

Expert exchange between
Germany, Spain and Tunisia

New Perspectives against Radicalisation

Preventing Radicalisation and Promoting Democracy
through International Exchange



International Youth Service of the
Federal Republic of Germany

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Preface

All over the world, populist movements are jeopardising democratic values. It is no longer exceptional to see extreme right-wing parties represented in parliaments all over Europe. For many societies, the fear of attacks from right-wing or religious extremist groups is a constant. What is more, these groups have long started to join forces across national borders.

The youth work community is using preventive approaches to combat attempts to radicalise young people, teaching them respect for diversity and democratic values while encouraging them to engage with and participate in society. In doing so, these preventive activities must take account of the social, political and socioeconomic challenges of our times, all of which are shaped by factors that have long moved beyond national borders. More than ever, this requires youth work organisations that seek to prevent radicalisation to cooperate at the European and international level.

"New Perspectives against Radicalisation", a cooperation project by German, Spanish and Tunisian partners, was designed as an opportunity for organisations working to prevent radicalisation and promote democracy to learn more about new approaches and ideas and to engage in more dialogue and international cooperation. At the heart of the project were two international expert exchanges – one in Tunisia, the other in Germany. Both times the international groups spent three days visiting local projects, discussing their work in small groups, and talking to fellow experts.

IJAB, the International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany, had invited its partners, Spain's national youth

agency INJUVE and the civil society organisation Club Culturel Ali Belhouane (CCAB) from Tunisia, to join the project. In Spain, decades of terrorist attacks from the Basque underground organisation ETA have been followed almost without interruption by Islamist terrorist threats. In December 2018, an extreme right-wing party appeared almost out of nowhere to take almost 11% of votes in Andalusia's regional elections – a phenomenon unprecedented since the end of the Franco regime – and enjoyed similar success in Spain's national parliamentary elections just six months later. By contrast, ever since the Arab Spring Tunisia has been a beacon of hope when it comes to democratic development in North Africa. That being said, many young Tunisians still face a precarious existence, which is making them vulnerable to radical ideologies: many ISIS combatants in Syria hail from Tunisia. Germany, finally, has decades of experience in civic education and in running initiatives to combat right-wing extremism and anti-Semitism. Also, more attention is being given to religious extremism. This notwithstanding, the country is seeing more and more open hate speech, xenophobia and racism.

The circumstances vary in the partner countries, yet all three share the same goals: to engage in prevention through youth work, which the partners believe plays a vital role in guarding against political and religious radicalisation.

This publication outlines the situation in the three partner countries, describes a number of selected good practices, and summarises the insights and new approaches that have come out of this more than one-year project.



Country portraits

Country portrait: Tunisia

- After the 2011 revolution, Tunisia witnessed an increase in extremist violence and a rise in terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and groups sympathising with the Islamic State (ISIS). In response, Tunisia joined forces with local and international partners to develop strategies and measures to counter terrorism and radicalisation. To this day, the fight against extremism remains a current and highly relevant subject of political and public debate.



According to UN estimates, by the end of 2015 around 6,000 Tunisian nationals had travelled to Syria to support ISIS, making the small North African country the fourth-largest exporter of ISIS combatants on the ground.¹ A study by the Tunisian Center for Research and Studies on Terrorism states that 69 per cent of jihadi combatants had previously travelled to Libya for military training.

Civilians enjoyed greater freedoms after the revolution, making it easier for Islamist groups to identify and recruit new followers and members. In addition, socioeconomic challenges and high youth unemployment left the population more vulnerable to ideologies like these than had been the case before.

After the 2011 revolution, the founder of the terrorist organisation Tunisian Combat Group was released and went on to establish a militant Islamist group known as Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia (AST). In 2012, Tunisian security agencies became aware

of two further groups, Katiba Uqba ibn Nafi (KUIN) and Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade, that stood ready to engage in violent attacks and maintained contact with al-Qaeda.² In 2014, many Tunisians who sympathised with al-Qaeda proclaimed their loyalty towards ISIS.³

The country has been shaken by a large number of terrorist attacks, among the worst of which were two attacks in 2015. 21 individuals died in the attack on 18 March outside the Bardo National Museum in the capital. Just a few weeks later, on 26 June, a shooting at a hotel in Sousse left 38 dead. ISIS claimed responsibility for both attacks. Besides the obvious human tragedy, these incidents had a major impact on the country's

1 Soufan Group, 2017

2 US National Counterterrorism Center

3 Center for Strategic and International Studies



tourism industry: tourism revenue dropped by around 35% that year, and some 70 hotels across the country had to close.⁴

Government action

Tunisia's government is responding to radicalisation largely by implementing security policies. In 2015, a new government strategy was introduced to combat terrorism and extremism. Measures included more consistently severe punishment for Islamist activities as well as a law stipulating the death penalty for terrorists. Also in 2015, the government formed a defense and security unit designed to strengthen the role of the army in combating terrorism.

After the 2015 attack in Sousse the government proclaimed a state of emergency that it has since renewed at regular intervals. In 2016, Tunisia's National Security Council adopted a new national anti-terrorism strategy that calls for a multidimensional approach and is based on four foundations: prevention, protection, tracking and response. As a deterrent, severe punishments are handed down for radical Islamist activities.

Given the large number of individuals who had travelled to Libya for military training and from there onwards to join ISIS,

Tunisia restricted freedom of movement for individuals under the age of 35 whose destination was Libya, Turkey or Serbia and temporarily closed the border with Libya altogether. The most recent closure took effect on 1 September 2018 and lasted over six weeks.⁵

Since 2016 more than 15,000 suspected extremists have been under surveillance by state security forces. During the same period, the government made a move on more than 160 jihadist cells and arrested over 850 suspected terrorists.⁶ It also began to close down mosques suspected of having jihadi leaders or to replace their imams. Many Salafi groups in Tunisia are known to have recruited new members in mosques: according to reports, in 2013 between 100 and 500 of the country's 5,000 mosques were under Salafi control.⁷

In 2015, the Ministry of Religious Affairs launched the "We are Islam" campaign to promote liberal Islam. The government is also investing in research into the root causes of radicalisation.

4 Reuters

5 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

6 Deutsche Welle

7 Combatting Terrorism Center



Tunisian youth

Tunisia's population is very young, with the 16 to 30 age group accounting for around one third of the total population.⁸ Since the revolution, young adults have found life particularly challenging. According to World Bank data, in 2018 youth unemployment in Tunisia stood at 34.8%. Interestingly, young university graduates are disproportionately affected by unemployment.

A study by Germany's Friedrich Ebert Foundation reveals the level of frustration among Tunisia's youth. 45% of those questioned stated they had lost a job at least once since the revolution. 47% felt unable to pursue their life goals. This sense of frustration means young people are particularly vulnerable to radicalisation.

The young generation lacks a voice at the political level in particular. Post-revolution, a mere 2.7% are members of a political party.⁹ In the eyes of Tunisia's youth, the state and the government lack both trustworthiness and credibility. Only 37% of young Tunisians have confidence in their parliament.¹⁰ This distrust in the political establishment is also evident in the outcome of the last presidential elections. Many young people voted for Kais Saied, an independent candidate who had entered the race as an outsider without prior political experience.¹¹ In the runup to the elections, young Tunisians had been mobilised heavily via social media.

