

To leave a destructive life full of hate

The Story of Exit in Sweden

Author: Anna-Lena Lodenius

Translation: Tanya Silverman, Institute for Strategic Dialogue

Exit Fryshuset in Stockholm was likely the first de-radicalization project that focused mainly on Neo Nazis in Europe. It started off as a self-help project and developed into something larger and more professional, without losing the key idealistic approaches at the heart of the project.

It has been a long journey, and not a straight road.

This is the story.

Exit in Sweden was one of the first projects that focused on helping people to leave the Neo-Nazi-movement and change the associated destructive lifestyle, not just in Sweden but possibly in Europe. It differs from other similar projects as it was established by former Nazis, and it is still run by former members of racist movements in cooperation with professionals.

There are many advantages when people with their own experiences give their advice to those that are beginning first steps into leaving their destructive lifestyles. But it has not been an easy road building up such an organisation, sometimes because of lack of support from authorities, but also because of the fragility that part of the leadership shares with their clients.

After some initial years the management realised it is essential to combine their resources with professionally educated individuals with a knowledge that is relevant to the clients. A counsellor, Ann-Sofi Stridde, was appointed, and after an initial period she became manager and came to play a major role in how the methods of work developed.

It has also been made investments in the employees who have undergone various training courses, for example in cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and other therapies, crisis management and project leadership.

Exit does not focus primarily on an individual's expressions of political ideology and criminal behaviour. The method is to identify the healthy aspects that might remain in an individual. An essential part of the work is to re-establish good networks that can help a person reintegrate into society and leave their destructive lives. During this process the Nazi ideology may normally vanish, in time, but this is not the focus point at this stage.

This report is partly based on an evaluation of the project that the author made for the Swedish Authorities for publically financed Youth projects in 2010.¹ The interview with the former Nazi called Anders (name changed for anonymity) was conducted for a governmental project in 2013.² The interviews with Exit staff, mainly Robert Örell, have taken place on a number of occasions from 2010-2013.

Growing Nazi-problems in the 1990s

In 1998 a former skinhead, Kent Lindahl, took the initiative to start an organization in order to give service and support to members of Nazi-groups and similar organisations wanting to quit a destructive life. He was inspired by the Norwegian scientist Tore Björgå at the Norwegian Police Academy, known for studies in political violence (later also in terrorism).

In Norway the authorities were taking the problems with growing Nazi-groups, and violence in connection with those, seriously. Björgå was involved in putting up an advisory board of experts ready to help local communities and professionals facing problems with extreme political violence. One idea that also came up was to involve former Nazis and allow them support others. For various reasons this particular idea was realised in Sweden, not in Norway.

Sweden had severe problems with Nazi groups throughout the 1990s, and they peaked towards the end of the decade. During the 1980s the old Nazi-organisations with their roots from the 1930s became more or less marginalized. This was partly due to a trial in the mid-80s in Gothenburg where young Nazis in a group called Riksaktionsgruppen, RAG (part of Nordiska Rikspartiet, NRP, an organization shaped already in the 1950s) were accused of a number of severe crimes, e.g. the brutal murder of a Jewish homosexual. The lack of support from the old leaders in the movement led to a division between the older and the younger generation of Nazis.

The Nazi-movement in Sweden and the rest of Europe was dominated by 'White Power' music and racist skinheads during the 90s. The movement was fairly loose, more like a network, and concentrated on booze and parties presenting the various musical groups that

¹ Lodenius, Anna-Lena: "Utredning av Exit – Fryshusets avhopparverksamhet", Ungdomsstyrelsens skrifter 2010:8.

² "Ett effektivare arbete för att förebygga våldsbejakande extremism" ("Looking for a more effective work in order to prevent violent extremism"): <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/16163/a/194061>

were an essential part of the movement. This new movement opened outwards through launch, including so called white power music and concerts, sales of CDs and various products that helped affiliates to mark a racist identity. A more effective use of new media such as the internet was also an essential part in the breakthrough of a movement that used to be more marginalised.

But alongside these events that attracted a broader audience grew another more closed and sectarian Nazi-movement with high demands on members' loyalty and sacrifice. An effect of this was that even the criminal activities got to be better organised.

In the beginning of the 1990s a person that media named "The Laserman" (his real name was John Ausonius) was hunting immigrants with a laser gun in Stockholm. This made media, politicians and many others aware of the growing anti-migration movement, even though Ausonius was operating all by himself without connection with any such group. Ausonius was sentenced to life for one actual murder, several attempted murders, and several aggravated robberies during the first two years of the 1990s.³

There were also a number of attacks on homosexual men, particularly in the western parts Sweden. A murder was committed outside a gay meeting place in Gothenburg 1990. Two members in Neo Nazi-groups were caught and received long time prison.

In 1995 one refugee, a homosexual ice hockey-player and a 17 year old male was killed by members in Nazi groups. In 1999 a number of other serious crimes were committed by Neo-Nazis: The killing of Björn Söderberg, a trade-union activist outside his home in a Stockholm suburb, and of two policemen that were hunting three Nazis after a bank robbery in the small village Malexander in the state of Östergötland. They had robbed a number of banks and post offices before they were caught. Possibly a bomb that was placed under a car belonging to two investigating journalists during 1999 was an act of Nazis as well, the couple (one of them had his back severely injured) had focused on revealing neo-Nazi activities.

Four big daily Newspapers in Stockholm got together in a unique cooperation during the autumn of 1999 in producing a number of investigating articles about Nazi-Groups in Sweden. The first articles were published simultaneously in all four papers on the 30th of November, a date since long known for big nationalistic parades celebrating the memory of the Swedish King Karl XII who were killed the 30th of November 1718.⁴

All these incidents together stressed the necessity to prevent young people from joining these violent movements, and if possible encourage those that already were involved to

³ These events have been described in a novel that has been translated to other languages. Tamas, Gellert: "Lasermannen – en berättelse om Sverige" ("Der Lasermann - eine Geschichte über Schweden"), Ordfront, 2002.

⁴ Aftonbladet / Expressen / Svenska Dagbladet / Dagens Nyheter: Common action against Neo-Nazism 1999-11-30. Link to articles: <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/9911/30/nazi/nazi1.html>

leave. A lot of hope and trust was put into Exit, a new organisation based in Fryshuset (Stockholm) that provided many activities for young people.

Exit Fryshuset has always been a project within the non-profit organisation Fryshuset. Formally Exit is part of the Exit Foundation YMCA Fryshuset. This was founded in 1984 by the YMCA in Southern Stockholm to widen the future of youth social activities of the association.

What does Exit Fryshuset offer?

Exit Fryshuset focuses on re-establishing the healthy and functioning lives of the clients rather than the causes of their problems. The staff tries to see beyond the ideologies and find the individual strength and resources (this can also be called a salutogenic approach). Additionally Exit tries to recreate networks around drop outs that can support them in their development towards a more normal life.

The support that Exit Fryshuset offers is always dependant on the client's individual wishes and needs. Exit provide hands-on support for persons wanting to leave a Neo-Nazi or racist environment by cooperating with various housing corporations, the police, social services, legal system and also with the client's own family and friends.

Exit provides a contact person who produces an individualized action plan that is continually evaluated. The supportive therapeutic talks continue for longer or shorter periods, sometimes up to several years. Client support is based on a social educational work. The treatment method also has elements of environmental therapy, model learning, and certain elements of motivational interviewing (MI) and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

The support varies depending on who it is aimed at and what situation the person is in. Factors relevant to the action plan are formulated, for example: how long the person has been involved in the Nazi movement; what status he or she had in the movement; if the case of a person who is single or who have family and children; education and relation to previous network (family, relatives, friends, peers, other adults etc.)

The support can include a wide range of actions such as penetrating traumatic experiences as perpetrator or victim of violent situations as well as reviewing of the need to catch up on studies and to get work experience. Practical details such as getting rid of tattoos are important for some to disassociate themselves from the movements. Others might need an emergency accommodation to escape threats and harassment. Drug related issues is part of the work since many of the clients has or has had an addiction to alcohol or drugs.

Robert Örell describes work as follows:

"The Nazi movement is equivalent to a political sect. This means that the movement is closed, stigmatized and that members are schooled in a black-and-white thinking, and purports that society faces a conspiracy and that all outside the group are enemies to be fought. It is often necessary to help the client to test how their beliefs match in connection with reality. To leave a closed, stigmatised, violent group can provide social disability in the form of difficulty in resolving conflicts, managing stress and often there is a need to process the ideas that the individual has been fed with for so long."

Many former activists in Extreme Right movements have committed various crimes, often including the use of violence. Some crimes might be part of the political work, but quite a few activists are also participating in crimes with no ideological connection. The situation for a former criminal is complicated, even besides having being part of an extremist movement.

In the early period Exit often referred to a five-point program based on the various needs most drop outs have in different phases. The first two phases were seen as a way out of the "White Power movement" (another name for the modern neo-Nazi movement). The phases were described with following key words:

- 1) Motivation
- 2) Get out of the movement
- 3) Being established in new life
- 4) Reflection
- 5) Stabilisation.

Robert Örell says this program was more a way to tell what is actually happening than a method. But as such it describes the process fairly well. Lately Exits have described the work that needs to be done on various levels:

- 1) Individual level: A client needs mental and psychological support to process own experiences. Many defectors have to process experiences of violence, both as perpetrators and victims. This mainly requires individual therapeutic talks.
- 2) Group pressure: Clients have been in a situation where they have been manipulated and prone to group influence, to break out of such indoctrination process and such dependence is often painful and difficult. This is also dealt with during individual sessions with Exit staff.
- 3) Ideology: The Nazi groups conjures an image of living in a continuous state of war, the group turns against society, dissidents and individuals who do not sympathise with their ideology. Ideology is not dealt with at the first phase, but later on in the process it might be necessary to deal with at least ideas that have an effect on everyday life. To be a Nazi is to paint the world in black and white, and a client needs to see that there are no simple answers to most questions and no easy solution to most problems.

- 4) The family and close network: It is important to re-establish relationships with friends, family, former friends and others that the individual broke up with because of the involvement in the movement. This requires numerous meetings with family members, friends and others in order to identify what support that is possible and how they can contribute to an individual's betterment. One part of the work is to identify reasons for lack of support and getting around preconceived opinions.
- 5) Society: Integrating individuals into society is also important. Individuals sometimes need help in dealing with the authorities and everyday social functions. In the Nazi movement most members despise everything associated with the democratic society, which can leave large gaps in the knowledge that most take for granted. The process of re-integrating in society also includes practical support and help with practical problems. This might include, for example, advising one how to find a job, enter studies, or find place to stay.

Exit hardly ever says no to clients in need of help. But everything is based entirely on a voluntary basis. There are high requirements for those who will drop out and clients must take a great personal responsibility. Exit obviously has no government responsibility; it is a place for those who demand strong support in their personal process of exiting a white power movement.

Normally the client themselves or the concerned relatives of a young person, contact Exit. Sometimes social security officers in local communities pay for specific services provided by Exit in order to help a certain client. The situation with emergency housing does not only include single individuals. In the spring of 2009 Exit managed to find accommodation for a whole family with children.

What determines whether a neo-Nazi drop out is possible and becomes permanently disassociated with their former violent groups is primarily due to the motivation of the individual, but also the resources around the person in the form of networks and relationships. Close contact with family and friends can be important. The drop-out will not be alone and to have a network outside of their violent movement is a protective factor.

At the start the contacts with Exit typically last between seven and twelve months.⁵ Today there are clients who are in contact for several years, but there are also clients that only meet with Exit occasionally.

A period of expansion

⁵ Ds 2001:70

De-radicalization is obviously a difficult and narrow specialty that requires certain skills to operate. Attempts to establish Exit branches in other parts of Sweden have failed after only a few years. This is partly due to difficulties in finding the right skills, but also on the problems with finding sustainable funding.

From the very beginning it was suggested that Exit should not operate throughout Sweden and not just in Stockholm region, since problems with Neo-Nazis were all over the country (apart from the northern regions which for unbeknownst reasons reported far less Nazi activities). But the expansion showed to be far more difficult than anyone had expected it to be.

The expansion into other cities started in the year of 2000. This development was made possible because the government doubled the financial support. Exit also had an increase in financial support from local communities.

Anders Höglund, a former Nazi, was employed to run an office in the town of Karlskrona in Blekinge in southern Sweden. Karlskrona was a centre for extreme right activism in Sweden during the 1990s. But soon after, in February 2001, the office in Karlskrona was closed, even though Anders Höglund continued to contribute in various ways as an individual, and many years after he left Exit he was involved in an operation stealing the sign with the text "Arbeit Macht Frei" at the entrance of Auschwitz, the former concentration camp. In December 2010 he was sentenced in a Polish court with 2 years and 8 month prison.

In January 2001 another two Exit branches were established in Helsingborg and Motala. But during summer 2001 the office in Helsingborg in Skåne declared independency from the rest of the Exit-network. An employee of Exit Helsingborg was reported to the police in 2003 for both taking full-time wages out of the public funds and stealing extra money through billing schools for lectures.

Even the local branch in Motala soon wanted to operate independently, and continued its work until bankruptcy in the middle of the 2000s. The bookkeeping eventually disappeared in a fire. It was considered that it could have been a fraud, but investigations could not find anything that supported that idea. These affairs, frequently exposed in media, created a problem for Exit Fryshuset since its reputation, associated with these failed Exit programs, was dampened.

Still, it has to be said that other more reputable offices outside Stockholm also provided popular speakers both from inside the Nazi Movement and professionals from different fields. They were lecturing a lot and took on a number of clients in the same way as Exit Fryshuset. The traces of the work were shown in a great number of articles in local media, and the clients were at least partly satisfied with the work that was done. When Exit Helsingborg was closing 17 clients were referred to Exit Fryshuset, which was a sign that despite problems that occurred, the people in charge showed responsibility. In one case they had handled a family with five children.

Even an employee at Exit Fryshuset had been accused of wrongdoings, but this was solved internally, and the person had to pay back what he owed. He left Exit in 2004.

Events like those can hardly be defended, but possibly can be understood in the context of what some of the former Nazis gone through. The risk of falling back into destructive patterns and abuse is imminent and that had to be included and considered in this type of field. The question is how these risks can be minimised.

Clearly, those who supported various Exit operations financially were not always giving such matters sufficient attention. It has been argued that the local branches were given far too much responsibility and did not receive enough support. Exit Fryshuset had limited possibilities of solving problems in other parts of the country.

Towards a more professional treatment

During those years Exit Fryshuset in Stockholm continued in the same way as before. The stability in the Exit-work in Stockholm was partly due to the cooperation with Fryshuset and all the facilities and experiences from dealing with young people in different and sometimes difficult situations.

After a few years the leadership realised the necessity of combining the experience of former Nazis with genuine professionals, particularly from the social service sector. A social counsellor, Ann-Sofi Stridde, was employed. Ann-Sofi Stridde had a long experience from fieldwork with social service in local communities as well as institutions. She made a tremendous effort to support Kent Lindahl and the Exit-project during the first years, partly on a voluntarily basis. In 2003 it was decided she should share responsibility with Kent Lindahl. From 2005 to 2008 Ann-Sofi Stridde was leading the project.

Exit Fryshuset did have the same problems as many other organisations that are started by enthusiasts. These difficulties were particularly noticeable when the business was expanding. Administrative shortcomings were often pointed out in previous evaluations and problems in contacts with authorities at the local level. But by the time this criticism is more seldom heard, Exit has developed considerably and works differently than it did in the beginning.

Ann-Sofi Stridde still works with Exit, and she still thinks the primary challenge is 'How to remove disadvantages of an activity as Exit and preserve the benefits?' She purports Exit Fryshuset has found solutions for many of the problems highlighted in the early evaluations.

One problem with too much efficiency and too formal an approach is that it might scare away some of the clients. There are many advantages with not being an authority, such as

the possibility for clients to be more or less incognito. Fryshuset offers the right kind of environment to create safe proximity to clients, an environment where youth subcultures and young people of all kinds feel welcome.

The combination of former members in Nazi groups and others with similar experiences and professionals reduces the vulnerability of defectors. It also creates better possibilities for Exit to take on assignments for social services and other partners and to communicate with those.

Since 2008 Robert Örell has been the head of Exit Fryshuset. He was once a client, but stayed on as a staff member and has continued to develop the Exit-project. By this time all staff had been educated in various ways, including cognitive behavioural therapy, handling crises and project management.

Exit started off with one staff, Kent Lindahl. By 2013 there were three people under full-time employment: Ann-Sofi Stridde, Robert Örell and Pelle Candal. Exit also had a person employed part time due to employment subsidies. All but Ann-Sofi Stridde has personal experiences from their involvement in an extremist movement. Exit could also share some resources with Passus, a parallel project in the same building using similar methods but focusing on helping members that wants to leave violent criminal gangs.

What kinds of clients are reached by Exit's activities?

Since Exit Fryshuset is the only remaining Exit-organization in Sweden their activities reach across the country, but with a particular concentration on the middle parts of the country. The clients are usually between 15 and 25 years, few are women, but the proportion has increased. There is an emphasis on people who primarily had succumbed to Nazism not for ideological reasons.

The Neo Nazi-movement has a goal to destroy modern society and replace it with its own social order, based on its own principles. Still this is a utopia and it has an attraction only on a limited number of individuals. Most activists in Neo Nazi and similar movement would not get involved in criminal activities, according to studies from the Security Police. And there is freedom of speech and organising. However, it may of course be a criminal offense to spread political messages that incite hatred against ethnic, cultural, sexual, and other groups.

Being a Nazi does not necessarily mean that someone has a destructive lifestyle, although it will in many cases. Members in Nazi or other racist groups can have various dispositions. To change the ideology is rarely the primary goal for the Nazis making contact with Exit. Instead most want help with situations created by being part of the Nazi-movement include social

problems and contacts with the police, etc. Clients with social problems dominate, and often they have a composite background of abuse and vulnerability.

The following text can be read in Exit's school supplies that were published in 2009:

"The reason or motivation for some young people to seek out destructive and undemocratic groups such as White Power groups, is not primarily ideological or political. Rather, they tend to experience social and emotional motivations. These recruitment basics are more or less the same for white supremacist groups, violent left-wing activists, criminal gangs or football hooligans. Many are looking for affirmation, protection, membership, and kicks."

In the early years of Exit Fryshuset it was thought that approximately half of the clients had abused alcohol and in some cases even used other drugs on a regular basis. Half of them had been convicted of crimes. Another quarter had declared to have committed crimes that they have not been convicted of.⁶ The perception today is that considerably more than half have been stuck in a past abuse of alcohol or drugs and that the majority, perhaps as many as 9 out of 10, pursued some form of crime (although they have not necessarily been sentenced for these crimes).

