Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Discussion Summary

This e-Discussion was conducted by The Commonwealth Education Hub between 12 November 2015 and 3 December 2015.

Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Introduction

Radicalisation and violent extremism are not contained to one country or conviction, but are issues that need to be acknowledged and addressed across the Commonwealth. On the eve of the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta, the Education Hub launched a discussion related to critical talks to take place at CHOGM exploring the strengthening of peace efforts and countering radicalisation and violent extremism. Education has an important role to play in formulating an effective response to radicalisation, building resilience and respect, and in rehabilitation.

The objective of the three-week discussion is to engage a wide range of education stakeholders from various professional and geographical backgrounds to critically reflect the role education can play in addressing radicalisation and violent extremism.

The discussion has reached out to 662 participants, comprising representatives from Education Ministries, development organisations, the private sector and academia. Responses were received from 5 countries across three Commonwealth regions, and was guest moderated by Mme. Raky Gassama, from the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

Contents

About The Education Hub

• • •

Conceived as a 'network of networks,' The Commonwealth Education Hub is intended to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration among policy-makers and practitioners across the Commonwealth. Through its virtual 'one-stop-shop,' the Hub offers an array of online knowledge services designed to enable easier access to relevant information and resources, as well as to strengthen the collaborative context within which approaches, solutions, and best practices can be shared and adopted at scale across the Commonwealth, and perhaps even more widely.

www.thecommonwealth-educationhub.net

• • •

Discussion Summary

Key points

The discussion presented radicalisation and violent extremism as a complex issue. Education was discussed as having the potential to be the greatest means of countering radicalisation and as having a responsibility to fulfil this potential. Education is able to equip students with the skills and capacities needed to reject radicalisation, and to cultivate a culture of peace and understanding. Examples presented various means of engaging formal and informal education to develop the necessary 21st century skills and emotional literacy to do so. The discussion also pointed to the necessity to incorporate alternative/non-traditional education for more effectively reaching individuals at risk of radicalisation. Social media is one of the main tools used for radicalisation, and as such was argued as a necessary tool to counter radicalisation. It was recommended that social media training be incorporated into teacher development and social media literacy be incorporated into the formal curriculum and through education initiatives.

Issues discussed

The nature of radicalisation

The discussion highlighted the complex and fluid nature of radicalisation and violent extremism. Radicalisation was presented as a global issue, not being bounded by race, religion, ethnicity or geography. The discussion reflected on the multitude of factors contributing to radicalisation, including various forms of social and political marginalisation. Examples were noted from across the Commonwealth and further afield. Contributions considered the complexities involved in addressing radicalisation, but likewise illustrated the role of education as common ground and a critical mechanism in countering radicalisation.

Respect and understanding as a bridging mechanism

Contributions emphasised the importance of respect and understanding as fundamental to peace and acceptance, and as being at the core of countering radicalisation. A general consensus formed amongst participants in relation to education's ability to cultivate tolerance and quell prejudices amongst individuals and within and across societies. It was argued that education must act in this capacity as a bridging mechanism across cultural, social and political divides for the greater goal of peace.

Social cohesion and education

Various contributions emphasised education in the promotion of social cohesion. Existing education programmes which seek to foster social cohesion were exemplified as a means of countering radicalisation (*e.g. Give Peace a Change, Give us a Future initiative in Cyprus*).

Role of formal education

Schools were discussed as being on the front-line of the battle to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. They were put forward as potentially having the greatest ability to bridge the divides exploited by radicalisation. Formative years are spent in the education system, helping to shape important skills and characteristics, including emotional and social literacy and critical thinking ability. The education system was discussed as having an inherent responsibility to address radicalisation; as an environment that is integral to the nurturing of peace and understanding, and building resilience to radicalisation. As contributed by Graham Robb, "schools can be uniquely placed to enable discussions for children and adults across communities and faiths, where the most difficult issues can be discussed, grievances aired and understood, and critical thinking applied to assertion, propaganda and indoctrination."

This distinct position illustrates the importance of inclusive and holistic education in ensuring education systems are competent in addressing these challenges. Emphasis was placed on the need for all groups and individuals to have access to these systems, and for effective policy in shaping such systems and outcomes across all educational providers. Understanding the link between education and countering radicalisation paves the way for policies and programmes which target prevention, intervention and rehabilitation of at risk individuals.

Role of teachers and curriculum

If schools are understood as being on the front-line, the discussion highlights teachers and content as vessels for countering extremism. The discussion emphasised the need for both to the reflect life skills necessary in the 21st century, and for teachers to be aware of and alert to signs of radicalisation, with the skills and capacity to act.

Alternative means/informal education

Alternative means of addressing radicalisation and the role of informal education were identified as necessary in adapting education to more effectively counter radicalisation. Social media was discussed as a critical communication tool for radicalisation, and something not incorporated into traditional educational practices. Several contributors concurred that social media use is widespread amongst school-aged children and needs to be integrated into education. Participants stressed the need for social media literacy to be incorporated into formal, non-formal, and informal education and training. Various projects were presented which engage students and youth with education through non-traditional/alternative means and technology to counter radicalisation. The discussion pointed to the need for greater innovation and generation of new approaches to improve the education sectors ability to address radicalisation.

