

STRUCTURAL QUALITY STANDARDS

for work to intervene with and counter violent extremism

A handbook for practitioners,
state coordination units and
civil society programme implementers
in Germany

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DEAR READERS,

In the state of Baden Württemberg and elsewhere in Germany we have, happily, a considerable number of counter-extremism projects and implementers. However, quality standards and evaluation outcomes which enable the efforts of project implementers to be measured and facilitate comparisons are a rarity not only here in Germany but also worldwide.

The question of the quality and impact of counter-extremism work is as old as debate about preventative work itself. From an academic viewpoint quality standards, transparency and evaluation are indispensable necessities in counter-extremism work. In its July 2016 Strategy on Countering Extremism and Advancing Democracy the German federal government formulated the aim of “ensuring the quality and further development of preventative and democracy-advancing measures and structures through continual, critical evaluation”.

With this handbook the Counter Extremism Network Coordination Unit (KPEBW) in the Ministry for Interior Affairs, Digitalisation and Integration of the state of Baden-Württemberg in cooperation with the German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization Studies (GIRDS) would like to present a recommendation for

minimum structural standards both to an audience of counter-extremism actors and to other state coordination units or policymakers.

Counter-extremism is such a dynamic and complex field that questions are naturally raised about the effectiveness and quality of individual measures. Counter-extremism activity – and hence also the quality of such activity – cannot be a function of a facility's available resource, the time budget of experts or funding criteria. We must instead focus our attention on developing efficient programmes. We need to identify positive and promising approaches if we are to deploy limited financial and personnel resources effectively. In this sphere of work structurally deficient counter-extremism and deradicalisation projects are not merely a waste of such scarce resources, they also present a considerable security risk. Reliability, efficiency and transparency are the foundations of counter-extremism work and must themselves be based on high quality standards.

This handbook draws on the evaluation of comprehensive case studies, interviews with practitioners, reformed extremists and family members of radicalised individuals as well as experience with casework and a close reading of international academic literature on the subject. It is the first publication to present a detailed synopsis of quality standards. Thanks to the support of the British Embassy in Berlin we have also been able to make this handbook available for an international audience.

We would be happy to support you in applying our recommendations. Please do not hesitate to contact the KPEBW with any questions.

Belinda Hoffmann,
KPEBW Managing Director

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Köhler is one of the world's leading experts in the field of (de)radicalisation research and has a wealth of practical experience as a caseworker. He studied Religion, Political Science and Business Studies at the Free University Berlin and Princeton University in the US. He co-founded the only existing journal on deradicalisation (www.journal-derad.com) and the German Institute of Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation Studies (GIRDS). Since 2015 he has been a Fellow on the George Washington University's Program on Extremism in the United States, where he also works as an expert witness for courts assessing jihadist prisoners as well as a trainer for deradicalisation experts at the US District Court in Minneapolis. Since 2015 he has led the Deradicalisation Working Group in the European Expert Network on Terrorism (EENeT) run by the German Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA). Daniel advises governments around the world (i.a. in Canada, the Netherlands, France, Italy and the US) on how to develop deradicalisation and counter-extremism programmes, and he trains experts in the field all over the world. He has published a number of academic articles in German and international journals, and he regularly contributes to leading international media (Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Huffington Post, BBC, The Economist) as an expert commentator on the issue.

Together with the parents of killed jihadist foreign fighters, Daniel founded "Mothers for Life" in the winter of 2014, the only existing international network of relatives, which is currently active in eleven countries.

Since January 2016, Daniel has been working as an academic expert in the Counter Extremism Network Coordination Unit (KPEBW) in the Ministry for Interior Affairs, Digitalisation and Integration of the state of Baden-Württemberg.

The opinions expressed in this handbook are solely those of the author and do not necessarily correspond to those of the Baden-Württemberg Ministry for Interior Affairs, Digitalisation and Integration.



INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011 public debate in Germany has continually focused on the ever-rising numbers of foreign fighters who, for a variety of reasons, have travelled voluntarily to Syria or Iraq to join groups such as Daesh or the Al Qaeda affiliated Al Nusra Front (now Jabhat Fatah al-Sham).

The fear of foreign fighters returning well trained and highly ideologised, coupled with the apparent inability of families, local communities and the authorities to prevent their travel to war zones, has generated a new dimension in the German debate about countering extremism, making interventions and running exit programmes. Although since 2000 numerous state and non-state programmes have been run across the country to counter right-wing extremism and support individuals exiting the far-right scene, only when the Federal Office for Migration and Refugee set up its counter-radicalisation advisory network (BAMF Advisory Network) in 2012 was this approach properly transferred to the sphere of Islamism and the ground laid for a national debate about the necessity and foundations of effective counter-Salafism work. The state and non-state exit programmes in the area of right-wing extremism, which hitherto have operated more or less in isolation from each other, have

now begun in different ways to develop new projects and approaches for the jihadist milieu. Nevertheless, since only very few isolated attempts were undertaken to foster exchange and establish common standards within the framework of civil society's far-right counter-extremism and exit work, and since the state platform for exchange on deradicalisation¹ is rather inaccessible to outside experts and particularly civil society actors, so far it has only been possible for individual implementers, willing and able to undertake considerable effort, to benefit from the practical experience gained from the work to counter right-wing extremism.

In parallel, revelations in 2011 about the far-right terrorist group "National Socialist Underground" (NSU) and its decade-long series of attacks revived the threat of organised right-wing extremist groups and clandestine cells in the public consciousness. Since the beginning of the so-called "refugee crisis" Germany has seen the sharpest rise in xenophobically-motivated violence and radicalisation in far-right and right-wing populist movements since reunification. Terrorist structures such as the "Old School Society" and the "Freital" and "Bamberg" Groups, as well as the steep rise in attacks on refugee facilities committed by spontaneous perpetrators hitherto unaffiliated to far-right milieus or highly radicalised and fanatical lone actors such as Frank S. (who attempted to murder Henriette Reker before she was elected mayor of Cologne), serve to demonstrate that the threat to domestic security emanates from different forms of extremist radicalisation.

Until recently counter-extremism and counter-terrorism were primarily the domain of the security authorities and the courts in the form of repressive measures. In the meantime the international community has also recognised the importance of effective prevention and intervention. Back in 2008 Time Magazine identified "reverse radicalism" as one of the most important and promising ideas for the future (Ripley 2008). In September 2011 the European Commission established the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), a Europe-wide network of practitioners, politicians and academics, as part of its counter-terrorism strategy. And in January 2014 EU Commissioner Cecilia Malmström presented a 10-point-plan² on combating extremism and terrorism in the EU, including a recommendation to

¹ The Deradicalisation Working Group of the Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre (GTAZ), in operation since 2009.

² http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-18_en.htm (accessed on 1 December 2014).

all member states to establish exit strategies (something which, at the time, only a handful of countries including Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany and the UK had done). In line with this development deradicalisation and counter-extremism measures were also adopted in the EU's latest counter-terrorism strategy, which since 2005 had listed prevention as one of its five central pillars. The expanded 2014 version of the strategy lent an additional focus to deradicalisation, calling on member states not only to set up corresponding programmes but also to ensure they evaluated their initiatives (EU 2014, p. 11). In the same year the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2178, which called for reintegration programmes for foreign fighters returning from Syrian and Iraq (UNSC 2014). All in all, in the past few years deradicalisation and counter-extremism programmes have become a firm feature of a number of national and international counter-terrorism strategies.

Despite this development, the question of how to evaluate the success and quality of deradicalisation programmes has remained largely unanswered. Whilst the underlying value of deradicalisation is not contested, for years academics have criticised the lack of conceptual clarity and transparency in the overwhelming majority of such programmes (e. g. Horgan 2015; Horgan & Altier 2012; Horgan & Braddock 2010; Koehler 2014a; 2015a; Williams & Lindsey 2014). An important part of this debate is the uncertainty regarding objectives, central aspects of the practical work and the extent of potential deradicalisation: is the aim merely to get someone to lead a life free from violence, or to turn their backs on extremist ideology entirely? And if the latter, just how far should the process go?

In comparison with other countries, Germany's counter-extremism landscape is characterised by a uniquely diverse group of implementers who possess broad practical experience and pursue a broad variety of approaches. However, hitherto these approaches have rarely been subject to scientific evaluation or made available to a transparent academic discourse for the purpose of their further development. German federalism and the complex funding landscape for civil-society programmes constitute further hurdles to establishing common standards and definitions. As a consequence, the counter-extremism situation falls short of all academic standards with regard to quality benchmarks, transparency and evaluation.

The most significant development since 2012 has been the creation of counter-extremism networks across the country, motivated by the strong demand of those relatives affected for help from the BAMF Advisory Network, to establish specially structured coordination units that pool and link up all actors in the prevention process. However, cooperation between state and non-state actors presents challenges of its own. Different ways of operating and divergent ideas about process collide in this highly complex area of work, and legal grey zones, for instance in data protection, also play a role. In this context it is the aim of this handbook to set out a basis for minimum structural standards for programmes, implementers and initiatives which, at least in the state of Baden Württemberg, can serve as a multi-step evaluation and quality assurance for counter-extremism work. In doing so Baden Württemberg has become the first German state to define quality standards in this field of work and to incorporate comprehensive experience from international research and practice. The structural standards outlined here are designed to facilitate the efficiency and effectiveness of counter-extremism programmes and interventions and to enable proper evaluation. As an initial foundation for further process and impact evaluations this handbook serves both as an important aid for state coordination units and other public bodies when evaluating programme implementers' structural quality, as well as offering a first opportunity for the implementers themselves to underpin the structures of their work and develop them further on that basis. The main body of the handbook covers six topic areas (running and developing a programme, personnel and organisation, participant classification, care and advisory services, quality assurance, and transparency), and an appendix summarises the individual standards. The core points are listed briefly at the beginning of each chapter.

TARGET GROUP AND OBJECTIVES

This handbook is aimed in particular at civil society practitioners and state coordination units working on counter-extremism.

Because of the rapid growth of prevention networks in Germany in recent years, the necessity for developing criteria and standards for selecting and evaluating civil-society partners has become ever more pressing. Competence centres and other state coordination units face the problem of having to assess the structural composition of partner organisations when deciding a tender. At the same time the exponential rise in demand for qualified experts and programmes covering counter-extremism and interventions has not only led to a sharp increase in funding opportunities in recent years, but also necessitated the involvement of civil-society organisations with little practical experience of designing and carrying out interventions to counter radicalisation. To facilitate coordination and cooperation between state and non-state partners working on counter-extremism, this handbook is designed to make a significant contribution to quality assurance in this field of work in Germany.

