PROTEST, PROVOCATION OR PROPAGANDA?

GUIDE TO PREVENTING SALAFIST IDEOLOGIZATION IN SCHOOLS AND YOUTH CENTERS

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CONTENT

PREFACE

For some years now adolescents – but also educators – are increasingly being confronted with anti-democratic tendencies in the form of anti-Islamic/anti-Muslim sentiment and a violent tide of Salafism. The cry for more security and a tightening of the laws typically follows as a knee-jerk reaction. Security, however, cannot be achieved with more stringent laws alone. Although threats to our free society usually don't make headlines until they have erupted into violence, they actually start taking form much earlier: They begin in the heads of mostly young people who have, in part, undergone a radicalization process spanning several years. Our prevention efforts need to hook into – and divert – this process. Indeed, prevention is an indispensable requirement for security and an open society.

But what makes violent Islamist currents so attractive? A simple black-and-white view of the world? Demeaning experiences of marginalization or exclusion? A lack of prospects? When young Muslims become the target of Islamophobia and animosity due to their migrant backgrounds, they sometimes turn to those who encourage and support them for answers to their questions. And they thereby risk falling into the hands of false friends. Islamophobia and radicalization are mutually reinforcing processes. Salafist preachers such as Pierre Vogel prove that it isn't just migrants who can be radicalized. Violent Salafism is a phenomenon that touches every segment of society. Far beyond immigration and integration, what this is about is democracy and the arguments and strategies that our democracy offers to counter radical ideologies.

In the beginning, many questions will arise for educators who have had little previous contact with violent Islamist extremism. "How do I respond to a young person who says that Sharia law is the only effective antidote against the disease of democracy and integration?" What could have been done to stop the Berlin-born youth 'DesoDogg' (or other boys and girls in my school, youth group or mosque community) from joining ISIS as a combatant? These developments are still new for many and it takes time for the counter strategies to take hold and establish themselves.

It is thus only appropriate to ask questions first. But one thing is already clear: Socio-political prevention work, culturally diverse coexistence and engaging in a trusting dialogue with Muslim organizations (and of course with those of Muslim faith) is indispensable for preventing radicalization processes. This requires joint efforts by the political leadership, Islamic religious communities and civil society. With the program 'Live democracy! Active against right-wing extremism, violence and hate,' launched by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, we are determinedly confronting – on all levels – right-wing extremism, racism and anti-Semitism as well as the challenges posed by Islamophobia and hostility against Muslims, antiziganism, ultra-nationalism, homophobia, violent Salafism and jihadism as well as left-wing militancy.

With this brochure, ufuq.de is offering relevant contextual information to answering the open questions of educators. I believe that prevention work should have a broad base; our prevention work should speak to all and exclude no one. In this way, our guidebook helps to prevent radicalization but also supports pedagogical practice in terms of countering Islamophobia and hostility against Muslims. The work done by ufuq.de and its competent and committed team is path-breaking in this area. I hope the information in this brochure will give everyone who reads it some additional confidence to engage in more open and trusting dialogues with young people. Good luck!

Sincerely,

Manuela Schwesig
Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

INTRODUCTION

„We don't look at things the way they are –
we look at them the way we are.“

This guide is mainly directed at educators in schools and youth centers. Their work is key to preventing standpoints and ideologies at odds with free society from taking hold among youths and young adults. For several years now, this has also included Salafist positions. But many educators – for understandable reasons – do not feel like they are adequately prepared and up to this task. This is where this handbook comes in. Brief and practice-oriented, it offers advice and information on how to help prevent young people from adopting Salafist positions and ideologies. In this guide, we have compiled the experiences gained in several hundred workshops with youths and from our training activities with multiplicators. We offer advice and make concrete recommendations for pedagogical practice. All the while, we are aware that the more concrete the recommendation, the more heated the debate it is likely to incite. In the end, however, you will have to make your own experiences in the classroom and in youth centers.

Salafism is not a problem that is specific to persons with migrant biographies. Most of the youths and young adults who can be considered adherents of the rather broad spectrum of Salafism were born in Germany. And generally their parents are not at all thrilled about the path their children have chosen. Moreover, there are also many non-Muslim born German youths who subscribe to Salafism; in fact, a disproportionately high number of converts have joined ISIS. The contributing factors that lead to radicalization are very diverse and individual.

There are, however, a number of questions, topics and conflicts that play a specific role: For example, the questions that many youths with Muslim backgrounds have with regard to 'their' religion, namely Islam. Or the experiences that many young people with a migrant background make with discrimination and anti-Islamic sentiment. But, more than anything, it is a sense of being rejected, marginalized and of 'not belonging'. It is thus not surprising that the approach Salafists take in addressing young people connect with the questions of 'who am I?' and 'where do I belong?'

By implication this means that these specific issues of a specific target group must play an essential role in universal prevention work and civic education. In schools and in youth facilities, it is thus important to take into account – more than before – the interests, experiences, lifeworlds and, last but not least, also the religiousness of youths with a migrant background. Yet this must be done without stigmatizing or defining them based on their background,

SALAFISM IS NOT A „MIGRANT PROBLEM"

culture or religion. And also without losing sight of the boys and girls in our 'globalized classrooms' who do not have a migrant background.

How can we succeed in doing this? You will not have to evolve into an expert with regard to religion, Islamism or immigration to do this. What is more important is being an expert on one's own account, in other words, being a good teacher or educator even in this difficult field with its specific challenges. The purpose of this guide is to help you.

To avoid misunderstandings: Prevention is at the focus of this handbook – pedagogic work meant to prevent the spread of Salafist ideology among youths and young adults in Germany. Obviously you will also learn something about Salafist ideology in this context and about what ideologization and radicalization processes look like. As a rule, however, you will only very rarely have to deal with youths who have already been ideologized – much less radicalized. You should never judge the behavior of 'your' youngsters filtered through your ideas of what a Salafist is, even if they come across as 'problematic' and you detect fragments of Salafist ideology in their statements. You cannot do justice to them if you do. Should you, however, become seriously concerned about individual youths, this could be a task that goes beyond the scope of universal prevention work. Such individual cases need to be discussed among your staff or faculty and subsequently the appropriate help should be sought.

Please note: 'Salafism' is a movement in Islam that encompasses various forms of orthodox Islam that are practiced in different ways (see Chapter III). When 'Salafism' – and its prevention – is mentioned in this guide, we are referring to the political ideology of Salafism and, above all, to behavior that is contrary to the basic tenets of peaceful coexistence and a pluralistic society.

I. PREPARING THE GROUND: 12 GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON PREVENTING SALAFIST INDOCTRINATION

Education and successful prevention should be guided by the following principles. They provide the framework for civic education and early interventions.

1. PREVENTION IS NOT DE-RADICALIZATION

Primary (or universal) prevention refers, above all, to civic education and building of resilience. It is directed at 'perfectly normal' youths long before any possible ideologization or radicalization begins. It can take place anywhere young people congregate – especially in schools and youth facilities. It is meant to sensitize and protect the young from simple world-views and enemy images. When it comes to the prevention of Salafism, the meaning of religion (Islam) in migrant society plays a specific role. And here is where a special challenge presents itself.

2. A SOCIAL ISSUE

A young person's standpoints and behavior are often conditioned less through religion or their parents' or grand-parents origins than by their social environment.

3. A QUESTION OF AGE

Young people in a free society are searching for their identity and place in the world. In doing so, they sometimes distance themselves from their parents, teachers and other authorities in ways that can be extremely provocative. Questions concerning values, politics, religion or global conflicts take on great significance. During this phase of insecurity and search for orientation, many young people become susceptible, or receptive, to ideologies and charismatic personalities.

4. SENSITIZATION VS ALARMISM

It is essential that we become sensitized to the positions and the behavior of youths who are possibly putting themselves and others in danger, or who are questioning the basic values of social coexistence. Alarmist views and fostering a culture of suspicion, on the other hand, are not helpful and even counterproductive.

5. SALAFISM IS ONLY ONE WAY TO PRACTICE ISLAM

Salafist ideology contradicts the basic values of democratic coexistence. Islam and democracy (or: Sharia and basic rights), however, can be perfectly compatible. Young Muslims should not be made to think that they must decide in favor of one (democracy) against the other (Islam). Instead, efforts should be made to merge the values and differing lifeworlds in a positive way.

6. SALAFISM IS NOT JIHADISM

Nowadays, Salafism is usually associated with violence and terror. Only some Salafists, however, can be counted among the ranks of the jihadis. Public attention to ISIS and the war in Syria/Iraq blocks options for preventative work because problems with Salafist ideology start long before the legitimization and use of violence. Issues with this ideology already start, for example, with its demeaning of others and its hostility to basic freedoms.

7. THE 9/11 GENERATION

Non-Muslim German youths are also attracted to Salafism; nevertheless, the majority of Salafist adherents were born into Muslim families. They are part of the generation born in the 1990s and 2000s in Germany – and many of them have experienced rejection and discrimination. Much more so than their parents, however, they see Germany as their home country. And this explains why they are all the more confident and assertive in their search for acceptance and belonging – including their 'small differences' in terms of traditions, origins and religions (if these are important to them). Principally, their demands are legitimate and emancipatory and this demonstrates their desire to be part of society.

8. PROVOCATION IS NOT SALAFISM

This also applies when their positions and demands are put forward in an unacceptable form. Indeed, provocative or aggressive behavior by young people in their day-to-day school life, for instance, does not initially indicate Salafist ideologization. Usually this is a way these youths are expressing a desire for belonging and acceptance. Nevertheless, this kind of behavior often poses a big challenge for teachers or educators who have to deal with it in an educational setting.

9. SHEIKH GOOGLE

In the course of this searching by an entire generation of youths and young adults, they will invariably come across websites operated by Salafists in the Internet: In a migrant society that has not yet redeemed its promises, the Salafists promise community, confidence and clear orientation to youths who have not been able to find space for their questions and conflicts – neither in their families, mosques, schools nor in society.