Commonwealth & other Case Studies

National Education Policy (2009), Pakistan (*from Allah Bakhsh Malik, Government of Pakistan, Pakistan*)

As policy, a curriculum focused on peace, global citizenship, respectful co-existence, critical thinking and innovation has been introduced in Pakistan. The National Education Policy is a consensus document that recognises education as a vital investment for human and economic development, and to ensuring peace and democracy.

http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Pakistan/Pakistan_National_education_policy_2009.pdf

Net@ Scheme, Israel (*from Jim Wynn, Imagine Education, United Kingdom*)

The Net@ Scheme integrates ICT education and soft skills training and intercultural, intergenerational and cross-gender respect and understanding.

https://www.cisco.com/web/about/ac48/pdf/EU_Case_Study_Net.pdf

ICTs and Peacebuilding, Northern Ireland (*from Jim Wynn, Imagine Education, United Kingdom*)

A report published by Transformative Connections presenting various case studies and ICT & Peacebuilding initiatives taking place in Northern Ireland.

http://www.tran-conn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TranConn-Bright-Ideas-Final.pdf

Education for a Culture of Peace as a vehicle for reconciliation, Cyprus (*from Eleni Kotziamani & Chritos Michaelides, Alambra Primary School, Cyprus*)

This project uses education as a platform to address inter-ethnic conflict for societal transformation, engaging educators and NGOs to use an education for peace methodology within the classroom and wider community. This includes training workshops, and the provision of space for community dialogue, trilingual educational materials and lesson plans, peer engagement, extracurricular programmes promoting reconciliation, and the establishment of a Peace Education Centre and Library.

http://tinyurl.com/EduforCultureofPeace

Give Peace a Chance, Give Us a Future, Cyprus (*from Eleni Kotziamani & Chritos Michaelides, Alambra Primary School, Cyprus*)

The project was developed as a tool to cultivate and sustain a culture of peace in Cyprus. With the ongoing conflict and challenges in achieving peace, the project is essential for deconstructing conflict-related beliefs and providing peaceful means for restoration of human rights. At a school level, the project integrates six pathways of 'Education for a Culture of Peace' into the curriculum: knowledge; intercultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity; dismantling the culture of war and violence; cultivating inner peace; living with justice and compassion; and living in harmony with Earth.

Related Resources

Civil Paths to Peace: Report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding
(*from Paul West, The Commonwealth Secretariat*)
http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/commonwealth/development/civil-paths-to-peace_9781848590014-en#page1

'Civil Paths to Peace' is the result of a mandate from Commonwealth leaders to look into the causes of conflict, violence and extremism in Commonwealth countries. It focuses on the problem of group-based violence and its impact on communities, advocating solutions based on individuals' multiple identities.

'Islamic State 'goes global' with Paris attacks' (*from Graham Robb, Restorative Justice Council, United Kingdom*)
Jason Burke, 15 November 2015, 'Islamic State 'goes global' with Paris attacks', The Observer, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/14/islamic-state-goes-global-paris-attacks

'Mindless terrorists? The truth about Isis is much worse' (*from Graham Robb, Restorative Justice Council, United Kingdom*)
Scott Atran, 15 November 2015, 'Mindless terrorists? The truth about Isis is much worse', The Guardian, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/15/terrorists-isis

'Islam and the Environment' (*from Nicholas Watts, Global Sustainable Livelihoods Consulting (SLC), United Kingdom*)
Khalid, Fazlun, 2002, 'Islam and the Environment', in Timmermann, Peter (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Global Environmental Change, Volume 5, Social and economic dimensions of global environmental change*, pp 332-339, Chichester, Wiley.

Using education to promote peace and counter radicalisation and violent extremism in Africa
(*from the Facilitation Team*)
ADEA, *Policy brief: Using education to promote peace and counter radicalisation and violent extremism in Africa*, Association for the Development of Education in Africa, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8T-PuCsgpbaXVDOXd3bVNvVGM/view?pli=1

'Countering violent extremism and building peace' (*from the Facilitation Team*)
The Commonwealth Secretariat, 9 November 2015, 'Countering violent extremism and building peace', http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/countering-violent-extremism-and-building-peace

Discussion Question

From: Education Hub Facilitation Team
Sent: 12 November 2015 08:48
To: The Commonwealth Education Hub
Subject: [edu-hub] DISCUSSION: Education's response to radicalisation – Discussion ends 26 November 2015

Dear Education Hub Members,

On the eve of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta, we are launching a discussion related to talks to take place at CHOGM exploring the strengthening of peace efforts and countering radicalisation and violent extremism.

The Hub discussion will be guided by the following questions:
What is the role of education and educators in countering violent extremism and ensuring that young people are resilient to radicalisation? What strategies or cases exist which demonstrate the success of efforts to counter radicalisation and violent extremism?

The discussion opens today, and will be guest moderated by Mme Raky Gassama. Mme Gassama is the current Knowledge Management Officer at the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). She has been a consultant at the ADEA Secretariat for 4 years, where she has facilitated internal coordination of evidence-based policy dialogue initiatives, external communication and knowledge sharing.

Our team will post no more than one "digest" email per day, which will include all responses and the moderator's comments. All messages received will be reviewed by the moderator.

The discussion will close on Thursday, 26 November 2015, after which we will consolidate a synthesis of the discussion which will be published on the Education Hub portal (https://www.thecommonwealth-educationhub.net/). To assist, we have included related resource links below.

To input to the discussion simply reply to this email or email edu-hub@groups.thecommonwealth.info.

We look forward to a productive discussion.

