

## Helpdesk Report: Education and extremism

**Date:** 30 November 2015

**Query:** What's the evidence/experience on how education interventions can minimise the risk that they contribute to extremism and maximise their impact on countering extremism?

**Purpose:** To provide decision makers with reference documentation and some practical details regarding the key ingredients of evidence-based teaching approaches and interventions that are effective in building resilience to extremism among young people.

### Content

1. Overview
2. Background
3. Key readings
4. 'Southern' countries perspective
5. 'Northern' countries perspective
6. Additional information

#### 1. Overview

This overview section summarises the key ingredients of teaching approaches and interventions that are recommended in building resilience to extremism among young people. It also details support factors in schools and other education settings that maximise the benefits and impact of such interventions. This practical advice, detailed in this overview, draws on a rapid search that includes findings from the in-depth research study undertaken by Office for Public Management and the National Foundation for Educational Research for The Department for Children, Schools and Families (now the Department for Education) (Kerr and Bonnell, 2011; and Bonnell et al., 2011) as well as recent work by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies.

Sections 3, 4 and 5 highlight some of the literature on education and extremism from a general perspective and then from the viewpoints of 'Southern' and 'Northern' countries'.

It should be noted that a recent rigorous literature review (Burde et al, 2015) finds the few examples of programmes for conflict resolution and human rights education are not evaluated rigorously enough to assess influence on students. Comments from Lynn Davies (University of Birmingham) and Alan Smith (University of Ulster) agree that evidence on the impact of interventions is not easy to find. Lynn notes that projects and curriculum materials are available but are difficult to evaluate.

#### Specific teaching approaches

The research identified three key components which can help build resilience to extremism amongst young people and of support factors that underpin them. Many of the key ingredients will feel like general principles of good teaching. Indeed, such principles provide the foundations on which to build resilience through teaching approaches. However, they are not enough by themselves. Simply teaching well in itself is not deemed sufficient to build resilience.<sup>1</sup>

**Component 1:** Giving careful thought to the nature and focus of the teaching approach or intervention. Interventions which are designed to build resilience to extremism work best where they actively target and involve young people. This can help to counter some of the push/pull factors into extremism, including low self-esteem and young people lacking a sense of achievement and not feeling they have a place in society. Five support factors are presented to support this component.

<b>Component 1: Making a connection through effective design and a youth-centred approach</b>	
<b>Support factors</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Enjoyable and distinctly different from normal classroom lessons</b>	By building in lots of opportunities for discussion and group exercises; the use of an external facilitator rather than a classroom teacher; and, taking an approach that emphasises 'honest realism' – i.e. not shying away from controversial issues.
<b>Learning objectives communicated clearly to young people</b>	How the activity in question fits within the broader learning programme and/or with other agendas.
<b>Set concrete and tangible goals and outputs for young people to foster a sense of ownership</b>	For example, by presenting at a conference at the end of a project, or creating a film or media article.
<b>Be young person centred and young person led</b>	Having young people as peer educators, which offers a sense of empowerment and can raise self-esteem, and making materials and activities relevant to young people's lives, for example, by reflecting local community language and issues.
<b>Produce something 'real' to encourage working collaboratively, and fostering transferable skills</b>	Young people said they found particularly enjoyable activities that used new technology such as film making, social messaging, online forums and video conferencing.

**Component 2:** Creating a dialogue conducive to building resilience, facilitators need to create a 'safe space' for all young people in a group. This is particularly important in the context of work targeted at building resilience to extremism because young people may be reluctant to engage with the issue or have a history of disengagement from formal learning. Six 'safe space' facilitators are presented for this component.

<b>Component 2: Facilitating a safe space for dialogue and positive interaction</b>	
<b>Safe place facilitators</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Recognise the key context factors that are crucial for creating a safe space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The development, preferably with young people, of agreed ground rules which are easy to remember, and which provide a vital route of recourse if things become heated or if unsavoury things are said</li> <li>▪ Tools and techniques which enable young people to self-facilitate sensitive discussions themselves, thereby taking ownership of the safe space</li> <li>▪ The ability of facilitators to ensure that sessions are inclusive and supportive, and to be able to deal with a young person saying something unpalatable, incendiary or offensive.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Kerr, D. & Bonnell, J. (2011) *Teaching approaches that build resilience to extremism among young people*. NFER. <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OPXZ02/OPXZ02.pdf> and Bonnell, J., Copestake, P., Kerr, D., Passy, R., Reed, C., Salter, R., Sarwar, S. and Shelk, S. (2011). *Teaching approaches that help to build resilience to extremism among young people*. Department for Education. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/182675/DFE-RR119.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182675/DFE-RR119.pdf)

<b>Have the confidence and ability to act in such a way that 'connects' with the young</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, by allowing honest, trusting and equal relationships to form, 'letting go' of the direction of the discussion, the appropriate use of humour and role-modelling of expected behaviours</li> </ul>
<b>Respect young people's pre-conceptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Otherwise, young people are likely to feel that they are being judged and are thus less likely to constructively engage with resilience-building activities. These pre-conceptions may reflect extremist or otherwise offensive thinking, but rather than ignoring them facilitators should allow the views to be aired and dealt with.</li> </ul>
<b>Possess sufficient knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, in countering stereotypes or mistaken assumptions about a particular religion, or where this is not feasible, know how to access the necessary information.</li> </ul>
<b>Be willing to admit gaps in their own knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partial or inaccurate information can undermine participants' trust in facilitators and disengage them from the intervention, potentially exacerbating a situation that may already be sensitive and difficult to manage.</li> </ul>
<b>Accurately assess the knowledge levels of their students.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including the extremism of young people's views, so as to be able to tailor the session accordingly.</li> </ul>

Component 3: Equipping young people with the appropriate capabilities - skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness - that improve personal resilience and have real, long-lasting benefits entails some specific teaching and learning approaches.

<b>Component 3: Equipping young people with appropriate capabilities - skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness</b>	
<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Build personal resilience and a positive sense of identity</b>	Supporting young people to be emotionally resilient to life's pressures and helping them to foster a positive sense of self, for example, through positive thinking, conflict-management techniques and celebrating their multi-faceted identities.
<b>Use simple theoretical frameworks and interactive techniques</b>	For example, using role-play to explore complex ideas about the control we can exercise over our perceptions, emotions, behaviours, interaction with others and capacity to affect change in our lives.
<b>Build a 'stretch' element into the design</b>	The principle that young people should be supported to develop confidence, a sense of self-worth and future aspirations by being encouraged to step outside of their comfort zone.
<b>Support young people to explore, understand, and celebrate their personal identity</b>	Particularly effective where young people are enabled to reflect on the multiple facets of their identity, discuss the possible tensions and celebrate multiplicity as something which creates balance and 'uniqueness'.
<b>Promote critical thinking skills</b>	Most successfully developed through teaching methods that support inquiry and intellectual inquiry led by the young people themselves.
<b>Make young people aware of views and experiences of others</b>	Giving young people the opportunity to realise that views and experiences other than that of their immediate family, peer network and / or school community also exist.
<b>Encourage engagement with a range of information, and appreciate the value of an evidence-based approach.</b>	Helping to challenge common myths and helping young people to appreciate the complexity of, for example, global conflicts.

