



Developing resilience as an approach to dealing with the influences of problematic informal and non-formal education in schools

A practical guide for first-line practitioners

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Radicalisation Awareness Network

RAN 
Practitioners

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Introduction

The role of education is not only to teach pupils subjects such as Maths, Biology and English, but to foster critical thinking and support children and adolescents to become responsible members of democratic societies. Education doesn't only take place in schools and other state regulated surroundings, which are bound to democratic values and human rights, but also in non-formal and informal surroundings which may or may not convey these values. Sometimes these surroundings can lead to problematic effects on individuals and contribute to the breeding ground for radicalisation and violent extremism. With the goal of preventing and countering such outcomes, this handbook provides guidelines on how to identify and deal with problematic non-formal¹ and informal education.

Nowadays, non-formal and informal education are having an increasingly strong impact on children and young adults. This is beneficial only if the education is bound to democratic values and supports the upbringing of responsible citizens within a democratic society, thereby contributing to the prevention and countering of violent extremism (P/CVE). However, it may undermine society if this non-formal or informal education contradicts democratic values. Furthermore, problematic non-formal or informal education can exclude pupils from democratic formal learning processes in schools. Therefore, it is crucial to provide first-line practitioners with information about problematic non-formal and informal education and to promote useful concepts to support fruitful interaction between formal, non-formal and informal education.

This handbook is written for first-line practitioners working with pupils between the ages of 10 and 18. It is primarily aimed at teachers who, in their function, are also the link between informal and formal education. Since teachers can act as the confidants of adolescents, they are (ideally) not only imparters of knowledge but also democratic role models and mediators of values. It is the teachers who decide what tone to adopt in classroom discussions and what topics to address. This handbook provides information on how adolescents develop socially, how problematic education can influence them, and how teachers can get support from appropriate cooperation partners. These partners can be experienced and trained first-line practitioners, field experts, civil society organisations and local authorities, among others, which will provide tools and guidelines for teachers to better prevent and counter any challenge that informal education might pose in the classroom.

There are many and varied sources of problematic non-formal and informal education. This makes it difficult for teachers to recognise which approaches are helpful in developing resilience and where to begin. Therefore, this handbook starts with the basic developmental processes of young people. Teachers need to keep these in mind in order to specifically address their pupils with the appropriate narrative. Furthermore, the handbook presents requirements that must be met by cooperation partners, in order to positively influence the social development of adolescents. Cooperation partners can be a helpful bridge between non-formal and formal education. That is why three approaches, which have been successfully used in schools throughout Europe, are included in the handbook to exemplify successful cooperations. The methods included can also be used by teachers to address difficult topics within the classroom.

¹ The definitions of formal and non-formal education in this handbook refer to those stated in the RAN issue paper *Annex to RAN's Manifesto for Education: The role of non-formal education in P/CVE*.

Understanding the basics of formal, non-formal and informal education

Before deep-diving into this paper and in order to properly understand its content and guidelines, it is necessary to differentiate between formal, non-formal and informal education.

Education vs Learning

In this paper, the terms 'education' and 'learning' are used interchangeably. However, it is important to note the differences.

Education is the formal process of transmitting knowledge, skills and values. On the other hand, learning is the intellectual process of adopting the knowledge, skills and values through experience, personal development, studying or instructions.

Education goes beyond what happens within the four walls of a classroom. It entails the process of acquiring knowledge whether this happens in a school, at a sports club or on social media. Based on these premises, there are three main types of education: formal, non-formal and informal education.

Formal education usually takes place in the premises of an educational institution such as a school. It is defined as an organised and structured educational model as it follows a formal curriculum and is taught by teachers or professors. The learning process is always intentional as the learner's main goal is to gain knowledge, skills and competences by attending the lessons and by studying.

Non-formal education, on the other hand, takes place outside formal educational environments. These may include youth and sports clubs, community organisations or at political and religious gatherings. However, far from being the antagonistic model of formal education, non-formal education is indeed organised and is intended to provide knowledge and skills through an open-structured programme delivered by professional or volunteer workers. Non-formal learning "arises from the learner's conscious decision to master a particular activity, skill or area of knowledge and is thus the result of intentional effort"².

Informal education takes place everywhere and at any time. It is a result it can coexist with formal and non-formal education. Informal learning "is never organised, has no set objective in terms of learning outcomes and is never intentional, is always incidental, from the learner's standpoint. Often it is referred to as learning by experience or just as experience"³. It is influenced by society and the community. Informal education is as valid as formal and non-formal education since it fosters the learning of new personal knowledge and skills. However, it lacks a set curriculum and there is often little control of contents. As such, it may not always (as is the case with non-formal education) represent democratic values. Social media and other online environments are very good examples of informal education environments that do not always foster democratic principles.

² Council of Europe, "Formal, non-formal and informal learning", <https://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/formal-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

³ OCDE, Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning, <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/recognitionofnon-formalandinformallearning-home.htm>

The role of education in preventing and countering violent extremism

‘Adolescence is a time for the differentiation from adult authorities, for the acquisition of autonomous decision-making capabilities, the development of a specific conduct of life, and for the testing of boundaries. Therefore, it is regularly a time for misjudgements – including some that may harm others. In other words, the learning process to make decisions includes the risk to make bad decisions.’⁴

The development of adolescents into responsible and critical thinking adults is strongly influenced by our multicultural, digital and democratic society.

- A multicultural society refers to the “co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles”. A multicultural society can present challenges such as prejudices and negative cultural stereotypes. Therefore, education needs to focus on intercultural learning to prevent such situations.
- A digital society, which influences children at early ages, requires pupils to be educated on media literacy. Children, adolescents and young adults need to be educated in identifying fake news and to filter bubbles and echo chambers when consuming polarised information.
- A democratic society is bound to values such as freedom of religion, speech and opinion and gender equality. These may or may not be values fostered in all families and cultures. Therefore, it is crucial for first-line practitioners to be aware of their function as role models and their responsibility to offer learning settings that can enable the opportunity to discuss and experience these values.

The challenges that arise in formal, non-formal and informal education can be addressed, to a greater or lesser extent, by other educational settings to positively influence the shaping of an individual’s identity. As such, when negative cultural stereotypes occur in an informal educational setting, they can also be addressed in a formal and non-formal educational setting. The goal is to support children in becoming independent, self-determined and critical thinking young adults who are up to the challenges of life including being resilient to extreme ideologies and radicalisation.

In both formal and informal educational settings children are encouraged to develop moral and democratic values such as equality, respect, and responsibility. Therefore, in the teaching of these values, moral development should be taken into consideration. In this paper, moral development is explained based on Lawrence Kohlberg’s stages of moral development model.

⁴ Heinke and Person’s, ‘Youth Specific Factors in Radicalisation’, 2016

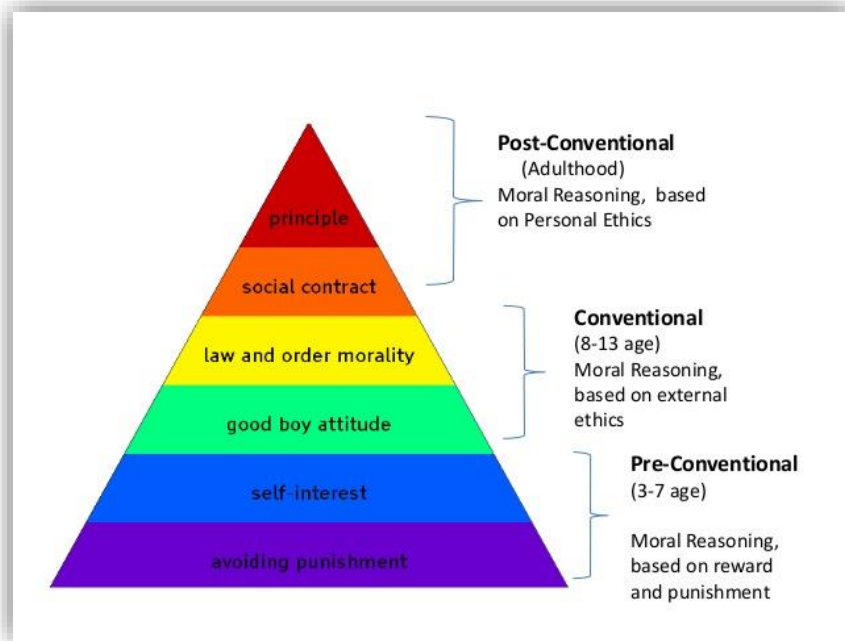


Figure 1: Lawrence Kohlberg's 6 stages of moral development, © Jennifer Wilber

The stage model offers a clear explanation of how children's understanding of morality forms and changes. It is an important basis for working professionally with children and young people. However, there is justified criticism of this model's western-only conception of morality. This is a criticism that should not be ignored during lessons, especially when working with children and young people from different cultural backgrounds.

