



in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate



# Civic Education Programs as Preventive Measures in Turkey

Turkey/D10.1 Country Report

May 2023

Hasret Dikici Bilgin, Istanbul Bilgi University

Horizon 2020  
**De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Re-integrate**  
959198



Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 programme  
of the European Union

© Hasret Dikici Bilgin

**Reference:** D.RAD D10.1

This research was conducted under the Horizon 2020 project 'De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Re-integrate' (959198).

The sole responsibility of this publication lies with the author. The European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: [hasret.dikici@bilgi.edu.tr](mailto:hasret.dikici@bilgi.edu.tr)

This document is available for download at <https://dradproject.com/>

## Table of contents

<i>Executive Summary</i> .....	4
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Disengagement and Deradicalization Pilot Program, 2009-2015, Adana Police Department</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1. General Information</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2.2. Description and Analysis</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2.3. Lessons</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Diyanet's Seminars on Combating Terrorist Organizations Exploiting Religion and the Prison Preachers Project</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>3.1. General Information</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>3.2. Description and Analysis</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>3.3. Lessons</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>4. Secularism and Radicalization in Prison (SERA)</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>4.1. General Information</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>4.2. Description and Analysis</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>4.3. Lessons</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>5. General Conclusions</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>15</b>

## Executive Summary

D10.1 country report for Turkey focuses on three major deradicalization programs in terms of their content, the extent of civic education measures as preventive strategies and the lessons that can be driven from these programs.

Turkey has yet to develop a comprehensive deradicalization legal and policy framework, and this reflects on the limited success of the deradicalization programs. The most extensive program remains as Adana Police Department's pilot program to this date. The program focused on contacting the individuals and their families at risk for radicalization at an early stage of their affiliation with the radical organizations. It also included support for psychological counseling and finding jobs to reduce recidivism. The program was terminated in 2015 for reasons that could not be found out in this report. The most long-lasting deradicalization program has been carried out by the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) since 2001, which mainly includes the activities of the preachers in prisons targeting religious-oriented radicalization. Participation levels remained very low, preachers have not been adequately trained to respond to the prison conditions and the programs' success remained limited as the activities did not go beyond religious conversations to include civic education measures. The third program, SARE, was a cross-country project with civic education activities on self-reflection, conflict management, communication in culturally diverse environments, empathy, and teamwork; however, most of the activities could be realized as the Turkish prisons' physical conditions were not suitable, some activities were not considered culturally suitable, and many prisoners could not participate as they work in the prison facilities.

The report shows that Turkey has to develop a wholistic deradicalization framework by including stakeholders from education and social policy fields, and collaborate with civil society organizations for the success of the future deradicalization programs.

## 1. Introduction

A comprehensive literature review conducted through desk research and interviews with members of civil society organizations, legal experts, and scholars since the beginning of the DRad project indicates that Turkey views radicalization as a security concern. However, the country has not yet developed a comprehensive legal and policy framework for deradicalization. The understanding of deradicalization mainly revolves around counterterrorism, which focuses on punishment and disengagement<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, there are very few deradicalization programs, mostly carried out by state institutions, with limited content related to civic education.

In the D.Rad Turkey country report D10.1, I examine three major deradicalization programs. The first program, although implemented solely by the police department without broader collaboration with other stakeholders, can be considered the most comprehensive and relatively successful. It began as a pilot program in the Adana Police Department, targeting both radicalized individuals and those vulnerable to radicalization. Despite the absence of involvement from social workers and psychologists, the low recidivism rate allowed the pilot program to expand nationwide.

The second program was carried out by Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs, known as *Diyanet*. *Diyanet* has been involved in prison activities since 2001, but with the rise of religious radicalization following the civil war in Syria, its focus shifted to Islamist radicals in prisons. Both *Diyanet*'s annual activity reports and interviews with prisoners indicate that the effectiveness of their programs remained generally low. Insufficient physical conditions, inadequate training for preachers regarding prisoner psychology and communication within the prison environment contributed to low participation levels.