## Concluding remarks

These recommendations highlight two key points - firstly, how there is a disconnect from the interventions proposed under 'proactive' extremism prevention programmes possible within a 'northern' country context compared to the implementation of similar interventions in a 'southern' country context where the country is possibly recovering or suffering from extremism; and, secondly, that 'education' does not just take place in the classroom and that is important for any response that broader societal processes support and underpin the formal education and learning.

## Common interventions but different contexts

Three key intervention components and 18 support factors and facilitators highlighted in the Table below have been drawn from the literature as exhibiting ingredients for curriculum and teaching approaches that are effective in building resilience to extremism among young people. These interventions provide valuable models for countering extremism that require different roles and responsibilities across the curriculum, teaching materials, the teaching cadre and teacher training.

Intervention	Factors and Facilitators
<b>Component 1:</b> <i>Making a connection through effective design and a youth-centred approach</i>	i. Enjoyable and distinctly different from normal classroom lessons
	ii. Learning objectives communicated clearly to young people
	iii. Set concrete and tangible goals and outputs for young people to foster sense of ownership
	iv. Be young person centred and young person led
	v. Produce something 'real' to encourage working collaboratively, and fostering transferable skills
<b>Component 2:</b> <i>Facilitating a safe space for dialogue and positive interaction</i>	vi. Recognise the key context factors that are crucial for creating a safe space
	vii. Have the confidence and ability to act in such a way that 'connects' with the young
	viii. Respect young people's pre-conceptions
	ix. Possess sufficient knowledge
	x. Be willing to admit gaps in their own knowledge
	xi. Accurately assess the knowledge levels of their students
<b>Component 3:</b> <i>Equipping young people with appropriate capabilities - skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness</i>	xii. Build personal resilience and a positive sense of identity
	xiii. Use simple theoretical frameworks and interactive techniques
	xiv. Build a 'stretch' element into the curriculum design
	xv. Support young people to explore, understand, and celebrate their personal identity
	xvi. Promote critical thinking skills
	xvii. Make young people aware of views and experiences of others
	xviii. Encourage engagement with a range of information, and appreciate the value of an evidence-based approach

However, national civil society networks and education systems are very different in their access to the requisite financial and human resources for implementation and there will be very different challenges faced in replicating these initiatives across the respective curricula, teaching materials, teachers and teacher teaching structures. Seven significant challenges to countries that are immersed in - or have recently suffered from - a violent and extremist situation are presented:

- Many of the citizens will be reluctant to take ownership of the problem, grasp the severity of the issue or will consider extremist attacks as isolated incidents rather than emblematic of a larger, systemic problem.
- There is a lack of funding and resources - while most community-based groups do not receive support from international organisations, and rely on small community donations, many of the formal education systems lack good governance, financial management, and communications and media skills.
- Difficulty in mobilising the diverse groups that constitute the moderate majority - unlike extremist groups that have developed cohesive platforms and streamlined talking points, there is a lack of collaboration between faith-based and non-faith-based networks and as a result, resources are not well-coordinated between organisations pursuing similar objectives.

- While government and civil society both lead initiatives through the formal and non-formal education structures to educate the population about the threat of extremism, public awareness campaigns are conducted on an ad-hoc basis and their content is often reactionary (denouncing violence after the fact, rather than pro-actively promoting peace).
- Civil society activists and education personnel face constant security threats particularly in conflict zones and their peripheries.
- They often operate in areas where social development indicators are among the lowest, the institutional capacity of civil society is underdeveloped hindering community mobilisation and project implementation.<sup>2</sup>

## Recommendations

A core message from the brief research was recognition that 'education' does not just take place in the classroom and the importance that societal processes support and underpin formal education and learning. A new pan-European study led by Miles Hewstone of Oxford University has shown that everyday learning through positive intergroup contact, develops both directly and indirectly to improve the understanding and acceptance of diversity.<sup>3</sup> While also including the tackling of disadvantage, the significant conclusion is that it is important - both from the northern and southern country perspectives - to support wider schemes that fall under the community cohesion agenda and to provide a counter-balance to the negative narrative which is succeeding where popular extremist and increasingly nationalist parties are growing.

Young people are emerging into an increasingly globalised world, but have few opportunities to acquire intercultural competences in which they are able to negotiate national, faith and cultural boundaries, with tolerance and respect, rather than retreat in fear. This is a challenge for all young people and is not confined to Muslims, migrants and other minorities; a sense of belonging needs to be shared by the entire population. As populations grow and become ever more globalised, governments need to take responsibility for a more positive vision of diversity, and to promote the development of shared spaces in which such debate can take place and be facilitated.

This final section offers recommendations - based on the brief search that support embedding these three interventions that were evidenced to reduce extremism - with a particular focus on those countries that are immersed in an extremist context. These recommendations encompass both the broader agenda and initiatives that impact directly or indirectly upon the formal education and training sector.

**Develop relationships with the 'right' groups.** Identify CSOs that uphold shared values - CSOs that uphold shared values and are engaged in promoting peace and inter-ethnic harmony, countering radical narratives and denouncing extremism at an ideological level, as well as providing humanitarian and development assistance to at-risk communities are good examples of CSOs that should be supported and empowered.

**Empower the next generation of leaders.** For the next generation to coordinate a countrywide movement against extremism, youth need to be provided with substantial training in social mobilisation, leadership development and non-profit management. In addition, young civil society leaders require strategic development skills to harness the energy of volunteers beyond the immediacy of crisis situations. Particular attention should be given to involving youth from lower and lower-middle class communities in these initiatives. Engaging youth on this issue requires supporting educational programs and debates that engage both university and madrasa students, particularly amongst the new teacher cadre. In addition, student dialogues and exchanges between disparate ethnic, faith, and ideological groups can help build tolerance and dispel stereotypes that have divided communities and fuelled violent extremism.

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<sup>2</sup> See Mirahmadi, H., Farooq, M. & Ziad, W. (2012). *Pakistan's Civil Society: Alternative Channels to Countering Violent Extremism*. WORDE. <http://www.worde.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/WORDE-Report-Pakistan-Civil-Society-Alternative-Channels-to-CVE.pdf> for further details on these challenges.

