## **ADVICE CENTRE** Hesse

Religious tolerance instead of extremism

**Change of perspective** 

Islam

Values Part

Participation

Deradicalisation

Interreligious

**Conflicts** 

Maturity
Mideast conflict

Lifeworld

Identity

Honour

Together

Extremism

Responsibility

**Democracy** 

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## ADVICE CENTRE HESSE

## → Religious tolerance instead of extremism

The Advice Centre Hesse of Violence Prevention Network is geared towards adolescents, parents and experts who have questions in the area of extremism. The centre provides prevention, intervention and deradicalisation measures as a response to general helplessness when dealing with religious extremism. The Advice Centre promotes increased tolerance of different world views, and early detection, prevention and reversal of radicalisation processes. Intervention in early radicalisation processes and targeted deradicalisation activities are aimed at people who are searching for an escape from extremist ideologies.

One of the key aspects of the Hessian approach is to provide adolescents with information and knowledge enhancement on interfaith and intercultural connections at an early stage and on dealing with interfaith conflicts. Interfaith communication allows for a basic understanding that does not reject fundamental principles such as democracy, non-violence, human rights and tolerance. Rather, it includes these values in their own religion as well. At the same time, this understanding also prevents extremism and the trend to radicalisation.



## → Objectives of the Advice Centre Hesse

- Creating an openness to dialogue between people with different cultural and religious backgrounds
- > Breaking down antidemocracy and misanthropy
- > Preventing and reversing radicalisation processes and violent behaviour
- > Promoting interfaith/intercultural responsibility
- > Activating and professionalising institutions and multipliers

The aim is to establish contact with young people who are susceptible to extremism. Also, in the course of pedagogical work, the intention is to first effect the separation process from extremist groups and the questioning of violent and extremist ideological elements, which then allows for deradicalisation processes.



## → Who can approach the Advice Centre Hesse?

The services of the Advice Centre are essentially meant for all persons who require advice or support in dealing with religious extremism.



## → The Advice Centre Hesse is there for you if ...

- $ight> \dots$  your institution is experiencing religious-related tension.
- > ... a religious conflict is intensifying in your environment.
- > ... you require support in dealing with extremist world views.
- > ... you think that your child, student or friend has become radical.
- ... your institution requires advice and advanced training in dealing with religious extremism.
- > ... you would like to disengage from extremist ideologies or opt out of radical groups.

## **PREVENTION**

The preventive work of the Advice Centre Hesse is part of the model project "Demystify extremism!". The model project is an answer to the growing need to use preventative political education in order to address the phenomenon of religious extremism. The goal is to provide education about extremism and recruitment strategies as well as to develop strategies for youth when signs of radicalisation arise in peer groups. Other objectives are to demystify the phenomenon of jihadism and to increase the ability of young people to distance themselves from extremism.

Young people are no longer powerless when faced with the recruiting efforts of the extremist scene; through a series of measures that are tailored to the specific context of the particular institution, young people can instead respond critically. The limits that the friends, teachers and social environment of a possibly radicalised individual have with regard to action are addressed, and mention is made of the Advice Centre Hesse staff members, who are available at all times. They can take immediate action in recognisable individual cases that require more intensive support.

In addition to the measures for young people in the areas of school and youth welfare, the qualification of multipliers and employees in the respective institutions is also an objective, in order to ensure sustainability of the preventive education and change processes.



## → Workshops according to the modular principle

The prevention work takes place in the form of workshops which are designed according to demand. This means that instead of a previously prepared offer having to be accepted, the particular situation and needs are analysed cooperatively with the institution in an initial exploratory talk. On this basis, a plan is established which is matched to the particular context of the institution. To ensure sustainability and to accompany change processes, several workshops are designed and conducted over a longer period of time. The individual modules are selected according to the modular principle, so as to achieve the following educational objectives:

- 1. Extending the knowledge of inter-religiousness, identity and religious extremism.
- 2. Achieving an awareness of the recruitment strategies of extremists and the stigmatisation of groups.
- 3. Enabling positioning in a pluralistic society (limits of tolerance, recognition of a foundation of common values, etc.).
- 4. Strengthening skills such as media literacy and awareness of tolerance.
- Developing action strategies for dealing with recruitment attempts and religious extremism. At this point, the intervention team of the advice centre may be called in as a partner at any time.