SPECIFICALLY THIS HANDBOOK HELPS:

- Governmental coordination centres and policymakers to identify and verify the structural requirements of civil-society partners in counter-extremism; this enables effective cooperation on the basis of academic and practice-tested standards;
- Civil-society organisations with little practical experience of counter-extremism work to design programmes on the basis of solid structural standards in order to subsequently develop their expertise and their specialisation;
- Civil-society organisations with broad practical experience of counter-extremism work to enhance existing programmes and identify structural weaknesses;
- Academic bodies to draw up and implement evaluation methods for counter-extremism measures in order to eliminate the often-criticised lack of transparency and lack of evaluation of the grounds on which interventions are based.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

This handbook combines many years of research and practical experience in the area of counter-extremism and interventions.

In his role as an internationally active counter-extremism expert the author has advised governments in the United States, the Netherlands, Canada, France, Italy, the UK and elsewhere on how to structure family support and exit programmes. Developing this basis, the author has also drawn on over five years of his own research activity and practical experience with family support and exit work. As part of that research he interviewed over 50 leading international counter-extremism experts, incorporated the experiences of over 150 families in 11 countries who had lost loved ones to radical jihad³ and conducted 47 interviews with former members of the Far-Right in Germany. After a comprehensive evaluation of the literature on programmes concerned with the reintegration of criminals, former members of sects, youth gangs and civil war groups (as part of the reintegration

of former fighters) as well as deradicalisation programmes targeting extremists and terrorists, the author analysed the interviews with regard to experiences and structural requirements for approaches to counter-extremism work. These practical aspects were then compared with the experiences of those families who had been affected and former members of the Far-Right demonstrating varying degrees of radicalisation, some of whom had sought professional help and advice.

This working process resulted in the following handbook, a hitherto unique compilation and examination of the structural requirements of intervention programmes based on broad interdisciplinary research and detailed input from experienced practitioners and also tested in practical case management.

³ Most of these families are organised in the “Mothers for Life” network run by the author, which is currently the only worldwide international network of families that have been affected by radical jihad. For more information visit www.facebook.com/mothersandlife.

TERMINOLOGY AND TYPOLOGY

Having complete clarity about the terms used and typologies employed is an indispensable prerequisite when discussing quality standards and means of evaluation in counter-extremism work.

German discourse commonly speaks of “exit programmes”, and occasionally in general terms of “deradicalisation programmes”. This discourse usually ignores the substantive differences between the various programmes. In recent decades around 40-50 projects which in rough terms may be categorised as “deradicalisation” programmes have been launched, drawing their inspiration from a broad spectrum of schools of thought and political motivations (see i.a. Koehler 2015a for an overview). However, these programmes differ fundamentally from one another, for instance with regard to methodology, target group and structure. As a consequence, the respective expectations concerning participant numbers, recidivism rates, case duration etc. necessarily vary from programme to programme, and so such quantitative performance benchmarks must be adjusted accordingly. In-depth discussion of these expectations is not possible here (for more details see Koehler 2016), though to give an example, programmes which operate inside prisons by actively seeking participants face the difficulty that they cannot rely on the self-motivation of the participants.

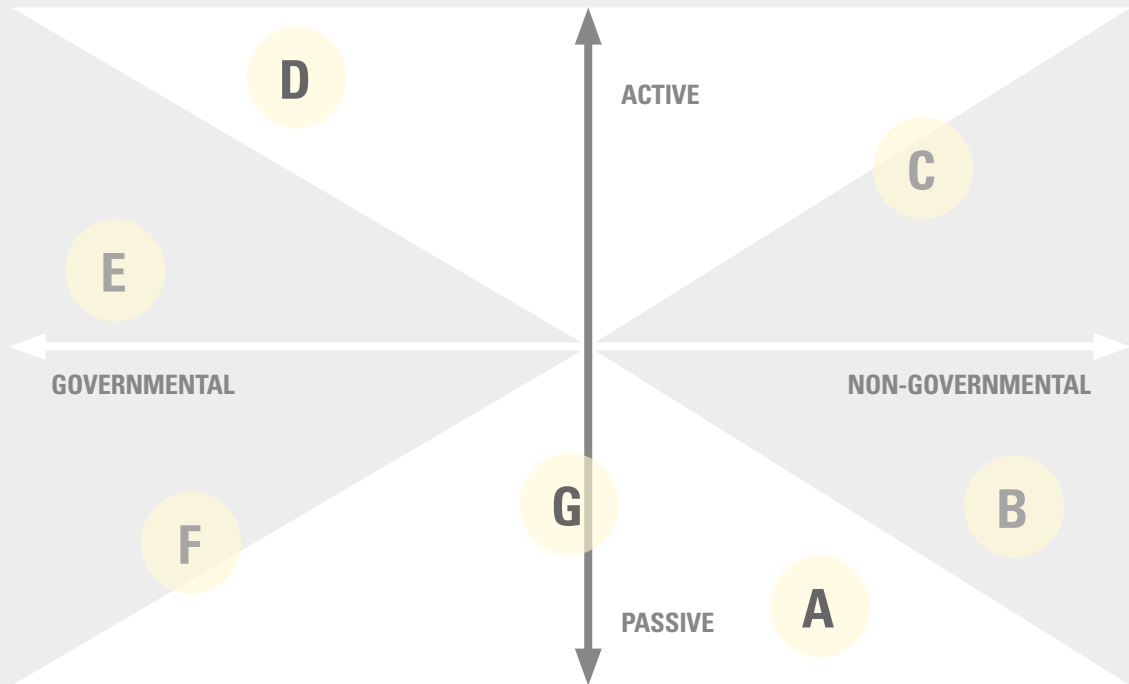
As a result, one would expect higher dropout and recidivism rates on programmes of this nature than for programmes which take a passive approach. A higher recidivism rate should not automatically be interpreted as the blanket failure of a programme.

If we compare the central characteristics of these initiatives around the world, we can identify three core features which lend themselves to developing a typology and enable us to better understand certain structural characteristics (potential and limits, strengths and weaknesses) and means of impact. Furthermore, the Types we shall introduce here also allow us to derive criteria for evaluation and case-to-case interlinkages. The three core features are: stakeholder-ship (state/non-state); form of contact (active/passive⁴); and the role of ideology (central/negligible). Strictly speaking, only programmes containing an ideological component can be called “deradicalisation programmes”. That said, countless programmes address ideology as a secondary component or concentrate on moderately ideologised target groups.

⁴ Active: the programme approaches the target group and seeks to encourage participation in the programme.
Passive: the programme is contacted by interested participants in search of assistance and advice.

Figure 1:

TYPOLGY OF DERADICALISATION PROGRAMMES



Ideological component plays a central role

Whilst Type A and Type B are non-state organisations operating passively, it is rare to find non-state implementers who are in a position to approach a target group actively (Type C). Data protection legislation means it is usually extremely difficult for NGOs, at least in western countries, to obtain by legal means the names and addresses of active extremists and other persons of interest to the authorities. In Germany there is only one non-state implementer currently engaged in this active approach (cf. Glaser, Hohnstein & Greuel,

2015 p. 56). On the other hand, Type A programmes are widespread in Germany, and in some cases they have been running for many years. Outside Germany, the most common programmes are of Type B, alongside state programmes in the criminal justice system. Traditionally Type D and Type E are comprehensive state deradicalisation programmes within prisons, in which access to potential participants is automatic. Such programmes, for instance in Saudi Arabia, revolve around intensive theological discourse, while, by contrast, western

programmes (for instance in Denmark or the UK) either explicitly exclude this component or delegate it to non-state partners. One unusual German case is the Advisory and Intervention Group against Right-Wing Extremism (BIG Rex) in Baden Württemberg, a state programme which also adopts an active approach outside of the prison system and seeks to motivate participants to enrol in the exit programme. An example of Type F is the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) exit programme for right-wing extremists, which relies on the initiative of the participants themselves. In that case the extent to which the ideological component plays a role is largely unclear. Type G meanwhile represents public-private partnerships such as the BAMF Advisory Network and the various counter-Salafism networks operating in some of the German federal states.

Since Caplan (1964), German academic discourse has usually characterised deradicalisation and counter-extremism as “secondary” or “tertiary” prevention (cf. e.g. Baer 2014). Alternatively, drawing on the theoretical model in Gordon (1983) reference is made to “indicated” or “selective” prevention (e.g. in Lützing, Gruber & Kemmesis, 2016). Both of these models originate in clinical psychiatry or medicine (the control of epidemics), yet they have two inherent disadvantages

when it comes to characterising deradicalisation: firstly, they imply that radicalisation is pathological by nature and based on illness and psychiatric disorder, which only serves to stigmatise someone seeking to disengage from extremism; secondly, the use of the term “prevention” to describe deradicalisation processes draws attention away from the core task at hand. Although successful deradicalisation self-evidently entails preventing somebody from relapsing into extremism and criminal activity, their sustainable reintegration can be considered subordinate to the actual substance, which is concerned primarily with severing their ideological link to an extremist group or radical milieu. To this extent, we shall speak here either of counter-extremism or of interventions/deradicalisation.

Accordingly, in this handbook, the national counter-terrorism methods are augmented by interventions (prevention and deradicalisation were hitherto grouped together with repression; cf. Koehler 2014a; Koehler 2015a). The new classification is based on three distinct methods of counter-terrorism (prevention, repression, intervention) as well as three different dimensions (macrosocial/national; mesosocial/regional, local; and microsocial/individual).

Figure 2:

THE COUNTER-TERRORISM NETWORK

	MACROSOCIAL	MESOSOCIAL	MIKROSOZIAL
PREVENTION (GENERAL, SPECIFIC)	e.g. education, research, youth work, social work	e.g. local crime prevention, federal state action plans (LAPs) etc.	e.g. workshops in schools with former extremists
REPRESSION	Legislative, executive, nationwide security architecture	e.g. banning orders, neighbourhood officers	e.g. banning orders, neighbourhood officers
INTERVENTION	Counter-narratives	e.g. family support	e.g. individual exit programmes

In the area of prevention we must distinguish between general prevention and specific prevention (e.g. counter-extremism), whereby the latter begins with the identified risk of a known individual entering a particular extremist group or radical milieu. Repression on the other hand pursues the aim of containing an existing radical milieu using police or criminal procedural measures. Equally, intervention assumes an existing radical milieu, entailing measures which complement repressive action in specifically targeting this milieu to break down the group structures and enable – in a variety of ways – individual or collective departure from the radical or extremist position. Essentially the corresponding methods and approaches should be conceived as a complementary partnership. For instance, individual deradicalisation programmes only make sense if state authorities do prosecute relevant politically motivated crimes and if a statutory basis is in place. By the same token, in the sphere of preventative action, for instance concerning school education and teacher training, a sound expert

knowledge of radicalisation is necessary in order to foster early recognition, which is why a broad range of implementers, from the state and counter-extremism authorities to civil-society initiatives, offer relevant training and workshops.

