**Youth work fight back the Violent Extremism**

**15-16.02.2018; Podgorica; Montenegro**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The regional conference *“Youth work fights back violent extremis”* is organized as a part of project Youth

Resilience to Radical and Extreme Behaviors created by consortium of six organizations: [**Forum MNE**](http://www.forum-mne.com) from Montenegro, [**DamaD**](http://www.kcdamad.org/) from Serbia; [**PRONI**](http://www.proni.ba/) Center for Youth Work from Bosnia and Herzegovina; [**IDM**](http://idmalbania.org/) **Institute for Democracy and** **Mediation** from Albania; [**FIQ**](https://fiq-fci.org/) **Forum for Civic Initiatives** from Kosovo and [**SEGA**](http://www.sega.org.mk/web/)Coalition of youth organizations from Macedonia.

Two-day conference with diverse panels has focused on in depth analyses of violent extremism, its drivers in WB region, examples of positive practices on building resilience and aimed at capturing regional strength and creating corner stone for regional cooperation in prevention and combating VE.

Without any doubt, the population which is most affected by violent extremism is youth. And it is not easy to do profiling and directly target youth at risk because, as Magnus Ranstorp describe, violent extremism can be best conceptualized as a kaleidoscope of factors, creating infinite individual combinations. There are some basic primary colors which create complex interlocking combinations, like: 1) individual socio-psychological factors; 2) social factors; 3) political factors; 4) ideological and religious dimensions; 5) the role of culture and identity issues; 6) trauma and other trigger mechanisms; and three other factors that are a motor for radicalization: 7) group dynamics; 8) radicalizers/groomers; and 9) the role of social media. But it is the combined interplay of some of these factors that causes violent extremism.

However, beside the national CVE strategies, we believe that larger number of stakeholders needs to take active part in creating sustainable solutions for our communities, countries and our region on their path to health and safety, so we developed recommendations for the three the most important levels.

**1. Governmental level recommendations**

Governmental sector should focus their work on preventing and combating violent extremism of youth on three levels: national, local and regional level.

* There is a need for more in-depth research in the area of violent extremism among youth – about the roots of the problem, pull and push factors (factors that attract or force young people to step into this field). Stronger partnership among governmental research institutions, academia, think tanks and other research organizations is needed.
* Governments needs to create supportive environment and develop and/or support programs for work on the prevention of violent extremism from the early ages, already in preschool and elementary school environment.
* It is necessarily to put more in practice usage of existing structures in the system when working on PCVE among youth: teachers/professors, psychologists, pedagogues, especially professionals like social workers employed in social protection system.
* In the countries where religion education is included in school curriculum, governments should ensure that those subjects includes topics like religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue.
* It is necessarily to strengthen cooperation of governmental sector with civil society, especially non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations and groups.
* Governments should ensure clear and regularly used communication channels between all sectors relevant for PCVE among youth, governmental and non-governmental sector, especially: education sector, security sector, social protection and welfare and health sector, so all relevant actors could react accordingly.
* It is necessarily to implement multisector approach in process of creating, implementing and monitoring of policies targeting youth, with special focus on PCVE related policies.
* It is important to understand that radicalization is not only migrant, religious based issue and try to understand roots in order to plan steps in this area.
* When creating policies on national/local/regional level that are focused on PCVE among youth, governments should plan activities that localize intervention because it would bring better results.
* It is necessary to implement and support activities that will strengthen capacities of governmental institutions from all sectors (education, security, social protection and welfare, health sector) to work on PCVE among youth – trough raising awareness, training etc.
* Governments should support implementation of continuous training on digital technologies for all professionals in direct contact with youth, in order to give them skills to work on prevention and combating violent extremism in online space.
* To develop/strengthen “task force” model at the level of the government, that is multisector body at the highest level (prime minister office) that monitor implementation of PCVE strategy and action plan, and ensure that measures covering youth are incorporated, institutions in charged for implementation are hold accountable.
* Support developing of different, innovative approaches in work with young people – in the frame of governmental institutions and also civil society (trough sharing data, knowledge, allocating funds etc.).
* To involve more young people into decision making and political discussions and life, and to strengthen link between government - elected representatives and young citizens.
* To ensure that there is a space and supportive environment in the education system for free speech of children and youth and having the right to opinion; and to create and implement reforms that are developing critical thinking and self-confidence of youngsters.
* To develop national and regional web platforms that will ensure accessibility of data and give space for sharing knowledge, research results, developing partnerships on national and international level on PCVE among youth.
* To include gender component in all governmental policies dealing with PCVE among youth.
* There is a need to increase regional cooperation, exchange of information and expertize among governmental institutions who are important actors in PCVE (cross border cooperation, signing bilateral agreements, implementing people to people programs for transfer of knowledge and practice etc.).
* Better visibility of intergovernmental regional initiatives like Regional Cooperation Council, RYCO and others should be ensured among diverse group of stakeholders, including stakeholders from national but also local level.

