

TOWARDS PREVENTING VIOLENT RADICALISATION (TPVR)*

RESEARCH REPORT

Authors:

Linda Pizani Williams MBA – European Institute of Social Services

Polly Radcliffe PhD – European Institute of Social Services

Dr. Harald Weilnboeck – University of Zurich



**** With support from the Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme of the European Union, European Commission - Directorate-General Home Affairs.***

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER1 – London Probation Trust	6
CHAPER 2 – Violence Prevention Network	29
CHAPTER 3 – Synthesis of Parallels	47
ANNEX 1 – Book Abstract	54

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

INTRODUCTION

This report has been commissioned by the Management Board of the Towards Preventing Violent Radicalisation (TPVR) project, funded by the former Directorate General - Justice, Freedom and Security (now Directorate General – Home Affairs) of the European Commission. The project represents a collaboration between two European partners; Violence Prevention Network (VPN) in Germany and London Probation Trust (LPT) in the UK. Each partner is working with violent extremist groups of offenders in very different ways and the objective of the project is to learn more about the different approaches, compare the impact and identify transferable good practice.

Initially, it was the intention to produce a comparative analysis of the two approaches, using case studies to illustrate the findings. However, as the investigation progressed it became clear that a direct comparison was not possible because of fundamental differences in the models, target groups and numbers involved. The use of case studies, particularly in the UK, also posed the risk of conferring a perceived status or profile to the offender because the numbers were so low, which was professionally unacceptable. It was therefore agreed between the researchers, and approved by the Management Board, to treat the models themselves as the case studies and analyse the elements of each to identify common elements which appeared to have a positive impact.

One of the fundamental differences between the two models is that the VPN model is a modularised groupwork programme which takes place in a custodial environment, facilitated by two highly trained workers. The LPT model however works on an individual basis, both before and after release from prison, involving non-statutory Muslim community organisations to address the socio-spiritual and cultural issues, whilst the statutory agency holds accountability for managing the risk and compliance issues. The nature of the offenders varies between the two partners in that VPN's experience has been largely with violent right wing extremist offenders (although now also working with violent Islamic extremist offenders), whereas LPT has experience of working with offenders whose crimes were motivated by hatred (e.g. racist or

homophobic crimes), but recently has begun to supervise violent radicalised Muslim offenders as they are being released on licence from prison to the community.

The two models operate in very different legislative environments. In Germany, VPN is working with young offenders (up to 22 years) who have been convicted of violent offences. The political, race or faith based motivation for the violence may be identified by the prosecution and lead to harsher sentences, but for historical reasons Germany has limited legislation in respect of “hate” crimes with a political and/or ideological background. Within the UK, however, there has been a dramatic rise in anti terrorist legislation, particularly since the 7th July London bombings in 2005, which has led to the imprisonment of people engaged in peripheral or associated terrorist activities. The challenge for London Probation Trust has been developing the skills, knowledge and models of intervention in supervising these offenders when they are released from prison on licence, safeguarding public protection, assessing, reviewing and managing risk. The number of released TACT offenders (convicted under terrorist legislation) is currently low, but is predicted to rise and each case has to be assessed and managed on an individual basis.

For London Probation Trust, this has been a period of intensive learning and engaging with Muslim community groups who may not share the same perspective or agenda. There are tensions in and between the organisations and it is critically important that the sensitivities are carefully managed to ensure there is mutual respect and acknowledgement of the different responsibilities. This has demanded an open and honest dialogue between the statutory and community organisations which is not always comfortable.

Each intervention model has been analysed by a local researcher and each presented as a separate chapter in this report. What has become apparent – somewhat to our surprise – is how much the models have in common in terms of the nature of the interaction and the characteristics of the relationship between offender and facilitator. Both models work on the basis of mutual respect and an understanding of how emotional narratives have been constructed and reinforced and how these have contributed to the escalation of violent extremism. The importance of establishing a therapeutic relationship in order to effect attitudinal and behavioural change and the institutional independence of the facilitator are critical

features of both models, but within the UK this presents a challenge for the statutory agency which is accountable in law for the protection of the public and managing the risk of reoffending.

Whilst there are significant differences between the models, I am grateful to Harald Weilnboeck for highlighting the parallels between the two projects by comparing the findings of the local researchers. This comparison will inform 'Good Practice Guidelines' which we will produce with the final report.

NB The authors have reflected the views of the respondents and these do not necessarily represent the views of the commissioning body.

**CHAPTER ONE: THE WORK OF LONDON PROBATION TRUST & MUSLIM
COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

LOCAL RESEARCH IN LONDON, UK

Polly Radcliffe, PhD

Introduction

The European Union-funded “Towards Preventing Violent Radicalisation” project has investigated the involvement of Muslim voluntary and community organisations with the supervision of Terrorist Act (TACT) offenders serving their sentences under licence in the community. The aim of this research has been the identification of effective practice interventions with such radicalised offenders with the aim of preventing further violent radicalisation. More specifically the project has sought to explore:

- The impact of socio-religious mentoring
- The differences between target groups
- What are the practice elements of the different models?
- What are the professional skills needed?
- How are the different models managed?
- How is success measured?

We report findings from interviews with representatives of Muslim community organisations who have been enlisted by London Probation Trust (LPT) to carry out socio-religious mentoring and support with TACT offenders; with LPT staff who have been involved in supervising TACT offenders and engaging Muslim community organisations in this process; and representatives from NOMS who are currently involved in producing assessment tools and protocols for probation staff working with TACT offenders both in custody and in the community. The interview data referred to constitutes accounts of practice, opinions and descriptions of processes by practitioners rather than interviews with TACT offenders themselves or observations of socio-religious mentoring.

This report should be seen in the context of an emergent body of research and review of practice that is being carried out by and on behalf of LPT. The RIRP (Reducing Influences that Radicalise Prisoners) project report (2009) examines the role and models of working of Muslim Community Agencies undertaking criminal justice work. As a leading practitioner and insider in the Muslim community development agency, STREET, the author of the RIRP report, Alyas Karmani is well placed to provide a wealth of data and analysis including interviews with offenders and community support agencies (CSA) themselves and a description of the factors influencing radicalisation. Much of the findings from interviews carried out for TPVR support the RIRP report.

In terms of practice instruments, NOMS and LPT have produced a specialist 'tool kit' for Offender Managers (OMs) and probation officers who are assessing and working with TACT offenders both in custody and the community that recognises the value of involving Muslim community groups in the supervision of TACT offenders (NOMS, 2010):

'Linking offenders to specialised faith groups has proved successful and in some cases led to a more constructive therapeutic alliance with LPT' (LPT, 2010)

As part of the EU funded STARR (Strengthening Transnational Approaches to Reducing Re-offending) project, research is also being conducted by Sarah Marsden to investigate risk management approaches being developed by LPT in their work with those convicted of terrorism offences. An interim report of findings was published in June 2010.

This report aims to describe what characteristics of faith group involvement and what practices with offenders prove effective. In Section 1 we give a short overview of research findings that are relevant to this area of practice. In Section 2 we describe the process by which partnerships with Muslim community organisations was established in London from the perspective of LPT and NOMS staff and directors of Muslim community organisations interviewed. Section 3 describes the methods and models used in each organisation in their supervision of TACT offenders. Section 4 concludes by summarising the roles that Muslim community organisations are fulfilling.

Section One: Research Literature

1.1. The Cohort

As part of recent research under the STARR project Sarah Marsden (2010) analysed Home Office figures to demonstrate that offences charged under the Terrorism legislation relate to:

- Possession of an article for terrorist purposes;
- Fundraising
- Membership of a proscribed organisation;
- Provision of information relating to a terrorist investigation; and
- Collection of information useful for a terrorist act.

Marsden states that for the period March 2007-March 2009 for which figures are available, 58 convictions were made under terrorism legislation, 71% of which received custodial sentences of under ten years (Marsden, 2010). A small cohort of offenders who have served custodial sentences for sometimes peripheral involvement in terrorist acts are being released on licence in the community.

1.2. Specialist Knowledge

Dernevik, Beck et al (2009) have argued that terrorist offenders and perpetrators of politically motivated violence rarely suffer from mental illness and should therefore be assessed not by mental health specialists but by practitioners who are able to demonstrate an understanding of the psychology of terrorism. In particular practitioners assessing terrorist offenders require a thorough understanding of the ethnic background, cultural heritage and social and political conditions of a terrorist offender. They argue that the assessor should in addition be sensitive to cultural influences on communication styles, social perception and cognitive constructs; that they should have current knowledge on terrorism and political violence; and a comprehensive understanding of the specific political context of the terrorist offence. Although, as will be described, Muslim community organisations' role has been most focused on the mentoring and support of TACT offenders once they have been released under licence in the community, the case is clearly made for the deployment

of specialist cultural and political knowledge in all aspects of working with TACT offenders.

1.3. Four Stage Model of Ideological Development

Using concepts from social psychology, Borum (2003) has set out a four stage model of the process of ideological development leading to terrorism that suggests the type of interventions that Muslim community organisations can make and at what points. The first stage is the perception of the injustice as regards to social, ethnic and economic deprivation in a particular political context. The second stage occurs when a political group or individual is perceived as being unfairly threatened in comparison to other groups leading to a sense of resentment at a perceived discrimination. The third stage relates to the attribution of blame for this perceived discrepancy. The final stage is the casting of other groups as evil. Borum argues that only a small minority progress from this stage to violent behaviour which is facilitated by the erosion of social and psychological barriers that delegitimise violence. As will be seen in the analysis of the interview accounts of the directors of Muslim community organisations, these organisations intervene at each stage of ideological development, not only with offenders but with young Muslims who they consider to be at risk of violent offending or being recruited to extremist groups that advocate such action. Muslim Community organisations intervene by:

- Focusing on the perceptions of injustice and rechanneling resentment
- Addressing the perceptions of some groups as evil and legitimate targets for violent attack
- Reinstating the social and psychological barriers delegitimizing violent behaviour

We will now examine two theories of rehabilitation and desistance from crime more generally that have a bearing on the 'journey' that TACT offenders might be assisted to take out of such offending by Muslim community organisations.