Youth work in Tunisia

Youth work in Tunisia is for the most part state-led. One major stakeholder is the Ministry of Youth and Sports, under whose umbrella there is a large number of youth clubs, some of which are affiliated with schools. They offer youth work activities in the classic sense: workshops, peer-to-peer activities, drama, exchanges, youth camps and so forth. Career guidance is another area of focus, for the government has recognised an urgent necessity to help young people transition into the labour market and to fight youth unemployment.

Youth work is organised by region, with one inspector per region who is responsible for ensuring that educators receive continued professional training and for coordinating and monitoring youth work. Every region has state youth centres offering activities for young people. There are also government-funded mobile youth projects that move from town to town. Besides, there is a large number of non-governmental organisations in Tunisia that work for and with young people. The approach to youth work has changed in particular after the revolution, with a number of new organisations having emerged. The majority of these, however, operate in the cities.

8 CIA World Factbook

9 Observatoire National de la Jeunesse

10 FES MENA Youth Study 2018

11 The Guardian

Country portrait: Germany

- Xenophobia, political or religion-based violence and right-wing populism are on the rise in Germany, in particular after large numbers of refugees began to arrive in the country in 2015. The Federal Government is attempting to address these developments through projects to promote democracy and prevent radicalisation.



Political radicalisation in Germany

In the 2017 national elections, a right-wing populist party known as Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) swept into parliament with 12.6% of the votes. It has since transformed Germany's public discourse, and its political landscape, with its anti-immigration stance. According to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation's 2018/19 "Mitte" study, right-wing populism has become a firm element in German society, with one in three Germans questioning the notion of equal rights for everyone. Negative attitudes to asylum-seekers are particularly prevalent, with half of those surveyed agreeing with negative statements about refugees.

These negative attitudes and populist propaganda have also been known to spawn violence. "Politically motivated crime – right-wing" is the term used by Germany's security agencies to designate criminal activity motivated by right-wing ideas or sentiments. In 2018, the government registered 1,156 acts of violence in this category in Germany.¹² In the autumn of 2015, when the influx of refugees to Germany reached its apex, attacks by right-wingers against refugees became more frequent. The number of politically motivated attacks on refugee accommodation, for instance, peaked in 2015 and 2016, with 995 such attacks registered in 2016.¹³

Right-wing terrorism has also gained heavy public attention in particular through the terrorist organisation "Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund" (NSU). Between 2000 and 2007, this neo-Nazi group killed nine immigrants and one police officer.

There is also violent extremism on the far left of the political spectrum. The most prominent example of left-wing extremism in German history is Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF), a group that is considered responsible for kidnappings, attacks and bombings that took 33 lives. In 2017, the G20 summit in Hamburg again directed the spotlight at left-wing extremism. Heavy rioting broke out, with hundreds of individuals injured and 51 arrest warrants issued against rioters.¹⁴

Religious radicalisation in Germany

Besides politically motivated violence, Germany is also grappling with religious extremism. The number of known Islamists in Germany who have left the country for Syria or Iraq is currently estimated at 1,050. Around half of these are thought to have

¹² German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community

¹³ German Federal Criminal Police Office

¹⁴ Die Zeit



travelled there specifically to join ISIS, al-Qaeda or other terrorist groups. Many of them were under the age of 30 at the time they left.¹⁵

Besides radicalised individuals who have left the country for Syria, Islamist terrorism is also present in Germany itself. On 19 December 2016, an attack on a Berlin Christmas market killed 12 and injured 62, with ISIS claiming responsibility.¹⁶

Prevention in Germany

The German government has launched a number of programmes to help prevent extremism and radicalisation. Two examples are "Zusammenhalt durch Teilhabe" (Cohesion through participation) and "Demokratie leben!" (Live Democracy!), two national programmes under whose umbrella the expert exchange on radicalisation prevention took place.

Since 2015, the Federal Family Ministry has funded projects to combat right-wing extremism, violence and group-focused enmity under the Live Democracy! programme. The programme's budget has been steadily increased from EUR 40.5 million in 2015, when it was launched, to over EUR 115.5 million at the end of 2019.¹⁷ In 2018, the budget allocated to the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth included EUR 120.5 million earmarked for measures to promote diversity, tolerance and democracy.¹⁸ The budget allocated to

combating religious extremism is almost as high: in 2018, the Federal Government's national programme to prevent Islamist extremism received EUR 100 million from across a variety of ministerial budgets.¹⁹

The government is also working to combat extremism through its own institutions. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees set up a central counselling service and helpline ("Beratungsstelle Radikalisierung") in 2012. A Salafism prevention network was established, under which the police and intelligence agencies are working together. In 2007, Germany introduced an anti-terrorism register ("Antiterrordatei"), which is fed by 38 security agencies across the country with information on suspected attackers.²⁰

Finally, a large number of non-governmental organisations is working in different ways to combat racism, anti-Semitism and other form of discrimination and radicalisation. These activities often take place in settings such as schools, youth clubs, mosques, families and social communities, as well as online and in prisons.

15 Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, June 2019

16 Die Zeit

17 Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, 2019

18 2018 Federal Budget Plan

19 German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, 2017

20 Federal Criminal Police Office

German youth

When it comes to employment, most young Germans are in a relatively comfortable situation. In 2018, the number of jobless young people aged 15 to 24 was as low as it ever had been since 1990, when Germany reunified. The unemployment rate in this age group was 6.2% for Germany as a whole.²¹ The number of young adults who are educated to a high level continues to rise. In the 2017/2018 winter term, around 2.5 million Germans were enrolled at university – a record high.²²

Young Germans are politically aware. According to the 2015 Shell study, six out of ten young people claim to have participated in political action in one or more ways. The most frequent kind of political activity is the boycott of certain goods for political reasons, followed by the signing of petitions. One in four young Germans has attended a demonstration, and one in ten belongs to a civil society organisation.

Having said that, young Germans, too, lack confidence in the political institutions. According to the 2019 Shell study, 71% of those interviewed agreed that "politicians don't care what people like me think". The study also found that around 24% of young Germans "tend towards populism". More than half believe that the government fails to disclose the truth to the public, and that it does more for refugees than for Germans in need.

Youth work in Germany

The child and youth services field, including youth work, encompasses a wide variety of organisations and stakeholders that are designed to reflect the diverse social make-up of Germany's young generation. Youth work activities are offered by independent organisations as well as by local and regional public-sector child and youth services providers. The partnerships between public- and private-sector organisations are organised according to the principles of equality and subsidiarity, with the public-sector youth welfare offices responsible for ensuring that adequate child and youth work activities are provided and, where possible, to devolve this function to those private-sector organisations that are closest to the young target groups.

There are almost 15,000 child and youth work providers nationwide. 84% of them are traditional "open" child and youth work organisations that run youth centres, adventure playgrounds and mobile play trucks,²³ for instance. Among the independent organisations providing child and youth work activities are youth associations, youth councils ("Jugendring") and church-backed providers such as Diakonie and Caritas.²⁴

One element specific to Germany is "open" ("offene") youth work structures. Open youth work facilities are open to all children and adolescents. Typically, these are traditional youth centres where young people can spend their free time and receive personal, educational and/or career guidance.



