO mentors. Some keep difficult issues "in-house" to ensure financial support from donors/government funding. Some are "pop-up" NGOs that seek funding and consequently motives, quality and longevity is called into question. Some enlist services of former jihadists/extremists and it is difficult to know if they return to or retain ties with extremists.

Guiding Principles

Structure and actors

- Mentors should not always be the first option; many issues can be dealt with using existing frameworks (health, mental health etc.); mentors should be reserved for those cases where one-to-one intervention is necessary.
- Some caution against NGO mentoring schemes and need to get a clear picture of the organisation's objectives, affiliations and required professional background needed to handle difficult personal backgrounds/problems.
- Formers can be used in the appropriate cases as powerful voices in preventing and countering radicalisation.
- Mentors should have trust in the professional network if you want them to make correct references of a person to someone (for e.g. if the mentor has no trust in the follow-up that is done by the police because they will treat an individual badly, he will not refer this individual to the police)
- Consider using people in the direct network of the at-risk individual for guidance and support as they use less time to build up a relationship and confidence. Establish reporting obligations (what to report, what not, and to whom) and do not leave this up to the decision of the individual mentor.
- Mentors should be treated 'inclusively' and not just as a tool for intervention. Establish national networks where good practice can be shared and emerging risks and threats can be updated.
- Some local coordinators caution against NGO mentors as some can have unclear intentions, unclear allegiances and lack the required professional background needed for handling difficult personal backgrounds/problems.

Toolbox and advice for the management/implementation of mentoring schemes
- Mentors should be vetted (security checked) to ensure there are no hidden risks to their involvement, or connections to existing extremist groups
- Mentors can find their roles criticised from within their own communities, or even at risk of violence, and this should be taken into consideration – their anonymity is important.
- Make sure mentors feel safe (e.g. where can they go if they are threatened?)
- Look for a combination of personal and professional qualities. Create a team of mentors that is diverse in gender, ethnic background and professions, so that there is as wide a range of to choose from when matching mentor and mentee. Trainer personality is more important than methodological issues. If the mentor corps is too narrow it will not be possible to match or switch a mentor if the intervention fails.

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- Establishing a pool of mentors to fit the individual solutions. All mentors should receive the same training and methods, which they combine with their personality and professional background to both intervene and act as a role model.
- Provide training for mentors to distinguish their own views from their 'professional' behaviour. Create training manual to be used as training and reference guide for mentors.
- Make sure mentors equip mentees with social skills and become independent within a set timeline – otherwise the relationship can continue indefinitely.
- Create better matching between mentor and mentee. Mentors should have profound understanding of cultural and religious background.
- Working directly with young people requires adoption of positive approach. Focus on guiding and asking the right questions in order to support individuals finding their own solutions.
- Distinguish between professional and individual behaviour (e.g. what if a mentor is addressed to in his personal life?)

Case Study: Method Manual on Mentoring, Parent Coaching and Family-Support (2016) (DK)

In Danish CVE initiatives there is focus on using mentors and methods to those that are in direct contact with young people aged 14 to 20 years old. These mentors are trained in the methods of Life Psychology, Signs of Safety – work with vulnerable children and their parents – and Solution-based Intervention which are made available through training and method manual. For example, in Aarhus, there are 21 mentors (2014) that are used in combination with psychological support.

The Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI) has developed this method manual aimed at developing consistent methods for practitioners in educating and handling mentors in the context of prevention of violent extremism.

Case Study: The German Violence Prevention Network (DE)

The German Violence Prevention Network provide their trainers with a one-year AKT® trainer (anti-violence and competence trainer) course to those working with young people in face-to-face work to handle their relationship abilities. In the method of Verantwortungspädagogik® (Education of Responsibility), Violence Prevention Network has identified a way to address people who have affiliated themselves with anti-democratic structures without humiliating them, thus facilitating their re-integration into the democratic community.

The basic premise of Verantwortungspädagogik® and of the deradicalisation training AKT® consists in drawing upon cooperation to facilitate people's learning of specific competencies that make it possible for them to distance themselves from inhuman ideologies. This occurs in an environment that accords respect to the person concerned and deploys a method that critically scrutinises the ideology. The AKT® training consists of flexible modules involving biography work, civic education and work in the field of anti-violence that Violence Prevention Network has already repeatedly endorsed in the past specific to various target groups and a variety of settings.

3: Role of Psychologists/Mental Health

Mental health professionals are important referral points to provide essential psychological risk assessments and counselling, especially for foreign fighter returnees from Syria/Iraq and for their families. Psychologists are often hired to perform screenings and therapy sessions. Often mental health care workers such as psychiatric nurses are important in this assessment process. Particularly children and youth psychiatric issues require

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specialised skills as they are too often missed by social workers and psychologists. Mental health problems in youth appear differently than in adults and are resultantly often misdiagnosed or not diagnosed at all.