The third program was part of a broader international project supported by the European Commission. The project aimed to enhance critical thinking, empathy, self-reflection, conflict management, and adaptation to culturally and politically diverse environments. However, its success in the Turkish context was limited, as local program coordinators found it challenging to implement in the restricted prison environment and considered many programs culturally incompatible.

The subsequent sections of the report provide a detailed analysis of each program, including the organizations involved, their conceptualization of deradicalization, the program content, and the lessons learned.

---

<sup>1</sup> Here disengagement simply refers to the distancing of the individual from a radical organization regardless of a change of mind happened or not. Deradicalization on the other hand is a process in which the individual's perceptions and behavior changes.

## 2. Disengagement and Deradicalization Pilot Program, 2009-2015, Adana Police Department

### 2.1. General Information

Turkish national police is one of the institutions active in carrying out deradicalization programs. The Disengagement and Deradicalization Program was initiated by the Adana Police Department and implemented from 2009 to 2015. It was later adopted by other public institutions as the basis of disengagement and deradicalization in Turkey and elsewhere (Duťu, 2021, p. 39). The program is based on communication and collaboration between law enforcement and the families of radicalized persons. The program targets young people who were considered as at risk of involving with extremist groups or those already convicted for extremist activities and their families. The program coordinators collaborate also with the police force, intelligence, National Directorate of Security and public prosecutor to convince the radicalized or at-risk young people and their families. As it started as a pilot program, the project approach de-radicalization at the meso (community) and micro (individual) levels. It later evolved into the macro (national) level after being adopted by other police departments. The program's stakeholders tailored their approach in accordance with the ideological type of the extremist groups such as the right-wing, left-wing and jihadist orientations.

The program conceptualizes deradicalization mainly on the basis of disengagement, changing their mindset and reintegration to the society. The implementors define deradicalization as a change in the values and attitudes and acknowledge the fact that violence is not a legitimate way to achieve social change (Baştug and Evlek, 2016, p. 26). It relies on educational/vocational courses; practical support and psychological support. They argue that distancing from radical groups require changing the worldview therefore disengagement and deradicalization are intertwined though different processes. Disengagement might not always result in deradicalization as it might rather be related to the group dynamics than ideological transformation. The program sees recidivism as a strong risk after disengagement; therefore, focuses its activities for deradicalization in the form of changing values and renouncing violence.

### 2.2. Description and Analysis

The program builds on the lessons from the previous deradicalization programs across the world. Drawing on the literature which focuses on deradicalization and disengagement programs targeting Islamist extremists, separatists and right-wing radicals, the program points out the importance of intervening at the early stages of the individual's engagement with the radical group, avoiding stigmatization while contacting the individual to prevent further alienation, providing incentives for disengagement alongside measures for increasing the cost of remaining within the group (Rabasa *et al.*, 2010). The incentives might include non-punishment, reduced sentences, and practical support to encourage disengagement (Della Porta, 2009). As some radical organizations provide material support to the families, the project argues that any deradicalization or disengagement program requires collaboration between the families and law enforcement for successful deradicalization. Approach to the families and the radicalized or at-risk individuals should be modified at the micro level in

accordance with the person and the family as well as the ideological orientation of the radical group.

The program targets two groups. In the first group, there are the at-risk individuals reported by the intelligence institutions as being at the early stages of engagement with an extremist group, not yet involved in any group activity. In the first phase, the program officers contact these people, usually by phone, and inform them that the law enforcement units are aware of the person's engagement and warn them about the criminal and legal repercussions. The officers inform both the person of interest and his/her family that it is still not too late; the person can be placed in a rehabilitation program and benefit from material and non-material support. The second group comprises of the persons arrested for their affiliation with an illegal radical organization, but not involved in any violent activity. They and their families are informed that disengagement will bring non-punishment or reduced sentence along with providing social assistance to their families and finding a job. The persuasion attempts continue even after they are imprisoned. The incentives also include vocational training, employment, housing, healthcare, social and financial assistance, counseling, and psychological support so long as the persons avoid recidivism (Baştuğ and Evlek, 2016, p. 38). Good treatment and positive communication is emphasized as a method to lessen the feelings of alienation. Finding jobs, providing social aid to their families and psychological support might also alleviate feelings of grievance and used as a path back to the society. However, the program does not provide further civic education measures.

