



# The contribution of youth work to preventing marginalisation and violent radicalisation

*A practical toolbox for youth workers  
&  
Recommendations for policy makers*

*Results of the expert group set up under  
the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018*

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The contribution of youth work as well as non-formal and informal learning to fostering active citizenship and participation of young people in diverse and tolerant societies, preventing marginalisation and radicalisation potentially resulting in violent behaviour

*A practical toolbox for youth workers and youth organisations and recommendations to policy makers*

*Results of the expert group set up under the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018*



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# Executive summary

The findings of the expert group<sup>1</sup> of policy makers, researchers and practitioners detail the role of youth work on promoting active citizenship, preventing marginalisation and violent radicalisation. The expert group follows in its work the model of three levels of prevention at a generic, targeted and indicated level. In each level youth work and non-formal and informal learning have a role to play and need to be supported in different ways. The expert group provides concrete proposals in each level in accordance with the different challenges each level poses.

The main outcomes of the expert group are:

- ✓ a practical toolbox for youth workers, both volunteers and employed, and organisations which train them with guidance on how to encourage active citizenship and prevent young people from marginalisation and radicalisation leading to violent extremism and deal with propaganda,
- ✓ policy recommendations addressed to public authorities from the local to the European level calling for a holistic approach in preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism.

## ***The practical toolbox***

Generic prevention targets all young people in an indirect way, by equipping them with life skills which contribute to their democratic resilience and thus strengthening their democratic values.

Youth workers at this level should:

- ✓ Be the mediators and facilitators when discussing difficult topics or topics they are not familiar with

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<sup>1</sup> Expert group on '*Defining the specific contribution of youth work as well as non-formal and informal learning to fostering active citizenship and participation of young people in diverse and tolerant societies and preventing marginalisation, radicalisation potentially resulting in violent behaviour*', set up under the EU Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018.

- ✓ Discuss questions of meaning with young people in a safe environment
- ✓ Dare to discuss taboo topics
- ✓ Know the trends, dare to confront them, tune in to young people's reality
- ✓ Enable young people to understand human rights and democratic values in practice
- ✓ Be aware of their values and implicit identity. Assess their own ability for self-reflection, critical thinking and emotional resilience
- ✓ Encourage intercultural and inter-faith discussions which underscore common values
- ✓ Make best use of existing training opportunities on processes of violent radicalisation
- ✓ Provide positive narratives to counter extremist ideologies
- ✓ Inform young people of public anti-discriminatory networks

Targeted prevention aims to reach young people who show tendencies towards or are interested in anti-democratic, extremist ideologies (or fragments of these ideologies) and propaganda, are close to extremist groups or have already been in contact with such groups.

Youth workers at this level should:

- ✓ Be aware when young people cut off bonds with their social groups. It could be a sign of violent radicalisation
- ✓ Try to identify the signals and assess them correctly. They are often a cry for attention
- ✓ Establish/build up a trustful relationship before confronting ideological issues
- ✓ Work with the mind-set



- ✓ Know the scenery of their area and be ready to intervene on site
- ✓ Use peer education activities to prevent young people from getting more involved in extremist circles
- ✓ Find out about young people's motives and reasons for joining extremism and develop strategies and social alternatives
- ✓ Create space for and get involved in dialogue. Train in dialogue facilitation techniques.
- ✓ Familiarise on the processes and dynamics of violent radicalisation and of propaganda as well as on motives and attractions
- ✓ Get to know the role of the symbols in extremist groups. It will help to approach young people from these groups
- ✓ Engage in dialogue: listen to young people's positions and demonstrate a democratic and humanistic point of view
- ✓ Establish co-operation with other stakeholders such as NGOs, schools, justice, security and social institutions.

Indicated prevention targets young people who are already engaged in an extremist group and want to drop out (or who are regarded as being open to receiving support for dropping out). This work should only be provided by experts and youth workers who are especially trained for it.

Youth workers at this level should:

- ✓ Build a trusting bond with young people they are working with.
- ✓ Be sure that they can meet the challenges before intervening.
- ✓ Form alliances with key figures in the community.
- ✓ Understand the process, work on the causes and develop alternatives.
- ✓ Approach the family, get to know its dynamics and seek the right person to get approval from before intervening.
- ✓ Develop security protocols to ensure security for the young person and themselves.

- ✓ Collaborate with experts from different sectors such as NGOs, schools, justice, security and social institutions.

### ***Policy recommendations***

The policy recommendations are based on the success factors of good practice projects or policy approaches across Europe. Different sectors must cooperate in a shared agenda to effectively fight the phenomenon of radicalisation leading to violent extremism as no sector can solve the problem alone. Therefore a holistic, integrated approach is required. The recommendations are structured in accordance with the *three-level prevention model* and are addressed to public authorities at the local, regional, national and European level within their respective sphere of competences.

***In a nutshell:***

*Cooperation among various fields needs time for meetings and developing mutual understanding and respect.*

*Thus regarding youth work it needs the willingness for increasing the resources for youth work in general to enable it to fulfil its tasks in generic, target and indicated prevention, including personnel as well as infrastructure but also investment in education and training.*

- ✓ At the generic level the experts are focusing on ways for systemic cooperation between youth work and various stakeholders such as formal education or welfare services. Suggestions are made on how to support youth workers and educators in general to deal with the newly occurring challenges.
- ✓ At the targeted level the experts are highlighting the importance of establishing structural, long lasting, sustainable partnerships between the youth sector and – among others – the formal education, social, health and security sectors. Moreover they call for the formation of networks at the national level where youth workers can seek advice, guidance and support.
- ✓ At the indicated level, the experts encourage a multi-stakeholder cooperation for tailor-made interventions for young people. At the same time they invite the security sector to collaborate systematically with youth workers to maximise the preventive impact in a way in which the values of youth work are respected. Finally, the recommendations stress the need to provide specialised training along with the necessary resources and equipment to youth workers to meet the additional requirements at this level of prevention.

# Final report of the expert group on the role of youth work for active citizenship, prevention of marginalisation and violent radicalisation

The findings of the expert group detail the role of youth work on promoting active citizenship, preventing marginalisation and violent radicalisation<sup>2</sup>. This report consists of five parts:

- ✓ A glossary which provides clarification on the terminology used in the context of this report
- ✓ An introductory part with background information on what this expert group is about, why it was established and how it carried out its work.
- ✓ A practical toolbox which provides useful guidance and advice to youth workers and organisations which train youth workers on how to prevent young people from marginalisation and experiencing violent radicalisation
- ✓ Policy recommendations to public authorities for a holistic approach in preventing violent radicalisation and extremism
- ✓ Conclusions

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<sup>2</sup> Expert group on 'Defining the specific contribution of youth work as well as non-formal and informal learning to fostering active citizenship and participation of young people in diverse and tolerant societies and preventing marginalisation, radicalisation potentially resulting in violent behaviour', set up under the EU Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018.