²¹ Federal Statistical Office, 2018

²² Federal Statistical Office, 2018

²³ Deutsche Telekom Stiftung

²⁴ Federal Statistical Office, 2017

Country portrait: Spain

- In December 2018 Vox, a right-wing populist party, unexpectedly entered parliamentary politics in Spain. That notwithstanding, the fight against extremism and radicalisation is still largely focused on religious extremism.



Religious radicalisation in Spain

In 2004, Spain was shaken by one of the most severe Islamist terrorist attacks ever to take place in Europe. On 11 March, bombs exploded in four trains in Madrid, with 191 dead and around 1,800 injured. Since then, the government has arrested around 400 Islamists.²⁵ Reuters reported that in 2017, around 3,000 Spanish government agents were working to prevent terrorist attacks, including the Spanish police, who at this point were observing around 260 suspected terrorists.

Despite these measures, on 17 August 2017 another terrorist attack took place when a van drove into the crowds on Barcelona's popular shopping street Las Ramblas. 13 were killed and over 100 were injured. One day later, a similar attack took place in Cambrils, a seaside town not far from Barcelona. ISIS took responsibility for both attacks.²⁶

The Madrid and Barcelona attacks were organised largely by individuals of Moroccan descent who had been radicalised in Spain. 90% of Islamists who were arrested between 2013 and 2016 in Spain had been radicalised there.²⁷ Radicalisation often takes place in prisons. In recent years, the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta in North Africa have become hotspots for radicalisation, too, especially for individuals planning to travel to Syria or Iraq.²⁸ By October 2019, 248 individuals had left Spain to engage in Islamist combat in the Middle East, Mali or the Philippines.²⁹

Political radicalisation in Spain

For a long time, Spain appeared to be one of the few European countries to be spared from the rise of right-wing populists. Then came the elections of December 2018, when the Vox party first entered the Andalucía's regional parliament with 11% of the votes and a pro-nationalist manifesto that was aimed squarely against multiculturalism, feminism and LGBTQI rights. One third of Vox's votes came from voters under 34.³⁰

Among the apparent reasons for Vox's broad support were the socio-economic crisis and corruption. In addition, it was said, the party had been inspired by right-wing populist movements elsewhere in Europe. Thanks to Vox, Spain's society is giving greater attention to the anti-immigration debate. Given that Spain's young people are particularly dissatisfied with the government, this has made them more vulnerable to radicalisation from the right. Vox has a very strong social media presence. It has the largest Instagram following of all Spanish parties (316,000). Instagram is one of Spain's most popular social media channels. 60% of its users are between 14 and 17 years of age.³¹

25 The Guardian

26 BBC News

27 Combating Terrorism Center

28 Counter Extremism Project

29 El Pais, Intelligence Center for Counter-Terrorism and Organized Crime

30 CIS – The College for International Studies

31 Open Democracy



Government action

In recent years, the Spanish government's radicalisation prevention activities have largely focused on religious extremism. In 2015, the government proclaimed terrorism hazard level 4 (on a scale of 1 to 5) and introduced heightened measures to combat terrorism, such as stricter border controls, a stronger police presence and stricter surveillance in transit facilities, hospitals and public institutions. In addition, cooperation between municipalities and security forces is to be stepped up. Spain introduced a "pact against terrorism", involving more severe punishment for support for terrorist activities. Hate speech and the glorification of terrorism online are now criminal offences. The government is also engaging in spreading counter-narratives, for instance via its anti-discrimination campaign #SomosMás (We Are More).

In February 2019, the Spanish government adopted a new counterterrorism strategy. Under the heading "Preventing, Protecting, Persecuting and Preparing a response", the strategy aims to identify extremists and individuals susceptible to radicalisation so as to prevent radicalisation as well as future attacks. It is mainly focused on jihadi combatants, including ISIS or al-Qaeda returnees, as well as on work in prisons.

Spanish youth

Since the financial crisis, young Spaniards have been in a difficult socio-economic situation. Youth unemployment is at 32.2%, with many young people in badly paid jobs on short-term contracts.³² According to a study by the University College of Financial Studies in Madrid, today young Spaniards are earning less than their peers did a decade ago – regardless of qualification.

In addition to their financial worries, there is much dissatisfaction and mistrust among Spain's youth vis-à-vis the country's political institutions. 78% of young Spanish adults believe that politicians are ignoring their opinions. Just 21% agree with the statement that politicians are working to provide them with a better future.³³

³² Eurostat 2019

³³ Foundation for European Progressive Studies, 2017



Youth work in Spain

Article 48 of the Spanish constitution gives young people the possibility to help shape societal, political, social and economic life in Spain. To this end, the government must establish adequate institutions and opportunities for participation, such as national and regional youth councils.

Youth policy structures in Spain are similar to those in Germany. There are independent organisations working at the national, regional and local levels. Most youth work is done by the country's 17 autonomous regions and local decision-ma-

king bodies. At the national level, there is a youth council, the Spanish youth institute INJUVE, and an inter-ministerial youth committee.

There are currently around 3,000 youth information centres,³⁴ which are run by public institutions or private non-profit initiatives. The former have their own budget with which they fund activities. The latter finance their activities using public funds or funds of their own.

³⁴ DIJA

Themes of the expert exchange

Primary prevention: Empowerment for everyone

- What is primary prevention in the context of Tunisia, Germany and Spain? Do experts in these countries use similar methods? What are the challenges? Working in small groups, the experts recognised a great deal of common ground – and concluded that primary prevention is always coloured by sociopolitical circumstances, too.

To identify the similarities and differences in primary prevention, the experts began by telling each other what methods and approaches they were aware of and which they had already used – after all, taking the practitioners' perspective would make it easier to understand how primary prevention is managed in the respective countries.

It quickly became obvious that differences in primary prevention are not necessarily due to how the matter is approached in largely Muslim and European countries. Regardless of the setting, primary prevention always seeks to deconstruct prejudices and create a more tolerant society. However, this being an international group, the experts quickly realised that there are country-specific conflicts, stereotypes and issues that need to be addressed through primary prevention. In Spain, for instance, there is much need for raising awareness of diversity, said Roberto Muelas. "We need to talk about multiple identities

– about the fact that it is possible for someone to be Spanish and Muslim at the same time," he said.

The group agreed, and clarified that primary prevention needs to take a holistic approach that goes beyond stigmatised issues such as one's religious or cultural background. "We need to work together on the same issue and examine it from a number of perspectives," said one expert. "For this to happen, everyone in the classroom needs to feel they are addressed, and so we need to find a common focus."

Strong agreement came especially from the Spanish and German experts, since there is a wide range of activities for immigrant target groups in these countries, but not enough of an approach that encompasses the whole of society, they said. Generally speaking, the German debate largely centres on intersectional approaches. "There are so many forms of discrimination that to some extent are played off against each other. We need to remain mindful of this," commented a German expert.

The discussion illustrated that primary prevention is shaped by the sociopolitical situation in a given country. In Tunisia, a young democracy, the main concern is to encourage more participation. "It is our job to teach young people that it's worth getting involved and that they can really make a difference, even through non-violent means," explained a Tunisian expert. "Where should the line be drawn between primary prevention and youth work?" asked a German participant. Throughout the exchange, the experts kept circling back to the methods that were and are traditionally the domain of regular youth work. Under what circumstances can they be used for the purpose of primary prevention? This may also be a question of where the funding comes from, suggested a German expert. Drawing a clear line between the two terms was difficult, they said, because ideally, any form of youth work can have a preventive effect, too.