With best regards,

The Facilitation Team
The Commonwealth Education Hub
Email: edu-hub@groups.thecommonwealth.info

Full Responses

Responses received with thanks from:

1. John Arnesen, Chartall College, South Africa
2. Ivan Yaholnitsky, Bethel Business and Community Development Centre, Lesotho
3. Allah Bakhsh Malik, Government of Pakistan, Pakistan
4. Jim Wynn, Imagine Education, United Kingdom
5. Paul West, The Commonwealth Secretariat
6. Graham Robb, Restorative Justice Council, United Kingdom
7. Eleni Kotziamani & Christos Michaelides, Alambra Primary School, Cyprus
8. Nicholas Watts, Global Sustainable Livelihoods Consulting (SLC), United Kingdom

---

John Arnesen, Chartall College, South Africa

In relation to programmes that support SDG4, ICT can play an important role in providing universal access to education, and promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

Vanuatu's Universal Access Policy (UAP) aims to provide telecommunications internet services to rural and unserved areas that are not commercially viable. The concept of schools as hubs for community access is central to the UAP's strategy, together with the provision of computer labs, class sets of tablets, solar power, broadband, and gateway servers with digital, educational resources to 21 schools nationwide. Integral to the success of these programmes is training for teachers and other key stakeholders. The school server technologies worked as a "local cloud", providing digital library and application services for the school and local community. Training workshops were also carried out to ensure supervisors of the facilities went away with a full set of essential operating, administration and maintenance skills, and explored educational resource collections provided on the servers and the local content tools. Teachers and educational officials are inspired and challenged to make connections with their teaching and curriculum, socialised into the world of "creative collaboration" and empowered with new digital literacies and local content capacities in line with the country's national ICT policy.

To learn more on the project, visit: http://community.nuzusys.com/

Moderator's Note, Raky Gassama

Thank you Mr. John Arnesen of South Africa. You provide an interesting perspective regarding the importance of Holistic Education in providing good citizenship. This suggests that schools are seen more and more as being on the front-line of the battle to prevent radicalization and violent extremism.

The situation in South Africa described by Mr. Arnesen on the day to day challenges regarding the issue of "good teaching" is now at the core in countering radicalization and violent extremism in most countries. This raises another question: do we provide guidance to teachers to be alert to signs of radicalisation? Is there a need for parents, teachers and others to have the skills, capacity and awareness necessary to identify and report any worrying behaviours?

Ivan Yaholnitsky, Bethel Business and Community Development Centre, Lesotho

A few days ago a Mosque was set on fire in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, apparently in an act of retributive hate. As a Canadian, it diminishes me. A constructive discussion on contemporary malaise needs to gather all of

the fragments. Timothy McVeigh, the perpetrator of the Oklahoma City Bombing was an Army veteran and American citizen; in 2012 hell on earth was unleashed at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in New Town CT USA; carnage in a Kenyan University also occurred, and in recent days a Russian airliner went down and the streets of Paris were filled with blood. Some profound flaw exists in human society and in mankind itself, when events like this occur. I mention only a few of these episodes; there are many others. If we are to grow out of this, we need to gain a critical perspective for the grounds of aberrant behaviour on this scale.

Penetrating and inclusive soul searching is required.

Allah Bakhsh Malik, Government of Pakistan, Pakistan

The role of educators is very basic and absolutely essential towards effectively countering violent extremism and addressing the serious issue of inappropriate attitudes in young people. When young people interact with educators at an early age, mental wiring is still being developed and tapestries of the mind being formed. It is the right stage when spirit of inquiry, critical thinking and secure understanding of the concepts of life are introduced to young impressionistic minds. The role of educator is of paramount importance to imbibe the spirit of tolerance and to develop the habit for understanding others' points of view. Unfortunately the seeds of hate, extremism and radicalization are sown at a young age, which grow and multiply with the passage of time and can subsequently be very dangerous to society.

In Pakistan, there are numerous noble and bright examples of a vast number of educational institutions charged with the responsibility of inculcating knowledge, tolerance, mutual respect and respectful co-existence. The students in these institutions are taught global citizenship and respect for humanity. The millions of young bright students graduating every year are the hope for the nation and humanity. They are charged with the passion to serve the people and oppose the extremist mindsets. Such young bourgeoning minds are an asset to our society. There are only a handful elements who preach hate and extremism while the whole of society is put in harm's way. At the same time, this particular mindset remains under-served so far as access to formal quality education is concerned. There is no evidence so far about the involvement of any educated person from a formal schooling system in violent extremism. The only difference among violent and peaceful citizens is the method of education and the type of instruction young people receive at an early age. There is an urgent need to approach and target the under-served and less-affluent sections of society through education so that seeds of peace and tranquillity could be sown and ultimately we get the dividends in the shape of resilience to radicalization, opposition to extremism and terrorism and eradication of hate and bias from young minds.

As a policy in Pakistan, we have introduced a curriculum, focused on peace, global citizenship, respectful co-existence, critical thinking and innovation. The National Education Policy is a consensus document that recognizes education as a vital investment for human and economic development in an excellent teaching-learning environment. There is an indomitable belief and stoic resolve and determination to ensure that young people are educated to serve the people and support peace and ensure repose of society.

Jim Wynn, Imagine Education, United Kingdom

There have been a number of projects led by tech companies addressing peacebuilding - such as this one by Cisco in Israel (https://www.cisco.com/web/about/ac48/pdf/EU_Case_Study_Net.pdf), and this one from EY and NESTA in Northern Ireland (http://www.tran-conn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TranConn-Bright-Ideas-Final.pdf).

I believe that as social media and the ubiquity of access becomes more and more a reality, the world's youth will use technology to bring different cultures together.

However, the propensity of the same technology creating divisions is clearly a growing danger. The so called IS have demonstrated this very clearly. So I believe that education systems have to include social media literacy in the list of the new literacies we must ensure all citizens have to survive and thrive today.

One issue of course is to make sure our teachers are familiar enough with the benefits and pitfalls of communications technology. There can be no better way to achieve this than for teachers to share their experiences through the same medium.

Every teacher of every subject and phase should have this as part of their own curriculum objectives. This is not a separate subject, project or exercise. It will impact every young person in all aspects of their lives and so it should be so at school.