## 1

## Glossary of key terms

- ✓ *Radicalism* is the advocacy of, and commitment to, sweeping change and restructuring of political and social institutions which involves the wish to do away with traditional and procedural restrictions which support the status quo.
- ✓ *Radicalisation* is the process of growing willingness to accept, pursue and support far-reaching changes in society, conflicting with the existing order.
- ✓ *Radicalisation leading to violent extremism* is a process whereby a person accepts the use of violence to achieve political, ideological or religious goals, including violent extremism and terrorism.
- ✓ *Extremism* refers to positions that are strongly directed against shared values and moral standards within a given society. The term «extremists» refers to people who strongly disrespect or even fight those values and standards (including the use of violence).
- ✓ *Propaganda* is information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view. Propaganda is often associated with the psychological mechanisms of influencing and altering the attitude of a population towards a specific cause, position or political agenda in an effort to form a consensus to a standard set of belief patterns.
- ✓ *Active citizenship* stands for an active participation of citizens in the economic, social, cultural and political fields of life. In the youth field much emphasis is on learning the necessary competences through voluntary activities. The aim is not only to improve the knowledge, but also motivation, skills and practical experience to be an active citizen.
- ✓ *Democratic resilience* refers to cognitive openness (willingness and ability to see different points of view, truths), emotional flexibility (ability to feel solidarity, identification, trust with people of different backgrounds, to negotiate the complicated «quest for significance in the modern world») and social variety (willingness and ability to negotiate and maintain relationships with people of different backgrounds).

- ✓ *Generic prevention* (also called primary prevention) is any form of intervention, information, training aiming at whole groups or populations to prevent certain behaviour and any hazards. Generic prevention includes lifestyle-related measures (influencing conditions and behaviour) to reduce the risk or strengthen protective factors before a disruption occurs. The measures perspective is long-term, and it begins with a life stage as early as possible.
- ✓ *Targeted prevention* (also called secondary prevention or selective prevention) is concerned with the early detection of already existing symptoms, problems and behavioural deviations in individual humans and groups. It aims at persons and groups with a high-risk potential, to prevent (further) misdevelopment and to support those affected in the design of more constructive ways of life.
- ✓ *Indicated prevention* (also called tertiary prevention) aims at individual people already showing the behaviour or being affected by the threat, therefore less emphasis is placed on assessing or addressing environmental influences, such as community values. Nevertheless, school and family are important intervention settings. It aims to prevent succeeding problems and prevent relapses. This includes measures of rehabilitation and social reintegration.
- ✓ *Youth work* is a broad term covering a broad scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sport and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the area of «out-of-school» education, as well as specific leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders. Youth work is organised in different ways (by youth led organisations, organisations for youth, informal groups or through youth services and public authorities). It is delivered in different forms and settings (e.g. open-access, group-based, programme-based, outreach and detached) and is given shape at local, regional, national and European level.
- ✓ *Detached youth work* is a form of street-based youth work, which operates without the use of a centre and takes place where young people «are» both geographically and developmentally. It aims at making contact on the streets with those «hard to reach» or «unattached» young people.
- ✓ *Outreach youth work* is a form of youth work that takes place on young people's own territory and is a method of work that supports and compliments a youth centre or project based youth work. Primarily used to inform young people of services that exist in their locality and to encourage them to use such services, outreach youth work can also seek to identify, through consultation with young people, any gaps that exist in services aimed at meeting their needs.
- ✓ *Youth workers* in the context of this report refer to both volunteers and professionals.

- ✓ *The values of youth work are:* respect, dialogue approach, relation work (trust), inclusive approach, positive approach, tailor-made intervention, flexibility, voluntary based, non-formal and informal learning methodology, resource perspective (building on the young person's potential), youth advocacy
- ✓ *Cross-sectoral co-operation* in the field of youth implies that, at local, national and international level, an effective coordination exists between the youth and other sectors. This concerns, for example, family policy, education, gender equality, employment, security, housing and healthcare.
- ✓ *Marginalisation* is the process whereby people or groups of people are pushed to the margins of a given society due to poverty, disability, lack of education, also by racism or discrimination due to origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation
- ✓ *Political extremism* refers to positions and movements that are directed against the existing (democratic) principles and institutions, aiming to establish a different political order. Political extremist positions might go along with the willingness to use non-violent pressure and coercion, but might also include various forms of political violence other than terrorism or even acts of terrorism and war crimes as methods to effect societal change.
- ✓ *Religious extremism* refers to positions and movements legitimising their extremist political aims and methods by a certain (extremist) interpretation of a religious belief system.
- ✓ *Recruiting networks* are organised systems aiming at convincing young people to join an extremist cause.





## 2

## Introduction

### 2.1. *What?*

The expert group on the role of youth work for active citizenship, prevention of marginalisation and violent radicalisation follows up the Paris Declaration<sup>3</sup>, the Council conclusions on the role of the youth sector in combating violent radicalisation<sup>4</sup> and the Communication from the Commission on supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism<sup>5</sup>.

The mandate of the expert group was to define the «specific contribution of youth work as well as non-formal and informal learning to fostering active citizenship and participation of young people in diverse and tolerant societies and preventing marginalisation, radicalisation potentially resulting in violent behaviour».

The expert group met 6 times between March 2016 and December 2016. The participation of Member States in the work of the group was voluntary and Member States could join at any time. The following Member States appointed a representative: BE, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, ES, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT, MT, NL, AT, PL, PT, SI, and SE. The European Youth Forum was invited as a permanent participant.

### 2.2. *Why?*

The succession of terrorist attacks in Europe in 2015 and 2016 involving young people who were born and raised in Europe, as well as the rise in incidents of hate-crime and xenophobia, highlighted that in order to maintain open and inclusive societies, radicalisation leading to violent extremism has to be prevented at an early stage.

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<sup>3</sup> Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, 17.03.2015

<sup>4</sup> The role of the youth sector in an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to preventing and combating violent radicalisation of young people, 9460/16/ 01.06.2016

<sup>5</sup> Communication from the Commission on supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, COM(2016) 379/14.06.2016

The role of education<sup>6</sup> in that regard is crucial. It can instil young people with the necessary life skills and human rights values, contribute to a positive identity development, make them resilient against extremist ideologies and ensure their personal well-being.

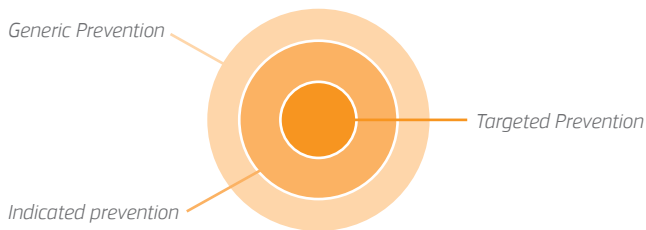
Youth work has a role to play in empowering young people to be active citizens and thus keeping them guarded from extremist ideologies potentially leading to violent behaviour. It helps young people gain skills and competences through non-formal and informal learning, such as teamwork, leadership, intercultural competences, problem solving, and critical thinking. It supports young people in the difficult identity issues that can arise in adolescence. It can make a difference by supporting young people, especially those at risk of marginalisation and social exclusion, with their problems by empowering them to deal with the challenges of growing up in a complex, pluralistic modern society.

### 2.3. How?

The expert group was requested to examine the contribution of non-formal and informal learning and the role of youth work to:

- The promotion of active citizenship
- The prevention of marginalisation
- The prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism (as a result of marginalisation)

The expert group structured a coherent approach based on the, hereafter, *three-level prevention model*<sup>7</sup>:



<sup>6</sup> Education in its broader sense includes formal, non-formal and informal learning. In particular both non-formal and informal education have a strong inclusive aspect as they are addressing not only the cognitive skills but also empower the emotional and social ones.