10. SALAFISM AS AN OPPORTUNITY

If society and its institutions do not make available such space, others will come and offer their own answers. In the light of this, Salafism could be seen as an opportunity. After all, it forces us to re-establish the values of democracy and pluralistic coexistence in our 'globalized classrooms' and present them to young people in a way that meshes with their particular living environment and even offers religious perspectives.
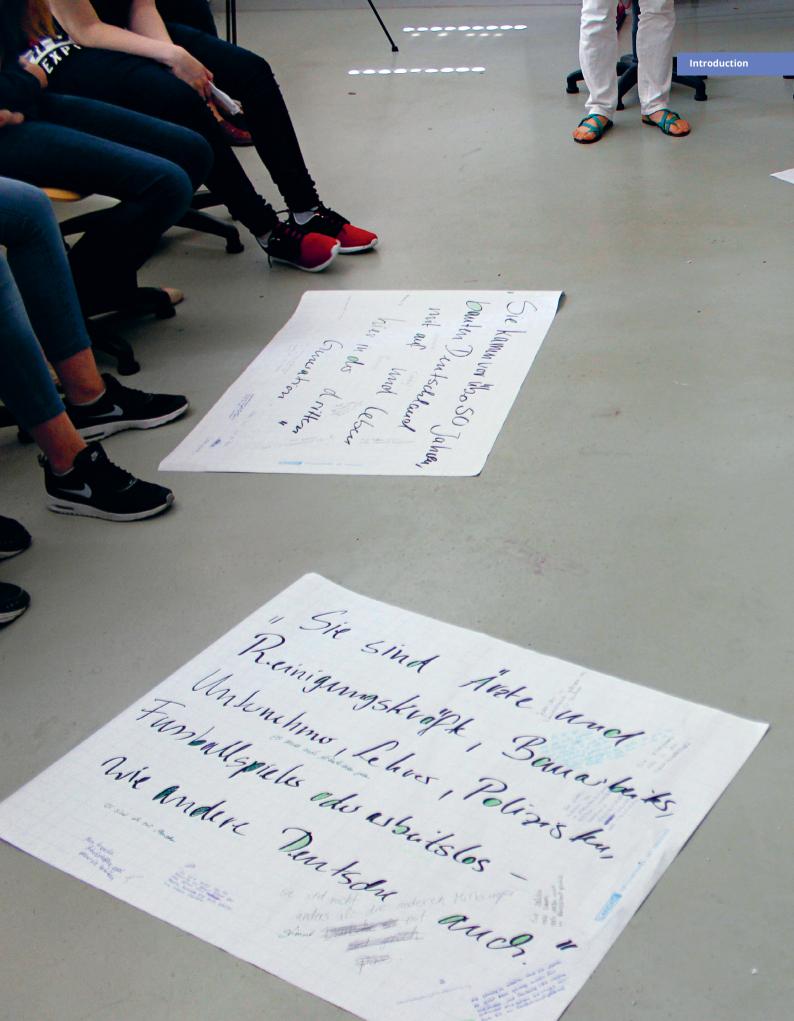
11. THOSE WHO WANT TO TALK ABOUT ISLAMISM …

must not be silent on anti-Muslim racism. Racism and hostility towards Muslims and Islam are widespread in society and do not spare educators in schools and youth facilities! Salafism hooks into corresponding everyday experiences made by young people. As experience has shown, prevention efforts must do this as well.

12. WHAT IS IT THAT SALFISTS ARE CAPABLE OF THAT WE AREN'T?

Signaling recognition, esteem and belonging is the best way to effective prevention. Creating a bond or forging a relationship is more important than educating. Young people do not want to be 'changed' or hear about how they should live. This only causes them to adopt a self-assertive posture. We should rather ask them how they want to live and encourage them to think for themselves and develop own perspectives. Not only is this the best kind of prevention, it is also the most effective civic education! To do this, educators neither have to be well-versed in theology nor do they need to be experts on Islam.

AND DON'T FORGET: THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT!

Young people deserve trust and recognition, the vast majority have no interest whatsoever in antidemocratic and antipluralist positions (and if they do, they would need our attention all the more!). Accosting youths with mistrust, skepticism, harboring prejudices against them and just seeing problems and deficits is more likely to promote than solve conflicts. What is needed is a paradigm shift; youths want and demand a sense of belonging and participation. Sometimes it takes courage and trust to give them the space they need. Have that courage. It's worth it.
After all: The kids are all right!

II. BACKGROUND: 'HOW DO WE WANT TO LIVE?'

Attractiveness of Salafist ideology and prevention work

'No, I am not Charlie!', is what a 15-year-old student of Arab origin wrote in response to an essay assignment about the January 2015 attacks in Paris and the 'Islamic State'. 'Instead, I am the devastated Gaza, slaughtered Syria, starving Africa, divided Kurdistan, suppressed Egypt, bombed Libya, the besieged Yarmouk and Daraa refugee camps, the forgotten Guantanamo…'. In her essay, she drew upon lyrics by the Frankfurt-based rapper 'SadiQ', which have been circulating in the Internet and were spontaneously 'liked' by thousands of youths.

Initially, such a stance has nothing to do with the Salafist movement – much less ISIS. In fact, it is more of an expression of protest against the sense of not belonging: 'Millions of you express consternation and outrage at the deaths of the caricaturists but no one talks about our dead.' This, basically, is the charge that is leveled against society by many young people in Berlin, Hamburg and Frankfurt as well as in parts of Paris, Marseille or Toulon. Naturally this provocative attitude poses a challenge to society. And it is mainly the Salafists who try to take advantage of this circumstance. The outrage with which many educators react to such student opinions – and with which the media covers youths

who refuse to observe a minute of silence for the victims – may also be understandable. But it obscures the view to opportunities that open up for educators and for prevention work. But let's take one step at a time.

What makes Salafism so appealing to youths and young adults? This is a question that has been reiterated time and again over the past months and years. It should be made clear first-off that the vast majority of young German Muslims are rather embarrassed by the style and ideological claims of Salafist preachers. And, among the few Salafists who think that Islam is under attack and must be 'defended' with violence in Iraq, Syria or Afghanistan, there are many converts of German origin. This is also the first indication that it is not Islamic theology per se that is driving young people to radicalize. Instead, the profiles of followers show that it is experiences with alienation, impotence, hopelessness, disenfranchisement and blocked mobility that make the enticements of the Salafists – namely community, orientation and a simple worldview – so appealing. And very often, complex, contradictory family stories that weigh heavily on these youngsters play a central role as well. This is particularly true for the small group

that is ready to resort to violence: Religion-based radical ideology gives them a chance to vent their frustrations and their anger. It gives them a sense of power and superiority for the first time in their lives – especially in connection with a certitude that they are on the right side.

Apart from this, for many youths of migrant backgrounds, experiences with discrimination and a sense of not belonging also play a crucial role. 'Even 100 years from now', they suggest for example, 'Germans will still ask me where I'm from just because I have black hair.' Young people are especially sensitive to what the barometer of public opinion has been showing for a long time: The majority of German non-Muslims hold skeptical and negative views vis-à-vis Islam and Muslims, which may extend all the way to outright racism in some cases. And not infrequently, even the media and the political establishment suggest that youths should leave their religion behind if they want to be 'a part of society'. Their religion, it seems, is neither compatible with democracy, basic rights nor with Western mainstream culture. The Salafists, on the other hand, offer a forum for disaffected youths to discuss experiences involving discrimination and marginalization. They also acknowledge their faith and welcome them, thereby giving them a sense of belonging.

That Germany is their home is something that especially young Muslims who were born here are more conscious of than their parents' or grandparents' generation. And it evokes a very sensitive reaction when they experience that they are not accepted the way they are. Nor is what is important to them – for example a positive reference to their parents' history, traditions and cultures – accepted. Not infrequently, this can lead to a deliberate re-identification with their ancestral roots, including various forms of self-ethnification. And then, at school, when they provocatively announce that they are not 'German' but rather Turkish, Arab or Muslim – or when they explain that Sharia (of which they often have no idea) is more important to them the constitution, this is quickly seen as an expression of segregation, of a withdrawal into parallel societies or even as Islamism.

In reality, though, the opposite is often true. When youths emphasize elements of 'their' culture or religion, what is often behind this is a desire to be accepted – along with their special traits – as part of society. Years ago already, in a very popular piece called Ausländer ('foreigner'), the rapper 'Alpa Gun' sang that 'it's time you finally understand that we are also Germans.' Behind this is a legitimate demand to finally affirm the axiom that we

are an immigration society. The circumstance that this demand is occasionally rendered in an exaggerated, aggressive and extremely insulting way ('pork eater', 'German slut') can be hard to deal with, for teachers for example. Where one succeeds in reacting less to a superficial provocation but more to the desire to integrate that is

behind it – and of which the protagonist himself is often unaware of! – understanding and communication can arise.

No Imams in the shopping malls

And it's high time for this. Not least because – as a reaction to post-9/11 experiences – an entire generation of youths with a Muslim background, while searching for a sense of belonging and attention, have discovered Islam (as the smallest common denominator) for themselves. And this even though – or perhaps despite of – the fact that Muslims have often found themselves under blanket suspicion since the terror attacks in New York. Religiousness often plays only a subordinated role here. It is more about Islam as a statement. It is part of their self-perception and they want to assert this. Indeed, they are struggling for acceptance in a much more assertive way than their parents ever did.

This searching for belonging by young, more or less religious German Muslims, initially has (even though not in all its manifestations) an emancipatory, integrative character. It is targeted toward acceptance as equal members of an immigrant society. Problems may arise when youths cannot find (neutral) space to ask their questions, when they get only ideologically-tinged answers. Parents and grandparents are frequently out of their depth and cannot help here (especially when,

for example, their understanding of religion is rooted in the traditions of their region of origin). Obviously, the local Imam will not be the right 'go-to person' either as he will generally neither be familiar with Facebook nor with the shopping malls that youths spend large parts of their leisure time in.

It is almost inevitable that, during the course of their searching processes, youths will bump into Salafists. They are omnipresent in the Internet. They will explain – in German – what is right and what is wrong, what youths should and shouldn't do if they want to be a 'good Muslim'. For many, such simplistic answers are quite attractive. But the propositions put forth by the Salafists are fraught with danger and many youth do not recognize this: Salafists make a truth claim that presupposes absolute knowledge and they malign all ways of thinking and living that deviate from their rigid, illiberal positions. The ideologization of youths who become involved with the Salafist movement thus begins early in the run-up to any possible radicalization processes.

Thus, when the 15-year-old student continues her essay as follows: 'No, I am not Charlie. I am the over 1.5 million dead Muslims who were killed at the bloody hands of Western powers over the past years', this by no means makes her a follower of Salafism. But what she is expressing is a prevalent conviction that Salafists pick up on and use for their own purposes: A resentment about own experiences with discrimination (not just their own but other Muslims' too, including their parents') is construed into a broad-brush enemy stereotype that depicts 'the West' as having been fighting 'Islam' and 'Muslims' from time immemorial. The message propagated by the Salafists is that 'as a Muslim you will never belong to Western society. Join us. In our midst you can defend yourself, together we are strong!' This is an attractive offer but in isolated cases (though always in conjunction with other motives!) it can lead all the way to the legitimization of violence and terror.

So what is to be done? First of all, it is important to more clearly differentiate between the terms 'prevention' and 'deradicalization'. These days, there is a lot of talk about prevention but what is usually meant is de-radicalization or disengagement. Deradicalization and disengagement efforts are targeted toward individual youths and young adults who have already become ideologized or even radicalized, and these processes, as experience with right-wing extremists show, can take years. Deradicalization programs cooperate closely with security authorities and generally intervene where radicalization has already occurred. In contrast to deradicalization programs, which are also national security-motivated, prevention initiatives have been few and far between. Acute threat scenarios and the images released by ISIS seem far too overpowering. But this imbalance is something that needs to be addressed and corrected.

What is prevention?

Prevention is 'education in democracy'. It is proactively directed at 'completely normal' youths and young adults in schools and youth centers, for example, to make them resilient to ideologization and radicalization. Where Salafism is concerned, however, civic education takes place in a specific context: Particularly youths with migrant backgrounds need space where they can freely discuss questions concerning their origins, their sense of belonging or not belonging, their identity, culture and religion. If this opportunity is not provided, others will step into the vacuum and offer their own simplistic answers. Youths must be sensitized and empowered to challenge these simple views on religion, the world and 'the enemy'. And for this, it is important to also make religious offerings to youths: The key message should be that Islam and democracy (or even Sharia and basic rights) are not mutually exclusive. Instead of conveying to youths that they can be 'Muslim' and 'democratic', that they can be 'Turkish', 'Arab', or 'Bosnian' and 'German', all too often it is suggested that they have to choose one or another. It is important here to give center

stage to such universal values as justice, social responsibility, tolerance and peace, values that also have their place in Islam. Indeed, the debate concerning Salafism could be viewed as an opportunity to re-affirm for ourselves our common values of coexistence.

