EX POST PAPER
RAN YF&C

Strengthening community resilience to polarisation and radicalisation

Introduction

Although governments and public authorities must do their utmost to prevent polarisation, extremism and radicalisation, these issues cannot be tackled effectively without community involvement. Extremism and polarisation thrive more readily when communities themselves do not challenge those who seek to radicalise others. In some communities, there is a profound lack of trust and confidence in the government, police and public authorities. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to build the cooperation and partnerships needed for a successful approach. Investing in community engagement and community empowerment is a key factor in preventive approaches to polarisation and radicalisation. The crucial question is how to achieve this effectively.

The Radicalisation Awareness Network Youth, Families and Communities working group (RAN YF&C) organised a meeting in London on 29 and 30 June on strengthening community resilience to polarisation and radicalisation. This meeting complemented earlier discussions within RAN and within the RAN YF&C working group ([1]). In addition, it is linked to one of the four RAN Centre of Excellence roadmaps ([2]) addressing the issue of polarisation, its connection with radicalisation and its daily effect on the work of first-line practitioners.

The findings of this YF&C meeting, which are outlined in this ex post paper, will also feed into the main deliverable of the polarisation roadmap: the RAN Cool Down Polarisation Manual. The ex post paper will first consider the obstacles to effective community resilience-building and engagement,

---

([1]) The following papers reflect these discussions and are available through the hyperlinks and on the website: RAN YF&C kick-off paper, RAN ISSUE PAPER Tackling the challenges to prevention policies in an increasingly polarised society, RAN Study-visit to Belfast and RAN ex post RAN POL-EDU joint meeting on Polarisation Management, 10-11 May 2017, Stockholm.
([2]) The four roadmaps for 2017 relate to responses to returnees, polarisation, training and local multi-agency cooperation.

as described by practitioners. Four approaches to overcoming these hurdles will be presented. These approaches, discussed in the meeting's break-out sessions, are focused on various target groups or methods within communities: women/mothers, youth, community dialogue approaches and partnerships between communities and authorities.

A given approach may offer several points of relevance for other approaches. Readers should note that lessons drawn from the meeting may not correspond to specific challenges, while many lessons will be applicable to a number of different challenges. Practice shows that there is no silver bullet or one-size-fits-all solution: what is needed is a comprehensive approach which includes diverse elements and perspectives.

Preventing polarisation and radicalisation in communities: challenges

Even though the prevention of polarisation and radicalisation receive a great deal of attention, obstacles and challenges remain in developing effective prevention structures within and between communities. In the meeting, community practitioners agreed that the following challenges must be addressed if we are to achieve effective community engagement and build community resilience.

1) The lack of a safe space for establishing dialogue
In many countries, budget cuts for community and youth services have resulted in the loss of safe spaces (whether physical, such as community centres, or in terms of community practitioners) where community members can share their concerns. The importance of such safe spaces has already been recognised within RAN ([3]).

2) Fear
Community practitioners report that many communities are apprehensive about dealing with polarisation and radicalisation. There is fear of stigmatisation, of police involvement, of being drawn into a criminal space and of being targeted by other (extremist) members of the community. Such misgivings can paralyse communities: people find it easier not to address or discuss these issues, hoping instead that they will disappear on their own. Fear is also used as a tactic by extremist groups, and in some cases, fear is fuelled by the media and politics.

3) Lack of acknowledgement from authorities

([3]) The RAN Prevent meeting in Zagreb in 2013 focused on how to deal with the past, in order to prevent future (extremist) violence in (post-)conflict areas.

In some cases, communities do not feel recognised by their local authorities. This may be because they are not consulted/involved in relevant debates, because they are denied permission to utilise/build on specific locations or undertake specific activities, or owing to issues of (mis)representation. It is not easy to foster relationships and develop community resilience when communities feel they are not being heard or seen.

4) Lack of accessibility to credible information
Community members become aware of their environments by accessing information. Today, countless sources of information exist, both online and offline, and it is often difficult to determine what the facts are. This is something that allows distrust and conspiracy theories to emerge and grow within and between communities. Having access to local, trusted sources of information can help make communities impervious to such dynamics and theories.

