



Abu Dhabi Plan of Action for Education and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

Introduction

A series of expert meetings, workshops, conferences and research hosted by the GCTF, *Hedayah* and various other partners convened educators, experts, practitioners and policymakers to share experiences and enhance understanding on education and countering violent extremism (CVE). These events also led to the drafting and development of the *Abu Dhabi Memorandum for Good Practices on Education and Countering Violent Extremism*, which was adopted at the September 2014 GCTF Fifth Ministerial Meeting in New York City. The topic of education and CVE was also a key component of the agenda at the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism in February 2015. A preliminary list of recommended action items was developed as part of the Follow-on Action Agenda coming out of the Summit. In addition, the European Union's Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), specifically the RAN PREVENT Working Group, has developed a Manifesto titled "Empowering Educators and Schools" aimed at outlining principles for ministries of education investing in CVE efforts within the European context which was endorsed in March 2015 by the Ministers of Education within the European Union. Drawing on these multilateral developments and existing body of knowledge on education and CVE, this non-binding action plan for education and CVE provides an illustrative list for how to advance and implement the good practices already outlined in the *Abu Dhabi Memorandum*.¹

This action plan describes programming and policy that are currently being, or could be, led/sponsored by the GCTF members and other interested stakeholders including: *Hedayah*, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), the UN Center on Counter-Terrorism, the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and the European Union Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). The specific organizations listed in this action plan are not necessarily endorsed by the GCTF members, but examples of existing programs are given that can serve as models for future program development. Moreover, the programs in this list need not specifically address violent extremism, but they will contain elements of good practice that can be applied in a CVE-specific context.

GCTF members are encouraged to update other members of the steps they take to implement these or similar initiatives, and coordinate with each other to share further good practices and lessons learned. The GCTF's CVE Working Group may periodically review and update this action plan.

¹ This Action Plan was developed for the GCTF with significant support from *Hedayah*.

I. General Programs and Policies

- Support efforts for sharing and disseminating good practices outlined in the *Abu Dhabi Memorandum* globally and implementing good practices at different levels and across relevant sectors.
- Design, develop and implement pilot programs drawing on the good practices outlined in the *Abu Dhabi Memorandum* in collaboration with existing initiatives conducted by *Hedayah*, GCERF and the EU RAN.
- Commission and conduct research projects using relevant evaluation tools and drawing on existing relevant data that identify successes and failures of existing programs integrating education and CVE.
- Ensure that programs and policies promoted by this Action Plan are designed and implemented with full regard to States' obligations under international law, including international human rights law.

Ongoing initiatives include:

- ***Hedayah***: “*CVE and Education Training*”— In coordination with the US Institute of Peace (USIP), *Hedayah* has developed a series of three (3) courses on CVE and education for government officials, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and community groups working in the education sector that can be replicated a number of times with further funding.
- ***European Union***: “*Holding Difficult Conversations*”— the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) PREVENT Working Group has facilitated several workshops with educators on the topic of CVE. These dialogue sessions helped to identify the main challenges for teachers facing the threat, methods and good practices helping teachers to hold difficult conversations about radicalization with students/young people, and potential policy solutions to address the specific challenges educators face.

II. Educational Initiatives

- Emphasize an active learning style, including simulations and games, to develop critical-thinking, civic education, civic responsibility and human values.
- Integrate values of civic education and civic responsibility into popular subjects such as math, science, engineering and medicine, where relevant, in both state and private, including secular and faith-based, schools to give students a practical application of those values.
- Develop vocational training programs in regions where violent extremist recruitment is triggered by unemployment and lack of financial opportunities.

Ongoing initiatives include:

- **Kenya, United Kingdom (Research Institution-IC thinking):** “*Integrative Complexity*”— Educators are working with neuroscientists and psychologists to design interactive exercises and curricula that reduce black-and-white thinking. Preliminary data has shown that the IC model is useful in increasing students’ abilities to hold multiple, conflicting viewpoints as valid.
- **Pakistan (Sabaon/“New Dawn”):** “*Deradicalization of Youth*”— This de-radicalization program in Swat Valley aims to rehabilitate ex-Taliban fighters and trainees of school age (12-18) through a program conducted in a school setting. The center aims to provide access to quality academic education and sports facilities to give these young adolescents a second chance at life. The center focuses on treating the physical and psychological effects of traumatic experiences, includes lectures refuting the doctrine of extremists groups, involves psychological counseling and self-worth training, and provides education on personal hygiene, health, ethics and vocational training.
- **United Kingdom (Tony Blair Faith Foundation):** “*Education in Refugee Camps*”— This program focuses on providing quality education refugee communities, particularly those displaced from Iraq and Syria. The program encourages appropriate civic education, uses an applied learning model and emphasizes critical thinking skills.