#### → Content

The different modules of the workshops build upon one another in terms of content. The ideal sequence of the individual workshop modules looks as follows:

The first workshop serves the purpose of approaching religious extremism as an issue via content such as identity and ideology, thereby enabling the team to find a point of access to the group. In the second workshop, education is provided regarding religious extremism through insights into the scene, the argument structures and the recruitment strategies. Based on the experience in the second workshop, education is deepened in the third workshop by addressing questions about society, religion and inter-religiosity. The fourth workshop deals exhaustively with the development of strategies for action in dealing with religious extremism.

## → The following thematic clusters can be addressed

## → Awareness of religious extremism:

- > role of one's own identity, origin and culture
- > life in a pluralistic society (human rights, fundamental rights, democracy, etc.)
- > dealing with other religions and world views (tolerance of ambiguity)
- > religious life practices and beliefs of the various religions (excursions)
- > shared value-basis of the three monotheistic religions
- > inter-religiosity as an opportunity of social cohesion

## → Education about and dealing with religious extremism:

- > context of ideologies and their circular reasoning structure
- > insight into the scene of religious extremism (with a focus on Germany)
- > recruitment attempts by extremists in the media (social networks, etc.)
- > strategies to deal with religious extremism

The workshops are aimed at students from the 9th grade and participants from the age of 14 and older. Depending on the respective needs, the work can involve religiously heterogeneous or homogeneous groups (e.g. in religious instruction). The amount of time ideally comprises three to four appointments of at least two full hours each, with these dates being as close to each other as possible (6 - 8 week distance). In the school context, this can either be adapted to the teaching (e.g. two double lessons in ethics, politics, etc.) or worked on in project weeks.

## → Possible workshops according to the modular principle





## QUALIFICATION

## → Information and awareness-raising events

For interested institutions, as part of its prevention work, the Advice Centre Hesse provides information and awareness-raising events concerning the topic of religious extremism or Salafism. These events are intended to ensure that all employees of an institution have the same level of information with respect to the subject matter and that they are informed of who they can turn to and what to do during a current situation. This is the prerequisite for a solution-oriented and value-free educational attitude and a targeted approach to the target group.

## I feel more secure now in dealing, ".with Muslims."

## → Topics of these events can be, for example:

- > Presentation of the Hessian Prevention Network Against Salafism
- > Outreach efforts by Violence Prevention Network
- > Islam teenagers between religion and extremism
- > Exploitation of the theological sources of Islam
- > Salafism and religious extremism
- > Experience gained from the practical work of Violence Prevention Network with extremist, ideological youth
- > Recognise, decipher and work on radicalisation and extremist tendencies
- > Case studies and strategies in educational work in dealing with religious extremism

Target groups include teachers, educators, youth services staff, police officers, probation officers, prison staff and mosque communities. The aim is to enable the early detection of radicalisation through these groups of professions and individuals, as well as the strengthening of skills and self-confidence in dealing with young people who are perceived as being at risk for radicalisation.

Approaching and dealing with young people who are radicalised or at risk of radicalisation are the key to successful educational work. This requires employees who understand religious extremism and Salafism, as well as the manifestations of these situations, so that alternatives can be identified.



## → Multiplier training -"Dealing with religious extremism and radicalisation in schools and youth welfare"

In working with young people, situations can always arise in which one is confronted with extremist or fundamentalist attitudes and behaviours. It is usually difficult to respond appropriately in such situations. Often one feels overwhelmed in a specific situation and does not know what to do. The overarching goal of this training is to convey the ability to recognise extremist argumentation and to develop possible resolution strategies concerning this argumentation. The qualification is aimed at participants who are in permanent dialogue with youths who are placed at risk by extremist or fundamentalist ideology.

