

EX POST PAPER

Making a difference: the dissemination and implementation of RAN EDU lessons for PVE-E

Summary

Since November 2015, educational professionals and experts have met in a series of RAN EDU meetings to discuss how best to contribute to the prevention of violent extremism through education (PVE-E). Practitioners from all tiers of formal education have showcased promising projects and presented lessons learned and recommendations.

As a result, inspiring policy documents have been produced: the *RAN Prevent Manifesto for Education*, and recently, RAN's *Transforming schools into labs for democracy: A companion to preventing violent radicalisation through education*. The meetings of the Working Group also resulted in practical guidelines on polarisation, training material for teachers and papers on returnee children. The RAN EDU library and the

educational section of the RAN Collection of Practices contain a rich supply of related documents.

Disseminating and translating these lessons and recommendations from the European working group documents to the languages and contexts of local teachers and other educational staff is now essential — and also presents a challenge. It is the committed practitioners in local networks and the dedicated individuals shouldering this responsibility who will have to inspire and empower other educators to take similar action.

For RAN EDU, it is vital to reclaim education's inherent position and promote prevention **through education**. The policy paper *Transforming schools into labs for democracy: A companion to preventing violent radicalisation through education* captured RAN EDU's efforts and is essential reading for those committed to PVE-E.

Product of the RAN Centre of Excellence and the RAN EDU Working Group. Authored by Steven Lenos and Jordy Krasenberg of the RAN Centre of Excellence.



Introduction

The RAN EDU working group's educators are strongly committed to PVE-E, thanks to their love of education and belief in upholding democracy and its values. After just over 3 years of PVE-E work, a group of participating experts met to review the deliverables and the progress of the dissemination and implementation.

This paper's intended readers are those seeking policy recommendations and practical guidelines to help teachers and others in education to contribute to PVE-E. After introducing the substantial body of RAN EDU work (papers and other contributions), the paper examines the bottleneck: the local delivery. It ends by showcasing RAN EDU's valued policy paper *Transforming schools into labs for democracy: A companion to preventing violent radicalisation through education*: this paper is RAN EDU's potential asset for a dissemination campaign.



RAN EDU's vast library

Over the past 3 years, the RAN EDU working group has met with educators across the spectrum, including primary schools and further and higher education. Across Europe, teachers, school management, researchers and policymakers have shared challenges, solutions and inspiring practices. The results are presented on the RAN EDU content page on the European Commission's website (see also Annex 1). They include:

- 14 papers addressing, among others, media literacy, teacher training, free speech in higher and further education and polarisation;
- 39 educational projects in the RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices;
- a short video, *RAN Policy and Practice: Building resilience among young children*;
- a short video, *Holding difficult conversations: the classroom*;
- RAN EDU also contributed substantially to both the *RAN Polarisation Management Manual* and the RAN manual *Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families*.

The nature of the topics and the target audience vary. The RAN Collection's section on education is focused on practice and practical issues, as are the video on holding difficult conversations and the manuals on polarisation and returnees. Other material is more strategy-oriented, focusing, for instance, on education and cooperation with other actors.

Dissemination

Notwithstanding the wealth of material, dissemination is key to achieving an impact. It is often difficult to ascertain whether and how the material is being used.

The following examples demonstrate ways to increase the potential for effective dissemination.

- The Finnish National Agency for Education is translating many RAN documents and sending them on, accompanied by a self-authored introduction.
- RAN EDU working group leader Karin Heremans is not only chair of the Royal Athenaeum, but also GO! Policy manager PVE.er position allows her to share RAN lessons with schools and policy circles in Flanders.
- The Dutch government is assessing the RAN EDU material to select items to translate into Dutch.
- In Denmark, RAN EDU material is sometimes passed on from national level to local level, and is accompanied by a short Danish document.

But it is often less clear whether there is any further dissemination of the material. It is difficult to precisely assess how dissemination takes place, but it appears that local dissemination depends on existing local capacity:

- availability of, for instance, a school support structure within a network including schools;
- a government willing to cooperate and inform employees and citizens;
- committed individuals who promote and pass on the material.



Because of the significant contextual differences across countries, the European documents are often in need of some kind of translation, to accommodate both the local language and the local context. This calls for effort on behalf of one of the disseminators mentioned above.

In a discussion on dissemination strategies, the RAN Centre of Excellence put forward the insights of the Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP) programme, and more precisely, the so-called GAMMMA+ model ⁽¹⁾. The results are presented in the closing paragraph of this document.

Dissemination strategies

In order to move beyond generating output towards seeing an impact and making a difference on the ground, a dissemination strategy is needed to reach the teachers and schools that will benefit from these documents.

The term dissemination is best described as:

- the delivering and receiving of a message
- the engagement of an individual in this process
- the transfer of a process or product.