**2. International actors’ recommendations**

International actors are considered to be UN agencies, European commission and Council of Europe bodies, intergovernmental organizations, OSCE, foreign embassies, international donor community (foundations) and other international political organizations. Their role and potential influence in supporting activities on prevention and combating violent extremism is recognized as very important, and therefore the main recommendations are:

* To have as one of the long term priorities work on improving economic and social condition of youth in the country where they implement their programs.
* To ensure coordination and synergy among activities implemented by all international actors active in certain community.
* To include governments and civil society when defining national and regional priorities of work in the area of human rights and youth related policies, especially in the field of preventing and combating violent extremism.
* To support activities of national and local stakeholders that are directly working with youth on prevention and combating violent extremism, and invest more in strengthening the local respond to this problem trough capacity building, allocating funds and other measures.
* All international actors that consider themselves as a part of donor community, to establish system for their regular communication and exchange of information on priorities and projects to be supported, in order to avoid overlapping support for certain type of activities and leaving the gap in the other areas that are recognized as important for working with youth on prevention and combating violent extremism.
* To cherish model of partnership with youth and civil society organizations and governmental sector that works on PCVE, and take into consideration national and local expertise and knowledge.
* Donor community to diversify list of partners and grant beneficiaries and break the monopole of certain organizations that are recognized as “usual suspects” or so called “proven partners” in implementing projects and receiving their financial support.
* Donor community to develop multiannual financing schemes and provide operating (administrative) grants to youth and civil society organizations and other stakeholders working on PCVE, because in this topic if we want to reach objectives it is not recommended to have short term projects and activities.

**3. Youth & CSO level recommendations**

Youth activist, CSO activist within youth, women and human rights organizations which are in daily contact with young people should take active role in PCVE and join the community & country and regional teams in prevention and countering of violent extremism. In order to maximize their impact youth and civil society organizations should:

* Create regional online platforms for tracking and monitoring PCVE among youth.
* Strengthen existing and developing new youth and civil society organizations networks on regional level that will focus on working on youth wellbeing and mitigating pull and push factors for violent extremism among.
* Shape positive narrative and promote positive examples and role models among youth.
* Cooperate with education sector on updating school curriculum in line with the needs of youth and modern developments in all sectors, especially digital technologies.
* Implement non-formal education activities for youth, parents and professionals from education sector in cooperation with schools, universities and other educational institutions.
* Build partnership with media, and implement joint activities (campaigns, trainings etc) on the topic important for building youth resilience to violent extremism and influence of hate speech and online violence in social media on youth development.
* To be more inclusive and directly involve young people in planning and implementation of their activities, especially youngsters coming from vulnerable groups and youth at risk.
* To promote intercultural dialogue among young people, and support their mobility.
* To establish partnership with influencers (people from public life, celebrities) so to involve them as human right activists and peace and nonviolence ambassadors.
* To develop and implement peer education programs.
* Incorporate “her perspective” into all activities in PCVE among youth, meaning gender mainstreaming all activities in this field.
* Develop/strengthen cooperation with religious groups and faith-based organizations working with youth and providing services for youth in order to provide more comprehensive respond to youth needs and prevent and combat violent extremism.

We consider this document valuable in process of PCVE and see it as possible source of ideas for planning future actions in this field.