5) Distrust of authorities
As already stressed in the ex ante paper of this meeting, distrust of authorities is one of the key obstacles to building community resilience. There are several reasons why such distrust exists and/or develops. An important reason is communities' perception that they are stigmatised or negatively labelled. This may be fuelled by authority-related incidents such as police raids in certain neighbourhoods (e.g. Roma areas in eastern Europe), or by public statements singling out certain communities as a hotbed for radicalisation (e.g. the debate about Salafist communities in some European countries).
Another element generating distrust is the (mis)use of specific language in the media coverage (e.g. the word Jihad, which has acquired particularly negative connotations, despite having positive associations within Islamic religion). Establishing a relationship with communities who feel targeted by authorities is extremely difficult and time-consuming; nonetheless, this constitutes a first step in advancing community engagement, resilience and the willingness to deal with issues such as polarisation and radicalisation.

6) Dealing with the media
The media (both mainstream and social media) is a highly complex force. As stated earlier, the media may fuel stigmatisation and insecurities, because it is unclear which information sources are trustworthy. Furthermore, when an event occurs within a community, both community members and practitioners have to deal with the media coverage of the story.
Julie Wharton of the Hideaway Youth Project in Manchester explained how difficult it was to do just this during the aftermath of the Manchester attack. Due to the pressures and stresses placed on residents, people were more reserved than usual — they did not want unsuitable media coverage to negatively affect the community.

The Hideaway Youth Project — Aftermath of the Manchester attack in Moss Side
The Hideaway project is based in Moss Side, an area hosting a complex make-up of ethnicities and cultures which is also in the highest 10 % of most deprived areas in the United Kingdom. This area is believed to have extremist groups and individuals in its midst — the perpetrator of the attack on 22 May 2017 was from here. Following the attack, residents were subject to raids, blocked community roads and hate crime in the form of telephone calls. Furthermore, the number of hate videos on social media rose enormously. At the same time, fewer young people attended youth centres, as their parents were apprehensive. A

community meeting was held to discuss the aftermath of the attack, where many questions and concerns were raised. The attack has clearly caused trauma at the community level.

The Hideaway project focuses on young people who voluntarily participate in project activities.
All young people, staff and volunteers reflect local communities in the area. Safeguarding is a priority at all times. Figure 1 below summarises the Hideaway identity and focus.

IDENTITY

Aims
Explore Belief Systems

Break Internalised Stereotypes

Promote Positive Sense of Self

Increase Equality of Opportunity

Actions
Workshops

Peer Mentoring

Residential

Project Development

Partnerships

Outcomes
Increased Confidence

Recognise and Take Opportunities

Improved Body Language

Recognition of Responsibility

Thinking Out of the Box

Figure 1: The Hideaway's identity and approach

More information on the Hideaway Youth Project is available at http://www.thehideaway.org.uk/ online.

7) Absence of voices opposing violence

As indicated in the ex ante paper, Bart Brandsma's model on countering polarisation stresses that the principal target group is not that of polarised people (referred to as pushers and joiners), but rather the silent middle group, i.e. those who do not pick a side. This group is usually the largest, but in a polarised society, it is slowly overruled by pushers and joiners. Community practitioners underline the value of strengthening the voices of those opposed to violence or other criminal, extremist behaviour that is legitimised by extremist ideologies. However, this is a difficult undertaking, as by definition, this large group is more focused on common, everyday life and is not as ideologically inclined as the pushers and joiners. In combination with overcoming the fear factor mentioned above, empowering these voices is one of the key challenges to be addressed.

8) Fluid community boundaries, diversity and dynamics

Defining or setting boundaries for what constitutes a community and for who belongs in it is not easy. The determining factors are the community's connecting element (a common culture, religion, language, city, activity, etc.), the extent to which people identify with a community, and the extent to which a community (re)presents itself as such.
In addition, this process is not static — it is constantly changing. In terms of representation, it is particularly difficult to determine whether a certain person or organisation is really representative of a community. This

makes it challenging for authorities and community practitioners to understand the communities they want to support.

9) Obstacles to cooperation within and between communities

Developing cooperation within and between communities is also a challenge. Community practitioners observed that in some cases, community organisations with common objectives compete for resources, participants in their activities, etc. In addition, community organisations may struggle with financial support and organisation, as funding for community-led efforts is frequently in short supply. Furthermore, too often, donors supply short-term funds to preferred partners, rather than investing jointly in developing the long-term capacity of local organisations as agents of change in their community ([4]). Consequently, newer, smaller and more innovative community partners are often left behind.

1. *General lessons on strengthening community resilience to radicalisation and polarisation*

The following general lessons on building community resilience and engagement are not related to specific target groups within the community. They are applicable across the board, and should be viewed as constituting the foundation of an effective community approach.

