

# Teaching approaches that help to build resilience to extremism among young people

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This research report was commissioned before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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# Executive summary

This report presents the findings from a large-scale, in-depth research study into teaching methods – knowledge, skills, teaching practices and behaviours – that help to build resilience to extremism. The focus is on teaching methods to be used in a general classroom setting rather than as part of interventions targeted at those deemed at risk of extremism.

The research methods used were 10 in-depth case studies of relevant projects and interventions, including interviews with teachers, practitioners and students and classroom observation, a literature review conducted according to systematic principles, and close engagement with 20 academic and other experts in the field.

The study was commissioned by the former Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF), now the Department for Education (DfE), with support from the Home Office. The **Office for Public Management** (OPM), an independent public service research and development centre, conducted the research in partnership with the **National Foundation for Educational Research** (NFER), which is the UK's largest independent provider of research, assessment and information services for education, training and children's services.

The primary aim of the research was to provide a strong evidence base for schools and other education providers to help them adopt and commission the appropriate interventions to build resilience to extremism.

Following detailed analysis and synthesis of findings from the case study visits, together with findings from the literature review, we identified a number of **key ingredients** which were important for resilience-building teaching activities. Taken together, these ingredients help to counteract the impact of factors that can help to either push or pull young people towards extremism and / or violent extremism, such as a sense of injustice or feelings of exclusion.

The key ingredients can be clustered under three headings:

- 1. making a connection through good design and a young-person centred approach**
- 2. facilitating a safe space for dialogue and positive interaction**
- 3. equipping young people with appropriate capabilities - skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness.**

Whatever the setting and resources available, the principles of good design and facilitation – the first two of the three – are crucial and non-negotiable. This research suggests that a well-designed, well-facilitated intervention will go a long way to building resilience. To be more confident of **longer-term, sustainable resilience**, however, an additional focus is needed, over and above good design and facilitation, on building 'harder' skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness, including practical tools and techniques for personal resilience.

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## Summary of research findings

### 1. Making a connection through effective design and a young-person centred approach

- The learning or wider objectives of participation should be communicated clearly, along with how the activity in question fits within the broader learning programme, or with other agenda.
- Setting concrete and tangible goals and outputs for young people can help to foster a sense of ownership and help to sustain involvement over time. Examples we observed included presenting at a conference at the end of a project, or creating an online wiki database or film.
- Producing something 'real' has the added advantage of getting young people to work together collaboratively, fostering transferable skills.
- Interventions work best where they are young person centred and young person led. This means both having young people as peer educators, which offers a sense of empowerment and can raise self-esteem, and making materials and activities relevant to young people's lives, for example, by reflecting local community language and issues.
- A well-designed intervention often feels enjoyable to those participating and distinctly from normal classroom lessons. This can be achieved by building in lots of opportunities for discussion and group exercises, the use of an external facilitator rather than a classroom teacher, and taking an approach that emphasises 'honest realism' – not shying away from controversial details.
- A number of the case studies which participants said they'd found particularly enjoyable used technology in activities including film making, social messaging, online forums and video conferencing.

### 2. Facilitating a safe space for dialogue and positive interaction

- To create a dialogue conducive to building resilience, facilitators, whether teachers or other practitioners, need to be able to create a 'safe space' for all young people in a group to be able to take part in discussion, which may (and in fact often should) cover controversial issues.
- Several factors are important for creating a safe space, including:
  - the development, preferably with young people, of agreed ground rules which are easy to remember, and which provide a vital route of recourse if things become heated or if unsavoury things are said
  - tools and techniques which enable young people to self-facilitate sensitive discussions themselves, thereby taking ownership of the safe space
  - the ability of facilitators to ensure that sessions are inclusive and supportive, and to be able to deal with a young person saying something unpalatable, incendiary or offensive.
- The willingness, confidence and ability of facilitators to act in such a way that 'connects' with young people is crucial, as hard as this may be for the classroom teacher.

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- This is achieved, for example, by allowing honest, trusting and equal relationships to form, 'letting go' of the direction of the discussion, the appropriate use of humour and role-modelling of expected behaviours.
  - Unless facilitators respect young people's pre-conceptions, they are likely to feel that they are being judged and are thus less likely to constructively engage with resilience-building activities. These pre-conceptions may reflect extremist or otherwise offensive thinking, but rather than ignoring them facilitators should allow the views to be aired and dealt with.
  - Facilitators must have sufficient knowledge to be able to, for example, counter stereotypes or mistaken assumptions about a particular religion, or where this is not feasible, know how to access the necessary information.
  - Being willing to admit gaps in knowledge is crucial. Partial or inaccurate information can undermine participants' trust in facilitators and disengage them from the intervention, potentially exacerbating a situation that may already be sensitive and difficult to manage.
  - Facilitators also need to take the time to accurately assess the knowledge levels of their students, in particular, the extremism of their views, to be able to tailor the session accordingly.

### **3. Equipping young people with appropriate capabilities - skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness**

- Interventions that include a focus on the 'harder' skills, tools and techniques to improve personal resilience and aim to have real, long-lasting benefits, such as leaving young people better able to cope with life pressures and challenges, use critical thinking skills to appreciate different perspectives and come to their own view, and work well with peers.
- Achieving this longer-lasting benefit requires a focus on building personal resilience and a positive sense of identity. This can be done by supporting young people to be emotionally resilient to life's pressures and helping them to foster a positive sense of self, for example, through positive thinking, conflict-management techniques and celebrating their multi-faceted identities
- Those case studies which had an explicit focus on building personal resilience used simple theoretical frameworks and interactive techniques such as role-play to explore complex ideas about the control we can exercise over our perceptions, emotions, behaviours, interaction with others and capacity to affect change in our lives.
- All of the case studies had a 'stretch' element built into their design, as well as opportunities for the young people to reflect on their achievement. This reflects the principle that young people should be supported to develop confidence, a sense of self-worth and future aspirations by being encouraged to step outside of their comfort zone.
- A key aspect of building resilience is supporting young people to explore, understand, and celebrate their personal identity. Particularly effective seems to be enabling young people to reflect on the multiple facets of their identity, discuss the possible tensions and celebrate multiplicity as something which creates balance and 'uniqueness'.
- Our findings suggest that critical thinking skills – crucial for interrogating and challenging extremist ideologies – can be most successfully developed through teaching methods that support inquiry and intellectual inquiry led by the young people themselves.
- Young people should be actively supported to become aware that views and experiences other than their own exist in the world. Similarly, they should have the opportunity to

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realise that views and experiences other than that of their immediate family, peer network and / or school community also exist.

- Both teaching practitioners and young people said that methods which are designed to encourage participants to engage with a balanced range of information, and appreciate the value of an evidence-based approach, have many benefits, including challenging commons myths and helping young people to appreciate the complexity of, for example, global conflicts.

## What factors help to support a successful intervention?

Three sets of broader factors are important in enabling a successful intervention: They are:

- effective partnership working with local agencies
- supportive school leaders, and
- good integration with the wider curriculum.

### Effective partnership working with local agencies

- Partnership working is a way to ensure that the intervention's potential impact can be maximised in practice through:
  - Creating local understanding about the intervention, which helps to ensure that it is tailored appropriately to the local circumstances and takes into account any particular local issues or sensitivities
  - Enlisting the help of locally-trusted individuals. This is especially relevant in terms of recruiting young people for sensitive, targeted interventions, a point raised in the literature review and supported in the case-study research
  - Developing a 'network of support' to ensure the intervention's sustainability in different places over time.
- The key principles of effective partnership working are open communication between agencies, which helps to generate shared understanding about the aims, methods and expected outcomes of the intervention; (for longer-term interventions) regular feedback on impact achieved; and encouraging local agencies to take ownership of specific aspects of an intervention.

### Supportive school leaders

- Strong support from school leaders is essential in gaining the buy-in of teachers and students and, where appropriate, parents and local community representatives. It means that the intervention is more likely to be well-resourced, and have a strong and clear educational rationale for those who are involved in it, whether they are teachers, facilitators, school leaders or participants.
- The most crucial aspects of strong leadership and management support are ensuring a good level of understanding among the leadership team, allowing sufficient time for the principal staff member to plan, organise and run the intervention, and the provision of sufficient training for participating staff members.



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## Good integration within the curriculum

If an intervention or programme is to be sustainable, it needs to be linked with and anchored in the wider curriculum. An intervention that is integrated into curriculum structures and teachers' working practices increases its potential to have maximum impact for students. It also avoids the necessity of spending time on one-off, isolated discrete interventions that may need to be repeated at further cost in the future. Good curriculum integration involves:

- Saving time and working 'smart' - an intervention needs to have resonance with a school's ethos if it is to have practical and sustained senior leadership support. Another way to gain leaders' support is through the intervention's capacity to allow teachers to maximise the use of their time through working 'smart' – by achieving a number of goals through one piece of work.
- Maximising impact - interventions that are integrated into the ethos and curriculum of the school provide a coherent and sustainable approach that maximises their impact. In particular, the messages conveyed by these interventions need to be clear, consistent and regularly repeated throughout the school's daily working practices if students are to be able to absorb them.

## Conclusion

- Many of the 'key ingredients' of teaching methods that help to build resilience to extremism are no more and no less than general principles of good teaching. Generic and general principles of good teaching are the stable foundations on which to base all subsequent successful teaching practice for building resilience.
- The research also highlights the importance of adapting, amending and building on general good teaching practice to ensure such methods become even more relevant and effective in helping to build young people's resilience.
- This research also revealed where specialist teaching methods are important to help build young people's resilience. Such examples include where specialist knowledge, people (with particular skills) or resources, techniques and interventions are essential.
- Conceptualising the 'key ingredients' in this way helps to overcome a false, artificial and potentially dangerous simplification: that apart from religious studies experts, mainstream teachers need to focus on 'good teaching' and leave the specialist stuff to the 'experts'.

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# 1. Introduction

This report presents the findings from a large-scale, in-depth research study into teaching methods that help to build resilience to extremism. The focus is on teaching methods to be used in a general classroom setting rather than as part of interventions targeted at those deemed at risk of extremism.

The study was commissioned by the former Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF), now the Department for Education (DfE), with support from the Home Office. The Office for Public Management (OPM), an independent public service research and development centre, conducted the research in partnership with the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), which is the UK's largest independent provider of research, assessment and information services for education, training and children's services.

This introductory chapter sets the scene for the chapters that follow. It has five main aims:

- Set out the objectives of the research
- Give a clear definitions of key terms used throughout the report
- Provide an outline of the methodology adopted
- Present the analytical framework for the study
- Provide a brief description of each of the 10 case studies used in the research.

## Research team and acknowledgements

This study was conducted jointly by an OPM and NFER research team, and overseen by Phil Copestake (OPM) with expert advice and guidance provided throughout by Professor David Kerr (NFER). The research was managed by Joe Bonnell from OPM and the team included Dr Rowena Passy (originally NFER but now at the University of Plymouth), Rachel Salter, Shama Sarwar, Chris Reed and Sanah Sheikh (all OPM).

OPM and NFER would like to thank all of the participants in the study, and in particular the members of the Expert Reference Group and the organisers, managers, teachers, practitioners and young people at the case-study sites who gave so generously of their time in the course of the research. The research could not have been completed without their assistance and commitment. We would also like to commend the support provided throughout the research by those at DCSF (now DfE), particularly Hannah Sheehan, Sarah Butt and Richard White. We hope that the report and its conclusions will prove useful in moving forward practice and research in this challenging area.

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## 1.1 Objectives of the research

### The context for the research

This research was commissioned by the former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (now the Department for Education (DfE)) in October 2009. Its primary aim was to provide a strong evidence base to schools and other education providers to help them adopt and commission the appropriate interventions to build resilience to extremism.

The election of the Coalition Government in May 2010 saw a policy shift around the agenda of preventing extremism and the announcement of a review of the government's Prevent strategy (ongoing at the time of this report). However, it is clear that education will continue to have an important role to play in the process of combating extremism and developing young people's resilience to potentially harmful ideologies. In October 2010 Home Secretary Teresa May spoke of the Government's intention to 'tackle extremism by challenging its bigoted ideology head-on' and to ensure that 'everybody integrates and participates in our national life'.

DfE has previously sought to provide practical advice on what schools can do to prevent violent extremism, through the *Learning together to be safe* toolkits for schools.<sup>1</sup> The toolkit was developed to raise awareness among educational institutions and educational staff of the risks presented by extremist groups, and to provide practical guidance on the contribution that schools and colleges could make in helping individuals and communities to develop resilience to extremism. However, there remains a need for a more systematic review of the most effective approaches to building resilience.

The Department has now moved away from issuing direct guidance to schools but is keen to continue to support schools as they seek to monitor and address the threat of extremism. Questioning the status quo is a normal part of growing up and young people should be encouraged to be inquisitive, explore their identities and express their views. At the same time, it is important to recognise that the anxieties and uncertainties surrounding the transition to adulthood in a diverse society can leave young people vulnerable and at risk to being influenced by those who seek to promote extremist view points, including encouraging the use of violence for political ends. There is a need to ensure that as they mature and begin to make sense of the world, young people have a full understand British democratic values such as mutual tolerance and respect for the law and are equipped with the skills and capabilities to resist extremist arguments that run counter to these values. This research therefore aims to provide evidence on effective teaching methods to equip young people with these skills and capabilities and to help schools and other education providers adopt and commission appropriate interventions to build resilience to extremism.

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Learning together to be safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism*. Available at: <http://publications.education.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/00804-2008BKT-EN.pdf> (accessed 21.11.10).

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## The objectives of the research

The research had three main objectives:

1. Establish an evidence base on current practice in building young people's resilience to extremism
2. Identify 'key ingredients' in building young people's resilience to extremism
3. Identify transferable learning from approaches concerned with changing and preventing dangerous behaviour such as involvement with gangs and / or drugs.

To achieve these aims, the research took account of:

- the amount of **knowledge and understanding required** to counter extremist narratives or challenge negative stereotypes
- the **skills needed** to engage young people, deliver effective interventions and introduce highly sensitive and contentious subjects
- other **appropriate practices**, for instance, in promoting positive behaviours.

The primary focus of the study was on principles that are appropriate for teachers to use in the school / college classroom i.e. when working with a general audience of young people to build resilience to extremism rather than delivering specific interventions targeted at those deemed at risk of extremism and/or violent extremism. It is not expected that teachers be equipped with the specialist knowledge and skills to deliver such targeted interventions.

Although the primary focus of the research was identifying principles that are relevant for school and classroom settings, we also worked with youth and community initiatives when we believed the practices could have *direct relevance* to teaching and learning both in and beyond schools.

**This was not a full-scale evaluation of impact achieved over time by projects that aim to reduce extremism through effective teaching.**

One of the criteria we used for selecting case studies to include was whether credible evaluation had been conducted, but due to the relatively small number of projects to choose from, we included some case studies where no such secondary evidence was available.

The projects and interventions we studied provided a chance to explore, in real classroom and other settings, the knowledge, skills and practices that appear to make a difference in building resilience to extremism.

**The focus of the research was on the specific knowledge, skills and practices themselves, rather than on the projects as a whole. This report is therefore not an official DfE endorsement of the participating projects. Confirming whether or not they have achieved impact – in terms of reduced risk of radicalisation, for example – will take more extensive, research and evaluation.**

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## 1.2 Key terms used in the report

The following are terms used throughout the report, clustered under the three headings of:

- **subject area terms**, i.e. the terms related to the subject focus of the report on extremism and building resilience
- **policy terms**, i.e. the terms used to define and describe policy in the subject area
- **education terms**, i.e. the terms used to describe the people and approaches involved in education concerning the subject area.

We believe that taking time to understand these terms will help the reader to get the most from the chapters that follow, particularly the conclusions in the final chapter.

### 1.2.1 Subject area terms

The key subject area terms used in the report are:

- **Extremism** is more than simply stubbornness in one's views or general intolerance of others. It involves holding views which are considered by equals, peers and society as being beyond collective norms and at odds with core beliefs of the whole. Extremism can relate to a number of different subjects from gender relations to politics, and does not necessarily result in violence. In a national context in the UK, extremist views may include those which are directly opposed to values such as democracy, mutual tolerance, individual liberty and the rule of law.
- **Violent extremism** is related to terrorism, which is 'at the extreme end of an extreme position, using fear and violence to achieve political ends'<sup>2</sup>. It describes the attitudes, beliefs and actions that condone violence as a means of political end. This includes views that:
  - Foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs
  - Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts
  - Foment other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts
  - Foster hatred intended to cause violence between communities in the UK.
- **Radicalisation** is the process by which people adopt an extreme position in terms of politics and religion; a violent extremist ideology; or move to violent action in support of their beliefs.

The radicalisation process does not follow a single process or pathway and there are no specific stages or steps involved. Radicalisation is often a social process involving interaction with others, however, there are reported cases of individuals self-radicalising. The rate at which a person becomes radicalised can vary greatly. People may become radicalised rapidly, while for others it is a more gradual process. Some may start to become radicalised only to 'stop' at a certain point or continue to become radicalised later.

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<sup>2</sup> Davies, L. (2008) Gender, education, extremism and security, *Compare* **38** (5), pp.611-625, p.612.

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Radicalisation doesn't necessarily result in violence being committed or even supported.

- **Resilience** is, broadly, 'the ability to 'bounce back' from adversity'<sup>3</sup>. It is used by educationalists and mental health professionals (among others) to describe a process in which people can *overcome* or *resist* negative influences that block (for instance) emotional well-being and / or achievement.
- **Community** has a number of dimensions:
  - The *school community* – the young people it serves, their parents, carers and families, the school's staff and governing body and community users of the school's facilities and services
  - The *local community within which the school is located* – the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area
  - The *national or UK community* – all schools are by definition part of this community
  - The *wider or global community* – formed by European Union and international links<sup>4</sup>.

### 1.2.2 Policy terms

The key terms used to define policy approaches to the subject area are:

- **Prevent** is one of the four components that make up the Home Office counter-terrorism strategy. Its aim is to 'stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism'<sup>5</sup> through:
  - Challenging violent extremist ideology
  - Disrupting those who promote violent extremism
  - Supporting vulnerable individuals
  - Increasing the resilience of communities to violent extremism
  - Addressing the grievances that ideologues are exploiting<sup>6</sup>.

The Prevent strategy is undergoing a major review, which was still underway at the time this report was completed. While the findings from this research will hopefully be directly relevant to the review, it was too early in the review process to reflect emerging findings in the focus of this research or report.

- **Community cohesion** refers to 'working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of

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<sup>3</sup> Buzzanell, P. 2010. Resilience: Talking, Resisting, and Imagining New Normalcies Into Being, *Journal of Communication* **60** (1), pp.1-14.

<sup>4</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) *Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion*, p.5. Available at: [http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/\\_doc/11635/Guidance%20on%20the%20duty%20to%20promote%20community%20cohesion%20pdf.pdf](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/11635/Guidance%20on%20the%20duty%20to%20promote%20community%20cohesion%20pdf.pdf) (accessed 21.11.10).

<sup>5</sup> The UK counter-terrorism strategy. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/counter-terrorism/uk-counter-terrorism-strat/> (accessed 12.11.10).

<sup>6</sup> Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2009) *Learning together to be safe: a toolkit to help colleges contribute to the prevention of violent extremism*, op cit, p.11.

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people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community'<sup>7</sup>. Schools and colleges have a duty to promote community cohesion, and the way they discharge that duty is inspected by Ofsted.

- **Integration** is 'principally the process that ensures new residents and existing residents adapt to one another'<sup>8</sup>. In his maiden speech, Conservative MP Simon Reevell, who represents a multi-ethnic constituency, said that 'integration is important – it is not about where someone is from, but the extent to which people are prepared to mix, and ensuring that we respect one another, whatever our cultural differences'<sup>9</sup>.

### 1.2.3 Education terms

In the context of this research, we define these particular education terms in relation to the subject area as follows:

- An **intervention** is a scheme of work with young people that is designed and implemented to achieve particular ends in particular circumstances
- **Teaching methods / approaches** are the approaches that teachers and / or facilitators choose to best help participants / young people to learn
- **Teachers** refers to trained school staff who (generally) teach in classrooms
- **Facilitators** are those who lead an intervention that (often) involves discussion, and who may not necessarily be trained teachers
- **Practitioners** refers to those who work in a particular profession such as teaching, youth work or and / or social work
- **Participants** refers to those young people who are participating in an intervention
- **Young people** are those up to the age of 18
- **Peers** refers to young people who are approximately the same age
- **Peer education** is education delivered by young people to other young people
- **Critical thinking** refers to the ability to analyse and evaluate information and argument. It is not necessarily negative, but focused on questioning assumptions and values that underpin statements and conclusions with a view to assessing their validity.

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<sup>7</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) *Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion*, op cit, p.3.

<sup>8</sup> Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Shared Future*. Available at: <http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/DownloadDocumentsFile.aspx?recordId=18&file=PDFversion> (accessed 21.11.10).

<sup>9</sup> Simon Reevell (2010) Maiden speech to the House of Commons. Available at: <http://conservativehome.blogs.com/parliament/simon-reevell-mp/> (accessed 23.11.10).



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## 1.3 Methodology

The research was conducted between November 2009 and September 2010. It included three interrelated components:

- **Scoping interviews** with 20 academic and non-academic experts in the field. These in-depth interviews enabled us to:
  - identify people to form the Expert Reference Group for the research
  - identify the factors that cause young people to become radicalised and / or violent extremists
  - create a working hypothesis of the ‘key ingredients’ in teaching approaches that build resilience against different forms of extremism
  - identify potential case study sites and organisations.
- A **review of the available literature**, conducted according to systematic principles. The aim was to collect and collate evidence from evaluated interventions that have been successful in preventing extremist and / or risky behaviour, such as involvement in gangs or drug misuse, among young people.
- **Ten in-depth case studies** in different regions of the UK. The rationale for selection was that the case studies should:
  - enable us to test the ‘key ingredients’ of teaching approaches that were identified through the literature review and scoping interviews and believed to build resilience against extremism
  - provide a range of delivery settings, such as primary and secondary schools, youth groups and faith groups
  - provide a range of different teaching approaches, involving teachers, facilitators, youth work practitioners and peer educators among others.

The ten in-depth case studies were selected from a long-list of potential case studies which was generated through the scoping phase. This long list was divided into three broad categories or types of case studies.

- Programmes or interventions aimed specifically at building resilience to extremism
- Interventions or activities aimed at building resilience more generally or that illustrated one particular ‘key ingredient’ which it was believed may contribute towards building resilience amongst young people (for example ‘helping to see multiple perspectives’)
- ‘Comparator’ case studies – namely case studies aiming to build resilience to extremism in other areas (such as Northern Ireland or resilience to gangs and guns)

We are aware that some of the selected case studies have been externally evaluated while others have not. We would stress that the case studies presented in this research have been chosen as **illustrative** of teaching methods that are believed to be successful in this area,



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and are exemplars of such methods and approaches. They do not offer a definitive and exhaustive set of approaches that contribute to building young people's resilience to different forms of extremism, nor are they the only case studies that could have been selected.

Following the scoping phase of the research, OPM and NFER worked in partnership with an **Expert Reference Group** (ERG) of leading national and international academics and experts in the fields of education, behaviour change and security. The ERG brought a wealth of knowledge of and experience in practical and academic educational research that provided a solid evidence base for the study, including the identification of potential case studies. They provided strategic advice and guidance at critical points in the project, particularly in the construction of the analytical framework and drawing out of conclusions from the research. We would like to express our grateful thanks to all those members of the group for their inputs.

We were also intending, at the outset of the study, to conduct in-depth interviews with adults and young people who had been deradicalised, having previously engaged in violent extremism. However, this was not possible within the timescales of the research, due to the difficulties inherent in gaining access to people in this category.

## 1.4 Analytical framework for the research

Developing a working theory or model of the factors that lead to young people's radicalisation was a key part of the scoping phase of the research. There was a general consensus among the experts we consulted that very few people become so extreme in their theology and / or ideology that they turn to violence (although many do become radicalised). Targeted, rather than generic, interventions are appropriate in the case of violent extremism.

It was also generally held that teachers are not equipped with the specialist knowledge and skills to deliver targeted interventions, but that they should have a baseline of awareness and skills in prevention through the type of work that they undertake as a matter of course in schools and colleges.

It was also clear from the scoping research that there is **no set pathway to radicalisation**. Instead, it was helpful for the purposes of the study to conceptualise the process of radicalisation as multi-faceted and dynamic, with a number of different specific instances or factors which can **'push'** and a different set of factors which can **'pull'** a young person towards extremism. It was noted, however, that process of radicalisation is not necessarily linear; as one ERG member pointed out, young people can 'dip in and out' of the process, or be interested in violence without having the desire or skills to engage in violent activity.

Another purpose of the scoping research was to develop a working hypothesis of the 'key ingredients' in teaching methods, practices and behaviours that seemed, on the basis of expert advice, to be most important in reducing the impact of both the 'push' and 'pull' factors and building resilience to extremism. These can be divided into three broad categories:

- teacher attitudes, behaviours and confidence (for example, willingness to admit gaps in knowledge or allowing controversial issues to be aired)
- specific knowledge on the behalf of the teacher or facilitator (for example, understanding of other cultures, religions and practices)
- specific teaching practices (for example, techniques for boosting critical thinking skills).

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The diagram on the next page presents the main hypotheses to emerge from the scoping phase. The ‘key ingredients’ of successful teaching approaches are in the centre column, and are placed in the context of the specific relevant ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors on the left and right hand sides of the diagram. While the actual key ingredients to emerge from the research were slightly different to this hypothetical framework, it provided a helpful way to target the study<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> NB – ‘support from senior leaders’ was initially ‘out of scope’ for this project as it isn’t a specific teaching method. Relevant research findings relating to leadership support have been included in this report.

**PUSH FACTORS** – factors that push an individual/ make an individual vulnerable to extremist messages

Lack of excitement; frustration

Lack of *sense* of achievement – seen as significant. 'lack of purpose' // Confidence in the future, life goals.

Lack of an outlet for views.

Gaps in knowledge or understanding of Islam – both young people and their parents

Sense of injustice

Actual or perceived humiliating experiences. (Including bullying, racial discrimination as well as perceived humiliating experiences. Perhaps linked closely to sense of injustice)

*Exclusion – lack of belonging to peer or community networks, associations etc.*

**Below the line: factors that are out of scope of this study**

**KEY INGREDIENTS**

**Teacher confidence** in many cases it will be the use of existing teaching skills and methods which may well be the most effective approach. From prison settings, staff who are more confident in their abilities tend to perform much better even though they have not received specialist training

**Teacher attitudes and behaviours**

- Willingness to admit you don't know
- Acknowledging controversial issues exist
- Awareness that I have a role to play
- Willingness to turn to others for help when you don't know about something

**Specific knowledge:**

- Understanding other cultures and religions as well as alternative values and beliefs (whilst being careful to avoid 'othering')
- Knowledge of an alternative values framework

**Teaching practice/pedagogy:**

- Boosting critical thinking (seeing through propaganda, singular messages etc)
- Helping to see multiple perspectives
- Using multiple resources/methods
- Embedding or sustaining dialogue following specialist interventions.
- Enabling students to tackle difficult issues.
- Linking school work to the wider community
- Drawing evidence from across the curriculum
- Developing in young people a sense of multiple identities. help young people become aware of, and comfortable with, multiple personal identity

Other factors

Support from senior leaders

Pupil support processes

**PULL FACTORS** - Factors that draw young people into extremist messages

Charismatic/confident individuals (recruiters).

Networks/sense of belonging

Broader community views which enable or do not oppose extremism.

Persuasive, clear messages. Exploiting knowledge gaps

Sense of dignity and importance and loyalty

Exciting (non-teaching) activities.

Sense of purpose in life



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This framework was used to design the research tools for the case studies and helped inform the sampling of suitable case study sites. Specifically, we focused on finding out:

- whether evidence from case studies shows that each ‘key ingredient’ is an important characteristic of teaching approaches that build resilience to extremism
- the relative weight or importance of each of these ‘key ingredients’ in building resilience against different forms of extremism
- the relative importance of the ‘key ingredients’ in different locations, environments and circumstances.

It is important to note that many of the ‘key ingredients’ of teaching methods that mitigate against the risk of radicalisation are not necessarily specific to preventing extremism or violent extremism, but are the principles of good classroom and / or teaching practice. The Economic and Social Research Council’s (ESRC) Teaching and Learning Research Programme (see [www.tlrp.org](http://www.tlrp.org)) defines 10 pedagogic principles based on the best available evidence, which we provide below.

### **ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme: Evidence-informed pedagogic principles**

1. **Effective pedagogy equips learners for life in its broadest sense.** Learning should aim to help individuals and groups to develop the intellectual, personal and social resources that will enable them to participate as active citizens, contribute to economic development and flourish as individuals in a diverse and changing society. This means adopting a broad conception of worthwhile learning outcomes and taking seriously issues of equity and social justice for all.
2. **Effective pedagogy engages with valued forms of knowledge.** Pedagogy should engage learners with the big ideas, key skills and processes, modes of discourse, ways of thinking and practising, attitudes and relationships, which are the most valued learning processes and outcomes in particular contexts. They need to understand what constitutes quality, standards and expertise in different settings.
3. **Effective pedagogy recognises the importance of prior experience and learning.** Pedagogy should take account of what the learner knows already in order for them, and those who support their learning, to plan their next steps. This includes building on prior learning but also taking account of the personal and cultural experiences of different groups of learners.
4. **Effective pedagogy requires learning to be scaffolded.** Teachers, trainers and all those, including peers, who support the learning of others, should provide activities, cultures and structures of intellectual, social and emotional support to help learners to move forward in their learning. When these supports are removed the learning needs to be secure.
5. **Effective pedagogy needs assessment to be congruent with learning.** Assessment should be designed and implemented with the goal of achieving maximum validity both in terms of learning outcomes and learning processes. It should help to advance learning as well as determine whether learning has occurred.
6. **Effective pedagogy promotes the active engagement of the learner.** A chief goal of learning should be the promotion of learners’ independence and autonomy. This involves

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acquiring a repertoire of learning strategies and practices, developing positive learning dispositions, and having the will and confidence to become agents in their own learning.

7. **Effective pedagogy fosters both individual and social processes and outcomes.** Learners should be encouraged and helped to build relationships and communication with others for learning purposes, in order to assist the mutual construction of knowledge and enhance the achievements of individuals and groups. Consulting learners about their learning and giving them a voice is both an expectation and a right.
8. **Effective pedagogy recognises the significance of informal learning.** Informal learning, such as learning out of school or away from the workplace, should be recognised as at least as significant as formal learning and should therefore be valued and appropriately utilised in formal processes.
9. **Effective pedagogy depends on the learning of all those who support the learning of others.** The need for lecturers, teachers, trainers and co-workers to learn continuously in order to develop their knowledge and skill, and adapt and develop their roles, especially through practice-based inquiry, should be recognised and supported.
10. **Effective pedagogy demands consistent policy frameworks with support for learning as their primary focus.** Organisational and system level policies need to recognise the fundamental importance of continual learning - for individual, team, organisational and system success - and be designed to create effective learning environments for all learners.

We return to these general pedagogic principles in the final chapter to assess the extent of their applicability in teaching approaches to build resilience to different forms of extremism.

In the context of this research, pedagogic principles can be divided into three groups:

- those that are **wholly generic**, that is they are aimed at developing a range of student attributes that include self-esteem, resilience and / or confidence
- those that **require adaption** in the context of discussion of controversial / sensitive issues or issues relating to radicalisation and extremism
- those that are **specific** to the prevention of radicalisation and extremism.

## 1.5 Case study descriptions

We now present a brief summary of each of the 10 case studies. Each summary includes a brief description of the rationale for its selection in the research, the aims of the intervention, the teaching or facilitation approach and a sense of its impact.

### 1. Philosophy for Children (P4C)

Philosophy for Children was selected for this research as an example of an approach that engages young people with analytical and critical ways of thinking. The case study for this project involved observing Philosophy for Children activities as part of The Oldham Dialogue and Enquiry Project lead by Richard Gore. The **aims** of P4C are to:

- develop skills of inquiry, listening and communication
- learn to integrate different viewpoints into personal thinking
- develop critical thinking skills and the ability to reflect.

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P4C sessions ideally consist of a group of 15 – 20 participants led by one or more facilitators. The session consists of a ten-step process<sup>11</sup> that encourages participants to collaborate in forming a specific question in response to a stimulus, which may be anything from a picture or a story to a piece of fruit. When the question has been decided, it is then examined and explored by the group, led by the facilitator(s). These use a set of agreed ground rules to ensure that each participant has time to speak and a right to be heard without interruption, but at the same time provides reasons for his / her opinion. Critical appraisal of others' thoughts is encouraged, but participants must challenge the statement that has been made and not the person who made it. The whole is aimed at creating a safe environment in which participants are free to explore controversial, sensitive issues that are important to them and to wider society.

Teachers of the primary school children reported that P4C gives children '*the tools to communicate with each other*'. For instance:

*'When two children collide into each other ... it's 'What did you do that for?'. They're given the chance to explain themselves, and so it's 'I wasn't watching where I was going'. 'Oh, all right'. And it's all over then, you know. So they will communicate now, and handle conflict through dialogue.'* (Deputy Head)

## 2. Rights Respecting Schools

The Right Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) is a UNICEF UK scheme that was introduced into the UK in 2004. The programme was selected for the research as an example of an approach within schools that is inclusive and generates understanding of the rights and responsibilities of social life. The **aim** of the RRSA is to put the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of the way in which the school operates. More specifically, the objectives are for the UNCRC to underpin the school's ethos and character, and to be embedded in the school structure and everyday life.

Putting the UNCRC at the centre of the way in which the school is run involves creating an ethos in which children are put first, where language and dialogue are enabling for both teachers and pupils, and where children are aware that they are part of a wider, global world. An important part of this process is recognition within the school of Article 12, which states that 'every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously'<sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup>. The process of accreditation involves staff and pupils working together to think about the key rights that they want to protect within the school and the ways in which those rights can be protected. This enables each school to develop and clarify a values framework that is supported by all members of its community, and that can be used to bring coherence to different educational initiatives.

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<sup>11</sup> Preparation; presentation of the stimulus; thinking time (private reflection); conversation (shared reflection); formulation of the questions; airing the questions; selection (of the question to discuss); first words; building (on the discussion); last words.

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.rrsa.org.uk/file.php/1/rrsa\\_documents/CRC\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.rrsa.org.uk/file.php/1/rrsa_documents/CRC_Summary.pdf) (accessed 17.08.10).

<sup>13</sup> Examples of effective pupil-led changes in the case-study school included: pupil access to water in the classroom; the school council collaborating over the design of the new sixth form building; the school installing pupil lockers; the school putting down astroturf games areas.



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Staff members in the case-study school spoke of improved relationships between staff and pupil since application for the RRSA, and of the quality of their own working lives:

*'You don't hear raised voices, both from pupils or teachers. There's a lot of listening ... I've noticed more of an open atmosphere, and it just seems to be a lot calmer school, a lot more focused school.'* (teacher)

One staff member commented that these open lines of communication mean:

*'If something goes wrong, if there's a fight or someone's being bullied, that they [pupils] come and tell us. And they're very good at that. If they perceive an injustice, they're very quick to come and say, 'This needs sorting out' ... they realise it pays off ... It's an absolutely lovely place to work'* (Deputy Head).

### 3. School Linking Network Model United Nations

Model United Nations (MUN) events provide the opportunity for young people to take the role of diplomats representing different countries in simulations of United Nations debates. The project was selected for inclusion in the research as an example of teaching young people to understand and appreciate others' experiences and views. The aims of the case-study School Linking Network (SLN) MUN were to:

- Encourage participants to find ways of working together to resolve conflict
- Raise participants' awareness of different global and political issues, and to encourage them to understand different views and perspectives
- Develop participants' knowledge, skills and confidence.

The project lead's objective was to create a safe space in which participants could explore issues of personal, local, national and global interest. During the course of twice-monthly workshops, the lead would give participants a topical issue to research and discuss with the aim of finding the root of the conflict. The group would reflect on their own emotions generated by the discussion and try to find solutions to the problem. This work was complemented by a trip to Northern Ireland, where the group met political activists and former political prisoners from both sides of the divide, and a debate on climate change. The programme was completed when the students took part in the National High Schools MUN event in New York, where 2,700 participants attended from 20 countries.

Teacher interviewees spoke of the personal, social and academic development of participants, and the quality of the relationships that developed within the group. These comments were echoed by the young people, who talked about the knowledge, understanding and skills they had gained through the programme:

*'I think we've all come on in leaps and bounds ... in terms of personal skills, how we interact with others. These skills are invaluable for life, I think.'* (participant)

### 4. UK Resilience Programme

The UK Resilience Programme (UKRP) is a programme developed by positive psychologists in the United States. It was selected for inclusion in this research as an example of training young people in techniques that are intended to promote optimism and well-being. UKRP

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draws on cognitive behavioural therapy to give pupils the skills, conceptual frameworks and vocabulary to:

- manage their emotions and deal appropriately with ‘activating events’ such as conflict with others, negative influences and emotionally testing situations
- think critically using evidence to avoid jumping to conclusions, being prejudiced, blindly following others and escalating conflict situations.

