Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

OSCE ODIHR

Youth Engagement to Counter Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism

Report on Findings and Recommendations

Joint OSCE Secretariat – OSCE ODIHR
Expert Roundtable

Vienna, 23-24 October 2012

This report should neither be interpreted as official OSCE recommendations based on a consensus decision, nor as the official position of the OSCE Secretariat, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, or of any particular OSCE participating State; it reflects opinions expressed individually by participants in the expert roundtable.

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Executive Overview

On 23-24 October 2012, the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department/Action against Terrorism Unit (TNTD/ATU) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) jointly held an expert roundtable on Youth Engagement to Counter Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT).

The roundtable brought together over 100 participants from state authorities, international organizations and civil society, including many youth representatives, with expertise in the fields of countering terrorism, protecting human rights and promoting tolerance. Participants discussed both the challenge of countering VERLT among youth and the role of youth in countering VERLT, addressing potential concerns arising in these contexts from a human rights and gender perspective.

A keynote speech was delivered by two youth representatives from Youth Action Northern Ireland (YANI), who shared their views on the spread of VERLT among youth and discussed why and how youth might be involved in efforts to counter it, with a particular focus on the example of Northern Ireland. The keynote was followed by a panel discussion aimed at better understanding youth terrorist radicalization in order to design and implement effective strategies and policies to counter this phenomenon, including by mobilizing youth themselves.

Participants were then divided into three break-out groups for in-depth discussions respectively focused on good practices and lessons learnt to counter youth VERLT through (1) Education; (2) the Media, including Information and Communication Technologies; as well as (3) the Arts and Sport.

As a result of these discussions, each working group formulated recommendations, which were discussed on the following day with all participants.

Summary of Findings

Keynote Presentation

1. Although terrorist radicalization can happen at any age, young people in search of a sense of belonging, purpose, and/or identity may be more vulnerable to violent extremism and terrorist radicalization. This is often compounded by negative perceptions of state authorities, especially of the police and security forces which are perceived to belong to or support 'the other'. Geographic segregation of communities may further exacerbate the risk of VERLT by hindering mutual understanding between the communities and reinforcing mistrust and the fear of 'the other'. Violent extremists exploit and nurture these perceptions to portray themselves as providers of justice and safety for 'their community' and to pressure young people into taking side.

2. Terrorist radicalization among youth can and should be prevented, starting at an early age, in formal schools settings. Particular efforts are needed with respect to teenagers, a group that is generally harder to engage with as they have specific interests and may avoid or oppose those they perceive as figures of authority. However, teachers often do not have the confidence and specialized skills needed to address issues such as violent extremism, and a segregated school system may reinforce ignorance and intolerance as opposed to promoting living together. Informal education plays a key complementary role and youth work by civil society organizations can support peace-building and promote tolerance based on positive and enjoyable activities.

3. Lessons learnt can be drawn from activities carried out by civil society organizations working with youth. YANI for instance seeks to understand and take into account in its projects the different attitudes towards violent extremism that young men and young women have. The organization works to build political consciousness and promote critical thinking and broad-mindedness among young people, encouraging them to hear the opinions of others and take notice of inequality and discrimination in all contexts. They prompt young men to challenge patriarchal and macho stereotypes to which they have subscribed under the influence of their peers. They make young women question the prevailing opinions about traditional position of women in the community that they tend to conform to, and to envisage an active role in the context of peace building as opposed to feeling invisible and disempowered. YANI seeks to provide young people with safe spaces in which they can raise their concerns and react to events related to violent extremism and terrorism; facilitators guide them in exploring and challenging their ideas and certainties by interacting meaningfully with youths from other communities. Thus, youths can channel their energy and sometime their frustration and anger into positive alternatives to violent extremism.

4. While radicalization is often understood and spoken with a negative connotation, it was argued that youth should be radicalized towards peace and democracy. Youth should be encouraged to embrace and actively promote peace, tolerance and democracy although these may be held as radical ideas in their communities.