1.4 The Good Life Model and Narrative Theories of Desistance

Borum's four stage model of the ideological development of terrorism has clear relevance to the ideological stages through which TACT offenders may have progressed. Both the Good Life Model (GLM) of rehabilitation and narrative theories of desistance provide a framework for models of working with TACT offenders, some of which have already been adopted by Muslim community organisations. Desistance has been described as residing:

'Somewhere in the interface between developing personal maturity, changing social bonds associated with certain life transitions, and the key individual subjective narrative constructions which offenders build around these key events and changes. It is not just the events and changes that matter, it is what these events and changes mean to the people involved' (McNeill, Batchelor, Burnett, & Knox, 2005)

Narrative constructions here refers to the notion that identity is a constructed, provisional process that is intimately linked to the telling of coherent autobiographical stories (Giddens, 1991). Shad Maruna (1999) has argued that theories of desistance from crime that are based on the notion that offenders mature out of crime through the process of aging, or that are based on the notion that the development of social bonds provides a disincentive for involvement in crime, miss out on the inter-subjective and narrated process of personal change. Maruna argues that 'to truly desist from crime, a person needs to restructure his or her understanding of self'. Maruna (2001) explored the subjective dimensions of desistance from crime empirically by comparing what he described as the prototypical 'scripts' of self produced by 20 offenders who had persisted with crime, with 30 offenders who had desisted. The desisters produced what Maruna described as 'redemptive scripts' that attributed past criminal activity to external forces beyond their control and attributed the radical change in their lifestyle to the generosity of a particular individual who forgave them their past mistakes, restoring them to the 'true' self. Maruna's work suggests a role for Muslim community practitioners in building a pro-social and forgiving relationships with TACT offenders, and the reworking of past crime into a redemptive script through which past involvement with violent ideology can be re-evaluated and recalibrated in terms of new sets of values and selfhood.

The Good Life Model of rehabilitation (Ward & Brown, 2004) reinforces this suggestion that it is the therapeutic alliance between the practitioner and offender

that is key in the process of rehabilitation from crime. In their critique of risk-based approaches to rehabilitation of offenders, Ward and Brown describe the Good Life Model as an approach that assumes the offender is motivated by a search for human goods. Although the GLM refers to the 'therapist', the focus on positive psychology and the emphasis on equipping offenders with the tools to live more fulfilling lives, provides a model for practitioners in Muslim community organisations working with TACT offenders. The GLM approach makes possible the reinstatement of the social and psychological barriers to violent behaviour, thus reversing the last stage in Borum's model for the development of terrorist ideology described above. As will be seen many aspects of these approaches are already being used both tacitly and explicitly by Muslim community organisations in their work with TACT offenders. We will now describe the rationale and process by which LPT engaged and enlisted Muslim community groups in their work with TACT offenders.

Section 2: The Process of Involving Muslim Community Organisations in the mentoring of TACT offenders on license in the community.

2.1

Because most TACT offenders have been convicted and imprisoned in the capital, LPT has taken the lead in this work although West Yorkshire Trust and West Midlands Trust have also been working with Muslim community organisations. In interviews Offender Managers (OMs) revealed the circuitous and unplanned way in which Muslim community organisations had become involved in this work. OMs reported that although the service assumed that working with TACT offenders would draw upon the same skills base as that deployed for the supervision of sex offenders and right wing racially motivated attackers, it was soon realised that the supervision of TACT offenders was unlike any other in which they had been previously been involved. The unique nature of this work and the extent to which professional training has not prepared officers for working with TACT offenders has a number of features.

For one probation officer the particular character of working with TACT offenders derived from the context, identity and motivation of its perpetrators:

'I realised that it was about identity, masculinity and the personal journey'

For others the challenging character of working with TACT offenders derived from their ideological source. It was a new experience for example to be attempting to work with offenders who stated that God had told them to carry out an offence or who responded to probation staff interventions with aggressive preaching. In summary it became increasingly clear that the upbringing, identities and experience of TACT offenders that had made them particularly vulnerable to being drawn, however peripherally, to violent plots linked to jihadist ideology, meant that specialist knowledge was required of OMs in order to work effectively with these offenders.

2.2

OMs who started to work with the first TACT offenders described pursuing a chain of individual professionals in search of someone with experience and knowledge of working with radicalised offenders before finally making contact with faith organisations. The manner in which Muslim organisations had been identified by the Home Office and in which Prevent funds had been allocated to organisations was described by other informants as 'unscientific'. They raised the question of how organisations could be judged to be 'safe' and on what basis certain organisations had been chosen by LPT to provide particular services. The question was asked by an informant from NOMS for example as to why if an offender needed housing or employment advice, a Muslim organisation was necessarily the best one to offer such advice and offenders might be better off being referred to generic services rather than organisations specialising in socio-cultural mentoring. Concern about the transparent and accountable use of government funds under the Prevent programme obscures the fact that none of the organisations now enlisted by LPT in their work with TACT offenders was on the original list of some 40 Muslim organisations funded by the Prevent programme. Whilst introductions to the organisations that are the focus of this report may have been circuitous, their track record in addressing radicalisation and its threat in their own communities, together with their insider knowledge, means that these organisations are considered by officers in LPT's Central Extremist Unit who are responsible for Prevent Leads in the capital, to have legitimacy and to be doing valuable work.

2.3

More general concerns about the risky character of Muslim organisations may reflect the haphazard way in which the Prevent programme was established rather

than any basis for concern about Muslim community organisations. Prior to 2005 there is no doubt that Muslim organisations had not been integrated into third sector service provision and that there was much ignorance of the heterogeneity of Islam, its institutions, traditions and ideologies on the part of both local and central government policy makers. The institutional distrust of Muslim community organisations confirms the suggestion by Spalek and Lambert (2008) that legitimate Muslim organisations may be those who engage with government agencies on the terms set by government agencies.

2.4

LPT OMs and Probation Officers emphasised that they were and had been on a 'steep learning curve' in finding the best way to work with TACT offenders, in their learning about Islam and in building relationships with Muslim community agencies. It was stated that the Muslim community organisations are as idiosyncratic as are the offenders. Nevertheless good working relationships have been established between LPT and the organisations described in this report.

2.5

Observation of the Practitioners Forum confirmed that supervision of TACT offenders creates high levels of anxiety throughout the probation service. OMs interviewed suggested that this anxiety has meant a culture of working at lower thresholds of risk with harsher licence conditions and lower thresholds for recall to custody. Such anxiety is linked to the high profile and violent character of the offences with which TACT offenders have been linked as well as the ideological character of the justifications offered by some offenders.

2.6

The need expressed by OMs for *credibility* in dealing with these offenders emphasises how far out of their professional comfort zone they may be taken and in addition, emphasises the vital need for specialist knowledge and training in the supervision of TACT offenders. The work is complicated by the fact, suggested by the nature of the behaviours that the terrorism legislation targets, the vast majority of TACT offenders have not been convicted of violent offences but for association with and links to such offences or offenders. Both practitioners and Muslim community representatives suggested that there has been a disproportionate criminal justice response to some of these TACT offenders in London, that their treatment and the

treatment of their families by the Criminal Justice System may in some cases have gone against principles of justice and may have had or have the effect in the future of deepening a sense of injustice, potentially pushing individuals further into radicalisation. These issues emphasise the very specific nature of work with TACT offenders that make comparisons with work with other groups of violent offenders difficult.

2.7

All representatives of Muslim community organisations interviewed gave accounts of concerns about radicalisation of vulnerable youth in their communities that had gone unheeded by police and local authorities until the London bombings of 2005. Although sceptical of the Prevent agenda and sensitive to the accusation of *spying* on their communities, representatives of Muslim CSAs took a pragmatic approach to Prevent funding, seeing it as a means to an end that had enabled them to carry out or continue to carry out important, preventative community cohesion work:

‘This is the one thing that I always will argue, whether you call it Prevent or whatever you call it, I don’t have a problem with that because I find that money has helped us as an organisation to change the lives of not just the young people but their families as well’ (CSA representative)

Two of the CSA representatives interviewed in particular emphasised the extent to which community cohesion and prevention are at the forefront of the work that they have continued to carry out with young people. While practitioners described intense anxiety in their work with TACT offenders, representatives of Muslim community organisations were extremely confident that their insider knowledge and methods of working with TACT offenders meant that they were ideally placed to re-educate and reintegrate them back into a new Muslim community. They valued the legitimacy that independence from CJS organisations gave them, focusing on building up supportive relationships with TACT offenders. Two Muslim community organisation representatives in particular emphasised their personal commitment to the young people with whom they worked; a commitment that falls outside office hours and can include responding to clients’ phone calls in the middle of the night. In terms of qualification for this work, community organisation representatives interviewed

emphasised their confidence in their own ability to mentor and build relationships with TACT offenders. They were frustrated at times by a lack of trust on the part of OMs who failed to share information with them or at times to include them in MAPPA meetings. One community mentor representative described how progress made with a TACT offender over many weeks could be set back by the insensitive use of risk assessment tools and interventions by OMs who insisted that TACT offenders returned again to addressing their crime at a point where they felt they had begun to forgive themselves and move on from the act for which they had been convicted. Another source of frustration for some CSA representatives was that they were not able to meet and develop relationships with TACT offenders until after they have had left custody. There may be the need for a greater commitment on the part of OMs to work in partnership with CSAs in order to demonstrate respect for the therapeutic alliance between CSA workers and client.

2.8

In summary, work with TACT offenders presented a challenge to LPT staff, unlike any other they had faced. The work continues to provoke high levels of anxiety in OMs and in the Probation service that means that thresholds for risk are lower than with other groups of offenders. Although the route to establishing relationships with Muslim community organisations in the capital may have been unplanned and circuitous, the small number of organisations now involved in what will be described as quite intensive work with TACT offenders, are deemed to have particularly valuable sets of skills, knowledge and credibility in working with this group of offenders.

Section 3: Case Studies of Muslim community groups working with LPT

The five organisations whose representatives were interviewed will now be described. The practice elements of the models adopted will also be outlined. It is important to note however that it is the *ethos* of the organisation that is particularly important in the work of providing community mentoring.

3.1 Active Change Foundation (ACF)

3.1.1

ACF is not directly linked to any mosque. The founders of the organisation have indeed been critical of the Muslim establishment's failure to address the cultural dilemmas and frustration of second generation Muslims in East London where they are based. They have been critical too of the local authority's failure to provide leisure services to a generation of increasingly alienated young Muslims. The two brothers who founded ACF initially provided a safe space and supportive environment for young men to 'hang out' in the rooms adjacent to the gym they ran in Leyton. Once Prevent funds came on stream to work with Muslim youth, ACF was forced to formalise their existing method of working with young people. They use what is described as the Intellectual, Cultural and Emotional (ICE) approach to mentor, and deradicalise young people. The ICE approach is used both preventatively with young people who they feel are at risk of becoming radicalised and with TACT offenders referred to them from LPT with whom they have a service level agreement:

'If you want to convince somebody, you've got to use intellectual, you've got to use emotional, you've got to use cultural'

The organisation has a range of sporting, outward bound, community outreach and support services for young people. De-radicalisation work takes place, sometimes overtly, sometimes covertly in the context of this work. ACF prioritises building up supportive relationships with young people.

3.1.2

TACT offenders work with one member of staff and are gradually included and integrated into group and community activities. The organisation's founders and staff have directly challenged jihadist sermonisers preaching in halls nearby and have looked out for which young people have joined these sessions. Covert mechanisms are used to test out the views of young people who may be identified as vulnerable to radicalisation. As someone who was himself recruited by a Jihadi network as a young man, one of the organisation's founders is well placed to use his knowledge of violent Islamic sects, to disrupt young people's allegiances. In that sense he has an understanding of the 'journey' in and out of violent, extremist networks. In terms of success, the founder of ACF emphasised that former TACT offenders may always stay in touch with the organisation, in some cases working for them. Their model is

therefore to provide an alternative, supportive community network for the former offenders.