Sometimes individuals drawn towards violent extremism suffer from a combination of complex socio-psychological problems, ranging from antisocial personality problems, criminality, dysfunctional families and other multi-layered developmental problems. Additionally, foreign fighter returnees have experienced trauma (resulting from their own violent behaviour or from having experienced violence) and suffer from crisis reactions or post-traumatic stress disorder. These individuals suffer from an overall low functionality with high stress-levels, sleep problems, depression, multiple conflictual relationships, lack of empathy, and proneness to risk and thrill-seeking, they lack problem-solving, social skills and critical-thinking skills with low impulse control.Individuals drawn to extremist milieus have often been previously diagnosed as having a range of complex psychological problems. Psychologists and mental health workers can contribute in channelling the feelings, frustrations and explore why the client was attracted to violent extremism and pathways out of extremism. Mental health professionals/psychologists/psychiatrists may play a role in detecting early warning signals of radicalisation. They can also play an important role in the early-detection of lone actors that potentially can become violent.

Challenges

- Limited, long waiting times or no access to psychological treatment.
- Psychologists' professional secrecy/confidentiality may pose a barrier to cooperation.
- Finding psychologists with the necessary background and experience to consult on the types of trauma often associated with returning fighters.
- Psychologists often involved at a later stage and may not be involved in the decision-making process.
- Making psychological risk assessment and counselling under difficult conditions with individuals that are not interested in cooperation.
- Creating positive cooperation and information-sharing between psychologists and client can take a long time.
- Other government agencies may work against client's best self-interest which limits psychotherapy outcome.

Guiding Principles

Structure and actors

- Involve psychologists early on in an multi-agency setting to receive multiple perspectives on cases from other agencies.
- A Mental Health questionnaire/vulnerability assessment should be used to effectively screen out false signals and determine how a case should be handled and by whom.
- Greater involvement of psychologists at all levels - not only in treatment, but in policy making, setting up and programming interventions, training, quality assurance and research.
- It is critical to have a range of psychologists: for mentoring parents, for assessing traumas, for managing acute crisis. E.g. when parents are notified of youngster's death, and for supervision of staff/mentors/parental coaches, for assessing the broad psychological health of a family (parents, siblings of radicalized youngster) thus enabling a holistic approach to the whole family.

Toolbox and advice for the involvement of health sector professionals

- Ensure that psychological/psychiatric focus on young people with different symptoms/needs from adults and women.
- Psychiatric personnel play important role in detection of mental health issues such as trauma in young people.
- There is a need for clear models/theories of change, strong evidence based methods and substantial and standardized training.
- Explore evidence-based methods that combine trauma treatment with risk assessment and therapy methods (Life Psychology, Risk Need Responsivity, etc.).
- Psychologists involved need to have experience with the target group and relevant specialized training and knowledge. Psychologists need to have intercultural and/or intercultural expertise.
- Adopt practices within the field of violence and criminology.

Case Study: Danish Dignity Institute (DK)

The Danish Dignity Institute is one of the first places in the world to offer treatment to torture victims. They provide extensive trauma treatment to refugees and to foreign fighters using cognitive programs, anger management and evidence-based methods using Risk Need Responsivity. This program combines trauma treatment with a range of cognitive and behavioural methods.

Case Study: Aarhus Model and Life (DK) Psychology

Aarhus municipality has collaborated with Professor Preben Bertelsen from Aarhus University, who has developed the training program for the mentors, based on his theory/method of Life Psychology. It is a cognitive program oriented toward training the mentees' individual life skills. The principles of Life Psychology are also used in other interventions, such as the family support groups.

4: Family Support and Intervention models

Family based interventions are crucial especially in early prevention work. Family members are often the first to detect worrying signs of radicalisation. Often families do not know where to turn to for support.

Family members can provide key forms of support to, and have a positive influence on a person at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism and, in many cases, can help with prevention or rehabilitation, reintegration and, to a lesser extent, de-radicalisation. The deep attachments and emotions in a family are a strong source countering radical ideals. It is important to support parents and other attachment figures to maintain a relationship with the young people at risk.

Complex psychosocial problems are often at the heart of why youngsters become vulnerable to violent extremism. Research has been found that a surprisingly high degree of foreign fighters show dysfunctional

family environment and an absence of father figures. Also, there are cases where families are part of the problem rather than solution as individuals are raised to become extremists. Siblings to foreign fighters are at considerable risk of becoming involved in extremism.

Families can also be a major protective factor as they are the first one to detect any changes of behaviour. Families are also partners in signalling, preventing and protecting individuals at risk of radicalisation and they are the foundation of building resilience in young people at-risk. Building trust and relationships with families is crucial. Therefore, it is important to avoid approaching families from the security perspective as it can lead to a negative spiral of distrust developing between families and authorities. A major goal of family intervention is to assess family structures and dynamics as a basis for further support and intervention. This entails focusing on the entire family rather than just individuals at-risk.