To leave such a movement involves a kind of crisis for most people. It is hard to leave a sectarian environment, the longer it lasted, the more difficult. But some clients are more vulnerable than others. There are some clients with psychiatric diagnoses. Another observation made by the Exits employees is that some have various neuropsychiatric disorders:

"Something that is 'new' and highly worries us is that it seems to be that young people with neuropsychiatric disabilities such as Asperger's syndrome, are drawn to/recruited into White power communities. This is particularly unfortunate since these individuals' characteristics (such as low empathy, fixed interest and often a level of intelligence far above average) are very useful in the white power movement.⁷

This reflection is slightly controversial since persons with Asperger's are not more likely to get into criminality according to statistics. But it is likely that if they do get in contact with a Nazi Group this might lead to certain problems.

Although some that join the Neo Nazi-movement are considerably young there are few clients that get in contact when they are in high school. It is only when they start paying attention to the consequences of the involvement in the Nazi movement that they seek help, argues Robert Örell. The clients tend to be slightly older than the average in the Nazi Movement.

⁶ Ds 2001:70

⁷ Exits business accounting 2008, 2009

From the start in summer 1998 to April 2001, 133 people who wanted to leave the white power world made contact with Exit according to a report for the National Council. In 2002 and 2003 there were 338 clients who received support. The number of clients remained at a relatively constant level until 2007.

During 2012 Exit worked with 21 clients directly and another seven indirectly (for example by support from their families and relatives). Three of the clients were in jail during most of the year, which created a different situation for the work to be done. Some of this work is focused on trying to set up how to move forward after the client is released. In one case the client has a life-time sentence and gets regular supportive meetings.

Five clients were delivered through contacts with Social Service or forensic care. In those cases the support includes practical help of various kinds. One client was going through a trial, three was in need of a place to stay, four didn't have a job, were not benefitting from the unemployment insurance and the Social Security System. In some cases Exit also helped to arrange meetings with psychologist and the counsellor (part of Exit staff).

It is obvious that the numbers of clients have reduced within the last five years. The numbers do not give the full picture; a client sometimes needs more, sometimes less, support. Axiomatically less staff means less work can be done.

It remains likely that the reduced number of clients also could be a signal that there is a change in what radical groups that attract young people and how Right Wing Extremist groups are operating. It has also been suggested that the typical Neo Nazi with social problems and a criminal record is not as common as he used to be. All this has to be proved in further studies.

Gender distribution

Robert Örell believes it is easier for women to leave the Nazi movement since the risk of intimidation and retaliation is less. It also seems as if the outside world does not judge women who have been Nazis as greatly as men. Many women that have been associated with the movement have tended to be a girlfriend, wife or maybe sister. Some share the ideology within the group, others do not. Sometimes they can also be helpful when trying to encourage their male counterparts from leaving the movement.

The Nazi movement is made up predominantly of men. The number of women has increased, but they are still a substantial minority. At the start of Exit it was said that there were very few girls. Later there were reports that more than one out of ten clients was female. In 2002 only 6 out of 85 clients was female, or 7 per cent. In 2006, the proportion

had increased to 2 of 10 clients according to Exits Annual Report for that year. A growing number joined the group without first being the companion of a man in the group.

In 2006 Exit had a former female Nazi as a trainee at the office, and this eventually turned into employment for that individual. She had been in contact with Exit for a year, which was the result her prior sentencing to community service in connection with a trial of a Nazi group that acted in the towns of Västerås and Köping around the mid-2000s. During her time at Exit she focused precisely on the role of women in the Nazi movement.

Although women still are in a minority, according to Exit, it is worrying that the number is increasing. Women might be maltreated by men in the movement; it might get even more complicated when they have a family and when their children are growing up in Nazi environments. But of course women also have problems of their own being part of a Nazi-group with the lifestyle that goes with it and the consequences of what they have acted out as Nazis. This is does not always receive adequate attention.⁸

Prevention and educational work

As Exit Fryshuset aims to prevent recruitment to Neo Nazi and similar groups it is not enough to work with those that are members and want to change. The preventative work is mainly focused on providing information to, and dialogue with, Swedish schools and governmental authorities.

Exit Fryshuset wants to contribute to the understanding of the mechanisms behind involvement in racist groups. The staff give lectures, seminars and workshops. They educate and help professionals, organisations and others working with people wanting to leave Neo Nazi-groups.

The most common lecture for many years was held in a school, often for students but also for teachers and other school staff. In addition, individual lectures have always been held in the municipalities as well as for groups with various occupations and organizations.

Exit Fryshuset gives advices to a variety of stakeholders such as employees in social services and in health care, prisons, police and armed forces. Some of this is done on an individual level. But the information is also shared during lectures and seminars.

⁸ This book published for the Swedish market in 2009 raises the problems with female Nazis but slightly exaggerates the problem: Blomquist, M. & Bjurwald, L.: "Goddag kampsyster", Atlas, 2009.

Lectures and seminars are important ways of supporting Exit's work and complement the money that is provided by the authorities. The lectures have also been a way to market the organisation and have provided rich opportunities for Exit's staff to meet with school staff and others who later may choose to use Exit's services. A reduction in the number of lectures automatically makes Exit less visible.

The number of lectures has declined in the past few years. In 2007, there were 185 lectures according to Exit's annual report. A rough estimate for 2007 shows that nearly 25,000 high school students attended lectures and group discussions with staff from Exit Fryshuset. Exit conducted 178 lectures during the period January to June 2008, but during the fall of 2008 a lot of activity was down due to economic reasons.

In the first half and in December 2008 and in January and May 2009 Exit held 12 half-day courses for teaching staff, 3 courses for prison service staff, 3 courses for municipal liaison teams (schools, social services, police, and others) as well as a training for officers and human resource officers in the armed forces.

During some of these trainings Exit describes the process from the time someone goes into a Nazi movement to a defection. Participants learn to recognise the signs and how different stages in a person's life as a Nazi might look. They also get advice and knowledge about the factors that may be crucial for dropouts and how best to support someone who wants to leave a movement.

According to the reports from 2011 and 2012 it is more common that Exit produces trainings together with other organizations or participates in arrangements by other organisations. Exit participates in a wide range of seminars on various themes such as crime prevention, youth problems and human right issues.

From lectures to theatre

For many years Exit was recognisable to mainly pupils in schools because of numerous lectures about what it is like to be a former Nazi, and the road to transformation. But by this time Exit started to question this work for many reasons.

- It can serve as a small flame that dies out after we leave the school. It might not change anything, says Robert Örell.
- It has been suggested that lectures in schools with former criminals, Nazis and drug addicts sometimes work the other way around and that some listeners get to be more fascinated than discouraged, in spite of good intentions to show the negative sides.

To leave a cultish organisation creates a life crisis, and many former members in such organisations are also vulnerable because they have substance abuse problems, psychiatric or neuropsychological diagnoses, etcetera. In the beginning of Exit Fryshuset some drop-outs went out and told their stories at too early a stage when they had not processed what they gone through.

On the other hand, and this is a dilemma: A drop out cannot claim to have a fresh story of what it means to change lifestyles. Also the knowledge of Right Wing Extremist cultures is something that fades quickly since these groups transform rapidly. One's knowledge of their former groups may be outdated and therefore untrustworthy.

Nowadays Exit is prioritising supervision of school personnel who wish to establish activities that impact in the long term. The organisation has also taken on a different approach and put up a play with professional actors. "Hatets röst" ("The Voice of Hatred") is based on many individuals' stories, it shows an example of what it can be like to join a Right Wing Extremist movement and what experiences can be backing such a decision. The play also shows the consequences for the individual and the people around.

"Hatets röst" has mainly been shown to pupils in high school. There are many advantages to act out a story based on many stories instead of exposing singular individuals, Robert Örell tells. It is easier to calculate with the reactions from the audience, and prepare for constructive discussions afterwards. A play can be done on numerous occasions, without any restrictions.

The play has been somewhat of a success. During 2011 Exit also produced a Teacher's Guide that is distributed together with the play.

The parents also need support

Parents with children drawn into Neo Nazi groups must not be forgotten, as they often have a difficult situation themselves. They might experience that other people think they are guilty of their child joining an extremist group, and they may also have difficulty managing their own feelings of guilt and thoughts of what has gone wrong.

Exit meets with a lot of parents, some make contact without their children knowing about it. Later the children might be taken on as clients by Exit, but in some cases this does not happen. Still parents might have a need to keep up relations with Exit, often a far bigger need than Exit can meet. Therefore Exit have suggested to parents to create and shape networks for each other.

Even though the time that Exit have to spend on contacts with parents is limited most parents seems to value it highly. Parents are often the ones that are most in favour of the Exit-work that is done. This has been shown in various evaluations, from 2001 to 2010. Parents often give the most emotional statements in the interviews with stakeholders. To have someone to turn to if a child becomes a Nazi is seen as invaluable for most parents.

Anna, mother of an active Nazis in Stockholm, appears in the latest evaluation of Exit from 2010. She has three sons, the eldest got to be involved in the Nazi movement. It all started when he was beaten by an immigrant, she says. Shortly after this event, a small group of Nazis appeared and told her son that he needed help, and that they could offer it.

Everything unravelled quickly and he ended up in gang fights between immigrants and Swedes that the police would come to mediate. Step by step he was drawn into a destructive gang, Anna tells.

Anna believes that an explanation for her son's transformation was a feeling of inferiority. He is dyslexic, had a hard time in school. He was full of hate, felt depressed. The family has lived in the areas where they had significantly less money than the surroundings to spend.

The son's involvement in the Nazi movement also affected the family. Anti-racists hung out stickers with his name and picture in the residential area. They even phoned and threatened. The son fought back and was subjected to stone throwing.

“As a parent, you become co-dependent, just as those who live with someone who has an addiction. Finally I felt that the only normal in my life when I to my job, my whole private life was a mess.”

Anna felt that she received much support in the conversation she brought with Exit. “They understood me and there was no debt overlaid. Furthermore, there was no waiting period before you had help. No one said: in three months we have some time for you. It was here and now. It was nice to meet one who understands and been there. You can talk and say just as it is and you feel they know what you are talking about.”

Eventually, she asked whether Exit had a group for parents that wanted to meet. The answer was no, but she was then asked to start such a group, and she did. The Parental Network began meeting in August 2008 and Anna got to be moderator.

“The others parent’s stories showed that we are in the same situation. But we felt isolated in our own islands, and would not talk to anyone.” They were first just seeing each other’s and talked, and then they invited lecturers. They received a project grant from the Social Services Administration in Stockholm. But the money that the project was driven by ran out, Anna still continued for some time.

“At that point, I had a lot of my struggles behind me, and although it is a gift to help others, I felt at last that I could not manage more,” Anna said. This was not the first attempt to shape

groups with parents to Nazis that gets together to support each other's. In the beginnings of the 1990ies there were a group of parents of Nazis in Klippan in southern Sweden. The parents met regularly with representatives from social services and the police. The group had a phone number that parents in need of help could call at certain hours of the week, and they also tried to answer questions and talk to parents in similar situations in other parts of the country. This group eventually got the Olof Palme prize. The parents in the group met with Kent Lindahl several times, but never cooperated with Exit in a more formal way.

Since, there have been more or less short-lived attempts to shape new groups with parents. But normally most parents want to go on and forget when they manage to get their children out of a Nazi movement. A mother of a Nazi wrote this in 2010 to the author of an evaluation report:

"I had a son with a diagnosis, which meant a messy trip periodically, contacts with various authorities along the way... In connection with my contact at Exit I also got the opportunity to talk with someone. Fryshuset is the only place I have been to over the years were I got a feeling on being reckoned on, they have given me a respectful treatment as a mother who was banging my head against the wall, for the first time I was treated with respect by people who understand what it's like on the front line! I give Fryshuset grade 5 + (on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 is the best) for a sizeable commitment, contact with reality and not a bunch of wimpy, fuzzy or minor explanatory receipt.

I am extremely grateful for the help and the support I received along the way to act in a good and understanding way towards my son. That changed the path, although he might not have changed his opinions yet, but there is plenty of hope, he might eventually go into university, he cares now about obvious things for you and me such as brushing your teeth two times a day, he even borrows his little brother's clothes to be dressed nicely ;-). THANKS!"

Level of satisfaction

Exit Sweden has been evaluated several times. In the beginning of 2001 the Swedish Authority for crime prevention, BRÅ, published a report telling that the strength in the work is a familiarity with problems in connection with leaving a destructive political culture. The people involved are described as devoted and willing to gladly provide help and support any time during the days and nights. Still, the investigator noticed some weaknesses in organisational structures and professionalism.

During 2001 the government initiated a workgroup with the task to suggest improvements in how to help dropouts from racist and similar groups. The aim was to initiate stronger

communications between local crime prevention organisations and other local actors. The work group also suggested a stronger focus on providing knowledge to local actors.

In 2003 the federal authority for integration of newcomers in the society (Integrationsverket) was following up on what was done in 2001. The investigator describes Exit as a typical project run by enthusiasts, for better and for worse. Even in this report the weak leadership and problems with administration as disadvantages was pointed out. The investigator also suggested that Exit should make local benefiterers in the municipality and various professionals to pay more for the service that Exit provided in order to strengthen the financial situation.

In the year of 2008 the government pointed out the need for a stronger support to organisations dealing with work against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance towards homosexuals. The organisations had to apply for new funds each year. Exit was included in this, and it was a great disadvantage since they needed to establish more long-term relations with the clients.

There was also a misunderstanding since Exit is not primarily an antiracist project, even though the work might lead to less Nazis and reduced activities in the Nazi Groups. Exit provides social support, ideological issues might be discussed but a transformation of political views is rather a secondary thing, a consequence of a transformation in lifestyle.

A new evaluation was produced in 2010 pointing out the need for a long term support and an understanding for the type of work that is done: It is a social project, and as such there must be a responsibility for each individual that is targeted. Lately, Exit has survived mainly on money provided from the government unit for developing democracy, distributed by the federal authority for Youth related issues (Ungdomsstyrelsen).

The evaluation from 2010 focused on the stakeholders, and it showed they were consistently very pleased with Exit Fryshuset and the work that were done. Most satisfied were parents of Nazis. However several, particularly social workers and police, pointed to that it had been more difficult to achieve effective cooperation in recent years when appropriations have been reduced, and funding has been uncertain.

From the mid-2000s, the number of employees has fallen sharply and this has affected lecture activities and joint projects with other stakeholders. Despite cutbacks stakeholders describe Exit as a stable business that found a functional form and still has a lot to offer.⁹

Difficulties in monitoring

⁹ Lodenius, Anna-Lena: "Utredning av Exit – Fryshusets avhopparsverksamhet", Ungdomsstyrelsens skrifter 2010:8.

As a contrast to mainly positive evaluations, it has to be said that little is known about how the client's benefit from the help they get from Exit Fryshuset. Clients are monitored occasionally, but there is no comprehensive written documentation of the work performed. Only a small number of clients have been the subject of research.

133 clients were registered from the beginning of 1998 up until April 2001. Out of those 125 clients seems to have left the "White Power-movement" permanently, and according to Exits own data ceased also with crime and abusing alcohol and drugs. Of the eight people who had been in contact with Exit, but not completed the program during this period, four had gone back to the "White Power-movement", one joined an outlaw motorcycle club and two got stuck in drug addiction.¹⁰

One difficulty in evaluating the results of Exits work is that it is not possible to store more detailed and sensitive data without violating the Personal Data Act.¹¹ In Exits documentation, there must be no personal details; every client is referred to only by first name, the birth year, and what county they are from or reside in. This documentation is adequate for Exits daily work, but is not enough to monitor the progress of clients afterwards.

The follow-up of clients who have left the project and what happens to them is still deficient, according to the report from 2010. This is still partly due to difficulties with the rules of confidentiality and data protection legislation, but is also a question of resources. To update information on nearly 600 individuals and their further development is near impossible with Exit's limited staff.

According to Robert Örell some drop outs would not go back to the Nazi-movement for one reason: they are hardly welcome because he or she is seen as a traitor. It is more likely that they get back into addiction or crime, he says.

Some of the questions might hopefully get answered during the year of 2014 when the social anthropologist Tina Christensen at the Roskilde University in Denmark will be presenting her Ph.D. thesis based on her studies of the work that is done at Exit Fryshuset.

Exit takes a broader perspective

A report from the Swedish Security Police from 2009 looks back on many years of Neo Nazi-activities and draws the conclusion that the number of activist are more or less the same each year, in spite of organisations coming and going. Sometimes these groups tend to be more violent, other years they rather focus on distributing propaganda or consolidating. But

¹⁰ National Council 2001, National Crime Prevention Council

¹¹ 1998:204, PUL

you can never neglect the problem, and the authorities must keep check. Suddenly there are new groups and crimes in connection with those popping up in some part of the country.¹²

Since the 22 of July-incidents in and outside Oslo not only the Norwegian but also the Swedish government has initiated new investigations and raised money for various activities against violent extremism. This has not necessarily improved the situation for Exit since the money now is shared between groups dealing with drop outs from different violent groups. The demand is now to focus not only on Right Wing extremists but also to target religious groups such as violent Islamists as well as left wing extremists.

In January 2010 an affiliate project to Exit, called Passus, was launched. Passus' target group is young gang members with a desire to drop out. The support and help offered by Passus is sprung out of the method developed by Exit.

Exit never had formal mandate to act as a national centre for organisations offering support to drop outs from religious and political sects, but has in practice often been allowed to operate as one. Recently Exit has also worked more closely with groups dealing with organisations trying to help individuals out of destructive religious sects. A network has been shaped for various groups dealing with similar problems, conferences have been held, some with guests from other countries.

During 2012 Exit was in charge of a project to put up a common national digital platform for those groups. The platform will serve as a resource for organizations working with defectors from environments that are anti-democratic, they might be criminal, racial or political – the common thing should be that they are prepared to use threats or violence to achieve their goals.

Part of the work has been to try to identify what other groups and organisations should be part of this work. Exit has a wish that more targeted de-radicalisation groups will be started. Initially, the platform will consist of Exit Fryshuset, Passus, Hjälpkällan (works with de-radicalisation from religious sects) and Livsstilshuset.