3.2 Stockwell Green Community Services (SGCS)

3.2.1

The work of SGCS has been well documented (Marsden, 2008). The organisation grew out of Stockwell mosque in 1999 in order to deal with issues of disengaged youth in an area with a large number of Muslim converts. In the view of the representative of SGSC I interviewed, the motivation for conversion to Islam is 'not faith but rebellion'. The organisation has successfully received EU regional development funds for SEED and PROSEED employment enhancement programmes and has developed what was described by one of co-directors as 'structured but flexible' programmes of social, religious mentoring and role modelling. In addition the organisation has contracts with Job Centre Plus and the London Enterprise Partnership. As part of their Prevent Programme, the organisation set up classes to promote the standard teaching of the Koran.

3.2.2

The SGCS representative gave two examples of TACT offenders they had worked with. One young man did not want to follow their curriculum but wanted to set-up his own business. THE SGCS representative said that he was resistant to working with them and had to be persuaded to engage with the organisation. They succeeded in giving him support in setting up his own business and to offer him training. Questions were raised about what sort of access to the internet he could be permitted. He was not allowed to visit any other TACT offender. He subsequently breached his licence conditions, was arrested and was returned to prison. A second young man had been in a training camp. He took part in the Stockwell Green programme, becoming a role model, completing the programme and continuing to work at Stockwell Green where he has been linked up with other Prevent activities. At one point he was overwhelmed by the rigidity of the programme at Stockwell Green which reminded him of prison and the organisation were able to be flexible.

3.2.3

The current approach at SGCS, as described by the present director, would appear to focus on employability rather than the psycho-social transformation of the individual offender, with the overall emphasis on the return of the young person to the 'system'. Reintegration via employment becomes the ultimate measure of success. It may be that this account of SGCS practice with offenders does not capture the wide range of activities that may have hitherto been carried out. It would appear that SGCS's more formal and employment and training concentrated approach is less focused on either the identity of the offender or the 'journey' in and out of radicalisation. Currently SGCS appear to have suspended their mentoring work with TACT offenders although this situation may change.

3.3 FAST

3.3.1

FAST (Families Against Stress and Trauma) is linked to Streatham mosque. Its director had organised women-only activities such as keep fit and what she described as 'soft' work in the community, supporting families who were concerned about their children's increasing radicalisation. She was encouraged to bid for Prevent money to carry out more 'structured' work with women and families, in order to take referrals of families where family members had been arrested for Terrorist related crimes:

'I said, we will work with the families, families of TACT offenders, because once they have been arrested and imprisoned there is no support for the families so that's the main aim of our project is to work with the families' (FAST director)

The organisation makes the link between the treatment of families of TACT offenders and radicalisation of their wider family:

'Families of individuals arrested under the Terrorism Act are often affected in many ways that can leave them vulnerable and susceptible to the false belief that the state is an enemy of Islam' (FAST leaflet)

The organisation goes for 'quick wins' with these families to gain trust initially, for example intervening so that a child will feel comfortable returning to school or

providing women with English classes. They then move into work more intensively with the family having identified that families suffer as a result of harsh treatment at the hands of the CJS, they are stigmatised following the arrest and conviction of family members for TACT offences and there is a risk that children in particular will become radicalised as a result of seeing the “brutal” way in which their fathers have been treated. They have supported families made homeless as a result of such arrests and advocated on their behalf to the police and head teachers where children have suffered bullying and stigma as a result of a parent’s conviction and imprisonment for a TACT offence. In addition they have Imams and scholars who work with children to address their sense of injustice at their parents treatment and any move towards the misinterpretation of the Koran:

‘we have an Islamic scholar and advisor on our books and a psychologist, I mean like one young man, first when we met him he said, ‘oh we have to go and kill these white people, the Koran says we have to kill these non-Muslims’ I said ‘where does it say that, have you read the Koran?’ he said ‘no my friend said it and this is the page it says and all that’, so we take our scholar and sit with him and we just calmly say, “where does it say that, the interpretation is wrong”, and he becomes deradicalised, slowly, slowly’ (FAST director)

3.3.2

In terms of indicators of success, the organisation sets great store by the reinterpretation of the Koran with the families they work with:

‘PR: how do you know that you’re making a difference?

Once they understand with our scholar what proper Islam teaches that is our indicator, once they realise and read the Koran properly and interpret properly then we know that they’re not going to go back into radicalisation’

The organisation has struggled to insist that families remain engaged and work with them for example after a TACT offender has returned to the family home. They would like to have formal agreements with the families that they work with that engagement will continue for a specified length of time into the licence. FAST has initiated its first piece of structured work with a TACT offender referred from London Probation in the summer of 2010.

3.4 STREET

3.4.1

STREET has a highly developed model and theoretical underpinning to its work with TACT offenders. The organisation was set up by the Chair of the Brixton mosque which had a high concentration of converts to Islam and had become a focus for jihadist recruitment in the 1990s. STREET has two branches of activities; their formal referrals from the criminal justice system, Probation, Youth Justice Teams, Youth Offending Service and Prisons, working with individual ex-offenders who have been involved in violent behaviour. The second branch of their work is preventative work with young people, often caught up in violent and/or gang related crime that makes them vulnerable to recruitment to jihadist organisations. STREET takes the view that people who are vulnerable to radicalisation need to have their radical views channelled.

3.4.2

In their model of working, STREET first have a handover with the agencies that have been involved with the individual which is an opportunity to share information about the individual's life. STREET has access to individuals while they are still in prison, via their sister organisation SIRAT. They emphasise that they are not part of the system but manage to work within the system.

3.4.3

STREET's approach is to try to humanise people who are otherwise considered to be a menace and a problem by criminal justice system agencies. Their starting point is to listen to their stories in order to have an understanding of their realities. This is the basis on which they are able to build a relationship with individuals. Relationships are built on mutual respect and a knowledge of the lived reality of the individual. The STREET representative interviewed stated that they are able to do this work because they are independent and have years of experience of working with Muslim extremists in the UK. The organisation aims to promote Muslim civil responsibility and citizenship and a moderate version of Islam. They are close to the issues and have an in-depth understanding of the disaffection of young Muslims and a grass roots perspective. Their representative argued that the more

'incorporated' an organisation is with established institutions, the more difficult it is to do this work. There is a danger that the more agencies and professionals become detached from their communities, the more difficult it will therefore become to engage disaffected youth.

3.4.4

After hand over, the next phase is identification and engagement. It is critical to identify who is at risk. They take a different view of individuals compared to other CJS agencies. They believe their assessment is more accurate than probation service and prison officers who tend to problematise young Muslim offenders. The STREET representative stated that unlike the probation service, STREET has a humanistic belief, that young people can be re-educated. An example was given of an 18/19 year old who had been in Belmarsh for an offence under the Terrorism Act. He may have led a sheltered, exclusively Muslim life and may have emotional vulnerabilities, which could mean that he could get involved with an extremist group. He may have been convicted for downloading information from the internet and sent to Belmarsh which will have been an extremely traumatic experience. STREET emphasise that they don't see these individuals in terms of sets of risk indicators but instead as vulnerable individuals who have made mistakes.

3.4.5

The STREET representative argued that the TACT offenders released on licence have all been convicted because there is a possibility that they **might** commit a violent act rather than evidence that such a crime has been committed. He believes that there is a strong case that they are being treated disproportionately by the system. Individuals may possess materials that were no more conducive to terrorism than on the hard drive of a disaffected anarchist. STREET feels positive that they can be successful and so far none of the people they have worked with have reoffended.

3.4.6

The intervention tools they use are counselling and mentoring approaches. They start from a position that the 'us' and 'them' between offender and STREET has to break down. STREET believe that it doesn't need to be so polarised between probation officers and these offenders and when offenders realise that non-Muslims can be respectful it challenges them. These offenders have, he argues, a very

simplified notion of foreign policy which is self-affirming. The STREET approach is to make offenders understand the complexity of foreign policy and issues at stake. They show them that it's not as simple as creating a purist Islamist state and obliterating all the trappings of a non-Muslim society. They introduce the idea of conflict resolution using the example of the Democratic Republic of Congo as a different conflict that also captures important world issues in order to teach a broader understanding of the complexity of a conflict situation and the need for a solution mindset rather than one that perpetuates strife and conflict. They ask these offenders what is justifiable activism? Often these offenders are described as being motivated by hate but STREET believes they are driven by compassion. This compassion needs a conduit, a legitimate channel.

3.4.7

The STREET representative stated that these offenders access alternative media such as Al Jazeera that fosters anger and frustration. He says that people have natural programming but they can be engaged. The task for community organisations like STREET is to create dissonance in order to give offenders a different perspective. He argues that we need to identify the many vulnerability factors. They have 150 case studies of individuals who they have worked with. He argues that in order to be proactive in terms of the identification of vulnerability factors it is necessary to intervene early. He gives an example of interaction with a north African young man who had been involved with a disengaged group and was getting involved with house breaking. Interaction with STREET has enabled him to leave this lifestyle behind. Engagement follows assessment and an intervention that constitutes a legitimate, holistic alternative. STREET tries to control as many variables as possible for these young people in order to create the motivation that is necessary for a young person to develop a career out of crime/disengagement and into education and learning as a legitimate alternative.

3.4.8

STREET takes the view that young people can be inspired towards good. They believe in redemption. They understand the young people they work with and work with them as individuals. One young man he worked with had witnessed the murder of his own father. He had been very neglected and was a bright young man with potential. Their model of working involves 'compassionate reintegration',

providing young people with a means of reconciliation with their past and a 'way back'. Communities have very often closed doors on TACT offenders. They have pariah status within their own communities. STREET takes the view that they need to be forgiven and to find a way back into their communities.

3.4.9

STREET makes a distinction between hardened ideologues/recruiters and the "foot soldiers" who are impressionable and vulnerable individuals who they see as victims. STREET has to play a compassionate role with these individuals who have been 'groomed' into these activities and crimes. He gives the example of Richard Reid the 'shoe bomber' who in his view is a victimised individual. He argues that it takes a millisecond to make a wrong decision. In Richard Reid's case, his decision has resulted in his being incarcerated in an American jail for the rest of his life. Richard Reid could have been successfully engaged by STREET. He argues that building up trust with individuals in the course of STREET intervention engenders engagement.

3.4.10

STREET have had success with 'at risk' groups. What is key is that they have continuity with the key worker who can play an active role in individuals' lives. A succession of different key workers is in his view destabilising. The support work of actively becoming involved in these young people's lives is not 9-5 but 24/7. There is no formal exit from engagement with STREET. STREET workers always maintain some stabilising influence in individuals' lives. Compassion and genuine care is what is key. This is not lucrative work. It is challenging and comes out of a genuine concern to build relationships with these individuals.

