A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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Table of Contents

Foreword

This is UNESCO's first *Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism* through education. This document has been developed in direct response to the needs of UNESCO's Member States as expressed in the landmark 197/EX Decision 46 taken by UNESCO's Executive Board in October 2015[1], which calls on the Organization to enhance its capacity to provide assistance to countries as they work to strengthen their education sector responses to violent extremism, including through human-rights-based Global Citizenship Education (GCED) programmes, keeping in mind national contexts.

As such, this Guide also constitutes UNESCO's first contribution to the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism[2], as it relates to the Education Sector.

Along with this Guide, technical guidance is currently being developed by the Organization for education policy-makers within ministries of education. This guidance seeks to provide countries with a set of resources that can help build and reinforce national capacities to address the drivers of violent extremism through holistic and pragmatic education sector-wide responses.

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1 Decision 46 adopted at the 197th session of UNESCO's Executive Board (197 EX/Decision 46), http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002351/235180e.pdf
2 Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/674) http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf

In order to ensure the relevance of this Teacher's Guide in different geographical and socio-cultural contexts, it was developed after an extensive consultation process with experts and teachers from different regions as well as field-tested by educational stakeholders in selected countries.

As such, it can be used as it is, or considered as a prototype to be further contextualized, adapted and translated in order to respond to the specific needs of learners.

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

Violent extremism and the underlying forces of radicalization are among the most pervasive challenges of our time. While violent extremism is not confined to any age, sex, group or community, young people are particularly vulnerable to the messages of violent extremists and terrorist organizations.

In the face of such threats, young people need relevant and timely learning opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that can help them build their resilience to such propaganda.

These competencies can be developed with the help of confident, well-prepared and respected teachers, who are in extensive contact with young people.

With this concern in mind, this Guide was designed for teachers in upper primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. It was also developed with the hope that it can support the efforts of teachers working in both formal and non-formal educational settings.

More specifically, this Guide seeks to:

▶ Provide practical advice on when and how to discuss the issue of violent extremism and radicalization with learners,

▶ Help teachers create a classroom climate that is inclusive and conducive to respectful dialogue, open discussion and critical thinking.

2. About violent extremism

2.1 VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND RADICALIZATION

Violent extremism refers to the beliefs and actions of people who support or use ideologically-motivated violence to achieve radical ideological, religious or political views[3].

Violent extremist views can be exhibited along a range of issues, including politics, religion and gender relations. No society, religious community or worldview is immune to such violent extremism[4].

Violent Extremism is …"when you do not allow for a different point of view; when you hold your own views as being quite exclusive, when you don't allow for the possibility of difference and when you want to impose this view on others using violence if necessary."[5]

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3   www.livingsafetogether.gov.au and www.dhs.gov/topic/countering-violent-extremism
4   The following website provides different examples of violent extremism, www.livingsafetogether.gov.au
5   Davies, L. 2008. Education Against Extremism, *Stoke on Trent and Sterling*. Trentham Books.
    https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/cld/UserFiles/File/DAVIESeducationagainstextremism.pdf

Though "radicalization" is a contested term to some, it has come to be used to define the process through which an individual or a group considers violence as a legitimate and a desirable means of action.

Radical thought that does not condone the exercise of violence to further political goals may be seen as normal and acceptable, and be promoted by groups working within the boundaries of the law.

There is no single profile or pathway for radicalization, or even speed at which it happens.[6] Nor does the level of education seem to be a reliable predictor of vulnerability to radicalization. It is however established that there are socio-economic, psychological and institutional factors[7] that lead to violent extremism. Specialists group these factors into two main categories:

▶ **"Push Factors"** drive individuals to violent extremism, such as: marginalization, inequality, discrimination, persecution or the perception thereof; limited access to quality and relevant education; the denial of rights and civil liberties; and other environmental, historical and socio-economic grievances.

▶ **"Pull Factors"** nurture the appeal of violent extremism, for example: the existence of well-organized violent extremist groups with compelling discourses and effective programmes that are providing services, revenue and/or employment in exchange for membership. Groups can also lure new members by providing outlets for grievances and promise of adventure and freedom. Furthermore, these groups appear to offer spiritual comfort, "a place to belong" and a supportive social network.

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6   Davies, L. 2008. Educating Against Extremism: Towards a Critical Politicisation of Young People. *International Review of Education, 55* (2/3), pp. 183-203. doi:10.1007/s11159-008-9126-8
7   USAID, *Summary of Factors Affecting Violent Extremism*. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PBAAA929.pdf; Zeiger, S. and Aly, A. 2015. *Countering violent extremism: developing an evidence-base for policy and practice*. Curtin University, Hedayah.