Panel Discussion

5. Terrorist radicalization does not follow a linear path and the conditions conducive to it vary from one individual to another. It is often the result of a combination of contextual and personal factors, which can include feelings of alienation, exclusion, deprivation, insecurity or victimization. Young people however appear particularly vulnerable.

6. Terrorist radicalization and recruitment of youth to violent extremism and terrorism appear, in many instances, based on social bonding rather than ideological grounds. Young people may initially turn to violent extremist groups to find a sense of recognition, fellowship, and identity. Youth may also join these groups because they offer forms of support that meet their material and socio-psychological needs, e.g., money, protection, and solidarity. The disproportionate impact of the economic crises faced by many OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation on young people in terms of poverty and unemployment may increase youth vulnerability to VERLT.

7. Violent extremist groups tend to rely on 'black and white' thinking to create an identity and a sense of belonging in opposition to an 'other' who is vilified and dehumanized. They do not give any space to doubt, critical thinking or self-criticism, and attribute the entire responsibility for an individual's situation, in particular real or perceived grievances, to the 'others ' and the society at large. Violent extremist narratives all tend to place guilt on others. However, each violent extremist group has its own characteristics and narrative which need to be properly understood and taken into account when developing counter-narratives.

8. Human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the freedom of religion or belief, the freedoms of expression and of the media, should be upheld at all times while countering VERLT. Holding views or beliefs that are considered to be radical or extreme, as well as their peaceful expression, should not be considered crimes *per se*. Non-violent forms of extremism should not be the object of law-enforcement measures unless associated with another unlawful act, as legally defined in compliance with international human rights law. States should promote a pluralistic, democratic debate, tolerance and universal human rights in order to challenge non-violent extremist ideas which advocate for the destruction of democracy and negation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, freedom of expression is a democratic requirement protected under international law and enshrined in OSCE commitments. Any restriction to freedom of expression and freedom of the media has to be based on law, justified, necessary, proportionate and non-discriminatory.

9. VERLT is a co-product of society. It finds a fertile ground in growing intolerance, racism and xenophobia, including as a result of counter-terrorism policies which have stigmatized and discriminated against certain individuals based on characteristics such as religion, racial or ethnic origins. Such discrimination is not only a factor conducive to VERLT but also a practical obstacle to the engagement of youth against VERLT as it risks undermining their interest and willingness to contribute to the prevention of terrorism. Intolerance and discrimination should be effectively combated, starting by ensuring that counter-terrorism measures are not discriminatory in their formulation or implementation.

10. Society should offer credible alternatives to violent extremism, including in terms of narratives, role models and opportunities for mobilization, such as democratic participation, civic engagement, access to health and social services and employment opportunities. The state has a primary responsibility in this regard and a broad range of

public authorities need to co-ordinate their actions at both national and local levels, to deepen and share their understanding of VERLT. Front-line actors, such as the police, teachers and social workers, have a special role to play as they may come in first-hand contact with individuals on the path to VERLT. The state should empower and support these actors on a continued basis through the development of tools and provision of training on how to prevent and respond to complex situations involving VERLT.

11. Civil society organizations and in particular youth organizations have also a key role to play in preventing and countering VERLT among youth. They often have better access to hard-to-reach individuals and can connect them again with their family, to social workers, psychologists, law-enforcement and other relevant actors.

12. Education, both in formal and informal settings, is critical in countering VERLT among youth. Young people should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand and reject VERLT. They need to understand that violent extremism and terrorism are not the solution to the injustices and conflicts they experience or identify with. Educational initiatives can contribute to raise awareness about VERLT, promote counter-narratives based on human rights, tolerance, and democracy. Such initiatives can also provide youth with safe spaces to share their concerns and discuss issues related to violent extremism and terrorism. In doing so, effective methods and tools should be used to reach out and appeal to youth, including music, media and especially social media, mentoring programmes, role models networks, leveraging parents' organizations, and highlighting the voices of victims and/or former followers of violent extremism.