Finally, it is also worth highlighting the difference between family support and individual exit programmes, which are often mentioned in parallel but without making the necessary distinction. The most important difference is that in the case of family support the person in question is still going through the radicalisation process. Hence the objective is to slow down and eventually stop this process with the help of the family and peers (for details see Koehler 2013, 2014b, 2015b, 2015c, 2015c). As soon as the person in question displays any desire to disengage, an offer of individual deradicalisation counselling should be made, since their desires and needs and those of their family may well not coincide.

CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH / DEBATE ABOUT EVALUATION AND STANDARDS OF COUNTER- EXTREMISM WORK IN GERMANY AND INTERNATIONALLY

Although German academic discourse regularly criticises this state of affairs (cf. Glaser et al 2014; Rieker 2009; Rieker 2014), to date only very few exit programmes have conducted evaluations in line with fundamental scientific standards (e.g. the state disengagement programme for right-wing extremists in North-Rhine-Westphalia; c.f. Möller et al. 2015) or presented their own comprehensive publications about their working processes and standards (e.g. Buchheit 2014; Jende 2014).

With regard to state-run exit programmes the joint counter-terrorism platform (GTAZ) has since 2009 addressed the issue of deradicalisation and discussed substantive aspects of quality assurance and standards in one of its nine working groups, although so far the valuable outcomes and proposals emanating from this forum have not been made accessible to a wider public (e.g. academia and civil society). Furthermore, in 2014 a handful of civil-society implementers in the field of disengagement from right-wing extremism joined forces in the “Exit/Entry National Working Group” (BAG), which emerged from a special XENOS programme financed by the Federal Labour & Social Affairs Ministry (BMAS) and the European Social Fund. Pursuing the aim of becoming an “umbrella” organisation for civil-society actors working on right-wing extremism exit programmes, this registered association is currently funded by the Federal Ministry of Families, Women, Senior Citizens and Youths (BMFSFJ) under the national “Living Democracy” programme. One of BAG’s declared aims is to develop common quality standards. An analogous national working group in the field of

Islamist extremism and jihadism was founded under the aegis of the BMFSFJ in 2016.

If we consider these newly instigated discourses in pursuit of quality standards for interventions against the backdrop of the practical work which has been carried out since 2000, it quickly becomes apparent that there is much catching up to be done. The most extensive survey of German counter-extremism implementers to date, conducted by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA), once again highlighted the absence of coherent standards and evaluations. Of 771 projects in this field (336 of them state-run), it was often not even possible to ascribe a clear designation of the actual objectives (using the BKA’s terminology: universal, selective or indicated prevention) (Lützing et al 2016, p. 13). With regard to the evaluation of these projects the authors found that: “the available information about evaluation measures for the projects surveyed here must be described as extremely threadbare, both concerning the amount and the quality (depth) ... With the exception of those local action plans that have been

thoroughly examined, the findings of evaluations were only available in isolated cases, it at all ... Overall it remained unclear in the vast majority of cases what had been specifically considered during the evaluation”.

The reason for this dearth of high quality evaluations is that civil society continues to grapple with a common understanding of central terms and foundations and state programmes have to overcome a variety of legal and bureaucratic hurdles. Furthermore, repeated calls for a “national counter-extremism strategy” that sets out uniform or at the very least specific guidelines (cf. for instance BKA President Holger Münch in Diehl & Ulrich 2015) also remains problematic on account of the complexities of German federalism and the divergent approaches across the system. The most extensive descriptions of the activities of exit programmes in the field of counter-extremism hitherto can be found in the final reports submitted in conclusion to national funding programmes. However, in general even these reports only contain quantitative assessments of an overall project or descriptions of the various civil-society implementers receiving funding, which is of limited use for an evaluation or the establishment of standards. In conclusion, it can be stated that in Germany there is considerable disagreement about fundamental standards in counter-extremism work, and at the same time a considerable diversity of implementers (both in civil society and among state actors). In particular the lack of exchange between state and civil-society

programmes (Glaser et al 2014), the lack of transparency within a number of implementers and the deficits in evaluation (which, when conducted, should ensue on the basis of common standards) have acted as a significant brake on substantive improvements in this field in recent years.

The picture in the international arena is not much different. Here, too, the deficits or complete absence of an evaluation of deradicalisation programmes – coupled with sky-high success rates reported by the programmes in question themselves – are criticised in the literature (e.g. al-Hadlaq 2015; Feddes & Galluci 2015; Harris-Hogan, Barrelle & Zammit 2015; Horgan & Altier 2012; Horgan & Braddock 2010; Mastroe & Szmania 2016; Romaniuk & Fink 2012; Williams & Kleinman 2013). In contrast to much of the latest research in Germany, however, some detailed international concepts for evaluating deradicalisation programmes have already been discussed, such as the Multi Attribute Utility Technology (MAUT) (c.f. Horgan & Braddock 2010), stakeholder-focused approaches (Williams & Kleinman 2013) and multidimensional (horizontal and vertical) evaluations (Romaniuk & Fink 2012). Despite the advanced level of their theoretical approach, these models have thus far not found any practical application or been tested in the field. On the one hand, this is down to the deficits in information inflows into most deradicalisation programmes, and on the other hand to the lack of funding

for evaluative research, the insufficient interest in being evaluated of many of the projects themselves, and not least the major lack of clarity concerning the aims and content of the evaluation. In the United States, however, the first evaluations of counter-extremism programmes have made significant advances in the practical applicability of quality assessment in this field (Williams, Horgan & Evans 2016).

Even the underlying aim of deradicalisation programmes is a point of contention in international discourse. Two schools of thought have emerged among researchers and practitioners, the first of which views disengagement from violence as a sufficient benchmark for the success of an intervention programme (e.g. Noricks 2009) and the second of which emphasises distancing oneself from the ideology of an extremist movement as a basic prerequisite for long-term disengagement (e.g. Rabasa, Pettyjohn, Ghez & Boucek 2010). This debate about the “behavioural v. attitudinal question” (Clubb 2015) has consequently influenced the ability of deradicalisation programmes to be evaluated. The question is how an ideological change can be measured reliably as part of an impact assessment. Although international criminology researchers have proposed the first techniques using linguistic analysis (e.g. subjects’ choice of words and syntax) in order to assess a psychological change (e.g. Maruna 2001), and this innovative approach has been applied in research into terrorism (e.g. Cohen 2016), so far the impact evaluation of deradicalisation programmes has scarcely been able to develop a broad understanding of disengagement (including ideological renunciation). Overwhelmingly, most “evaluations” of intervention programmes in the area of counter-extremism merely describe the features of the programme. Moreover, these descriptions are based not on scientifically collated primary data but for the most part simply

on information from the programme providers themselves (Feddes & Galluci 2015). Around the world the most common benchmarks used to measure the quality of deradicalisation programmes are recidivism rates and case numbers (Mastroe & Szmania 2016), even though neither criterion is particularly appropriate for assessing a programme. Judging success on the basis of low recidivism rates is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, the definition of “relapse” varies considerably from one programme to another. Does it constitute a relapse, for instance, to undertake criminal activity of any kind, or even simply to return to a similar or other extremist milieu? Furthermore, it is completely unclear what information is used to calculate recidivism rates, since even state programmes are only allowed to monitor their former participants for a limited amount of time. It is harder still for civil-society programmes to obtain reliable information about the behaviour of individuals once they leave their programmes. Recidivism rates, which themselves presuppose a non-existent common definition of the end of a case, are of limited value for drawing conclusions for the simple reason that there are no sufficiently comparable groups enabling the identification of a so-called “base rate”. In contrast with non-political or non-extremist prisoners, it is largely unknown whether the cohort of released terrorists or politically motivated criminals in general tends to exhibit high or low recidivism rates (understood here as re-arrest rates). Some studies for instance highlight the astonishing fact that after their release from prison fewer than 5% of former members of the Irish Republic Army (IRA), Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and Al Qaeda are re-arrested, even without their having participated in a reintegration or deradicalisation programme of any kind (Silke 2014b). The low re-arrest rate may of course be connected to a number of other factors too, but it does offer the theoretical possibility that on

average released terrorists and extremists are re-arrested less frequently than non-political prisoners. Therefore, a qualitative assessment of an exit programme is only possible to a limited extent on the basis of recidivism or re-arrest rates. Low recidivism rates of, say, 5% are open to numerous interpretations and do not automatically demonstrate the success of a programme.

Secondly, the number of cases in a programme is widely viewed as a criterion for quality. Initiatives recording a particularly high volume of telephone calls or participants are often seen as being of high quality on account of this high demand. However, this criterion too is limited in the conclusions it permits about the actual quality of the deradicalisation work being performed. To be meaningful, a high contact rate per se must be seen in conjunction with additional factors such as quantitative designation to particular case types (those of interest to the security authorities, highly radicalised individuals, moderately radicalised individuals or those with no radicalisation), drop-out rates and the use of resources. If a programme for instance reports a high number of approaches, but it transpires that these consisted for the most part of mere information requests or cases in the early stages of radicalisation, then it can be assumed that the programme may not be reaching its main target group (insofar as one was defined in the first place), is failing to designate sufficient resources to this group or is processing too many irrelevant requests. Conversely, programmes with low case numbers which, however, largely comprise highly security-relevant cases can be deemed to be particularly successful in reaching out to

their target group. Alongside the pure case numbers, further aspects need to be considered which are often neglected in standard evaluations. One such additional aspect is the ratio of initial approaches to cases taken on, dedicated resources per case type and drop-out rate.

For the scientific evaluation of the impact of intervention programmes, an additional problem in the field of counter-extremism and counter-terrorism is that the usual approach to carrying out experiments using a number of methods with comparative groups would not only be unethical but also highly risky. To circumvent this challenge to research, the possibility of using time-shifted or randomly attributed interventions was discussed, and this method was applied to evaluate a handful of deradicalisation and reintegration programmes treating fighters in civil wars (e.g. Humphreys & Weinstein 2007; Kruglanski, Gelfand, Bélanger, Gunatara & Hettiarachchi 2014; Mastroe & Szmania 2016).

