Evaluating Multi-Agency Working in extremism prevention

Evaluation and Mentoring of the Multi-Agency approach to violent radicalization in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany (EMMA)

26th German Prevention Congress 2021 / 14th Annual International Forum, Köln, 10/05/2021

Noel Klima
Lieven Pauwels
Wim Hardyns
THE FIGHT AGAINST RADICALIZATION AT A LOCAL LEVEL

How to fight it locally?

Diverse policy initiatives on local, regional, national level

Multi-actor structures = crucial, but…

What is needed for effective cooperation?

Multi-agency structures and working processes (MAW) are crucial for early and effective identification of individuals at-risk, improved information-sharing, joint decision-making and coordinated action.
THE FIGHT AGAINST RADICALIZATION AT A LOCAL LEVEL

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Evaluation!
EU-funded EMMA-project

The EMMA project: *Evaluation and Mentoring of the Multi-Agency approach to violent radicalization in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany*

EU funding: European Union’s Internal Security Fund — Police Action Grant 871058 — EMMA

Timing: 2020-2022

Partners: Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG), Ghent University, RadarAdvies, Violence Prevention Network (VPN)
Specific objectives

Identifying key factors for MAW

What works and under what conditions?
- Systematic Review -> measurable process indicators -> self-evaluation tool
- Participatory observations -> identify possible strengths and pitfalls
- Interviews
- Focus groups

Improving coordination and communication

Improve coordination of services and lines of communication
- Self-evaluation tool for local actors involved in MAW
- Peer-to-peer assessment networks
- Mentoring: Individual consultancies for professional hands-on advice

Enhancing professional’s ability

Guiding local actors to a more professional MAW approach
- Training modules and e-learning modules
- Peer –to-peer assessment networks
- => Translate lessons learned to their MAW
Specific objectives

Lessons learned

- Transpose the lessons learned to all MAW agencies and policy makers
  - Digital platform with hands-on information on diverse types of MAW (start-ups, advanced users/experts)
  - Communication programma
  - International conference to promote the tool and the platform

Standardized procedures

- Dealing with the diverse MAW characteristics and structures specific to the local context
  - NOT: towards standardized MAW construction
  - Determine key factors and indicators for self-evaluation
  - Analytical tools for advising, supporting and consulting with local MAW structures
Methodology

- Process evaluation
  - Field ‘preparation’
  - Evaluation research through interviews, observations and focus groups
  - Systematic literature review -> self-assessment tool

- Mentoring
  - Individual guidance
  - Peer consultancy
  - International workshops and training modules

- Extend
  - Digital platform for all MAW officials

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THE EMMA PROJECT

Ghent University

WP 2: The scientific pillar

Realistic proces evaluation (BE, NL, DE)

- HOW does the approach work?
- WHAT actually works?
- Under what conditions?
OBJECTIVES

SELF-EVALUATION TOOL

- Practical **self-evaluation tool for local MAW actors** with extensive manual
- Constructive **recommendations for MAW** approaches in the context of radicalisation

EMMA

WP 1: Coordination

WP 2: Scientific evaluation

WP 3: Mentoring

WP 4: Dissemination

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Research Aim

Perform a **process-evaluation** of the MAW approach in Belgium, Netherlands and Germany

Make **constructive recommendations** for MAW in the context of radicalization and violent extremism

Realistic evaluation

- HOW does the approach work?
- WHAT works?
- And under what CONDITIONS?

Research question:

How and under what conditions does MAW in the context of radicalization and violent extremism work within the three countries?

