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# Assessment of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism by the Ministry of the Interior



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## Assessment of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism by the Ministry of the Interior

Ministry of the Interior

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<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>The Ministry of the Interior coordinates preventive work against violent extremism nationally, and the work is divided between several actors. The current National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism from 2016 lists the measures and the authorities, organisations and communities participating in the work. The plan is built around measures that are discussed in more detail later in this assessment. The Action Plan contains goals that are intended to be reached by various measures. Responsible parties have been appointed for the goals of the plan, and their task is to ensure the implementation of measures.</p> <p>The measures, the short-term goals and the focal actors and the cooperation forums working with the subject are introduced in this assessment. In addition, the successes and challenges of the plan are assessed and recommendations for the upcoming National Action Plan are given. Besides national cooperation, local cooperation, especially in locations where a local network works for the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism, has been assessed.</p> <p>The most successes in the assessment were observed to be the multi-professional cooperation and the participation of associations, the aim for structural measures as well as the emphasis on the significance of researched information. The biggest challenges were detected in the gaps and in the exchange of information between actors, the assurance of the association funding and its discontinuity as well as in the awareness of the phenomenon taking into consideration the different levels of the preventive work. The recommendations given in the assessment focus on meeting the challenges found.</p>			
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<b>Referat</b>	<p>Inrikesministeriet samordnar det riksomfattande arbetet för förebyggande av våldsamt extremism. Arbetet utförs av många olika aktörer. I det gällande nationella åtgärdsprogram som utarbetades 2016 för förebyggande av våldsamt radikaliserings och extremism förtecknas åtgärderna och de myndigheter, organisationer och sammanslutningar som deltar i arbetet. Programmet är uppbyggt kring åtgärderna, och i denna utvärdering beskrivs åtgärderna närmare. Åtgärdsprogrammet innehåller de mål som ska uppnås genom de olika åtgärderna. För varje programmål har det utsetts en ansvarig instans som har till uppgift att sörja för att åtgärden genomförs.</p> <p>I denna utvärdering presenteras åtgärderna i åtgärdsprogrammet, målen på kort sikt samt de centrala aktörer och samarbetsforum som är verksamma på detta område. Dessutom utvärderar man hur åtgärdsprogrammet har lyckats och utmaningarna i det samt ger rekommendationer för följande nationella åtgärdsprogram. Utöver samarbetet på nationell nivå har även det lokala samarbetet utvärderats, särskilt vad gäller de orter där det finns ett lokalt nätverk för förebyggande av våldsamt radikaliserings och extremism.</p> <p>De viktigaste framgångar som kunde observeras vid utvärderingen gällde det multiprofessionella samarbetet och organisationernas deltagande, strävan efter strukturella åtgärder samt fokuserandet på betydelsen av forskningsbaserad information. De största utmaningarna gällde luckorna i informationsgången mellan aktörerna, säkerställandet av och avbrotten i organisationernas finansiering samt struktureringen av problemen med beaktande av de olika nivåerna i det förebyggande arbetet. De rekommendationer som ges i utvärderingen gäller i huvudsak hur man kan svara på utmaningarna.</p>		
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# 1 Introduction

The Ministry of the Interior coordinates preventive work against violent extremism nationally, and the work is divided between several actors. Municipalities, civic society organisations and communities participate in the cooperation in accordance with the National Action Plan. The first National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism was published in 2012. The Action Plan was revised in 2012 taking into account the changes in the operating environment, and it is in use at the time of writing the assessment. The upcoming National Action Plan will be published later in 2019.

In the Action Plan and in this report, violent extremism refers to using, threatening with, encouraging or justifying violence based on one's own view of the world or on ideological grounds. The National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism from 2016 lists the measures and the authorities, civic society organisations and communities participating in the work. The plan is built around measures that are discussed in more detail later in this assessment. The Action Plan contains goals, which are tried to be reached by various measures. Responsible parties have been appointed for the goals of the plan, and their task is to ensure the implementation of measures. Reaching the short-term goals set has been assessed as a part of this assessment.

The Ministry of the Interior has procured an assessment from KPMG on the achievement of the short-term goals of the current action plan, the recognition of the actors' roles and tasks as well as of the local cooperation in various parts of Finland. As a part of the assessment, recommendations to the upcoming action plan are made based on the observed successes and challenges.

## 1.1 National short-term goals

The national short-term (the end of 2018) goals for preventing violent radicalisation and extremism are as follows:

1. National and local structures and procedures based on multi-professional cooperation are in place which makes it possible for the authorities, organisations and communities to prevent violent radicalisation and extremism.
2. The volume of ideologically motivated crime will continue to decrease year by year compared to the previous year.
3. The number of those travelling from Finland to conflict areas for the purpose of engaging in combat/violence will start to go down from its peak. The starting date is 1 November 2015.
4. Those returning from conflict areas are identified. The ones having committed crimes will be brought to justice. All returning persons will be systematically targeted with individually tailored measures which reduce the risk of violence and help improve their ability to cope.
5. The police will efficiently detect and investigate hate crimes. The victims of hate crime will be supported and the impacts of crime on the victim's reference group will be identified.

## 1.2 Different actors

It is stated in the action plan that the field in which violent radicalisation and extremism is being prevented is wide, and a number of actors possess responsibilities, competency and resources for this purpose. The key actors within the subject have been listed in the action plan. In addition to the listed actors, also other actors work around the phenomenon, who as a part of their own work do preventive work, as well as parties who otherwise are involved in the cooperation. A part of the parties involved in the cooperation have joined during the implementation of the action plan. Also, cooperation forums and groups in the prevention of violent extremism joining together different actors work within the subject.

### 1.2.1 Actors named in the action plan

The focal actors named in the action plan are the politicians and decision-makers, the social services, the healthcare services, the youth services, the education sector, the police, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, civic society organisations and religious

communities as well as the family and friends. The role of the central actors is described briefly as it is described in the action plan and observed in the interviews.

The functions of social services include the evaluation of the need for special support, such as benefits for employment or livelihood. Correct actions may have a make-or-break effect from the perspective of the radicalisation process. Child protection measures are employed when the person who runs the risk of becoming radicalised or who is already radicalised is under 18 years of age or has underage children.

Healthcare services provides maternity and child health clinic services as well as school and student healthcare services from which the persons may be further guided to other services. Even if violent radicalisation and extremism are not mental illnesses per se, international research and experiences indicate that there is a strong correlation with mental health problems. This being the case, mental health services play an important role in the preventive work.

Youth services encounter many adolescents and carry out actions that strengthen the adolescents' involvement, media literacy and ability to counter violence-inducing propaganda. Youth services can also notice changes occurring in adolescents and intervene in the situation. Youth services guides adolescents to join in youth work.

The role of the education sector in the preventive work is seen focal. Teachers notice various signs relating to radicalisation and can steer towards services. Many of the responsibilities given to the education sector are already included in the existing structures, such as the media literacy skills and discernment included in the curricula. During the interviews, the readiness to face a person at risk of radicalisation and the ability to discuss the phenomenon when the subject arises were seen important by the professionals in education.

The police are an important actor in the preventive work. As a part of maintaining general order and safety as well as preventing crimes, the police also come across persons who are about to become radicalised or who are already radicalised. The anchor model is arranged within police departments, and through it the police have an important role in implementing multi-professional cooperation where radicalised persons are encountered. The role of the police is not limited to the direct crime prevention and detection, but the police have an important role in finding help for persons already radicalised or at risk of it, irrespective of whether the question concerns only the police itself, another authority or an organisation.