Finally, there are **contextual factors** that provide a favourable terrain to the emergence of violent extremist groups, such as: fragile states, the lack of rule of law, corruption and criminality.

EXAMPLES OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan, eco-terrorism, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Boko Haram.

✺ **EARLY SIGNS**

The following behaviours can be signs of radicalization. If several are observed, the family and immediate circle should be alerted.

▶ Sudden break with the family and long-standing friendships.

▶ Sudden drop-out of school and conflicts with the school.

▶ Change in behaviour relating to food, clothing, language, finances.

▶ Changes in attitudes and behaviour towards others: antisocial comments, rejection of authority, refusal to interact socially, signs of withdrawal and isolation.

▶ Regular viewing of internet sites and participation in social media networks that condone radical or extremist views.

▶ Reference to apocalyptic and conspiracy theories.

Source : http://www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr/

2.2 VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND EDUCATION

The role of education in preventing violent extremism and de-radicalizing young people has only recently gained global acceptance.

An important step in this direction was the launch, in December 2015, of the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism[8], which recognizes the importance of quality education to address the drivers of this phenomenon.

The United Nations Security Council also emphasized this point in its Resolutions 2178[9] and 2250, which notably highlights the need for "*quality education for peace that equips youth with the ability to engage constructively in civic structures and inclusive political processes*" and called on "*all relevant actors to consider instituting mechanisms to promote a culture of peace, tolerance, intercultural and interreligious dialogue that involve youth and discourage their participation in acts of violence, terrorism, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination.*"[10]

In October 2015, UNESCO's Executive Board adopted a Decision[11] that unequivocally affirms the importance of education as a tool to help prevent terrorism and violent extremism, as well as racial and religious intolerance, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity worldwide. Whether provided through schools, clubs and community associations or at home, education is indeed acknowledged as an important component of a societal commitment to curb and prevent the rise of violent extremism.

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8   Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/674) http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf

9   United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178, adopted in September 2014, http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf

10 UN Security Council Resolution 2250, adopted in December 2015, http://unoy.org/wp-content/uploads/SCR-2250.pdf

11 Decision 46 adopted at the 197th session of UNESCO's Executive Board (197 EX/Decision 46) http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002351/235180e.pdf

These documents underline that education can...

▶ Help young people develop the communication and interpersonal skills they need to dialogue, face disagreement and learn peaceful approaches to change.

▶ Help learners develop their critical thinking to investigate claims, verify rumours and question the legitimacy and appeal of extremist beliefs.

▶ Help learners develop the resilience to resist extremist narratives and acquire the social-emotional skills they need to overcome their doubts and engage constructively in society without having to resort to violence.

▶ Foster critically informed citizens able to constructively engage in peaceful collective action.

For UNESCO, this is possible notably through Global Citizenship Education (GCED), which seeks to nurture a sense of belonging to a common humanity as well as genuine respect for all.

WHAT IS GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP?

Global citizenship refers to a sense of belonging to the global community and common humanity, with its members experiencing solidarity and collective identity among themselves and collective responsibility at the global level.

GCED is an emerging approach to education that focuses on developing learners' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in view of their active participation in the peaceful and sustainable development of their societies. GCED is about instilling respect for human rights, social justice, gender equality and environmental sustainability, which are fundamental values that help raise the defences of peace against violent extremism.[12]

12 Global Citizenship Education – Topics and Learning Objectives, UNESCO, 2015, http://unesdoc. unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf and Global Citizenship Education - Preparing learners for the challenges of the twenty-first century, UNESCO, 2014, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ images/0022/002277/227729e.pdf

2.3 LOCAL MANIFESTATIONS OF EXTREMISM

Since many learners may be poorly connected to, or misinformed about, international events, there are many benefits to discussing local manifestations of violent extremism in addition to, or instead of, international forms of the phenomena.

Discussing local manifestations of violent extremism...

▶ Helps learners understand the connections between local and global challenges.

▶ Helps them understand the real risks and consequences of violent extremism.

▶ Finally, it demonstrates to young people that they can make a difference if they make the right choices within their immediate context.