3.4.11

STREET has a formal service level agreement with LPT. They also have a contract with the Home Office. The representative interviewed has a SLA as an individual with West Yorkshire Probation. They carry out case by case liaison entailing formal and informal information sharing with LPT and give feedback to OMs. Some OMs respect and value their expertise and perspectives, others are less respectful. In West Yorkshire (where he is an imam) the STREET representative interviewed has carried out training with OMs.

3.4.12

Their view is that people don't commit indiscriminate violent acts unless they are psychotic. This is not something that the Probation Service are able to see but some of their work with TACT offenders is likely to be counter productive and alienate these individuals further.

3.4.13

They acknowledge that ideologues are more difficult to work with. It is still possible to intervene but it is less successful. The STREET representative argued that it is a matter of finding someone who is credible as far as the individual is concerned. He argues that even the ideas of the most hardened ideologues have a 'shelf life'. After a period of time cognitive dissonance can be created where individuals are forced to reassess and re-evaluate their positions. The tendency though is for individuals to seek new belief systems that reinforce the old system and to look for evidence selectively. Echoing Maruna's work, STREET argue that what is needed for these individuals is an alternative narrative.

3.5 Unity

3.5.1

Like STREET and ACF, Unity combines preventive, community cohesion work with young people considered to be at risk of radicalisation with work to rehabilitate TACT offenders. In addition to working with TACT offenders with LPT, the director has been involved in training probation staff and the organisation has a programme of community 'counter culture' projects for which they bring in other practitioners. The director of the organisation is a member of an Islamic Institute that describes itself as:

'a centre of traditional learning, encompassing a holistic approach to the education of mind, body and spirit, with the purpose of equipping individuals with the tools to transform themselves and their communities'
(<http://alamiyahinstitute.org/content/1/our-philosophy>)

3.5.2

Unity's director has an understanding of a burgeoning of deviant Islamic subculture that developed since 9/11, that he argued is characterised by a reactionary mindset, one form of which is radicalisation. This, he contrasts to 'traditional Islam' that did not feature polarised, divisive thinking about Muslims and Non-Muslims. The oral tradition of Islam, the fact that there are multiple readings of the text, that it is translated from Arabic resulting in linguistic corruption of many of its tenets, mean that the Koran has multiple versions, readings and interpretations and can be misquoted, misrepresented and misinterpreted and used to justify both reactionary politics, criminal activity or both.

3.5.3

In his work with TACT offenders, Unity's director reinterprets absolutist versions of the Koran using his Islamic scholarship. He works to change the perceptions of TACT offenders 'using the hook of their extrinsic attachment to their community'. Unity's director is critical of the use of a generic tool kit or risk assessment model to work with these offenders because, he says that they have a 'finishing line mentality' and are adept at appearing to comply with programmes based upon Western models of psychotherapy or cognitive behavioural therapy:

'Where this individual has this absolutist ideology, trying to come in with a generic toolkit, you have people that are working a finishing line mentality, 'if I can get to the end of this, I'll be okay' so what happens is that they'll sit there, take part in the exercises and put across what they think needs to be put across, what happens is that only reinforces the absolutist mindset that 'we're living in the abode of war, this, what I'm taking part in is their control mechanism, I have to get through their control mechanism to get through the system'

3.5.4

Unity instead uses the Director's own biography and identity as a second generation Muslim and respected mixed martial arts instructor in his work with offenders. Offenders behave differently with him than they might with their OMs or a psychologist. He has an understanding of where these young people come from, the sorts of insular communities in which they have grown up, the sorts of racism and hostile society and resentments they have grown up with and the sorts of indignities they might more recently have experienced in prison. His legitimacy derives from this

knowledge of 'the street', his training in Islamic teaching and his status as a senior mixed martial arts instructor. Unity's Director describes his method as taking offenders through their lives, 'you take their experiences and put them into context'. Once in the Criminal Justice System there are a host of incidents that can take place for example uniformed police knocking on offenders' doors in the middle of the night to check that they are not breaching a curfew, which may re-engage their reactionary mindset. It is necessary to demonstrate a caring, human approach that enables offenders 'to give you their baggage'. Much of the reactionary teaching that TACT offenders have been exposed to is based in simplistic, selective readings of historical events which are not hard to dismantle:

'You realise that this reactionary understanding is only based on a select few books that are written by guys who don't really have a high stature within the scholars of Islam, but the only difference is that when a country gets billions of dollars through petrol income and are able to print extraordinary amounts of literature and flood those countries with that literature those individuals can seem huge'

When you take someone's hate away from them and challenge their perception of themselves you're taking away their negative, activist understanding and rechanneling their activism in positive ways:

'If I said to you 'how are you going to help the people in Afghanistan?', 'oh I'm going to pick up a gun and go'. well actually let's put everything into context, why don't you collect some charity, go round to your friends and ask them how many of them have got shoes that they don't use, and clothes they don't need, let me put you in touch with that charity that will take that off you and send that abroad, now all of a sudden you've got a positivist activist which is something that is completely different'

Conclusions

The small number of Muslim community organisations currently working with LPT in the supervision, support and mentoring of TACT offenders in the community each have a distinct and particular skills base and approach. They bring to this work a unique combination of insider, cultural and Islamic knowledge and a spiritual humanity that to some extent defies analysis. Although there is currently much discussion concerning an 'industry' of Islamic advice and expertise called upon by government agencies, this research has uncovered a set of often charismatic individuals who are motivated by altruism in their work with individual TACT offenders and in the preventive community work in which they engage. The most valuable roles that Muslim community organisations play with TACT offenders can be summarised as the following:

- Informed and authoritative challenging of violent Jihadist ideology
- Deep understanding of conflicts and political context of offenders
- Empathy with and humanity for the journey that TACT offenders have travelled
- Forgiveness and acceptance
- Pro-social relationships and alternative community
- Rechanneling of activist drive to positive citizenship

In Section 1 of this report we discussed the research literature that provides theoretical models for working with TACT offenders in the community. We described Dernevik et al's argument that terrorist offenders need to be assessed by those with specialist knowledge of culture, politics and conflicts associated with terrorist acts. We discussed Borum's model that sees the induction into terrorist ideology in terms of a progression through four stages. We discussed the centrality of the therapeutic relationship, central to the Good Life Model as described by Ward and Brown as an alternative to risk based methods of rehabilitating offenders. Lastly we described Maruna's discussion of narrative construction in the psychosocial processes of personal change. The case study descriptions of the five Muslim community organisations reveal that, although not always explicit these theoretical approaches underpin much of their work with TACT offenders.

References

- Borum, R. (2003). *Psychology of Terrorism* Tampa: University of South Florida
- Dernevik, M., Beck, A., Grann, M., Hogue, T., & McGuire, J. (2009). The use of psychiatric and psychological evidence in the assessment of terrorist offenders. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology*, 20(4), 508-515.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self identity. self and society in the late modern age* Cambridge: Polity
- Karmani, A (2009). Reducing Influences that Radicalise Prisoners Project Research, London Probation Trust.
- NOMS/London Probation Trust (2010), Toolkit for working with TACT offenders. Not sure about this reference as it's an internal document
- Marsden, S. (2008). Stockwell Green Community Services and the SEED and PROSEED projects, London Probation (<http://st-andrews.academia.edu/SarahMarsden/Papers/>)
- (2010). Strengthening Trans-national Approaches to Reducing Reoffending. London Probation: Managing TACT offenders: Marsden Consulting Social Science Research.
- Maruna, S.(1991). *Desistance and Development: The Psychosocial process of going straight*, (Eds.) Brogden, Mike. The British Criminology Conferences: Selected Proceedings. Volume 2,
- (2001, 2007). Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives, American Psychological Association.
- McNeill, F., Batchelor, S., Burnett, R., & Knox, J. (2005). 21st Century Social Work Reducing Re-offending: Key Practice Skills. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, Social Work Inspection Agency.
- Spalek, B., & Lambert, R. (2008). Muslim communities, counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation: A critically reflective approach to engagement. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 36(4), 257-270.
- Ward, T., & Brown, M. (2004). The good lives model and conceptual issues in offender rehabilitation. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 10(3), 243-257.

CHAPTER TWO: THE WORK OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION NETWORK

LOCAL RESEARCH IN BERLIN, GERMANY

H. Weilnböck

Modularized Group-Dynamic Work as De-Radicalising Factor – Violence Prevention Network’s approach to integrating hate crime offenders from right-wing and fundamentalist backgrounds, in custody and after release.

After outlining the methodological design, consisting of a combination of various methods of qualitative-empirical research, such as biographical-narrative interviews, focused and expert interviews and group discussions, the TPVR-study on Violence Prevention Network’s method of intervention discusses questions of how and according to which criteria “best-practice” may be recognized in social work with hate crime offenders in custody and after release: How can one determine whether a method of intervention is effectively contributing to de-radicalizing a person/ group of persons? When talking to an offender who participates in the intervention, which criteria help us to evaluate whether he/she is making good progress towards a more pro-social and anti-violent personal habit and conduct.

Besides the quantitative criterion of a significant reduction in the recidivism rate, best practice research needs to pinpoint qualitative indicators in order to be able to discern best practice on the spot, to develop further the method in an informed and systematic manner, and to make the intervention practice transferable to different contexts and countries. Best practice is transferable if not only its methodical elements are known, which mostly are quite evident, but if one also knows the intervention’s less visible ‘impact factors’.

Therefore this research:

1. Inductively reconstructs how the offenders ‘processes of developmental change’ work during the intervention and also explain why the change processes work the way they do, and, following from this, determine which criteria are most helpful and reliable in assessing these change processes.

2. Proceeds to answer the question of what the specific impact factors of the VPN methodology are which prompt and further consolidate such change, and why it is that they are effective in bringing about a more conducive personal behaviour with the participants.
3. Provides general recommendations for the methodology of de-radicalisation work which apply to various contexts and national milieus of social work in prison and in probation.

What are the empirically most reliable indicators of an ex-offender's enduring pro-social change?

A: Appreciation for personal memories

Here the study came to a counter-intuitive answer : One might intuitively expect that criteria like the 'offender's remorse,, 'their insight in the condemnable and destructive nature of his actions and attitude', or 'their empathy for the victim' are useful criteria for assessing successful de-radicalisation. This study however shows that one of the most unfailing and comprehensive indicators of mental change processes is that the offender shows a new attitude about and *appreciation for personal memories* and for the *emotional experience of remembering*, irrespective of the subject matter of the memory; and that the person has, thus, increased his/her capacity to uncover, bring to mind, emotionally re-experience, and also verbalize memories of personally lived-through events. In light of this, it has been assessed as particularly indicative if 'memories with a *positive emotional charge*' are expressed/valorized and also if such memories pertain directly to what the person experienced during the intervention when working with the group.