Moderator's Note, Raky Gassama

Many thanks to Mr. Jim Wynn from the United Kingdom, Dr. Allah Bakhsh Malik from Pakistan and Mr. Ivan Yaholnitsky from Lesotho for their contributions. We can see the underlying importance of "prevention" in countering radicalisation and violent extremism. More specifically, Mr. Wynn tackles the vital aspect of integrating social media literacy and critical thinking in formal education systems to prevent the planting of the seeds of intolerance, radicalisation and extremism. We can stretch this approach to non-formal and informal education and training. As we regularly observe, radical groups are increasingly using the "narratives" in social media space that educators are not be not using.

Dr. Malik insists on the key role played by the education system in the socialization of young people and their moral development, and presents an interesting perspectives. Social and political marginalization has been cited as a contributing factor. It is therefore important to address inclusive basic education for all, without any discrimination towards individuals or groups. Mr. Yaholnitsky also highlighted the potential role of self-analysis in addressing this issue.

These interventions show that new strategies need to be explored to counter the "narratives" of radicalisation and violent extremism. Perhaps we should allocate more time and practical lessons to peace and pluralism in formal education through the use of social media and other tools. Should educators, with the involvement of the youth, develop their own practices in order to challenge violent extremist messages and awareness of how these are constructed? In final analysis, it appears essential to foster greater confidence in existing and new partnerships involving citizens, Governments, schools and social media companies to generate new ideas.

Paul West, The Commonwealth Secretariat

Reading the book titled "Civil Paths to Peace", the author refers to the term 'respect' being used with multiple meanings. Amartya Sen, the Commission's Chairperson points out that 'respect' may be used to show respect for a person who is older or in a more senior position. Respect in many settings (such as in business) is something that is earned while power is 'taken note of'.

In an inter-cultural setting, however, the term respect requires equal and fair treatment of each other. True respect for oneself is something we must earn by the ways that we behave towards others. If one 'demands' respect through the use of power, one may have the pretence of respect shown to one, but this may only be the notion of being 'taken note of' as suggested by the Commission.

Respect toward others includes an acceptance of the views, opinions and freedoms to conduct one's life in the way one wishes, providing this does not infringe on the same rights of others. While any one person is striving to exercise his or her own right for respect and freedoms, so are others striving to exercise their own rights and freedoms. It is in this context that we need to have respect for each other's rights.

Commonwealth values have respect and understanding at their core with the organisation striving to achieve consensual rather that confrontational debate. If we are to achieve respect and understanding, Sen points out that this must be achieved in an environment that is non-threatening.

The Commission points out that where young people work together and are able to experience equality and mutual dependence across race, religion and ethnicities, they tend to be less prejudiced than those who do not. Promoting anti-discrimination in schools and post-school institutions can help to reduce the prejudices amongst the younger generation that retard relationships amongst some members of the older generations. All organisations in the arms of government and the economy can play roles in helping to reduce the prejudices that may have been absorbed by an individual. It is both in the formal education and the informal education systems where positive changes can be made. This may be led through the implementation of policies at government and institutional level that entrench true respect rather than the use of blunt or unsophisticated power.

Education possibly has the greatest potential in the long-run to bridge the divides between people. We need to think strategically (LONG-term) and positively about how to deliver education as an intervention to build true respect between individuals and groups. In doing so, we must ensure that education is delivered to all people and not based on their location, race, wealth, connections or other status. The content of the educational programmes must build on the need to reinforce strong and positive relationships, and of mutual understanding between different people who may hold different opinions. This must be delivered irrespective of whether education is provided by governments or non-governmental sectors. Any person or grouping promoting violence over mutual respect should be encouraged to be more accepting of others.

In the Commission's words: "it would be hard to exaggerate the importance of non-sectarian and non-parochial education that expand, rather than reduce, the reach of understanding and reason."

Reference: Civil Paths to Peace: Report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding (http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/commonwealth/development/civil-paths-to-peace_9781848590014-en#page1)

Moderator's Note, Raky Gassama

Many thanks to Mr. Paul West for recalling the critical and true meaning of "acting respectfully", understanding each other and fundamental freedoms. Education for intercultural understanding and respect is more than ever an importance tool that should be promoted not only within the education and training systems, but in all levels of society. The Commonwealth is a good example of integrating respect and understanding into core business systems and processes. Holistic education must provide the right skills and competencies to enter into the world of work, but should also help children and students to respect, cherish and appreciate the multitudes of cultures and viewpoint rather than to judge or fear them.

The dilemma is that, as human beings, educators, family members and government and community leaders often carry individual biases and prejudices. Thus the question arises of how to ensure children and students are taught the values of respect and understanding without prejudice.

Graham Robb, United Kingdom
Radicalisation, Resilience, Respect and Rehabilitation

I will start with some assertions, then set out some current challenges, and then move to some of the approaches schools take.

1) It is self-evident that the main goal of education is to build the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which enable young people to be empowered and engaged citizens.
2) Using a narrower definition of youth crime, there are calculations of the monetary cost of crime, both around specific crimes and over the life course. No state should want to spend on enforcement when early intervention and prevention is better for the individual, family, community, and the public budget. This applies to the crimes linked to radicalisation as much as any other crime.

3) Schools can be uniquely placed to enable discussions for children and adults across communities and faiths where the most difficult issues can be discussed, grievances aired and understood, and critical thinking applied to assertion, propaganda, or indoctrination.
4) There are parallels between recruitment of young people to criminal gangs dealing in drugs and the sex trade and the modus operandi of radicalising recruiters.
5) Cyberspace is used very effectively by some radicalising groups especially among young people.

Some current challenges (November 2015)

Terrorist groups, as Jason Burke sets out (Observer newspaper 15 Nov 15), use 'violence purposefully. They have three aims: to terrorise, mobilise and polarise. ..The third aim – to polarise- is the most important. In Iraq and Syria, ISIS has used any internal tension within a community – sectarian, tribal, ethnic economic – to open a space that it can exploit. It knows that a community divided, where hate is nourished by mutual fear, is a fertile recruiting ground.' The goal according to the ISIS magazine Dabiq (Feb 15) is to eliminate the 'grey zone' between belief and unbelief, good and evil and so force people to choose to support a radical path.

