

# EX POST PAPER

## RAN YF&C Kick-off

### Summary

**On 28 January 2016 the first meeting of RAN YF&C took place in Munich (DE). The objective of the meeting was to discuss the long term agenda of this working group and decide upon concrete deliverables.**

One of the challenges for YF&C is that this working group covers three fields, with both specific and overlapping topics. There is also a close relation with several of the other working groups like RAN EDU, LOCAL and C&N. The key is to keep focus, find overarching principles and be a trendsetter of new developments in this area. Participants agreed that finding and disseminating best practices should remain a priority, but that there needs to be an emphasis on methodology. YF&C should not only find out which practices are successful, but also why and how they work. This could possibly result in a core document like the Manifesto of RAN Education.

## Introduction

RAN Youth, Families and Communities (YF&C) is a new working group that builds on earlier work from RAN Prevent and RAN INT/EXT which have touched upon issues such as family support structures, (informal) education interventions for youngsters, dealing with CVE in post-conflict societies etc. RAN YF&C will take this work to the next level, developing more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, trends and effective interventions.

During the kick-off meeting the long-term agenda for this working group was discussed. Key questions were; What are the main topics that we need to address in the upcoming four years? What kind of support and tools do practitioners in these fields need? How can RAN YF&C work towards concrete deliverables that really benefit first line practitioners? How can we expand our group's circle of influence at local, national and European level?

This ex post paper is the reflection on the most crucial findings of the meeting. It will also build on the analysis and reflections on the meeting by the WG leaders Kelly Simcock, Werner Prinzjakowitsch and the RAN CoE staff. The ex post will follow the structure of the meeting and will address Youth, Families and Communities accordingly. The most important considerations and topics will be addressed for all three areas. We will also reflect on the projects that were presented at the meeting which will be nominated to become part of the RAN Collection. The ex post will conclude with some suggestions and ideas for deliverables.

## Youth

Within the RAN YF&C group the youth focus is particularly aimed towards engaging youth through the 'informal' system. RAN Education looks at the formal education part and RAN Health and Social Care includes mental health care for children and youngsters. RAN YF&C includes youth workers, youth leisure organisations, peer projects etc. This area of involving youth is relatively new within the RAN and has not received as much attention as family support or community engagement.

Participants agreed that the following factors play a crucial role for young people:

- identity development and sense of belonging
- orientation – being able to explore and experiment
- Having a perspective (on very practical things such as a house or a job). A lack of perspective can play a crucial role in a possible turn towards radicalisation

On the development path to adulthood, all young people

### EU Fair Skills

Silke Baer (DE) - Cultures Interactive

Cultures Interactive is an organisation for youth cultural work to prevent hate attitudes, group related enmity and right wing extremism. With the project 'EU Fair Skills' they seek to transfer some of their best practices to eastern Europe (HU, CZ and SK).

EU Fair skills consists of 3 elements:

1. Train-the-trainer workshops for local facilitators and youth cultural trainings for young people.
2. Local deradicalisation. Locally embedded deradicalisation training for practitioners
3. Regional Development Roundtables" with local (and national) stakeholders

Youth culture can be a starting point for discussion. In order to reach young people you must focus on their interests. It is possible to discuss topics like democratic values during youth cultural and media workshops. It is of importance to be respectful, appreciating but also have a clear stance.

will have to deal with these factors. Without general resilience and critical thinking skills, it can make youngsters especially vulnerable to radicalisation and as such an important target group for RAN.

### Possible topics related to Youth

- **Social media and internet**

*Social media plays a big role in the reality of (radicalising) youngsters. In order to understand (radicalising) youngsters it is crucial to understand the influence of social media and how it can also be used to make a positive impact. .*

- **Empowerment of marginalised (migrant) youngsters**

*Lack of perspective and belonging can play an important role in a possible turn towards radicalisation. The empowerment of migrant youngsters can thus be a powerful prevention measure.*

- **Youth culture as topic and tool**

*Youth culture can be a door opener for discussion about democratic values and radicalisation. See the textbox 'EU Fair Skills' (page 2) as an example of a good practice.*

- **The role of girls/and females**

*The percentage of girls that are joining Daesh is growing. They play a different role and prevention might demand specific measures.*

- **Including radicalisation in curriculum of youth workers and other related studies and occupations**

*Dealing with radicalisation should become a topic that youth workers and other related professionals are comfortable with.*

## Families

Family members are most often the first to detect worrying signs of radicalisation by their relative but often do not know how to deal with the situation. Families can be key actors in the prevention of radicalisation, can act as important agents of change and can provide enormous support structures for radicalised individuals who may be having doubts. It is recognised that family members can also be spoilers in de-radicalisation, reintegration and safeguarding processes, however their importance should not be overlooked.

Providing individual families with knowledge, support and tools for dealing with radicalized relatives can therefore be a powerful asset. Gaining access and building trust was seen as one of the biggest challenges in working with families. The threshold for families to reach out for help is generally high because of fear, insecurity and shame. Important challenges when designing family support structures are therefore to find ways to lower the threshold, build trust in (local) authorities and reach families in early stages rather than moments of crisis.

### The Dutch family support unit

The NCTV is a coordinating organisation within the Dutch central government and is responsible counter-terrorism, crises management and cyber security.

As part of the comprehensive action programme to combat jihadism the NCTV set up a family support model based on the German ('Hayat') model in which family members of radicalised or radicalising individuals are supported and if need be, are brought into contact with people in the same situation.

The support unit functions independent from the government to strengthen its credibility. The team consists of 6 case managers that received an extensive training. They are supported by a pool of experts such as care professionals, a lawyer, psychologists, Islam experts and Imams.