Family supporting networks help families to maintain contact with their children or relatives. If the young individuals are in the beginning of a radicalization process families are supported to create an environment in which they can discuss extremist ideas with their child and provide positive alternatives. If a youth has already left for a conflict zone the aim is to stay in contact in order to create a positive environment for this person to return home. If a young person is incarcerated in prison families are an important resource in the re-integration and rehabilitation process.

Challenges

- Municipal authorities do not adequately provide awareness to vulnerable target groups of available family support measures or family support networks.
- It is difficult to motivate and offer municipality services to relatives of deceased foreign or returning foreign fighters.
- Families may cover up and refuse to confirm whether the individual have travelled abroad to join extremist group. They may provide alternative explanations for why the person has travelled out of the country.
- In some countries, local authority engagement with families relies on consent from the family members and families may refuse to cooperate with authorities.
- To take care of siblings, you need to proof child endangerment, if there is no voluntary cooperation of the parents.
- Mistrust between families who accuse each other of being responsible for their child's departure.

Guiding Principles

Structure and actors
- Work to develop with other partner agencies a shared understanding of how and when information will be shared and thresholds.
- Consider facilitation of family support networks as meeting points for parents in similar situation. However, be aware that sometimes people are ashamed or still too angry to share their emotions with other families who are in the same situation
- Establish specific contact persons for the family.
- Adopt a tailored customised approach for the individual family by creating a multi-agency response and action plan. For example, bring in family/individual therapists (create family support networks and specialized guidance), mentors, arrange practical support to the individual to apply for work/school placement etc.

Radicalisation Awareness Network

- Obtain a detailed family history and get an overview of the family's socio-economic status. This includes mapping out the resources already in contact with the family. (e.g. social security services, police, child services). Observe family dynamics and signs of dysfunctional relationships.
- Good communication flow between the various institutions is important. Preferably by spearheading action through one primary task force.
- For radicalization in the family to be a social service issue, the symptoms of radicalisation must be in line with the "usual" risk parameters of neglect, abuse, violence etc.
- There is no one-size fit all models for family intervention. As such, it is crucial to have different methods for different family structures as variance in family backgrounds; socio-economic, religious, cultural status will require diverse approaches.

Toolbox and advice on the management/implementation of family support measures

- Build trust and relationship with family. Be transparent and avoid secrecy. Don't get 'stuck' between families on the one hand, and police on the other hand, be clear about your actions from the local authority's perspective.
- Establish contact and identify the problem. Hold direct conversation right away. This builds trust.
- Point out one point of contact for the families, don't crowd their living room.
- Be understanding if parents try to protect their children by lying (consider parents to stay parents, regardless of how 'close' you are to them).
- Assess the parents' thoughts/concerns (potential support) for the radicalised child/young adult. Including their needs for external support. Experience indicates that this should be assessed in the family home by a *combination* of social workers and police.
- Debrief families after 'hurtful' incidents (such as attacks against foreign fighters).
- Provide guidance for how to maintain contact with the individual who has travelled. For example: over Skype/social media.
- Start assessments early and keep response proportionate. Explain that process takes time and will likely involve setbacks.
- When a family 'loses' someone who becomes a foreign fighter, make sure you do not only target the parents, but also the siblings. They appear to be a group at risk of radicalisation themselves.
- Exercise patience, be persistent and offer help several times, focus on the needs of families and accept their grief and ambivalence over the situation.
- Focus on the family needs instead of the risks. Understand family dynamics at play.
- Focus on the social and emotional issues (while not ignoring the role of ideology), it works with an identity model, which helps to figure out underlying social problems – feelings of alienation, frustration, exclusion, lack pf perspectives etc.
- Point out to family that interventions can help youngsters and their parents get closer again and improve their communication and conflict management.
- Engage the entire family as a group provides important clues as to why the individual left and the degree of willingness by the family to play constructive role in intervention.
- Set practical boundaries for support at the outset and clearly defined goals when and how engagement needs to wind down.Initiate protective measures for the family to guard against other affiliates of the radicalized that remains in country. For example, other radical persons with ties to the individual who has travelled might attempt to marry sisters or attempt to radicalize other family members.
- Consider providing courses targeted at socially vulnerable parents and relevant relatives with a focus on strengthening parental roles and skills in everyday life, and greater knowledge of rights, duties and norms in society. Focus on their resources as a parent, not on faults or failures.
- Crisis counselling – with additional long-term counselling for how to cope with the situation.
- The family might need assistance to handle media.

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- Never provide contact details of families to the media or researchers. Do pass on requests, messages to the families and let them decide. Do not appear to 'favour' one family above another: stay neutral, don't always request the same family to make public statements. Be neutral, explain to families that often accuse each other, that everyone can expect the same kind of support.