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RESEARCH PHASES

I. Lit. study
Identification of:
⇒ Indicators
⇒ Good practices

II. Realistic process evaluation (9 cities: BE, NL, DE)
Preparation
⇒ INTERVIEWS (N=45)
⇒ OBSERVATIONS (N=18)
⇒ FOCUS GROUPS (N=6)
  Part 1: Preparing the tool (N=3)
  Part 2: Reviewing the tool (N=3)

Data Collection

Analysis

III. Output
- Self-evaluation tool + manual
- Practical recommendations
- Research report

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
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| Feb '20 - Aug '21 | Systematic literature review     | Overview of good MAW practices
| May '20 – July '20 | Fieldwork preparation           | • Selection of 9 MAWs (3 cities x 3 = 9 cities)
|                     |                                   | • Contacting MAW in each city
|                     |                                   | • Prepare informed consents
|                     |                                   | • Prepare interview schedules
|                     |                                   | • Prepare observation lists   |
| Sept '20 – Feb '21 | Fieldwork                        | • Participatory observations (2 per city = 18)
|                     |                                   | • Semi-structured interviews (5 per city = 45)
|                     |                                   |   • With local government actor(s), security actor(s) and socio-preventive actor(s)                                                   |
| March '21 – May '21 | Focus Groups                     | Focus group to prepare self-evaluation tool (n = 3)
|                     |                                   | 1 focus group per country (including the 3 MAWs per country)                                                                           |
| May '21 – July '21 | Self-evaluation tool             | Using
|                     |                                   | • Indicators of ‘good practice’ from lit. review
|                     |                                   | • Qualitative results from process evaluation                                                                                         |
| Sept '21 - Oct '21 | Focus Group                      | Focus group to evaluate self-evaluation tool (n = 3)
|                     |                                   | 1 focus group per country (including the 3 MAWs per country)                                                                           |
Indicator list

Developed from screened literature
(systematic lit. review)

Criteria for retrieving process indicators:
• *Occurrence*: repeated or single observation in the literature?
• *Evidence*: rationale for this indicator specified?
• *Usability*: is the indicator measurable (Or can it be transformed in a measurable indicator?)
• *Applicability*: could it be applied in the MAW context?

Grouped in 9 broad categories

As concrete and measurable as possible

Living document

Categories

• Information sharing
• Coordinated collaboration
• Approach
• Vision
• Case management
• Expertise
• Quality assurance
• Practical conditions
• structure

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LITERATURE STUDY: INCLUSION CRITERIA

1. (De)radicalisation
   - Intervention/action/approach to prevent at-risk individuals and/or disengaging radicalised individuals

2. Local MAW
   - At least 1 MAW intervention described at the local/meso level
   - MAW: cooperation between several organisations/institutions

3. Evaluation
   - Evaluation of the effect of one or more MAW approaches OR recommendations of good MAW practices
   - No economic evaluations
### STATUS AND FIRST RESULTS

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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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**Next step:**

Identifying literature using the snowball method
FIRST THOUGHTS

– Little evaluation research on MAW in the radicalization context

– Very few scientific publications. Mainly reports.

– Lack of transparency in research methods – How did the evaluation happen?

– Most discussed recommendations (top 3)
  1. Sharing information
  2. Collaboration between actors
  3. Composition of actors
Roberts (2018): Detecting Radicalisation in Communities: The Role of Multi-Agency Partnership and the Power of Local Information

Research question:

*Do local MAW partnerships play a significant role in the detection and prevention of radicalization?*

Method:

– 18 semi-structured interviews + observations in three MAW partnerships in UK (Sussex, Surrey)

– Best and worst element in MAW partnership?
LEADING BY EXAMPLE

+  
  • Rapid information sharing  
  • Networks  
  • Good relations between actors

-  
  • Processes and procedures  
  • Time between meetings  
  • Long presentations

Some recommendations:
  • Invest in relationships between MAW partners. Components playing a role:
    • Frequency of contacts  
    • Duration of relationship  
  • Trust, openness and honesty in information sharing  
  • To gather layered information about individuals and their immediate environment: Engage in dialogue with local communities and involve a variety of organizations

Yes, powerful role for MAW partnerships in detection and prevention of radicalization
Ongoing research

Publication literature review
Realistic process evaluation (9 cities in BE, NL, DE) data collection and analysis
Outputs: self-evaluation tool for practitioners,
All results to be expected end of 2021/beginning 2022