Lesson 1.1

A human-based, individualised approach is needed when strengthening community resilience. Communities are groups of individuals with distinctive thoughts, fears, frustrations, grievances, etc. Therefore, addressing the individual needs of community members is the first step in building community resilience, and may set off a ripple effect in the community. Starting at the individual level may help people to overcome fear and/or empower those willing to speak out against violence.

Lesson 1.2

When individuals or communities are affected by (moderate forms of) polarisation/extremism, a step-by-step approach is called for, as the following example illustrates.

International Association for Human Values (IAHV) — Healing, resilience and empowerment

Through its work in peace-building and dealing with radicalisation and extremism, the IAHV has recognised three steps/stages in the personal transformation culminating in social prevention and transformation: healing, resilience and empowerment. These steps are needed at both personal and community level.

---

(4) The Prevention Project and Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). (2016). Opportunities and Challenges for Mobilizing Resources for Preventing Violent Extremism. Retrieved from http://www.organizingagainstve.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Meeting-Summary-Mobilizing-Resources-for-PVE-June-21_Final.pdf
Rosand, E. (2016). Communities First: A Blueprint for Organizing and Sustaining a Global Movement Against Violent Extremism. The Prevention Project. Retrieved from http://www.organizingagainstve.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Communities_First_December_2016.pdf

The first stage involves healing the physical, mental and emotional problems encountered by individuals contending with radicalisation, extremism and violence. For instance, testimonies of mothers worldwide who have lost their children to terrorist organisations reveal they suffer from extreme levels of stress and anxiety, lack of sleep, lack of energy and negative emotions (feelings of failure). These issues need to be addressed before it is possible to build resilience, by developing coping skills.

Once the stage of resilience has been attained (i.e. the individual is able to withstand radicalisation), empowerment becomes possible. This means that the individual has taken responsibility for the part they played, and is seeking ways to utilise this experience as a tool or method of preventive outreach to others. While not every individual and community can attain this stage of empowerment, many former extremists, militants and affected communities around the world have become actively engaged in prevention and transformation.

More information on the IAHV is available at http://www.peaceunit-iahv.org/ online.

Lesson 1.3
A safe space for cooperation and to build trust-building is essential in any intervention with communities or community members. This space may take any of the following forms.
- A physical safe space that does not represent any party's 'territory' (e.g. whether a city hall is considered 'safe' depends on whether people trust the local authority).
- The people building relationships with, within and between communities. They need to be credible in the eyes of community members, trustworthy, honest and able to empathise with different perspectives.
- The rules/agreements/rituals concerning how to cooperate. This refers to practicalities (whether notes are being taken, whether the press is involved, how sensitive information will be shared and handled, etc.).

Without such spaces, it is difficult to address sensitive topics such as polarisation or radicalisation. Having safe spaces and trust are preconditions for building community resilience to polarisation and radicalisation.

Lesson 1.4
Even though polarisation and radicalisation are again high on the political agenda, they are not new phenomena, and many community resilience exercises already exist. There is no need for community practitioners to reinvent the wheel when they could instead adapt existing practices to a new reality. Examples of such practices will be given throughout this paper, ex post.

Lesson 1.5
Funding from government agencies may accompany targets which are incompatible with communities working on a certain project (e.g. because the targets are unattainable, because there is great distrust towards authorities, because the targets do not allow for enough freedom for a grassroots approach). For this reason, some community initiatives are strictly against government funding. If the authority's cooperation is desirable, the accompanying targets need to be open for discussion.

Lesson 1.6
Before embarking on an intervention with specific target groups (e.g. a training or dialogue group), it is crucial to conduct a thorough analysis of their background, culture, needs, expectations and possible limitations. Adapting the programme to local circumstances is key, as is rendering it attractive and adding

value for the women and mothers involved. This tailoring should be monitored throughout the intervention, to ensure that the 'fit' between programme and participants is maintained.

Community engagement should be established because of interest in the community as such, and not following on from an incident. Cooperation (amongst communities, and between communities and authorities) should be the aim of a long-term approach rather than a project.

2. *Lessons from the women/mothers-based approach*

Across differing countries, cultures and/or religions, women and mothers play a specific part in building community resilience, owing to the central role they play in the family and household.

