



# How to prevent radicalization

Digital guide 



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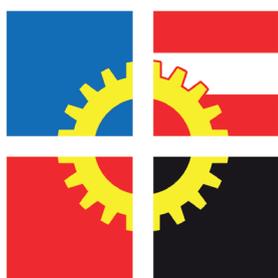
Digital guide



## Radical Online Education

Key Action 2

Strategic Partnership



PROJUVEN

*This project is funded by the European Union.*



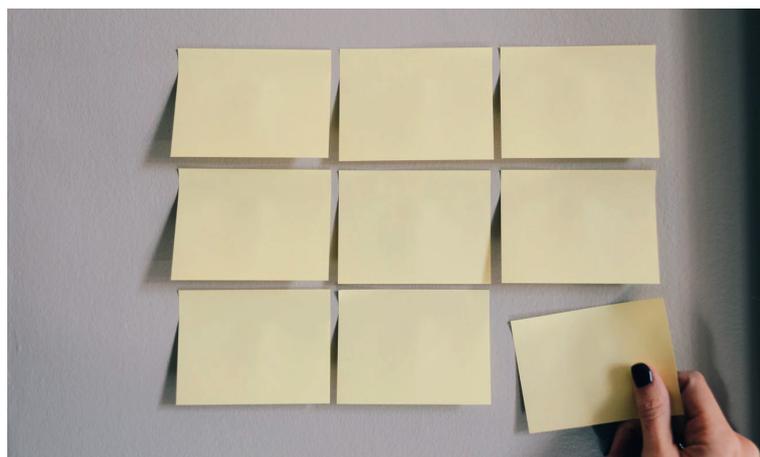
Erasmus+

Funded by  
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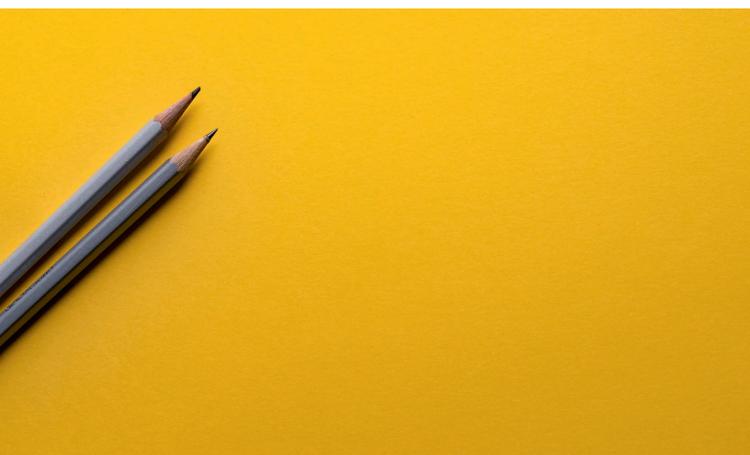
## Project Consortium

- Danish Youth Team (Denmark)
  - Projuven (Spain)
  - OEJAB (Austria)
- Alternativi International (Bulgaria)

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# Introduction

The project **Radical Online Education** focuses on the radicalization of young people on the Internet. It is a cooperation project within the framework of **Erasmus+**, with a total of four organizations from Denmark (**Danish Youth Team**, Coordinator), Austria (**OEJAB-Austrian Young Workers Movement**), Spain (**PROJUVEN**) and Bulgaria (**Alternativi International**).

The project **Radical Online Education** deals with the problem of radicalization and recruitment of young people to fight in war zones. This radicalization or recruitment is often done through the internet and through social media. That's why **Radical Online Education** wants to act against online radicalization and find an appropriate response to this threat. The goal is to educate trainers and social workers on the abuse of social media, to empower them with a positive counter-narrative and to equip them with the necessary information and competences to encourage young people to think critically.

In literature, exclusion experiences, disorientation and a polarized view of the world are stated as major reasons for the radicalization of young people. Radical thinking and acting in many respects meets youth-specific needs such as protest behavior, adventurousness, and clique affiliation and thus holds a great attraction. Regarding radicalization prevention, it is therefore necessary to offer young people alternatives in respect to radical groups.

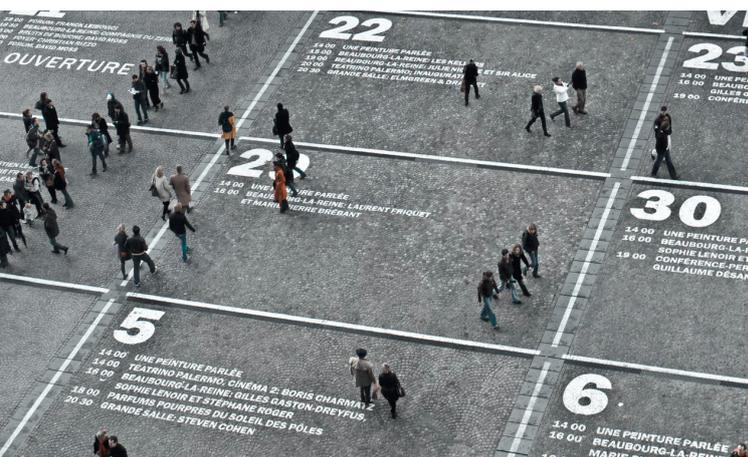


Through the Internet, radical and extremist groups have found suitable channels to spread their propaganda, recruit new members and portray and spread acts of violence or terrorism in the name of different extremist ideologies. Research shows, however, that the internet and new technologies can also be most effective when tackling radicalization. Assumed they are used correctly.

With the recent rise in violent incidents related to online radicalization, the outline of a global action plan to promote de-radicalization is gaining importance. In 2017, the **Security Council of the UN** issued a letter with a comprehensive international framework to combat terrorist narratives. This includes legal and prosecution measures in accordance with international law obligations.

In general, preventing violent extremism is a major challenge and different methods, both online and offline, have to be used to master this challenge. In the course of this guide, some of these methods and good practice examples will be presented. It is intended to help trainers and social workers to recognize and prevent radicalization and recruitment of young people on the internet, and subsequently respond to and deal with it successfully.

Enjoy your reading!



# Chapter I. Guidelines

## Phenomenon of radicalization

### Cause Research

In the literature, exclusion experiences, disorientation and a polarized world view are largely responsible for the fact that people and especially young people join radical groups. Radical thinking and acting also meets youth-specific needs, such as protest behaviour, adventurousness and clique affiliation and is therefore among other things a great lure for young people. In the sense of radicalization prevention, it is therefore necessary to perceive the needs and problems of radicalization of vulnerable young people and offer them alternatives to connect to radical groups.

### Digital Media

Whether participation in radical ideas takes place via digital media or results from direct contact with radical persons or groups, it plays a rather subordinate role. The experts on radicalization agree that individuals are only radicalized via digital media in exceptional cases, but the Internet is not to be underestimated in terms of its potential danger. Radical groups have always used the Internet for global information, dissemination and ideologization. However, the threat does not stem from the ideologies available on the Internet, but rather from how online and offline influences are linked.

## Measures for radicalization prevention

### Initial situation

Like the radicalization process itself, radicalization prevention does not follow a universal valid scheme. By definition, as part of the radicalization prevention process, any radical tendencies must be identified ahead of time and efficient measures

taken against potentially threatening developments. However, as there is no consensus on the indicators of radicalization to date, prevention work is a separate challenge.

### Proven strategies

Experience has shown that preventive measures in general, and thus also in terms of radicalization, are more efficient and sustainable if they are carried out via existing projects and not explicitly. The present document therefore combines experiences and ideas for implicit radicalization prevention with hypothetical youth projects.

## Guidelines

### Social policy abuses

Radical groups recruit their youthful followers primarily in regions that have few or no youth institutions. The affected youths of these regions mostly suffer from a lack of orientation and perspective and, moreover, have no social support whatsoever. Poverty, unemployment and social exclusion mean that these young people are increasingly marginalized and, as it were, left to their own devices. Feelings of insecurity and alienation make young people especially susceptible to trend-setting ideologies.