Nevertheless, evaluating the impact of deradicalisation and intervention programmes is difficult. One alternative method which is often mentioned is process evaluation. Whilst an impact evaluation pursues the aim of verifying whether a specific project actually achieved the desired effect (e.g. deradicalising individuals), process evaluation aims to ascertain whether the programme does effectively what it was designed to do. However, in order to be in a position to judge whether a process is effective in the sphere of deradicalisation, objective quality standards for the intervention work are indispensable, since otherwise comparisons or evaluative statements about particular

processes and approaches in the intervention programme cannot be made. Input from the programme itself is only of limited relevance, since comparative research from a number of different fields regularly shows that self-presentation always entails the risk of uncritical self-perception and overestimation. A particularly important approach to evaluating and substantively assessing intervention programmes is therefore to analyse their structural integrity using scientifically sound and practice-tested standards. In contrast to impact evaluation and process evaluation, the assessment of the structural integrity of such programmes rests on easily measurable criteria of programme design which in a broad range of research disciplines (including criminology, psychology and sociology) demonstrate a high correlation with low recidivism rates, drop-out rates and lasting behavioural changes among participants. Since research into deradicalisation has produced only very few detailed high-quality studies of individual methods and programme elements, this handbook has made additional recourse to a broad interview-based analysis by consulting experienced international deradicalisation practitioners.

In Germany only very few attempts thus far have sought to describe the structural requirements of advisory programmes in the context of counter-extremism and deradicalisation (e.g. Jende 204; Koehler 2014b; Koehler 2015a, 2015b). In the international arena the first widely regarded effort to establish fundamental structural standards was undertaken in 2011. The “Rome Memorandum”, drafted by experts from the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the Internal Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) in The Hague, is the only collection of quality criteria for deradicalisation pro-

grammes targeting detained terrorists and extremists (cf. e.g. Stone 2015). The 25 points of the memorandum pursue the aim of ensuring the effectiveness of such programmes, entailing aspects such as clearly defined objectives, respect for human rights in detention facilities, the integration of various disciplines and post-release follow-up. However, although the 30 member states of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum signed the memorandum, it can be stated that around the world even these fundamental elements of effective intervention work in the criminal justice sphere exist largely only on paper. The Rome Memorandum is an important starting point for application by German implementers, but at the same time it is far too abstract, being designed with countries in mind which demonstrate a far lower degree of legal certainty (for instance with regard to corruption and respect for human rights).

The following substantive section of this handbook therefore presents a first detailed discussion of the structural requirements for programmes engaged in intervention work which can form the basis of subsequent impact and process evaluations. Before the impact of an intervention programme or its internal working processes can ever be evaluated, it is essential to first define the central parameters of the programme’s work with reference to quality standards, which should in turn function as minimum benchmarks for this field of work and which themselves should be easy to test. Particular consideration was thereby given to reflecting the diverse landscape of projects and implementers in Germany and to ensuring that they can continue to develop themselves and maintain their unique identifiers and individual approaches.

SUBSTANTIVE PART

I RUNNING AND DEVELOPING A PROGRAMME

KEY POINTS

- Senior management and team leaders possess appropriate training and experience
- Sufficient scope for supervision of staff by seniors
- Programme structured on a sound theoretical basis
- Thorough consultation of academic literature and external evaluation during the development phase
- Approach in line with the current state of research

Senior management and team leaders are of central importance to programmes dealing with counter-extremism and interventions. The quality of the structured interventions on offer depends to a large extent on the senior staff (from managers to team and project leaders). The relevant qualifications and practical experience of senior personnel must therefore be duly considered when deciding on an intervention programme and evaluating its structural integrity, not least because the managers and project leaders usually form the public “face” of the

programme and are hence crucial for gaining the trust of the target group. The findings of research in the fields of criminology and terrorism (deradicalisation) indicate that the following questions should be answered in the affirmative:

- Are the management and project leaders sufficiently qualified in the subject to fulfil the requirements of the project? For example, can they demonstrate knowledge of jihadism, extremism, deradicalisation, risk analysis etc. in line with the latest research?
- Do the management and project leaders have adequate practical experience, and is it also appropriate for the requirements of the intervention programme?
- Are the management and project leaders involved in recruiting and training staff?
- Are managers in a position to supervise staff sufficiently and to engage in quality assurance?
- Do the management and project leaders have practical experience of the activities expected of their staff?
- Is the risk of management overload (manifested e.g. by unreachability, failure to keep important appointments, lack of availability for stakeholders) largely mitigated?

One further aspect of great importance is the programme development process. Counter-extremism interventions must be **placed on a robust theoretical footing**, in order to apply a heuristic method to the programme approach and the central impact mechanisms. In a high-quality intervention programme, contexts, impacts, methods and problem outlines cannot be identified without providing underlying evidence or referencing the latest research. The programme development phase should therefore entail a **thorough consultation of academic literature in the relevant disciplines** to ensure that the **fundamental approach of the project is in line with the latest research**. As is common in academia – though hitherto rarely the case in the field of counter-extremism – **external academic experts with a proven track record and experienced practitioners should review the theoretical basis of a project**. A mutually confidential process (in which the external reviewers and project implementers are not known to each other) is advisable, and in the context of project evaluation the question of the academic quality and practical relevance of the project strategy is crucial.

Concrete issues to verify are whether:

- The theoretical basis of the project strategy is in line with the latest international academic research;
- Academic literature was sufficiently consulted during the programme development phase and the material reflected the latest findings on the relevant theories and models applied in the project;
- Pilots were conducted and adequately assessed and evaluated.

Moreover, when conducting a structural integrity evaluation a **high degree of acceptance and standing within the counter-extremism landscape** as well as **stable funding over a period of at least two years**, at a level commensurate with the aims of the project, are further relevant indicators with regard to intervention projects which have been in operation for a long period of time.

Although the German counter-extremism implementer landscape is deeply heterogeneous and civil society actors often have to compete for funding, for the purposes of quality assurance it is nevertheless sensible to consult relevant external experts routinely and anonymously about issues such as the acceptance of a particular project among peers. This is because the confidence of multipliers and academic experts or practitioners in an implementer's ability and the quality of their project can be central to success or failure in establishing the project. Stable funding is important insofar as intervention programmes which attract media attention by complaining of their impending financial collapse or which otherwise gain a reputation for instability may struggle to win the trust of the target group (families and participants) to engage in long-term and lasting treatment. With regard to interventions in the field of counter-extremism it must be borne in mind that years of activity do not automatically equate to a high degree of competence or quality. As discussed above, the vast majority of programmes in this field are yet to be comprehensively evaluated. Questionnaires aimed at families with programme experience revealed

a number of cases in which parents urgently seeking advice approached long-established programmes which either failed to return their calls or provided them with substandard advice. In some cases this resulted in missing the opportunity to prevent someone from travelling to Syria or Iraq to participate in the civil war. In spite of these failures (for instance in Germany, Denmark, France and

Canada), the programmes in question continue to be seen as successful, on the basis of their own unverified presentation of their work. In such cases competence and success are not derived from programme evaluation, but from the long duration of the activity. Years of experience may indeed engender expertise, but this is not automatically the case.

II PERSONNEL AND ORGANISATION

KEY POINTS

- Clearly defined objectives and tasks
- Effective reception and categorisation process for new cases
- Low threshold for initial contact
- Integration of victim and local authority perspectives
- Staff training in line with the latest research
- Effective risk analysis system in place
- Central impact mechanism: identification of radicalising factors, selection of methods using impact theory, documentation and assessment of effects, recalibration and follow-up

The structural integrity of an intervention programme depends not only on senior management but also

on further criteria relating to the organisation of the programme. The **concrete aims of the programme must be clearly defined**. As has been pointed out by Lutzinger et al. (2016) for Germany, the absence of a formulated aim is a major problem when categorising the programme as a particular type of preventative measure or intervention, which in turn is connected to the respective criteria for success and failure as well as expectations and claims. Both the target group and the financial backers – but not least also the staff themselves – must be as clear as possible about the actual aims of the programme. Evaluation is only possible when formulated aims can be measured against ultimate outcomes. By contrast, and for a variety of particular reasons, the majority of – for the most part civil-society – intervention projects in Germany adopt broad-based and undifferentiated approaches pursuing unspecified aims. For the implementers this has the advantage that, under the aegis of a single project, they

can offer everything from counter-extremism measures to interventions. However, it can also lower the quality of the particular services they offer.

A central structural component of high-quality intervention programmes is the availability and operation of an **effective case management registration, reception and categorisation system**. As emphasised in the 'Rome Memorandum' (Stone 2015), the assistance requests and cases reaching an intervention programme do not all belong to the same risk and radicalisation type. As a result, the cases coming in need to be captured in a uniform and effective reception process and categorised so as to enable the designation of individual caseworkers and a specific treatment methodology. Furthermore, as a matter of principle effective interventions need to be designed in accordance with individual needs, which in turn requires a structured reception process which incorporates a medical history (or something similar) as part of the treatment. This is the only way to ensure the necessary information and categorisation at the case reception phase are aligned with the methodology of the ensuing treatment and thus to perform a targeted intervention or preventative measure. Programmes which log and consider all requests (including e.g. those merely enquiring about further information) as treatment cases, irrespective of relevance or degree of radicalisation, fail to distribute their time, material and personnel resources according to risk category, a point which criminology researchers have identified as a central problem in such programmes (Mullins 2010). This has the effect of reducing the efficiency of intervention programmes and deradicalisation work in general. It may safely be assumed that highly radicalised individuals and persons of interest to the security authorities require more effort and intensity of treatment than early-prevention cases. Caseworkers therefore

need to be able to vary the duration of their advisory sessions by case type and prioritise by urgency. There are a number of further reasons why having an internal categorisation system for different case types is an indispensable feature of an effective intervention programme. For instance it is crucial that the programme and staff are capable of distinguishing between different work processes for different case types, which in turn also enables the various processes to be examined. If cases demonstrating no indication of current radicalisation are treated in the same way as cases of interest to the security authorities instead of being delegated to partner organisations, this not only distorts the value of using the simple case numbers as a possible criterion of success, it also amounts to a use of programme resources which is at odds with the formulated aims and tasks. It is here that the interaction of the structural quality indicators is best illustrated. If an intervention programme does not have clearly defined aims and tasks, it becomes very difficult to establish a uniform reception process to allocate and prioritise resources. Consequently, inefficiency in intervention work can stem both from having consciously broad and undefined tasks, and also from not having case typologies, reception procedures and registration criteria in place. In such circumstances it is also far less likely that a programme will concentrate on its originally defined target group and reject irrelevant cases, and the value of other forms of assessment (impact and process evaluation) becomes diminished. Ultimately, internal quality assurance is only possible to a limited degree without clear aims, tasks and registration of incoming cases. If the same amount of effort is always expended and the same substantive processes automatically applied, regardless of case type, then the crucial factors of success for individually tailored and needs- and risk-based treatment are not in place.