<sup>3</sup> Christ, O. et al. (2014) *Contextual effect of positive intergroup contact on outgroup prejudice*, 111 (11), 3996–4000, doi: 10.1073/pnas.132090111. <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/11/3996.short>

**Train CSOs to expand and improve upon existing programmes.** Invest in developing the capacity of CSOs (and owner/operators of low cost private schools) to improve existing programmes with a proven track record. Specific areas that require capacity building and attention through training and funding include:

- ⇒ *Non-profit management and capacity building training:* provide leadership and good governance training to strengthen those organisations working in schools that receive funding and support from international organisations, and those that are indigenous and rely on grassroots community support. Grassroots CSOs in particular require record-keeping and financial management training.
- ⇒ *Emergency management and humanitarian relief distribution training:* empower groups to effectively compete against radical charities that have sophisticated distribution mechanisms; in addition, assist to grow skill sets to expand their donor base, improve financial accountability, accelerate distribution of goods and services, strengthen communication with volunteers, and improve their marketing and visibility within the education sector.
- ⇒ *Coalition-building assistance:* CSOs engaged in peace-building efforts need to collaborate and coordinate resources with other organisations involved in similar efforts. To effectively build partnership and coalitions, CSOs require communications, consensus building, and conflict resolution skills to formulate coherent agendas and prevent internal fissures.
- ⇒ *Communications and media training:* CSOs, particularly traditional Muslim networks, lack communications and media training to disseminate their anti-terror messages to broader audiences. Traditional Muslim scholars, for example, have the capacity to speak at great lengths to promote peace within an orthodox religious paradigm that is palatable to at-risk youth, but lack skills to synthesise their arguments into brief media sound bites. Furthermore, they lack the skills to market their messaging to non-religious audiences. Public relations firms could help fine-tune their messaging. Similarly, marketing firms could help CSOs disseminate their messages to broader populations.
- ⇒ *Social media skills building:* In an age where the internet is playing an increasingly menacing role in radicalising youth, civil society leaders – in particular religious scholars - need to be integrated into modern technological platforms and online social networking sites. With the appropriate training, community leaders can harness the digital age and share de-radicalization seminars and lectures through different media

**Support evaluation.** This search has highlighted the paucity of robust evidence that measures impact across different programmes and enables the preparation of possible models for advocacy, scale up and replication with other actors - this includes information from the monitoring of the progress of trainees through the programme, the costs of the programme and an assessment of the advocacy achievements.

## 2. Background

The ever-escalating examples of extremist attacks continue to highlight the need to combat *extremisms* and develop young people's *resilience* to potentially harmful ideologies to prevent them from being *radicalised*.

**Extremism** is deemed to be when a person does not allow for a different point of view, holds their own views as being quite exclusive, does not allow for the possibility of difference and wants to impose this view on others using violence if necessary. **Radicalisation** is the process by which people adopt an extreme position in terms of politics and religion, a violent extremist ideology, or move to violent action in support of their beliefs. **Resilience** is the ability to bounce back from adversity and describes a process in which people can overcome or resist negative influences that block emotional well-being and/or achievement.

Governments underline the key role of education, and of decision makers – policy makers, school leaders, teachers and other practitioners - in helping to build resilience to extremism among all young people, radicalised or at considerable risk of radicalisation. Education policies undertake this role by supporting violence mitigation at the individual, community and institutional levels.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Chaux, E. (2009). *Citizenship Competencies in the Midst of a Violent Political Conflict: The Colombian Educational Response*. The Harvard Education Review, Spring Edition.

<b>Individual Level:</b>	<b>Family and Community Level:</b>	<b>Institutional Level:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cognitive and socio-emotional assets of children and youth</li> <li>▪ Protection from recruitment</li> <li>▪ Reverse the negative impact of violence mechanisms within schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parent counselling and support</li> <li>▪ Support from community organisations</li> <li>▪ Community-led initiatives to promote security, cultural and behavioural change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changes to the legal and policy environments</li> <li>▪ Promotive and protection programmes</li> <li>▪ Community and institutional climate and behaviour</li> </ul>

From the perspective of the 'institutional level' in answer to these two overarching questions - *How do you prevent individuals joining extremist or violent movements and how do you enable people to make challenges to extremist or violent movements or to extremist or violent governments* - Davies (2004 and 2008) states that there is a threefold 'Educational Task' that involves answering *How to Deal with Identity, Justice and Critique*.<sup>5</sup>

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Aim</b>
<b>Identity?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of identity in educational terms involves not seeking constructions and exoticisation of multiculturalism and cultural diversity</li> <li>▪ Need to stress recognition of difference and enhance the <i>resistance</i> to labels and categorisations</li> <li>▪ Celebrate not a bland diversity but a <i>resistant hybridity</i>, an originality in each child and to try to mitigate the worst excesses of competition</li> </ul>	<i>To give children a secure, but hybrid sense of identity, so that they are less likely to be drawn to 'membership' of single-identity, single-issue, ends-justify-the-means groups</i>
<b>Justice?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not to use retribution and the 'eye for an eye' matching seriousness ideology</li> <li>▪ Support the theory of restorative justice through the 3 Rs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recognition of the <b>reasons</b> behind the action and the needs driving the behaviour;</li> <li>- the perpetrator takes <b>responsibility</b> for their actions and accepts they have done wrong;</li> <li>- the perpetrator makes <b>reparations</b>, which might include restitution, restoration and reconciliation to settle differences.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<i>To demonstrate and act out fair and non-violent ways of achieving justice</i>
<b>Critique?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Outline four sorts of critique or critical analysis which are needed in the counter to extremism, critical respect, critical thinking, critical values and critical action.</li> </ul>	To give skills in critical appraisal, critical values and critical action.

### 3. Key readings

#### **Moral Disengagement and Building Resilience to Violent Extremism: An Education Intervention**

Aly, A, Taylor, E & Karvosky, S. (2014). *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 37 (4), 369-385.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2014.879379>

This article reports on the development of an education intervention, the Beyond Bali Education Resource funded by the Australian Governments' Building Community Resilience Grants of the Federal Attorney General's Department, that applies a conceptual framework grounded in moral disengagement theory. Beyond Bali is a five module programme for schools that is specifically designed to build social cognitive resilience to violent extremism by engaging self-sanctions and preparing students to challenge the influence

<sup>5</sup> Lynn Davies in *Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos* (2004) and *Educating Against Extremism* (2008).