### Youth and social work

To socially integrate young people and to give them viable perspectives is not a measure for radicalization prevention, but a socio-political obligation. Youth and social institutions provide support for young people and help them to establish themselves in society. Youth and social work is therefore largely responsible for preventing young people from becoming radicalized. The guidelines set out serve to support all those persons and institutions involved in radicalization prevention. The main focus is on youth and social work.

## The Project

### Basic principle

The following ideas are based on the basic principle of project management in its simplest form. They cover the aspects of initiating, planning, controlling and concluding a hypothetical radicalization prevention measure. As usual in project management, the project management has the primary responsibility for ensuring that the project is successfully completed. In the case of the present project idea, the project management is required on the one hand with regard to its management competencies and on the other hand it must have a strong socio-pedagogical and psychological knowledge and abilities.

### Project goal

Success is fundamentally different in the case of social projects and especially in projects for radicalization prevention as for projects in the e.g. economic or IT sector. Projects without direct social aspiration are primarily aimed at achieving a superficial goal by using all available resources.

By contrast, social projects are primarily concerned with providing a pedagogically highly demanding and socially relevant intervention. The actual project goal is therefore based on the project itself and is measured by how the process proceeds or how it continues beyond the time frame of the project. The success of the project is independent of whether the project conceived may already exist or have been implemented in a similar form elsewhere.



## Project preparation

### Efficiency and sustainability

In order to live up to the claim of radicalization prevention, a project must be meaningful, self-affirming and community-promoting. The individual commitment of the project participants will be defined by their contribution to mutual success. Accordingly, the existing competences are used purposefully and, moreover, are cultivated in the course of the project implementation. There is also the possibility of acquiring additional personal and professional skills through the project and testing them directly on the project. In dealing with others, socially more competent strategies are developing and cooperative relationships are being developed. The project thus represents a solution-oriented approach to reality and strengthens the identity of all contributors. In this way, the project virtually competes with radical ideologies and represents a worthwhile alternative.

### Simplicity

The efficiency and sustainability of projects does not correlate with their complexity, but on the contrary with the simplicity of their implementation and their direct relation to reality. Projects that take into account the basic human need for recognition and closeness and do without superficial grandiosity are especially in the social field, best suited to achieving socially relevant successes. For efficient and sustainable radicalization



prevention, it is therefore advisable to use simple and old-fashioned project ideas.

### Project variants

For example, a joint construction project, an environmental activity, a whatsoever project for the good of society, a theatrical performance or even a sporting competition are considered to be the best way to attract young people to a common idea. Radicalization prevention and the development of intercultural tolerance are virtually a highly effective concomitant in the implementation of these projects. Under the condition of a coherent conception and the guidance of experienced personalities, the group acts in the best sense self-regulating and promotes the personal development of each individual member at the same time.

## 1. Initial Phase

### Conditions

At the beginning, the basic possibilities to implement a possible project have to be clarified. It is important therefore to reconcile individual needs with societal demands. The openness of the social environment to new ideas plays just as big a role as the motivation and commitment of the project participants. Added to this are the legal and political aspects that significantly influence the success or failure of a project. The more comprehensive the inquiries are, the lower the inherent risk of encountering any obstacles as a result.

### Exchange of experiences

In order to clarify the project, it is advisable to refer to the experiences of previous projects or to exchange information with experienced persons. In this way, we can avoid fundamental mistakes in the planning phase of a project. With regards to the topic of radicalization prevention, the project needs have to be identified separately. This raises the fundamental question of whether the project is preceded by an event or purely preventive. The answer to this question lies, on the one hand, in the

experiences and perceptions of the social project environment and, on the other hand, in the experiences of those affected themselves.

### Nature of projects

An occasion-related project has to be conceived differently with regard to different aspects than a pure preventive measure. If there is a reasonable suspicion that radical tendencies prevail, this gives the respective prevention measure a much greater weighting. The project conception is even more complicated if an incident has already occurred, which clearly indicates radical tendencies. In this case, the required measure no longer has the character of an exclusive prevention, but must already actively counteract. Depending on the particular cause that precedes the project, it may only be possible to implement it with the support of other experts. In addition, an event-related project may require additional resources and must be calculated in a fundamentally different way. The more urgent a measure against radicalization must be, the more explicit it is to shape it. A neutral project on the other hand allows more flexibility and opens up greater possibilities for the individual development of the people involved in the project.

## 2. Planning phase

### Project concept

For project planning, a conception based on the SMART principle is recommended. This means that the project is by definition specific, measurable, accepted, realistic and timely. The project objective will be clearly defined in terms of content and time, and the necessary incentives will be created to achieve the goals.

### Project participation

The motivation to participate in the project is closely related to how the project idea is communicated and promoted in terms of its sustainability potential. The ongoing networking with experts and practice partners is just as important as measures

to raise public awareness. Participation in the project increases depending on the relevance the project has to the contributors or depending on the added value they expect from it. For young people, it is foremost important that their needs and opinions are taken seriously and implemented as part of the project.

### Multipliers

When recruiting interested young people, education and social services may be a great help. Schools, for example, but also youth centres or various youth clubs can make the project idea more effective and inspire young people over large areas. In order to be successful in applying for a youth project, it is also advisable to contact the young people themselves. The young people are in direct contact with each other and act accordingly as multipliers within their peer groups.

### Control

In the case of radicalization prevention projects in particular, the initial focus is on the formation of the target group. Assuming that the individual group members harmonize with each other, it is very likely that simple youth projects lead to a superficial goal. For example, in the artistic or sporting field, there are countless opportunities. By contrast, the fact that this implies the implicit and actual goals of democracy-building and value acceptance is by no means a matter of course and requires targeted planning and control.



### Diversity

In terms of education and tolerance development, a high degree of diversity must be ensured with regards to the target persons. Tolerance to diversity develops an exclusively through direct confrontation with a wealth of variants.

The heterogeneous prerequisites and demands of the project participants must be differentiated and treated sensitively with regard to the different dimensions of diversity. A responsible and tolerant treatment of gender, religion, worldview and ethnicity is to be taught and handled as a basic democratic value. In dealing with the issues of identity, diversity, alien attributions and discrimination, differences are addressed, their own and foreign prejudices reflected, and strategies for dealing with diversity demonstrated. The perceived and accepted diversity can then be used to initiate innovative and creative learning processes.

### Conditions

Every project, and especially a measure for the prevention of radicalization, can only be successfully carried out within a given framework. The agreement between the project management and the project participants with regard to appropriate and necessary framework conditions for the achievement of a common goal is therefore a top priority.



## Methodology

In order to be able to achieve the overarching goal of general personal orientation, and above all tolerance development, through a project, we need to wisely choose the methods for project implementation. Appropriate methods are based on proven experience, values accepted by society as a whole and scientifically founded knowledge. They aim at the strategic planning of sustainable processes, are goal-oriented and are open to any corrective measures. In addition, the chosen methods must be individual and factually appropriate and oriented to the respective project framework. In the case of social projects, psychosocial and socio-pedagogical aspects are particularly important.

### Project management

Project management must be fully informed about all the aspects of project management and have a broad experience in the field. When it comes to social projects, the project management must also be educated in a pedagogical, psychological and diversity-relevant manner and have the necessary specialist and personal skills to deal with different forms of diversity. This acts as a role model and motivates the participants to contribute as an individual to a harmonious, tolerant and successful co-existence. Furthermore, the project management is required to show a high degree of empathy and sensitivity towards the project participants and at the same time to meet the demands of society.

## 3. Project implementation

### Chances and risks

At the beginning of the project implementation, the opportunities and risks that may be associated with the project are relatively evenly distributed. It is therefore of paramount importance, especially in this sensitive project phase, to take the right steps to prevent any future problems in advance. It should be remembered that even the best of intentions are not a guarantee of success, and therefore everyone involved in the project must be open making necessary corrections.