The **threshold for initial contact** or arranging a first approach should be as low as possible to ensure that individuals, particularly those in a situation of personal crisis or great uncertainty, have the opportunity to take up the offer of help and also want to do so. Individuals in search of advice should be confronted with as few hurdles as possible. As is common in other crisis treatments, it is essential to **provide a direct contact person for the initial conversation** in order to commence the case and if necessary to take immediate emergency steps. As a matter of routine the initial conversation should include information about the advisory centre, the advisory services it offers, and its approach in cases of interest to the security authorities. Such transparency with regard both to the work which may be expected from the advisory centre as well as the possible involvement of the security authorities must be in place from the outset and the situation explained unequivocally to the individual. Whilst it will be very rare to secure written consent for the transmission of personal data, this can at least be obtained orally during the initial conversation. Such a step not only helps build trust between the individual and the advisory centre, it also provides legal cover for both sides. It should be clear to individuals approaching advisory centres which personal data may have to be transmitted to which bodies – for instance employers, schools or psychologists – as part of the consultation.

Further structural quality criteria which have become established in international best practice include having an **interdisciplinary case management team and psychological expertise on hand**. Since counter-extremism efforts and disengagement from radical milieu processes are highly complex affairs, it is essential that the advisory team can draw on various areas of academic and practical knowledge (e.g. Islamic studies, political

science, law, psychology, sociology, theology, as well as practical experience in security, social work, family support and trauma therapy). Among those programmes around the world deemed to be effective, the overwhelming majority consider it essential that the necessary psychological expertise is available which goes beyond a mere basic knowledge of psychology for case management purposes. Since both the contact to and membership of extremist groups can be linked to psychological traumas, many programmes offer the possibility of intensive trauma therapy in addition to their standard ideological or pragmatic disengagement and counter-extremism intervention. One example of the necessity for such therapy is the high risk of post-traumatic stress disorder among individuals returning from Syria or Iraq, which can also extend to relatives of the returnees and thus should also feature as part of family support (cf. Rose & Zimmermann 2015).

A particular structural feature of counter-extremism and deradicalisation work is the widespread international practice of **using former extremists and terrorists as case workers**. In line with this approach, the bulk of the real deradicalisation work is done by former extremists, as for example in Indonesia (Idris & Taufiqurrohman 2015) or Sweden (Christensen 2015). In principle the involvement of reformed extremists in an intervention programme is to be welcomed, provided it takes place on the basis of **clear quality standards and guidelines for their work**. The mere experience of having been a far-right extremist or a jihadist does not automatically mean suitability as an intervention caseworker. In Germany, and elsewhere, there have been numerous instances of former extremists committing gross misconduct or even engaging in criminal activity whilst leading intervention projects. As a consequence, the expectations with regard to training, supervision and working standards for former extremists

working on counter-extremism must significantly exceed the minimum standards. It must be checked whether someone has the necessary expertise to do casework, regular and intensive supervision and training are guaranteed and the person has the mental stability (to avert the risk of re-traumatisation through confrontation with one's own ideological past), as well as whether their activity conforms to the actual aims of the deradicalisation project. A critical point is the observation that the status of "professional ex-extremist" can at most be an interim stage in the disengagement process, since the aim of successful deradicalisation is not to create a new dependency on the very same extremist milieu one has sought to quit. Programmes which former extremists exploit as a source of funding must be viewed as highly unprofessional. Ideally **former extremists are therefore:**

- A) integrated in mixed teams (together with people without an extremist background);**
- B) involved in the intervention within the framework of clear and particular quality standards (including intensive training and supervision);**
- C) only involved for a pre-defined, limited time, in order to secure the transition to a lifestyle entirely free of extremism.**

A further quality standard for interventions concerns **confronting disengaging extremists with the experiences of the victims of extremist violence or examining the victims' perspective.**

The risk to be averted here is an excessive focus on the former perpetrators which neglects the interests of the victims. Disengagement interventions for the perpetrators must be methodologically distinct from victim interventions, since an intersection of the two approaches would cause considerable structural and ethical problems. Researchers have repeatedly emphasised the

positive impact of the victims' perspective (e.g. Barret & Bokhari 2008; Bazemore 1998; Hettiarachchi 2015; Mullins 2015), particularly as an educational measure intended to raise awareness of responsibility for one's own past and earlier violent crimes as well as developing empathy for the victims and generating a reflection of the effects of violence on the basis of relationship work and critical examination in the context of "forgiveness of guilt" and "atonement". Inclusion of the victims' perspective should be grounded in a sound methodological concept, in order to avoid reinforcing the conflicts between perpetrators and victims or re-radicalisation due to a sense of perceived condemnation, shame, guilt, etc.

When designing an intervention project, it is always important to consider the **perspective of the towns, cities and districts** into which the former extremists will ultimately be reintegrated. Ideally, local authorities and towns will have either been directly involved in developing the programme or their particular needs and expectations of the project will have been ascertained in advance. Since successful counter-extremism and intervention work is fundamentally dependent on support on the ground, both from the state administration structures (e.g. schools, council offices) and civil society (e.g. social partners and service providers, employers), practical necessities should be clarified in advance and a corresponding communication and education strategy for the local community network activities presented and implemented.

Within the organisational aspects of structural integrity evaluation, the advisory centre staff assume a central role. All over the world, the quality and effectiveness of counter-extremism and interventions (from family support to disengagement) depend chiefly and crucially on the caseworkers, who need to meet a broad range

of requirements to fulfil these highly complex tasks. The importance of caseworker training should therefore not be underestimated. In the international context two distinct models for further training and specialisation have established themselves in this area, whereby both assume greatly differing levels of prior knowledge (e.g. a degree in Islamic studies, political sciences, psychology or law, or prior practical experience as a police officer, journalist etc.). On the one hand is a special training course developed specifically with the programme in mind and lasting for several weeks which commences and concludes a few months before the actual casework begins. The other approach often entails undergoing further training in parallel with ongoing casework. The latter model automatically requires a greater level of practical experience and subject-related expertise from caseworkers, who merely receive additional on-the-job training. In this context it should be borne in mind that highly complex cases, including those of interest to the security authorities, can come up at a relatively early stage, which in turn requires effective case management processes. Only by immediately categorising new cases is it possible to designate them to appropriately qualified personnel or other organisational units (e.g. within senior management, among team leaders or training teams) or to supervise them accordingly (e.g. when the caseworkers taking them on have not yet been fully inducted or trained). Furthermore, in the second model it is imperative for the trainers to ensure intensive and close support and supervision for the newly recruited caseworkers, as well as short and effective channels of communication between these caseworkers, senior management and the trainers themselves. For both models the following rules apply:

A) The curriculum for the caseworkers training units must be scientifically sound and in line with the latest research;

B) The specialisation must be comprehensive and based on subject expertise (i.e. conceived, conducted and continuously updated by recognised and experienced experts);

C) Particularly relevant practical aspects such as case studies, verification of the latest standard of knowledge and applicability of the learning material, risk analysis, recognition and interpretation of extremist ideology must feature in the curriculum.

The materials used to implement the training strategy must be made available for the evaluation. By the same token, this strategy forms an integral part of the overall project, and hence it must be aligned in substantive and educational terms with its focus and aims (for example, family support requires special modules on this topic, and work in prisons needs legal units on the relevant context). The broader the aims and tasks of an intervention project, the broader and substantively more complex the staff training must be. Here we refer again to the aforementioned importance of drawing clear limits on the aims of an intervention project. In the course of staff training and specialisation, consideration should also be given to **including ethical guidelines for caseworkers as well as ensuring the possibility for staff to provide feedback on the course content**. This should ensure that caseworkers know, share and support the aims and tasks of the project. Ongoing further training is also a central component of quality assurance.

Caseworker recruitment should be undertaken according to relevant experience and subject expertise as well as verified competences and ethical values, which should be clearly defined for the project. Often it is the case that apolitical Salafists or others who, whilst not espousing violence, do hold

deeply conservative or even radical opinions, consider engaging in counter-extremism casework. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the project as a whole and its implementer stand on a firm foundation of values and that this is also reflected in personnel recruitment.

Regular team meetings and discussion of cases are just as essential for the caseworkers as an **assessment of staff according to the quality of their work**. A further central aspect of quality is **effective caseworker supervision** and the possibility for caseworkers to enlist psychological support themselves if needed. Counter-extremism casework is unavoidably associated with an intensive and challenging confrontation with a wide range of content and events which is sometimes traumatic (e.g. analysing Daesh propaganda, informing families about the death of relatives in Syria or Iraq). The high number of cases and the stress and the pressure they entail (e.g. through the high hopes of family members that their son or daughter can be brought home from Syria alive) mean the risk of burnout or other stress-related effects are particularly high in this field of work. Just as with other jobs where wrong decisions or an unsuccessful intervention can have dire consequences (right up to the death of the individual being treated), in the field of counter-extremism work adequate staff support must be ensured.

With regard to effective intervention work, frequent mention has been made of the particular aspect of **risk analysis or the assessment of the security relevance of a case**. The identification of those cases that are of particular interest to the security authorities or that carry

a high risk of violence or travel to Iraq, Syria or other regions of conflict, is central in determining the preventative impact of the project and the casework strategy pursued (including the possibility of referring a case to the security authorities). It is therefore fundamentally important for the entire spectrum of counter-extremism and intervention work to have recourse to a methodologically sound and comprehensively developed mechanism for risk analysis and assessment of a case's security relevance. This mechanism should also be made available to caseworkers through guidelines, analysis tools and handbooks. In addition, risk analysis must also be a fundamental component of staff training and be subject to broad examination. Caseworkers who are unable to recognise the potential security relevance of a case, and perhaps even unclear about which bodies should be contacted when and how, pose a high risk themselves as well as representing a clear sign of unprofessional casework. In conjunction with this aspect, clear guidelines on cooperating with the security authorities should be available and known to all staff, and the application of these guidelines should be checked regularly. Generally speaking, there ought to be a distinct approach to high-risk cases, which should be familiar to all caseworkers. In the international context a series of approaches have become established in a number of countries and come to be seen as the basic standard, such as the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment (VERA) Protocol (Pressman & Flockton 2014), which now exists as a revised second version (VERA-2) and in short form (VERA-SV), as well as the Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG 22+) (Dean 2014; Silke 2014a). Further approaches are currently being tested in the United States, the Netherlands, Denmark and

Germany (the latter is the “risk-based analysis of potentially harmful perpetrators to assess acute risk – Islamist terrorism”, or ‘RADAR iTE’). All of these risk analysis methods require special training for staff, conducted by a qualified trainer and entailing corresponding practical exercises.