Teachers and facilitators are trained in the techniques of UKRP in the United States. In a series of workshops, they then teach participants how to:

- take ‘a step back’ and look for evidence for their thoughts about a problem using the ABC – a three-step approach (activating event - belief - consequence) to help young people reflect on their emotional responses to problems
- put problems into perspective by looking at the worst and best possible outcomes as a way of mitigating the initial intensity of emotional responses
- communicate assertively and avoid aggressive and passive behaviour
- manage intense emotional reactions with relaxation skills
- dispel pessimistic thoughts with resilient thinking.

Participants reported that they applied techniques they had learnt on the UKRP in ‘real-life’ situations both in and out of school:

*‘This guy walked past me and swore at me. At first, I thought I would swear back. But then I asked why he did this, and I thought it might be because he’s not treated well at home or something. All I said to him was that I feel sorry for you and then he walked off.’*  
(participant)

## 5. Dissolving Boundaries

This project was selected as a case study because it highlights a teaching approach that aims to use the curriculum and Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a means to break down barriers between communities that have had long-standing and bitter grievances against each other and build greater understanding of and resilience to extremism among young people. The **aim** of Dissolving Boundaries is to promote cross-border links and understanding. This is achieved through collaboration between two partner schools per project (one from Northern Ireland and the other from the Republic of Ireland) in educationally-valuable curricular work that requires the use of ICT.

The project is underpinned by work from social psychologists, in particular the contact hypothesis<sup>14</sup> and the ‘group identity’ model<sup>15</sup>. The latter shows that, when two groups are encouraged to work cooperatively and to think of ‘we’ (as opposed to ‘them’ and ‘us’), contact significantly reduces prejudice.

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<sup>14</sup> Allport, G. (1954) *The Nature of Prejudice*. London: Addison Wesley.

<sup>15</sup> Gaertner, S & Dovidio, J. (2000) *Reducing ingroup bias: the common ingroup identity model*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press.



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Teaching staff emphasised the *'natural'* way in which pupils were brought together. They believed that the messages to the pupils of collaboration and cooperation were more powerful for being implicit. Pupils reported increased awareness and tolerance of pupils from the other side of the border:

*'Before we sort of judged them like because they were from a different place and they liked different things ... we thought 'Oh goodness, what will we do? They're going to be so different'. But in reality they really weren't.'* (participant)

The schools in which the Dissolving Boundaries work was observed as part of this case study were Strandtown Primary School, Belfast, Bloomfield Collegiate School, Belfast and Ballyclare Secondary School, Ballyclare

## 6. 'Not in My Name'

*Not in My Name* is a play written by Alice Bartlett which illustrates the effect of a terrorist attack on all members of a local community. This project was selected to show how theatre can introduce young people to sensitive and controversial areas and stimulate discussion on these issues. The aims of the intervention centred on the play include:

- offering a hard-hitting production that demonstrates the impact of a terrorist attack upon a local community
- raising awareness of issues around radicalisation, extremist activity, counter-terrorism procedures, identity and community cohesion
- encouraging diverse audiences to engage critically with these issues.

Through extensive use of verbatim dialogue the theatre production offers a personal perspective on the immediate consequences of the attack. This approach enables audiences to develop a genuine interest in the characters and what happens to them. The events of the play are set in the close future and a post-show activity, based in the present-day, incorporates advising an actor playing the potential bomber of alternate (non-violent) means of resolution. This is designed to open up discussion around issues including extremism, terrorism and identity. The play engages audiences further by including cast members from similar ethnic groups as the audience, and using language which is relevant to the local area in which it is being performed.

Pupils interviewed by OPM reported that the play felt 'real' and that they could connect with it. They said that the work undertaken through the play had broadened their understanding of social and demographic issues, and how change might be achieved in the local area. In their interviews with the researcher, they discussed the implications the play might have on the way they see others, such as avoiding stereotyping people and/or understanding that there are different cultures.

## 7. Tools for Trialogue

Tools for Trialogue (TfT) is a workshop based on reading and discussing passages from Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptures. The project was selected for the research as an example of educational inter-faith collaboration. The **aims** of TfT are to:

- help young people recognise that they have complex, multiple identities

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- enable participants to understand the variety of interpretation that becomes possible when religious texts are discussed openly
  - improve 'faith literacy' and young people's understanding of religious texts and their relevance to contemporary life
  - explore differences and similarities between beliefs and common values – between the three Abrahamic faiths, with the broader aim of allaying fears about the religious 'other'
  - develop 'empathy skills' among young people, that is, the capacity to understand what someone else is saying without necessarily agreeing with it.

The workshop is run by facilitators of the three Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They engage participants in the study of key excerpts from the Torah, the Bible and the Koran that refer to issues in 'modern youth culture' (for instance, the issues of dress, adornment and modesty). Participants are asked for their interpretations of the different texts. The facilitators, as part of the response, explain how the given scriptural message is practiced, that is, how it impacts on behaviour and ways of living.

Participants reported that they enjoyed being taught by representatives of each faith, and the inter-faith approach:

*'It was good to talk to someone from that religion, rather than a teacher that might not be religious ... It was good to hear what they believe in and why, rather than hearing from someone who just knows about the religion.'* (participant)

*'It was interesting to see the similarities and differences between the texts.'* (participant)

## 8. Digital Disruption and STREET

These projects were selected as examples of educating young people in understanding and deconstructing the techniques and messages of propaganda. The **aim** of both projects is to sensitise young people to the use of propaganda techniques in the media and to teach them to:

- identify these techniques
- develop an understanding of their intended impact on audiences
- deconstruct the messages of propaganda.

Digital Disruption's approach consists of a series of workshops with about eight young people. They discuss the meaning and techniques of propaganda and then contribute to the production of four short viral videos.

STREET's approach is to have a series of workshops with young people, led by a teacher trained and experienced in the subject area of media, in which they discuss:

- core concepts related to Islam. This is aimed at addressing the gaps in knowledge / misconceptions that the young people may have about Islam
- social policy and how the Muslim world responds; how Muslims can contribute to the society around them
- international conflicts and the role of propaganda in exacerbating the conflicts
- the broad context of propaganda and its methods

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- deconstructing propaganda techniques through watching propaganda videos. The young people are shown how it is an emotive process that is attempting to influence their opinions.

Digital Disruption project leaders and participants commented that the programme results in increased capacity for critical analysis among the young people:

*'This is about getting them [young people] to think critically and make an informed choice about what they're seeing online – we won't always be there.'* (project leader)

STREET reported that reactions from the young people vary. Some recognise that they were being exposed to propaganda and show appreciation of initiation into other interpretations of Islam, while others report an appreciation of a safe space to talk about these issues.

## 9. Leap – Confronting Conflict

Leap are an organisation which specialises in youth conflict resolution, working to tackle knife and gang crime and other forms of youth conflict. Leap were chosen as a case study organisation due to their relevant experience in building resilience to and preventing violence and risky behaviour as well as their experience of 'de-radicalising' (our term) young people who had become involved in violence or risky behaviour.

Leap kindly offered to act as a case study organisation very late in the life of the project due to a last minute cancellation by a similar organisation. As such, our case study with Leap took place in the late summer – their quietest period for delivering interventions. Our case study with Leap was therefore made up of a series of scoping interviews with key project staff and directors as well as a visit to and observation of a course called Quarrel Shop – selected as an example of teaching and learning about conflict resolution. As the case study happened late on in our research project and a number of 'key ingredients' of effective practice had emerged already, we conducted an interview with a director of Leap in which they gave examples of the ways in which some of their projects demonstrate those key ingredients. In particular, examples came from Leap's Pathfinder Schools project and their Fear and Fashion anti-knife crime project.

It is important to note that where we have included examples of these two projects in the body of the report, their purpose is to provide illustrative examples of how Leap achieve a particular 'key ingredient' of effective practice as well as to further bolster and demonstrate the importance of that ingredient which emerged from our analysis.

The rest of this introduction to Leap focuses on the Quarrel Shop intervention which we observed. Where other examples of Leap projects are included in this report, contextual details are given at the time. The **aims** of Quarrel Shop are to:

- encourage young people to reflect on their individual and pre-existing ways of dealing with conflict, and to develop their skills in managing conflict constructively
- train young people in facilitation techniques so that they can run workshops for their peers to support the practice of conflict resolution in their work with young people

The Quarrel Shop course is designed to be practical, fun and informative. Participants are involved in a number of exercises that encourage them to think about the causes of and triggers for conflict, and how these might be resolved. Ground rules are set between the group for creating a safe space for discussion, and Quarrel Shop facilitators employ particular techniques to promote constructive and respectful discussion. These include:

- 
- acknowledging rule-breaking statements or behaviour non-verbally
  - encouraging participants to 'challenge the statement, not the person'
  - one-to-one work with any individual(s) who is consistently breaking the ground rules of interaction, offering them a choice about whether to adapt their behaviour.

## 10. Rewind

Rewind<sup>16</sup> is an anti-racist project based in Sandwell Primary Care Trust , and was selected for the research as an example of anti-racist and anti-extremist work. Rewind's **aim** is to educate people of all ages about issues of racism and identity. Anti-racism is at the core of this teaching, and the project aims to provoke deep thought about issues of race, and to provide a safe, no-blame atmosphere in which participants are encouraged to debate issues about race, extremism and related areas of contention.

The approach is founded on raising awareness of 'race' as a socio-political creation. Drawing on academic theory and research, Rewind gradually presents participants with information about genetics, history and current attitudes that show 'race' to be a theory that has been used to justify attitudes and actions based on ideas of superiority and inferiority towards different groups of people.

Pupils felt that they had learned that:

*'There's only one, the human race. That's it ... there's only skin colour which is separating us.'* (pupil)

*'Six genes control your skin colour ... more genes control your height.'* (pupil)

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<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.rewind.org.uk/> (accessed 17.08.10).

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## 1.6 Report structure

This introductory chapter has set the scene for the chapters that follow. It has

- Set out the objectives of the research
- Given a clear definitions of key terms used throughout the report
- Provided an outline of the methodology adopted
- Presented the analytical framework for the study
- Provided a brief description of each of the 10 case studies used in the research.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapters 2, 3 and 4** contain the findings from the case study research, and present a thematic analysis of the most important principles of successful approaches to teaching and learning that help to build resilience to extremism. Links are made throughout to findings from the Rapid Evidence Assessment. The chapters are based on the three main clusters of 'key ingredients' that emerged from the research:
  - making a connection through effective design and a young-person centred approach (chapter 2)
  - facilitating a safe space for dialogue and positive interaction (chapter 3)
  - equipping young people with skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness (chapter 4).
- **Chapter 5** focuses on drawing out the key findings regarding the factors that, based on the research, are important for enabling these kind of successful approaches to flourish, in terms of, for example, management, strategic, training and other broader factors
- **Chapter 6** focuses on a summary of the key additional findings from the Rapid Evidence Assessment that are *not* covered in the preceding chapters
- **Chapter 7** sets out the key conclusions that stem from the research, particularly for practice in education and training settings.

The **appendices** contain further detail on the case studies, methodology, including interview topic guides and other research tools.

The complete findings from the Rapid Evidence Assessment conducted as part of this study are published in a separate companion report. Relevant comparisons between case study and literature review findings are made throughout.

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## 2. Making a connection through effective design and a young-person centred approach

Before delivering an intervention and being able to equip young people, through teaching methods, with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to build their resilience to extremism, it is essential that any intervention or activity is first well-designed and fit for purpose. In this chapter we explore the importance of a well-designed intervention or set of activities in helping lay the foundations for building young people's resilience through teaching methods.

This chapter outlines the key ingredients that are important to consider when designing an effective intervention underpinned by principles of being young-person centred. They are:

1. That young people know and understand the purpose of their participation in a given intervention or activity.
2. Setting concrete and tangible goals and outputs for young people to foster a sense of ownership.
3. Ensuring interventions *feel* young person centred and young person led. This can be achieved through using techniques such as co-production and training young people to deliver skills to their peers as well as making interventions feel relevant by using local language, community issues and reflecting local demographics.
4. Designing interventions to feel enjoyable and 'different', which can be achieved through a number of general techniques including (although not exclusively) building in lots of discussion and group exercises, the use of 'honest realism' and using external facilitators. Techniques such as using innovative and interesting methods using technology such as film making and social networking are also powerful ways to make interventions feel enjoyable and different

The chapter and sub-sections that follow explain the significance of successful interventions being designed with the participants in mind. This chapter is divided into four sections, one for each of the key ingredients outlined above. Each section describes the research evidence that has informed our analysis, explains why this characteristic is important, and offers an analysis of the challenges which practitioners might encounter in trying to implement such ingredients in their practice.

### 2.1 Young people know and understand the purpose of their participation in a given intervention or activity

Ensuring that young people know and understand the nature and purpose of their participation in educational activities is a core principle of effective teaching practice<sup>17</sup>.

This element of effective teaching takes on particular importance in attempts to build resilience to extremism among young people where extremist groups and ideologies are often credited with appealing to young people by providing a clear sense of purpose and participation.

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<sup>17</sup> Ofsted (2009), *Criteria for making judgements about the quality of provision*.

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For practitioners, the challenge is often in establishing:

- *what* young people need to know and understand about their participation in resilience-building activities
- *why* such participation is important
- *how* best to communicate this importance to young people.

What follows provides insights into how our case studies have approached these issues and how they have helped young people to understand the purpose and nature of their involvement in a range of interventions and activities.

## **What do young people need to know and understand about the nature and purpose of their participation in resilience-building activities?**

Overall, our case studies indicate that there are two different types of knowledge that young people may want or need when it comes to their participation in resilience-building:

- Knowledge about the intended focus of the intervention itself and what they will gain through their participation – including the wider applicability of the intervention and the benefits of taking part
- Knowledge about the wider agenda or strategic objective the given intervention is linked to (such as the duty to promote community cohesion or preventing extremism).

With regard to the first level of knowledge, for many of the young people that we spoke to, they saw their participation as being about achieving particular learning outcomes or objectives. This learning was often valued by participants either as end in itself (as something that was simply ‘good or interesting to learn’) or as a means to an end, that is, learning that could help them develop particular skills or gain qualifications such as GCSEs and NVQs.

In one case study, young people were also offered small financial incentives to initially help encourage participation<sup>18</sup>. In this case, a programme director noted that by the end of programmes where people are paid incentives to attend, participants acknowledge that though the vouchers had motivated them to attend initially, the experience had given them far greater benefits than the amounts paid to them.

In cases where young participants had a greater understanding of the nature and purpose of their involvement, they appeared more likely to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

It also appeared to widen the applicability or ‘reach’ of learning outcomes. Feedback from a focus group of UK Resilience Programme participants indicated that they were aware of the wider significance of the programme as a code of conduct for almost all aspects of school

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<sup>18</sup> Note – the payment of incentives to young people to take part in activities classed as ‘positive activities’ is an issue of great debate among those working with young people with some arguing that in certain circumstances (such as young people working in a consultative capacity for local authorities) payment should be made to young people for doing a job. Others argue that the skills and opportunities such situations offer should be payment enough. The issue of payment for participation is not something that there is scope to explore in this report.

As one expert noted, much can be made of the importance of participants choosing to attend voluntarily, but in reality they will attend for a variety of reasons and a number of (non-financial) *incentives* are used to encourage participation. Some services may incentivise with cash or vouchers, whereas those in prisons may incentivise with time out of cells. For others, the *incentive* for attending is to avoid a jail term following a strong encouragement of attendance by a judge or youth offending team worker.



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and home life, which could also assist them on leaving school (in gaining employment, for example). Participants demonstrated this awareness by reporting that they had used the 'ABC' approach<sup>19</sup> to problem-solving in 'real-world' situations both inside and outside of school. They noted that such behavioural skills would likely improve their chances of obtaining employment.

However, where young people had only a limited grasp of the intended purpose and what might be gained through their participation, they were less likely to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

For example, from participant feedback that followed the screening of the *Vampire Conspiracy* (as part of the Digital Disruption project), young people seemed to have a limited understanding of what the screening was for, or its 'fit' with earlier learning from the wider project.

**Digital Disruption**, the *Vampire Conspiracy*, Bold Creative, Tower Hamlets

This project, devised and run by Bold Creative, aims to build young people's resilience to online extremist propaganda by making them more aware of the techniques that are used in its production.

One of the films used to achieve this was entitled the *Vampire Conspiracy*. The film was presented as a comic exposé of conspiracy propaganda, which attempts to demonstrate to its audience how thorough the use of language and the selective ordering of factual information the film-maker can propagate a particular message.

However, of those young people who gave feedback to the project lead following the screening, none were able to identify *Vampire Conspiracy* as a form of propaganda or the main devices it employed. From our observation it was clear that participants did not fully understand the purpose of their participation in the intervention and this in turn affected their ability to recognise the key messages being communicated via the film.

This illustrates that having a limited understanding of the purpose of participation can impact on participants achieving intended learning outcomes. In this case, the importance of ensuring that young people understand the intended purpose of their participation is emphasised by its observed absence.

It is important to note that the *Vampire Conspiracy* and the surrounding workshops were just one element of Digital Disruption's work to help young people de-construct propaganda. In another element of the Digital Disruption project, participants create their own propaganda films having de-constructed key propaganda techniques. The project lead commented that following an initial session to explain the purpose of the Digital Disruption project, young people were able to quickly understand and engage – helped in part by the accessibility and familiarity of the film-making task:

*'They immediately got the point of it.'* (project lead)

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<sup>19</sup> The 'ABC' in this context is a three-step approach to problem-solving designed to help young people reflect on their emotional responses to particular situations where they identify the activating event (A), belief or motivation (B) and consequence (C) of a given response.



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With reference to the second level of knowledge – i.e. knowledge about the wider agenda or strategic objective the given intervention is linked to – the majority of the interventions we observed did not explicitly broach the subject of wider strategic objectives with participants. There are valid reasons why the wider strategic aims (as opposed to learning objectives) may not be *explicitly* shared up-front with participants. These include the need for sensitivity about certain agendas and the need to build trust gradually with certain participants. In cases where young people didn't know the underlying strategic objective, facilitators, and educators working with those young people did know the strategic objectives behind the intervention.

In what remains of this sub-section, we explore how the above knowledge and understanding about the purpose of participation in resilience-building can be effectively communicated to young people.

### How can the purpose of participation be effectively communicated to young people?

As noted above, practitioners can clearly and openly communicate the purpose of young people's participation in an intervention. In the instances where learning objectives were stated more explicitly - UKRP student handbooks have a summary of objectives for each lesson, for example, young people reported having a clear understanding of project aims.

Where potential gains or learning objectives were not explicitly stated at any point during a given intervention, they were often strongly implied by the design of particular learning exercises instead. For example, in the case of *Tools for Dialogue*, young people were encouraged to recognise that they have complex multiple identities (and that this also true of others) by *doing* – that is, by identifying their own 'lenses' of identity and those of others.

Conversely, in the case of *Dissolving Boundaries*, for example, participants are *neither* explicitly told the purpose of their participation, nor is it implied. In this case the central purpose of the project is to change their perceptions of the 'others', i.e. those with different cultural, religious, political or social upbringings. Instead the project attempts to achieve this aim by encouraging sustained contact through ICT and face-to-face contact between pupils from both Protestant and Catholic schools in Northern Ireland and across the border in the Republic of Ireland. The work is supported by the theory that working together towards shared goals will help participants to change their perceptions of others. In the case of *Dissolving Boundaries* intentionally not stating the true underlying purpose of the intervention had merits and was successful in achieving buy-in to the project. Young people reported feeling generally more aware and tolerant of their Protestant or Catholic peers as a result of participating in the project.

With reference to the wider strategic objectives of particular interventions, depending on the sensitivity of the context, these may need to be revealed over time once rapport and trust with participants is first established. *Rewind* facilitators, for example, introduce young people gradually to the anti-racist aims of the project by talking about who they are and what they have done, arguing that this is necessary due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter.

There can also be a skills-based rationale for incrementally revealing the broader aims or scope of a particular project. In the case of the UKRP, the application of the 'ABC' approach is, where possible, initially restricted to relatively everyday problems (such as forgetting your homework) before moving onto 'worst-case scenarios' or broader social problems. In this sense, the UKRP is something of a 'foundation' programme for Year 7 pupils in that it seeks to equip them with the skills to participate positively in more overtly 'Prevent' focused

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teaching interventions later in their school lives (when they discuss issues such as religion, community cohesion, terrorism and extremism inspired by animal rights).

Potential **challenges and risks** involved in ensuring that young people have an understanding of purpose of participation include the following:

- Both explicit and implicit approaches to communicating the purpose of young people's participation in resilience building carry certain risks. More explicit approaches risk being too didactic, where objectives are learnt more by rote than self-reflection, leaving young people with only a surface-level understanding of the purpose of their participation. More implicit approaches most obviously risk participants' misinterpreting core aims and learning objectives, but, as mentioned above, this can be controlled for to a certain extent by clearly signposting objectives in the design of interventions.
- Where school faculty members are insufficiently informed about their intended role in a given project - whether active or passive, for example - this may lead to interventions on the part of teaching staff that jar badly with the learning objectives or overall tone of the project. During our observation of one intervention using external facilitators, the class teacher interjected with an inappropriate example during a class exercise with potentially negative consequences. This indicates the added need for teaching staff to have a clear understanding of their role in any given intervention. However, it should be noted that this can work in reverse emphasising the need for teaching staff to brief external facilitators in advance about anything in the background of students and / or the local context that may impact adversely on the intervention.

## 2.2 Setting concrete and tangible goals and outputs for young people to foster a sense of ownership

To generate commitment and dedication from young people, it is important for interventions to help young people feel some sense of ownership over the process and the end result. Our case study research found that setting goals for young people to achieve (e.g. presenting at a conference at the end of the project, creating a wiki database) can be very helpful both in fostering ownership and in generating commitment and making activities feel participant-centred.

Similarly, creating tangible outputs, such as a film, can also ensure that that young people value their involvement in the intervention. Setting concrete goals and tasks works particularly well because:

- It can foster a sense of achievement in participants, thereby increasing their confidence and self-esteem. Participants are left feeling that they have accomplished something important or can reflect with pride on a tangible output they have created. This can have a positive impact on whether young people decide to take up other development opportunities in the future.

*'Other young people will see it and if it's good they think, yeah he's got talent.'* (YP, *Digital Disruption*)

- Young people are often required to work in a team which means working collaboratively, apportioning responsibility and communicating effectively to achieve an end goal. These are transferable skills that the participants will be able to draw on in the future.

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- It can also help young people maintain their focus and momentum over the course of an intervention. Additionally, working towards an end goal which is exciting and enticing (for example, a conference in New York) also acts as an incentive to participate in interventions.

These points are illustrated by the following case study examples:

**The School Linking Network Model United Nations** (SLN MUN) project aims to break down attitudinal barriers to resolving conflict through developing young people's self-knowledge, skills and confidence. The SLN-MUN was launched in July 2008 and the subject addressed at this conference was *'The Instability in Iraq'*. Research is the first step for all the delegates – in order to fully participate they must have a clear understanding of their allocated country's perspective on the agenda. To do this they must submit a country position paper and proceed to uphold this position during the conference. A position paper includes a brief introduction to the country and its background in relation to the topic including political and foreign policy and government action to date on the issue.

One of the key successes of the programme as reported by the lead project deliverer was young people's increased confidence and realisation that this confidence would help them to achieve what they wanted. Participants also reported that the experience had been enjoyable and rewarding:

*'It's been a long, long journey ... initially it was all a bit weird, it was all a bit scary ... going and meeting someone from a completely different school, getting partnered with someone who's maybe a different age as well and arranging in your own time to meet up and write an actual country's position paper and then debate on that topic as a simulation of the United Nations. It's a bit frightening. But it was very, very enjoyable. A valuable experience.'*

**Dissolving Boundaries** is a project that aims to promote cross-border relationships between young people in schools in Northern Ireland and the Republic through curricular work that requires the use of ICT. Schools make contact using Moodle (a virtual learning environment) and teachers encourage social messaging so pupils from both schools can get to know each other before starting to work on an agreed topic. The two groups have a video conference at the end of the first round of collaboration which allows students to put faces to each other names and through this encourage a deeper working relationship. The project culminates in the development of a wiki to which both groups can contribute and edit.

By having a tangible output towards which both groups contribute, the project was successful in providing pupils with a definite focus. According to one member of staff:

*'There's more nitty gritty to it, it's got its own purpose ... having something that they work on is much more satisfying ... you have an end that you want to achieve and you have an end that is visible.'*

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The creation of tangible outputs is also valuable because these outputs tend to be long-lasting and thus ensure that the intervention has a long-term impact on participants. It also provides participants with a way in which to share their learning with their peers thereby ensuring a ripple effect:

*'When the project funding runs out, you'll still have a tangible output, and you'll still be impacting on young people.'* (PD, Digital Disruption)

According to one project deliverer of **Digital Disruption** a key success of the intervention was the manner in which it used creative media to produce a final deliverable - namely the scripting and production of a number of short films based on exposing the nature of propaganda. The videos created will remain on the internet, where they will be viewed by a wider community of young people. The participants were also enthused that by remaining online, their videos could attract the attention of national media.

From our research the primary **challenge** associated with setting extremely aspirational goals, such as the trip to New York, is how expensive these can be. There will thus be a need for interventions to take care in ensuring that any such enticing goals fit well with and are important for achieving the intended aims and outcomes of the intervention. Of course it is possible to set similarly aspirational goals which cost significantly less.

Giving young people a sense of ownership over the things they produce will require facilitators and practitioners to relinquish some control over final outputs, however, this is not a new challenge and something that skilled youth workers and teachers will be doing already in their day-to-day work.

## 2.3 Young person centred and young person led

Building on the need to ensure young people have some knowledge and understanding of the nature and purpose of their involvement and have a sense of ownership of activities, the research revealed the importance of interventions being designed and delivered in a young person centred way. Activities and interventions that worked well were designed carefully with the participants in mind, ensuring they were tailored, appropriate and engaging for the intended participants. In some cases this was achieved particularly well by allowing significant elements of the intervention to be young person led.

A young person led approach is one where:

- choice and control for the young person is built into an activity. The approach is supported by exploratory learning rather than didactic knowledge transfer. In a young person led initiative the young person can be co-producer of the product, initiative or solution. A young person led approach allows for young people to feel a sense of ownership over the initiative or lessons they are involved in. It is, in a real sense, 'co-produced'
- where the initiative is tailored about the issues which are most salient to the young person, with the young person's interests and development in mind.

Such an approach can mean a range of different things in practice, including peer educating, peers becoming trainers, peers mediating situations or creating resources to use with one another such as videos or books. Specific activities we observed included writing, reading or watching films, plays or demonstrations about the local area, local people, local opportunities and tailoring activities to individual personal interests.

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Work which is led by the participants themselves is important for building resilience. It offers a sense of empowerment and can raise self-esteem. It can give a young person a sense of achievement and therefore help them to develop a sense of their place and worth in wider society. The push / pull factors that can lead a young person to be vulnerable to extremist messages included young people having low self-esteem and a lack of sense of purpose or achievement. Extremists may offer young people the chance to have a clear, uncomplicated idea of their place in society, and the opportunity to gain a sense of achievement and self-worth. Interventions which are young person led are empowering to the young people involved.

In this section we have drawn on a number of case studies to demonstrate different ways a young person led approach is taken. These include Rewind which aims to train young people as peer educators, 'Digital Disruption' which is an example of young people co producing a solution using creative media, 'Not in my Name' whereby young people produce a solution through discussion, and Model United Nations where young people are encouraged to think of solutions to local, national and international problems.

### **Co-production through training young people to deliver skills to their peers**

One of the most advanced ways in which co-production principles can be achieved is through training young people to teach one another, i.e. a 'peer educator' approach. The benefit of a peer educator approach is that it allows for young people to receive information from another young person who may be able to communicate the message in a more relevant and a more hard hitting and credible way.

The rapid evidence review includes evidence of the effectiveness of a peer mediator approach:

Huan and Khoo (2004), in their quantitative study on the role of the mediator in a peer mediation setting, note that 'peer mediation is based on the principles of applied conflict resolution which is a strategy employed by individuals to help solve their problems in a non-adversarial and positive way' (Huan and Khoo, 2004: 27). Peer mediation is noted to be an effective method to employ with young people as the purpose of it is to encourage them to question the use of violence as a conflict management strategy and to analyse problems arising from conflicts. The authors note that through peer mediation, students are equipped with the interpersonal skills necessary to resolve and manage these conflicts with a positive problem solving framework and assume responsibility for their behaviour.

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**Leap Confronting Conflict** believes in the importance of giving a role of peer educator to young people who have been involved in, or are at risk of being involved in risky activities such as gang violence or knife crime. Supporting young people to become peer educators and share learning and support with other young people underpins lots of the work that Leap undertake.

They believe that by training young people as peer educators it helps them to feel valued, respected and trusted and gives them a sense of self-worth and achievement. An absence of such positive feelings was identified as a 'push factor' - potentially making a young person to vulnerable to radicalisation or other risky behaviours.

The process of becoming a peer educator helps to reinforce an awareness of the skills and lessons learnt from the original intervention and in turn helps to embed these.

In turn, the peer educators become ambassadors for the projects and demonstrate to future participants the clear and marked benefits of engaging in such programmes. Furthermore, Leap find that well-trained peer educators who have gone through the programmes they are delivering have natural levels of authenticity and credibility that they bring to their facilitation and delivery. Other young people respond well to peer educators and in some cases respond better than they would to adults delivering the same message.

For a young person to become a peer educator in a school or non-school setting they need to be trained. A key ingredient for success when training young people is providing sufficient support and challenge to trainee peer educators.

**Leap Confronting Conflict** refers to the model which they follow as the 'cascade' or 'ladder model'. The idea behind the model is that young people are on a metaphorical rung of a ladder of progress in terms of their skills, knowledge, experience and levels of vulnerability. Those who are higher up the ladder help and support people lower down the ladder to move up a rung, and so on, up the ladder. Thus learning is cascaded out from young people to their peers as they gain experience.

An example of this in practice is part of the Fear and Fashion project which works with young people who are at risk of knife carrying and knife use. The young people are initially referred to the project via a local steering group, consisting of local police, the youth offending teams, educators and local youth services.

Young people attend an intensive leadership workshop where they have the opportunity to examine their attitudes and behaviors and the particular issues about knife carrying and use. Young people graduate from this workshop and are trained as peer educators over a period of time, with support from professional trainers.

The staged approach taken by Leap is designed to support the peer educators at every step, For example, peer educators start working together in groups, with lots of professional support to deliver small, short workshops. As they grow they are supported through placements in colleges and other youth settings to conduct larger, more challenging workshops on their own, with minimal support.

There are some **risks** involved when delivering this type of approach to co-production. Firstly, persuading the young people to participate and to see the value of what they're doing is difficult. Although once the knowledge was gained young people felt they were really



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benefitting, getting to that stage can be difficult, and the use of external trainers in some situations may help with this. If the facilitation skills of the trainers are effective and they are able to manage any conflicts that arise while making the learning engaging, it can be helpful.

Another risk is training young people on a topic that may invoke a range of emotions and potential conflict within the group, such as racism. To manage this, it is important that the trainer has the appropriate conflict management skills and has the knowledge needed to be able to respond to any discriminatory or untrue comments. This does not necessarily require the expertise of an external trainer and is something the teacher may be able to do effectively.

The Rewind case study participants reported that being a peer educator gave them a sense of status and made them feel special. This is really important to facilitating a successful approach as it can act as encouragement to take advantage of other positive opportunities. This sense of feeling 'special' alludes to the notion that having a role in society and being sure of your identity is very valuable to young people and is also an element identified in the analytical framework of push / pull factors that can lead to vulnerability to radicalisation.

#### **Quarrel Shop**, LEAP Confronting Conflict, Westminster City Council

Quarrel Shop is an accredited peer-educational approach to conflict resolution. Young people - often, although not exclusively, trainee or fully qualified youth workers - are taught particular facilitation techniques or exercises that they may emulate and adapt in their work with peers to address conflict.

We observed the introductory Quarrel Shop session where young people participate in several warm-up games and are then introduced to some exercises that attempt to interrogate what may often be angry emotional responses to conflictual situations.

Participants are encouraged to reflect on four levels of their emotional responses to conflict as follows: fears (irrational and rational), needs (emotional and practical), hurt and anger. LEAP facilitators propose that there is a causal link - starting with fears moving right through to anger - and use a scenario that is presented by the lead facilitator as a way of demonstrating how this four-dimensional approach can be applied.

This was part of Fear & Fashion – anti-knife crime project, a partnership project delivered by Leap and Westminster City Council Youth Service.

Another way that co-production can be facilitated is through the use of creative media. Our case studies revealed how young people can work together to co-produce a product to be used by or peers with the support of expert facilitators. A product, such a film or play can be an effective way of doing this.

An example of how this was be done in an engaging way can be seen in the case study example of 'Digital Disruption' where young people worked together to coproduce a film on propaganda messages.

### **Making interventions relevant to young people, their lives and the places in which they live**

Later in this chapter we highlight the importance of aligning interventions with young people's own hobbies and interests as part of ensuring an intervention is enjoyable and different and provide examples of how to achieve this (section 2.4). More broadly, it is important to ensure

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the intervention is *relevant* to the participants, and vitally, that they see the intervention as being relevant to them. This can be achieved through:

- Using local language and relevant local examples
- Taking account of local demographics
- Referencing community issues.

It is possible to make interventions relevant by **using relevant language** and carefully picking **examples that will resonate with the audience**. For example, Tools For Dialogue use youth-orientated, cross-cutting themes to explore religious scripture. Rather than titling a topic ‘What do religious texts tell us about appearance’ or ‘What does the Koran say about dressing modestly’ TFD use titles such as ‘Bling’, which resonate with young participants, to begin exploring issues of appearance and dress according to different religions.

Tailoring interventions to **reflect the specific local community** within which young people live can be an important factor in making the intervention effective. This can include, for example, the use of **local language** and phrases when working with young people.

It may also involve ensuring that interventions **reflect the local community and demography**, use local actors or companies (in the case of theatre) and involving members of the community – including parents. Part of reflecting local communities may involve referring to local issues (or perceived issues) perhaps by naming and discussing specific local incidents, events, communities or landmarks.

Using local language, familiar phrases and words that young people themselves use can make the work feel relevant to them and their lives. By involving young people in initiatives that use local language or phrases, reflecting the local demographic or community issues, the participants are able relate to the real world environment as far as possible and understand why the work or initiative is relevant and important.

In doing this, it is important to not shy away from using language that may be ‘derogatory’ or ‘offensive’ if that language is commonly used in the participants’ communities – as seen in both Rewind and Not in My Name. Naturally, it will not always be necessary or appropriate to use such language to make a connection, and if done poorly could be seen as disingenuous and a barrier to making a connection. However, our research revealed examples where using appropriately context specific language can help young people to make a direct connection between the ‘classroom’ based activities and their day-to-day lives.

By using an initiative that, for example, uses local actors or a local company who talk in the local accents and reflect the local demographics of the area, it helps young people to identify with the issues presented.

An example of where a locally tailored approach is used can be found in the case study Not in my Name (NIMN).



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**'Not in My Name'** is the name of a play written by Alice Bartlett. The play demonstrates the consequences of a terrorist attack on all members of a local community. The play depicts a young Muslim suicide bomber who acts alone, leaving his family and friends to deal with the aftermath of his actions, including a police interrogation. The play demonstrates how wider community groups are affected by the event and how personal friendships break and prejudices develop because of it. It also challenges the predominant stereotype of an 'Asian Muslim' by including a white police officer who has converted to Islam and other 'stereotype-breaking' roles. After the play is performed there is usually a forum-based discussion whereby the young people can talk to an actor in role as the potential suicide bomber; we discover the play has been set a year in the future and the audience met with a character who is frustrated but has not yet reached the point of deciding to carry out an extremist attack. Audiences are able to talk to him, ask questions and make suggestions for ways in which he can address his frustrations in a peaceful manner. For more information on this and the way different schools have used the play, please refer to appendix 3.

In addition to the forum, the published script provides cross curriculum resources for follow-up work.

After taking pupils to watch the play, schools then build on the issues raised in the play independently and integrate follow-up work into the curriculum (either in individual lessons or across the curriculum where possible)

Evidence indicates that follow-up is most effective when it based on different elements of the play so that pupils are able bring learning forward. This is because abstract and generalised learning materials often have limited impact on young people because they do not feel 'real'. Building on the localised elements, as seen by the follow up work by Halton High in Runcorn is one way in which this can be done.

In an English lesson we observed young people writing about the local area of Runcorn. They were encouraged to write a personal account of what they thought the positives and negatives were in the area and what was the cause of these was. They were asked to consider what other people might think of the area and why they may hold those views and stereotypes. Stereotype breakdown was then further facilitated by the teacher by using facts such as Runcorn's demographic makeup and employment statistics to explain the situation that different parts of Runcorn's community are in. Pupils responded well to this and were able to recognise local differences, as one young person commented:

*'Not everyone has the same opportunities around here. It a class thing, all the rich people get to do stuff.'* (Young person, participant)

The young people were asked to think of solutions to the problems that were a result of stereotyping within the local area. On the issue of race, the pupils who had seen the play wanted to mix more with pupils from other schools to find out more about their lifestyle and culture. They also noted that by breaking down the reason behind a stereotype they were able to see other people's point of view. One young person commented:

*'If it was one of my mates being racist then I would say, what are you doing? Because that's not right, you wouldn't like it if it was done to you ... we have to understand other people and they have to understand us too.'* (Young person, participant)

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Focusing on the local area appeared to be an effective method. It allowed the 'real life' element of the type of work to come to life and be explored further. The real life element also means that the work is able to have an impact on the individual behaviours of the pupils, as seen above in the comment by a young person about allowing their friends to be racist. It can also cause a conflict within a young person as seen by the comment by one young participant that their family didn't like people 'of different colours'.

