

Criminal Justice Platform Europe

Criminal Justice Summer Course

Barcelona, 2-5 July 2019

WORKSHOP REPORT

- Workshop Title:** Doing Social Inclusion in a Polarised Society.
- Moderator:** John Stafford, United Kingdom.
- Leader 1:** Professor Ioan Durnescu, Romania.
- Leader 2:** Professor Esther Montero, Spain & Håkan Järvå, Sweden.
- Participants:** Twenty three participants from twelve countries.
- Note taker:** John Stafford.
- Pictures:**



Impression

A highly successful workshop with three leaders whose knowledge, expertise and backgrounds worked very well together. The participants came from a rich variety of backgrounds – policy makers, practitioners, managers and researchers – bringing together a wide range of skills and perspectives. High motivation levels and a willingness to learn, participate, share experiences and to support each other was a feature of the group. They brought a high level of expertise, talent and commitment to the subject, grappling with some very difficult and challenging issues in terms of the methods needed to change the lives of this category of offenders. Accordingly, attendance, dedication to task and punctuality was first rate.

1. Introduction

The workshop built upon the positive foundation of the 2018 Summer School Workshop on VEOs led by Professor Durnescu. It had at its focus developing a deeper understanding of disengagement and social inclusion of former violent extremist offenders; What Works and the skills required to bring about lasting change.

The three Workshop leaders worked well in combination.

Ioan Durnescu, a Professor at the University of Bucharest and a leading academic on the subject of desistance expertly presented a comprehensive overview of radicalisation and violent extremism, disengagement and social inclusion and what intervention programmes work.

Together with Professor Montero, Professor Durnescu presented on the importance of the Working Alliance in dealing with involuntary clients. Professor Montero is a Professor at the Loyola University in Andalucía, a lawyer in the Spanish Penitentiary Service and an expert in the field of correctional skills. Håkon Järvå is a licensed psychologist from Sweden and sits on the Board of a Swedish NGO dedicated to helping ex-cult members. Håkon brought a powerful personal experience on the subject of being a cult member to how to work with ideology and measures to lessen the grip of ideology.

2. Workshop Methods

The aim of the workshop was to promote a deeper understanding of working with VEOs, with a particular focus on identifying and developing best practice at individual and community level. The workshop was delivered using presentations based on the most up to date scientific research evidence, European guidelines and expert views. These were combined with role plays, real life case study exercises, group discussions and working in small groups in order to accommodate differing learning styles.

The workshop was highly interactive, enabling participants to share and test their particular national and professional experiences and perspectives. This stimulated an effective problem-solving approach. Participants ranged from Africa, North America, The Middle East and Europe, giving a comprehensive overview.

3. Summary of Presentations

- **Session 1** Participants introduced themselves and shared their background and experience, which formed a basis for the future sharing of practice. They also outlined and recorded their expectations of the workshops. Professor Durnescu presented an overview of the international legal order; existing guidelines and handbooks to aid working with this group of offenders and to indicate what works best.
- **Session 2** The focus was on the importance of the working alliance in dealing with involuntary clients led by Professors Durnescu and Montero, using the case study of John Walker Lindh.

- The reasons for resistance were explained and methodologies on how to reduce resistance were explained.
- The role of empathy in enhancing the working alliance.
- Dealing with crisis and how to react to and work with confrontation.
- **Session 3** Professor Durnescu delivered a presentation based on the most up to date research literature, consultation with experts and practitioners and case studies to demonstrate:
 - Why some people become radicalised.
 - What makes people voluntarily leave radical networks.
 - Interventions using the Pro-integration Model, citing several examples of effective deradicalisation and disengagement programmes, including the SRI Lanka deradicalisation programme, Back on Track, Entre and HII.
 - The principles of effective practice with VEOs.
- **Session 4/5** Håkon Järvå presented on how to work specifically with ideology when it gets in the way of recovery/rehabilitation, including:
 - Learning by experience and consequences.
 - Pliancy.
 - Tracking.
 - Evolutionary biology and contextual behavioural science.
 - Relational Frame Theory.
 - Fusion and De-fusion.
 - Working with Metaphors.
 - Using the above theories and techniques participants engaged in a series of exercises and approaches designed to lessen the grip of ideology in working with VEOs.
- **Session 6** Entitled 'Working with Communities', Professor Durnescu encouraged participants to take a more critical approach to social inclusion. He demonstrated the role families and peers, NGOs; mentors and communities should play in overcoming social exclusion, citing the examples of Aarhus in Denmark; Prevent in the UK and Mosaic of Engagement in the USA. Participants were challenged to explore what could be done to promote more community-based interventions in their jurisdictions.
- **Session 7** Participants identified personal action plans for implementing their new knowledge and skills on return to their workplace.

They also assessed whether the workshop had met their earlier expectations and were presented with their certificates of attendance.

4. Key Learning Points

Session 1:

- i. There are a wealth of documents, reports and handbooks available to probation and prison practitioners outlining shared definitions; challenges; recommended approaches and good

practice; and specific interventions which should be consulted in work with VEOs (see annex and CEP website).