Scott Atran, an anthropologist in France, Oxford and Michigan who has extensively interviewed terrorists in custody, quotes an unnamed source responding to the Paris attacks – "capture the rebelliousness of youth, their energy and idealism and their readiness for self-sacrifice, while fools preach moderation, security and avoidance of risk."

What are schools doing?

This gives a flavour of the sort of actions taken by some schools when faced with risks to their pupils, including through radicalisation.

1) Universal strategies
- Using approaches such as the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools to stress values which bring people together rather than polarize
- Recognise that through routine teaching pupils are learning the skills of critical thinking and analysis
- Give space and time to let pupils discuss difficult issues
- Teach safe IT practices to pupils and parents and have safe IT monitoring to ensure school and home systems are not being misused

2) Partnership strategies
- Schools linking with local community and faith groups so that pupils

3) Targeted actions
- If a child is at risk of being radicalised then the first response must be a Safeguarding one- to protect them, even if adults in a family are colluding.
- Restorative justice can be used especially if a child has actively caused harm to someone.

Moderator's Note, Raky Gassama

As has been highlighted in previous contributions, Mr Robb discusses the role of education in shaping respect and skills such as critical thinking which impact an individual's choices and resilience to radicalisation. He also links back to the importance of the "narratives" used through information and communication technology tools, which play a critical role in radicalisation. These tools can conversely play an important role in prevention over enforcement (with education playing a key role), the paradigm shift of restorative justice and the importance of 'rehabilitation' to demonstrate the principles of a supportive and cohesive. Mr. Robb also presents some of the actions being taken to prevent/intervene when pupils are at risk. Organisations such as the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) are supporting prevention/intervention through its "Children's Government" programme. This programme involves learners in the governance and accountability of schools to promote cohesion – devoting time to, and giving a forum for children to discussion difficult issues.

This contribution brings up the question of what other policy and practical mechanisms are being used within the education sphere which are replicable and adaptable to other educational environments?"

Eleni Kotziamani & Christos Michaelides, Cyprus

The role of education is extremely important in countering violent extremism and ensuring that young people are resilient to radicalisation. According to McCarthy "If we don't teach our children peace someone else will teach them violence". Everybody wants to live in a Culture of Peace, but we have never thought of teaching children about it. We take it as granted that children know how to live in peace, but in reality they are born in a world of violence. Since their early childhood they watch cartoons full of violence, later they play video-games full of violence and watch movies full of violence, apart from the violence they experience sometimes within their families, their communities, their countries. We teach our children almost everything but how to live in a Culture of Peace. Education cannot be examined separate from the social milieu. And one cannot ignore the fact that education is the biggest ideological mechanism used by states; after all, that was the original driving wheel behind the creation of the education system.

There is no doubt, that our era is bothered by peacelessness. According to the Armed Conflicts Report 2014 there were 28 active armed conflicts in 2013, while U.S. $1,557.6 billion was the total amount of world military spending (Project Ploughshares, 2014). Violence and war are institutionalized, are collectively and personally mediated, and are being internalized. Contextual factors such as the media, the education, and the religion are used by institutions to legitimize ethnic policies, as a means of achieving political control, a monopoly of economic power, and the preservation of the current status-quo held up by the dominant group of the society. And as Gibson (2012a) reports, "there are presently a great many representational systems which make conflict, and the institutions which facilitate it, appear natural and enduring" (p. 10.5). The role of education is essential in deconstructing various beliefs, and providing alternative peaceful means for restoration of the rights, for building a healthy teenage and adulthood life.

The example of Cyprus will be brought up as an example of how education has sustained a Culture of violence, hatred and war throughout the years. For more than 4 decades, the two larger communities of Cyprus live in a divided island (the historical events that led to this separation do not add any value to the current discussion). As a result of the division, people who are up to 40 years old, never lived with the members of the other community and actually it's the generation who came to be fearful of the other community, and developed a hatred for the "enemy". This is a fact for the members of both communities. That is because during the era they grew up there was a narrative that glorified the history of one's own ethnic group and victimized the members of one's own group, ascribing the sole responsibility for the outbreak and continuation of the conflict to the others. This narrative was gaining strength due to the lack of any interaction with the other community. The physical separation of the two communities created psychological barriers. Additionally, within the schools, there are teachers over 40 years old who lived traumatic events and as such, the memories of the past, especially when they are fueled by various mechanisms, either formal or informal, can be a barrier to reconciliation. And within the schools, one also finds the new generation, the students, who actually witness a different perspective, where they basically have no experiences of actual contact and interaction with the members of the other community, but they can actually see them (physically) in their surrounding environment. It is of great significance to mention here the way history is taught within the schools. Students are taught only the events that victimize their side, while they become ignorant of any atrocities held by the members of one's own community. As for the national celebrations, those are related only with wars; there is not a single celebration (apart from the religious ones), which celebrate anything peaceful. As a result we glorify the war, we become proud of our own group, and we name fighters as heroes. We dress children as soldiers, we provide them with toy-guns, and we congratulate them at the end of being so heroic. We forget to celebrate the children's day, the rights' day, and we are completely ignorant of people who have "fought" for peace and justice. As a result, in both communities of Cyprus, war and violence have gained a significant place within the society. This institutionalization is also indicated by the monuments and museums that exist in both communities and it is strengthened and disseminated within the younger generations.