Exploring community tension is an effective way of facilitating a young person centric approach, as current tensions – whether between different ethnic or religious communities or between gangs of young people – can be very 'real' and often pressing for the young people in question.

Exploring local tensions in a constructive way can help contribute towards change in the community. To explore tensions, the facilitator needs to have knowledge of two things. Firstly, the teacher or facilitator needs to understand what the *cause* the local tensions is, and then what is *exacerbating* them among different members of the community. Once these two elements are understood, an appropriate programme can be sought.

An example of a programme delivered in an area of racial tension to combat it was seen in the Schools Linking Network Model United Nations case study. This has a focus on creating critical thinking skills among young people and ways of thinking which are sympathetic to conflict resolution skills and creating an attitude change in the young people. Like the Not In My Name performance which encourages young people to create a different solution for the suicide bomber, participants are encouraged to think of solution to issues through discussion, and the programme teaches discussion skills and thinking processes.

In one of the schools in Bradford (an area felt by teachers to be 'segregated') where the Model United Nations programme was delivered, young people discussed their perceptions of difference and how they perceive each other. Pupils from different backgrounds were known to have pre-conceived ideas about each other's schools and areas. The initiative aimed to facilitate their ability to understand others. This initiative was delivered over two months.

Managing this conflict and supporting young people to find a solution can be difficult. It can mean that any work that is conducted in a school should ensure that parents are informed and that families, if possible, are involved. Inviting parents in to share the learning process (or watch the play in this case) is one way of achieving that.

Tailoring interventions to make them relevant to the young people participating in them can be extremely effective, although it can also bring with it certain **challenges**.

It is important for those delivering interventions to 'get it right' when it comes to using local or young-person orientated language. Coming across as trying too hard or being disingenuous could reduce the credibility of a facilitator.

Some people will feel uncomfortable using certain language – particularly if that involves using derogatory words or phrases or includes swearing or using certain slang words. Furthermore, the use of such language within the context of a targeted session may cause problems or be at odds with rules and behavioural expectations in other in-school settings.

Finally, tailoring interventions to make them relevant to local contexts can be time consuming and resource intensive.

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## 2.4 Design interventions to feel enjoyable and ‘different’

A well-designed intervention often feels enjoyable to those participating and distinctly ‘different’ to ‘normal’ classroom lessons. There are a number of ways of achieving this – ranging from wholesale shifts in location or teaching style through to smaller changes such as a specific set of ground rules which come into place for the duration of an activity or intervention. Regardless of how it’s achieved, young people responded well to resilience building activities which felt in some way different from their regular school-based lessons.

There are two distinct elements to this key ingredient: *enjoyable* and *different*.

An approach being *different* in this context means that teaching practices should feel like a ‘break from the norm’ - an intervention that feels different in some way from a ‘normal school lesson’ can result in participants better engaging in the process. It should feel fresh and exciting and offer a new way of exploring the issues and topics that form the subject of the intervention. This could be as simple as using an external facilitator or having a distinct set of intervention-specific ground rules. Fostering a ‘different’ approach could include varying the timing, pace, or location of the intervention from the norm or using new or different learning materials, tasks and techniques. It may also include using ‘honest realism’ – perhaps using hard hitting or provocative materials and giving airtime to difficult, unpalatable or controversial details, images or language.

For example, an approach which allows young people to feel comfortable and confident to contribute and participate to whatever extent they feel like doing can feel very *different* to a conventional lesson. A lesson which encourages honest realism, open dialogue, and acceptance of hard-hitting language will create an atmosphere where young people feel free to express their opinions, which to many, feels very different from conventional lessons. This sense of difference can go some way towards increasing a participant’s engagement in the process.

An *enjoyable* intervention is about ensuring it is engaging and aligned with the interests of young people, as well participatory and interactive. This can include, for example, using ICT tools such as social messaging and online forums, sports, music and films as part of the delivery of an intervention. It may also include making the intervention relevant to and resonate with the young people.

By aligning interventions with young people’s hobbies and interests, practitioners can ensure that not only are these interventions experienced as fun but they also feel more accessible to young people.

The importance of an enjoyable and different approach has also been evidenced in the Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA). In the literature reviewed, after-school programmes were found to have performed reasonably well at preventing gang behaviour, delinquency and youth crime. The best example of an after-school programme is the Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach (GPTTO) programme delivered by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). An important part of the initiative is promoting positive developmental experiences for these young people by developing **interest-based programmes** that also address the young people’s specific needs. The authors describing the programme have argued that:

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*'prevention strategies must accommodate both youth's developmental needs for safety, support and structure, as well as their interest in **having fun, seeking excitement ...**'*  
(Arbreton and McClanahan, 2005: 2)

Additionally, if young people have really enjoyed being involved in an intervention, they are more likely to share their learning with their peers and their families, which can extend the reach and broaden the impact of the intervention. Finally, young people are also more likely to take part in other interventions or perhaps take up other development or education opportunities, if they have found their initial experience of participating in an intervention enjoyable and different.

This section draws on evidence from the following case studies to illustrate the key approaches that appear to be particularly helpful for ensuring interventions are enjoyable and different: Digital Disruption, Dissolving Boundaries, Tools for Trialogue, Philosophy for Children, Rewind, Not in my name, Model United Nations and Leap Confronting Conflict

## **Ensuring that the format of delivery feels 'different' from the traditional classroom setting**

There are several components to this key ingredient, and so we use bold headings to distinguish between them. They are:

- i. Building in lots of discussion and group exercises and having an emphasis on participation
- ii. Bringing in external facilitators to deliver the intervention
- iii. Introducing 'honest realism' into the session.

### **i. Making the format of delivery feel different through building in lots of discussion and group exercises and varying the timing, pace and location**

An important part of ensuring that young people find interventions enjoyable and interesting is designing a format of delivery that does not make them feel that they are in a classroom following teachers' orders or listening to a lecture. Such associations are often likely to result in a lack of enthusiasm from young people and them potentially dismissing the intervention programme.

Instead, as our observations of case study sites demonstrated, young people really enjoy active and participatory programmes that are designed to include lots of discussion, question and answer sessions, small group exercises and plenary sessions:

*'I liked the way we were able to discuss what was being taught rather than just having to agree with it.'* (YP, Tools for Trialogue)

This type of format of delivery can be successful in maintaining the momentum of a programme and works particularly well for a number of reasons:

- It creates an informal working environment where **young people are more likely to be honest and open about their opinions and views**. Where interventions focus on controversial topics (e.g. racism), creating this type of environment where participants feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and concerns and where these can in turn be constructively challenged is particularly key.
- Working in small groups with set goals **creates a collaborative atmosphere** where young people are more likely to listen and respond to each other and learn from each

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other. These types of interactions also play a big role in fostering friendships or deepening existing relationships. This is particularly important when interventions are aimed at promoting tolerance and teaching young people about the importance of difference and diversity.

- Delivery formats that include a range of discussion spaces (small groups, paired, plenary etc) are also helpful in ensuring that **all participants are able to contribute**, in whichever arena they feel most comfortable. For example, those participants that are less confident may not feel comfortable expressing their thoughts in front of a large group. It will be important for facilitators and programme directors to take care in planning the format of an intervention to ensure that the full diversity of opinion is explored and that all participants experience the intervention as beneficial and valuable.

The **Leap Confronting Conflict** Pathfinder Schools project which trains young people in conflict resolution employs a number of techniques to make their lessons feel different including the use of games, drama and in-depth discussion.

One exercise Leap use to stimulate discussion is Red Flags, which is about helping young people to identify and recognise the types of ‘triggers’ – behaviours and situations, which make them ‘see red’. Participants are encouraged to be very honest and open in these discussions and share their real life experiences.

Leap recognise that having peers know each others’ ‘red flags’ could be dangerous in that it provides ample opportunity for participants to easily and effectively antagonise their peers in the future. The facilitators encourage the group to discuss the benefits (and dangers) of knowing what easily winds up their peers and the discussion often reveals that individual members have many ‘red flags’ in common, which helps mitigate the risk of future conflict.

The exercise helps the individuals recognise and unpick their own ‘red flags’ so they can avoid them or react differently to them in the future and is linked directly to interventions aimed at building young people’s personal resilience. For more examples of personal resilience building activities see chapter 4.1 – building personal resilience, and examples from the UK Resilience Programme (UKRP).

Leap also use a number of ‘enabling’ techniques to help young people look at and unpick the nature of conflict and how conflict can escalate. **Ready to strike** and **conflict machine** are two such techniques.

**Ready to strike** gets participants to look at how a conflict can escalate from an initial spark, through to friends and peers getting involved and stirring things up to the point where violence occurs. Students then unpick situations and identify points of intervention where they or friends could have acted to avoid conflict. The group discusses how even a ‘passive’ or non-violent role of standing on the sidelines or not stepping in is still part of the conflict build-up and discuss ways of defusing and de-escalating conflict situations.

**Conflict machine** asks participants to act out a slow-motion tableau of an escalating conflict situation. Young people themselves decide on the situation and generate the next steps (such as kissing their teeth or saying ‘your mum’). Other group members watch and comment on the situation as it unfolds, enabling them to see the observers role in conflict and reflect on what they could do to help diffuse situations.

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Similarly, well-designed programmes will often *break* from conventional classroom formats to vary the length, pace and location of interventions to make them feel exiting, enjoyable and different to the participants. The act of making activities or interventions feel enjoyable or different in some way appears to be very effective in increasing young people's engagement in those activities.

While talking about the **Dissolving Boundaries** the teachers noted that the format and delivery being so different from traditional citizenship lessons was effective and helped contribute to the positive outcomes of the project. The approach of collaboration between two schools in educationally-valuable curricular work and the use of ICT made the activities feel different from normal lessons. The contact hypothesis<sup>20</sup> and the 'group identity' model<sup>21</sup> underpinning the project helped participants to work cooperatively and to think of 'we' (as opposed to 'them' and 'us').

Teachers commented that with this approach, cultural and social issues came up 'naturally' during the course of the project and, because the young people had got to know each other, they didn't shy away from these issues. This was contrasted with the more didactic form of learning (e.g. in traditional delivery of citizenship education) where issues are presented to pupils in a way that can be too 'blunt' or heavy handed for pupils initially who may not engage.

Dissolving Boundaries approach was *different* and felt different to normal school lessons and this proved effective. Allowing cultural and other differences to emerge slowly and naturally seemed more effective than explicitly highlighting such differences.

The research did uncover some **challenges** associated with establishing a less didactic format of delivery that focused on active participation:

- Interventions that are delivered in a setting or to a group of young people where there is a problem with cohesion or where some participants hold particularly antagonistic views may find it more difficult to manage an active and participatory format lest it result in any trying or unsavoury situations. What would help counteract this risk is a skilled and sensitive facilitator with good knowledge of conflict management techniques.
- Where interventions are focused on difference and diversity but delivered to a group where some participants form a clear minority, an active and participatory setting could run the risk of a dominant viewpoint emerging and where minority participants feel unrepresented and thus unwilling to express their opinions.

## ii. Bringing in external facilitators to deliver the intervention

The role of facilitator, deliverer, practitioner is key in any intervention. In chapter 3 – (Facilitating a safe space for dialogue and positive interaction) we outline the key characteristics of good facilitation.

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<sup>20</sup> Allport, G. (1954) *The Nature of Prejudice*. London: Addison Wesley.

<sup>21</sup> Gaertner, S & Dovidio, J. (2000) *Reducing ingroup bias: the common ingroup identity model*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press.



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Facilitators may be teachers or other practitioners from the school in question, and bringing in external facilitators is not always necessary or indeed appropriate for a successful intervention. However, in some cases it can have definite benefits, including helping to make an intervention feel 'different' or a break from the norm for young people participating in it.

If there is no resource to bring in external facilitators or schools feel this is inappropriate, it's worth schools considering how they could replicate the 'freshness' brought by external facilitators within the resources available to them. This could be as simple as a teacher from elsewhere in the school delivering an intervention rather than pupils' regular teacher.

External facilitators are able to bring with them a freshness of approach and new knowledge and techniques. The very act of having an external facilitator can make an intervention feel exciting and different. If the sessions are delivered 'off-site' in an external setting, this has a very marked and obvious effect of making the intervention feel 'different'. If delivered in a school, the presence of external trainers can change the dynamics of the classroom as a different style of teaching and learning objective is introduced into the space. Young people are also aware that the external trainers usually have specialist knowledge.

A benefit of an external trainer was highlighted by a school staff member when commenting on the peer education training provided by Rewind:

*'I don't think it could be done in a better way ... the students are engaged, they're all identifying with certain situations.'* (School staff member)

In the case studies we observed the young people also often saw the external facilitators as having greater credibility and authority on the issues and topics that were being discussed. This was because it was the 'job' of these facilitators to deliver these interventions and that they did so because of their expertise in the area. For example, Tools for Dialogue was delivered by faith representatives.

Similar levels of authenticity and credibility of external facilitators were seen in a number of other case studies including Leap Confronting Conflict and Rewind. In both cases the facilitators had real, recent and relevant experience of the topic area they were facilitating. In the case of Leap, facilitators were young people who had been involved in gang / knife violence, and in the case of Rewind, former members of the BNP.

Some young people involved in the case studies also reported feeling more comfortable and confident asking questions of facilitators that are not their teachers. This may be linked to the fear of repercussion associated with school authority figures or of asking what could be considered a 'stupid' question:

*'We could ask whatever we wanted without worrying.'* (YP, Tools for Dialogue)

It could also demonstrate success on the part of these facilitators in creating a safe and nurturing environment.

### **iii. Introduce an element of 'honest realism'**

'Honest realism' is a way of approaching challenging issues raised in a number of interventions. It is about tackling issues head-on and not shying away from controversial details. There is some overlap with the use of local language and relevant local examples cited in section 2.3. in that 'honest realism' may involve using hard hitting language that young people relate to or examples from the local areas. However, 'honest realism' is more



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than simply being local and relevant to young people. The use of 'honest realism' could be seen in a number of different forms:

- using the type of language employed at the time of the event / incident under discussion
- ensuring that unpalatable details were not glossed over or avoided
- using real images (of dead bodies piled up outside Auschwitz, for instance)
- encouraging participants to understand the real-life implications of different views and actions through stories, images and discussion
- portraying the local population's ethnic mix accurately.

Facilitators and participants alike believed that promoting honest realism contributed to the authenticity of the intervention, and that the images portrayed and language used provided colour and generated interest in the sessions.

Promoting honest realism encouraged young people to understand how it might feel to be on the receiving end of abusive language or aggressive behaviour. Participants in the Rewind sessions told us how the stories and images triggered self-reflection, with one remarking:

*'... you have to think about what you're going to say ... Before this, yeah, I wouldn't think about what I'm going to say to anyone. But now [I] have to think about what I'm going to say, like if it's all right or not.'* (Participant, Rewind)

An important aspect of promoting 'honest realism' is the way that it can help participants to engage with real issues and real emotions.

The play **Not in my Name** uses the type of language either used or experienced by the young people who were in the audience. The work 'Paki', for instance, is regularly used in the case-study area as a general insult, and this was reflected in the language of play when performed in the case-study school. The demographic makeup of the cast, which was similar to that of the local area, furthered the sense of realism.

Pupils commented afterwards that they understood from the play how particular words could '*really hurt*' people's feelings; as one observed: '*You wouldn't like it if it was done to you*'. Equally, another pupil pointed out that '*tolerance needs to be both ways. If we aren't going to judge, they shouldn't judge us either*', and the group went on to discuss with our interviewer how '*mutual respect-building*' was important if different groups were to live together peaceably in one area. Showing these pupils authentic issues in a realistic way, and then providing timetabled space for follow-up work, had the effect of engaging both their cognition and emotions, a critical factor in effective learning, particularly when dealing with controversial issues<sup>22</sup>.

Being able to give real life accounts of racist incidents in a classroom setting is also an effective method as it can again make the learning feel more 'real' and be more hard hitting.

In the Rewind case study, trainers were able to give the young people real life accounts of racist incidents, in-depth knowledge about racism and race and why a change in racist

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<sup>22</sup> McCully, A. (2006) Practitioner perceptions of their role in facilitating the handling of controversial issues in contested societies: a Northern Irish experience. *Educational Review*, **58** (1), pp.51-65.

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attitudes should be made. In turn, there was also a space for young people to talk about their experiences. By using real life examples of racism and language that is common in the local context the young people were more able to reconcile the local situation around them. By understanding local tensions, a personal effort was made to reflect on individual experiences.

Using materials that are hard-hitting and thought provoking can be effective. Visual materials such as photographs, films and plays are quick to engage young people and thus make it more likely that they will begin to grapple with the issues and topics they are presented with. Such materials are also often subjective and open to interpretation and can thus be successful in encouraging debate and discussion among participants. Such material also tends to have a long lasting impact and young people can come away from these sessions with a desire to share their learning with their peers.

The **challenge** associated with promoting honest realism is arises from judgement relating to the context of the intervention:

- For planned ‘one-off’ interventions, such as the play described above, it can be a challenge to ensure that **the production resonates with each audience**, and research may be needed to target the intervention appropriately.
- For interventions that depend on facilitation, the challenge may relate to the **dynamics of the participant group and the relationship created between facilitator and participants**. Different groups of young people have different types and degrees of sensitivity and resilience, so it can be a challenge in the discussion to strike the right balance between manageable realism, so the young people feeling that the intervention is relevant to them, and overstepping the mark with an ill-judged example or resource, so that the young people feel alienated or isolated. This balance requires sensitive appraisal of participants’ experience and knowledge, and – depending on the type of facilitation – a range of different resources that ensure the intervention is appropriately targeted.
- It is also important that when using hard-hitting and real life examples, the follow up work that is integrated in to curriculum work doesn’t become tokenistic. This is a risk which can affect any potential positive impact. If the follow up work is tokenistic and doesn’t allow for the development of individual thought and learning, it will not have an impact.
- For example, if young people are undertaking work to learn about the ethnic diversity in Britain then this needs to be facilitated in developmental way. The work needs to have meaning and critical thinking skills need to be developed. More detail on critical thinking skills development is in section 4.2.1

## Employing the use of innovative ICT

A number of the case studies which participants said they’d found particularly enjoyable had used innovative ICT tools including film making, social messaging, online forums and video conferencing. These tools were effective in making interventions feel enjoyable because they appealed to young people’s existing interest in online spaces and new technologies.

For example, some young people involved in the case studies felt that it was more interesting to learn about topics and issues by creating something using ICT, for example, a film, music video or a wiki-database, than by listening to talks and lecture:

*‘It’s better than paper or writing it down.’ (young person, Digital Disruption)*

Additionally, where interventions included the use of ICT, young people were also more quickly able to grasp the aims and objectives of the interventions as well as what was

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expected of them. This was because, not only had the intervention very quickly piqued their interest, but also because expressing and communicating via ICT is motivating and appealing to young people. For these same reasons, interventions that included the use of ICT also worked particularly well because they were able to elicit a strong commitment and dedication to the programme.

From our observations and discussions with participants and project deliverers in the **Digital Disruption** case study it became clear that one of the key successes of the project was that the young people responded very well to having access to professional equipment (cameras, editing programmes etc) and the co-production approach taken by Bold Creative. The project lead from Bold Creative felt that there is a need to '*use the native language of young people*' to successfully engage them and that in this case the language of film-making was chosen, due to the proliferation of film-making and video among young people: '*Everyone's a filmmaker these days.*'

Having access to professional equipment and specialist ICT resources and support was also really valued by young people because they do not usually have this kind of access.

Aligning the delivery of interventions with young people's interests also meant that the programmes felt more accessible and familiar to young people, while at the same time feeling enjoyable and fun. For example, it felt more 'natural' to young people to collaborate and work with each other using social messaging, online discussion forums and video conferences (similar to Skype). This is because young people associate these forms of communication with their social life and leisure time.

Additionally, where interventions were aimed at fostering understanding and tolerance among different groups of young people who generally do not interact with each other the use of social media worked particularly well because it acted as a 'safe space' for communication. Using social messaging or video conferencing meant that the participants could get to know each other at their own pace and without the pressure of a facilitated face to face meeting. It allowed relationships to develop organically and resulted in the formation of individual friendships in addition to an inter-group understanding.

For example, in the case of the *Dissolving Boundaries* case study, a vice principle of one school reported that participants were 'cheerfully involved' – at least in part due to their enjoyment innovative ICT. For one practitioner this sense of *enjoyment* was a key success factor.

The research uncovered some **challenges** associated with using ICT in the delivery of interventions:

- The case studies highlighted that using innovative approaches that allow young people to use ICT are successful in garnering interest and fostering commitment. However, there is also a need to ensure that there is a balance between the time spent on fun activities involving ICT (e.g., film making) and the time spent on interpreting and unpicking what has been learned from these activities. An in-depth debriefing session is also important so that the key learning from the intervention can be re-emphasised.
- Employing the use of online forums and social messaging, although aligned with young people's interests, can also represent privacy and safety risks. Interventions that use these types of forums in their delivery mechanisms may thus have to devote significant resources to ensure that the correct safeguards are in place and that web traffic and exchanges are monitored.

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- The use of ICT inevitably presents the risk of various mishaps (slow connections, unexplained shutdowns etc) that can be frustrating, time consuming and expensive to correct. It will thus be important to ensure that an easily accessible system of ICT support is available over the course of the intervention or that those delivering the programme are well trained in the use of the equipment and are able to fix problems.

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## 3. Facilitating a safe space for dialogue and positive interaction

Effective facilitation by well-prepared, appropriately confident, knowledgeable and skilled facilitators (whether teachers and / or other practitioners) goes hand-in-hand with good, young-person centred design. Both are necessary, neither is sufficient for an intervention to have the best chance of building resilience to extremism.

During the course of the case-study visits, we observed the way skilled practitioners and facilitators handled controversial issues and tackled the sensitive and emotive areas that were under discussion or review. The common features of these facilitators' styles were that they were confident, engaging and flexible; leaders were able to draw participants into the sessions and to create an enjoyable, supportive learning environment.

Although this is again part of effective teaching practices, it is particularly important in the context of work targeted at building resilience to extremism or violent extremism because young people may be suspicious of the intervention, or reluctant to engage with a particular issue, or have a history of disengagement from formal learning. Confident facilitation is also important for those generic case-study approaches that involve dealing with controversial issues, something that teachers have found – and continue to find – difficult<sup>23</sup>.

In summary, our findings suggest that the following are the key ingredients of effective facilitation to build resilience:

1. The ability of facilitators to create a 'safe space' for all young people in a group to be able to take part in the dialogue, for example, through the use of ground rules, the ability to deal with conflict, dispute or distress, and sensitivity to the needs of individuals.
2. The willingness, confidence and ability of facilitators to act in such a way that 'connects' with young people, for example, by allowing honest, trusting, wherever possible equal relationships to form, 'letting go' of the direction of the discussion, and through appropriate use of humour and role-modelling of expected behaviours.
3. Facilitators having sufficient knowledge, or knowing how to access the necessary information (and being willing to admit they need to), and taking the time to accurately assess the knowledge levels of their students.

This chapter is divided into three sections, one for each of these key ingredients. As well as describing the evidence from the research about the impact that can be achieved and the specific factors that need to be taken into account, each section also includes an analysis of the relevant challenges.

### 3.1 Ability of facilitators to create a 'safe space' for dialogue

We saw in the first chapter (section 2.4) that interventions are more likely to be successful if they are designed in such a way as to provide plenty of opportunities for participation and

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<sup>23</sup> McCully, op cit; interviewees from two case studies (RRS and TFT) both mentioned teachers' nervousness around tackling the PVE agenda in the classroom.

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discussion. This is often achieved through creating quite an informal environment, one in which young people feel comfortable in expressing their views on sensitive issues.

However, this kind of open, fluid setting can be a more challenging environment to facilitate than a more typical, structured classroom. Key factors for successful facilitation in a more fluid setting include the use of ground rules, inclusivity, and the ability to deal with disagreement, dispute and unpalatable opinions (factors which are explored later in this section). These are all key in ensuring that there is a 'safe space' for dialogue.

A 'safe space' in this context is something more than just a physical space in which people are safe from harm – although such pre-requisites are clearly important. It is about creating an environment in which practitioners and participants can have rich and meaningful discussions about controversial issues, and in which young people feel safe discussing those issues. This could mean ensuring young people feel safe to express their views, regardless of what those views are or how people may react to them. It could also mean young people are free and safe to ask questions without worrying about that question being 'silly' or 'wrong'. Furthermore, a safe space might mean that a participant is able to say when they have found a view or a question from the group offensive or unacceptable.

Creating a safe space for discussion is about allowing young people to have an outlet for their views and enabling them to talk about and explore their thoughts and feelings honestly and openly. A good space for discussion also ensures participants are listened to and are able to hear a wide range of views and experiences. A safe space may take many forms. Indeed, evidence suggests that there are many ways to create different types of safe space. What they have in common, however, is that they *enable* rather than *inhibit* discussion about difficult issues, while protecting participants from negative experiences and emotions (e.g. feeling upset, angry and frustrated).

The majority of experts and practitioners consulted emphasised that creating a safe space for discussion of contentious or difficult issues was a vital characteristic of any teaching method or intervention aiming to build resilience to extremism. Whether a teaching method is being used to develop critical thinking skills, emotional wellbeing and resilience or impart new knowledge about complex issues – the importance of having a safe space in which to do that was a recurring theme. A safe space for discussion was seen as a key factor for enabling young people to mitigate the push factors towards extremism, as it provides both an opportunity and an environment in which to:

- explore grievances, feelings of injustice and actual or perceived humiliating experiences
- voice views and personal opinions (without which young people could potentially feel frustrated and subsequently attracted to networks where they feel their views will be valued more)
- address gaps in knowledge or understanding that may be exploited by extremists (e.g. by encouraging young people to listen to others and engage with new knowledge and alternative perspectives).

A significant finding across the literature reviewed as part of this research was the importance of creating safe spaces where young people were able to comfortably express their views. Creating safe spaces and establishing trust was reported as even more important when preventative initiatives are aimed at dealing with particularly controversial issues and deep seated beliefs and attitudes.

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## The importance of establishing clear, agreed ground rules

The vast majority of teachers and facilitators consulted emphasised the importance of establishing a set of ground rules for discussion, to help create a respectful environment in which all participants can contribute equally. These rules form a 'virtual contract' which help inform the remit, tone and dynamic of the interaction that follows.

While clear ground rules are considered good practice for a range of generic teaching and facilitation situations, they are considered vital for discussions on sensitive topic matters, where the discussions are more likely to become heated, where 'unsavoury' views are more likely to be surfaced and where people are more likely to be offended or upset. Contentious or sensitive topic matters are frequently referred to as a 'can of worms' by teaching practitioners, and as such, ground rules are a helpful way to manage and contain the 'fall-out' from such discussions and turn the disclosure of honest views into a positive that can be capitalised upon by the facilitator. Many of the ground rules encountered as part of this research had the following core characteristics:

- They established clarity about what constitutes positive behaviours for interacting with others in a safe space and what constitutes negative or unacceptable behaviours. This focus on behaviours (rather than the content of opinion, i.e. views being 'right' or 'wrong') was considered important for supporting young people to share their uncensored views, while protecting participants from the negative experiences associated with being subject to aggressive or disrespectful behaviour.
- They gave the participants equal rights and responsibilities in that space. An example of a right might be the right to articulate a half-formed view or ask a question without fear of ridicule, the right to express disagreement, etc. An example of a responsibility might be the need to listen to others and to allow others to speak. These kinds of shared rights and responsibilities were perceived as important for promoting equal participation and as a helpful means to model democratic values.
- They explored and clarified any boundaries between the safe space and everyday life. This was often considered important for reassuring participants that their openness would not be used against them by peers at a later date and / or in an unfacilitated space. An example of this would be views expressed 'in the room, staying in the room' and being treated confidentially.
- They encouraged young people to share their honest views. It was said by several practitioners that for a space to feel genuinely safe (rather than 'safe' by name only), it is essential that all conversations are authentic and engage with honest views and emotions.

Findings from the literature also suggest that creating a safe space can be achieved by establishing a 'code of conduct' for the sessions. One study suggested this was to include no put-downs but the right to challenge opinions and the importance of confidentiality once the sessions were over.

Evidence from the case studies suggests that the process for establishing these 'rules of engagement' were most effective when the ground rules were:

- **co-created with the young people**, rather than imposed on them by the teacher or facilitator – young people said they were more likely to follow rules that they themselves had thought of and articulated



- **short and easy to remember** – this meant they could be revisited easily during the course of a discussion or when starting a new session. In some cases, young people were observed quoting the ground rules at each other, thereby self-facilitating their own discussions
- **tailored to the core purpose of the intervention.** While there was a lot of commonality between many of the ground rules encountered, the observed case studies often used ground rules tailored to the nature of the intervention. For example, when one of the core objectives was to help free-up discussion around a ‘taboo’ topic such as racism and unpack people’s most uncensored views relating to race, the ground rules tried to create a ‘blame free’ environment to help facilitate this. Conversely, in other interventions which aimed to encourage reflection on personal beliefs, participants were equipped with clear ways to raise an objection if a view or remark was considered unacceptable (e.g. to help manage any offense relating to one’s faith or religious beliefs).

Two examples of how ground rules can be used to help create a safe space are presented below. These draw on the Philosophy 4 Children and the Rewind case studies. These highlight how the ‘rules of engagement’ themselves can be different (in line with differing aims of the interventions) but the positive effect of creating a safe space where all individuals are empowered by a shared set of rules is common to both.

**Philosophy for Children (P4C)** is designed specifically to create an environment for young people to discuss and think about complex topics with their peers. It is essential for P4C to create a safe environment in which participants are free to explore, through dialogue, the sensitive and philosophical issues that are important to them.

Participants are encouraged to sign up to a set of agreed ground rules so that each person can speak and has a right to be heard without interruption. One feature of the ground rules observed was that each speaker must provide reasons for his / her opinion. Significantly this means that when another member of the group wishes to disagree, they are encouraged to ‘challenge the statement, not the person’. This helps contribute to a safe space for discussion as participants know that they can speak openly and disagree with others, without fear of personal attack or causing personal offence to others. Other rules include ensuring that only one person speaks at a time. This discipline helps promote calm discussion, and produces an environment which enables the participants to think about and engage with difficult issues and prepare their thoughts before contributing.

The teachers interviewed felt that the experience of debating in a safe and well-managed environment had:

- the direct effect of enabling the young people to feel sufficiently comfortable to raise contentious questions they would have perhaps avoided otherwise
- been an important enabler to the wider impacts of the programme – including participants being more likely to champion the value of listening to other people’s views and handling conflict arising from differences of opinion more positively.

*‘Students will ask questions that they think might be inappropriate but nonetheless want to discuss, e.g. why don’t people in poverty spend their money more wisely?’ (Teacher)*

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**Rewind** was originally set up as an anti-racist project, but now challenges all kinds of extremism. It aims to provide a no-blame atmosphere in which young people can discuss and explore the issues and their views about 'race' and racism. Creating a safe space for discussion is achieved by:

- ensuring pupils understand that whatever is said remains in the classroom. This helps young people feel that they can speak and question freely, knowing that they won't be tied to those views outside of that setting.
- agreeing with the pupils that they can use language that they wouldn't be allowed to use elsewhere in school.

*'At the start of our sessions we always say, Due to Rewind trying to keep it real ... we will have to use racist language.... And we always stress that we don't want to offend people by that but, if we don't use it, then...it's sort of tiptoeing around it a little bit. Because whether we like it or not, young people are using this language on a daily basis...and hearing it or being a victim of it, potentially.'* (Facilitator)

Rewind encourages young people to tell an honest, truthful story 'exactly how it is'. The trainers contract with the participants to ensure that whoever is speaking is listened to and, that no one person or group should dominate the discussion. The facilitators also do not show shock or surprise regardless of what is said.

This approach differs from other approaches by gaining agreement from all that people will be able to speak freely and openly in a non-judgemental environment. This means real feelings and difficult views are aired and shared, in turn allowing them to be challenged and deconstructed. Rewind acknowledge that creating such a space to enable open discussion about controversial issues can lead to 'unpalatable' views being aired but, ultimately it is necessary for opening up and potentially changing young people's mindsets.

Findings from the literature review also suggest that respecting the pre-conceptions of participants - however unpalatable - without necessarily accepting them, is an essential first step in making educational initiatives genuinely participant-led.

Evidence from across the case studies suggests that when ground rules were successfully established and adhered to, they delivered a number of benefits, which enhanced the interventions' chances of achieving their key objectives. Reported and observed benefits include promoting calm discussion, providing a safe space to broach subjects often considered 'off-limits', enabling a range of views to be articulated and heard, encouraging a wide range of individuals to participate (including those who appeared quieter or less confident) and providing a frame of reference for challenging inappropriate behaviours and resolving conflict amicably.

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The research uncovered some common **challenges** associated with establishing shared 'rules of engagement' that need to be managed:

- co-creating ground rules with young people takes time and it needs to happen relatively early in an intervention, often when the rapport between a facilitator / teacher and the participants is still being developed. The young people consulted often considered the process of establishing ground rules to be less interesting and engaging than the core topic for discussion itself or the initial ice-breaker. In light of this there is a need for the relevance of this process to be made apparent to the young people involved without 'turning them off' or alarming them about what they're about to embark upon. The contracting process to be made as engaging and interactive as possible, and tailored to the nature of the young people involved (e.g. recognising that harder to reach young people who have been identified as vulnerable may be particularly mistrustful of 'rules' early on in an intervention).
- when time is at a premium there is a temptation to rush the 'contracting' process, to get to the 'meat and gravy' of the intervention. If rushed the process of establishing ground rules can be reduced to a 'tick box' exercise that has little influence on the subsequent discussion or activity. Sufficient time (proportionate to the entire time of the intervention) should be allowed for agreeing the rules of engagement.
- discussing the 'rules of engagement' should not be something that is confined to the first ten minutes of the first session. They should be kept alive, revisited and potentially re-contracted depending on how they are used, challenged and contravened. One way to do this is to use an adage, tool or technique that encourages participants to hold each other to account in line with the agreed rules. For example, 'challenge the statement, not the person' (P4C) is a quick way to remember the need to depersonalise disagreement with others, and the 'oops and ouch' technique encourages participants to take responsibility for saying when offence has been caused and responding to it appropriately.
- it should not be assumed that because a ground rule has been agreed, participants will keep to it, and in this respect the process of agreeing the 'rules of engagement' are no substitute for flexible and skilled facilitation.

Having clear 'rules of engagement' that all participants understand and are comfortable with was reported to be critical for interventions in all settings and with all types of young people (including both targeted and non-targeted interventions). However, it was considered particularly important in settings where there were known tensions between different groups of young people (e.g. in schools or youth groups with known incidents of racial abuse / prejudice in relation to faith, latent community tensions and / or problems with gangs, etc), where it was felt that open discussion of sensitive topics could incite further tensions or incidents.

### Enabling self-facilitation by young people

Evidence from the case studies suggests that **tools and techniques which empower participants to reinforce ground rules among themselves** and self-facilitate sensitive discussions can be helpful for reinforcing feelings of safety and maintaining a safe space. These techniques were not as common as the establishment of ground rules and were only encountered in a minority of the case studies. However, they were reported to be effective for empowering young people to resolve tensions among themselves, and therefore act as co-

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owners or co-guardians of the safe space. Two examples of simple, but apparently effective, techniques of this kind are presented below.

As part of the 3 Faiths Forum's **Tools for Trialogue** (T4T) participants were equipped with a 'back pocket' technique called 'oops and ouch'.

'Ouch' acts as a shorthand for saying 'I found that offensive' or 'I know that other people (either in the classroom or outside it) will find that offensive.'

'Oops' means 'I acknowledge I've caused offence' or 'I take back what I said.'

This technique was introduced in recognition of the fact that open discussions relating to faith, personal identity, cultural practices and the interpretations of holy texts can be enlightening and interesting, but they also have the potential to cause offence to individuals. Although the discussions in the lesson observed as part of this research did not lead to high levels of conflict between the participants, the young people said they would find this technique easy to remember and simple to use. They could see how it would be helpful if something said by another person upset them or if they said something and it 'came out wrong'. They felt if they used this technique it would be less likely to cause a serious argument with another pupil, than a more open or direct challenge such as 'you're wrong'. They felt that by using the technique to open up a discussion about what was said, the teacher might not have to get involved at all.

Similarly, participants of the **UK Resilience programme** were equipped with an assertiveness technique to help them challenge others safely (e.g. if they felt the behaviour or an opinion of another person had threatened the safe space). They were encouraged to break the challenge down into four clear steps:

D – Describe the problem

E – Explain how it makes you feel

A – Ask them to change their behaviour

L – Learn from the experience.

In a focus group discussion, the young people felt the 'DEAL' framework was a useful way to remember how to challenge others respectfully during the lesson. They also felt it could be transferred to a number of situations outside of the classroom.

More comprehensive frameworks, focusing on structured approaches to facilitation, were also used to enable young people to be active players in the creation of a safe space. For example, in the case of Philosophy for Children, older pupils, known as 'peer educators', were trained to use a clear 10-step process to help them create a safe space for younger children to engage in debates on complex issues. The teaching practitioners involved feel this process is particularly helpful for supporting the peer educators (who are young people themselves, and not experienced facilitators or teachers) to create a safe space, by keeping control of the session and ensuring it is not dominated by one vociferous person.