This study documents and analyses various pieces of interview material supporting the above hypotheses and draws upon empirical violence studies research to further explain why it is, that successful de-radicalisation is indicated by the person's 'appreciation for personal and emotionally positive memories' or simply speaking, by the offender getting in touch with what they experienced during their life history – and in her/his experience during the pedagogical intervention with the VPN-group.

In particular the study shows the wide *scope of indicators* pointing towards the impact factor ‘appreciation for personal memories’, ranging from quite evident to less visible clues. The range spans from (rare) emphatic expressions such as “*this was the first time in my life, I had such a memory ... that I created a memory like that ... and this memory is still in my head, to this day ...*” to almost indiscernible indicators such as “this is awful ... I can’t remember anything we said [in the training] ... but I’d love to, because the training was great fun mostly ... I’d love to tell you more ... and then we could write a book about it”. This tends to be the case in people who suffer from Attention Deficit Disorder with very little access to and verbalization capacity for memories about personally lived emotional experience, who, however, may at least have discovered a strong personal wish to remember more.

Isolating the criterion of ‘memory/ emotional recall’ is not to say, that observations pertaining to the offenders’ remorse; their insight in the condemnable nature of his behaviour; or their empathy for the victim may not be significant guidelines of reconstruction. It just means that the new *appreciation for personal memories* and for the emotional experience of remembering is more reliable and indicative as an analytical criterion for enduring personal change. In an interview or during intervention, the expression of empathy or remorse may sometimes be the result of pretence, self-deception or simply of good-will which, however, might then all the more easily break down in the face of real-life conditions. Furthermore, such seemingly obvious criteria will keep us from discerning less obvious and more important change-processes and they do not give us any help when facing interview material in which no expression of empathy or remorse can be found.

B: Personal confidence and trust

A second essential indicator which witnesses mental change processes of de-radicalisation is that the offender shows signs that *he/she has built personal confidence and trust* with facilitators and with the group; and that the person has thus, increased their capacity to built trust in relationships and stay trustful even over quite challenging, conflicting, and exhausting experiences of (group) interaction. Here, the study documents and analyses various passages of interview material which show how indicators of trust-building look like with this target group of individuals. Reference to empirical violence research underlines how significant –

and indicative – issues of trust are with these individuals, who tend to not trust anyone easily and sometimes lean towards almost paranoid modes of perception and interaction.

C: Narrative interaction

As third essential indicator for processes of mental change and de-radicalisation it has been reconstructed: The offender shows a new sense and appreciation for *telling stories*/ narrating personally experienced occurrences and actively listen to such narrations; and the person has, thus, increased his/her capacity to *partake in narrative interaction*. This criterion, which is likely to coincide with the criteria of ‘memory’ and ‘trust’, may take into consideration any given narrative, irrespective of its content. However, it particularly pays attention to the narratives which the person gives about conflict-ridden and affectively charged subject matters – as is touched upon for instance in VPN’s course modules of working on the offenders’ biography, and with his biographical history of violence and denigration/ humiliation, as well as in the reconstruction of the violent crime scene.

The study proceeds to document and analyze interview material which shows different aspects of appreciation for and capacity of *narrating* personally experienced occurrences, as well as of different qualities of *personal story-telling* in terms of coherence, completion, and emotional saturation. Furthermore, in reference to narratological research the study underlines the importance of ‘narrative listening’ and ‘co-narrative interaction’ as well as the necessity that the method of intervention provides story-generating tools.

D: Emotional learning

As a further essential indicator for mental processes of de-radicalisation it has been determined that the offender shows signs which indicate experiences of *emotional learning/emotional intelligence building*, i.e. that the person shows signs that /s/he begins to realize and reflect upon her/his own affects and upon situations in which s/he was mostly guided by emotions. This might include observations and thoughts about what consequences these emotions had and maybe even: how the situation could have had a different outcome and how one could possibly take influence on

and moderate ones emotions in comparable scenes of interaction (which one module of the VPN course systematically picks up on by role-play training of emotional scenes). This section of the study analyzes the pertinent interview material as to what the contexts and setting conditions are under which such experiences of 'emotional learning' may occur and further develop.

Particular attention is paid to indications which signal build-up of emotional memory and emotional learning around scenes/ emotions of *embarrassment/ shame, insecurity, fear, and helplessness* – be it helplessness in the actual group of the intervention and/or in prior life situations, since scenes with such emotional charge are most remote from verbalization and self-reflection and often linked to dynamics of escalating aggression. Also this indicator is likely to be relevant in situations in which issues of *political convictions*, partisanship, and extremism as well as issues of *religious believe*, feelings, and fundamentalism play a role.

E: Dealing with ambivalence

A further indicator, which is often closely linked to the above mentioned scenes, pertains to issues of ambivalence and of dealing with ambivalence, or, one step before this, concerns interview passages in which the person recognizes others and/or oneself as being contentious in nature, i.e. as being of two or more minds about concrete real-life situations and about other people and of having to make decisions and negotiate compromise. This indicator is, about leaving behind the 'black and white'-world and entering in a world of different shades of colour.

F: Capacity to argue

As further indicator for mental processes of de-radicalisation was found to be that the person shows signs of a newly build appreciation for and *capacity to argue or struggle with others in non-destructive ways* - be it issues of political, religious, or personal nature, i.e. to argue without either turning abusive/ verbally violent or withdrawing and cutting off the interaction. Particularly indicative are signs of a newly built capacity to interact and negotiate conflict *in group situations* – which generally increase the level of fear/aggression and tend to be more regressive in their affective dynamic than interactions between two or three persons.

The impact factors in good practice de-radicalisation work

One of the most significant factors in the impact of Violence Prevention Network's (VPN) social-therapeutic group-work techniques has proved to be that it was possible to generate an interactive atmosphere in which a trusting and resilient relationship was established both towards the facilitators as well as within the group itself. This "trust" proved to be essential, as an all-or-nothing condition, without which the pedagogic techniques and methodical exercises would only have been of limited impact and barely capable of prompting a lasting change in the individual's attitude and behaviour.

Why this should have been the case was not immediately obvious. Nevertheless, it was already known from empirical violence research that people tending towards violent and extreme behaviour live according to a marked system of distrust that can sometimes assume paranoid features.¹ The question, however, as to how, in psychodynamic terms, this mistrust is conditioned and obtained, and above all how VPN's intervention method still managed to generate trust and resilience, remained for large parts of the research unanswered.

Initially it was possible to isolate a few formal factors:

1) it seemed to be of utmost importance that the facilitators *come from outside* and not from within the environment of the institution itself. Obviously, the prison is particularly susceptible to distrust. It is very difficult for a prison psychologist to succeed in credibly guaranteeing the confidentiality of the conversation when he or she has a direct institutional involvement in decisions that are life-altering for the prisoner. However in any youth-work contexts of violence prevention, it generally also proves quite recommendable that the team be independent from the everyday contexts of the young people. Above all the components of the self-awareness-group required a protected space that internal staff and facilitators would have been unable to provide.

¹ On the "paranoid style of attribution" in "violent imprisoned men" as well as the tendency towards "preventative attack", cf. Tedeschi, J.T. (2002): Die Sozialpsychologie von Aggression und Gewalt. In Heitmeyer/ Hagan: Internationales Handbuch der Gewaltforschung, Westdeutscher Verlag, p. 585.

2) That is by no means to say, however, that the institutional environment should remain uninvolved, or that it should not accept and absorb the external impulse, and support and extend it using the means available to it. On the contrary – and this is the second formal factor: the effectiveness of the VPN approach was closely connected to the necessity of involving in the intervention's sphere of impact not only the young people themselves, but also and in principle the *institutions and local environments* to which they belong. It is therefore propitious and helpful when these institutions expressly signal their "respect" for these "outsiders", for example by simultaneously commissioning training for staff members and by seeking institutional consultancy. *Violence Prevention* therefore also often works with prison employees and takes on consultancy roles in higher-level administrative-technical and political structures. This consultancy activity gave rise to networking effects that in turn had a positive effect on the work with the young people themselves.

3) The third formal factor contributing significantly to the generation of trust and resilience, and thus to the lasting impulses for change that arose, is the fact that VPN's work is done *in the group and with the group*. The interviews clearly indicate that the basic trust of the participants, and thus the degree of impact that the behaviour-altering effects have upon them, are crucially dependent upon a *group-dynamic* approach being taken. In other words, it is essential that attention is paid to the *processes* and the *developments* of the participants in the group and their *relationships* towards each another, and that these processes and relations are conceived of as the primary object of the group work. It is clear that what is said and experienced by attentive and active participants in a professionally-led group goes much deeper and has a doubly lasting impact.

This observation seems to be particularly pertinent with the groups of people at issue here, because almost all violent hate-crimes are generated by clique behaviour – and thus are the product of uncontrolled processes of a so-called escalating *anti-group dynamic*.² It is therefore all the more true to say that in the VPN approach an

² On the other hand, it should be said that the psychopathic individual offender fundamentally requires forensic psychiatry and is out of place in normal prison and its capacity for intervention. It is particularly important to point this out given the misleading question occasionally expressed as to whether it does not constitute a limitation of a technique such as VPN that it only applies to a selected sub-group of violent offenders. It became evident that the technique, as soon as the necessary framework conditions are provided, can in principle be

essential social-therapeutic goal of the work is the ability to enter into, maintain and make use of triangular (at the minimum), multi-pronged and complex group relationships. The VPN method of intervention therefore intuitively placed emphasis on demanding from their participants the art of talking openly and personally within the group, and of being confidential and discreet outside the group – without at the same time insisting that they be utterly silent and act as though they were members of a secret society.

Moreover, the ability to successfully practice trust, confidentiality and "respect" across the range of loyalties and group- and relationship-contexts in one's life and school/work environment can be seen as the highest goal of *civic education*, in the post-classical sense of anti-bias work. After all, societies in which the opposite of freedom, liberality and non-violence predominate can be recognized simply enough by the absence in them of trust and confidentiality, and instead the presence of indiscretion/denunciation, intrigue, surveillance, fear/exercise of power, and selfish segregation – a misanthropic and anti-social situation that can exist in smaller or larger groups and for which terms such as "anti-democratic" or "extremist" are far too vague. It seems all the more appropriate, then, to aim for what can only be achieved through dynamic and open group-work, namely to provide participants with the ability to find their way in a world consisting of occasionally conflicting and competing groups, and to provide them with the necessary abilities of self-integration and self-delineation.