Our prevention work is also directed at the largely non-Muslim multiplicators. These are teachers, for example, who work in 'globalized classrooms' – often without knowing much about the lifeworlds (religion, origin) of their students. Apart from having the relevant skills, a climate of acceptance is the prerequisite for effective preventive work: In spite of all the questions and conflicts, the premise that 'the kids are all right' should take hold in the classroom and take the place of grueling skepticism or a focus on failings or short-comings. To this end, the way we speak in the classroom, in the political realm and in the media is important: Youths are very sensitive to 'us-and-them' discussions. On the other hand, providing clear signals of belonging and acceptance are crucial for communication and integration. In a broader sense, such signals are the basis for interventions as they make it possible to challenge, in a second step, problematic attitudes and positions, to irritate and to encounter. But our experience also teaches us that 'those who want to talk about Islamism must not keep silent on Islamophobia'. Prevention work has to reflect and respect the lifeworlds and experiences of youngsters.

For young people, such almost cliché-like concepts as 'the liberal-democratic constitutional order', 'the constitution' and democracy' aren't necessarily the measure of all things. Instead, it is the lifeworld-relevant basic question of 'how do we want to live?' that can help youths to develop own positions. Here is where their experiences and feelings should be acknowledged and take center stage. The aforementioned student position with regard to the January 2015 attacks in Paris illustrates the dangers of ideologization on the one hand. But on the other hand, it also offers a starting point for education and prevention. Where outrage about injustices and empathy with victims of war and violence is per se positively acknowledged it can also serve as a starting point for discussions with youths about their own experiences. They can talk about the injustices or violence that they were subjected to. And they can also discuss what needs to be done to make things better at school, in their neighborhood, in Germany and in the world in general. If this approach is taken, not only will the prevention work be a success but our immigrant society as a whole will also be a success.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD I

During a workshop for 9th grade students – largely Muslims – all of the youths professed to be **proud Muslims** for whom religion is very important. Upon further questioning it turned out that many of them were in fact not particularly religious and knew little about Islam. Their religion, it seems, was important mainly in terms of having an affiliation and identity. The youths are caught up in a search for own personal identity and orientation, indeed, all of them were familiar with Pierre Vogel, a prominent German Salafi preacher.

A group of 14-16-year-olds discussed the question of '**what defines a true Muslim?**' in a local mosque. The first answers rang out in rapid succession: 'No alcohol, no pork, observing Ramadan, wearing a hijab and praying five times a day'. One of the students then asked the round: 'But who of us prays five times a day?' (The youths sense that observing the norms is just one aspect of being religious.). 'OK, fine', the question was continued, 'what else does it take to be a good Muslim?' 'Keeping the peace, love, and being just and fair...' The group then continued by discussing whether a 'good Muslim' is – above all – just tantamount to being 'a good person'.

III. SALAFISM AT SCHOOL AND IN YOUTH WORK

1. What is Salafism?

The word 'Salafism' derives from the Arab term *'as-salaf as-salih'* (*'pious predecessors'*) and refers to the first generations of Muslims in the 7th century. They are considered role models that serve as examples in behavior and thought. As a **political ideology**, however, Salafism is a variation of Islamism. 'Islamist' refers to the ideology of a great number of currents and players whose objective it is to forge a politics and society based on their understanding of Islam. They derive their **claim to truth** from a conviction that their understanding of the religious sources (Quran and Sunnah) is the sole authentic and possible understanding. Inevitably, this leads to the **rejection and denigration** of all other perspectives – whether these are embraced by other Muslims or non-Muslims. In this, Islamism and Salafism are like other, for example Christian fundamentalist ideologies. Nevertheless, Islamist organizations differ in how they want to spread their beliefs throughout society: They largely bank on **missionary work, education and persuasive efforts**. Some also participate in elections. Others (for example ISIS or al-Qaeda) legitimate **violence and terror** and claim this is necessary in order to defend Islam and Muslims.

Security agencies estimate the number of Salafists in Germany at 8.000 persons, with the majority of them being in their early 20s. Just a few years ago, only a few dozen could be described as adherents of this spectrum. About 700 (most recent figure from June 2015) persons have left the country to join organizations involved in armed struggle.

Salafism is characterized by its very **rigid, literal understanding** of Islamic sources. This is how Salafists derive their claim to truth even vis-à-vis the great majority of Muslims who espouse a non-literal, contextual reading of the religious texts. Salafism offers very few concrete political ideas concerning public order. Thus, Salafists stress external characteristics (dress code), preach strict moral norms as well as denounce and combat ways of thinking and living that they consider sinful or immoral. Salafists differentiate only between 'right' and 'wrong'; 'good' and 'bad'. Diversity in lifestyles, pluralism and ambiguities, tolerance and freedom of thought – these fundamental elements of life in a democratic society are incompatible with Salafism.

Roughly outlined, Salafists can be subdivided into:

1. *Purists*: Their main concern is to lead what they consider a godly life for themselves. They try to closely follow their role models in their own lives but they don't exert pressure on others.

2. *Missionaries*: They actively proselytize, declare their Islamic understanding of the world to be the only true way and openly denigrate other ways of thinking and living. They exert pressure on their environment – at schools and youth facilities, for example.

3. *Jihadists*: This very small wing is prepared to use violence to spread their convictions, legitimizing their actions as a defensive fight.

Salafist propaganda is spread mainly through the **Internet** and by individual **preachers**. Beyond this, a few isolated mosque communities give Salafist preachers a platform from which they can agitate and even recruit fighters for jihad. In most mosques, however, youths are not subjected to Salafist ideology or radicalization attempts. The objective of Salafist propaganda is not only to convert non-Muslims but also to win over other Muslims who think and live differently than what Salafist consider proper. **Converts** – young people of non-Muslim origins who convert to Salafism – play a big role in the Salafist scene.

More information is available in the glossary to this handbook under the following key words: Islamism, Salafism, jihadism, propaganda, preacher and conversion.

2. What role does religion play among youths? What is the appeal of Salafism to some youths?

It may sound peculiar, but one probably could not find a single household in Germany that is completely immune to Salafist teachings. The level of education, social background, religious socialization or migration issues – none of these factors taken alone can explain why some youths are drawn to Salafist ideology. The image of 'losers', which is often put forward, is misleading. Indeed, you can find youths and young adults with a good education and good career prospects in the jihadist movement. And many youths who espouse Salafist thinking come from homes where religion did not play a role. For these individuals, the embracing of Salafism signifies a break with their parents' traditions

and background or a 'rediscovery' of religion. And not infrequently, the charge they level at their parents is that they 'betrayed', abandoned and subordinated themselves and their religion by adapting to their new society. Moreover, the high number of conversions to this school of Islam is a clear indication that Salafism cannot be considered as just a Muslim or migrant-related phenomenon.

Nevertheless, there is a whole series of factors that is characteristic for the course of Salafist indoctrination:

In the beginning, what is of foremost importance for youths with a Muslim

background is the **search for knowledge about Islam**. For many, the motivation behind this is not religious as such; instead, they are 'discovering' Islam as part for their identity. And, more so than their parents, they want Islam to find recognition in Germany. Youths are often unable to find the answers in their quest for information – they can neither get them from their parents nor from mosques or schools. In the **Internet**, however, they will inevitably come across the ideology embraced by Salafists, the supposedly straightforward and simple answers for what is right and what is wrong 'in Islam' and in the world. Their brand of Islam holds out the promise of **support, orientation and purpose** – and this accommodates the needs of youths.

Furthermore, Salafist ideology picks up on the wearying **experiences with discrimination** and **anti-Muslim racism**. It admits and facilitates these sentiments while also magnifying and distorting them so that they can be construed as an enemy stereotype: 'In this country you will never be accepted as part of society and you will always be discriminated against. Join us. We belong together; we have a **strong community** beyond provenance. We will embrace you and jointly we can fight against injustices. For us, you are important!'

Even for young people without a migrant background or experiences with discrimination, this understanding of religion and self-understanding can be quite appealing. This is especially true when youths are also caught up with other **experiences of alienation** related to family or school issues, for example. Young people who convert to Salafism like it that they know what their role is and that they get a sense of support, orientation, **self-efficacy**. In the light of an insufferably complex and contradictory world, they are assured of being on the right side. Salafism's dichotomous (good versus bad) and **simple understanding of religion and the world** plays a decisive role here: You do not have to do your own thinking; all you have to do is follow to be a part of a large and powerful whole.

What are young people looking for?	What do Salafists offer?
Religious 'knowledge'	Answers to the question: 'What is a true Muslim?'; code of conduct: 'How must I comport myself?'; self-confidence
Values, orientation	Clear differentiation between good and bad, right and wrong
Sense of purpose, perspectives	Prospect of living a devout, virtuous life, prospect of entering paradise
'Truth' and explanation of the world	Claims of 'ultimate true religion' provide simple answers, clear enemy image.
Superiority and attention	It takes just a few statements / campaigns to provoke and 'turn the tables'.
Community, belonging, recognition, strength and self-efficacy	Online, as part of a local community or as part of the 'umma' (community of Muslims): Being part of a group of like-minded individuals holds out the promise of being in good hands; experience of jointly succeeding and accomplishing. This community delimits itself from others externally through a dress code, language and behavior.
Obedience, orientation, role models, authority figures	Preachers and texts demand unambiguous behavior in a complex world: You don't have to do your own thinking.
Justice (protest against injustices)	The youth-typical protest against injustices, suffering and discrimination is picked up. It is conveyed to youths that they can participate in establishing a new, better world.

The appeal of these central motives is in fact very 'normal'; they correspond to what many youths are searching for; they are not limited to various extremist ideologies. In fact, they are this-worldly and have little – or only indirectly – to do with religion and spirituality. What this unveils is that the needs of youths are not being adequately met and this should be the task of pedagogic work and prevention programs. We must ask ourselves: What is it that Salafists can do that we can't? What can and should we be offering them?

3. At what point should a red flag be raised?

Educational efforts and universal prevention are not about recognizing 'Islamism' or 'Salafism'. What is more important is recognizing very concrete positions and modes of behavior among youths that are hostile to basic freedoms and which can conceivably lead to ideologization processes. Consequently, pedagogical interventions do not ensue because of 'Islam', 'Islamism' or 'Salafism' but rather as a reaction to concrete anti-pluralistic and anti-democratic (or hostile to freedom) positions and attitudes. This is the case when individual youths put forth a claim to truth; when they mob others or pressure others because they choose to think or live differently. These are problematic positions and offer a concrete occasion for entering into a discussion with these youths. Your proximity to their day-by-day routine and to their experiences will tend to make this possible. When Islam and Islamism are addressed in an abstract form, on the other hand, many youths feel like they are being labeled as 'Muslims' and feel like they are being put on the defensive.

On the right to be young, religious and provocative

Teachers are in constant touch with their students; they exchange views, know their interests and worries, they see all the developments that students go through over the years. They are thus often also the first to notice – and the first to be able to react to – any 'problematic' positions that their students have assumed, including the development of 'Islamist' views and ideologies. Obviously, no one turns into a Salafist overnight – much less becomes a staunch radical. This process evolves through distinct phases and generally goes hand in hand with visible, palpable changes. This is why it is important to become familiar with the characteristics that may point to ideologization. The stress, however, is on '*may!*' After all, oftentimes positions, modes of behavior or symbols cannot be accurately interpreted. Among youths, adopting radical positions and categorizing people and things into right or wrong can just as easily be a fad, a trendy and cool thing to do at the moment.