## Trust

The whole project stands and falls on the fact that all members of the project are within a trusting relationship. Young people are more open and less sceptical about each other than adults. By the means of suitable interactive methods for building trust, it is usually possible to bridge initial uncertainties with regard to external persons and circumstances. As a result, the trust gained must be permanently maintained in order not to jeopardize the future success of the project through an unstable basis of trust within the project group.

### Group dynamics

Various group dynamic processes can shake the prevailing trust and must therefore be observed closely and steered in the service of harmonious coexistence. In order to be able to intervene in a targeted manner, the project management is first required to identify the individual personality types or their communication and cooperation behaviour towards others. As a result, the individual personalities must be entrusted with project tasks in accordance with their competences. If the course of the project is disturbed by group dynamic influences or if the confidence of the project participants is jeopardized, countermeasures must be taken immediately.

### Motivators

Furthermore, it is important to identify the respective motivators of the individual group members, which cause them to participate in the project. The commitment to realize the project's goal depends more on the youth generation's skills, abilities and experience than on adults. In this regard it must be ensured that no competence assessment is carried out or perceived as such. Added to these are autonomy, responsibility and recognition as further essential influencing factors in the process of activating and enthusing people for a common goal.

## Recognition

Ideally, the individual actors within a project should be given the necessary confidence to be able to use their competences autonomously in the service of project development and thereby achieve the hoped-for recognition. A successful project, and in particular the efficient personal contribution to it, has a perpetual self-upgrading and confirming effect. An adequate degree of appreciation of achievements and behaviours that are beneficial to the project is, however, also essential on the part of the project managers. Praise and recognition should not only follow the final realization of the project idea, but rather accompany the entire project.

## Stage win

Achieved stages on the way to the project goal are to be evaluated as partial successes and to be duly appreciated. This applies just as much to the project activity as such as to the successful interaction between the project members. In this way, the self-confidence of the individual project members is strengthened and in parallel their motivation to reach the project goal is raised.

## Results

The positive effects that can accompany the project are particularly important in pedagogical contexts and, above all, in reference to prevention measures against radicalization. If all project-immanent challenges are mastered, ultimately not only the project managers benefit from it, but with them the entire social environment.



## 4. Project completion

### Safeguard earnings

In terms of sustainability of the projects, the project history must be logged in with as much details as possible. The experiences gained from the project have to be compared to the original project expectations. In terms of content, it must be ensured that the project objective has been achieved and that all project members can identify with the goal achieved. Individual feedback discussions with the project members and a joint graduation ceremony ensure a sustainable and positive attitude towards the project and a good reputation of the project actors. With regard to a successful youth project, it is also important that the prospective young people who have participated in it are promised a possible follow-up project.



# Chapter II.

## Methods

Youth work aims to help the young person to reach one's full potential and encourages personal development, autonomy, initiative and participation in society. Youth work is usually related to non-formal education methodology. NFI is a specific approach to education that uses such pedagogical and social methods and learning activities that are focused on the individual learning and the needs of the learner. It is directed to specific problems and less often to abstract subjects and it is flexible, being oriented to the learner. The non-formal education is based on mutual trust and respect, learning by doing and encouraging questioning and reflection.

NFE is firstly used as term in UNESCO's report in 1947 in terms of reforms in developing countries education. In the beginning of 1972, the International Commission for Education publishes its report named "Learning to be: The world education today and tomorrow" which boosted the non-formal education development. In the late 80's in the UK and Wales, a national system for professional qualification is being developed for the first time in Europe. The system validates the skills and competences acquired outside of the formal education. Non-formal learning and non-formal education slowly become more and more relevant for the European Union. Later on, the year of 1996 was declared the European year of lifelong learning. In the same year, the report "Learning-the treasure within" of UNESCO's Education commission is released, highlighting the 4 pillars of 21st century:

- learning to know
- learning to do
- learning to live together
- learning to be

Consequently, the main features of non-formal learning are as follows:

- balanced synergy between the cognitive, emotional and practical dimensions of learning;

- links individual and social learning, solidarity, oriented towards partnership and symmetry in teaching / learning;
- comprehensive and process-oriented;
- real-life, experimental, and learning-by-doing, using intercultural exchanges and meetings as learning bases;
- voluntarily and (ideally) with open access;
- seeks, above all, to surrender and practice the values and skills of democratic life;

Nonetheless, the informal methods of teaching and learning follow subsequently:

- communication methods: interaction, dialogue, mediation;
- methods of activity: experience, practice, experimentation;
- socially focused methods: partnership, teamwork, networking;
- self-directed methods: creativity, discovery, responsibility;

### Digital Youth Work and its role of preventing on-line extremism and radicalization

**According to an expert group of the European Commission**, the digital youth work implies proactively using or addressing digital media and technology in the youth work field. Digital youth work has the same goals as youth work in general by using technology to support specific goals. In addition, the digital youth work can be present in face-to-face situations and as well as in online environments – or in a mixture of both. Digital media and technology can be either a tool, an activity or a content in youth work. Consequently, digital youth work is underpinned by the same ethics, values and principles as youth work. Nonetheless, the context refers to youth workers as both paid and/or volunteers.

In accordance, below we can see a series of typical examples of innovative practices in the field of digital youth work closely related to digital competences:

- sharing information on social media
- online youth counselling
- supporting digital literacy

- enabling participation with digital tools
- supporting cultural youth work online
- supporting the development of technological skills
- using digital games in youth work

Moving forward to the nowadays society, we can see that Europe faces one of the biggest refugee crisis and this leads to European values being in danger, fueling violent extremism. The role of European youth work is crucial in preventing online violent extremism but at the same time it is a huge challenge for all the European NGOs on how they address the extremist narrative online without limiting the basic rights of freedom of speech and access to information. In the same time, youth workers need to adapt in order to be able to use digital technologies to reach out more young people and to reduce the risk of online radicalization.

## Methods

Preventing violent extremism in general is rather a difficult challenge and no single method can be successful by itself thus NFE trainers/facilitators need to make use of various methods, both online and offline in order to address the challenge.

- interactive offline activities (i.e. role plays, simulation games, discussions)
- media literacy education
- reflection/focus groups
- online counselling and consultation
- gaming and digital tools (i.e. using apps, developing online games, online webinars, digital courses)



## Interactive offline activities and methods

### 1. World Café

*Time needed:* 1.5 hours

*Example of topics:* violence, extremism, radicalization, terrorism

*Description:*

**World Café** is a well known tool that can boost discussion at any topic. You can apply it to encourage a dialogue among the group on the topic of migration. It is simple, yet effective format that engage groups of people in meaningful conversations. The bigger group is divided into smaller groups/around 4-6 people/ and each group is given a different topic to discuss on a different “table”. Each table has a table host who facilitate the discussion. The participants are switching tables periodically and getting introduced to the previous discussion at their new table by the host. The aim of the exercise will be to understand more about radicalization process, reasons, about terrorism, how it evolves.

*Tips:*

- if you work with mixed groups or members of different target groups, make sure you have a balance in each small group but use creative ways of splitting into small groups
- make sure there is translation provided if needed in each small group



- if the world cafe is your only activity, make sure you use some getting to know each other (i.e. ice breakers, energizers) to ensure a pleasant environment and encourage trust among the group

## 2. Where do I stand?

This is a simulation game, designed to educate, raise awareness and make call to action among young people.

*Materials:* big space, pens, markers, A4 papers, post-it notes

*Aim:* to get aware of possible treats online (usually used by extremist groups to attract youth); to recognize online hate speech and learn how to respond to it, to raise their media literacy, to form a strong and active position and encourage active involvement in case of possible treat from violent extremism online. Depending on your target group, their experience and your overall aim, you can create your own scenarios.