### 2.3. Lessons

The Adana Police Department's deradicalization program can be considered as one of the most successful programs in its field. Although it began as a pilot program, the fact that the other police departments adopted the model developed for the pilot program indicates the extent of its positive impact. The project builds on a pressure factor as it involves the families and the possible outcome that non-cooperation might have repercussions (Basra, 2022, p. 11). To what extent, the program can be taken as a successful model is controversial if we consider the I-GAP model. The program administrators claim that good treatment by the police officers in contradiction to their expectations facilitates moderation and changing their views regarding the police force (Baştuğ and Evlek, 2016, p. 38); however, good communication does not necessarily eliminate the feelings of injustice and grievance. The implementors of the program also note that the project was most successful for the ultranationalist persons, and least with the jihadists. Similarly, families of the jihadists were least collaborative.

The most important lesson that can be drawn from the program is that ideological orientations of the radicalized or at-risk individuals should be taken into consideration while designing and implementing deradicalization schemes. The program administrators also acknowledge that they did not tailor the persuasion efforts in accordance with the ideological orientations. Secondly, the program shows that it is important to intertwine discouragement tactics with positive incentives and support.

The program's weakness stems from the fact that it retains a securitizing approach. It remains limited to collaboration between the police, intelligence and families and suffers from the absence of a national legal and policy framework and a wholistic approach to deradicalization. The persuasion initiatives are carried out by the police officers, which might make the person

feel targeted by the law enforcement from the beginning. If the initial contact was made by the schoolteachers, community leaders or social workers, it might have more promising impact.

Finally, there is no information about how the groups are identified as “terrorist” organizations. The organizations might be simply radical opposition groups without any violent activity. In such a case, the person of interest might feel further alienated and under threat and move towards a more extremist group to seek protection from the police. Moreover, the program also focused on the suspected individuals which violates the presumption of innocence as it is the law enforcement which contact the person.

### 3. *Diyanet's Seminars on Combating Terrorist Organizations Exploiting Religion and the Prison Preachers Project*

#### 3.1. General Information

Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs, commonly known as the *Diyanet*, was established in 1924 as an institution to regulate religious services and has become an increasingly partisan and active institution since AKP's coming to power in 2002. Its budget continuously increased, now surpassing many of the ministerial budgets, acquiring a central role in policy-making and legitimizing the government's actions (Öztürk and Sözeri, 2018). The *Diyanet* has a TV channel, has become one of the most important sources of public sector employment, and benefits from funding for its activities and publications. The institution is also active in nearly 40 other countries, assigns preachers and imams to mosques, organizes Quran education, and provides counseling. The *Diyanet* projects are jointly organized and funded with the Ministry of Justice since 2001. *Diyanet* has been actively involved in the prisons, especially since 2011 with the rise of Islamist extremism in Turkey and the Middle East. With the rise of violent religious radicalization, the protocol was updated first in 2011 and then in 2019. In addition to the regular religious services provided to the prisoners, *Diyanet* organizes seminars on religious radicalization. The project targets the prison staff and the inmates. It aims to raise awareness about the dangers of religious radicalization and deconstruct radical religious views by conveying the peaceful interpretation of Islam. It also focuses on training the preachers to combat religious radicalization in prison. The activities are also tailored separately for the jihadists and the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (*Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü*, *FETÖ*).<sup>2</sup> *Diyanet* approaches deradicalization at the macro level, although there is an attempt to tailor the activities with respect to the characteristics of different religious organizations. The institution conceptualizes deradicalization as a process of changing ideas and values in the form of learning the “correct” interpretation of religion in a peaceful way and emphasizing that it is important for preventing recidivism.