<sup>7</sup> For this model inspiration was drawn (amongst others) from prevention models developed by G. Caplan, R. Gordon and S. Johansson.

This model identifies three levels of prevention: generic prevention which targets all young people, targeted which aims to reach young people who are interested by anti-democratic ideologies (or fragments of it) and propaganda and indicated which targets young people who are already engaged in an extremist group and want to drop out (or who are regarded as being open to receiving support for dropping out).. In each level youth work and non-formal and informal learning have a role to play and need to be supported in different ways.

Both the practical toolbox and the policy recommendations follow the *three-level prevention model* and provide concrete proposals in each level in accordance with the different challenges each level poses.



## 3

## The practical toolbox

This toolbox is aimed at all youth workers who deal with young people who could be at risk of violent radicalisation and also to organisations which train youth workers and seek advice on that subject. It provides tips and guidance which were extracted from various good practice projects across Europe.

### 3.1. *Generic Prevention*

The generic prevention targets all young people. The prevention at this level is indirect, by equipping young people with life skills which are contributing to their democratic resilience and thus strengthening the democratic values. A strong aspect at this level is to empower young people to be able to make their own choices following those values.



However, a sense of vigilance is required along with a sense of urgency around the immense challenges our societies are facing. Violent radicalisation is a disruptive force of the social fabric which is here to stay and can affect all parts of the society. That is why youth workers can and should be ready to jump in and contribute to the identity building process of young people. Hereunder youth workers and organisations will find practical tips for generic prevention, followed by a short explanation.

■ **Be the mediator and facilitator when discussing topics you are not familiar with.**

There are difficult topics for a youth worker but they should be discussed and not avoided out of fear. Providing an answer is not always important but it is crucial to mediate and facilitate a conversation with young people. While accepting a young person's views and concerns at the same time a youth worker should reject extremist ideology leading to violent behaviour.

■ **Discuss questions of meaning with young people in a safe environment.**

Young people, as part of their identity shaping process are posing basic human, existential questions which may lead to diminished self-confidence. Safe environment means that young people should be treated with the necessary seriousness, attention, discretion and the understanding that these are important issues for them without fearing that they will be criticised.

**«Kreuzberg Initiative» against anti-Semitism e.V. KIGA**

*The non-profit organisation KIGA e.V., originated in a migrant community initiative in Berlin, Germany, addresses anti-Semitism, violent Islamism and anti-Muslim prejudice by means of civic, non-formal education. Work with young people includes workshops in schools and youth centres, youth exchanges (e.g. between German Arab youth and young Jewish and Arab Israelis in Israel), and peer trainings.*

*The youth workers want to support young people in developing their own views on different political and religious positions. The project aims at countering and preventing prejudice and extremist thinking by reflecting on shared values and ideas of «how we want to live together» and by showing possibilities and means of democratic participation.*

*For more information please visit: [www.kiga-berlin.org](http://www.kiga-berlin.org)*

■ **Dare to discuss taboo topics.**

As a youth worker, you should not avoid discussing issues such as sexual orientation, racism, political views, cultural differences, religion or mental health issues. There are no taboo topics which cannot be discussed. Engage in a conversation which does not make young people feel embarrassed or rejected and discuss these topics with young people. But remember, listening is more important than answering.

■ **Tune in to young people's reality, know the trends and engage in the conversation.**

In order for youth work to be more effective it should be attuned to young people's reality. For example, in search of answers – also with the rise of internet and social media presence in our everyday life – young people are fascinated by urban myths, the paranormal, conspiracy theories and extreme ideologies. Basic knowledge of current trends and issues in relation to extremist movements which are attractive to young people is essential. This is necessary to enable a youth worker to engage in conversation with young people.

**«BOUNCE» training and awareness-raising tools in Belgium**

*Based on scientific research and interviews with youngsters BOUNCE comes in a package of three, elaborating on different ways to enhance the resilience of youngsters against violent radicalisation. BOUNCE young is a resilience training programme for youngsters. In ten active group trainings, youngsters train and strengthen different aspects of their resilience. BOUNCE along is an awareness-raising tool for parents and frontline workers. It provides tips, insights and practical exercises for adults in the social environment of youngsters. It covers five topics: 'a positive point of view', 'strengthening resilience', 'resilient relations and communication', 'concerns and challenging situations', and 'information and influence'. BOUNCE up is a training tool for frontline workers. This tool instructs them in working with the BOUNCE young resilience training programme and the BOUNCE along awareness-raising tool.*

*For more information please visit: <http://www.arktos.be/bounce> and [www.bounce-resilience-tools.eu](http://www.bounce-resilience-tools.eu) where you can take a look at the BOUNCE manuals*





## ■ Enable young people to understand human rights and democratic values in practice.

Youth workers should be able to create educational activities based on non- formal and informal learning methodologies where practical issues on theoretical concepts could be addressed (for example through workshops addressing human rights). When starting or engaging in discussions on issues that concern young people, all views must be taken seriously. No expertise in ideologies and religion is required; instead understanding injustices (which are often a burning subject for a young person) can be a starting point for an honest discussion. In practice that means that youth workers should use a neutral moderate language, avoiding «us and them» discussions. At the same time it is important for youth workers to show (and have) a clear democratic and human-rights-oriented position themselves

### **ACTIVE «Human Rights Generation - Freedom in the 21st century»**

*«Human Rights Generation - Freedom in the 21st century» was a year-round European series of seminars (in Germany, Romania and Belgium) about understanding the concept of human rights and how they are currently being infringed in Europe. Around 130 stories from people across Europe were collected and sent in postcards to members of the European Parliament. Many participants were given the tools and knowledge in order to better understand of human rights and, particularly, on the issues of equality, gender and minorities rights.<sup>8</sup>*

*For more information please visit: <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2016/10/Youth-organisations-contribution-to-citizenship-education.pdf>*

## ■ Be aware of your own values and implicit identity. Assess your own ability for self-reflection, critical thinking and emotional resilience.

We all subconsciously label and exclude. Self-reflection, emotional and spiritual intelligence and ability for open critical conversation (also about your own position) are crucial. Be open to extra training to develop new skills in this area. Youth workers, especially those in contact with young people who are dealing with complex issues of identity and exclusion and who want to support youth to navigate their way through their dilemmas and emotions, must be aware of the need of objectivity.

## ■ Encourage intercultural and inter-faith discussions which underscore the common values.

Youth workers through mentoring and guidance must help young people to express and explore their own identity as well as that of others. A youth worker should accept the need for young people to express their fears and frustrations in relations to intercultural or interfaith issues. When intercultural and interfaith dialogue is occurring, a youth worker should try to stress the common values instead of spotting the differences.

<sup>8</sup> European Youth Forum publication 'Inspiring! Youth Organisations Contribution to Citizenship Education', 2016

■ **Make best use of existing training opportunities on violent radicalisation processes.**

The youth work sector is invited to make best use of existing opportunities to provide extra training to youth workers to learn more about the (psychological, pedagogical, social context) background of violent radicalisation processes, about extremist ideologies that youth are interested in and about the sect-like manipulations of extremist movements.