13. De-radicalization is a process which requires time and a proper understanding of the motivations and other factors behind each instance of violent radicalization. Initiatives to support de-radicalization should try to identify and focus on those young people who appear motivated to change voluntarily, or those who are considering but still hesitant about turning away from VERLT. Each youth should be engaged in a safe environment, based on an assessment of their personal needs and circumstances. Inconsistencies in violent extremist ideologies or the behaviors of violent extremist leaders should be highlighted to instill doubt in the mind of young people and draw them away from the movement. Facilitating positive interactions with others, especially young people outside violent extremism is instrumental. The state needs also to show willingness to offer ways out of violent extremism.

Working Group 1 – Good Practices and Lessons Learnt for Youth Engagement to Counter VERLT through Education

14. In their efforts to counter VERLT governments should put an emphasis on prevention rather than focusing on repressive measures only. Formal and informal education is critical in countering VERLT among youth. It was noted that the rising polarization and violent extremism in schools calls for specific initiatives to prevent VERLT. However, stakeholders in the field of education are often unprepared and therefore ill-equipped and anxious to address such emerging and unfamiliar challenges as terrorist radicalization. Educational institutions need to be empowered to play a more targeted, proactive role in preventing VERLT, relying on innovative approaches to overcome the budgetary constraints in the educational sector.

15. Leveraging formal education to prevent and counter VERLT requires a holistic rethinking of schools as a human rights-based environment, both in terms of methods and

curricula and youths as rights-holders. Particular emphasis should be put on teaching human rights to youth in order to contribute positively to shaping their identity-building process and counteracting negative influence such as violent extremist ideologies. While many participating States pay particular attention to 'knowledge education', more focus should be put on building key skills and competencies – such as critical thinking, dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution. Such skills are essential to empower youth to reflect, interact with others, peacefully channel and express their opinions, reject calls for violence and intolerance and/or unlearn violent behavior. The capacity of educational institutions, teachers and youth workers to teach these competencies needs to be strengthened.

16. The rise of VERLT among youth is often fuelled by issues of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization. Fostering feelings of belonging to society and encouraging the development of active, civic and democratic engagement is instrumental in countering terrorist radicalization. It was suggested that encouraging the development of 'hybrid' identities[1], rather than 'multiple' and possibly competing identities, is more conducive to the promotion of a pluralistic society in which individuals, beyond their diversity, are brought together around shared, universal values of human rights and democracy.

17. Both formal and informal education should promote the respect and appreciation of diversity, especially in the use of language, and emphasize that crime, in particular terrorism, cannot be identified with specific ethnic, racial, religious or other groups. Education is central in developing and promoting shared narratives of tolerance and mutual understanding which are instrumental in tackling discrimination and hate speech. Faith-based educational institutions as well as individuals committed to peace and representing a wide range of beliefs should be mobilized in support of human rights-based and inter-faith approaches in education.

18. Relevant initiatives to counter VERLT should therefore be carried out also in informal settings, including through modern media (the Internet and social media). Such initiatives require co-operation and partnerships among state authorities and international organizations, civil society, including the media and businesses. Synergies should be developed between global approaches, specialized initiatives, and locally tailored projects in order to create integrated learning environments that build resilience against VERLT. Good practices and lessons learned need to be more broadly shared among various stakeholders and joint projects explored.

19. Youth are exposed online to a high volume of violent extremist, xenophobic and intolerant content and behavior (e.g., 'cyber-bullying'), targeting religious groups, ethnic minorities, women and members of the LGBT community. Human rights and fundamental freedoms apply equally online and offline. While freedom of expression should be upheld this should not come at the expense of respect and effective protection of the rights of others. It was observed however that there were comparatively fewer initiatives by governments or civil society to tackle hate speech online than offline, and this gap should be closed. Some participants especially emphasized that youth must be educated to use the Internet safely, including to be made aware of risks, also in order to identify and reject intolerant, hateful and violent extremist content.

20. Engaging with young online activists and youth organizations is crucial to safeguard human rights online. Possible initiatives include the creation of online networks of young human rights activists and the provision of training in online campaigning against intolerance and discrimination. An emphasis should be put on creating network of youth

[1] The concept of hybrid identity was referred to in the sense of the different facets of one's identity coalescing, merging into a distinct whole that is greater than its parts.

from different online communities, supporting the development of counter-narratives by young people, training them in non-violent response to violence and hate online, as well as linking online and offline efforts.