The task of the Finnish Security Intelligence Service is to prevent and reject the most serious threats to the national security. The Finnish Security Intelligence Service monitors the development of violent radicalisation and extremism and the situation picture. The Finnish

Security Intelligence Service cooperates with the local police and provides expert assistance to the other authorities.

Civic society organisations provide services which help people disengage from violence, as well as offering mentoring and other similar services which make it easier to renounce ideals that condone the use of violence, while at the same time providing an avenue for non-violent social activism. The role of civic society organisations is important especially in situations where the authorities' possibility to provide support ends or the trust in the authorities is shaken. The action plan contains a lot of references to the cooperation between civic society organisations and the authorities.

Religious communities can offer important mental support and for their part prevent the misuse of religion as a vehicle justifying violence. They have a possibility to be credible actors in the eyes of a radicalised person in matters related to religious interpretation, and by working together, religious communities can act against violence and spread the message that violence can never be justified on the basis of religion.

### 1.2.2 Cooperation forums

Different cooperation forums bring together actors operating within the subject nationally, locally and per field. Through cooperation forums, also other central actors listed in the action plan are involved in the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Nationally the most central network is the National Cooperation Network for the Prevention of Violent Extremism coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior. The cooperation network consists of actors around Finland, authorities from different sectors and civic society organisation operators. The tasks of the group are the preparation of training related to the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism, research, prevention of local situation pictures, promotion of local work, preparation of the EXIT operation and other services as well as cooperation and communication with communities. The implementation and results of the action plan are monitored by a steering group where organisations of paramount importance to carrying out measures are represented. The steering group will annually approve the operating plan which describes the actions and the schedule of the calendar year in detail.

Local networks within the subject are operating in Helsinki, Tampere, Turku and Oulu. Local networks contain parties who are deemed important cooperation partners in each location. The extent and scope of the action are determined on the local level. In addition, the steering groups of the projects (e.g. MuVenna, Radinet, Reach Out) form cooperation forums around the subject which locally and nationally bring together different actors.

Internationally, good practices are shared through different seminars and cooperation networks. The involvement in the EU cooperation has been active especially through the

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). The network has provided information on the phenomenon to actors in the practical level and enabled their understanding of their own work in a bigger picture.

### 1.3 Implementation of the assessment

The assessment has been realised by getting acquainted with the background material provided by the Ministry of the Interior and various actors and by interviewing the central actors. The background materials used, and the actors interviewed, are exhaustively listed in the list of sources. The interviews were executed partly individually and partly as group interviews. The starting point used was the actors listed in the action plan, besides which actors were interviewed who participate in the work of the National Cooperation Network or are otherwise active in the cooperation within the subject. Furthermore, in the meetings of the local cooperation networks in Helsinki, Tampere, Turku and Oulu were participated. In connection with the cooperation networks, persons and actors actively involved in local cooperation were interviewed.

In the interviews, representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the National Institute for Health and Welfare, the National Police Board, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, the Finnish National Agency for Education, the Finnish Immigration Service and the Criminal Sanctions Agency were met. In addition, persons involved in the anchor model, researchers of the University of Helsinki, persons participated in the continuing education HY+ of the department of teacher education, representatives of the HY+ education and representatives of early childhood education from Helsinki and Kirkkonummi were met. Civic society organisation representatives from the Finn Church Aid, the Vuolle Settlement, the Muslim Youth Forum of Turku, Mahdi Youth Society and MuVenna project were interviewed. Representatives of religions were also met with.

In the interviews, the actors' own roles in preventive work and in cooperation with other parties were clarified. The participation in international, national and local cooperation forums was reviewed. Information on the effectiveness of the National Action Plan was collected from the actors and development proposals for the preventive work in Finland were examined.

## 2 Summary

### 2.1 Measures and roles

The National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism contains 12 measures, which encompass 36 subsections. The measures differ from general level measures to strategical level measures. A part of the measures is aimed to improve the preconditions for preventive work, for example, by creating structures and joint procedures. Correspondingly, the scope of the measures deviates. The measures are aimed from the early level preventive work at persons who are at risk of becoming radicalised and at persons already radicalised. The action plan is in this respect exhaustive and it does not have significant gaps.

The most significant actors around the phenomenon have been recognised in the action plan. The list of the actors was not fully comprehensive upon the writing of the plan but the cooperation partners were supplemented as the implementation of the plan proceeded, for example, through the inclusion of the early childhood education. All actors interviewed recognised their own role in the preventive work. The formation of the total picture on the other actors' role is partly lacking due to the diversity of the phenomenon, the general lack of information and the number of the parties involved.

### 2.2 Short-term recommendations

When assessing the short-term goals of the action plan, it must be noted that the possibilities of this action plan to affect them are limited. International events may have a bigger impact on many matters. It does not mean that goals should not also try to be reached by national measures. The goals listed in the action plan have largely been reached from the point of view that measures have been directed at them or that no close conclusions can be drawn in the light of the available information.

1. Structures for multi-professional cooperation and cooperation between authorisations, civic society organisations and communities have been created even though there are local differences in structures and cooperation.
2. It is difficult to see large changes in the volume of ideologically motivated actions partly for the reason that due to varying statistics no exact conclusions can be drawn from the figures.
3. The number of persons leaving for the conflict area in Iraq and Syria has lessened as ISIL has suffered military losses.
4. An operating model for identifying persons returning from conflict areas and for measures directed at the returning persons has been created, which was approved in spring 2017.
5. Additional funding was given in 2017 for the research and disclosure of hate crimes, and the police were trained in the subject, which has intensified the action. A large number of hate crimes remains unreported, and due to that the support of victims is difficult.

## 2.3 The most important successes

The most important successes of the action plan can be seen the following:

### **1. MULTI-PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF CIVIC SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS:**

- The cooperation is seen important both at local and national level because everyone views the intricate phenomenon from their own point of view. Civic society organisations have the possibility to operate where the authorities' resources end or no trust is found.
- Preconditions for the cooperation have been created by bringing actors around the same table in national and local cooperation forums, which has help in creating a common situation picture and networking the actors.
- Multi-professional operating models such as the Anchor model are valuable when matters are tried to be solved extensively from the root causes.

### **2. CONSTRUCTIVENESS AND PROACTIVE WORK AS A STARTING POINT:**

- The actors aim to build their own preventive work proactively and do things so that the preventive work becomes a part of the organisation's structures.
- The actors are aware that single projects suit for testing operating models but not for continuous action.

**3. EMPHASIS ON THE NECESSITY OF INFORMATION:**

- A strong consensus prevails among the actors that the preventive work must be based on researched information.
- During the implementation of the plan, more resources were aimed at the scientific research and the actors have compiled their own guidebooks on the matter.

## 2.4 The most important challenges

The biggest challenges in the action plan are:

**1. GAPS AND FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THE ACTORS**

- The actors recognise that the biggest risk in the preventive work is situations where a person is transferred from one actor to another. Despite that, the largest part of the practical work is directed at the development of one's own actions. The cooperation is largely based on a person, in which case the replacement of persons may significantly weaken the cooperation between the actors.
- Furthermore, the flow of information forms a problem in the cooperation between the actors especially due to different interpretations of law and therefore it is difficult to create joint operating models.

**2. CIVIC SOCIETY ORGANISATION FUNDING**

- The actions of civic society organisations are seen important in the preventive work, and they have a clear role in those areas where the authorities' actions end or are not purposeful. Funding in preventive work is based on project funding, which does not guarantee continuity. The risk is that the work goes down the drain and long-term trust is not built.