Furthermore, many of the religious positions and symbols that play an important role for Salafists are also of essential

importance for other Muslims (and especially for youths who are engaged in search processes). After all, if they so wish to, there is nothing wrong in outwardly expressing pride in one's religion.

This makes recognizing and dealing with problematic developments difficult. We *implore educators to ask questions* rather than *to dramatize; to engage in conversations with youths* rather than *to judge them; to show interests* rather than *to be scandalized.* Only by taking this approach can the motives of young people be understood and can ways of dealing with the issues – which neither stigmatize nor fall for such provocations – be found.

I. Appearances
Symbols and dress code, rituals and language

Symbols, dress code and other visible features typically serve youths to mark their identity and affiliation. A hijab, which about a fifth of all Muslim women in Germany between the ages of 16 and 25 wear, is an important and natural aspect of their faith. But these features can also become an expression of ideologization. Apart from the hijab, this applies to the wearing of traditional clothing (a jellabiya, for example), growing a beard or the banning of alcohol or pork consumption. For Salafists, these externals demonstrate their belonging to the community of true believers and serve to segregate them from 'non believers' and an environment they deem immoral.

It's similar with the **rituals** that play an important role in most religions. Fasting, for example, is a communal experience; it

plays a big role especially for children and youths because it marks a kind of initiation. In Salafism, however, rituals such as religious wear and symbols, largely serve to highlight the differences to others and for segregation purposes. They grant inflated importance to these rituals and demand they be observed in a rash, unreflected way. Strict compliance is considered proof of 'true belief'. Excessive use of religious lingo by youths can either be an expression of legitimate searching or serve to put distance between oneself and others. *Our educational work* is not so much about questioning religious symbols, rituals or the use of language; it's about encouraging youths (and not just Muslims!) to reflect on their purpose, meanings and functions.

II. Attitudes
Rejecting diversity, group formation and disparaging others

The rejection of diversity – religious, cultural, political or lifestyle-related – is a major characteristic of all Islamist currents. Pluralism and diversity in ways of thinking and living are seen as deviation from true belief and are thus a threat to unity. This manifests itself as a categorical rejection of other views (also the views of other Muslims), which are vilified as wrong, evil, un-Islamic, immoral and sinful. When young people communicate such ideas it can signify Islamist indoctrination. *The pedagogical approach* to take when young people feel the need to isolate themselves and give their life new direction (including religious) is to pick-up on this while putting a positive, lifeworld-related spin on it ('how will we coexist?'). Often youths

distance themselves as a reaction to negative experiences of not belonging. The opportunity should be seized to reflect on such 'exaggerated' reactions and their negative consequences (for example, self-ethnification or group building). Such a youth can be approached by asking: 'If you don't want people to treat you…'

Rejection of democracy and human rights

Islamist ideologies are not so much concerned with legitimate criticism of individual social phenomenon or political decisions as they are with a general rejection of the idea that 'all power emanates from the people.' For Islamists, God alone is the almighty sovereign. By this logic 'man-made' laws are blasphemous because they put into question God's 'explicit will'. Among youths – Muslim and non-Muslim alike – skepticism vis-à-vis democracy is prevalent for other reasons as well. Especially international politics and human rights have been discredited in their eyes. Many young people argue 'you always bring up human rights when it is actually about power and oil.' This often goes hand in hand with an understanding of democracy that is limited to elections and governing (= 'ruling'): 'Politicians are always calling for democracy yet when Hamas wins an election this is considered unacceptable.' Educators should initially take this legitimate skepticism and the experiences of youths seriously and give them space. Subsequently, they can ponder how one can establish a sustainable coexistence among people with different interests (for example, diverging opinions on justice).

'Us-and-them' and conspiracy theories

What is typical of the Islamist worldview is the tendency to think in homogenous groups: 'Us' and 'them' are juxtaposed as seemingly irreconcilable. This manifests itself, for example, in the suggestion that 'the West' is materialistic, individualistic and hostile toward 'all Muslims'. But this is also demonstrated in the assertion that there is only one Islam, which must be lived (and thought) by all Muslims. This simplistic worldview is also the basis for conspiracy theories, which play an important role in Salafist thought. As with other ideologies that stress a homogenous community while denigrating others, the view of an enduring conspiracy against Muslims is also typical for Islamist worldviews. But one must keep in mind that an affinity for conspiracy theories is relatively prevalent among young people. One shouldn't deduce an Islamist ideologization from this.

III. Behavior
Return to the beginning / Withdrawal and mission

Youths who turn to – or convert to – Salafism often describe this as 'a new beginning'. Their new worldview marks a radical break from their previous lives – a 'zero hour' if you will. This often goes hand in hand with a determined rejection of ideas, interests and orientations that used to be important to them. Often this is a turning away from a lifestyle described as sinful and fuelled by drugs, hanging around aimlessly and lacking discipline. Not infrequently, this pertains to their own family: Youths often accuse

their parents of having adapted to, or having become assimilated into, society and thus no longer being true Muslims. Salafists encourage such departures and also advise young converts not to celebrate Christmas with their families. In fact, their aim is to reduce contact with non-Muslims and to Muslims who espouse different Islamic ideologies, which are considered potentially dangerous. Only a complete withdrawal into one's own community offers 'security'.

Their own comportment in connection with this 'new life' is thus accorded paramount importance and the goal is to lead an exemplary life. In this context, modes of behavior that are demonstratively 'Islamic' play an important role, this includes the strict rejection of alcohol, pork and gambling and the embracing of behavioral norms prescribing how men and women should behave. When young people thus declare that wearing makeup or shaking hands is un-Islamic, it is possible that completely normal search and orientation processes are behind it. But it could also signify an ideologized need to 'return' to a supposedly more authentic, pure form of Islam.

In this context, yet another important feature of Islamist movements should be pointed out, namely the need to persuade others of the correctness of its belief system. In principle, such activities are covered by the principles of freedom of religion and freedom of speech. In Salafism, however, so-called 'dawah' ('invitation to Islam') is considered to be a duty. This can manifest itself in vehement efforts to get others to wear a headscarf, pray or fast.

What is typical for followers of Salafism is that they put social pressure on others, for example, by mobbing fellow students whose comportment they fault.

But: When religious Muslims invite non-Muslims to convert to Islam, this can also be seen as an expression of warmth and friendship. Thus, when Mara tells her friend Samira to fast so she won't go to hell, this is a generally well-meant advice rather than Salafist ideology! A youth who refuses to shake hands can be seen as wanting to put distance between himself and his opposite but it can also be interpreted as a harmless search movement by a young men who wants to highlight the 'small differences' that distinguish him. This complicates things for educational and outreach efforts: A cognitive and reflecting approach that promotes tolerance for ambiguity is in a rather tenuous position vis-à-vis Salafists, whose appeal is more emotional, promising a sense of warmth, security and empowerment.

Conclusion: The phenomena outlined here can indicate Salafist ideology – but do not necessarily do so. And anyway, for prevention purposes this plays only a subordinated role. Indeed, (universal) prevention doesn't react to 'Islamism' or 'Salafism'; instead, it addresses concrete problematic attitudes and modes of behavior. These are 'problematic' when they judge and contradict the norms that are conveyed in pedagogic contexts and in civic education. The teacher should ask his/herself: 'Which concrete value of coexistence is XY violating with his assertion?' This can be discussed one-on-one or within a group ('how do the others view this?').

PREVENTION DOES NOT RESPOND TO 'ISLAMISM' OR 'SALAFISM'

When youths engage in violence and pressure their peers, when other religions, skin colors, ethnicities or 'undesirable' sexual orientations or ways of thinking and living are denigrated, this should entail preventive interventions at the school or youth center in question. This also applies when an absolute claim to truth is made. The task of prevention is to hook into concrete positions and behavior and to initiate a debate on this.

4. How do I recognize Salafist indoctrination and radicalization processes?

Only very few youths and young adults undergo a radicalization process. Such radicalization is at the very end of diverse processes that generally take place over a long period of time. Usually a 'completely normal' and **legitimate quest** for personal identity is at the beginning of any ideologization and – possible – subsequent radicalization. This can be a search for belonging, for example. At an early stage (i.e. when universal prevention can still be effective), a long series of **everyday factors** (family environment, school, social, religious or cultural background, job / career prospects or experiences with discrimination) play a role in terms of what kinds of perspectives and orientations youths develop. If **religion and piety** are – or become – significant as part of this quest, youths frequently have no reference persons in the family,

school or mosque from whom they can get satisfying answers to their questions.

In the light of this circumstance, the **Internet** takes on a central role at the beginning of almost every ideologization process. Almost inevitably, youths will come across Salafist propaganda targeted at their concerns in connection with religion or their sense of alienation and disenfranchisement. Salafists offer their own specific message while presenting simplistic answers and solutions to complex issues. This is where a young person's sense of uprootedness and discontent is met with an explanation and incorporated into a **worldview**: I'm not the only one who is affected. This **ideology** names the culprits of my plight or the plight of all Muslims. During this stage of Salafist indoctrination, **personal contacts** play an important role. This can be a religious community, Salafist preachers and mentors or individuals in connection with seminars on Salafist-brand Islam.

Indeed, direct contacts generally play a crucial role in the radicalization process. Youths join peer groups and their indoctrination is reinforced as they become part of a **community**. Others approve of and harden their views and this mutual encouragement leads to a conviction that it is time to take action – not just for the youth's personal salvation but also for the collective on whose behalf they allege to act. Oftentimes concrete events such as a political

grievance related to global affairs or problems in one's own life, serve as the **trigger** – the straw that breaks the camel's back.

In the case of youths and young adults who take the step from a readiness to commit acts of violence to actually taking action (by joining ISIS, for example), there are usually additional **personal factors** involved. This can include: traumatic family experiences, violence in their upbringing, perceiving experiences made by their parents as humiliating, fathers who are mentally or physically absent or a sense of having no future, alienation or non-belonging. All of this can engender **frustrations and a sense of powerlessness** that can be vented with anger, aggression and violence. (This is comparable to the motives of someone who is running amok: Wanting – for once in one's life – to turn the tables on society, being on top of things and having the desire to make others feel insignificant). This also goes with a **naïve thirst for adventure and a desire for self-efficacy** among youths and young adults who are fascinated by the idea of playing an important role in the establishment of a new society, a new world as promised by Salafist **propaganda**.

Possible signs of indoctrination and radicalization:

• Is an individual espousing extreme religious views – even vis-à-vis other Muslims? Or is this merely provocation (also by breaching taboos) and attention-seeking?

• Does this individual take a closed worldview? Or is he simply engaged in ideological experimentation?

• Is the youth gravitating away from family and old friends from sports clubs and the like and calling them infidels (kuffar)? Or is he just trying out new peer groups, youth scenes and cliques?

• Is the youth abandoning his previous lifestyle and denigrating it? Is he closing himself off? Who are his new friends, the new group? Which Internet sites is he interested in?

• Is this new affiliation also visible physically – growing a beard, wearing a caftan, shortened pants, camouflage or (among women) a full veil?

Please note: This type of behavior can – but doesn't necessarily – point to indoctrination or radicalization. Generally there is no need to worry unless the individual in question has modified their behavior on several fronts at once.