Lastly an additional project at Fryshuset, CIDES, needs to be mentioned. CIDES also works with issues that concern young people in destructive subcultures. The aim is to gather information from both practitioners and academics and to conduct an analysis in order to find effective methods. CIDES have created a network for professionals and arrange regular meetings where people can try to find solutions to common problems and initiate collaborations. CIDES, Passus and Exit cooperate in all different ways, but mainly in arranging seminars and lectures. The three projects also share some resources with Fryshuset.

International work

¹² BRÅ / The Security Police: "Våldsam politisk extremism - Antidemokratiska grupperingar på yttersta höger- och vänsterkanten", BRÅ-rapport 2009:15.

Being a somewhat unique project, Exit Fryhuset gets more and more attention on an international level. During the year of 2012 the staff participated in seven seminars in other countries, and also contributed and presented lectures during quite a few of those.

Exit was been invited to the Steering Committee for RAN European Commission Network. During 2012 Robert Örell, along with Harald Weilböck from the Violence Prevention Network in Berlin, were in charge of the work group First Line Practitioners DERAD (Deradicalisation).

In March 2012 Exit arranged a 2 day conference regarding experiences from de-radicalisation in the Scandinavian countries together with the Police Academy in Oslo and the local communities in Copenhagen. The conference attracted more than 200 participants from 15 countries.

Exit is involved in two European scholarly studies on right wing extremists and is collaborating with the University of St Andrew's in Scotland and with the European Survey of Youth Mobilisation, ESYM, project.¹³

Chronological description of activities:

- 1998-1999: Kent Lindahl starts Exit and is the sole employee.
- 2000-2002: More employees are hired, all but one person recruited from the client base and there is a large staff turnover.
- 2000-2001: Local offices open in Karlskrona, Helsingborg and Motala. Operations in Karlskrona closed down in February 2001. Operations in Helsingborg and Motala are transitioning to becoming conducted locally.
- 2002-2003: A counsellor employed part-time, Ann-Sofi Stridde.
- 2005-2008 Ann-Sofi Stridde is in charge of the business. Operations are structured under her direction and get a clearer focus on treatment, methodology and development. The Employees are trained in various ways to extend skills and activities, and engage in higher degrees of professionalism.
- 2008: Robert Örell becomes head of Exit Fryhuset.
- 2008 June-December: Exit operations are suspended due to lack of funding.
- 2010: Exit start sister business Passus operating according Exits method with support for defectors from criminal gangs. Another project at Fryshuset, CIDES, initiates. It also works

¹³ More about the project: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/intrel/projects/esym/>

with destructive subcultures and aims amongst other things to shape networks of professionals.

Appendix:

Interview with “Anders”, former member in a Nazi-organization:

He waits outside a local train station south of Stockholm. People that are passing him hardly takes notice, he is dressed in sporty clothes with rather short hair, and it looks like he spends quite some time at the gym. If you look more closely you notice he has some tattoos, but since they are hidden back of clothes the motives are hard to figure. Later he shows there is a swastika on his wrist.

Until 4 years ago he was a member of the Swedish Neo Nazi-group Svenska motståndsrörelsen, SMR, (Swedish Resistance Movement), an organisation with a long record of violence and criminal activities. He left when he was in jail for weapons offenses and reckless endangerment.

“During that time I tried to get in contact with Exit. Everybody in organisations such as SMR knows that Exit exists, and everybody considers them to be the big traitors.” So why did he get in touch with Exit? “I just needed someone to talk to. But the first person I met was strange, we didn't connect at all. Later I met Robert (Örell). He supported me, whatever I said. He had the experience, and the insights.”

The road to Nazism

Anders, today 26 years old and former member in the Nazi-group Swedish Resistance Movement, MR, describes his childhood as messy. He has a large family and many siblings; there were often fights between parents. He did badly in school, he hung around the premises but avoided going in class. “We drank beer in the common room or in the dining room that we smuggled in, drove the scooter to school, stole cell phones in the locker room. Things like that.”

The grades were suffering and final year of primary school, he did not go there but was moved to a special class with fewer students and more teachers. After individual program at the high school for a year, he went on a vocational program to become a chef, a professional dream he had since he was a child. But it was not long before he found that he could not handle the stress and heat of a restaurant kitchen.

There were two different groups of friends in high school, one began to use more and more drugs, the others were skinheads. First he hung out mostly with those who took the drugs, but then he jumped over to the skinheads.

“But they were just talking about immigration; they were not involved with any political organisation. We really behaved as assholes, just like you see in the movies. We were drinking beer, yelling, walking around in bomber jackets in town.”

The gang eventually split up. He was feeling worse and became depressed. During this period, he received an increasingly violent lifestyle and began hanging out in racist circles.

“Mom and Dad tried to do everything to get me out of this, but I didn’t care whatever they said. I came home with batons that I made myself. Dad threw everything he found, right wing extremist propaganda, weapons etc., and I bought new stuff. It was not that we fought so much; it was more about feeling safe, they told us not to go out without a knife. This way of thinking was quite natural in the group. I always thought immigration was a negative thing, they are loud and rowdy, I had that way of thinking with me previously.”

In SMR, he saw things in a broader perspective.

“We were the master race, we would take over Europe, we were all over Sweden and we should throw out all immigrants, I thought.”

But SMR also put great demands on him. He could not stay away from the meetings. There was an explicit coercion to implement at least one group activity per week, and preferably something every weekend too, he participated regularly in selling their own newspaper and distributing leaflets. The membership fee would be paid, 200 Swedish crowns per month. Members had to contribute in all different ways, by buying materials, adhesives and other things that were needed.

An important and recurring activity was the study of different books; it could be about eugenics and various racist theories. Anders, who was not at all interested in what they tried to teach him in school, suddenly thought that it was fun to read and learn things.

“This was different; it was something I was passionate about.”

But above all it was the violence that attracted, he says. The sense of danger every time it was the sale of newspapers on the town triggered him. The pride he felt when he walked with banners and felt how he provoked other people. “It felt so cool, it was to have power!”

It was always trouble when SMR conducted activities, although he says that the police became increasingly skilled and learned how to separate the racist and anti-racist groups.

“It felt like adrenaline, it was fun, exciting. Every time I went out I almost hoped that AFA (Anti-Fascist Action, militant anti-racist organization) or Syndicalists (a fairly small alternative trade union with great focus on antifascism) would be there.”

He was arrested a few times after such clashes, “We had gone through it during the meetings; I knew what we should do: We would not say one single word. Those who were on the outside would do everything for us to come out.”

The road to another life

What was it that made Anders finally leave a Nazi movement? He describes it as a process, with time; he began to feel that he felt bad when he spent time with others in the group. He became increasingly depressed. At the same time he was attracted to other friends that made him film more at ease. They had parties that he wanted to go on, every weekend he tried to find excuses why he was not available for the demands from the leadership in SMR.

“Then I thought everything they said began to go to excess, you should measure skulls, it felt ridiculous, there were like no limit to how silly it could be. But I said nothing, I just held on.”

Finally SMR shut him off for six months, as a punishment for not showing loyalty. He soon discovered that he was not missing anything, except for a few of his friends. So when the semester was over and they wanted him back, he tried to wriggle. He understood that he had long turned a blind eye because he was not satisfied with his life, “I thought about how it would be then, when we took over. It felt good, it felt just right, then it would be just the way we wanted it, then everything would be perfect. I do not regret that I joined the SMR, I see it as an experience in its own way. That I had extreme political views have made me become more interested in politics in general. Before, I was totally unimpressed.”

Over time, he has also changed opinions, it came naturally. “I do not judge anyone today who I have not met.”

An important part of his transformation was imprisonment. He says “It challenged my prejudice; my hostility towards immigrants disappeared completely. There were so many immigrants there; many of them were really good, fair means.”

It was during that time he got in contact with Exit, an organization he heard of many times. “Everyone in the Nazi movement knows that Exit exists. No one likes them.”

But at this time he badly needed someone to talk to, and he couldn't think of anyone else that would understand his situation. Unfortunately his first meeting didn't turn out well. He thought the first person he met from the organization was strange, they didn't connect at all. It was all on a personal level, he can't say the person he met did anything wrong. But somehow the trust wasn't there, it was not a person he felt he could open up himself for.

So he turned back to the Exit office and ask for a meeting with somebody ells. They arranged a meeting with Robert Örell and Anders went on meeting with him on a number of occasions.

“Robert is a fantastic person; he has given me all the support I needed. No matter what I asked for. If I had a problem he could always come up with a solution. He had the experience and he knew what to do.”

The support both consisted of the possibility of talking about problems and challenges in a new life as former activist in the Nazi movement and practical help with different things. Anders mentions he has a bad feeling for exposing his tattoos, and Exit showed him different things he could do, if not get rid of all of them, a painful and expensive solution, he could change the motives and make them less controversial. This is something he is still working with, and it might still take some time before he can show himself on a beach without

What does he think about immigration today?

“We have received a little too many immigrants, but I do not mind it as long as it works, I'm not going to vote for Sweden Democrats (the biggest anti-migration party in Swedish politics). I don't know where I will put my vote in next election, perhaps the Social Democrats?”

In the beginning of a new life

What was most difficult to when leaving a Nazi movement? Probably the fear of doing it. Anders, that left SMR 4 years ago, did what many others do: they tries to slip away without anyone noticing it. “I did not dare to say that I wanted to leave, I wished my exit it would not be noticed. I was of course a little afraid of it, you hear about others who they see as traitors, and they tell they were beaten up, all sorts of things happens to them, I was told. But I felt much better when I was not with them, it made me think of all the things I like that I had not have access to. I liked other music, hip-hop, going to parties. Being with them was not me. It was not what I wanted. I became paranoid, was always carrying a knife. Every night I wanted to find someone to mess with. Sometimes I got in to ridiculous things. One night when I was on my way home I saw two guys that walked 100 meters in front of me, they came closer and closer, and then they disappeared. I thought I heard them on the stairs to my building and prepared myself to confront them with the knife. Then I realised that what I heard was a girl, a neighbour, it was quite embarrassing, and we never talked about it.”

He had to stay in his home the first period as part of the sentence, and he was afraid of being alone. So he arranged parties and made people come to his house. And there she was,

and she didn't leave him as other girls done, often because of his political points of view. On Monday she went to get her things, and then she came back and stayed.

He lives a family life, he has a job and runs an excavator. Some day he wants to have children. He also hopes he can work for Exit in one way or the other, to help others.

Interviews with stakeholders made during 2010 as a part of an evaluation for the Swedish national authority for Youth related issues

Anne Marie Wallin, Social Service / field worker, Nyköping

“We had a growing number of Right wing extremists here in town, and we were not prepared, we didn’t know what to do. We needed someone to ask for advice and how to work with this group.”

“Even the parents of these guys needed to talk with someone. They were ashamed and felt like people thought it was their fault that the children were Nazis. They were desperate.”

“We had a war between right-and left-wing extremists, and people who rattled with their keys to protest against the Nazis. It was all against all and a complete chaos. Extremists were even more enhanced when local newspapers began to write about what happened. People were reported each other’s to the police, we had trials, this went on for what seemed like forever.”

“Pelle from Exit came down here and talked to me. At one point we asked Exit to come down and meet one of the guys who wanted to drop out. Sometimes we have gone to meet with them at Fryshuset.”

“Exit has given us strength and peace. They told us that we must give it time and be patient. They have backed me in my role, I have felt safer. For the parents, it was a cool trip, they were able to eliminate much of the heaviness, guilt and shame they felt and found a way to be able to walk upright in the supermarket. It's not as simple as newspapers say that parents do not hold their children, many are very disappointed and resigned and do not know what to do.”

The situation in Nyköping has settled down, said Anne Marie Wallin 2010. Some of the driving Nazis had moved, others had been convicted and imprisoned. But suddenly appeared SMR again. “So there's enough reason to continue watching if Nazi groups begin to grow strong again in Nyköping.”

Ulf Forss, in charge of public free time-activities in the local municipality of Skellefteå

“We had a bunch of young Nazis for more than ten years ago, and felt that we were groping in the dark, not knowing what we would do. I called on Exit and hit them at Fryshuset later when I was in Stockholm for other reasons.”

“It was the beginning of a long relationship. He sees the long-term perspective as an essential part of the work, and he's got a sort of mentor relationship with Exit. They keep him updated on what happens.”

“I can call Robert (Örell) at any time, whenever we have a problem. He has given me coaching, explained how guys think, what it means to have national socialist values.”

“This time ten years ago, the group grew; there was a lack of clarity about who was in the group and who was not. There was a tail of young people who hung up without saying so much. Ulf Forss tried to make contact with.”

“We organized a lecture for politicians and officials, but also for us teachers, school nurse, social worker and other people in the school. We received training in how to recognise signs signals, symbols. Since then we have trained all staff in middle and elementary school.”

In 2010 the situation was better, but the problems remained.

“We still have a number of Nazis, but they have split into two groups. We are planning a group for parents. Today we are talking about extreme groups, not just right-wing extremists. They are more different. Last spring we had a National Socialist demonstration at Town and counter-demonstrators who jumped and screamed, it was about 1 000 opponents. But everything was quite calm, the police guided them out of town.”

There were students in high school who were hanging around the Nazis, but the leading person was over 40 years. The largest group of supporters were in high school. Recruitment seemed to have decreased.

“If they see something they deal with it at once.”

Later, Exit visited Skellefteå an additional time and had a lecture for a large group of young people in secondary schools.

"Marie", working for the Security Police

Exit's contacts within the police are to be found primarily on the open side. But there are also occasional contacts with the Security Police. A policewoman at the unit for protection of the Constitution (and monitoring of groups that are considered to be a threat to Democracy)

made contacts with Exit at a time when The Security Police tried to change their approach and wanted to work more proactively.

“I got in touch with Robert (Örell) Exit when we had noted that there were some very young activists in the White Power movement, it was around 2008-2009. They had a very powerful recruitment focused precisely on those who were younger than 16 years. We saw the risk that it would lead to crime and wanted to try to curb it.”

It was the open police who had provided the information about an increasing number of young activists in different cities, and also that there were people who they thought would be interested to defect.

Around 2008 they created a special group within the Security Police that would operate in a slightly different manner. The work included to open up and cooperate more with other organizations such as Exit.

“I think we had a lot of help by Exit, they have experiences that we do not have. Exit can have other contacts than we are able to have. In our case it is a complicated matter because so much of what we do is surrounded by secrecy.”

“I think they are very ambitious but the problem is finances. They live with uncertainty about how they should be retained, and that inhibit good long-term planning. It was difficult for us to implement somewhat over time, on the way we had wanted because of this. I have been surprised by the uncertainty they live with. I had thought it was more permanent than it is.”

About the author:

Anna-Lena Lodenius is a freelance journalist, lecturer and an author, known mainly for my studies in Neo-Nazi-groups, she covers all kinds of radical right as well as left wing extremism and political violence from both those groups. She has also written several studies of Right Wing Populism in Sweden and Europe. Anna-Lena Lodenius has written 14 books and has contributed to a large number of texts published in anthologies as well as magazines.

Her second book was "Extremhögern" ("The Extreme Right", first 1991, revised edition in 1994) together with Stieg Larsson who apart from studies in extremism also got a worldwide reputation for writing crime novels: the Millenarie-trilogy. For more information about the author check website: www.al-lodenius.com

References

Arnstberg, K.-O. & Hållén, J. :”Smaka känga – vägen tillbaka, intervjuer med avhoppade nynazister”, Exit, Fryshuset, 2000.

Asplund, Patrik: "Med hatet som drivkraft", Hjalmarsson & Högberg, 2000.

Björge, T., van Donselaar, J. & Grunenber, S.: “Exit from right-wing extremism groups – lessons from disengagement programmes in Norway, Sweden and Germany”. In T. Björge & J. Horgan (Eds.). “Leaving terrorism behind – individual and collective disengagement”, Routledge, 2009

BRÅ: "Exit – En uppföljning och utvärdering av organisationen Exit för avhoppare", BRÅ-rapport 2001:8.

BRÅ / The Security Police: "Våldsamt politisk extremism - Antidemokratiska grupperingar på yttersta höger- och vänsterkanten", BRÅ-rapport 2009:15.

Egonson, Johan: "Ett liv i mörker – Min resa in i – och ut ur – extremhögern", Forum, 2012.

Exit / Fryshuset: "Vägen ut – En handbok i hur man förstår och bemöter extrema rörelser", 2009.

Exit material distributed in schools, 2009.

Exits annual report for 2007-2012.

Government: Ds 1998:35, Rasistiskt och främlingsfientligt våld, rapport från Arbetsgruppen med uppgift att motverka och förebygga rasistiskt och annat etniskt relaterat våld. Regeringskansliet, Inrikesdepartementet.

Government: Ds 2001:70 Vägen tillbaka - stöd till verksamhet för att bistå personer som vill lämna rasistiska och andra liknande grupperingar.

Hållén, J.: "Exit – vägen ut och tillbaks". I Fryshusets årsbok 1999.

Hållén, J.: "Exit – vägen ut och tillbaks". I Fryshusets årsbok 2000.

Lindahl, Kent / Mattson, Janne: "Exit – Min väg bort från nazismen", Norstedts, 2000.

German translation: "Exit – Ein Neonazi steigt aus" (Alternative titel: "Exit – Mein Weg Aus Der Neonazi Szene"), dtv, 2001. Translation Sigrid Engeler.

Lodenus, Anna-Lena: "Utredning av Exit – Fryshusets avhopparverksamhet", Ungdomsstyrelsens skrifter 2010:8.

Lodenus, Anna-Lena: "Gatans parlament – politiska våldsverkare i Sverige", Ordfront, 2006.

Lodenus, Anna-Lena / Wikström, Per: "Vit makt och blågula drömmar", Natur och Kultur, 1998.

Lodenus, Anna-Lena / Larsson, Stieg: "Extremhögern", Tiden, 1994.

Löfgren, C.: "Uppföljning och utvärderingar av avhopparverksamheten Exit, Fryshuset KFUM Stockholm och Motala Exit, De ungas revansch", Möjlighetskompaniet på uppdrag av Integrationsverket, 2003.

Persson, Dennis: "Jag bröt med nazismen", LL-förlaget, 2003.

Sandelin, Magnus: "Den svarte nazisten – en dokumentär om Jackie Arklöf", Forum, 2010.

Tamas, Gellert: "Lasermannen – en berättelse om Sverige", Ordfront, 2002. (There is possibly a German translation of this book: "Der Lasermann - eine Geschichte über Schweden")

(page 64-69) Greger Wahlgren, police from the crime prevention center in Värmland

The Crime Prevention Centre in Värmland, BFC has a close relationship with Exit and the work of the police. The network wishes this cooperation could be a model for crime prevention in other parts of the country.