21. Youth are central to promoting a human rights-based culture in society. They can act as a multiplying force by influencing their peers and relatives. Beyond education, political systems should allow for broader participation of young people in public life, and better recognize the different forms of positive youth mobilization already in place.

Working group 2 – Good Practices and Lessons Learnt for Youth Engagement to Counter VERLT through the Media, including Information and Communication Technologies

22. Traditional and modern media are increasingly used by terrorist groups to spread their narratives and recruit new followers. Young generations are particularly at risk of VERLT through their use of social media and the Internet, combined with various personal and contextual factors. However, the phenomenon of terrorist radicalization of youth facilitated by the Internet needs to be further researched and better understood.

23. Any efforts to prevent VERLT should not only target modern media but also traditional ones, which remain in some countries the main source of information for the majority of the population. The media offer unique opportunities to counter VERLT among youth by providing them with a platform to express their identities, concerns and frustrations and to be heard within the society. They can also help reaching out to vulnerable young people who are disconnected from their communities and the society at large.

24. Counter-narratives undermining the discourse of violent extremists and promoting tolerance, inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue can be disseminated through the media, in particular social media and the Internet. Communities are best placed to develop authentic and credible messages which take into consideration the local context and culture, as well as the challenges and possible feelings of isolation, deprivation and lack of prospects faced by their members. Key messengers, such as victims and former violent extremists, should also be identified within communities, in particular by civil society organizations and their capacity built to use the media to help counter terrorist radicalization. Giving such a central role to communities allows them to contribute to counter-VERLT efforts but also to dispel any misunderstanding and stereotypes of their identities and cultures.

25. The media, in particular the Internet, are powerful networking tools. They can put in direct contact former violent extremists, survivors such as victims of terrorism, and individuals on the path to VERLT or vulnerable to this phenomenon in order to share their experiences and offer alternatives to individuals, including young people, not to get involved in VERLT or to disengage.

26. Young people are not only the target of counter-VERLT efforts through the media, they also have a role to play in using the media to help counter VERLT. They might engage in journalism or implement specific projects on the Internet to promote tolerance, inter-cultural and inter-faith understanding. Their voices would be particularly powerful to challenge terrorist radicalization and push back violence among their peers. However, young people need to be empowered to do so. They need to be equipped with journalistic skills and/or media and communication strategy skills, as well as trained to confidently express their views in public and handle criticisms.

27. Efforts should also be undertaken to make youth more resilient to VERLT on the Internet and social media. Governments can undertake initiatives to strengthen youth critical thinking and Internet literacy, in particular to enhance the abilities of young people to use the Internet safely, to detect risks and reject violent extremism narratives.

28. In addition to young people and communities, a variety of actors can contribute to the prevention of VERLT through the media. Journalists themselves should avoid spreading biased analysis of terrorist-related events and reinforcing stereotypes. They are also pivotal in spreading positive information on initiatives led by communities. Handling information related to violent extremism is particularly sensitive and civil society organizations can deliver targeted training to journalists or organize general awareness raising activities in this regard. Civil society organizations are also key actors to reach out to vulnerable young individuals, including through the media and they would benefit from private sector experience in developing media strategies as well as additional funding from both the governments and private sector. The private sector[2] is a key partner in tackling violent discourses on the Internet and has therefore demonstrated a growing interest in getting involved in this field. Specific programmes at the European level[3] aim at connecting law enforcement agencies and Internet service providers in identifying and acting upon problematic content on the Internet.

29. Some participants stressed the need for an appropriate regulation of the Internet, including legal basis and effective mechanisms to allow for monitoring by, reporting to and co-operation among states, in line with their international obligations. Others underlined that any form of Internet monitoring would pose legal problems across multiple jurisdictions and should not amount to censorship. Specific narrowly defined legislations have to be put in place, including on the criminalization of the incitement to terrorism in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1624 (2005). Suppressing or filtering online content is not only technically challenging but also ineffective, as terrorist groups will immediately move to new forums or websites.