---

<sup>2</sup> FETÖ is an organization affiliated with a group following a preacher named Fethullah Gülen. The government holds the group responsible for the abortive coup attempt in 2016.

### 3.2. Description and Analysis

A recently written master's thesis describes the methodology of *Diyanet*'s deradicalization projects as one following the D-type deradicalization programs identified by Daniel Koehler (Akbaş, 2020, p. 96). In fact, Koehler describes Type D as governmental prison-based programs, mostly in Middle Eastern countries, building on ideological and religious debates, conveying the state-sanction interpretation of Islam (Koehler, 2016, p. 125). *Diyanet*'s project fits this type of deradicalization program. The first contact with the radicalized or at-risk prisoners is made by the prison preachers. The conversations between the preachers and the prisoners only contain religious and social issues rather than ideological matters. In order to maintain the continuity of the project, *Diyanet* signed protocols with the Ministry of Justice before the rise of ISIS and other jihadist organizations in the region, as part of the government policy to make *Diyanet* more active and expand its scope in policymaking. However, as jihadist extremism and other religious-oriented radicalization became an imminent concern since 2011, larger joint projects have been carried out.

*Diyanet*'s prison projects have a number of components. The first one is the Quran teaching. It involves both teaching the peaceful interpretation of Islam based on the textual evidence to show that the radical and violent interpretations are not Quran-based, sometimes even against it. This activity also aims to train eager prisoners as *hafiz* (person who can recite Quran from memory in the religious ceremonies), hence has a skill acquirement aspect. The second activity is named as ward conversations again mostly in the form of religious discussion, aiming to correct the religious ideas and norms of the radical and at-risk prisoners. A third activity is individual meetings which can be initiated by both the preacher and the prisoner. It is also referred as moral counseling. This activity involves not only religious issues but also social discussions. There are also activities such as competitions (such as best Quran reciting) and seminars. The preachers also reach the families and children of the prisoners to prevent them from exploitation and radicalization. There are specifically prepared programs, which *Diyanet* refers as "rehabilitation programs", in which the preachers focus on the radical prisoners and the prison personnel (*Din Hizmetleri Raporu* 2020, 2021, pp. 228–230). The preachers also collaborate with psychologists and theology scholars along with the prison system bureaucrats. Considering the I-GAP spectrum, the seminars, individual and group meetings try to ease the feelings of injustice and grievances as God ordained for the reasons that only God can know and advises for acceptance. The seminars also try to replace the religious opinions of the prisoners with peaceful interpretations and show them that they are not alienated by the society. The impact and efficiency of the programs remain limited. Participation from the prisoners and the prison personnel continues to remain as low as 10%, mostly due to the physical restrictions of the prison environment and security concerns as explained by the *Diyanet* resources (*Din Hizmetleri Raporu* 2019, 2020, p. 36). It is also argued that it became more difficult to conduct the meetings due to the increased tension after the abortive coup in 2015 as the FETÖ prisoners categorically rejected them (Akbaş, 2020, p. 101).

*Diyanet* also publishes and disseminates books and booklets explaining the concept of religious exploitation, that the radical organizations distort the religious teachings to recruit devout people for their own self-interests.

### 3.3. Lessons

The success of *Diyane*t's prison programs can be described at best as limited as it is also admitted in the annual activity reports of the Directorate. The low participation rate is explained partly by security concerns and partly by the voluntary nature of the program. The preachers interviewed in a field research underlines that many jihadist or other religious-oriented radical prisoners refused to interact with the preachers as they represent the state (Akbaş, 2020, p. 119). This shows that the organic relations between *Diyane*t preachers and the state undermine the potential success of such programs. This lesson can be generalized to all deradicalization programs. By definition, the radicalized individuals feel unjustly treated by the society and the political systems and this translates into alienation and in turn the individual distances from the rest of the society which indicates polarization as DRad's I-GAP spectrum also underlines. In these circumstances, it is expected that the deradicalization programs directly organized by state institutions might lead to suspicion and rejection from the beginning.