The group quickly moved on to the role of the media when it comes to narratives and stereotypes. In primary prevention it was important, they said, to educate young people in taking a critical stance towards media and to help them to become better at spotting fake news. The media channels that are most popular among radical groups vary from



country to country. According to Mónica Carrión Otero from Spain, WhatsApp groups are the channel of choice for Spanish groups. It is difficult, she said, to regulate and identify fake news spread via this channel because the groups are closed. During a visit to the Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt, the group also discussed the relevance of the Telegram messaging service for radical groups.

Another important point besides an informed approach to media consumption, the group agreed, was that young people need to be able to recognise themselves and their lifestyles in the media. To ensure this, more positive role models need to appear in the media, suggested a German expert. "On YouTube this is already happening. Influencers are painting a different picture of the Muslim community and are normalising their experience simply by outlining what their day-to-day life is like," she said. Germany's Federal Agency for Civic Education runs a programme called "Say my name", which works with influencers to highlight diversity. This is particularly important in Germany where immigrants are underrepresented in a number of fields.

The group also discussed with whom, and how, partnerships should be formed for primary prevention. Most experts agreed that it is necessary to work closely with stakeholders in the cultural field and the labour market. In Tunisia in particular, reported the participants, there is still no close cooperation between the government and NGOs when it comes to preventing radicalisation. By contrast, in Germany there is a wide variety of both governmental and non-governmental primary

prevention programmes with a strong link to the youth work community.

As the debate turned to the causes of radicalisation, it emerged that primary prevention also extends to giving young people a chance on the labour market. The group considered a programme involving career guidance and personal coaching for young people as they enter working life. "We need to help them realise that non-violent empowerment, too, is an option," commented a Tunisian expert. The Tunisian experience demonstrates that high unemployment and weak governmental support for young people on the labour market are leaving a gap that in many cases NGOs are helping to close. So while in Tunisia, a big part of primary prevention is about strengthening young people socioeconomically, in Germany and Spain it also involves abstract issues such as identity.

The female Tunisian experts explicitly mentioned support for women as an important part of primary prevention. As Hedia Abidi commented, efforts to build a peaceful society are only effective when support and empowerment are also directed at women.

While primary prevention projects in Germany, Tunisia and Spain may look similar, the work being done on the ground in the field of secondary and tertiary prevention varies widely. Work with particularly vulnerable young people or those who are already radicalised or have turned to crime plays barely a role in Tunisian youth work. Instead, this field is occupied largely by the police and security forces, the Tunisian experts explained.

The causes of radicalisation: Many paths, many similarities

- A different continent, a different religion – and yet the causes of radicalisation are similar. During their discussions of how radicalisation happens, the participants from Tunisia, Germany and Spain recognised many similarities.

In the debates about the causes of radicalisation, there is often a focus on push factors. Why do young people turn to radical ideas? What different pathways to radicalisation are there in Tunisia, Spain and Germany? As they talked about extremist groups of various kinds, they quickly realised that the push factors are quite similar, regardless of whether radicalisation is religious or far-right in nature.

The strongest factor the group identified is young people's socio-economic situation and the resulting marginalisation. "Poverty can make people more vulnerable to radicalisation," said one Spanish expert. Participants from all three countries agreed that low-income groups are marginalised. In Tunisia, the economy took a downturn after the revolution, which has affected young people in particular. Spain, too, is more than familiar with the phenomenon of high youth unemployment, a common side-effect of an economic crisis. And yet the discussion showed that it is not the income divide between Germany and Tunisia that is the problem – it is the gap between the haves and have-nots inside the countries.

The issue of poverty is closely connected with ghettoisation. Participants from all three countries were familiar with neighbourhoods that suffer particularly from poverty and crime. The ghettoisation phenomenon has meant that the inhabitants of these deprived neighbourhoods often feel excluded from society. "They do not feel integrated, let alone appreciated," said a participant from Spain. In addition, ethnic minorities are frequently discriminated – a problem particularly in Germany and Spain. Demetrio Gómez from Spain mentioned the marginalisation and exclusion of the Roma community. "Many feel excluded because they do not have the same opportunities, so they start to socialise with religious groups and build a separate identity there," he reported. In many cases, he felt, individuals were suffering from an identity crisis. "People in search of an identity often experience discrimination and hostility, too," as another participant put it. "This makes them susceptible to extremist propaganda."

In Germany and Spain, the issue of identity is closely linked to the history of migration in these countries. "People living in a diaspora are particularly in need of an identity," explained Türkan Kanbıçak. "If you're not welcomed by mainstream society, you feel unwelcome and seek out a community that will accept you. Ultimately, she continued, it wasn't that relevant whether someone was an immigrant or not. Rather, vulnerability to radicalisation is rooted in one's biography. Who do young people interact with? How confident are they? What opportunities do they have?"

In other words, besides one's external circumstances, psychological instability or lack of confidence can make individuals more vulnerable to extremism, agreed Abdelkarim Aboufarah from Tunisia. This is particularly valid for young people because they are still developing their personalities. And there are groups in all three countries that exploit young people's instability and naiveté.

As they search for identity, individuals can embark on a variety of paths. Religious communities offer clear structures and rules. Neo-Nazi groups have a distinct music culture. Often, the "community" character of these groups and the sense of belonging they offer are a major draw, explained an expert from Spain. Michael Hebeisen of jugendschutz.net highlighted the role of the internet as a space for radicalisation. Online, he said, radicalisation processes can take place across national borders, which also makes it easier to maintain contact with potential new followers.

Although these push factors are valid for all forms of radicalisation, given the experts' professional background, the discussion moved on to religious terrorism. Why is extremism so often motivated by religious beliefs? The German and Spanish experts were particularly keen to discuss how to approach this issue while avoiding any accusations of Islamophobia. How can one work with vulnerable target groups without prematurely condemning their religious beliefs?

Hedia Abidi from Tunisia argued how important it was in Tunisia to encourage religious education and highlight the many different interpretations of the Quran. Demetrio Gómez from Spain felt this was an issue everywhere, not just in Islamic countries. He believes that in principle, all religions are vul-

nerable to exploitation by extremists and radicals. "Religion is a vehicle for radicalisation, but religion itself is not the problem," echoed another expert, explaining that "this is the interesting thing about religion. It is instrumentalised for positive and negative purposes. There is no such thing as the one true interpretation of religion. We need to accept that religion can be interpreted in a multitude of ways." The group agreed that indeed, Islam is not the only religion that can be exploited; all religions are vulnerable.

Despite all the causes they identified, the experts were also aware that there are many reasons why people radicalise. Radicalisation processes are multidimensional and always specific to the individual. This, they agreed, makes it so difficult to make generalised statements about the causes, let alone to clearly spot individuals who are in the process of radicalising early on. Here, all experts face similar challenges regardless of whether they come from Germany, Tunisia or Spain.



Tools and methods to prevent radicalisation: Learning to leave through play

- After a quick brainstorm, the experts settled on a subject to discuss in their World Café: methods and tools. And who knows – maybe they would also come up with ideas for new methods.