**3. STRUCTURING THE PHENOMENON**

- The phenomenon is mainly well-understood but its structuring is lacking. The starting point brought up in the principles of the preventive work is that the preventive work is focused on such groups or persons who are at risk of becoming violently radicalised or who already are radicalised.
- In respect of many actors, the preventive work is seen more extensively and other matters within public policy are connected to it. The extensive perspective is partly well-founded but it may expand the actions too much and lose focus from the action.



#### 4. REQUIREMENT AND GOALS OF TRAINING

- No clear goals or priorities have been set from the training of practical actors. There is disagreement on the goals of training especially in respect of in which role the recognition of radicalisation should be.
- The actors' resources available for training do not correspond to the acknowledged need of training from the point of view of the training organiser or participant.
- In addition, training material has been poorly available, especially for self-study purposes.

## 2.5 Recommendations to the next action plan

The authors of the assessment recommend that the next action plan pay attention to the following points:


1. Clarification of the interfaces between actors and, thus, the description of the roles between the actors more extensively in the next action plan.
2. Emphasis on the cooperation between actors by establishing measures extending the actors' scope of operation where actions are developed despite the borders between the actors.
3. Taking into account in the structures and training that a radicalised person is encountered successfully, paying attention to how and by whom the encounter with a radicalised person takes place, without adding to a single person's risk of becoming radicalised.
4. The training of practical actors should have more exact goals and priorities so that the lacking resources are directed correctly. The envisioned web-based training and self-study packages may help in the situation.
5. Arrangement of the civic society organisations' funding so that the continuity of operation is secured, and the knowhow accrued during the project can be utilised.

### 3 Measures of the plan

The action plan contains several goals for the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism. The goals of the measures in the plan have been written down in connection with the measure promoting their achievement. The measures, their subsections and defined goals are discussed according to the division made in the action plan.

In figure 1, the measures are classified based on their allocation and goals. The measures are classified based on their allocation and the goal of the preventive work. The allocation refers to a measure focused primarily either on an individual (Individual) or a wider group (Group) or whether the purpose of the measure is to improve general operating conditions in preventive work (General). The goal of the preventive work refers to which part of the radicalisation process is wished to be affected by the measure. A measure aimed at a wider population aims to realise changes in a wider scale, such as the prevention of social exclusion and the development of critical thinking (Population). Correspondingly, measures directed at persons being at risk of becoming radicalised or already in the process aim to prevent radicalisation in a targeted fashion or stop the already started radicalisation (Risk Group). The aim of measures directed at radicalised persons is, for example, to detach the person from violent behaviour and reduce the threat of violence directed at the rest of the society (Radicalised Persons).

**Table 1. The classification of measures according to the focus and target**

Action	Actors	Goal of the preventive action
Action 1: Coordination and cooperation	General	General
Action 2: Efficient and functional structures	General	Risk group / Radicalized
Action 3: RADINET (exit) function	Individual	Risk group / Radicalized
Action 4: Helpline support service  Not implemented	Individual	Radicalized
Action 5: Radicalized guided to join organizations	Individual	Radicalized
Action 6: Increasing competence and knowledge	General	Risk group / Radicalized
Action 7: Hate crimes	Individual / Group	Risk group / Radicalized
Action 8: Refugees	Group	Population / Risk group
Action 9: Communications	General	Risk group
Action 10: Critical thinking by children and the youth	General	Population
Action 11: Special responsibilities by the police	Individual / General	Risk group / Radicalized
Action 12: Actions directed at different forms of action	Group	Radicalized

The largest part of the measures is classified as general level measures. Their primary aim is to improve cooperation, create structures, increase information and expertise and strengthen critical thinking. Three of the measures are clearly of the individual level and two partly. The individual level goals are typically directed at individuals who are at risk of becoming radicalised or who have already become radicalised (or their close circle). The individual level goals are more concrete in the action plan than the general level goals. For example, target groups and goals have been clearly determined for RADINET (exit) operation and Helpline support function. There are altogether three measures in the plan directed at a larger group. These are directed at the victims of hate crimes, asylum seekers and various forms of violent radicalisation and extremism.

The action plan contains two measures which aim to prevent radicalisation of a wider group in a very early stage who are not actually at a specific risk of becoming violently radicalised. The principle of the action plan states that such measures belong to the scope of social policy and, thus, they are not subject to this action plan. The most part of the measures are directed at those persons who are at the biggest risk of becoming radicalised or who have already become radicalised. The measures differ in their work amount and effectiveness so no direct conclusions can be drawn from the volume of the measures on how the preventive work has been focused. Nevertheless, it can be stated that preventive work has been performed in the action plan very extensively from the point of view of the goal of the operation.

### **3.1.1 Coordinating preventive work, sharing good practices and increasing expertise**

The coordination of the preventive work has succeeded as set out in the action plan. The responsibility for the measure belongs to the Ministry of the Interior, and in practice, the coordination takes place through the actions by the National Cooperation Network. The creation of the cooperation network has succeeded so that authorities, Civic society organisations and religious communities are involved in it. The group convenes regularly. The operation has been developed according to the changes in the operating environment, for example, by involving new actors in the group. According to the interviews, the cooperation network has managed in the creation of the total and situation picture as well as connections by bringing in actors from different sectors. What should be especially developed in the operation of the cooperation network is that more exact goals are set for the operation and concrete development projects are created as drivers of the network.

Seminars have been organised to increase expertise, and information is distributed at the meetings of the network between the actors. Good practices are shared between the cooperation network based on the successes reached in the actors' own operation. The progress of the action plan has been monitored in the situation reports and annual reports published from 2013 by the Ministry of the Interior.

International good practices from elsewhere in Europe are taken into account in the action plan. They are, for example, obtained through participation via the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). The significance of international cooperation was brought up in almost all interviews. Good practices are sought from abroad by several sectors, and the obtained knowledge are disclosed forward in national and local cooperation forums.

### **3.1.2 Creating effective and functional structures and procedures**

The aim of the measure is to ensure that all parts of the country have readiness and permanent structures for the prevention. The multi-professional Anchor model functioning in connection with police departments is largely discussed in the action plan. The goal of the Anchor model is the multi-professional early intervention in the situation of an adolescent with the purpose of promoting the adolescent's wellbeing and preventing crimes. Experts of the police, social services, healthcare services and youth services work in the Anchor team. The operation is agreed on locally with the participants. The Anchor team also cooperates with other actors, such as various actors of municipalities, schools, civic society organisations, hobby and sport clubs, as well as religious communities. Anchor teams also work with persons already radicalised or at risk of becoming radicalised. The action plan determines three different levels, the structures of which correspond to various regional needs. The minimum level, the basic level and the high level determine the readiness of the Anchor model to prevent violent radicalisation and extremism according to the local operating environment and the situation picture.

Due to the diversity and different levels of the operation, the inclusion of measures in structures is easier to some. For example, a part of the measures has been included in the curricula at schools, and the question for the police is largely of the implementation of previous goals. The inclusion of the prevention of violent extremism in the structures was deemed an important target, and the actors feel that through that the quality of services and the national accessibility can be guaranteed.

A good example of the local actions is the When Concern Arises model created in Tampere. A procedure has been created in the model, which guides the different actors of municipalities when concern arises relating to radicalisation. The same kind of development work has also been done in other places.

### 3.1.3 Launching RADINET (exit) service

In Vuolle Settlement Radinet project, an operating model has been developed where the disengagement of radicalised persons from violence and from the sphere of influence of violent groups is supported. Similar exit models are also in use elsewhere in Europe. The action is systematic, targeting the individual, and voluntary. The aim of the service is for the person in question to renounce ideologically motivated violence or disengage from it. The Radinet exit service was launched in 2016 by the Vuolle Settlement. The objective was to create a service which reaches customers around Finland. The persons participating in the service worked in Oulu and Helsinki, but customers were also reached from other cities. During the first operating year, an exit model was created, the network was built, and the phenomenon was reviewed. As the operating continued, more focus was aimed at the training and customer service of the mentors. The steering group included the key authorities regarding the action. Further funding was applied for the project, but funding was not continued, and the service ended at the end of 2018.