Another factor that limited the success of *Diyane*t programs might be related to the one-issue nature of these programs. Psychologists, social workers and scholars of theology have been involved in the seminar programs, but not in the other activities. In this way, the meetings and counseling cannot go beyond preaching and does not give any reason for the prisoners to engage further. These programs should be jointly organized by civil society organizations, educational institutions and the activities should be diversified to include non-religious activities such as sports and skill-acquisition. Otherwise, the preaching serves consolidating the conviction of the radical prisoners that the state imposes the official narrative and does not try to understand why they are alienated.

Assessments on the *Diyane*t programs in specific prisons also underline that the physical conditions in the prisons should be improved before applying these programs. The preachers complain about the insufficient logistical equipment, for example a separate room where the preachers can meet with the prisoners and feel secure with the support of the prison personnel. However, due to the workload of the security personnel, some preachers noted that they did not feel secure and suffer from the lack of psychological support for themselves. The programs also suffered from discontinuity as the preachers could not continue to follow-up the prisoners. The preachers also felt not adequately equipped to respond to the diverse problems of the prisoners as they were only trained on religion. They especially emphasize the lack of any training about the psychology of the prisoners (Çınar, 2016). The self-assessment of the preachers indicates that deradicalization programs should be placed within a wider and comprehensive deradicalization policy and adopt a holistic approach in which diverse stakeholders participate.

## 4. Secularism and Radicalization in Prison (SERA)

### 4.1. General Information

Secularism and Radicalization in Prison (SERA) project was a 24-month long project, carried out from December 2016 to June 2019 (with extension).<sup>3</sup> The project was funded through

---

<sup>3</sup> Project website is accessible at <https://euro-cides.eu/SERA/index.php> .

ERASMUS+ Programme / Support for Policy Reform under Key Action 3: Support for policy reform Social inclusion through education, training, and youth (project number 580247-EPP-1-2016-1-FR-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN). The project is led by Euro-CIDES (Euro-Compétences et Initiatives pour le Développement de l'Entrepreneuriat Solidaire), an association based in Bordeaux, France. The project was coordinated by Esma Güllü Egjin, for the Ankara Directorate of National Education (ADNE), working under the Ministry of Education. ADNE coordinates the relations between 25 districts of national directorates in Ankara and the ministry. The directorate applies programs through its public education centers which carry out non-formal programs as part of their regular activities. It works with the Ministry of Justice in the prisons to assess the educational status and needs of the prisoners; and assign teachers to the prisons in the city. The project targets male and female prisoners who were convicted for their extremist activities or considered to be at risk for radicalization. The younger prisoners with low skills or considered to be in search of deviant form for protection were prioritized. The project team aims to provide education to teach moral and civic values to the target population in the prisons to prevent radicalization and recidivism through civic education.

The project adopted the Council of Europe's definition of radicalization as "a dynamic process by which an individual accepts and increasingly support violent extremism. The reasons for this process may be ideological, political, religious, social, economic or personal". The partners made interviews with the residents and staff of prisons, closed youth facilities, and frontline officials to understand their perception of radicalization. The interviews indicated that "extremism" emerged as the most dominant theme among the respondents in the prison environment. Intolerance, isolation, intolerance and fanaticism also emerged as other dominant concepts in relation to radicalization. Although the project focused on deradicalization, the documents do not provide a clear concept of deradicalization. However, the review of the activities indicates that the project places deradicalization as a process of changing values and ideas so that already radicalized individuals would not be vulnerable to recidivism and the prisoners at risk would be prevented from radicalization. Overall, civic education is seen as the main mechanism for reintegration. The project team approach deradicalization at all macro, meso and micro level. The education programs were adopted to the country contexts, they coordinated the activities with the bureaucrats from the ministries of justice and education, the prison staff, psychologists, and community centers. The participants also tailored the trainings in accordance with the specific situations such as the time the prisoner has until his/her release. The deradicalization method mainly aims to provide pedagogical and methodological support to the teachers working in the prisons in three cycles, 360 hours in total. The teachers then are expected to follow the lesson plans they were instructed and tailor those plans for the individual needs.