In an increasingly multicultural society, moral thinking patterns may progress differently according to different external influences. For instance, the moral development of children may be hindered or prevented if obedience to authority and elders, patriarchal values, and religious commandments have a higher value than democratic principles of freedom and individual rights.⁵

In this context, first-line practitioners need to be aware of the fact that, depending on the family background and cultural upbringing of their pupils, moral development may not follow Kohlberg's model exactly.⁶ Being bound to cultural or religious beliefs prevent students from progressing further up the moral development funnel which ultimately calls first-line practitioners to be aware of the children's upbringing when addressing certain topics and holding difficult conversations in the classroom. As such, teachers not only need support when understanding their students' backgrounds, but also need training in becoming moral role models and creating holistic learning settings so that democratic moral values can be experienced by pupils.

⁵ Siegler, Eisenberg, DeLoache, Saffran, (2016). *Entwicklungspsychologie im Kindes- und Jugendalter*, Springer, 535

⁶ Ibid.

The relationship between formal and informal education

*'Mis- or disinformation through propaganda is one of the greatest tools in the hands of those who benefit from polarisation in modern societies. Polarisation creates a fertile breeding ground for radicalisation and extremism both within and outside schools.'*⁷

Informal education happens unintentionally in various contexts such as work, family and leisure. For example, informal education takes place when we learn to do something by observing other people like playing football, learning a new recipe or greeting people when entering an establishment. Informal education becomes problematic when it influences a pupil's opinion in non-democratic dimensions. This is the case when it fosters content that contradicts common law, human rights or involves any kind of misanthropic content. There is an increasing number of pupils who refuse certain topics in school, e.g., they question certain facts in history lessons, are not allowed to take part in sex education, and do not want to work with specific pupils due to personal biases. These attitudes can be attributed to the student's upbringing and family values, as well as politics, culture and/or religion. Not only do these factors shape a student's belief system, they can also impose certain attitudes. However, these attitudes may also be a result of influences through traditional media, social media and social environments such as a group of friends and sports clubs. These environments can also be one-dimensional, aligned with only one ideology, world view or power structure⁸ due to echo chambers and filters.

Understanding echo chambers and filter bubbles

Echo chambers and filter bubbles are both environments where a person is exposed only information and opinions that reflect and reinforce their own. This can result in misinformation and can distort a person's perspective making it difficult to consider opposing viewpoints and to discuss complicated topics.

Although the result of these phenomena is the same (misinformation and disinformation), the causes are very different.

An echo chamber occurs **when people actively choose information** that does not disrupt their mindset. This process is fuelled partly by confirmation bias, which is the tendency to favour information that reinforces their existing beliefs.

A filter bubble, a term coined by Eli Pariser, is created by **online filters (personalisation algorithms)** that automatically filter out news that we dislike or disagree with and show us only content similar to what we have expressed interest in. This might lead to narrowing down what we know and/or creating personal biases as it prevents us from finding new ideas and perspectives online⁹.

While echo chambers could be a result of **human filtering**, filter bubbles are the result of **algorithmic filtering**.¹⁰ Online echo chambers are the result of filter bubbles. Therefore, when avoiding echo chambers, we alter the algorithms to burst the filter bubble.¹¹

⁷ RAN Ex Post Paper, 'Dealing with fake news, conspiracy theories and propaganda in the classroom, 3

⁸ Simplificable, "7 Examples of an Echo Chamber," <https://simplificable.com/en/echo-chamber>, (accessed 2 January 2021).

⁹ "What is an echo chamber?" CGF Global, <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/digital-media-literacy/what-is-an-echo-chamber/1/>, (last accessed 27 July 2021).

¹⁰ TED, Beware online "filter bubbles" https://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles?language=en, (accessed 27 July 2021).

¹¹ Better by Today, NBC News (2019), Are you in a social media bubble? Here is show to tell,

<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/problem-social-media-reinforcement-bubbles-what-you-can-do-about-ncna1063896>.

Digital Media Literacy

Echo Chambers

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se20RoB331w&t=22s&ab_channel=GCFLearnFree.org

Filter Bubbles

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT-k1kDIRnw&feature=emb_title&ab_channel=GCFLearnFree.org

All the above influences can be categorised as an example of informal educational environments. When they interfere with the student's democratic formal learning process, they are considered problematic. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of these influences to encourage pupils characterised by one dimensional thinking to adopt a more multidimensional worldview.

How to identify echo chambers and filter bubbles

Online and real-life echo chambers are difficult to identify especially for those already in one. One way to determine if a social group or website is an echo chamber is to ask the following:

- Do they tend to only give one perspective on an issue?
- Is this viewpoint mainly supported by rumour or incomplete evidence?
- Are facts ignored whenever they go against that viewpoint?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may have found an echo chamber. To avoid echo chambers, here are a few tips:

- Make a habit of checking multiple news sources to ensure you are getting complete, objective information.
- Interact with people with different perspectives, and make it a point to discuss new ideas with facts, patience and respect.
- Remember that just because you want something to be true, doesn't make it true.¹²

Nonetheless, even problematic information can or should be used as a learning field in formal education. As recommended, difficult topics coming from the media should not be ignored by teachers just because "they are considered taboo or because the teacher feels ill equipped or insufficiently informed to tackle them".¹³ Instead, teachers need to be educated in identifying problematic topics of conversation, in facilitating and moderating discussion on these topics to ultimately safeguard, and in creating safe and democratic environments in schools.¹⁴

To benefit from informal education and pursue the democratic education of adolescents to become responsible members of society, one must understand the relationship between informal and formal education. What influences do social media and peer groups have on young people? How can these influences be addressed in schools and how can critical thinking be encouraged? Moreover, how can harmful informal education be identified?

It does not matter whether the problematic influences relate to right-wing extremism (RWE), left-wing extremism (LWE), Islamist extremism (IE), anti-establishment sentiment or

¹² CGF Global, What is an echo chamber?, <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/digital-media-literacy/what-is-an-echo-chamber/1/>, (accessed 27 July 2021).

¹³ RAN Ex Post Paper, 'Dealing with fake news, conspiracy theories and propaganda in the classroom', p. 5

¹⁴ RAN Edu's Guide on training programmes "Effective and confident teachers and other school stuff"

conspiracy narratives, among others. Radical theories, in general, work with a black and white scheme. They foster polarisation by promoting a '*them versus us*' view of the world.¹⁵ When discussed in schools, polarising statements are often justified by students based on the freedom of opinion, speech, and religion, which are fundamental rights in constitutional states. Nevertheless, one's freedom ends where another one's begins. The following example illustrates this problem. The 10-step guide on the following page may assist in holding such difficult conversations.

Freedom of speech in social media

While discussing current topics, such as the rising of RWE, LWE, religious extremism and single-issue extremism (i.e., anti-feminist movements, radical animal rights groups and anti-abortion movements) and the problems they generate in our democratic societies, students may have a polarised and biased view based on what they see and hear from their families, group of friends and on social media.

Social media is the epitome of freedom of speech and expression, and as an opinion-forming medium can influence audiences in their way of thinking. This includes the distribution of extremist content and conspiracy narratives on social media platforms that can contribute to fostering non-democratic values.

These platforms significantly contribute to the spread of radical ideas which can lead to radical actions. To avoid the spread of radical situations, students should be reminded of the following points:

- Statements shared through social media are bound to be biased since, in most cases, they represent the opinion of one person or a specific group of people.
- As a result of filter bubbles and echo chambers, what students see in social media often does not represent the whole spectrum of a given situation and shouldn't be considered by them as the truth.
- Freedom of expression doesn't mean students are allowed to say whatever they want. In fact, it should be limited when it infringes the rights of other people.

Most of the content shown in social media that youngsters consume is the result of echo chambers and filter bubbles and as a result,¹⁶ it is necessary for teachers to be aware of their effects so they can counter and tackle their consequences through class exercises, workshops or media literacy courses.

However, echo chambers and filter bubbles not only influence pupils' critical thinking but also those who engage with them. "Teachers must be aware of their own biases. Children are not the only ones who may be motivated by their personal biases. Teachers themselves must comprehend how media and information reach them. They should be made aware of their own information bubble."¹⁷ Not only should teachers foster the critical thinking of children and adolescents, they also need to question information they themselves regularly receive in order to properly address the problematic influences of informal education.

If pupils aren't confronted with difficult topics in school, they could easily think that statements they have read online or heard elsewhere represent the only truth. It is important to provide pupils with information and context on what is happening in the world and to facilitate discussions to address the questions they have, thus offering additional perspectives and multiple points of view.

¹⁵ Brandsma, 2017. Polarisation – Understanding the dynamics of us versus them, p. 35

¹⁶ Brent Kitchens, Steven L. Johnson, and Peter Gray, "Understanding echo chambers and filter bubbles: The impact of social media on diversification and partisan shifts in news consumption, 2020" https://www.darden.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/05_16371_RA_KitchensJohnsonGray%20Final_0.pdf

¹⁷ RAN Ex Post Paper, 'Dealing with fake news, conspiracy theories and propaganda in the classroom, p. 5

A 10-step guide: How to hold difficult conversation in the classroom¹⁸

1. **Consider possible sources of student views:** Be aware of the origin of the students' opinions whether that is family members, group of friends, religious beliefs or social media.
2. **Lead with your goals:** Be clear with the students why are you having this conversation and what learning outcomes you expect.
3. **Provide pre-discussion assignments:** Ask students to complete an assignment in advance to help them understand and articulate their own views.
4. **Establish discussion guidelines:**
 - a. Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
 - b. Give everyone the opportunity to speak.
 - c. Avoid inflammatory language.
 - d. Ask questions when you don't understand.
5. **Provide a framework and starting point:** Prepare some questions to get the conversation going. Avoid questions that make it seem there is only one right answer.
6. **Actively manage the discussion:** Prompt students as needed for additional explanation or evidence.
7. **Address the difficulty:** If there is some hesitancy in the conversation, start by asking why it is difficult to discuss the topic.
8. **Provide structured opportunities for reflection and input**
9. **Be aware of the implications of sharing your own views:** Weigh the impact of sharing your opinions on an issue, knowing it could silence students who hold different views.
10. **Confront inappropriate language:** Responding directly to micro-aggressions and other inappropriate language may feel uncomfortable, but our discomfort as instructors has less impact than discomfort experienced by marginalised students.