◀ *Training Dealing with Extremist Ideals*

*This training supports youth workers, teachers and other frontline workers to better understand violent radicalisation and to have 'difficult conversations' with radicalising youngsters of any creed (religious, political). It is based on a solid pedagogical perspective: approaching idealism as a 'normal' part of adolescence, which can derail if the necessary 'checks and balances' are not provided by adults. It invites social professionals to engage in an open fashion, allow youngsters to explore their feelings and ideas while also setting clear boundaries. The training includes the opportunity to practice skills in real case scenarios through use of an actor.*

*For more information please contact: [ESS@minszwnl](mailto:ESS@minszwnl).*

■ **Provide positive narratives to counter extremist ideologies.**

Youth workers should be able to provide young people with counter narratives to combat extremist ideologies. By counter narratives, it is meant either an alternative narrative (for positively presenting facts and offering alternative solutions to spiritual, psychological, social or political needs, desires and grievances) or a deconstructing narrative (which enables a young person to critically analyse an extremist ideology and debunk its inadequate answers to those needs and grievances).

■ **Inform young people of public anti-discriminatory networks.**

Young people are often not aware of the existence of public structures which can provide support and protection against discrimination practices. This could lead to them not feeling protected and opening themselves to extremist networks.

## *«No hate speech campaign Movement» from the Council of Europe*

*The campaign was set up in 2013 to mobilise young people in awareness-raising and acting on the issues related to hate speech and human rights online. Member States set up National Campaigns and took part in the European campaign to gain a better understanding of the issues young people are concerned with, tackle the new vulnerabilities of our societies that have emerged through the growth of the Internet and social media and ways forward to counter this challenge to human rights and democracy. This youth led and youth-oriented campaign aims to: support human rights education activities for action against hate speech and the risks it poses to democracy and the well-being of young people; mobilise national and European partners to prevent and counter hate speech and intolerance online and offline; promote media literacy and digital citizenship and support youth participation in internet governance; develop counter-narratives against hate speech; The campaign has been renewed until 2017 aiming to further recognise hate speech as an abuse of human rights and involve new partners notably law enforcement agencies and national monitoring bodies, for a zero tolerance approach to hate speech.*

*For more information please visit: [www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign](http://www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign)*

At this generic level, the role of youth work is to add an extra focus on resilience to anti-democratic influences. In all, youth work has a long experience in working on life skills of young people. By continuing their work on youth empowerment, participation and social inclusion (topics which are on their everyday agenda) and by assisting teachers in their everyday work youth workers are already contributing to the promotion of active citizenship and prevention of violent radicalisation at the generic level.

### **3.2. Targeted Prevention**

The targeted prevention aims to reach young people who show tendencies towards or are interested in anti-democratic extremist ideologies (or even only fragments of these



ideologies) and propaganda, or are close to extremist groups or have already been in contact with such groups. Prevention at this level is about fostering a young person's wellbeing. A focus of this work will be on youth at the periphery of the society and at risk of marginalisation since such life circumstances can create a specific vulnerability for violent radicalisation. However, youth workers have to keep in mind that there are different reasons why young people are attracted by extremist groups and those reasons differ from one individual to another.

In that level of prevention, youth workers must deal with more specialised issues and negotiate the challenges of identity development if they are to provide young people with the support they need.

- **Be aware when young persons are cutting off bonds with their social groups. It could be a sign of violent radicalisation.**

When young persons are cutting off their bonds with their social groups (this might involve parents, siblings, peers, teachers, etc.) and open themselves up only to those they accept, it could be a normal development in gaining independence but it also bears the danger of getting involved only in groups where extremism is a dominant mind-set. This might eventually lead to radicalisation into violent behaviour.

- **Try to identify the signals. They are often a cry for attention.**

A narrative of victimisation is often adopted by young people at risk. They tend to present themselves, and those who believe in the same cause, as victims. However, in many cases this is a signal for attention, not for violent radicalisation. Expressing support for extremist thoughts might often be nothing more than a form of protest against the adult society and calls for exchange and the chance to get their own needs and wishes heard and their own problems noticed.

- **Assess the signals correctly. A drastic change in the behaviour or in external appearance could be a signal that this young person undergoes a lot of changes or troubles inside.**

Even if a young person shows a drastic change in behaviour which youth workers cannot agree with, they should keep their positive approach, offer space and empower the young person to work with these challenges. Youth workers have to pay attention to potential signals for a beginning shift towards violent extremism and at the same time be aware of the risk to (wrongly) stigmatise young people as potential extremists.

## Adopting a fundamentalist islamic dress code

*It is often perceived that once a young person changes external appearance in accordance with the fundamentalist islamic dress-code that means that s/he has already become a Salafist<sup>9</sup> and thus a youth worker might hesitate to approach such young person. This is a mistaken perception: this change might be a signal that the young person undergoes a lot of inside changes and needs more attention. Youth workers who see a young person having adopted such dress-code should not be afraid or hesitate to involve in a conversation (in which they would involve if the young person did not adopt such dress code), in the fear of might not being able to provide responses to specific religious issues. Instead, youth workers must maintain an even closer contact with the young person and concentrate on what they do best by listening carefully and deeply behind the words, trying to understand the real issues behind this change.*

### ■ Work with the mind-set of the young person.

The closed mind-set is an important prerequisite for extremist ideologies to be attractive. That means that young people with an open mind-set are less vulnerable to such ideologies. It is not the ideology that persuades the young person, it is the young person who is attracted by the ideology because it psychologically fits. Therefore one way for youth workers to counter extremism could be addressing the mind-set, by supporting young people to become open minded and reflective in dealing with various ideologies, ideas and values.

### ■ Build a trustful relationship before confronting ideology.

A progressive approach to confronting ideological notions should be adopted when approaching a young person. Youth workers will have to address ideological aspects eventually (if these aspects appear to be relevant for the youngster) but they have to make sure to do so in an adequate way. Before confronting ideology questions, a trustful relationship between the youth worker and the young person should exist. Confrontation should preferably take place in face-to-face settings, not in front of the group and always in a respectful way. Youth workers should also make clear to young people that it is the ideology they reject and not the young people.

### ■ Know the scenery of your area and be ready to intervene on site.

Detached and outreach youth work can provide a good and successful means to get in contact with young people at risk of radicalisation into violent extremism. Good knowledge of the local networks and of the area is important along with the ever present prerequisite for successful youth work: the existence of trust. But detached youth workers must have

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<sup>9</sup> *Salafism is a conservative movement within Islam which lives Muslim religion in the way it was lived 'originally', in the times of Muhammad's' first fellow men. Three types of Salafists can be identified: the apolitical orthodox, the political who promote sharia and the political jihadists. Out of these types only the political jihadists are the ones who accept violence as means for action.*

the necessary resources for this work: The request would be for time, space, both for youth and youth workers, on the spot in their area, as well as for equipment. Being aware of the local networks in the vicinity of the young person like family, neighbourhood, school and sport clubs and knowing the scenery is crucial for youth workers.

