

Council of Europe
PESTALOZZI Modules Series

“From the Remembrance of the Holocaust
to the Prevention of Radicalisation and
Crimes against Humanity”
(PREV2)*

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Module A - Evaluation Report

Introduction

“From the Remembrance of the Holocaust to the Prevention of Radicalisation and Crimes against Humanity” is a Pestalozzi Programme, Council of Europe, Trainer Training Course.

The trainer training courses of the Pestalozzi Programme, Council of Europe - European Module Series - are directed at trainers working in the field of education and wishing to improve their knowledge and to develop their skills in the priority fields of the Council of Europe, namely, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The modules offer a unique experience in a stimulating international environment which gathers trainers coming from across Europe and beyond. Work is based on content, methodology and a four-fold concept of competences development: developing sensitivity and awareness, knowledge and understanding, individual practice and societal practice.

The Module Series spreads over nearly 18 months and includes 2 face-to-face meetings for participants. This report presents an overview of the first meeting, Module A, which was held in Strasbourg between 22 and 25 November 2016. In total, 27 participants from all over Europe took part in Module A.

Focus

The numerous atrocities that have been committed in the past should stand as a stark warning lest they happen again. For Europe the Holocaust is certainly the worst memory of that kind. Yet, we are living in a world which seems to be alienated and disinterested, blind to the atrocities that still occur on a daily basis. Recent political events have led to an unprecedented rise in hate crimes and what seems to have been hidden under a plethora of politically correct discourse has been unleashed.

This Module Series aims to look at what can be done in education in a medium to long-term perspective to prevent such crimes from happening and to work for more sustainable and inclusive democratic societies. The module series explores the mechanisms at work and focuses on how every teacher can contribute to this prevention. In particular it looks at how to strengthen education values (notably the coherence between one's values and one's behaviour), how critical observation and critical thinking can help to resist group pressure and blind obedience to authority and how these and similar educational efforts can contribute to preventing radicalisation and crimes against humanity.

Aims

The Module Series aims to support participants to use diverse methods and approaches to contribute to education for the prevention of radicalisation and crimes against humanity; in particular they will be better equipped to:

- Raise awareness in teachers and learners, in their families and communities of the importance of education's role in the prevention of radicalisation and crimes against humanity
- Keep alive the memory of the Holocaust as one way to prevent radicalisation and future crimes against humanity
- Integrate the development of the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge in their teaching and training practice
- Take action in their school and community to promote inclusiveness and democratic participation as well as to counter developments that may lead to radicalisation

Module A

Preparations for Module A started early in 2016, with a first preparatory meeting for the team of trainers in April. The theme is complex and emotionally engaging on many levels and it was deemed important from the outset to focus on creating a safe environment in which participants could feel comfortable to actively engage with the topic and the way in which it relates to each and everyone of us as individuals and as educators. The activities that were ultimately identified and presented to participants, aimed for a coherent balance between the theme of the module series, team building, methodology, personal and professional development and a commitment to carry the work through.

The Methodology

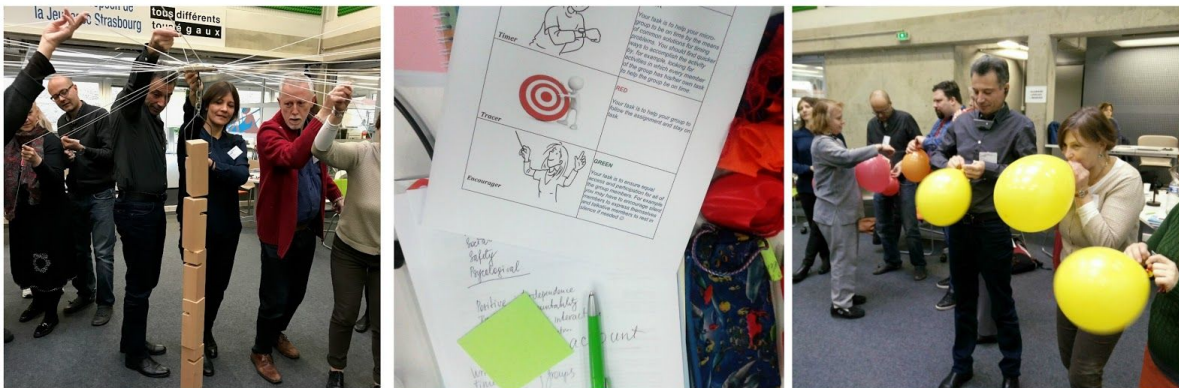
One of the hallmarks of the Pestalozzi Programme is the commitment to model the pedagogy that the programme promotes. This essentially entails looking at the core of what being a teacher means: our pedagogy, what we feel and think about the relation we have with education, with knowledge, with school, with colleagues and learners and bringing this to bear on the theme of the module series. Such a pedagogy puts the person at the centre of our educational undertaking, with a marked focus on processes.

With this in mind, cooperative learning principles and democratic practices were modeled throughout the meeting and participants could experience first hand cooperative learning in action with ample time to debrief about the activities in terms of feelings, ethics, meta-cognition and application in the classroom. Peer learning was also a focus with

continuous micro-groups and coaching groups encouraging critical and constructive feedback between participants.