- ii. The sharing of experience by practitioners in a forum such as this is a valuable way to promote knowledge / best practice.

Session 2:

- i. The quality of the offender / practitioner relationship is one of the most important in the five correctional skills to reduce reoffending and the most important predictor of psychotherapy and outcomes. Desistance literature cites legitimate and respectful relationships' as essential. This is equally applicable for VEOs.
- ii. Professionals should accept reactance/resistance as a normal reaction to being in an involuntary situation, rather than as an indicator of pathology.
- iii. There are methods to reduce resistance, including:
 - a. Avoidance of ironic process which consolidates pro-criminal identity.
 - b. Enhancing self-control and choices.
 - c. Behavioural contracting (agreeing goals are processes, rather than by professional direction).
 - d. Encouraging participation in goal/task selection.
- iv. Empathy is a critical factor in creating the working alliance and in particular the demonstration of empathy requires the professional not only to show understanding, but also to reflect back on the client's experience/feelings to them.
- v. Professionals need to develop emotional literacy in themselves in order to read situations and to recognise not only surface feelings, but deeper ones.
- vi. VEOs will probably be unaware of the full extent of what awaits them in the community post release and will depend on the professional for support.

Session 3:

- i. There is no single profile of a terrorist. There are predispositions in terms of world view, mindsets or psychological propensities:
 - a. Authoritarianism.
 - b. Dogmatism.
 - c. Apocalypticism.
 - d. Fundamentalist mindset.

But no distinguishing profile.

- ii. *Webber and Kruglanski's 3 N's* – needs, narratives and networks provide a helpful framework on why people become terrorists.
- iii. *Borum's Integrated Model* (2011) and *Precht* (2007) give further analysis on becoming a terrorist.
- iv. *Altier et al* (2014) and *Barrell* (2014) analyse why people leave radical networks. The Pro-integration Model has five domains:
 - a. Social Relations.
 - b. Identity.

- c. Ideology.
 - d. Action orientation.
- v. Effective interventions do exist worldwide, including Back on Track, Entre and H I, but few have been evaluated. A major exception is the Deradicalization programme in Sri Lanka evaluated by Webber et al (2018) and shown to be successful in both deradicalization and desistance. It is based on significant quest theory and has seven programmes: educational; vocational; spiritual; sport and recreational; social, cultural and family and community rehabilitations.

Sessions 4 & 5:

- i. Techniques and exercises exist for lessening the grip of ideology, involving the opening up of the client to other realities, creating a distance, and being able to make a choice.
- ii. Constantly confronting the client with ideological arguments re-enforces that ideology, rather than the opposite.

Session 6:

- i. Disengaging from extremism requires the ex-offender to engage with positive alternatives. Communities in turn need to be engaged to make them more inclusive. Networks have to be established around the ex-offender on a multi-agency basis.
- ii. Initiatives to involve communities include:
 - a. Aarhus model in Denmark.
 - b. Prevent UK.
 - c. Mosaic of Engagement USA.
- iii. Aarhus is a tertiary prevention model, mixing hard and soft solutions, including one stop shops where suspicions can be reported; the use of very well-trained mentors; parenting networks; exit programmes with fast track interventions; regeneration measures to avoid ghettoization.
- iv. As professionals, we need to work together with communities and other agencies to influence and build long-term objectives for community-based interventions.

5. Key Practice Issues for the future

1. Intervention programmes remain in urgent need of evaluation regarding their targeting and effectiveness.
2. The children and partners of Jihadists should be the next target group for intervention as they will pose an increasing VEO problem.
3. Community initiatives and community-based interventions need development, based on best practice, particularly in those areas where the threat is highest.
4. Probation needs to use its influence to work towards long-term objectives and strategies involving multi-agency working and build trust between agencies, reducing the distance between themselves and communities.

6. Annexes

References provided by the workshop leaders for additional reading:

1963 – Convention on offences + Certain other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft.

2016 – Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners & the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons. UNDOC (United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime).

2015 – Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism.

Counter – Terrorism Strategy 2018-2020 CofE.

Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies 2016-2019.

Guidelines & Handbook for prison and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism CofE.

2014 – Revised EU strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism.

541/2017 – EU Directive combating terrorism.

Radicalisation Awareness Network – Prison & Probation Working Group - 'Approaches to countering radicalisation and dealing with violent extremist and terrorist offenders in prison and probation'.

The Pains of Probation.

Becoming the '3 Ns' Webber D & Kuglanski (2018) The Social Psychological makings of a terrorist.

Precht T. (2007) Home Grown Terrorism & Islamist Radicalisation in Europe: from conversion to terrorism.

Barrel K (2015). Pro-integration: disengagement from and life after extremism.

Evolution and Contextual Behavioural Science. Daniel Sloan Wilson & Steven C. Hayes.

Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion and The Nature of Society. David Sloane Wilson.

Bertelsen P (2015) Danish Prevention Measures & De-radicalisation Strategies: The Aarhus Model in Panorama Insights into Asian & European Affairs.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p02vipfl>. Jamal.