*Instructions:* prepare the room - make 3 separate corners and put a sign on each corner with the following: **Do not do anything**, **Make action online**, **Act out**. Tell the participants you are going to read a case study/situation and then they have to decide how to respond. For each corner put pens, papers, markers. After every statement/situation is read and everyone places oneself in each corner, have them discuss their approach to the situation.

*Examples of case studies:*

1. On a private website of a group called **Protect our Nation**, few sarcastic cartoons are made, displaying roma people tortured/murdered. A call to action is made to the whole community to start getting ready to erase them one by one from Mother Earth and clean the country.
2. You see your classmate who is from Pakistan following a Facebook group called **New Order** and since then he/she stopped communicating with you and most of other classmates. What would you do?

3. Your best friend Michael has started participating in a Sunday meeting of some voluntary organization and doing a lot of charity, his marks and behavior at school changed dramatically in a good way, but he grew his beard and stopped drinking alcohol. What would you do?

4. A local politician from the Nationalist party has been sharing on his personal blog information about refugees - that all of them are terrorists and that they need to be taken away immediately from the country - and he is organizing a group to protest in front of a local migration camp. What would you do?

*Debriefing and evaluation:*

- how did you feel in the beginning, during and at the end of the activity?
- was it difficult to decide your action(s)?
- was it easy to make decisions in the group?
- do you think those are real life situations?
- what will you take away from this experience?

## 3. Understanding Radicalization (Pyramid of Hate)

*Aim:* To understand radicalization as a process, how it evolves, how small things can have a huge impact and to encourage active position and response of young people. For this we will use the theoretical method **Pyramid of Hate**. The pyramid shows biased behaviors, growing in complexity from the bottom to the top. Although the behaviors at each level negatively impact individuals and groups, as one moves up the pyramid, the behaviors have more life-threatening consequences. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels.

*Instructions:* Draw each stage of the pyramid on a big flipchart and introduce it one by one by explaining with concrete examples. Once you introduce the pyramid, split the group into smaller groups and give each group a sample of the pyramid to work with along with A4 papers, pens, flipchart and markers. Give them the task to discuss in each stage of the pyramid concrete examples, what can be done to prevent it to evolve in the next level and what could be the best possible role of young people.

*Debriefing and evaluation:*

- do you get a better understanding of the radicalization process and its elements?
- in which stages do you think that young people and/or youth workers can interfere?
- have you realized before how the small actions or lack thereof can lead to bigger consequences?
- what are the most common elements that can lead to violent extremism?
- what did you take away from this exercise?

**4. Linking Radicalizations**

*Aim:* to visualize the links between all elements that can lead to radicalization.

*Instructions:* you can use this activity after [World Café](#) to create a consequent and deeper understanding. If you use it by itself, make sure you create a common understanding between all group members, by discussing and writing down on a flip-chart the associations of each participant related to radicalization. After you are done with the short intro, divide the group into smaller groups. Give to each team pre-made colorful papers with written few terms: extremism, hate speech, radicalization, violence, prejudice, stereotypes, racism, xenophobia and colorful arrows. The task of each team will be to find as many connections as possible between the terms and to find how they correspond to each other and lead to radicalization.

**5. In Migrant's Shoes (simulation game)**

The game primarily focuses on developing the participants' awareness, empathy, tolerance and



understanding of migrants and refugee situation. The game put participants into various scenarios that migrants face when arriving into new country or refugees face when fleeing from home and the obstacles they have on their journey. Moreover, the game help reducing radicalization by building understanding, empathy and dialogue and teach human right, You can adapt the game, depending on the target group you want to tackle.

*Time for preparation:* 15 minutes

*Time for group work:* 45 minutes

*Time for debriefing:* 30 minutes

*Instructions:* explain the group what a simulation game is and its purpose - to be put in an imaginary but at the same time real situation - each group will face a different situation. Refugees need to cope with and will be taken to an imaginary journey in which migrants face when they arrive in new country and struggle to adapt. Set up the room into few corners: put a starting point, 3 check points and finishing line (to mark the start and the end of the journey, as well as 3 obstacles they will face). Divide the group into small groups (3-5 people) and give each group a different scenario. Explain them that they are a family and they have to reach decisions as a group and highlight the importance of respecting each other, listening to each opinion and sharing. Give them 10 minutes to reflect on the situation they are in and discuss the questions they have on the list given. After they discuss their scenario, give them the first task: for 5 minutes, to



decide as a group which 3 things out of 10 to get on their journey. After they finish with the first task, they “start” their journey. Then they pick 3 obstacle cards (these are the cards with different challenges that refugees can face on their journey). Give them 10-15 minutes to discuss in their group the challenges and what solution/decision they can come up with. After each obstacle-card decision is made, they pass through the imaginary checkpoint and get closer to the finish line. Then, after each group is done, leave them time for group elaboration and feedback, then form a plenary discussion.

#### *Debriefing and evaluation:*

- how did you feel in the beginning, during and at the end of the activity?
- how did you feel when you only had to choose 3 things to pack?
- was it easy to make group decisions?
- what do you think about the obstacles of migrants/refugees - could they be real and how does it make you feel?
- how do you feel about the people that need to go through such a journey?

# Chapter III. Use of technology in preventing youth radicalization

## Introduction

Through the Internet at large, radical and extremist groups have found convenient channels to spread their propaganda, recruit members and portray acts of violence and terrorism in the name of diverse extremist ideologies. As an example, online videos spread by ISIS are very well made, and along with their release speed, they became very popular across the Internet. Although it seems that their strategy is going well, research shows that when used correctly, Internet and online technologies are some of the greatest tools to counter radicalisation.

The fight against online extremism is multidimensional and constantly evolving. Social media has helped like-minded people around the world to connect, but in the same time facilitates the communication process between far-right extremists by introducing them to similarly inclined individuals and organisations. The battle against online extremism and disinformation is an solid example of how innovations that have had an overwhelmingly positive impact on global interactions and connectivity have been exploited by groups with nefarious objectives. In order to respond to online threats, the world governments and social media companies must stand together with the civil society to fight the radicalization process across the Internet.

In this chapter, we will see what initiatives and measures were taken from the above mentioned public institutions and private companies, highlighting how they contribute to the prevention of youth radicalization.



## 1. Social Media Companies commitments against prevent of youth radicalization

### Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism

Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube agreed that the spread of terrorism and violent extremism is a pressing global problem and a critical challenge for all of them. On 26th June 2017 they joined the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT). GIFCT is buildt on several existing initiatives, which are designed to scrub terrorist recruitment material from the internet and promote counter-narratives to potential recruits. The forum makes it easier for its members to cooperate with each other, as well as with governments, smaller companies, and non-governmental organizations.

Consequently, all of these companies have developed policies and removal practices that enable them to take a hard line against terrorist or violent extremist content on their hosted consumer services. In addition, they constantly develop and implemen new content detection and classification techniques by using machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Last but not least, the forum's scope is supposed to evolve over time, but its core goals include improving technology for detecting terrorist material, creating best practices for addressing "extremism and online hate," and sharing information about members' respective counter-speech tools — like [Google Jigsaw's Redirect Method](#), which places anti-terrorist advertisements alongside keywords popular with potential ISIS recruits.



### The Shared Industry Hash Database

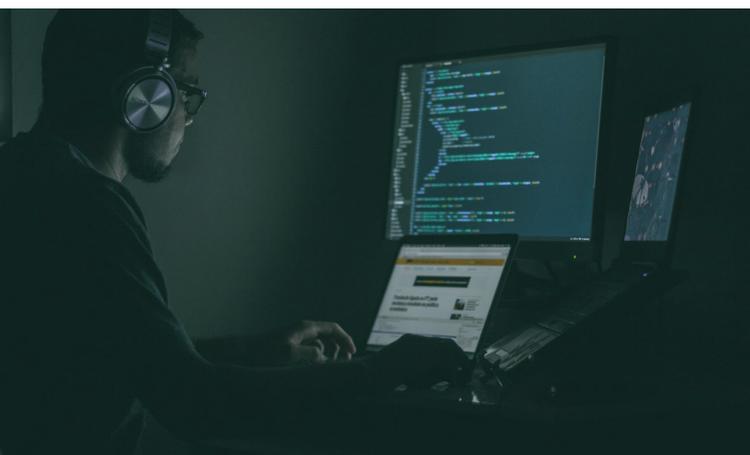
The Hash Database is a shared database of digital fingerprints from "the most extreme and egregious" terrorist images and videos in which material that gets flagged and removed from one platform can be automatically taken down from others. These kinds of initiatives are partially a response to the pressure from European governments, which have urged companies to limit hate speech. However, these initiatives have raised certain privacy issue in the US where free speech rules are broader than in Europe.