Of course, not all pupils will be able to follow students or teachers who present arguments that are well-balanced. However, it's important to give the latter enough room and space for their arguments because they are the important ones. Although they're often not as "exciting" and "emotional" as the radical (polemic) arguments. As such, holding back difficult topics because they seem to be too complex for students to understand won't help. The topic should be presented age appropriately without lacking its complexity. This will strengthen the centre of society. The reason it is important to strengthen the centre if you want pupils to become resilient towards problematic education will be explained in the next chapter.

How to tackle difficult topics in the classroom to build resilience to extremism

One observation made by teachers is that a single student who holds radical views can affect the atmosphere of an entire class. The problem is that the extreme presentation of a topic leads to only one side being illuminated, and teachers are often required to present the opposite pole to "counter" this view. The following model illustrates why simply countering a view with the opposite stance is often counterproductive and promotes polarisation. Pupils who previously had no opinion at all or a differentiated opinion on the topic could feel pressured to take a side. The model explains how important it is to strengthen those pupils who stand in the middle and to not allow too much space for extreme views.

¹⁸ Indiana University Bloomington, Managing difficult classroom discussions, <https://citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/diversity-inclusion/managing-difficult-classroom-discussions/index.html>

The main catalysts of polarisation are explained by Bart Brandsma¹⁹. He points out that four roles can be observed when polarisation turns conflicts into “them versus us” thinking.

- **Pushers:** they foster polarisation by criticising the opposite pole and urging the silent to take sides. (They claim 100% truth and are more in the “send mode” than the “listen mode”).
 - **Joiners:** they are more moderate than the pushers but contribute to one side by enhancing its visibility; this is polarisation unfolding.
 - **Silent or Middle Ground:** they don’t take part in the escalation but they don’t help either because they are indifferent.
- Bridge-builder:** they want to end the polarisation but only fuel it by supporting the visibility of the two poles²⁰.

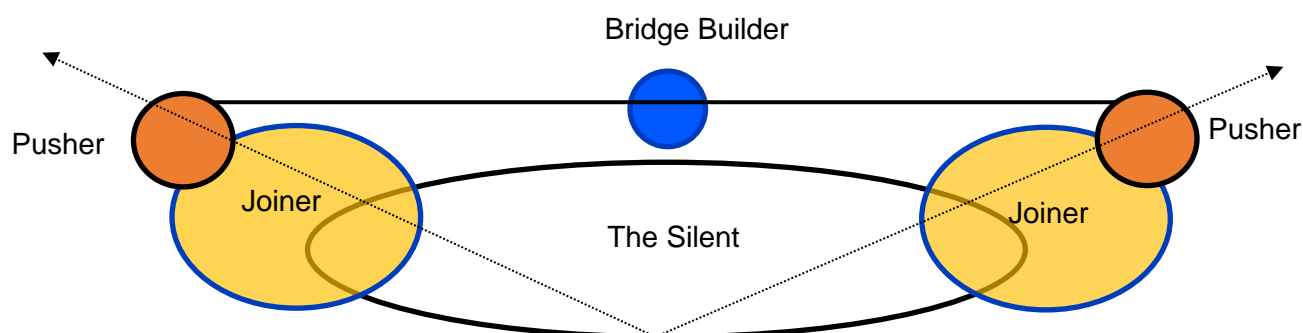


Figure 3: Pushers, joiners, the silent, and the bridge builder © Bart Brandsma

A bridge builder supplies fuel for the polarisation by providing a stage for pushers and joiners. “The viewer, the reader, the listener – the middle – may form an opinion based on what they hear.”²¹ In the media, headlines designed as click bait – to ensure an article gets lots of clicks – gives pupils a one-dimensional view on topics. A polarising headline is often followed by a text which is less extreme. However, youngsters and adults often just read the headline and what remains with them is a limited view and understanding of the topic.

Consequently, teachers need to be trained in media literacy to be able to foster pupils’ sensitivity to “us versus them” thinking which is presented in the media. They also need to steer discussions away from “us versus them” thinking by not going back and forth between the two poles. In the long run, this can build resilience to radicalisation if it is taught age appropriately and regularly in schools.

The RAN Ex Post Paper “Dealing with fake news, conspiracy theories and propaganda in the classroom” recommends two angles of media literacy skills. Firstly, it highlights the importance of pupils understanding the need for media literacy and critical thinking. Secondly, it addresses the need to empower teachers.”²²

The mentioned paper provides a methodical overview on how to work with children and adolescents. It is important to consider the age of the children and young adults. For a good overview of what support options to consider at each age level, see the RAN Ex Post paper ‘Dealing with fake news, conspiracy theories and propaganda in the classroom’.

¹⁹ Brandsma (2017). Polarisation – Understanding the dynamics of us versus them

²⁰ There is a fifth role, the scapegoat, who may be found among the silent or the bridge builders when polarisation is at its peak.

²¹ Brandsma (2017). Polarisation – Understanding the dynamics of us versus them, p. 37

²² RAN Ex Post Paper, ‘Dealing with fake news, conspiracy theories and propaganda in the classroom, 3

Lessons and methodology for different age groups²³

1.1 Primary education (age 4–8)

At this age, the focus should be more on general resilience and safeguarding, making sure children are not confronted with harmful content. The parents are crucial at this stage because they are the providers and gatekeepers to tablets, phones and new media. Parents can play a role in providing explanations, context, and reassurance.

1.2 Primary education (age 8–12)

For this age group, it is crucial to keep up with the equipment they are using. Most children in this age group use tablets and smartphones, and many have the **credentials** for their parents' accounts. At this stage, parents and older siblings should oversee and control what they do and watch. Peer-to-peer work such as workshops on values, tolerance and democracy have brought to light that children aged 9 to 10 struggles with the abstract concept of democracy and the role of relevant institutions within society. However, bringing these concepts and topics into the class and conversation, with the appropriate approach and language, have proved to be working and they are understood by students and put to practice in and out of the classroom.

Similar results had previously been observed in the Peaceful School Project (see RAN Collection).²⁴

At this stage, is important to draw the pupils' attention to various types of extreme behaviour observable online – from bullying to hate speech. It may be preferable to avoid focusing specifically on extremist groups and content. However, there is a need to talk about this specific issue, and teachers are advised not to shy away from it, to link the topic to PVE, and thereby sow the seeds of critical thinking as children in this age group are aware of terrorist attacks and intolerant ideologies.

It is recommended to work with visual and practical materials instead of abstract textual materials. Activities should foster “learning by doing”. One example is starting an online campaign against hate speech, which would also offer opportunities to get the parents involved, and thereby get the message across parents.

1.3 Lower secondary education (age 12–15)

In this age group, teachers are encouraged to bring to the student's attention that there are different and even conflicting opinions on a same topic, and that agreeing on an absolute truth is a complicated subject. Pupils should be made aware that things are not black or white but there are infinite shades of grey.

Media literacy activities for this age group can focus more specifically on extremist ideologies, group pressure and group thinking. Teachers can work with the pupils' own experiences and make this very generic and transferable. They can highlight a range of potentially contradictory opinions to students and **hold** a discussion around the following four questions:

1. Who do you believe?
2. Why?
3. Are all the underlying facts correct?

²³ *ibid.*, 9-10

²⁴ RAN Collection of Inspiring Practices: Archives

4. How can we check?

Suggestions for ways to address these questions include turning fact-checking into an interactive game by presenting different ways to check facts.

1.4 Higher secondary education (age 15–18)

Students in this age group should be able to:

1. Identify propaganda and the role of emotion, provocation/othering and manipulation in engaging with said propaganda.
2. Critically analyse and create multi-perspective content (classical media vs user-generated content/who is providing information and why/manipulation of facts).

The overview above offers media literacy approaches which are age appropriate. Most EU countries do not offer media literacy and critical thinking in their formal education curriculum and most of the time it is up to teachers to invite external experts to hold workshops or initiate media-literacy conversation in class. However, countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Austria, and United Kingdom are currently working on a curriculum which entails these topics. A multi-agency approach²⁵ implemented in this curriculum would help to foster a sustainable education in media literacy and ultimately “help students in becoming more resilient to radical ideas”, as pointed out by Italian first-line practitioner Ilaria Zomer.