*'We think it's something very straightforward for them [peer educators] to get their heads around.'* (Youth group founder)

The research suggests these kinds of tools, techniques and frameworks are applicable to all young people across a range of settings. However, the research also highlights some risks

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and challenges associated with equipping young people with the means to take ownership of the safe space:

- While empowering young people to take ownership of the safe space is a positive principle, in reality young people often don't have the behaviour management skills of teachers or facilitators, therefore they are still likely to require high levels of support (especially if the safe space is threatened by a serious conflict situation).
- Developing the skills to challenge others assertively, constructively and diplomatically also takes a great deal of practice – some of the shorter or 'one-off' interventions may not provide the opportunity for this.

### Ensuring discussion is inclusive, supportive, open and non-conflictive

Some participants may feel less confident than others in contributing their opinions, and good design can only go so far in making interventions **inclusive and supportive**; the facilitator(s) will have a vital role to play too.

The Model United Nations leader was aware during her sessions with her group that issues were raised that could potentially cause tensions in participants' lives. Students' views on conflict, for instance, could move away from those held by close family members, and those students needed support while working through and managing any difficulties that might arise. The leader ensured that she *'kept an eye'* on these students, and was always ready to support them herself or to guide them to other sources if necessary.

One of the most commonly recurring themes from across our case studies was how to deal with the possibility that, after initiating discussion on a sensitive topic, one of the participants says something **unpalatable, incendiary or deeply offensive**. Such comments need to be carefully managed both with the individual concerned as well as with the other participants, because contradicting their content can harden attitudes and help to drive any potential extremism underground.

The practitioners consulted often said they needed to be able and ready to respond effectively to intense emotional responses and conflicts to maintain the safety of the space. This was in recognition of the fact that the following are not unusual occurrences when discussing sensitive topic matters: 'offensive', inflammatory, prejudicial and / or threatening remarks; arguments between participants; participants becoming emotional or upset; and participants becoming angry or frustrated.

The importance of facilitators and practitioners knowing how to deal with intense emotional reaction was echoed in the findings from the literature review. One study highlighted the manner in which discussing difficult issues such as race and racism can evoke difficult emotions such as fear, apathy, withdrawal and anger. The authors recommend that:

*'Prevention program staff will need to be skilled in...creating atmospheres where individuals can discuss negative reactions such as anxiety confusion, shame, and even anger and learn to cope with them in order to facilitate positive outcomes of intergroup contact.'* (Bunin and Vera, 2009: 51)

Some studies advocated the practice of allowing emotional reactions to 'run their course' as very often these could result in a breakthrough.

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The facilitator of the **Model United Nations** case study felt that one of the key ingredients to maintaining a safe space in her workshop was reacting carefully to any emotional response generated during the session, and giving pupils time to reflect. Emotional issues and responses would be discussed in the next session, never on the same day, to provide time for personal reflection and to help generate and maintain the safe space. She would recognise those individuals who had been particularly affected by a session and would talk to them individually where appropriate.

When individual students have shared something difficult and personal it was considered extremely important to make **the act of 'sharing'** one's personal opinions and experiences **rewarding** and, if appropriate, fun and enjoyable. In the observed lessons participants were frequently praised for sharing their thoughts out loud, and thanked for 'taking a risk' for the benefit of the wider group, especially if they were sharing something sensitive or personal. Where the story or experience being shared was considered less sensitive, teaching practitioners used interactive techniques (such as role-play) to bring the act of sharing to life. This was only done with express permission of the young person to use their 'story' in this way.

It can also be important for facilitators to be aware of local factors – for example, relating to issues or rivalries between different groups or communities – to be able to pre-empt, better understand, and be able to respond to more effectively disputes caused by these issues.

#### **Thinking about local tensions**

One facilitator of **Philosophy for Children** inquiries recounted how issues related to local tensions can often surface in discussions. Primary children from one area, for instance, may make the statement that 'white children shouldn't play here'. She asks them to justify and explain this type of statement, posing questions such as 'Do you mean in your house? In your garden? In your area?' By playing devil's advocate, she can test the resilience of what they are saying at the same time as unpicking what they mean. This encourages the whole group to think critically about the original statement.



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## 3.2 Confident and connected facilitation based on trust

The issue of teachers' and facilitators' confidence was raised regularly in the course of the research, and the majority of experts and practitioners agreed that successful approaches to building young people's resilience needed a thoughtful kind of confidence in which facilitators have the capacity to deal flexibly with the particular challenges that this type of work may raise.

Findings from the literature review emphasise how the quality of the facilitation can affect its response, with young people more likely to engage in an intervention that is led by a person to whom they can relate and who they feel has an understanding of their lives and issues.

### Gaining trust by letting young people take control

An important feature of the case study programmes was gaining young people's trust so that they engage with the intervention and participate in the learning activities. Trust in this context can be defined as the young people having confidence in a number of things – in the person or people delivering the intervention, in the other participants, in the authenticity of the issues being discussed and / or in the quality of the intervention itself.

While gaining young people's trust is part of good practice in any teaching or facilitation, our case studies demonstrated that the building of trust was a critically important factor for the success of interventions that aimed to build resilience to radicalisation. This is for a number of reasons:

- **The sensitivity of the agenda.** Young people can be reluctant to engage with activities that they know are funded by Prevent, as we found in the case study Digital Disruption. In that example, gaining the trust of the participants was essential to encourage participation.
- **The controversial nature of the subject matter.** If young people are to be able to discuss difficult issues, they need to feel that their emotions will be handled sensitively, that their confidences will be respected, both within and beyond the learning environment and that any disagreement will not be allowed to escalate towards conflict but will be sympathetically resolved.
- **Local sensitivities.** When groups of young people are brought together from areas where there is a history of tension or conflict, they can bring an atmosphere of mutual suspicion which needs to be overcome if constructive work is to take place.

The ability of facilitators to form trusting, honest relationships is particularly important when the young person is undergoing training, for example, to become a peer educator.

Teachers and facilitators were also observed having the confidence and flexibility to **relinquish control over the direction of the discussion**. For teachers generally accustomed to working with a pre-planned set of tasks and discussions, this can be 'scary' (Philosophy for Children teacher), but it allows young people to open up and to talk about what is important to them in their lives. Confident and flexible facilitation in this context embraces unexpected turns in the discussion, and encourages the young people to think critically about these issues, however sensitive they may be.

Several of our case studies indicate that where interactions between adult facilitators and young people were on **as equal a footing as possible**, this engendered constructive



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engagement between the two. In these cases, adult facilitators participated in learning exercises on the same level as young people, while prompting where appropriate and fielding any questions or concerns that arose.

Put another way, adult facilitators retained an important role in providing knowledge, advice and guidance while equalising the power relationship with young people in so far as is practicable. For example, LEAP's Quarrel Shop encourages adults to participate in learning exercises in much the same way as young people. While adult facilitators complete the core tasks of any exercise in the same way as participants, they also remain a source of knowledge and guidance for young people. In closed focus groups following the first day of Quarrel Shop, young people talked positively about this form of facilitation and seemed particularly keen to engage when everyone in the room was participating in learning exercises in much the same way.

Similarly, Tools for Dialogue facilitators attempt to engage in dialogue with young people about the similarities and differences between religious texts using a line of questioning that makes no attempt to persuade young people of a particular set of beliefs or interpretations. Again, in post-lesson focus groups, participants seemed to value this constructive and respectful form of interaction and seemed to respond in kind:

*'It was good because we were being taught how to discuss rather than having to agree or disagree with what was being said.'* (year 10 participant)

## Respecting young people's preconceptions

Findings from our rapid evidence assessment and case studies suggests that constructive interaction - particularly between adult facilitators and young people - will partly depend on **whether young people's pre-conceptions are respected**. Respecting young people's pre-conceptions is about allowing young people to express their thoughts and feelings in their own terms, even in cases where teachers / facilitators do not agree with their views or choice of language.

Many of the practitioners that participated in this research argued that unless young people's pre-conceptions are respected, they are likely to feel that they are being judged and are thus less likely to constructively engage with resilience-building activities. Our research also indicates that a failure to acknowledge young people's pre-conceptions can lead to their feeling that the given resilience-building activity lacks authenticity, ultimately resulting in disengagement. Perceived authenticity is also shown to be particularly important where young people have experienced the behaviour that a particular intervention is trying to build resilience to. The above findings are supported by the following brief discussion of insights from case studies and a rapid evidence assessment.

Our observation of Rewind - an anti-racist educational initiative - illustrates how respecting young-people's pre-conceptions is an important first-step towards encouraging constructive interaction. In semi-structured interviews, Rewind facilitators emphasised the importance of *'keeping it real'* by asking young people to describe any experiences of racism in the terms used at the time:

Rewind facilitators clearly felt that young people would not willingly or constructively interact with adults or peers about the issue of racism unless the project encouraged the authentic expression of racist experiences. Feedback from project participants supported this thinking:

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*'It's really interesting. I've been to these sorts of things before, about racism. Boring, boring ... we had a really boring, serious teacher. They're telling us as it is, using the racist language. With the other one, it was just like 'racism is bad.'* (male Rewind participant)

The Rewind facilitators believe that allowing participants **to air their views** in a way not normally permitted within formal educational settings can have a calming effect that facilitates the young people's ability to settle down and engage with the intervention. Confidence from the facilitator is needed in two particular respects: to allow the young people to have their say without interruption and to retain sufficient self-control that the facilitator passes no judgement on what is being said. Both preserve the contract of the safe environment. Once the young people know that they will be heard, the facilitators can then start to challenge these views through education rather than confrontation. The effectiveness of this technique of respectful listening is evidenced in the literature review, and is illustrated in the extremist case-study example below.

Similarly, findings from our rapid evidence assessment suggest that failing to respect young people's pre-conceptions can lead to disengagement and alienation from resilience-building education. Ezekiel's (2002) ethnographic study with young members of a neo-Nazi group in Detroit, USA, found that conventional anti-racist education in schools was felt to be ineffective from the participant's perspective because they largely ignored young people's pre-conceptions:

*'For the neo-Nazi youths, the teaching in school of multiculturalism had been another adult exercise in hypocrisy. Black History Month was an annual annoyance. It is easy for an adult-led discussion to seem like sermonising ... education about racism should begin with respect for the constructs and emotions that students bring with them into the classroom.'* (Ezekiel 2002, p. 65)

## Appropriate use of humour

Using humour can be a highly successful way of breaking down barriers and encouraging young people to engage with the facilitator and the intervention. The humour we observed was either personal and took the form of repartee between facilitators, for example, or formed part of the materials presented in the intervention. We observed humour being used as a way to break down barriers between facilitators and participants, to defuse tension after a particularly difficult discussion or presentation, or as a way into encouraging young people to think about serious issues.

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The **Rewind** facilitators often use humour while delivering their sessions, believing that the subject of racism is so serious that humour is needed to counterbalance the intensity of emotion that it can provoke. Depending on the make-up of the group and the context of the training, they use it initially to break down barriers between participants and facilitators.

Both facilitators that we observed are bald men, who dress informally and who would (by their own cheerful admission) be unlikely to make any of the gossip mags' lists of best looking men.

One often announces that he is a model and, when participants look disbelieving, singles one out to stare at and – after a suitably dramatic pause – smiles and says, 'Haven't you heard about modelling gloves and shoes?' He often follows this up by confiding that the brand of shampoo he uses is 'Wash and Gone'. While participants may or may not find the jokes amusing, they begin to understand the message from this exchange that the facilitators are 'on their side'.

The key ingredients to using humour in this context are appropriateness and timing. In the case study observations, jokes were confined to areas not directly related to the subject matter, and humorous remarks are used carefully and sparingly. When telling stories about racist incidents, for instance, humour was in the delivery of the story – in the description of a large, frightening and angry man, for example – rather than the situation to which it referred.

This type of delivery can also reinforce key messages. A Rewind story, in which one facilitator recounted how he was told by his parents that gypsies stole children from the end of the garden, was a highly amusing illustration of how easily myths can be created through thoughtless acceptance of what is said. All the participants laughed, but their interviews showed they understood the message that everyone should question and subject ideas to critical thought. One commented that the training made her *'look at the world differently. Like you just feel the way you think has changed.'*

Using humour has its risks, however, and facilitators (particularly if mainstream teachers) will need to avoid ridicule and setting themselves up as figures of fun. Instead the use of humour should reinforce their authenticity as serious, committed people who have a well-developed sense of humour. This can be a fine line to judge and caution is advisable, particularly in the early stages of the participant / facilitator relationship.

A balance also needs to be struck between seriousness and humour, so there is clear demarcation between the moments of intensity and those of light relief. The participants then have no doubt as to which parts of the session require them to focus and which parts allow them to relax, and can react accordingly.

## **Role-modelling expected behaviour through confident, honest facilitation**

A notable characteristic of these case study facilitators was that they **modelled the type of behaviour** they expected from the participants. In this context we mean that they were open and honest in the way that they handled themselves within the session; they approached their subjects directly, showed courage in the way that they were ready to discuss difficult or controversial issues, and were often prepared to show a range of emotions, including vulnerability, at different times during the intervention. They demonstrated patience in the way that they encouraged the more reticent members of the group to participate, and

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avoided being dismissive and / or patronising in their reactions to the young people's contributions. They also showed consistency and integrity in the way that they bound themselves to the ground rules of the sessions, thereby ensuring that the same expectations governed their behaviour as well as that of the participants.

By providing examples of the modes of behaviour that they wanted from the participant group, facilitators were able to show the young people the value of open and honest discussion. Allowing people to speak without interruption, for example, brings the message that each person's contribution to the discussion is respected, that different points of view are welcomed, and everyone has the capacity to learn; showing a direct approach to a difficult issue promotes open discussion about matters that, in other contexts, can be seen as no-go areas. Importantly, facilitators need to show trust in the participants, and treating them as responsible young adults who can debate thoughtfully and intelligently was something we regularly observed.

Facilitators showed personal authenticity and integrity in a way that contributed to the honesty and openness of their sessions. Recounting anecdotes that portrayed the leaders in a variety of different situations – that were often amusing and not necessarily flattering – was an important part in the sharing of experience that was encouraged within the Rewind sessions, for example. The stories told by the facilitators also illustrated their own integrity as people who were consistently and whole-heartedly working against different types of racism and extremism. These factors encouraged participants to feel that they were dealing with the facilitator as a 'real' person, and that there were no pretensions or falsehoods in the way that facilitators were acting or behaving.

The majority of interviewees and experts we consulted regarded this as highly important, saying that young people are quick to pick up any mixed messages from teachers' and facilitators' behaviour; honesty really is the best policy in this respect. This finding is consistent with those from the literature review, which stressed the importance of the facilitator's authenticity in gaining young people's trust and engagement.

The case study example below illustrates how one facilitator modelled the type of behaviour she expected from participants, and how one of her students perceived its effect:

The project lead for the **Model United Nations** case study described the programme as 'a *personal journey of self-discovery*', working towards building the skills, confidence and aspirations of the young people so they are equipped to face challenges that come their way in a positive manner.

In the twice-monthly workshops that formed part of the preparation for the formal Model United Nations debates, the facilitator gave the participants different scenarios (bullying at school, for instance, or the Iraq conflict), and asked them to discuss what they believed was the cause of the conflict. She would then ask the young people to think about the people who were directly involved and the way that the conflict affected them. This brought the focus of the discussion to the lives of individuals and their families and encouraged participants to reflect on the role of conflict in their own lives.

By showing herself as vulnerable and '*on a journey*', and by being honest and authentic in her reaction to the issues raised, the leader modelled the behaviour that she expected from the group. The approach helped to create an atmosphere of trust that enabled the young people to confront issues within their own lives honestly and openly. This, in turn, could prompt deep reflection on students' own lives and encourage them to think about the ways in which they could change things for the better.

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One Year 12 student (i.e. aged 16-17 years old) who participated in the MUN programme commented:

*'This has made me think more about who I am, and what my place is in the world ... [who I am] in terms of a person ... Stuff like this does definitely put you under the microscope and make you question your attitudes towards different topics and whether ... they are the right opinion, if you like.'*

A real **challenge** is that teachers may have well-founded concern about relinquishing control over the discussion. A number of teachers commented during the course of their interviews that they found a more flexible, less didactic pedagogy difficult at first. Equally they commented that, once they had accustomed themselves to the different aims and methods of a relatively free discussion, they became comfortable with this way of working.

Key to this adaptation was the recognition that this type of discussion was not necessarily curriculum-oriented (even though it may have beneficial academic effects), that they had embarked on a 'learning journey' with their students and that they developed the confidence / willingness to say when something was beyond their area of expertise.

Modelling the sorts of behaviours expected of young people can also be challenging for teachers, because it means reflecting on the ways in which they work, act and present themselves, and involves revealing emotions, feelings, vulnerabilities, humour and personal experiences. To be effective in modelling behaviour, teachers / facilitators need to '*put out to bring out*' – to put themselves and their emotions, feelings and experiences on the line to show participants how it can be done and to encourage them to do likewise.

A further challenge is that **facilitators must be authentic** in the way that they 'put out'; young people are quick to pick up mixed messages, and will know if emotions, feelings and vulnerabilities are not genuine. The effect of mixed messages can be for the participants to lose trust in the facilitator and disengage from the activities.

Facilitators will also need to judge **the right degree of openness about the aims of the intervention**. On the one hand, the sensitivity of work in this area requires teachers and facilitators to start gently and to build up trust before working on issues that are sensitive or particularly controversial; being open about the (possibly long-term) intentions can have the effect of putting them off. On the other hand, young people can be reluctant to engage with an intervention unless they know exactly what it's about. The challenge in this case is to judge the right degree of openness that sparks young people's interest without alienating them from the intervention.

When and if interactions between young people and their peers or facilitators break down, some form of disciplinary action or focused one-on-one work may be necessary – despite this obviously damaging the 'on the same level' dynamic described above. This is particularly true in school-based settings. Tools for Dialogue and Quarrel Shop facilitators both reported having to adopt these strategies on rare occasions where a young person's comments have been seen by peers or facilitators as particularly disrespectful.

The issue of time is always a challenge in teaching and learning, but the clear message from all the case studies is that establishing and maintaining a connection takes time and requires a clear space in which to initiate, build and maintain such a connection. It is not a process that can be rushed or squeezed, but is one that has to go at the pace and speed that is appropriate to the young people who are involved. Taking time at the start to build

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relationships carefully and constructively can reap rich rewards as the process embeds and deepens over time.

Many of the points that we have described as effective practice in this section are illustrated by the Rewind peer-education programme, and are outlined in the box below.

The aims of the **Rewind peer-education programme** are to educate people of all ages about different forms of racism and extremism, to provoke deep thought about issues of race and identity, and to provide a safe, no-blame atmosphere in the session that encourages debate around these issues.

The leaders create a **safe learning space** in two ways. The first is to ensure all participants understand that whatever is said within the sessions must remain within the classroom. This is to prevent any teasing or bullying once the session is over. The second is to encourage a respectful, non-judgemental climate in which all participants are allowed their say – whatever their views – and have the right to be heard by other members of the group.

The sense of safety is further encouraged by the leaders **modelling the behaviour** that they require from participants. They encourage discussion by asking questions; they listen when someone is speaking; they take participants' views seriously and respond to the points that are raised. They take care never to react emotionally when racist views are expressed or when unpalatable stories are told. At the start of the programme, they say to the young people that they will be **honest** and they expect the same in return. During the course of the four days they tell personal stories and recount incidents that illustrate the ways in which different people experiences racism and / or extremism, encouraging participants to share their own stories. As participants often ask for a story to be repeated, the leaders stress the practical necessity of honesty; any inconsistency in repeating the story would be noted and would undermine participants' trust.

The leaders **show trust** in the participants through respecting their wish to become peer educators and helping them to develop the knowledge and confidence that will enable them to run sessions in their schools or colleges with the support of the staff in that institution. By sharing something of themselves with the group, the leaders gave a practical demonstration of their trust in the participants' integrity.

### 3.3 Appropriate levels of knowledge

The evidence from the case studies shows that the extent to which practitioners need to be knowledgeable depends on the type of intervention and the context within which it is used. Specifically, the evidence shows that:

- Interventions that focus on gaps in young people's knowledge require practitioners who are knowledgeable about their subject and confident in their pedagogy.
- Interventions that are aimed at encouraging young people to question and to engage in critical reflection do not necessarily require expert subject knowledge, i.e. a facilitator need not necessarily be an expert on a topic to help people critically reflect. Discussions



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facilitated by non-experts in this context can be helped by a structure and framework that enables them to build their confidence in handling potentially difficult issues.

- It is important that practitioners are honest about the limits of their knowledge, and refrain from 'doing their best' particularly in sensitive areas, for example, about students' personal identity.

Being a knowledgeable and confident practitioner in the context of building resilience involves having sufficient knowledge and confidence to counter falsehoods, undermine myths, question inaccurate statements and – in a more positive fashion – to help participants develop constructive arguments and trains of thought during the course of the intervention.

Depending on the context, partial or inaccurate information can undermine participants' trust in facilitators and disengage them from the intervention, potentially exacerbating a situation that may already be sensitive and difficult to manage. This may particularly be the case in the presence of highly articulate participants who have detailed knowledge of the issue under review. Expert in-depth knowledge, and repeated public demonstration of that knowledge during the course of the intervention, can be an important factor in these cases in establishing a connection with participants as it helps young people to develop respect for their facilitators and to engage with informed discussion.

Those case-study interventions that required detailed, expert knowledge from facilitators were based on countering gaps in knowledge. These gaps may act as 'push' factors that make individuals vulnerable to extremism or, in a more general sense, mean that young people are unable to defend themselves confidently against racist comments, for example. Interventions of this type can benefit from a highly political understanding of the issue in hand. If young people are able confidently to explore issues about institutionalised and government racism and imperialism, for example, or the reasons for and effects of invading Iraq, or the motives behind current involvement with Afghanistan, they can develop their capacity to think critically in a wider context and to build resilience from continuous questioning of messages, whatever their source.

One critical factor in determining the degree of knowledge required is a **sound assessment of the extent of the young people's own knowledge** and the degree to which they are deemed to be 'at risk' of being drawn towards extremist ideology and groups. The case-study example below shows how a combination of subject knowledge and judgement about individuals' degree of vulnerability determine the type of intervention offered.

The **Strategy to Reach, Empower and Educate Teenagers (STREET)** organisation works with young people in gangs, pupil reform units (PRUs) and with other young people referred to them by statutory services or families. They believe that young people who convert to Islam or are learning about the faith are susceptible to a number of vulnerabilities, and base their programmes on developing the emotional well-being of the young people with whom they work. They argue that work with 'high risk' or radicalised individuals must sit within a holistic approach to intervention that addresses the possible multiple areas of vulnerability that these individuals are experiencing.

One part of this package aims to deconstruct propaganda and challenge extremist ideology. Street has three aims for this particular intervention:



1. to equip young people with the tools to deconstruct myths and propaganda techniques in a way that they feel is empowering
2. to help the participants see extremist-inspired messages within the context of an informed understanding of geo-political issues
3. informed Islamic instruction.

As part of this deconstruction, facilitators explore issues related to jihad, Islamic fatwa, taqfiri Islam (Al-Qaeda Islam), and the process of arriving at a legitimate Islamic ruling. They also examine related social policy issues, how the Muslim world responds to them, how change is brought about and how Muslim citizens can contribute to the society around them. The course is tailored to the degree to which the individuals have been assessed as 'at risk', which could be high, medium or low.

An extensive understanding of Islamic theology is needed for these detailed discussions, together with an understanding of the geo-political issues that form the background to different interpretations and understandings of Islam. Young people can be suspicious of the programme, and the knowledge displayed by expert facilitators helps to establish a connection.

Expertise does not necessarily have to be located within the leader, however, and facilitators can bring in experts in their field to help with an area that is beyond their realm of knowledge.

**Model United Nations:** preparing for the New York debate on 'Global Development'

The Model United Nations group were allocated representation of two African countries and two special agencies in the New York debate about 'Global Development'. Participation in these debates requires each group to prepare a position paper for each of their allocated countries that establishes the country's background in relation to the topic, and includes details on home and foreign policy together with any government action that has taken place to date. The group then has to uphold this position in a number of different committee sessions during the week-long conference.

Asking young people to discuss and to co-create solutions in this huge debate (with about 2,700 participants in 2010) means they need to be equipped with knowledge and understanding of complex geo-political issues from a particular standpoint. In this instance, the group's leader brought in an expert with a long academic career in African Peace and Conflict Studies, who spent a day discussing and explaining issues about global development in Africa with the group of young people.

The expert helped the young people to understand the complexity of the way in which the world perceives Africa, the important role that Africa plays in the international arena, and the ways in which individual countries can and do wield their influence. He covered a brief history of the region and the involvement of the United Nations in different fields. The group discussed together how conflicts in Africa cannot be seen in isolation due to a long history of colonial involvement in the continent, but also how each African country has different needs and priorities. Participants felt that the time spent with the expert was a critical part of their preparation for the debates in New York.

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In interventions that are aimed at encouraging young people to question and to reflect critically on what is being said, expert knowledge is not necessarily needed. The case study below shows how facilitators' confidence to handle potentially difficult issues can be built through a utilising a particular framework for the discussion and through experience in leading inquiries.

The rationale behind **Philosophy for Children** sessions is to encourage participants to become inquirers in their own right; to develop their ability to question and to think critically so that they see themselves as inquiring, thinking beings. Experienced practitioners reported that facilitators needed a basic understanding of current affairs, but that it was equally important that they had an open mind and were interested in exploring and sharing ideas. The peer educators whom we interviewed reported that they became more courageous about the type of stimulus they chose as they became more practiced in the method of the inquiries; as they became more experienced, they felt able to use stimuli that were more likely to lead to difficult or controversial areas. In the session we observed in a primary school – the last of the series in the academic year – the sixth-form students who led the inquiry had chosen a stimulus of a picture of a small boy holding a teddy bear with a number of heavily-armed soldiers in the background. The title for the inquiry chosen by the Year 4 children (i.e. aged 8-9 years old) was 'Why are there wars?'

In this case it was the accessibility and the simplicity of the intervention's 10-step framework that helped to support the facilitators and to build their confidence in leading discussions. Experienced facilitators, however, believed that inquiries in which there were articulate young people who were knowledgeable about controversial areas needed equally knowledgeable facilitators who would be able to spot – and correct – inaccurate factual statements.

In another case study, facilitators were aware of the limits of their knowledge and were sufficiently confident to be prepared to be honest with the young people about what they did or did not know.

**Tools for Dialogue** is a workshop based on reading and discussing passages from Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptures. It aims to engage participants in the study of religious texts by using themes that are topical and relevant to young people's lives. Each workshop is led by three representatives - one from each faith.

These facilitators are knowledgeable but not experts, and they would not regard themselves as authority figures; they are sharing their beliefs and insights based on their own personal experience of their faith. They encourage open questioning, but are happy to be fallible and to say when they are unable to answer a question. The message conveyed is that they are knowledgeable about and comfortable in their faith, something the students appreciated.

The evidence shows that **challenges** relating to being a knowledgeable and confident practitioner / facilitator in this context arise from:

- **Ensuring that the intervention has a clear philosophy and approach.** The case studies described above are effective because they all have a clear and consistent philosophy and supporting approach that has specific aims and methods. Each case

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study can justify what it is doing and why. This provides a firm foundation for both participants and facilitators.

- **Being knowledgeable about the subject and confident in the pedagogy.** One of the central messages from the case studies that focus on the gaps in young people's knowledge (such as STREET) is that facilitators need to be confident and knowledgeable about the subject matter (the topics and associated issues). You can guarantee that during discussion the knowledge of the teacher / facilitator about the area will come under scrutiny from young people. Knowledge of the topic and confidence in pedagogical technique go hand in hand. The more secure the teacher / facilitator is in their knowledge and pedagogy then the more able he / she is to challenge young people during discussions and encourage them to think more deeply about issues during the discussion exchanges.

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## 4. Equipping young people with appropriate capabilities - skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness

In this chapter we look at the content of teaching interventions, and in particular how successful approaches can equip young people with the skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness they need to become more resilient and tolerant individuals.

Well-designed and skilfully facilitated interventions will provide a space for dialogue about sensitive issues and will help to build resilience to and understanding of extremist ideologies, which in many cases will be 'good enough'.

Wherever possible, however, a focus on 'harder' skills, tools and techniques to improve personal resilience should be incorporated, to increase the likelihood of longer-term impact.

While we have not attempted to measure in definitive terms the impact of the teaching methods we observed, our analysis suggests that successful interventions with this kind of skills / knowledge / understanding / awareness focus have three common desired aims and outcomes, namely to:

- support individuals to be able to cope with a range of different life pressures and challenges
- develop young people into critical thinkers who are able to appreciate a range of different perspectives in coming to their own judgements
- help young people become skilled at working collaboratively with others.

These three areas of desired learning outcomes are strongly linked to theory on what makes an individual vulnerable to extremism, as such they actively aim to mitigate the risk of a young person becoming emotionally fragile, ill-informed and overly dogmatic, socially isolated, and consequently vulnerable to extremists and extremism.

In summary, our findings suggest that the following are the key ingredients that should guide teaching outcomes for building resilience:

1. A focus on building personal resilience and a positive sense of identity: supporting young people to be emotionally resilient to life's pressures and able to foster a positive sense of self, for example, through positive thinking, conflict-management techniques and celebrating their multi-faceted identities.
2. Development of critical thinking skills, i.e. continually encouraging young people to think for themselves and in doing so take account of a balanced range of evidence and alternative perspectives – we look at how these skills can be developed to help young people to become informed and independent thinkers who are resilient to the influence of propaganda, e.g. through text-based, discussion-led and multi-media teaching approaches.
3. Opportunities for interaction and team-work, so that young people develop transferable skills for positive collaboration and ongoing engagement.

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This chapter is divided into three sections, one for each of these key ingredients. As well as describing the evidence from the research about the impact that can be achieved and the specific factors that need to be taken into account, each section also includes an analysis of the relevant challenges.

## 4.1 Building personal resilience and a positive sense of identity

Personal resilience in this context relates to the capacity of young people to control their own emotions and feelings, to engender feelings of positive well-being, to exercise control over their lives and develop emotional resilience which will enable them to deal positively with the challenges life presents.

Some examples of the skills and behaviours associated with personal resilience include being able to prevent the escalation of negative thoughts or situations, managing intense emotional reactions, communicating assertively with others, and being able to focus on one's strengths and capacity to succeed. Skills and techniques for developing personal resilience are intended to be transferable and applicable to many contexts, including relationships with peers and family members, as well as achievement in academic and / or other activities. In this context, personal resilience is considered to be something that we all have the capacity to develop, and we can all benefit from developing. It is not considered to be an innate quality that only some of us possess, nor is it considered an exclusively 'remedial' or 'corrective' intervention which is only relevant to those who are experiencing emotional trauma or personal crisis.

Personal resilience is strongly linked to a young person's sense of self, i.e. whether an individual is aware of and happy with 'who they are'. Many of those consulted as part of this research believed that individuals who have positive self-regard are more likely to be able to maintain personal well-being, make positive life choices and cope with challenging situations. Furthermore the concept of 'identity' – what makes us 'who we are', how we reconcile different facets of ourselves and how our sense of identity affects the way we see the world and are seen within it – is seen to have a particular relevance to building personal resilience to extremism.

The majority of practitioners and experts consulted felt generic skills for promoting personal resilience and positive self-regard were extremely valuable for helping build resilience to extremism specifically. They felt that a young person would be much better able to mitigate the 'push' factors towards extremism (such as a sense of injustice; actual / perceived humiliating experiences and a lack of sense of achievement) if they were empowered to sustain their emotional well-being and affect positive outcomes in a range of emotionally testing situations. Similarly, there was an implicit assumption that confident young people, who are comfortable with their personal identity, are less likely to be drawn towards charismatic 'extremists' offering a strong alternative identity and a sense of belonging in tight networks, i.e. the 'pull' factors towards extremism. This was often in light of a recognition that many young people - and particularly those considered more 'vulnerable' to extremism - may be struggling to reconcile their 'multiple identities', in terms of their faith identity, race identity, national identity, sexual identity and peer vs. family identity.

The findings from the literature review show that a number of initiatives that aim to prevent involvement in risky behaviours (such as gangs and crime) use cognitive behavioural approaches based in social learning theory that seek to 'correct' maladaptive cognitions (e.g.

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beliefs, self statements, perceptions) and build positive coping skills (e.g. pro-social skills, anger control). Overall, the literature indicates that very few rigorous evaluations and reviews of specified cognitive behavioural based initiatives have been conducted. Nevertheless, our review of available evidence suggests that interventions that used cognitive behavioural methods can be effective in reducing delinquency, anti-social behaviour, drug use and school drop out.

## The use of simple theoretical frameworks

Those case studies which had an explicit focus on promoting personal well-being and **building personal resilience**, such as UKRP and STREET'S Routes to Success, used a number of **simple theoretical frameworks** and interactive techniques such as **role-play** to explore complex ideas about the control we can exercise over our perceptions, emotions, behaviours, interaction with others and capacity to affect change in our lives. Two examples from the case studies are presented below.

**The UK Resilience Programme (UKRP)** draws on cognitive behavioural therapy to give pupils the skills to think positively, manage negative emotions and deal appropriately with 'activating events' such as interpersonal conflict, negative influences and other emotionally destabilising situations. One of the teaching methods observed was to equip pupils with a very simple framework to deconstruct emotionally challenging situations. The ABC framework encourages young people to break down a problematic situation into:

**A** – an Activating event, Action or Adversity

**B** – a Belief which either motivated the activating event or was formed as a result of the activating event

**C** – Consequence.

Understanding of the ABC framework and its application was reinforced using a scenario-based exercise: *'You've forgotten your homework for the second time this week, and you've been given detention meaning that you'll now have to miss football practice'*. Through a Q&A exchange, the pupils successfully identified the activating event (the act of forgetting the homework), and explored the initial negative beliefs this scenario could trigger, e.g. *'I always forget things'*, *'I'm so stupid'*, and *'If my Mum finds out, I'm going to be grounded for life'*. The pupils analysed these beliefs and concluded they were exaggerated and probably not true. The teacher encouraged the pupils to consider how one could achieve a more positive set of consequences, by challenging one's initial negative beliefs and entertaining more positive beliefs, e.g. *'everyone forgets things from time to time'* or *'I might have forgotten today, but I will remember tomorrow'*. By focusing on these positive beliefs one might be less upset about the prospect of missing one football practice session and more likely to seek a solution, e.g. one could *'explain to the teacher that he's going to miss football practice and try to re-negotiate the timing of the detention'*.

By breaking down a range of problematic situations into these three components, the pupils were encouraged and enabled to:

- challenge their own beliefs following an activating event, to examine how far it was grounded in real evidence vs. assumptions or faulty thinking
- recognise they have the power to influence the consequence or outcome of an activating event, by reflecting on their initial response and modifying their beliefs and behaviours.

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All of the pupils consulted felt techniques like this were helpful and relevant to real life.

In one observed **UKRP** lesson, a small group of pupils were asked if they would be happy to act out a problem they'd recently experienced in their peer group: one boy had been looking forward to going to cricket trials and was expecting his two friends to go with him. When his friends said they didn't want to go, the boy suddenly felt anxious about going alone and annoyed with his friends for dropping out at the last moment. The aim of the exercise was to deconstruct the following situation, explore the feelings of the three people involved and to think through possible solutions. The three boys acted out the situation and other class-members were given the opportunity to take it in turns to:

- 'thought-track' the internal dialogue of the individuals involved (by placing a hand on the shoulder of the main actors during 'freeze' moments and saying what they might be thinking and feeling at that moment)
- provide helpful suggestions for resolving the problem.

All members of the class appeared to be finding the exercise enjoyable, entertaining and amusing. The teacher then asked the class to debrief the exercise, by saying what it had revealed. The pupils were able to highlight a number of key insights, for example, the importance of explaining how you feel to your friends, not bottling up emotions and not assuming that others have acted out of spite to deliberately upset you.

Several young people consulted about these techniques said they had put them - or the learning which they illustrate - into practice in everyday situations. Consequently, they reported being more aware of their emotions and behavioural reactions in everyday life, being better able to positively manage their negative emotions (such as anxiety and anger), and more likely to take steps to help prevent conflicts from escalating.

Our analysis suggests that these teaching approaches were most successful, and were most likely to have a positive impact when they:

- equipped the participants with a vocabulary for talking about their emotional and behavioural responses to situations. Many of the teaching practitioners consulted felt young people are often deprived of regular opportunities to express their feelings openly, and consequently can struggle to articulate themselves in this way, without being given a 'language' to do so. Some examples of helpful terms young people were observed using include: 'activating event', 'response', 'perception', 'makes me feel ...' and 'my rights'.
- enabled the participants to recognise they have some degree of power over the outcome of emotionally destabilising events. Many of the techniques we observed encouraged the participants to identify and analyse unsettling incidents, such as a conflict with a peer, or receiving a hurtful remark. For example, facilitators would invite the participants to break down the situation into a sequence of events, identify the key players and examine their motivations, empathise with the other perspectives and consider the difference between fact and interpretation. By deconstructing situations in this way, it was possible for the young people identify the opportunities to exercise control over the outcome of the event. For example, they could see that they have some power to moderate their reaction and response, e.g. 'when someone behaves like this, I feel like this, but I can choose to take



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a step back'. This process often emphasised the value of a measured response, rather than a reactive one<sup>24</sup>.