Die wahre Religion
Mannheim Gestern

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IV. HOW CAN PREVENTION SUCCEED?

Our focus here is on universal, or primary, prevention aimed at sensitizing youths to views that are hostile to freedom and democracy in the run-up to any potential indoctrination processes. The idea is to prevent Salafist indoctrination by means of civic education and youth work under specific conditions and portents, in other words, directed at specific needs, issues and target groups. Questions concerning religion, piety and belonging are raised and play a central role in these efforts. The following suggestions and advice fundamentally apply both to schools and to youth outreach programs – even though there will be considerable differences in terms of the hands-on work and the possibilities given. It is up to you, the educators, to source and draw on suitable content, formats, methods and materials in addition to what is presented here.

The overriding goal of prevention work comes down to motivating youths in heterogeneous groups to think about this central question: 'How do we want to live?' It is critical that they develop independent thinking skills that equip them to form own opinions and defend these. In our experience this makes youths immune to the simplistic offerings and worldviews espoused by Salafism and other fundamentalist ideologies. Specifically, we want to single out the following objectives: Promoting integration as a mutual process; addressing hostility to Islam and recognizing experiences with racism and discrimination; developing value-oriented positions among youths; fostering the ability of one's charges to tolerate and respect diversity, plurality and ambiguity; sensitizing them to simplistic worldviews and concepts of 'the enemy' (i.e. the 'evil West') and especially also to Islamist views that are contrary to our basic freedoms.

1. Prerequisites for successful prevention work

- *Educators* in schools and youth facilities should *strictly avoid us-and-them discourses*. Islam and Muslims must be acknowledged as an integral part of Germany – especially the young people who, for the most part, were born in Germany. The language used should be inclusive and Islamophobia should be addressed and challenged wherever it manifests itself.

- All *religions*, piety and Islam *should be met with openness*. In other words, steer clear of the attitude that 'religion is the opium of the people'. Ideally, educators should have 'an ear for religion'. Youths for whom religion is important thus won't have to go on the defensive from which they can only be 'retrieved' with difficulty.

- Encounters with Muslims / migrants and dealing with *diversity*, religion and piety is already a natural part of pedagogical work.

- Conflicts and specific religion-based

'problematic' positions and behavior by youths must not be used as a catalyst event for launching debates. Instead, such problems should be taken up as part of the ongoing prevention work in a neutral, *occasion-independent* way.

- During prevention work, or in dealing with 'problematic' views, it is important to *sensitively deal* with the topic at hand and to use terms such as Islamism in a reserved way. Educators are aware of the pitfalls and specific problems.

2. Specific problems of pedagogical work in this thematic field

- Youths could get the impression that Islam and Muslims are a 'problem'. (In the light of public discussions this impression can come about quickly.)

- Youths could get the impression that they are being lectured (about religion or problems with their religion) or that attempts are being made to change them.

- Educators have a hard time engaging in open discussions with youths (for example, because they are rejected as 'being German').

- Educators have difficulty in dealing with and countering specific arguments made by youths (for example, by youths who have been trained in ideological and religious argumentation).

- Educators have a hard time differentiating between positions that are indeed problematic, those that are mere provocations and expressions of genuine piety.

- Educators are unsure of what stance to assume (on issues of religion, for example). What role does it play in the youth center? In my own work? How do I react to it?

3. Anti-Muslim sentiment and racism

Addressing discrimination experiences and the sensitization of youths for the various forms of discrimination should always be an essential aspect of educational work. And based on our experiences, this is particularly necessary for successful preventive work.

Suffering disadvantages when looking for an apartment or work, attacks on mosques, skepticism and rejection with regard to Islam and Muslims, physical attacks – Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism are real problems. Across all demographic groups, there is a perception that Muslims are a *problem group*. Anti-Islamic and racist remarks are not found exclusively among notorious haters of Islam. They pop up almost everywhere Muslims are talked or written about. Young Muslims are troubled by this. They have a need to process experiences, not just with personal discrimination but also with the discrimination suffered by their parents. And, of course, they also have a need to talk about worries in terms of their job and career prospects. Occasionally this worry turns to anger. Some Muslims put blanket blame for this discrimination on *the state,* on *politicians,* on *the media* or on *German society*. But what they often overlook is the fact that obviously not all non-Muslims in Germany are hostile to Islam or racist. When the disappointment and anger of young Muslims is instrumentalized by Islamist propaganda, real experiences and ideological interpretive schemes are consolidated into resolute enemy images.

According to these, Muslims are a group that is threatened from all sides and forced to defend itself against hostilities and racism; if need be using violence. Painting themselves as the victims of societal resentment, however, prevents active and constructive engagement against discrimination.

When dealing with discrimination, resentment and unease in a pedagogical context – but also with anger and aggression – one must proceed with caution. Of foremost importance here it to listen and to show genuine interest. Some of the things they say may tempt you to shout out: 'No, that's not true!' But it is only by taking note of their unease, fear and anger – and also acknowledging it – that we can expect them to take the second step and question their own black-and-white thinking. In this connection, it makes sense to convey Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism as a variety of group-based hostility. Once these young people understand that the different types of discrimination (sexism, discrimination against handicapped individuals, homophobia and anti-Semitism, for example) function based on similar mechanisms, they also start to deal with their own prejudices in a self-critical way. Be sure to point out the various opportunities for taking action against discrimination and provide examples of positive engagement against discrimination.

4. Pedagogical content: Signaling recognition and acceptance

Educators often want compelling arguments and concrete information on what action to take so that they can work effectively. But expert knowledge and debates that are conducted using a purely cognitive model of argumentation and a methodological toolbox do not lead to the key objective in prevention, namely the sharing and exchanging of ideas and the fostering of independent thinking. The discursive approach recommended here can be described on two levels: On the one hand, it is about the curricular content of pedagogical work; on the other hand it is about the stance taken by the teachers themselves. We'll start with some information on the curricular content of pedagogical practice:

- Give the youths *space* to share and exchange ideas amongst themselves on matters concerning their identity, belonging, ancestry and religion. As far as possible, avoid intervening yourself.

- Make the *diversity* of the youths in your group a subject for discussion. They come from diverse homes in terms of their background, their parents' jobs, degrees of religiousness and lifeworlds. Obviously this also applies to Muslims within the group. The label 'Muslim' does not usually even begin to describe most of them. Highlighting this diversity can promote respectful interaction and protect youths from stereotypes and ideologies of inequality and collective identity.

- Signal your *acceptance* to them and strengthen their *sense of belonging*. This is anything but a matter of course for youths with a migration background. By adding thematic priorities to some of the subjects taught at school, it is possible to highlight the fact that these youths, along with their religions, cultures and backgrounds, are an integral part of this country (for example, by examining their parents' regional and biographical backgrounds, the Middle East Conflict or the Turkish Süper Lig). Don't *culturalize* the behavior of your students: Often their behavior is influenced more by their social milieu than by their parents' religion or native culture.

- Draw on the youths' *lifeworlds*. Discussions in which youths think on their own are more likely if they are about everyday questions and issues that interest them. Discussions about the theft of a mobile phone in the classroom, on the most popular YouTube videos, sexuality or the question: 'How would you raise your children?' offer a good opportunity for this. Ideally, educators will just moderate the discussions and not guide them.

- The topic of *'justice'*, in other words, questions dealing with right and wrong concern young people. Not surprisingly, the desire for justice is also something that radical voices seize upon. Youths' sensitivity with regard to injustices and their empathy with victims are strong resources that can be used by teachers

in their preventive work. In the process, youths learn that there are no easy answers. Differing views of what is considered 'just' must be tolerated. This also encompasses the notion of 'empowerment', namely, being engaged and committed for one's convictions and interests.

- *Religion* is a subject that concerns many youths in one way or another, yet even though educators could make a real difference here, they shirk from it. For one thing, they could simply acknowledge religiousness. Or they could steer discussions on rituals (praying and fasting, for example) and rules, to values which

are necessarily also part of Islam (tolerance, compassion, social responsibility etc) – but which usually do not get mentioned right off. This can help promote a value orientation and underline the common ground between the various religions and worldviews. One could also address the diversity in the ways of thinking and living within Islam and among Muslims. Indeed, youths are quite aware of this.

- If possible (instruction material can support you in this) you can point out the *compatibility of Islam, democracy and modern society*. Our experience shows that more than just a few Muslim

QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE USED TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS

'Do all of you share the same opinion? Do you know Muslims who take a different view?'

'In your opinion, what is 'a good Muslim'?'

'In what areas of our lives are there a lot of rules? What purpose do they serve? What are the values behind these rules?'

'Why do you comply with some rules more strictly than with others?'

'What rules would you like to have at our school / in our society?'

'What do you wish for your children? How would you raise your children?'

Please note: Educators are not supposed to provide any answers here. They are not supposed to lecture students but rather show interest and respect the opinions expressed by their students. Your questions are not aimed at changing anything – even rituals and rules are not to be put into question. Young people sense when this happens and respond by withdrawing from the discussion. The goal is to get your students to reflect and to bring about a change in perspective, but initially without ranking or judging their positions.

youths are caught up in a conflict of loyalty. It is frequently suggested to them – both at home in their communities and in the public sphere via schools, politics and the media – that they can only be either Muslim and conscious of their roots or democratic and German. When recognition is signaled to them and it is made clear that they can indeed be both, you can sometimes literally see that a burden has been lifted from their shoulders.

• Cultivating *critical media competencies* could go a long way toward prevention. There are formats and materials that are available to help with this. Sensitizing youths especially vis-à-vis Salafist propaganda could be used as an example for debating ideologically-shaped characterizations in the media. Dealing with the portrayal of violence could constitute another possible topic.

• Terms and *catchwords* from public discussions should only be used cautiously if at all. Far too often, the use of such terms (for example 'Islam' and 'Islamism') leaves the impression on Muslims that their religion is largely perceived as a problem in terms of violence and terrorism.

• *At schools*, too, faculties need to be sensitized and their ability to take action should be boosted. Teacher training measures should be scheduled and time should be set aside for the staff to share experiences and exchange advice. Making sure that there is unambiguous, value-oriented (!) clarity in terms of the rules, basic rights and legal requirements is also helpful. Moreover, the practice of imparting democratic values at school should be strengthened in general; and ideas on how to involve parents and students in the prevention work should be mulled over. Fundamentally, the initiatives and attitudes of school administrations play a big role in the development of such skills, in fact, they are crucial for effective educational and preventive work.

MATERIALS AND METHODS / FORMATS FOR PEDAGOGICAL WORK

In collaboration with the Hamburg University of Applied Science (HAW), ufuq.de put together a German-language **film package** titled: *'How do we want to live?' Films and materials for pedagogical practice with regard to Islam, Islamophobia, Islamism and democracy.* The films cover the following topics: Identity and belonging, Islam, Sharia and basic rights, anti-Islamic hostility, media competency and empowerment; anti-Semitism, gender roles, Salafism and jihadism.

Current information, materials and methods for pedagogical practice can also be found on our **website** *www.ufuq.de.*

5. Pedagogical attitudes: Dialogue instead of confrontation

The **attitude of educators** and how they approach their students is often crucial for their ability to impart their message. Indeed, youths are very sensitive. It is the pedagogical encounter rather than the pedagogical intent that engenders pedagogically-fruitful discussions. Generally speaking, it is the common sense that informs the pedagogical work with youths of migrant backgrounds that makes preventive work effective. The principles of the **Beutelsbacher Konsens** for civic education thus apply: Educators shouldn't overpower their charges by forcing their opinions on them. Educators should keep their opinions to themselves and let students make up their own minds when it comes to controversial issues. Moreover, educators should adopt a student-based / lifeworld-orientation in the classroom.