The emphasis is placed on practice-oriented pedagogical thinking and behaviour. The starting points are particularly the experiences of the participants in their professional fields. While confronting these young people directly is certainly commonplace, conscious dialogue and intentional communication is not. To this end, new courses of action are presented. With the qualification, further understanding of one's own professional role is developed, making dialogue possible with young people who display extremist thought patterns.



#### → Content

Fruitful dialogue lives from relationships between the individual parties. Relationships begin with oneself.

- > What is the basis for what has been said?
- > What images arise?
- > What is used as a comparison (including one's own religious education)?

The participants are encouraged to clarify where their own (especially affective) "trigger points" are. What is the perspective of (one's own) possible positions? What are one's own experiences regarding migration / demarcation / excessive community-based or origin-based thinking / perceived and real injustices? The idea is to see oneself clearly and to be able to justify one's own positions.

- How do I develop dialogue relationships with young people who possess inhumane attitudes?
- > How do I start to address the topic in everyday working life?
- What position can I develop for myself?
- > How can I make inhumane positions arguable, and thereby create uncertainty?

## → Modules of the multiplier training

- > Presentation of the Hessian Prevention Network Against Salafism
- Outreach efforts by Violence Prevention Network possibilities for prevention and intervention
- > Islam teenagers between religion and extremism
- > Exploitation of the theological sources of Islam
- > Salafism and religious extremism causes and backgrounds
- > Causes of radicalisation and attractive moments of Salafism
- Recognise, decipher and work on radicalisation and extremist tendencies
- > Casework examples from practical work
- > Strategies in educational work in dealing with religious extremism
- > Experience gained from the practical work of Violence Prevention Network with extremist, ideological (delinquent) youth





## → Special training for teachers

The Advice Centre Hesse of Violence Prevention Network, in cooperation with the State Office of Education and the Teachers Academy of the State Education Authority of Frankfurt and the Hessian Ministry of Culture's project "Violence Prevention and Democracy Learning" (Gewaltprävention und Demokratielernen (GuD)) offer a three-part training session concerning the topic: "Salafism: prevention and intervention at school - causes of the radicalisation of young people".

## → The contents of this training series are:

- > Presentation of the Hessian Prevention Network Against Salafism
- > Outreach efforts by Violence Prevention Network
- > Islam teenagers between religion and extremism
- > Salafism causes and backgrounds
- > Exploitation of the theological sources of Islam
- > Salafism and religious extremism
- Experience gained from the practical work of Violence Prevention Network with extremist, ideological youth
- > Recognise, decipher and work on radicalisation and extremist tendencies
- > Casework with examples from daily school life
- > Strategies in educational work in dealing with religious extremism
- > Topics raised by the participants, such as
  - + The role of the media fascination with violence
  - + Biography work
  - + Islamophobia and global ethics
  - + Democracy and human rights education

## → In this series, the teachers should:

- develop strategies for dealing constructively with Salafism
- > be informed about causes, backgrounds and contexts of Salafism
- > be encouraged to conduct self-reflection regarding their own behaviour
- > become aware of outreach opportunities in Hesse concerning radicalised students
- > find out which each particular outreach opportunity or intervention makes sense

The methodological design of the event takes place through interactive lectures and discussions, working groups, film screening, group discussions and case work in workshops. Participation will result in certification.



## INTERVENTION

## → Anti-Violence and Competence Training (Anti-Gewalt- und Kompetenztraining - AKT®) in prison

With the Anti-Violence and Competence Training (Anti-Gewalt- und Kompetenztraining - AKT°), Violence Prevention Network has developed a humiliation-free, non-confrontational alternative in the field of anti-violence and educational work, based on the concept of Verantwortungspädagogik® [Education of Responsibility]. AKT® training is offered as group training in prisons. It represents an aid to vulnerable youth who have a Muslim background and is intended to prevent further radicalisation and careers of violence. Qualified AKT® trainers are deployed who have years of experience in working with violent offenders who are motivated by extremism. Participation in the training is voluntary.

