

Welcome to the Toolkit "YOUTH WORK AGAINST VIOLENT RADICALISATION and EXTREMISM"

This card game has been created in the context of the work done by the SALTO EuroMed, SALTO EECA, SALTO SEE, SALTO INCLUSION and DIVERSITY, the National Agencies of Erasmus+ Youth in Action of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth.

Motivated by the increasing radicalisation of young people and the use of violence, hate speech, hate crimes, xenophobia, propaganda, attacks on migrants, political and religious extremism and terrorist attacks, this game, based on the previous research, aims to discuss the underlying causes and factors leading towards the adoption of a radical ideology and use of violent means. Young people are open to various types of radicalisation: right wing extremism, left-wing extremism, political-religious extremist violence and single-issue extremist violence.

Radicalisation leading to violence is a process whereby people adopt an extremist belief system – including the intent to use, encourage or facilitate violence – in order to promote an ideology, a political project or a cause as a means of social transformation.

¹ This implies that there are various factors and opportunities for radicalisation, but also potential for youth work to intervene in order to build resilience of young people and empower them to face the challenges.

Objectives of the Tool Kit

- Raising awareness of different factors and steps influencing the process of violent radicalisation
- Reflecting on the diversity of pathways and process of violent radicalisation and our own stereotypes
- Brainstorming potential youth work strategies for generic prevention of violent radicalisation

This game set consists of 42 cards - 37 cards which represent various factors shaping the perceptions and minds of young people, which may influence the process of adoption of radical belief system, 5 strategy cards and 5 case studies. By playing this game, players brainstorm various influencing factors and ways in which they are manifested through case studies, walk through the ladder of radicalisation process and devise strategies for intervention.

The set contains the following:

- 12 individual factors
- 6 relational factors
- 6 community factors
- 7 institutional factors
- 6 ideological factors
- 5 youth work strategies
- 5 case study sheets
- Ladder board

Number of players:

The game can be played in a group consisting from 3-6 players and a facilitator.

Duration:

60-90 minutes

Topics addressed:

Radicalisation, discrimination, hate-speech, stereotypes, socio-economic inequalities, human rights

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATORS:

Explain the topic and objectives of the game to the group. Select one of the variations of the card game described below and follow instructions. In each of the games, participants select cards in different colours, examining influencing factors and strategies/approaches and youth work methods can be used to pre-empt or prevent the process of violent radicalisation and shape young people's attitudes, perceptions and behaviours. ***Encourage participants to play roles different from the one they have in real life*** (e.g. male/female; student/unemployed). Make sure that you leave enough time for debriefing at the end and discuss the stereotypes held and also strategies. ***Emphasise the words of caution at the end!***

GAME 1 BUILDING YOUR PROFILE:

- Let one participant draw/select 4-7 factor cards in different colours randomly. They begin by reading their factors and building their profile or a personal story – if a card “gender” is selected, a participant may choose whether they are male or female, “employment” - employed or unemployed etc. (15-20 minutes)
- Once the participant creates a profile, other players discuss how the combination of these factors may influence their views, attitudes and behaviours. (15-2 minutes)
- Participants select cards with youth work strategies to debate which strategies may be used in this case to empower young person and build their resilience. (15-20 minutes)
- Debrief after the game – discuss how the factors may influence but do not determine the final outcome. What are some of the stereotypes that players hold about different factors? (10-15 minutes)

GAME 2 MY RADICAL STORY:

- The trainer/facilitator or a participant reads a case study card about a process of radicalisation. All case studies are based on real-life examples. (5-10 minutes)
- Each participant selects 2-4 factor cards which they believe have most influence on the young person from the story and explain their selection. Participants discuss their choices and others’ influencing factors (15-20 minutes)
- Participants, with the help of a facilitator, then examine potential youth work prevention strategies (from the card deck, or from own experience) and brainstorm the response options (15-20 minutes)
- Debrief after the game – What influencing factors have you found surprising? What strategies may or may not work in certain situations? Why/why not? (10-15 minutes)