<sup>6</sup> Alexander, T (2001) *Citizenship Schools*. London: Campaign for Learning.

of violent extremism that can lead to moral disengagement. The theory of moral disengagement has been applied to the study of radicalisation to violent extremism to explain how individuals can cognitively reconstruct the moral value of violence and carry out inhumane acts. The mechanisms of moral disengagement through which individuals justify violence, dehumanise victims, disregard the harmful consequences of violence and absolve themselves of blame have been used in the construction of violent extremist narratives. However, they have not been applied to the development of intervention strategies that aim to counter the radicalising influences of violent extremist narratives.

### **Teaching approaches that help to build resilience to extremism among young people**

Bonell, J., Copestake, P., Kerr, D., Passy, R., Reed, C., Salter, R., Sarwar, S. and Shelk, S. (2011). Department of Education. ISBN 978-1-84775-919.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/182675/DFE-RR119.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182675/DFE-RR119.pdf)

This study posits that there are three sets of broader support factors, within schools and other education settings, which are important in enabling the key ingredients to be employed in successful teaching approaches and interventions - (i) effective partnership working with local agencies, (ii) supportive school leaders and (iii) good integration with the wider curriculum.

*Effective partnership* working with local agencies requires ensuring that an intervention's potential impact can be maximised in practice through the creation of local understanding about the intervention, enlistment of locally-trusted individuals, the development of a 'network of support' to ensure the intervention's sustainability in different places over time; and recognition that the key principles of effective partnership working include open communication between agencies and the encouragement of local agencies to take ownership of specific aspects of an intervention.

*Strong support from school leaders* is essential in gaining the buy-in of teachers and students and, where appropriate, parents and local community representatives. It means that the intervention is more likely to be well-resourced, and have a strong and clear educational rationale for those who are involved in it, whether they are teachers, facilitators, school leaders or participants. This can best be achieved through strong leadership and support that ensures a good level of understanding among the leadership team, allows sufficient time for the principal staff member to plan, organise and run the intervention, and enables the provision of sufficient training for participating staff members.

Finally, if an intervention or programme is to be sustainable, it needs to be *linked with and anchored into the wider curriculum* structures and teachers' working practices in order to increase its potential to have maximum impact and avoid the necessity of spending time on one-off, isolated discrete interventions that may need to be repeated at further cost in the future.

### **Teaching approaches that build resilience to extremism among young people. Evidence-based learning for decision makers- policy makers, school leaders, teachers and other practitioners, including youth and community workers.**

Kerr, D. & Bonnell, J. (2011). NFER.

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OPXZ02/OPXZ02.pdf>

The practical advice paper is a summary for decision makers. It draws on the previous resource mentioned (Bonell, J., et al., 2011) – which is a large-scale, in-depth research study aimed at providing a strong evidence base to schools and other education providers to help them choose the most appropriate interventions to build resilience to extremism among young people. The research included a systematic literature review, steering group of experts in the field, and scoping study of effective teaching approaches. It culminated in the selection of ten case studies of effective interventions and an in-depth investigation of what made them effective in building resilience to extremism among the young people involved in terms of key ingredients and support factors.

This note outlines the key ingredients of teaching approaches and interventions that are effective in building resilience to extremism amongst young people – more detail is provided in the Overview section of this Helpdesk report. The case studies covered three broad categories:

- Programmes or interventions aimed specifically at building resilience to extremism
- Interventions or activities aimed at building resilience more generally or that illustrated one particular ‘key ingredient’ which it was believed may contribute towards building resilience amongst young people (for example, ‘helping to see multiple perspectives’)
- ‘Comparator’ case studies – namely case studies aiming to build resilience to extremism in other areas or contexts (such as in Northern Ireland)

### **The two faces of education in ethnic conflict: Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children.**

Bush, K.D., & D. Saltarelli. 2000. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Center.

<http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight4.pdf>

This study challenges a widely-held assumption – that education is inevitably a force for good. While the provision of good quality education can be a stabilising factor, Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli show how educational systems can be manipulated to drive a wedge between people, rather than drawing them closer together. In short, education reflects the society around it. The attitudes that flourish beyond the school walls will, inevitably, filter into the classroom. Peacebuilding education goes further than the ‘add good education and stir’ approach, aiming to transform the very foundations of intolerance.

Sadly, these foundations are controlled by the same political or ideological forces that control education, making the necessary transformation immensely difficult. Such change would threaten the structures of authority, dominance and control – in the North as well as the South. The study examines possible steps towards the creation of a peacebuilding education, outlining guiding principles and goals, including the demilitarisation of the mind, the introduction of alternatives to suspicion, hatred and violence, and the value of memory.

### **What Works to Promote Children’s Educational Access, Quality of Learning, and Wellbeing in Crisis-Affected Contexts**

Burde, D., Guven, O., Kelcey, J., Lahmann, H. & Al-Abbadi, K. (2015). DFID.

[http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/HumanDev\\_evidence/61127-Education-in-Emergencies-Rigorous-Review\\_FINAL\\_2015\\_10\\_26.pdf](http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/HumanDev_evidence/61127-Education-in-Emergencies-Rigorous-Review_FINAL_2015_10_26.pdf)

Emerging observational evidence from ECD programmes indicates the importance of educational content and practices in the early years, since intolerant content may contribute to the development of harmful values and attitudes in children as young as 5–6 years old. For example, Connolly et al. (2002) studied ECD programmes in Northern Ireland to identify and analyse child awareness of communal or sectarian symbols. They found that awareness and associated politicised attitudes increased significantly around the ages of 5–6 (the time when children also enter the school system, which itself is highly segregated).

This review shows that there is little evidence on how schooling or educational content contribute to participation in and support for violence and extremism. Specifically, the complex relationship between education and radicalisation/tolerance is not addressed widely through intervention programmes. When it is addressed, such as with human rights education or conflict resolution programmes, the programmes are not evaluated rigorously enough to understand the impact on student attitudes and behaviour. In addition, although the relationship between madrassas and violent extremism is widely discussed, there is little evidence that indicates a causal link. That said, it is possible that negative curricula are being taught in these schools and negative curricula and practices, as discussed above, are problematic both in secular and religious schools.

### **The Children Are Watching: How the Media Teach About Diversity**

Cortés, C. (2000). New York: Teachers College Press

<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED443917>

Cortes classified four types of societal curriculum – the immediate curriculum (home, family, peers, neighbourhood); the institutional curriculum (youth groups, religious institutions, voluntary associations); the serendipitous curriculum (random personal experiences, chances interactions, foreign travel); and the media curriculum. He analyzes how the media frames diversity-related issues, transmits certain values, and contributes to stereotypes. These "textbooks" created by the media or "media educators" have the power to influence the way people think. Since both the media and schools educate, he made a distinction between the "media educators" and "school educators." One way to work with this competing curriculum that the media has created is for parents and guardians to work with it and explain it to their children as a form of "spin control."

### Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos

Davies, L (2004) London: Routledge<sup>7</sup>

<https://www.questia.com/library/107647916/education-and-conflict-complexity-and-chaos>

Davies considers that there are three big interlinked questions that need to be answered in order to frame education strategies for addressing extremism - how do we deal with identity? How do we deal with justice? And how do we deal with critique? She outlines four sorts of critique or critical analysis which are needed in the counter to extremism: critical respect, critical thinking, critical values and critical action. The opposite of extremism is not in fact being moderate. It is what is called 'interruptive democracy' or the 'excuse-me reflex' which recognises and challenges social injustice.

<b>Type of Critique</b>	<b>Details</b>
<i>Critical respect</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools need to teach mechanisms for when and what to respect and when and what to reject. This is not an exact science, and needs a value base in order to do this, but a base in human rights gives as good a framework as any</li> </ul>
<i>Critical thinking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critical media education is crucial – both analysing spin and propaganda, and conversely in recognising the importance of media in investigative journalism and in freedom of speech and critique</li> <li>▪ Political and media literacy in schools is not always seen as a vital part of language learning</li> <li>▪ Learners need to be able to engage in critical analysis of newspapers, TV reporting, and government information campaigns</li> <li>▪ Critical thinking is an essential survival skill at individual level and at national level</li> </ul>
<i>Critical values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acceptance of ambiguity - there being more than one 'truth' must be taught</li> <li>▪ Education should be about constantly weighing things up, making judgements, sorting out</li> <li>▪ Human rights do not provide every answer, but they do provide a framework for debate – and action, not compliance</li> </ul>
<i>Critical action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Young people's J8 summits, Youth Parliaments and Local Government consultation groups provide teaching skills of advocacy, lobbying, negotiation – that is, creating change not through violent means but through legal and micro-political processes</li> <li>▪ Schools with a commitment to student voice produced students that were much more confident in expressing their views about a range of topics, including government policy</li> </ul>

### Gender, education, extremism and security

Davies, L. (2008). Compare, 38(5), 611-625.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03057920802351432#.Vlb8I3bhDq4>

This paper examines the complex relationships between gender, education, extremism and security. After defining extremism and fundamentalism, it looks first at the relationship of gender to violence generally,

<sup>7</sup> Also accessible in <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/cld/UserFiles/File/DAVIESeducationagainstextremism.pdf>

before looking specifically at how this plays out in more extremist violence and terrorism. Religious fundamentalism is also shown to have gendered concerns. The paper concludes with drawing together the educational implications of these analyses, arguing for a politicised education to promote both national and personal security. Five components are proposed: acceptance of ambiguity rather than absolutism and single truths; a secular basis in human rights; breaking down 'otherness'; reconciliation rather than revenge; and free speech and humour.

### **The Causes of Youth Extremism and Ways to Prevent It in the Educational Environment**

Davydov, D.G. (2015). *Russian Education and Society*, 57 (3), 146–162.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10609393.2015.1018745>

The article sketches the main theoretical approaches that account for the phenomenon of youth extremism. It compares the theoretical description of the causes of extremism to the opinions of specialists in its prevention in the educational environment. It explores the limited nature of perceptions that a leading role is played by ideology in the formation of extremist behaviour and emphasises the inadequate effectiveness of preventive measures that consist solely of cultural and educational measures. A number of directions of preventive work in educational organisations are proposed.

### **The Role of Education in Countering Violent Extremism**

Fink, N.C., VeenKamp, I., Alhassen, W., Barakat, R. & Zeiger, S. (2013) CGCC Meeting Note.

[http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Dec13\\_Education\\_Expert\\_Meeting\\_Note.pdf](http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Dec13_Education_Expert_Meeting_Note.pdf)

This is a report from an expert roundtable on the “Role of Education in Countering Violent Extremism.” The meeting included experts from the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the United States. In order to inform current and future countering violent extremism (CVE) programming and good practices, participants shared experiences and lessons learned from their fields of work, including sports and culture, community engagement, and rehabilitation. While many participants recognised the importance of education in CVE, some cautioned against the idea of “injecting” CVE policy into curricula and were concerned that programming around CVE and education would backfire due to wariness around “hard” counterterrorism measures. In order to correct misunderstandings about the CVE concept and distinguish it from “hard” counterterrorism measures, others suggested embarking on awareness-raising campaigns that could explain the purpose of countering violent extremism and how it relates to broader educational goals, and explore how educational institutions and all other relevant education actors could play a role in its practice. However, participants posited the following:

Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CVE lessons should be integrated into existing curricula in an intelligible and easily digestible way where it is addressed as one of the many risky behaviours or dangers affecting youth.</li> <li>▪ Inclusion of a civic education and citizenship responsibility component in curricula could equip students with the social and communication skills necessary to address their grievances in a positive, nonviolent way.</li> <li>▪ Civic responsibility and citizenship may also build a shared sense of culture within a society that consists of a diverse mix of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds although in some countries implementing or even justifying the need for civic education in curricula could be challenging.</li> <li>▪ One type of CVE intervention could be the development of curricula in the children’s mother tongue.</li> <li>▪ Sports, in particular, was highlighted as an important positive outlet for youths as it fosters teamwork, social and leadership skills, promotes goal-setting and instills sense of identity.</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers who do not have the proper support or tools to address CVE could actually cause more harm than good.</li> <li>▪ Teachers are already burdened with many challenges, and adding a complex topic such as countering violent extremism to their curricula may actually hinder their ability to recognise signs of radicalisation</li> </ul>
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhancing logic, problem solving, and critical thinking skills of young people was seen as a vital element in preventing violence and extremism.</li> <li>▪ Empowering students to think critically teaches them to challenge ideas, construct rational thoughts, and engage in meaningful debate.</li> <li>▪ Provide translations of critical texts, popular novels, and storybooks in students’ mother tongue.</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Allow students access to translated religious texts would help deepen the understanding of their religion and empower them to challenge extremist narratives that use religious rhetoric to justify violence</li></ul> |
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### **Human Rights Education in Peace-building: A Look at Where the Practice Has Come from, and Where It Needs to Head**

Holland, T. (2010). Working Paper No. 62: Posted on 1 December 2010

<http://www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/workingpapers/2010/62-holland-2010.pdf>

The author of this paper argues strongly that human rights education (HRE) is not only an essential component of just societies, but is a necessary element of re-establishing stable and just post-war societies. This research claims 'strong empirical evidence' that HRE reduces violence in situations of conflict. Three fields are needed in order to tackle factors of violence and social trauma: these are cognitive (the knowledge needed to promote human rights); attitudinal (self-help, trust, commitment to fairness); and behavioural (mobilising, organising, documenting violations).