The characteristics above are not part of the educational system in Cyprus, but of all the educational systems throughout the world. It's not just part of the educational systems in countries with inter-ethnic conflicts. After all, we should be troubled by the recent events of terrorism (and we believe we are), implemented by nationals of the states. If all the above, are not a clear example of how education promotes radicalization and violent extremism, then what is? And feeling the responsibility of sharing the pathway that education has taken in one's own country needs lots of courage, since you can be easily called a traitor.

Another major obstacle in extremism is the distribution of wealth and power, not just among the countries but also within the countries. The last couple of years Cyprus is in a bad economic situation, with many young men without jobs, without prospects. Political ethnicist parties create youth groups apparently to gain young followers. In such conditions, young people are taken into advantage, they are trained to become monolithic in their judgments. Through those parties they acquire a community, a sense of importance. Their needs for security, identity and connection are somewhat satisfied. It has been documented that young people in similar situations in other countries get into gangs or are being military trained and have been documented to commit atrocities. The ethnicity is used to legitimize actions, while the use of ethnocentrism (thinking of one's group as superior; Barger, 2004) is manifested in the public discourse. Propaganda of hate and superstitions of the out-group is transmitted to the younger generations through formal institutions, but through informal channels, such as stories from the families and neighbours.

What is our responsibility as citizens, as educators? We believe a huge one. We do have to share though, two examples from the island of Cyprus, which show how 'ordinary' citizens, how educators can offer a lot and change the current status quo of violence and create an educational system that resists in radicalization and extremism.

The first example relates to a project that started as a sequence of lesson plans during the arts class. The teachers designed a project that aimed to cultivate and sustain a culture of peace in Cyprus by promoting knowledge, attitudes and behaviours for social action. It used the 6 pathways supported by the theoretical framework of peace education and it involved all the students, teachers and staff members of the school, the local community and had an impact on the wider community of Cyprus as well. It started as an art project, but then expanded to all subjects of the curriculum.

To start with, during the Arts classes two grades worked throughout the first year on "identity". Many social issues such as racism, terrorism, ethnocentrism, sports violence, even depression are the result of an inability of individuals, groups or societies to understand the multiple dimensions that comprise our identities. Within the Arts class students deconstructed the multiple elements of our identities, and continued by examining each element separately: physical appearance; age; family; religion; profession; nationality; displacement/refugee; globalization; special needs; gender; ethnicity. They investigated all the elements through the arts, which resulted in better outcomes, as it provided ways of alternative expression for students who do not have opportunities for success at school. Four famous Cypriot artists collaborated for the implementation of the activities, there was a collaboration with a USA school (Ohio), where we exchanged art projects which transferred the message of peace and humanity. In the same motive, students participated with the use of technology in various projects and collaborated with schools in Europe as well, learning that they are part of a greater system. This brought us to an end of the identities spectrum.

One of the pathways of peace education is promoting intercultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity. For that reason, students explored aspects of social exclusion. The discussion was initiated by identifying groups within the Cypriot society that are usually excluded and those were the old people, the immigrants, and the refugees. Students searched within various media forms and realized that journalists through cartoons they criticize social phenomena. They asked to also make their statements through cartoons, and a cartoon artist was invited to inspire them to create.

At this point, we realized that it was important to incorporate another element within our project, since working on knowledge and attitudes is essential but not sufficient to bring social change. As such, at the same time that we explored various characteristics of the third age, from February to April once a week the students visited the elders' home, where they shared songs, dances, poems, and love! Elders and students felt strongly for this activity and anticipated the next visit. Characteristically an elder stated that "every time you come here you

give us a reason to live". We also collaborated with an NGO residing in Cyprus, the African Diaspora, where an immigrant shared his experiences with the students, before immigration, during and at the country of settlement. Children were inspired, in a level to ask to create a sculpture of a child immigrant. During the process they empathized with the child immigrant and they came to understand the difficulties he or she might face.

The most striking experience according to students' words, was when 24 unaccompanied minors visited our school after an initiative carried out by the students themselves. We have to admit that this was a difficult attempt, since in order to follow the students' idea, we had to overcome bureaucracy with Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, and the social services. We also had to deal with parents who were not open to hosting such an event in the local community. But if you believe at it, you do it, so children came to our school and spent the whole day. A person working at the refugees' shelter stated at the end of the day that we gave them life back and allowed them to be children once again, even if it's just for one day.

Apart from all the above, throughout the year in order to strengthen the goals of the project, we implemented a variety of activities aiming at strengthening the collaboration among everybody involved in the project. Students' association proclaimed a competition about collaboration, where all students participated. A number of the artworks of the students was printed on cups, which were given to all the students to remember. Students also created artwork about collaboration on the walls of the school.

Through the project, we also had the opportunity to incorporate an alternative use of sports, other than the common one, which is to create athletes who compete each other. There are a number of sports programs nowadays around the world, which use sports as a means for achieving personal and social development. Sports are a powerful tool towards that end, since through sports you can actually collaborate with the members of your team, you have to communicate and you have to build a group that will achieve a goal. When used in this way, it has been proved that non-traditional sports, meaning sports which are not known to the wider community, have higher impact on individuals, communities and societies involved. The reason is that individuals start from the same baseline, and they have no ideas about the rules and as such they have to communicate in order to have a better understanding. So, we introduced a number of sports activities, rugby, lacrosse, kayaking, table tennis and so forth. Another important aspect is that in this way you enrich the spectrum of activities that students can get involved during the afternoon, and in doing so you reduce youth delinquency.

A Peace Day was organized for students, parents and the local community, where they all had to participate in non-traditional sports activities with the aim of collaborating through sports. The parents of the children participated as well. The event started with a small ceremony, where the students presented activities they completed throughout the year concerning peace, such as peace songs, poems, an exchange of peace drawings with a school in the U.S.A. and they attended a mini lecture on violence in sports provided by a referee-parent. During the day, the parents and students created the wall of peace, where they stated what peace means to them.