More broadly, the findings also point to the fact that *the one-to-one supervisor*, no matter how talented, is unable to through his or her work to achieve this demanding pedagogic goal, and that the expectations and self-images of practitioners often equate to a systematic (self-)over-exertion that negatively affect the work. This is especially true for the target group in question here, since violent offenders, or those vulnerable to such behaviour, often grew up fatherless (because the latter were absent either de facto or emotionally). They were thus socialized in a dyadic and *tendentially symbiotic two-way relationship*, which was mostly cramped, insufficiently delineated and chronically over-exerted. For this reason, all social- or psychotherapeutic interventions carried out between two persons are subordinated to

applied to all types and all degrees of crime. (And even in forensics, excellent work is done with – psychotherapeutic – groups.)

additional structural limits that, in the interest of quality assurance, should be cause for concern. Having said that, the two- or three-way conversation has an important *supplementary function* in the VPN approach and is above all useful when individual results need to be consolidated or when individuals have to be stabilized because the group process becomes too intense for them – a permanent risk with precariously situated groups such as this. Accordingly, the results also indicated that a further formal factor influencing trust-building lies in the precise *dosage of group intensity*, which is regulated through flexible setting changes from the whole group to small groups and to two-way conversations, or through the change to pedagogic exercises and role plays. Nevertheless, it appears to be crucial to the success of the work that *the group* always remains the main point of reference, against which the various individual measures are placed in perspective.

Above and beyond the formal factors, the interview material also raised connected questions as to how the *professional persona and group-interaction style* of the facilitator contributed to producing the aforementioned prerequisites for generating a climate of "trust and resilience", and how the facilitator succeeded in moderating the interaction within the group in such a way as to be effective in terms of trust and hence of changing behaviour. There are many indications to suggest that the personal attitude of the facilitator represented a *direct influencing factor* – although this runs the risk of being mystified as a personal talent, whereas in fact it is of a thoroughly technical nature and as such can be communicated and acquired.

Violence Prevention Network revealed a central aspect of this personal facilitation style to be a kind of conversational and group guidance, which can be called the "*lifeworld*" mode or briefly: the *narrative* mode of interaction. This denotes that the centre of the group's attention is occupied by each participant and his or her self and personal experiences, and that the primary interest is the individual, lifeworld experiences of that particular person, to which the other group members relate at an equally personal level. Compared to this, all other components – teaching and training plans, exercises and definite pedagogic content – are assigned a secondary valence, because in order to be lastingly effective they depend on the existence of a relational basis that always offers the possibility for participants to confidently return to narrating their experiences.

In work with violent offenders, then, all morality and all judgements are initially dispensed with. Similarly, in local prevention work, where the primary concern is civil-societal issues of tolerance and diversity, or political educational issues of prejudices and group-directed misanthropy, then any argumentation, information and ethical or value-based considerations are initially put to one side. In both cases, the working approach is primarily concerned with the release of the individual, lifeworld narratives of the participants; with their *subjective experiential perspectives* and *biographical early histories* – and with the exchange of these perspectives with the other members of the group. In this respect, the VPN approach intuitively followed the *pedagogical primacy of narration*, and it discovered and took to heart the fact that people, especially when it comes to making lasting changes to their attitude and behaviour, open up when they are able to *develop their personal narration in a trusting relationship*, to do so in a way that reveals areas of their individual experience, and when they can share these perspectives with other people in a process of group exchange. Aspects of ethics, morality and judgement then seem to return of their own accord, not from the facilitators, but rather from personal motivation.

Of course, the experienced practitioner will hardly be surprised by this. It is well known that morality, judgement, arguments and information have always demonstrated limited effects; people have been quite right to warn against "overestimating" the "power of factual arguments" as opposed to the level of "feelings and emotions"³). This is truest of all for vulnerable youths, who automatically react with cynical contempt or inner retreat wherever moral or pedagogic value pressure is generated. Yet regardless of how well known this fact is, it often seems difficult to abandon the moral-judgemental impetus and to acquire and to put into practice a *facilitator style of lifeworld-narrative and relationship-based access*. This, at any rate, represented a particular challenge for VPN when it came to training new co-workers and introducing them to the work and the *facilitation style* of the approach – which one has after all developed oneself.⁴

In concrete terms, the difficulty for methodological approaches like this consists primarily in motivating participants to even begin with *trusting narration* – given that

³ Cf. Spangenberg, R.: <http://www.politische-bildung-brandenburg.de/extrem/praevention.html>

⁴ However it became all the more clear how necessary it is to continue, by means of systematic accompanying research, objectifying, documenting and didacticising Best Practice techniques, in order to provide orientation for further methodological developments in this and other areas of social work and "education".

as a rule they are often somewhat disinclined to talk about themselves and about emotional subjects. The ability to narrate in this sense of the term is a quite difficult skill that requires the person first recognizes their own subjective narrative perspective as such, and that he or she is sufficiently familiar with its content in order then to be able to present narrative episodes as detailed and accessible stories and to exchange these stories with others. However the greatest objective difficulty is above all the fact that the personal experiences recalled by this group of participants, for example in the area familial background, often involve exceedingly negative experiences that can only with considerable difficulty (or not at all) be narrated spontaneously – and as such, block other more immediate narrative content.

The skill of narrating is also difficult insofar as the narration – and this is especially the case with negative subject matters – can take a form that is always more or less *detailed and conducive to personal development*. As is well-known, one can "lie to oneself", "kid" oneself and others, remember essential details "only dimly" and jointly cultivate anti-narrational defence mechanisms. On the other hand, together with the group, one can take risks in narrational self-discovery – which in principle produces social-therapeutic effects. From a narratological perspective, it should be recalled that psychotherapy as such is defined allegorically as the "continual re-telling of one and the same story", only that this one story "is re-told ever better" (Roy Schafer). This can be taken to mean that, through narrative representation, the decisive episodes of a person's biography and life-world can 1) be increasingly elaborated and completed, so that 2) they can gain increasing intensity in emotional expression and in the affective engagement of the narrator. Thereby the emotionality of the narration increasingly comes to approximate what was thought and felt during the experience itself.

This *process of narrative-forming* often extends to the listeners and co-narrators in the group, and/or is to a great extent prompted and supported by them.⁵ The "better" – in a narratological sense – the story is told, the greater the probability of releasing long-lasting impulses for personal change and development. From a scientific perspective, too, there is a great deal to be said for trying to elicit development-

⁵ The biography researcher Gabriele Rosenthal has in this connection spoken of narrated and experienced life stories. In: (1995). *Erzählte und erlebte Lebensgeschichte. Gestalt und Struktur biographischer Selbstbeschreibungen*. Frankfurt a.M. (Campus). Rosenthal, G. (2004). *Biographical Research*. In: Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F. & Silverman, D. (Eds.). *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage, 48-64..

conducive forms of narrative in the group, and for that reason for the facilitator to adopt the attitude of *lifeworld-narrative and relationship-based access* as the benchmark for the group-culture being aimed for in the intervention.

In view of the quite wide spread programs of fully modularized *cognitive-behavioral trainings* in various areas of socio-therapeutic and social work, it can be said that it is this very element of *lifeworld-narrative and relationship-based interaction and co-narrative* dynamic – often also called open-process interaction – which is missing there. Many experienced practitioners in this field have long shared the impression that the avoidance of narrative and open-process interaction goes back to a institutional and/or personal hesitation or inability to build trust and relationship with violent offenders or vulnerable persons and that this, for a fair number of these trainings, is the main reason of their relatively limited success in bringing about lasting effects.

How, then, did the facilitators proceed in order to initiate a *narrative process quality* of this sort?

Throughout it was possible to observe that the group and workshop facilitators in their own ways signalled *their personal readiness to enter a relationship*. In doing so, they made use in particular of the basic fact that the more one demonstrates a credible personal interest and a "*reliable attentiveness*", the more open others are, both towards themselves and in the way they speak about themselves. However this attentiveness has to be entirely credible and to stand up to all kinds of testing – especially with young people, who relentlessly and minutely scrutinise their counterparts before they trust them.

As concerns the central question as to which further conditions need to be fulfilled so that this trustworthiness and attentiveness at the level of the personal relationship can be reliably applied, the evaluation resulted above all in two findings. Helpful, though as a rule overestimated, is the ability and the readiness of the facilitator to involve *themselves as a person* and sometimes also to reveal personal information about themselves, in order to appear to others as authentic and inspire trust. However this factor is in fact demanded by young people lesser than is generally thought – and sometimes feared. In most cases, the questioning from the

adolescents is a matter of fairly uncomplicated and easily manageable initiatives in order to carry out a first contact probe, something that basically is very welcome. (Notably, in almost all cases the facilitators tended to respond to the questions directly and in a measured fashion, without insisting too soon on professional abstinence and neutrality, which comes into play at a later stage during more critical moments. The facilitators, with their process- and relation-oriented approach, go on the basis that a principled abstinence would – logically enough – be understood by the young people to mean that there is something else, something external, that is more important to the facilitator than the working relationship at hand, and that therefore that the young person him- or herself is of merely secondary importance).

On the other hand, what is generally underestimated, despite it being of central importance, is that the openness and the attentiveness of the facilitator, though thematically unrestricted, is by no means entirely unconditional. Successful praxis was characterized by the fact that the facilitator demonstrates an attitude that can be called an *attitude of critical attentiveness*. Essential for this is that the facilitator, alongside his or her credible guarantee of confidentiality and trustworthiness, also unreservedly expresses any (un)reasonable doubts, conjectures or enquiries concerning the statements, representations and stories of the participants, and that an atmosphere is thereby created in which everyone can show their true colours and thus, by daring to express themselves, enter into negotiations over their relationships. This is standard in dynamically-open group work, however by and large something that the young people barely have experience of.

Critical attentiveness, in other words, deals with precisely this conflict-prone contact and the frictional points of reference, without of course acting in a way that is aggressive or deprecatory, or even overbearing or suggestive. It is far more the case that the facilitators pursued the goal of practicing an exemplary mode of *respectful scepticism*, which does not jeopardise the dignity of the person, but which, on the contrary, for the first time gives the person's dignity its due. (While "human dignity" is only very formally guaranteed by an undifferentiated and contact-abstinent notion of tolerance or acceptance, in a successful negotiation of difference it can be properly given credit.) The *critical attentiveness* practiced by VPN observes the basic difference between person and criminal offence, and thus corresponds to a

fundamental attitude that is *as accepting as it is confrontational*.⁶ One might have thought that this combination would be impossible (at least if one bases one's assumptions on the discourse of classical political education or youth work), however it has proved essential as a technique of intervention.

Moreover, this combination contains a specific pedagogical value. The *attitude of critical attentiveness* involves the practice of a skill that this target group can be seen to be sorely lacking, yet one they urgently need to learn: the ability to get along with people who are very "different", to overcome large subjective perceptions of difference, and to act acceptingly-attentively as well as, in critical moments, critically-confrontationally. They must also learn to maintain this ability in emotionally dynamic group situations – and not to react, as they had previously, with avoidance, uncompromising schism or violent escalation.

