

Newsletter #4 Germany

EDURAD: ADDRESSING VIOLENT RADICALISATION: A MULTI-ACTOR RESPONSE THROUGH EDUCATION



Co-Funded by the
Internal Security Fund
Police (ISF-P)
Programme by the
European Union

November 2021/Issue 4/ Germany

Grant Agreement Number: 871110



“Topics behind the Topics”

By Sevgi Söyler, Connie Castein, Michaela Köttig and Michaela Glaser

This issue spotlights a hub developed in Germany, bringing together professionals, teachers, (school) social workers, and political advisers. The hub meetings have created valuable spaces for deep reflection and open exchange. The hub participants highlighted that it is helpful to shed light on “the topics behind the topics” in the context of prevention work on extremism.

Why a hub?

As described in previous newsletters, Germany has a relatively long tradition of addressing political extremism through education, with the first national funding programmes reaching back to the early 1990s (Bohn, 1993; Rieker, 2002). During the last 20 years, the prominent nationwide programmes based at the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) promoted preventive structures and networks on different levels (BMFSFJ, 2016; BMFSFJ, 2018; BMFSFJ 2020).

The European Commission’s support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

IN THIS ISSUE

TOPICS BEHIND THE TOPICS

This issue spotlights the development of a hub around questions of education and preventing extremism in Germany.

By initialising a hub, we did not want to copy existing work and networks in Germany, but rather—based on our research results in the project—connect actors who have not come together before to reflect on and advance specific topics in the context of preventing extremism in Germany. The hub consisted of practitioners in non-formal education who are active in school-based PVE-E activities, teachers, and professionals in various positions, who take on an advisory role in preventing extremism through education. In addition to their specific expertise in PVE-E, the participants also contributed their broad knowledge of pedagogical topics and experiences from various professional fields to the network.

What did the hub do?

The German PVE hub focused on:

- networking of professionals engaged in school-related PVE-E activities
- how to strengthen the ability of school educators to develop trustful communication with students on topics (potentially) related to extremism
- networking for professionals who are (also) active in school-based activities, with young people in the field of preventing extremism through education (PVE-E), as well as teachers and professionals who take on an advisory function for schools in the field of PVE-E in various positions
- the question of how to strengthen the ability of school educators to develop trustful communication with students
- discussing on digital platforms outside of one's organisation with school and non-school actors/professionals from one's own and other professional groups, who are active in schools in the prevention of extremism
- networking as a platform for exchanging views and reflecting on experiences with different pedagogical approaches and pedagogical tools (e.g., films, podcasts) to strengthen complementary competencies.

What has the impact been?

What was exciting and helpful for the participants at the hub meetings was the joint experience and insight that, in the context of prevention work, talking and listening to young people helps to reveal, that is, the “topics behind the topics” which are repeatedly mentioned as reasons why young people turn to political or religious groups.

Important aspects here are:

- Experiences of belonging and exclusion
- Safe places (spaces free from discrimination, racism, mobbing, etc.)
- Building relationships: How can trusting relationships between teachers and (school) social workers, students and teachers, and (school) social workers and students be created?
- Participation: Children and adolescents should be offered genuine/lived participation in important processes in everyday school life; for instance, they must be

heard on issues that concern them, and they should be allowed to express their opinions and be actively involved in shaping school life as part of the school system.

- Educational obligations of teachers: Teachers must do more than just impart didactic knowledge; they must offer democratic education. Teachers must be aware of their educational obligations!
- Professional reflection on teachers' attitudes towards students, e.g. self-awareness of prejudice and diversity.
- Democratic education and awareness of diversity, for instance, should be compulsory during teacher training, both in theory and in practice, e.g. reflection during periods of practical experience.

What comes next?

In addition to the existing network composed of the hub participants who met each other at the two hub meetings, the network will be extended to include colleagues of these participants and their networks.

On the academic level, going beyond the EDURAD project, we at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences are planning to offer hub meetings once or twice a year to enable the participants to continue discussing their experiences with each other and with experts in specific thematic areas. The hub meetings will be in the format of a forum so that the present participants can intensify their discussions and make contact with new participants. Future meetings will discuss reforms in teacher training, everyday democratic education in schools, and school quality assurance processes.

References

BMFSFJ (2016). *Federal Government Strategy to Prevent Extremism and Promote Democracy*. Available at: <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/115448/cc142d640b37b7dd76e48b8fd9178cc5/strategie-der-bundesregierung-zur-extremismuspraevention-und-demokratiefoerderung-englisch-data.pdf> [Accessed: 23.07.2020]

BMFSFJ (2020). *Federal programme „Live Democracy!“*. Available at: <https://www.demokratie-leben.de/bundesprogramm/ueber-demokratie-leben.html>. [Accessed: 23.07.2020]

BMFSFJ (2018). *German Federal Government Report on the Work and Effectiveness of the Federal Government Programmes to Prevent Extremism*. Available at: <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/130220/78e5ce069aba4bb2982d23892c933c00/extremismusbericht-englisch-data.pdf>. [Accessed: 23.07.2020]

Bohn I., Kreft D., Stüwe G. and Weigel G. (1993). *Das Aktionsprogramm gegen Aggression und Gewalt*. In: Otto HU., Merten R. (eds.) *Rechtsradikale Gewalt im vereinigten Deutschland*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Rieker, P. (2002). *Aktionsprogramme gegen Rechtsextremismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit – Überblick und Einschätzungen*. In: *Recht der Jugend und des Bildungswesens* 50(2002)1: 27–37

Join us and spread the word!

Visit our Website!

<http://edurad.edu>

Follow us on Facebook (Page)!

<https://www.facebook.com/edurad2021/>

Join us on Facebook (Group)!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/edurad/>

Connect with us on LinkedIn!

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/edurad/>

Partners:



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth



FRANKFURT
UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED SCIENCES



Center for Social
Innovation



VRJE
UNIVERSITEIT
AMSTERDAM

kunstuniversitätlinz
Universität für künstlerische und industrielle Gestaltung