Additionally, throughout the year, within the economic crisis that Cyprus is suffering, the school identified seven students that their families had financial difficulties in fulfilling basic needs of their children (such as nutrition and clothing). For that reason, an idea under the name "Delivery of Love" was initiated by the students, where they could bring food to support those 7 families. The school provided a special room where those supplies were kept. The Parents' Association and the teachers financially supported the idea, so that extra items such as detergents and cleaning fluids were bought. At the end of each month, the supplies were distributed to each family. This initiative is in progress since November 2013 and is still taking place. The anonymity of the families was of course ensured.

An afternoon visit (non-school hours) with parents, teachers and students to the premises of the Red Cross Cyprus to help them package supplies for families in need. Volunteering is not really part of the culture in Cyprus, and having parents, teachers and students devoting their afternoon time for activities like that, it is considered a major accomplishment for the project.

They also voluntarily brought to the school war games and exchanged them with new, educational ones. Not that shows the impact the whole project had on the students, but it also sent a message to the community that buying war games can be harmful for the development of the young individuals.

The current project did not entail extra-ordinary activities that needed a budget or a fair amount of preparation. They were small actions, but at the same time it revealed the transformative power education has. Throughout the project we have experienced a tremendous change not only for students, but for the local community as well. When thinking about changing the world, we think of huge, costly projects, of projects that most of the times cannot be completed due to the investment they demand in terms of time, costs, and energy. Most of the times we think that this is something inconceivable, something unachievable, since we are only a small part of a huge system. But this project has shown us that changing the world means changing the person next to you, and has managed to make a whole community caring and affective. If nothing else, this project has shown how powerful education can be in "changing" the world!

Measurable Impact and Effect:
The project activities promoted universal values, such as equal opportunities, human rights and democracy, and respect for other cultures. The project had the following impact on the individuals involved:
- □ Empowerment of and creation of active citizens as shown by the increasing numbers of individuals participating in voluntary activities, with parents and teachers included, which were reluctant to do so at the beginning.
- □ Less conflicts during recess at the end of the project, as those were recorded by the educators. Students became more capable of articulating their opinions and respect diverse ones.
- □ Improvement of the self-esteem of the students, as it was expressed in their written documents.
- □ Improvement of the learning outcomes, as it was expressed in the participation of students within the classroom and their performance in tests.
- □ Involvement of a bigger number of students in sports and arts activities during after-school hours.
- □ Increase awareness about how specific behaviours perpetuate the culture of violence.
- □ Develop a sense of community by paying attention to a group of people within the community, as indicated by the participation in the activity 'Delivery of Love'.
- □ Bridging gap between different members of the society within Cyprus, as indicated by the volunteerism during the host of vulnerable groups such as individuals with special needs, refugees and so on.
- □ Combating discrimination based on ethnic origin, based on anecdotal reports held before and after the project.
- □ Treating each other appropriately regardless of cultural differences, developing tolerance and tackling racism, as indicated by the difference in including students from other backgrounds in play, before and after the project.
- □ Reduce of vandalism during the afternoon hours when school is closed, committed by members of the local community and students.

The project had an impact on the school as an organization:
- □ Increased ability to evaluate approaches and make corrections based on outcomes.
- □ Increased ability of the school members (educators, staff and students) to work as a community, as it was observed by the effectiveness of operating as a team.
- □ Increased motivation and commitment by all school members, as shown by the willingness to perform duties in non-school hours.
- □ Increased ability to set specific goals and take actions to meet those goals.
- □ Transformation of the school community to one that promotes mutual understanding, generating confidence and resonance.
- □ Creation of alliances with parents and other members of the society, as shown by the increased interest of parents for the school activities.

The project used anecdotal reports and written reports from students and teachers. Comments and reactions were collected almost at the end of each of the activity, along with feedback that was used for the design of the next activity. There was not an official way of reporting or providing feedback; each educator was using various formats.

The school has been recognized by the educational authorities as one promoting innovative practices that have a positive impact on youth lives, and the presentation of the project in various conferences have increased the interest of the authorities about it, and have an open dialogue with the school for observing both its implementation and outcome.

The second example refers to a project called "Education for a Culture of Peace as a vehicle for reconciliation in Cyprus", which also started by three educators who collaborated with two NGOs, a Turkish Cypriot and a Greek Cypriot and was submitted as a grant and was successfully financially supported by the European Commission through the Civil Society in Action IV Program opened for the Turkish Cypriot Community (please find attached further info about the project).

The main aim of the project is to bring about societal change and transform the current status-quo through a bottom-up approach by engaging educators, young people, parents, community members, and civil society in an educative and transformational process. The overall objective of the project is to use Education for a Culture of Peace as a vehicle to bring structural changes and transformation in the Cypriot society across the divide in order for a Culture of Peace to be cultivated and sustained.

The specific objectives of the action are to:
- Increase the capacity building of members of NGOs and the applicant organizations in promoting practices supporting a Culture of Peace;
- Engage educators from both communities in a dialogical process where the needs for implementing Culture of Peace initiatives will be identified and analysed;
- Engage 80 educators and 160 students across the divide in workshops on Education for a Culture of Peace;
- Provide opportunities for educators to apply Education for Peace methodology in their educational settings;
- Provide participants the opportunity to spread the message of peace to their peers, their families and the community (an estimated 1600 students will be involved in Education for a Culture of Peace activities);
- Produce joint educational material, including lesson plans and a guide on the methodology of Education for a Culture of Peace, for immediate use in classrooms (a trilingual manual to be distributed to all public and private schools in Cyprus);
- Bring youth together through the organization of a theatre camp in order to promote reconciliation;
- Establishment and launch of a Peace Education Centre and Library to meet the educational, information and entertainment needs of educators, students and other members of the society;
- Provide data on how the infusion of Education for a Culture of Peace in the school curriculum can develop societies;
- Set Cyprus as an example for future initiatives in Europe and elsewhere through the organization of an International Conference on Education for a Culture of Peace and a publication on how to integrate Education for a Culture of Peace in divided societies.