### *The «Easy Street» Project in Ireland*

*Easy Street engages and works with gang members groups to support positive change within its members and to facilitate their reintegration into the community. A dedicated outreach team of youth workers builds relationships with young people who are in gangs and encourages young people to look critically at their actions, reflect on the consequences and provides them with alternative options for their behaviour.*

*All gangs possess many positive attributes but mostly gang behaviour is seen by others in a negative light and classed as anti-social. Easy Street engages the gang members, identifies and harnesses the positive attributes within the gang and, using a youth work approach, provides the opportunity for those positive attributes to be experienced by the gang members and seen by others in the community in a more positive light.*

*Through this process young people start to see and believe that they have strengths and are not just a nuisance to society and therefore should behave that way. Easy Street provides programmes and interventions that facilitate new experiences, in which needs are met in new ways that result in long term better outcomes for the gang members.*

*Easy Street is also based on and supported by community-based role models who have turned their lives around by choosing healthy, positive, alternative lifestyles. Some young people, supported by Easy Street, have completely changed their lifestyles from what they eat, to when they sleep, to what they put into their body in terms of substances, to how they behave in their community, to how they are seen in their family and in turn how they impact on their younger and in some cases older sibling.*

*For more information please contact: Ms. Angela Birch – [angie.birch@bryr.ie](mailto:angie.birch@bryr.ie)*

### ■ Use peer education activities to prevent young people from getting more involved in extremist circles.

Create an extremism-free setting where at-risk youngsters are provided with a safe space and are offered the opportunity to express their feelings among peers who are not under extremist influences. That could be an effective way to have these at-risk youngsters pulled away from an extreme environment.



■ **Find out about young people's motives and reasons for joining extremism. Develop support strategies and social alternatives.**

Youth workers should try to find out about individual motives as well as individual experiences and backgrounds that may have caused a young person's vulnerability to extremist (ideological and social) offers. Against this background, support strategies could be developed to help a youngster countering critical experiences and life circumstances as well as positive alternatives may be developed to counter extremist groups and identity offers.

**Acceptance-based youth work with right-wing oriented youth in Germany**

*In Bremen, Germany, a team of youth and social workers focusses specifically on youngsters that show right-wing oriented or extremely intolerant behaviour towards ethnic and other minorities. The project approach includes clique work, individual aid, parental involvement and community work.*

*One core assumption is the necessity to build trustful relationships as a precondition for the youngster's willingness to reflect on arguments and to take offered alternatives seriously. Young people are then confronted with their problematic attitudes and they are shown alternative ways to experience membership, recognition and participation (in peer groups, school, suburb etc.). Work also includes biographical background work, especially on aspects that are regarded as relevant for a young person's interest in right-extremist or other extremely intolerant views and groups.*

*In working on these different levels the project cooperates with other, e.g. therapeutic, services.*

*Recently the project also started working with youth who are regarded as being vulnerable to islamist extremist offers.*

*For more information visit: <http://vaja-bremen.de>*

■ **Create space for and get involved in dialogue. Train in dialogue facilitation techniques.**

The ability to set up a dialogue with young people at-risk and target the emotional, spiritual and social level instead of their ideology per se is important and should be a basic skill of youth workers. This skill in the targeted prevention requires a basic knowledge of extremist ideologies.

■ **Train on dynamics and processes of violent radicalisation and of propaganda as well as on motives and attractions.**

Youth workers should get training in the processes and dynamics of radicalisation as well of propaganda (group dynamics, mass psychology, psychology of projection, the



working of sects and sect-like movements, and scape-goat mechanisms). This would provide some insight to youth workers on how recruiting networks operate, how to counteract and thus help young people to not be dragged down by these networks. Basic understanding is required also on what extremist ideologies and groups are offering to young people: acknowledgement, sense of belonging, orientation, meaning, status, housing, sex, money, extra attention and a space to discuss matters which cannot be discussed in settings such as schools or are considered taboo. That is why youth workers must not be afraid of stepping in and having these difficult discussions. The recruiting networks will.

■ **Use social media to learn what is discussed among young people.**

Youth workers must feel comfortable when using social media. They must be able to identify which are the trending topics that are being discussed and if necessary intervene. It is not about confronting the ideology but addressing the mind-set of the young person. Keep in mind, however, that although social media have a growing influence and provide introvert persons a space to speak their minds, recruitment to extremist movements most often occurs via existing social relations.



## **The «Web Walkers» in France**

*The project «Web Walkers» aims at improving media literacy of young people for safe surfing in the web and equipping youth workers with the necessary tools for online youth work. Inspired by the homonymous programme of Sweden, the National Institution for Families, young people, youth organizations and families are cooperating to teach what young people can do and what not when they are online and how to protect themselves. The project takes an online educational approach by developing its presence on social networks or any websites where young people meet. The intervention can take different forms: an instant message conversation, an exchange, receptive listening, the possibility to bring young people together, advice and support, information, project support, etc. Although cannot make up for the work being done in a youth centre, online youth work gives the opportunity to youth workers to reach out to the less outspoken. This project has outlined various challenges notably the lack of IT literacy among youth workers to cope with the challenges of the digital environment and how to handle the transition from the digital to the real world by implementing a physical follow-up which at a certain point is necessary.*

For more information please visit: <http://promeneursdunet.fr/>

### **■ Get to know the role of the symbols in violent radicalisation. It will help to approach young people from these groups.**

In targeted prevention, good knowledge of symbols and of the ideologies could be important to effectively engage in discussions and reach out to those groups of young people.

### **Getting to know the ideology**

*Experience shows that in political and religious extremism knowing the symbols as well as having a basic knowledge of the ideology offers advantage to a youth worker who wants to effectively reach out to young people in the vicinity of such groups and engage in discussions with them. However, no specialist expertise is necessary. In both cases it is advised that youth workers do not engage in ideological discussions before a trustful basis with the young person has been established. In these discussions they should give space to young people to unfold their positions and make clear that they reject the ideology the young people refer to, but not the young people as persons and the needs and questions they have. Youth workers should also challenge them to reflect what this ideology means in practice for their lives and show a clear democratic, humanistic and non-violent position themselves.*

### **■ Establish co-operation with other stakeholders.**

The general skills required at targeted prevention – empathy, setting of boundaries – are hard to maintain when a young radical starts acting out. No one, parent, teacher, youth worker or friend can handle this by themselves. Such complicated situations call for greater cooperation between all relevant actors surrounding the young people.

### 3.3. *Indicated Prevention*

Indicated prevention targets young people who are already engaged in an extremist group and want to drop out (or who are regarded as being open to receiving support for dropping out). Such rare cases of young people could be located either on the streets or even in prisons and institutions.<sup>10</sup>

It is important that youth workers at this level of prevention are well trained and collaborate with other professionals from different fields, in particular social and therapeutic services and the security sector (the police, secret services, etc.). At the same time, youth workers should strive to maintain the bond of trust on which the success of youth work is based.



#### ■ **Build a trustful bond with young people you are working with.**

Trust between youth workers and young people as well as providing a safe space for discussions is a prerequisite for successful youth work. It allows the youth worker to confront the young person and engage in honest discussions. This requires an open-minded, sincere and discreet environment where, while all matters can be discussed, the young person is aware of the obligations the youth worker has towards the security sector (e.g. the obligation to share certain information).

#### ■ **Be sure that you can meet the challenges before intervening.**

A youth worker without specialised training or a tailor-made advice from an expert will not be able to intervene effectively when working with young people at the indicated level of prevention. Without sufficient expertise, a youth worker may do more harm than good.

#### ■ **Form alliance with key figures in the community.**

Forming alliances with the right people and building trustful relationships with key figures in the local community, such as religious leaders is an important prerequisite for successful outreach to young people at the indicated level. Knowing the right people in the community is crucial.