### What does The Redirect method consist in?

The Redirect Method uses Adwords targeting tools and curated YouTube videos uploaded by people all around the world to counter online radicalization. It focuses on the slice of ISIS' audience that is most susceptible to its messaging, and redirects them towards curated YouTube videos debunking ISIS recruiting themes.

Back in 2018, a study carried out over the course of 8 weeks found out that 320,000 individuals watched over half a million minutes of the 116 videos selected to refute ISIS's recruiting themes. This open methodology was developed mostly with the help of ISIS defectors.

In addition, the researchers found an abundance of videos to support their project and they shifte the focus on seeking out videos that appeared to be



neutral in intention - including documentaries or citizen journalist footage that portray the world as the creators found it, rather than materials that appear specifically designed to counter ISIS. To get there, they used keyword searches to identify “hidden” counter-argument content - that is, videos that are not necessarily well known, and often that were not designed with the explicit intention of refuting ISIS. The researchers also found that video content featuring prominent individuals whose contributions deliberately contradict ISIS’s messaging were helpful as well.

Overall, the researching team managed to identify five ISIS recruitment narratives that are recurring in ISIS’s official media, as outlined below:

- **Good Governance** - ISIS showcases not only its bureaucratic structure and provision of social services, but also its harsh implementation of sharia
- **Military Might** - a narrative designed to display ISIS’s battlefield victories in order to portray it as an unstoppable force. The group depicts itself as possessing continuous momentum, and its message to its enemies is that they faced capture, torture, humiliation, and death
- **Religious Legitimacy** - ISIS depicts its interpretation of Islam as the only authentic manifestation of the faith. ISIS argues that its alleged re-establishment of the caliphate made all competing states and organizations null and void under God’s law
- **Call to Jihad** - emphasizes the individual duty to either emigrate to the “caliphate” or carry out local terrorist attacks in ISIS’s name. This messaging portrays ISIS fighters as heroes, their days as packed with action, camaraderie, and glory
- **Victimhood of the Umma** (the worldwide body of Muslims) - this narrative depicts outside powers conspiring to harm, subjugate, and disempower Muslims throughout the globe

### The research process

Scientists used campaign metrics provided by AdWords, and Youtube Analytics, along with third party software „Tubular Labs“ who offered methodologies to measure the impact by looking at the public comments under the YouTube videos included in the campaign. The reach of most viewed

campaigns is gauged by the number of unique users who ‘saw’ the ads. The main goal was not just awareness, but actual engagement, they chose to measure the reach of their campaigns by the number of unique users who ‘clicked’ on the ads, not just ‘saw’ them.

All in all, the campaign reached 320,906 unique users who chose to click on its ads across the different touchpoints of the campaign: Google Search, Google Display Network, and YouTube. There were 263,001 unique clickers from the Arabic campaign, and 57,905 unique clickers from the English campaign.

**Click Through Rate (CTR)** is one of the most widely used online advertising metrics to gauge campaigns’ engagement. The ratio calculates how often people who see an ad end up clicking it. Average CTRs vary widely according to the industry of campaign, type of ad, precision of targeting, overall campaign objectives, and many other factors. The average CTR of all ads that ran 12 months prior to the research process was 2.41% for Arabic-language, and 1.73% for English language. These metrics served as an initial benchmark to evaluate the overall CTR ratio.

Thanks to this campaign, the target audience was reached. Moreover, some of the comments of the video ads received showed that they reached users who are sympathetic towards ISIS. Also the highest rates of engagement with their ads came from users searching for official ISIS content in both English and Arabic (eg. Dabiq magazine, Furqan Media, Hayat Media, Amaq news, etc.). This pilot project was just one example of how the technology can help addressing the problem of online youth radicalization.

In addition, the introduction of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and natural language processing technology to identify and remove terrorist content online is a positive step forward to make the Internet safer.

### P2P: Facebook Global Digital Challenge

P2P: Facebook Global Digital Challenge began in 2015 in collaboration with EdVenture Partners (EVP).

EVP is an organization dedicated to developing innovative industry-education partnership programs. They provide experiential learning opportunities which deliver a hands-on, real-world experience to students in addition to providing social impact and community outreach opportunities at colleges, universities, and high schools.

In the framework of P2P, over the course of one academic term, teams of students work with advisors research a designated peer group audience and create a strategy designed to best reach those peers. Teams receive a cash budget and Facebook ad credits to produce a real campaign with measurable results. To date, it has launched over 600 counter speech campaigns from students in 75 countries, engaged over 6,500 students, and reached over 200 million people.

### Online Civil Courage Initiative

The Online Civil Courage Initiative (OCCI) is an European Initiative challenging hate speech and extremism online. The OCCI was founded in Berlin, by Facebook, and is being led by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). The OCCI is the first strategic non-governmental effort to mount a proportional response to the propagation of hate, violence and terrorism across Europe. It delivers models that combine expertise from the technology, communications, marketing, and academic sectors to ‘upskill and upscale’ the civic response to online hate and extremism.

The initiative aims to provide online support for NGOs and activists working to counter hate speech and extremism online by supporting a



research focused on the relation between online speech and offline actions . Until January, 2019 OCCI reached 15,000,000 people online, trained 470 civil society practitioners and has 500 community members in total.

### One to One

Violent extremists are increasingly using peer-to-peer messaging to engage potential recruits on social media. ISD’s One to One programme uses a similar approach to dissuade and disengage extremist sympathisers online. One to One programme has engaged 723 radicalised individuals up til 2018.

Using various digital tools, the team maps and locates the users who are expressing extremist sentiments online. Following this identification, the intervention team engages in constructive dialogue online with these individuals, offering a positive alternative and deterring them from joining violent extremist groups. The team consist of former extremists, survivors of extremist violence and counsellors. The “formers” and survivors who initiate these conversations are drawn from the Against Violent Extremism (AVE) network – the largest network of former extremists and survivors of extremism in the world. These individuals have the credibility and insight needed to carry out these highly sensitive conversations with radicalised individuals online.



## Youth Civil Activism Network (YouthCAN)

ISD's Youth Civil Activism Network is the leading global counter-extremism network. The YouthCAN community unites over 1,300 young activists, creatives, and tech entrepreneurs in 130 countries to amplify the efforts in countering extremism worldwide. More than that, YouthCAN is designed to upscale and optimise youth-led grassroots counter-extremism efforts internationally. The network enables a global exchange of practices and know-how to foster collaboration and co-creation between its members. The network engages young people and provides them with the tools they need to create effective content aimed at challenging hate speech and extremism. The team works directly with youth activists, facilitating Youth Innovation Labs that provide them with the resources and expertise to develop and deliver counter-speech campaigns for preventing and countering extremism in their communities.

## Be Internet Citizens

While social media plays a vital role in the everyday lives of young people as citizens, education systems across the developed countries are reacting slowly. Extremist groups rely on false promises of status and purpose, manipulation, conspiracy and divisive rhetoric to exploit young people online. Against these methods, critical thinking skills and media literacy, social and emotional skills and meaningful digital citizenship capacities are a strong defence. Today's young people may be digital natives, but they still need to be taught how to stay safe, make their voices heard and play a positive role as citizens in the online space.