Past research has shown that when children are taught about their rights as described in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), in a rights-consistent classroom and school, there is a contagion effect. Teaching about rights has the effect of empowering teachers, reminding them that their day-to-day interactions with children really do have the potential to improve society – thus reminding them of why they went into teaching. Teachers report children using rights discourse to settle problems and to be ready to accept responsibility for their errors and to behave appropriately when a rights-based explanation of what is unacceptable is used.<sup>8</sup>

### **Transformative Resilience Guide: Gender, Violence, and Education**

Reyes, J., Kelcey, J. & Diaz Varela, A. (2013). Washington DC: The World Bank

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/18979>

This guide, which focuses on reducing gender violence through education, is divided into two parts, plus an initial chapter on general aspects of gender and resilience in situations of conflict and violence. Together, the parts present, respectively, core guidance on gender-related risks and assets, and the ways that schools, communities, and education systems can respond to protect education actors from gender-related violence—as well as contribute to mitigating the sources of such violence. Each chapter has a list of core principles related to its focus, along with recommended resources.

### **The influence of education on conflict and peace building**

Smith, A. (2011). Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001913/191341e.pdf>

The purpose of this paper is to identify aspects of education that may have a positive influence on the dynamics of conflict or make a contribution to peacebuilding. The UN Secretary-General's (2009) report on peacebuilding identifies a number of recurring priorities in conflict-affected situations, 'establishing security, building confidence in a political process, delivering initial peace dividends and expanding core national capacity'. These priorities include 'the provision of basic services, such as water and sanitation, health and primary education'. However, in conflict-affected situations education is also about more than service delivery because it is a means of socialisation and identity development through the transmission of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes across generations. Education may therefore be a driver of conflict (fuelling grievances, stereotypes, xenophobia and other antagonisms), but can also be a way of contributing to 'conflict transformation' and 'peacebuilding'.

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<sup>8</sup> Howe, R. & Covell, K. (2005). *Empowering children: Children's Rights Education as a Pathway to Citizenship*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

#### 4. 'Southern' countries perspective

##### **Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Community Resilience in the Greater Horn of Africa: An Action Agenda**

Global Center on Cooperative Society (2015)

[http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/HoA\\_Action\\_Agenda\\_Low\\_Res.pdf](http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/HoA_Action_Agenda_Low_Res.pdf)

Education, whether formal or informal, plays a critical role in fostering resilience and promoting civic values like tolerance, pluralism, and the rule of law. Supplemented by programmes including sports, arts, and culture, a comprehensive curriculum can help empower youths, provide powerful alternative narratives and activities, and engage families and communities in positive transformations. These dynamics, while not narrowly defined as countering violent extremism, can be critical to strengthening community resilience against violent extremist groups. State institutions responsible for education could consider developing curricula that encourage a deeper understanding of national histories or identities, enhance creative and critical thinking, inspire civic responsibility and citizenship, and highlight the usefulness of public service outside the military. Through these efforts, young people can be better equipped to resist the pull factors that may drive them toward radicalisation to or recruitment for violent extremism.

This project on 'Preventing and responding to violent extremism in Africa' is a four-year multi-country and regional engagement. One of the outputs involves reintegrating members of extremist groups who have been disengaged. Rehabilitation centres will be equipped with effective de-radicalisation strategies and curricula and informed by best practices. Through these centres, at-risk individuals will be provided with psycho-social support to prevent them being radicalized and/or to facilitate their reintegration. This part of the intervention will involve the development of curriculum for mentoring and Training of Trainers programmes and advice on appropriate livelihoods/ employment opportunities – all under the supervision of national entities. This activity will leverage expertise from the soon-to-be established Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism in Djibouti. Another output will develop toolkit for mosques, madrasa and Imams on effective standards to promote good governance, curriculum development, training on effective governance, building resilience against violent extremism and radicalisation, developing effective leadership and safeguarding.

##### **Combating radicalisation and violent extremism through education**

Hinds, R. (2014) GSDRC Helpdesk. (*Confidential document commissioned by DFID. Available upon request*)

Evidence on the impact of education programmes to tackle radicalisation and violent extremism is limited. In particular, there is a lack of systematic reviews and independent evaluations assessing the impact of state and donor agency programmes. The aspects of education that are highlighted as important for tackling radicalisation and violent extremism are curriculum, textbooks and religious instruction. Religious education is an important component of de-radicalisation for two reasons: first, it helps to delegitimise the actions of radical groups and terrorists; and second, it is necessary to refute the theoretical and ideological justifications of such movements.

##### **Interventions to Promote Social Cohesion in Sub-Saharan Africa**

King, E., Samii, C. & Snilsveit, B. (2010). *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 2(3), 336-370.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17449057.2010.504552>

This article presents a synthetic review of impact evaluations examining the effectiveness of community-driven development (CDD) and curriculum interventions in improving social cohesion in sub-Saharan Africa. The review found weakly positive impacts of CDD and curriculum interventions on social cohesion outcomes, although only two findings were replicated across studies: one positive and one negative. Causal chain analysis of data on implementation and contextual factors relating to the CDD interventions found

that broad and substantive participation was often lacking, suggesting the interventions have often not been carried out in accordance with the theory of CDD.

### **Pakistan’s Civil Society: Alternative Channels to Countering Violent Extremism**

Mirahmadi, H., Farooq, M. & Ziad, W. (2012). World Organization for Resource Development and Education.

<http://www.worde.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/WORDE-Report-Pakistan-Civil-Society-Alternative-Channels-to-CVE.pdf>

Terrorist attacks, internal conflicts fuelled by ethnic and sectarian violence, and a myriad of governance and development challenges constrain the Government of Pakistan’s ability to counter violent extremism effectively. The purpose of this report was to examine the breadth and scope of Pakistan’s civil society, and its capacity for peace-building and countering violent extremism (CVE) initiatives. Its findings are the result of a year-long study featuring twelve weeks of field work in which WORDE researchers travelled to over 35 cities and villages at risk of violent extremism—from Peshawar, Swat, and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), southern Punjab, interior Sindh and Karachi to meet with over 100 civil society networks.

Throughout the country, and particularly in conflict areas, traditional Muslim networks are building and expanding moderate madrasas to counter the proliferation of radical ideologies offered by violent extremists. These moderate madrasas often serve as “hubs,” coordinating resources and projects among their satellite schools, affiliated social welfare institutions and media outlets. Because these networks are active on every level of society, they are critical channels for disseminating anti-extremist messages within a conservative religious framework that is palatable to at-risk individuals as well as the broader population. This report provides examples of six education interventions that focus on developing positive personal characteristics (e.g. anger management and conflict mediation skills) and necessary mechanisms for building community resilience to violence and extremism.