'Mothers are a continuous presence in their children's lives, with deeply-rooted connections and an understanding of push and pull factors: of what excites them, upsets them, and what might seduce them into a community of violence. Their concerns provide a unique insight into the intimate geography of the preliminary stages of radicalisation, helping to fill a crucial gap in the current understanding of the problem of extremism. In their unique position of access and proximity to their children, mothers are an unrecognised source for deepening our understanding of risk factors and a key partner in developing preventative, counter-violence strategies.' ([5])

From the break-out session dedicated to this approach, the following lessons were drawn on, successfully engaging with women and mothers to empower them to help build resilience in their communities.

Lesson 2.1
If possible, start the initiative from the community itself. If there is already a mother who is active and involved, or who has personal experience with radicalisation, she might present a good starting point for finding, connecting with and persuading other mothers in the community to take part in the intervention.

Lesson 2.2
The intervention should utilise the mother's talents and strengths. As explained earlier, mothers who have had to tackle radicalisation may suffer from fear, anxiety and feelings of failure. Making them aware of their strengths and capabilities, the positive influence they (can) have within their own family and the wider community and how they best use this potential is decisive in building self-esteem and empowering them to take action.

Lesson 2.3
Do not have unrealistically high expectations of the intervention or ask too much of the women involved. It takes time to build trust and confidence and for participants to feel secure in sharing their thoughts and concerns. It is advisable to have interventions in place that are spread across several weeks or months, allowing women to build confidence and slowly undertake actions outside their comfort zone (e.g. talking about radicalisation or violent videos on the internet with other family members, or sharing their testimonies in public to help other parents in the community).

Lesson 2.4

([5]) Schlaffer, E. & Kropiunigg, U. (2015). CAN MOTHERS CHALLENGE EXTREMISM? Mothers' perceptions and attitudes of radicalisation and violent extremism. Women without Borders, Vienna. Retrieved from http://www.women-without-borders.org/files/downloads/CAN_MOTHERS_CHALLENGE_EXTREMISM.pdf

The credibility and competence of those performing the intervention is crucial for success. Working with local key figures and/or trainers with high transcultural competence is vital.

Lesson 2.5
A point requiring attention is how the intervention is communicated to the community, and the language being used. If this is not carefully considered, women not wishing to be associated with the intervention might be reluctant to take part. Community practitioners note that words such as radicalisation, extremism and Jihadism are usually not very effective.

Lesson 2.6
Consider what the intervention itself is focused on or whether it has a certain ideological or political slant. For example, the Mothers Schools of Women without Borders are viewed as an ideology-free space; they do not incorporate political or religious principles in their teachings. This allows the sessions to focus on the parent-child dynamic.

3. Community-organising and dialogue approach

Through action groups, community organisations and community dialogue projects, this approach harnesses community voices and talents to build resilience within and between communities. The aim is to organise community members to peacefully discuss and find alternatives to extremism and violence. The focal point is the method of dialogue rather than a specific target group.

Experiences from the Basque Country, shared by Agirre Lehendakaria Center for Social and Political Studies

The violent radicalized people — 1st level

The people supporting them (or that justifies/understands it as legitimated) — 2nd level

The community that shares some of the objectives or the identity, but not the violence; — 3rd level

The others
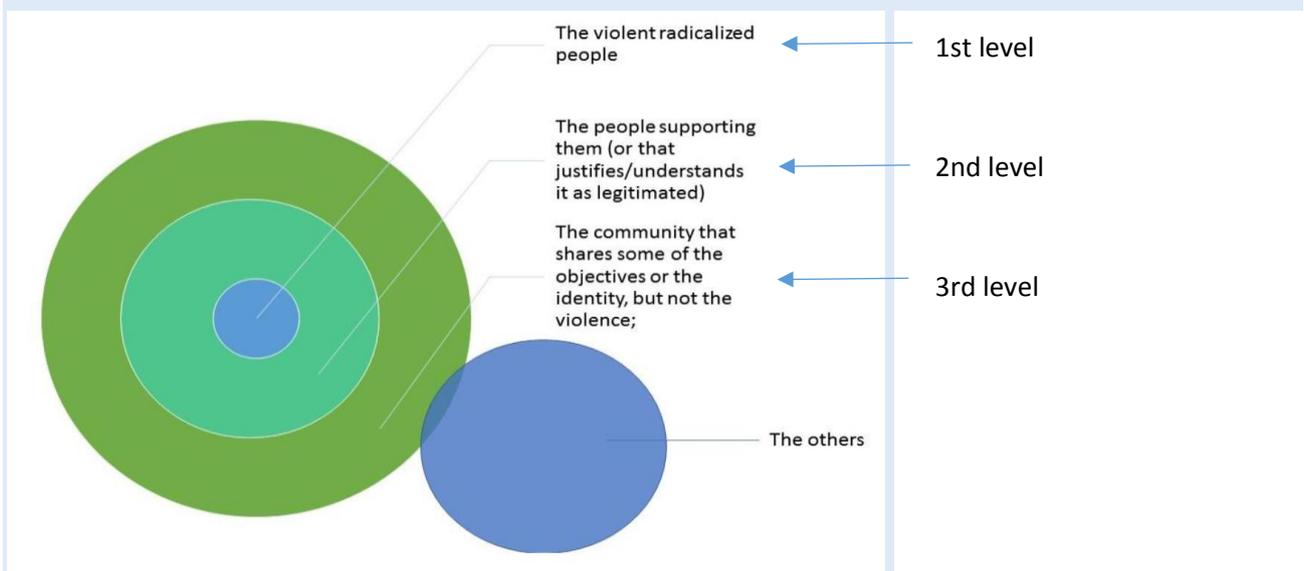
Figure 2: Community dialogue approach: Strategy of Agirre Lehendakaria Center for Social and Political Studies