"We have had contact with Exit a long time, certainly ten years."

Crime Prevention Centre in Värmland offers support for defectors locally, outside the framework of Exit, and encourages organisations to exchange knowledge and experiences.

"It's good to have Exit there, but there are still unexplored possibilities of working together.

Our philosophy works very well together. Even our humanity. It is about making sure no man is left behind. We have opposing views, such as believing in talking about things. However, it is interesting to find that I'm the first one they call when a situation arises.

They conduct very important activities that have become better and better. There are municipalities that believe they do not need to do anything because he or she is in prison. But just because the leader is gone it does not mean that you have stopped violent actions. When he leaves prison he will come out to a set table. Instead it is when one has the opportunity to do something and *really pull the rug out from under them.*"

Greger Wahlgren does not believe in "big meetings or lectures in the auditorium." He compares it to the drug addicts that had been previously sent to schools, and then it turned out that it was more appealing than a deterrent.

If Exit may be left, he sees that the cooperation will strengthened. He sees Exit Fryshuset as the stable point and has criticized much of what he had seen in general within disengagement activities.

"We have to have people standing with both feet on the ground and who have knowledge. Many people want to launch programs but are not sure it works so well. Exit has many possibilities, could do even more than today."

Greger Wahlgren sees how in the future he could assign responsibility for defectors more based on what type of individual is involved and take greater advantage of each other's differences. He believes that various activities dealing with defectors can learn from and support each other. In Värmland they had a clearer focus on the Nazis who are more ideologically convinced.

Anna, the mother of a Nazi in Stockholm

Anna has three sons, the eldest became a Nazi. It all started when he was beaten by an immigrant. Then there were Nazis there who explained that he needed help, and that they were willing to help him. Then everything went in quick succession, he ended up in gang fights between immigrants and Swedes, the police arrived. He got progressively sucked into a destructive gang.

Anna believes that an explanation for her son's transformation was a feeling of inferiority. He is dyslexic, thus had a hard time in school. He was full of hate, felt depressed. His family were less well off than the other people that lived in their neighbourhoods.

The son's involvement in the Nazi movement also affected the family, who hung out stickers in the residential area of the opponents of the 'Antifascist Action'. They even phoned and threatened phone. The son fought back and they were subjected to stone throwing.

"As a parent, you become dependent, just as those who live with someone who has an addiction. It became my normality, my job."

Anna felt that she received much support in the conversations she had with Exit.

"They understood me and there was no issue overlooked. Furthermore, no waiting period before you had help, no one said in three months we have some time. It was here and now.

It was nice to meet one who understands and not to feel alone. They set up and you can speak openly and truthfully."

Eventually she asked if there any other parents, but there were not. She was then asked to self start such a group, and she did. The Parental Network started in August 2008 and Anna became moderator. They first met up and talked, then they invited lecturers.

"Their stories revealed that we find ourselves in the same situation. But we felt isolated in our own islands and dared not talk to anyone. "

The money that was driving the project ended, and Anna looked for funds but she could not commit all the time to the project as it needed.

"At that point, I had much of my struggle behind me, they were behind me and although to help others is a gift, I felt at last that I could not manage it anymore."

Anna would like to continue and re-launch the network. She has been in therapy and thinks she strengthened their preparation and gained experiences that she wants to share.

How can the business grow? Better local ties.

Exit is currently the only organization of its kind. Otherwise there are no prepared communities to meet defectors, support parents of young people on their way into the movement or that are already active in the movement.

Ever since its inception over ten years ago, governments set requirements on Exit to also develop local disengagement. Several attempts have been mentioned, but no branch of business, apart from the Exit Staying house, lasted longer than a few years.

The Government has tried in different ways to put pressure on Exit Network to create local and regional roots. The working group that designed the state aid rules of disengagement activities in 2001 set as a requirement that local government financing would constitute at least half of budget and that the organisation should be conducted in conjunction with where defectors live. This is to force Exit to provide local funding and thus hopefully more involvement in the municipalities where they operate.

But the state was also expected to give their support because the organisation was considered to have a national value. In the Working Group's report it was emphasised that the organisation will interact with the local regular business and that it will grow out of local and regional needs.

"A local base of operations in local government and a better interaction with municipalities' regular activity is the working group's view of the central importance to work to support young people who want to leave racist and similar groups to work in a satisfactory manner. Organisational focus must emerge from local / regional needs and circumstances and should not be confirmed from above. "¹⁴

¹⁴ Ds 2001:70

In reality local politicians often see Exit activities as necessary during periods when you have visible and acute problems of Nazi youth groups, but do not consider their necessity more than that. When Nazis disappears from local newspapers' news sites there also disappears willingness to support disengagement projects.

However, internal problems at the local Exit offices also played an important role when the local support was withdrawn. The people who were recruited had difficulty meeting the requirements, and were missing person management skills, and supervisory responsibility. It is easy to see that all those involved underestimated the need for funding and support, not only financially but also in terms of guidance for the employees.

It is against this background that one should see Integration Minister Nyamko Sabuni's statement in April 2008 when the decision to let Exit Fryshuset compete with other activities with anti-racist focus on government grants were presented:

"Exit, people from all over the country. Why can we not imagine ourselves to see subdivisions in other parts of the country? The problem does not exist only in Stockholm."¹⁵

There have been some initiatives to start new local Exit offices in the late 2000s but these have by and large failed. This is because of a lack of funds, according to the minister. The money was not earmarked for Exit Fryshuset but general disengagement activities. One such activity was only at the Staying House after the other branches closed. If someone tried to create new Exit offices they had been able to apply for grants earlier in the 2000s. The tension between local and national activities, therefore, does not exist because there are no alternatives.

A solution to the stronger local presence would be to offer disengagement activities or create an Exit office. One idea Exit is trying to make is to attach it to local crime prevention centers and let them take care of and build local disengagement initiatives. Exit Staying house visited the Crime Prevention Council National Conference in September 2007 with a prepared draft on how such a solution might look like. The idea was that the organisation would be expanded in several stages.

In the initial stages they planned to inform policy and decision makers, then take an inventory of the local problems in parallel with the training of strategically selected persons. After that, an adapted package with concrete work on several levels where concerns as well efforts of individuals and more structural changes in a community or region.¹⁶ The idea was that cooperation would be established with each call based on their needs and after a maximum of three years in a disengagement project they would become self-sustaining.¹⁷

¹⁵ Swedish Radio, 2008

¹⁶ Exits accounting activity, 2008/2009

¹⁷ Exits business description 2006

This model is based on the idea that it is a long-term effort that is needed to help someone leave an extremist group, as well as to stem recruitment to the destructive formations to shatter existing destructive groupings and motivate and assist the defection. Learning experiences must take place at different levels to increase awareness of the problem. However, above all it is important to convey the knowledge and tools to strategically important people and staff working with young people.¹⁸

Exit has stated for many years that an established partnership with the Crime Prevention Centre in Värmland is crucial, which in practice can be seen almost as a local Exit Department. Otherwise, no local crime-oriented council has engaged with the idea of a more permanent collaboration with Exit. Many questions and reactions arose when the proposal was submitted to the Council for Crime Prevention National Conference.

Need for a national center

Building an effective disengagement project can take time, and finding the right employees is difficult. Several of the other Exit offices have stated that employees consider their first stage of learning as a difficult experience.

Exit Staying house was never formally been contracted to serve as a national center for organisations providing support to the defectors. Yet Exit Fryhuset in practice functioned as a support for the sometimes rather short-lived centers that has existed in various parts of the country.

Exit Fryhuset's connection with an established youth house is likely part of the reason that the organisation has survived for over ten years. There is a stable organisation that stands as a principal and as a back up in times of uncertain funding. For drop outs, Exit's image not as an authority or a municipal-run project, despite funding in part by state and local government money, but as something detached is important. Exit can take advantage of Fryshusets skills to lead and manage activities aimed at young people, and offer support which other offices could not.¹⁹

Greger Wahlgren emphasises that the best time to act is when it is 'quiet' (i.e. there is little in the media regarding white power activity). A slower phase provides the opportunity to take preventative action. However, a calm on the surface may well mean mobilization in silence. When *clinical* then something happens there is no preparedness to deal with this. However it does not seem this way at the time being, and no municipality or region (excluding Varmland) have had the idea of resources for a more permanent operation.

¹⁸ Exits business accounting 2008, 2009

¹⁹ Ds 2001:90

Local efforts to stem Nazi influence and activity has often been supported only when acute problems arise. Once these problems die down a little local efforts draw their support. This is justified sometimes due to the fact that th organisation has been unstable and not lived up to expectations. However, activities that are perceived to be a little outside the usual commitments are likely to draw the short straw when they are seen to cut into costs that otherwise provide services for localities. This has been particularly evident in light of the recent financial crisis.

Should new local offices be established, and their connection to Exit Fryhusets be clear and solidified, there must be contributing funds to the Exit Staying house to be able to guide the new organisation. This is the sort of guarantee that could help reduce the risk of a backlash. A comment from those who have recognised the organisation a long time is that it is only in recent years that the organisation has developed a maturity and stability. Giving Exit Fryshuset a role as a hub in the future disengagement services could contribute to quality control and secure funding.

Personal experiences are a strength and prerequisite for a successful outcome. However, they also bring a vulnerability which can sometimes have unintended consequences. The need for support in their own personal development is crucial for the former Nazis who will work in a disengagement service. That is why it is so important for Exit's employees to receive proper guidance and the ability to process their own history, for example in the form of therapy.²⁰

It is desirable to most of the employees to acquire a more professional approach and, as aforementioned, to undergo the adequete training to acquire the skills needed to handle the advanced counselling that is needed in this field. Staff training has been mentioned earlier in this report. However, Exit has also established links with other individuals with expertise in psychiatry, psychotherapy, treatment and so on since 2003.

Social Work Online

The Internet has become an increasingly important place for destructive youth groups and political extremists. Whilst recruitment of new activists is still done primarily through physical contact, the internet is often the first contact that arouses interest or contributes to an already established contact. This is often through online chats, texts, and activist websites that offer information and opportunities for the consumption of products. In addition, many groups mobilize to action through information on the Internet (sometimes in closed online chat rooms and forums).

²⁰ Exits business accounting 2008, 2009

Nätvandrararna ("Net Hikers") is a national network of key people in child and youth protection in each region who examine precisely what is happening on the internet and what may be important for youths. Practically speaking for "Nätvandra" this means logging onto internet sites and the community in which young people risk being indoctrinated and possibly recruited. Fryhusets has been planning to include this in our Exit program. With our knowledge of Nazi groups, Exit will be a valuable contribution to such online activities.

Exit's contribution need not be about what is now formally named as "Net Hiking." Another possibility is that Exit is given the resources to participate in the forums and in the community where the Nazis are engaging online and highlight issues from other angles.

Some challenges for Exit

Joint Operation - Pros and Cons

Exit may be compared with joint operations in alcohol and drug rehabilitation, and projects involving ex-criminals in crime prevention efforts and client support. But just as with alcohol and drug problems, crime is also common with the clients Exit comes in contact with.

The people who run such projects have knowledge about the environments in which clients are in and what motives anyone entering or leaving such an environment or lifestyle can have. It is Exit's assessment that defectors rely more on a contact that has been in the same situation as them. As such, Exit's staff all have personal experience of Nazism which reduces opportunities for clients to manipulate and lie. But more importantly these staff also show, through their own example, that it is possible to continue with life and sort out their situation.

The problem is that it can become too easy for the person who may have been a Nazi to identify with the client. It can be difficult to keep a distance and demand that clients consistently face their old problems. Those who only have their personal life story to fall back on risk backlash and that their own primary problems come to the surface.

Personal experiences are a strength and a prerequisite for a successful outcome, but they also bring a vulnerability which can sometimes have unintended consequences. The need for support in their own personal development is great for the former Nazis who will work in disengagement activities. That is why it is so important to Exit's employees that they receive proper guidance and the ability to process their own history, for example in the form of therapy.²¹

²¹ Exits business accounting 2008, 2009

It has been seen as desirable to most of the employees to acquire a more professional approach and, as previously mentioned, undergo training to acquire enough skills to handle advanced counseling of the kind that are necessary in the business (the training staff has been mentioned earlier in the report). But Exit have also been counsellors since 2003 as key persons in the business and with established links to other individuals with expertise in psychiatry, psychotherapy, treatment and so on.

How business can capture changes in the world?

Knowledge of youth-dominated subcultures is ever-changing, relatively soon after a drop off in one movement, its members change and another youth-dominated subculture begins. It is therefore important that Exit's employee's experiences are not too out of date. Exit must have at least some employees who still have defection in recent memory.²²

As early as 2003, the Fryshuset's founder and longstanding Director Anders Carlberg created an employment model for former Nazis that meant they could work at Exit for approximately two years to get an education and work with young people. The idea was that from the outset it would be clear that the employment was terminated after two years and it was then time to move on in life. The justification was that it could be difficult to survive long in a role dealing with defectors. But Anders Carlberg stressed that with the time limit, employees must be supplemented with a plan for each person about what will happen afterwards.²³

For different reasons, primarily resources, this has never been achieved. But Exit's employees still think it would be a good idea and something that would provide a number of defectors with security during the turbulent period when they will begin to function as usual members of society after years of alienation.

As previously mentioned, high staff turnover is a negative way to describe something that is also partly a necessity. A disengagement activity must have employees who have not had time to forget what the defection means and how the world looks when the clients leave.

Previous criticism of the business

During Exit's early history there were headlines in the media about the irregularities, e.g. when Exit Motala was heading towards bankruptcy and lost records in a fire.²⁴ Integration Office

²² Exit's business accounting from January to June and December 2008 and January and May 2009. 41 P. 12.

²³ Lofgren, 2003

²⁴ Larsson & Karlsson 2006

auditors felt that it could have been fraud.²⁵ An employee at Exit Helsingborg was reported to the police in 2003 for taking money beyond his salary by billing schools extra amounts for Exit's lectures.²⁶ In both cases, however, Exit Fryshuset was not involved.

It is worth mentioning that when Exit Helsingborg was closed, it handed 17 clients to Exit Fryshuset, a sign that despite everything, there was a responsibility towards the individuals in the business. One of the cases was a family with five children.

An employee at Exit Fryshuset was also accused of wrongdoing, but the matter was solved internally, and the accused had to pay back what he owed. The person in question left Exit in 2004. Events similar to those occurring in local Exit offices can be difficult, but can be understandable in light of what those working in Exit have gone through. The risk of falling back into destructive patterns and addictions are ever present and can lead to these types of activity. The question is how these risks can be minimised. Clearly, those who supported various forms of Exit activity did not devote adequate attention to such issues.

For many years, Exit Fryshuset hired both defectors and people with vocational skills relevant to the business. This combination reduces the vulnerability of defectors and also creates and promotes Exit on behalf of Social Services and other partners. This combination of workers with different roles and knowledge is the key to business success, explains Ann-Sofi Stridde. But she emphasizes the need for respect from both sides for it to work.

For a long time Exit Fryshuset dealt with the same problems as other organisations that are started by enthusiasts. These difficulties are noticeable when the business starts to expand. Past evaluations pointed out administrative shortcomings, but also the impossibility of an organization being in contact with so many agencies at the local level.²⁷ It should be noted that the criticism derived from the first years is prior to the last evaluation in 2003.

Past questions were asked: How do you remove disadvantages from an organisation like Exit but preserve the benefits? Exit Fryshuset have found solutions to many of the problems highlighted in previous evaluations.

If an activity such as ours with our type of client base was to be perceived as an authority it would probably scare off a lot of clients. The chance of anonymity and the absence of personal identity means that many do not hesitate to contact Exit Fryshuset. Fryshuset offers the right kind of environment to create proximity to clients, an environment where different subcultures and young people of all kinds are welcome.

The last employees at Exit Fryshuset are behaviourists who have management training experience, which can be seen as a sign that Exit are trying to get into new forms of expertise. During Ann-Sofi Stridde's time, Exit introduced an accurate record of each client in

²⁵ Swedish Radio 2005

²⁶ Palmkvist 2006

²⁷ Ds 2001:70

a binder with a tab per person. However, there have been no resources to process the documentation she explains. The base is available, but not the potential to extract all information that could be gained from the basis of the data collected.

Marketing problems

Some of Exit's activity has been witnessing a downfall; they have had to de-prioritise lectures for resource reasons and as a result the organization has become less visible and misses out on making future contacts. The lack of lectures also deplete Exit's access to information on how the current Nazi environment is working in different parts of the country and the persons who may be seen as resources in their work.

Exit's work sometimes feels as though it is sailing against the wind in the media because the issues they deal with have not been the focused on in recent times. Media often discuss the issue as if it is new and unknown, which means that the issue is not dealt with adequately in the media itself, which does allow Exit to make its mark. In addition, the media often creates contrasting images to previously established images rather than telling the same story over and over again.

Exit must therefore reach out in other ways. Marketing the project has, therefore, become a new aspect of the budget. This was lacking in the beginning of Exit's conception. However, this requires resources and takes time from employees especially as there are not resources that we can dedicate to a marketing professional.

To advertise the organisation, Exit has been sending lecturers and adult education to all Swedish primary schools (and middle and high schools) and secondary schools.²⁸ In addition, they used advertising in magazines targeted at teachers. But in many ways the main marketing strategy for Exit is through word of mouth; through those who come in contact with the business telling others. A client often generates new clients.

Exit need to consider how the organisation can become more present and visible, especially at a time when Exit staff are not able to share their stories through lectures. Perhaps a more effective marketing of the courses could produce the same results. This is something that needs to be considered.

Studies of media coverage of racial and xenophobic violence in the 1990s can be found in the Racial and Xenophobic violence report of the working group that combat and prevent racial and ethnic violence.²⁹ Racism and anti-racism, encompassing the study of television reporting in the early 1990s³⁰ and "dark magic" in the "white media" - Swedish news

²⁸ Exits business accounting 2008, 2009

²⁹ Ds 1998:35, pp. 162 ff

³⁰ Löwander 1997

journalism about immigrants, refugees and racism are all detailed in the above mentioned report.³¹

The many roles - is it possible to clarify our focus?

Exit is an activity that not only addresses defectors. One question that should be asked is who or what Exit is really primarily for and what the purpose of the organisation is. You could say that Exit has interest in different camps and perhaps should clarify which camps are more important than the others.