Consequently, the main aim of the programme „Be Internet Citizens“ seeks to meet these needs of the young people. A partnership between Google, YouTube Creators for Change and ISD, the project was designed to teach 13 to 15-year-olds about media literacy, critical thinking and digital citizenship, encouraging young people to be positive voices online while increasing their resilience to hate and extremism. Using an implicit approach to counter-extremism which focuses on popular culture and social issues, the project delivers

positive secondary effects, helping participants become more informed citizens, critical consumers and empowered producers of content.

## 2. Other measures against online youth radicalization

### EU actions plans and strategies

EU actions plans, communications, strategies have been adopted at the EU level in last decade to tackle the underpinning factors and reasons that lead certain people, in certain circumstances, to be recruited and get involved in extreme forms of violence.

The EU is working to stop terrorists from using the internet to radicalise, recruit and incite to violence. On 6 December 2018, the European Council confirmed its negotiating position on the proposed regulation in terms of preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online. The proposed rules apply to hosting service providers offering services in the EU, whether or not they have their main establishment in the member states. These providers will have to remove terrorist content or disable access to it within one hour from receiving a removal order from authorities. If a hosting service provider fails to comply with removal orders, they may be liable to a penalty of up to a maximum of 4% of their global turnover for the previous year. According to Herbert Kickl, Minister of the Interior of Austria, “online terrorist content has played a key role in almost every terrorist attack we have seen in Europe” so this agreement aims to send a strong signal to internet companies about the urgency of addressing this issue.

Every year, thousands of projects are submitted by organisations across Europe in order to receive financial support from the Erasmus+ Programme . In 2019, in the selection of projects, emphasis will be put also on:

- reaching out to marginalised young people, promoting diversity, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, common values of freedom, tolerance and respect of human rights as well as on projects enhancing media literacy, critical thinking and sense of initiative of young people

- equipping youth workers with competences and methods for their professional development, including for digital youth work, needed for transferring the common fundamental values of our society, particularly to the hard to reach young people and preventing violent radicalisation of young people as well

In addition, in 2010, the EU-funded **Clean IT project** was established to start a constructive dialogue between governments, businesses and civil society to explore how to reduce the terrorist use of the internet. This dialogue resulted in a set of general principles and an overview of possible best practices aimed at reducing terrorist use of the internet.

### Civil society

Civil society plays a crucial role in a whole-of-society approach to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. Civil society actors are often well positioned, credible and experienced in working with specific groups to help identify and address the grievances that make individuals more vulnerable to the influence of violent extremist groups.

In other words, the civil society is best understood as a diverse body of civil actors, communities, and formal or informal associations with a wide range of roles, who engage in public life seeking to advance shared values and objectives. Traditionally, civil society has operated in the physical space, but information and communication technology (ICT) innovations in the last decades have ushered a new area of citizen engagement and have funda-



mentally changed the way people associate and seek to advance social goals. Summing up, the values of the internet are very close to the core values of civil society so technology are more than needed in addressing the current problems of our society.

### Smart technologies help cities fight terrorism and crime

Today's cities are on the frontline of crime and terrorism. While some of them are clearly more at risk than others, all of them are vulnerable. The most successful ones are improving the intelligence gathering, strengthening the policing and community outreach, and investing in new technologies to improve urban safety.

Agile security measures start with the premise that many types of crime, radicalization and terrorism are non-random and even predictable. With some exceptions, they tend to cluster in time, space and among specific population groups. The massive increase in computing power and advances in machine learning have made it possible to sift through huge quantities of data related to crime and terrorism, to identify underlying correlations and causes. A growing array of crime prevention tools are not only connected to the cloud, but they are also running off deep neural networks. As a result, public authorities can easily identify license plates, run facial recognition software, map crime and terrorist networks and detect suspicious anomalies. Some of these technologies are even processing data within the devices themselves,



to speed up crime-fighting and terrorist prevention capabilities.

Tech companies have the technological capacities and resources to develop, in partnership with CSOs and IT-savvy youth, tailored communication strategies and campaigns that challenge violent extremist narratives and promote a culture of tolerance, dialogue and non-discrimination. They are also encouraging and supporting the research on the misuse and exploitation of the Internet and social media platforms, helping policymakers develop more effective responses.

## Chapter IV. Case studies

A community depends on the active participation of its members and now it becomes more and more accessible for people to be active on the Internet. It offers the space and even more, the virtual anonymity, to discuss, debate, and dissent, especially topics and issues that are emotive in nature, such as terrorism and extremism. A community has the power to create very real values, as members set their own standards, sense of identity, and meaning of group belonging. Furthermore, the ideology promoted within a community may control the individual's decision making and behavior, with the potential to facilitate the involvement and to instigate to action (Bowman-Grieve 2009).

Thus, sketching a global action plan for promoting online de-radicalization and producing counter-narratives becomes crucial with the current rise of violent incidents linked to online radicalization. Interaction models should be used to inform and guide the process of constructing persuasive counter-narratives. For there to be success of any action plan there needs to be an exchange of experiences and an enhancing international cooperation (Ashour 2010).

United Nations share the same thoughts regarding the importance of the international cooperation in order to prevent radicalization and extremism. The security council of UN released in 2017 a letter containing a comprehensive international framework to counter terrorist narratives. The framework consists of legal and law enforcement measures in accordance with obligations under international law, including international human rights law, public-private partnerships and the development of counter-narratives. The measures presented include the following:

- states have to strengthen international cooperation, including through enhanced border security and screening measures, with a view to preventing those guilty of such incitement from entering their territories



- it is important to distinguish between communications that may be criminal in nature and others that, while morally repugnant, do not rise to that level, thus States must ensure that any measures taken comply with all of their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law
- in order to safeguard the right of every persona to be free from the threat of violence, while protecting freedom of opinion and expression, it requires careful choices of statutory policy and language. Thus, effective counter-terrorism measures and the protection of human rights are not conflicting goals, but complementary and mutually reinforcing
- the business community, among others, has a role to play in fostering an environment that is not conducive to incitement of terrorism. As there is a direct connection between terrorism and information and communications technology (ICT), in particular the Internet, companies that maintain ICT platforms can continue to play an important role in preventing such abuse
- states, regional organizations, the private sector and civil society should establish effective partnerships, with a view to developing improved methods for monitoring and studying terrorist content transmitted over the Internet and other communications technologies and countering incitement to commit terrorist acts, utilizing it for intelligence work and referring it, where appropriate, to relevant law enforcement agencies



- many different approaches could be taken to counter these narratives, including, for example, scholarly rebuttals by religious authorities on issues like tolerance and non-violence; contradicting evidence on life in battle zones (including the testimonies of former terrorists); personal stories of the impact of terrorism on victims and their families; and information on the scale and severity of human rights abuses committed by terrorist groups. Much depends on the context in which the narrative is communicated, including the national context. Much also depends on the psychological profiles of targeted individuals. For this reason, counter-narratives aimed at a large audience often need to be supplemented by one-on-one interventions, including through the work of community mentors, mental-health professionals and others

As the threat of incitement to commit acts of terrorism had increased significantly worldwide, largely due to the increase in messaging transmitted over information and communications technology (ICT), as well as in more traditional venues, such as educational and religious institutions, there has been greatly increased interest worldwide in the role of counter-narrative campaigns as part of a comprehensive approach to the threats of terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism.

One example of good practice is the creation of The Counter-Narrative Handbook, funded by Public Safety Canada through the Kanishka Project. It was created by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) to help anyone looking to proactively



respond to extremist propaganda with counter-narrative campaigns and is intended as a beginner's guide for those with little or no previous experience of counter-narrative campaigning. It takes readers through the main stages of creating, launching and evaluating an effective counter-narrative campaign. Moreover, it mentions many examples and case studies of counter-narrative campaigns. Some of them are further presented below.