Practitioners undertaking community dialogue in the Basque Country propose the following approach.

First level

The message should be sent from within the specific community, as this carries the most weight. Radicalised people are likely to listen to messages sent from the second and third levels, because they feel that they belong to the same community.

Second level
If the second level no longer supports the first level, or it is getting smaller, the framework and legitimisation for extremist views disappear.

Third level
The key actor is defined as the third space (the third level). This is the connecting bridge between the radicalised communities and 'the others', and this actor can understand the needs, aims, language, values, feelings and perspectives of both communities.

More information on the Agirre Lehendakaria Center is available at https://agirrecenter.eus/en?set_language=en online.

The following lessons were learned regarding community-organising and dialogue (as discussed during the meeting).

Lesson 3.1
Following (violent) incidents, the first visible action is often repressive or security-related. While at first glance, it may appear that these actions help to reduce violence and deter aggressors, this is usually a superficial impression. Without dialogue about the incidents and dynamics leading up to them, community issues get pushed into ungoverned, underground places (both online and offline). By having an infrastructure in place that allows for quick and open processing of community dialogue (after incidents (but not only then)), we can promote community resilience and keeping community issues in sight.

Lesson 3.2
When designing community dialogue sessions, bear in mind that authorities and communities can be convinced to take part when a range of benefits are highlighted:
- they break down the 'enemy' concept;
- they help communities understand each other;
- they offer a space in which to reach agreement without resorting to violence;
- they show that there is an alternative to violence;
- they promote deep strategical thinking about how to coexist locally/nationally.

Lesson 3.3
There are certain preconditions for effective community dialogue.
- The first is to promote listening. If there is no willingness to listen to others in the dialogue process, or only partial willingness to do so, the effort will not be successful. It is therefore crucial to invest in ensuring that all involved stakeholders are committed.
- Creating a safe and secure space (also see Lesson 1.3).
- Involve credible and skilled social mediators who grasp the issues, who know how to handle group processes and emotions, and who can maintain neutrality in the eyes of different stakeholders.

4. Youth involvement approach

The younger generations will have a significant impact on community development in the future. Involving young people and giving them a role in building resilient communities now and in the future is key. Community practitioners share the view that young people are not being exposed to good programmes, in mosques, for example, where they can be pulled in by other forces. Furthermore, the emotional well-being of young people is not being nurtured.

Involving young people in approaches to build community resilience is key because:

- it provides a foundation for the future;
- it is key to be aware of the status quo in young people's circles;
- youth empowerment and engagement gives young people a sense of ownership/agency;
- it provides young people with concrete activities (covering leisure time).

The following lessons were drawn about how to successfully engage with youth to equip them to build resilience and empowerment in their communities.

Lesson 4.1
Young people should not be viewed as sources of information by security services. However, their disclosures (sharing trusted information) are a key element of engagement. Youth professionals should be facilitated in their role as trusted brokers, keeping both the trust and engagement of youngsters as well as from security authorities. This means information exchange protocols should be in place that allow youth practitioners to maintain confidentiality, whilst being able to share information that could prove crucial for personal/community safety and security.