The objective is to get youths to communicate with one another, to motivate them to think independently and to sensitize them to the dangers of stereotypes, simplistic answers and enemy images. This can best be achieved by **adopting an attitude that is open, interested, devoted, inquiring and critically-questioning**. It is not about cognitive learning processes and the exchanging of arguments. It is not about rebutting, moralizing or convincing students and making them feel like you want to change them. For this reason, educators merely initiate and moderate the discussions. Initially, their task is simply to listen and to have the **courage and patience** to allow the youths to express their convictions, positions and interests.

Educators should avoid personally countering views that are controversial and worthy of criticism. They should put their **trust in the group** and in the discussion process. ('What do you think about what XY just said?', 'How do the others see this?', 'Is anyone else familiar with this?').

'The process that takes place between these young people and me is not that different from our joint efforts at interpreting a poem by Goethe: If I can't comprehend and identify with the feelings of my students, I won't be able to respect them either. And if I can't respect them, I'm not a good teacher. The effectiveness of my contribution toward terrorism prevention is demonstrated not in how determinedly I reject violence but rather in how open-mindedly I am prepared to become engaged in my **students' points of view**. It is only by getting to this point first that I can walk down the difficult path leading to the moral issues that are involved.'

From: Kurt Edler, Was heißt pädagogische Islamismus-Prävention? 2009

This process can be promoted by means of **creative inquiry**, envisioning the consequences ('What would be the consequences if we did things the way XY suggests?') or posing questions on the future or their desires ('How would you do things?', 'What should it be like?'). But critical and confrontational questions can also be on the table: 'I don't agree with what you said but what makes you think so?' Approaching the discussion this way allows talking about mobbing, contemptuous remarks and insults, defamation or group-based hostility without letting specific religious or cultural backgrounds play a role.

Do not be too rash in saying: '**Yes, but…**' This is something that we all do all too often. Say 'yes' to the positions taken by the youths either because you share their views or because you are interested in them. Stick with this 'yes'. Ask questions because you want to find out more. Hold back your 'but' for as long as possible. Wait until their positions lead to the *legitimization of violence, ideologies, debasement* and *'claims to truth'* during the course of the conversation before you intervene. And do this, as far as possible, by involving the group. ('What do the others think?') Youths sense an authentic 'yes' and appreciate the respectful way you encounter them and their thoughts. They will be much more willing to accept a 'but' and to reflect on other opinions, or change their perspective, on this basis.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD III

Several Muslim students at a college-preparatory school in Hamburg adamantly voiced their demand for a **prayer room**. After some back and forth the school administration agreed to establish a 'quiet room' for all students to use. Even those students who demanded the prayer room agreed with this. At the end of the first two weeks, none of the students went to this room to pray anymore. The issue had not been, as it turns out, about prayer. The prayer room was just a symbol, a putting to the test of the school's willingness to accommodate and take seriously the special considerations of these youths.

A group of youths was up in arms about **'the media'** which they accused of being responsible for the negative image of Islam and Muslims in Germany thanks to their unfair and biased reporting. The group found examples of this, their outrage grew and everyone felt deeply affected. This continued for several minutes – all media outlets are useless and unfair. The teacher kept out of the discussion apart from ensuring that everyone had a chance to voice their opinion. After a while, one student remarked: 'Wait a minute, isn't what we're doing now the exact same thing that we are accusing the media of?'

Not only should educators encourage students to **change their perspective** ('how would it be for you / you guys if…?'), they should also change their own perspectives as often as possible. Statements such as 'Oh yes, I'd never thought of that before…' can have a dramatic effect in encouraging youths to open up. This **openness** by educators should also extend to religiousness. Many educators have no real connection with religions and faith; they often encounter religion with a degree of skepticism and try to 'enlighten' their students. Whether they are religious or not, students often consider such an attitude as disrespectful and non-accepting. It forces them to assert themselves and often unhelpful, antagonistic relationships ensue. By giving **recognition** to religion, different cultures and origins, on the other hand, you send a very helpful signal that could form the basis for discussions on important questions connected with their search for personal identity, spiritual guidance seeking etc.

Try to encounter even extremely **provocative** views as an **invitation to talk**. Even though this is difficult, it shouldn't necessarily be taken personally when a student

describes his teacher as 'immoral'. Often legitimate frustration, resentment and protest are behind such behavior, even though it is expressed in an inappropriate and hard to tolerate manner. One should react by focusing one's interest on the content of such an outburst, which generally has nothing to do with Salafism, rather than its form. While this may be hard to stomach – there's no way around it.

THE GRASS WON'T GROW FASTER JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE PULLING ON IT

For educators, a dose **humility** is something that can often go a long way. When you are being confronted with provocative opinions and behavior, your first question should always be: 'What is the actual message behind this provocation?' And thereafter you could ask yourself: 'In what way could I personally – or the school – be partly responsible for such behavior?' What kind of change could we effect in the future?' However, often the answers to such questions will be outside of your direct influence. This is the case, for example, where youths come from difficult family situations and are forced to find their way in an immigrant society that makes it difficult for them to fit in. In such cases the dynamic that comes from a difficult familial situation or social conditions, but also the behavior of affected individuals, could prove to be 'bigger' than you are. And there's no point in running into walls. After all, neither can nor should you try to change the youths, their families or even the world. But you can offer help and gain their confidence in the process.

6. Overview: Topics, objectives and recommendations for pedagogical practice

Below we offer a selection of objectives that you can set up and topics you can treat in the course of your (preventive) pedagogical work. We are merely offering recommendations for action. Concrete methods for implementation, such as gallery walks, role play, questions for discussions, dilemma exercises or tests and group work should be designed based on the group / class composition and the issues at hand *(for relevant material see page 65f).*

Goal	Recommendation for action
Empowerment: Recognition of the normalcy of Islam and students' identity as German Muslims; acceptance of Islam and Muslims as an integral part of Germany	• Take up in a positive way religious issues and positions • Recognition of religiousness as a resource • Make the origin / personal background / the achievements of students' parents the subject of discussion and show recognition and appreciation.
Reflections on values and religious beliefs	• Give space to religion and religious beliefs (in secular contexts as well). • Religion is a matter of faith: Don't criticize religious attitudes as such, don't aim to change things, motivate the students to think. • Promote value orientation to underscore commonalities rather than differences: religious and non-religion based orientations often pursue the same values and norms which should be 'translated' and illustrated in a way that is close to the students' lifeworlds. • The students discuss which values are important to them, which values are important to Islam and which ones are fundamental for a democracy? Where is the common ground?

Goal	Recommendation for action
Giving youths a forum to talk about their experiences with discrimination	• Recognize their experiences with discrimination and alienation as well as acknowledge that there is hostility to Islam in society as well as anti-Muslim racism: Address these issues and give them space. • Point out courses for action (discussing this at school, counseling services, legal options, bringing media attention to these issues). • Sensitize students to the risk that victimhood can turn into an ideology and generate an enemy image ('the West' or 'all non-Muslims'). • Question: At what point does legitimate criticism overstep and risk turning into ideology and enemy images?
Sensitizing students to positions that are hostile to democracy and basic freedoms; sensitizing students to group-focused enmity	• Deal – in a way that is lifeworld-relevant – with the various forms of group-focused enmity; Islamophobia and Salafism are two of the many manifestations. • Question: What consequence does the resulting behavior have on our coexistence (in the classroom, schools, facilities, neighborhoods and society)? • Guiding question: 'How do we want to live?', 'What can we do so that everyone feels safe and happy?'
Promote media competency	• Analyze the broad range of media: Are they all the same? Who reports in which way? What reasons could there be for this? • Practice working with sources (especially the Internet): How are opinions formed? What do we believe? Where does information come from? Is there one truth or differing perspectives? • Invite journalists to discuss: 'How does media work?'

Goal	Recommendation for action
Reflect on rules, norms, dos and don'ts	• Question: What are the rules, norms and dos? How do you deal with them in your lives? Which of them are more important to you than others? Why? • Who determines which rules are valid? Who makes sure that they are observed? Is this fair?
Promoting a tolerance of ambiguity	• Justice is an important topic for many youths. But there are differing opinions as to what is considered just: Based on lifeworld-near examples (for example, theft of a cellphone in class), youths debate what they consider just in the classroom. • What do religion or non-religion-based ideas prescribe? How do the courts rule?
Reflecting on gender roles	• More in-depth information on gender roles and norms: Is it important to you to be especially masculine or feminine? Who decides what is masculine or feminine? • Questions concerning the future in connection with role models: How would you raise your children? • Discuss various ideas of 'honor', 'pride' and 'respect' … Do fear and violence play a role?
Reflecting on politics, society and international developments	• Discuss current news that is of importance to youths as part of a 'current news hour'. • Offer differentiated depictions of complex relationships (using different perspectives) without trying to determine whose 'fault' it is (for example, Middle East Conflict). • Question: What possibilities are there (for us) to take influence?

Goal	Recommendation for action
Reflecting on war and violence	• Questions and topics: Which wars are currently being waged in the world? What are these wars about? What role does religion play? How are wars depicted by the warring parties?
Sensitizing youths to the backgrounds and motives of Islamist players	• Provide background information: Who are the groups? Which – and whose – interests are they pursuing? • Initiate discussion: What are the consequences?
Introducing alternatives to Islamist ideology into the discussion, propose ways to give meaning to life and highlight possibilities to participate	• Discuss the diversity of Muslim life. • Point out lifeworld-relevant role models. • Introduce religious and non-religious initiatives into the discussion that enable participation, community and engagement (local, regional, global).

7. A formula for all eventualities

The following six steps can help guide you in the event that your students are espousing opinions of which you cannot be sure whether they are based on legitimate protest, targeted provocation or ideologized propaganda.

Step 1:
Do not relate positions and conflicts with culture, Islam or Islamism! Do not ask yourself what the ‚problematic‘ positions and behavior adopted by the youths in your care might have to do with Islam, their culture or Islamism.

Step 2:
Ask yourself instead:
a) What is the real issue here? What is the real issue that is concealed behind the superficial topic?
b) How might I personally (or the school / youth facility / society) have contributed to such types of behavior?

Step 3:
Say ‚yes‘, be open and show interest for the concerns of youths (even if these are voiced in a provocative manner) and give the youths enough space and time to set out their views and perspectives and share/exchange ideas.

Step 4:
Do not intervene unless you are confronted with disparaging comments, claims to absolute truth and anti-pluralistic opinions or assertions that are hostile to basic freedoms and they are not contradicted by the group.

Step 5:
Ask the students about their ideas and what they want in terms of the various topics discussed (‘How do we want to live?’)

Step 6:
If we succeed in having a proper group discussion on this topic, this means that we are doing a good job that we can be proud of.

8. Checklist: Dealing with cases of ideologization at school or youth centers

The main focus of this guidebook is in preventing Salafist indoctrination. As part of your pedagogical work, you will tend to have to deal 'only' with 'problematic' positions and provocations or with ideological fragments. You can use the mentioned information, approaches and methods to deal with this. There may, however, be a gradual, fluent transition to actual Salafist ideologization. What do I do if I find out that a student regularly surfs Salafist websites? How do I react to students from my class who start to take up and follow Salafist positions? Here one should ask: 'How advanced is this youth's indoctrination?