## 4.2. Description and Analysis

The training of the teachers working in the prisons encompasses 3 cycles, each of them spanning 4 weeks, and a total of 360 hours. The recipient prisoners are identified as learners. Regular clinical therapy accompanied the lessons provided to the prisoners. Permanent access to sport activities is considered as important for the learners' well-being. The teachers are trained to assess the physical and psychological needs of the prisoners in accordance with the Maslow's pyramid of needs and each week's program addressed these needs by

cooking together, doing sports, delineating ground rules for each specific context, ensuring teamwork and educational activities.

The activities are divided into 5 categories: beliefs, education, intercultural, psychology, and social. Each activity is designed in detail. In the area of beliefs, the activities aimed to improve critical thinking and learning about other religions through a board game, group debates, and self-assessment. The education area activities focus on literacy, skill and professional improvement. Film screenings, digital communication exercises, media literacy training, preparing interviews and writing exercises are the major activities. The learners are encouraged to assess their talents and the skills they can acquire by training. These activities aim to improve critical thinking, social and civic competence, cultural awareness and expression, self-reflection and teamwork. The intercultural area develops activities for cooking together and for charity, storytelling and discussion making. Conflict management and teamwork are at the center of these activities. The area of psychology occupies a vast space with its multiple activities. The trainings in this area intend to help learners to assess their personal well-being, develop their identities, manage their anger, develop empathy for others, raising awareness for cultural differences. The activities range from sports, games that require teamwork, singing, listening to others and encouraging them, playing puzzle and trust games, storytelling, music and art activities. Music activities are specifically designed to teach the learners to manage their anger by channeling their emotions to music. Clinical therapy and yoga also accompanied the activities in the field of psychology. The social field aims to develop digital and conventional communication, teamwork, conflict management, managing diversity, developing empathy and self-reflection. The activities involve reflection exercises, group discussion, photo association, empathy role play, values corner, organizing a party, creating a dream and singing. The participants are encouraged to tell their life stories and their dreams for future.

A core theme among the activities especially in the area of beliefs is to help the participants understand that some forms of extremism might be even positive such as advocacy of animal rights and taking part in a cause for social well-being. Most of the activities require teamwork. Each activity is followed by self-assessment and the participants receive certificates for the activities they joined. This is important especially for improving self-reflection among the participants. Film screenings, telling life stories, participating in debates help the participants to realize that they are not alone in their feelings of injustice and grievance. One of the films, for example, is *Billy Elliot*. It tells the story of a boy who wants to be a ballet and is rejected by his father who sees his choice as an indicator of his being gay. He also gets into conflict with the other people around him and was arrested by the police during a strike. The film ends with *Billy* becoming a successful professional ballet and his father's pride in him. Managing anger and working hard to realize one's dreams are dominant themes also in the other films and role plays. The activities which require the prisoners to participate in community building and teamwork aims to combat alienation and polarization. Learning about the cultural differences and other religions in an environment that foster anti-hate communication, anger management and conflict resolution fight polarization. Rather than long lectures, the activities require active participation of the prisoners. They play games, prepare quizzes, make interviews, organize other activities such as parties. An important part of the civic education is the moral and civic values that emphasize empathy, self-reflection, active citizenship and democratic literacy. The civic education transforms the prison from being a closed space where the prisoners are isolated from the social life into a place they can learn from each other, reflect on their talents and weaknesses, foster social relations and build a community of the people with similar

grievances and different backgrounds. There is no document available to measure the impact and the efficiency of the civic education. However, there are reports provided by the Turkish team assessing the learning outcomes of the activities. Relying on these reports, we can argue that the results are mixed.