Case Study: The Dutch family support unit (NL)

NCTV (coordination organisation within Dutch government responsible for counter-terrorism, crises and cyber security) has established a family support unit. This unit functions independently to ensure credibility. This family support unit consists of 6 case managers supported by a pool of experts which provide the following service:

- Coaching families in dealing with a radical family member.

- Keeping in touch with family members who is in Syria/Iraq.

- Contact with school, work friends, etc.

- Offering care and information in case of the death of family member.

RAN CoE Collection of Practices

The RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices contains over 100 promising practices, including several in the field of family support. Relevant projects include:

- Hayat (DE)

- Steunpunt Sabr (NL)

5: Gender-specific Intervention Methods

The role of gender and identity-related issues has strong impact on trajectories of radicalisation. Males and females are attracted to violent extremism for different underlying reasons and roles. In relation to the foreign terrorist fighter issue in Syria/Iraq there are different interlocking push- and pull-factors. For boys/men the recruitment focus on pronounced masculinity roles (violence attracts, being warrior and hero). For girls/women the recruitment is often focused on emigrating to a romanticised utopian society. In the case of recruitment of women to ISIL there is a strong desire to support the rebuilding of the so-called 'Caliphate' with domestic support roles involving childbearing and raising roles, enforcing sharia laws amongst fellow women, humanitarian contributions to suffering Muslims. Some also embrace becoming brides to mujahedin. Complex identity-issues are also at play. Some girls may experience conflicting identities living under restrictive rule within their community. These girls are torn between the family and society's expectation – between being obedient and considerate of family standing and honour in the community and individual rights and freedoms with strong focus on women emancipation. The issue of identity development mechanisms can play a major role for women becoming involved in violent extremism.

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Tactics to recruit women and men differ for violent extremism. These different kinds of roles necessitate adoption of tailor-made gender-specific intervention approaches. Identifying drivers of radicalisation and its attraction with gender dimensions can also reveal useful pathways out of violent extremism.

Radicalization towards violent extremism is still misconceived to be a male issue. It is important to acknowledge that girls are not only passive victims but also active perpetrators and often highly fanaticized. Often they support their husbands and families and provide logistical support.

Focusing on gender perspectives can also contribute positively. Women also play a key role in family life and in raising children. Mothers also know their children closely and are positioned to detect dramatic changes in behaviour towards extremism. Mothers play a huge role in families as primary care providers and spend often more time with their children than fathers. Sometimes these mothers are difficult to reach for cultural and religious reasons. Providing space for parental guidance and support on the issue of extremism can be important, especially as the mothers of foreign fighters are often isolated, ridden with guilt and stigmatized. Mothers are ideally situated as a protective role against extremism with the ability to reach their children.

Challenges

- To have the specially-educated personnel and methodology to deal with gender-specific issues.
- Reaching some women can be challenging for religious and cultural reasons.
- Better understanding is needed to see how the differences why girls/women radicalise compared to boys/men., influence means and forms of interventions, interlocutors etc.
- Difficult to deal with families who have radicalised together.

Guiding Principles

Toolbox and advice

- Develop gender-specific indicators of radicalization.
- Provide female role models and mentors.
- Consider having mixed teams working with radicalization and de-radicalizing individuals at risk. It allows for different opportunities/angles for how to approach individuals and their family members.
- Be sensitive to cultural settings such as girls not wanting to be left alone with a male professional.
- Provide space for empowerment of mothers to believe in their parenting skills and how to deal with difficult issues such as radicalization.
- Prepare for combination of gender and convert issues.

Case Study: Mother´s School (AT)

Mother´s School is a concept developed by Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) in Austria that empowers women and offers mothers to learn how to deal with radicalization. The courses aim to build the mothers self-esteem and courage as well as the tools to enable them to guide their children away from extremism. It also provides the mothers with a platform where they can discuss freely, without guilt and shame, with other parents who share similar problems and experiences.

> ### Case Study: Heroes(DE)
>
> HEROES is a project for gender equality and against suppression in the name of honour. Target audiences are young men in the age between 14 and 18, with immigrant background. In weekly sessions, patriarchal paradigms are discussed as well as values of German society. The young men reflect their own positions on topics like honour, manhood and gender equality. After one year training the HEROES give workshops in schools to share their experiences (peer to peer-approach).

> ### Case Study: Circle of Security (NO)
>
> The Circle of Security is a relationship based early intervention program designed to enhance attachment security between parents and children. Focusing on how parent/child relationships can be strengthened, this unique approach teaches parents and those helping them new ways to understand and respond to children's needs and behaviour.

6: Rehabilitation Issues (in particular after release from prison)

Investing in rehabilitation and establishing exit-programs for people in violent groups is important both within prisons and transitioning into rehabilitation. Psychological counselling and religious discussion are designed to get a person to reflect on their actions and ideas to disengage from violence. After the release from prison, old group structures with the same pressures and temptations lie in wait for the young person: they can expect threats, frustrations and setbacks. The young people should deal with their feelings of aggression and avoid resort to violence in stressful situations.