Radinet provided impartial, confidential and civic society organisation-based support when individuals wished to detach themselves from violent extreme thinking and actions. Such exit work as provided by Radinet was deemed necessary in the interviews because corresponding service is not available nationwide. Radinet's work was praised over sector borders, and the created exit model was considered successful. It is also worth noting the wide recognisability gained by Radinet and the creation of networks where the employees of the projects had an important role.

Radinet's customer numbers are available and based on them it can be stated that Radinet reached a lot of people. All customers have not been assessed systematically by an assessment model based on systematic scientific evidence, so it is difficult to assess how radicalised the persons were. Approximately one half of the customers were directed to Radinet through authorities, where the assessment methods are at least partially in use,

so it is probable that a large part of the customers was in actual need of help. The effectiveness of the method to a person's de-radicalisation is difficult to assess. A risk is that only the participants in the treatment are observed and no actual picture of the effectiveness of the method is reached. The operating model could not be documented during the operating period of Radinet. The project was complicated by changes of personnel, which resulted in different views inside the project of the way in which to lead the operation. In addition, the scientific foundation of the methods would have been deemed important especially in the exit work performed in prisons.

As a subsection of the Radinet service, the action plan brings up the prevention of radicalisation taking place in prisons. Radicalisation in prisons is one of the greatest concerns in Europe. According to the report by the Criminal Sanctions Agency, the perpetrators of crimes made for terroristic purposes have often already been previously convicted of another crime.

The Criminal Sanctions Agency had a project to identify violent extremism and radicalisation in the Southern Finland during 1 August 2016–28 February 2018. In it, operating methods were developed by which the extremist radicalisation in prisons can be detected. As a part of the project, over 400 officials of the Criminal Sanctions Agency were trained in 14 prisons and other units. During the project, the aim was also to improve the exchange of information inside the Criminal Sanctions Agency and between cooperation authorities and other actors. The objective was to bring inmates already radicalised or at risk of becoming radicalised within the sphere of support functions. A report on the project was prepared. The project to identify violent extremism and radicalisation in the Southern Finland criminal sanctions region.

### **3.1.4 Launching Helpline support service**

The measure was not implemented. The Helpline support service was not launched because no resources were directed at it.

Based on the interviews, there would be a need for the support service because currently there is no service where the family and friends could contact in case of concern. The report by the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs (SIA report) prepared on the Turku stabbings states that it is typical for the backgrounds of individuals performing a terror attack alone that their behaviour changes fairly quickly and the family and friends notice worrying signs. The family and friends can detect a change in a person's behaviour and these observations would be valuable in preventing acts of violence.

### 3.1.5 Promoting the actions of civic society organisations in developing services

In the action plan, the services produced by civic society organisations are deemed focal for the preventive work. Civic society organisations provide services facilitating disengagement from violence, mentoring and other healthcare services that promote the disengagement from ideologies accepting the use of violence, offering at the same time a way to non-violent social input. It was deemed in the action plan that persons interested in violent extremism and joining in extremist groups often do not trust authorities so the threshold to use the services provided by civic society organisations is lower. The funding of the civic society organisations' work is not discussed in the action plan.

However, the question in the civic society organisations' basic function is not necessary in the prevention of violent radicalisation. The civic society organisations' operation as such promotes the participation by organising different kinds of action. With the help of projects, the civic society organisations can direct their operations more clearly to the prevention of violent radicalisation. The role of civic society organisations in preventive work is defined most clearly when the actions are project-related.

A lot of people work in civic society organisations who have broad experience, for example, in adult social services or support in disengagement from violence. The participation of these professionals in the prevention of violent extremism is deemed important.

In addition to the earlier discussed Radinet service, civic society organisations do important work locally. In Helsinki, Turku and Tampere, the Reach Out project by the Finn Church Aid was launched, which supports the cooperation between authorities, different religious communities and civic society organisations in the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism. The objective of the cooperation is to find a support model for families. During the project, international cooperation was participated in and the dissemination of good practices and cooperation between experts were supported. Reach Out has raised interest in other cities as well, and its operating models have been found good. In Turku, the Muslim Youth Forum has launched a MuVenna project, the aim of which is to prevent factors causing violent radicalisation among immigrants and young Muslims in Turku region. The project's duration is 2018–2020, and it is funded by STEA.

The action plan tries to promote the spread of civic society organisations' services supporting the disengagement from violence to different geographic regions. Young men have been raised in the action plan especially for the reason that they are over-represented among the perpetrators and victims of crime. An example of a civic society organisation working among men is Miestentalo Mattila in Tampere. Mattila focuses on increasing participation and supporting welfare. Mattila has, besides open daytime activities, also various groups men can join based on their own field of interest.

Based on the interviews, the activities of civic society organisations are mainly based on the local operating environment, and the services provided by civic society organisations vary from place to place. The goal would be a supply of civic society organisations' services covering the entire country. During the interviews, the actors, without exception, deemed the role of civic society organisations important. Securing funding was regarded important for the continuity and sustainability of the operation. Based on discussions held with local networks, the local cooperation promotes the knowledge of the civic society organisation field, and steering people to the sphere of services provided by civic society organisations is more fluent. Civic society organisations are involved in local cooperation in different ways depending on the location.

### **3.1.6 Increasing competency, expertise and awareness**

The compilation of training needs and the preparation of a training plan discussed in the action plan are deemed difficult because the training needs differ in different sectors and there are many parties offering training. As an idea, the survey of the training needs is regarded as good. The training relating to the phenomenon has been considered important, but in respect of training needs, the needs of actors in different sectors have been found to differ from each other.

Researchers and actors in different sectors are, according to their own areas of responsibility, responsible for promoting study that produces information to support the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism. The scientific research has been increased based on the information received from professionals and the Ministry of Interior. In the interviews, the role of cross-sector scientific research and correct information was deemed an important aspect of increasing expertise. There is little scientific reading on the phenomenon. The situation reports published by the Ministry of the Interior are considered good among the existing sources.

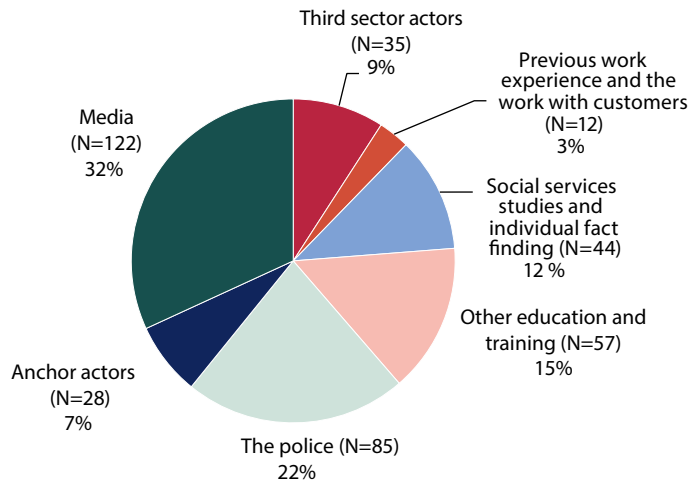
A good example of increasing competency, expertise and awareness is the continuing education in the prevention of violent radicalisation organised by the University of Helsinki Centre for Continuing Education HY+ and funded by the Finnish National Agency for Education, which is aimed at professionals in the education field. The purpose of the training is to disseminate researched data and create more versatile understanding in the themes of the subject.