- appeared to be relatively easy and simple to integrate into everyday life. Many of the techniques were 'small steps', which in themselves did not appear overly ambitious or daunting. They were also often supported by a short adage or phrase. For example, in the UK Resilience Programme, the saying '*Don't just do something, stand there!*' reinforced the value of taking a step back in the 'heat of the moment' to reflect on the best course of action. Many of the young people consulted felt that they were learning 'life skills' that they could apply outside of school (in their family life and with friends) and would be useful in the future (e.g. in managing their conduct in the workplace or at university).

Skills for supporting personal well-being were considered to be relevant for, and beneficial to, all young people, ranging from those who are likely to present a low risk of being radicalised, to those who have been referred to active de-radicalisation programmes (such as the STREET). Core components of approaches to building personal resilience for both universal and targeted audiences appear to have a lot in common, in particular, methods for both audiences have a strong emphasis on equipping young people with practical techniques (often drawing on cognitive behavioural therapy) which enable them to deal positively with a range of challenging life situations.

While there was no direct observation of a method of this kind targeted at 'vulnerable' individuals, the lesson plan for STREET suggests there is a need to have a stronger focus on improving confidence, reinforcing self-worth, developing self-efficacy and promoting a sense of achievement (see STREET case-study below). Similarly findings on best practice methods for cognitive behavioural initiatives found in the literature review highlight the importance of ensuring different specific behavioural or educational goals are set for each individual or group.

The research uncovered some common challenges associated with the teaching of theoretical frameworks, tools and techniques for personal resilience:

- Many of the relevant interventions were designed by psychologists, or informed by life coaches, mentors, counsellors and personal advisors. The content of these programmes can border on the territory traditionally occupied by mental health, counselling and psychology, and as such they need to be expertly, responsibly and ethically delivered. In many cases the programme designers are conscious of the need to protect the programme's integrity and discourage adaptation by non-specialist or inexperienced teaching practitioners.
- Therefore, in some cases, such as UKRP, the process of training teaching practitioners in these specialist programmes can be costly and time intensive. UKRP requires teachers to attend an eight-day training programme, which provides both a theoretical grounding

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<sup>24</sup> This finding is supported by evidence from the literature review, which found projects aiming to prevent a range of risky behaviours which clearly communicated that how you respond to an emotionally destabilising event is a matter of choice, e.g. the 'Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways' (RIPP programme) has the motto 'You can Respond in Peaceful and Positive Ways, or you can Rest in Peace Permanently, the choice is YOURS!!'.

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and clear instruction on how to teach using a prescribed set of teaching materials. Clearly this kind of investment requires senior-level backing within the school, and not all schools will be in a position to undertake such training.

## Support young people to develop confidence, self worth and aspirations

A common theme across all the case studies was that young people should be **supported to develop confidence, a sense of self-worth and future aspirations, by being encouraged to stretch themselves**, step outside of their 'comfort zone' and succeed in new tasks / situations. All of the case studies had this 'stretch' element purposefully built into their design, as well as opportunities for the young people to reflect on their achievement. To take just a few examples: Digital Disruption encourages young people with no prior experience of film making to produce their own music video for the internet; Model United Nations requires the participants to research complex issues relating to world politics and potentially present at a large-scale mock international conference; Dissolving Boundaries expects young people to form new relationships with pupils at another school to co-produce a project and Leap's work in training and supporting peer educators and facilitators provides young people with a huge sense of self-worth, achievement and confidence.

Such activities had the reported impact of improving young people's confidence in the short term and opening up their minds to future possibilities and ambitions in the long-term. The act of succeeding in new tasks was felt to be really important for encouraging young people to believe they could achieve their chosen goals. The following quotes from young people help illustrate this:

*'I think we've all come on leaps and bounds ... in terms of personal skills, how we interact with others. These skills are invaluable for life I think.'* (Male participant, Model United Nations)

*'I enjoyed it. I enjoyed emailing another school and it's helped to build my confidence.'* (Year 5 pupil, Dissolving Boundaries)

*'I came out of it ...really, really interested and really wanting to – it sounds a bit clichéd – but change the world, almost. I am now really interested in what's going on in the world.'* (Male participant, Model United Nations)

The value of supporting young people to undertake new and stretching activities was considered universal to all groups and achievable in both school and youth work environments. However, some practitioners aiming to engage 'vulnerable' or harder-to-reach young people felt this process was particularly valuable for these individuals, given that they are less likely to receive positive affirmation through their school or family life on a regular basis. Although they weren't observed directly as part of this research<sup>25</sup>, some interventions working with this group had an additional focus on supporting young people to enhance their effectiveness in their daily lives (as a means to reinforce a sense of self-worth on an ongoing basis) and supporting young people to think about their future aspirations.

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<sup>25</sup> The information provided in the case-study box derives from a written overview of the Routes to Success programme supplied by STREET

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The **STREET'S** Routes to Success programme uses a range of flexible learning methods to help create a learning environment which encourages personal discovery, boosts self-esteem and confidence, encourages risk taking, pushes individuals out of their comfort zone and challenges conventions. It aims to help participants:

- Discover their self by breaking out of their comfort zones, challenging self-limiting beliefs and being encouraged to try new things and to learn about themselves through new experiences
- Develop a strong sense of self-worth by creating a non-threatening, non-judgemental environment of learning which welcomes and acknowledges young people's contribution and input
- Expand their capacity to know that success is possible by experiencing new situations, completing activities and celebrating accomplishments.

In the second module on personal effectiveness the participants are supported to enhance their effectiveness in their daily lives, by applying team working, leadership, time management, problem solving and critical thinking skills. They are also encouraged to develop an aspirational approach in life, and have a clear idea of what they want to accomplish and how they can achieve these personal goals. It aims to motivate young people to open up to the full potential of their minds and reinforce their sense of self-worth on an ongoing basis.

For both universal and targeted audiences, activities considered particularly effective for reinforcing confidence and self-worth were those that encouraged the young people to:

- take a positive risk and see the 'pay-off' or benefit of taking that risk – e.g. the sense of achievement having stood up to make a presentation
- enter new environments and interact with unfamiliar people – many young people said it boosted their confidence to know they could be accepted by new people in circles they might have shied away from before
- think in a different way or acquire new knowledge – in several of the case studies young people were positive about being exposed to new ideas, perspectives and information. They often could see a shift in their capacity to find out, explore and interrogate new arguments and information following their involvement in the intervention and said this was an important part of what had made it worthwhile for them
- learn new technical or practical skills in line with their interests, such as how to use a camera or edit film footage
- 'show case' their talents to peers and other young people (e.g. by presenting to others or posting a film online).

In terms of potential challenges regarding building self-esteem and aspirations through stretching activities, the evidence suggests young people are less likely to take risks if they feel they are being judged by their peers or are going to be subject to criticism – therefore creating a 'safe' and non-judgemental space is critical to encouraging young people to move outside of their comfort zone. This is particularly important given that young people who have received criticism or knock-backs when trying something new, said they were less likely to put themselves in that position in the future.

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## Explore and understand personal identity

Experts, teaching practitioners and young people felt that a key aspect of personal resilience in the context of building resilience to extremism was young people being aware of, and feeling positive about, 'who they are'. In this context, it was strongly felt that young people should be **supported to explore, understand, and celebrate their personal identity**. As well as being an important pre-requisite to strong self-esteem and confidence, 'knowing oneself' and having an appreciation of the complex nature of identity, also acts as:

- an important foundation that enables a young person to make sense of the factors which influence how they see the world and their place within it
- a potential defence against reductive or dangerous interpretations of identity used by extremists, which may invite young people to abandon parts of their identity (e.g. their role as a son or daughter, or a citizen of a democratic country, etc), and over-simplify and exaggerate other aspects (e.g. 'I'm pure white English').

Findings from the rapid evidence assessment also suggest that understanding identity has a unique role in teaching young people about racism, diversity, and respecting others. One of the key sources identified here states:

*'Teaching about racism is a subtopic of teaching about identity. Perhaps the first step is to help the student think through his or her own sense of identity and to its roots ... only then can the student begin to acknowledge that other people also have a sense of identity and that it also had multiple roots.'* (Ezekiel 2002, p. 66)<sup>26</sup>

Findings from the case studies suggest teaching methods that aimed to help young people to explore their own identity, and the wider concept of identity, were most effective when they enabled the young people to reflect on the multiple facets of their identity, discuss the possible tensions and celebrate multiplicity as something which creates balance and 'uniqueness'. Several of the teaching methods invited the young people to reflect on the key factors and influences that combine to make them 'who they are', in terms of their:

- personal / inherited characteristics, e.g. gender, race, genetic make-up, family position
- experiential factors, e.g. life events, learned behaviours, influential individuals, etc
- social and cultural factors, e.g. faith and values, cultural history and heritage, national and local community, etc.

The act of self-exploration was often said to be an engaging and enjoyable experience for participants, and many reported learning something new about themselves and others. It was said to be a helpful reminder of how no-one's identity is simple or static, and therefore pre-judging others based on the visible facets of their identity (such as the colour of skin or religious dress) can be unhelpful and / or dangerous. Many of the observed interventions aimed to provide sufficient time and space for the young people to explore (through dialogue) possible areas where different aspects of their identity may cause a tension, contradiction or conflict. It was felt by teaching practitioners that the act of 'holding' and appreciating these tensions, and recognising no one is free of them, was an important part of becoming self-aware.

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<sup>26</sup> Ezekiel, R. S. (2002) An Ethnographer Looks at Neo-Nazi and Klan groups: *The Racist Mind Revisited*. American Behavioral Scientist. Vol.46(1), Sep. 2002, pp. 51-71

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An example of an intervention which encouraged participants to explore their own identity, and embrace multiplicity within it, was encountered through the **Rewind anti-racism** training. Rewind's approach is to deconstruct the notion of 'race' as an unhelpful social construct which is loaded with notions of superiority / inferiority. To illustrate this point, sometimes participants have had their DNA samples sent off for analysis. This shows that each person has ancestors from different (and often many) parts of the world. Although an individual may identify with one dominant 'race' or ethnic group (such as black African or white British) the real picture is often far more complex. Therefore, young people are invited to have an open mind about seemingly concrete aspects of their own identity, and to be comfortable with the thought that it is challenging to 'know oneself', let alone to 'know others'. It also helps reinforce the message that one may have hidden commonalities with people one might initially consider 'other' or 'different'.

Pupils at a school in Runcorn, Cheshire watched a play called '**Not In My Name**' and used it as stimulus for further class-room work on the issue of identity. The play raises a number of questions about identity, including: What makes us who we are, in terms of our beliefs, behaviours and actions? In what ways can pre-judging another person's identity lead to mutual mistrust? How does our community impact on our sense of self? To help them reflect on these questions the pupils in the observed lessons were asked to discuss, write about and construct presentations on:

- what they think builds an identity for them as individuals
- what they like about Runcorn, their local area: the pupils were asked to consider the local demographic profile, the employment opportunities and the extent to which the community was cohesive. Young people were also asked to reflect on the question: 'What changes would we need to make to the views in Runcorn to ensure that Britain is a more tolerant community?' The class decided that 'If our community becomes more aware, then other communities might become more aware.'
- what it means to be British and developing a complex understanding of diversity and the importance of valuing diversity. Through whole year-group cross curricular work pupils discussed what diversity meant and what evidence of diversity they could see around them in Runcorn. Pupils also discussed the importance of tolerance for difference and explored how it felt to be stereotyped.

Our observations showed that these methods successfully provided the young people with an opportunity to reflect on their own identity, and the key influences on this.

Analysis of evidence from the case studies also suggests teaching methods that aimed to help young people to explore their own identity, and the wider concept of identity, were most effective when they invited the young people to consider the different ways in which identity is relevant to one's understanding of, and experience of, the outside world. This relates to the idea that knowing your own identity is crucial not only for self-awareness and a sense of personal well-being, but also for being aware of how you view the world, how you are viewed by others within it and how you appreciate and are responsive to diversity in others. For example, one of the reported impacts of the discussions on identity in Runcorn following the

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'Not in My Name' play was that the young people recognised that there is a great deal of diversity between individuals and this should inform the way we interact:

*'Now I see that when something is said, it can really hurt someone's feelings....also I now know that all people aren't the same and don't respond to things in the same way.'* (Pupil, Halton High, Runcorn)

The **Tools for Trialogue** method used by Three Faiths Forum encouraged young people to think about their identity in terms of a series of lenses through which they see the world, as if they were putting on different pairs of coloured glasses. This simple analogy enabled the young people to consider the different facets of their identity (such as their gender, ethnicity, faith, age, nationality, political orientation, beliefs, etc), and how these aspects of themselves might affect their interpretation of events and issues, and their judgments of other people.

There were some aspects of exploring identity that were specific to the target audience being engaged and the specific purpose of the intervention (i.e. de-radicalisation of individuals supporting extremism in the name of Islam). For example, the conceptual framework underpinning the work of STREET suggests that 'negative masculinity' is a specific identity issue that may need to be addressed with radicalised or vulnerable groups, i.e. by countering incorrect understandings of masculinity and masculine traits in Islam, countering the view that fighting Jihad is the only means of displaying masculine traits and providing an alternative source to the feelings of masculinity a Jihadi group may offer and bolster. Similarly, it was felt a holistic and intensive package of support would be needed to improve low levels confidence, as experienced by radicalised or vulnerable individuals (and exploratory conversations relating to identity in isolation would be relatively ineffective).

*'Often low confidence leads to a stronger need to belong to a group that bolsters a sense of confidence or to an Amir who is seen a strong and protective.'* (Taken from a STREET presentation on risk factors for extremism)

A key challenge highlighted in relation to exploring identity was that many teaching practitioners do not feel sufficiently knowledgeable to advise on some issues relating to an individual's 'faith identity', e.g. how aspects of a young person's personality / upbringing / political beliefs etc might sit with the theological arguments within their faith. Consequently, teaching practitioners may lack the confidence to explore this fully and meaningfully, and fear adding to the sense of confusion and isolation a young person might be experiencing.

## 4.2 Developing critical thinking skills

Critical thinking skills in this context refers to the capacity of young people to be able to: question and inquire (and not passively receive information and ideas from others); analyse a balanced range of evidence to explore a situation, hypothesis, opinion or message; appreciate that perspectives different to their own exist and be open to integrating new viewpoints into their personal thinking. Experts and teaching practitioners felt these skills were essential for empowering young people to come to independent, informed and 'reasonable' viewpoints.

Several of the interventions encouraged young people to apply critical thinking skills to topics considered relevant to extremist ideologies, e.g. foreign policy, faith and religion, extremist



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propaganda. However, several focused on more generic topics chosen by the young people themselves, reflecting the strong feeling that these skills are transferable – i.e. once you have seen the value of, and acquired the skills for, thinking for yourself and thinking ‘reasonably’, then you will apply these same skills to any context, for example, whether you are being subject to peer pressure, or being actively targeted by extremist ideologies. Therefore these ‘skills for life’ were considered more sustainable than more didactic approaches to promoting ‘reasonable’, ‘moderate’ or ‘mainstream’ views or behaviours.

A number of case study interventions aimed to boost critical thinking skills and expose participants to a multiplicity of world-views. A number of links were made between critical thinking, exposure to different world-views and resilience to extremism. The underlying principle being that young people who appreciate that a multiplicity of views are likely to exist, continuously interrogate the messages they encounter and seek a range of perspectives and evidence to inform their own views. Therefore these young people are likely to be:

- more at ease with ambiguity and conflicting ideas and therefore will be less likely to rigidly endorse a ‘binary’ worldview, and dogmatic, inflexible beliefs
- able to address gaps in their knowledge and understanding (e.g. about different faiths, cultural customs, geo-political issues, etc) that could make them vulnerable to extremist narratives (one of the ‘push’ factors to extremism)
- better equipped to deconstruct and actively challenge the potentially ‘persuasive and clear’ messages existing in extremist single narratives and propaganda (which might include myths about race, oversimplified readings of complex geo-political issues, etc) (one of the ‘pull’ factors to extremism)

*‘These are core skills that are going to benefit children and young people generally. But they are also going to benefit them in relation to not being sucked into extremist ideologies because they’re going to be able to see through ... the rhetoric.’ (Project Leader, Philosophy for Children)*

The importance of critical thinking skills is also emphasised by the findings from the literature review. The available research on preventing violent extremism through community interventions and an examination of theology, suggests this is most successful when it is non-prescriptive and allows individuals to develop independent thinking, research and leadership skills in order to interrogate the knowledge derived from the internet and radical groups.

## **Building critical thinking skills by letting young people take the lead**

Building on the broad need for young person centred design, practitioners felt that **teaching methods that support inquiry and intellectual interrogation must be led by the young people themselves**. This was felt to be particularly important for making critical thinking skills transferable to other settings and for promoting the idea of independent thought. It was also felt participants will be more likely to want to ask questions, hypothesise and exchange ideas on a topic they’ve chosen themselves (e.g. for being particularly interesting, relevant or controversial). The following case-study presents an examples of an inquiry-led approach, where the young people have a large degree of control over, and responsibility for, their learning.



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The original aim of **Philosophy for Children** was to develop children's thinking skills (under the slogan 'Think For Yourself'). However, the aims have become broader over time and it is now regarded as an all-round approach that seeks to engage children with thinking, learning and inducting them into 'reasonable thinking and reasonable action'. As such it aims to encourage children to develop skills of inquiry, listening and communication; to be more critical and reflective in their thinking and to learn to integrate different viewpoints into personal thinking.

*'We're engaging the children through the medium of their own questioning, encouraging them to become inquirers in their own right and to see themselves as inquiring and thinking beings.'* (Co-founder, Philosophy for Children)

'Peer educators' (i.e. older pupils) are trained to use a 10-step process to help younger children to question, hypothesise and explore through dialogue a controversial issue considered important to them and society in general. The approach encourages participants to form and explore a specific question, developed in response to a stimulus that has been presented to them. Stimulus may be anything from a picture, some music, a story, symbol or object. The 10 steps (which include 'thinking time' and 'shared reflection through conversation') provide a safe and structured framework that stimulates thinking and encourages lively but respectful discussion.

Several of the young people involved in Philosophy for Children credited the inquiry-based approach with exposing them to new view perspectives and even changing their own personal opinion. They also said they were more comfortable with the idea that people will have views different to their own, and could see that achieving consensus or a definitive 'answer' on a complex topic is sometimes unrealistic.

*'I would never have known what these people's views were on poverty and war before we did it. And if you hear other people's opinions, it can change yours.'* (Y12 pupil and peer educator)

In the case of Philosophy for Children, the reported impacts of encouraging young people to question and interrogate ideas include:

- greater recognition that others are entitled to their point of view; that there are not necessarily any 'right' or 'wrong' answers, but instead a number of different perspectives and lines of inquiry
- an increased appetite among pupils and teachers to have conversations about potentially controversial issues (such as nationalism) in school settings
- more open-mindedness among pupils, e.g. in relation to current affairs
- improved academic performance of some pupils, due to their application of interrogatory and analytical approaches in their written work for other subjects .For example, one teacher said of the 'peer educators' involved in Philosophy for Children:

*'You can see them using the sentence starters and questioning each others' ideas in their other subjects as well. And in some of their essay-writing, so they're starting to use things like 'On the other hand, people might believe ...' or 'We can question this idea... '. So they're learning to be critical, but in a non-aggressive way with each other ... academically, it's had that impact.'* (Teacher, Philosophy for Children)

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These impacts have the potential to increase young people's resilience to extremism by equipping them with the ability to think critically and independently

However, there were reported to be a number of challenges associated with youth-led enquiry based approaches:

- Sufficient time for exploration, digestion, reflection, and discussion, etc can be difficult to find within a busy school timetable and an already crowded curriculum. It was also noted by practitioners that getting staff buy-in to these approaches can also be challenging given that 'getting them right' can require additional time and effort on their part, and the 'results' will not necessarily be instant.
- Teaching programmes, such as Philosophy for Children, use a questioning approach to stimulate critical thinking that are not considered appropriate to use in relation to some faith issues, for example, the project leader felt it would not be appropriate to use this approach to question the existence of God in a faith group or faith school setting (nor indeed in a mixed setting where individuals who observe a faith may feel under scrutiny from those who do not, and vice versa). This highlights a potential tension between the universal value of using evidence, open debate and critical thinking, and acknowledging that some spiritual and religious beliefs should not be subject to public interrogation (however expertly facilitated) due to the need to respect and honour the beliefs of others and avoid causing offence.

## Help young people to be aware of the views and experiences of others

To develop a sufficiently open mind to become 'critical thinkers', **young people should be actively supported to become aware that views and experiences other than their own exist in the world.** Similarly they should have the opportunity to realise that views and experiences other than that of their immediate family, peer network and / or school community also exist. They should subsequently be encouraged to:

- Respect the views of others, either by actively empathising with them or respectfully disagreeing with them
- Recognise there will be commonalities as well as differences between themselves and people and / or cultures they consider to be 'other'.

We observed several methods for helping young people acknowledge the existence of a multiplicity of views and experiences. Several projects brought together individuals from diverse backgrounds (e.g. from different faith and socio-economic backgrounds) and invited them to explore the range of views and perspectives held by the group, as well as explore commonalities such as shared interests. Such an approach builds on contact hypothesis which shows that 'contact' is most successful when it is cooperative, long-term (to allow relationships to develop) and involves people of equal or similar status (e.g. individuals of a similar age).

The Dissolving Boundaries case study helpfully illustrates the value of bringing young people into contact with other young people they wouldn't normally mix with to broaden their horizons.

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Dissolving Boundaries (DB) was set up in Northern Ireland in 1999 to improve and promote **cross-border understanding** through different schools working on a joint, collaborative project with clear links to the curriculum. Pupils from both schools communicate through different technologies, and get to know one another, which enables them to see that the pupils they are in touch with are complex individuals with views and experiences both similar and different to their own.

The project offers an opportunity to broaden pupils' horizons and lessen the fear of the unknown:

*'It's part of that whole package of encouraging young people to look out beyond their own horizons and their own boundaries ... with the aim of ... understanding, opening eyes, making them aware of what's going on outside of the parameters of a small town.'* (Vice-Principal)

There was a belief that establishing contact with pupils from the other side of the border means that pupils have the capacity to be able to differentiate between the actions of a government and the people who are citizens of that country but are not directly connected to those actions, that they are less likely to commit violent acts that protest against a government and that will affect ordinary people.

Model United Nations also brought together a diverse group to work together with a common goal. There was evidence that the young participants had developed a greater understanding and appreciation of each other's views and beliefs. This was evidenced by the reported inter-community friendships borne out of the project:

*'They matured ... and also [overcame] some of the barriers within their own communities, meeting students from other schools ... they've kept contact with the other students from other schools and they meet up. There's a big community thing, I think.'* (Project teacher)

The approach of bringing together young people from different backgrounds to expose them to people who have different beliefs, views and experiences is not without its challenges. In an area such as Northern Ireland, where a number of underlying tensions between communities still exist project organisers found it difficult to be open about the true nature of the work (i.e. that it aims to both broaden horizons in general terms, and also change young people's perceptions of each other in the context of a highly sensitive context of conflict and prejudice).

Model United Nations facilitators also noted some challenges to their approach, including the difficulty of creating a cohesive group with pupils who came from different schools and had a wide range of abilities and backgrounds. What they called a 'culture of suspicion' between communities made honest, open dialogue difficult, but demonstrates the need for initiating dialogue in which inequalities, discrimination and conflict are recognised so that action can be taken to change the situation. The difficulties of creating cohesive groups were evidenced by a number of pupils dropping out throughout the course of the project.

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## Help young people to empathise with and understand the motives behind other people's views

Young people's capacity to **empathise** with, or respectfully disagree with, alternative perspectives can be developed by encouraging them to **understand what might motivate and influence the views of others**. Part of doing this is exposing young people to real and authentic views, often presented by those who hold them. For example, Tools 4 Dialogue encourages young people to have one-to-one conversations with a facilitator from a different faith, e.g. to explore what might motivate them to worship in a church or observe religious dress (see below for a more detailed analysis). Such a process is said to help to humanise people who may hold a different religious belief or adhere to a different cultural practice.

This research also suggests that teaching methods worked particularly well when they did not separate 'evidence' from 'emotion'. Several of the teaching practitioners consulted felt it was important to recognise that our emotions and personal experiences play a strong role in how we view evidence, especially when exploring emotive topics, such as genocide, war and poverty. There was a strong view that being aware of one's emotional reaction to evidence is an important part of engaging with it and using it responsibly, e.g. recognising what might be 'evidence' to us, is, for example, someone else's personal tragedy.

*'My vision was always that we don't just talk about things, without them seeing what it means for them personally.'* (Model United Nations programme lead)

In some of the sessions attached to the **Model United Nations** programme, the course leader breaks pupils up into groups and gives them scenarios (e.g. bullying at school, or the Iraq conflict). She asks them to discuss for 30–45 minutes where they think the conflict is coming from. The groups feed back and the facilitator draws out and records the main points on a flip chart. For example, the main area of conflict here is based on religion; a fight for land; racism and prejudice, etc. The pupils then return to their groups and discuss one aspect of the conflict, in particular asking *who* this directly involves.

*'So that they get to that point of [recognising] the immediate people involved ... So there is, at the end, a mother and a father with children; this is ... where they are situated within that conflict.'*

Pupils then have the time to reflect on the emotions that go with this particular conflict, asking themselves *'how do I feel emotionally when this happens?'*. The aim at this point is to reflect on *'what the head says'* and *'how it really makes you feel'*. This can then be reflected on individually or discussed further within the group if the pupils so wish.

Getting young people to conduct their own research into the views of others, and in turn to 'take on' and advocate those views is another way of encouraging young people to empathise and / or respect views and beliefs different to their own. This could be through debate, drama, creative writing, art or any number of other subject disciplines. These approaches were felt to work well because they exposed young people to new information, perspectives and ideas, as well as actively encouraging them to think and behave as if 'in someone else's shoes'. In some cases this led them to modify their own opinions and have a new appreciation of the complexity of the situation.

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There are challenges associated with in-depth exploration of multiple perspectives. At a time when young people are naturally exploring their identities and may be looking for a clear and simple narrative to make sense of the world around them, asking them to accept a view of the world which is based on cultural relativism and accepting difference could prove difficult for them. Also, it is important to consider 'emotional management' for young people when and if they start to realise the validity of a viewpoint opposite or conflicting to those they previously held.

In preparation for the **Model United Nations** conferences, participants have to submit a position paper for 'their' country that establishes its background in relation to the topic, and that should include home and foreign policy and government action to date on the issue. The group then has to uphold that position in the different committee sessions during the course of the conference. These committee sessions consist of opening statements from each group of delegates, followed by formal and informal caucus discussion, all of which leads to the creation of working papers that then form the basis of a draft resolution. Resolutions only become official if they are passed with a simple majority.

The debate on Gaza was considered particularly challenging given that some of the pupils were reluctant to argue the case of Israel, as they felt this was in direct conflict with their personal sympathies. Nevertheless, the act of simulating a debate involving the full spectrum of 'global players' was helpful in enhancing the knowledge of the participants and showing them the value of using evidence to form, re-evaluate and reinforce opinion and political positioning.

*'For the Gaza thing I knew there was trouble ... but I didn't really know the ins and outs. It's taught me apart from anything don't have an opinion until you can back it up ... if you're saying to someone, 'Oh, I think such and such is right or wrong,' and you don't know what you're talking about ... you come across as ignorant apart from anything, but you're also not really respecting other arguments.'* (Participant)

*'Before any of this happened, I didn't really know much about the [Gaza] conflict, but I tended to take one side ... because everyone around took that side, just to conform with them. Now I was the UK in that debate, so my position was in the middle ... and I learned both arguments so I could actually make an educated decision ... I learned the proper way to do it.'* (Participant)

## Recognising the benefit of an evidence based approach

Teaching practitioners and young people alike said that methods which are designed to encourage participants to engage with a **balanced range of information, and appreciate the value of an evidence-based approach**, can be helpful for a number of reasons. They can support young people to: come to an informed point of view independently (and therefore be better enabled to resist peer pressure and 'group think'); challenge common 'myths' and pre-conceptions that might be barriers to cohesion and mutual respect; and appreciate the complex nature of intractable problems and geo-political conflicts. These approaches also help young people experience first hand the power and persuasiveness of using evidence to back up opinion.

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Evidence-based approaches were particularly effective when they encouraged young people to explore 'primary evidence' that may in part account for the way we see the world and live our lives. This was considered helpful in showing that none of us have to rely on 'second hand' information to make our minds up, or if we do, we should be aware of the biases that may affect its reliability. It was noted that this kind of 'return to the source' approach could potentially be quite 'dry' or not particularly well suited to lower ability groups who may struggle to engage with written texts. As mentioned above, one of the most successful methods we observed of this kind, combined analysis of texts (in this case religious scripture) with dialogue with a 'lay facilitator' who was a follower of a faith and who could also provide first hand evidence about what it felt like to 'live' the values under discussion.

As part of the **Tools 4 Trialogue** workshop, the pupils work in small groups to explore three carefully chosen excerpts of religious texts, focused on a theme such as 'bling' (personal adornment and dress) or 'relationships'. They consider the meaning of what they are reading, its implications for different cultural practices seen in everyday life, and areas of commonality and difference between the three faiths. They do this with the guidance of three 'lay' facilitators: one Christian, one Muslim and one person of the Jewish faith (these are community volunteers who are people of faith, but are not faith leaders or experts). The scriptural reasoning exercise observed as part of this research was effective in the following ways:

- It encouraged the young people to analyse a balanced range of texts and use this as the basis for an evidence-based discussion (e.g. about why some Muslim women choose to cover their hair and how this compares to Christian concepts of modesty). The young people felt this wasn't too 'dry' because as well as looking at the wording of the religious texts, they were also encouraged to ask questions to the lay facilitators (e.g. asking what it felt like to wear a hijab in the street). This enabled them to explore and link different types of evidence, i.e. ancient holy texts and personal testimonies about everyday life.
- Following the scriptural reasoning exercise, the young people said they were more aware of commonalities between the values underpinning the three main Abrahamic faiths than they were previously. They felt that the combination of analysis and discussion with someone other than a teacher worked very well.

*'It was interesting to see the similarities and differences between the texts.'* (Pupil)

*'It was good to talk to someone from that religion, rather than a teacher that might not be religious. It was good to hear what they believe in and why, rather than hearing from someone who just knows about the religion.'* (Pupil)

*'They [the students] might come away surprised: 'I met a Muslim woman and she didn't feel oppressed.'* (Muslim faith representative facilitator)

There are a number of **challenges** associated with teaching methods that promote an evidence based approach, which need to be actively managed. As mentioned above, there is a danger that evidence-based approaches that focus on written texts or independent research can be perceived by young people as 'dry'. Similarly, the teaching practitioners consulted recognised that they can be better suited to higher ability groups. A number of techniques and strategies were used to manage these risks, such as:



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- combining textual analysis with debate and dialogue (e.g. with a ‘guest facilitator’ who may be able to shed new insights on the written text)
  - encouraging personal reflection on the content of the text, to ensure the evidence is reviewed in the context of emotions and feelings – i.e. what emotional impact (if any) does it have and why?
  - using small group work to encourage students to support each other, this was considered particularly helpful for mixed ability groups
  - having two lesson plans - one designed for higher ability groups and one designed for lower ability groups - that are designed to achieve the same learning outcomes. This approach is used by Three Faiths Forum in recognition of the fact that Tools for Dialogue draws on the more advanced textual and discursive methods of analysis that are taught in the humanities. If the group is considered lower ability, they will use the more discussion based ‘Encountering Faiths’ session format.

There are also some specific challenges relating to the use of religious scripture and personal testimony as ‘primary evidence’. The Three Faiths Forum Education Manager reported that Jewish faith schools have taken issue with the placing of text from the Torah alongside other spiritual texts, or having someone who is not a rabbi teaching scripture. While pupils from faith schools are likely to be more familiar with scriptural reasoning methods more generally, they may also be less accepting of the scriptural interpretations offered by ‘lay’ faith representatives, who are not formalised religious leaders. Furthermore, techniques which rely on the use of personal testimonies from faith representatives are not considered transferable, in the sense that a teacher cannot spontaneously and easily ‘pick up the lesson plan’ and run it alone.

An ‘evidence-based approach’ was not only considered important in relation to debating and constructing solutions to global issues, but also promoted as a helpful way to guide one’s personal assessment of and response to ‘everyday situations’. This links to the concept of ‘personal resilience’ so was considered helpful for enabling young people to resist the urge to jump to conclusions and potentially escalate situations. The value of an evidence-based approach to solving a personal problem, was explored in the UK Resilience Programme, using a simple vignette and ‘talk-out’ approach. Here the teacher told the story of two crime-fighting detectives ‘Sherlock Holmes’ and ‘Merlock Worms’ who are both tasked with finding out who is responsible for stealing a bicycle. Sherlock carefully evaluates the available evidence to come to the correct conclusion, and Merlock simply makes matters worse by ignoring the evidence, jumping to conclusions and falsely accusing innocent people.

## Equipping the skills to critically review and deconstruct propaganda messages

**An analytical approach was also considered important for enabling young people to critically review, deconstruct and challenge propaganda** and other the messages they might encounter in the media (online, in newspapers, on TV, etc). There was a sense from teaching practitioners that this is a skill that is relevant to all young people (in supporting them to be discerning consumers of the media), but particularly valuable to vulnerable or ‘at risk’ individuals who may be targeted with, exposed to or attracted towards extremist propaganda. Two of the case studies aimed at targeting ‘vulnerable’ or ‘at risk’ individuals aimed to build the capacity of young people to identify, deconstruct and challenge propaganda. The reported impact of these approaches, include:



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- greater awareness that nearly all media (and certainly all media that can be classed as propaganda) has an 'agenda' behind it, therefore it should be treated with caution
  - increased scepticism about online conspiracy theories, i.e. this can also be 'propaganda', even if it is not created by government or large corporations.

*'Participants who previously felt that the West is at war with Islam and felt some conspiracy theories, like no Jews were in the 9 / 11 towers, it was an 'inside job', etc... had some currency, are now more likely to look at the news and ask 'but how do you know that's true?' Who has funded this?' (Digital Disruption, project leader)*

The evidence from the Digital Disruption and STREET case studies suggests these approaches were particularly effective when they taught participants about the common techniques used in 'propaganda'. 'Propaganda' in this sense was not just extremist messaging, but any piece of communication that aims to influence the attitudes or behaviours of its audience.

It was considered important to introduce young people to the generic 'tricks' of propaganda that are used in the media generally (e.g. in advertising, political campaigning, etc), before looking at how these techniques might be applied to sensitive material (e.g. Al Qaeda inspired online videos). Equipping young people with the knowledge to be able to recognise when and how a piece of communications is trying to manipulate them was considered very valuable, and much more sustainable than simply countering the messages contained within extremist propaganda. A sustainable and young person led solution was felt to particularly useful, as some forms of extremist propaganda, such as online material, moves incredibly fast and is being updated all the time.

An example of how this was achieved within the Digital Disruption programme is presented below.

**Digital Disruption**, devised and run by Bold Creative, aims to make young people more aware of the techniques that are used in propaganda, and in the media in general. It is hoped that an understanding of these approaches will make young people more resilient to techniques used by those who promote violent extremism, including the techniques used within online propaganda. In the fourth workshop, the young people were engaged in discussions around the meaning of propaganda, the techniques used and the relevance this has for their own lives. The workshop introduces the 'Eight Sins of Propaganda', drawing on the theories of Edward Bernays (the 'grandfather of PR'). This include techniques such as:

- 'Omission' - leaving out information that runs counter to the main message being communicated
- 'Bandwagon' - persuading people to act in a certain way to follow the crowd, fit in with others and be accepted, e.g. 'You should do this because everyone's doing it'
- 'Down with the kids' – the propagandist presenting a false image of him or herself to suggest they have more in common with the audience than they really do, e.g. '...you can trust me because I'm just like you.'

A video presenting the key learning points (entitled 'Workshop 4: Presenting information to our audience') the young people took away from this workshop can be viewed here: <http://blogs.boldcreative.co.uk/digitaldisruption/page/2/>

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The evidence from the Digital Disruption and STREET case studies also suggests these approaches were particularly effective when they demonstrated how easy it can be to produce persuasive propaganda that is based on myth and misinformation. The Digital Disruption programme also involved the young people in co-producing a short propaganda film with Bold Creative. This resulted in a conspiracy film that tries to persuade the viewer that urban foxes can be linked to vampires and present a real risk of infecting the UK population with rabies. The purpose of this was to give the young people an insight into how a persuasive, but factually inaccurate, message can be constructed, e.g. by using emotive imagery, quoting evidence out of context, relying on 'hear-say' rather than substantive evidence, making tenuous assertions about the 'cause and effect' links between different sources of 'evidence', and presenting only one side of the argument. The film has since been posted-online and has captured the imagination of a number of online bloggers who have embedded it into conspiracy sites and forums throughout the internet.