Families, positive social resources persons, civil society organisation, social workers and mentors play a crucial role in ensuring that individuals do not fall back to their old, destructive behaviour. Mentors can play an important role as resource persons to talk to about difficult issues and as a guide towards reintegrating into society. They can also play a role in practical issues guiding the individual through municipal bureaucracies to access application for jobs, housing and education.

Challenges

- Prisons are 'places of vulnerability' and radicalised individuals tend to interpret every perceived injustice and all experiences of powerlessness or humiliation as confirmation of their ideology and their concept of the enemy. This can affect rehabilitation efforts beyond the period of incarceration.
- To get prisons, police and local municipality systems to work together. It is not always possible to share sufficient information between prison rehabilitation and local authorities.
- Crucial phase of vulnerability after release.
- Local authorities can be surprised by the release of prisoner. The release can create significant turbulence in local milieus among criminal gangs and extremists.
- Risk of individual moving somewhere else (outside municipal jurisdiction) upon release.

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Guiding Principles

Programs

- Build exit-programs on existing crime prevention programs and exit from criminal gangs as the same kind of principles often apply in extremism cases.
- Consider establishing a mentor program in prison for those motivated to leave extremist behind. It needs to be based on an established methodology of exit programs.
- Exit-programs by NGOs cannot be done without access to the required social services, e.g. adequate housing, employment, education etc. There needs to be established coordination.

Actors

- Allow access to other inmates and prison visits as an important part of helping them to stay in contact with their families and friends.
- Provide access to psychological/mental health treatment both inside prison and afterwards.
- Link the local level with what happens in prison: provide frameworks where actors from the local level can already reach out to prisoners prior to their release.
- Availability of the same mentors that worked during imprisonment and involving positive resource persons from their social environment. It is essential to prepare the inmate for life outside prison and to transfer what they have learnt to their future day-to-day life and to anchor it there.
- Establish a local network with practitioners from prison, police and municipality to discuss issues such as transfer systems, release issues etc. in preparation for release.

Toolbox and advice for the management/implementation of rehabilitation measures

- Establish contact immediately with released prisoners to give good aftercare and to make a qualified assessment of a person's situation and his/her degree of radicalisation.
- Engage them with meaningful work and education.
- Make use of the confinement and provide an alternative contact to introduce different perspectives and to promote positive influences by offering a reliable relationship and trustful social interaction.
- Take the local context into account as some measures have already tried and failed or seemed successful: build upon this while someone is in prison.
- Be clear about ultimate responsibility for risk assessment.
- Reason for exiting extremism may not be the same as why they entered it in the first place. Underlying reasons may differ between joining and exiting which needs to be explored.
- Reason for exiting is seldom ideological but concerns practical and social reasons.

RAN CoE Collection of Practices

The RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices contains over 100 promising practices, including several in the field of prison & probation - rehabilitation. Relevant projects include:

- Back on Track (DK)

- Exit Sweden (SWE)

- Exit Germany (DE)

- The Unity Initiative (UK)

7: Reintegration of Returnees

Preventing foreign terrorist fighters from travelling to the conflict theatre or detecting their return is challenging and need to rely on interventions from the security and law enforcement actors. It also places special demands on municipality coordination and the information-sharing mechanisms between the intelligence and law enforcement community. Often local coordinators express frustration over lack of information that foreign terrorist fighter returnees have returned to the municipality without any prior information by intelligence. Developing screening tools for risk assessment of returnees is a priority to determine the degree to which they may represent a danger to society or to themselves.

Returnees may pose a significant security risk. This applies in particular to adult males have been through military training/indoctrination camps in Syria/Iraq and some have engaged in combat and killed others. Lessening the psychological barriers for using violence, combined with trauma such as post-traumatic stress disorder, makes returnees potentially very dangerous. Their veteran status within extremism milieus can attract new extremist sympathies and recruits. Returnees will also have significant contacts with other returnees in different cities and internationally. Women and children have regularly witnessed public executions and other atrocities making them traumatised. Some women have remarried and children have been born without any registration of nationality. Some women have been sexually and violently abused while others have been an integral part of the foreign fighter activities providing significant moral and logistical support.

Some returnees will be disappointed and demoralised; others will be ideologically hardened and more radical than before. Handling returnees can be difficult given the layers of psychosocial challenges and if they are uncooperative. Some will be automatically prosecuted while others will remain under surveillance; still others may be candidates for other forms of interventions. It is in this last respect, that other players than actors from the security and law enforcement field come in.