Sector-specific research has been done, for example, by the social services, where the detection of violent radicalisation and extremism as well as the need for information have been examined. The results of the study are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. Based on the study, it was noted that more scientific and high-quality information on violent extremism and radicalisation is needed in the social services. Due to the detected need for

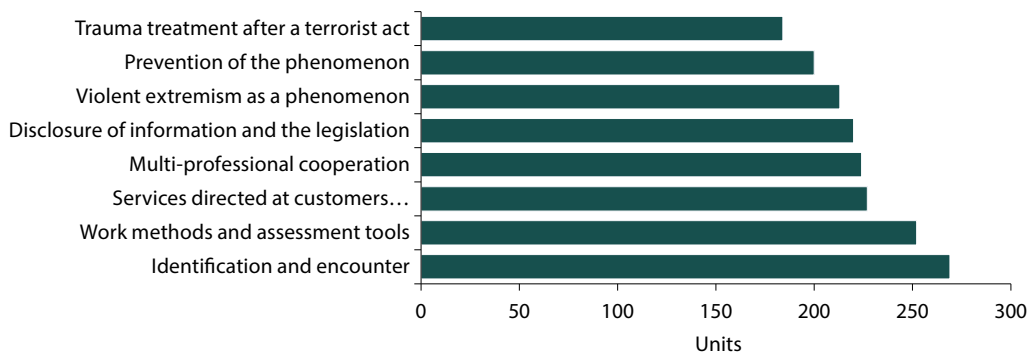


information, a web training executed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the National Institute for Health and Welfare for professionals in the social sector has been planned to increase information on the phenomenon, its encounter, identification and prevention. A corresponding study is also planned for the professionals in the healthcare services. (Ritola, Väkivaltaisen ekstremismin ja radikalisoitumisen havaitseminen ja tiedon-  
 tarve sosiaalitoimessa, the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Helsinki, 2019).

**Figure 1. Sources of information where the respondents have obtained information on the phenomenon**



**Figure 2. Need for additional information**



The National Police Board of Finland has directed and been responsible for the training within the police and relating to the Anchor model. During 2015–2017, a national training tour was realised where five trainers trained approximately 800 police officers on the themes of the subject matter. In addition, the National Police Board has arranged seminars to increase awareness. The police have also accepted the training of interest groups as their role. Based on the interviews, it came up that the police are requested to train on the phenomenon and subjects relating to safety across sectors.

Seminars on the subject matter and relating to the roles of different actors are arranged. Local networks have organised seminars to increase competency, expertise and awareness. The events have also been held as a good way to get to know other actors and receive more information on the services produced by the other actors. For examples, Tietotalo seminars where violent radicalisation is discussed from the local point of view. In addition, sector-specific seminars have been held.

The participation in international events and training has been deemed successful. In the interviews, some international training or reference was without exception brought up where the successes reached were used as a basis in the planning or developing one's own actions. Based on the interviews, international trainings were participated in especially through the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN).

In order to increase awareness, the purpose has been the implementation of an electronic toolbox to compile material in one place. No separate toolbox was launched during the action plan. The Anchor work website Ankkuritoiminta.fi functions currently as a good source for information and good practices.

### **3.1.7 Efficiently detecting and investigating hate crime and support for the victims of hate crime**

Finnish law does not define the concept of hate crime. According to the definition by the police and the action plan, hate crime generally refers to a crime against a person, group, a person's property, institution, or a representative of these, motivated by prejudice or hostility towards the victim's real or perceived ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or appearance, or disability or some similar characteristic. The police increased the prevention of hate crimes in 2017. One way of intensifying was the establishment of a national unit focusing on the prevention of hate speech in connection with the Helsinki police department, which investigates, among other things, all incitements made on the Internet of ethnic or religious hatred. Due to that, especially police reports of incitements against an ethnic group were written far more than in the previous years. The incitement against an ethnic group is a hate crime, but the possible connection of the action to violent extremism may be difficult to verify (Situation overview 1/2018 of violent extremism). The police have been trained in matters relating to hate crimes.

Together with Victim Support Finland (VS) the Ministry of the Interior has implemented the EU's 'Good Practice +' project which creates practices for supporting the victim of racist and hate crime. The project planned in the action plan was implemented, and also follow-on projects were implemented.

It is stated in the action plan that religious communities and religious premises can also become the targets of hate speech and hate crime. The Finn Church Aid, working with religious communities, has developed the 'Shoulder to Shoulder' action. The model is based on the movement around the world where religious communities cooperate, show mutual solidarity and help each other especially when they are threatened. In the interviews, the Finn Church Aid's work among the topic was deemed good and as promoting the cooperation between actors.

### **3.1.8 Actions resulting from the increased number of asylum seekers**

Measures have been directed at asylum seekers due to the increased number of them. In the subsection, the number of asylum seekers is reviewed in 2015. In addition, measures were directed at the persons being granted a residence permit and at their social integration. In this measure, the reception centre staff is trained and the safety of employees and persons subject to social integration is ensured. The reception centre staff has been trained a lot by the police and the Finnish Immigration Service. The police have also given instructions on how to act in worrying situations. The action has been boosted compared to the situation in 2016. The Finnish Immigration Service cooperates with other authorities both at the administrative level and locally with different actors and organisations.

The so-called Tupa function was set up in the National Bureau of Investigation in 2016. One of its tasks is to develop the national multi-authority cooperation relating to the asylum phenomenon. During 2017, the Tupa function supported, among other things, the preparation of the national asylum situation picture and developed the exchange of information between authorities.

It is stated in the SIA report prepared from the Turku stabbings that it would be important to offer a possibility for asylum seekers' family and friends to express concern and ask for advice from a service like the helpline support service. It is recommended in the report that an advice service is set up that can be contact in cases of concern and that knows cooperation partners, such as the police, religious communities and various parties offering help.

### 3.1.9 Preventive work through good, balanced and clear communications

The objective of the action is to use a manner that does not offend, label or radicalise any individuals or groups as supporters of violent extremism or, at the extreme, as terrorists. The party responsible for communications is named to be the National Cooperation Network for the Prevention of Violent Extremism. The national cooperation network has surveyed the situation relating to communications from the members of the cooperation partners, and discussion arose in respect of the action. However, the action cannot be deemed realised. Finland has participated in the operation of ESCN European Strategic Communication network where experiences are exchanged and competency in communications relating to violent radicalisation and questions relating to propaganda are increased.

In the interviews, the preparation of joint terminology was seen as a success even though it has not yet been taken into use by all actors in an established manner. The existence of clear and neutral terminology is deemed important so that in concerning situations the person causing concern is not labelled. The planned up-to-date material to support communications has not been prepared by the national cooperation network.

In the study, which surveyed the detection of violent extremism and radicalisation as well as the need for information in the social services, the respondents were found to have received the most information on the phenomenon from the media and the social media (Ritola, Väkivaltaisen ekstremismin ja radikalisoitumisen havaitsemisen ja tiedontarve sosiaalitoimessa, the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Helsinki, 2019). Well-balanced and clear communications relating to the phenomenon are wished for, besides the information published by the media. In the interviews, the wish was expressed for receiving common instructions for the communications in crisis so that the communications by different authorities would be as consistent as possible. In this respect, the action has not been implemented.