The session began with a discussion of the participants' own methods. What tools had they used so far? What target groups had they worked with? Everyone quickly agreed that whatever the methods, they have to be adapted to the target group in question. As one Spanish expert put it, it was important to empathise with individuals' perspectives, needs and realities. What motivated them to attend a workshop or take part in an activity? What did they hope to achieve? These, the expert said, were the key questions.

The discussion then turned to methods, where the differences between Germany, Spain and Tunisia became particularly evident in regard to activities in schools. The German and Spanish experts spoke of the obstacles they had to overcome when planning extracurricular workshops or similar activities in schools. Not only did they have to grapple with red tape and teachers, but also with the parents, who preferred for their children to concentrate on their schoolwork and nothing else. Also, they reported, they frequently were up against prejudices against programmes that teach students about Islam. "The schools are concerned that we are encouraging the students to become Muslims," as one Spanish expert put it. In Tunisia, said the Tunisian experts, the line between what happens inside and outside of schools was rather less defined, given that in many cases youth centres are integrated directly in the schools.

In all three countries, however, the approaches used locally vary widely: artistic activities, inclusive camps, digital tools and so forth. But what conclusions have the experts drawn from their work so far?



Abdelkarim Aboufarah from Tunisia reported that good results had been achieved with drama forums, a technique that is based on the Theatre of the Oppressed, a method developed in the early 1970s by the Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal. The idea is that the audience watches a play in which the protagonist is up against an insurmountable obstacle or challenge. After the play ends, the "spect-actors" are asked to weigh in: they can go up on stage and suggest alternative paths of action for the protagonist, upon which the actors try out the suggested solutions together with the audience. This produces a "theatrical debate" that highlights alternative courses of action and inspires the participants to analyse these.

Another popular method is storytelling. In its "method toolbox", the Spanish association Al Fanar recommends working with comics in which children can fill in the speech bubbles themselves (see section on best practices). Basira Beutel from the Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP) employs a similar method. "We give children unfinished stories that they are asked to complete. The basic storyline is that there is a child that feels excluded and lonely. By continuing the story as they see fit, the children come up with their own solutions to the problem," she explained. This was particularly relevant in Germany, she continued, since many immigrant children feel unable to identify with Germany. These stories help them to recognise themselves and feel understood.

Another game designed to help young people reflect on privilege is Inequality Road. The participants line up in a row, with someone reading out certain categories or life circumstances.

Those who enjoy the privilege in question take a step forward. This is a simple way to illustrate the differences in how young people start out in life. The participants were inspired to play this game by the viral video clip "Life of Privilege", in which a US football coach plays the game with his team. The experiences shared by the participants from all three countries speak for themselves: increasingly, methods are exchanged and materials provided online as well as in real life.

As they watched the video together, the participants considered whether it would be better to assign the children fictitious identities so the experience wouldn't become quite so intimate and emotional. "Children who have few privileges are usually aware of that fact, so a game like this could re-traumatise them," explained Basira Beutel. If it were played with fictitious characters, she suggested, there would still be a learning effect yet the participants would not feel vulnerable.

Inspired by a game called "Der Islam" by Katrin Benzenberg of Gesicht Zeigen!, an organisation from Berlin, the experts came up with some new ideas of their own that could be applied to other settings and discussed a new game. During this game, similarly to the game "Activity", participants have to verbally explain, mime or draw terms associated with Islam. Flashcards are provided with texts explaining the terms and their backgrounds. This game is a playful form of learning. "It's easy to create oneself, and it can also be adapted for other uses," explained a participant.

In Germany in particular, there is an urgent need to educate non-Muslims about Islam, thought Mutaz Tamimi. "If you



want young people to integrate into society, they deserve to be understood," he said. "So it's important for young non-immigrants to learn more about other religions and realities."

As the discussion continued, it was evident that any educational activities need to use digital media, too. One expert recommended Kahoot, an app for building quizzes. "It's a good method to teach children about Islam in a playful manner," said Mónica Carrión Otero.

Just as important is the appropriate use of media and online journalism. Naceur Mehadoui from Tunisia has run some successful media training courses for young people. "You need to teach young people to be attentive and critical when consuming media content, so they can learn to spot fake news and make sensible choices when using media."

The experts also visited some organisations, which inspired them to come up with their own ideas for games. At the Anne Frank educational centre in Frankfurt, visitors are shown

photographs of items that they should categorise by origin – such as beer, which is considered typically German. However, a glance at the reverse side of the photo shows that beer actually comes from China. Games like these inspire young people to rethink their primary assumptions. Türkan Kanbıçak emphasised how important it is for young people to learn from experience, not because someone tells them something. "If someone tries to be a go-between, they can quickly become a focal point and hence a target for hostility or prejudices. This does not happen when young people learn on their own," she explained.

Some of the methods used by the German, Spanish and Tunisian experts are the same, some are different – and yet the group quickly realised that having a conversation about them was helpful. They decided that after the exchange they would continue to work together on a method handbook, with each participant listing a few methods they use themselves to create a collection that they can all use for reference.

Islam in youth work: So how do you feel about religion?

- 98% of Tunisia's population is Muslim. In Germany, that figure is around 19%. How does this impact on the significance of Islam in youth work? And what role do mosques play? These were the questions debated by Tunisian and German experts.

"For me, engaging in youth work in a mosque is an alien concept," stated one of the Tunisian experts. In Tunisia, there is a clear dividing line between youth work and what happens in mosques, they explained, which is also due to experiences made in the wake of the revolution. "As democracy evolved, radical groups found that they had greater freedom to spread their messages in mosques. The government has recognised the problem and imposed stricter rules," said a Tunisian participant. Today, Tunisia's imams are appointed and paid by the government.

Things are different in Germany, where mosques are not subject to governmental oversight except for those monitored by the country's intelligence service. The Tunisian participants were surprised to hear this; coupled with the fact that some imams in Germany are paid by foreign governments, they felt quite concerned. "The combination of religion and money is always dangerous," stated a Tunisian participant. In Tunisia, mosques are funded by the government. Donations are not permitted, unless they are directly invested in mosque renovation projects.

However, does the strict divide between youth work and mosques in Tunisia mean that Islam is entirely irrelevant to youth work? No, explained the Tunisian experts. "We invite imams to come to our youth centres and talk to them about Islam in general and also liberal Islam. We want to counter-balance negative media reports about Islam and reshape the reputation of Islam in a more positive way."

In Germany there is no such clear division, yet cooperation with mosques is still very much in its infancy, said the German experts. When it comes to youth work in mosques, it was important, as a German participant explained, to refrain from referring to any planned activities as "prevention". "Youth work in mosques should not be framed as a form of prevention; this would stigmatise the community. Rather, you should ask what kind of support is needed here. How can long-term structures for youth work in mosques be developed?" they said.

By contrast, the Tunisian side was quite clear that religious education is always also about prevention. "In Tunisia, we try to empower young people in such a way that they are unlikely to fall victim to radicalisation," they explained. "We try to help them understand their identity as well as Islam and to deconstruct the methods used by ISIS."