The question of **incentives for participation** in an advisory programme is the subject of controversy in international debate. Depending on the type of programme, possible incentives for participants who confront their own ideology, distance themselves from their extremist world views and actively participate in the corresponding groups commonly include the prospect of reduced custodial sentences, access to free education, removal of tattoos, drug therapy, psychotherapy, help finding a job, etc. With regard to the structural integrity of a counter-extremism and intervention programme, it is important to ensure that the incentives on offer clearly relate to the fundamental values and aims of the programme and the programme type. It is quite common for state programmes and those which actively seek to engage participants to offer a wide range of state-funded benefits including cash payments (e.g. for new clothes or to pay off debts), something which is rarely possible for those civil-society implementers following a passive approach. Since in the latter case individuals in search of support usually contact the programme on their own volition, the need to “tempt” them into participating would seem to be lesser. Nevertheless it should be borne in mind that such incentives do not distort the motivation to participate in a programme and thus do not undermine its basic values and aims. Conversely, any effective

counter-extremism programme ought to have the option of resorting to **sufficient punitive mechanisms** in the event of participants actively disregarding the intervention plan, refusing to cooperate with the necessary measures or showing no readiness to distance themselves from the extremist milieu and/or ideology. Such sanctions can range from a restriction on the abovementioned incentives to the termination of the intervention by the programme implementer. At any rate these punitive mechanisms should form part of the clear procedures and mechanisms which are familiar to all parties in the programme.

In conclusion it may be said with regard to the structural integrity of an intervention project that, both in the programme’s design and in the training of its staff as well as in all functional aspects the central counter-extremism impact platform must be safeguarded:

1. Identification, documentation and clarification of the presumed reasons and motives for an individual’s radicalisation.
2. Development of an individually tailored treatment on the basis of this analysis, entailing:
3. A selection of methods which are linked to the radicalising factors by a concrete impact theory.
4. Effective internal verification of the impact of the selected treatment methods on the identified radicalising factors and adjustment where necessary.
5. Attainment of an objective identified at the outset and a clearly defined end to the treatment.

III PARTICIPANT CLASSIFICATION

KEY POINTS

- Clearly defined target group
- Clearly defined exclusion and conclusion criteria
- Performance of structured risk analysis
- Clear procedures for different case-types according to risk
- Effective case documentation system

Alongside the relevant aspects of programme management and development and the organisation of the interventions or counter-extremism programme, the third area which plays a large role in structural integrity is the handling and categorisation of programme participants, recipients of advisory services and “clients” in a disengagement session.

As well as the programme aims, the **target group for the intervention must be clearly defined and appropriate to the programme design**. Different types of intervention programmes are suited to different kinds of target groups, and so the social and political context of the programme must be given serious thought at the programme development stage. Without precise knowledge of the given local extremist structures, their sociobiographical make-up and recruitment or radicalisation processes, any programme can only be developed in line

with a general logic rather than adapting to circumstances on the ground. The defined target group with its specific characteristics (regarding language, family status, level of education etc.) has a direct influence on the core offers and services of the programme. These factors also determine the skills staff must possess (e.g. language ability). At any rate the quality of a programme’s design can be seen in whether field work or analysis of relevant sources of information has produced an accurate picture of the situation on the ground and whether the programme has been adjusted accordingly. It would be lamentable for a programme to do the opposite, namely to simply assume a “generally known” situation without gathering evidence and to transfer an approach from one context to another without verifying possible differences.

Of comparable importance to the **definition of the target group is the definition of clear exclusion criteria and their application** in everyday casework. As a matter of principle any counter-extremism programme or intervention should expect to be approached by some people seeking assistance who are in fact not at risk of radicalisation. In such circumstances caseworkers need clearly defined and easily understandable guidelines on when a case should be accepted or passed on to another organisation. Here again, the undifferentiated classification of all requests as new cases must be seen as a major

quality deficit, since such an approach undermines the genuine central counter-extremism aim by transitioning it into one of general preventative action. Without a clear definition of the target group, effectiveness is neither possible in theory nor in practice. Furthermore, exclusion criteria also serve to protect the ability of staff to work, since they ought to stipulate when a case must be stopped without bringing it to a successful conclusion or when it must be passed on to other organisations (such as the security authorities). Such exclusion criteria may be set out in security guidelines, for instance, which should also **define risk factors (behaviours and biographical factors believed to present a potential risk of criminal activity)**. Carrying out structured risk analysis on the basis of these factors is an integral part of counter-extremism and interventions, and without them no programme should be funded or implemented – especially with regard to security-relevant cases. To ensure **effective risk assessment in casework the corresponding risk levels must also be defined and linked to certain procedures with which programme staff should be entirely familiar**.

As is the case for rehabilitation programmes concerning other forms of criminality, the well established RNR⁵ principle (Donald A. Andrews, Bonta & Wormith 2015; Mullins 2010; Smith, Gendreau & Swartz 2009) should also apply to programmes in the field of counter-extremism

and interventions. This principle, which numerous studies have strongly linked to low recidivism rates, programme effectiveness and long-term impact, states the following:

- A) Individuals in the highest risk category must have the most programme resources devoted to them (risk);
- B) The treatment methods must be guided by the particular needs and motives for participation of the individuals in question (need);
- C) Methods aimed at social learning must be prioritised (responsivity).

As a result, the casework with programme participants should have recourse to a **mechanism and process for determining entry or radicalisation factors**. These need to be **anchored in staff training and their implementation regularly checked**. The selected **methods of treatment must be aligned to these factors** and be **based on the notion of social learning**.

Finally, the **course of the intervention and the impact of the selected treatment methods on the risk factors must be recorded and documented in a standardised fashion**. The **case documentation system must facilitate both internal and external statistical programme evaluation as well as the effective handover of a case to other staff members**.

⁵Risk, Need, Responsivity.

IV CARE AND ADVISORY SERVICES

KEY POINTS

- Emphasis of the care and advisory services on individual radicalisation factors
- Staggered allocation of programme resources according to risk level
- Effective implementation of protective measures
- Existence of a comprehensive and up-to-date handbook for all programme processes
- Possibility for programme participants to provide feedback
- Appropriate sanction mechanisms and incentives to participate
- Conclusion following attainment of set aims and intensive preparation and follow-up; negative effects of the treatment are identified and documented

The nature of the care and advisory services provided to individuals seeking assistance or desiring to disengage as part of a counter-extremism or intervention project is a further crucial aspect determining the success and lasting impact of such work. Furthermore, the quality of the advisory services and the methodological basis for the care must constitute part of the quality standards in all forms of evaluation.

As has been frequently mentioned, the foundation of professional counter-extremism and intervention work is an **emphasis of the treatment on individual criminogenic factors in combination with those factors (assumed to be) driving the ideological radicalisation**. In the field of criminology a series of criminogenic factors (the so-called “Central Eight”) have assumed a particular relevance with regard to managing extremist and terrorist criminals and assessing the risk they pose. These factors consist of: having experience of violence and committing violent crimes in the past, anti-social personality disorders, drug abuse, views legitimising criminality (including rationalising crime), social support for crime, family influence, influence of school and friend circles, and relevant problematic leisure activities (Donald A. Andrews, Bonta & Wormith 2015). Since the driving factors of extremist radicalisation are not identical to the criminogenic factors for apolitical criminal conduct, it is once again important to emphasise for the purposes of case management that uniform mechanisms identifying the grounds of radicalisation must be in place which apply from the moment of taking on and assessing a case, and the selection of advisory methods should be both conscious and strategic.

Both the field of international research and everyday deradicalisation practice have developed a standard for **methods to strengthen the cognitive abilities of programme participants**. The intention is thus, in combination with **elements of general and vocational education**, to expand their world view and open their cognitive capacity to a self-critical reflection of their own actions and the ideological attractiveness of the extremist milieu.

Of particular importance for the effective handling of individuals seeking assistance is the **inclusion of their place of residency** and an examination of whether the potential threat posed by the respective extremist milieu renders a move to another location necessary. The ability of a counter-extremism or intervention programme to arrange or secure individual protective measures also constitutes a quality standard in this area. As research has shown (e.g. Bates 2010; Koehler 2015d; Speckhard & Layla 2015), in some cases extremist groups and radical milieus possess considerable capacity to sanction individuals and numerous reasons and mechanisms to punish those who leave the group or question its central ideological positions. Therefore, the **aspect of planning and implementing protective measures** (e.g. a move to a safe place of residency, personal protection to avert threats, removal of relevant online profiles, imposition of reporting requirements and curfews) **must be integrated within the project or as part of the agreed procedures for high-risk cases as well as in caseworker training modules**. The **intensity of the treatment** (e.g. time length, density of sessions, measures) **must increase in line with the risk level**. This **relationship between use of programme resources and respective risk level should be internally identifiable and comprehensible**.

To abide by quality standards for participant care in counter-extremism and intervention projects it is also necessary for caseworkers to have recourse to a **comprehensive handbook which is updated in line with the latest research and the programme's casework practice**. Furthermore, **caseworker training and**

application of the handbook's contents ought to be regularly assessed.

As is well known from the practice of counter-extremism and intervention casework, the relationship between the caseworker and the participant can be of vital importance and the question of personal chemistry can certainly be a factor. It should therefore be possible within the treatment process to switch caseworkers or hand over cases or, alternatively, to incorporate a mechanism when commencing a new case to ensure the best possible compatibility of caseworkers and participants. Of similar importance is the compatibility of caseworkers and the programme, which should be reviewed regularly.

As part of the structural quality assurance it is essential – as far as possible – to gather feedback from participants about the programme offer. Whilst this is not feasible in all cases and circumstances, one option is to give participants the opportunity to provide anonymised feedback on a voluntary basis on conclusion of the treatment. This offer to participants provides a key resource for both internal and external impact and process evaluation. As mentioned earlier, in interviews the majority of relatives of radicalised individuals are overwhelmingly dissatisfied with the services offered in the programmes they have used. Some such programmes fall at the first hurdle by simply not being available or failing to provide information. Since the relatives interviewed generally had no opportunity to offer formal feedback which might have helped to improve the service provided, and since conducting

questionnaires with participants is categorically refused on a multitude of grounds, it is rarely possible to evaluate the basic quality of the advisory services or their relevance to actual needs from a recipient's perspective.

As part of the internal impact assessment of the methods applied, all project caseworkers must be able to **identify and document negative effects of their own advisory work**. As described, one of the central mechanisms in counter-extremism and intervention work is linking a working hypothesis on the radicalising factors to a selection of programme elements and methods associated with these factors. If, for instance, it is suspected that racism and bullying at school are contributing to the radicalisation of an individual, then one aspect of the treatment should comprise e.g. tailored information about legal options, psychological examination of possible traumas, victim support, measures to help boost self-confidence and targeted efforts to contact and link up with school staff members. The central impact level of such an intervention is achieved by finding a possible explanation for the respective grounds for radicalisation using the identified factors and the resultant connection to individually selected and composed advisory services. In such cases a positive effect may well not ensue, or indeed there may be a negative impact, if:

- A) The radicalisation factors were wrong or imprecisely defined;
- B) The treatment and applied methods were not aligned to the individual situation.