Just as important as the methodological and pedagogical work is the identity of the trainers. Since the clients can relate to the trainers on an equal footing, it is possible to quickly establish a relationship level. This basis of trust is a prerequisite for successful collaboration.

## → Training format

#### Phase 1: Group training

- > 23 meetings in prison: group training with accompanying individual discussions
- > Training duration: 4-6 months (115 h)
- > Group size: 8 participants and two trainers
- > If applicable, involvement of tutors and lecturers
- > Involvement of relatives in preparation for release

## Phase 2: Transition management

- > Maintaining contact until release
- > Personal preparation for release
- > Involvement of relatives
- > Collaboration with internal and external professional services
- > Follow-up meetings with the group

### Phase 3: Stabilisation coaching

- > 6-12-month stabilisation coaching by the group trainers after the client's release
- > Intensive initial accompaniment
- > Regular meetings to review the development process
- > Continuous telephone counselling, crisis phone line
- > Involvement of relatives

The goal of AKT° is to help young people to lead an autonomous life, in which they do not harm themselves or others. They should be enabled to function without the use of justification contexts which are motivated by prejudice and/or ideology, as well as to distance themselves from the seductive "scenes" and subcultures.



## → The focus of the training work

It is part of the conceptual self-understanding of Violence Prevention Network that the basis for change is a reliable offering of a relationship. Relationship work means appreciation and respect. This is not to be confused with acceptance of the past's events, deeds or ideological positioning of the young people involved.

### **Group training**

- > Understanding one's own history
- > Identifying the failed self-healing processes of radicalisation and affinity for violence
- > Critical reprocessing of criminal events
- > Developing a safety plan
- > Deradicalisation of the residual identity
- > Development of an independent identity
- > Civic education regarding the practice of democracy and tolerance development

### **Transition management**

- > Personal release preparation and the development of future plans
- Resource and risk analysis
- > Preparation of basic security following release
- > Review of a low-risk return
- > Involvement of key anchor persons in the preparation for release
- Development of a private support system

#### Stabilisation coaching

- > Transfer of what has been learned (real-life test), stabilisation of the security plan
- > Return to the social environment (construction of a new environment)
- > Establishment of stable relationships
- > Distancing from groups which have an affinity for violence
- > Structuring of everyday life
- > Support in the case of conflicts
- > Crisis intervention
- Integration in education/work

# DERADICALISATION DISENGAGEMENT ASSISTANCE

## → Counselling for relatives when dealing with religious extremism

It is not only direct access to young people with extremist tendencies that is important. It is also urgently necessary that there be a supportive offer for their relatives (and the immediate environment, such as teachers and friends) who might feel helpless and powerless in dealing with their progressively estranged children (or students/friends). Outreach counselling is therefore required which is quickly put into practice once radicalisation is detected, so that incipient processes of radicalisation do not perpetuate and escalate. Otherwise, there is a risk that the vulnerable young people will become progressively closed off in the radicalised scene and that the parents or other family members will have less and less influence.

The primary objective is to boost the communication and conflict-resolution skills of parents (and people in the young person's immediate environment) so that a robust and resilient relationship is established between the parents and the children. Accordingly, the objective consists of facilitating the initiation of deradicalisation processes through the stabilisation of relationships. It is precisely within the context of cooperation with parents that the objective is, furthermore, to empower them at a personal level, as well as to give them leeway to process their fears, self-reproach and helplessness. By way of in-depth, specialised information and methodical counselling, a context is created that allows parents to recognise how the radicalisation process of their child has been able to emerge and which options for action they have for establishing a robust and resilient relationship. They are, however, also equipped to recognise that such a process of reversal requires a great deal of time and that setbacks are to be expected.





## → The counselling process

The target groups of the counselling process are parents and relatives whose children are subject to a radicalisation process involving religious extremism. In a broader sense, those seeking help may also be teachers, social workers or friends.