III. Institutional Initiatives

Schools and Higher Education Institutions

- Coordinate skills training on communication with facilitating opportunities for dialogue and discussion within a school setting on core issues around violent extremism.
- Work within the schools and collaborate with educators to identify students that are on the path towards violent extremism and intervene, keeping the students' best interest at the center of the program design.
- Promote accelerated learning programs that directly addresses dropout rates in countries where this is a significant driver of radicalization and recruitment.
- Facilitate platforms that encourage collaboration between schools and private sector companies to assist in job placement after graduation, both at the secondary school level and the higher education level.
- Train students and teachers on how to use the Internet safely and effectively; and integrate counter-narratives strategies into this sort of training.
- Facilitate initiatives that create safe spaces to address grievances, especially at the higher education level.

Ongoing initiatives include:

- **South Africa (Government and NGO-Valued Citizens):** “*Open Dialogues in Schools*”—This partnership between the Gauteng Province Department of Education and an NGO creates interactive platforms in schools to promote constitutional values and develop youth responses to current challenges. The Open Dialogues program also enhances learners' communication and critical thinking skills by facilitating constructive debates and discussions between peers in a safe space.
- **United Kingdom (Higher Education-Bradford College):** “*Safe Spaces*”—This higher education institution has developed an inclusive College community that integrates practices of early identification of vulnerability in students, and has created safe spaces where sensitive issues can be discussed and debated.

Government

- Train state officials (Ministries of Education, Culture, Youth, Sport, Religions) on basic elements of CVE, including general awareness-raising, terminology, and their potential role in preventing and countering violent extremism.
- Link relevant ministries within the government on appropriate intervention plans and strategies.
- Train teachers on managing their own inherent biases and/or behavioral tendencies that may lead students down the path of radicalization and recruitment through communication skills and resilience training.
- Equip teachers with proper knowledge about violent extremism in their own context, and the push and pull factors that lead to radicalization and recruitment.
- Institutionalize quality standards for learning for all types of schools (including religious institutions).

Ongoing initiatives include:

- **Colombia: (NGO – Convivencia Productiva):** “Aulas para la Paz” – With the support of the Ministry of Education and international cooperation, this multicomponent program is intended to prevent acts of aggression and to promote peaceful coexistence through the development of citizen competencies in children and young people. This program includes training of teachers, volunteers and study tutors; actions in the classrooms to improve citizen competencies; workshops where children exhibiting aggressive behaviors can interact with their positive peers; and family workshops for children exhibiting aggressive behaviors. The Aulas para la Paz program has been implemented in 46 schools in different Colombian cities and was exported to Monterrey (Mexico).
- **Greece (NGO—Processwork Hub):** “*Teachers Empowered*”— This training program for teachers aims to increase teachers’ self-awareness, build skills for dealing with criticism, develop abilities to facilitate discussions around difficult topics, and understand and manage their own inherent biases.
- **Norway:** “*Dembra (Democratic preparedness against racism and anti-Semitism)*”— With support of the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, this training program trains teachers and management in secondary schools to prevent anti-Semitism, racism and undemocratic attitudes in schools. The program offers three seminars on conceptual, theoretical and historical frameworks to the challenge that are combined with hands-on training exercises for inspiring learning inside and outside the classroom.

Each school team also designs their own school project tailored to the local context that are implemented with the support of mentors and experienced trainers supporting the schools.

- **Nigeria:** “*Model Al Majiri Schools*”—Initiated in 2012, these government-funded Islamic educational institutions aim to train teachers to higher educational standards, give access to better teaching equipment and facilities and provide vocational training alongside religious teaching in al majiri schools. The schools have been built in previously unregulated areas of Nigeria.
- **Somalia (NGO-Somaliland Youth Development Organization (SOYDAVO)):** “*Capacity-Building Training Workshop for Teachers*” — This program, in partnership with the Somali Department of Education, aimed to build capacity of teachers in Burao District to identify causes of school violence and develop preventive strategies for decreasing violence in the learning environment.
- **Sweden (NGO-Expo):** “*Tolerance Project*” — This project aims to combat intolerance and racism through equipping teachers with the knowledge, research and information on Nazi and right-wing extremism in Sweden. The program aims to reach teachers that interact with students ages 14-16. The training includes a historical background of extreme right-wing groups in Sweden as well as a resource network of the latest trends and propaganda being utilized by these groups.

Media and Technology

- Support existing tools and media, as well as develop new tools and media (including games, television shows, radio shows, social media platforms) to reinforce lessons learned in a classroom setting in a fun and interactive way.

Ongoing initiatives include:

- **Middle East and South Asia (Private Sector-Variou):** “*Cartoons*”—Cartoons (both print and TV) reinforce lessons learned in a formal educational setting such as tolerance, diversity, cooperation, and coexistence that can be used as supplemental to coursework. Cartoons are also useful in challenge the narrative of violent extremists that can be used as a catalyst for discussion in an educational setting. One specific cartoon reinforces the importance of girls’ education and access to polio vaccinations in Pakistan. Another specific cartoon creates a role model/super hero for young boys in Jordan.