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b><i>Building &amp; Expanding Moderate Religious Schools</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traditional Muslim networks are actively engaged in building and expanding educational institutions to deter families from enrolling their children in radical madrasas.</li> <li>▪ Moderate schools are well positioned to form a bulwark against extremism – by openly rejecting violence and countering radical narratives in their classrooms.</li> <li>▪ According to community leaders, the mere presence of moderate madrasas can create a frontline defense against radicalisation.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Organizing Anti-Terror Camps</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some schools also offer specially designed seminars to counter radicalization in their communities.</li> <li>▪ Minhaj-ul-Quran International has developed anti-terror camps in Pakistan to provide young Muslim men and women with sound religious refutation of extremist tenets.</li> <li>▪ In the tribal frontier, the women’s organisation, PAIMAN, has established the “Let’s Live in Peace Project” in which women and youth are taught mediation and conflict transformation skills.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Promoting Interethnic and Interfaith Social Harmony</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In regions facing high levels of militancy such as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Swat and southern Punjab, extremists recruit heavily from undereducated and vulnerable communities where youth are easily manipulated into accepting a bifurcated world outlook.</li> <li>▪ To help individuals broaden their mindset, several Pakistani CSOs are providing radicalised youth with basic education in cross-cultural awareness to challenge the intolerant ideologies propagated by extremists.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Public Debates against Extremism</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public lectures and community debates are popular options to counter narratives of extremist groups.</li> <li>▪ Religious scholars and skilled orators from madrasas and mosques employ verses from the Quran, stories of the Prophets, and historical examples to deconstruct radical interpretations of Islam.</li> <li>▪ In regions of Pakistan, like southern Punjab, where robust civil society networks exist, public debates and lectures are held on a weekly basis and some featuring prominent speakers are televised or posted on YouTube.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Arts</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Art is another powerful medium for countering extremism particularly for young audiences.</li> </ul>

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| ▪ Beaconhouse National University (BNU) has engaged students in art projects to promote peace, from chalk graffiti on the streets of Lahore, to designing T-shirts. |
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### **Prevention of violent extremism in third countries: Measures to prevent individuals joining armed extremist groups in conflict zones**

Ranstorp, M. & Hyllengren, P. (2013). Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS), Swedish National Defence College

<https://www.fhs.se/documents/externwebben/forskning/centrumbildningar/cats/publikationer/prevention%20of%20violent%20extremism%20in%20third%20countries%20.pdf>

There are a handful of state-run de-radicalisation programmes in both Somalia and Pakistan, however the projects in both countries suffer from serious problems. With the exception of an initiative in Mogadishu, which does not focus directly on de-radicalisation but is focused on vocational training, most Somali de-radicalisation programmes include the internment of defected al-Shabaab members in camps where they are very inactive and where several are addicted to the drug Khat. There are also a number of small rudimentary programmes in Kenya that are being developed.

Pakistan has state-run de-radicalisation programmes. The Mashal Center and Saboon School concentrate on young people recruited by the Taliban and offer the young people a mixture of psychological counselling, religious retraining and vocation training. The Mashal Center has been run since 2010 and focuses on offering three-month courses in psychosocial, religious and vocational education in order to de-radicalise individuals who have been influenced by the opinions of the Taliban and al-Qaida extremists. Most participants are under 30 years of age. According to the Center's own assessment more than 1,000 individuals have 'graduated' from the programme, with only 10 per cent failing. While the Saboon Center focuses on rehabilitation and readjustment of child recruits who were to be suicide bombers. At present, the Center is looking after 85 boys and has about 100 successful rehabilitation cases.

### **De-radicalising Islamists: Programmes and their impact in Muslim majority states**

El-Said, H. (2012). The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence. London: Kings College London.

<http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/1328200569ElSaidDeradicalisation1.pdf>

In 1995, in Saudi Arabia the educational system was reformed as part of wider de-radicalisation efforts. Reforms led to a more balanced curriculum between religious and non-religious subjects. Textbooks removed lessons that instilled hostility, particularly towards non-Muslims and especially towards Christians and Jews.

### **Education and madrassahs in South Africa: on preventing the possibility of extremism**

Waghid, Y. (2009). British Journal of Religious Education, 31(2), 117-128.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01416200802661142#.Vlb77HbhDq4>

Firstly, madrassah educators should constantly inculcate in learners the important virtues of democratic citizenship in order to prevent the possibility of injustices against human beings. The possibility that inhumane and unjust acts against human beings can be reduced is highly likely, if learners are educated to be democratic citizens. What does this entail? Important virtues of democratic citizenship include the capacity to deliberate as free and equal citizens in a democratic polity, and to conduct such deliberations so that they are about the demands of justice for all individuals (Gutmann 1996, 68–9). If we deliberate as free and equal citizens, then we first of all give an account of what we do to others, who might find our reasons justifiable or not. In turn, we consider the reasons of others equally, which can lead either to our accepting or rejecting their reasons, or their understanding of our reasons or justifications. Such justifications and concomitant actions happen in an atmosphere of free and open expression and are hindered when our reasons embody injustice towards others. Hence, educating madrassah learners to be democratic citizens involves inculcating in them a spirit of openness and respect for the justifications of

others, a recognition that others should be listened to, and that injustices should not be done to others under the guise of equal and free expression.

## 5. 'Northern' countries perspective

### **Prevent Strategy Presented to Parliament**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department by Command of Her Majesty June 2011

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf)

This document sets out the UK Government's three-pronged Prevent programme: (i) responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat from those who promote it and in doing so clearly differentiating between the ideology of extremism and terrorism which is the problem and the legitimate religious belief which is emphatically not; (ii) preventing people from being drawn into terrorism and ensuring that they are given appropriate advice and support; and (iii) working with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation - working with education and healthcare providers, faith groups, charities and the wider criminal justice system and, in addition, working to tackle the challenge of radicalisation on the internet.

### **Communities and Local Government Committee, Preventing Violent Extremism: Sixth Report of Session 2009–2010 (London: House of Commons, 2010).**

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/65.pdf>

The Government's 'Prevent' programme – focusing on community work to crime prevention – has tried to build the capacity of Muslim communities to counter extremism without properly addressing social factors and their mutual reinforcement. Urgent interventions are required to holistically address all these fronts.