### 3.1.10 Strengthening the ability of children and adolescents to identify, and guard against, violence-inducing messages

The objective of the action is to strengthen the ability of children and adolescents to identify and reject messages and propaganda inducing violent radicalisation and extremism. The responsibility for the action lies with the Finnish National Board of Education and, in certain parts, with youth services and civic society organisations. The primary means of influencing at schools in order to reach the objective is the democracy education, media literacy education and the compliance with equality at schools. For example, in the curriculum for basic education, the pupils are guided in social studies to act according to the values and principles of democracy in a multi-cultural society understanding differences and respecting human rights and equality. In addition to that, it is important to learn to

acquire and assess critically information produced by different actors as well as apply it to situations encountered. (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2014). The values and targets included in the curricula do not only aim to affect the ability of children and adolescents to identify violence-inducing messages and propaganda but also to develop further the skills in critical thinking and media literacy skills. As for measures of violent extremism and the measures of the plan, a clear parallelism can be detected, as well as the similarity of objectives between the action plan and the structures of the education. In order to develop the ability of children and adolescents to identify and guard against violence-inducing messages and propaganda, teachers and other professionals in the education sector must understand the violent extremism as a phenomenon and have the readiness to discuss the matter with pupils. In the performance agreement between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Board of Education, the priorities of the early education funded by the government and the personnel training of the education are determined. The priorities in 2017 were, among other things, the promotion of the social integration of asylum seekers and immigrants, language and culture-oriented education as well as the prevention of radicalisation. In 2018, the focus was, for example, the promotion of healthy and safe learning environment.

In respect of increasing competency, the focus in the education was not on training teachers especially to identify radicalised persons but on developing a learning culture promoting welfare and learning. Continuous education in the prevention of violent radicalisation at schools is available for teachers and other professionals in the education sector. The continuous training by the professionals in education (HY+) provides a training programme preventing violent radicalisation at schools, by which the competency of professionals participating is increased through study-based information. The purpose is to increase expertise as well as share competency and information. Similar university-level training to professionals working within the subject is not offered in any other sectors than in the education sector.

The Finnish National Board of Education has also published guidebooks and online materials on the subject to the professionals in the education sector, for example, a guidebook to strengthen democratic involvement and prevent hate speech and violent radicalism in 2017. The Finnish National Board of Education has in 2018 initiated measures by which the ability to counter extremist thinking in early education as a part of strengthening the safety and wellbeing of children is increased. Children displaying symptoms are also seen in early education, and outside of schools, the parents of the children are also daily encountering such. The basics of the early education plan also take into account the democratic values, such as equality. The representation of early education has joined the operation of the national cooperative network during the implementation of the current action plan.

The Regional State Administrative Agencies have also launched regional networks promoting the safety culture of learning environments, the purpose of which is to further the cooperation between and within municipalities, multi-professional cooperation, disclose up-to-date information and good practices as well as maintain situational awareness at local, regional and national levels of the safety of the learning environments of municipalities and other education organisers.

The national cooperation network also tried to strengthen the participation of the youth. Representatives of youth organisations are represented in the network, and they develop measures as a part of their own activity to prevent violent radicalism. A good example is the MuVenna project by the Muslim Youth Forum in Turku.

### **3.1.11 The particular responsibilities of the police**

The police have been given particular responsibilities based on the duties of the police according to section 1 of the Police Act, which are to secure the rule of law, maintain public order and security, prevent, detect and investigate crimes, and submit cases to prosecutors for consideration of charges. The police work in cooperation with other public authorities and with communities and residents in order to maintain security, and they engage in international cooperation pertaining to their duties. The action plan emphasises that the police are comprehensively cognisant of their particular responsibility in preventing and countering violent radicalisation and extremism. Especially after the Turku stabbings, the National Police Board and the Finnish Security Intelligence Service developed the handling of leads concerning terrorism and violence in cooperation with all police units.

The purpose is to develop the Anchor model, and the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism have been included as part of the pre-emptive action, in addition to which the aim has been to expand the Anchor model to all police departments. The principles of the Anchor model have been documented when the Anchor handbook was prepared. The website [Ankkuritoiminta.fi](http://Ankkuritoiminta.fi) is operating, and materials to support the work of professionals from different sectors have been collected on the site.

### **3.1.12 Measures aimed against different forms of violent radicalisation and extremism**

The different forms of violent radicalisation and extremism, referred to in the action plan, are violent far right, violent far left and religiously motivated violent radicalisation and extremism.

Changes in the operating environment; for examples, trips to the combat zones of Syria had reduced from the situation in 2016 when the action plan was prepared. After the Turku stabbing, a strong discussion against immigrants and asylum seekers arose within the far right. The actions in connection with protests have been developed, and training relating to the rejection of polarisation has been launched. The operating model accepted by the ministerial working group for internal security and administration of justice for dealing with those returning from combat zones has been implemented.

Research on the non-parliamentary far right movement and anti-immigration was done in the University of Helsinki (Sallamaa, Ulkoparlamentaarin äärioikeistoliikehdintä ja maahanmuuttovastaisuus 2010-luvun Suomessa, the Faculty of Social Studies of the University of Helsinki, 2018)

## 4 Successes, challenges and development targets of cooperation

### 4.1 Reaching national short-term goals

The national short-term goals for preventing violent radicalisation and extremism, which have been set in the action plan, are as follows:

**GOAL 1:** National and local structures and procedures based on multi-professional cooperation are in place which makes it possible for the authorities, civic society organisations and communities to prevent violent radicalisation and extremism.

National structures based on multi-professional cooperation are in place. The national cooperation network and the steering groups of projects have an important significance in making it possible for different actors to find each other, in improving the exchange of information at the national level and deepening the cooperation. Nationally we have succeeded in finding active organisations, which bring a valuable practical view on discussions, for example, from the youth and religious communities.

At the local level, the most important steps of progress can be deemed the development in the operation and Anchor model of local cooperation networks. The development of cooperation between different authorities and civic society organisations has been made possible in the cooperation networks. The relationships created in the networks are useful in a wider sense as well because the actors will see that actions are taken too often in one's own bunkers, and it is important that the threshold to contact another authority decreases. A weakness in the local level structures is deemed the disunity of different operating models and local differences in the implementation of models.



**GOAL 2:** The volume of ideologically motivated crime will continue to decrease year by year.

The assessment of the realisation of the goal is important because the statistics of the volume of crimes have differed between police departments. Several entries may have been written down on the same event or one entry may contain several separate actions from the same event. In 2017, almost 100 crime labels were identified in the police's police report system, which were suspected to relate to violent extremism. Hate crimes, which are motivated by hatred or racism may also be extremist crimes. The number of these crimes clearly increased from 2016 to 2017. This is at least partially explained by the police's additional investment in making the interference in hate crimes more efficient.

**GOAL 3:** The number of those travelling to conflict areas for the purpose of engaging in combat/violence will start to go down from its peak. The starting point is the situation on 1 November 2015.

Upon the publication of the action plan, over 70 persons travelling to conflict areas were identified. At the beginning of 2018, approximately 80 of those persons travelling to the conflict areas of Syria and Iraq had been identified. The actual number is probably slightly more. Leaving for the conflict areas has in practice lessened along with ISIL facing military losses.

**GOAL 4:** Those returning from conflict areas are identified. The ones having committed crimes will be brought to justice. All returning persons will be systematically targeted with individually tailored measures which reduce the risk of violence and help improve their ability to cope.

According to the Ministry of the Interior the goal has mainly been achieved. The operating model based on the authorities' cooperation for the handling of those returning from conflict areas was approved in spring 2017. The objective is to clarify what each person returning did while in the conflict areas.

**GOAL 5:** The police will efficiently detect and investigate hate crimes. The victims of hate crime will be supported and the impacts of crime on the victim's reference group will be identified.