Lesson 4.2
The effectiveness of youth involvement approaches relies on the quality of the human resources available. These professional youth workers, volunteers, peer coaches, etc. should be able to connect with young people, understand their grievances and needs, and be able to encourage change (however small), to a young person who seems to be heading on a destructive path. Authenticity and intrinsic motivation, good selections, training and coaching on the job are ways to ensure this.

Lesson 4.3
The age range for 'youth' varies: in an international context, it is often up to the age of 30, and particularly the so-called student group, aged 18 to 24. The years from 12 to 18 are considered crucial for the development of identity and values, and are therefore more decisive. Furthermore, community practitioners emphasise the importance of working with even younger children. Even in primary education, it is essential to lay the foundations of youth involvement in social and sensitive societal issues such as extremism.
Close cooperation with parents and schools will help make youth interventions more effective and will involve a larger part of the community.

Lesson 4.4
To really engage with youngsters and be able to grasp their world and perspective, working with peer groups (both face to face and virtual) is essential. Ultimately, young people are more likely to confide in and commit to a friend or another young person they can relate to, than for example, a local civil servant. Interventions aimed at increasing youth involvement and engagement should therefore include a peer component.

180° Wende — Involving youth through peers

180° Wende (i.e. 180 degrees turn) is a German organisation whose key objective is to provide young people with a wide network of role models. Their aim is to positively impact young people at risk, to prevent youth crime and radicalisation, and to decrease the consumption rate of drugs. Their model and activities are built on the idea of cooperation with local partners and peers, as shown in Figure 3 below.
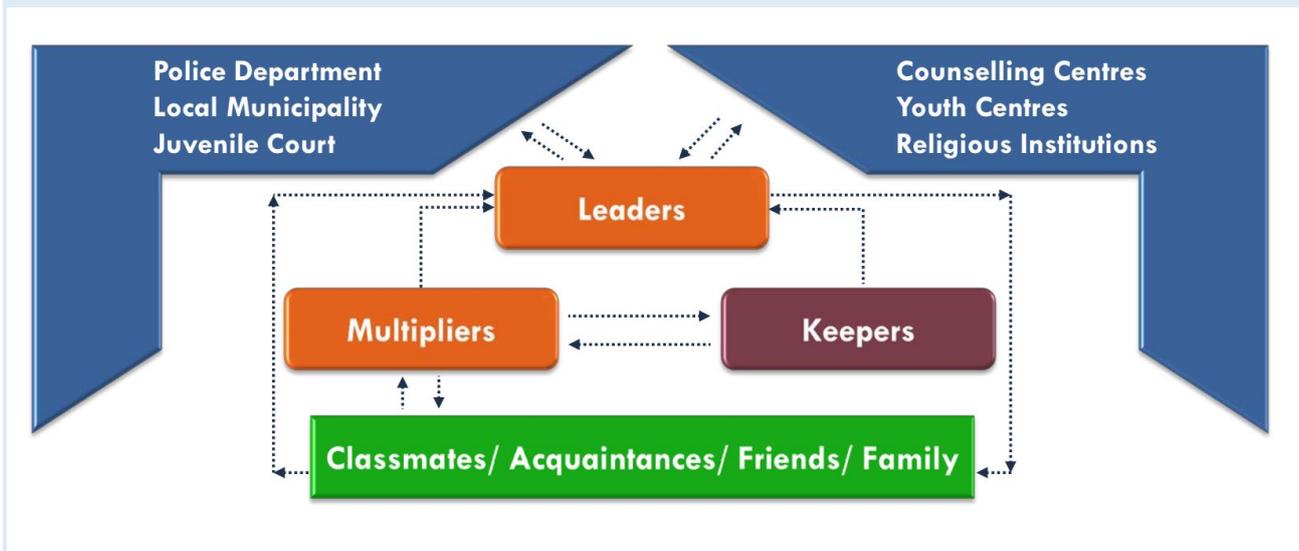

Figure 3: Network approach of 180° Wende

Leaders are key personalities in their respective communities, who are responsible for a certain district**.** To be able to support an entire district, leaders are helped by multipliers. Multipliers are committed young people trained by the organisation, who perform as role models on a voluntary basis. Keepers function as the interface between members of the social community, and they work to consolidate our efforts in a more efficient way. They are a form of guardians — people in the community who care and have something to offer to youngsters (expertise, resources, jobs, etc.).

More information on 180° Wende is available at http://180gradwende.de/de_DE/ online.

