Radicalisation Awareness Network

RAN

Working Group
on Communication and Narratives
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1. To facilitate the **exchange among practitioners** themselves on the one hand and between them and **other stakeholders** on the other hand.
2. To deliver **support to both the EU and its Member States** (in certain circumstances, also to third countries).
3. Finally, to **disseminate the learning** gathered on the basis of the RAN activities to several audiences.

Key elements of RAN 'RAN DNA'

- Involving and training first line practitioners is key
- Prevention is key
- Multi-agency approach is key: involve NGOs, communities at risk, victims, formers
- Tailor-made interventions, adapted to local circumstances, are key

Achievements of the RAN

- Over 2000 practitioners from all MSs connected
- 120 RAN events organised in nearly all MSs.
- Peer review of best practices – Collection of nearly 100 practices, updated on 1 September 2015.
- Member state support in different MSs., like exit workshops, train-the-trainer programmes.
- Early detecting of trends, such as foreign fighters.
- Deliverables from Working Groups like: Education Manifesto, Prison and Probation practitioners working paper, Handbook voices of victims of terrorism.

Propaganda, the art of twisting information to make it fit your interests/ideology, always plays a role in radicalization.

Extremists promise:

- a simple meaning to an otherwise complex life

- an ideology that divides the world in an in- and an out-group

- emotional benefits like a new family, brotherhood and the fight for a supposedly just cause

- adventure and glory

Propaganda can work when people are:

- in emotional crisis looking for new direction or support

- *curious* about what "else is out there" or *in doubt*, when a perceived truth losses attraction

Do alternative and counter narratives really work?

Yes, if specifically directed at a well-researched target audience that is:

- *curious* about extremist content or

- *in doubt* if an accepted extremist worldview is working out for them

Campaigns should:

- highlight flaws, lies and contradictions (Counter) or promote role models/examples for positive action and offer new direction (Alternative)

One-to-one digital interventions (online social work) are necessary to:

- follow up the campaigns to satisfy the curious/radicalized individuals´ need for attention and (inter-)action

- evaluate if the campaigns and interventions did have the desired impact

To counter extremist propaganda and promote positive alternatives effectively *civil society* must be put in the *driver seat*.

Networks of *pro-democratic* activists and NGO´s should be created.

Governments should help create, support and maintain these networks but stay in back seat

The EU Commission´s "Empowering Civil Society Program" could be an opportunity to create such networks. Key aspects to consider are:

- a transparent *vetting process* on how to select the right partners who promote European values

- a strong *evaluation* component from the start to be able to select and promote good practices

- *easier access* to funding for small NGO´s

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http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/index_en.htm