30. Monitoring the Internet may raise a number of human rights concerns. The right to privacy, freedom of expression, freedom of the media and free access to information should apply both offline and online and law enforcement activities should always be conducted in compliance with international human rights standards. Therefore, states should rather take advantage of the media, and the Internet in particular, for educational purposes in order to marginalize and counter terrorist discourses.

[2] For the purpose of this report, "the private sector" refers to companies running online video and file-sharing websites, Internet search engines, social media platforms as well as Internet Service Providers.
[3] See for example Europol "Check the Web" Programme.

Working group 3 – Good Practices and Lessons Learnt for Youth Engagement to Counter VERLT through the Arts and Sport

31. Both arts and sport have a positive impact on young generations and the society at large. Not only do they offer youth the opportunity to engage in social and purposeful activities with specific rules, they also help them develop and improve their skills and talents as well as raise their confidence and self-esteem. As such, they increase the ability of youth to be agents of positive change and undertake leadership roles in society.

32. Arts and sport initiatives contribute to the promotion of inter-cultural dialogue, reconciliation and integration. They can help build bridges between divided groups and communities by providing young people with a neutral activity to engage in collectively. Theater programmes established in post-conflict regions have for instance gathered youth from divided communities to analyze conflict stories and discuss potential solutions in a play of their creation. Other initiatives include young people co-operating with local businesses and organizations to raise money in order to improve local sports facilities. The involvement of community members and recognition by community leaders can be strong incentives for youth to engage in such type of activity.

33. Furthermore, arts and sport initiatives also provide a forum where youth can raise issues and formulate their grievances in a friendly environment. They can also be effective means to reach out to and involve vulnerable youth, who may otherwise be drawn into violent extremist groups as an outlet to channel their frustrations. Train-the-trainer programmes for young people can also be successful initiatives where vulnerable youth are trained to become youth trainers in various arts and sport activities of interest to them.

34. However, arts and sport initiatives will neither close the gap between divided communities nor counter VERLT alone. Besides, particular parameters are required when designing and implementing these activities to ensure their success in preventing VERLT. Arts and sports initiatives should have a neutral and enjoyable character for youth. Street culture and sports (e.g. street art, skateboard, hip-hop) have for instance oftentimes been well-received by young people, in particular where activities of this kind did not exist beforehand. It is also essential that such initiatives are conducted in an open and secure environment which ensures broad participation, including of women, and promotes gender equality. Determining in advance the target audience of these initiatives is crucial. While some activities can aim at reaching out to everybody, others could focus on specific groups such as individuals on the path to terrorist radicalization, or youth already involved in violent groups but willing to disengage.

35. The mindset in which youth workers and teachers set up the activity is decisive. Trustful relationships and dialogue are at the core of youth work and of particular importance to successfully prevent and counter VERLT among youth. Arts and sport initiatives create opportunities to have informal conversations that may over time progress towards a structured and more in-depth dialogue through which the youth worker or teacher can gain the trust of the young person. This kind of dialogue might be more difficult to establish in mandatory school activities. Arts and sport initiatives may be used not only to establish a first contact with vulnerable youth, but also to directly develop and disseminate counter-narratives.

36. Youth workers and teachers should encourage young people to be proactive during these activities and share their ideas, concerns or grievances. They should be prepared to discuss young people's concerns and grievances and to act on the issues that are raised. They should also be empowered and provided with adequate knowledge to challenge ideological prejudices that may drive VERLT in individual cases. In this regard, governments and civil society actors have a role to play in developing and delivering human rights-oriented and gender-sensitive trainings, including vocational and awareness-raising trainings on violent extremism for social workers and teachers. Guidelines could also be developed to assist them in their action.

37. Connecting prevention and intervention through initiatives involving former violent extremists has proven to have a greater impact on youth. De-radicalized individuals can share their personal stories with young people and challenge violent ideology with more credibility. They can also make the most of their knowledge to help design new activities. Examples of successful initiatives within the OSCE region have included the co-operation of former extremists, marketing experts and civil society in the design of art initiatives aiming at de-radicalizing violent extremists.