Exit can be described as:

- 1) A network - help to help defectors.
- 2) A mentoring / coaching business for defectors where therapy trained staff provide personalized guidance.
- 3) A care and treatment agency with client responsibility at emergency lodging, CYPA treatment etc. with services purchased by social services and local government.
- 4) Consulting for professionals with different roles.
- 5) A study organiser – an organiser of seminars, lectures and training courses.

It might be worthwhile for Exit to look at what part of the organisation that the focus should be on. Perhaps there is reason to forego some areas instead of demanding too much. In a survey conducted for the National Integration Office in 2003, speaks of to make profits from the difference when such services are sold on, but it is hardly realistic considering that the most frequent buyers are communal activities with substantial cutbacks in the wake of the financial crisis.³²

However there may be branches of activities that can be developed. Training and mentoring may raise more money for Exit's business if they were packaged right and marketed in a good way. In this they would be working in a relatively unexploited market, although staff working with young people in schools or in the leisure sector have seen big cutbacks. The difference is that no such activity can target larger groups, giving a more realistic budget for municipalities.

Exit does not provide first-hand knowledge that contributes to less racism and intolerance. Exit is working to counter the indoctrination, to help young people stuck in destructive youth gangs and reducing violent tendencies. As a side effect this can also reduce Nazi groups in

³¹ Brune 1998

³² Lofgren 2003

strength, but it is not the primary goal. Exit focus more towards crime prevention work, which is just as important.

Who needs Exit?

Youths who are misaligned cost society a lot of money. By getting them into study and work or psychiatric care and drug rehabilitation to prevent human suffering, Exit thus results in fewer victims and incarceration. To prevent young people falling into destructive youth groups is not so much about combating their opinions as it is getting them to change lifestyle and acquire another more positive identity.

For that reason, it is really unfortunate that Exit's efforts are compared to the efforts to combat racism and xenophobia, and that its group that allocated grants from the Youth Board ended. Exit has far more similarities with other efforts being made to curb abuse, crime and violence among young people.

There is also reason to believe that it could be problematic for Exit to have an overly close association with various anti-racist organizations because there is such a negative image of those in the Nazi groups. As such, a drop-out might not seek contact with such an organization. After all, defection occurs often not because someone began to reevaluate their previous opinions but for other reasons; the ideological change is rather something that comes at a later stage as a result of that person beginning to acquire another identity.

Exit engaging in social activities

Social services and schools are the main stakeholders who benefit from Exit's activity. That it also may affect the Nazi environment so that activists leave it is another thing. But it is not the primary goal.

The opportunity for social services, the police and others to get the help of Exit presumes that it is possible to see a commitment of at least a few years.

Exit has, over the years that the organisation existed, accumulated a lot of experience across different contexts. As probably the world's oldest existing de-radicalisation organisation, Exit is contacted frequently by scientists and other stakeholders from many countries. Staff at Exit Fryshuset were even invited to the UN in 2008 and they have also attended several gatherings about de-radicalization in the Netherlands and Denmark in recent years, including in the education of Copenhagen city. In 2009 the Exit Fryshuset also had its own two-day conference together with the British Council on the theme of Disengagement amongst youths with participants from six countries.

Conclusions and Proposals

Exit Fryshuset is a highly regarded organisation that has matured and found its form. But economic hardship has characterised the last few years and hampered development. However their work is still in great demand and, according to their stakeholders, of high quality.

Exit Fryshuset's primary business comes either from schools or social services although medical staff, employees in correctional facilities and police officers are other professions that make use of Exit's services. Individuals, parents of Nazis for example, are also seeking frequent contact with Exit. The need for support of this group appears to be large and not least, they are also an important resource in attracting defectors. There are currently no similar operations with similar services to Exit's. The relief felt by many to finally be able to talk about problems that the rest of the world does not understand, shines through in survey responses and interviews.

Aid to Nazis who want to escape their white-power environments remains at the core of the organisation, but the tutorials and advice for working in various professions who come into contact with members of the white power movement also account for a large portion. Exit also conducts training activities targeted at approximately the same audiences.

Lack of personal identity (due to Swedish privacy guidelines, as aforementioned in this report) has made it difficult to follow up on the results and therefore there is no reliable data on how many drop-out Nazis stay defectors for good. Most indicate that they do not return to political activity in these kinds of groups because they are seen as traitors after the defection. However, it would be interesting to know how many people relapse into criminal activity. Such tracking is something that can possibly be implemented by external forces.

Exit used to hold extensive lecture series but have now slimmed down their programme due to lack of resources, reducing visibility. As a result, Exit Fryshuset gets fewer opportunities to make connections and build networks. But at the same time, it is reasonable to believe that it behaves in the manner Exits employees believe: that the lectures actually change nothing of substance and perhaps even may seem counterproductive. Exit Fryshuset want to work longer term with its stakeholders and build something that can live on.

Exit activities were also previously held in more localities but since the mid-2000s the country's only exit activities have been in Fryshuset. However, Exit does still engage in business with professionals and clients from across the country. There is a particular emphasis on the middle parts of the country which are closer geographically, but Exit a local Stockholm project.

The Integration Office has also supported the Exit operations in Motala. Regulations that made this possible should be able to make it possible to offer support to any new activities directed at defectors. There is no contradiction between Exit Fryshuset and other activities for the defectors; the former has several similar operations conducted in parallel.

However, Exit Fryshuset had a special role as a hub of disengagement activities in Sweden because it is the oldest organisation of its kind. If a new similar disengagement activity projects are established, it is likely that Exit would take up a mentor role. It may be particularly important in view of the difficulty that many of the previous Exit projects experienced in managing operations as well as financial resources made available from various sources. If a new similar organisation were to start, there would be clear quality control and contribution from Exit Fryshuset.

Exit Fryshuset has over ten years' experience, formally associated with an established youth center which offers help and support in all its forms, administrative assistance, support with coaching during certain periods, including financial support. These are experiences that Exit has to offer, more so than others.

There is an important reason that Exit Fryshuset survived and still exists. It is important to have a regional base, but it also brings Exit something that is so narrow that it is probably unrealistic to imagine that such an activity will be across the country. Therefore, should the idea of a national responsibility, perhaps in the form of a national centre. Regionally based activities need not imply that there should be a permanent base in the municipality or region. You can create more temporary solutions during periods when special support is needed in a particular place.

In Germany, the government has employed disengagement projects at various levels across central, local, and regional. There, they have not considered that there is no contradiction in this.³³

The Nazi atmosphere is quite consistent in size, but the location of its strongholds varies year after year. This means that the same community or region does not always see it as an urgent issue that must be included in the budget. This suggests that national centers are probably necessary in order to create continuity in tackling the issue.

For a number of years the crime prevention center in Värmland has conducted disengagement activities. This is where the knowledge and experiences of dropouts are most consistent. Thus, there are no competing alternatives.

—

³³ Bjørgo et al., 2009

If it is society's view that disengagement activities should be commonplace then money should be earmarked for just that. The current government has disengagement activities equated with focusing on anti-racism and intolerance, which is not appropriate at all levels. Exit engages in social work and there are treatment responsibilities involved in adequate disengagement work. This means that there is a third party liability in the form of clients from the Nazi environment.

Exit are not concerned with advocacy and political campaigns. It is an important observation because this misunderstanding has dogged the business through the years. Exit focuses on crime prevention and its aim is ultimately to get young people to leave the environment where there are destructive elements such as violence, drugs and crime. However, once they are within that environment the political indoctrination that occurs is crucial to understand, and to work with. To manage this complex combination of problems understanding these environments is Exits specialty.

The aim of the authorities is to support Exit's activities. This has included both responsibility and support for individuals involved and those no longer involved and their families and those individuals that may be concerned about the growth and recruitment of Nazi movements. But there is still no factual basis for analysis of the impact that dropouts have on the Nazi movement as such data is difficult to obtain without breaking the Data Protection Act and confidentiality.

One assumption is that many defections may seem demoralising for Nazi movements, especially if it is key people who drop out. It is assumed, to an extent, that if the drop outs were publically visible members with a high standing then the group will disband, or at least become severely reduced in membership. The fewer people who spread the movement's message outwards also means fewer new members. Defection might also help inspire thoughts of those who are still in gangs and struggling with self-doubt, thus already having the seeds of doubt planted that may inspire them to ultimately leave the movement.

Support for disengagement activities should be designed to extend over a longer period. Those who work with defectors need the aforementioned training so that they dont only have their own personal history to rely on. The economy makes it difficult to retain trained manpower, which means loss of invested capital. Continuity creates a framework for stable employment and enables Exit both to retain staff and provide them with training.

Continuity and sustainability is essential for working with defections; clients need to know that Exit will exist for several years to give them peace of mind and stability. Even professionals who collaborate with Exit have a need for a certain foresight to plan their work with clients. Finally it creates greater long-term certainty for financiers because it will be easier to carry out regular assessments and establish a feedback system as a proof that the business delivers what it promises.

About Disengagement Activities

Concepts and Definitions

As previously mentioned disengagement activities in this report should be understood as 'activities to help young people leave groups that promote intimidation and violence to achieve political goals, and subsequently helping young people who have left these groups. This is the main definition unless otherwise stated.³⁴ Below is a brief discussion on some of the other concepts that are both in the mission and used in the survey.

Operations

In Swedish 'operation' generally refers to the concept of business or any form of structured, continuously ongoing movement or function. However, in English it has the more common meaning of business or group "activity"³⁵ which could possibly be perceived as something broader. How the concept of operations should be handled in the survey has been discussed and worked on by the Youth Council of experts. Given the initially limited knowledge of more formal disengagement activity survey work, it was decided to continue with a broader and more open approach as to what can be considered disengagement activities. Both more formalised efforts as well as individuals with substantial responsibility in providing support to the target group have been determined to be of interest in the investigation. Overall, therefore, the survey sought widely for all types of initiatives directed at young people who want to leave or have left groups that promote threats and violence to achieve political goals. This approach is more powerful, as the activities should be in the hands of the individual being helped, not the person or professional investigating them.

Radicalisation and Deradicalisation

Radicalization and de-radicalisation are two concepts that need to be touched upon. Security services generally define radicalisation as "the processes that lead to an ideological or religious activism to introduce radical changes in society".³⁶ Radicalisation can lead to an individual or group promoting or advocating violence for political ends.³⁷ It should also be mentioned that the concept of radicalisation is relatively controversial in terms of both its meaning and what trends it aims to describe. The concept of radicalisation is much debated in both in Swedish and international discourse.

International research and examples of disengagement activities are found primarily under the umbrella term "deradicalisation". It should be understood as the opposite of radicalisation, that is a process that involves departure from radical values and/or

³⁴ De-radicalisation is also used to describe other activities. It may be a matter of business that supports people leaving religious sects or criminal gangs. These types of disengagement activities are not in focus in this survey.

³⁵ Great English dictionary (New York: Collins, 1989).

³⁶ 11 2010-05-28: <http://www.sakerhetspolisen.se/omsakerhetspolisen/radikaliseringochavradikalisering.4.5bf42a901201f330faf80002008.html>

³⁷ 12 Ibid.

expression. Bjørgo and Horgan state de-radicalization in recent years has come to be subject of increasing political and academic interest:

*“After the London bombings in 2005, in particular, there has been an increasing political and academic interest in understanding the process of radicalization into violent activism and terrorism, and specifically by young Muslims. More recently, deradicalisation has become a new buzzword at conferences and in policy documents”.*³⁸

But Bjørgo and Horgan criticise the concept's lack of clarity³⁹ and acknowledge the need to distinguish between cognitive and behavioral aspects of the concept of radicalisation. They are opposed to the assumption that people's radical values first need to change in order to achieve a desired behavioral change. Bjørgo and Horgan make a further distinction between *deradicalisation* and what they have chosen to call *disengagement*. Deradicalisation by their definition can be said to describe a process by which a person who has entered into a group that promotes threats and violence to achieve political goals both repudiates previous values and behaviors. Disengagement means that the person will no longer get involved in the group, nor use radical methods (i.e. threats and violence) that he or she had previously advocated. It does not necessarily result in a change in the person's values or ideals.⁴⁰ Disengagement has so far no good Swedish (or Norwegian) translation. It may be described as a process in which an individual or a collective group ends its involvement in a particular radical group, and thus stops using radical methods to achieve their political goals.⁴¹

The National Council Report 2009:15 by the Security Service talks about two different ways of "being deradicalised" - by "new start-breakers" and "innovative thinkers" (definitions of these two groups is below). However, this is another way to describe the process of disengagement activities.

An "innovative thinker" is one who no longer believes that violence or violent opinions are legitimate. The reason for this change may be that the person began seeking answers in other ideologies or became interested in philosophy or religion. A "new start-breaker" is a person who retains their political beliefs, but no longer gives their own practical support for violence. This development often runs parallel to a new life with family, work and friends who are not radical. "New start-breakers" find it practically impossible to continue to be radical [...] and have given up the extreme factions and instead operate in more established organizations or movements'.⁴²

The (de)radicalization concept does not detail problematized issues. The reason that it has been raised is that it will become significant when the practical implications of the concept involved are discussed in the concluding chapters.

³⁸ ¹⁵ Tore Bjørgo och John Horgan (red), *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (New York: Routledge, 2009), s. 3.

³⁹ ¹⁴ Bjørgo and Horgan, 2009, s.3.

⁴⁰ ¹⁵ Ibid. Samt Interview with Tore Bjørgo, 18 may 2010.

⁴¹ Interview with Tore Bjørgo, 18 May 2010.

⁴² *Brå-rapport 2009:15* Pages 180-181

Research context in brief

A Youth Board's expert pointed out early in the spring that there is a lack of basic current disengagement activities. Their findings are confirmed by other researchers. Bjørgo and Horgan describe the situation in *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, one of the most recent and comprehensive contributions to the research on de-radicalisation, as follows:

*“Disengagement from terrorism has been a neglected area not only in counter-terrorism policies but also in research on terrorism. This is despite the fact that disengagement remains potentially as complex a process as initial radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism and the issues raised by it provoke a number of interesting empirical and theoretical questions”.*⁴³

A cursory review of existing research has been carried out. Analyses and evaluations of different deradicalisation initiatives as well as research on crime prevention work targeted against young people was mainly focused on these surveys. These referred mainly to the international examples, lessons learned and conclusions in the final analysis.

Methods and Material

Survey Work

A survey is usually aimed at reproducing and describing an area, phenomenon or a need based on one or more issues. This mapping is more broad than it is deep; it tries in summary terms to describe the prevalence and needs of disengagement activities rather than to describe issues in detail or immerse itself in different activities or reports. In this survey work various methods have been used but in essence the approach is qualitative. The reason for this is that the study's issues are far too complex and not easily described by only one method.

The quantitative component consisted mainly of the questionnaire survey that was carried out in order to get a nationwide picture of the prevalence and perception of the needs and organisation of disengagement activities.

Selection

A fundamental methodological challenge in a survey of this nature is to ensure a sample that gives as generalisable results as possible. The problems of choice are based on a number of factors such as difficulties in identifying an organisation, or authority that was most likely to engage in this activity. No "control group" was identified, and the area has been relatively unexplored and thus there has been limited support from the literature in the selection process. Overall, this has meant a starting point where virtually all sources of current de-radicalisation have been of interest to the survey.

⁴³ Bjørgo and Horgan, 2009.

The selection of sources for this survey work can thus be said to have been exploratory for its kind. The selection method that best encapsulates the mapping work for this survey can best be described as a “snow-ball selection”,⁴⁴ meaning that both oral and written sources led to new people or reports to talk to or take part in the survey work. This method indeed reduces the author's influence over the sources included in the survey, but it can never completely eliminate the author's power of selection. In any given selection the location and proximity are factors that affect the selection process, thus the assessment.

Given the survey's methodological limitations, the survey work done was kept as transparent as possible so as to enable the reader to draw his or her own conclusions about what perspectives or resources the survey's results were based on and which, if any, sources they feel is lacking to give a true and fair view of the state. The persons contacted and the written materials included should have provided sufficient data to answer survey's overall issues in a fair manner.

Written Sources

The survey's scope has no deeper literary or discourse analysis prioritised. Instead, the focus is on identifying some key analysis and evaluations of disengagement activities. The Youth Board provided the initial mapping with a dozen publications (reports and articles) to begin the work with. In addition any further written sources for mapping work have been identified after increases in participation and through the advice of people who have been contacted.

Interviews and conversations

Much of the information in the survey was collected through interviews and discussions. In the more structured interview situation the respondent had a rough idea in advance of what questions they might be asked. In the conversation situation the respondent was unprepared for questions and was asked to respond to more specific questions. Virtually all interviews were conducted through meetings while most of the conversations were conducted via phone. Both the interviews and talks can be said to be semi-structured. This can be seen in the interview guide in Appendix 1.

The Youth Board initially had a number of people to contact for the survey, which included experts and a number of people at different "nearby" authorities. These people then led on to new contacts being contacted and subsequently involved in the survey. In total about 30 calls and interviews were conducted for the survey.

The Survey

The survey aimed to gain a broad understanding of the prevalence and need for disengagement activities. To some extent, the survey had a deductive approach to verifying or overturning the hypothesis that Exit is the only active disengagement in Sweden.

⁴⁴ Karin Dahmström, *from data collection to the report - to make a statistical study. Third Edition* (Student Literature, 2000), s. 196.

In order to get as nationally comprehensive a picture as possible the Youth Board aimed to reach out to all municipalities in Sweden. A fundamental problem in the choice of questionnaire method was how to address the survey. Following discussions with the working group on the Youth Board and conversations with the Crime Prevention Council, it was decided that the list be sent to the National Crime Prevention Council's local contact, where it would be used. It included e-mail addresses of some 303 correspondents in almost all the country's municipalities. The working group we decided to also send the questionnaire to was the country's 21 police forces.

The questionnaire was prepared together with the Working Group on the Youth Board and was pitched by the expert group. The final questionnaire, which respondents could either fill in on the web or in electronic (attached) word forms, can be found in Appendix 2.

Disengagement in Sweden

Presence in Sweden

The image of this form of Exit as the only clearly defined disengagement activity in Sweden has not been negated by the survey. It is, and remains, the only known activity whose stated focus is to support people who want to leave or have left groups promoting and engaging in threats and violence to achieve political goals. The interviews with the expert group and with contacts at the authorities who should have knowledge of any such activities confirms the perception⁴⁵ - as do the results of the questionnaire and the rest of the information that was collected.⁴⁶

That no other activity has been identified with such a strong focus on defectors from political extremist groups does not mean that there is or has not been activity, people or initiatives that at least partially work to support this specific audience. One such example is the National Crime Prevention Centre in Värmland as described below. Various initiatives to start and conduct a parent network for parents whose children are or have been in groups that promote threats and violence to achieve political goals are also examples of activities that could be construed as a form of disengagement activity. The same applies to individuals which over a period have supported and acted as mentors for defectors from a political extremist group. Finally, other types of crime prevention initiatives and activities directed against adolescents are described by various respondents in the survey. Some dimensions of such groups/ organisations can also support defectors. Some such examples are also discussed in the presentation of seven municipalities' reports on their work.