How to identify problematic non-formal education and find helpful cooperation partners

It is not straightforward nor is it easy to set up general guidelines for effective approaches to non-formal education. It is also difficult to ensure non-formal education remains bound to human rights and democratic values. As it depends on the target group, the teacher, taking into consideration his or her relationship with students, will define which approach works best. Besides the fact that the approach must be age appropriate, it's also essential to reach pupils according to where they are currently at, for instance, regarding their experience. For example, there is a huge difference between pupils who are open to anti-Semitism due to a glorification of the Second World War and pupils who are open to anti-Semitism because of an emotional attachment to Palestine. Therefore, teachers need the right cooperation partners to meet the needs of their specific pupils.

Non-formal education doesn't only take place when external experts work with pupils in schools. Actually, when workshops take place in schools, they border between non-formal and formal education. That means when the participation of pupils is mandatory, there is the opportunity to reach children and adolescents who would not commonly participate in non-formal settings such as sport clubs, thematic or religious youth organisations, or even “informal groups”. A huge part of non-formal education takes place after school and on weekends where children and youngsters participate voluntarily. Relating to the conclusion paper of the RAN event “Dealing with the co-existence of formal and non-formal education,” non-formal schooling can serve as a protective factor and contribute to community and identity building. It can add value to personal life and spark cultural and religious development. For example, it can offer additional tutoring that could not be afforded otherwise and spark a sense of self-esteem, sense of identity and sense of belonging. Non-formal education can therefore have beneficial outcomes, also in terms of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

²⁵ Children and young adults interact with different professionals and services throughout their lives. Examples of these professionals and services can be teachers, health experts and security forces. A multi-agency approach happens when these professionals and services work together to tackle one problem.

Facilitation and accommodation by local governments can be considered if the providing party is trusted/trustworthy.²⁶

Non-formal schooling becomes problematic if a discrepancy exists or arises with formal schools, in relation to content, didactics or values. For example, when anti-democratic values are taught, this can lead to the underdevelopment of critical thinking skills and absence of a democratic attitude.²⁷ Experience has also shown that non-formal education can become problematic if it goes head-to-head with the content, didactics and values instilled through formal education in a democratic, European society. This can happen when non-formal education teaches anti-democratic values, suppresses critical thinking, promotes discrimination (racism, xenophobia or antisemitism), or diminishes and harms the rights of children. It can even lead to pupils becoming confused if they are stuck between what they learn outside of school and what they are taught in the classroom, e.g., “evolution versus creation”.

Of course, a lot of non-formal education which is offered is valuable and helpful. Alan Fraser, a RAN expert from England, argues there is a lot of concern about some of the non-formal education, in particular certain supplementary schools in England. There have been reports on madrassas which have been identified as teaching certain extremist views. These were not necessarily violent extremist views but homophobic prejudice and issues of gender.

Overall, the amount of non-formal education is quite significant. The challenge is to find a way to monitor a very small part of non-formal education because a large part is a very successful and providing a thriving environment that should be encouraged. One of the challenges is keeping a perspective on that but also monitoring the problematic parts. Alan Fraser says that the UK came up with a voluntary accreditation process.

This accreditation not only focuses on hygienic standards and equipment but also on values which are conveyed. The UK thus offers orientation to parents about where to send their children and tries to sort out undesirable non-formal education settings.

The UK's Department for Education also has a system of subletting school premises to organisations of non-formal education. That helps to keep an eye on what is going on. If there is someone, for example, who wants to run an Islamic supplementary school on state school premises, or actually any religious supplementary school, they will be asked to hand in their curriculum. This way, textbooks and texts that they are using can be checked. The second step is to contact the local authority and check to see if the people running the supplementary school are known in any way to them - either good or bad. If rooms are sublet, school director and teachers monitor what is going on just for a while until the relationship builds up.

This shows that concepts to monitor non-formal education exist. It is obvious however that governments need to further engage in this field to develop general guidelines on how to monitor non-formal education.

At this point teachers can only decide which non-formal cooperation partners they will work with. The next chapter focusses on how to identify beneficial partners and presents approaches which have been successful.

²⁶ RAN Conclusion Paper: Dealing with the Co-existence of Formal and Non-formal Education, 2

²⁷ *ibid.*

Three helpful approaches of non-formal education in schools

There are different approaches on how to foster democratic values and critical thinking in pupils. There are non-formal approaches which focus on single aspects of pupils' appearances. They are popular in schools at the moment, but they bear risks because they exclude the fact that your appearance does not define your position in society. An example of this is the concept of "Critical Whiteness" which focuses on teaching "white" pupils to recognise their colonialist guilt.

This concept implies that every white child is superior to children with darker skin colour. The aim is to make white children aware of their privileges and teach them to be careful not to hurt coloured people's feelings. Instead of bringing coloured and non-coloured children together to get to know each other and learn to recognise that no matter what skin colour they have, they have the same needs, i.e., to live in peace, have friends, food and a home, "critical whiteness" focuses on dividing people according to their skin colour. It implies that non-coloured people are always superior, and they should be considerate towards people of colour.

This approach does not consider that there are also many white children who lack certain privileges such as parents who provide a stable financial background or are able to support the school career of their children. It also insinuates that every person of colour in our society is underprivileged and wants to be treated in a certain way, e.g. not to hear certain words or questions.

To teach pupils to cancel certain words and avoid certain topics does not lead to getting to know each other but to tiptoeing around one another. It seems to be more helpful to empower each pupil to find his or her own language to be able to address individual needs without presuming that other people ask or say things predominantly to discriminate others. The Anti-Bias Approach in the next chapter provides a successful alternative to these concepts.

One problematic approach focusses on empowering just one part of ones' identity (such as the Muslim identity). This approach is problematic because empowering a small part of an identity adds fuel to the "us versus them" thinking. Of course, non-formal education is meant to have a positive influence on a person's identity, but identities are multi-layered and individual. Concepts need to foster the many facets of an identity instead of focussing on one single aspect of ones' identity. Examples include methods like "identity chain" (see page 26). Instead of focussing on dissimilarities, adolescents should have the opportunity to get to know each other by finding similarities with one another, such as hobbies or music preferences.

The following three approaches, offered by various non-formal organisations in EU countries, can support P/CVE by empowering young people to have a greater degree of autonomy, self-determination and control over their lives, and support them in dealing with challenges they face. This, in return, leads to strengthening young people's resilience to violent ideologies by developing their critical thinking.

The Extreme Dialogue Approach

Young people already discuss extreme topics online and offline, but normally they do it within their own filter bubble. Since it is impossible to completely shield young people from exposure to extremist content, it is necessary to make them sensible towards those topics and enable them to form their own opinion and to speak their mind.

"Extreme Dialogue therefore aims to build resilience and help young people develop critical thinking skills so that when they do encounter extremist propaganda, they understand the origins and intent of such content, and are better positioned to make positive rather than destructive life-choices."²⁸

²⁸ Extreme Dialogue, *Extreme Dialogue Facilitator Guide*, 7

Approach	Extreme Dialogue
<p>Description</p>	<p>Extreme Dialogue is a unique series of short films and open-access education resources that aims to reduce the appeal of extremism among young people and offer a positive alternative to the increasing amounts of extremist material and propaganda available on the internet and social media platforms. Extreme Dialogue encourages safe, constructive discussions around extremism and radicalisation in educational or community settings in the UK, Canada, Germany and Hungary.</p> <p>A series of short documentary films tell the personal stories of Canadians and Europeans profoundly affected by extremism from across the ideological spectrum: a former member of the extreme far-right in Canada, a mother from Calgary whose son was killed fighting for ISIS in Syria, a youth worker and former refugee from Somalia, a former member of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) whose father was killed by the IRA, a former member of the now-banned UK Islamist group al-Muhajiroun, a Syrian refugee now living in Berlin, and a member of a Roma community in Hungary targeted by far-right demonstrations.</p> <p>The films are accompanied by a set of educational resources that can be used with young people in classrooms or community settings and are intended to build resilience to extremism by creating a safe space for debating controversial issues and enhanced critical thinking. They also aim to give teachers and those working with young people the confidence to manage active discussions about contentious and sensitive subjects. These resources include Prezi presentations and practitioners' resource packs and are available via the "Educational Resources" pages on our website. All films and resources are freely available in English on the project website. Resources are also available in French, German and Hungarian, and the films²⁹ are accessible in English.³⁰</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>If extreme dialogue is conveyed professionally, pupils train skills and gain knowledge they need to critically assess difficult topics for themselves. They don't discourage debate around controversial or sensitive issues. Extreme Dialogue is not intended to de-radicalise someone who already holds extreme views, but it is a helpful tool in preventing radicalisation.</p>

Extreme Dialogue works with a learning cycle which starts at having an experience. This experience can be initiated by a method or one of the short films.³¹ The next step is to review and reflect on it as a group. The third step is to draw a conclusion out of the reflexion. The last step is to plan an active experimentation, e.g., to engage socially in your community or to try to behave differently in certain situations. In the best case, the cycle starts all over again.³²

²⁹ Extreme Dialogue, <https://extremedialogue.org/stories/adam-deen> (accessed 2 August 2021).

³⁰ Extreme Dialogue, *Extreme Dialogue Facilitator Guide*, 5.

³¹ Extreme Dialogue Stories, <https://extremedialogue.org/stories> (accessed 2 August 2021).