Challenges

- Establishing a contingency for the reintegration of returnees from conflict zones.
- Establishing the facts related to the returnees' activities in conflict zones which is determining for the appropriate follow on action (including prosecution)
- Effective risk assessment tools.
- Manage public perception vis-a-vis returnees: as potential threats to security or people who need and deserve reintegration.
- Limited access to employment and housing; some housing corporations have problems with housing returnees/radicalized individuals.
- Immediate access to psychological treatment
- Social and moral exclusion.
- Ensure participation and in particular voluntary cooperation, while exploring ways and effectiveness of compulsory programmes. Deep involvement to the cause by foreign fighters may make this process more difficult.
- Some returnees do not want contact with authorities, and hence authorities do not have access to assess the psychological damage or life situation of a returnee.Avoiding to lose returnees from the radar and reaching out to them (some returnees go underground because they fear prison).
- Legal issues such as nationality of children born abroad or losing the status as a legal resident

Guiding Principles

Structure and actors

- It is crucial to have early notification when individuals return back. This is a prerequisite to be able to implement de-radicalization/monitoring measures. Open communications flow between intelligence, security services, police, multi-agencies and other relevant actors are therefore crucial.
- Determine appropriate risk assessment tools for returnees and follow up procedures. This may involve examining applicability of various frameworks - e.g. the Dynamic Assessment Framework (Dynamisch Beoordelingskader, The Netherlands); the Extremism Risk Guidance 22+ (ERG22+) (The United Kingdom); the Violent Extremist Risk Assessment (VERA) (Canada)
- Put professionals 'at ease': clarify your expectations (why are they involved), be clear about security risks and who they can reach out to in case of problems.
- If a returnee comes back with new wife or child, this situation needs to be flagged to the child protection service.
- Prepare Child Protection Services for different scenarios of handling child returnees. Developing other tools beyond default position of removal of children from families. Child Protection Services are important in assessing the dangers for the child. It is important to develop alternative options beyond placing children into child protection services in cases where the child is not in danger and one or both parents are voluntarily reintegrating into society.
- Establish a contingency group with the participation of representatives of the relevant municipal departments, the police, and representatives of the psychiatric system if needed. Create clear and established guidelines how to handle returnees.
- Choose the appropriate channels and actors for reaching out to the returnee when cooperation is refused (choice between law enforcement and other relevant agencies that stand ready to support with health issues or offer avenues for rehabilitation and integration.
- Be clear about how you communicate about them: e.g. if you arrange a psychologist for a returnee, you don't tell his entire story to the psychologist before their first meeting.
- Consider making early-release from prison conditional on entering an exit program.

Toolbox and advice for the management/implementation of reintegration measures

- Returnees need immediate follow up – with access to psychological treatment. Most returnees have significant psychological traumas.
- Provide re-integration programs in dialogue with the returnee: don't just oblige them, listen to their needs.
- Returnees need a perspective of reintegration – tailor made approach, support also after imprisonment.
- Knowledge about ideological components are important. Develop knowledge of salafi-jihadism (takfirism) as an ideology for frontline workers to improve possibilities to open-up conversations within families.
- Help returnees build a solid and positive network around them.
- Reintegration of returnees should involve focus on practical support with applications for social housing, employment etc.

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> **Case Study: The Haaglanden Safety House (NL)**
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> Since March 2014, the Haaglanden Safety House has dealt with all cases of individuals leaving for or returning to Syria/Iraq. This unit holds a case-by-case discussion involving regional municipalities, the police, the NCTV, the *Bureau Jeugdzorg* Crisis Intervention Team, and the Child Care and Protection Board. A personal action plan is drawn up for each individual to ensure they no longer represent a danger to society.
>
> Key point:
>
> - The regional approach involving other municipalities allows for uncovering links of behavior (links between wives of different travelers or crime or employment activities) that would otherwise not be made.
>
> - Developed 'potentially violent person' pilot scheme to screen returnees

8: Social media

The different actors involved in prevention work should use the possibilities of social media to reach out to the target group. Following social media is useful as it provides insights into the individual's views and social network. It can also provide a useable intervention tool for discussion and engagement with the extremist online or offline. Social media is a particularly powerful tool for disseminating counter or alternative narratives as they reinforce other forms of intervention and increase chances of reaching out to the target group. In particular, alternative narratives strengthen the feeling of belonging at municipal/local level and thereby strengthen resilience against radicalisation.

A counter-narrative is an argument that disputes a generally held belief or truth. Developing an effective counter-narrative policy is not an easy task. An effective counter-narrative will need to address not only those susceptible to the extremist message, but also those on the path toward radicalization and those already radicalized. It is clear, therefore, that local governments and others cannot develop one single, all-embracing counter-narrative that is likely to work across the board. Beyond carefully shaping the counter-narrative, (local) governments must also be aware of how and by whom they deliver the counter-narrative. Finding credible messengers can be a significant challenge.

It is also important to differentiate between counter- and alternative-narratives. Alternative narratives or positive social narratives is about projecting positive societal values of democratic and individual rights and equality and building positive stories about partnership and relations with minority communities. It is often easier to engage and include community members around positive social narratives.