There are, however, **some important prerequisites** to discussing controversial local issues:

▶ Connecting the issue of violent extremism to content in the local curriculum,

▶ Understanding the social, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of the local context,

▶ Including minority-group perspectives in the discussions – or at least ensuring that their views are represented, so young people are offered a balanced view of issues,

▶ Being very clear to learners about your own role as the moderator (objective voice, "devil's advocate", impartial facilitator, etc.),

▶ Identifying the right timing, since controversial issues should not be discussed haphazardly.

In some cases, discussing local manifestations of extremism can be too complex and sensitive. In these circumstances, it can be more productive to introduce the subject through an example that is far removed from the challenges faced by local learners.

EXAMPLE

UNESCO and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum developed in 2015 a new training programme entitled *Conference for International Holocaust Education* to assist education stakeholders from all parts of the world in developing new pedagogies using education about the Holocaust as a prism to tackle their own traumatic past of genocide and crimes against humanity. This approach has proven particularly effective for communities that have suffered mass atrocities.

2.4 ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND MEDIA

Preventing violent extremism through education should be part of a broader prevention effort in which the family, community and media are involved. Building support and care networks that enhance these domains increases the likelihood of having a positive impact and develops the well-being of the community, without focusing on surveillance alone.

EXAMPLES OF CROSS-CUTTING COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

▶ **Project Exit** – Founded by the Norwegian government, it had three primary objectives: to establish local networks to support the parents of children embedded in racist or violent groups; to enable young people to disengage from these groups; and to develop and disseminate methodological knowledge to professionals working with youths associated with violent groups. The project involved collaboration between parents, child welfare officers, police, teachers and local youth workers.
https://www.counterextremism.org/resources/details/id/665/project-exit-leaving-violent-groups

▶ **Women Without Borders** – An Austrian NGO that empowers mothers and families in various countries to detect early signs of radicalization and confront the influence of factors that can lead youngsters to violent extremism.
www.women-without-borders.org

▶ **Connect Justice** – An independent UK-based social enterprise that creates community-led solutions for social justice. The operational focus is building trust and collaboration between communities, civil society, state agencies and the private sector around extremism and exploitation.
http://www.connectjustice.org

3. Managing the classroom discussion

3.1 OBJECTIVES

A discussion on violent extremism should seek to reinforce as much as possible the full range of skills that enable learners to participate more generally in civic life as informed global citizens.

This implies ensuring that the learning objectives cover the following three domains of learning: the cognitive, the socio-emotional and the behavioural.

EXAMPLES OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES BY DOMAINS OF LEARNING		
DOMAINS OF LEARNING	**LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE DISCUSSION** Learners should	**LEARNER ATTRIBUTES**, or traits and qualities, to be enhanced through the discussion
COGNITIVE	▶ Develop skills for critical thinking and analysis ▶ Acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations	▶ Recognizes forms of manipulation ▶ Aware of stereotypes, prejudices and preconceptions and their impact ▶ Able to distinguish between fact and opinion and question their sources ▶ Informed about the different facets of violent extremism and other global issues ▶ Understands that these issues are complex
SOCIO-EMOTIONAL	▶ Experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities based on human rights ▶ Develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity ▶ Develop inter-cultural competencies	▶ Shares a core set of values based on human rights ▶ Is respectful of diversity ▶ Able to recognize emotions that are experienced by another person ▶ Is interested in understanding different people, lifestyles and cultures ▶ Has the ability to "effectively and appropriately interact with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself "[13]

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13 Intercultural Competences – Conceptual and Operational Framework, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002197/219768e.pdf

EXAMPLES OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES BY DOMAINS OF LEARNING		
DOMAINS OF LEARNING	**LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE DISCUSSION** Learners should	**LEARNER ATTRIBUTES**, or traits and qualities, to be enhanced through the discussion
BEHAVIOURAL	▶ Act effectively and responsibly during the conversation ▶ Express oneself with self-confidence and address conflict positively ▶ Develop a motivation and willingness to take necessary actions	▶ Able to listen with respect to different points of view; to express one's own opinions; and to evaluate both ▶ Expresses a wish to take responsible action

3.2 PREPARATION

■ WHY PREPARE?

▶ Advance preparation reduces the fear of discussing controversial topics when the opportunity appears.

▶ An important aspect of the preparation is the development of a rationale for the discussion that clearly outlines the educational benefits of the experience.

■ WHAT TO PREPARE?

▶ The learning objectives, topic/entry point, discussion approach and the key content messages that should be transmitted through the conversation should be identified well in advance.