#### ■ **Approach the family, get to know its dynamics and when necessary seek the right person to get approval from before intervening.**

Knowing the family and social surroundings of a young person is essential. By knowing its dynamics a youth worker can identify who has a positive or a negative influence on the young person and understand who the key influential figures are. The youth worker

<sup>10</sup> This might involve correctional, penitentiary or social institutions in general.

should then seek the approval of the appropriate person (either in the family or the social surroundings) in order to gain access to the young person.

### ■ Understand the process, work on the causes and develop alternatives.

Find out about the individual backgrounds, biographical experiences and motives for joining as well as for leaving the group. Look for and work on alternatives to extremist group offers together with the young person. Provide practical help in building up an alternative life outside extremist groups. Work on biographical experiences (if necessary, with professional support e.g. by therapists).

#### *Story from the field in the Netherlands*



*An experienced youth worker was contacted by the municipality with the request to cooperate in a difficult case. A young man had been signaled on his way to join jihadist forces in Syria. On his return, the municipality coordinated an intervention in which they wanted to involve youth work. The youth worker started by making a standard assessment; this young man came from a troubled family environment: absent father, mother struggling to cope as both father and mother to her children. The young man had limited mental capacities and was easily influenced by his peers, in this case by the radical group he had fallen in with.*

*With much effort, the youth worker managed to gain his trust. Knowing the family dynamics and gaining mother's trust was key in this. Also focusing on the practical aspects (schooling, job, family relations) and leaving religion out of the intervention to begin with. On the basis of this trust, it was later on in the process possible to confront him with more difficult subjects and also to bring in religious expertise to discuss some of his ideological assumptions.*

*In this case, even though the youth worker made significant progress, the story did not have a happy ending. A number of triggers happened at the same time: the young man lost his girlfriend and had a fall-back, after which certain public services lost their patience (from the perspective of the youth workers they had too high expectations, not taking into account his limited mental capacity). The young man dropped out of contact, reconnected with the radical group and swiftly left for Syria, dying weeks later in an airstrike.*

*Lessons from this are: even if you do everything right, not everyone can be saved. Also always try to involve the family. In this case, the youth worker supported the family to process the loss and in the course of this did important work to prevent the younger brother to derail after this experience.*

## ■ **Develop security protocols to ensure security for the young person and yourself.**

A security protocol should be provided for youth workers working with extremist young people at this level of prevention. The protocol should be developed in collaboration with the state authorities, in particular the security sector and can serve as a framework for managing the overall process. All involved parties, including the young people and the youth workers should be aware of the protocol and in particular of the obligations it entails before the beginning of the intervention.

### *Development of security protocols in Germany*

*In Germany, Violence Prevention Network has developed security guidelines in cooperation with security authorities in every advice centre to ensure that youth workers and the young people involved will remain protected throughout the mentoring process. To be successful, the security guidelines must be transparent and both sides are aware of it before the beginning of the intervention. The security guidelines establish basic rules and red lines not to be crossed, as well as the conditions, legal basis, and data protection principles under which reporting to the security authorities will take place. This possibility is also communicated to the client before/s/he agrees to the intervention.*

*For more information please visit: <http://www.violence-prevention-network.de/en/>*

## ■ **Collaborate with experts from different sectors.**

At this level of prevention youth workers should collaborate with other professionals from different fields such as those working in the security, mental health and social services domain as well as experts on extremism, in order to bring together a broad variety of competences. This is crucial to successfully tackle the multiple problems that might have caused a young person's vulnerability and that made extremist groups or ideologies attractive to the young person.

## ***Disengagement and deradicalisation work in prison in Germany***

*The ‹Taking Responsibility – Breaking away from Hate and Violence› programme is a training programme in Germany based on a non-confrontational approach to deradicalising young people in prison. Based on the concept of ‹Education of Responsibility› the programme is specialised on working with ideologically motivated young violent criminals. Since 2001 the programme has evolved from including right-wing oriented and xenophobic youth to neo-Salafist young people as target groups. The programme enjoys is well accepted among the judicial authorities, the federal ministries the participating prisons and international partners. Evaluation results indicate a significant reduction in the re-imprisonment rate.*

*On a voluntary basis, the approach consists of deradicalisation training, civic education, long-term group training and post-release stabilisation coaching. Important during the training are the separation of offence and offender and the questioning of ideology, strategies of justification and offence. Trainers and trainees are supposed to have a reliable relationship based on confidence and respect.*

*For more information please visit: <http://www.violence-prevention-network.de/en/>*

## 4

## Policy recommendations

This part of the report provides policy recommendations based on the success factors of good practice projects or policy approaches across Europe. Different sectors must cooperate and have a shared agenda to effectively fight the phenomenon of violent radicalisation as no sector can meet the challenges alone. Therefore a holistic and integrated approach is required. Different alliances have to be formed in each level of prevention and thus the following recommendations are structured in accordance with the *three-level prevention model*. Cooperation among various fields needs time for meeting and developing mutual understanding and respect.

Thus regarding youth work it needs the willingness for increasing the resources of youth work in general to enable it fulfilling its tasks in generic, target and indicated prevention, including personnel as well as infrastructure but also investment in education and training.



## 4.1. At the generic level

Young people by participating in civic activities (volunteering, local engagement, etc.) are instilled with life skills which act as a deterrent to violent radicalisation and thus prevent disengagement from democratic values. A common characteristic of young people is their need to feel listened to. They have a range of different needs that need to be met. This quest often brings them in touch with radical ideas, which are not necessarily harmful. On the contrary they are useful in the shape identity process. Therefore it is important for young people to have a space where they can discuss their ideas.

**Authorities, within their respective spheres of competence, from the local and regional to the national and European level, are invited to take into consideration the following:**

A holistic and integrated approach is required. Form long-lasting, sustainable partnerships of all relevant sectors in the context of a strategy. Make good use of existing projects, practices or policies that work and mainstream them.

### *«Ufuq e.V.» in Germany*

*Ufuq. e.V., an NGO in Germany, counters polarized debates on «parallel societies» and «jihadism», by supporting professional pedagogical discussions on Islam, Islamophobia and Islamism. Making young people familiar with the plurality of muslim life worlds and religious traditions is seen as crucial in countering islamist « attractiveness to young people, as well as creating spaces for discussing religion and identity questions openly.*

*Ufuq e.V. started as a small civil society initiative in the city of Berlin. From 2015 to 2019 it will be funded by a special government funding programme, designed to support initiatives in the field of promoting democracy and countering violent extremism in developing nation-wide structures as non-government, non-profit youth welfare organizations.*

*The projects' team of researchers and educationalists provides trainings, develops pedagogical materials (in German and English) and runs a website with academic and pedagogical information on these topics.*

*For more information visit: [www.ufuq.de](http://www.ufuq.de)*

- ✓ Develop alternative positive narratives and support communities in their fight against social exclusion and hate speech by implementing effective anti-discrimination policies.
- ✓ Promote structural and systemic cooperation between schools, youth work and welfare services. Introduce sessions at school where young people can discuss matters that concern them. This could include open debates on different matters, surfing the internet for hoax spotting and training on critical thinking. Allow

teachers and social workers to be supported by youth workers with experience in holding difficult conversations on identity issues.