An expert who already cooperates with mosques in his day-to-day work is Mutaz Tamimi from the organisation Salaam Sachsen-Anhalt in Germany. He explains the kind of activities that are already offered in mosques, such as German language classes, courses about Islamic values, and activities especially for women. Certainly there is a need for Muslim youth work





outside of prevention-oriented settings, another German expert said, given that many young Muslims are looking for orientation. "Young Muslims need guidance and rules, and so there is strong potential for Muslim youth work and religious education," he said. This need for guidance, Türkan Kanbıçak explained, is rooted in the fact that many Muslims in Germany live in the diaspora and that their religion is that of a minority in this country. Many Muslims feel they are not full members of society. Their religion and their mosque provide them with the sense of belonging they are looking for, she said.

Often, this means that social workers are biased in their work or quickly feel out of their depths as soon as they hear what they feel is a trigger word, "Islam", reported some of the German experts. A course in Islamic social work is about to be offered in Osnabrück, Germany, in the hope of gaining more qualified experts.

Mutaz Tamimi emphasised that Islam needs to play a role in schools, too. "Islam needs to be taught in the mosques and in schools so that young people realise that Islam is part of the

picture," he said. Türkan Kanbıçak, too, believes that religious education needs to be on the curriculum. "Children need to learn about all world religions, and especially what the religions have in common."

The Tunisian experts agreed. "The imams in our youth centres talk about subjects such as tolerance and Islamic values, and they contrast that with other religions. What is more, the imams represent a liberal form of Islam and teach participants that the Quran should not be taken at face value but that it needs to be interpreted," reported a Tunisian delegate.

At the end of the day, it was clear that this is a case of two countries, two different sets of circumstances and hence two different ways to approach the matter of religion in youth work. On the German side, in particular, things are starting to change. There is a need for better activities, which the German experts are trying to meet. The Tunisian approach could be more relevant to Germany than meets the eye. After all, giving young people access to religious education and teaching them about more liberal forms of Islam is a universal aim.

Best practices

Mobile Youth Unit – A minibus with a message

- Sofiane Ben Gaddour and his team of young volunteers travel the country in a colourful minibus equipped with loudspeakers and lots of educational material. His form of youth work is mobile, designed specifically for young people in socially disadvantaged regions where there is precious little in the way of leisure activities and increased vulnerability to radicalisation.

We meet Sofiane Ben Gaddour at Youth House Khaznadar, where he regularly offers training courses for young people. Today, he is teaching a short workshop for a group of experts, who are quickly roped into the first exercise: who can build the highest, most stable and attractive structure using paper, scissors and glue? The participants get to work, with Sofiane Ben Gaddour calmly explaining that in daily life, we often focus on secondary things and tend to lose sight of what is really important. "In this exercise, it isn't the actual building exercise that is important – it is communication inside the group," he says.

Sofiane Ben Gaddour offers a training course spanning 15 three-hour units where he teaches young people communication skills using games and other activities. The young participants learn to work in groups, take responsibility and question existing attitudes. "Young people need spaces where they can express themselves, find out who they are and what they need, and learn to overcome challenges and problems," he explains. Sofiane Ben Gaddour's courses offer this kind of space. He works with games as well as artistic methods involving drama, music and dance. "We want to encourage young people to be active and to get involved," he says. "If they are provided with





legitimate ways for expressing themselves and getting rid of some energy, they are less susceptible to radicalisation."

Sofiane Ben Gaddour's work doesn't just take place at Youth House. With his minibus, he and his team travel the entire country. The itinerary and length of the trips vary; sometimes they stay for a day, sometimes they stay for the duration of an entire project. Sometimes the activities happen in the street or in market squares, sometimes in cafés or schools. The project receives funding from Tunisia's youth ministry. Sofiane's Mobile Youth Unit attempts to respond to the needs of its young clients and the realities they face.

"Many young people are afraid or prejudiced. They do not feel welcomed by established institutions and find it difficult to integrate. So it's important to reach out to them in ways that they understand, in places where they feel they belong," explains Sofiane Ben Gaddour. In his work, he focuses on the individuals themselves. He wants to speak their language, understand their realities, and accompany them as they go through life. For this, he says, he needs to recognise and understand how their lives are changing.

A story he will never forget involves a young girl who fell victim to prostitution when she was 14. Asked by her parents to explain why she was home late so often, she lied that she had been out late working with Sofiane Ben Gaddour and the group. When the truth came out, Sofiane Ben Gaddour took her under his wing and worked with her for another three years. Today, she has a job and is independent. "This story makes me happy. I like working with young people. When I was her age, I wasn't lucky

enough to have a mentor or coach. But I believe that support of this kind can make a real difference to young people's lives," he says.

The lives of Mansouri, Brahim and Aouini, too, have changed thanks to Sofiane Ben Gaddour's Mobile Youth Unit. They come from El Kabaria, a fairly deprived neighbourhood on the outskirts of Tunis. Today they work for Sofiane's project. In El Kabaria, they say, drugs are often the gateway to radicalisation. They work for the Mobile Youth Unit to help protect young people from this fate.

The Mobile Youth Unit is one way for them to take positive action for themselves, their community and their region, they say, and share all the experiences associated with their work with others, such as their neighbours and friends. Thanks to the Mobile Youth Unit they can reach out to more people than they could through Youth House. They appreciate the fact that their work for the project is having a wider impact. "Our work takes us out of our daily lives, allowing us to communicate with people, work together, and take initiative," says Mansouri.

The Mobile Youth Unit team incorporates a number of young people, which is a deliberate part of the concept. "We are peers, we speak the same language as the young people we work with, and there's no hierarchy or condescension," says Brahim. They are confident that what they are doing helps to prevent others from radicalising. "The strongest driver of radicalisation is isolation. But if you learn to work in a team and experience what it feels like to belong to a community, you are protected from isolation."

Anne Frank educational centre in Frankfurt, Germany – A question of perception

- It is often said that we need to learn from history. An organisation that helps to do exactly that, coupled with a contemporary approach to anti-racism, is the Anne Frank educational centre in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

At the Anne Frank educational centre, children and adolescents can use a number of tools in the learning lab "Anne Frank. More tomorrow." to learn about participation while familiarising themselves with the life of Anne Frank. "They learn about Anne Frank's life and work and are encouraged to engage in a dialogue on current forms of anti-Semitism, racism and discrimination," explains Deborah Krieg, deputy director of the centre and curator of the exhibition.

It is important, she says, that the young visitors come up with their own questions and contributions to the debate. "Our methods help to create a safe space in which they can talk about

certain things," she continues. Essentially, the experience serves to give young people an awareness of discrimination. This is done using a variety of tools, some of them digital. For instance, participants are invited to wear "Racist Glasses" to experience sexist, racist and anti-Semitic stereotypes. At the Hate Speech station, visitors are invited to pick out instances of online hate speech and respond appropriately. Deborah Krieg emphasises the fundamentally democratic nature of the organisation. "Nothing works without visitors taking action themselves – just like in any democracy. After all, society is all about exploring and experimenting; a space for trial and error, if you like," she says.

The lab invites visitors to reflect on what they consider to be "normality" and on their own attitudes. In a game, they learn that beer and garden gnomes are not as quintessentially German as they might have thought. At another station, they are assigned a certain identity at random, which allows them to see the world from the point of view of someone with different religious beliefs, from another ethnic background or from a different socioeconomic group.