The Government gave additional funding for more efficient interference in hate speech and hate crimes in 2017. Approximately 40 police officers have been trained to identify and prevent hate crimes in accordance with the training against hate crimes (TAHCLE). These police officers have shared what they learned in their own police units. The volume of hate crimes known to the police in 2017 increased by eight per cent from the previous year. As much as 80% of hate speech and harassment remains unreported so the identification and support of victims is difficult (Victim Support Finland, Victims' experiences of hate crimes in Finland during 2014–2018).

## 4.2 The roles and tasks of the actors

Among other things, the National Police Board and the Finnish Immigration Service working under the Ministry of the Interior as well as the Finnish National Board of Education working under the Ministry of Education and Culture play an important role in the action plan. On the other hand, the social and healthcare services arranged by municipalities have a significant role in the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism. The extent of the action plan and the roles of different branches of administration force into the fact that the guiding impact of the plan is principally based on the tasks set out each actor to themselves, which are then written down in the action plan.

The targets set by the actors for themselves are partially of very different levels. A part of the measures can be seen as strategic-level measures, whereas a part of the measures focus in more detail in individual matters. The interviews transmit that the actors have actively discussed what their roles in the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism are. All interviewed actors had considered what the preventive work means for them. The development of thought is evident in the fact that new measures have arisen even later on, even though they were not included in the action plan.

The formation of a clear role has been the most difficult for those actors who are seldom in daily life affected by violent extremism. For example, in the education sector, discussions were held concerning how common this phenomenon is and how it presents itself in practical work. The role of the early education in the preventive work was understood fairly late. Correspondingly, among the police and the Criminal Sanctions Agency, extremism is more visible as a phenomenon so understanding it and the measures aimed at it are easier to perceive.

The role in the prevention of radicalisation is seen by the abovementioned actors differently. In the education sector, the role is strongly focused on the general development of critical thinking, on the improvement of media literacy and on the ability of the youth to counter violence-inducing messages. Such goals are aimed at a wider part of the population, which is not at an immediate radicalisation risk. The attention by the police and the Criminal Sanctions Agency is clearly stronger on the risk groups of radicalisation and on the already-radicalised persons. In which case also the measures taken to prevent radicalisation are at a very different level. Thus, it can be said that there are very different levels in the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism, depending on whether the matter is measures directed at the entire population or at persons already in the radicalisation process. In future, construing the discussion according to the radicalisation level could clarify the discussion and through that the roles of different actors.

### 4.3 Information and competency

At the latest after the Turku stabbings, the need for information on violent extremism has been recognised, and the subject is no longer deemed as solely the police's duty. At least additional information on the phenomenon, understanding the concept, receiving the correct information and operating procedures in a worrisome situation have been identified as the need for training. Generally, a good addition to the competency is regarded to be gaining a wider understanding on the phenomenon and better readiness to discuss the subject as well as the availability of scientific and correct information from reliable sources. The increase in competency is sought after especially in respect of one's own work and practical situations, for example, a teacher wishes to increase his or her readiness to discuss radicalised groups with his or her students. In the current situation, the goals of training and actual training needs are not clear. In some sectors, the training needs have been clarified, and in the most sectors the clarification of the training needs have been planned.

Increasing one's own competency and expertise in the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism is challenging because the actors' need for information varies sector by sector, locally and according to the job description. The prevention of extremism is deemed basic work only by a few working within the subject matter. Trainings by sectors can respond to the correct need as the scope and content of the training can be planned in a targeted manner. In addition to the sector-specific trainings, the training need at the local level arose in several interviews. At the local level, training could be arranged to all employees in social services, healthcare, youth services and education sector in the municipality, with the help of which the roles and tasks of local actors as well as the operating models in situations of concern will be understood.

Among the participants, the HY+ continuous education has been deemed an excellent way to receive information and increase one's own expertise. Offering wider training to all at grassroots level is, however, probably not a realistic target; instead the availability of the training and updated knowledge should be settled in a manner suitable for the current structures.

Good practices are shared among the cooperation network based on the successes reached in one's own operation. However, good practices do not currently efficiently adapt to operating models. The implementation of practices found good elsewhere is not always felt necessary if one's own operation is already deemed functional as things currently stand.

## 4.4 Cooperation in practice

The cooperation in practice refers to multi-professional cooperation and cooperation between civic society organisations and authorities. Cooperation is important because if a person moves between the services of different actors, there is a risk that the situation picture and the service chain are broken. A successful example of multi-professional cooperation is the Anchor model where the problems of an adolescent are sought to be solved multi-professionally with the help of a more diverse toolbox than that which the police alone could offer. The aim is to break the criminal career of the youth right at its beginning by focusing on the root causes.

The challenge in the Anchor model is bringing the operating model to different locations. In many big locations, there already exist forms of cooperation that are deemed functional. In that event the willingness to start developing a new operating model is low. In smaller locations, resources to arrange action are, then again, smaller. As a solution for this, Anchor models of different levels were developed in which case the operation can be brought even to smaller places.

In the cooperation in practice, building trust is decisive. This is especially emphasised when the question is of a civic society organisation. A civic society organisation must be able to convince that it can act qualitatively and reliably. In respect of civic society organisations, the authorities have to consider whether the risk is that the civic society organisation's actions, for example, in helping a radicalised person, cause more harm than good. From the point of view of the authorities, the fragmentation of the field of civic society organisations becomes a challenge. Many civic society organisations do not function nationally, whereby the cooperation must be built locally.

The cooperation between civic society organisations and authorities is at its best when it is flexible and utilises the strengths of both parties. Especially among immigrants, prejudices against authorities are met, and a civic society organisation might more easily gain trust. Civic society organisations can offer such support as can be important but which does not directly belong to the authorities' job description. In practice, civic society organisations can promote participation within the society, add information on services available by the authorities and assist in many practical matters.

A challenge in the cooperation in practice is also the borders between municipalities. While people fluently move across municipality borders, for example, in the Helsinki metropolitan area, the municipal services do not necessarily keep up. This creates possibilities for a radicalised person to avoid the authorities if the authorities cannot be agile enough in the distribution of information. The distribution of information is generally deemed as one of the biggest challenges in the cooperation concerning the preventive work.

The exchange of information between different actors is difficult because the disclosure of information between different authorities is regulated and, according to the interviews, the regulation is interpreted differently by different authorities. The interviews also provided that in many cases, the discussion multi-professionally would be sufficient at a more general level. Discussions could be held without disclosing confidential information or acting contrary to law and work instructions.

The cooperation may be withheld also due to the fact that understanding a single actor's tasks and the total picture of the cooperation between actors is challenging. Based on the interviews, the parties involved in the action no longer perceive what the other participants' role in the preventive work is, even if their own role were clear to them.

According to the interviews, potential is seen in the deepening of the cooperation in practice by sector-specific cooperation networks. The increase in the sector or actor-specific information and competency already exists in the form of various trainings and seminars but especially in the interviews of persons in customer service, wider possibilities to increase good practices and competency were wished for.

## 4.5 Local operation

Local cooperation networks for the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism are operating in Helsinki, Tampere, Turku and Oulu. In all these cities, the cooperation group convenes several times a year. The compositions of the groups vary from city to city, as do the focus areas of the operation. In Helsinki, Tampere and Oulu, representatives of civic

society organisations are involved whereas in Turku, civic society organisations are not permanent representatives in the cooperation group. It is considered in Turku that achieving as open discussion as possible is important that, thus, the composition of civil servants is justified. In the cities where civic society organisations are involved, it is deemed that civic society organisations have an important role in the cooperation and their participation has not significantly impeded the openness of discussions.