Private Sector

- Target corporate social responsibility programs in the private sector, and include the private sector in the dialogue of CVE and education.
- Involve private sector companies interested in the education sector to help tailor their programs and services to fit the needs of CVE.

Ongoing initiatives include:

- **United Arab Emirates (Private-Knowledge Workx-Ed):** “*Global Leadership Track*” — Private company develops specialized school curricula to enhance leadership skills, increase intercultural intelligence, build students’ abilities to navigate complex situations, and enhance self-knowledge and differing worldviews.
- **United Kingdom (Private-Digital Disruption):** “*Digital Resources for Youth*” — This private sector company develops digital resources for facilitators working with youth to improve digital literacy skills. The resources are available online for free (www.digitaldisruption.co.uk), and the company offers trainings for youth and facilitators on how to sort through messages and content in the online space.
- **United States (Private-Microsoft):** “*YouthSpark*” — This program builds the capacity of unemployed youth internationally by developing computer and coding skills and providing an online platform to market their skills to companies looking for interns and new-hires.

Family and Community-Based Initiatives

- Train and empower youth to serve as positive mentors to their peer school groups in areas where radicalization and recruitment is high.
- Involve youth and students in the development of CVE and education programs through the development of dialogue and focus group sessions in existing student groups.
- Facilitate interactions between students and positive community role models in formal and informal educational settings.
- Develop informal and formal programs for educating parents and families on CVE, including on detecting early warning signs of violent extremism.
- Create public awareness campaigns to educate the general community on how violent extremism affects their daily lives, including a call for action.
- Work with religious leaders, where appropriate, on CVE and education in religious schools.

Ongoing initiatives include:

- **Indonesia (NGO- Aliansi Indonesia Damai (AIDA): bebas dari kekerasan ekstremis/Alliance for a Peaceful Indonesia: Free from Extremist Violence): “Team of Peace Ambassadors”** — Organization supporting victims of terrorism has developed outreach teams consisting of one victim of terrorism, one former violent extremist and one religious authority. These outreach teams have piloted in several schools and community settings targeting students aged 16-18. The victim of terrorism and the former violent extremist each tell their stories, after which there is a question and answer session. The religious leader serves as a religious authority on questions of ideology and faith, while the victim and former extremist provide warnings against the consequences of violent extremism.
- **Germany (NGO-Cultures Interactive): “Rightwing De-Radicalization”** — The organization uses a “Fair Skills” de-radicalization approach combining youth-cultural workshops with civic education, deradicalization interventions, anti-bias and democracy training, psychology and self-awareness training to prevent right-wing radicalization in Berlin and in rural towns of Eastern Germany.
- **United Nations (Alliance of Civilizations): “Summer School”** — UN Alliance of Civilizations (AOC) Summer Schools seek to improve cross-cultural understanding and cooperation among countries. Summer Schools have been organized in Portugal, Malta and the United States, and have incorporated participants from over 90 countries. The program includes lectures, workshops, role-play, site visits and social activities to strengthen the capacity of young leaders to enhance international cooperation and highlight common interests.
- **United Kingdom (Foundation-Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace): “Think Project”** — The peace center organizes programs that use games and role-playing to develop skill sets aimed at reducing cross-community conflict and building resilience to the threat of radicalization for youth ages 14-19. The Think Project includes introductory sessions at schools in the UK as well as follow-up residential courses (3-days) at the Peace Centre.
- **Nigeria (NGO-Search for Common Ground): “Civic Education and Free Information in Zinder”** — This program aims to introduce civic education through informal forums to youth aged 15-35 in northern Nigeria. The program attendees covered three main topics: 1) roles and responsibilities of youth in building future communities, 2) public resources and rights of citizens, and 3) non-violent conflict management skills. The trainees then organized a series of 21 youth forums to share this knowledge with their broader community.
- **Nigeria (NGO-Tolerance Academy): “Champions of the Society”**—This educational training program promotes cultural and religious tolerance through an intensive 30-day summer program of youth leaders. Participants included members from different villages and states in Nigeria.

After the training program, participants serve in 2-week internships in churches and mosques to increase cross-cultural and inter-faith learning opportunities.