The project which also started from a grassroots initiative, managed to contact the Ministry of Education and get its support. It's not accidentally, that the Ministry set as one of the goals of this academic year the anti-racist education and the education for a Culture of Peace.

Nicholas Watts, United Kingdom

In April of this year (2015), the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC) Governing Board held an away day to consider the way forward for the charity. One of the exercises involved responding to a question along the lines of "If you woke up tomorrow and your dream had been realised, what would it be?" My intuitive response was "ISIS has gone green". By this, I meant that the destructive energies of ISIS had been channelled into addressing climate change and related challenges, including the greening of human settlements. I wonder if this is a question worth posing in the context of a long-term approach to the problem of radicalisation.

In the 1970s, Roger Hart (http://www.gc.cuny.edu/Faculty/Core-Bios/Roger-Hart), Director of the Centre for Human Environments at City University of New York Graduate Center, arranged an exchange between schoolchildren in the Bronx and their peers in a Vermont farming community; an exchange of context and a meeting with unfamiliar contemporaries from different ethnic communities. This was part of Roger Hart's long-term project of children's rights and participation as a fundamental component of a working democracy. It also introduced metropolitan children to 'nature' for the first time - as well as rural children to New York. The project served to familiarise unfamiliar groups with one another, and also points to the importance for children of contact with the natural environment. We now accept that green in the environment, in the form of plants, trees or parks, is conducive to wellbeing. And any process that engages children from different population groups together in a process of engagement in decision-making (the emphasis of much of the rest of Hart's work) can help develop their skills in thinking for themselves and understanding the perspective of others (a cognitive skill that emerges between the ages of 7 and 12 years).

From 2009-2011, in the last major CHEC-sponsored project 'SAUCE' (Schools at University for Climate and Energy: www.schools-at-university.eu), mixed groups of schoolchildren from North London gathered at London Metropolitan University to engage with shaping solutions to climate change together. Children from all social, ethnic and religious groups worked together in addressing environmental challenges positively and gaining a sense of efficacy in doing so.

Culpeper Gardens, in the London Borough of Islington, has one day a month when refugees and asylum-seekers come to do some gardening. They report a feeling of contact with nature, a sense of relief and a connection with their home countries in this experience.

The integration of nature into Islamic thought is part of Islam as a way of life. Fazlun Khamid (2002) reminds us, in addressing the ethical dimension of Islam, of

> *"the instruction by Abu Bakr, the first Caliph (Khalif) of Islam to his armies. In addition to telling them not to harm women, children and the infirm, he ordered them not to harm animals, destroy crops or cut down trees. There were two elements present in this decree: the first, to establish justice even as the Muslim armies fought, and the second, to recognize the value of nature. It should also be noted that the environment was not an issue or subject for separate treatment in life as it flowed onwards in both war and peace. The human condition was never separated from the natural order. It was a matter to be reckoned with at every moment of existence like the very air we take into our lungs."*

Some ISIS propaganda includes the image of an angler fishing in a river (in a clip I have not been able to retrace), implying nature as a part of paradise. Perhaps a connection with the immediate natural environment in this life could be a useful alternative: a 'green and pleasant land' for Islam, too.

The Islamic commitment to solutions to climate change is also addressed comprehensively in the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change, which provides another impetus to engagement with environmental issues.

My speculative question, then, is: should we be making more of an effort to improve the natural environment in which young Muslims grow up, and support their engagement with 'work' (e.g. gardening) and play in, and decision-making for this environment? Could they, through active participation in democratic decision-making for their own spaces and the policies that affect them, including climate change policies, develop independent cognitive and empathic skills that would protect them from influences such as ISIS? A long-term strategy perhaps, but it may be worth engaging with Muslim communities and environmental psychologists to see if it is worth a try.

References:
Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change (http://islamicclimatedeclaration.org/isl amic-declaration-on-global-climate- change/)
Khalid, Fazlun M (2002) "Islam and the Environment" in Timmermann, Peter (Ed.) Encyclopaedia of Global Environmental Change, Volume 5, Social and economic dimensions of global environmental change, pp 332-339 Chichester, Wiley

Moderator's Note, Raky Gassama

I'd like to thank Eleni Kotziamani, Christos Michaelides and Nicholas Watts for their contributions as we wrap up the discussion. These contributions provide practical examples of how the education system can be utilised to address exclusion and foster social cohesion, and illustrate the transformative power of education in addressing radicalisation.

These examples provide tangible solutions to a discussion which has mulled over the complex dynamics and relationships at play, and offer food for thought in transforming policy into effective actions.

The Moderation Team:

Guest Moderator: Raky Gassama (Mme.)
Education Hub Facilitators: Emma Findlater (Ms.) with support from Paul West (Mr.) and Sultana Ladhani (Ms.)
Correspondence: Facilitator, The Commonwealth Education Hub, Health & Education Unit, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, United Kingdom.
Email: eduhub@commonwealth.int
Web: www.thecommonwealth-educationhub.net

To cite this report: The Commonwealth Education Hub Discussion Summary (December 2015), Education and Radicalisation.

Disclaimer: The Education Hub is an initiative of the Commonwealth Secretariat, UK. In posting messages or incorporating these messages into synthesized responses, the Education Hub or the Commonwealth Secretariat accepts no responsibility for its veracity or authenticity. Readers intending to use or transmit the information contained in these messages should be aware that they are relying on their own judgment.