Challenges

- Huge quantities of extremist propaganda published on social media makes it difficult for the municipalities to follow and monitor.
- Role and impact of local authorities in delivering counter and alterative narratives.
- Creating an online prevention that supports the off-lineintervention.
- How to reach out and engage with target group and how to offer online prevention tools and interventions that resonate with the target group.
- Finding the credible (and representative) voices and ensuring their safety.

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Guiding Principles

Structures and actors

- Get teachers, social workers, street workers informed about the role of social media both in terms of recruitment and radicalisation and effective prevention efforts.
- Ensure that communities themselves are involved in the development of counter narratives.
- Create innovative partnerships to 'tool up' civil society partners with skillsets to create their own material.
- Establish collaboration with national and international partners for exchange of methods, experiences and training.
- Engage with and support civil society online initiatives to prevent radicalization and raise awareness and a critical approach to online information.
- A community engagement plan should be developed and an attempt made to map those people or groups who are best-placed to reach the target audience (at-risk individuals or groups)
- Once those credible voices are found, it is important to give them the skills and training they need: social media, mainstream media (you may want them to speak on your behalf in the press), building websites, generating web traffic and followers, amplifying messages.
- Digital skills are essential as an integral part of education at an early age. This involves how young people should engage in source criticism, 'net etiquette' and critical thinking skills. Adults and parents could play an active role on social media to engage with young people who may show digital signs of extremism.
- Consider creating digital youth teams focusing on digital awareness/training/education.
- Creativity is essential. Work with young and innovative filmmakers.

Toolbox and advice for the management/implementation of social media intervention tools

- Encourage a peer-to-peer approach
- Consider reaching radicalised youth online to establish offline counselling.
- Draw on the examples of good practice in your municipality to evidence positive narratives.
- Exchange extremists' social media *nom de guerre* between partner agencies to be able to track online behaviour.

RAN CoE Collection of Practices

The RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices contains over 100 promising practices, including several in the field of alternative narratives. Relevant projects include:

- Hope Not Hate

- Abdullah-X project

Case Study: ISD – Counter Narrative Handbook (2016) (UK)

This Handbook, funded by Public Safety Canada through the Kanishka Project, was created by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) to help anyone looking to proactively respond to extremist propaganda with counter-narrative campaigns, and is intended as a beginner's guide for those with little or no previous experience of counter-narrative campaigning. It takes readers through the main stages of creating, launching and evaluating an effective counter-narrative campaign

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Case Study: Hedayah – Counter Narratives Library

The Library is intended to be a tool to provide content and material to front-line practitioners and civil society working in the counter-narrative space to prevent violent extremism. The key objectives of the Counter-Narrative Library are:

- Establish a comprehensive portal where governments, front-line workers and civil society can access information used to counter the narratives of all forms of violent extremism

- Provide practitioners with the most relevant and recent content to counter existing threats

Promote good practice sharing and provide practitioners with relevant resources and tools to counter

Case Study: Tränen der Dawa (Tears of Dawa) & On/Off Derad (DE)

The German Violence Prevention network work to establish contact with radicalised individuals online to build a relationship offline. Through the projects Tränen der Dawa (Tears of Dawa) and On/Off Derad they try to reach individuals who are radicalised or at-risk through social media and engage in conversations.

Chapter 4: Engaging with communities and civil society actors

Engagement with all communities at a local level remains important to building capacity to challenge and resist violent extremism. Supporting and working with vulnerable communities is essential. Extremists are good at tapping into the need to belong and the current disconnect within some communities and the society they live in. It is important for communities to recognise there is a local problem with extremism. As long as there is denial there is a problem assuming responsibility in partnership with the authorities. Admitting there are extremism problems is important for community buy-in.

It is also important for municipalities to recognise there are significant differences between different local minority communities. It can best be described as a complex ecology, constantly dynamic, changing and rich in diversity. Each community must be approached in a customised way. This diversity must be reflected in multiple channels of dialogue and in community engagement. It is also important to avoid stigmatization of specific communities. As such using the right terminology is critical. What is said is not always what is heard or perceived.

Developing local partnership and establishing trust is crucial but a long-term process. The lesson is that engagement with the community should not only be done through solely a counterterrorism prism. It is important not to adopt a panic policy but ongoing, genuine dialogue. For example, Muslim communities have the same issues as all other communities and partnerships cannot be formed if all these other issues are not addressed. Indirect and subtle approaches that are not overtly addressing counterterrorism are key approaches to avoid securitization which undermines trust between the respective communities and local authorities.