The local collaboration differs in the cities involved, even greatly. Based on the interviews, one reason for the difference seems to be the formation of the local cooperation network from different starting points, in which case the network and its operation have tried to correspond to the then current needs of the operating environment. In Tampere, Turku and Oulu, the phenomenon is approached purely from the point of view of the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism, whereas in Helsinki the group approaches the subject through general security, and radicalisation is only one of the themes. The phenomenon presents itself differently in different cities, and local events affect it strongly. The Turku stabbings and the Oulu sexual crimes are events that have a great impact on the operating environment. For example, the events in Oulu have led to increased threat of violence against minorities and added hate speech that has also been directed at the authorities.

A part of the networks are led by the police whereas in other locations, the city takes the lead. Due to the actors' different basic tasks, the needs of the police and the city for the cooperation network may differ from each other. Common in all cooperation networks is the creation and distribution of the local situation picture. The police and the Finnish Security Intelligence Service has a major role in distributing the situation picture. Persons employed in youth services, social and welfare services and at schools and learning institutions also are given a channel to transmit their concerns and as for their part enlighten the situation picture.

The most important value in the local cooperation is to see that persons working for different authorities and civic society organisations learn to know each other, and the understanding of the phenomenon improves. This furthers cooperation, not only relating to extremism but also wider as part of local cooperation. Based on the discussions held with local networks, the local cooperation enhances the knowing of the civic society organisation sector and the guidance to the services of the civic society organisations takes place more smoothly. The civic society organisations are involved in the local operation in different ways depending on the location.

The challenge at the local level is the small number of concrete measures. As positive examples of joint projects in networks can be regarded the process scheme When Concern Arises in Tampere, where the aim has been to jointly solve the existing problem in the preventive work, and the Case City Center in Helsinki, the objective of which was to have a positive change in a shopping centre found in a state of unrest for a long time.

## 4.6 Recommendations

In the assessed practical implementation of the action plan, different actors have been exhaustively taken into account, even though all actors were not brought up in the actual action plan. For example, the role of early education was realised in the middle of the implementation of the plan. The importance of the role of early education is highlighted by the fact that when children are small, the contact with their parents is much closer than compared to the school age. This increases the possibility to further the development of children's safe growth environment at the earliest possible phase. On the other hand, harmful attitudes inherited from parents are recognised in children very early on. Correspondingly, the Finnish Defence Forces are not involved in the measures of the plan. However, their representative actively participates at least in the local cooperation groups of Helsinki, Turku and Tampere. In future, the role of these actors should be made more visible in the action plan.

In addition to that, the roles of different actors in the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism should be clarified. As for the key persons within the authorities, their own role towards the action plan is understood well. Achieving the understanding of the basic level within the actor's own organisation as well as outside one's immediate operating environment is more difficult. The actors have difficulties in forming a total picture of what different actors concretely do for the prevention of violent extremism, and how these different actions are linked together.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** Clarifying the interfaces between the actors and, thus, describing the roles between the actors in more detail in the new action plan.

A large part of the measures of the plan is focused on what one actor may do to prevent the phenomenon. This facilitates the management of the implementation of the measures but causes a risk that the measures remain dispersed and gaps remain between the actors. It was brought in the interviews that the biggest risk for failure in the preventive work is when a person is transferred from one actor to the responsibility of another. Even though, for example, in the Interface Project<sup>1</sup> launched in May 2018 tackles this problem, an operating model based on cooperation should also be adopted as a wider principle. For example, in the action plan, the significance of the Criminal Sanctions Agency has been recognised because inmates are in many ways in a vulnerable position and susceptible to radicalisation. The investments of the Criminal Sanctions Agency on the prevention of

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of the Interior report: Observations and recommendations for local collaboration on referral mechanism of persons of concern in local multi-stakeholder collaboration for preventing violent radicalisation

radicalisation have been significant. However, less attention has been given in the action to how the integration of inmates into the society takes place after the end of their time in prison. The measures by one actor on these kinds of problems are typically not sufficient; instead cooperation, for example, between the Criminal Sanctions Agency, cities, the social services, the police and organisations are required.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** Emphasising the cooperation between actors by forming measures exceeding actor borders where the actions are developed despite the border fences between the actors.

The definitions of radicalisation and violent extremism forming the basis of the plan start from the idea that violence, the threat of violence or the encouragement to violence are extreme if they are justified by an ideology. The definition does not take a stand on whether the ideology refers to interpretations, for example, on people groups, the world or religion. It is deemed important among the actors that violent extremism is not seen only as a religious phenomenon but that the violent actions justified by the ideologies of the far right and the far left similarly concern violent extremism. A wider approach has an important message. Violence or threatening of it is not accepted regardless of by what it is justified. It also has significance for the practical work. It is, for example, easier to include religious communities in the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism when the starting point is not the idea that the phenomenon would only be limited to violence justified by religion.

It is important to invest in successful encounters in measures targeted at persons at risk of becoming radicalised or who are already radicalised. It is important to take into account in the structures how the actors are profiled. For example, the focus of Radinet only on radicalisation may cause problems in how the help is seen among the close circle of the person being helped. The said problematics are, for example, seen in prisons. If an inmate seeking help is deemed radicalised, the threshold to seek help may become high. The wider point of view of the Anchor, which is directed at the youth, on problems does not cause a similar problem. The actors must be able to solve how the problems of a person causing concern are tackled without labelling the person in his or her own social networks. A good example of that is seizing the concern in the school world as a part of wider care for the person's wellbeing.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** Taking into account in the structures and education that a radicalised person is encountered successfully, taking into consideration how and by whom the possibly radicalised encounter takes place without adding a single person's risk becoming radicalised.



Various authorities have arranged a lot of training and in all sectors. Despite the fact that a lot of training has been arranged, there is still a demand for it. The training is also demanded among those persons who do not daily encounter radicalised persons or even persons in a risk group but to whom it would be important to have the basic skills to understand the phenomenon and act when a situation arises. In future, even more attention should be paid in the training to what kinds of training needs different groups have, because the resources for trainings are limited. The training and participation in trainings are often away from the daily work, so it is important that the content and objectives of the trainings are closely considered.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** The training of practical actors should have more exact objectives and priorities so that the lacking resources are directed correctly. The planned web-based trainings and self-study packages may for their part assist in the situation.

The problem of the civic society organisations' work, also otherwise than within the scope of this plan, is the lack of funding. Civic society organisations are largely operated on a voluntary basis, and the hired persons often work in the projects. Their problem is the fragmentary funding that causes problems especially in an operating environment where long-term operation that is based on the trust between persons is important. The discussions should also be opened on who the correct party is to fund the work of the civic society organisations in this sector. At stake is on one hand how the civic society organisations' work can be guided according to those objectives that the financier wishes to promote and on the other hand that the funding should be to such extent independent that the civic society organisations' plausibility as independent actors remains.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** The arrangement of the civic society organisations' funding so that the continuity of the operations is secured and the knowhow accrued during the project can be utilised.

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Meeting of the Oulu cooperation network, 24 January (The local police: school police, juvenile crime investigator; the City of Oulu: youth services, social services; the Finnish Immigration Service, Vuolle Oulu)

Meeting of the Tampere cooperation network, 12 February (City of Tampere: security management, education sector, primary and secondary education, social services/social emergency duty, the police, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, Kølvi, Miestentalo Mattila, the Finnish Red Cross)

A separately arranged meeting of the Helsinki cooperation network with a smaller composition (the City of Helsinki, the local police, Aseman lapset, a researcher of the University of Helsinki)

Representative of the Radicalisation Awareness Network



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