

RadArt

Resilience, Art and Development in youth work and communities Against violent Radicalisation of youTh.

European Report

Art as a tool to build resilience of youth against violent radicalisation:

Key findings of the RADART survey

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Partnership:

- Merseyside Expanding Horizons UK - Coordinator
- Town Hall Kostrzyn nad Odra - PL
- Osservatorio di Genere - IT
- Elan Interculturel - FR
- Le Foyer Des Jeunes Des Marolles - BE

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Authors:

MEH: Luca Serratore

And Radart partnership

Methodology

The questionnaires were shared among young people, notably those with thoughts considered radical. Some partners found some difficulties in reaching the target group; therefore, they expanded the share the questionnaires on their general networks. Some other partners, in order to reach the target group, involved their colleagues who work in organisations supporting vulnerable youth.

The questionnaires were shared with 71 participants mainly reached by email, private Facebook account, WhatsApp, workshops, family and groups of work, and also through direct interviews. People reached are young people from the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, Turkey, Morocco, Ukraine, Portugal, and Belgians of Moroccan and sub-Saharan origins aged between 14 and 30.

Data from Partners

MEH (UK) received the 20 questionnaires, through which it is possible to highlight that radicalisation is understood by the majority of the young people as a violent or somewhat violent action. About 60% of the participants have been curious about the idea of radicalised people, and 80% of them think that media equally cover all kind of radicalisation. Dance, photography, painting, drawing and video making are the creative workshops that attract most participants. Some do not feel artistic or creative and do not like when they are obliged to participate in workshops.

All participants believe that art can help in preventing radicalisation processes, and they suggested increasing the awareness on the subject of radicalisation, to deal with young people's interest issues, to show that radicalisation limits freedom, to make them see the beauty in diversity, to create opportunity for radicalised people and to understand their needs. Furthermore, to give them confidence and to approach young people in the attempt to change their beliefs.

Town Hall Kostrzyn nad Odra (PL) reached 11 young people who associate radicalization primarily with extremism, fanaticism, and the preaching of extreme ideas. When asked whether radicalism was always associated with violence, the answers were divided. Almost everyone believes that they have never been interested in radical ideas, and in their opinion the cause of radicalization is weakness, fear, loneliness, and an escape into ideology. Almost everyone interested in creative workshops think that they would not change anything in their organization and course. Only one person admitted that the workshop was not helpful in fighting radicalization. Suggestions on ways to interest young people in the fight against radicalism are primarily workshops, conversations with interesting young people, various meetings, debates and discussions. The respondents to the above questionnaire are primarily people interested in art. We believe that most art sensitive people are against radicalization.

ODG (IT) involved 17 young people by the questionnaires. Most of the responses defined radicalisation as a tendency to take to extremes their own vision of world without any mediation or form of compromise. 59% of recipients think that radicalisation is not always violent. 47% state they were a bit intrigued by the ideas of radicalized people, while 41,2% said they were intrigued, only 11,8% said they weren't intrigued. 76,5% do not think that media cover all types of radicalisation in the same way.

Concerning the interest in creative workshops, 41,2% claims to be interested in photography, 29,4% in drawing and 17,6% in video making. Some, to the question what you don't like about creative workshops, have answered the too much

organisation and the little space left to comparison. Someone states that they do not feel adequate, because not very creative.

All participants believe that art can help prevent radicalisation processes, because it has the ability to bring people together and break down cultural and social barriers. To the question “what do you suggest for attracting young people to the risk of radicalisation”, most of those who replied to the questionnaire reaffirm the importance of testing new instruments and to create moments of collective confrontation which have art, literature and social commitment as a strategy of action.

Elan Interculturel (FR) shared the questionnaires with 9 participants by who Elan received some refusals for talking, fear of being exposed – in this frame, the google form was a useful alternative to communicate and hear what they had to say.

One aspect found in the questionnaires is that the term “radical” might be positive in some context, and even be a claim of a social movement – it is not always violent. One of our answers:

- “I belong to a movement, radical feminism, but I don’t feel radicalised.”

This leads to another aspect that appeared more than one time: the concern about being radical by choice (because you searched information, talked to others, created a critical thought about it, etc.) or was “radicalised” by someone else or another group (the process of receiving the ideas and thoughts already made and not reflecting on it):

- Personally, my radicalisation comes from a sociological path. My parents have instilled in me equality, respect, gender equity. It also comes from an intellectual path: you come across a book or a video by chance, and you go deeper. Radicality is attractive because “it thinks”.
- In the expressions “radicalisation” and “radicalised people’ there is a passive dimension to the person, as if they had not chosen this path. For example, I don’t consider myself to have been “radicalised” by someone, as in a sect.