### Extreme Dialogue

Extreme Dialogue is a project designed to provide young people with the tools they need to build resilience against extremism in all its forms. Through a series of compelling films telling the true stories of those affected by extremism, with supporting educational resources, this project provides a range of perspectives on how violence, exclusion and hate change lives. Designed to be used by teachers, external facilitators or young people themselves, it is an engaging way of starting conversations about identity, difference and prejudice. Extreme dialogue provides also free educational resources supported by training designed for teachers.

[www.extremedialogue.org](http://www.extremedialogue.org)  
[www.facebook.com/extremedialogue](https://www.facebook.com/extremedialogue)  
[www.youtube.com/user/extremedialogue](https://www.youtube.com/user/extremedialogue)

### One to One

One to One is an online intervention program managed by ISD (Institute for Strategic Dialogue) which is facilitating interventions between former extremists and young people who show extremist tendencies online. It is using digital tools which utilise publicly available information to map and locate users expressing extremist sentiments online. Following this identification, the intervention providers engage in constructive dialogue online with the individuals, offering a positive alternative and preventing them from joining violent extremist groups. The intervention providers consist of former extremists, survivors of extremist violence and counsellors. They are drawn from ISD's Against Violent Extremism (AVE) network - the largest

network of former extremists and survivors of extremism in the world. By combining the latest digital mapping with the established human networks, these interventions can have a significant impact in preventing extremism.

### Against Violent Extremism (AVE)

AVE network empowers former violent extremists and survivors of violent extremism to work together to push back extremist narratives and prevent the recruitment of 'at risk' youths. AVE uses technology to connect, exchange, disseminate and influence all forms of violent extremism (from far right and far left to AQ-linked and inspired and gangs). It leverages the lessons, experiences and networks of individuals who have dealt first-hand with extremism. Through the website and YouTube channel, members can stay in touch, share ideas, collaborate, find investment and partners, and project their messages to wider audiences. AVE was devised and launched by Google Ideas at the Summit Against Violent Extremism in Dublin in 2011. It is managed by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and is a unique private sector partnership between ISD, Google Ideas, the Gen Next Foundation and Rehabstudio.

[www.againstviolentextremism.org](http://www.againstviolentextremism.org)  
[www.youtube.com/user/AgainstVE](https://www.youtube.com/user/AgainstVE)

### YouthCAN

YouthCAN is designed to upscale and optimise youth-led grassroots counter-extremism efforts internationally. The network enables a global exchange of practices and know-how to foster collaboration and co-creation between its members. The network engages young people and provides them with the tools they need to create effective content aimed at challenging hate speech and extremism. It works directly with youth activists, facilitating Youth Innovation Labs that provide them with the resources and expertise to develop and deliver counter-speech campaigns for preventing and countering extremism in their communities.

[www.youthcan.net](http://www.youthcan.net)

## Hours Against Hate

Hours Against Hate is an initiative designed to help stop bigotry and promote respect across lines of culture, religion, race, tradition, class, sexual orientation and gender by mobilizing participants to spend one hour or more with someone “different”. It is a call to action. Participants are encouraged to do service projects alongside a fellow community member that, “doesn’t look like you, pray like you, love like you or live like you.” Hours Against Hate is the connector – whether helping participants find each other or helping school groups and other organizations plan service events.

[www.hoursagainsthate.com](http://www.hoursagainsthate.com)

## Global Survivors Network (GSN)

GSN aims to provide a platform to amplify the voices of victims and survivors of violent extremism. To achieve this, GSN produced and disseminated a series of survivor testimonies through social media. They also produced an Oscar-nominated documentary, *Killing in the Name*. They combine their online work with offline social activism.

[www.fb.com/GlobalSurvivorsNetwork2016](http://www.fb.com/GlobalSurvivorsNetwork2016)  
[www.youtube.com/user/GlobalSurvivors](http://www.youtube.com/user/GlobalSurvivors)

## Network of Associations of Victims of Terrorism (NAVT)

The main aim of NAVT is to stimulate trans-national co-operation between associations of victims of terrorism and enhance the representation of victims’ interests at European Union level. This is done



through the setting up and running of a stable, focused and effective network of European associations of victims of terrorism or other non-governmental organizations with a special focus on supporting victims of terrorism.

## The Forgiveness Project

The Forgiveness Project collects and shares stories from individuals and communities who have rebuilt their lives following hurt and trauma. It provides resources and experiences to help people examine and overcome their own unresolved grievances. The testimonies collected bear witness to the resilience of the human spirit and act as a powerful antidote to narratives of hate and dehumanisation, presenting alternatives to cycles of conflict, violence, crime and injustice.

[www.theforgivenessproject.com](http://www.theforgivenessproject.com)

## Not Another Brother

Launched by the Quilliam Foundation, the campaign’s video is an emotionally charged story of a young man who only comes to realize his mistakes when it’s too late. It aims to challenge extremist recruitment narratives and was financed using crowd-funding. It was disseminated primarily via Twitter and YouTube advertising.

The latest video ad, developed by London agency Verbalisation, is part of the Quilliam Foundation’s #notanotherbrother campaign which aims to provide a



counter-narrative describing the human cost of radicalisation and exposure to Islamist extremism.

“[Isis] are radicalising our brothers to fight in Syria,” runs a statement accompanying the YouTube video. “They are tearing families apart. Enough is enough. Sharing this film will show [Isis] that their extremist views have no place in our community. No family should lose another loved one to such hatred. Not another child. Not another sister. #NotAnotherBrother.”  
Video: [youtu.be/ljIQ0ctzyZE](https://youtu.be/ljIQ0ctzyZE)

### JiLadz

JiLadz are a comedic duo from the UK who took on ISIS’ recruitment narrative in their satirical video *Falafels and Kafirs*. This is a low budget video that could have easily been shot on a mobile phone or webcam and required little editing. The video is a good example of how an effective video could be crafted without a high budget.

Video: [youtu.be/Ocsa37ojUsc](https://youtu.be/Ocsa37ojUsc)

### Hero Factor

Hero-Factor is a graphic novel created by Suleiman Bakhit. It presents a positive role model as an antidote to extremism and “adventure-seeking” narratives with cultural and historical legitimacy that rivals the inaccurate worldview of extremist groups. Produced with financial support from the Jordanian government it sold over 1.2 million copies in 2011.

Suleiman Bakhit, an ambitious comic book entrepreneur, believes Arab superheroes can act as the antidote to extremism that youth in the Middle East need. A native Jordanian and student at the University of Minnesota, Bakhit became an activist post-9/11 and routinely visited elementary classrooms to dispel stereotypes about Arabs in America.

“It’s a project dedicated to promoting heroism as an antidote to extremism,” explains Bakhit, speaking in front of a wall-sized projection image of his comics. “We are developing a terrorism prevention program that teaches young kids to take these heroic journeys... based on positive narratives of hope, of resilience, of love, of connection.”

Video: [youtu.be/EHxOnXnp4Ho](https://youtu.be/EHxOnXnp4Ho)

### English Disco Lovers (EDL)

The English Disco Lovers is a play on Far-Right English Defence League (EDL). It’s a “Google bomb”<sup>1</sup> campaign that uses a similar name with the same initials to try to outrank the far-right group on web searches and social media.

The English Disco Lovers was formed on 18 September 2012 by four anonymous London-based friends, who were discussing the appropriation of the initials EDL from the English Defence League and “putting it to better use”. Afterwards they wrote a manifesto expressing their aim to oust the existing EDL from the top of Google’s and Facebook’s search results, aiming to achieve this via search engine optimisation using a website, Twitter feed, and Facebook page.

### Abdullah-X

Created by a former Islamist who uses his experiences to dismantle extremist narratives, Abdullah-X is a young Muslim living in the UK and talks about current events in a way that speaks to his intended audience rather than lectures them.