## → The ideal consultation process is as follows:

## 1. Establishing contact and identifying the problem

Direct conversations with the person seeking help (also in person and at their location) are held right away. This involves the development of a trusting relationship, before anything else.

## 2. Initiation of a support network and the development of an assistance and promotion plan with the involvement of private and public support system

In order to sufficiently inform the social environment of a concerned individual/client, it is necessary that there be a well-connected and transparent cooperation between the actors in the social and family environment (with the possible involvement of experts).

## 3. Counselling and support during the change process

The counselling team accompanies the parents, their relatives or other people seeking help in conducting their communication with the young people at risk.



# → Advice, support and special training for adolescents at risk of becoming radicalised prior to delinquency

An important addition to the preventive work are offers for those students or young people who become conspicuous, for example, in inter-religious workshops in schools and youth welfare through certain forms of dialogue and their external image. Unlike with measures of deradicalisation, the aim of the intervention is the triggering of distancing processes as well as the promotion of curiosity about other points of view. By offering dialogue, allowing questions that were considered taboo in the past experience of the young people, and a serious work relationship, the process of incipient radicalisation can be stopped.

Methodically, this work is comparable with the above-described AKT® for juvenile detention. Another similarity to the program is the focus of the content, such as: biographical understanding of careers involving violence and extremism, religion and culture as a standard justification for violence, suggestibility by "we-cultures", victim status and real consequences, as well as religious extremism.

The setting is different, however. Work occurs here in the form of individual counselling/ training, since the cases are usually brought to the advice centre as isolated cases by the schools/youth welfare institutions.

The educational content emerges from the situations and controversies. They are geared to the issues of the young people and cut across topic groups and modules. The clients should experience a dialogue which is rich in confrontation but which is also non-violent. In this way, a sense of tolerance grows. The maintenance of divergent views as well as the attentive registration of other perspectives and new information is a very important experience for a non-violent and prejudice-free life. The discussion with the counsellors should lead to uncertainty with regard to supposedly inalterable positions.

Learning processes take time and have to stand up to practice in everyday life. Therefore, a follow-up process will occur after the consultation. This includes the local youth welfare and family systems as well as the community. In other words, in consultation with the young person, those individuals will be addressed who play an important role in the client's future development in the sense of developing "positive social capital".

- → The content of the follow-up care is the support of a successful re-integration in a supportive social environment. This includes, among other things:
  - identification of tensions and conflicts in the social reference system development of possible solutions
  - > continuous dialogues that encourage questioning and arouse curiosity regarding new perspectives and which allow different perspectives with regard to Islam
  - > preparation for dangerous situations
  - > strengthening of the steps towards positive change and critical processing of relapses into old patterns of behaviour
  - > empowering of the client to live independently and participate in stable relationships
  - > determining the need for assistance and the existing support system

# → Disengagement assistance: advice and dialogue-promoting measures with radicalists, foreign fighters and returnees (e.g. from Syria)

Another important pillar of the overall concept is to initiate/monitor the disengagement processes by local contact and the immediate initiation of the deradicalisation work.

The main objective is to build a working relationship through outreach approaches and to encourage educational work to bring about the process of detaching from violent groups as well as the questioning of violent ideology elements, so as to make the deradicalisation process possible.

The focus of the work lies in establishing the accessibility to the people at risk, the approach to these individuals, the development of working relations and the actual deradicalisation work itself.

### → The deradicalisation work includes:

- continuous dialogues that encourage questioning and arouse curiosity regarding new perspectives and which allow different perspectives with regard to Islam
- > the recognition of the specific danger situation for the young person concerned
- > promoting the young people to recognise their own processes in regard to their previous course of life as well as the biographical understanding of a career of violence, militancy and extremism, with special consideration paid to how the image of an enemy is developed
- > assuming responsibility for independent living creating conditions and planning a future
- > support and advice in difficult life situations