GAME 3 CLIMBING THE LADDER:

- Place the ladder board on the floor and explain the six steps on the ladder and the process of adoption of violent ideology. Each person's path is different, and the transitions from one to the other may not be clear-cut, but these six steps help in understanding some of the personal paths towards formation of radical beliefs and turning to violent acts, as well as why individuals may engage or disengage in the process of radicalisation (5-10 minutes).
- Let participants select 3-5 factors, present the story of a young person influenced by these factors and suggest/ brainstorm where on the ladder of radicalisation they may be (10-15 minutes)
- Participants select strategy cards and devise potential new strategies for youth work intervention (20 minutes)
- The group devises a plan (training, campaign, cooperation with other actors etc.) for preventing and countering the radicalisation process (10-15 minutes) and evaluates the potential successes and flaws of the plan (10 minutes)
- Debriefing – participants reflect on how the game has shaped their understanding of the process of violent radicalisation and what they have learnt (10-15 minutes minutes).

A WORD OF CAUTION!

The factors identified here cannot be used to create a checklist or identify a profile of a young person who could potentially be exploited by the recruiters of extremist violent ideologies. Instead, these factors present a set of most common tendencies/potential influences on a young person or potential pathways towards radicalisation. The presence of factors themselves does not mean that violent radicalisation will occur.

The list of these factors and trajectories is by no means exhaustive, and there are many other potential pathways towards violent radicalisation and the factors motivating a young person to take up violence as means of pursuing a cause.

It is important to note that the process of radicalisation is unique and different for each individual. Individuals and communities influenced by the same factors make different choices. Moreover, youth work can only intervene and influence this process up to a certain point.



FIFTH FLOOR

The violent act and the mechanisms of inhibition

This is the operational phase, where individuals are equipped to carry out violent acts. They receive the necessary resources in order to inhibit the mechanisms that prevent taking violent actions:

- Social categorisation, which is used to identify the target and the enemy
- The exacerbation of differences between the intra group and the extra group
- The prevention of any mechanism of inhibition.

FOURTH FLOOR

Categorical thinking and legitimacy of the violent group or organisation – Recruitment

Entry into the violent group or organisation and beginning of the secret intra-socialisation

- The group promotes the dichotomous thinking “us against them” and increases the isolation

THIRD FLOOR

Moral commitment

Violent group or organisation appears to support the process of engagement by persuasion and the justification of the means to achieve the ideal society

- Using tactics of isolation, affiliation, confidentiality and fear
- Promoting the change the world or reform the society as the only option
- Refuge for the outraged, the disaffected, the marginalised and other people who find themselves in similar situations.

SECOND FLOOR *Aggression*

- Displacement of verbal aggression
- Displacement of physical aggression
- Indirect support for the groups or organisations that advocate and promote a vision of “us vs them”
- Direct support for the groups or organisations that advocate and promote a vision of “us vs them”

FIRST FLOOR *Options envisaged against unfair treatment*

- Perceptions of the lack of or limited possibilities of social mobility and alternative ways to improve the situation
- Perception of legal proceedings as unfair and biased
- Sense of injustice and illegitimacy of the normative system in force
- The aggression felt is projected towards those who are held responsible for the problems

GROUND FLOOR *Psychological interpretations of material and social conditions*

- Perceptions of the lack of or limited possibilities of social mobility and alternative ways to improve the situation
- Perception of legal proceedings as unfair and biased
- Sense of injustice and illegitimacy of the normative system in force
- The aggression felt is projected towards those who are held responsible for the problems

CASE STUDY 1

Ronald* is a 16-year old teenage boy in Sweden, growing up in a relatively stable family. Yet, he faced certain challenges in school with learning, due to the fact that he had a learning difficulty which was not identified throughout his education. He was sometimes bullied by his peers. These learning challenges translated to low self-esteem and he often felt inferior and isolated.