In building a RAN EDU dissemination strategy, the broad scale of challenges currently hindering dissemination must be taken into consideration. The principal challenges relate to the documents' uptake and adaptation within different contexts.

Each country requires a different strategy, depending among others, on the respective organisational structure. For example, in some countries, moving from dissemination to implementation necessitates a 'chance agent', while in others, beginning at ministerial level best serves the intended purpose.

The GAMMMA+ model from the Communication and Narratives (RAN C&N) working group ⁽²⁾ can help identify who should be targeted and how this can be best achieved. Moreover, it is key that the message be tailored to the audience (using audiovisual material, for instance) and that a credible messenger with a clear call to action be used.

The RAN EDU dissemination strategy can benefit from the GAMMMA+ key insights, which can also be of service to the RAN Centre of Excellence, national governments and national or local education support structures.

⁽¹⁾ See the RAN issue paper *RAN guidelines for effective alternative and counter-narrative campaigns (GAMMMA+)* (2017) at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-c-and-n/docs/ran_cn_guidelines_effective_alternative_counter_narrative_campaigns_31_12_2017_en.pdf online.

⁽²⁾ See the RAN issue paper *RAN guidelines for effective alternative and counter-narrative campaigns (GAMMMA+)* (2017) at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-c-and-n/docs/ran_cn_guidelines_effective_alternative_counter_narrative_campaigns_31_12_2017_en.pdf online.



Table 1 Key insights for the RAN EDU dissemination strategy using GAMMMA+

Element	General insights	Getting to a plan of action
G Goal <i>What is your goal?</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you know you have succeeded?
A Audience <i>Who is your target audience?</i>	<p>Where should you begin, when your aim is to address all audiences?</p> <p>To achieve an impact in education, all levels of the educational system must be incorporated into your dissemination strategy: the ministry of education, principals, all teachers, certain teachers (e.g. history teachers), etc. Each audience requires a tailored strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the country's organisational structures and education tiers to determine where real change is instigated. • Who are your stakeholders and what can you offer them? • Identify the 'change agents' you wish to target within the different structures. Taking ownership of the idea will motivate actors to make a difference.
M Message <i>What is your message?</i>	<p>Papers in the RAN EDU library are not always localised, and may be abstract in context, or even not applicable. Therefore, tailoring the message to the needs and wishes of your audience (including institutional structures and country specifics) is crucial. If you wish to engage policymakers, principals and teachers, you must develop and apply the appropriate style for your audience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate the message into the local language. • Tailor the message to the audience. • Trigger curiosity. • Use real-life issues that appeal and relate to your audience. • The quantity of new information and/or products can be overwhelming. Emphasise why this particular paper carries weight and should be prioritised. • A positive starting point is important: although it is not guaranteed to achieve prevention, it can have a preventive effect. • Prioritise a specific message: determine which message is most important. <p>Be aware of your tone — it might be considered condescending. Take full advantage of each opportunity, while trying to prevent information avoidance (the avoidance or sidestepping of communications or data that people believe to be stressful or unpleasant but that could aid them to make better decisions). This form of behaviour is especially applicable to information that is freely available, for example online. This form of behaviour is especially applicable to information that is freely available, for example online.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it clear that your target audience's country has contributed to the papers through its RAN practitioners.



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<p>M Messenger</p> <p><i>Who is your messenger?</i></p>	<p>The credibility (and therefore, effectiveness) of your messenger is determined solely by your target audience. Ensure that you are convinced that the target audience will be receptive to your chosen messenger. Introducing the message through human mediation is key in bringing the message across to your audience. In diverse communities, this is decisive in achieving effective dissemination and reception of the material.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is vital to appoint a credible messenger: this could be a teacher who has implemented some or all of the insights of the RAN EDU papers, or someone with good public standing. • Consider whether 'chance agents' are indeed the best messengers. There might be more authoritative or inspirational figures better equipped to carry your message. Identify the real influencers. • Training or workshops to introduce or integrate the insights from RAN EDU will have an impact and make a real difference.
<p>M Media</p> <p><i>What is your medium?</i></p>	<p>Several factors come into play when selecting a medium. An unread, discarded or forgotten paper is a primary dissemination failure. There are more creative and appealing ways to spark curiosity. Consider the target audience when determining the medium. A teacher and a policymaker would not find the same medium appealing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts are simple and accessible. • The use of audiovisual material (e.g. podcasts, or even multiple mediums) can enliven a document and better transmit your message.
<p>A Action</p> <p><i>What is your call to action?</i></p>	<p>How can you prompt your audience to take action? What form will this action take? Having a clear call to action can make all the difference in achieving a successful dissemination strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a clear directive or set of instructions. The target audience should know, for instance, whether they should read the paper for support in policy implementation or share it with likeminded groups or actors.