Particularly as concerns the "lifeworld-narrative" technique, the "*culture factor*" opens up a highly original spectrum of methodological possibilities – that are not yet systematically used by VPN, but showed their potential with the work of *Cultures Interactive*, another Berlin NGO the EU project of which was evaluated concurrently (cf. TPVR end report). The trusting narration of personal experience can be particularly effectively prompted and intensified using cultural and fictional narrative and/or individual creativity. Particularly with youths from problem areas, a group which is hard to reach, *Cultures Interactive* employs forms of praxis taken from urban youth culture that offer the young adults readily accessible methods for personal self-expression, and which can thereby help to attain a significant deepening of the pedagogic process. Even drawing on films or song texts that the participants indicate to be personally important or interesting, opens up numerous possibilities for working on biographical or lifeworld experiences, which can then be taken up in the group discussion. In a person's mental handling of a fictional narrative of his or her own choice, particular personal themes or "developmental challenges" are consistently brought to the fore that can be used for the shared process. Of course the prerequisite for this is that a *lifeworld-narrative and relationship-based access* approach is used and that the facilitator practices an *attentive-critical attitude*.

⁶ Also cf. Harris, D.M., Selyn, J. & Bush J.: Positive and Supportive Authority: An Approach to Offender Management and Supervision (in preparation), and: Harris, D.M. & Riddy, R. (2008). The Thinking Skills Programme Facilitation Manual. Ministry of Justice. Harris, D.M. & Bush, J. (2010). Ono to One Cognitive Self Change. NOMS Cymru.

In comparison with the fundamentally different, what could be called behaviouristic approaches, it can be said that, when taken out of context, individual elements out of a complex technique like the VPN approach have proven barely to function and sometimes even to be unadvisable – in other words, to remove particular exercises, role plays, methods of arrangement or didactic modules of civic education from the concept as a whole, and to practice them outside the trusting, process-based and relational context of the directed group, will barely be successful. Even maintaining the process-based context requires that care must be taken not to carry out the modules, exercises and role-plays etc. too early, before the framework of trust necessary for life-world narrative work has been reliably generated. This is because there is a danger that the exercises are only performed by the participants for the sake of politeness, or that they descend into more or less open boredom, and that the biographical investigations remain superficial and clichéd.

The even greater risk of a technique that tries to employ selected exercises while dispensing with the context of relations, process and group, is that in acutely emotional situations particularly vulnerable individuals will enter states of fear and rage, since they are unable to rely on the security of a relational framework of trust, one that because of their psychologically fragile condition they absolutely require. Methods such as the "hot seat", where the violent offender is provoked with insults and physical assault, so that he learns not to lose control and resort to violence, need to be cautioned against. People that have learned both approaches were able to provide particularly useful assessments here. External assessments also reached the conclusion that methodically isolated provocation exercises of this sort are disadvantageous. They run the danger of exacerbating precisely what these young people can do all too well (and what is not good for them): bottling things up and hanging in there, until in real life the affect breaks out – at the expense of others. A *critical-attentive* attitude and systematic relational and narrative work in the trust-framework of the group is therefore an essential prerequisite if individual exercises and modules are to have a lasting and low-risk impact. It is all the more important to emphasise this, since in the last decade anti-aggression work has been strongly characterised by such approaches.⁷

⁷ It is possible to learn a this lesson through a similar methodological trend in psychotherapy: the family arrangement of Bernd Hellinger. Here, the long-established and highly effective methodological element of

Hence, to sum up, the good practice research on *Violence Prevention Network's* method of intervention has formulated the following impact factors in de-radicalisation work: The methodological prerequisites of any successful approach are

(i) that the facilitators of the pedagogic intervention come from *outside the institution* and are able to act independently; this is required in light of the indispensable process of confidence-building which is generally most difficult to achieve with this target group; being able to provide a *secure and confidential space* for the participants to speak and interact, seems to be one of the most important success factors of the VPN work”

(ii) that the *institution* does, however, signal its high esteem of the incoming outside facilitators (which requires containment of any impulses of professional competitiveness or feelings of envy) and that the institution itself is *interested and actively involved* – for example in staff training or workshops given by these facilitators;

(iii) above all, that significant parts of the work takes place *in the group and with the group*, and thus attention is paid to the processes and developments in and of the participants and their *group-dynamic* relationships with one another, a prerequisite which is due to the fact that hate crimes are generally group-dynamically induced and that hate crime offenders have often been raised in overexerted one-on-one relationships to their single parents – and therefore are all the less experienced in and more vulnerable to escalating group-dynamics;

(iv) that a *conducive dosage* of group intensity (off-set with pedagogical exercises and supplementary-supportive one-on-one conversations) is borne in mind;

(v) that the professional persona and intervention style of the facilitator focuses on generating a *trusting and resilient* relationship, both in the group and in the one-on-one sessions, and that this relationship is nurtured constantly;

(vi) but also, that a facilitator style of *critical attentiveness* is adopted which also seeks out points of contention and conflict, at the same time observing the basic distinction between the person, which is accepted, and the offence, which is

"family constellation" has been removed from the therapeutic (trust) framework and been used as an isolated – and sensational – technique. The bitter consequence has been psychiatric internments and suicides, as well as occasionally highly questionable ideological implications.

confronted – so that an *respectfully-enquiring exchange* can proceed *both acceptingly and confrontationally*;

(vii) that on the basis of this relationship a mode of *lifeworld-narrative* and *relationship-based* access to the young people is created that enables the occurrence of a trusting and *development-conducive* narrative about personal experience;

(viii) that the factor of *civic education*, political and ideological exchange as well as the *factor of culture* is incorporated (for instance in the form of fictional media narratives) in order to add to the experiential depth of the pedagogical process;

(ix) that the intervention on the whole does, however, not feel compelled to following an entirely strict syllabus; due to the above stated principle of the *lifeworld-narrative* and *relationship-based* approach, the need for an *open process* is acknowledged in which the participants group's spontaneous issues are given priority.

(x) the principle of working with an open process *lifeworld-narrative* and *relationship-based* approach also implies *methodological flexibility* and *eclecticism* with regard to pedagogic tools and therapeutic resources. In particular, the VPN study and other topical studies and evaluations have recently demonstrated the deficits and pitfalls of two approaches which have been quite predominate during the last decade: (a) pure *anti-aggression trainings* by themselves as well as (b) fully modularized *cognitive-behavioral trainings* seem to have had less effect then previously assumed – unless they are embedded into and off-set with an open-process narrative framework of proceedings.

(xi) that *protective relationships* are inaugurated already during prison time, calling on suitable family members, friends or community members whose personality is fitting the needs and challenges of reintegrating hate crime offenders.

(xii) that a *post-release coaching* is put into place which assists the ex-offender in beginning his new life in the community.

These conditions seem propitious for setting in motion mental processes that in turn can lead to the development of essential personality competencies and emotional intelligence and to the alteration of certain attitudes and forms of behaviour. These provisional findings await completion and refinement on the basis of the final evaluation. However it is possible to state that in the future an innovative,

interdisciplinary and application-oriented technique is called for, and that in the development of interventional methods for use in social work there are good reasons to look for possible ways in which the clinical-therapeutic field might be of assistance – and thus to ease the not always easy relationship between social and clinical work, and between clinical and cultural/social scientific research.

CHAPTER 3

A synthesis of Parallels in models used by London Probation Trust (LPT) with Muslim organisations and the Violence Prevention Network (VPN) work in Germany.

The following aspects characterise both the work used by Muslim organisations with LPT and VPN's work in Berlin. The following list of parallels cannot be considered complete or comprehensive at this stage. The listed aspects seem to be interlaced with each other and thus show a number of similarities in both models of intervention.

1. The *humanistic* base attitude

Findings from Muslim organisations:

- “STREET takes the view that young people can be inspired towards good”
- “STREET emphasise that they don't see these individuals in terms of sets of risk indicators but instead as vulnerable individuals who have made mistakes.”
- “STREET's approach is to try to humanise people”

Findings from VPN:

- VPN's responsibility pedagogy ® explicitly formulates a humanistic approach (see curriculum and HW's article, keywords 'responsibility' 'humanistic'). However, according to the VPN method, the humanistic assumption is valid only under the strict provision that a small minority of offenders are not searching for human goods but for power and destruction, and that this small number would be recognizable in diagnostic and psychometric testing to be socio-pathic and in need of psychiatric/forensic attention: These individuals are not well placed in standard prison. However, as has been determined by other studies, many of them can be found in standard prisons anyway.

2. Intellectual, Cultural and Emotional approach i.e. not just cognitive-behavioural and/or corrective approach

Findings from Muslim organisations:

- “The Intellectual, Cultural and Emotional (ICE) approach” (Active Change Foundation)
- “Unity’s director is critical of the use of a generic tool kit ... based upon Western models of psychotherapy or cognitive behavioural therapy. He observes and criticises “a ‘finishing line mentality”.

Findings from VPN:

- “One of the most unfailing and comprehensive indicators of mental change processes is that the offender shows a new attitude about and *appreciation for personal memories* and for the *emotional experience of remembering*”.
- “As a further essential indicator for the mental processes of de-radicalisation it has been determined that: ‘the offender shows signs which indicate experiences of *‘emotional learning’/‘emotional intelligence building’*, i.e. that the person shows signs that he/she begins to realise and reflect upon his/her own affects and upon situations in which he/she was mostly guided by emotions.
- Generally VPN’s group-dynamic approach includes the emotional aspect, whereas the civil education modules/elements stand for the intellectual aspect, and VPN’s incoming cultural representatives (who come from migration backgrounds and visit the groups) represent the cultural element (see VPN curriculum and HW’s article).

3. The importance of the institutional independence of the facilitator

Findings from Muslim organisations:

- “The STREET representative interviewed stated that they are able to do this work because they are independent and have years of experience of working with Muslim extremists in the UK”.

Findings from VPN:

- “It is one of the most basic principles of operation for VPN to only work as independent facilitators from outside the institution, for reasons of confidence building. However, it is as essential that the institution (the prison staff and administration) show signs of respect to the independent facilitators, for example in

that they access vocational training and consultancy from them at the same time the intervention takes place”. (see HW’s article, part 3)

4. There is no short-term fix

Findings from Muslim organisations:

- “They would like to have formal agreements with the families that the work with that engagement will continue for a specified length of time into the licence.”

Findings from VPN:

- VPN’s work is strictly process oriented. It requires a certain amount of time and a middle term perspective. The post-release coaching takes up to a year (see curriculum and HW’s research report/ monograph)

5. A therapeutic approach - confidence building, relationships, respect, genuine care and compassion

Findings from Muslim organisations:

- “Relationships are built on mutual respect and a knowledge of the lived reality of the individual”
- “When offenders realise that non-Muslims can be respectful it challenges them“.
- “STREET argues that building up trust with individuals in the course of STREET intervention engenders engagement.”

