

CoCoRa – Newsletter No. 2

First two phases concluded: Collaborative Programme and Prevention Programme

The two-year Erasmus+ project “Community Counteracting Radicalisation” (CoCoRa) was launched with the **Collaborative Programme**: In spring 2016 CoCoRa partners organised various **collaborative workshops and meetings with local organisations and local stakeholders**. The aim was to introduce the project, assure cooperation and local support, and generate ideas for contents and activities of the Prevention Programme for young people.



CoCoRa Partners at Innsbruck meeting in January 2017

During the partner meeting on 24th and 25th January 2017, CoCoRa partners have shared their **experiences and feedback from the local Prevention Programmes** with young people implemented between September 2016 and February 2017. The CoCoRa Prevention Programme focuses on topics such as **radicalization and violent extremism, active citizenship, intercultural learning, competences, opportunities and empowerment**. While the topics were common to all local programmes, each country version had slightly different

priorities, depending on the local context and specific needs of the young participants. Such a flexible approach was necessary, as local communities in partner countries differ as well as the characteristics of young people attending the meetings, e.g. in terms of their age and their educational and cultural background.

The Prevention Programme in Denmark...

In Denmark, we conduct a long-term and extensive learning programme, meeting 1-2 times a month in evenings in our collaborative Muslim organisation. Around 10 young people, all of them belonging to the collaborative organisation, are involved in the learning programme. The group is equally divided between young men and young women, aged 18-27 years. Most of them are in school, in education or in job. At the first meeting, the participants tested and accepted a programme proposal. Subsequently, we have adjusted the order of topics to the participants' current needs and engagement. Radicalisation and violent extremism was one of the first topics on the agenda. Through brainstorming and common discussions, the participants reflected on the general social and political articulation of the theme as well as causal explanations etc. A main point was that extremism is mistakenly linked to religion and religiousness. All features and statements were thoroughly referenced and printed to participants' folders. As a follow-up theme, the participants focused on the concept of citizenship and afterwards the themes of identity, multiple identities and the concept of culture.



CoCoRa participants in Denmark

...in Austria

In Austria, we had a group of 11-12 young Muslims aged between 15 and 20 years. We organized in total 7 meetings focused on intercultural dialogue, religion, culture, diversity, acceptance and tolerance, radicalisation, human rights and gender equality. Seminars and debates were combined with non-formal and outdoor activities like visits at museums, picnics and other activities that fostered dialogue and intercultural exchange.



CoCoRa participants in Innsbruck/Austria visiting a museum

...in France

ADICE organised the prevention programme by recruiting young people among the participants of ADICE. This includes young people from deprived neighbourhoods, young people oriented by local partners and young participants interested in taking part in citizenship programmes. The training programme deals with interculturality, citizen participation, community engagement and European integration and intends to create the conditions for critical thinking and self-reflection among participants, as a way to empower young people in their community, fight exclusion and prevent radicalization.

There were four sessions spread over 2 days:

- An engagement forum to understand the concept of active citizenship and community engagement and to encourage young people to speak in public;
- An intercultural learning workshop to help participants understand the cultural differences and learn how to deal with different points of views. The objective was also to approach the concept of tolerance and inclusion as a way to fight against radicalization;
- A Europe for Youth workshop to identify European common values and present specific opportunities for youth such as the European volunteering service;
- A workshop called “Competences+” to help participants recognize and promote their competences and to help them set personal life goals such as pursuing higher education or accessing the labour market.

In total, 57 participants have participated to the local prevention programme.



CoCoRa participants in Roubaix/France

...in Germany

In Germany an intensive empowerment and prevention workshop of five full days was implemented, involving a group of 16 young people who live in Berlin/ Kreuzberg. This October workshop was preceded by an extended series of half day activities since March in the youth club Statthaus Böcklerpark which collaborated with CI in forming the participant group.

Reflecting a typical contemporary Berlin/ Kreuzberg community, 11 participants had a migration background (Turkey, Macedonia/ Ex-Yugoslavia), 7 were refugees (Afghanistan, Iraq/ Syria), 7 were female, roughly 6 young people seem to define themselves as Muslim in varying degrees. 6 of the group were considered 'differently abled', i.e. had psycho-social or mental conditions which may render them particularly vulnerable to recruitment.

The methodology of the CoCoRa workshop was inspired by Cultures Interactive's (CI) Fair Skills approach of preventing violent extremism – combining youth cultural creativity with exercises of non-formal civic education and narrative self-experience group work. The open process workshop was facilitated in a way which starts with exchange on immediate life-world and family history issues and then addresses personal identity, whereby issues of gender identity and future perspective are privileged over any ethnic/ religious issues which are not proactively pursued. The topic of so-called radicalisation is approached by way of addressing questions of human rights and 'group-focused hatred/ enmity'.

...in Italy

In Italy, CESIE decided to put an emphasis on the topic of intercultural exchange, inviting both local young people with and without migrant background. The group of 19 young participants between 15 and 25 years explored together topics around their identity and diverse cultures, including different religious backgrounds. Further, a workshop on talents and strengths was facilitated, and opportunities in Palermo were presented and young people discussed, how they could apply their interests and talents. All in all, 9 encounters were organized – highlights were common visits to a mosque and a church, and visits to social projects that promote intercultural encounters and exchange in Palermo.



CoCoRa participants in Palermo on the way to visit a mosque and a church

The way forward: Ambassador Programme

The next phase of the project, the Ambassador Programme, will see young people as protagonists: they will be trained in different competences and skills, so that they are enabled to act as “Ambassadors” for their own interests and needs. Topics of this programme will be:

- Social projects and opportunities, including mobility opportunities in Europe;
- Skills and making use of skills and talents;
- Active citizenship, anti-discrimination and identity;
- Communication techniques and presentation tools;
- Assertive training.

Young people will first undertake small research projects to collect life stories and information about prevention and inclusion initiatives in their town. Then, they will prepare creative presentations of their research results (e.g. through performances, Youtube videos). Finally, they will plan and implement Ambassador Workshops that will be attended by local politicians, youth workers,

social workers and other members of local communities. The Ambassador Programme will be organized between March and June 2017.

Prevention Strategy and Handbooks

Each of the CoCoRa Programmes (Collaborative Programme, Prevention Programme and Ambassador Programme) will be described in detail in a methodical handbook. This will contain objectives, approaches, methods and materials used, including good practice examples collected from partner countries during implementation. These will be complemented by an overall introduction describing the concept of the CoCoRa Prevention Strategy. All handbooks will be developed in the next months.

CoCoRa Closing Conference in Berlin, September 2017

The total handbook package will be presented at the final CoCoRa conference in Berlin, September 19, 2017. Participation in the conference is free, so check the calendar already now and have more information about the conference from your local CoCoRa contact or from the Danish coordinator mhtconsult, Margit Helle Thomsen, mht@mhtconsult.dk.

Do you want to know more about the local CoCoRa Programmes?



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Follow the CoCoRa project online:

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