Dissemination opportunity: RAN EDU reclaiming PVE-E as prevention through education (instead of in education)

From the wealth of the RAN EDU library, *Transforming schools into labs for democracy: A companion to preventing violent radicalisation through education* (2018) is one document that receives a great deal of support and could be an important asset for more proactive RAN EDU dissemination. The authors, Götz Nordbruch and Stijn Sieckelinck, have focused on the contribution of schools, building on the RAN EDU legacy.

The companion is divided into three main chapters. The first covers challenges and opportunities in schools themselves. The second considers the institutional structures around the schools. The third chapter focuses on the political context and formulates recommendations to optimise its positive impact on the proposed activities.

As with other European documents, this too is in need of an introduction and translation before being used in local contexts. For instance, the religious element or the partners related to schools differ across countries



Figure 1 *Transforming schools into labs for democracy* (2018)

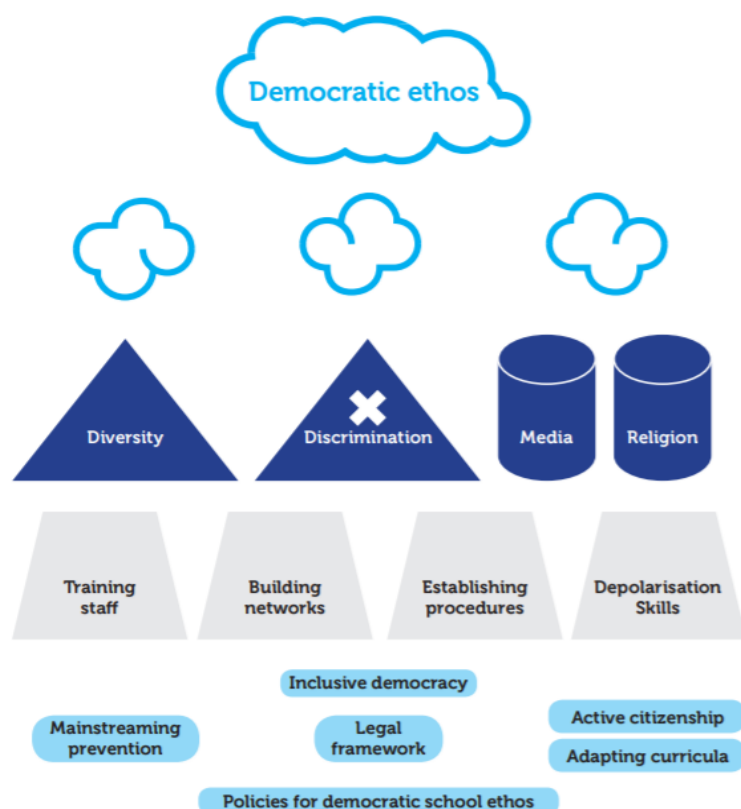


Figure 2 *The L4D-plan: Laboratories for democracy*

— and indeed, sometimes even within countries. This discrepancy presents an opportunity for local actors or disseminators to put themselves forward as support or expertise centres.

The companion can also prove helpful at a strategic level for Member States. In talks with security sectors, the education sectors can draw on this document to highlight the added value of sustainable prevention achieved **through** education as a driver of positive social change.

If this is done at a strategic level, the RAN Centre of Excellence can support Member States by co-organising workshops or sending experts to attend meetings and contribute to the discussion.



Key messages

1. The vast RAN EDU library needs more proactive and strategic dissemination to reach schools and teachers.
2. Dissemination of European documents is dependent on national/local disseminators for translation to local languages and contexts.
3. The GAMMA+ model offers practical guidelines for dissemination.
4. The valued RAN EDU paper *Transforming schools into labs for democracy: A companion to preventing violent radicalisation through education* (2018) should be disseminated, to kickstart the promotion of prevention **through education** instead of **in education**.



Annex 1. The rich library of RAN EDU

On the European Commission's website, the RAN EDU content page ⁽³⁾ contains links to the ex post docs and two videos. The vast range of publications containing examples, practical guidelines and recommendations is showcased in the list below.

Two videos

- *RAN Policy and Practice: Building resilience among young children* (https://youtu.be/DggONFHVA_w)
- *Holding difficult conversations: the classroom* (<https://youtu.be/OnH7DY3uMlk>)

The RAN EDU contribution to two key RAN documents

RAN EDU contributed substantially to both the *RAN Polarisation Management Manual* (ex post paper, 2017) (https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_polarisation_management_manual_amsterdam_06072017_en.pdf) and the RAN manual *Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families* (2017) (https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf).

RAN EDU documents

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⁽³⁾ See https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-edu online.



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[https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_policy_practice_event_building_resilience_among_young_children_raised_in_extremist_environments - specifically child returnees warsaw 4 july 2018 en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_policy_practice_event_building_resilience_among_young_children_raised_in_extremist_environments_-_specifically_child_returnees_warsaw_4_july_2018_en.pdf)

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