▶ Necessary permissions are useful, as the role of the school directors and administrators is critical in providing support for introducing these topics. Depending on the context, it may be necessary to get feedback or even obtain approval from the students.

▶ It can also be helpful to review information materials on the topic before the discussion, in order to address misconceptions and myths, by providing facts.

TIPS

▶ Anticipate challenges and opportunities for discussion.

▶ It can help to hold conversations with other adults in the school and local community, such as parents, and other educators about how to approach the subject of violent extremism.

▶ Do not engage in a conversation if you do not feel emotionally and professionally ready to do so.

▶ Visualize one of your students and imagine the conversation before it happens.

▶ Depending on the composition of each school/community, it may be beneficial to invite to class people from different backgrounds than those of the typical student and staff member.

▶ If necessary, it could also be helpful to bring in a professional specialized in mediation to offer support for particularly sensitive discussions.

3.3 DISCUSSION

■ WHEN TO DISCUSS?

Identifying the right moment and entry point to address violent extremism in the classroom requires preparation and forethought.

While lessons and discussions can be pre-planned and implemented as part of the day's lesson, other entry points for discussion may occur on the spur of the moment. These are "teachable moments". They can come when least expected. They are unplanned opportunities that should be seized to explain a difficult concept or start a conversation that will relate this topic to the experiences of learners.

Teachable moments can be missed opportunities if teachers are not prepared both personally and professionally to make good use of them.

TIPS

One of the most important skills a teacher can possess is the ability to recognize and use "teachable moments" to develop a safe and trusting environment. It is the ideal time to teach an important lesson[14]. Teachable moments can happen almost anywhere and anytime: on the way to school, in the playground, in the school cafeteria, and in the classroom.

▶ Teachers may not have time to fully review the rules and guidelines for a teachable moment discussion with students. A teachable moment discussion often follows an incident that provoked it. You can prepare students by regularly participating in discussions and dialogue in the classroom in anticipation of these unplanned moments of inspiration.

▶ A teachable moment discussion may focus on values as well as academic learning skills.

▶ Be observant and a good listener. Some teachable moments are not as apparent as others.

▶ Be creative. A teachable moment discussion can also arise out of negative experiences. If a child calls another child a "terrorist" or another bad name, use the incident to teach about name-calling, respect and violent extremism.

▶ Teachers can use these conversations starters to begin a teachable moment discussion in the classroom.

    a. "What has just happened here? Why did this happen?"

    b. "Someone did something nice today for someone else. Who can guess what was done?"

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14 Ballenger, C. 2009. *Puzzling moments, teachable moments: Practicing teacher research in urban classrooms*. New York, Teachers College Press (Practitioner Inquiry Series, 1st edition.)

c.   "Let's talk about respect today."

d.   "Why do you think it is important that we discuss what happened in class today?"

▶ End the teachable moment discussion:

a.   What did we learn today? Why was it important to have this discussion?

b.   Next, engage the class in a fun activity like sports or drama to enhance friendliness and cooperation, especially if the teachable moment discussion was brought about by a negative experience.

c.   Make yourself available to students and parents for unresolved feelings, questions or comments after the discussion.

■ WHAT ARE THE GROUND RULES?

Whether a discussion is pre-planned or not, it is important to develop ground rules that allow it to flourish in a safe and respectful learning environment.

One way to build a community in the classroom is for teachers and learners to develop together a list of ground rules to guide the discussion process.

After all the rules have been proposed, only those agreed upon by the majority of the classroom should be adopted. Review and post the ground rules before the discussion.

EXAMPLES OF GROUND RULES FOR THE DISCUSSION

1. Listen carefully in a non-judgemental manner, with an open mind.

2. Ask for clarification when you do not understand something.

3. Critique or question comments, ideas or positions, not the person making them.

4. Be willing to accept feedback or criticism of your ideas.

5. Demonstrate tolerance of other's viewpoints that are different from your own.

6. Use respectful non-inflammatory language. Avoid words that are politically charged, or violent in their meaning.

7. Consider others' positions, feelings and perspectives on the issue.

8. Share the stage by taking turns speaking and by not interrupting others.

9. Include everyone in the discussion, especially those who might lack confidence or willingness to speak.

10. Stay on topic and keep your comments brief.

▮ HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS?

As the facilitator, provide the model for asking and answering questions to help guide learners in the discussion. Ask probing and critical questions that help learners explore alternative viewpoints.

Giving examples of such questioning should eventually lead your learners to do it without any prompting.