*'It seems that Bloggers have embellished their own theories, curiosity and fear without really checking the film's credibility at all: reminding us how easy it can be to manipulate people's perceptions through the media, and how easily misinformation and propaganda can spread and mutate.'* (Digital Disruption / Bold Creative project blog<sup>27</sup>)

These interventions were carefully tailored to individual young people involved. The practitioners consulted expressed extreme caution around analysing sensitive material (such as Al Qaeda inspired online videos) unnecessarily or too quickly. In particular, they were concerned about disengaging participants early on in a programme's schedule, by implying they are active consumers of extremist propaganda who need to be 'de-programmed'. Similarly, practitioners warned against introducing extremist propaganda to young people who may not have encountered it previously (and thereby 'promoting' it to new audiences). They felt deconstruction of the theological messages found in extremist propaganda should only be attempted when those individuals are known to be informed advocates of extremist views, i.e. there is no point going into the detail of extremist ideology (and effectively 'educating' young people about it) if this is not something which is an active risk factor for that individual. This was felt to show the value of a careful 'triage' process when working with 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' individuals and using this to design a bespoke and holistic package of support.

*'It's really important to think 'how deep do we need to go'? I mean how many 14 year old ideologues are there really?'* (Alyas Karmani – Director, STREET)

*'A Dispatches video on Al-Qaida in Pakistan is not something you'd explore in a school setting – it's too complex and doesn't fit with their level of understanding.'* (Alyas Karmani – Director, STREET)

An example of teaching methods used to help 'at risk' individuals deconstruct extremist propaganda is presented below.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://blogs.boldcreative.co.uk/digitaldisruption/>

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One element of the **STREET** programme, uses a 'slow build' approach to explore the concept of propaganda and its wider ideological and global context. Initially the facilitator looks at the 'basics' of propaganda, i.e. how people are trying to influence you with messages all the time (e.g. through advertising and marketing); skills for critiquing the media; the role of bias, etc. The aim of this first session is to get the participants to be aware when consuming any media: 'How is this trying to influence me?' The second session focuses on international conflicts and how these have been instigated or exacerbated by propaganda messages. The focus then turns to Islamic / theological distortion and propaganda techniques being used. Young people are provided with translations of Al Qaeda videos to highlight the contradictions in what the speaker is saying, and the techniques employed to influence the viewer and call them to action.

How far each individual participant goes down this 'journey' is determined by how 'at risk' the individual has been assessed to be. This could be 'low', 'medium' or 'high'.

In addition to the aforementioned risk of exposing young people unnecessarily to extremist propaganda, there are a number of other challenges presented by applying critical thinking skills for deconstructing propaganda:

- It is often difficult to present a counter-narrative to some forms of extremist propaganda, without the session-leader possessing, or being able to draw on, in-depth theological knowledge.
- When dealing with radicalised or 'high risk' audiences, teaching methods which aim to deconstruct propaganda and challenge extremist ideology must sit within a wider package of support interventions (i.e. a comprehensive programme that aims to address the full spectrum of identified risk factors). It was felt they cannot be expected to achieve results in isolation.
- Approaches aiming to engage 'harder to reach' young people can rely on less formal engagement approaches, e.g. drop-in sessions, located close to where the young people live, e.g. in a youth centre located on an estate. While this format can be very effective in engaging the desired audiences, the informality of the session format can mean the participants do not stay for the whole session. This poses potential risks when dealing with subjects as sensitive as extremist propaganda. For example, young people could leave the session with a distorted perception of what it was trying to achieve.

### 4.3 Building skills for positive interaction and collaboration

A focus on developing skills for team working and positive interaction within groups is important to a wide range of learning experiences and positive activities aimed at young people. By this we mean, the ability to listen to others, communicate clearly without causing offence to others, to work collaboratively to achieve a shared goal, negotiate with others, have patience in working with others who may have a different level of ability, etc. These skills are seen to have particular importance in the context of building resilience to extremism, as by developing these skills individuals have the potential to:

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- become active participants in peer groups, networks and communities, that may offer a positive alternative to extreme networks
  - participate in a process which has links to democratic values, and thereby see how debate, deliberation and collective action can allow the individuals to express their views and potentially create progressive solutions.

All of the case studies reviewed as part of this research included some kind of **group work** to help enhance development in this area. Many of the projects set in out-of-school settings brought together a diversity of young people for the first time to work on a shared project or goal, or to focus on a central theme for debate. Even those interventions that were school based sought ways to configure new groupings of young people to learn together and carry out shared tasks. A safe space in which there are agreed rules of engagement is obviously essential for successful and developmental group work.

In addition to this, it is worth noting that across the case studies the **ability to positively and respectfully disagree** was central to encouraging constructive and respectful interaction. Positive disagreement, in this context, refers to the capacity of young people to engage with different perspectives without necessarily agreeing with them, to have the confidence to acknowledge the disagreement and debate it in such a way that no party feels unduly undermined or offended. Our case study research suggests some different ways in which positive disagreement can be achieved:

- Encouraging young people to recognise that they have a right to express their views, that this is a universal right and as such they should respect others' right to do the same.
- Building young people's capacity for empathy, that is, understanding and imagining how others feel. By implication, this may be particularly relevant where young people's worldviews or cultural backgrounds are relatively divergent – focusing on emotional empathy can be a useful 'leveller' in such contexts, providing a common focus for young people with different cultural or religious beliefs.

This first principle is best illustrated by **Rights Respecting Schools** - a Unicef sponsored initiative which encourages the use of the UNCRC as the basis for interactions between teachers, pupils and peers. The rights based approach attempts to equip young people with a way of articulating respectful disagreement or disapproval. In place of a potentially angry disagreement, teachers and pupils are encouraged to identify where their rights are being violated and how to correct this violation:

*'And in some lessons where a student is not letting someone express their right, the teacher will point it out – because in every classroom they've got that [the charter] stuck up there – and then they'll show it: 'this is that right and you're not letting that person express that right'. And then that person will stop doing that.'* (Y10 pupil)

Teachers participating in the project at Alder Grange Community and Technology School argued that rules governing thinking and behaviour can seem fairly abstract or impersonal for young people, whereas upholding rights entails a clear sense of both mutual and individual responsibility:

*'Explaining to a pupil, for instance, that he's affected other pupils' rights to learn is better than telling somebody off, and, from the pupils' point of view, 'throwing away your own rights' is a bit less palatable than breaking rules.'* (teacher)

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Where the charter of rights is mutually agreed by both teachers and pupils, it also offers a means of controlling for the risk of hostile or negative disagreement in the classroom between teachers and pupils or peers:

*'I can say...the other children in the room have a right to education, and your behaviour is stopping those people from getting their rights.'* (Teacher)

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## 5. Enabling factors: supporting a successful approach

Divided into three parts, this chapter examines the different factors that support a successful approach to building young people's resilience to violent extremism. The first part considers issues in working in partnership with local agencies, while the second part is concerned with leadership and management within school settings. The third part examines the ways the case studies linked interventions with the wider curriculum. Each part considers the challenges that arise from this particular way of working.

### 5.1 Partnership working with local agencies

The importance of involving local agencies is emphasised in the findings in the literature review, and the case-study evidence shows how partnership working can enhance an intervention. Such partnership working may be before an intervention has taken place (i.e. in the initiation and set-up phase), during the intervention (i.e. when it is being delivered) and after the intervention has taken place (i.e. in follow-up activities or actions designed to make the intervention and its impact sustainable over time). Partnership agencies in this context may include, among others, the local authority, the police, various youth groups and referral organisations.

Partnership working is a way to ensure that the intervention's potential impact can be maximised in practice through the means of:

- Creating local understanding about the intervention, which helps to ensure that it is tailored appropriately to the local circumstances and takes into account any particular local issues or sensitivities
- Enlisting the help of locally-trusted individuals. This is especially relevant in terms of recruiting young people for sensitive, targeted interventions, a point raised in the literature review and supported in the case-study research
- Developing a 'network of support' to ensure the intervention's sustainability in different places over time.

Practical collaboration over an intervention also sends a deeper message about the importance and value of individuals and groups working together in ways that support the local community. The local council, for instance, hosted the **Model United Nations** case study's first debate (which involved 76 students from 12 local schools) at City Hall, thereby contributing to the drama of the occasion and helping to prepare the students for the formality of the debate in New York. This relationship has continued to grow; the council provides on-going support for the programme, and councillors attend local events organised by the Model United Nations leader and students.

In summary, the key principles of effective partnership working are open communication between agencies, which helps to generate shared understanding about the aims, methods and expected outcomes of the intervention; (for longer-term interventions) regular feedback on impact achieved; and encouraging local agencies to take ownership of specific aspects of an intervention.

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## Open communication

Open communication between agencies can generate knowledge about an intervention, and subsequently ensure that the intervention is appropriately targeted and delivered. This is particularly important for programmes that involve portrayal of sensitive or controversial events and that are brought in to schools by an external agency for a one-off session.

The importance of in-depth, multi-agency discussion when developing and tailoring an intervention of this kind can be seen below:

**Not in my Name** is a play that explores the aftermath of a terrorist attack in a small northern town.

The production involved local agencies from the time of its inception. It was commissioned and partly-funded by Lancashire Constabulary, and produced in Burnley Youth Theatre. The storyline was developed through intensive research with young people and community figures, and local schools and the Young People's Service playing an essential role in the development phase by providing target audiences who fed back their thoughts and ideas. The young people came from a broad range of cultural and geographical backgrounds.

These early performances generated demand from community partners for the play to tour to different localities in the region. In each case the play was delivered as a multi-agency production. Before visiting the case-study schools, the company ran a series of workshops with local people to ensure that it was adapted appropriately to the area. In one school, some young people had been victims of and / or affected by riots in the area, for instance, and issues related to 'hardcore' racism were regarded as highly sensitive. The company adapted the play by removing some of the overtly racist remarks previously used in the play, and changed the ethnic make-up of the cast so that it reflected that of the school.

Local agency collaboration also played an important part in bringing the play to the case-study schools. One of the headteachers sits on the local council Equality and Cohesion Committee, which works on monitoring levels of tension between communities displayed through hate crime and racist incidents. He believed that the young people in his school led insular lives, that the play would help them to understand the human stories behind the incident that the play portrayed, and thereby contribute to developing a tolerant attitude.

Open communication between agencies can also play a part in providing intelligence about local developments and helping to recruit young people for targeted interventions, as the case study below demonstrates.

The **Strategy to Reach, Empower and Educate Teenagers (STREET)** have found that young people can be suspicious of Prevent-focused interventions, and have developed a network of relations among local agencies that provides intelligence on local developments and allows them to work through locally-trusted people when they recruit.

The project **Digital Disruption** was commissioned by Tower Hamlets council as part of their Prevent activity. They selected an area for delivery of the project through knowledge of



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violent extremists who were said to be recruiting young people in the locality. The young people were targeted for inclusion in the project by a local youth worker, who knew them from previous work he had done in the area. He had generated sufficient trust over time that he succeeded in persuading these young people – who were initially reluctant to become involved – to participate in the project.

## Regular feedback

Part of open communication involves regular feedback on developments within and impact of the intervention. This plays an important part in making an intervention sustainable over the longer-term for several reasons:

- It helps the people involved to see the effect they are having and how they might contribute further
- It ensures that practical problems are addressed immediately
- It maintains the momentum of the project by ensuring that effective practice is shared, and that fresh ideas and innovations are regularly introduced and implemented.

The case study example below shows how the Dissolving Boundaries project's core team has built an infrastructure that relies on open communication and regular feedback. All partners are aware of developments within the project, and schools are supported throughout the project with funding and with easily-accessible technological and educational advice.

**Dissolving Boundaries** is a project that aims to promote cross-cultural understanding between school-aged students in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The project has a number of different partners that all help to ensure that it runs smoothly during the course of the year. These are:

- The two government **departments of education** provide funding for the initiative. Each receives regular updates on the progress of the project and an annual report at the end of each academic year.
- Advisers from the relevant **education authorities** recommend schools for possible inclusion in the project, and the core team works closely with the authorities to ensure that they are kept up to date with developments. Both authorities have a written report submitted at the end of each year.
- The core team has close links with the **organisations** that are responsible for ICT infrastructure in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; these organisations advise both the core team and individual schools on hardware and connectivity systems.
- The core team maintain regular contact with all the **partnership schools** to monitor progress and offer support where necessary. If a schools asks for help, the team respond quickly and efficiently to solve the problem.

Some of the work done each year is recorded, and the link to the film is sent to all partners so they can enjoy watching some of the highlights of particular projects in each academic year.

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## Encouraging different agencies to take ownership of the intervention

The example cited above has developed based on the work of the core team who manage the intervention centrally. Other case-study projects found that, as the intervention has developed and expanded, its management has become more time-consuming, which reduces the amount of time spent working with the young people. The **Rights Respecting Schools** programme provides an example of how local authorities have begun to manage implementation of the programme locally, with UNICEF UK taking a smaller role in those areas that focuses on overseeing quality assurance:

In 2007, the **Rights Respecting Schools** project received funding from the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to develop implementation of the award and to evaluate its effect<sup>28</sup> in five local authorities. This funding has helped to engage the local authorities to the extent that some of them have developed their own training and assessment, which means that UNICEF's main role is quality assurance in those areas.

Other methods of encouraging local areas to take ownership of the programme include creating local networks of Rights Respecting Schools, with a Beacon School (which has achieved the full award) at the centre, and creating a virtual learning environment, which welcomes contributions from all participants. Encouraging agencies in this way has the effect of allowing the UNICEF staff to support the increasing number of schools that are beginning to engage with the award.

Partnership working can also involve a school taking an intervention and then tailoring it to the particular needs of their own school community. The UK Resilience Programme was introduced by the headteacher in the case-study school with the aim of building students' resilience and promoting their psychological well-being. As teachers have implemented the programme within the school, so they have been tailoring the materials and techniques in ways that draws on their own areas of expertise and engages the young people in their classrooms.

Challenges presented by working in partnership with local agencies include:

- access to different agencies with the relevant expertise i.e. finding the right match and making this match fit the particular context / circumstances
- clarity in communication and consistency in liaison and planning, particularly when involved in multi-agency work, so that the intervention runs smoothly
- Time and resource for busy people. As we have stressed throughout this report, time is a precious commodity and it can be difficult to engage different agencies with particular interventions; they need to believe that the intervention will align with their strategic objective and that any time they spend in supporting it will be profitable in terms of impact. It is essential, therefore, that there is clarity over the aims, processes and

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<sup>28</sup> See Sebba, J. and Robinson, C. (2009). *Evaluation of UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA). Interim report*. Available at: [http://www.unicef.org.uk/publications/pdf/sussex\\_interim\\_summary.pdf](http://www.unicef.org.uk/publications/pdf/sussex_interim_summary.pdf).

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potential impacts of the interventions when engaging with and endeavouring to draw support from any local agency.

## 5.2 Leadership and management support within the school

Both the findings from the literature review and interviewees from all the school-based case-study interventions stressed the importance of whole-hearted support for interventions from the school's senior leadership team. Such support is essential in setting the right tone for the intervention in terms of gaining the buy-in of teachers and students and, where appropriate, parents and local community representatives. It means that the intervention has a strong and clear educational rationale for those who are involved in it, whether they are teachers, facilitators, school leaders or participants.

Such support also makes it more likely that the intervention will be properly-resourced, in terms of time and staffing in the preparation for the intervention, during the intervention and, often crucially, in any follow-up to the intervention. Indeed, school-based interventions work best where they are carefully planned, delivered and followed up through evaluation, review and further activities. This, in turn, helps students to derive maximum benefit from the work that is being done in the before, during and after phases of the intervention. This is equally applicable for short, one-off projects or for programmes that last over a longer period of time.

In summary, the most crucial aspects of strong leadership and management support are ensuring a good level of understanding among the leadership team, allowing sufficient time for the principal staff member to plan, organise and run the intervention, and the provision of sufficient training for participating staff members. These considerations are examined in the following sections.

### The rationale for the intervention is clearly understood, supported and communicated by school leaders and staff

If the rationale for the intervention is to be clearly understood, supported and transmitted by schools leaders and staff to the whole school community, it needs to fit with the ethos of the school and the vision of its leaders. The case study below illustrates how one programme was brought into the school because it fitted with the school's way of working, but how the school needed strong commitment from its leaders if the programme were to be implemented successfully.

It was the pupils' idea in the **Rights Respecting School** case-study school - Alder Grange Community and Technology School - to become involved with the award. They went to a student voice conference organised by SSAT, where the UNICEF UK Education Lead was the keynote speaker. The pupils learned about the Rights Respecting Schools award, felt that its ideas and methods had resonances with the ethos of the school, and suggested to the senior leader who was accompanying them that they should apply for the award.

The start of the RRS process is for a member of the UNICEF education team to come to the school to explain what is required and clarify the degree of commitment needed from senior leaders if the award is to be achieved. Although all schools are volunteers for the programme – which suggests that they view the award favourably and are enthusiastic about undertaking all that it involves – it needs strong commitment from senior leadership and management because:

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- the essence of the UNCRC is to ensure that students have an effective voice within the school, and this can only be achieved if all staff see the value in this. Strong leadership plays a key part in engaging staff in the project, communicating clearly its aims and rationale, and ensuring that there is a consistency of approach throughout the school. Part of this is leading by example – encouraging an atmosphere of respect within the school in which all have an equal right to voice their opinions but equally have the responsibility to listen to what is being said
  - achieving the award is time-consuming, particularly in the initial stages when a steering group has to be set up within the school and staff require training. Strong leadership support is needed if staff and students are to be given the time (and, in some cases, training) to fulfil these requirements
  - momentum needs to be maintained. Strong, supportive leadership is required over a sustained period to implement the changes needed to embed the UNCRC ethos fully in all aspects of the school.

Support in terms of time and timetable flexibility is essential if the intervention is to be properly planned and organised. This type of senior management support is essential in interventions that involve peer educators (such as the Rewind anti-racist peer education training and Philosophy for Children inquiries led by peer facilitators), if this type of education is to be effective. Support at senior management level in these case studies meant that the staff involved in rolling the programme out through the school were able to have training in the intervention, and that they had enough flexibility within their timetables to roll the programme out across the school, offering support and further training to the students as necessary. The box below illustrates the ways in which teachers in one school were able to support the young people as they undertook their peer facilitation sessions.

Peer facilitators in the **Philosophy for Children** case study school needed support to prepare for and lead inquiries, and teachers within the school were given sufficient flexibility by senior leaders that they could:

- teach their peer educator students behaviour management techniques, so that they felt confident when they were facilitating inquiries with younger children
- help the peer educators to develop a culture and community that had resources for facilitation, and in which they were encouraged to support each other in offering ideas and moral support on a daily basis
- allow peer educators sufficient time that they could think about, research and practice facilitating different topics
- de-brief peer educators after an inquiry, so any issues arising could be discussed and possible solutions found.

## Staff have sufficient training

The case studies show the importance of staff training when delivering these interventions, whether it is to implement a programme, to support particular types of learning or to deal with new technologies. School leadership support is important to this, as funding is generally – although not always – needed for training, and the absent teachers' time needs to be

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covered while they are away. Leaders also need to support the training within the school in the sense that teachers are then given the time and space to implement the knowledge and skills that they have learned.

For some programmes, specialist training is essential if the intervention is to be successful. We have seen in the earlier section how the headteacher from the case study **UK Resilience Programme** sent his staff to have eight days' training in the United States. This was a significant outlay that he clearly believed was a worthwhile investment for the future, as teachers gained knowledge, tools and techniques that help the young people in the school to build resilience through thinking critically and being able to handle their emotions. These tools and techniques can be applied at different times and in different contexts throughout school life, and so can be regarded as professional development that has a strong positive impact on those teachers' working practices and behaviours during the course of their professional career..

Other forms of training involve a specific set of knowledge or skills. The case study below offers a form of just-in-time training that is implemented in such a way that the teachers are prepared for each different stage of the project and can use the necessary technologies when necessary.

A critical factor in the **Dissolving Boundaries** project is its use of up-to-date technology in linking schools from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and encouraging the students to work on collaborative projects.

Teachers have planning meetings and training that are carefully timed so that they are prepared for each stage of the project.

- In September, they attend a planning meeting of all teachers involved. Partner teachers discuss and decide on their topic for the project, and plan how it will be executed
- In October they have intensive training in how to use the virtual learning environment (VLE), which they will use with their students when they return to the school
- After Christmas they are trained in how to develop wiki work with their students, and how to make best use of the video conferencing. This is in preparation for work in the Spring term
- There are two further training sessions in the year to ensure that teachers are comfortable with using the different technologies.

This intensive ICT training, and the subsequent use of the different technologies, help to develop teachers' skills and confidence in this area. The training in and use of different technologies was regarded as one of a number of significant motivators for teachers' participation in the project.

A recurrent theme through the research was that teachers feel diffident about broaching the subject of Prevent, violent extremism and related issues, and that they need appropriate training to enable them to do this.

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One case study teacher spoke of the training she had received in which staff were asked what they felt most uncomfortable about in the classroom. The answer was violent extremism; teachers were scared of tackling the issue for fear of being branded racist, not being able to use the appropriate language, and offending pupils in the course of the discussion. This teacher noted that pupils want to discuss terrorist attacks in their immediate aftermath, saying that *'pupils are absolutely fascinated by why, [by] the psychology of these people. And they want answers. They want to discuss it. And it takes real skill to be able to do that'* (class teacher). The training in this case involved a *'few simple exercises'* to get teachers thinking about how they would handle that kind of situation and what they might say. They also discussed the possibility of further training in this area.

The main **challenges** associated with leadership and management support within the schools include:

- Finding the time to engage busy school leaders and senior management teams (SMTs) in programmes and initiatives so that they can see the relevance of an intervention to their particular school / local context
- Ensuring continuity of vision between what headteachers want interventions to achieve and what other school staff involved in their planning and delivery see the intervention as achieving
- Maximising the impact of one-off interventions
- Ensuring that school staff are sufficiently trained to implement, support and follow-up an intervention

### 5.3 Linking interventions with the wider curriculum

The case studies underline how if an intervention is to be sustainable, it needs to be linked with and anchored in the wider curriculum. An intervention that is integrated into curriculum structures and teachers' working practices increases its potential to have maximum impact for students. It also avoids the necessity of spending time on one-off, isolated discrete interventions that may need to be repeated at further cost in the future. The examples we examine below show different ways this has been achieved.

#### Saving time and working 'smart'

An intervention needs to have resonance with a school's ethos if it is to have practical and sustained senior leadership support. Another way to gain leaders' support is through the intervention's capacity to allow teachers to maximise the use of their time through working 'smart' – by achieving a number of goals through one piece of work. The case study example below shows how one programme succeeds in fulfilling a number of curricular requirements and policy obligations.



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**Dissolving Boundaries** is a programme that is aligned as much as possible with school policies, and interviewees believed that an integral part of its success lies in offering schools the opportunity to bring a different approach to a number of different requirements and obligations. These include:

- Bringing the young people opportunities to broaden their horizons and lessen the fear of the unknown
- Areas of the curriculum. The focus of the project can be about any subject the teachers choose, so, for example, they can explore the question of the plantation of Ulster from a Northern Ireland and from a Republic of Ireland perspective in a history project
- ICT. Northern Ireland has recently revised its curriculum and ICT is now an assessed competence. Using ICT in this project ensures that the young people are familiar with different aspects of ICT through their use of virtual learning environments, wikis and video conferencing, and the Dissolving Boundaries work forms part of their assessment. It also fulfils the policy requirement to exchange work with other students using ICT
- Citizenship Education. A Dissolving Boundaries project fits well with the requirement for Citizenship Education as it develops cultural awareness, encourages collaboration and enhances communication skills.

An additional benefit can be seen in the teachers' continuing professional development. Teachers are trained in the use of ICT when they start to work on the programme, and develop new teaching approaches as they collaborate with the partner school. These benefits mean that teachers have often stayed with the programme because they feel they are developing their professional career.

This combination of fulfilling a number of curricular requirements and providing teachers with additional training encourages their motivation to engage in the intervention. This, in turn, increases the potential sustainability of the programme. Dissolving Boundaries was founded in 1999 and currently involves about 95 partnerships (i.e. 190 schools), with many teachers remaining with the programme for many years.

## Maximising impact

Interventions that are integrated into the ethos and curriculum of the school provide a coherent and sustainable approach that maximises their impact. This applies particularly to interventions aimed at building young people's resilience, as it is an area that can be approached through a number of different routes. In particular, the messages conveyed by these interventions need to be clear, consistent and regularly repeated throughout the school's daily working practices if students are to be able to absorb them. The following examples provide illustrations of how this might work in practice.

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The **UK Resilience Programme** seeks to equip younger secondary school students (i.e. those aged 11 to 14) with the skills to be able to manage conflict with their peers, to improve their behaviour, and to develop their ability to think critically. The programme fits with the school's ethos of encouraging all students – many of whom come from deprived backgrounds – to think about the ways in which they behave, to have high attendance records and to improve their academic outcomes. This includes engaging with discussions on controversial issues as they progress through the school. The techniques and attitudes fostered by the intervention are practised and emphasised by staff in all aspects of school life. Students reported that they have applied the techniques inside and outside the school community.

This type of work can be seen as providing a foundation for future, more specifically-targeted interventions aimed at increasing resilience to extremism – as young people who are able to think critically, manage their own emotions and resolve conflicts are in a strong position to engage with activities aimed at challenging extremist narratives.

An evaluation of the **Rights Respecting Schools Award**<sup>29</sup> draws attention to the way in which the award provides a framework that brings together work on Every Child Matters, the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL), personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship education and healthy schools.

Case-study interviewees from Alder Grange Community and Technology School spoke of the way that schools can break down policy and curricular demands into the fundamental rights that they encapsulate. Every Child Matters, for example, can be seen as an expression of a number of Articles in the Convention<sup>30</sup> including Article 6 (the right to 'the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child'), Article 12 (the right to freedom of expression) and Article 19 (the right to be protected from 'all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment'). By interpreting policy and curricular demands in this way, the thread consistently running through the school's ethos and values is based on the Rights of the Child and the responsibility that accompanies that right. This gives coherence to the school's ethos and values and allows a consistency of approach throughout the school.

Practical examples include:

- A child's right to learn – which means that the teacher has a right and responsibility to teach, and the students have the right and responsibility to engage with the learning
- The right to a clean environment – for example, which becomes everyone's responsibility to pick up litter
- The right to be safe – which means that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that bullying or racist incidents are reported and dealt with.

The case-study school senior leader gave us an example of how this use of rights and

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<sup>29</sup> See Sebba and Robinson op cit

<sup>30</sup> See Convention on the Rights of the Child, available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

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responsibilities to frame the school's organisation and life works in practice to everyone's benefit:

*'We've got to a situation where our students expect to be heard and expect us to listen to them, and quite rightly so ... But it also means if something goes wrong, if there's a fight or someone's being bullied, that they come and tell us. And they're very good at doing that. And if they perceive an injustice to have happened, they're very quick to come and say this needs sorting out because this person has done [something hurtful] ... They're very, very good at doing that, which means you get a phone call, someone rings in to say some problem has arisen on the way home and very quickly you find out who it was because someone will tell you ... They're very open to doing that. They realise it pays off ... It's an absolutely lovely place to work.'* (Senior leader)

These examples show how consistent messages, delivered in a variety of ways and in different contexts, help students to develop resilience, think about the morality of their actions and behaviours, and develop the skills to resolve conflict as it arises.

**Challenges** to linking interventions with the wider curriculum include:

- Ensuring that the aims of each intervention fit with a particular dimension of the school. This might be with the school ethos, curricular demands and / or policy requirements
- Recognising the importance of providing secure foundations for the intervention, particularly in terms of the time required to establish, maintain and sustain the links associated with an intervention
- Providing the knowledge and understanding – and possibly offering training – required to ensure that the relevant staff understand and value the aims of the intervention.

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## 6. Additional findings from the review of the literature

Throughout the sections above, links have been made between the findings from the case studies and the evidence presented by the rapid evidence assessment (REA) or literature review. In particular, we have commented when the findings from the literature review have supported or corroborated the findings from the case studies. Similarly, we have explored instances where the findings from the two elements of the research present contradictory evidence. The detailed findings from the REA are reported in full separately, however, it is worth noting that the literature review presented some additional findings, that fall outside the main themes presented above. These can be summarised as follows.

### 6.1 Multi-modal approaches

International literature on the prevention of gangs, guns, and to some extent knife, crime, indicates that the most effective way of preventing involvement is through a multi-modal approach. A multi-modal approach is one which involves a range of institutions as partners to deliver a variety of different elements within one preventative programme. This supports findings from the case studies in the following ways:

- The importance of a **holistic approach** was emphasised by practitioners working in 'hard edged' PVE prevention with 'at risk' or already radicalised individuals. This was in recognition of the fact that the reasons why young people become involved in extremist networks and engage with extremist ideologies are complex and wide ranging.
- The importance of **partnership working** between different agencies - such as schools, police, youth offending teams, community or youth centres, youth workers, families and others - was reported in the case studies as an important enabler to success.

The literature reviewed presents additional evidence as to why multi-modal programmes are the most effective approach to the prevention of the different types of risky behaviours. In particular, the findings suggest that preventative programmes which focus only on a single risk factor, for example, by trying to change young people's attitudes and behaviour, can ignore the societal, environmental, and systemic factors creating the conditions in which risky behaviours can occur.

Caution is advised before drawing a clear a conclusion on this point. While the value of a holistic and locally tailored approach was recognised in the case studies (particularly for young people demonstrating multiple vulnerabilities to extremism), those interventions which had a more singular focus were also seen to have value in relation to building resilience. In this respect, it should be noted:

- the literature review only draws on evidence in relation to gangs, guns, and to some extent knife, crime
- many of the studies relate to interventions working with 'at risk' individuals, rather than wider prevention work with 'universal' groups of young people
- some of the studies make it clear their findings are not generalisable (e.g. to all schools across the UK) and that their research only provides a snapshot (e.g. from a small number of urban schools).

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## 6.2 Mentoring approaches

The findings from the literature review suggest that mentoring has become established in the UK as an important mechanism for working with disadvantaged youth. Mentoring is viewed as a way of tackling social exclusion and youth crime and compensating for poor parenting and lack of family support. A mentor can be a peer, adult or professional, depending on the context of the programme. For vulnerable and disadvantaged youth, the mentoring role can involve mentors acting as positive roles models, sources of practical help, providing encouragement to take on education and training and to criticise and challenge attitudes and behaviours associated with ant-social behaviour and youth crime.

It should be noted that this method was not explored in-depth through the case studies selected for this research. However, the literature presents a number of features of good practice, such as appropriate training for volunteer mentors, clear expectations on both sides as to the personal commitment needed and appropriate conduct, sufficient time to develop a mutually satisfying relationship, etc.

There is conflicting evidence on how effective mentoring models are, with key reports suggesting that it is only relatively recently that demonstration research projects have begun to produce evidence to suggest that mentoring has positive results, and that generally there is very little other empirical evidence about the efficacy or otherwise of mentoring programmes. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence suggests mentoring can be a positive experience, which has the potential to help individuals avoid alcohol, drugs, fights, gangs, guns and knives.

Similarly, there is limited information in the literature about counselling approaches and how effective they have been as part of prevention programmes, and these approaches were not explored in-depth through the case studies.

## 6.3 Peer mediation and conflict resolution approaches

Although peer mediation and conflict resolution approaches have been discussed in the literature reviewed to a much lesser extent than the other approaches described above, this was identified as a distinct category of intervention used to prevent risky behaviours. To a limited extent, aspects of these kinds of intervention are explored through the case studies above. For example, Philosophy for Children is led by 'peer educators' who develop the skills of enquiry, listening, communication and critical thinking among younger children. Similarly, a key part of acquiring personal resilience is developing the interpersonal skills necessary to resolve and manage conflicts within a positive problem solving framework.

However, the literature presents this as a distinct approach in which young people have a role in regulating or responding to student conduct, through youth courts, conflict resolution and peer mediation. It is based on the principles of applied conflict resolution, which is a strategy employed by individuals to help solve their problems in a non-adversarial and positive way.

The key learning to take from the evidence is that 'at risk youths' show a preference for peer mediators who they feel they can relate to, for example, an ex-gangster.

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## 6.4 Educating young people about the consequences of violent actions

There are a number of preventative programmes described in the literature reviewed that seek to educate young people about the consequences of violent action (gangs, guns, knife crime and terrorism) to change their attitudes. In part, this corresponds with findings from the case studies, as many of the interventions invited young people to consider the consequences of their actions, and to think critically about what might motivate people to act in the way that they do. Furthermore, some 'harder-edged' de-radicalisation interventions such as STREET, encourage individuals who have previously been involved in extremist networks to work with 'at risk' individuals to talk to them about the real life consequences of becoming involved in extremism, (e.g. including prison). However, this kind of intervention was not observed as part of this research.

However, some aspects of this kind of intervention were not encountered through the case studies. For example we did not see interventions which took young people on prison visits, showed them slides of victims of violence, etc.

The available evidence indicates that approaches which focus on the consequences of violent actions have only enjoyed mixed success. Where some evaluations suggest that such approaches can affect at least short-term changes in attitudes towards violent behaviours, others claim that attitudinal change could not be demonstrated empirically. It is also argued in some sources that these approaches have not created a long-term impact on attitudes and positive changes in behaviour, often because they fail to confront participants' real-world experiences of violence.

## 6.5 Community based approaches

Community based approaches to the prevention of gangs and guns activity outlined in the literature consist of a combination of outreach work by youth workers and after school programmes delivered by organisations such as the Boys and Girls Club of America. It is based on the theory that:

- interventions need to go where the specific communities or sub-communities are, rather than working through more formal channels
- outreach work in more formal settings seems to be much more successful than working through schools or other more formal organisations.

While the findings from the case studies draw attention to the value of 'external facilitators' and the importance of using local language, local demographics and community tensions to ensure the approach is tailored, the literature review presents other forms of community based approaches that may have some relevance and value in this context.

One type of community based approach that is regarded in the literature as having had some degree of success, although little evaluation has been conducted, is the employment of 'detached' workers such as youth or community workers to deliver prevention projects. These projects tend to consist of a combination of the provision of supervised recreation and leisure facilities and involving young people and the community in neighbourhood renewal. The purpose of such projects is to provide young people with the facilities and infrastructure that they have lacked and that may have fostered gang formation and to improve the reputation of the local area or neighbourhood where they live.



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## 6.6 Family based approaches

Programmes and interventions, aimed at preventing youth involvement in gangs and guns, included in the literature reviewed often include family based approaches. These tend to consist of parent and carer training relating to child behaviour management and supervision as well as behavioural interventions to reduce coercive family processes and family counselling and therapy. These programmes can be delivered as distinct interventions or as part of a wider programme of work.

It should be noted that none of the case studies can be regarded as family based, or if they had family based elements, they were not observed or explored in-depth as part of this research.

Evaluations of family based approaches do not present conclusive evidence of impact. Family based interventions studied in the relevant literature were largely targeted at individuals facing 'multiple risk factors', and therefore if best practice in this area is transferable it would seem most applicable to interventions aimed at 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' individuals.

## 6.7 Opportunities provision

Findings from the case studies show the importance of providing young people with 'stretch' in the positive activities they undertake, and the importance of this in reinforcing a sense of achievement and self-worth, and for developing future aspirations and life goals. The literature review goes further to identify opportunities provision approaches for preventing involvement in gangs, crime and anti-social behaviour. These include tutoring, supplementary or remedial education, job training and preparation, job development and job placement. Some interventions are based on the theory that gangs provide a means of fulfilling the economic needs of youth excluded from the legitimate labour market.

The literature reviewed suggests that although employment focused initiatives are often a part of multi-modal preventative programmes aimed at at-risk, anti-social or delinquent youth, they are not very effective. Research is cited that found that there is insufficient evidence of the connection between employment, training and education and offending.

## 6.8 Organisational or environmental arrangements

The literature review indicates that many school based gang prevention programmes involve 'organisational or environmental arrangements', which include improved teaching practices and classroom management; efforts to promote interaction between diverse student groups and between the school and the community; and efforts sustain a special school climate or culture through symbols, ceremonies, or systematic procedures.

The Rights Respecting Schools case-study is an example of such an intervention. Schools awarded with the Rights Respecting Schools award aim to embed the core principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into the school's ethos, character and everyday life. This approach aims to embed awareness of everybody's rights throughout the school.

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## 7. Conclusion

The key objective of this research was to establish an evidence base about current practice; focusing on the key ingredients of successful teaching methods that build young people's resilience generally and to extremism more specifically. The research also set out to identify transferable learning from related approaches to preventing and changing other risky behaviours. The research was designed to help policy-makers:

- pinpoint the key ingredients of successful teaching approaches that build young people's resilience
- continue to act as a source of guidance and advice, both for those developing resources for schools and for school leaders and other local stakeholders thinking about which approach to pursue.

In thinking about teaching methods to build resilience the research explored

- knowledge required to be resilient to successfully counter extremist narratives or challenge negative stereotypes and how to teach this
- skills needed to be resilient and to teach resilience, e.g. the skills young people need to be resilient and the skills practitioners need to be able deliver the most effective teaching methods, and to engage a diversity of young people on highly sensitive and contentious subjects
- other appropriate practices to adopt including broader enabling factors that support a successful approach to building young people's resilience.