Community Counteracting Radicalisation (CoCoRa)

The CoCoRa project is an Erasmus+ collaboration between five European partner organisations (from Denmark, Germany, France, Italy and Austria): it targets young people potentially at risk of radicalisation, and aims to contribute to a community-based preventing violent extremism (PVE) strategy. Though the approach to involving young participants differs in each of these countries, all focus strongly on the inclusion of young Muslims in this process.

Within the project, the dilemmas and learning points from each country and approach are being analysed; in terms of young Muslims being defined as a target group for prevention, preliminary results show the following.

- From a formal equality and secular perspective, in some societies it may be stigmatising to address citizens' religious affiliations — despite the existence of unequal opportunities and social mechanisms of exclusion.
- From this perspective, the Muslim community prevention approach is not legitimately considered an official strategy. The inclusive and intercultural approaches are an acceptable platform for involving young people devoted to Islam.
- By collaborating on equal terms with Muslim communities, it is possible to address the religious component of the prevention perspective.
- Addressing Islam and Muslims in targeted prevention does not in itself imply stigmatisation or discrimination.

With regard to directly or indirectly addressing the topic of radicalisation or extremism, results show the following.

- Tendentiously, the more dominant inclusion and intercultural diversity was at the agenda, the more indirect the discussions and reflections on radicalisation and extremism.
- Restraint in direct discussion may be due to fear of making young people feel like suspects and thereby losing their trust and confidentiality. The inclusive and appreciative approach is considered a bridging approach.
- In some learning/teaching contexts, when the topic was raised directly, participants would engage actively in discussions and common reflections.
- The depersonalised approach (i.e. observing and discussing others rather than talking about oneself) promotes discussions, reflections and perhaps furthers experience.

More information on the CoCoRa project is available at http://cocoraproject.eu/ online.

5. Cooperation between communities and authorities approach

Communities need support from their authorities, and likewise, authorities need to involve the communities they must protect, represent and support. Building strong cooperation structures and partnerships will therefore positively impact efforts to prevent polarisation and radicalisation.

Multiple examples of cooperation between communities and authorities were provided during the meeting.

Hear our Voices

The London Borough of Hounslow hosted the meeting and also presented its prevention approach. The project **Hear our Voices** was highlighted as an example of good practice. Hear our Voices was a youth-led project aiming to challenge terrorism and highlight and respond to the threat.

This project included three activities:

- secondary school children devised three short drama pieces (plays) around the themes of violence and radicalisation and its effect on families;
- year 5 students worked with a professional writer to produce poems and stories about British/fundamental values, and reviewed what it means to be British;
- the primary school held combined performances of the plays and stories, and parents from the performing children's school were invited to attend.

Through the Hear our Voices project, the Prevent message was delivered to nearly 1 000 children, parents and teachers from a Muslim school attached to a mosque, a diverse audience, with over 70 % coming from a Bridging Educational Access to Migrants (BEAM) background.

Ealing Partnership against Radicalisation and Extremism (EPAREX)

The London borough of Ealing worked on this partnership project from 2011 to 2013, undertaking a series of established counter-radicalisation programmes in Ealing borough with the local Somali, Afghan and Pakistani (SAP) communities. EPAREX efforts resulted in a Prevent Partnership group, a community network, adult mental health mentors, trusted interlocutors and the women and mothers' focused project Muslimah Matters.

More information on the partnership projects is available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/community_engagement_and_empowerment_en.pdfb.

Efforts of the municipality of Vienna to create a Networking Platform with Afghan and Chechen Communities