Also on the level of the relation between Muslim community facilitators and Offender Managers (OMs):

- “They were frustrated at times by a lack of trust on the part of OMs who failed to share information with them”.
- “Compassion and genuine care is what is key. This is not lucrative work. It is challenging and comes out of a genuine concern to build relationships with these individuals”..
- “Focusing on building up supportive relationships is key”.

- “The Good Life Model of rehabilitation (Ward & Brown, 2004) reinforces this suggestion that it is the **therapeutic alliance** between the practitioner and offender that is key in the process of rehabilitation from crime.... it assumes the offender is motivated by a search for human goods”..
- “Active Change Foundation (ACF) prioritises building up supportive relationships with young people . . . ‘compassionate reintegration”.
- Supportive relationships may ‘include responding to clients’ phone calls in the middle of the night”.

Findings from VPN:

- “A second essential indicator which witnesses mental change processes of de-radicalisation is: ‘the offender shows signs that *he/she has built personal confidence and trust* with facilitators and with the group; and that the person has thus increased his/her capacity to built trust **in relationships** and stay trustful even over quite challenging, conflicting, and exhausting experiences of (group) interaction”.
- “The VPN approach to relationship building combines personal acceptance and focused confrontation: it envisages a ‘delineated relationship’ which in a way is the opposite of a symbiotic, possibly ‘charismatic’ relationship. VPN intuitively draws from sources of group psycho-therapy”.

From this perspective it seems recommendable to look at relationships of ‘compassionate reintegration’ (as one Muslim organisation says) in terms of the relational delineation and personal autonomy; given the psychodynamic knowledge about how symbiotic, non-delineated relationship engender aggression and violence.

- ‘Delineated relationships’ in the VPN sense which encompass personal acceptance and focused confrontation, are indicated by a growing capacity to “argue or struggle with others in non-destructive ways.”
- A further indicator for mental processes of de-radicalisation it was found: ‘that the person shows sings of a newly build appreciation for and *capacity to argue/struggle with others in non-destructive ways*, be it issues of political, religious, or personal nature’, i.e. to argue without either turning abusive/ verbally violent or withdrawing and cutting off the interaction.” (also see HW’s research report/ monograph)

6. Narrative constructions and narrational work

Findings from Muslim organisations:

- “Echoing Maruna’s work, STREET argues that what is needed for these individuals is an alternative narrative”.
- “The key individual subjective narrative constructions which offenders build around these key events and changes”.
- The “starting point is to listen to their stories in order to have an understanding of their realities. This is the basis on which they are able to build a relationship with individuals. Relationships are built on mutual respect and a knowledge of the lived reality of the individual.
- “A person needs to restructure his or her understanding of self’

Findings from VPN:

- "A third essential indicator for processes of mental change and de-radicalisation is that: ‘the offender shows a new sense and appreciation for *telling stories/narrating* personally experienced occurrences and actively listen to such narrations; and the person has, thus, increased his/her capacity to *partake in narrative interaction*’.

7. A developmental approach: re-socialising key competencies, biography work

Findings from Muslim organisations:

- The emphasis on “developing personal maturity” (McNeill, Batchelor, Burnett, & Knox, 2005)
- The concern for the “upbringing, identities and experience of TACT offenders that had made them particularly vulnerable to being drawn”

Findings from VPN:

- Methodical biography work and the socio-therapeutic work on mending deficits of personal socialisation and identity formation is the most crucial methodical element

of the VPN approach (next to the working-through of the crime scene in view of personal biography) - (see chapter in HW's research report and in HW's article)

8. The importance of family work

Findings from Muslim organisations:

- “money has helped us as an organisation to change the lives of not just the young people but their families as well
- also: FAST (Families Against Stress and Trauma) makes the link between the treatment of families of TACT offenders and radicalisation of their wider family.

Findings from VPN:

- VPN conducts family days in prison and works at identifying ‘anchor persons’ for post-release supportive relationship of the ex-offender (a friend or family member). VPN currently deliberates to put more emphasis on the concomitant work with the families and communities. One of the essential targets of this work has been to teach parents and families to cherish, encourage and support their kids, and to think well of them, in a humanistic sense. But also to moderately call into question some of the ideological beliefs they hold.

9. ‘Civic education’ and intellectual debate

Findings from Muslim organisations:

- “The STREET approach is to make offenders understand the complexity of foreign policy issues at stake”..
- FAST intervenes with families of TACT offenders who are “susceptible to the false belief that the state is an enemy of Islam”.
- “One of the Muslim mentors underlined that he “directly challenges jihadist sermonisers” and tries to “disrupt young people’s allegiances”.
- “The task for community organisations like STREET is to create dissonance in order to give offenders a different perspective”.

Findings from VPN:

- With VPN civic education is a cross-over module which is applied throughout the training and in particular sessions. It however is applied in a particular mode of 'personal experience, narrative' interaction. (see curriculum and HW's research report / monograph)

This synthesis of parallels between the 2 models will be developed to form the basis of good practice guidelines and practitioner skills.

ANNEX 1 – Book Summary

How to work with Violent Extremist Offenders in custody and after release -- Good practice research on Violence Prevention Network, Berlin (VPN)

(Harald Weilnböck)

The two hundred page book manuscript presents the findings of the Good Practice research on Violence Prevention Network's (VPN) social-therapeutic approach of group-work with hate crime offenders from right-wing and Muslim fundamentalist backgrounds in Germany. Using a qualitative-empirical design of open, non-thematic methods, as biographical-narrative and focused-narrative interviews with participants and facilitators, group discussions and participative observation, the study (a) elaborates criteria according to which Good Practice in the field of de-radicalization and re-integration may be recognized and (b) analyzes the crucial impact factors of the VPN intervention method and puts them into perspective with recent research on terrorism and hate crime. Moreover, reference is made to projects from the current 'Federal Program' of anti-extremism work in Germany.

Violence Prevention Network applies a systematic form of open-process group-training, which is off-set by one-on-one talks, also using biography work, group-dynamic work, civic education/ political discussion, some elements of family counselling, and provides post-release coaching. The method builds on the participants' willingness to speak to a group about oneself, about ones lives prior to prison, about families and friends, ones political orientations, as well as the acts of violence one has committed -- which is different from classical approaches such as anti-aggression training or fully modularized cognitive behavioural programs. Pedagogical exercises, confidence-building, roll playing, drawing a biography curve may assist the process. The 'violent act sessions' which aim at precisely reconstructing the actions, thoughts, fantasies and feelings of the each offender during one of his hate crime scenes, form a central element of the work. The recidivism rate, which is generally estimated to be around 80% with this offender type is reduced to under 30%.

As criteria of Good Practice indicating that participants begin to embark on favourable changes of attitude and behaviour, it was found: any signs which indicate that the offender

(1) has begun to build a greater degree of *personal confidence and trust* with facilitators and with the group – and thus increased his capacity to built trust in relationships even during conflicting and challenging phases of (group) interaction.

(2) has begun to build a new attitude about and appreciation for *personal memories* and for the emotional experience of *remembering personally lived-through events* – in particular positively charged events.

(3) has begun to developed a new sense and appreciation for *telling stories/* narrating personally experienced occurrences – regardless of what scope and significance the experience has – and actively listen to such narrations, and thus increased his/her capacity to *partake in narrative interaction*.

(4) has made experiences of *emotional learning / building emotional intelligence* and thus has begun to realize and reflect upon one's own personal emotions and about situations of emotional involvement – in particular situations and emotions of embarrassment/ shame, insecurity, fear, and helplessness.

(5) has acquired some recognition of *personal ambivalence* and has thus experienced that he himself and/or others often are of two minds about concrete real-life situations and that one has to make decisions and negotiate compromise.

(6) has begun to built a new appreciation for and capacity *to argue or struggle with others in non-destructive ways* – be it issues of political, religious, or personal nature, i.e. to argue without either turning verbally abusive or withdrawing from the interaction.

In view of these basic criteria of favourable personal changes, the following impact factors and practice-guidelines for de-radicalisation work could be determined: The methodological prerequisites of any successful approach are

(i) that the facilitators of the pedagogic intervention come from *outside the institution* and are able to act independently; this is required in light of the indispensable process of confidence-building which is generally most difficult to achieve with this target group; being able to provide a *secure and confidential space* for the participants to speak and interact, seems to be one of the most important success factors of the VPN work;

(ii) that the *institution* does, however, signal its high esteem of the incoming outside facilitators (which requires containment of any impulses of professional competitiveness or feelings of envy) and that the institution itself is *interested and actively involved* – for example in staff training or workshops given by these facilitators;

(iii) above all, that significant parts of the work takes place *in the group and with the group*, and thus attention is paid to the processes and developments in and of the participants and their *group-dynamic* relationships with one another, a prerequisite which is due to the fact that hate crimes are generally group-dynamically induced and that hate crime offenders have often been raised in overexerted one-on-one relationships to their single parents – and therefore are all the less experienced in and more vulnerable to escalating group-dynamics;

(iv) that a *conducive dosage* of group intensity (off-set with pedagogical exercises and supplementary-supportive one-on-one conversations) is borne in mind;

(v) that the professional persona and intervention style of the facilitator focuses on generating a *trusting and resilient* relationship, both in the group and in the one-on-one sessions, and that this relationship is nurtured constantly;

(vi) but also, that a facilitator style of *critical attentiveness* is adopted which also seeks out points of contention and conflict, at the same time observing the basic distinction between the person, which is accepted, and the offence, which is confronted – so that an *respectfully-enquiring exchange* can proceed *both acceptingly and confrontationally*;

(vii) that on the basis of this relationship a mode of *lifeworld-narrative* and *relationship-based* access to the young people is created that enables the occurrence of a trusting and *development-conducive* narrative about personal experience;

(viii) that the factor of *civic education*, political and ideological exchange as well as the *factor of culture* is incorporated (for instance in the form of fictional media narratives) in order to add to the experiential depth of the pedagogical process;

(ix) that the intervention on the whole does, however, not feel compelled to following an entirely strict syllabus; due to the above stated principle of the *lifeworld-narrative* and *relationship-based* approach, the need for an *open process* is acknowledged in which the participants group's spontaneous issues are given priority;

(x) the principle of working with an open process *lifeworld-narrative* and *relationship-based* approach also implies *methodological flexibility* and *eclecticism* with regard to pedagogic tools and therapeutic resources. In particular, the VPN study and other topical studies and evaluations have recently demonstrated the pitfalls and deficits of two approaches which have been quite predominate during the last decade: (a) pure *anti-aggression trainings* by themselves as well as (b) fully modularized *cognitive-behavioral trainings* seem to have had less effect then previously assumed – unless they are embedded into and off-set with an open-process narrative framework of proceedings;

(xi) that *protective relationships* are inaugurated already during prison time, calling on suitable family members, friends or community members whose personality is fitting the needs and challenges of reintegrating hate crime offenders;

(xii) that a *post-release coaching* is put into place which assists the ex-offender in beginning his new life in the community.