Concerns about mainstreaming the 'Prevent' agenda are also shared by service providers. For example, many schools in the UK are resisting applying the guidance in the school Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) toolkit launched by the Department of Children, Schools and Families. The toolkit is aimed at helping schools to contribute to the prevention of violent extremism. The government says that many of the recommendations within the toolkit are in line with what schools are already working (on developing equalities and anti-bullying practice, community cohesion and the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship curriculum). The fact that separate guidance has been produced especially to deal with PVE puts the majority of the law-abiding Muslim pupils under the spotlight. According to research carried out by various teachers unions, the problem of faith-based bullying in schools and colleges has intensified in recent years, particularly in the case of anti-Muslim prejudice and racism.

### **In Extremis: a Self-defeating Element in the 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Strategy**

Stevens, D. (2009). *The Political Quarterly*, 80(4), 517-525.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-923X.2009.02057.x/abstract>

The main policy reaction to the terrorist attacks of 7/7 and 21/7 of 2005 has been the development of the £6 million 'Preventing Violent Extremism' (PVE) initiative which aims, as part of the Government's broader counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST), to tackle support for, and the promotion of, violent Islamist ideologies within British society. One crucial component of this strategy is providing support for Muslim groups and individuals to tackle radicalisation and extremism directly at the local level. Funding and charitable status for mosques, Muslim community and youth groups and initiatives, 'forums against extremism', anti-extremism 'road shows', and the training of imams are included as part of this strategy. This article argues that this aspect of PVE is not only ill-advised, but potentially deeply counter-productive. It takes issue with two reasons that inform the PVE strategy: first, that what motivates individuals to join extremist groups are the religious ideas themselves; second, that government intervention or involvement

is an effective method for rendering the moderate antidote attractive. Arguably, neither of these assumptions is warranted in the face of contrary evidence. Consequently, this arm of PVE is, at best, barking up the wrong tree; at worst, fuelling extremism.

### **Extremism and 'Prevent': the need to trust in education**

Thomas, P & Cantel, T. 10 December 2014

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/paul-thomas-ted-cantle/extremism-and-'prevent'-need-to-trust-in-education>

These authors' concern is that the *Prevent* focus on identifying young people viewed as vulnerable to radicalisation is taking attention away from the need to promote the prevention of extremism through educational approaches that build individual and collective youth resilience that not only just teach the principles of democratic citizenship but actually put it into practice. They feel that initiatives such as the Welsh-based Think Project show how to do this through open and robust educational conversations. However, currently, such open and upfront political education work is not being prioritised by *Prevent* - educational practitioners are not being trained and supported to undertake such work – and the wider context of citizenship education is being downplayed. They argue that *Prevent's* failure to trust in, and promote processes of, genuine education built around principles of democratic and equal citizenship represents a failure of the country's national democratic traditions and nerve as a society in the face of an undoubted terrorist threat.

They argue for the approach advocated by Lynn Davies termed '*educating against extremism*' in both schools and communities. This educational approach is one of open dialogue, with prejudiced views challenged but in a patient and respectful way that encourages young people to re-think assumptions through exposure to different perspectives. This includes dialogue with local asylum seekers about their actual experiences and the input of a confident, trained and ethnically-mixed staff team who demonstrate 'cohesion' in action. Above all, it trusts the power of education and shows a faith in the potential of all young people to develop resilience against extremism and hatred by enabling them to learn and to practice real, democratic debate and citizenship. There are three fundamental learning points:

- i. the need for training that gives educational practitioners the right skills and approaches to confidently engage young people in processes of debate and reflection;
- ii. the need for educational leaders and, more importantly, politicians to trust teachers and youth workers to engage in such political education debates with young people – such processes inevitably lead to the airing of strong language and strong views but these are much better aired within facilitated educational processes that are set against multiple perspectives, than in private spaces where no challenge or learning is encouraged; and
- iii. such anti-extremist educational processes need a sound philosophical base revolving around processes of citizenship education based around concepts of human rights that enable young people of all backgrounds to appreciate that they have rights but also have responsibilities.

### **Preventing Youth Violence and Dropout: A Randomized Field Experiment**

Heller, S., Pollack, H., Ander, R., & Ludwig, J. (2013). NBER Working Paper Series #19014. Cambridge, Massachusetts: National Bureau of Economic Research.

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w19014>

This paper reports results from a large randomized controlled trial of an intervention for disadvantaged male youth Grades 7-10 from high-crime Chicago neighbourhoods. The intervention was delivered by two local non-profits and included regular interactions with a pro-social adult, after-school programming, and - perhaps the most novel ingredient - in-school programming designed to reduce common judgment and decision-making problems related to automatic behaviour and biased beliefs, or what psychologists call cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Programme participation reduced violent-crime arrests during the program year by 8.1 per 100 youth (a 44 percent reduction).

### **Resilience, violent extremism and religious education**

Miller, J. (2013). *British Journal of Religious Education*, 35(2), 188-200.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01416200.2012.740444#.V1b50nbhDq4>

This article is an attempt to provide an educational justification for the British Government-funded project, *REsilience*, on addressing contentious issues through religious education (RE) which was carried out by the RE Council of England and Wales. A number of issues relating to the inclusion of religiously inspired violent extremism in the curriculum are raised – definitional, political and educational. A justification is proposed which focuses on human rights in two ways: the right to freedom of religion and belief and the promotion of pupils' moral development through human rights issues. It is suggested that the work of the moral philosopher Kwame Antony Appiah with his focus on morality in cosmopolitan societies is relevant to this, and in particular, his concept of 'honor' which can be used by educationists as the basis for engagement with violent extremism and related topics in the classroom.

### **Religious Extremism, Religious Education, and the Interpretive Approach**

Miller, J. (2013). *Religion & Education*, 40(1), 50-61.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15507394.2013.745362#.V1b5THbhDq4>

This article has attempted to show that the interpretive approach to RE offers both a theoretical justification and an effective pedagogy in addressing religiously inspired violent extremism. It is important that teachers have such confidence because this is a particularly controversial and complex area of public debate that touches on the most profound questions of individual freedom, belief, identity, community, and society. The interpretive approach enables dialogue that is deeply moral and educationally challenging. By focusing on interpretation, it can be recognised that there is always the possibility of further change and what Appiah called "fallibilism—the sense that our knowledge is imperfect, provisional, subject to revision in the face of new evidence." This sits comfortably with Wright's "political liberalism" (rather than "comprehensive liberalism") by which teachers embrace principles of freedom and tolerance as a "non-absolute interim ethic." The author believes that this is a way forward that maintains the epistemological openness of the interpretive approach, is appropriate for all pupils in our classrooms, and enables deep learning about religions and cultures in an ethos of respectful, critical engagement.

## **6. Additional information**

### **Author**

This query response was prepared by **Michael Latham**

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