The presence of Anne Frank remains clearly tangible throughout. The young visitors learn about her diary and enter a virtual "rear building", where Anne Frank and her family hid from the Nazis. Yet they also hear the voices of other young people who stood up against injustice and oppression: Charlotte L. Forten's 19th century reports on racism in the United States, the diaries of Ana Novac and Arieh Koretz from the concentration camps in Auschwitz-Birkenau und Bergen-Belsen, and blogs including that of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai and Jamie Raines, who is charting his journey from girl to man. These testimonies also serve to illustrate the close link between the personal and the political – and how young people, too, can stand up for a better society.

The centre also takes an intersectional approach. The focus is not just on racism, but also on anti-feminism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination, all of which are considered to be of equal significance. "We want to encourage more tolerance for the fact that the world is a complex place. Young people need to understand that they, too, can effect change," explains Deborah Krieg. Young visitors to the lab are always accompanied by peers, since this, says Krieg, helps them to learn.

Besides the Anne Frank "learning lab", the centre also hosts changing exhibitions on sociopolitical issues such as the peaceful revolution in 1989 or anti-Semitism in Germany's left-wing party. The centre also runs an outreach programme, organising educational events for young people as well as adults in schools and other institutions. This broad range of workshops and methods is designed to empower people – not just those who suffer discrimination themselves, but also individuals who could become supporters and enablers.



KifKif – an inclusion comic

- Images of diversity: with a comic and a series of workshops, the organisation Al Fanar wants to give greater visibility to the diversity of identities and realities in Spanish society – an attempt to combat Islamophobia.

How often are girls with headscarfs represented in school-books? How many immigrant children are able to identify with the characters in traditional teaching materials, or to see them as role models? Not many, usually.

The comic "The Outskirt" can help to combat this underrepresentation of diversity in the classroom. Coaches use the comic to teach workshops that promote multiculturalism and the social integration of Muslims and in turn, to combat Islamophobia in Spanish society. The target group of their activities is students at upper secondary level.

The thematic starting point of the workshops is "identity" or rather, multiple identities. Who am I? What is important to me? What makes me who I am? The subject of Islamophobia is debated against this backdrop. The participants read about certain situations involving Islamophobic content in the comic, discuss what they have learned, and hence develop an awareness of it. Later in the workshop, the discussion turns to specific issues such as gender and the role of media in the context of Islamophobia. "If you look at the statistics, gender is a major issue here: most Islamophobic attacks online and offline, not only in Spain but also in Europe, in Spain are directed against women," explains Mónica Carrión Otero of Al Fanar.

The idea of using a comic to work with young people is based on comprehensive academic research, she says. "It's easier to work with visual representations. Young people are not really used to reading long texts any more, so using a comic is a good solution." "The Outskirt" was developed in another workshop before this project was launched – and Al Fanar simply designed its workshop concept around it.



It helped that the project was launched with government support, recalls Mónica Carrión Otero. This meant that schools took it more seriously from the start. Also, the organisation was told in advance by the government which schools had a particularly large number of immigrant children, so they could select the schools more effectively. "After all, this project is not just about raising awareness of Islamophobia; we also want to empower those individuals who suffer from it, or from structural racism," she continues.

KifKif was designed as a long-term project. "We want to reach out to as many people as we can," says Otero. During the first year, the project offered workshops in schools; it has since expanded to include seminars for coaches and teachers where they learn how to use the material themselves and run their own workshops. The third step will be to involve parents and neighbourhood initiatives, too. "Identity is a complex issue and so a five-to-six-hour workshop is really not enough. But it can go some way to start raising awareness," she explains.

While the comic is available in Spanish, English and Arabic, one would really to start over before implementing the project in other countries," says Otero in response to the question whether the project is to be rolled out to other Arabic-speaking countries. Content-wise, the comic does not respond to the problems that young people face in Tunisia or Morocco. "Things there are different and so the comic would have to be adapted." However, the method itself and the general approach towards issues such as identity and gender are indeed useful as a basis for developing a new comic and hence to benefit from the experience of Al Fanar.

Stop OK – A game for multipliers

- What drives young people to radicalise? How can radicalisation processes be identified early on, and what can be done in such situations? These questions are on the minds of many of those who work with young people. The game Stop OK is one way to help them talk about it.

Stop OK aims to help develop an awareness of the processes and causes behind radicalisation. Its target group is not young people – rather, it was designed for multipliers who work with young people, such as teachers, social workers and trainee police officers. The game tells five stories about fictional young characters who have been radicalised in real life to raise awareness of the push and pull factors at play.

And it goes like this: the stories are read out twice. The second time, participants can raise their Stop OK cards whenever they hear a situation that they feel is critical. These are noted down on flashcards and later discussed. In the discussion after the

readings, the participants identify similarities between these critical situations and can assign special weighting to certain cards by marking them with a red pen.

Stop OK is one way to become more aware of certain points in young people's lives where they may be particularly vulnerable to radicalisation. The participants discuss these issues in the group and learn to look at the situations through the eyes of their fellow participants. "Participants like this game because it allows them space for debate. Teachers have explicitly told us this," says Katrin Benzenberg from "Die Freiheit, die ich meine", the project that developed the game. "All of them are in some way affected by this issue, but they don't have an opportunity to talk to their colleagues about this and ask them how they deal with it."

The idea for this game evolved at a neighbourhood meeting with mothers, who had come to watch a film about the life of a man who had previously been radicalised and who had left to begin a new life.

The next step in the game involves "What now?" cards that flag up possible responses and solutions. The group not only discusses what each individual person can do, but also looks at the wider social context. What can schools do? What about society at large? What can be done at the political level to prevent radicalisation?

The fictitious stories are told from a variety of perspectives: by the protagonists themselves, by their friends, or by their teachers. The current version of Stop OK focuses exclusively on Islamist radicalisation. A new edition on right-wing radicalism is in preparation.



What participants said about the exchange project

➤ Hedia Abidi:

"I really liked this exchange. I have been on exchanges before when I was younger, but this was different because it was at professional level. It's given me some effective tools that I can use in my work with young people. I think there are so many issues where we need to work together at international level, like women's rights. We can learn from the experiences of others to help protect women and girls, in particular, from radicalisation.

I particularly liked how we communicated within the group. Whether we were Muslim or Christian didn't matter at all – we just interacted as fellow human beings, which I felt was very moving. Of course I want to stay in touch and keep working with the people I've met here. It was also very helpful for the Tunisians among us to meet other people working in the same field in Tunisia. We have already arranged another network meeting so we can continue working on the issues raised here."

➤ Katrin Benzenberg:

"The exchange was really good. Talking to the Tunisians was particularly informative, I think. It was interesting to hear where they are in the transition process and what challenges they face. I was very pleased that they liked the "Gesicht Zeigen!" games and felt they could do with something similar. Many were interested to hear how we developed and produced the games. We discussed how we can set up a project to produce new material together. I think it's vital that people who work in prevention get together regularly and build networks because after all, that's what the Islamists do, too."



➤ Demetrio Gómez:

"It was very interesting for me to spend time in a predominantly Muslim country and to see the differences between here and Europe. We shared our experiences with each other and discussed what activities we can do in future. It was particularly enlightening to visit the projects and see how youth work really works in practice.

I'll be taking home a few new ideas for civil action projects. It's important to collaborate with young people and use the same communication channels they use. They know how to use Instagram, YouTube and Facebook, and these media play a major role in their lives. So it's important for us to spread a more positive image through these channels and combat fake news, particularly in a time where we are seeing more right-wing parties in parliament."