There are challenges to community-based approaches. Firstly, the approach has sometimes not been properly embedded. Government cannot talk about partnership and then hide behind complex and opaque decision-making structures. There needs to be a change of mind set regarding what kind of information we share and

how it is shared. Secondly, the message from government agencies setting policies has been mixed. Should it be about focusing on extremism or violent extremism; should it be about security or about integration and cohesion – this continues to be publicly debated but creates confusion on multiple levels. Thirdly, government thinks in roles and responsibilities but communities work through people. It is not about the organizations, it is about the individuals. If a community-based approach is going to work, communities must be trusted and they must be equal partners. This needs to be reflected in structures on consistent basis, and cultures of how we work.

Challenges

- Engaging with local communities to address issues of radicalisation if security concerns are the only hook/trigger.
- Sharing information about concerns of radicalisation within their communities (no feed back from law enforcement due to confidentiality rules).
- Involving all the ethnic immigrant associations in the municipality.
- Knowing which civil society organisation to work with and which civil society organisation has right knowledge, aims, competencies. Some civil society actors may be well placed to reach out and impact at-risk youngsters, but public authorities may have concerns as to the ideological foundations for their work.
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- Including all important stakeholders (there are many different stakeholders, which very often do not work together)
- Gaining trust within different (ethnic) communities
- Creating a sense of ownership, with all partners seeing the benefit of cooperation and staying committed over time.

Guiding Principles

Cooperation
- Support debate and dialogue between groups and communities.
- Community policing is one of the keys to community engagement.
- It is important to establish and foster "open doors" in the municipality where people can come and share their concerns and thoughts.
- Giving civil society influence and making sure they know about their critical role in preventing violent extremism. By investing in contact with these organisations and individuals, a local authority can build broad networks that engage in a constructive dialogue with the authorities and are able to play a role in confronting social tensions and radicalisation.
- It is crucial to have close and continuous cooperation with NGOs and civil society organisations. They can play an important role in backing up the work being done by the municipality/state, and to spread messages and help reintegrate individuals.
- When political climate is highly charged, delegate responsibility to civil society actors, who are embedded in local areas, where at risk youth and risk environment are situated. Municipality can facilitate dialogue and networking between local actors. Can provide training and courses to local actors. Contact and interaction between authorities and local actors will provide mutual confidence and sharpen focus on local challenge and solution.

- Civil society has the potential to play a more neutral role. This can broaden the scope of countering violent extremism and strengthen the possibilities for broad and constructive engagement on range of community issues.
- To find the right groups, you should attend their community events and listen to the problems those communities have concerns about. Recognize that CVE will be low on their list of priorities and respect this fact.
- Establish local networks of contacts at neighbourhood level.
- Mobilize as many partners as possible, each in their own capacity.
- Consider establishing a social media messaging thread for civil society networks which allows for quick-time dissemination of info, commentary. This can be used to dispel myths or get important messages to this cohort of community activists. It also allows community members to ask questions and get fast responses from partners (and of course, each other).
- A community action plan can be developed as a tool for delivering community-based initiatives with minutes of the meeting published online so discussions are available to all.
- Preventing violent extremism is related to a number of policy areas: community cohesion, greater community involvement and empowerment. This requires a willingness of authorities to allow space for communities to identify their own roles and specific involvement in mainstream initiatives.
- Consider establishing cooperation with housing associations. These associations know residents and can provide positive social change for locals through homework cafés, job coaching, health events, etc.
- Knowledge of local conditions and culture is important in preventing violent extremism. At times statements and actions may be interpreted as worrisome may simply be due to the lack of cultural understanding and knowledge of local communities among employees of municipal services and police.

Dialogue

- Engaging in dialogue with key organizations and figures in local communities.
- Civil society groups should be invited to participate in community panels (either as a community reference group or scrutiny panel) so that they can see the CVE work being undertaken locally and have a voice in its application. If they're involved in this manner, then they will be stronger advocates of your work and – if you have the right people around the table – can help open doors and build confidence. This is why it is important to bring 'gateways' and not 'gatekeepers' to the table
- Arrange open discussion-events with representatives from the police and municipality, sometimes they are on specific issues.
- Establish interfaith roundtable discussions.
- Invest in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue with an emphasis on local level and social cohesion which contribute to social cohesion.
- Don't be afraid to talk to your "opponents" – they might not be opponents after all.

Pitfalls

- There needs to be proper vetting mechanisms of civil society organisations if they receive public funding.
- Be careful about language and terminology to ensure community buy-in. Rather than preventing violent extremism it may be useful to engage on crime prevention and safety and then weave in aspects of violent extremism.

- It is also important that civil society actors retain independence. If they are seen as spokespersons for the government or municipality then they lose their credibility. Respect that they must remain 'critical friends' and be able to criticise where they see flaws or challenges.
- Focus on safeguarding duty of young people as starting point.

RAN CoE Collection of Practices

The RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices contains over 100 promising practices, including several in the field of civil society and community engagement. Relevant projects include:

- Ethnic Liasion Officers (IE)

- Allies (NL)

- Rethinking Radicalisation (UK)