## → The ideal course of an intervention can be described as follows:

- > knowledge regarding a vulnerable young person, such as from institutions, relatives or parent counselling projects
- > review of the dangerous situation by scientific and educational staff
- > establishing direct contact to the young person
- > creation and stabilisation of a working relationship
- development of a help and promotion plan with the involvement of the private and public support system on site
- consulting in the development of emergency measures and long-term disassociation strategies
- > implementation of various pedagogical work steps

## → Success criteria for working with young people at risk:

- > accepting professional support and helping to shape a continuous working relationship
- > developing and increasing the capacity for dialogue
- > developing distance to protagonists and role models with inhumane viewpoints
- allowing doubts about one's own beliefs, ability to perform self-reflection regarding one's own career progression
- > developing a tolerance of ambiguity
- > constructing a new private network, constructing different social contacts outside of the extremist scene
- > maintaining a distance from the extremist scene (group, individuals and the media)
- > orientation in terms of a personal plan for the future beyond «political struggle»
- > no new offences



Regarding method and content, the design of the deradicalisation process depends on the degree of radicalisation in this circumstance, as well. It can be assumed that the need for a theological debate parallel to pedagogical and psychological intervention will increase the further the radicalisation of the respective individual has progressed. When a person joins an extremist group with the will to kill for his faith, the counsellor in the deradicalisation process has to spend a lot of time to shake up the ideological justification patterns and to sow doubts about it.

Deradicalisation can only be sustainably achieved if the client experiences an atmosphere of respectful interaction, with regard to himself as well as his religious beliefs. With this target group, it is decisive that the theological debate does not have a missionary char-



acter, but rather is based upon dialogue. Only the honest respect for the explanatory approaches of the clients allows an opening of people for the process of questioning one's viewpoints. An argumentative response leads instead to defence and to a strengthening of radical ideologies.

As part of monitoring the young person's disengagement from ideology, it is conducive to integrate clients into existing Muslim communities that allow them a different perspective on their religion. Unlike in the area of right-wing extremism, for example, "disengagement" in this field of extremism requires a stable redefinition of faith. It is not a "disengagement" from Islam which is the goal, but rather the move away from radical and inhumane perspectives and from the associated willingness to use violence.

# VIOLENCE PREVENTION NETWORK

Violence Prevention Network is a group of experienced specialists who have been successfully engaged in the prevention of extremism, as well as in the deradicalisation of extremist-motivated criminals, for a number of years. Since 2001, the Violence Prevention Network team has been working successfully in reducing ideologically and religiously motivated serious crime and extreme acts of violence committed by adolescents and young adults.

Violence Prevention Network and its collaboration partners aim to pass on the expert skills gained over many years in working with this target group to the people and institutions in Hesse. The objective is to integrate as many Hesse-based institutions and persons as possible, thereby creating an extensive network that facilitates sustainable prevention and intervention activities

Detach and send to: by fax to: +49 (069) 269 18 729 **Advice Centre Hesse** Leipziger Straße 67 60487 Frankfurt am Main → UPDATE INFORMATION - CONTACT Copies of brochure "Advice Centre Hesse" Copies of brochure "Taking Responsibility - Breaking away from Hate and Violence/Deradicalisation in Prisons" - Pedagogical approach, target groups and training program I am interested in the following workshop(s): I would like a customised offer. Please contact me. Name Institution Address Telephone Fax

#### Every person can change his behaviour

Fmail

The skills that a person needs to change his behaviour – the ability to relate with others, to empathise, to have a sense of responsibility and to perform self-reflection – can be learned. The activities of Violence Prevention Network are based upon this educational attitude, which involves a commitment to humanist principles.



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In crisis situations, relatives based in Hesse should please contact the hotline of the "Advice Centre on Radicalisation" at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees: +49 (069) 269 18 597.

If you are interested in a workshop, advanced training or advice, give us a call or send us an Email. The services provided by the Advice Centre Hesse are free of charge and accessible to all persons.

The Advice Centre Hesse is part of the Hessian Prevention Network Against Salafism. It is funded by the Hessian Ministry of the Interior and for Sport.









# DIE TRÄNEN DER DAWA

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