The education and social system has failed him in providing him with timely support, and he felt anger and frustration, which he channelled into music and sports. He listened to black metal, angry and aggressive music, and he made friends in those circles. He also joined the football supporters' group, which was a great outlet for his anger, but also sometimes brought him in trouble with police. At one of the football matches, he met people who belonged to a white supremacist group. They seemed to understand his anger, supported him and gave him a sense of belonging to a community, and a sense of direction. They also built his self-confidence and made him believe he was better than the others. He was involved in spreading hate speech and participated in various events, protests and attacks on people of different backgrounds.

CASE STUDY 2

Amina* was born in an immigrant family in London, UK. Her parents divorced, and she was placed as a foster child with her uncle's family for ten years. When she was a child, she was sexually abused by her uncle, and after speaking up about it, she was moved to another foster family. Her family disapproved of her testimony, and Amina felt abandoned and failed by the system. She had no therapy or counselling and attempted suicide several times.

At the age of 16, when she met her husband, she was listening to hip hop and had no interest in religion. When she got married, she started studying Islam, which helped her to find spiritual meaning in life. The version of Islam propagated by one radical Islamic group, promised her a state based on justice, social rights and capital punishment for rapists and sexual offenders. Amina was drawn to this idea and she also felt welcome by the extremist group, becoming a member in the mid-1990s. She isolated herself from friends and family and became an active recruiter, targeting particularly young women with social or family problems to join the group.

CASE STUDY 3

Elizabeth was born in the UK to English parents. Her father was a British soldier, and she was brought up a Christian. When she was 11, her parents divorced, and this had a great impact on her self-esteem and emotional well-being. At the age of 17, she adopted Islam, graduated from high school and went to study politics and religion at a well-known university in London. She took part in anti-war protests in 2001 in the UK, where she met her future husband.

Three years after their marriage, her husband committed a suicide attack, leaving Elizabeth with two children. She claimed to have had no relations with the attack. She remarried two years later and moved to East Africa, where she supported the terrorist group Al-Shabaab through fund-raising, buying weapons, transporting and recruiting people. She is suspected of being behind several bomb attacks in East Africa, and responsible for over 400 deaths.

CASE STUDY 4

George* is a young man in Athens, Greece, who has experienced great changes in his country as a teenager. The difficult financial situation in Greece and political turmoil, coupled with the sense of uncertainty about the future and isolation created in him a deep sense of injustice due to lack of opportunities and perception of exclusion. At the same time, Greece also hosted one of the largest numbers of refugees and migrants in Europe. George sympathised with their difficult situation, but also felt that Greece was carrying an unfair burden of a refugee crisis, and isolation from Europe. He began to listen more to the conservative and right wing groups who discussed the effects of growing number of refugees on Greek identity. Slowly, he started developing animosity towards them.

At university, George met other young men who shared similar frustrations and fears of unemployment. They discussed political and economic situation, and spoke about Greek history, identity and national pride. His friend invited him to join a new group, Crypteia, which was based on the stories of young Spartan men, and built a sense of brotherhood and national pride. Since then, George has taken part in several attacks on migrants and refugees in Athens.

CASE STUDY 5

Neil* is a young man in his twenties, growing up in Northern Belfast. He lives in an area which has traditionally experienced low income, deprivation, unemployment and high crime rates. The divisions between religious-political communities, protestant and catholic, continue to impact on everyday lives. He has witnessed members of former paramilitary groups engage in racketeering and organised crime, intimidation and violence, including beatings and shootings.

Similar to his peers, Neil feels that his community has been unjustly treated and is a victim of the British. He is brought up with stories of British brutality and violence, making him feel the need for revenge. Neil feels a strong sense of collective identity, belonging to "his group", a sense of brotherhood, and he is a sympathiser of IRA. He has not personally been involved in any violent actions, but he feels a sense of pride and excitement when he reads about such activities.



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Recruitment Opportunities

Adaptation from "Youth Work against Violent Radicalisation. Theory, concept and primary prevention in practise", p.18