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE USED TO CLARIFY THE STATEMENTS MADE BY STUDENTS

1. Can you explain what you mean by that as I did not understand?

2. Can you give an example of that?

3. What is fact and opinion in this statement?

4. How do you know that....? On what do you base your judgement?

5. What might logically follow from that argument or statement?

6. How does your example tie in with what we learned today?

7. What is the difference between.....and ...?

8. Can you please explain why you think this is important?

9. Is there another point of view on that issue?

■ HOW TO BE A NON-JUDGEMENTAL LISTENER?

Young people yearn for opportunities to discuss issues with a non-judgemental listener. They are brimming with ideas, some reasonable and some less so. They need someone to listen to their ideas, suggest other ways of thinking and help visualize reasonable decisions that take into account important longer-term consequences.

▶ Avoid condemning or prejudging learner's voices, concerns, actions or intentions during the discussion ("you can't say that"; "you can't think that").

▶ Avoid positioning yourself as the main authority on the subject. Rather, be a facilitator and make sure that pluralistic views and arguments are reflected in the discussion.

▶ Try not to interrupt students as they develop their arguments. On the contrary, help them find the words to express their thoughts.

▶ Provide sensible and respectful suggestions of issues to consider, including moral and ethical consequences of decisions.

▶ Take care not to over-interpret controversial or racist comments as signs of violent extremism.

TIPS

▶ **Stay focused** - Keep the discussion focused on the topic and learning objectives. If the discussion strays into other areas, it will weaken its quality. The facilitator's role is to steer the discussion back on track when it drifts off course, to make sure the learning objectives are met.

▶ **Model respectful, civil behaviour through your own actions** - Learners will observe your behaviour and modify their behaviour accordingly. If the facilitator speaks with respect and care in the context of the dialogue, students and learners will emulate this behaviour. Observe discussion rules. Smile when appropriate. Avoid interrupting people and require students and learners to allow a speaker to finish before another begins. Do not assign blame, openly disagree or admonish.

▶ **Watch for aggressive verbal and non-verbal behaviour** during the discussion. If it is observed, respond appropriately according to the agreed upon rules and consequences. If the behaviour persists, it is advisable to continue the discussion at another time. A proactive approach is best to deal with aggressiveness. Help learners visualize an effective discussion by role-playing and modelling active listening strategies.

▶ **Encourage and positively reinforce constructive engagement** in the dialogue.

▶ **Encourage the students to write about their feelings and experiences** – either in a journal or in a letter – to help them reflect more deeply on the topic discussed and collect their emotions.

■ HOW TO ENSURE THAT ALL PERSPECTIVES ARE HEARD?

▶ It is critical to structure the discussion in such a way that everyone is given an opportunity to speak and no one person, group, or viewpoint dominates the conversation. You can avoid excessive teacher talk and make sure that all voices are heard by utilizing a strategy called *respond and bounce*. Respond to a question or statement by learners but then "bounce" or "toss a ball out" to one or more students and learners.

▶ It is important to ensure that no groups are excluded from the discussion and all girls and boys and minority groups are included in the discussion and feel safe to participate.

▶ It is important to help learners understand that many of the world's problems are complex and multifaceted. The issues raised may not have a clear "right or wrong" answer, but contain many complexities, shades of meaning and ambiguity.

3.4 TOPICS TO ADDRESS VIOLENT EXTREMISM

There are many subjects that can bring about a fruitful discussion on violent extremism. The challenge is to frame the subject in a way that helps learners to explore their own values and opinions and to manage their emotional responses, while getting a better understanding of the underlying narratives of extreme ideologies.

One can consider, among other subjects :

▶ **Citizenship** - to allow learners to address issues of rights and responsibilities in diverse societies, justice, identity, and the notion of "belonging". The topic also offers opportunity to debate fundamental human rights principles, including freedom of expression, and to identify and counter hate speech.

▶ **History** - notably education about the history of genocide and mass atrocities, such as the Holocaust, to engage students in reflection about the power of hate propaganda and the roots of racism, antisemitism and political violence. It also allows learners to explore how historical narratives are constructed and how they can perpetuate conflict and prejudice in their own society.

▶ **Religion and beliefs** - to foster awareness about, and respect for, diversity within the community and provide opportunity to explore different values and beliefs, thus challenging prejudice and racism. This should include discussion of secularism and humanism, to counter myths about secularism as being the same as atheism[15] and mistrust of "non-believers". It should be stressed that believers in a particular religion should not be stereotyped as all the same, when there is often more diversity within a religion than across religions. It is also important to include those students who do not hold religious beliefs.