### «Class of intercultural competencies»

*Europe4Youth, a member of the Polish National Youth Council, cooperates with the Jagiellonian University in Cracow within the initiative called «Class of intercultural competences». It consists of a cycle of meetings for high school pupils (30 recruited people from different high schools in Cracow) in the university premises delivering citizenship education (workshops and simulations on political systems, civil society mechanisms, public participation opportunities, etc.). The programme lasts 3 years (during high school) and at the end, the pupils are rewarded with extra points for application procedures on Universities and recognition of the learning outcomes.<sup>11</sup>*

*For more information please visit: <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2016/10/Youth-organisations-contribution-to-citizenship-education.pdf>*

- ✓ Allow young people to design the above mentioned sessions or actively involve them in a bottom-up approach. Encourage young people to design and facilitate discussion of issues that concern them.
- ✓ Encourage the use of non-formal methodologies and informal learning within formal education settings for civic education. Encourage a bottom-up approach in designing such classes allowing young people to explore what human rights or democratic values mean for them in practice.
- ✓ Involve higher and middle management and secure their commitment in developing an informed vision within schools and youth work of what identity issues young people face and how to promote their democratic resilience.

### **Study on extremism in the youth domain in the Netherlands**

*Often frontline workers (teachers, youth workers, youth care) recognize the importance of paying attentions to the identity issues that young people face concerning their search for meaning, belonging and justice. An in depth study among practitioners in the Netherlands showed, however, that they often experience difficulties in getting their organisation to dedicate time, funds and support to making time for dealing with these issues, allowing practitioners to follow trainings, buying in new methods, bringing in expertise from the outside. Also, support is needed to share worrying signals with outside partners (i.e. the police). Management can be worried about the image of a school or community centre. Practitioners need to be aware and competent, but they require the support from higher and middle management to be able to achieve this.*

<sup>11</sup> European Youth Forum publication «Inspiring! Youth Organisations Contribution to Citizenship Education», 2016



- ✓ Provide training opportunities to youth workers and educators on subjects such as dialogue techniques and conflict management which would allow them to be able to handle difficult discussions on sensitive matters.
- ✓ Provide training opportunities or access to information to youth workers and educators regarding basic understanding of the factors leading to violent radicalisation.
- ✓ Provide training opportunities for youth workers and educators in general to develop their IT skills, get familiarised with social networks that are appealing to young people and learn how to approach them online.
- ✓ Offer support to youth workers and educators by establishing local, regional or national pools in order to facilitate access to organised knowledge and expertise. Since violent radicalisation does not always occur often enough to justify training, these pools will give the opportunity to youth workers and educators to engage in collegial and in-depth discussions, to share their concerns on specific and often very complex cases, to discuss the details with a colleague and work out a possible path of intervention together.
- ✓ Make best use of existing anti-discriminatory or other networks that provide support services to young people especially at the local level but also at national and European level.
- ✓ When it comes to designing policies or measures which aim at addressing low level anti-social activity or youth delinquency, justice departments and the police should explore cooperation possibilities with youth workers.



### *«Network youth street» in Slovenia*

*Running already for four years, «network youth street» is a project which was developed in 2012 to tackle delinquent behaviour of young people in the municipality of Ljubljana. Local authorities decided to tackle the issue through youth work instead of applying security measures.*

*The project is street-based, where seven youth organizations in cooperation with the municipality, are reaching out to young people in order to change their behaviour and thus solve the problem. Through a positive approach and the creation of a friendly and encouraging environment, youth street workers are raising young people's awareness about responsible use of public spaces, so that they start to appreciate the freedom to gather and hang there. Their point is not to moralise or tell them what to do. Instead, youth street workers establish opportunities for young people to self-reflect and realise what is right and what is wrong, not just for them, but for the whole community. In such a way they can become more aware of their actions and the consequences which follow. The main tool for doing this is conversation, so that they come to the point that leaving trash behind is not right and if everyone pays attention to it, it is very simple. They try to be creative in the approach that they use, modifying and changing it depending on the situation.*

*As success factors were identified the cross-sectorial cooperation, the peer to peer approach and the outreach youth work. The main difficulty which this project had to face was the distrust from locals on the effectiveness of this project. However the successful implementation of the project resulted in the persuasion of the authorities on the value of youth work and the positive perception of local youth by the community.*

*For more information please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/MrezaMladaUlica>*

- ✓ Create «hubs» at the local level where all sectors (e.g. schools, municipal services, sports / cultural clubs, communities, NGO's) surrounding young people including their families can come together and discuss issues that concern them, seek guidance and establish contacts.
- ✓ Establish «helplines» and help desks where young people can seek support, guidance and discuss matters that concern them.

### **The «Kellimni» project in Malta**

*The project provides online support to Maltese youth through a dedicated team of trained operators. It provides a safe and respected environment where young people can discuss a series of matters that concern them, varying from puberty and body changes to dealing with others and hate speech. Young people can communicate with the Kellimni team on an anonymous and confidential basis through various – youth friendly- channels (e-mail, social networks, and chat applications). The goal of the project is to support young people in their journey to realise their goals and potentials and make them feel safe well, respected and dignified. The project runs in partnership between the public sector and the civil society and the service is provided free of charge.*

*For more information please visit: [www.kellimni.com](http://www.kellimni.com)*

## **4.2. At the Targeted level**

The need for cross-sectoral cooperation at this level is prominent. Since youth workers will need to draw from the expertise of and at the same time provide their support to other fields (e.g. social work, justice, security, education and training, health) a setting for mutual exchange is necessary.

At this level, many young people find themselves in a vulnerable position often troubled, at risk or already socially excluded, do not find their place in society or experiencing family or health problems. They could find comfort in groups and radical ideologies might be appealing to them. These young people, especially if located in environments where radical influences are present, are extremely exposed to recruit networks.

**Authorities, within their respective spheres of competence, from the local and regional to the national and European level, are invited to take into consideration the following:**

- ✓ Establish structural, long lasting, sustainable partnerships between municipal services and the sectors of social, education, labour market youth, health, justice, security at the local level.
- ✓ Set up a pool of specialists at the national level from the various sectors where youth workers can seek advice and guidance.
- ✓ Provide a wide-ranging list with useful resources which can provide information (e.g. facilitate access to relevant pedagogical methods and materials from other countries by translating them), advice or expertise at the local level and at the national level and ensure that youth workers can access it if necessary.
- ✓ Establish «helplines» at national level where young people and their surroundings can seek support and guidance. Such helplines or helpdesks can focus either

on young people who seek support when feeling endangered, their social surroundings looking for advice how to deal with the situation of a close person is at risk of violent radicalisation, or on the wider public.

### «Beratungsstelle Extremismus» in Austria

*In Austria, the «Beratungsstelle Extremismus» (helpline extremism), established 2014 by the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth offers free of charge help, if relatives, social workers, teachers or any other person are worried, that someone might have joined an extremist group. It offers information and advice concerning questions on extremism (politically or religiously motivated extremism such as right wing extremism or jihadism.) The helpline offers workshops and lectures as well as direct personal counselling and expertise. The team is multi-professional (psychologists, adult educators, researchers) and multi-lingual to reach also persons with migrant background. The service is anonymous and confidential. This helpline is placed within the nationwide network of open youth work, bOJA, which is a service point for open youth work in Austria. Since its start the helpline was contacted more than 1.700 times (almost 1.000 first time contacts) and 86 families made use of the face-to-face counselling. Additionally, more than 4.400 participants were reached in workshops. The «Beratungsstelle Extremismus» is networking with national and international groups of experts in the field of radicalisation and extremism.*

### Confidential line in Lithuania

*In 2016, the State Security Department (SSD) launched a confidential line aiming to channel public attention to current intelligence threats and to educate the society; available 24/7 which connects directly and anonymously to trained intelligence agents as an opportunity for each and every citizen to contribute actively to the enhancement of national security. In that way, responsibility, resistance, critical thinking and civic empowerment are encouraged and thus civic trust is promoted.*

*This campaign is an example of strategic attitude and expedient communication of our country: it is supported by the Ministry of National Defence, Lithuanian Army, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, in cooperation with 10 000 citizens, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, and business marketing experts DANSU. They all have expressed support and have been presenting the project as an example of social advertisement in Lithuania.*

*For more information please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHkJBFdHd4c>*

- ✓ Provide youth workers, both volunteers and employed, with training opportunities for specialisation at this level of prevention.
- ✓ Provide sufficient funding for youth work enabling it to fulfil all tasks mentioned in the toolbox, including detached youth work (working hours, number of staff, education and training, supervision, infrastructure, etc.).