- ***Nigeria: “Creative Curriculum Project (CCP)”*** – This Nigerian CVE initiative aims to promote creativity in problem solving and develop tolerance and empathy within the primary school population. The project aims to expose primary school students to ideas and opportunities that will enrich their self-confidence and enable them to overcome narratives that seek to divide the community. The CCP focuses on several areas, including providing young students with an opportunity to counter violent extremist ideologies and narratives through educational programs and activities which are designed to provide young Nigerians with a platform for critical thinking. The programs make it easier for students to identify and abstain from extremist views and other ideologies that seek to promote violence.
- ***Europe (NGO-Arktos, Belgium): “BOUNCE Resilience Training”*** - This training curriculum has been developed in order to provide psycho-physical training for vulnerable youth to strengthen their resilience against radicalization. The project has developed three sets of tools based on testing in Belgium and the Netherlands. The three training modules are: 1) BOUNCE young, a tool for training youth; 2) BOUNCE along, a tool for training adults, and 3) BOUNCE up, a train-the-trainer tool. The tools are available online for free (<http://www.bounce-resilience-tools.eu/en>), but it is suggested that prior to utilizing the training programs, that the facilitators undergo training themselves.
- ***United States (NGO-World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WORDE)): “Cultural Competency Training”*** — This program educates policymakers and law enforcement officials about Muslim communities in the United States to enhance shared values and raise awareness of cultural and customary sensitivities to Muslim communities.
- ***Horn of Africa region, European Union: “Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism (SAVE) Horn of Africa”*** – This project aims to strengthen resilience to violent extremism in Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia, especially amongst the European-born Somali diaspora and amongst Kenyan youth. In Somalia, this is done through, amongst other activities, promoting diaspora engagement through cultural and educational activities and promoting moderate voices through panel discussions. In Kenya, this is being done through peer-to-peer education, intra-faith dialogue, and youth membership, among other activities.

Sports, Arts and Cultural Initiatives

- Facilitate lectures and discussions between students and popular sports players and artists as role models to promote non-violent actions.
- Reinforce lessons learned in a formal educational setting through deliberate curricula in after-school programs that engage children through sports and arts.

Ongoing initiatives include:

- **Afghanistan (Private-Sayara Strategies): “Provincial Cricket Leagues”** — Since cricket is a popular sport in Afghanistan, the cricket leagues provide opportunities for messaging in three areas. First, the cricket players themselves are often from at-risk communities, and their well-designed sports teams and coaching clinics can divert these individuals from violent extremism. Second, players are trained in messaging to the spectators in the pre and post-game interviews. Third, the live broadcast of the sports activities provide opportunities for positive, non-violent messages.
- **Colombia: (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Cultural, educational and sports diplomacy):** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs designed a program of sports and cultural exchanges intended to promote social inclusion, peaceful coexistence and intercultural dialogue in municipalities where there exists risk of recruitment of minors by armed groups. During the exchanges, children and youth get to know social inclusion experiences, peacebuilding programs and intercultural dialogue through sports and culture. They also meet with leaders and representative personalities of their fields and train or interact with similar teams or groups.
- **Denmark (Foundation-Sjakket/“The Team”): “Community Centers”** — This organization uses sports and health activities to address dropout rates for immigrants and disadvantaged youth in Copenhagen, and is based on “inclusion through trust.” The activities are conducted at a youth center located in an area vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment.
- **Kenya (NGO-Youth Arts, Development & Entrepreneurship Network (YADEN)): “Edu-ART and ART-preneurship”** — These programs aim to use arts to overcome developmental challenges in East Africa. In the Edu-ART program, individuals engage in theatre performances and sport competitions to address local challenges, including violent extremism. In the ART-preneurship program, individuals learn artistic skills as vocational tools for development and advancement in regions where radicalization and recruitment are bolstered by lack of employment.
- **Jordan and Tajikistan (Higher Education-Ball State University): “SportsUnited Program”** — This program aims to develop values-based curriculum in both Jordan and Tajikistan, using recreational sport leagues to target vulnerable youth.

The model utilizes a research-based coaching style that encourages collaboration and fair play, and enhances individuals' opportunities for psychological growth and maturity.

- **Nigeria (NGO—AIESEC (Association internationale des étudiants en sciences économiques et commerciales) Nigeria):** “Project Worldview” — This program was implemented to increase intercultural awareness and facilitate dialogue between youth in Nigeria, Benin and Gabon. This 8-week educational program aimed to empower young leaders through intercultural, interreligious, intertribal and international experience and dialogue.
- **Poland (NGO- Stowarzyszenie Nigdy Więcej/Association ‘Never Again’):** “Let’s Kick Racism Out of Stadiums” and “Music Against Racism” — These anti-extremism and anti-Nazi programs utilize sports and music to campaign against Nazi and racist rhetoric.
- **United States (Foundation-The Sanneh Foundation):** “Summer Camp” — Originally aimed at youth Minneapolis, Minnesota, this sports camp has reached immigrant youth from the Somali community, and helped to develop opportunities for leadership, teamwork, collaboration and social inclusion in areas where immigrants have difficulty assimilating into US culture and have sometimes resorted to violent extremism.