It should also be said that most of the examples given, or the associations that correspondents specifically contend are "defectors from violent political extremist groups",

⁴⁵ Interviews with representatives of the Group of Experts: Gunno Gunnmo March 19, Mattias Gardell March 29, Magnus Ranstorp April 13 and Aje Carlbom April 23. Interviews and conversations with agencies and organizations: Sara Lind, SKL, March 24, Lars Korsell, BRÅ March 29, Johan Olsson, SAPO April 7 and Josefine dos Santos, National Defence College April 12.

⁴⁶ For example, the interview with Anna-Lena Lodenius April 28, Magnus Sandelin, 21 May and Robert Orell, May 25 The source and reference before drawing provides a comprehensive list of the contacts made during the survey work. A few contacts listed only in organizational level as a result of personal preference or because of marginal contributions to the survey's results.

are regarding the right-wing extremist environment. Very few examples of initiatives or activities directed against defectors or young people from other groups promoting threats and violence to achieve political goals has been found.

Recognition of the presence of disengagement activities is structured as follows. First, the results from the part of the questionnaire which related to incidence are given. This is followed by a section with examples of initiatives and activities that can be considered or have given some support to defectors. In these, introductory sections will return the survey's overall conclusion on the presence, or lack of, disengagement activities; the descriptions' aim is to give examples of the answers given in investigation. Then follows a brief paragraph about the results and effects of existing disengagement activities. The performance report then concludes with a section on such business that can be considered adjacent to such disengagement activities referred to in the assignment.

In July 1, 2010, the Malmö Municipality gets a new department that deals with security and safety issues. The department replaces the previous "Security and Preparedness." The reason for the reorganisation is to clarify entrance to the town with regards to safety and security issues, and obtaining life-skills. One of the two coordinators who are now appointed will focus on combating organized crime and criminal gangs.

Measures against hate crimes are on two levels. One of the preventive approached and demonstrations towards children and young people is to prevent hate crimes from occurring. The second is to better investigate whether the events have "hatred" as the basis or cause in order to identify and define them as hate crimes, and to improve them. Malmö information database is being developed at national level.

Norrköping

Norrköping has an active crime prevention campaign, including annual awards for the actions on human rights and freedoms and against xenophobia. Any business with a focus on defectors is not and has not existed in the municipality. A few years ago, any attempts to create discussions on organisations like Exit would not happen. Now, there is greater emphasis on initiatives aimed at combating organized crime and gang recruitments. These types of problem are experienced in large scales (e.g. Motorcycle Gang) compared to politically extremist groups.²⁹

Stockholm

In Stockholm, the group of defectors from political extremist groups have not been the focus of some efforts in the past ten to fifteen years. A project in the 90s was aimed to eliminate the violence between skinheads from the streets.³⁰ It is also stated, however, that have given rise to some other undesirable effects. Stockholm currently supports Exit with a contribution of SEK 300 000 per year. Reviews on Exit are good, and they feel that the problems that existed have decreased ever since Exit started operating. The experience shows that the problems with particular groups that promote the threats and violence so as to achieve political ambitions are particularly extensive in the municipality. Stockholm, however, would shut down the Stockholm Gang Prevention Intervention project³¹ (read more below), which aims to support defection and counter-recruitment into criminal gangs without political overtones. Similar types of initiatives have been targeted in the community.³²

Västerås

Like other municipalities, in Vasteras, there are no specific exercises that target the group of defectors. Local representatives in Västerås have researched the applicability of activities that support the defectors but have not come across any initiatives that have targeted audience. However, they had problems with right-wing extremist groups between four and six years ago. There was no special PJ network of formers that was initiated then. The municipality is aware of the problems that comes and goes with politically extreme gang. Therefore, the municipality is trying to pay attention to events that can trigger or make that people are drawn to extremist and criminal activities. One such example would be the murder of a young girl that took place in the municipality in May 2010. For example it could give rise to manifestations that concern integration issues which in turn can cause anxiety and polarization and the more extreme (political) groups to which some young people are drawn to.³³

Overall, it has been surveyed that after increases on the Internet and conversations and interviews with various municipality representatives and experts will not lead to some additional examples of activities, whether in civilian or in the public sector, with primary focus on supporting defectors from groups promoting threats and violence In order to achieve political goals.

Examples of activities and initiatives

The following briefly describes the examples of activities that at least partially support or have supported the defectors. The first two operations (Exit and Crime Prevention centre in Värmland) are described in more detail in the evaluation of Exit³⁴ and in the upcoming final report by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) mission to provide

examples of how extremism in local community can be countered and bemötas.³⁵ SKL report will also provide other examples of activities that counteract the prevalence of political extremism. SKL such descriptions are complementary at least in some respects, the examples below.

EXIT, Fryshuset

Exit focuses on people who have been or are active in various nationalist or Nazi groups and has been around since 1998. Exit is mainly financed by government grants and currently has two employees.

Many of those who work or have worked at Exit have been very active in the communities they now help people to leave. Exit works with different types of activities but the focus is on the direct client support to defectors. Training of professionals such as teachers and field staff and lecturers at schools in recent years has stepped down as a result of a lack of resources and evidence of a lack of results, for example as regards lectures at schools. Much of the work also consists of working consultative and supervising municipalities or other entities in need of support in situations where it has occurred problems with far-right groups.³⁶

Crime prevention Centre in Värmland

The Crime Prevention Centre in Värmland (BFCiV) was started in 1995 and is a nonprofit organization that works to "develop local and regional crime prevention strategies and build on the knowledge of criminality development, causes and effects".³⁷ The funding comes from both public and private actors in the Värmland region. As an example, BFCiV mediates (including with something that they call "klassmorfar") project concerning the management of social unrest, concerns relating to certain motorcycle clubs and supporters. A large part of the activity, however, concerns the push for a "Värmland free from Nazism,"³⁸ where support for defectors is a part. The work is conducted largely through a very close collaboration between social services, employment agencies, schools, social insurance, police and parents there to help each other based on their role and their ability support defectors. Much of the work itself consists of educating people who are in direct contact with young people who are in right-wing extremist groups, or are about to leave the group.

Greger Wahlström is an operative for BFCiV, working by providing training to other stakeholders and counseling to defectors. He has no background in extreme right-wing environment, but he has long experience in working towards right-wing extremist groups and emphasises on the importance of keeping abreast of how the various extremist groups

operating. BFCiV is now working to develop cooperation with Exit Freezer house and also runs a parent network for parents with children in the Nazi circles.³⁹

Parent network

Apart from the parent networks in Värmland, there are other examples of parent groups. In the aftermath of the assassination of Gerhard Gbeye in 1995, a group was launched in 1997. The group consisted of both parents of children or adolescents who have or have had Nazi views and officials from schools, social services and the police. The main aim of the group was to "provide support to parents to enable them to cope while providing love to their children in their struggle against the racist and Nazi opinions".⁴⁰ Klippan's working methods also spread to other municipalities. Nora is an example of a municipality that started a similar föräldragrupp.⁴¹ None of these parent groups is active today.

Skellefteå is, however, a municipality that is now building up a network of parents with children in extreme right groups as a result of the increased incidence of right-wing extremism in the municipality. This work is also mentioned in the evaluation of Exit in 2010. All of these networks mainly focus on parents with children in extreme right groups.

Commitment and activities varies slightly between the various examples of parent network. The importance of having a good picture of the current situation, i.e. by identifying groups that are active and how they work, is said to have been an important starting point for work.⁴² The overall common denominator for the networks that can be seen supporting analysis and discussions of the current situation in the municipality, supporting each other to manage and respond to children or youth at risk, and interaction with other players to counteract the prevalence and recruitment to racist organizations. Parent networks are rarely resistant but are in a period of a region or municipality for some time have problems with political extremism.

Few individuals (enthusiasts)

During mapping works, there are examples of single individuals who assume the role of supporting defector from Nazi environments that emerged. Amongst them is Björn Fries, who was known for his support for the defecting Nazi about ten years ago and for his commitment to neo-Nazism in his role as councilor in Karlskrona (1994-2002).⁴³ Another is Bert-Inge Karlsson, who also is alleged to have acted as a mentor to a defecting nazist.⁴⁴ Bert-Inge Karlsson, who was also involved in the Klippan parent network, won the Olof Palme Prize 1999. Within the same year, Björn Fries (along with Kurdo Baksi) was a prize winner for their commitment against racism and xenophobia. There are probably more

examples of people who, through their personal commitment and mentoring, have acted as their own "former".

The mapping framework also gave examples of people who are more focused on the proactive efforts against radicalization and greater integration. For Example, it has been about individuals working actively through dialogue, training, workshops and youth activities such as parties and outings for Muslim youth, parents and imams to discuss the experiences of being Muslim in Sverige.⁴⁵ However, it is still quite far away from the objectives but it may be worth mentioning under the heading "firebrands" for the upcoming chapter on the needs of the picture.

Criminals Return into Society and 'Normal' Lifestyles

Another organization that act as defector support are Criminals Return into Society (CRIS). It is a nonprofit organization that has been around since 1997 which supports criminals and addicts to reintegrate into society. KRIS work by meeting people after a prison term. They also hold information and discussion meetings in prisons and juvenile detention centres. In some parts of the country, they also organise activities in collaboration with other stakeholders. For example, living initiatives in Gothenburg and Uppsala.⁴⁶ They are not directed specifically against defectors from political extremist groups but may come in contact with such individuals. KRIS also carries sponsorship. Their activities are based largely on the local union activities, which may vary due to resources and active members. KRIS caters to people with different types of criminal background and can in some cases come into contact with persons in or on the edge of political extremist groups. They then provide support when a person leaves political extremism behind.

Taken together, these are the most obvious examples of activities that at least partially provide, or have provided, support for defectors.

Results and Impact

Given the lack of network of formers, it has been difficult to comment on the network of former's effects. The evaluation of Exit describes the results and impact of the business had led to. The evaluation also pointed out the shortcomings and difficulties in following-up. One problem regarding monitoring is that the business lacks the ability to register formers' personal information. This is partly because formers in contact may be disappointed and partly in the legal difficulties to keep such records.

Robert Orell, Operations Manager at Exit argued that the possibility of registration of personal data should not be an insurmountable problem. He believes that the lack of follow-ups is usually due to short-term resources, and limited opportunities for long-term planning of the work. Maybe it is not the question of getting the registered person be the first to reset when a defector comes in contact with the business. Once they have been part of the business for a while, the ability to register the person for future monitoring will be better.⁴⁷

Documented results and effects from the other initiatives presented above have not emerged during mapping work. Many municipalities and experts testify the volatility of different movements, which in itself means that the problems are on the move in the country without determining as to why. Greger Wahlgren, head of operations at crime prevention centre in Värmland, claimed that the problems with right-wing extremism in recent years have declined in the region. When the association began working with defectors felt the need as more constant.⁴⁸ The causal relationship to just work at crime prevention centre is difficult to ensure.

The presence of parents' associations has also varied and few have been particularly long lasting. Perhaps it might partly be because they are successful in their ambition to make young people leave the political extremist groups. However, it may also be in the nature of young people as they grow up, problems moving, or that the problems subside as a result of other types of action.

With regards to the commitment of individuals for defectors have also in these cases was difficult to comment on the impact of their work. However, it is reasonable to assume that these "enthusiasts" have personal commitment, and mentoring has been of great importance in volunteer's choices in life.

Overall, the support of Swedish disengagement networks success has been far too scarce to draw any general conclusions about the results and effects.

Related Activities

The survey has also found that activities that support other types of deviations from various types of (destructive) context. These examples have been raised by respondents in the survey for various reasons associated with such "neighbouring" activities when they had questions about the presence of disengagement activities. There have been primarily three types of activities to which various respondents in the survey work have made connections: businesses that support defectors from religious sects, those who support the defectors from criminal gangs without political overtones and some initiatives which act against honour-related violence. The following describes very briefly some of the examples of such initiatives and businesses that have emerged during the survey.

Help source and Rescue Association Individual (FRI) are both examples of non-profit associations supporting defectors from religious sects and relatives of people in sects. They are working partial prevention through information dissemination and lobbying but focuses mainly on direct support (often in the form of calls) to defectors and relatives. Many of the volunteers in these businesses have themselves a background in manipulative and totalitarian groups. Translation source and Exit has identified similarities in approach and requirements of the clients and try to continuously hold joint meetings and exchanges. For example, on May 7, 2010 a film screening was organized, followed by a discussion regarding defection.

Passus (Frost House) is a new business that received funds of the State Inheritance Fund to support defectors from criminal gangs. The operation consists of three coaches including two which are usually light, i.e. they have a background in organized crime. Passus defined as a "sister company" to exit and seek to work with the same method as Exit. Another project that targets criminal gangs is the EU-funded Stockholm Gang Intervention and Prevention Project (SGIP). It is a similar project where Special Gang Initiative (SGI) in the Stockholm police force takes place with Huddinge, Botkyrkavägen , Haninge Municipality and some other government agencies as well as a few police departments in other states. Their focus is on developing effective methods and approaches to reduce recruitment into organized crime and criminal gangs and to support defectors. The project started in autumn 2009 and will last until August 2012, resulting in a manual that can support other police forces in their efforts against organized crime and criminal gangs.

Elektra and Sharaf Heroes (both at Frost House) are examples of organizations that are working towards violence and oppression. Both organizations aim primarily at young people. Elektra offers direct client support, information dissemination and education regarding violence and oppression while Sharaf Heroes focuses on changing attitudes by dissemination of knowledge. Another activity even greater targeted at adults (mainly women) is the national association Never Forget Pela and Fadime with several local associations around in the country. Their main method is information and knowledge sharing, and to provide concrete support (for example, housing) in emergency situations related to female violence.

These activities are therefore not disengagement in the sense of "supporting people who want to leave or have left groups promoting intimidation and violence to achieve political targets ". They are able to carry on the experiences and knowledge that may be relevant to the government or other actors who decide to build disengagement activities directed against political extremism. It may be a matter of how a long-term client support, best designed, how collaboration with other stakeholders can be organized as well as the social support that may be needed when a person leaves one, in many cases, a sealed and insulated group. Of course there are also significant differences between these types of activities. The reason for their inclusion, however, is that many respondents made

connections to these nearby businesses when it received issues such as disengagement activities referred to in the assignment.

International examples and experience

As part of this survey has a very comprehensive use of international examples and experiences of efforts against violent extremism. The following section is intended to provide examples of initiatives and efforts against violent extremism in some European countries.

As the international ideas have formed a limited part of this survey's work, and makes no claim to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of the main grooves and tenderises in disengagement activites internationally. The examples given should not be taken as "best practice". Recommendations and tips from informants in the survey have guided the selection of examples and countries listed in this section and may therefore in no way be considered representative of the area as a whole. The political climate or image problems (perceived or actual) in the countries concerned may differ in many respects from Sweden. The outlook should not be seen as an attempt to show the way for Sweden's continued efforts against groups promoting intimidation and violence to achieve political goals. They serve, in short, to exemplify how other countries, based on their needs analysis and policy, to act to prevent the occurrence of violent political extremism.

The countries from which these examples are mainly taken are Denmark, UK and the Netherlands, some of those who in recent years have taken many initiatives in response to the violent political extremism and radicalization. The international Utblicken may thus feel as a great parenthesis in the survey. In comparison with the Swedish context many examples, interventions and contexts are perceived as extreme. Few of the activities are evaluated at the level of power and many are also new to it even to be possible to comment on their results.

Examples of Programs and Projects to counter violent political extremism

Denmark

In 2008 there was a crackdown by the Danish Integration Ministry, as Denmark desired to be the leading country in the field of de-radicalisation in the areas that the EU's joint efforts to combat terrorism included. They also desired to be the leading country in an area consisting among others of collecting knowledge and research and sharing it with other EU countries, such as conferences and information material. The Integration Ministry was appointed to the ministry, and in April 2008 formed the Office of Democratic community and the prevention

of radicalisation (Kontoret for Demokratisk **Fællesskab** og) that also came to be called "Democracy Bureau".

In January 2009 the Danish Government's set Action Plan (A Common and Safe Future against Political Extremism and Radicalisation). Action Plan contains the essentially preventive efforts aimed at countering radicalization and "weaken breeding ground "for young people who are drawn to political extremist groups. The actual action plan contains 22 initiatives and is divided into the following seven areas:

1. Direct contact with young people.
2. Inclusion based on duties and rights.
3. Dialogue and enlightenment.
4. Democratic Community.
5. Interventions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
6. Special initiatives in prisons.
7. Knowledge, collaboration and partnership.

An impact evaluation of the entire Danish intervention package was produced by an external consultancy (COWI) and an evaluation was published in 2013. In June 2010 there was an interim report on the work of Plan ahead. The result that together describes a range of initiatives and projects that are to take part in www.nyidanmark.dk - Denmark's official portal for all issues regarding integration and immigration. It describes essentially what is to be done and in lesser extent the results that the efforts produce.

There is a big focus on mentoring and close contact with young people of Integration Ministry's most comprehensive de-radicalisation, initiated in 2009 called "Afradikalisering - målrettet intervention" (de-radicalization - targeted interventions) .The project is managed by the Integration Ministry in collaboration between the Copenhagen and Aarhus Municipality, East Jutland police and Danish security service (PET). The project budget is a total of approximately 1 160 000 euros of which the European Commission (Programme for the Prevention of and Fight against Crime - Action Grants 2008) contributed approximately 65 percent.

The project supports the implementation of the initiative one of the Danish Action Plan (Direct contact with youth). The aim is to develop tools and methods to help young people to leave an extremist group. One part of the project develops methods for so-called "Preventive interviews" directed against politically extremist groups, and carried out by the security police. The second part of the project focuses on developing models of mentoring for young people moving in politically extremist environments, words politically extremist views or discriminatory acts against people in their immediate environment. Integration Ministry in collaboration with the Copenhagen and Aarhus Municipality and police on East Jutland have been responsible for this part of the project. The mentors will both act preventively and reactive, that is, both try to prevent young people from getting into

politically extreme groupings as well as helping young people who want to leave such contexts. The entire project based on voluntary participation. This means that a key element is to develop methods for identifying and reaching out to young people "at risk". The idea is that mentoring initiative must strengthen existing prevention efforts in local government and lead to improved models for interdepartmental agency cooperation against violent extremism.