38. Designing and implementing long-term projects with subject-matter experts is necessary to effectively counter VERLT through the arts and sport. The relevance and legitimacy of such projects are essential to create trust and build relationships with young individuals vulnerable to terrorist radicalization. Recognition and financial support from public authorities play an important role in helping social workers engaged in this field.

    Evaluating existing initiatives and identifying good practices is very helpful in the design and implementation of successful activities to counter VERLT. The necessary resources, including funding, should be planned to this effect. Recent evaluations conducted in some OSCE participating States have for instance shown that small group discussions are more effective methods of work in primary and secondary schools, especially with the participation of former violent extremists, as well as role-plays, films and discussions. On the contrary, computer-based methods and exhibitions appear to be less effective.

Recommendations

This list of recommendations is non-exhaustive and should neither be interpreted as official OSCE recommendations based on a consensus decision, nor as the official position of the OSCE Secretariat, the OSCE for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, or of any particular OSCE participating State. It reflects opinions expressed by participants in the expert roundtable.

Recommendations for OSCE participating States

A1. Reaffirm that the protection and promotion of human rights is at the core of any effective counter-terrorism policies.

A2. Put an emphasis on preventive rather than focusing on repressive measures only to counter VERLT.

A3. Establish effective inter-agency co-ordination among a broad range of public authorities, at both national and local levels, to deepen and share their understanding of VERLT among youth, as well as to develop and deliver effective preventive measures and targeted interventions in cases of VERLT.

A4. Take into account the various violent extremist group characteristics and narratives and the different attitudes towards violent extremism of young men and young women when developing policies and measures to counter VERLT among young people.

A5. Ensure that policies and measures to counter terrorism, and in particular VERLT among youth are not discriminating, in their design or implementation, against certain individuals based on religious, racial or ethnic characteristics. Review, and where necessary terminate or correct such policies and measures.

A6. Narrowly define legislations criminalizing incitement to terrorism in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1624 (2005).

A7. Ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the freedom of religion or belief, the freedom of expression and of the media, are upheld at all times while countering VERLT.

A8. Promote freedom of expression and refrain from criminalizing or otherwise repressing the peaceful expression of non-violent radical or extremist views.

A9. Make genuine efforts to identify and address the issues of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization that fuel VERLT, especially among young people.

A10. Strive to prevent and/or remedy instances of geographic segregation of communities, which can also result in segregated schools.

A11. Seek to offer and support credible alternatives to violent extremism by fostering feelings of belonging to society, providing access to health and social services as well as employment opportunities to young people and enabling their active participation in public life including through civic and democratic engagement.

A12. Promote a pluralistic, democratic debate, tolerance and universal human rights in order to challenge non-violent extremist ideas which advocate for the destruction of democracy and negation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, freedom of expression is a democratic requirement protected under international law and enshrined in OSCE commitments.

A13. Build the capacity of front-line actors, such as the police, teachers, and social workers, to prevent and respond to complex situations involving VERLT, through the development of tools, guidelines and provision of training, including human rights and gender-sensitive training on a continued basis.

A14. Develop and implement educational initiatives to equip young people with the knowledge and skills, including on Internet safety, to understand and reject VERLT narratives and to promote counter-narratives based on human rights, tolerance, and democracy.

A15. Build the capacity of formal educational institutions, such as schools and universities, to play a more targeted, proactive role in preventing VERLT.

A16. Apply human rights-based approaches in the formal educational sector, both in terms of methods and curricula. Particular emphasis should be put on teaching human rights, promoting tolerance and on building key skills – such as critical thinking, dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution.

A17. Support research on how the Internet may facilitate the terrorist radicalization of youth.

A18. Support the dissemination of counter-narratives and the promotion of tolerance, inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue through both traditional and modern media, including by identifying key messengers within communities and building their capacities to use the media.

A19. Encourage and support youth initiatives to counter VERLT through the media by building young people journalistic and/or media and communication strategy skills and capacities to confidently express their views in public and handle criticism.