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15 See Davies, L. 2014. *Unsafe Gods: Security, secularism and schooling*. London, IOE/Trentham.

▶ **Languages** - to help learners discover a wide range of cultures, values and viewpoints on world history and thought. Besides developing core skills of writing and oral argumentation, it will also contribute to develop media literacy.

▶ **Freedom of expression and the internet** - to explore with learners how information is offered, structured and relayed; how it can be manipulated for violent purposes; and how new sources of information compete with professional media. Addressing online media literacy will help learners use the internet and social media in a safe and effective way. This can be linked with citizenship education on human rights and the difference between lawful free speech and hate speech.

▶ **Gender equality and gender-based violence** - to help understand the root cause of the problem; challenge certain attitudes about the status and role of women; and empower boys and girls alike to take constructive, non-violent action against extremist arguments promoting violence, notably against girls and women.

▶ **Art** - to promote understanding and valuing of diverse peoples, cultures and artistic expressions different from one's own. Art can be seen as a universal language binding communities and cultures over time and space. It offers the possibility of debating how the denial and destruction of cultural and artistic heritage due to violent extremism is a loss for all humanity.

3.5 DEBRIEFING AND FOLLOWING UP

After a discussion on violent extremism with students, teachers need to make sure there are no misunderstandings and unresolved tensions between learners. This implies taking the time to review together what was understood and learned from the exchange. This is also the time to identify unsettled issues that require in-depth and/or follow-up activities.

DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS:

What did you learn, what do you still have questions about? Are we any closer to understanding processes leading to radicalization of youth? What else do we need to know to better understand violent extremism? How might we continue the discussion?

If the discussion was especially heated, it may be advisable to follow up with learners individually to thank them for participating in the discussion and reassure them that they are entitled to their views as long as they are respectful of others.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS can assist learners in reflecting on the experience.

How do people show respect for others' ideas, even if they disagree? Is there anything you will do differently after this conversation?

Teachers might also consider incorporating a few extension activities that give learners an opportunity to further the discussion.

EXAMPLES OF EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

▶ Organize small group and pair discussions to be monitored very carefully, and abide by the same rules as the whole-group discussion.

▶ Be available to learners and families for confidential discussions.

▶ Talking heads panel: this follow-up activity requires that learners have some background knowledge on violent extremism. The goal is to enable learners to articulate positions unlike their own. Begin by selecting volunteers to take on the roles of panellists on a television show to discuss violent extremism from a youth perspective. Ideally, the learners are assigned a position, which is the opposite of their personal views on the topic. The class asks questions to the panellists, while the teacher serves as moderator. The activity begins with the student panellists introducing themselves and articulating their positions.

4. Key messages to deliver

After a discussion on controversial issues, positive messages need to be reinforced and transmitted to reunite the classroom community around a common set of values. This is important to ensure that the classroom climate remains productive and learners feel safe.

4.1 SOLIDARITY

Learners can be encouraged to think critically about, and to question, current situations and the status quo; to come up with new and creative approaches to common/global problems; and to find ways to take non-violent and constructive action to demonstrate their solidarity with others. These actions could include volunteerism, or obtaining more information from reputable institutions, NGOs and civil society organizations that work to help people in difficult circumstances and in need of support.

A concept at the core of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is solidarity, irrespective of differences in age, gender, nationality or ethnicity, and not just solidarity with people within your immediate community but also with those outside of it. It may help learners understand this notion if teachers identify examples from current events that illustrate how the world is interconnected, how concerns or issues affecting one part of the world can also impact another region, and how someone living elsewhere can also be confronting the same challenges or issues as oneself.

4.2 RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

Cultural diversity is a common feature of most, if not all, societies around the world. It is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature[16].

Acknowledging the intrinsic value of diversity stems from the recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others.[17] Respect for diversity is thus an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity.

Respect for diversity also helps to understand contrasting points of view and nurtures empathy and compassion.

In our diverse societies, these skills are essential to forge meaningful bonds between people and to identify collective solutions for societal well-being and sustainability.[18]

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16 Expert meeting – International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002346/234607e.pdf
17 Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, 1995, http://www.unesco.org/webworld/peace_library/UNESCO/HRIGHTS/124-129.HTM
18 Ibid 16.