The research used evidence from a literature review based on systematic principles together with scoping interviews with academic and non-academic experts in the field of resilience building, teaching and preventing extremism. The scoping phase helped to identify models for radicalisation and the key push / pull factors that may lead a young person to being vulnerable to extremism or other risky behaviours. The initial stage also provided working hypotheses about the types of teaching or key ingredients of teaching methods that may help to build resilience to such activities

In turn we developed a framework of exemplar case studies, 10 of which were selected to explore in detail the key ingredients of good teaching to build young people's resilience to extremism. The wide-ranging and varied case studies revealed a huge breadth of professional teaching practice, skills, knowledge and approaches which either directly or indirectly addressed push / pull factors. The case studies revealed examples of the suggested key ingredients which emerged from the scoping phase as well as highlighting a range of other key ingredients also important for teaching methods aiming to build young people's resilience to extremism.

Taken together, these key ingredients can be grouped into three broad categories to illustrate the areas practitioners may wish to consider when designing, commissioning or delivering resilience-building teaching. These are:

1. Making a connection through good design and a young person centred approach
2. Facilitating a safe space for dialogue and positive interaction
3. Equipping young people with the appropriate skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness for resilience.

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In each chapter and under each of these three broad headings we have explained in detail the nature and importance of each 'key ingredient', together with how that ingredient relates directly to the push / pull factors outlined in the introduction. In addition to explaining the nature and importance of each key ingredient and how it relates to the push / pull factors we have provided detailed analysis and practical examples of where we saw evidence of such ingredients in practice as well as potential challenges to doing so in a learning environment.

Our over-arching message is that whatever the setting and resources available, the principles of good design and facilitation – the first two of the three clusters of 'key ingredients' – are crucial and non-negotiable.

Well-designed and skilfully facilitated interventions will provide a space for dialogue about sensitive issues and will help to build resilience to and understanding of extremist ideologies, which in many cases will be 'good enough'.

To be more confident of longer-term, sustainable resilience, however, it's vital that there is an additional focus, over and above good design and facilitation, on building the 'harder' skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness, including practical tools and techniques for personal resilience.

## **Planning, set-up and design. The importance of a well designed, young-person centric intervention with appropriate support structures in place**

The research revealed the importance of intervention or activities aiming to address sensitive issues being well-designed and fit for purpose to lay the foundations for resilience building work.

### **Clear goals, shared and understood by all**

Having a clear set of goals, or aims and objectives for the intervention is key – and ensuring key people (practitioners delivering the activities, senior management, participants, and other partners such as regular class teachers, youth workers, community leaders etc) know, understand and share these aims is equally important. A good teaching approach to build young people's resilience is one where the participants understand the purpose of their participation and have a sense of ownership of the activities and outcomes. This can be achieved through co-production, training peer educators and ensuring they have an understanding of the goals they are working towards.

### **Enjoyable and different**

A well-designed intervention or activity is one that also gives consideration to ensuring that it feels enjoyable and / or different from regular lessons for young participants, for example, via using 'honest realism' and open discussion that may not be present in other lessons. The use of innovative ICT and external facilitators are some (although not the only) ways of achieving a sense of enjoyment or difference.

### **Broader enabling factors**

The broader enabling factors of success such as good partnership working, support of senior leadership within the school or delivery setting and linking the intervention with the wider curriculum also warrant consideration. These can be achieved through ensuring that senior

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management buy in to and understand the aims of the approach and that sufficient support to plan and deliver it is in place.

## Carrying out the intervention

### Implementation

A well-designed teaching method, activity or intervention needs to be well-delivered. Our research revealed a number of ways in which skilled teachers, facilitators and other practitioners delivered well-designed activities to build resilience to extremism. Such practitioners were confident, engaging, flexible and inclusive and created a safe space for dialogue and discussion and a positive learning environment.

In summary, our findings suggest that the following are the key ingredients of effective facilitation to build resilience:

1. The ability of facilitators to create a 'safe space' for all young people in a group to be able to take part in the dialogue, for example, through the use of ground rules, the ability to deal with conflict, dispute or distress, and sensitivity to the needs of individuals
2. The willingness, confidence and ability of facilitators to act in such a way that 'connects' with young people, for example, by allowing honest, trusting, wherever possible equal relationships to form, 'letting go' of the direction of the discussion, and through appropriate use of humour and role-modelling of expected behaviours
3. Facilitators having sufficient knowledge, or knowing how to access the necessary information (and being willing to admit they need to), and taking the time to accurately assess the knowledge levels of their students.

### Integrating and embedding

Successful teaching methods to build resilience were not 'one-offs'. Good resilience building work witnessed as part of this research was sustained and ongoing. We have already noted the importance of linking interventions to the wider curriculum to embed the activities into the day-to-day life of learners. Where activities were deemed to be effective, practitioners, schools and other youth settings ensured that the messages and activities of resilience building were embedded and regularly revisited.

## Going a step further to build long-term resilience: equipping young people with the right skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness

As well as considering the practicalities of delivery and ensuring buy-in, support, understanding and ownership of the activities or intervention are in place, it is vital that teaching activities are designed to equip young people with the necessary skills, knowledge understanding and awareness to help them become resilient to extremism when they leave the classroom.

The research highlighted a number of key skills, and important areas of knowledge, understanding and awareness that young people should have to be resilient to extremism – the most important of which was a building of personal resilience. Our findings revealed that the following key ingredients should inform the design of teaching outcomes for building resilience:

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1. A focus on building personal resilience and a positive sense of identity: supporting young people to be emotionally resilient to life's pressures and able to foster a positive sense of self, for example, through positive thinking, conflict-management techniques and celebrating their multi-faceted identities
  2. Development of critical thinking skills, i.e. continually encouraging young people to think for themselves and in doing so take account of a balanced range of evidence and alternative perspectives – we look at how these skills can be developed to help young people to become informed and independent thinkers who are resilient to the influence of propaganda, e.g. through text-based, discussion-led and multi-media teaching approaches
  3. Opportunities for interaction and team-work, so that young people develop transferable skills for positive collaboration and ongoing engagement.

### How these findings relate to ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) evidence-informed pedagogic principles

As the research aimed to look specifically at teaching methods, it is to be expected that it would uncover teaching methods which would be beneficial in several settings, and not exclusively to building resilience to extremism. The aim of the research was not to uncover new, previously unheard of teaching methods that would work and be used exclusively for building resilience to violent extremism. The aim was to identify which teaching methods work particularly well (and in what circumstances) when it comes to building young people's resilience to extremism.

As the introduction to this report notes, very few young people become so radicalised that they actually become involved in violent extremism. As such our attention naturally focused on the early, often 'generic' and broadly preventative interventions and teaching methods as opposed to 'hard edged' initiatives aiming to de-radicalise those young people who have moved beyond the scope of general resilience building.

One of the principles underpinning teaching and activities with young people is to help prepare and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to live a rich and fulfilling life in accordance with societal norms. General teaching aims to build young people's readiness for the world and for the events and influences that they will experience in life. Teaching methods more generally will help to build young people's resilience to risky behaviour of all kinds.

With this in mind, a number of 'key ingredients' of good teaching to build resilience to extremism identified through this research may at first glance appear to be generic ingredients for 'general good teaching'. For example, ensuring lessons are engaging and enjoyable, and delivered by a teacher / facilitator that models desired behaviours may feel at first glance to be an unsurprising finding.

This does nothing to detract from the fact that such teaching practices are effective at helping to build resilience. It is certain that this research has revealed that a number of general principles of good teaching are vital to building young people's resilience.

It is important to think of such generic and general principles of good teaching as the **stable foundations** on which to base all subsequent successful teaching practice for building resilience. Without such core good practice, subsequent, more specialised and niche

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teaching methods would be unable to have the levels of success demonstrated through the case studies.

The findings of this research study show that although such generic principles of pedagogy are indeed vital foundations, two further types of knowledge, skills and behaviours are needed to build resilience. Firstly, certain generic principles become preeminent or need to be adapted in some way when specifically intervening to tackle issues relating to radicalisation. Secondly, specialist skills, knowledge and resources need to be appropriately managed and deployed.

This research highlighted the importance of **adapting**, amending and building on general good teaching practice to ensure such methods become even more relevant and effective in helping to build young people's resilience.

Numerous case studies showed examples of where certain general teaching principles, and the adapting thereof becomes particularly important. A number of case studies showed how being able to deal with challenging or controversial language an essential teaching skill may need to be adapted in certain settings. Such a skill is important generally, but particularly important when trying to hold an honest and open conversation.

Other examples include adapting the type and nature of a safe learning environment as seen in numerous case studies including Philosophy for Children and Tools for Trialogue. Such 'safe spaces' were somewhat different from the everyday safe environments required for general teaching.

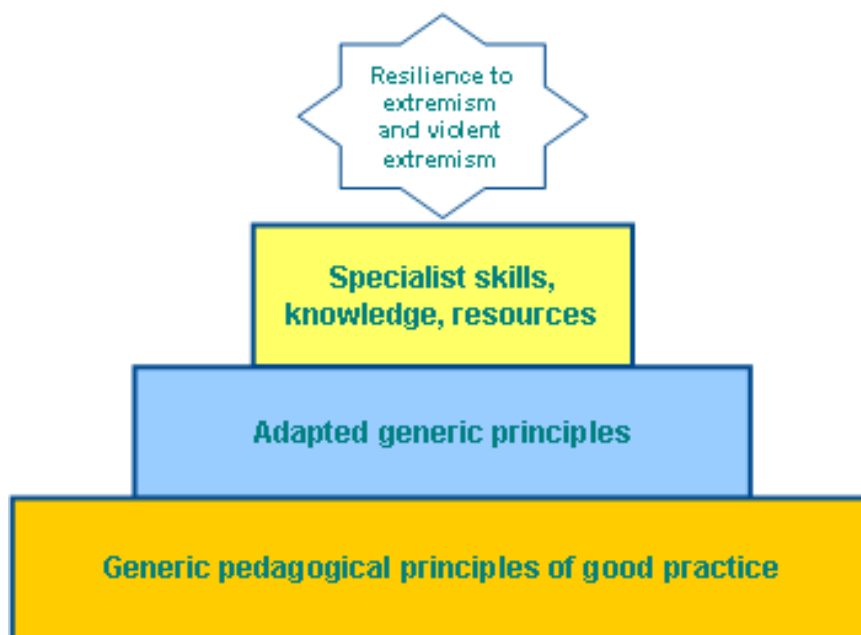
This research also revealed where **specialist** teaching methods are important to help build young people's resilience, i.e. where specialist knowledge, people (with particular skills) or resources, techniques and interventions are essential to help build resilience. Some examples include in-depth knowledge of faith, cultural, political issues, an understanding of the psychological foundations of emotional resilience, and specialist techniques for facilitating difficult conversations and managing conflict.

Holding honest and open discussions may benefit from the use of external facilitators to both allow trust and protect classroom teachers from having to reveal personal beliefs to children they need to maintain a professional relationship with. Tools for Trialogue and Leap illustrated the value of having specialist external facilitators with in-depth, personal knowledge of the issues at hand. Not in My Name showed the benefits of having a specialised and tailored intervention and resource to address particular issues relating to violent extremism.

The diagram on the next page shows the interdependency of these different levels – without all three, preventing radicalisation in young people becomes much more difficult.

An intervention that conveys excellent specialist knowledge in a dry and un-engaging way will fall short, but so will a lesson which is fun and lively (a good generic principle) but fails to create a safe space for controversial views to be aired as part of an appropriate dialogue.





Conceptualising the key ingredients of successful teaching to build resilience in this way helps to overcome a false and potentially dangerous simplification: that apart from religious studies experts, mainstream teachers need to focus on ‘good teaching’ and leave the specialist stuff to the ‘experts’ (whether part of the school staff or external).

This is false for at least two reasons. Firstly, the vast majority of teachers have, aside from their subject teaching, pastoral responsibility, for example, for a tutor group, which includes teaching citizenship, PSHE and so on. This means that issues relating directly to radicalisation have a high chance of coming up. When they do, teachers need to be able to use generic pedagogical principles in a way that makes them suitable to build resilience.

Simply staying at the purely generic level will not be sufficient (even though generic principles of pedagogy remain vitally necessary, as we have seen). Applying the broad principles of ‘enjoyable and different’, ‘young person centric’ and delivered in a safe space for discussion to a maths lesson on quadratic equations will do little to specifically build a young person’s resilience to extremism. Likewise, a detailed series of well-delivered history lessons could help a young person to see multiple viewpoints and perspective in relation to serf emancipation in Tsarist Russia without necessarily building any resilience to extremism. Simply having the knowledge and understanding of multiple perspectives in this context is unlikely to be enough to build resilience.

The second reason is that, as this study has shown extensively, specialist skills, resources and interventions need to be embedded into the broader curriculum and learning cycle, and supported appropriately. Teachers need to be able to act as ‘intelligent clients’ to choose the right specialist support to bring in but, even if not involved in that decision, they certainly must be able to play their part during and after specialist input. It is not enough to rely simply on using external facilitators or specialists to deliver and supply niche interventions and specialist knowledge (although external specialists are a useful resource for teachers).

Teachers do not necessarily need to have any more knowledge about the Koran or Islam than would be expected of any civic-minded, responsible public servant. But that does not mean building resilience to extremism is either ‘all about basic good teaching’ or ‘the domain of the specialist’.

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## Using this research, and next steps

This research project set out to produce evidence-based for policy makers to help them pinpoint the key ingredients of successful teaching approaches that build young people's resilience, in turn enabling them to act as a source of guidance for those developing, commissioning or delivering teaching activities for resilience building.

We believe that the research and subsequent analysis has provided such an evidence base together with real examples of such practice, as well as practical guidance and possible challenges to putting such key ingredients in place in a number of settings. As such, we hope that this report is of practical value to not only policy makers, but school leaders, teachers and other youth workers with an interest in building young people's resilience to extremism and other risky behaviours.

As noted in the introduction, this research did not set out to evaluate the impact over time of these interventions. Instead, we accepted on the basis of expert advice and secondary evidence that these were examples of good practice. While the research findings attest to the quality of the teaching methods observed, the next step would be to conduct an in-depth, rigorous evaluation of the impact of teaching in terms of whether or not it actually leads to a measurable reduction in extremism and violent extremism.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 - Expert Reference Group

**Professor Andrew Silke** (BSc Hons, AFBPsS, CSci, PhD) is internationally recognised as a leading expert on terrorism. He has a background in forensic psychology and criminology and has worked both in academia and for government. He is the author of over 100 books, chapters and articles on terrorism and counter-terrorism and has presented papers and invited lectures at conferences throughout the world. His work has taken him to Northern Ireland, the Middle East and Latin America. In recent years he has worked with a variety of government departments and law enforcement and security agencies. These include the Ministry of Defence, the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, and the London Metropolitan Police as well as several other UK police forces. Overseas he has worked with the United Nations, the United States Department of Justice, the United States Department of Homeland Security, NATO, the European Defence Agency, the European Commission, and the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation. Professor Silke currently holds a chair in criminology at the University of East London where he is also the Director for Terrorism Studies.

**Professor Alan Smith** (B.Sc (Hons) inclusive of teaching qualification, D.Phil, Curriculum research and evaluation) is a specialist in Education, Conflict and International Development.

He is holder of the UNESCO Chair in Education at the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland where he is head of a research unit based within the School of Education. He has taught in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe and was a Senior Research Fellow at the University's Centre for the Study of Conflict. His work has includes research on education and the conflict in Northern Ireland, young people's understanding of human rights and the development of social, civic and political education. He was involved in the establishment of integrated ('desegregated') schools in Northern Ireland and was the founding chairman of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). He has been a member of an OECD working group on education and social cohesion and a member of an external advisory group on civic engagement, empowerment and respect for diversity established by the president of the World Bank.

**Jo Broadwood** is an expert practitioner and adviser in conflict management and cohesion. Until recently she was the director of the Leap Academy of Youth and Conflict at Leap Confronting Conflict, (Charity of the Year 2009). In her time with Leap she was responsible for curriculum, qualifications and practice development, and led on action research programmes exploring gangs, knife and weapon use, identity and prejudice reduction.

She is also a Local Improvement Adviser for the Department for Communities and Local Government, and for the last ten years has been advising local areas on community relations, integration, community conflict and cohesion, and children and young people issues. She has worked with diverse localities across England supporting them to address the drivers of community tensions and conflict.

She is co-author of a number of publications, Most recently Growing Young Leaders – transformative programmes to build resilience in young people at risk and Playing with Fire – training for those working with young people in conflict (2nd edition) (both due to be published early 2011). Building Cohesive Communities – what frontline staff and community activists need to know (November 2009)

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**Professor Lynn Davies** is the author of "Educating Against Extremism", a book that contributes to the research on resilience building greatly. Her major teaching, research and consultancy interests are in educational management internationally, particularly concerning democracy, citizenship, gender and human rights. She takes a specific focus on conflict and education, in terms of how education contributes to conflict and/or to peace or civil renewal.

**Steve Wilkinson** Steve was born in West Yorkshire and began his policing career with the Metropolitan Police in 1984, starting at Clapham in South West London, before transferring to Greater Manchester Police in 1990. Since then he has served on several divisions and in training, before being seconded in 2008 to lead a project to set up Safer School Partnerships across the Force. This grew into developing service delivery frameworks for serious youth violence and Prevent projects, youth strategy, creating engagement tools and delivering training for police staff working in education, and designing and delivering training for teachers.

Steve now writes on delivering Prevent in education regionally and nationally and is currently working on projects with CRIMESTOPPERS, and several national charities.

Steve's first degree was in physics and mathematics; he has a further degree in theology from Leeds and is a PhD student researching and writing about leadership and knowledge transfer. He is a visiting lecturer at the University of Chester, where he leads a masters degree module on teaching the controversial issues around violent extremism for the faculty of Education and sits on the University Partnership Executive, and he speaks and nationally on partnership working and leadership with the civic sector.

Ordained as a Priest in the Church of England, Steve has been involved locally with ecumenical community cohesion projects.

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## Appendix 2 – Research tools

### Interview guide for scoping phase

The Office for Public Management (OPM) and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) have been commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Home Office to conduct research into teaching methods that help prevent extremism.

The key objective of the research is to establish an evidence base about current practice, focusing on what works and why, to allow policy-makers to pinpoint the ‘key ingredients’ of successful teaching approaches. The research will also assess whether any key gaps exist in current provision, and identify transferable learning from related approaches to preventing and changing dangerous behaviour (e.g. preventing young people’s involvement in gangs, violence and drugs).

The project will include a review of available literature and in-depth fieldwork with people in schools and other relevant settings, including teachers, students and young people with past experience of radicalisation. At this stage we’re conducting interviews with leading experts and policy-makers to get a sense of the range of issues and practice relevant to the research, to help us determine specific research questions and develop appropriate research tools.

We’d be keen to maintain links with all the people we speak to as part of these interviews, and so I’d be keen to discuss at the end what kind of involvement you might like to have moving forward. It’s also important to say that everything you say in this interview will be held confidentially and we would always check with you and gain your explicit consent before sharing specific comments with anyone outside of the core OPM/NFER project team.

1. Background and introductions – respondent to introduce themselves and explain their role, organisation and experience of Prevent
2. Can you give me a sense of people’s knowledge, attitudes and feelings towards Prevent?
  - a. How is Prevent viewed / understood in general?
  - b. How do you think practitioners in schools / those working with young people understand Prevent? How do you think they feel about the Prevent programme / helping to prevent violent extremism?
  - c. What are your thoughts about the future of Prevent over the coming year or two?

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3. What factors do you believe contribute to or play a part in individuals becoming radicalised?
  4. Are you aware of any examples of teaching methods relating specifically to preventing violent extremism that you would say were particularly worth us exploring in more detail?

PROMPTS FOR EACH EXAMPLE GIVEN:

- a. please describe the methods involved in detail?
- b. what was the setting(s) in which these methods were used? (prompt on school, extra curricular etc)
- c. what kind of children and/or young people were involved? (prompt on age, gender, background, numbers involved)
- d. were the methods universal or targeted at specific groups?
- e. were the methods used general or specialised?
- f. was the method a one-off, multiple sessions or a continuous programme?
- g. is the intervention / approach complete or ongoing?
- h. who was involved in the design and delivery of this intervention? (prompt on teachers, community leaders, youth workers etc)
- i. would you say this is an example of particularly good practice?
- j. or is it e.g. an example of innovation (where the impact is uncertain)?
- k. are any further details available about the methods used (e.g. in reports or publications)?
- l. what evidence, if any, exists about the impact of these teaching methods on preventing or changing the dangerous behaviour in question?
- m. who would be best for us to speak to in order to explore this example in more detail?
- n. To what extent can these teaching methods be used more widely beyond the young people who were involved Prompts – in schools? with all young people? beyond school?



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5. Are you aware of any examples of teaching methods relating to preventing and changing other types of dangerous behaviour that you would say were particularly worth us exploring in more detail?

PROMPTS FOR EACH EXAMPLE GIVEN:

- a. please describe the methods involved in detail?
  - b. what was the setting(s) in which these methods were used? (prompt on school, extra curricular etc)
  - c. what kind of children and/or young people were involved? (prompt on age, gender, background, numbers involved)
  - d. were the methods universal or targeted at specific groups?
  - e. were the methods used general or specialised?
  - f. was the method a one-off, multiple sessions or a continuous programme?
  - g. is the intervention / approach complete or ongoing?
  - h. who was involved in the design and delivery of this intervention? (prompt on teachers, community leaders, youth workers etc)
  - i. would you say this is an example of particularly good practice?
  - j. or is it e.g. an example of innovation (where the impact is uncertain)?
  - k. are any further details available about the methods used (e.g. in reports or publications)?
  - l. what evidence, if any, exists about the impact of these teaching methods on preventing or changing the dangerous behaviour in question?
  - m. who would be best for us to speak to in order to explore this example in more detail?
  - n. based on what you know, would you say that this kind of teaching method would also be effective in preventing violent extremism?
6. Thinking generally (i.e. drawing on your knowledge of various different examples) what is it about the most effective teaching methods that you've seen in action or are aware of that makes them so successful?

PROMPTS:

- a. ask interviewee to distinguish between the impact of the:
  - i. knowledge of key individuals (what knowledge/who had it/how was it deployed?)
  - ii. skills that individuals needed (what skills/who had them/how were they deployed?)
  - iii. way that key individuals behaved (how *did* they behave? who was it?)
- b. to what extent does this depend on the specific context?

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- c. to what extent does this depend on the skills or abilities of the individuals in question?
  - d. ask respondent to consider holistic, whole school approaches that have been effective. Consider systems and processes and leadership that have led to an effective teaching environment.
7. Are there any particular groups or individuals that consistently develop really excellent teaching methods to help prevent or change dangerous behaviour?
8. Thinking about this research, what would you recommend as the most important specific research hypotheses?

PROMPTS:

- a. for example are there any 'hunches' you've had about the impact of a specific approach that you'd like to test out?
  - b. or are there any particular gaps in the evidence that this research could help to fill?
  - c. are there any particular other sectors or fields or practice that would be particularly worth us focusing on (in terms of generating transferable learning)?
9. How can this research add most value?
- PROMPTS:
- a. e.g. in helping make the case for a particular approach?
  - b. in filling a gap in the evidence?
  - c. by supporting those developing resources in the future?
  - d. by supporting policy-makers?
10. : What sort of outputs do you think would be most useful / have the most impact? (e.g. research report, online tools, training etc)?
11. Which other experts or policy-makers do you think it would be worth talking to at this stage of the research (i.e. to help us get a sense of the range of issues and practice relevant to the research, to help us determine specific research questions and develop appropriate research tools)?
12. Is there any literature we should be aware of when conducting our literature review? Where could we find or access that literature?

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**Future involvement:** would you be willing for us to contact you again, for example:

- a. for further conversations on the telephone or discussion by email (on an ad hoc basis).
- b. to discuss becoming a core member of a reference group (e.g. to attend meetings, help develop research tools, consider emerging findings), for which payment would be paid.
- c. to attend workshops to test our findings, towards the end of the project (i.e. 2010).

## Outline topic guide for case studies

(To be used flexibly according to case study).

### 1. Overview – with principal case study sponsor/lead

- What are the main characteristics of this project or initiative? e.g.
  - When was it first established?
  - Who set it up?
  - How many schools/sites/children and young people are involved?
  - How is the project/initiative funded?
- What were the main objectives of this project/initiative when it was first established?
  - Have these remained broadly the same or changed over time?
- What are the principal teaching methods involved?
  - Have these remained broadly the same or changed over time?
  - Why were these teaching methods chosen?
- What have been the biggest successes of the project/initiative with regard to teaching methods / approaches?
- What have been the biggest challenges facing the project/initiative with regard to teaching methods / approaches?
- What research and/or evaluation of the project has been conducted?
  - If none, why not?
  - What did this focus on and why?
  - What impact, if any did this research suggest the project/initiative had achieved, in terms of building the capacity of children and young people?
  - What were the key lessons emerging from the research?
  - What, if anything, was changed as a result?
  - What lessons does the project / initiative have for our research with regard to teaching methods and building capacity / resilience?

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## 2. Detail – for teachers/practitioners in a specific site

- How did you come to be involved in this project/initiative?
- What's your understanding of the main objectives?
- Have you had any training / preparation for your involvement with this project / initiative? (Yes / No)
  - If yes – what type of training?
  - What impact did it have for you?
- How would you describe the attitudes of children and young people at the start of this teaching intervention?
- Did these attitudes change during the course of the intervention?
  - If so, how did they change?
- What do you think makes this teaching approach work particularly well?
  - Probe around key hypotheses e.g. 'how do you go about supporting students to appreciate multiple perspectives on a given issues'?
- What challenges have you encountered in implementing this teaching approach?
- What support have you had from senior managers specifically, and how effective has this been?
- What support, if any, have you had from other organisations in your local area (e.g. police, local voluntary groups, local council), and what difference, if any, has this made?
- Have you adapted the methods you use over time, and if so why?
- Have parents/carers had any involvement in the design or delivery of this intervention?
  - If so what form did this involvement take?
  - What impact did it have?
- Do you find you have particular success with certain groups of students rather than others?
  - If so, why do you think this is?
- What support do you receive in implementing the teaching methods?
  - How helpful has this been?
  - What more or different support, if any, would you find helpful?
- What advice would you give to those looking to build resilience among young people with regard to:
  - Teaching approaches?
  - Training issues?
  - Other?

## 3. Recommendations/looking forward – with all research participants

- Based on your experience, what would you say were the top three 'key ingredients' in helping to build the resilience of children and young people in general? To violent extremism in particular?

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- Given that different conditions face different schools in different areas, to what extent would you say that the approach taken in your school should or could be replicated more widely?
    - What would enable that kind of replication? What might stand in the way?
  - If you were to give one piece of advice to DCSF to guide them in their future policy-making with regard to building resilience, what would it be?
  - How can DCSF best support schools, teaching practitioners and other organisations/individuals in building resilience of children and young people in general? To violent extremism in particular?
  - What kind of information, advice and guidance should DCSF give to those looking to commission projects to build resilience in general? To violent extremism in particular?

#### **4. Questions for children and young people – to be adapted by case-study**

- Adapt questions from outline topic guide as appropriate, e.g.
  - What did you think the aims of the session / lesson were – was this clear?
  - How successful was it in trying to achieve this?
  - What were the good things about it? What were the bad things about it? Why? (Probe: approach / method; teacher / facilitator skills, materials, etc)
  - What if anything did you get out of today's lesson? (Probe: what they've learned / explored / practiced, etc)
  - How did today compare to other work you've done, say in PSE/citizenship lessons?
  - Thinking about how you felt at the beginning of the lesson and how you feel now – do you feel any different? If so, how? (Probe: attitudes, emotions)
  - Do you think you'll do anything differently as a result today's lesson?
  - Thinking about what the lesson was trying to achieve, what could be improved to make it better?
  - What would you say are the top three things that will help young people become more resilient against risky behaviours generally? What would you say are the top three things that will help young people become more resilient against extremism in particular?

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## Appendix 3 – Two page summaries of case studies

### Philosophy for Children

#### Introduction

Philosophy for Children (P4C) was established 40 years ago by Professor Matthew Lipman from Columbia University in the United States of America. He believed that philosophy would help students whose thinking skills needed development. He trialled 'doing' philosophy (rather than teaching about the books) with students aged 11 - 13, and developed this early work through the 1970s and 1980s into a curriculum for 6 – 16 year olds. P4C came to the UK through the BBC documentary 'Socrates for Six Year Olds', which stimulated interest in the area and resulted in the formation of Sapere in 1991. Sapere is now a charity that promotes P4C in the UK.

#### Aims

The slogan for P4C is 'think for yourself'. Its primary aims are to engage its audience with thinking and learning, and to induct people into reasonable thought and action. Specifically, the aims of P4C are:

1. to develop skills of inquiry, listening and communication
2. to learn to integrate different viewpoints into personal thinking
3. to develop critical thinking skills and the ability to reflect.

#### Audience

Although the name suggests that P4C is for children, it is used in a variety of contexts with children and adults that include schools, SureStart centres, interfaith groups and housing associations. When used with adults, it can be called 'Philosophical Inquiry' or 'Philosophy for Children and Communities'. The case study for this research involved primary and secondary schools, and a number of different youth groups.

#### Approach

The P4C approach is based on the four C's of Creative, Caring, Collaborative and Critical thinking. It uses a form of collaborative inquiry which encourages participants to question, research and hypothesise on different issues and, through this process, to take responsibility for their own learning. Participants then incorporate what they have learned into their understanding of the world, and adjust their thinking in the light of others' ideas and understandings.

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P4C sessions ideally consist of a group of 15 – 20 participants and are led by one or more facilitators. The session consists of a ten-step process<sup>31</sup> that encourages participants to collaborate in forming a specific question in response to a stimulus, which may be anything from a picture or a story to a piece of fruit. When the question has been decided, it is then examined and explored by the group, led by the facilitator(s). These use a set of agreed ground rules to ensure that each participant has time to speak and a right to be heard without interruption, but at the same time provides reasons for his / her opinion. Critical appraisal of others' thoughts is encouraged, but participants must challenge the statement that has been made and not the person who made it. The whole is aimed at creating a safe environment in which participants are free to explore controversial, sensitive issues that are important to them and to wider society.

In this case study, key young leaders – from a range of contexts that included sixth form students, a local youth group and a faith group – were trained in P4C so that they were able to facilitate inquiries with other members. The premise underlying this approach was that 'older young people' would work well with 'younger young people' in helping them to explore controversial issues related to identity, diversity and difference. These 'peer educators', in turn, would help younger members of the community to understand and deal with controversial issues.

## Impact

Teachers of the P4C-trained sixth-form students commented on the effect that facilitating inquiries had had on these students' academic development: *'You can see them using the sentence starters and questioning each others' ideas in their other subjects as well. And in some of their essay-writing, so they're starting to use things like 'On the other hand, people might believe' or 'We can question this idea'. So they're learning to be critical, but in a non-aggressive way with each other'* (teacher).

Teachers of the primary school children reported that P4C gives children *'the tools to communicate with each other'*. For instance *'when two children collide into each other ... it's 'What did you do that for?'. They're given the chance to explain themselves, and so it's 'I wasn't watching where I was going'. 'Oh, all right'. And it's all over then, you know. So they will communicate now, and handle conflict through dialogue'* (Deputy Head).

The sixth-form students reported different skills that they had acquired, including:

- Listening to other people's opinions, and allowing these opinions to influence their own: 'I would never have know what these people's views were on poverty and war before we did it. And if you hear other people's opinions, it can change yours' (Y12 peer educator).
- Handling differences of opinion: 'You begin to respect people for what their views are, never mind whether they're opposing to yours or contrary to yours ... you're going to have different opinions sometimes and maybe you need for someone to have a different opinion for you to accept that maybe some things are unsolved sometimes'. (Y12 peer educator).

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<sup>31</sup> Preparation; presentation of the stimulus; thinking time (private reflection); conversation (shared reflection); formulation of the questions; airing the questions; selection (of the question to discuss); first words; building (on the discussion); last words.



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## Rights Respecting Schools

### Introduction

The Right Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) is a UNICEF UK scheme that is based on implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>32</sup> within schools. It involves accreditation at two different levels. To achieve the higher, Level 2 award schools must fulfil 18 criteria under four different headings in which:

1. Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management
2. The whole school community learns about the UNCRC
3. The school has a rights-respecting ethos
4. Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners<sup>33</sup>.

The RRSA was introduced into the UK in 2004. Currently over 1500 schools are registered for the award.

### Aims

The aim of the RRSA is to put the UNCRC at the heart of the way in which the school operates. More specifically, the objectives are for the UNCRC to underpin the school's ethos and character, and to be embedded in the school structure and everyday life.

### Audience

Any school can apply for the RRSA.

### Approach

Achieving the RRSA involves a number of formal processes. These include setting up a steering group of staff and pupils; examining the criteria for the RRSA and determining points of action; undertaking focus groups with pupils to gain their perspective on the necessary points of action; submitting a formal action plan to UNICEF; implementing the plan; assessment by the UNICEF UK education team. On average it takes a school around 18 months to achieve Level 1, and it can take a total of up to three years to achieve Level 2.

The RRSA's aim is to put the UNCRC at the centre of the way in which the school is run. This involves creating an ethos in which children are put first, where language and dialogue are enabling for both teachers and pupils, and where children are aware that they are part of a wider, global world. An important part of this process is recognition within the school of Article 12, which states that 'every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously'<sup>34 35</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Summary available at [http://www.rrsa.org.uk/file.php/1/rrsa\\_documents/CRC\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.rrsa.org.uk/file.php/1/rrsa_documents/CRC_Summary.pdf) (accessed 17.08.10).

<sup>33</sup> See full details at [http://www.rrsa.org.uk/file.php/1/rrsa\\_documents/Standards\\_RRSA.pdf](http://www.rrsa.org.uk/file.php/1/rrsa_documents/Standards_RRSA.pdf) (accessed 17.08.10)

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.rrsa.org.uk/file.php/1/rrsa\\_documents/CRC\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.rrsa.org.uk/file.php/1/rrsa_documents/CRC_Summary.pdf) (accessed 17.08.10).

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The process of accreditation involves staff and pupils working together to think about the key rights that they want to protect within the school and the ways in which those rights can be protected. This enables each school to develop and clarify a values framework that is supported by all members of its community, and that can be used to bring a coherence to different educational initiatives (such as Every Child Matters).

Pupils' learning and understanding about their own rights means, in turn, that they learn to respect others' rights. A pupil's right to learn has the responsibility of respecting the teacher's right to teach, for example; the right to a clean environment means that all school community members take responsibility for picking up litter, or stopping graffiti. The effect of this approach is for staff and pupils see that education is a common endeavour in which all are seeking the same end.

### Impact

Staff members in the case-study school spoke of improved relationships between staff and pupil since application for the RRSA, and of the quality of their own working lives: *'You don't hear raised voices, both from pupils or teachers. There's a lot of listening ... I've noticed more of an open atmosphere, and it just seems to be a lot calmer school, a lot more focused school'* (teacher). One staff member commented that these open lines of communication mean, *'if something goes wrong, if there's a fight or someone's being bullied, that they [pupils] come and tell us. And they're very good at that. If they perceive an injustice, they're very quick to come and say, 'This needs sorting out' ... they realise it pays off ... It's an absolutely lovely place to work'* (deputy head).

Pupils, for their part, spoke of the ethos of the school: *'They showed us the importance of having rights, but also of giving other people the same rights. And that's what the school's really all about, isn't it? It's not just helping yourself but helping each other'* (Year 10 male). They also talked about:

- developing a sense of responsibility: *'People are more aware of the responsibilities that every person has'* (Year 10 male).
- respecting rights of others: *'And in some lessons where a student is not letting someone express that right, the teacher will point out – because in every classroom they've got that [the charter] stuck up there – and then they'll show it: This is that right and you're not letting that person express that right. And then that person will stop doing that. I reckon that's why this school is pretty good in rights respecting'* (Year 10 male).
- their ability to change things for the better: *'Everybody has a right to change the school in the way they want and to make it better'* (Year 10 male).

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<sup>35</sup> Examples of effective pupil-led changes in the case-study school included: pupil access to water in the classroom; the school council collaborating over the design of the new Sixth Form building; the school installing pupil lockers; the school putting down Astroturf games areas.

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## Model United Nations

### Introduction

Created in the United States of America and now practised in many different countries, Model United Nations (MUN) events provide the opportunity for young people to take the role of diplomats representing different countries in simulations of United Nations debates. Events range in size and duration; the largest attract thousands of students from many different countries, run over several days and can be held in venues such as the United Nations headquarters in New York or the Palais de Nations in Switzerland. The smallest may involve a debate between pupils in one school.

### Aims

The aims of the case-study School Linking Network (SLN) MUN were to:

1. Encourage participants to find ways of working together to resolve conflict
2. Raise participants' awareness of different global and political issues, and to encourage them to understand different views and perspectives
3. Develop participants' knowledge, skills and confidence

### Audience

SLN MUN participants in the academic year 2009 / 10 were secondary students aged 14 – 19. Over seventy participants took part in the first debate on the situation in Gaza, and thirty were selected from those to take part in a year-long programme. The criteria for selection were that the young people should show a desire to understand local politics and issues, and that they should show an interest in learning about different perspectives. Participants came from a number of different schools and had a range of backgrounds and abilities.

### Approach

The SLN MUN lead's objective was to create a safe space in which participants could explore issues of local, national and personal interest. During the course of twice-monthly workshops, the lead would give participants a topical issue to research and discuss (that ranged from bullying in school to the Iraq conflict) with the aim of finding the root of the conflict. The group would reflect on their own emotions generated by the discussion and try to find solutions to the problem. This work was complemented by a trip to Northern Ireland, where the group met political activists and former political prisoners from both sides of the divide, and a debate on climate change. The programme was completed when the students took part in the National High Schools MUN event in New York, where 2,700 participants attended from 20 countries.