A20. Acknowledge and support, including financially, initiatives of civil society organizations designed to counter VERLT through the promotion of human rights, democracy and tolerance.

A21. Refrain from suppressing online content and, if monitor the Internet, then in full compliance with domestic legislation and international human rights standards on the protection of the right to privacy, freedom of expression, freedom of the media and free access to information.

A22. Support arts and sport initiatives which contribute to the promotion of inter-cultural dialogue, reconciliation and integration.

A23. Together with other governments develop synergies between global, national and locally tailored educational projects in order to create integrated learning environments that build resilience against VERLT.

Recommendations for Civil Society and the Private Sector [4]

B1. Undertake further research on youth terrorist radicalization, including the role of the Internet in this phenomenon.

B2. Develop an understanding of, and take into account the different attitudes towards violent extremism that young men and young women have.

B3. Consider how their efforts to promote peace, human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination or social inclusion could be further developed or built upon in co-operation with other stakeholders to prevent terrorist radicalization.

B4. Use more methods and tools which appeal to youth to best challenge VERLT among young people. These include music, media and especially social media, mentoring programmes, role models networks, leveraging parents' organizations, and highlighting the voices of victims and/or former followers of violent extremism.

B5. Support communities to develop authentic and credible messages to counter VERLT, taking into consideration the local context and culture as well as challenges and possible feelings of isolation, deprivation and lack of prospects faced by their members.

B6. Support the identification of key messengers, such as victims and former violent extremists, within communities and build their capacities to use the media to help counter terrorist radicalization and dispel any misunderstanding and stereotypes on their identities and cultures.

B7. Implement projects and activities aimed to:

- promote critical thinking, dialogue and pluralistic debate;
- provide young people with safe spaces in which they can proactively raise their concerns and react to events related to violent extremism and terrorism;
- channel the energy and sometimes frustration and anger of young people into positive alternatives to violent extremism such as civic and/or democratic engagement;
- develop and disseminate locally tailored counter-narratives and promote alternative role models;
- provide employment opportunities and in particular psychological support to vulnerable individuals;
- act as a bridge between hard-to-reach individuals and their family, social workers, psychologists, law-enforcement and other relevant actors;
- educate about Internet safety;
- involve youth in arts and sports initiatives through neutral and enjoyable activities;
- target specific audiences, whether youth on the path to terrorist radicalization or willing to disengage;
- promote inter-cultural dialogue and build bridges between divided groups and communities;
- promote the equal participation of young men and women in such activities.

[4] See note 2 above.

B8. Actively engage with the media, including by training journalists on how to objectively handle information on terrorist-related events and share stories of positive engagement with youth and effective community's initiatives.

B9. Challenge both online and offline non-violent extremist ideas which advocate for the destruction of democracy and the negation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, while respecting the freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief of every one which are democratic requirements protected under international law and enshrined in OSCE commitments.

B10. Identify, focus on and engage individually those young people who are considering or appear motivated to voluntarily turn away from VERLT.

B11. Establish online networks of young activists and train them in online campaigning against intolerance and discrimination and developing counter-narratives. Link online and offline initiatives to maximize impact.

B12. Develop more long-term projects with subject matters experts in order to create trust and build relationships with young individuals vulnerable to terrorist radicalization. Evaluations of existing initiatives should also be undertaken to identify lessons learnt and good practices in this field.

Recommendations for International Organizations and the OSCE

C1. Stimulate and support a broader sharing of good practices and lessons learned in the field of countering VERLT among various stakeholders, from government, civil society and businesses, as well as facilitate the development of joint projects.

C2. Develop and promote global approaches to countering VERLT, for instance on the role of education, and encourage the development of synergetic initiatives at the national level and locally tailored projects.

C3. Facilitate a more regular dialogue among state authorities and civil society organizations from throughout the OSCE area on the phenomenon of VERLT among youth, by e.g., establishing a working group that would exchange findings and experiences on countering terrorist radicalization and violent extremism, combating discrimination, racism and xenophobia.

C4. Promote and support online campaigning by civil society organizations against intolerance and discrimination, including by providing training to young human rights activists.

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