³² Educational Technology, *Kolb's Experimental Learning Theory and Learning styles*, <https://educationaltechnology.net/kolbs-experiential-learning-theory-learning-styles/>

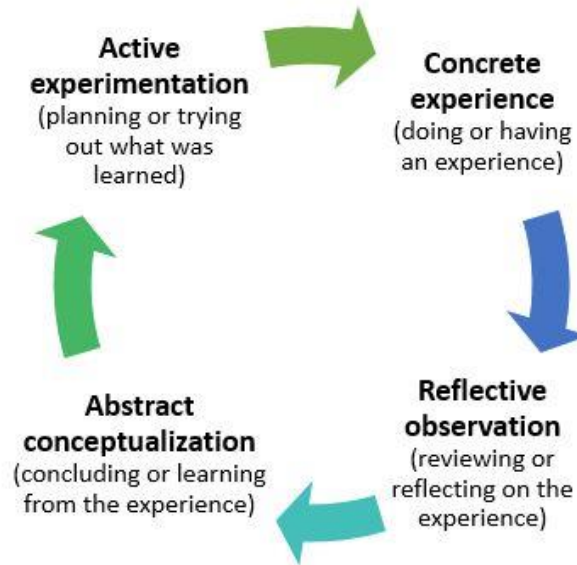


Figure 4: Kolb's four stages of learning © David A. Kolb

Extreme Dialogue Methods

Method	Unfold my arms ³³
Aim	<p>The activity gives the facilitator an opportunity to coach the group and suggest alternative strategies and patterns of behaviour which may be different from our initial responses and habits when we are faced with a frustration or challenge. The activity allows these patterns of behaviour to be experienced in a safe environment and offers an opportunity for their 'real life' equivalents to be discussed. It encourages fresh thinking and creative problem solving.</p> <p>It also provides an opportunity to understand the distinction between what a person does and who they are and also demonstrates that some problem-solving solutions are unexpected.</p> <p>Frequently frustration can lead a group (or individuals within it) to give up and stop trying. When handled and acknowledged sensitively this can be a useful learning experience.</p> <p>The activity gives facilitators an opportunity to manage a situation in a non-judgmental fashion.</p>
Time	10 – 15 minutes
Target Group	Year 9 and older
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The facilitator tells the group that they are about to do a problem-solving exercise. The group can work as a team sharing ideas or individuals can attempt to solve it. 2. The facilitator is a part of the activity as well as the facilitator of it.

³³ Extreme Dialogue, *Extreme Dialogue Facilitator Guide*, 35-37.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The facilitator stands in front of the group and tells them that they (the facilitator) are going to fold their arms and then they do so. 4. They then tell the group that they must try to get the facilitator to unfold their arms. “Your task, as a group or as individuals is to try to get me to unfold my arms”. 5. The rules are quite simple. The group (as a whole or as individuals) can try a range of tactics, but they are not allowed to touch the facilitator in any way. This means that they can’t literally touch the facilitator nor can they make physical contact with an object. 6. The facilitator will only open their arms when a participant puts their own hand out as one does when about to shake hands. 7. A range of behaviours and strategies may well follow. The facilitator must resist these and only open their arms when a participant holds their hand out to shake hands. 8. A variation can be that the facilitator will open their hand if they are offered (by hand) something by a participant (for example a piece of candy, a small toy, pen or gift). <p>Debrief questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Talk about your experience. — What happened during the exercise? — What tactics were used? And why? — What assumptions did people make about how to solve the problem? — When did change occur? — What do you think stopped people (or helped people) to try something different? — How does this exercise relate to what we saw in the film? (Here, this is a reference to the film that participants will have watched before taking part in this exercise) — When do we see people getting frustrated for not getting what they want? — Conclude by thanking the group for their participation.
Material	The activity requires a space large enough for the facilitator to stand in front of a group.
Evaluation	This activity can bring out a certain level of frustration. Coinciding with this can be a range of behaviour and manipulations that are associated with frustration and aggression.

Method	Anyone who ³⁴
Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — To warm up the group and demonstrate how interactive activities can be linked to real-life situations. — To encourage participation in an interactive mode (we learn by doing, and by reflecting on that doing). — To provide participants with alternating opportunities: to observe and to take part. — To allow the trainee facilitators an opportunity to engage in and observe an activity that produces different forms of behaviour. — To allow trainee facilitators the opportunity to collectively reflect on a shared experience. — The activity places future facilitators in the middle and in a position of high focus. — To allow facilitators an opportunity to discuss the social mechanisms based around avoiding isolation. For example, the amount of energy individuals uses up in trying to avoid being in the middle. <p>With regards to the variations (previously prepared statements, see Phase 3), the objective is to allow time and space for potential worries and concerns to be aired and shared.</p>
Time	15 – 25 minutes
Target Group	Year 9 and older
Instructions	<p>Phase 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand in the middle of a circle. Everyone else is sitting and there is no empty seat. There is not much distance between the chairs. 2. Explain that this is a moving around game and that everybody must be ready to respond at any time. 3. Tell the group to be careful, and to look after themselves and the others while playing. 4. Tell the group that they are about to say something that is true about themselves, but that they will start by saying “Anyone who...” 5. Whoever has the same quality or experience must move to a different seat. Players are not allowed to leave their seat and go back to it, nor are they allowed to occupy the seat on either side of them. 6. The facilitator starts the activity off by saying “Anyone who...”, followed by something true about themselves. 7. If someone ends up in the middle and is unable to think of anything to say, they can simply say ‘party’ and this means that everyone must move. 8. The movement gives the facilitator the chance to take a temporarily empty seat and sit in it. 9. This will leave one person in the middle, who will then say something true about themselves.

³⁴ Extreme Dialogue, *Extreme Dialogue Facilitator Guide*, 28-31.

	<p>10. The facilitator will then allow the process to continue so that enough activity has been witnessed.</p> <p>Phase 2</p> <p>Questions to review the game.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was it like being in the middle? 2. What strategies did you see people use to avoid being in the middle? 3. Was anyone surprised by what they did or saw? 4. Did anyone not move when they should have? 5. What behaviour did you notice in other people? <p>Phase 3</p> <p>For the purpose of training the facilitators, the activity should continue after the short debriefing. The following statements are then said by the facilitator:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anyone who has seen the films. 2. Anyone who found the films challenging. 3. Anyone who finds it easy to talk about minority groups with young people. 4. Anyone who thinks the refugee crisis in Europe has presented challenges. 5. Anyone who is concerned that the topic of extremism is shutting down dialogue. 6. Anyone who occasionally keeps their views to themselves about race, faith or immigration. 7. Anyone who thinks it will be easy to deliver these processes with young people. 8. Anyone who would like to know more following each round (statement). 9. The facilitator can ask why people moved, or why they stood still. 10. This provides an opportunity for discussion and for those within the group (trainees and facilitators) to share examples and reduce anxiety, when appropriate.
Material	A large room and chairs
Evaluation	<p>Some participants may find themselves in the middle and not have anything to say. They may need to be reminded of the ‘party’ rule (point 7 of the description.).</p> <p>The game can be ‘energetic’. As such, it may be necessary to remind participants that it’s not a game of football! Sometimes the qualities or aspects called out by the person in the middle can get stuck on a particular theme (fashion for example). If this happens the facilitator can ban a particular topic. The facilitator may need to ‘repair’ the circle if a particular movement disrupts it.</p> <p>This activity provides unpredictable opportunities for participants to speak in front of the rest of the group, experiencing what it may be like to be a participant. The facilitators can use this activity (especially the ‘specific statements’ element) to initiate bringing open conversation about the lessons related to the films into their training session.</p>

The Peer-to Peer Approach

Peer-to-peer projects have many advantages. The fact that the person who is running the workshop has a similar background makes it possible to identify with the target group. Group leaders take on a role model function that can offer orientation.

At the same time, they provide a protective space in which values and (power) structures are reflected upon, tolerance of ambiguity is developed, and the acceptance of other opinions is practised.

The social background of the group leader prevents the denial of one's own origin. The participants cannot withdraw from discussions by stating: "That's just the way it is with us".

By discussing daily life experiences of discrimination or racism, it is possible to address the participants' feelings of not belonging socially.

As such, participants can find alternative ways to handle difficult situations.

Approach	Peer- to- Peer
Description	Peer-to-peer projects work with multipliers of the same social background as the target group. These multipliers have had similar experiences and have similar social and cultural backgrounds with the pupils they work with. They have been trained to work with adolescents to initiate topics of conversation that are difficult for the target group. One example could be how to adjust one's own religion, culture or belief system to the values and laws of the society in which he or she lives in.
Sustainability	Peer-to-peer approaches are very sustainable if they are established over a long time.

There are plenty of methods to train peers to work with peers. What methods to use and how long to train peers depends on the group and the topic. Projects like "HEROES"³⁵ are long-term, sustainable projects which are very successful. But also, short term projects which are tailored to a certain group can be effective. The following examples outlines the advantages of a peer-to-peer approach.

³⁵ HEROES, <https://www.heroes-net.de/family.html> (last accessed 15 August 2021).

Where do you come from?