There were a total of 30 trained mentors in each of the participating municipalities. Furthermore, another group of municipal employees trained to continuously monitor and support mentor in their work. Consulting and research firm ALS Research has been engaged to recruit and train the team of supportive resource and persons (mentors). Through education efforts mentors and municipal employees should strengthen their skills to respond to young people, such as issues relating to integration, polarization and extremism. Knowledge building is a very important dimension of the whole effort and resources are assigned to smaller research projects and national and international exchanges.

Prepare the EXIT program for members of violent gangs

In December 2009, the Danish police were instructed to initiate a project view to drawing up an exit program for members of criminal gangs and groups (such as motorcycle clubs). The project include cross-sectorial working group and consisted of participants from the management of the prisons, the police, local authorities, tax authorities and prosecutor. Now, in August or September, the project should have come with suggestions on how such a program could be organised. Initiatives that have similar target groups and focuses are the Swedish project Passus and to some extent the SGIP.

United Kingdom

Britain's efforts during the past few years, partly as a result of London bombings in 2005, in the fight against political extremism, focused increasingly on efforts against violent Islamist extremism.

National action plan against violent extremism - Prevention in Focus

Britain's major national programs "Preventing violent extremism - Winning hearts and minds" (PVE) April 2007 aims to strengthen cooperation with the Muslim community to "Isolate, prevent and combat" violent extremism. Action contains an amount concrete measures by which the government in collaboration with Muslim organizations that combat political extremism. "Bottom-up" approach is considered to permeate the Action Plan. Its proposal is derived from the organisations and actors (often local) that come in closest contact with the radicalisation tendencies that the government wants to discourage.

The Action Plan contains four main areas:

1st: support the creation of shared values (Promoting shared values)

2nd: Support local solutions (Supporting local solutions)

3rd: Promoting citizens' capacity and leadership to act (Building civic capacity and Leadership)

4th: Strengthen Muslim communities and its leaders' roles (Strengthening the role of faith Institutions and leaders).

In PVE is knowledge-building efforts downtown. Various forms of support materials and "Wizards" are developed, for example, to support schools and local actors in their work against expressions or tendencies to violent political extremism. Training of different types are also commonplace. The focus on "rehabilitation" in prisons is strengthened also in the context of PVE. More Muslim scholars and imams in prisons should offer ideological discussions with detained persons accused or convicted of terrorism. The program is run by the Department for Communities and Local Government but the initiatives implemented and funded in collaboration with other ministries. The Home Office, for example, has had a significant role in the program's implementation.

Implementation of the Action Plan PVE

Since 2007, a few progress reports and reconciliations made. An example is the case study Empowering Muslim Women - case studies give various examples of how to locally work to strengthen and encourage Muslim women to take a more active role in the community and in society at large. In March 2010 came a follow-up initiative taken by "community level" under the PVE. The main purpose was to analyse the concrete local actions against radicalisation and identify which ones were most effective given the objective of promoting rejection of violent extremism in the name of religion. Overall, the base survey was relatively weak. The findings indicate, however, partly because the target audience "religious leaders" were not sufficient to provide statements against extremism name of religion. It also showed that the target audience of "young" were considered to be an effective group to focus on and that any initiative must be tailored to their specific sub-group. The UK program has been met with both praise and criticism from including politicians, local actors and associations. On the internet there are lots of discussion papers and articles views on various interventions successes or failures to take note of. One of the latest Entries come from Britain's newly appointed Interior and Equality, Theresa May (at time of writing). As recently as July 13, 2010 The Guardian reported that "The government's £60m "Preventing Violent Extremism" program is to be dismantled after a widespread loss of confidence in it within Muslim communities." Department of the Interior (Home Office) report that in future there should be a clearer distinction in the fight against terrorism and at risk for radicalisation and the broader efforts to strengthen social cohesion and counter (the feeling of) social exclusion among the Muslim population. Information about "dismantling" of the program

should have been presented part of a major review of its "counter-terrorism and security powers".

Organisations with a focus on dialogue and local against violent extremism include the Quilliam Foundation. Whilst they describe themselves as a think tank, the company cooperates with the British government to counter violent Islamist extremism in Britain. The organisation was formed in 2008 but had been founded that several of its core staff themselves have a background in Islamist extremist groups. Quilliam Foundation works with the disseminate knowledge and stimulate debate, to thus counteract extremism. In 2009 there were 1,000 officers in the public sector that were trained in Islam and violent extremist Islamism as well as to recognize and manage different kinds of extremism (even right-wing extremism). Quilliam Foundation also work with lecturers and workshops at universities and schools. The strong support that the British government gave Quilliam Foundation has been challenged by a few liberal and conservative MPs. The criticism has centred on investment in an organisation that has not had time to show off the effects of their work. The support Quilliam Foundations have from British Muslims, also has been challenged.

Active Change Foundation is another example of an organisation that works mainly with young people to counter the expression of political extremism and support defection from violent extremist groups. The organization has existed since 2003 and works to strengthen social cohesion in society and thereby prevent the spread of extremism. The focus is on countering violent extremist Islamism and many in the organization claims to have personal experience of the problems linked to such teams. The organization works to counteract the presence of political extremism by various local dialogue projects and by supporting people who want to leave extremist groups.

Holland has historically had problems with various forms of political extremism, different expression of right-wing extremism has existed in the country and the murder of Islam critic Theo van Gogh in 2004 is an example of an event than the more driven the debate over the need for de-radicalization efforts.

In Holland, the focus on knowledge creation and method development has been central in work towards political extremism. National guidelines and support to local action, like in Denmark and the UK has been a key principle of the Dutch efforts towards political extremism. The focus has increasingly been on prevention than on supporting defectors.

Dutch reports and knowledge initiative on de-radicalisation

The research report "Decline and Disengagement - An Analysis of Processes of Deradicalisation" came around the same time as the "Leaving Terrorism Behind", analysed the response to a number of different radical groups from the 70s onwards. The report was

prepared by researchers at "Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies" (IMES). By analysing and drawing conclusions about the factors that hampered the different types of extremist movements in Holland over time and by looking at international de-radicalization initiatives report aims to draw conclusions about the appropriate approach to, and action against violent Islamist extremism. In the analysis, researchers are trying to identify differences and similarities in the nature of Islamist extremism in comparison with another form of ideological extremism. The conclusions included in the final section about general lessons regarding disengagement activities.

"Monitor Racisme and Extremisme" at the University of Leiden is another example of Holland's focus on knowledge creation. It is a research project that started in the middle 90's on behalf of the then Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. Since 2001, the project represents collaboration with Anne Frank Foundation and University of Leiden. It was only in 2005 that the project was given its present name, the Monitor Racism and Extremism, before that it was called "Monitoring Racism and the Extreme Right ". As the name change indicates the focus has broadened and now includes more forms of political extremism. The project was implemented in 2009, an evaluation of two disengagement activities (in Winschoten and Eindhoven), with main focus on people in extreme right-wing groupings. The project in Eindhoven would also try to reach out to "radical Muslims". The project Winschoten managed to get 75 percent of the people they met to leave the extremist grouping while the project in Eindhoven disbanded early. The conclusion of the evaluation was that the disengagement activities studied were most successful as it was directed at persons outside the absolute core of an extreme right-wing group. To reach people in the inner circle of those politically extremist groups required more intensive support than the projects studied had offered.

National action plan against polarisation and radicalisation

In 2007 the Dutch government introduced the four-year action plan Polarization and Radicalisation - Action Plan 2007-2011 (Actieplan Polarisatie a radic nationalization, 2007-2011). The focus is on countering radicalisation of violent right-wing extremism and Islamist extremism, which is considered one of the greatest threats to society.

The action plan stated aims to:

- Increase the resilience and strengthen the link to the community of individuals and groups who can be assessed as at risk of polarisation and radicalisation.
- Improve the skills of parents and local actors working in close collaboration with youth by creating programs and support teams with different types of experts.
- Identify, delineate and slow polarisation and radicalization at an early stage.

For any given area are listed a number of activities in which different types of actors at different levels of society need to act well together. The majority of the budget on a total of 28 million goes out to the local level (municipalities) when the government determined that radicalization is best countered locally.

Different types of written "Wizards", both before and after the NAP was drafted been developed to support the local effort.

Anne Frank Foundation in the Netherlands was formed in 1957 with the aim of preserving the Anne Frank House. Nowadays operates the Anne French house as a museum and manages and supports various types of educational and research projects. See for example www.annefrank.org.

It has been difficult to get information or find concrete descriptions (at least in English) of what the agreed implementation of the action plan would be.

Examples of local Dutch initiative - Slotervaart

Slotervaart is a multicultural district in Amsterdam which in early 2007 developed a local initiative against radicalisation. An important part of their strategy is to focus on awareness-raising, dialogue-oriented initiatives targeting Muslim youth and parents to reinforce social cohesion in the community and thus counteract radicalisation. Collaboration and "coalitions" between different types of actors, civil and public, is also an important ingredient in the action plan. The Action Plan's Annex 1 details an activity plan with Slotervaart's efforts. In early 2008, there is a first Progress Report of the Action Plan. It describes in some detail the difficulties to establish a good and broad cooperation and difficulties in engaging all stakeholders as the reason for implementation delays. Different types of analysis and education projects primarily focused on strengthening Muslim youth and to get a bigger insight into their experiences of Dutch society has also been initiated or completed. A pair of parent training programs has been organised with a focus on "parenting as a cultural act". Contacts with schools and youth workers have also started to get going as well as cooperation with some mosques. Some of the mosques, for example, have organised meetings between various religious groups in the district to enhance understanding. The official site for their work is <http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/tegenradicalisering> . There you can read more about the district's efforts.

Anti-discrimination offices in the Baarsjes

Examples of other local Dutch initiatives are also available. In the district of Baarsjes in western Amsterdam opened an office for complaints of discrimination in 2005 to which Muslims could turn. The idea came from a similar Israeli example, Anti-Semitism Complaints

Office of the Centre for Information and Documentation Israel (CIDI). The office in Baarsjes reportedly opened in return for some Muslim organisations were asked to write on a "contract with society" in which they, among other things promised to inform the district when members in their networks showed radicalisation tendencies. The office was among those that were otherwise involved in lawsuits against anti-Muslim cartoons on the Internet, and one case regarding a woman who was forbidden to wear the veil at work. In 2007 the office expanded its target group to include other types of discrimination cases (exactly how wide the focus was became unclear), but in 2009, the office closed down as demand for their services was reported to be poor.

Other examples of disengagement activities and initiatives towards political extremism

Another variety of initiatives and analyses in radicalisation and disengagement activities have been identified during the mapping process. Below are a few such examples:

An EU project, ReCoRa underlines conclusions on the educational needs of "frontline staff" in their anti-radicalisation work during 2008. The aim of the project was to investigate the training needs of people working in "Front line" against violent (Islamic) extremism. The study was conducted in six municipalities in Holland, the UK and Germany, all of which carried disengagement projects where field staff played a central role. The study states that it was necessary to field staff (such as teachers, community policing, key members of Muslim organisations and youth workers) both had an understanding of themselves radicalisation risk as well as how they in their actions could counter political extremism.

A main conclusion was also in the importance of field personnel managed to build trusting relationships and their ability to act and communicate in a way that imbued with a sense of compassion rather than of information collection and "designation" of radicalisation tendencies. Another pitfall that field personnel would try to avoid was to communicate in a way that could be perceived as the attempt to impose a "desirable" form of Islam.

New report on radicalisation and de-radicalisation in prisons

In July this year the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) at King's College London published a report about Prisons and Terrorism, Radicalisation and De-radicalization in 15 Countries. It is one of the first attempts at a more comprehensive analysis of the role prisons play in forced radicalisation and de-radicalisation, focusing on Islamic extremism, of individuals. A dozen leading experts have participated in the research where among other initiatives and developments in countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, the UK and the U.S. have been analysed. Of these, the UK and U.S.

examples of countries without an explicit deradicalisation program but does have established specific strategies for dealing with those accused or convicted of terrorism.

The aim of this work was to identify success factors in different types of counter radicalisation programs in prisons. The conclusions highlighted the importance of mixing different types of training (ideological and vocational), the strength of credible well-informed interlocutors and a focus on prisoners' reintegration into society.

German newly established Exit program for violent extremist Islamists

Germany's Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV), which is part of the German intelligence service, during the summer of 2010, established a program to support defectors from extremist, våldbejakande Islamic groups. The program is called "Hatif" which means *phone* in Arabic. Part of the program consists of a phone line opened for people who want to leave radical, violent Islamist groups and counseling in various languages offered. The details of the program overall is still unclear.

Peter Neumann, an expert at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICRS) in London (and in charge of the study mentioned above on avhopparverksamhet in prisons) has commented on the program. He believes that it is the first example in Europe of a program that caters to people who do not necessarily have been punished for an extremist agerande.

German mobile advisory team against right-wing extremism

Since 2001, Germany's "Mobile Beratung gegen Rechtsextremismus in Berlin" (Mobile counseling against right-wing extremism in Berlin, or MBR) offered needs-based counseling and support to individuals who want to actively distance of right-wing extremism, racism and anti-Semitism. The project is funded by both state and federal medel.

When a new coalition government was formed in 2009 there was a proposal to widen the MBR's activities to include and combat extremism in environments other than that of right-wing extremists. Feeling as though there was a "threat" entailed from widening MBR's activities ten experts wrote an article in which they strongly criticised the expansion of the program. Their main criticism was that this this expansion would lead to different political extremist ideologies being treated the same. In this same article they also warned that such a kind of extension of the MBR's activities would devalue and reduce the problem of right-wing extremism.

Summary of the international outlook of programs

To conclude the international examples of regulated actions against violent political extremism is limited when it comes to a focus on supporting the defector. Outright examples of support to the defectors have mainly been finding for far-right extremist groups, but even these seem to focus on a preventive part. Activities with a specific focus on supporting people to leave violent Islamist extremist groups have been rare. Regarding leftist extremist groups, there have been no such disengagement activities identified in any of the countries studied.

They studied their general strategies against what they chose to call violent political extremism, terrorism, radicalisation, polarisation, etc. Denmark, Holland and the UK in recent years have focused on prevention, specifically against violent Islamist extremism. Many efforts have focused on trying to create forums for improved dialogue, mutual understanding of different religions and religious expression and strengthening social cohesion in society.

Criticism of some of the efforts made have also pointed to the difficulties in finding a good approach and a sustainable climate for action against political extremism.

General lessons and conclusions

What then are the general lessons and conclusions on the efforts aimed at supporting people to leave violent political extremist groups?

To begin with the area is, as previously mentioned, young and relatively unexplored. In the analysis and evaluations available emphasises virtually all authors draw the conclusion that all attempts are tentative, or based on limited findings and should therefore be interpreted with some caution.

Another general conclusion is that the area is very complex and various interventions effect largely contextual. Bjørge and Horgan writes, for example, in the introduction to *Leaving Terrorism Behind*: "Although a further objective of this volume is to achieve a sense of the lessons learned from past experiences, caution will surround any effort to over-generalise individual cases." At the same time they emphasise religious and political aims are fundamentally different and it is essentially the social and psychological processes associated with leaving a political extremist group behind that are important.

Although there concrete actions against political extremism and radicalisation in different countries, these are still somewhat new and still in their experimental phases and searching for sustainable, efficient solutions. Some of the conclusions that can be drawn from collective expertise, however, are:

- A central success factor in supporting people who have left groups that promoted threats and violence to achieve political objectives are to support the defector to create a new social "family".

This may be for example to help find a new residence, education, job or internship, new leisure activities.

- The more stigmatised a political extremist group in society, the harder it is for the former to socially integrate.
- Situations when a person is physically separated from their group, as in a prison or in a hospital, can provide a good opportunity to motivate the person concerned to his group.
- Users, i.e. people with personal experience from the current political extremist grouping can be a powerful part of a disengagement activities success.
- People with personal experience, deep understanding of the context and high credibility is of particular importance in initiatives against violent Islamist extremism and radicalising.
- Possibilities within the framework of a deradicalisation project offer security solutions that can be critical to its ability to support defectors from groups where there is a threat against former members. This is mainly relevant for programs targeting people in the inner circle of extremist movements.
- Focus on the ideological dimension is of greater importance in combating violent extremist Islamism than actions against far right extremism.
- Involvement of parents and other family members in disengagement work is generally a success factor and can be especially powerful in societies where family and especially older family members have high status and authority.
- There are various pros and cons of conducting disengagement activities in public (GO), and privately (NGO). The benefits of a public actor, for example, better financial resources and greater opportunities to negotiate various options to "amnesty" for the defector. Commercial players have also greater possibilities than civilians to follow up drop outs and demonstrate transparent results of its operations. A civilian actor's greatest strength lies in its neutrality. Unlike a public actor who can be seen as the "enemy", a civilian actor act more autonomously and can thus be closer at hand for a defector to turn to.

Bjørger and Horgan continued research on how supporting defectors can have multiple purposes. The obvious goal is to create better organisations and efforts to help people who want to leave or have left groups promoting intimidation and violence to achieve political goals. Another goal is that through a better understanding of the de-radicalisation process we can get better at countering radicalisation, i.e. prevention interventions.

A final conclusion and question is whether the role of disengagement activities fits into a broader effort to counteract the occurrence and expression of political extremism. Bjørger presented an analysis of different strategies to prevent terrorism in autumn 2010. Disengagement activities can be put in the context in which a long-term, "soft", action in

response to the expression of political extremism. Bjørge also emphasises the challenge of getting the repressive, "hard", effort not to antagonise the softer types of interventions such as disengagement activities and initiatives: strengthening social cohesion.

Summary conclusions

Political extremism, terrorism, radicalization, polarization, de-radicalization and disengagement activities, all these concepts have both in Swedish and international discourse proved they involve a variety of interpretations, positions, strategies, and interventions. In this mapping, with a focus on the prevalence and needs of businesses that support defectors from groups promoting threats and violence to achieve political goals, has a variety related issues emerged: Where is the line between preventive and reactive response to political extremism? What is radicalization and what characterizes different radicalization tendencies? What are the differences and similarities between groups with and without political goals, promotes threats and violence?