What can we do about it?' What follows is a checklist that you can consult for orientation. We consider it essential that you consult with fellow educators and discuss the course of joint action to take with students at real risk of radicalization. But these efforts too are not yet what can be considered 'deradicalization efforts'. During the course of an internal debate on the case, it should be examined whether it might make sense to involve external facilities and agencies and have them approach the endangered individual and launch a deradicalization process.

1. Take position
Filter what you see through the eyes of an educator. We see boys and girls in need of help (not dangerous terrorists). Keep in touch with the troubled youth and signal to them that you continue to accept him as a person even though you do not share his opinions. Inquire about the ideals and motives behind the positions and worldview the student has espoused – but without judging them. If applicable, share his concern for suffering and inequality but initially without dragging the deduced ideologies into the picture.

2. Examine the content ('What is going on?')
By carrying out a 'behavior and position update', the involved players (the faculty, for example) could share their experiences with regard to a specific case at hand.

a) What kind of problematic behavior has occurred, which particular positions have been put forth?

b) What can be said of how the student reacted when confronted about his behavior (successful or failed intervention)?

c) Analysis: Which (personal) motives are behind this 'problematic' behavior? (For example, provocation or ideology; family; protest…).

3. First phase of action

Approaching the student and taking measures to protect the group (class, peers):

a) Depending on the results of the analysis, measures (approaching the student personally or group work on specific topics) can be taken and implemented by individual, involved players. Realistic and verifiable goals should be defined and agreed on.

b) In the course of the measures taken/ appeals launched, a dialogue should be opened up to assess the willingness (openness) of the youth in question (see above). This work should relate directly to the youth's behavior and positions espoused. On an ideological level, the objective might be to rattle and unsettle the individual with regard to positions he has adopted.

4. Examination phase

Analysis of the results of the appeal/measures taken: Are there any visible results?

a) Would a continuation of the measures adopted be expedient?

b) Should the measures be supplemented? For example, by involving experts from the local network? This could be a specialist on Islamist ideology, psychologists, Imams and other authorities or persons of trust (family member, sports coach etc).

5. Second phase of action

During the second phase, auxiliary measures involving external experts can be introduced, carried out and assessed.

Please note: In some cases, it may be justified and prudent to involve relevant counseling centers, the police or local mosque communities if they are not already players in the network. They might be able to make a more accurate assessment as to how far the ideologization process has already progressed; or judge in which circles (environment, clubs, Internet) the youth is active. This step should be made, for example, when the youth explicitly turns his back on his family, having denounced them as 'infidels' or if the youth in question speaks about other Muslims, mosques or preachers in an extremely demeaning way or espouses genuine (not just provocative) sympathy for violent groups… Seeking help from outside is also necessary to protect yourself (or your institution). After all, you might be out of your depth with this individual. A relationship of trust, which is ideally established before problems and conflicts arise, is important for successful collaboration with external support services and players in the network.

9. Case studies: Exercise on prevention and encounter

I. Praying together during Ramadan

At a youth center that is frequented by youths of Arab and Turkish ancestry (about 50 percent) but also by youths of German extraction (the other half), a group of five adolescents approaches the program assistant to ask whether it might be possible to organize communal prayer during the upcoming month of Ramadan. This would take place on the center's soccer field. Some of the youths making the request have been regulars at the youth center for years. One particular youth, the one who initiated the idea for communal prayer sessions, just recently joined and the supervisors barely know him.

Think about the following aspects:

• What are the pros in accommodating this desire?

• What are the cons?

• Design a scenario for a solution.

• What are the opportunities, the difficulties and the risks that present themselves?

II. Phases of transformation
Source: LI-Hamburg

An apprentice of legal age at a vocational school attracts attention with a change in his physical appearance (beard growth, long gown) and by trying to convert his peers to Islam. During lessons he often steers the conversation to religious issues and makes connections to global (political) events. His classmates have informed the instructor that this young man not only practices martial arts with peers but also takes part in paramilitary training.

Several months after graduation, the instructor sees a photo of him in the newspaper. He reads that this young man went to Syria where he died as a member of an Islamist group of combatants.

Your task: What possibilities do teachers and schools have to prevent this kind of development? Focus your thoughts especially on what measures could be taken during the various phases of radicalization.

V. WHAT DOES THE QURAN SAY?

Educators are often asking about proof or quotes from religious sources so that they can use them in their work with young people. While this may be an option, it is, above all, risky. Time and again, it really depends on just how and with what kind of agenda the Quranic verses or accounts of the Prophet Muhammad (Hadith) are applied:

Are they supposed to serve as proof for a certain position? Should the positions and convictions of these young people be changed through their use? In this case, please do not use Quranic verses! You are an educator, not a theologian (and usually not even Muslim). These verses are embedded within a specific context; simple wisdoms and truths cannot be asserted by means of these verses – this is only done by fundamentalists. Young people will sense that you are trying to change them and will thus more likely withdraw or go on the defensive, something that can also lead to a senseless surah or verse 'ping-pong match'.

When these youths therefore justify their opinions with quotes from the Quran and the Sunnah (Hadith), you can open a conversation with the group about the possible meanings: What could have been meant by this? How could the meaning of a particular verse be different in another context? How can this statement be interpreted with regard to the different circumstances in your students' lifeworld? Should you decide to use quotes from the Quran or the Sunnah, do so sensibly and only to stimulate reflection, for joint reflection and to jointly gauge a situation. 'Look here, this is a verse from the Quran that might have something to do with our topic. What do you think?' There is no learning goal; the only objective is to encourage discussions among young people.

We wish to point out that we will not provide a selection of quotes from the Quran or the Sunnah as part of this brochure. If you wish to look up some for yourself, in the Internet for instance, please be sure to thoroughly review the choices you have made.

VI. UFUQ.DE: WORK AND OFFERINGS

Prevention brings itself to bear in the run-up to any potential ideologization; it aims to sensitize, protect, strengthen and motivate young people. In our experience this succeeds best when we offer spaces for them in which they can think things over and enter into conversations with one another. Here they learn to develop own aspirations and to formulate own opinions. This gives adolescents an opportunity to tangibly experience plurality in politics and society and also teaches them how to deal with the impositions involved. Our experience shows: If young people develop own perspectives and standpoints – particularly in terms of religion – ideological indoctrination efforts, and those who are behind them, lose their appeal.

With this goal in mind, *ufuq.de* offers **teamer workshops** for young people in the schools and youth facilities of several cities. We train young teamers (usually having a migrant background and being more or less religious) for this purpose. In these workshops teamers work with short films that were specially produced by ufuq.de in collaboration with the Technical University of Applied Sciences in Hamburg (see page 39). The teamers work with young people as part of so-called 'project days' or during regular school instruction (a minimum of three 2-hour sessions). The advantages offered by such short-term interventions: We can reach a large number of adolescents. And, within this relatively short period of time, very important impulses can be given. By means of the films, the methods used and, not least, the teamers themselves, young people experience new things ('I've never seen a Muslim like that before!' 'It's great to finally have had a chance to talk freely about these topics…'). The workshops also stimulate young people to think about things on their own and engage in conversations with others. This alone goes a long way to protecting them from simple worldviews and enemy images. As a result, self-professed 'class spokesmen' or ringleaders in youth groups lose their 'air supremacy' in matters of religion. The workshops are effective, on the one hand, because they place special emphasis on questions and topics that concern young people in terms of religion and belonging. On the other hand, the workshops also follow a universal preventative approach (i.e. value-oriented civic education). These preventive efforts thus also work in mixed groups: Non-Muslims come see Islam and Muslims in a new light ('maybe the idea of jihad should be introduced to Christianity?!') and students can freely discuss their aspirations, values and ideals ('How do we want to live?').

Our teamers are also present in the Internet: In a pilot project with the Robert Bosch Foundation, we are testing how civic education and **youth outreach work** can succeed **online**. Additionally, *ufuq.de* offers **training** for so-called 'multiplicators'.

Nationwide, over 2000 multiplicators from all walks of life have been schooled in this way: From teachers to social workers, from policemen / women to municipal employees and peer educators. *Ufuq.de* is also a **cooperating partner** in various other **initiatives** and **projects** that deal with Islam, Islamophobia and the prevention of Islamism – at the municipal and state levels as well as in EU programs. Most recently we opened a counseling center in Augsburg that will establish networks and provide counseling and training.

Our **portal for education between Islam,** **Islamophobia** and **Islamism** is directed toward educators and other multiplicators from schools and youth work programs (*www.ufuq.de*). Here we provide background information and editorial contributions to current debates that also concern your students. We also offer suggestions, materials and formats for educational practice, for instance, dossiers from the project: 'What are you posting?' *(www. ufuq.de/Publikationen)*

Find out about the latest on *ufuq.de* or our Facebook page.

Since 2007, *ufuq.de* has been carrying out scientific, journalistic and educational work on youth culture, Islam, Islamophobia, Islamism and civic education. The staff members of this Berlin-based association are researchers/experts in the areas of Islam, education and didactics. Our mission is for Islam and Muslims to become accepted as an integral part of Germany, whereby difficult issues and conflicts are not glossed over. Instead, ufuq.de tries to find constructive means to approach and deal with them. For this purpose, the association operates an **Internet portal**, furnishes background information, prepares **materials** and devises methods for educational practice. In selected cities, *ufuq.de* offers **teamer workshops** with young people and **training** for multiplicators across Germany. Additionally, we offer guidance to politicians, the media, communities, schools and youth facilities.

UFUQ-WORKSHOP WITH YOUNGSTERS IN BERLIN

VII. IN THE SPOTLIGHT

On the following pages, we provide information on individual topics and questions that regularly arise in educational work with adolescents and young adults. Discussing these topics is not often easy. In our experience, however, this helps to get a better handle on specific issues and conflicts that have a religious connotation or are related to the migration backgrounds of youths. Usually these young people don't have spaces in which they can talk about precisely such questions as these. Ideologies of the most varied political stripes can find listeners in such a 'vacuum' and this can be dangerous. The following list of topics and questions does not claim to be either systematic or complete.

You can find more information and references to the individual entries in this overview, as well as additional keywords in the glossary to this guide at www.ufuq.de.

Anti-Semitism is widespread in the form of anti-Jewish stereotypes, insults ('you Jew') and demeaning attitudes all the way to conspiracy theories propagated by young people of both German or non-German origin. This occurs, however, in varying degrees of openness, it is usually fragmentary and seldom appears in connection with a coherent anti-Semitic worldview. Such positions are normally not based on religion. In fact, even Salafists usually recognize other monotheistic religions and their prophets in principle, although they do not accord them equal status. In the meantime, however, in radical Islamist or Salafist positions, hatred vis-à-vis Jews is justified on religious grounds. The vast majority of Muslims see this differently, all the more so because interreligious tolerance can also be justified on the basis of the source texts. However, young people often project their own frustrations and feelings of helplessness on 'the Jews'. This is a challenge for educational work, albeit usually not an indication of Salafist indoctrination.

