
Countering Radicalisation Across Europe – The Pioneering ISDEP Project

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The changing landscape of the global terrorism threat coupled with increasing concern about home grown extremism means that the need to tackle the root causes of radicalisation across the European Union has never been greater.

The pathway to violent extremism and terrorism is, however, undeniably complex. Frontline practitioners working with those vulnerable to radicalisation need to have the right tools to allow them to recognise, respond to and challenge ideologies and narratives associated with any form of terrorism.

A pioneering EU Commission funded project is the first of its kind designed to offer consistency around, and increase awareness of, counter radicalisation specifically for frontline practitioners.

Improving Security by Democratic Participation (ISDEP) is a two year programme based on the EU Commission's Prevent strand of the Counter Terrorism Strategy. Training themes focus on helping practitioners to identify the influences and vulnerabilities that shape an individual's thought processes towards violent extremism.

This pioneering training course is led by Chief Inspector Rupert Dore and Rozila Kana from the UK National Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters (NCTP HQ) and was developed in partnership with organisations from the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Bulgaria, Belgium, and the Czech Republic. Financial support for the project has been provided by the Prevention of and Fight Against Crime Programme, through the European Commission's Directorate of General Home Affairs.

ISDEP has taken the learning, research and experience from a range of training programmes and initiatives and built them into a visual, interactive training tool to support a wide range of sectors including law enforcement agencies, prisons/probation, the higher education sector and non government organisations.

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Chief Inspector Rupert Dore, from the NCTP HQ in the UK, who leads the project, says:

“ISDEP training consists of ten modules that cut across a variety of terrorist and violent extremist case studies. It focuses on preventing violent extremism through safeguarding vulnerability to radicalising influences. ISDEP is not about complex academic study. It is about simple, practical, time effective training.”

“During 2014, we have delivered four ISDEP training courses to more than seventy ‘lead trainers’ from eight European countries. Course participants have included senior representatives from ministries, representatives from police, prison and probation services, non government organisations and the education sector. Amongst the participants were psychologists, human rights lawyers, former combatants and a judge. These trainers are now well placed to take their learning back to their own countries and deliver the training programme to their colleagues.

The ISDEP training course has been extremely well received by participants. The training modules have already been translated into a Czech training manual, and are also currently being embedded in the curriculum by the Bavarian police academy in Germany.

Praise for the course has been high from participants with comments such as:

‘The content follows a logical path which sets terrorism in context a good mix of activities.... Which keeps delegates engaged and provides a well balanced series of modules’.

‘I have attended a lot of radicalisation training but I was enthralled every minute’.

‘Very well structured content, the videos and case studies provide a point of view much closer to real life than simply therapy’.

‘Really useful course, well researched, organised and presented. I look forward to adapting it into our local context.’

The ISDEP training programme will be supported by a comprehensive visual and interactive based e-learning programme designed by the University of Applied Sciences in Lubeck Germany. This training platform will be freely available over the internet to front line practitioners in 7 European languages.

Chief Inspector Dore adds:

‘We are delighted that we have been able to extend ISDEP by six months to June 2015, which will allow time to cascade the training wider afield throughout the EU. A new module is also currently being developed on foreign fighters, which will complement the existing training programme.’

If you would like to know more about ISDEP please visit
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