4.3 HUMAN RIGHTS

Learning about human rights promotes a culture of non-violence and non-discrimination and fosters feelings of respect and tolerance. An education that encourages a better understanding of human rights also enables critical learning and debate about violent extremism.[19] Some of the notions explained below are complex and may not be relevant for the younger learners.

▶ Human rights are fundamental and universal safeguards. They apply to all human beings regardless of nationality, place of residence, gender, origin, religion, language, or any other status. Unlike the rights recognized by a State under domestic law, human rights apply to individuals from all States beyond national borders.

▶ Human rights entail both rights and responsibilities. Included in these notions is the idea that every person has the duty to respect the rights of others. For example: respecting each other's right to freedom of opinion, expression and belief.

▶ It is important, therefore, for young people to understand that individuals (or groups of individuals) cannot invoke their own rights as justification to violate someone else's rights.

▶ Knowing what is and what is not a human right, as determined by various international conventions, enables learners to challenge false claims and understand what is just and what requires protection. For example: there is no right not to be criticized; religions do not have rights, people and religious groups do.

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19   Learning: the Treasure Within,Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for
     Twenty-First Century, 1996, http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/15_62.pdf

▶ It is also useful to understand that according to international conventions there are non-derogable rights, meaning human rights that must be applied without exception (such as the right to life and the right to freedom from torture), as well as human rights that may be restricted under exceptional circumstances (such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of movement and the right to privacy). These distinctions are useful to help learners develop a more sophisticated understanding of complex situations. For example: if an extremist group commits a violent attack, the media may be given only restricted access to the site and may be instructed to limit communications immediately after the assault, for security reasons.

4.4 LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

Living in an interconnected and interdependent world does not automatically mean that individuals and societies are equipped to live together in peace.

Living in a peaceful society is a long-term goal, which requires "an understanding of others and their history, traditions and spiritual values" as well as the ability "to implement common projects or to manage the inevitable conflicts in an intelligent and peaceful way."[20]

UNESCO's approach to "learning to live together" is based on this definition and implies two complementary learning processes:

▶ the "discovery of others" which sets out to foster mutual understanding among students, and

▶ the "experience of shared purposes" whereby students work together towards common goals.

"Learning to live together" leads to the development of core competencies and skills such as empathy, knowledge of other cultures, cultural sensitivity, understanding of discrimination, acceptance, and communication.

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20   Learning to Live Together, UNESCO Bangkok Office, 2014, 20, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/
     images/0022/002272/227208e.pdf

4.5 YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT

Young people can be encouraged to harness their energy and enthusiasm to create, and develop positive ideas and innovative solutions to today's challenges and global concerns. With their knowledge of networking through social media, the sharing of experiences becomes instantaneous and potentially widespread.

Through the active participation in youth organizations and informal groups, young people are able to nurture a sense of hope, identity, camaraderie and belonging, which renews their engagement with the community.

Being involved in the decision-making processes at local or governmental levels, or taking part in volunteering activities also cultivates young people's desire and energy for change.

Schools can teach skills related to advocacy, campaigning, budgeting, organization building, and leadership, in order to facilitate engagement.

Democratic processes of elections tend to be too slow for young people, who prefer immediate action. Fast ways to create change and positively impact one's community need to be identified.

ANNEX

■ **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

Q: What if I do not have the answers to their concerns and questions?

A: Admit it, but do not quit the discussion abruptly. Use the question as a starting point to continue the debate in the next class. You can also encourage the students to use the contentious issue as a subject for a research project. It is important to acknowledge that you, as a teacher, do not have all the answers and that you also need to study further. Practicing honesty is one of the best ways of teaching honesty. Positioning yourself as a life-long learner can further help build a positive rapport with the students. It is important not to drop the subject and provide students with another opportunity to address the issue more substantially. To that effect, you should check and collect the necessary information after the class and consult colleagues and school authorities concerning the best ways in which to handle the issue. Where necessary, do not hesitate to seek professional development to improve your expertise.

Q: Should I touch upon sensitive subjects or those considered "taboo"?

A: With the growing access to information and communication technology, teachers and parents may be surprised by the extent to which children are already exposed to sensitive issues and are aware of controversial world events. Teachers should therefore not refrain from tackling such issues. If they do, the students will venture out to seek answers by themselves, which can lead them to misguided sources of information and approaches. Thus avoidance is not an option. Teachers should build a safe and constructive environment for dialogue within the classroom and make sure students

feel and trust that their questions and concerns are heard and taken into account by teachers and the school. This will lead students to resort to the classroom discussion to address their problems and dilemmas. Building trust is critical in handling taboo-issues and the stepping stone towards avoiding marginalization.