Day 1 - Untangling

The focus of Day 1 was to get to know each other and to set the scene of our work. Participants were almost immediately engaged in a team building activity with a focus on cooperation. Participants were invited to participate in what under different circumstances, might be termed as a fun, party activity. Working in teams, they had to protect balloons attached to their ankles. The ensuing reactions and the way in which participants behaved in the name of light-hearted fun, nonetheless brought to light issues that included aggression, deceit, victimisation, violence, inequality, blame, the notion of bystanders, obedience to authority, anger, retaliation... Participants were then invited to explore the personal nature of experiences while stepping out of their immediate frame of reference to understand how different people may experience the same situation differently. Participants were also supported to explore key concepts, identifying issues and devise working definitions for the module series. Cooperative learning structures were introduced and participants had the time to experience and reflect on the methodology. Base-groups were also introduced with tasks set to support participants process the work done during the day.



Day 2 - Ordinary People - Extraordinary Evil

The focus of Day 2 was the ordinariness of people who committed extraordinary evil, challenging the notion that extraordinary evil is committed by evil monsters in the guise of human beings. To start with, participants were invited to explore the purposes of education and to explicitly identify what really matters, and to determine whether these aims are appropriate and enacted in appropriate ways. The pictorial representations of schools and the ensuing discussions provided plenty food for thought - school as factories that

annihilate critical thinking; institutions in which teachers are dehumanised and shackled by the system and a stark divide between what education is and what it should be about.

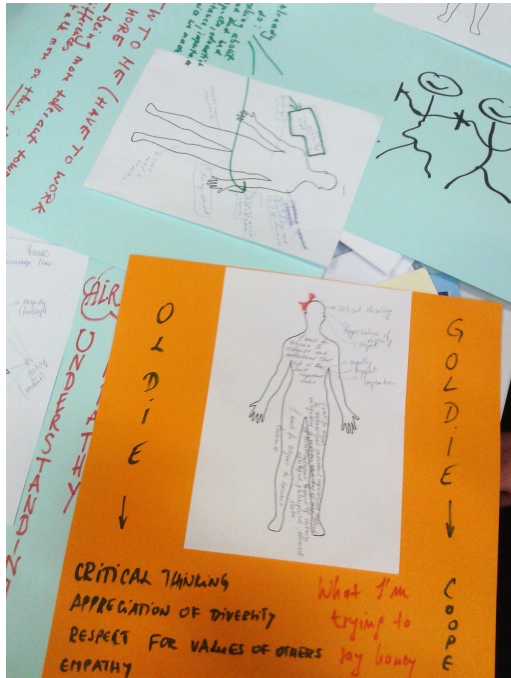


Next participants were engaged in a session that aimed to highlight the difference between teaching about something, intervening when something happens, and educating for the prevention while exploring concepts like cyberbullying, online discrimination, online racism, violent online radicalisation and denialism.

Participants then looked at what makes ordinary people commit extraordinary evil by looking at historical examples and social experiments in order to identify what instigates people to commit extraordinary evil. These motivational factors were found to be very similar across the various examples. A trust building experiment during the coffee break set the scene to explore that how “I” perceive the world, very much depends on stories “I” tell myself or that others tell me (including the media). Participants were supported towards recognising the fact that sometimes all it takes for a group to be victimised is another group that declares them to be so. The day ended with more work in base-groups, with participants taking time to process the day’s activities and feelings through the use of DIXIT cards.



Day 3



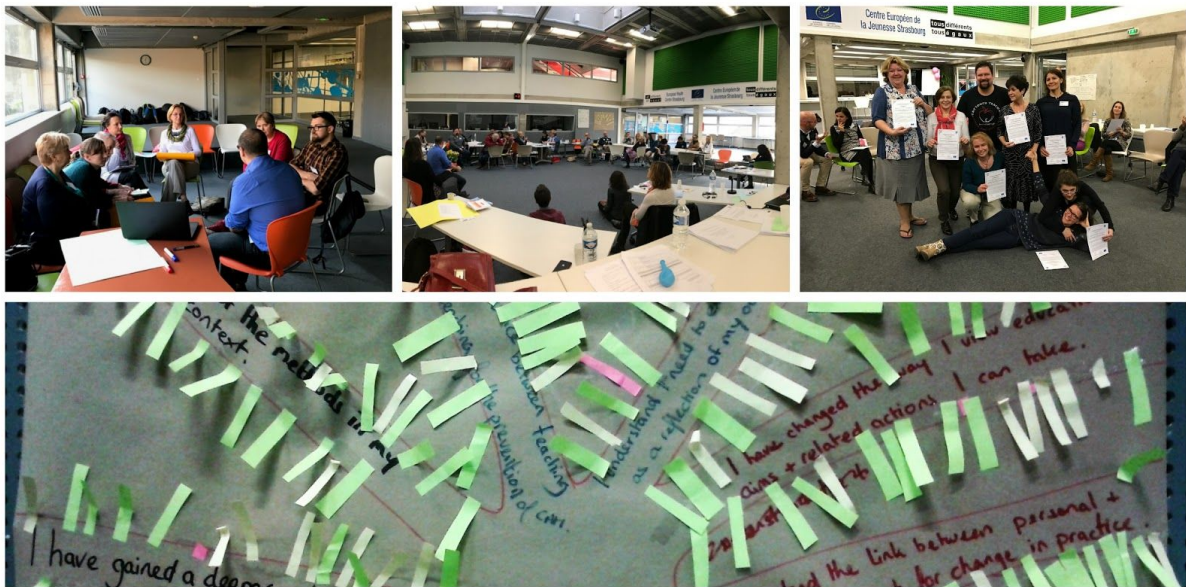
Having explored how ordinary people can and do commit extraordinary evil, the focus of the third day was on how these same ordinary people are also faced with with the possibility of extraordinary choices. Participants were asked to compare what they believe to be their purpose, identity and values as teachers with how they behave and act in class. This entails coming to terms with the fact that we are living contradictions, and that our human potential is capable of both good and evil. Our contradictory personalities may leave us in an emotionally uncomfortable place with feelings of guilt, shame, anger, denial and sadness. In accepting our whole human potential, we move to a place from where we can make informed and conscious decisions about what role we want to play, whether to be