This mapping has not been able to follow up all the sidings and new roads opened during work time. The final report, however, an attempt has been made to not strictly reject questions not directly dealt precisely disengagement activities but instead bring the recorder, areas and Conclusions adjacent to the main survey questions. The hope is that it will contribute to wider perspectives that may be of benefit in the Youth Board continuing mission.

A challenge of this work has been the lack of empirical evidence and data in the field. The results of this survey are based very largely on the responses of all the respondents who were contacted in the investigation, and on existing national assessment and evaluations. In an attempt to broaden the survey, some predictions of international examples and international research has been done. An important issue that has not yet been commented on is how the results are applicable presence and need disengagement activities in Sweden correspondence international experience in the field.

Are the results of Sweden's unique?

The current instance has previously mentioned, a regular disengagement activities focusing on supporting people leaving right extremist groups, have been identified in Sweden (Exit). Establishments that primarily focus on supporting the defector from other types of political extremist groups are not in Sweden. The international outlook image is similar. Both in countries like Holland, Denmark, Germany and UK there are, or has there been, businesses with a similar focus as Exit. However, one must move from northern Europe to find examples of outright disengagement activities for another kind of political extremism. For programs targeted against left-autonomous groups may, for example, seek out countries in South America for that in the present day find such activities. There are examples of large

government programs that are trying to support defection from large left autonomous organizations. In the countries that have studied, yet also examples of activities that support the defectors from violent extremist Islamism, with the possible exception of the programs recently initiated in Germany. Initiatives in prisons has elements of disengagement activities but hardly provides the full support, such as housing, social networks and work needed to help a defectors to an alternative life.

The current needs of disengagement activities are also similar between the Swedish context and international results. The right-wing extremism is in many countries a recognized need of support to the defectors. The issue is often not about the need for such activities but are how to organize such activities to best meet the demand. Needing to support defectors from the left autonomous environment may be judged to be small, at least in countries like Sweden. The assumption receives some support in research showing that a departure from a group having less stigma, is easier than dropping out of groups society has collectively taken a significant stand against (e.g. extreme right-wing groups). When it comes to violent Islamist extremism Sweden gets its results, where a preventive focus is advocated, supported by international action. The international outlook essentially gives examples of preventive measures aimed at reducing polarization and strengthening social cohesion in society through dialogue, collaboration, education and early intervention against radicalization. Here, the FBI's forthcoming investigation helps clarify the issue. The challenge of accurate need to analysis and from there, finding the right choice of action, is also something that the international outlook revealed.

The main findings, a summary

In summary, the following conclusions have been drawn during the survey work: In Sweden, the business that focuses on providing support for people who want to leave, or have left, politically extremist groups unusual.

Exit is the only identified activities in Sweden with a distinct focus to support defectors from groups promoting threats and violence to achieve political goals.

- In Sweden and other neighbouring countries disengagement activities are primarily focused against defectors from the right-wing extremist groups. It is missing to a large extent experiences and activities with a focus to support defectors from other politically extremist organizations.
- Several examples of local initiatives aimed at young people 'at risk' who could be dragged into different types of destructive groups have emerged in the survey. At the municipal level is the political dimension key in various types of operations (mostly preventive) against various types of criminal behaviour. Several municipalities indicates that they operate or intend to initiate activities aimed at combating organized Crime and recruitment to criminal gangs, rather than activity combat political extremism.

- Lessons learned from other activities is that supporting young people to leave the various types of destructive situations, groups or environments can be useful for activities that support the defectors from political extremist groups. Research indicates that the social and psychological aspects of leaving a closed grouping often are the same irrespective of its ideology.
- In Sweden, there is a need for support to defectors from the extreme right-wing groups while there was no demonstrated need for support to defectors from violent Autonomous or left extremist Islamic groups. Looking at occurrence of disengagement activities internationally seems like needs analyses have been made in several neighbouring countries.
- The need to focus on prevention rather than disengagement activities emphasised particularly in the area of response to violent extremist Islamism. Other countries have mainly focused on just preventive measures in the "soft" part of their work towards political extremism in general and Islamist extremism in particular.
- Ability to create legitimacy and trusting relationships is a crucial factor in all types of operations against political extremism. People with personal experiences of an extremist organisation or members of their own religion, can be particularly successful in creating such trusting relationships to defectors.
- Civilian actors are well suited for conducting disengagement activities, but interaction with public bodies is essential for defectors to be supported in the most comprehensive manner possible. Parents and friends can also be important to a person's motivation and drive to leave an extremist grouping.
- Disengagement activities alone can rarely affect the existence of political extremism, but in combination with other types of short term and long term efforts to reduce the incidence of groups promoting threats and violence to achieve political goals.

Sources and references

- Källor Bjørgo, Tore and Horgan, John (eds), 2009: Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement, Routledge, New York.
- Council for Crime Prevention and Security Service, 2009: Violent extremism - Anti-democratic groups on the extreme right and left wing (BRÅ Report 2009: 15), Edita Norstedts, Vasteras.
- Counterterrorism on a local LEVEL A Guide, 2007.
- http://english.nctb.nl/Information_for/local_authorities/
- Counter-Terrorism from Within - Assessing Saudi Arabia's Religious Rehabilitation and Disengagement Programme (RUSI December 2008 Volume)
- Dahmström, Karin, 2000: From data collection to report - to do a statistical study. third Edition, College Literature, Lund.

- Demant, Froujke, Sloodman, Marieke, Bujis, Frank and Tillie, Jean, 2008: Decline and Disengagement - An Analysis of Processes of Deradicalisation. Amsterdam: IMES Report Series.
- English summary of the project Afradikalisering - målrettet intervention (ref. No. 4050- 2008 1076, Danish Integration Ministry)
- The parents of the cliff and Save the Children, 2001: A small booklet about to face racism and Nazism in adolescents.
- Gruunenberg, Sara and van Donselaar, Jaap: Deradicalisation: Lessons from Germany, Options for the Netherlands? (<http://www.annefrank.org/upload/Downloads/Mon7-UK Ch8.pdf>)
- Practical Guide to the Deradicalisation of Youngsters, 2009.
- <http://www.forum.nl/Portals/0/pdf/Practical%20Guide%20Deradicalisation.pdf>
- Project description of Danish EXIT initiative targeting violent gangs from the police on South and Sonderjylland from April 3, 2010 and mailkorrespondens with Hans Roost, project manager.
- Government decision IJ2009 / 2331 / DEM, 2009-12-17: Mission to Youth Board to investigate activities that help young people to leave the groups promoting threats and violence to achieve political
- Government decision IJ2009 / 2136 / DEM, 2009-11-26: Funding for Local Authorities and Regions to illustrate examples of extremism in the local community countered and countered.
- Government decision IJ2010 / 262 / DEM, 2010-02-11: Mission to the Security Service to compile a report on violent Islamist extremism Big English Dictionary, 1989: Norstedts, Solna.
- Youth Board, Survey of completed and ongoing avhopperverksamhet - suggested focus, February 2010
- Youth Board's mandate reporting Evaluation of Exit Fryshusets avhopperverksamhet - Progress report on action for young people who want to leave groups that use violence and intimidation to achieve political Goals, May 2010.
- Oral sources Alexandersson, Lars, Crime Prevention Council. Telephone conversation on 28 April 2010.
- Ardell, Lise-Lott, Lean Link in Linköping. Telephone conversation on 27 May 2010.
- Bjørge, Tore, Norway Police Academy. Interview on 18 May 2010.
- Carlbom, Aje, Expert Group. Interview on 23 April 2010.
- Dos Santos Josefine, National Defence College. Telephone conversation on 12 April 2010.
- Gardell, Mattias, Expert Group. Interview on 29 March 2010.
- Gunnmo, Gunno, Expert Group. Interview on 19 March 2010.
- Kelemen Niklas, formerly of Save the Children. Telephone conversation on 19 April 2010.
- Korsell Lars, Crime Prevention Council. Telephone conversation on 29 March 2010.

- Witty, Gert, Jönköping Municipality. Telephone conversation on 21 May 2010.
- Lappalainen, Naomi, Auxiliary source. Telephone conversation on 5 May 2010.
- Larsson, Annika Karlsson, Håkan, Stockholm city. Telephone conversation on 31 May 2010.
- Lind, Sara, SKL. Telephone conversation on 24 March 2010.
- Lodenius, Anna-Lena, writer and author. Interview on 28 April 2010.
- Martelius Malin, City of Malmö. Telephone conversation on 25, 2010.
- Mattsson, Anna and Puhakka, Olavi Precens Stockholm city. Telephone call on May 28 in 2010.
- Olsson, Johan, SAPO telephone conversation on 7 April 2010.
- Oskarsson, Michael, Knowledge Centre organized crime, Gothenburg city. Telephone conversation on 3 August 2010.
- Ranstorp, Magnus, Expert Group. Interview on 13 April 2010.
- Rask, Per-Olov, Västerås Municipality. Telephone conversation on 21 May 2010.
- Sandelin, Magnus, author. Telephone conversation on 21 May 2010.
- Wahlgren, Greger, Crime Prevention Centre in Värmland. Phone calls May 10 in 2010.
- Orell, Robert, Exit. Interview on 25, 2010.

And conversations with some representatives of non-profit associations and certain email correspondence regarding international experiences and examples.

Electronic sources:

- 2010-04-20: http://www.bra.se/extra/news/?module_instance=7&id=397
- 2010-04-29: <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article6394278.ab>
- 2010-05-05: www.hjalpkallan.se
- 2010-05-05: <http://www.fri-sverige.se/index.shtml>
- 2010-05-10: <http://www.fryshuset.se/fryshuset/exit.aspx>.
- 2010-05-10, http://www.bra.se/extra/news/?module_instance=7&id=281
- 2010-05-25: <http://livsstilshuset.org/kontakta.html>,
- http://www.kris.a.se/pdf/vagen_ut/VU_2009_NR3.pdf and
- http://www.kris.a.se/pdf/vagen_ut/VU_1001.pdf
- 2010-05-27: <http://www.bfciv.se/>
- 2010-05-27: <http://www.sydsvenskan.se/sverige/article141994/Kunskap-is-extremismensmotkraft.html>
- 2010-05-27; <http://www.fryshuset.se/fryshuset/passus.aspx>
- 2010-05-28: <http://www.sgip.se/>, <http://www.sgip.se/partners.html>,
- <http://www.sgip.se/index.html>
- 2010-05-28: <http://www.fryshuset.se/elektra/> and
- http://www.fryshuset.se/elektra/elektra/sharaf_hjaltar.aspx
- 2010-05-28: <http://www.pelafadime.se/>
- 2010-05-28:
<http://www.sakerhetspolisen.se/omsakerhetspolisen/radikaliseringochavradikalisering.4.5bf>

- 42a901201f330faf80002008.html
- 2010-05-30: [http://vlt.se/nyheter/vasteras/1.844154 team-quiet-in-demonstration](http://vlt.se/nyheter/vasteras/1.844154-team-quiet-in-demonstration)
- 2010-07-03: <http://www.netz-gegen-nazis.de/artikel/10-professor-meinen-peroxidase-neueextremismus-bekaempfungsprogramm-rechtsextremismus-9822>
- 2010-08-05: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/jul/13/ministers-dismantle-programme-prevent-violent-extremism> and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10619419>
- 2010-07-29: <http://www.monitorracisme.nl/content.asp?PID=324&LID=1>
- 2010-07-29: <http://www.monitorracisme.nl/content.asp?PID=322&LID=1>
- 2010-08-03: http://www.government.nl/News/Press_releases_and_news_items/2007/August/Plan_to_combat_polarisation_and_radicalisation and [http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/E9353925-A523-41C6-94F1-643EACF826CC / 0 / minbiz007_actieplanukv3.pdf](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/E9353925-A523-41C6-94F1-643EACF826CC/0/minbiz007_actieplanukv3.pdf)
- 2010-08-03: [http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/8BCC391C-9D18-4FFC-8D9EF8A93E9F733C / 0 / Faktaarkafradikalisering.pdf](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/8BCC391C-9D18-4FFC-8D9EF8A93E9F733C/0/Faktaarkafradikalisering.pdf)
- 2010-08-03: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,702103,00.html>
- 2010-08-03: http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/en_infophone/
- 2010-08-03: http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/aktuell_thema/meldungen/
- 2010-08-03: <http://www.information.dk/219810>
- 2010-08-03: <http://www.alsresearch.dk.php5-6.dfw1-2.websitetestlink.com/dansk/projekter/uddanelse-radgivning/radikaliseringforebyggelse>
- 2010-08-03: [http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/B6795CE0-AB82-4964-8D33-B3E9804C4ACD / 0 / radikalisering_handlingsplan_status.pdf](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/B6795CE0-AB82-4964-8D33-B3E9804C4ACD/0/radikalisering_handlingsplan_status.pdf)
- 2010-08-03: http://www.slotervaart.nl/aspx/download.aspx?file=/contents/pages/97375/slotervaartacti_onplancounteringradicalisation.doc
- 2010-08-03: <http://www.nieuwsuitamsterdam.nl/en/2009/04/district-closes-discrimination-complaints-office>
- 2010-08-03: <http://www.mbr-berlin.de/>
- 2010-08-04: [http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/bestanden/documenten-en-publicaties/Kamerstukken / 2009/12/22/2009 to voortgangsrapportage-definitief / voortgangsrapportage2009definitief.pdf](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/bestanden/documenten-en-publicaties/Kamerstukken/2009/12/22/2009-to-voortgangsrapportage-definitief/voortgangsrapportage2009definitief.pdf)
- 2010-08-05: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/669801.pdf>
- 2010-08-05:

- <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/preventapisassesssummary>
- 2010-08-05: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article5549138.ece> and
- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/oct/23/quilliam-Islamic-fundamentalist-terrorism>
- 2010-08-05: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2010/03/mps-warn-preventprogramme-backfiring-in-local-communities/>
- 2010-08-06: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/8615390.stm
- 2010-08-06: <http://www.nuansa.nl/uploads/47/7b/477b575509dcd636d771f32a282d7777/recor-finalreport-en.pdf>

APPENDIX 1 - INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction - general information about the mission and the purpose and use of the interview

About the survey:

- Overview of mapping elements (intelligence, operations focus, scope and effects and the boundaries between the civil and public responsibility).
- Scope and Definitions (focus civilian sector, groups that promote the threats and violence to achieve political objectives).

Purpose of the interview:

- Take advantage of the knowledge and experience that the interviewee has in force disengagement activities in Sweden and abroad.
- Take note of the interviewee's views on various aspects of disengagement activities - Identify examples of disengagement activities.
- Good as well as less favourable.
- Identify relevant sources (written as well as key personnel) should be included in mapping.

Use of the interview:

- The concrete contribution to the mapping
- Contribute to the next step in mapping work

Initial orientation of the interviewee's knowledge, experience and perspective

1. Tell us about your work and the knowledge and experience regarding political extremism / disengagement activities!

2. Which perspective and questions you have especially touched in your work and to what extent have you come in contact with questions regarding de-radicalization / dropout / "disengagement"? If disengagement activities - the present
3. What is your view on the meaning of "disengagement activities"?
 - a) What - e.g. degree of organization, project / activity
 - b) Who - e.g. actors involved (civil / public), individuals / organisations
 - c) How - e.g. Systematics, continuity (Government of the mission definition: Completed and ongoing activities that help young people to leave the groups promoting violence and intimidation to achieve political goals and support people who have left such groups)
 4. What do you know about disengagement activities (type, scope, collaboration, quality, methods, funding, etc)
 - a) In Sweden?
 - b) Abroad?
 5. Do you believe there are good and not so good examples of disengagement activities?
 6. Are there any particular countries / international organisations that you think may be particularly interesting to look at when it comes to disengagement activities? Which?
 7. What do you know and how do you see the effects of activities that help youth groups to leave groups that promote violence and intimidation to achieve political goals?
 8. What are the success factors for disengagement activities?
 9. How do you see the need (type, scope, collaboration, quality, methods, funding, etc.) of disengagement activities in Sweden?
 10. What goals do that disengagement should have in Sweden?
 11. What aspects / perspectives are particularly important to consider when building disengagement activities in Sweden?
 12. What responsibility do you see the different actors (civil and public) will take in disengagement activities? Other sources of survey work
 13. Do you have suggestions on written sources or research (national and international) that you think I should take note of the mapping work?
 14. Do you have suggestions for organisations / individuals with good knowledge of de-radicalisation / disengagement activities who could be contacted in the survey work?
Other
 15. Finally - do you have other meds kick you want to do the survey work?

16. Is it okay that I am contacting you through if I have additional questions? Feel contact me if you come in any further or if you encounter during spring information that you think I should pay attention.

Clearance - rounding and closing information

- Thank you for taking the time.
- Final report of the Youth Board on 31 March.

APPENDIX 2 - SURVEY REGARDING EXISTENCE AND NEEDS OF DISENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Initial data Authority / municipality

Role / title on you responding:

Contact information for those who respond (optional):

Occurrence of so-called disengagement activities in Sweden

1. Do you know of any initiatives / businesses / individuals in Sweden that provides or has provided support for young people (13-25 years) who have left or want to leave groups that promote violence and threats to achieve political goals? (Double click on the box in front of your answer and select Default "Highlighted")

a) Yes (go to question 2)

b) No (go to question 3)

Comment:

2. If yes - briefly describe the initiative / activity / individual below and specify if possible any contact details!

3.

Write your reply here:

Need for disengagement in Sweden

4. Do you feel that there is need for organisations in Sweden that support young people (13-25 years) who have left or want to leave groups that promote violence and intimidation to achieve political goals? (Double click on the box in front of your answer and select Default "Checked")

a) Yes (go to question 4)

b) No (skip to question 5)

Comment:

5. If yes - please describe how you feel the need to look like:
- a) What indicators suggest that there is a need for so-called disengagement activities?
 - b) What young people are in need of such activities?
 - c) Extent of need, d) What type of business / support you will see that these young people need?

Write your reply here:

Different market participants to conduct disengagement activities in Sweden

6. Given that the government would provide support to young people (13-25 years) who have left or want to leave groups that promote violence and intimidation to achieve political objectives - how do you assess the various actors potential to be successful in the pursuit of such activities? Please tick in the table below!

Very bad conditions

Bad conditions

Good conditions

Very good conditions

Civil Society (eg non-profit organizations and public education stakeholders)

Probation

Police

The social

Other (comment below):

Comment:

Other views, comments or tips:

Save your completed questionnaire as usual (save as) and then send it by e-mail as attached documents to: ida.thomson@battra.se by 21 May, we need your response!

Thanks for your participation!