Initiated by the municipality and implemented with partner organisations, a programme was set up to proactively involve Afghan and Chechen communities in social issues/topics affecting them. The activities held in 2016 and their results are shown in Figure 4 below. Several of the efforts shown here continued in 2017.
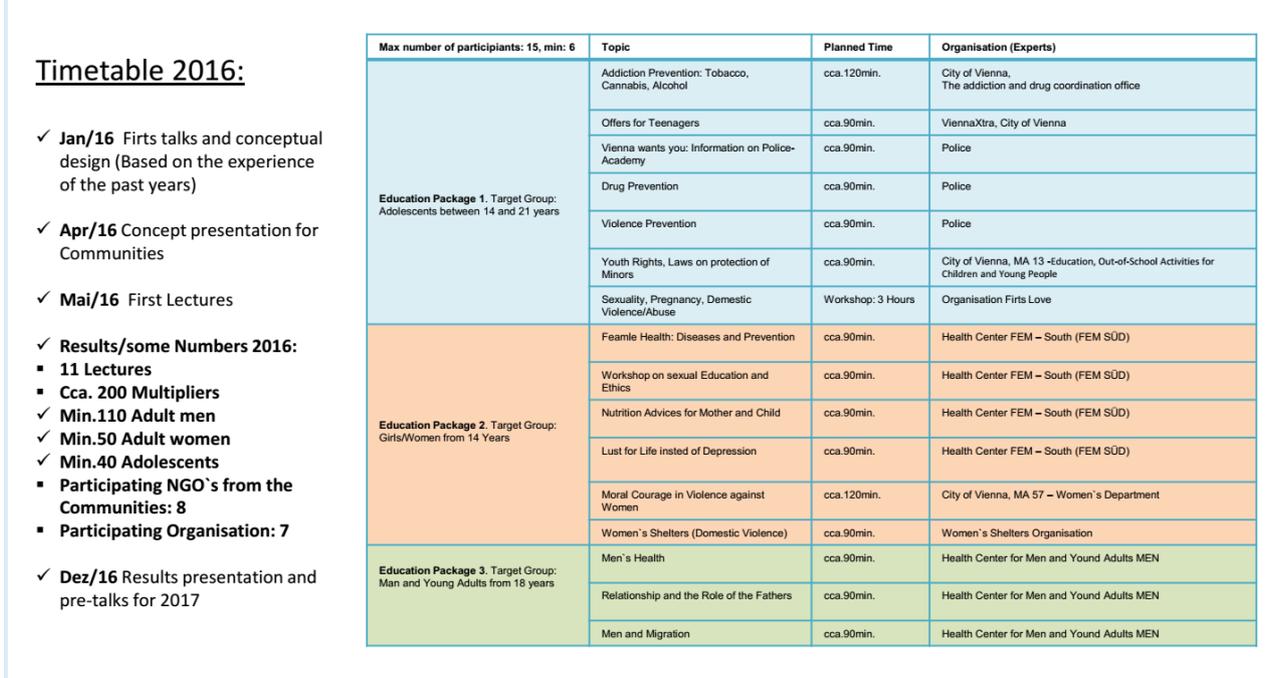
Figure 4: Activities of the municipality of Vienna in 2016

The following lessons were drawn on successfully developing community-authority cooperation to help reinforce resilience against polarisation and radicalisation.

Lesson 5.1

When specific communities are prioritised in a project, a clear explanation is needed so as to avoid stigmatisation and also in terms of perceived risks. As the example of CoCoRa shows, it is not possible/accepted to single out a particular community for cooperation efforts in every country or area. If this is the objective, alternative means of reaching out need to be developed.

Lesson 5.2
Projects requiring information (or personal information) are difficult to deliver, as they can compromise trust between parties. Therefore, clear rules about confidentiality should be set out early in the cooperation process.

Lesson 5.3
Action planning and a clear rationale for working with community groups is essential. Objectives and targets should be well-defined from the outset. Community practitioners underlined the difficulty of meeting politicians' requests for quantitative targets (which are usually output related, e.g. the number of meeting participants) on the one hand, and measuring real impact (e.g. whether behaviour has actually changed) on the other.

Lesson 5.4
'Integrity testing' is needed for individuals responsible for community organisations, as funding groups with a poor reputation can jeopardise a wider project. There should be transparency about this testing, and potential partner organisations should be informed why it's needed.

Lesson 5.5
When authorities reach out to communities, they should not hold a condescending attitude toward them. It is important that community representatives feel the partnership is an equal one, even though the authorities are providing the funding.

Lesson 5.6
The transcultural competence of the community workers and authorities is vital. Both parties should be able to empathise with each other, based on a rudimentary knowledge and understanding of cultural differences as well as respect for these differences.

Lesson 5.7
Working with volunteer organisations (which many community organisations are) should be considered both an effective means to reach certain objectives (social capital for trust) as well as an end goal in itself. However, volunteer work should not be taken for granted or used as a 'cheap' form of community work. An organisational framework is often necessary for effective volunteer work: it will ensure volunteers are trained, motivated and not overtaxed, and will keep knowledge capital within organisations as volunteers come and go.

The RAN LOCAL working group has explored cooperation models between authorities and religious communities. The outcomes are available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-local/docs/ran_local_how_to_cooperate_with_religious_organisations_08122016_en.pdf online.