“Abdullah X,” the new Web-only cartoon series, is the tale of a young Muslim man in London who is struggling with his identity and his faith. It is a story that its creator, a former extremist who spoke to CNN on condition of anonymity, knows all too well. He mentions to CNN: “Young people - the most vulnerable groups in society - were caught between government policy perspectives on how you combat terrorism and extremism, and this wall of shame and denial from within communities. I felt that we needed something that was going to be innovative and engaging”.

[www.abdullahx.com](http://www.abdullahx.com)

[www.youtube.com/user/abdullahx](https://www.youtube.com/user/abdullahx)

### Average Mohamed

Average Mohamed is a series of short animated videos intended for an upstream audience to build resilience to extremist narratives. The videos are short (1-2 minutes) in order to encourage views

and shares on social media. YouTube, Facebook and Twitter ads were used to reach thousands of youth in targeted locations across the US.

## My Jihad

My Jihad aims to reclaim the word jihad from extremists by emphasizing and amplifying more moderate, user-generated meanings of the term. My Jihad provides a virtual community that offers Muslims an online platform to share their stories and participate in the campaign on Twitter using the hashtag #MyJihad.

Besides the online community, the campaign spread also offline, as Vibrant posters with the words “My Jihad” alongside smiling, friendly faces and positive messaging plastered across public transport buses in states like Chicago, San Francisco and Washington DC.

## EXIT USA

EXIT USA is a project of Life After Hate and run by former white power extremists. They conduct outreach work dedicated to helping those who want to leave the far-right groups they are associated with. They produced a series of four videos, each shared on social media, and engaged with their audience in a thoughtful and positive manner by frequently replying to the comments and messages on their videos and social media.

[www.lifeafterhate.org/exitusa](http://www.lifeafterhate.org/exitusa)



## The French Association of Victims of Terrorism (AFVT)

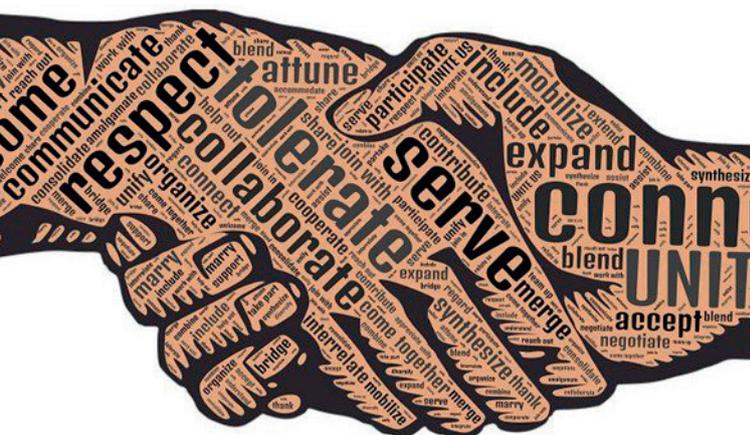
It was set up to provide victims of terrorist attacks with personalized psychological and legal support to respond, on the one hand, to the trauma they may have developed in the past, as a result of the aggression they have been subjected to, and secondly, to prevent manifestations of secondary victimization (e.g. the negative consequences that may result from the treatment of the victim by the authorities).

In parallel with victim assistance missions, AFVT has gradually developed and implemented a series of programs aimed at combating the phenomenon of violent radicalization and terrorism. The objective is also to develop a network of associations to help victims of terrorism and to relay its actions internationally, particularly through the International Federation of Associations for the Assistance of Victims of Terrorism (FIAVT). It also has a team of clinical psychologists specializing in the treatment of post-attack trauma, ensuring access for victims to individual follow-up on medium and long terms.

[www.afvt.org](http://www.afvt.org)

## Radical Middle Way

Radical Middle Way (RMW) is a non-profit Community Interest Company which aims to allow young Muslims – in the UK and around the world – to connect with their faith and explore what it means to believe in the 21st century. Founded in the wake of the 7/7 attacks on the London



underground, RMW aims to promote a mainstream, moderate understanding of Islam to which young people can relate. By working alongside grassroots partners, RMW creates platforms for open debate, critical thinking and deep spiritual reflection. RMW aims to give its audiences the tools to combat exclusion and violence and encourage positive civic action.

### EXIT Germany

EXIT-Germany is an initiative assisting individuals, who want to leave the extreme right-wing movement and start a new life. EXIT-Germany was founded by criminologist and former police detective Bernd Wagner and former neo-Nazi leader Ingo Hasselbach. EXIT-Germany has been working since summer 2000 to provide assistance to drop-outs from extreme and violent right-wing environments. They created the ‘Trojan’ T-shirts, which bore a skull and crossbones symbol and the words “Hardcore Rebels” that was fading after washing to reveal a hidden message: “What happened to your shirt can happen to you. We can help you break with this right-wing extremism”. About 250 of the shirts were distributed at the ninth edition of the Rock für Deutschland concert, in the town of Gera, in eastern Germany. Around 600 neo-Nazis were in attendance at the concert, which is run by the extreme right-wing National Democratic Party.

“With these T-shirts we wanted to make ourselves known among right-wingers, especially amongst young ones who are not yet fully committed to the extreme right,” said Exit founder Bernd Wagner.

## Conclusion

The present digital guide represents one of the main outcomes of the joint work of the project consortium represented by Danish Youth Team (Denmark), OEJAB-Austrian Young Workers Movement (Austria), PROJUVEN (Spain), Alternativi International (Bulgaria), within the project “Radical Online Education”, in order to provide youth workers with updated knowledge, tools and examples of good practices in the field of preventing online radicalization.

As the Internet became one of the most preferred and accessible platforms for recruiting and sharing radical ideologies, it is now more crucial than ever to promote counter narratives and equip youngsters with skills and competences in how to use critically the Internet, especially social media platforms. Thus, this guide gathered a useful set of guidelines, methods and case studies to be used by any youth worker interested in online de-radicalization.

The first chapter offered insights into the causes of joining radical groups and the influence of digital media. Young people experiencing exclusion, disorientation or a polarized world view may be within the first with potential to be recruited by radical groups. Thus, one necessary step in preventing radicalization is to act within social work, to become more active in the field of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, as these are the categories most targeted by radicals. The chapter went further into presenting general guidelines for taking measures and initiating projects to prevent radicalization. It gave theoretical and practical details starting from initiating and planning phases of a hypothetical preventing project up until the implementation and completion of the project.

The next chapter provided direct examples of methods that could be used in preventing online radicalization within the youth work. It started by presenting the advantages of using non-formal education methods in preventing online extremism, for instance providing a balanced synergy between cognitive, emotional and practical dimensions of



of learning, linking the individual and social learning while exemplifying with real-life, experimental and learning by doing activities which can be more effective when working with vulnerable groups of people. Furthermore, the chapter explained the concept of digital youth work and described different methods that could be used in preventing violent extremism, like interactive offline activities (e.g. role plays, simulation games), media literacy education, reflection/focus groups, online counselling and consultation or gaming and digital tools using apps, developing online games, online webinars, digital courses.

The third chapter presented Internet and technology as tools to counter radicalization. The governments, multilateral bodies, social media companies and civil society play key roles in taking effective measures. There are several ways in which these public institutions or private companies contributed in preventing youth radicalization. Some of the examples mentioned in the chapter include the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism joined by Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and Youtube, designed to scrub terrorist recruitment material from the Internet and promote counter-narratives; the Online Civil Courage Initiative, a European initiative challenging hate speech and extremism online, founded in Berlin, by Facebook which provides online support for NGOs and activists.

The guide ended with a series of case studies showing examples of good practices from around the world with people, organizations or campaigns aiming to counter and prevent extremism and radicalization.



All in all, this digital guide highlights the importance of sketching a global action plan for promoting online de-radicalization and producing counter-narratives as this becomes crucial with the current rise of violent incidents linked to online radicalization. Interaction models should be used to inform and guide the process of constructing persuasive counter-narratives. For there to be success of any action plan there needs to be an exchange of experiences and an enhancing international cooperation, thus this guide could be used as a measure in this direction.



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