That’s why in more than one interview that they are closer to having “radical ideas”, but they are not radicalised people.

Radicalisation appeared as being always a process – that might lead to violence. In some of our answers, this violence would be justified by the violence of the system. The problem seems to be precisely the causes of this radicalisation and their concrete consequences. One of the youngsters pointed out: Regarding the questions, it might be interesting to ask, “does being radical help to make things move forward?”. It is a question that he poses to himself before evaluating if the movement is worth it or not. It might be a bridge to dialogue.



The point of “group belonging” appeared many times too. Violent radicalisation might come from the feeling of being excluded that develops angry:

- It’s a phenomenon where we can make assumptions: search for belonging to a group – claim of thoughts and/or values – search for identity – more fragile psychology at a given moment in life and manipulation.

In terms of linking radicalisation and art, music, writing, video making, photography and theatre were pointed out as good propositions. Finally, for youngsters, the using of social network is crucial: radicalisation in our times comes a lot from internet – so in order to talk with these youngsters and open the dialogue, we must pass by developing our work in social media.

Le Foyer Des Jeunes Des Marolles, (BE) reached 14 young people. In general, there is a tendency to show little interest in art, those who appreciate it give more precision about the one they like. Radicalization is understood to more than 50% as the rejection of different opinions, which leads to intolerance and extremism without naming racism even though they are subjected to it on a daily basis (only 1). It is also associated with terrorism and religion. Religion is the first form of radicalization they know (11), as many denounce the unequal media treatment on these issues, half of which denounce the focus on religion. 8 out of 14 respondents do not associate radicalization with violence and 11 of them show curiosity about radical ideas. 11 young people believe that radicalization is the product of loneliness, isolation, bad influences and manipulation. A process which requires a certain emotional and affective fragility beforehand.

More than half of the young people took part in artistic workshops, as many believe that the instructions are too strict, “school”, leaving little freedom for creativity. Despite the lack of interest in creative workshops, 8 young people show their attraction to video making.

Finally, they are mixed on the effectiveness of art as a means of preventing radicalization in equal proportion, some think so, others no, some do not know and for others perhaps, with a tendency rather pessimistic. They advocate as means, the existence of collective, open spaces, conducive to expression and meeting the other to avoid exclusion.

Table of data

The table contains all the data collected by partners in 5 different nations and 71 participants.

<i>Number of completed questioners received</i>		71					
QUESTIONS							
		Age 14-18	Age 18-26	Age 26-30		Age 30 +	
1	How old are you?	7	36	22		6	
		UK	PL	IT	FR	BE	EU/Other
2	In which country do you currently live?	11	10	20	9	14	7
3	Are you interested in art?	- yes : 54 - a lot : 1 - musical art, art : 1 - depends which but in general yes : 1 - kind of/more or less : 2 - not really : 2 - no : 8 - not much : 1					
4	How would you define the word "radicalisation"?	- Extremism; Actions of violence; Change of thoughts/beliefs; opposition to status quo; political/religious radical positions; strong beliefs; physical/mental hurt; LinkedIn/Facebook; doing something different; crime; liberal; terrorist attacks and religion; ideology that leads you to be intransigent in certain fights; forcing someone to force your views.					
	N° of answers	YES	NO	KIND OF		OTHER:	
5	Do you think that radicalisation is always violent?	11	33	18		9	
	N° of answers	YES	NO	KIND OF		OTHER:	
6	Have you ever been curious about ideas of radicalised people?	34	18	16			