Prayer: This is a topic in many schools and youth facilities. Some schools in Germany try to accommodate the wish to pray to one or many as long as existing rules are not broken. The desire to have a prayer room can be an opportunity for a school or facility to show openness vis-à-vis religious matters or to begin
a discussion about whether – or under what conditions – a room (a 'quiet room' for all, for example) could be provided. In the follow-up to the establishment of such a room, however, the school or facility would be obliged to keep an eye on events surrounding the prayer room. The administration would have to make sure, for instance, that pressure is not brought to bear on those who pray or those who don't pray.

Democracy, human rights, the liberal-democratic constitutional order and the Basic Law are not suitable 'arguments' in debates when they are boldly put forth by teachers. Referring to 'our' democracy or 'our' Basic Law can quickly be understood as being part of an 'us-and-them' discussion. To young people of non-German origin this conveys the sense that they must first render a service, meet conditions and change before they can belong. In educational work, the focus should rather be on the values that are the basis for democracy, human rights and the liberal-democratic constitutional order (but also for Islam and other religions). Ideally, the youths should discover these values for themselves in discussions, based on examples from their everyday lives ('How do we want to live?').

Jihad (Jihadism): It is the so-called 'jihadists,' like those who fight for ISIS or al-Qaeda, who interpret the Islamic concept of 'jihad' (Arabic for 'personal endeavor') as an obligation to spread Islam with violence and to combat non-Muslims or Muslims who think differently. This has contributed considerably to many Muslims and non-Muslims equating jihad with war, violence and terror. However, Islamic theology differentiates between 'lesser' and 'greater' jihad: 'lesser jihad' refers to the military defense of Muslims; 'greater jihad' describes the path to inner perfection taken by an individual on the way to becoming a better human being. For most theologians, 'lesser jihad' hardly plays a role anymore (the commonly used translation 'holy war' is incorrect and does not exist in Islamic theology). As part of our educational work it could be very rewarding to reflect jointly with young people about what it then means to strive to be a good human being (or a good Muslim).

Fasting: This is a regularly explored topic in schools and youth facilities. When children and young people fast they usually do so on their own accord – fasting communally, on the other hand, is akin to an initiation: Those who fast enter the world of adulthood. Under certain circumstances, such as during school leaving examinations at the height of summer or when fasting becomes a competition, it can negatively impact students. Don't hesitate to initiate a discussion among them with regard to the various possible approaches, but without giving them the impression that their religion is being belittled or that you are trying to talk them out of fasting. Thus, when students insist on fasting at school, one shouldn't jump to the conclusion that their parents are behind it (parents are often critical of it) or that it is connected to Salafist ideology in some way. Instead, this behavior should be seen within the context of adolescents who are trying to mark their identity and explore affiliations. If the fasting leads to the repression of fellow students who aren't complying with these religious norms, or who want to interpret them differently, the school or facility must react.

Gender Roles: The percentage of women in the Salafist scene is somewhere between 20 and 30 percent. Girls and young women are also among those who have travelled to Syria and Iraq in recent years to support ISIS. In fact, recruitment efforts have

increasingly targeting them for some time now. The appeal for young girls could be the 'role security' that they can expect, but also the possibility of being active within the Salafist network and contributing to the success of the 'project'. This can boost their self-esteem and help them demand respect. The Salafist worldview, though, accords a specific position to girls and women and a role that is not equal to that of men. Salafist gender roles thus often dovetail with the non-Salafist notions of masculine and feminine held in many traditional milieus. Role models and questions relating to the upbringing of boys and girls can be addressed in educational work. In general, young people want to discuss this but they do not want to be either 'converted' or mobilized against their parents.

'Haram' and **'Halal'** are religious terms that are also frequently used by young Muslims. In a nutshell, the former term denotes something that is religiously prohibited / improper while the later refers to proper behavior. In the Salafist dualistic world view, this fixation on categories serves to prescribe clear and unambiguous answers and directions. In this way, a certain behavior or thing is either 'good' or 'evil'. Deviations or 'violations' are seen as 'un-Islamic' and, in extreme cases, arms are taken up against this. Theologically-speaking, this narrow view ignores the variety, the ambiguity and the need for interpretation of the values and norms prescribed in the religious sources and practiced by Muslims in their everyday lives. So when young people speak in such categories, Salafist ideology is usually not involved. Instead, this tends to reflect a search for orientation. It opens up the possibility of thinking about values and norms and stimulates **questions on ethics and morals** that also play a big role in Salafist propaganda. Legitimate criticism of phenomena such as materialism, media and drug consumption, sexual permissiveness or egotism, which are also common among young people, is validated on religious grounds by the Salafists and ideologized. From this they construe an image of a 'godless' society ravaged by moral decay. This is then juxtaposed with their vision of a 'godly' community. Topics like this can play an important role in educational work. Young people are more than prepared to talk about this. And, in this context, it should be made clear that there can be no easy answers to the question: 'How do we want to live?'

Homophobia: This is widespread among adolescents with or without a migrant background. The motives for homophobia, as a form of group-focused enmity, are diverse and often have more to do with education than with religion or other culturally-specific traits. Blatant homophobia is, however, more common in milieus in which traditional values and norms regarding family and sexuality dominate. And not infrequently, this attitude is also religiously-validated here. As part of the pedagogical work, the different ideas of morality and sexuality should be discussed along with the norms of coexistence, as long as no one is the group is offended or excluded.

Internet: This is one of the most important fields of action for Salafism. Young people in search of answers for everyday questions regarding Islam very quickly wind up on sites operated by Salafist players. And these are often more appealingly designed than websites run by established Islamic associations. This applies also to jihadist propaganda, which tries to mobilize youths by promising community, adventure and participation in the establishment of a new, just society. Frequently young people don't recognize the problematic nature of the various outreach efforts by Salafists. Critical media competency should thus be part of the standard civic education curriculum, not just in connection with Salafism.

Islam and democracy / Sharia and basic rights are, of course, compatible – even if fundamentalists deny this. For millions of Muslims who were born in Germany this functions nicely. Islam doesn't prescribe a system of government nor does it prescribe a set of laws that hold their validity unchanged for all times. The wording of the original sources is unchanged – people are commissioned to interpret and implement it. Accordingly, sharia is not a legal code but rather the entirety of the values and norms prescribed in the sources (Quran and Sunnah). Compliance with these bring people closer to God (sharia = Arab for 'the way to the watering place / to God'). Islam prescribes to Muslims the values of mercy, mutual social responsibility and justice, yet you'll search in vain for information with regard to the top tax rate; here people are supposed to arrive at their own conclusions based on the prescribed guiding principles. For the pedagogical work it is of great importance to avoid questioning the compatibility of Islam and democracy. This is what Salafists do and what is done often enough in the media and political debate.

Islam and violence: 'Islam' must sort out its relationship with violence. This assertion was heard over and over following the terrorist attack against the Charlie Hebdo offices. In reality, the vast majority of Islamic theologians and scholars have already spoken out against violence in the name of Islam again and again. And 99 % of Muslims across the globe have long since clarified their relationship to violence. This does not exclude the possibility that militant movements regularly hijack Islam for their own particular interpretation and agenda. The various justifications for violence could be turned into a topic for pedagogical work and used to sensitize young people to the propaganda of jihadists and other violence prone ideologies.

Islam and tradition: Oftentimes adolescents will say: 'that's what is said in the Quran' when they are asked any number of questions, for example, when it comes to gender roles. But actually a more fitting statement would be: 'that's how we do things'. Indeed, most adolescents know little about their religion. Indeed, more likely they come from families where conservative, traditional norms and modes of behavior predominate – often justified and reinforced via religion. Our pedagogical efforts focus on motivating young people to think on their own ('how do we want to live?'). The objective

is learning to accept ideas that don't correspond with one's own ideas ('we don't see things the way they are; we see things the way we are'). And adolescents should never be made to feel like one is trying to change them. Indeed, many youths manage to perform well and fulfill expectations on several fronts and lifeworlds and in constellations that are often difficult for them.

Hijab: Young people and Muslim women wear a hijab for very different reasons; it can be an expression of religiousness or just serve as a fashionable accessory. Some wear it more or less voluntarily because it is considered the proper thing to do in their environment (neighbors, family), while others are forced to wear it. For Salafists, the wearing of a hijab is a religious obligation and failing to do so is deemed sinful. Especially for religious and highly educated women, wearing a hijab can also be a symbol of integration and emancipation. Frequently they do this against the will of their parents ('think of your career, why do you choose to wear a headscarf?') as this is how they envision living out their faith. All the while, they self-confidently demand societal acceptance and recognition, not least in their profession. In short, a hijab can be a symbol of collective identity or religious identity under different portents. Per se, it is neither a sign of repression nor a sign of deep religiousness.

Middle East Conflict: This conflict is significant for many young people – even those without a direct relationship to the region. They feel solidarity with Palestinians because they feel connected to their fate and history. For some, the Middle East Conflict is a symbol for the discrimination and repression of Muslims. Salafist propaganda hooks into this but turns legitimate criticism and legitimate empathy into an enemy image of 'the West' against 'people of Muslim faith'. Pedagogic work can begin at this juncture: Criticism and empathy can be taken up with a positive spin and given room. The enemy images that are deduced from this can then be questioned: 'Is this conflict about religion or is it really a war against Muslims?'

Paradise and **hell** are places that many youths believe in literally. This understanding of Islam is not different from what followers of other religions believe. It becomes a kind of poisonous pedagogy (a pedagogy of fear) – in the way that we are also familiar with in Christianity – when the intention is to force desired behavior by instilling a fear of the devil, hell and divine retribution in people. Salafists too like to work with the fear of hell: Numerous of their videos conjure up the eternal torments that are in store for those whose behavior is deemed 'un-Islamic' by Salafists. Those who don't comply with their understanding of Islam will go to hell by this logic and those who follow it strictly can enter paradise. Critical voices argue that no one can take God's position and predict who will enter paradise and who won't.

Preachers play an important role in Salafism. They serve as models to emanate from some young people. Indeed, young people don't feel like they are being manipulated by the preachers but rather that an overture is being made to them. Education providers could organize a debate on the influence of role models; school teachers and youth work assistants can also make educational offers on this topic.

Shiites: Salafism considers Shiites to be apostates who need to be combated, as is happening in Syria / Iraq. The conflict between Sunnis and Shiites here is actually about politics, power and influence for the time after Assad and Saddam Hussein. In Germany, too, young Shiites are looked at askance and demeaned by Salafists. As mutual reservations among young Muslims are indeed common, it is worth highlighting the diversity of religious and non-religious ways of thinking and living. And this will actually succeed if more stress is put on the commonalities than on the differences.

Syria / Iraq: Many youths are very moved by the developments and the war in this region. Some want to become personally active – this can lead all the way to provocatively announced support for IS. In the light of the images shown in the news, others feel a sense of helplessness. This is then taken up by radical Salafist propaganda: 'Muslims are dying and you are doing nothing about it. Join us to help!' Pedagogical work should also treat these difficult topics by asking about the backgrounds and the motives behind the war ('war against Muslims?'), for example. Moreover, options for taking action could be pointed out, such as helping Muslim and non-Muslim fundraising and charity organizations.

VIII. FURTHER INFORMATION

For detailed information on literature and institutions working in the field of prevention, please check-out the following websites:

• Online-platform for education on Islam, Islamophobia and Islamism: www.ufuq.de

• Information service on the prevention of radicalisation: www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/radikalisierungspraevention/

• Federal Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, 'Live democracy! Active against right-wing extremism, violence and hate': www.demokratie-leben.de/

SITE NOTICE

Guide to preventing salafist ideologization in schools and youth centers