The MUN conferences follow a format in which groups of pupil delegates represent different countries in a debate on a specific subject. Each group of participants submits a position paper for 'their' country that establishes its background in relation to the topic, and that includes home and foreign policy and government action to date on the issue. The group then has to uphold that position in the different committee sessions during the course of the conference. In New York, the SLN MUN participants represented two countries (Tanzania

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and Gabon) and two special agencies (Green Cross International and the World Food Programme). The topic for the debate was 'Global Development'.

The committee sessions consist of opening statements from each group of delegates, followed by formal and informal caucus discussion. This leads to the creation of working papers that then form the basis of a draft resolution. Resolutions have to be approved by the committee, so debates and amendments usually take place before the resolution is put to the vote. Resolutions only become official if they are passed with a simple majority.

## Impact

Teacher interviewees spoke of the personal, social and academic development of participants, and the quality of the relationships that developed within the group. These comments were echoed by the young people, who talked about the knowledge, understanding and skills they had gained through the programme. These included:

- Increased understanding and awareness of global issues: 'When you write it [the position paper], it's quite interesting, especially if you're a smaller country ... you find that even the smaller countries are very important ... Because if the resolution says put some troops into Gaza, South Korea has to help. You kind of understand the fact that every country in the UN, no matter how small, is impacted by something, even if you'd think it's got nothing to do with them' (male student)
- Skills, including:
  - The 'ability to look at both sides' together with the confidence to stand up for what you believe in: 'One of the things we did learn was that you have to get your point across. I mean you have to understand the other person's point of view ... If you know what you're talking about, then you should have the confidence to say 'I can understand where you're coming from, but this is what I think is right'. It's the confidence, I think, to say that what I think is right' (male student)
  - Sensitivity and diplomacy: 'You have to consider the position you're in ... When I was Israel, before I spoke I always had to consider the position I was in, who I was, what I was representing and what I stood for. And I had to make sure that what I said ... sounded right ... on my country's behalf and it shouldn't offend others around me. So you always have to consider what position you're in before you speak' (female student)
  - 'I think we've all come on in leaps and bounds ... in terms of personal skills, how we interact with others. These skills are invaluable for life, I think (male student).

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## UK Resilience Programme (UKRP), Burnage Media Arts College, Manchester

### Introduction

UKRP draws on cognitive behavioural therapy to give pupils the skills, conceptual frameworks and vocabulary to:

- Self-manage their emotions and to deal appropriately with 'activating events' such as conflict with others, negative influences and emotionally testing situations.
- Think critically using evidence in order to avoid: jumping to conclusions, being prejudiced, blindly following others and escalating conflictual situations (amongst others).

### Learning objectives and aims

Participants are taught:

- How to take 'a step back' and look for evidence for their thoughts about a problem using the ABC – a three-step approach (activating event - belief - consequence) to help young people reflect on their emotional responses to problems.
- How to put problems into perspective by looking at the worst and best possible outcomes as a way of mitigating the initial intensity of emotional responses.
- How to communicate assertively and avoid aggressive and passive behaviour.
- How to manage intense emotional reactions with relaxation skills.
- How to dispel pessimistic thoughts with resilient thinking.

### Audience

UKRP participants were mixed ability groups from Year 7 at Burnage Media Arts College. No criteria were explicitly used for the selection of participants. As regards school selection, a DCSF funded evaluation of the programme states that, *'three local authorities opted to become involved in the UK Resilience Programme, and in December 2006 they made presentations to potentially interested schools to promote the programme. In some cases this was to a selected group of schools the LA thought would be most interested and most appropriate for the intervention; in others all local secondary schools were invited to get involved. Not all eligible schools chose to take up the programme'*<sup>36</sup>.

### Approach

The first UKRP workshop that we observed began by introducing participants to the 'ABC method' (activating event/action/adversity - belief/motivation - consequence) of situational thinking. The teacher hands out flash cards to each member of the class showing real-life pictures of individuals expressing particular emotions through body language and facial expressions - for example, a child that is seemingly half asleep slumped on a desk. The

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<sup>36</sup> Challen *et al* (2009), UK Resilience Programme Evaluation: Interim Report for DCSF ([http://www.education.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR094%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR094%20(1).pdf)).

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teacher asks each student to build a narrative around their given picture, identifying the activating event, motivation and consequence - *why do you think the child is asleep (activating event)? What could he be thinking (belief)? What are the consequences of this?* This method also seeks to help young people re-think their initial reactions to an activating event or perceived problem so that they feel more positively about it.

In both of the sessions that we observed, this 'ABC approach' is then applied to a range of different scenarios or narratives. Participants read out loud a story about two characters called Greg and Geoff, where the former represents a negative and emotional response to an activating event (an invitation to attend basketball trials), and the latter represents more positive or constructive forms of thinking about this event - Greg: *'are you kidding me, we would never stand a chance of making the team. I'm too short and wouldn't ever make the team. There's no point in trying'*. Participants are asked to then read through the story individually and identify 'always' statements about 'us, me and them' to examine where blame or responsibility is being attributed. The participants focus on suggesting what could be the belief or motivation behind Greg's negativity, and how to think about the basketball trials more positively - *'Greg might be scared of Geoff being better than him at basketball'* (participant), *'there might be shorter people than Greg at the trials'* (participant), *'Geoff is being dominated by Greg's negativity'* (participant).

In one of the lessons we observed, a role-playing exercise that draws on Greg and Geoff's story is also used as another way of applying the ABC approach to particular scenarios. The teacher starts this exercise by asking, *'have you ever been in a similar situation to Greg and Geoff?'* Two participants act out an activating event and their initial responses to it. The rest of the class are then charged with exploring the beliefs or motivations behind this initial response. Individual members of the class take turns 'thought-tracking' – that is, placing their hand on either of the two actors' shoulders before trying to explain what each might be thinking in response to the given activating event.

## **Impact**

Participant responses both during the observed lessons and in closed focus groups indicated the following impacts:

- Participants reported having applied techniques they had learnt on the UKRP in 'real-life' situations both in and out of school: *'this guy walked past me and swore at me. At first, I thought I would swear back. But then I asked why he did this, and I thought it might be because he's not treated well at home or something. All I said to him was that I feel sorry for you and then he walked off'* (participant).
- Participants suggested that the core skills involved in UKRP would stand them in good stead for the future by helping them manage their anger in the workplace, or get into university.
- The role-playing techniques in 'observation 2' seemed to introduce some humour and interactivity to the lesson. Participants reported that the role-playing boosted their confidence, and that *'the drama helps us visualise how it [the ABC approach] might work in real-life'*. They also reported feeling more comfortable with trying to explain what someone else might be thinking rather than their own personal thoughts.

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## Dissolving Boundaries

### Introduction

Dissolving Boundaries (DB) was set up in 1999, shortly after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. It was inspired by the two former heads of state Tony Blair and Bertie Aherne who participated in the first 'virtual' north-south meeting of politicians, each in the presence of a class of pupils and their teachers. The meeting led to the idea that north-south links could be explored between schools through the means of information communications technology (ICT).

DB is funded by the Departments of Education in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and managed by the Schools of Education in the University of Ulster and NUI Maynooth. It originally involved 20 schools; in the academic year 2009 /10, around 200 schools participated in the programme.

### Aim

The aim of the Dissolving Boundaries (DB) project is to promote cross-border links and understanding. This is achieved through the means of collaboration between two schools – one from Northern Ireland and the other from the Republic of Ireland – in educationally-valuable curricular work that requires the use of ICT.

### Audience

Participants are from primary, secondary and special schools, with the majority from primary. DB is regarded by schools as particularly valuable for pupils between 8 – 11, as pupils of that age are considered to be comfortable with using that type of technology, to be open to new experiences and to have a curiosity about similarity and difference. The proposed new requirement for secondary schools in Northern Ireland to show collaboration with each other, however, may mean an increase in the number of participating secondary schools.

### Approach

The project is underpinned by work from social psychologists, in particular the contact hypothesis<sup>37</sup> and the 'group identity' model<sup>38</sup>. The latter shows that, when two groups are encouraged to work cooperatively and to think of 'we' (as opposed to 'them' and 'us'), contact significantly reduces prejudice. The DB approach is to encourage groups of pupils from two schools to work together and, in the process, to discover similarities that may become the basis of friendship between the pupils. At the same time they observe their teachers modelling cross-border cooperation, and develop cultural awareness and sensitivity through discovering details about each others' lives and schools. The aim to increase cross-border understanding is therefore implicit in the work rather than explicitly stated at the outset of the project.

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<sup>37</sup> Allport, G. (1954) *The Nature of Prejudice*. London: Addison Wesley.

<sup>38</sup> Gaertner, S & Dovidio, J. (2000) *Reducing ingroup bias: the common ingroup identity model*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press.



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Partnership teachers plan their work at a conference hosted by the DB team in early September. The work then generally follows these different stages:

1. The two classes make contact through a Moodle forum. The groups of pupils get to know each other through social messaging before starting work on their agreed topic (e.g. Your School, My School).
2. The two classes hold a video conference at the end of this collaboration to discuss their work. This allows pupils to put names to faces and encourages a deeper working relationship.
3. The pupils then create a wiki on a particular topic, which may be in any subject. Both classes contribute information and have the right to edit, so the final product is a joint project agreed by both sets of pupils.
4. Pupils have a face-to-face meeting, generally – although not always – at the end of the project. This consolidates the work undertaken during the course of the project and allows pupils to develop friendships if they wish.

### **Impact**

Teaching staff emphasised the *'natural'* way in which pupils were brought together. They believed that the messages to the pupils of collaboration and cooperation were more powerful for being implicit: *'I find if you go in and you ... signpost all these differences, all these controversies with kids ... they shy away from it. But if you create the idea of a context where they're continually working together, collaborating through ICT ... it's cooperating on a project and through that cooperation, through the study, through the building of new websites, through the contact through the forums ... you just let it [the pupils' understanding of each other] flow naturally'* (DB teacher).

Pupils reported increased awareness and tolerance: 'Before we sort of judged them like because they were from a different place and they liked different things ... we thought 'Oh goodness, what will we do? They're going to be so different'. But in reality they really weren't' (Year 8 pupil). They also enjoyed broadening their own horizons: 'Unforgettable ... I don't really get a chance to meet people from [place] with my own group of friends ... the way we sort of met them and how nice they were ... it was really good' (Year 5 pupil).

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## **‘Not in My Name’ Halton High School, Runcorn and Breezehill School, Oldham**

### **Introduction**

Produced by Theatre Veritae, Not in My Name by Alice Bartlett is a play that explores the causes and impact of terrorist activity and the impact it has on the local area.

The play is aimed at audiences aged 14+. The play engages young people by including cast members from particular backgrounds, portraying relevant character relationships such as between family or friends, and using verbatim theatre techniques including language which is relevant to the local area in which it is being performed. The play is set in the future, and after its performance there is a chance for discussion between the audience and an actor playing the potential suicide bomber.

The play is delivered in schools, community centres, theatres and other youth settings and many schools and youth groups that see the play also carry out follow-up work building on the main messages. Some schools do this independently whilst others have worked closely with the theatre production company; in the instance of the Runcorn case-study, this was Fuse: New Theatre for Young People, who co-produce with play with Theatre Veritae in Merseyside and Cheshire. OPM visited two schools, Halton High in Runcorn, an area with a predominately white ethnic population and school population and Breezehill, an almost 100 per cent south – east Asian school population located in a mainly white ethnic area.

### **Aims**

The play illustrates the impact of terrorist activity upon a community and raises awareness of issues around radicalisation, extremist activity, counter-terrorism procedures, identity, and community cohesion. Schools therefore often watch the play to provide pupils with an introduction to one or more of these topics. Some settings opt to show the play to small audiences of around 30, others up to 150.

### **Method/ approaches**

Both schools that OPM observed aim to do follow up work that contributes to building community cohesion and resilience amongst the pupils, especially to challenge racist views. They both aim to build critical thinking skills amongst pupils, through different techniques tailored to the pupil cohort. Linking up with other diverse schools is also an aim for both schools.

*Halton High* - The strategy around cohesion and preventing racism at Halton High is one that is delivered in classrooms in a cross curricula way. So for example, other global or historical events such as Vietnam and the Holocaust have been covered in history lessons, whilst music and English lessons look at themes of identity. The school can and has ‘collapsed’ their timetables and facilitated other activities that can encourage understanding of other cultures such as international food and flag days. This is supported by the headteacher. OPM observed an English lesson and a music lesson.

The English class that we observed was looking at the theme of identity whilst practicing their writing skills for their GCSE coursework.

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Pupils were set an objective for the lesson and were asked to discuss and write about what they think builds an identity for them as individuals and what they like about Runcorn – their local area. They had previously discussed identity in Britain and in Runcorn, having looked at local statistics around unemployment and teenage pregnancy. The teachers also mentioned how people see the school they attended and pupils understood that this was a ‘stereotype’. The idea that was being built was that ‘you cannot judge someone or something else based on rumours, you need to know them yourself’. Pupils were asked to consider the demographic, the employment opportunities and the extent to which the community was cohesive. Pupils discussed some of these issues. Whilst listening to the pupil table discussions, discussion were taking place about going outside of Runcorn and what the community would be like.

In the music lesson pupils were asked to create a slideshow on ‘What it means to be British’. Pupils searched on the internet for images and sound themes to help with this.

*Breezehill* - At Breezehill the cohesion and preventing violent extremism agenda has been taken on in drama lessons. This has been supported by the headteacher. Previous lessons had been focusing on the local area, different cultures and racism. The lesson OPM observed was one lesson out of a 12 lesson schedule the young people had been participating in.

The main objective of the lesson was to ensure that the young people are able to understand the concept of stereotyping and how stereotypes can affect different groups of people. This was demonstrated by a use of a range of symbols as examples of stereotyping but also through using media examples of stereotypes in Islam.

The lesson began with a slideshow. It started with a symbol of the ‘moon and crescent’ to which the pupil made association with Islam – there were then told that this symbol is not mentioned anywhere in the Quran and had just been developed over the course of history. They then were also presented with the England football team emblem and talked through what it stood for. Symbols were a way of making the pupils understand how stereotyping worked.

After this, as the practical activity the pupils had to get into groups and do a short ‘tableaux’ of a situation where a stereotype can lead to conflict and then be resolved.

### **Impact**

Pupils in both schools reported that the play was very real to life and that they felt they could connect with it. They reported that it also broadened their understanding of racism and different cultures.

The English class appeared to be having an impact upon pupils and was developing critical thinking skills. Pupils had to think of reasons as to why certain elements of Runcorn were the way they were e.g. the unemployment and other demographic characteristics and what might be done to change those. They also discussed what implications this would have for the way they see others e.g. stereotyping or making sure they understand that other cultures are different.

Young people were making a variety of comments demonstrating a positive impact. One young person said, ‘*Yeah I think it had made a difference, it like shows you that not everyone’s bad and people can do stuff in their religion if they want to’....I would want to meet other kids our age who are Asian or something ...we could do a student swap.*

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## Tools for Trialogue (TfT), Three Faiths Forum (TFF), Sir John Lawes School

### Introduction

Tools 4 Trialogue is a workshop based on reading and discussing passages from Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptures. It interactively engages participants in the study of different religious texts on a theme that is topical and relevant to their lives. This approach seeks to highlight the varieties of interpretation that become possible when religious texts are discussed openly. The participants are encouraged to read the texts in pairs or in a group and to ask questions of each other. The workshop is run by facilitators of the three Abrahamic faiths.

### Learning objectives and aims

- To help young people recognise that they have complex, multiple identities and that this also true of others.
- To help young people identify that one basic narrative can be interpreted in a variety of different ways depending on the interpreter's perspective.
- To improve 'faith literacy' and young peoples' understanding of religious texts and their relevance to contemporary life – *'it's about learning from religion rather than just about religion'* (TFF Education Manager).
- To explore common values - and to a lesser extent beliefs - between the three Abrahamic faiths with the broader aim of allaying fears about the religious 'other' – to demonstrate that *'there's nothing wrong with Jewish, Muslim and Christian people coming together if they are sharing their thoughts together constructively'* (TFF Education Manager).
- To develop 'empathy skills' amongst young people – that is, the capacity to understand what someone else is saying without necessarily agreeing with it.

### Audience

Tools for Trialogue is designed for high ability groups in years 10 to 13, and university students. No further criteria were explicitly used for the selection of participants.

### Approach

The lesson we observed begins with an introduction to ground rules for discussion and the 'oops' and 'ouch' technique – participants are encouraged to say 'oops' if they make a comment that they would like to revise or retract, or 'ouch' if they want to express discomfort with another class member's comment(s). The lead facilitator makes clear that participants can 'ouch' on behalf of others who may not be in the room.

Participants are then asked to identify and explore different interpretations of the well-known nursery rhyme, *Jack and Jill*. Participants are asked why people with different perspectives might interpret the events that the nursery rhyme describes in different ways. The class breaks off into four smaller groups where each is provided with a different written interpretation of the overall meaning of *Jack and Jill*. The following key questions are posed to the participants to guide their reflections – *'who is talking, what are they saying, and why*

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*are they saying it?* One member of each group then reports back to the whole class, explaining from which perspective they think the given interpretation has been written.

The class is then called back together for the 'lenses of identity' exercise. Participants are asked to identify the 'lenses' - that is, different forms of identity, whether *gender, faith, ethnicity* or *nationality* (amongst others) - through which they understand and interpret the world. The idea of religion and religious identity is first introduced at this stage by the lead facilitator. As part of the lenses of identity exercise, participants are asked to work individually in identifying their own 'lenses' through which they interpret the world, recording these on a piece of paper.

The 'scriptural reasoning' element of the lesson is then introduced. Key excerpts from the Bible, Torah and Koran that refer to issues in 'modern youth culture' - in the case of our observed lesson, the issue of 'bling' (dress, adornment and modesty) - are examined by small groups of students with Muslim, Jewish and Christian 'faith representatives'. 3 groups of six to eight students work for 10 minutes with each of the faith representatives who move around the groups in carousel. Groups work through the text that corresponds with the faith background of their given facilitator. The facilitator asks the group to first read through the text and ask questions about any terms that they don't understand. Groups are then invited to express their views on the meaning of the given scriptural excerpt and ask related questions – *'what is the text saying about physical appearances or 'bling'?*' Group facilitators also provide an explanation of how the given scriptural message is practiced – that is, how it impacts on behaviour and ways of living. For example, the groups look at how different interpretations of just one word - *'they should not display their beauty and adornments except that which must **ordinarily** appear [emphasis added]'* - will lead to differing practice between people of the same faith (for example, covering the head or the whole face).

## Impact

Participant feedback in closed focus groups indicated the following impacts:

- Participants felt that they were more able to ask questions of TtT session leaders seeing as they are not members of Sir John Lawes teaching staff – *'we could ask whatever we wanted without worrying'* (student).
- Participants broadly regarded TtT as a success in an ethnically/culturally homogenous school setting.
  - Feedback suggests the format of the lesson worked well – *'I liked the way we were able to discuss what was being taught rather than just having to agree with it'* (participant).
  - Participants also broadly endorsed the idea of being taught by representatives of each faith, and an inter-faith approach: *'I thought it was good that it wasn't just one person talking to us about all the religions, it was a person from that religion talking to us'* (participant). *'It was good to talk to someone from that religion, rather than a teacher that might not be religious. It was good to hear what they believe in and why, rather than hearing from someone who just knows about the religion'* (participant). *'It was interesting to see the similarities and differences between the texts'* (participant).

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## Digital Disruption, Bold Creative, Mile End Community Project, Tower Hamlets

### Introduction

This project, devised and run by Bold Creative, aims to make young people more aware of the techniques that are used in online propaganda, and in the wider media. It is hoped that an understanding of these approaches will make young people more resilient to the techniques used by those who promote violent extremism.

### Learning objectives and aims

- Sensitising young people to the use of propaganda techniques in online digital media – helping young people to identify these techniques and develop an understanding of their intended impact on audiences.
- Helping young people to creatively contribute to the production of digital media. The project intends to increase young people's awareness and understanding of on-line propaganda by allowing them to contribute to the production of 'viral videos' that propagate particular messages.
- Engaging young people in the on-line distribution of the viral videos that are produced during the course of the project. The project aims to make young people responsible for tagging the project videos next to pieces of propaganda that they encounter on-line. In this way, when young people encounter propaganda online, they would also be faced with the deconstruction of the very techniques they are being subjected to.

### Audience

A group of eight Muslim teenage boys became involved in Digital Disruption through their existing participation in Mile End Community Project (MECP). Despite being wary about engaging in a project receiving funding earmarked for 'Prevent', the young people agreed to take part largely because of their existing relationship with a youth worker from MECP. This youth worker acted as Bold Creative's partner in delivering the work.

The project was commissioned by Tower Hamlets Borough Council as part of their programme of Prevent activity. Within the borough, Mile End was chosen because it is an area where there are violent extremists who are thought to be recruiting youngsters.

### Approach

Digital Disruption works with a small group of eight young people attending Mile End Community Project. In an initial workshop, young people are engaged in discussions about the meaning of propaganda and the techniques it often employs (inspired by the theories of Edward Bernays). In further workshops, young people contribute to the production of four short viral videos. The first of these videos captures learning from the initial workshop where the young people explain to camera their understanding of propaganda techniques. The second video - entitled *The Vampire Conspiracy* - is intended as a comic exposé of conspiracy propaganda, which attempts to demonstrate to its audience how - thorough the use of language and the selective ordering of factual information - the film-maker can propagate a particular message. OPM observed a screening of this second film at Mile End Community Project at a time when the third and fourth films had not yet been introduced to



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the group. The third and fourth films are intended as a deconstruction or ‘unveiling’ of the propaganda techniques used in *The Vampire Conspiracy*.

Bold Creative originally wanted to focus Digital Disruption on the deconstruction of Al-Qaeda inspired extremist propaganda through the production of a viral video presenting a ‘counter-narrative’ to a ‘classic’ propaganda or conspiracy theory film such as *7/7 Ripple Effect* or *Loose Change*. However, the aim of Digital Disruption changed from wanting to counter Islamic propaganda, to educating young people about generic techniques used by propagandists of any persuasion to manipulate audiences. According to the project sponsor and leaders, this shift in focus to propaganda more generally was in response to:

- The remit of ‘Prevent’ broadening (beyond Al-Qaeda inspired extremism to include the far right), and objections from local politicians and community members about ‘singling out Islam.’
- Digital Disruption was intended to engage lower-risk individuals. Such individuals might react badly to attempts to actively ‘de-radicalise’ them (because of the implicit accusation of being an active extremist or terrorist), and might benefit more from a more general education about how propaganda can be used to mislead and manipulate people.
- On-line propaganda films are so prolific and change so quickly, it is difficult to identify ‘classic’ propaganda or conspiracy films to present a counter-narrative for.
- Active de-radicalisation can’t be achieved through a purely on-line medium – this needs intensive mentorship as part of a holistic package (including informed theological guidance).
- There is often little to no consensus about what the ‘truth’ is in relation to complex theological debates. If you try to create a counter-narrative in response to a piece of propaganda that draws heavily on a misrepresentation of a faith, it is no simple task to know what counter-narrative to replace it with.

## Impact

Interviews with project leaders and participants indicate the following impacts:

- Increased capacity for critical analysis amongst the young people. Through their guided explorations of examples of propaganda, the young people involved in this project have learnt how to critically engage with messages that they are presented with: *‘this is about getting them to think critically and make an informed choice about what they’re seeing online – we won’t always be there’* (project leader).
- The media-led approach potentially has a wide reach as any film outputs are posted online for other young people to view – also generated interest from national media, including the Guardian.
  - ‘Other young people will see it and if it’s good they think, ‘yeah, he’s got talent’ Young Person (participant).
  - ‘When the project funding runs out, you’ll still have a tangible output, and you’ll still be impacting on young people’ (project leader).



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## STREET - Interview with Alyas Karmani – Director

### Introduction

Strategy To Reach, Empower and Educate Teenagers (STREET) is an organisation working with young people in gangs, pupil referral units and other young people referred to them by statutory services or families. They work to educate young people about the risks of what they are involved in. The aim is that by completing a programme at STREET young people become less vulnerable more resilient to negative messages.

STREET believe that a lot of young people who convert to Islam or who are learning about Islam are susceptible to having a number of vulnerabilities, such as being open to distorted messages and attempts to radicalise them. STREET have therefore designed programs based on ensuring the **emotional well being** of young people since it is considered one of the most important factors in building resilience to extremism.

OPM went to STREET to gather information about their de-radicalisation programme that focuses on deconstructing propaganda.

### Aim

An intensive programme is offered to deliver interventions to a high risk cohort,. It includes 30 hours learning and 20 hours applied work – of which deconstruction of propaganda and / or countering extremist ideology is one part. According to STREET, to ensure that the programme does not create a further deficit in knowledge and therefore increase the vulnerability of a young person, it must offer 'a legitimate and holistic alternative' and any deconstruction work must present a balance of;

- Equipping young people with the tools to deconstruct myths and propaganda techniques (and for this to be an empowering experience)
- Helping them see Al-Qaida inspired messages within the context of a more informed understanding of global geo-political issues
- Informed Islamic instruction; (see core/direct theological deconstruction below);

STREET believe that this kind of knowledge is rare in mainstream teaching and youth work.

To do all of these three effectively takes time, and from STREET's experience one of the biggest challenges when trying to apply this kind of work to a school context is finding sufficient time (2 whole days are needed). Generally STREET felt this kind of work with 'higher risk' audiences needed to go on outside of the school environment.

### Methods/ Approaches

STREET deliver a range of programmes aimed at reducing the vulnerability of young people. One programme that aims to do this is the Routes to Success programme (R2S) and another is deconstructing propaganda. STREET assess how 'at risk' an individual is when they join the organisation then determine which topic is approached or which course the young person takes and in which order.

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R2S consists of six modules that are delivered over 30 sessions. The following five core modules make up the R2S programme. The modules consist of individual lessons; most of the lessons are one hour sessions however some lessons are double lessons.

1. Emotional Well Being
2. Personal Effectiveness
3. Communication & Interpersonal Skills
4. Active Citizenship & Social Responsibility
5. Sustainable development and international development

The *deconstructing propaganda* programme's primary aim is to deconstruct the messages and methods of Al-Qaeda inspired extremism. This is delivered by a teacher trained and experienced in teaching media studies. STREET commented that having a charismatic facilitator who has a persuasive and engaging personality is helpful here.

Stage one begins with a discussion around core / direct theological deconstruction. This includes understanding of jihad, deconstructing the core taqfiri Islam, mainstream Islamic fatwa and the process of arriving at an Islamic ruling and how this is done legitimately. This is to address the vulnerability of knowledge on Islam that new converts or others can have.

Young people then engage in a broad discussion exploring social policy issues and how the Muslim world responds to them - recognise how people bring about exchange in society and how Muslims are citizens and can contribute to the society around them.

Stage two focuses on international conflicts and how these have been instigated or exacerbated by propaganda messages. The focus then turns to Islamic / theological distortion and propaganda techniques being used to endorse violent extremism.

Stage three introduces propaganda and begins with the session-leader looking at the broader context of propaganda – how people are trying to influence others with messages all the time (e.g. through advertising and marketing); skills for critiquing the media; the role of bias, etc. STREET aims to ensure that young people are aware when consuming any media: 'how is this trying to influence me?' The deconstruction work then follows this.

Firstly, the teacher takes videos and delivers sessions on 'media deconstruction' adapted from A Level media studies on tackling and understanding propaganda as a technique. Sessions break down the text to demonstrate how it is an emotive process which is instigated within the young person, through which the speaker is then trying to unbalance or change someone's existing view.

From watching and deconstructing these videos the young people are taught how to balance a view drawing on what they have learnt earlier in the programme.

With regard to Al-Qaeda videos specifically, young people are also provided with translations and are shown comparisons and contradiction between what the speaker will be saying. Through realising the contradictions in the text young people can understand that a deliberate attempt at persuasion with the use of inconsistent facts is being made.

## **Impact**

STREET has won the Preventing Violent Extremism Innovation award (February 2009) for the most innovative youth programme in 2008.

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STREET reported that reactions from the young people vary. Some feel recognition that they were being exposed to untruths previously and appreciation that the mainstream view is 'correct' – i.e. a complete shift. Some feel an appreciation of a safe-space to even talk about these issues – felt to be absent previously.

STREET also reported that a lot of young people still have a sense of suspicion – requiring longer term relationship building with programme deliverers. STREET work with more 'at risk' young people and therefore it takes time to build levels of trust and 'de-radicalise' certain young people.

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## **The Quarrel Shop, LEAP Confronting Conflict, Westminster Council**

As noted in the introduction to this report, Leap kindly offered to act as a case study organisation very late in the life of the project due to a last minute cancellation by a similar organisation. As such, our case study with Leap took place in the late summer – their quietest period for delivering interventions. Our case study with Leap was therefore made up of a series of scoping interviews with key project staff and directors as well as a visit to and observation of a course called Quarrel Shop – selected as an example of teaching and learning about conflict resolution. As the case study happened late on in our research project and a number of ‘key ingredients’ of effective practice had emerged already, we conducted an interview with a director of Leap in which they gave examples of the ways in which some of their projects demonstrate those key ingredients. In particular, examples came from Leap’s Pathfinder Schools project and their Fear and Fashion anti-knife crime project.

It is important to note that where we have included examples of these two projects in the body of the report, their purpose is to provide illustrative examples of how Leap achieve a particular ‘key ingredient’ of effective practice as well as to further bolster and demonstrate the importance of that ingredient which emerged from our analysis.

The Summary below focuses on the Quarrel Shop intervention

### **Introduction**

Over sixty hours, *The Quarrel Shop* uses discussions, games, exercises and role-play to equip young people with a language of conflict, helping them to identify what it is, and how it resonates with their personal experiences. The course focuses on mediation, communication, teamwork and conflict resolution skills. *Quarrel Shop* attempts to instill confidence in participants to run local workshops for peers. The course is designed to be practical, fun and informative, where participants apply their learning so that they can run and facilitate peer training. One of the training team always includes at least one previous *Quarrel Shop* participant.

### **Learning objectives and aims**

- Encourage young people to reflect on their individual and pre-existing ways of dealing with conflict, and to develop their skills in managing conflict constructively
- Train young people in facilitation techniques so that they can run workshops for their peers to support the practice of conflict resolution in their work with young people

### **Audience**

A typical *Quarrel Shop* group of 16-21 year old participants might include a mix of young people who have left school early or who have been excluded; with some experiencing issues in dealing with their own anger and aggression; students who want to go on into youth work, social work or mediation.

### **Approach**

The first session of the *Quarrel Shop* programme that OPM observed begins with an exercise called ‘the sun shines on...’ where individual members of the group take turns to stand in the middle of a circle of all remaining participants and make a statement about something that is visibly true about them – for instance, *‘I have brown hair. The sun shines*

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*on all those who have brown hair*'. Where this statement is also true of other participants, these individuals stand up and switch places in the circle. The 'sun' then 'shines on' the participant who is left without a seat in the circle when all have switched places. Participants are asked to reflect on how this exercise made them feel – *'you feel a bit isolated when you're in the middle, but then you feel more comfortable when you're not on your own'* (participant). Facilitators then ask how this exercise might work if individuals are asked to make statements about something that is not immediately visible that can be associated with conflict – for example, *'the sun shines on all those who have at some point started a physical fight'*. Participants explore how this could be an exposing experience, and how certain individuals might use the exercise as a way of 'outing' people for particular actions and experiences.

This exercise is used as way of stimulating participant's thinking about ground rules for discussion and 'creating a safe space'. Participants are asked what *'would turn them off being here or make them feel unsafe'*. Facilitators emphasise that a list of 'don't' statements will not be as effective as more positive statements about participant behaviours.

Participants are encouraged to *'challenge the statement, not the person'* as a way of maintaining constructive and respectful discussion. Trying to ensure that interactions do not become highly personal or an exercise in character assassination is central to LEAP's approach. *Quarrel Shop* facilitators employ particular techniques for supporting the 'ground rules' of interaction, while encouraging young participants to use them also, which include the following:

- Acknowledging rule-breaking statements or behaviour non-verbally.
- Facilitators or participants verbally describing what they have seen immediately after the fact, and possibly having a group conversation about it.
- Finally, one-to-one work with any individual(s) who is consistently breaking the ground rules of interaction, offering them a choice about whether to adapt their behaviour.

Creative facilitation approaches are used to present complex concepts in straightforward terms. For example, participants engage in an exercise called 'fixed positions' where each looks at the lead facilitator from different physical positions around the room, and are asked to describe what they can see of the facilitator's physical features from their particular position/angle. Where the facilitator is thought of as embodying 'conflict', this exercise demonstrates how conflict is often multi-dimensional.

Following the 'fixed positions' exercise, participants are encouraged to reflect on four dimensions of their emotional responses to conflict as follows: fears (irrational and rational), needs (emotional and practical), hurt and anger. Facilitators propose that there is a causal link - starting with fears moving right through to anger - and use a scenario that is presented by the lead facilitator as a way of demonstrating how this four-dimensional approach can be applied.

## **Impact**

Participant feedback following the first workshop indicates the following impacts:

- Participants had a clear understanding of why they were enrolled on the course – 'I'm here so I've got a better understanding of how to facilitate conflict resolution when I'm working with young people' (participant).

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- Participants endorsed the willingness on the part of facilitators to explain the relevance and thinking behind particular exercises: 'I learnt different exercises, and the purpose of them. Not only can we understand it and take it away with us, we can appreciate the meaning behind it so that when we're debriefing a workshop we can explain the exercise and why it's relevant' (participant).

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## Rewind

### Introduction

Rewind<sup>39</sup> is an independent anti-racist project located in the West Midlands, and has a number of 'satellite' trainers located in different parts of the country. Set up in its current form in 2003, Rewind has worked in 132 areas of the UK and delivered courses to over 29,000 people. Financial supporters include the Home Office, the National Youth Agency, the Runnymede Trust and Sandwell Primary Care Trust.

### Aim

Rewind's aim is to educate people of all ages around issues of racism and identity. Anti-racism is at the core of this teaching, and the project aims to provoke deep thought around issues of race, and to provide a safe, no-blame atmosphere in which participants are encouraged to debate issues around race, extremism and related areas of contention.

### Audience

There are three strands to Rewind's work:

- Formal education delivered in primary and secondary schools, further education colleges and universities
- Informal education through youth work at youth centres, residential weekends, detached youth work and youth councils
- A 'train-the-trainers' strand, which is usually aimed at police officers, teachers, youth workers and social workers.

The case study observed for this research was a four-day peer-educators' course for secondary students aged 12 -18. When the course was completed, these students were intending to deliver anti-racist education others in the school, supported by members of the teaching staff.

### Approach

The approach is founded on raising awareness of 'race' as a socio-political creation. Drawing on academic theory and research, Rewind gradually presents participants with information about genetics, history and current attitudes that show 'race' to be a theory that has been used to justify attitudes and actions based on superiority and inferiority towards different groups of people.

The course rests on two principles. The first is the belief that educating people about racisms and extremisms has a more powerful effect than simply challenging racist attitudes and views. The second is that a safe space should be created in which all participants are permitted to air their views and experiences, however racist they may be, to encourage honest and open debate. A variety of different stimuli are used to provoke thought and discussion, including Rewind's training DVD and manual, clips from films such as *This is*

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<sup>39</sup> See <http://www.rewind.org.uk/> (accessed 17.08.10).



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*Britain or Football Factory*, powerpoint presentations that include shocking or harrowing images of racist attacks, leaders' personal anecdotes and different types of group work. Leaders are careful to include different kinds of racism and extremism – always using the plural – so that participants understand that racism can happen at any time to anyone.

The core of the information given to participants is the theory that modern human life began in Africa and that, as humans gradually populated the rest of the world, the amount of melanin in people's skin changed as their bodies adapted to the different climates. This common ancestry means that there can only be one race – the human race. The point is illustrated in the training DVD, which shows the results of a DNA test from a group of students. The test demonstrates that their ancestors came from a number of different countries; one pupil who said her family came from Pakistan, for instance, found that her DNA linked her to people in a range of countries from Italy to Australia. Further thought is provoked by the information that only 'a few' genes determine skin colour, and that the human body contains over 30,000 genes, and the question is posed: Does it make sense to categorise people on the basis of such a small amount of information?

### **Impact**

Teachers believed that the training helped the pupils to make sense of the different messages around race and religion that, in the local context, helped them to make sense of their own lives: *'I don't think it could be done in a better way ... the students are engaged, they're all identifying with certain situations'* (teacher).

Pupils reported that: *'it gives you confidence ... you know the information behind it, so you can confidently ... give it to other people. And you feel good as well, it's like you're making a difference ... You don't need to hide from nobody. Stand up for what you feel ... before, even with my friends, right, I used to say us Pakis ... I haven't said it since [the training]'* (female pupil)

They appreciated both the type of information and the way that it was given: *'It's really interesting. I've been to these sorts of things before, about racism. Boring, boring ... we had a really boring, serious teacher. But this one has actually taught us what racism's done in the past ... It's full of life'* (male pupil).

Pupils felt that they had learned: *'There's only one, the human race. That's it ... there's only skin colour which is separating us'* (male pupil); *'Six genes control your skin colour ... more genes control your height'* (male pupil).

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