



CHAMPIONS

Cooperative Harmonised
Action Model
to Stop Polarisation
in Our Nations

Activity Brief #4

The CHAMPIONS Roundtables

National Roundtable in Poland

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Introduction

CHAMPIONS' central action is to establish permanent offline working groups – 'CHAMPIONS-Roundtables' – bringing together FLPs (first-line-practitioners) of different disciplines, professions and institutions or to which jointly detect risks and challenges and elaborate feasible responses to counter polarisation, and to build resilience and protect vulnerable groups in their local communities. During the course of the Roundtables, FLPs will be trained to enable them to design solutions and programmes which address the drivers of polarisation and collaborate in breaking down institutional barriers.

In the medium term, their actions will impact both vulnerable individuals who will be engaged in awareness-raising events and their community – as well as local and national policy-makers. In order to facilitate these processes of offline nature an online platform will also be developed.

In the long-term, the project will be used as a pilot model and transferred to other communities. To that end, synergies with related EU-funded projects, platforms and networks will be harnessed throughout the project and after its implementation period.

Find the full roundtable report in different languages on <https://www.championsproject.eu/media/>

National Roundtable in Poland

The first CHAMPIONS-Roundtable in Poland, which took place from 12.02. - 13.02.2020, was attended by 17 participants - the same group that took part in the Kick-Off meeting held in December 2019, with three new participants. The majority of them was from different departments of the City Council of Dąbrowa Górnicza, such as the Crisis Management Centre; Culture, Sports and Leisure Department; Civil Society Organisations and Civic Activity Department; Education Department; Municipal Social Assistance Centre; Centre for Helping Education and Social Work Facilities in Dąbrowa Górnicza; Sports and Recreation Centre; Zagłębie Culture Palace; Municipal Police; Municipal Police Force (prevention and investigation); a civil society organisation - Active Dąbrowa Association (Aktywna Dąbrowa) and Psychological and Teaching Counselling Centre in Dąbrowa Górnicza.

During the first Roundtable training workshop we focused on team-building activities linked to collaboration and on providing input to discussions about the structure and the functioning of a local multi-agency group on prevention and countering of radicalisation. We presented the recommendations regarding the multi-sectoral co-operation from Radicalisation Awareness Network and combined them with a discussion about a model of such collaboration in the city of Augsburg in Germany with a guest speaker, Diana Schubert - a coordinator of this co-operation. Another guest speaker, an expert on hate crimes, the former deputy head and adviser for combating racism and xenophobia at the OSCE/ODHIR, Larry Olomofe, talked about negative implications that hate crimes have for local communities and the crucial role of multi-agency approach in effectively dealing with them. The participants of the meeting also had the opportunity to talk to a former member of an extremist group and now a deradicalisation activist and expert, Stanisław Czerczak.

The aim of the above-mentioned local group in Dąbrowa Górnicza is to enhance the level of security in the city by developing and introducing mostly preventative measures to address radicalisation in schools and in the city in general. However, countering radicalisation will also be an element of the work of the group.

The majority of the participants have a valuable recent experience of multisectoral cooperation in a similar thematic area (social integration of individuals and families from marginalised, poor and vulnerable backgrounds) with almost the same partners (KOOOPERACJE 3D - 3D Cooperation). We can therefore base the work of our local group in Dąbrowa Górnicza on the existing structure of multi-sectoral collaboration and use related lessons learnt. While consolidating the CHAMPIONS local group in Dąbrowa Górnicza, we can also rely on the city's unique characteristic - a large number of civil society organisations, the above mentioned multi-agency co-operation, close networks of civil society and municipal workers and a considerable level of trust among the participants.

The participants were aware of many of the factors of radicalisation (such as marginalisation, dysfunctional family and domestic violence, economic hardships etc.), knowing them from their work. Thanks to our training they benefited from a more structured and comprehensive approach to these factors and the stages of radicalisation.

Several participants underlined that before the series of our training workshops they would rather say there is no radicalisation in their city, whereas during the second training they were increasingly aware of this issue. They indicated they were also better able to detect signs of radicalisation in their cities and point to areas which would require their joint action such as increased level of aggressive

behaviours of young people in school; extremist graffiti - a way to mark territory; football hooligans and their radicalised groups; recruitment to extremist groups in gyms and, above all, the lack of awareness and knowledge of radicalisation in society at large and denial of it (e.g. government officials, parents etc.). The participants were interested in promoting diversity - it recurred as one of the ways mentioned to prevent radicalisation on a larger scale.

During further Roundtable training workshops IBS will work with the participants on specific cases relevant for their work that they will bring to the table. Our observation of the importance of this type of work during this training was confirmed by the feedback from several participants.

We will seek to consolidate the group by working on specific real-life cases and alternating this work with sessions aimed at learning more about different aspects of radicalisation. After each session, we will evaluate it with the group and establish further tips and recommendations for future Roundtable meetings. Further down the road, we will also develop a plan to implement one or two preventative measures (an awareness-raising event envisaged in the CHAMPIONS project will be one of them), test them and run a participatory evaluation to see in which direction we should go further with the group.



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