As part of an educational theatrical project at a school in Germany, students developed a play about the question “Where do you come from?” During trainings for teachers and social workers, it has recently been assumed that this question has a discriminatory effect on people with an immigrant background. In this respect, the participants of the project were asked to write a freeform text about what this question triggers in them. The group consisted of two students from the so-called majority society and thirteen students with an immigrant background, all of whom attend the same school in which students from the majority society are represented by only 5 %.

Two texts were debated intensely.

“Where are you from? I never get asked that. I have blond hair and blue eyes and people think I look like a typical German. I think that's funny. I have so many friends who are German. They have black hair or dark skin. Many of them were born here and have a German passport, but because their parents were born somewhere else, they speak Kurdish or Turkish with them. They always say that they are not Germans. I find that funny, then being German sounds like it's something bad.”

The student said that he often had the feeling that it is something negative to be German. Especially at a school that is largely attended by students with an immigrant background. What's more, the few students from the majority society often feel excluded.

This was an exciting insight for the young actors, as they had assumed that a German student at a German school would naturally feel “at home”. It became clear to the group that discrimination is not only experienced by immigrants and that it has nothing to do with where one lives, but with one's circumstances. In addition, it also became clear that teachers need to know their target groups very well to find programmes that promote P/CVE in the right way. It depends on the group and the setting as to which approach is most promising.

“I am from Turkey, so no, I was born in Germany and my parents are Turkish. My mother was born here in Germany and my father in Turkey. We speak Turkish at home. I am proud of my Turkish roots, but it annoys me when people think that books weren't read to me at home because my mother doesn't know German. My mother speaks better German than I do. Just because you look Turkish doesn't mean you can't speak German.”

The girl who wrote the text explained that she always answers the question “Where are you from?” simply with “from Turkey” because it annoys her when people ask where she is really from because she doesn't look at all like she was born in Germany.

After discussing this text for a long time, the participants reached the conclusion that the next time you are asked where you are from, you should say “from Germany” if you were born there. If the person you are talking to then says that you don't look like that, you can ask what a “typical German” looks like. Then you can start a conversation about the fact that there is no such thing as a “typical” look for people that shows where they come from.

Only in this way can both sides learn something: people whose families have a migration history can integrate their two identities by answering this question truthfully. People from the majority society get used to the fact that there is no such thing as a “typical” appearance. This learning process is hindered if, as is now required in many training courses, we do not ask the question “Where are you from?” at all.

The work on the texts resulted in a play performed in front of students. The audience also answered the question “Where are you from?” in advance and some answers were read out at the beginning of the play. Afterwards, in accordance with the peer-to-peer approach, the actors got into conversation with the audience. As a result of the exchange, those in the audience had the opportunity to talk about their own experiences and the players were able to add to this with what they had learned about themselves while working on the play.

Amongst themselves, the young people exchanged ideas about the topic, in a much more open and honest way than they would have under the guidance of a trainer. The current trend in first-line practitioner training of deciding in advance what questions or words can be discriminating makes one group of people become “sensitive victims” who are to be protected by the others. That leads in the long run to polarisation and “us versus them” thinking. The young people, amongst themselves, did not even think that they could all react the same way to the same question and found it exciting to exchange their experiences and opinions and develop their own individual standpoint. This is precisely the strength of the peer-to-peer approach.

The Anti-Bias Approach

The Anti-Bias Approach is a very successful approach when working with children. In the long run it can help pupils to see diversity as an option rather than as a threat.

Approach	Anti-Bias Approach
Description	<p>The Anti-Bias Approach is suitable for pupils of all ages. There are methods which can be chosen from, to find the best way to work with a certain group. They all focus on four goals.³⁶</p> <p>Goal 1: Identity - Strengthen ego identities and reference group identities Each child should be strengthened in their self-confidence by being recognised and valued as an individual and as a member of their social reference group.</p> <p>Goal 2: Diversity - Enable experiences with diversity All children should have the opportunity to interact with people who look and behave differently. Such experiences help to ensure everyone feels comfortable with each other and develops empathy and respect for diversity.</p> <p>Goal 3: Justice - Encourage critical thinking about prejudice and discrimination The aim is to address prejudice, bias and discrimination with children in a way that is accessible to them. As such, children learn to develop a language to communicate about what is fair and what is unfair.</p> <p>Goal 4: Activism - Encourage resistance to prejudice and discrimination Children should be encouraged individually or together with other children to actively resist biased and discriminatory statements and behaviour directed against themselves or against others.</p>
Evaluation	<p>The anti-bias approach works with a set of methods which helps both pupils and first-line practitioners to recognise their own biases and needs (see chapter “Methods”).</p> <p>This approach should not be mistaken for approaches such as the “Critical Whiteness Approach” or “Non-Discriminatory Language”. The Anti-Bias Approach works on the principle that everyone can experience discrimination or have unknown biases. The goal is to address this and create new possibilities for action. The other two approaches basically assume a hierarchical gradient in which it is only possible for certain people to experience discrimination. This “perpetrator-victim” attitude promotes “us</p>

³⁶ Derman-Sparks, Olsen Edwards, (2020). Anti-Bias Education for young children, naeyc.

versus them” thinking and is counterproductive when working with young people.

Anti-Bias Methods

Method	My Name is...
Aim	<p>Getting to know each other through the origins and stories of names.</p> <p>This exercise is suitable for starting a workshop lasting several days.</p> <p>It creates mutual interest, builds trust and brings about positive strengthening of self-esteem.</p>
Time	30 minutes
Target group	The method is suitable for all ages.
Description	<p>Phase 1:</p> <p>Round of introductions of the pupils (about one minute per person)</p> <p>The pupils introduce themselves using the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What’s your name? • What’s its meaning and where does it come from? • Who chose your name and why? • Do you like your name? Do you want to use another name while you’re in the workshop? <p>If necessary, the trainers add information about the meaning and origin of the names.</p> <p>Phase 2:</p> <p>Reflection on the round of introductions (10 minutes)</p> <p>The trainers reflect with the students on the variety of names, their meanings and origins, and the role of families in giving names.</p> <p>— What did you notice about the names during the introductions?</p>
Material	List of names of the pupils. If necessary, do research on meaning and stories behind the names in advance.
Evaluation	<p>With large groups, concentration must be maintained until the last person has spoken.</p> <p>Arabic, Turkish and Persian names are sometimes difficult to pronounce for non-native speakers. This is why it is important to create an atmosphere in the group where no one makes fun or laughs. The trainers need to be well prepared so that each student can learn the meaning behind their name, even if they may not be able to tell anything about it in the first round.</p>

Method	Identity Chain
Aim	<p>Self-reflection: Who am I? What makes me special?</p> <p>Experience identity as dynamic and changeable</p> <p>Perceiving identity characteristics</p> <p>Getting to know one other</p>
Time	70 minutes
Target group	Year 8 and older
Description	<p>Phase 1:</p> <p>Brainstorming in the entire group (15 minutes).</p> <p>The trainer/teacher asks the students for associations with the theme of identity. They collect the results on a flipchart or on moderation cards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What comes to your mind with the term identity? • What topics do you associate with the term identity? • What does identity mean to you? <p>Afterwards, similar terms are sorted and added if necessary. The students discuss which terms are particularly important to them. In this way, different categories are created, each of which is later linked with a colour.</p> <p>Category examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion/Worldview/Spirituality • Origin/Home/Place of residence • Gender/Sexual orientation • Hobbies/Lifestyle • Family/Partnership/Friends <p>Phase 2:</p> <p>Individual work (15 minutes)</p> <p>For each category, wooden beads in the corresponding colour are placed in bowls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellow: Religion • Green: Culture • Blue: Gender • Red: Friends • Purple: Hobbies • White: Family • Grey: Various other categories <p>Pupils consider the role the categories play in their own identity and create an identity chain accordingly. For example, if a pupil's friends are a more important part of his or her identity than family, he or she will choose more red beads than white beads for his or her own chain. If religion does not play a role in a pupil's life, he or she will not use yellow beads.</p> <p>Supporting questions for this phase:</p>

	<p>— What defines me? — Which categories are most important to me now?</p> <p>The number of beads should be limited to 15 per student.</p> <p>Phase 3: Presentation in groups of 3 or 4 (20 minutes) The pupils present their chains in small groups.</p> <p>Phase 4: Reflexion in the group (20 minutes) First step: The trainer/teacher can ask these questions to support the reflexion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was it like making your identity chain? • What was surprising? • What was difficult? • Why did many of you choose the colour _____? • There are only a few beads of the colour _____? • Do you have an explanation for this? • What do the “other” beads stand for? <p>Second step: The trainer/teacher steers the reflection to another level. The process of identity development is placed in a wider context (social, political, geographical, temporal).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What influences one's own identity? (Birth, friends, parental home, etc.) • What would this chain have looked like 5 years ago? • What will your chain look like in 10 years?
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 wooden beads per person in 7 or 8 different colours • 1 string per person • 7 or 8 bowls for the beads • Flipchart or moderation cards • Pens
Evaluation	The exercise is used in many workshops, for example, in anti-bias training or intercultural encounters.