7	What types of radicalisations do you know?	- Religious/political; radical inspiration/ideology; anti-feminist/LGBT movements; racism an religious extremism; social/political; sympathy to terrorist groups; Nazism; food (antispecism, veganism); patriotism;						
	N° of answers	YES	NO	KIND OF	OTHER:			
8	Do you think that media equally cover all kinds of radicalisation?	1	58	7	5			
9	Do you know why people become radicalized?	- Vulnerability; social situation; Internet/social media; government drives beliefs ; need to belong to something; radical education systems; fear; lack of ability; potential for extreme actions; school dropout and family; no goals; loneliness; no; frustration; bad influences/manipulated; To belong to a group and do not feel lonely.						
	N° of answers	YES	NO	KIND OF	OTHER:			
10	Have you ever participated in creative workshops?	44	24	1				
	N° of answers	PH OT OG RAP HY	VIDEO- MAKIN G	DANCE	DRAWING	PAINTIN G	POETRY	OTHER :
11	What kind of creative workshops can attract you?	31	26	23	20	18	12	12 (music, collages, graffiti, Cinema, writing, Circus)
12	What you do not like in creative workshops?	- obligation to participate; the shame of no having creativity; having no art/creativity; need to have something that works for you; love to meet people and work together; writing and tests; to express; everything; don't know; dance; too many compulsory guidelines; too rigid instructions; monotony; nothing; is a good way to develop skills;						

13	Do you think that art can help in preventing radicalisation processes?	- Yes; kind of, opportunity to spend time and enjoy; yes, way to ease the mind; yes, way to learn; radicalized people have different art; yes, propose to see the world differently ; sort of; it is helpful in shaping the character; yes, in general, any activity that involves people is helpful; not really because people will forget about it; Yes, because it opens the dialogue, can facilitate communication
14	We are youth workers aiming to engage with young people. What do you suggest us to attract young people at risk of radicalisation?	- To raise the awareness on the subject; balance of treatments; to deal with young people's interest issues; to show that radicalisation limits freedom; to make them see the beauty in diversity ; to worry about them; to create opportunity ; to understand their needs; to give confidence; to change beliefs; to approach young people; Create partnerships with NGOs from the neighbourhoods of the youngsters; Give them a voice; Theatre; organize collective event/debate ; paying attention to these people. Art is a good direction. Young people often have a lot of energy, so dancing can be a good idea; innovation; to promote empathy ; artistic sharing

Conclusions and remarks

The majority of the participants (54 out of 71), expressed to be interested in art. This can be considered as an essential step from where to start to prevent radicalization in young people. Although radicalization may be linked to several fields such as politics, economics and religions, an important number of participants understand radical actions related to violence or linked to some kind of violent action. Therefore, this perception expressed by 29 participants shows somehow the idea of an interaction between violence and radicalisation.

On the other hand, the participants' ideas show that radicalisation could also be different actions and thoughts related to radical inspirations, extremist ideologies, racism, patriotism and veganism. Therefore, participants' perception indicates that the types of radicalizations are several and this plenty existence is not equally covered by media. Currently, the explanation may be found in the fact that some kind of radical actions, whether violent or not violent, sound louder and attract a major number audience. However, media and social media managers can have an extensive impact by changing the way of control and generating a system of protection dedicated to those vulnerable people. Indeed, when participants were asked why people become radicalized, they directly pointed their focus on social media and people's vulnerability which together with their social situation and backgrounds have an important impact in shaping their mind, personality and their choices.



Nowadays, where and what young people belong to is strictly connected to their social activities. Moreover, in some countries governments drive people's beliefs through radical education systems and it represents a potential opportunity for people to feel the need to belong to something and to adhere to extreme actions.

These are the reasons because it is deemed that alternative and creative attempts are necessary to prevent young people to approach radicalizations and to move away from violent radical actions those who already move into a radicalized environment. We believe that by the use of art to develop innovative, creative and cooperative tools, approaches and methodologies for youth workers, and using art as a vehicle to improve their competences, is possible to prevent the risk of radicalization among young people.

Furthermore, the responses of participants, which demonstrate their willingness to be involved in several kind of arts, confirm that the goal expected by the RadArt Partnership is downright reachable through:

- raising awareness of the impact that art can have on young people at risk of radicalization;
- improving critical thinking skills of young people by involving them in a research and by using art;
- and raising awareness of the risks of extremism and radicalisation among family members and communities through accessible guidelines.

Recommendations to develop creative tools targeting young people

- Take into consideration flexibility in shaping rules for the activities using arts. People do not have to feel forced to express their intimate thoughts and they do not have to participate in rigid activities.
- Make all participants feel comfortable and safe whether or not they have artistic skills and talents to share
- Use arts to highlight the beauty of diversity and underline that diversity is richness, by promoting empathy among people with different stories and background.
- Art as means of communication and a way to create opportunities for young people, in terms of: meeting new friends, expressing themselves, enhancing their talents, raising their voices.
- Think of activities that enable young people to connect with their local communities: work in partnership with local grassroots organisations
- Develop activities which stimulate debates and events based on discussions.