good or bad. Participants were supported in exploring ways in which to acknowledge, accept and even celebrate this whole human potential and to reflect on our role as educators. Finally, the participants were encouraged to revisit the purposes of education as identified on the previous day and reflect on changes that may have occurred in the process.

Day 4 - Weaving It Back Together

The last day of Module A had participants reflect on the various activities throughout the training course and how these fitted together and within the broader theme of education for the prevention of Crimes against Humanity and radicalisation. Allowing time for participants to think and reflect on the rationale behind the activities, methodology and content, supported their understanding and proved to be extremely useful, particularly in terms of making the connection between personal and professional development. Coaching groups were established - participants will be working in coaching groups to develop material, supporting each other in so doing. The participants were also given a guided tour of the online platform that is at the core of the online community of the Pestalozzi Programme of the Council of Europe and where work between Module A and Module B will take place. Before being presented with certificates, the participants were invited to evaluate the training and provide feedback on their experience.

Various issues were brought up during the final evaluation, many touching upon issues that were discussed during the module. Participants acknowledged the difficult concepts and issues that the module deals with while celebrating the methodology of the training as a treasure trove of ideas for action in schools and classrooms. Participants reported feeling safe and empowered to share experiences, feelings and even mistakes, asserting that if experiences are reflected and debriefed upon properly and deeply, significant learning takes place. Participants also valued the camaraderie, the friendships that developed, and the personal and professional growth that came about as a result of cooperation, mutual respect and a shared vision for education in which teachers become facilitators of learning.



From Module A to Module B

Over the next months and until the second face-to-face meeting (Module b) which will be held in summer or autumn 2017, participants will be creating training material which they will also pilot in their own specific contexts. Throughout they will be supported by the team of trainers and their peers online.

Conclusion

The work done during this intensive training is but a drop in an ocean. As we continue to witness atrocities of all sorts happening in the world around us, our work becomes more urgent, more poignant, more relevant. As educators, we have an added responsibility and onus. Events around us are clearly indicating that it is not enough to educate for Remembrance of the Holocaust and other crimes as heinous as they can be. We need to

educate for prevention - we need to empower learners to make extraordinary choices in the face of extraordinary evil.

Appendix

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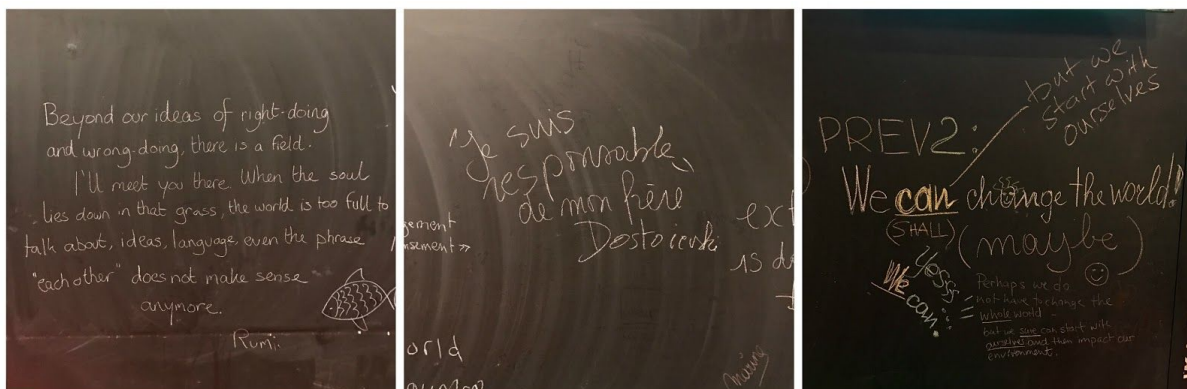
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