➤ Miriam Macak:

"The most important takeaway for me is that we need to look beyond our own horizon. Working at the local level in particular, it's too easy to get wrapped up in petty details and lose sight of the big picture. Learning about the situation in Tunisia inspired me to pay more attention to extremism prevention at the international level, rather than just take action at national level. If you have an international perspective, you get a notion of the causes of extremism and have a better idea of what measures are being taken in other countries that might work in adapted form at home, too. I plan to liaise more with other stakeholders, such as psychological counselling units, so I can assess existing concepts from other angles. I would also like to stay in touch with experts from other countries so my own work can benefit from their experiences."

➤ Jahouer Sallemi:

"I am returning home from the exchange with a fresh set of educational tools and ideas for future projects. I was particularly impressed by our visit to the Anne Frank educational centre in Frankfurt where we learned about many different tools, some of them digital. Comparing Germany's prevention activities to our Tunisian approach, I have realised that the German government is actively promoting young work projects that seek to prevent radicalisation. In Tunisia, youth work is mainly about promoting democracy, whereas terrorism and radicalisation are the domain of our national security plan. I also have a feeling that more scientific research is being done in Germany on radicalisation. That being said, I did recognise some similarities in what Germany and Tunisia are doing. In both countries, much significance is attached to maintaining strong connections with civil society groups."

➤ Quoc Viet Hoang:

"Talking to experts from other countries has inspired me to think about the circumstances of my own work and how they influence what I do."

➤ Michael Hebeisen:

"We all share a similar view of the human beings we work with, and we are all paying attention to young people's needs. I feel that we are doing the right thing."

➤ Basira Beutel:

"I have realised how important it is to have this international dialogue. When it comes to radicalisation, we cannot limit ourselves to the national level but need to bear in mind the global context."



Interview with CCAB

"Different responses to radicalisation"

➤ The project "New Perspectives against Radicalisation" would never have happened without the support of Club Culturel Ali Belhouane (CCAB). In this interview, CCAB's Hadhami Sassi and Sami Essid talk about why they believe this project is an important step in the right direction and how beneficial it has been for the participants' work in Tunisia.

What were CCAB's expectations and goals as you joined the project "New Perspectives against Radicalisation"?

Sami Essid: We came to this project above all in the knowledge that there is enormous demand for more debate on radicalisation. It is urgently necessary to act against radicalisation, and it's up to all of us to come up with common prevention solutions and approaches. We have already been working closely with the youth sector in Tunisia and the Ministry for Youth and Sports, and so it made sense for us to engage in this area so youth workers would have more methods and tools to work with. We wanted to extend participants' horizons and give them a space to talk.

What challenges are there for Tunisian youth workers who are working to prevent radicalisation?

Hadhami Sassi: There's a particular deficit when it comes to integrating young people in youth work structures. NGOs are still fairly elitist and most of them are active only in the cities.

Although the government runs facilities across the country, they are not particularly attractive for young people. We also lack a clear definition of "prevention". While many people work in this field, not all of them are aware of this. We need a clear awareness and understanding of the subject matter, with action targeted directly against radicalisation. After all, besides young people who have already become radicalised, there are many who simply have no access to services and are hence easy targets for radical groups.

Why do you feel it is important to tackle this subject internationally?

Sami Essid: It is vital that we look at radicalisation from a number of perspectives and against different backgrounds so we can come up with more effective solutions.

Hadhami Sassi: I also think that we lack experience in Tunisia. For a long time, the response to radicalisation was purely a security policy one. For historical reasons, Germany has a strong track record in civic education and democracy promotion. These are experiences we need to draw on.

Is it possible to compare the two countries and their approaches to prevention – and if so, what similarities and differences have you recognised?

Hadhami Sassi: One of the most crucial insights of the project has been the importance of individuals' biographies. As Tunisian participants, we were able to recognise a number of different radicalisation processes at play in Germany, and to an extent they are similar to those in Tunisia. Although the economic situation in the two countries is different, we do have some issues in common, such as marginalisation and lack of integration of individuals. Our respective countries have responded in different ways to these phenomena, and the participants were able to learn a great deal from this.

What other insights did the Tunisian participants gain during the exchange?

Hadhami Sassi: Our participants took away a number of important insights, especially through the project visits. Take the use of counternarratives and the decoding of online propaganda, for instance. The visit to the Anne Frank educational centre in Frankfurt, in particular, taught us a number of innovative and creative ways to get a discussion going about



perspectives. The participants have been inspired to come up with similar formats for their own work.

These are insights from Germany that you took back to Tunisia. What about the participants' view of the Tunisian situation and their own work – did that change too?

Hadhami Sassi: In Tunisia we are quite judgmental when it comes to radicalisation; we feel that it is quite alien and threatening. Thanks to the exchange we have realised that it's not a problem that is specific to our society, and that it is not exclusively due to our difficult economic situation. Instead, it is a global problem with many different causes.

What would you like to say to the German and Spanish participants? What can they learn from the Tunisian side?

Sami Essid: We'd like to encourage them to stay in touch and keep working with us so we can continue to exchange viewpoints. It is vital that we support each other and allow one another to learn from our respective experiences and backgrounds.

Hadhami Sassi: The Tunisian situation also shows that it is still possible to come up with well organised and very effective projects even if you don't have generous resources. In Germany in particular, where resources are maybe easier to obtain, it is important to realise that there are ways to make things happen even off the grid – activities that may be a bit unconventional, but effective nonetheless.

How do you plan to scale up or implement the insights gained during the project in Tunisia?

Sami Essid: One major benefit of the exchange has been that all participants now have a heightened awareness of the subject, so they can now rethink their approach to their work with youth workers and young people. We have scheduled a debriefing session with the Tunisian delegation where we'll reflect on the insights gained here and come up with a plan for integrating them in our work on the ground.

Hadhami Sassi: We plan to develop some projects that were directly inspired by the exchange and that can be implemented in the youth centres. The hope is that this will help to engage more in primary prevention in youth work contexts. We'd also like to see this issue higher up on the political agenda.

Representatives from the following organisations took part in the expert exchanges:

Germany:

Gesicht Zeigen! Für ein weltoffenes Deutschland
Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP)
jugendschutz.net
Amadeu Antonio Foundation
Fitt gGmbH
Al Etidal
Jewish Museum Frankfurt am Main
District office of the Lake Constance region,
office for migration and integration
Salam Sachsen-Anhalt

Spain:

Ververipen, Rooms por la Diversidad
Asociación Judía Progresista de Barcelona
University of Barcelona
Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies
Al Fanar

Tunisia:

Youth office of the region Gafsa
Youth office of the region Sousse
Youth office of the region Manouba
Youth office of the region Tunis
Youth office of the region Mahdia
Youth office of the region Monastir







As a central specialist agency for international youth work, IJAB works on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the IJAB member organisations and other central bodies responsible for youth work, youth policy and youth information. Its task is to strengthen and further develop international youth work and the cooperation in the field of youth policy – with countries in Europe as well as worldwide. Since 1989, the German National Agency "YOUTH for Europe" has been attached to IJAB. "YOUTH for Europe" implements the EU Programme "Erasmus+ YOUTH IN ACTION" and the European Solidarity Corps in Germany.

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