- ✓ Create (an) international network(s), or give visibility and access to existing ones, based on the different level of challenges in each country, for sharing information and expertise between specialised in the targeted prevention youth workers, and facilitate their access to these international networks.

### **Radicalisation Awareness Network — Centre of Excellence<sup>12</sup>**

*The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) and its Centre of Excellence is the European hub and platform to exchange experiences, pool knowledge, identify best practices and develop new initiatives in tackling radicalisation. It engages, different actors (including youth workers, psychologists, educators, social workers, community leaders and NGOs together with police, prison and probation officers as well as representatives from different ministries and administrations) in all relevant areas ranging from enhancing resilience against extremist propaganda on the internet, radicalisation in prison as well as in the educational environment with a particular focus on youth. The RAN is conceived as a network of networks and cooperation between other relevant networks and the RAN Centre of Excellence helps pooling relevant expertise and mutually reinforcing initiatives in different policy areas. 9 RAN Working Groups, all chaired by experienced practitioners from the relevant fields, connect several hundred actors from all over Europe. The RAN Centre of Excellence is furthermore mapping latest research findings which are directly relevant for the concrete work of practitioners and authorities within the different RAN working groups and provides specific support to stakeholders in the Member States in designing comprehensive prevent strategies and setting up multi-agency frameworks. The RAN working group on «Youth, Families and Communities» is specifically addressing issues such as family support structures, community work and furthermore has a strong focus on informal and non-formal education. In this respect youth work and support for youth workers are of the key components of RAN.*

### **4.3. At the indicated level**

**Authorities within their respective spheres of competence, from the local and regional to the national and European level, are invited to take into consideration the following:**

- ✓ Provide funding for the cooperation of the stakeholders.
- ✓ Encourage multi-stakeholder cooperation (e.g., between the security sector, mental health professionals, social workers and specialised youth workers) in order to provide tailor-made interventions to young people who are already engaged in an extremist group and want to drop out.

<sup>12</sup> Several initiatives presented in this toolbox are also part of a selection of practices featured RAN. For more information please visit: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-best-practices/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/index_en.htm).



### *The «Exit» project in Sweden*

*«Exit» provides hands-on individually targeted support to those who want to leave white power/neo-Nazi environments behind. Exit offers personal meetings, provides a contact person available 24/7 and assists in contacts with governmental agencies. Exit cooperates with housing corporations, the police, social services, other legal entities and family and friends of those who want out. Exit also offers counselling to parents, siblings, partners and others close to its clients. Exit has existed since 1998. Some of those who have left white power/neo-Nazi environments through the support of Exit now work for the project, building on their own experiences and deep understanding of what it means to leave such environments behind. Other activities of Exit include capacity building in municipalities, schools and non-profit NGOs working with the target group.*

*For more information please visit: <http://exit.fryshuset.se/english/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNlgKsb1ObA>*

- ✓ Establish multi-stakeholder «round tables» in order to share information, discuss concrete cases as well as potential collective interventions, at the local level.
- ✓ Provide youth workers with training opportunities for specialisation at this level of prevention.
- ✓ Examine the possibility of having youth workers train law enforcement officers on how to better reach out to young people.

### *Countering extremism in Denmark*

*The Danish approach to preventing and countering extremism and violent radicalisation, be they political or religious, is based on systematized multiagency collaboration between various social-services providers, the educational system, the health-care system, the police, and the intelligence and security services that has evolved over a decade. The sharing of information necessary for such collaboration is regulated by the Danish Administration Justice Act, which limits the use of shared information. The Danish approach draws on decades of experience with similar collaboration from other areas and benefits from already existing structures and initiatives developed for other purposes than specifically preventing extremism and violent radicalisation. It includes state, regional and local actors and is structured around efforts targeted respectively at the wider society, extremist individuals and groups, and individuals involved, or in imminent danger of becoming involved, in illegal activities. Concrete methods are continuously being developed, both top-down and bottom-up, to meet contemporary challenges.*

*For more information please visit: <http://www.djis.dk/en/research/the-danish-approach-to-countering-extremism-holds-potential-as-well-as-challenges>*



# 5

## Conclusions

### **5.1. *The role of youth work***

The mandate of the expert group was promoting active citizenship, preventing marginalisation and violent radicalisation. In preparing these documents the specific focus was on prevention and the contribution youth work and youth workers can make. It is very important to state that radical ideas are not in themselves problematic. This changes when radical ideas develop into violent extremism.

Violent radicalisation jeopardises first and foremost a young person's future and well-being and with that our European project. Youth work has a role to play in building democratic resilience and empowering young people to become active participants in the European democratic society.

### **5.2. *Three levels of prevention***

The expert group has identified three levels of prevention at a generic, targeted and indicated level. Youth work has a unique contribution to make at each different level. Youth work's contribution at a generic level is about equipping young people with life skills which contribute to their democratic resilience and strengthens their democratic values. At the targeted prevention level, youth work can work at an individual or collective perspective with young people who are close to or have been in contact with extremist groups. At the indicated level we find young people who are already engaged with an extremist group or extremist ideals. Here youth work, along with other key professionals, can support young people to transition out of these groups.



### **5.3. *The role of policy makers***

Member States are invited to take into account the policy recommendations having in mind existing practices in their countries which could be further developed to face newly occurring needs and challenges. It is of the utmost importance to develop these activities in close cooperation with youth workers respecting the values of youth work.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, cross-sectoral cooperation between youth work and security and justice departments, social work and formal education system among others, is encouraged to be further developed and mainstreamed. The recommendations highlight the need for action in certain key areas, such as an integrated approach, capacity building of the youth sector, developing sustainable partnerships and maximising current resources.

### **5.4. *Current challenge***

The recommendations prepared and presented in this document should be read and used in accordance with national and local realities that differ across the European Union. Violent extremism is a very real threat to our democratic values. Because young people are naturally drawn to more radical ideas when they grow up, they need a place where they can discuss and experiment.

The value of youth work lies in its ability to be flexible and address the reality of young people. Youth work can make the difference by supporting young people, especially those at risk of marginalisation and social exclusion, with their problems and by empowering them how to deal with the challenges of growing up in a complex, pluralistic modern society. In that way, further recognition and support of the role of youth work role from Member States and the European Union is needed.

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<sup>13</sup> See glossary. *The values of youth work as identified in the final report of the expert group on 'The contribution of youth work to address the challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment', European Commission, 2015*

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