Q: I have minority group students in my class who can be stigmatised for violent extremism. Is it still appropriate to discuss the issue?

A: Yes, as long as the discussion is balanced. First, it is of utmost importance that the minority group students present in the classroom are not equated with the perpetrators of violent extremism belonging to the same minority/ethnic group. Highlight individual or personal identities over the group identity, as well as the need to respect every individual in his or her own right. Second, it is useful to discuss the issue of unfair stigmatisation cast sometimes on an entire minority group following the violent extremist acts committed by one or two individuals associated with that group. Students need to understand the injustice they themselves can inadvertently inflict on innocent people through stigmatisation and exclusion. Third, from the beginning of the discussion, the teacher must underline that violent extremism is not confined to any racial, religious, ethnic, gender or political group. Diversifying the examples of violent extremism in terms of the background of the perpetrators is critical.

Q: Do I teach the topic of violent extremism when the student population is not immediately concerned by the phenomena, as it is seen and presented in the media?

A: The purpose of teaching about the impact of violent extremism as well as encouraging open discussions about its prevention is not just to mitigate its immediate impact. Violent extremism concerns, first and foremost, the violation of basic universal values, such as human rights, non-violence and non-discrimination. Prevention measures involve, among others, teaching students positive values and helping them build resilient minds to counter extremist narratives and influences to which they can be exposed, even if they seem, for now, not to be affected by the phenomenon.

Global Citizenship Education, one of the pivotal concepts utilised to prevent violent extremism, focuses on students' learning about compassion and responsibility towards individuals that they do not know and may never know. Preparing young minds to respect humanity in its diversity and unicity represents one of the most fundamental objectives of quality education to prevent violent extremism.

Q: Should I focus my discussions on a particular local type/case/example of violent extremism?

A: Incorporating local examples of extremism in classroom discussions can help make the subject more relevant to students, but it can also lead to emotionally charged and distressing outcomes. There is also the risk of stigmatising certain student populations. It is therefore important to handle the matter in a balanced manner. One can use examples of violent extremism from textbooks, from other countries or from one's own community. To the extent possible, the teacher should diversify the examples used, preventing in this way students from building a stereotyped understanding of violent extremism in relation to one particular group or population. When handling a local manifestation of violent extremism, the teacher can address it at a conceptual level, referring to the different possible causes and drivers of extremism as well as its impact. This will help students approach the topic with some distance and limit the personal involvement that can hinder open and constructive debates.

Q: How do I prevent learners with different views from confronting each other during and after the classroom discussion?

A: It is very important that the process of discussing violent extremism is completed within a structured cycle. There has to be a preparation stage for both the teachers and the students. Ground rules must be laid at the very beginning and the teacher must draw clearly the boundaries of what is permitted and what is not. The students should not be left feeling that their voices were not heard or that in-depth discussion was avoided or

terminated abruptly. Debriefing and concluding discussions are thus as relevant as the preparation.

Feeling and experiencing the debate as a democratic and open process that treats all students equally is as meaningful as the actual content of the discussion. If all students are aware that their views were heard and respected they will be less likely to gang-up afterwards. During the discussion, it may also be an opportune time to remind the students that bullying or violence in schools will not be tolerated under any circumstances. If necessary, the teacher can identify unsettled issues requiring in-depth examination and/or follow-up activities and continue the conversation at another time[21].

Q: *How do I address the problem of extremist propaganda online?*

A: It is crucial to address the topic of online propaganda openly during the discussion on violent extremism. While propaganda is hardly a new tool for disseminating extremist and harmful ideas, it has a greater impact now because of its wide accessibility via internet. Therefore, it is all the more necessary to address the issue early, by cultivating critical thinking skills and encouraging students to question the sources of information and the motivation of the people posting extremist materials online. Introducing them to such concepts as "digital citizenship" and highlighting the importance of responsible behaviour not only in reality but also online must form part of the school programme to address violent extremism. Meanwhile, the teacher may also wish to make best use of the constructive on-line educational resources on the prevention of violent extremism which can be used to attract the students' attention and interest (see References section).

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21 Stopping Violence in Schools: A guide for teachers, UNESCO 2009, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/
images/0018/001841/184162e.pdf

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For a broad range of resources and educational materials, we encourage readers to consult the *UNESCO Global Citizenship Education Clearinghouse hosted by APCEIU* at http://gcedclearinghouse.org/

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