Method	Lemons
Aim	Raising awareness of the diversity of supposedly homogeneous groups. Developing a critical attitude towards categorisations of people. Change of perspective.
Time	60 – 80 minutes
Target group	Year 8 or 9 and older

Description	<p>Phase 1:</p> <p>Brainstorming (10 minutes)</p> <p>The trainer/teacher shows the basket of lemons and asks the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do lemons look like?• What characteristics do lemons have? <p>The pupils' answers will be written down on the flipchart with the headline: "Lemons are..."</p> <p>Phase 2:</p> <p>Work in pairs (15 minutes)</p> <p>Students pair up and each pair chooses a lemon from the basket. The pairs are given the following task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look carefully at your lemon.• What does it look like?• What special features do you notice?• Write your observations on a card.• Formulate your observations in such a way that you can recognise the lemon from the description.• You are allowed to alter the lemon (e.g. by cutting/painting it). <p>Phase 3:</p> <p>Reflexion in the group (20-30 minutes)</p> <p>All the lemons are collected and placed in a large pile. The partners try one after the other to find their lemon again. The trainer/teacher asks the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was it difficult or easy to find your lemon?• How did you recognise your lemon?• What special features does it have? <p>Each pair presents their lemon using the description on the card.</p> <p>The results of this round are summarised on a new flipchart. Under the heading "Not all lemons are ...", individual lemon characteristics are collected.</p> <p>The trainer/teacher asks the pupils to compare the first poster "Lemons are..." with the second poster "Not all lemons are...".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you notice?• What are the differences between the two posters?• Why are the two posters so different, although they are always about the characteristics of lemons? <p>Phase 4:</p> <p>Transfer it to everyday life (15-20 minutes)</p> <p>The pupils discuss situations in everyday life in which they have been described and categorised by others. The following questions support this reflection:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could the lemons stand for in a figurative sense? • Have you ever had a first impression of people/groups that turned out to be wrong when you got to know them better? • Have you ever been misjudged yourself by others?
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket with different looking lemons. • Flipchart • Pens • Moderation cards
Evaluation	<p>The topic of attributions to others is particularly preoccupying for young people with a migration history and young people from so-called problem districts. They often experience exclusion and discrimination in their everyday lives. It can be discussed how young people from other districts/urban areas/regions are perceived or portrayed in the media and in political debates.</p> <p>Particularly exciting and new is the discussion on the question of in which situations young people themselves tend to generalise about other people. They find that generalisations and stereotyping can fuel conflicts and aggression because the people concerned do not feel perceived as individuals and their personal dignity is violated. The exercise is based on the Anti-Bias Approach.</p>

Method	Yes and no
Aim	<p>Positioning on various social and personal issues.</p> <p>Formulating arguments for one's own position.</p> <p>Listening to and respecting other opinions.</p>
Time	45–90 minutes
Target group	The questions can be adjusted to any age.
Description	<p>The trainer/teacher hands out one 'yes' and one 'no' card per participant. The first question is read out and placed on the floor. The trainer/teacher can choose from the following questions, according to the group and the workshop content, or they can choose their own questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe in true love? • Is it right to donate to poor people? • Is your opinion on Islam important in the country where you live? • Do people need religion? • Are human beings unique? • Is religion a private matter? • Is Jesus a role model for you? • Is Mohammed a role model for you? • Do you believe that you can help shape society through your commitment? • Do you have friends who belong to a different religion than you? • Do you celebrate Christmas?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been to places of worship of religions other than your own? • Does a “real” girl need long hair? • Do you think you are an important part of society? • Is it okay for a female teacher to wear a headscarf? • Does religion have anything to do with morality? • Do you agree with the sentence “Love your neighbour as yourself”? • Do you believe in miracles? • Do you believe in heaven and hell? • Do you know what you want to do when you are 40? • Are faith and knowledge mutually exclusive? • Should children be allowed to choose their own religion at a certain age? • Is God a woman? • Do you think religion promotes conflict? • Do you believe in life after death? • Do you think there are too many “foreigners” in the country you live in? • Should there be religious education in schools? • Are homeless people themselves to blame for their situation? • Can you imagine living in another country? • Is a “Jew” a dirty word for you? • Are you proud of the country you live in? • Do you avoid conflict? • Does it bother you when you see two men kissing? • Does it bother you to see two women kissing? • Do you believe in fate? • Can animals think? <p>After a short period of reflection following the question presented, the pupils are asked to turn over their answer card. The group analyses the result together and collects pro and contra arguments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers distributed in the group? • Are you surprised by the result? • Who would like to justify their answer? <p>The trainer/teacher moderates the discussion and presents the next question after some time.</p>
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One ‘yes’ and one ‘no’ card per person • Cards with questions
Evaluation	<p>The exercise helps to get to know a group better and to identify spokespersons, perceive conflicts and determine attitudes. Each pupil can say something about the questions. This means that all students are involved from the beginning. The questions can be decided spontaneously by the trainer/teacher according to interest and need. They can be focused on one topic, such as religion or origin, or come from different subject areas.</p> <p>This method can be used in different thematic contexts. The trainer has the possibility to spontaneously respond to the needs and interests of the students and to select the questions accordingly during the exercise.</p> <p>Discussions may need to be stopped in order to discuss several questions. This requires sensitive moderation. If the students have a sluggish</p>

discussion behaviour, the trainer/teacher should challenge the contradiction in the group through provocative examples. If the same students always speak up, it is the task of the trainer/teacher to involve the quieter students as well.

Method	What's normal?
Aim	<p>Positioning and discussion in the group.</p> <p>Positioning and arguing on different socio-political issues.</p> <p>Listen to and endure other opinions.</p> <p>Reflect on one's own ideas of normality.</p> <p>Knowledge about the emergence of societal conceptions of norms.</p>
Time	60 minutes
Target group	Year 9 and older
Description	<p>Preparation (5 minutes)</p> <p>A tape or rope running through the room represents a scale from "normal" to "extreme".</p> <p>Phase 1:</p> <p>Positioning (15 minutes)</p> <p>Each pupil receives a statement card. The pupils position their statement card on the scale (tape or rope) in the room one after the other and give reasons for their decision. The reasons should not be commented on or discussed by the others.</p> <p>The following statements can be selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homosexuality • Nudist beach • Eating horse meat • Being drunk • Prostitution • Supplying arms abroad • Religious freedom • Sexual intercourse before marriage • Women in leadership positions • Teacher with headscarf • Brushing teeth twice a day • Going to school • Having an invisible friend • Men keeping house • Cloning • Tattoos • Piercings • Living at home at 32 • Going to church at Christmas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosques • Veganism • Taking part in “Fridays for Future” • Starting a family • 24-hour serial marathon • Visiting grandma every day • Wearing combat boots • Reading books <p>Phase 2: Positioning (15 minutes)</p> <p>The pupils are allowed to move their own cards on the scale one after the other. The shift must be explained.</p> <p>Phase 3: Positioning (5 minutes)</p> <p>All pupils are allowed to move their cards on the scale at the same time. No talking is allowed.</p> <p>Phase 4: Discussion (20 minutes)</p> <p>The trainer leads a discussion with the following possible impulse questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you feel during the different phases of the exercise? • Did you change your mind about certain positions during the exercise? • What does normal and extreme mean? • What criteria did you use to make your decision? • Where do ideas of normality come from? • Is there a single normality? • How easy or difficult is it to tolerate other ideas? • Does there always have to be a consensus? • How do you deal with different opinions or ideas?
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One statement card per person • Tape or rope • If necessary, signs with the words “normal” and “extreme” for the scale
Evaluation	<p>Depending on the group dynamics, phase 3 can be skipped. The statements can be chosen differently depending on the composition of the group and the topic of the workshop. Certain conflict dynamics may arise during the exercise. Hurtful statements and/or prejudices need to be addressed by the trainer/teacher. The choice of statements should be chosen in regard to whether someone in the class is personally affected.</p>

Method	Guess who?
Aim	<p>Reflecting on one's own prejudices about people.</p> <p>Getting to know living conditions in other countries.</p> <p>Promoting openness and tolerance for others.</p>
Time	45 minutes
Target group	Year 8 and older
Description	<p>Individual or small group work and discussion in the group.</p> <p>Preparation (5 minutes)</p> <p>Hang 5 portrait picture of different people on a wall, at enough distance from another. Put a table (see material) under each of the pictures.</p> <p>Phase 1:</p> <p>Individual work (5 minutes)</p> <p>The pupils look at the portraits and write down their spontaneous assessments of the people shown in the tables assigned to them.</p> <p>Phase 2:</p> <p>Positioning (15 minutes)</p> <p>The pupils position themselves in front of the respective portraits to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who would I most like to talk to? • Who would I sit next to on a bus? • Who would I take with me in a car? • Who is politically active? • Who has made an important invention? • Who has written world-famous books and made films? • Who had a difficult childhood? • Who earns the most money? <p>After each question, the trainer/teacher asks some pupils to give reasons for their assessment.</p> <p>Phase 3:</p> <p>Evaluation (20 minutes)</p> <p>The students summarise their assumptions written in the tables as well as their positions on the individual person one after the other. The students compare the assumptions and the actual characteristics of the persons and discuss the similarities and differences: What surprises you? What led you to your assumption about this person?</p> <p>Optional questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the consequences of assumptions and prejudices? • How can you approach people more openly?

Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five portraits of famous people who are successful in different areas of society. The people should be unknown to the pupils (e.g., Malala Yousafzai or Eufrosina Cruz)• Five curricula vitae of the people in the portraits• Pens• Adhesive tape• Five tables with as many rows and columns as desired
Evaluation	<p>Depending on the group and the main topic of the workshop, the portraits and corresponding CVs, as well as the questions in phase 2, can be selected differently.</p> <p>The people in the portraits should be unknown to the young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International or national personalities.• Persons of different religiosity or only Muslims.• Historical persons who have made a positive or negative impact. <p>If there is a lack of time, phase 2 can be omitted. If phase 2 is omitted, phases 1 and 3 can also be carried out in small groups. In this case, each small group receives 3 portraits. The tables are filled in together. Afterwards, the groups receive the real CVs, which they compare with their assumptions. The result of the group work is collected and discussed in the group.</p> <p>The exercise deliberately challenges prejudices about people. Reflecting on one's own prejudices is designed to encourage people to be curious about others and make it clear that it is often worth looking twice and asking questions.</p>

Two European programmes for schools

There are also two programmes which are financed by the EU and which offer their expertise to schools in various EU countries.

Bounce Back³⁷

The Bounce Back! programme is a Positive Education programme. It provides engaging lessons, uses children's literature, practical resources and relationship-building teaching strategies to explicitly teach social and emotional learning skills and promote student wellbeing and resilience. A whole school approach contributes to a positive school culture.

This engaging and practical workshop will ensure all participants develop a thorough understanding of the Bounce Back! programme and have the confidence to teach it in their classroom and embed it across their school.

By the end of a Bounce workshop participants should be able to:

- Recognise the psychological principles, pedagogy and research that underpin the programme.
- Understand how Bounce Back promotes both academic engagement and wellbeing
- Have a strong understanding of the key messages in the 10 curriculum units.

³⁷ Bounce back! *Training*, <https://www.bounceback-program.com/training> (accessed 28 August 2021)

- Use Bounce Back! effectively to develop and foster student social and emotional skills and resilience in the classroom and playground.
- Incorporate the recommended quality children's literature into teaching key wellbeing and resilience concepts.
- Implement, embed and sustain the Bounce Back! programme within the classroom and across the school.

Active Citizenship³⁸

Citizens have a role to play to build a better, democratic society and developing the skills and attitudes of active citizenship is crucial. Active citizens not only know their rights and responsibilities, but they also show solidarity with other people and are ready to give something back to society.

Developing active citizenship and civic competences is an integral part of the new priorities for European cooperation in education and training, which stress the role of education in promoting equity and non-discrimination and in imparting fundamental values, intercultural competences and active citizenship.

Here we look at four projects and initiatives as examples of how to plant the seed of active citizenship.

The European Wergeland Centre (EWC) was established by the Council of Europe together with Norway to support its members in providing education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding.

Working closely with national authorities, EWC creates programmes tailored to the needs and priorities of national education systems. The activities expand across Europe and are accessible for participants from the 47 member states of the Council of Europe.

The EWC Summer Academies in various locations help educators to promote democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding in school communities, while other initiatives address potentially controversial issues such as migration and refugees, sex education, use of religious symbols, and child abuse. EWC runs also national programmes like the one for Education for Democratic Citizenship in Ukraine, which aims to strengthen social cohesion between regions, or the Advanced training in Practising Citizenship in Russia, which provides a whole-school-approach training programme for teachers, school administrators and university staff.

Recommendations

The requirements for non-formal education and formal education identified in the handbook suggest the following conclusions.

- Non-formal education must be committed to democratic values and human rights.
- Both formal education and non-formal education need guidelines according to which the commitment to democratic values and human rights can be evaluated.

³⁸ School Education Gateway (Erasmus+), *Education for active citizenship: raising the citizens of tomorrow* <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/latest/practices/education-for-active-citizensh.htm>.

- To implement P/CVE sustainably in the education of children and young people, a long-term cooperation between NGOs, organisations of non-formal education and schools is needed.
- Media literacy must be part of the curriculum.
- Teachers need to be trained to discuss challenging topics with pupils.

For this handbook several interviews with RAN experts from all over Europe were conducted. They show that all countries are on the way to tackle problematic informal and non-formal education by implementing certain topics in the curriculum and by fostering multi-agency approaches.

Ilaria Zomer from Italy noted that they foster the multi-agency approach for certain schools. He said: *“We found out that there are schools in higher education which are mostly attended by boys, for example, schools for information technology, and there are schools which educate many girls. We found out that the male students are more at risk of (coming into contact) with radicalisation, especially far-right extremism. In these schools we work with a program of peer-education to prevent radicalisation and to be present at schools.”*

“In schools for younger students, which are (situated) in challenging neighbourhoods there is a project called Provaci ancora, Sam (“Play it again, Sam”). This is a weekly programme that focuses on fighting against kids dropping out of school by using non formal education in school subjects.”

“Those schools also work with a multi-agency approach. Especially since the pandemic, those schools have worked closely together with youth workers, families and the youth welfare service. We have experienced that this multi-agency approach is helpful in supporting students in becoming more resilient to radical ideas. I hope that these programs continue after the pandemic. They are very helpful.”

Jesper Holme Hansen from Denmark says they “offer workshops in critical thinking, digital and democratic learning, polarisation, discrimination, marginalisation, and exclusion in schools. These are designed to prevent and encounter political and religious oriented radicalisation/violent extremism. We offer those workshops to all schools and to youth education institutions. That doesn’t mean that we’re running those workshops in every school, but the offer is open to every school. The school can decide whether to book a workshop or not because it’s not in the curriculum. I would prefer the workshops to be mandatory but at the moment they’re an option.”

Alan Fraser from England recommends the peer-to-peer approach. *“The peer-to-peer approach is something that I’m quite passionate about because we have developed a model of delivering extreme dialogues peer to peer. We trained students up and they were brilliant, absolutely stunning. I have to say far better than any teacher. They really caught the audience. The kids were so connected to them and just asking loads and loads of questions. I very strongly believe that actually peer-to-peer is something that we really haven’t fully explored and exploited. The students who are delivering it love it and, you know, they become knowledgeable in it.”*

Karin Heremans from Belgium implemented the ‘Active Citizenship’ and ‘Bounce’ at her school. *“We focus on ‘Active Citizenship’. Now, we are linking it to religious education. Not all the schools are already doing it, but it will be part of the new curriculum. ‘Active Citizenship’, critical thinking and media literacy becomes a very central part.”*

And we also have the “Bounce” project which is funded by the EU. It supports teachers and schools in their efforts to promote positive mental health, wellbeing and resilience for both students and teachers and build safe and supportive class and school learning environments.”

Astrid de Reus from the Netherlands emphasised the importance of evaluating workshops to find out if they are suitable for a specific group of students.

“It is hard to answer what approaches are successful because we almost never ask the pupils to fill out an evaluation form after the workshops. So, it’s quite hard to tell if something has really changed in their minds. Furthermore, you’ll never know if they have really learned something or if they just answer, according to what you want to hear.”

I remember my pupils talking about homosexuality and the equality of all people in a workshop. I had the feeling that the pupils had no interest in the topic. Most of them reacted quite understandingly on the surface but you could tell that they didn’t really mean it. They had already made up their minds. So, I guess we’re only reaching a very little number of pupils with these workshops in some schools. A workshop can never be as sustainable as a real-life experience. Children from different social and cultural backgrounds who mingle in sports clubs and on the playground at an early age could maybe learn to sense problematic non-formal education instinctively. They would realise prejudices quickly because they were friends with children from different social and cultural backgrounds. That would be the best prevention.”

The above statement adds to the assumption that building resilience towards problematic education must be part of the curriculum at schools. One element of prevention strategies against radicalisation and polarisation is the reduction of prejudice. A way of achieving this is by facilitating interaction with one another. Children who go to school and are members, at an early age, of, for example, social clubs with children from different social and cultural backgrounds do not fall as easily into the temptation of "Us versus Them" thinking.

They have not only talked in arranged settings about the fact that not all Christians are the same and not all people with black skin have the same needs but indeed they have lived it, made friends and had experiences. This is a highly recommended form of P/CVE, which can be achieved by facilitating opportunities for personal exchange.

About the authors

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Julia Wöllenstein is a social worker, drama instructor and public-school teacher. She has been teaching years 5–10 at a German school since 2012. She is also currently instructing aesthetic education at the University of Kassel, Germany. Julia is the author of the book *Von Kartoffeln und Kanaken - Warum Integration im Klassenzimmer scheitert* (published 2019). She is a member of the *Netzwerk gegen Gewalt im Namen der Ehre* and the RAN Expert Pool. Her area of expertise is P/CVE in formal education.

Elena Silva Duque

Elena Silva Duque studied International Relations and has been working on P/CVE projects since 2015. She has always been passionate about educating children and young adults in topics such as violent extremisms and radicalisation, at first with a focus on Islamist extremism and lately on right-wing extremism. She currently works at SaaS start-up but continues to partner up with different organisations to keep working on P/CVE projects. Elena has been a member of RAN Young since 2017.

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