In a highly complex intervention situation, neither A) nor B) can be fundamentally or entirely excluded, and so the course a case takes needs to be continually monitored with regard to the methods being applied in order to improve the impact of the intervention. As a first step, as part of their case documentation caseworkers need to be able to confirm or adjust their working hypothesis by

referring to the radicalisation motives and factors and to verify the positive or negative impact of the methods chosen. For this to happen, as a rule the status quo needs to be documented at the outset of the treatment, setting out the problematic behavioural or attitudinal patterns, and aims need to be set which have been drawn up jointly with those seeking assistance. **At the very outset of the intervention the chosen methods should be tested for possible negative effects.**

Closely linked to the set aims for an individual case are the **defined criteria for concluding the treatment**. The absence of criteria for closing a case runs the risk of continuing the treatment well beyond the period in which it is beneficial and efficient, which both presents an unnecessary danger of creating a dependency for the person seeking help and also unduly burdens the resources in the project. As soon as the defined aims and conclusion criteria have been met, the **closure of a case should be planned and prepared** – consistently and according to a fixed procedure – and/or the case handed over to a third party. Once the case has been closed, there should be a follow-up for the caseworkers to address positive and negative aspects of the case and produce possible feedback for the programme as whole. Moreover, every case provides the opportunity for structured learning and contains potential information about radicalisation processes, ideological aspects, access to new networks and contacts etc. which must be documented and evaluated for the benefit of future work. A case which is closed after meeting the criteria for conclusion is of far greater value to the process and impact evaluation than those cases which the participants terminate prematurely. As a matter of routine, the **ratio of closed cases to uncompleted ones** should be recorded and documented as a structural programme quality standard.

Although determining recidivism rates as part of an impact evaluation is problematic for the reasons set out above, this will nevertheless remain a popular criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of an intervention or counter-extremism project. Closely connected with recidivism rates – and hence of importance in assessing structural quality – is the possibility of observing a case post-closure with regard to subsequent developments. Since western countries generally impose very strong constraints on protecting data, detailed evaluation of the subsequent development of a case is only possible during a narrow window and on a voluntary basis. State-run programmes have the obvious advantage that, within existing data protection frameworks, they can still learn of an individual relapsing into criminal activity after participating in an intervention. Civil-society projects on the other hand are usually reliant on conducting their own limited research or hearing of a relapse by chance. In terms of structural integrity, the important point is whether or to what extent the possibility of post-closure observation of a case and of obtaining feedback is discussed and applied in the methodology for the respective project type within the existing data protection framework.

The final quality standard concerns the area of family support. As numerous studies have illustrated, the so-called affective environment of peers are instrumental both in recognising early signs of radicalisation and achieving an effective intervention. In one study of lone actor terrorism for instance, over 60% of families and friends were aware of the radicalisation or attack plans (Gill, Horgan & Deckert 2014). By the same token, families and the close social circle around radicalising individuals play a central role in paving the way to advisory services (Williams, Horgan & Evans, 2015). The existence of a stable and positive social environment is one of the most frequently cited grounds for disengagement from extremist groups (e.g. Barelle 2015; Bjørgo

2009; Jacobson 2010; Rosenau, Espach, Ortiz & Herrera 2014) and successful reintegration into a life free of crime (which applies not only to extremism/terrorism but also other phenomena such as youth gangs: c.f. Altier, Thoroughgood & Horgan 2014; Hastings, Dunbar & Bania 2011; Mullins 2010; Vigil 2011). Besides the positive influence of family and social networks on an intervention, in the area of jihadist radicalisation it is also known that the initial exposure to an extremist ideology or group – or indeed even the active recruitment – often happens through family members. Sageman's fundamental study of worldwide jihadist networks highlighted the central importance of social ties (friends and relatives) in the recruitment for Islamist extremism in 75% of the cases examined (2004 p. 111-113). In the case of European jihadists the figure is still 35% (Bakker 2006). This share was confirmed for those Germans travelling to Syria or Iraq with jihadist motives: between 35% and 38% of them were centrally influenced by their close social circle when becoming radicalised (BKA, BfV & HKW 2015 p. 19). As a result, the **involvement of the affective environment** (family, friends) both in counter-extremism measures and interventions is of great importance.

KEY POINTS

- Internal and external quality assurance in place
- Application of transparent error analysis
- Review and distinct documentation of unsuccessful cases; pre-closure evaluation of all cases

Integrated programme quality assurance forms a further component of the structural integrity of counter-extremism programmes and interventions. This not only entails substantive safeguards for the project design, caseworker training content and constant updating of the underlying methods and processes, but also a quality assurance mechanism explicitly built into the programme structure. This mechanism should be divided into an internal and an external part.

The internal quality assurance must check actual compliance with the formulated aims and standards and envisaged processes. This includes verifying that:

- Caseworkers' knowledge is regularly tested and updated;
- Caseworkers' practice and awareness in matters pertaining to risk analysis and security relevance is tested;
- Case conferences are arranged regularly;
- Random checks of individual caseworkers' case documentation are performed;
- Reports are regularly submitted by caseworkers to project managers and senior management;

- Data on the economic parameters of the project (e.g. income/expenditure; duration of advisory services broken down by case type) are monitored;
- Demand for the advisory services is evaluated internally.

The latter point is only possible on the basis of effective case management procedures and corresponding documentation. With regard to the purpose of an advisory programme it is essential to ascertain, through comparison with the originally formulated tasks and aims, whether for instance the majority of cases reaching the programme belonged to the lowest radicalisation threshold or resulted from early-preventative work when the intended target group was in fact highly radicalised individuals and their families. If a programme is seeking to focus on specific preventative activities but is prevented from fulfilling this aim due to the high volume of cases coming in requiring an intervention, this too may be grounds for adjusting the programme's design. A host of further statistics are necessary for internal quality assurance, including: concentration of time periods for approaches to the programme (weekends, out of office hours), distribution of resources among the different case types, and time periods for measures being implemented. These internal quality assurance mechanisms ultimately help in making fine adjustments and optimising processes with regard to the actual aims and tasks of the programme. As indicated above, in practice this is made more difficult by the fact that many implementers cast the net of services they offer too widely (ranging from preventative activities to family support and disengagement care) within one and the same project, which in light of the limited staff resources as a

rule cannot work in a methodologically effective and sound manner without impacting negatively on the quality of the treatment. A further aspect of internal quality assurance is determining participant satisfaction to the extent that this is possible within the parameters of the programme. It should be emphasised here that particularly failed cases and those terminated by the participants themselves should be documented precisely and evaluated in order to identify possible structural or methodological problems and avoid replicating them in future. The quality of a project dealing with counter-extremism activities or interventions depends fundamentally on how unsuccessful cases and failures are handled. The fact that around the world the overwhelming majority of projects in this field report almost nothing but successful cases and low recidivism rates is cause for scepticism. It also begs the question of how these few cases of relapses are handled, given that as matter of principle there is no such thing as a perfect methodology for all cases. Internal quality assurance should therefore **entail a distinct error analysis and evaluate all unsuccessful cases separately**. The feedback loop needs to be joined up, i.e. the mistakes and problems identified from a case must be documented and communicated back to the process cycle through the modification of certain measures (for instance special training units on specific topics for individual caseworkers, optimisation of the case reception process, improvement of the documentation system, capture and communication of lessons learned). As far as possible, **statistics should be kept on known relapses** following the successful completion of a case. In this context it is particularly important to **evaluate the individual cases regularly, and at**

any rate completely prior to concluding the case (with regard to risk, security relevance, radicalisation etc.).

External quality assurance is not commonly conducted by persons or bodies outside the advisory programme or the implementing organisation. It is based on comparisons using specific defined criteria and benchmarks. It is of fundamental importance to the structural integrity of counter-extremism and intervention activities that the programme undertakes regular external quality assurance using independent third parties. This entails **conducting regular external evaluations of different areas of the programme**. It must be borne in mind that whilst evaluations carried out in the past are to be welcomed with regard to structural integrity, conversely such evaluations are counter-productive if they merely transpose unrelated material or if studies with no evaluative substance are wrongly portrayed as evaluations. It is not uncommon for implementers to transpose evaluations from other projects which have no substantive connection to the counter-extremism or intervention activity in question. Furthermore, final project reports, student dissertations on projects and government responses to parliamentary questions are regularly cited as “evaluations”, despite the fact that as a rule these merely present information about the project rather than a genuine assessment. The professional examination and evaluation of various aspects of a particular programme should in all cases be carried out by people and bodies possessing relevant practical experience in the field or the necessary academic expertise.

In conclusion, we can state that internal and external quality assurance must entail a **critical and transparent dialogue about mistakes made during the advisory activity and possible structural problems**. Around the world numerous cases of corruption or even criminal acts involving staff members or senior managers in a host of deradicalisation or counter-extremism programmes have come to light. The knowledge of

such incidents must be discussed critically as part of the structural integrity evaluation, which is why detailed media research and interviews with caseworkers to ascertain known cases of relapses or structural problems are an essential component of an evaluation. The question is also raised as to whether or to what extent the programme and the implementer have addressed such incidents and minimised the risk of repetition.

VI TRANSPARENCY

KEY POINTS

- Fulfilment of the Transparent Civil Society 10 Point Initiative, particularly disclosure of business relationships with associated organisations, use of funds and personnel structure.