Services consist of:

- Coaching families in dealing with a radical family member
- Keeping in touch with family member who is in Syria/Iraq
- Contact with school, work, friends and others
- Organising of proper care and support
- Including local government in role, function and appearance
- Offering care and information in case of the death of family member
- Advise to parents and municipalities in lighter cases of radicalisation

## Possible topics related to Families

- **Gaining access to families**

Families that deal with radicalising/radicalised members often cope with feelings of loss, shame and fear. The families that need the most may therefore support be reluctant to seek it. Hence gaining access to these families is an important challenge.

- **Family dynamics and roles within the families; focus on fathers, siblings, mothers**

Each family member plays a different role. Although each family is different and demands a tailor made approach, a greater understanding of cultural influences on family roles and dynamics may help to improve prevention strategies.

- **Working with broken families**

Families can be a powerful asset in the prevention of radicalisation. However, in some cases family can be a spoiler for prevention or even on as a catalyst for radicalisation.

- **Social media and internet.**

Social media and internet are often a black box for many of the families. This can have a crippling effect on their ability to recognize signs of radicalisation of their family members.

- **The art of dialogue**

Discussing radicalisation and democratic values with- and within families is a sensitive topic. Sharing methodologies and best practices in the art of dialogue are much needed.

## Communities

Although governments and public authorities must do all they can, the prevention of extremism and radicalisation is most effectively addressed by communities. Extremism is able to thrive when communities themselves do not challenge those who seek to radicalise others. In some communities, particularly minority communities, there is a profound lack of trust and confidence in the government, police and public authorities. This can make it harder for them to achieve success. It is therefore important to invest in community engagement and community empowerment. Community engagement should be in place routinely and not just implemented after a problem arises.

The discussion during the kick-off meeting proved that community is complex concept. Participants had a hard time formulating a definition of a community. When can you speak of a community? What are the boundaries? It is important to keep these questions in mind when discussing communities.

### The CoCoRa project

Margit Helle Thomson (DK)- MHT Consult

The Community Counteraction Radicalisation (CoCoRa) project is a joint effort of five organisations in DK, FR, IT, DE and AT.

The objective of the programme is to contribute to a new community-based and coproductive prevention strategy against political-religious radicalisation and violent extremism among young people in the risk zone for radicalisation. The mission is threefold:

1. To develop a prevention programme focused on the strengthening of young people's empowerment and devotion to an active fellow citizenship
2. To involve local communities as equal partners in developing the prevention programme, utilizing inside knowledge, confidential positions and credibility
3. To train the young participants for an intercultural ambassadorship to engage in dialogue and coproduction with professionals in prevention activities

CoCoRa uses the following strategies to accomplish these goals:

- Direct involvement and equal collaboration with high-status persons within the community
- The physical anchoring in own localities
- Positioning as resource persons and supervisors in relation to professionals
- Intercultural understanding and methodical innovation in the general professional prevention efforts.

### Possible topics related to communities

- **Reciprocal radicalisation**

The refugee crises is being exploited by both right-wing extremists and Daesh. Is the growing polarisation between communities a potential breeding ground for radicalisation?

- **Religious communities**

A never ending and diverse discussion story is the role of religion, religious institutions and leaders in radicalisation. Exploring the role of religious groups and leaders in the role of countering violent extremism.

- **Establishing and maintaining a relation with communities**

A condition for a community-based and coproductive prevention strategy it is a good relation with a community. RAN YF&C should find best practices and methodologies on maintaining and establishing community relations.

- **Relationship between integration and radicalisation**

Participants agreed that a sense of belonging and inclusion play a big role in the prevention of radicalisation. Is there also a relationship between integration and radicalisation?

### Deliverables

It became clear during the RAN YF&C kick-off that there is no shortage of relevant issues and topics. This abundance shows both the need for an YF&C working group as well as the challenge to have actual added value. The key will be to set an agenda that covers the most urgent topics without losing focus. Adding value brings us to the topic of deliverables. Participants agreed that finding and disseminating best practices should remain a priority, but that there needs to be an emphasis on methodology. YF&C should not only find out which practices are successful, but also why and how they work. Besides practices and methodologies there was a desire to develop overarching principles.

This input resulted in the plan for RAN YF&C to work on three levels over the coming four years :

- 1st level: The development of overarching principles that may inform international/national/local policy on the areas of youth, families and communities (with a wider framework connecting these areas as well). RAN YF&C can bring this together in a dynamic core document.
- 2nd level: Concrete, in-depth understanding of methodologies used and the reasoning behind them. This may be input for the Collection but also as annexes to the first level document
- 3rd level: Offering Concrete practices; offer them a stage, input for the Collection, as annexes of the dynamic core document.

For 2016 a preliminary agenda was set based on input from the RAN plenary. The kick-off meeting has helped to fine-tune this agenda. The following activities are foreseen for 2016:

- Around involvement of communities, a meeting is foreseen to address the role of religion and religious leaders in prevention of radicalisation. The kick-off meeting has added to our understanding that community representation (also in the form of religious leaders or organisations) should not be confused with the voice of an entire community.
- Around involvement of youth, a joint meeting is foreseen with RAN EDU and RAN C&N. Giving young people a voice in approaches to prevent radicalisation is of crucial importance. The kick-off meeting has helped to underline the importance of peer groups and youth workers to provide positive alternatives to youngsters dealing with difficult issues and choices.
- Around family support, a meeting is foreseen to look deeper into family support practices and structures. The kick-off meeting has showed the importance of comparing methodologies such as system theory and non-aggressive communication in the context of family support.

It is of importance to underline that the agenda is not set in stone. RAN YF&C will always try to be 'trendsetting' and early spot and address new developments in this area.