Transparency, the final aspect of structural integrity for programmes and implementers in the field of counter-extremism and interventions, is particularly important. Academia and media have regularly criticised the lack of transparency of state and non-state projects and implementers in this area, both in

Germany and elsewhere (e.g. Horgan & Altier 2012; Horgan & Braddock 2010; Mastroe & Szmania 2016). The transparency of processes, financing, personnel structures and other aspects on a programme is crucial to winning the trust not only of prospective participants but also financial sponsors and ultimately the wider public, leading specialists and the local authorities, all of which are indispensable partners for the successful implementation of the programme. Programme implementers often point to data protection rules and the safeguarding of their own unique identifiers and methods as a hurdle to full transparency. In response it should be observed that the field of counter-extremism and interventions has much catching up to do in comparison to other areas of activity with regard even to the most basic transparency. The NGO Transparency International has launched a Transparent Civil Society Initiative⁷ based on a 10-Point self-commitment:

⁷<https://www.transparency.de/Initiative-Transparente-Zivilg.1612.0.html> (in German)

10

POINT PLAN

1. Name of the organisation, headquarters, address and year of establishment
2. Complete statute or stakeholder contract and further central documents setting out the concrete aims being pursued and how they are to be achieved (e.g. vision, guiding principles, values, criteria for funding)
3. Date of the most recent confirmation from the tax office of the organisation's preferential tax status as a (charitable) corporation (if this is indeed the case)
4. Name and function of the central decision-makers (e.g. senior management, board and supervisory bodies)
5. Timely, comprehensible and detailed report on the organisation's activities
6. Personnel structure: number of employees, freelancers, part-time workers and people performing civilian or voluntary service, plus information about volunteers
7. Source of funding: information about all income, presented as part of the annually collated income/expenditure or profit/loss account and broken down into contributions (e.g. donations, membership fees and other contributions), public assistance, income from economic activity, taxable activity or wealth management.
8. Use of funding: information about the use of all income, presented as part of the annually collated income/expenditure or profit/loss account as well as the asset oversight or balance sheet
9. Company-law association with third parties, e.g. parent or subsidiary company, funding association, business, partner organisation
10. Name of legal persons whose annual financial assistance (including contributions, payment for services rendered, fees, project funding, donations etc.) exceeds 10% of overall annual income; information about corresponding donations from natural persons are published with their consent, or at the very least listed as "major donations from private individuals"

So far, not one implementer of an intervention programme in Germany has signed up to this initiative, despite the fact that these ten points in no way threaten the progress of a project or any of its potential unique identifiers or methods. This is particularly problematic with regard to the public private partnerships in which state bodies operate advisory hotlines for which the civil-society partner receives funding for providing the advisory services despite not complying with the fundamental transparency standards. A lack of transparency is a considerable risk factor in counter-extremism and intervention work, influencing a project's effectiveness with regard to the target group as well as the long-term prospects of the organisation. The higher the degree of transparency at the outset, the higher the structural integrity of the project should be judged to be.

CONCLUSION

Counter-extremism and intervention work, addressing emerging or well-advanced radicalisation processes as well as providing advisory services in the area of deradicalisation to effect lasting disengagement and the rejection of extremist ideologies and radical milieus, is a highly complex and at times very risky activity.

In contrast with the extensive research available about radicalisation processes and individual motivations for joining such extremists groups, little reliable research is available in the field of disengagement and deradicalisation processes. Only in recent years have a handful of academics begun conducting systematic research into the process of reversing radicalisation and developing initial basic theories (cf. e.g. Barrelle 2015; Christensen 2015; Clubb 2015; Dalgaard-Nielsen 2013; Hwang 2015; Koehler 2016; Mullins 2010). As a direct consequence, the field of prevention possesses an (even) broader, more comprehensive and academically reliable stock of knowledge on the basis of high-quality research, which enables the development of sound methodologies for preventative work. Interventions on the other hand find themselves to a large extent from an academic perspective in a quasi-experimental phase, in spite of the fact that in particular in Germany practitioners have been working for almost two decades now with radicalised persons associating themselves with a variety of different extremist ideologies and groups. Absent or deficient programme and methodology evaluation, a lack of transparency, non-existent standards and an extremely heterogeneous and

competitive field of actors have so far greatly hindered the effective assessment and further development of intervention work. In the area of civil-society efforts on countering right-wing extremism the first moves to establish quality standards only emerged in recent years, although state programmes have been nurturing an intensive exchange in the joint counter-terrorism platform GTAZ since 2009. Admittedly, it must be added, GTAZ is not accessible to non-state programmes and those actors not connected to the security authorities. However, since the founding of the nationwide advisory network of the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in 2012 and the advent of more and more counter-extremism networks at regional (state) level, Germany has seen the emergence of some new discourses and efforts to coordinate and assure quality which cover a host of state and non-state organisations and actors and which focus on a series of essential issues (e.g. quality standards, expert exchange, development of further training modules for staff, discussion about a national counter-extremism strategy).

Two central issues should be emphasised among current developments: evaluation and quality standards.

As mentioned above, not only in Germany is the state of evaluation of deradicalisation projects sub-standard (cf. e.g. Feddes & Gallucci 2015; Horgan & Altier 2012; Horgan & Braddock 2010; Lützing et al. 2016; Mastroe & Szmania 2016; Williams & Kleinman 2013). A variety of problems such as data protection, lack of transparency, the absence of theoretical foundations or the lack of clarity between different forms of assessment have so far hindered the necessary evaluations. The sole notable exception in Germany is the evaluation of the state disengagement programme for right-wing extremists in the state of North-Rhine-Westphalia (Möller et al. 2015). Likewise the area of quality standards has so far seen very few publications (cf. e.g. Jende 2014; Koehler 2014b). Without fundamental standards and an evaluation that builds on these benchmarks to assess programme structures and working processes, substantive progress in the field of counter-extremism is out of the question. In particular the trend in recent years towards using civil-society implementers for the counter-extremism networks' advisory centres has exceeded the actual availability of trained personnel and implementers with structures of sufficiently high quality. For too long a variety of civil-society implementers, in their battle to

secure programme funding, have sought to shield their own unique identifiers from transparent substantive scrutiny and thus thwarted substantive developments and the establishment of standardised methods.

This handbook is the first of its kind to offer a comprehensive foundation for minimum structural standards in counter-extremism work, and thus constitutes a starting point for further developments and expert exchange. The handbook sets out for the first time, on the basis of extensive studies of deradicalisation programmes, numerous interviews with experts around the world and practical experience with advisory services, the parameters for the evaluation of a programme's integrity as well as for its intended structural development. This enables existing programmes either to be brought into line with the unavoidable minimum quality standards in this field or, accordingly, for specific areas of a programme to be developed further and weaknesses identified. The handbook also offers state coordination units and the funding ministries, for the first time, the possibility to assess counter-extremism and intervention projects with regard to their structural quality or to set priorities on a number of levels and make more conscious, strategic

selection decisions. Particularly with regard to the running of such programmes and the administrative-bureaucratic realities it is essential to be able to draw on a structural guidebook when developing or assessing processes.

One further important point concerning the necessity of structural standards is that such criteria are a prerequisite for the sensible and strategically effective combination of different implementers and projects in the area of counter-extremism and intervention work. As mentioned, it is common practice among German civil-society operators to offer the full bandwidth of services from counter-extremism to interventions and to seek to implement all of these in the same project and sometimes using just a single team. Counter-extremism networks in which traditional preventative work (e.g. further training events for multipliers) is carried out in conjunction with interventions (e.g. family support and advisory services) by a single implementer, project and team run the considerable risk of over-burdening staff and hindering a specialisation or the implementation of lessons learned in one of the two areas. Whilst spreading areas of work among several implementers,

teams and projects does safeguard specialisations in the respective areas, that too can lead to additional burdens, loss of information and unnecessary time lost on account of the need for coordination and co-operation. Structural standards are therefore a highly effective means of avoiding such effects, provided they are aligned with the needs of the practical work and reflect the respective substantive and factual realities.

In conclusion, it must be underlined that this handbook marks merely the beginning of a long overdue debate about standards and evaluation in counter-extremism and intervention work. Effective process and impact evaluation can only be carried out on the basis of coherent structures and defined processes. The comprehensive and internationally unique practical experience gathered over the past 26 years by state and civil-society programmes in Germany is a treasure trove of knowledge which has unfortunately hitherto not been exploited to improve the quality of counter-extremism and intervention work. As a platform for such a development common minimum structural standards are indispensable. The standards proposed in this handbook are a synthesis of the years of practical experience with advisory

services gathered by leading international practitioners, combined with the intensive examination of relevant related fields of research and structural standards familiar to these areas – which include criminology, reintegrating civil-war fighters, disengaging from sects and youth gangs etc. This handbook is thus the most comprehensive of its kind to date in the field of counter-extremism and interventions, which aims to make a key contribution to ensuring quality in this highly complex and fundamentally important work in Germany.

STRUCTURAL ELEMENT

RUNNING & DEVELOPING A PROGRAMME

- Senior management and project leaders sufficiently trained
 - Senior management and project leaders have practical experience
 - Involvement in selection and training of staff
 - Sufficient supervision of staff by seniors
 - Senior managers have their own experience of the advisory activities
 - Programme is structured on the basis of solid theory
 - Thorough consultation of academic literature in the development phase
 - Project in line with the current state of research
 - Approach evaluated by external experts
 - Inclusion of pilots
 - Acceptance for the project among leading experts in the field
 - Funding situation appropriate with regard to the aims
 - Financial situation stable over the past two years
-

ORGANISATION

- Clearly defined objectives
- Reception, documentation and categorisation system in place for new cases
- Lowest possible threshold for initial contact
- Personal point of contact for the initial contact
- Interdisciplinary team of caseworkers
- Availability of psychological expertise
- Former extremists available as advisers
- Former extremists deployed under a framework of particular quality standards
- Integration of the victim perspective
- Perspective of the local authorities included
- Specific caseworker training at a sufficient level
- Selection of personnel according to expertise, practical experience and ethical values

- Regular team meetings and case discussions
 - Supervision
 - Assessing personnel according to quality of their casework
 - Firm methodology for risk analysis and classification of security relevance
 - Firm counter-extremism mechanism (identification of radicalising factors, corresponding selection of methods, impact assessment and documentation or recalibration)
-

PARTICIPANT CLASSIFICATION

- Target group clearly defined and appropriate to the programme aims
 - Definition and consistent application of exclusion criteria
 - Performance of risk analysis
 - Defined risk levels using in-house procedures
 - Assured staff application of risk analysis
 - Mechanism for identifying radicalising factors anchored in staff training
 - Treatment methods adjusted to individual radicalising factors
 - Adequate case documentation system capturing relevant case evolution
 - Case documentation system enables internal and external evaluation
-

CARE & ADVISORY SERVICES

- Emphasis of services on individual radicalisation
- Methods for boosting cognitive capabilities applied
- Methods of general and vocational education
- Inclusion of place of residence
- Possibility of protective measures
- Intensity of treatment according to risk level
- Availability of handbook for personnel
- Caseworker-participant compatibility
- Compatibility of caseworkers and programme
- Possibility of participant feedback
- Adequate incentives for participation
- Adequate sanction mechanisms

- Negative impacts of treatment are recognised and documented
 - Clear criteria for case closure
 - Case closure is planned and prepared
 - Follow-up
 - Ratio of closed to uncompleted cases is measured
 - Case monitoring post-closure
 - Inclusion of affective environment of family and friends
-

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Internal and external quality assurance in place
 - Statistics on known examples of relapses
 - Complete case evaluation prior to closure
 - Regular external evaluations
 - Critical and transparent discussion of failures
-

TRANSPARENCY

- At the very least fulfilment of the Transparent Civil Society
10 Point Initiative
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