### 4.3. Lessons

As the SERA manual underlined at the beginning of the project, the most important challenge comprises the restrictions in carrying out a civic education program in the prison environment. For example, nearly half of the activities could not be realized in the first cycle in Turkey. Social media literacy and digital communication activities could not be carried out as internet connection is forbidden in Turkey and the prisons do not provide supervised computer access. The prisoners do not have access to kitchens or cooking materials. Cooking by the prisoners is also forbidden. The art activities which require material to paint or music instruments could not be made as they were not available. Taking photos at the prison is forbidden. For some activities, the prisoners were not allowed to go outdoors with the professional running the activities. This situation tells us that civic education activities should be designed in a feasible way considering the prohibitions in the prisons, lack of materials and restrictions on the movements of the prisoners. Cooking together for charity is a good idea so that people can work in teams and do something they will enjoy at the end of the activity; but, it also involves utensils that can be used as weapons, and pose fire risk. The activities also suffer from a lack of foresight to prevent conflict. In other words, the way the activities are configured seem to rely on an optimistic assumption that those who agree to participate in the activities will be willing to cooperate with the other participants. Given the tension in the prison environment, sharing experiences and ideas may end up in conflict even if it is playing sportive games. The first lesson we can derive from the project regarding the activities is that they need further tailoring with respect to country-specific prison conditions, available resources and preventive measures.

Careful planning of the activities and scheduling is also another lesson that can be taken from the application of the project activities. Some activities are given too much time as noted by the professionals. For example, seven hours is devoted to film screening and discussion which the implementing professional notes that it would be boring to make people talk so much on a single film. In the Turkish prisons, the inmates also work in the prison facilities to earn money. Therefore, the activities could not be scheduled for every weekday. This tells us that an assessment about the conditions in the prisons or other institutions in each country should be made in advance rather than providing standard time frames for all participant countries.

Activities requiring physical contact also require careful evaluation. The implementing professional could not carry out the games that needed physical contact as both she and the prisoners did not feel comfortable. There are also culturally sensitive games that could not be implemented in all settings. Some activities, such as yoga, were received as culturally alien for the prisoners. Finally, playing games or storytelling might foster cooperation, teamwork and conflict management; but the project evaluation reports indicate that some games, such as drawing appeared childish and condescending. It tells us that activities involving games targeting the youth should be appealing and suitable for the age group.

Overall, the project seems to yield mixed results. The activities should be less time-consuming, more individually tailored in accordance with the facility and country context and

informed about the restrictions and risks. Otherwise, it would be tiresome and discourage participation in the future.

## 5. General Conclusions

The D10.1 Turkey report on civic education programs as preventive measures reveals that Turkey lags behind European countries in terms of deradicalization efforts. This finding aligns with the previous reports, D3.1, D3.2, and D4.1, which confirm that state institutions in Turkey primarily approach radicalization within the terrorism context and still lack a comprehensive policy and legal framework for deradicalization. This situation has significant consequences. Firstly, the actions primarily focus on punishing and disengaging individuals who are already radicalized, with minimal efforts targeting those at risk of radicalization or addressing the underlying feelings of injustice and grievance that lead to alienation and polarization, as emphasized in DRad's I-GAP framework. Secondly, there are limited deradicalization programs incorporating civic education measures. Thirdly, the few existing programs cannot be considered successful.

The pilot program initiated by the Adana Police Department, later expanded nationally, was regarded as successful due to the reported low recidivism rate. However, this program does not involve stakeholders from the education or social policy sectors and remains confined to a security-oriented approach. Additionally, it suffers from a one-size-fits-all design, despite efforts by program managers to customize it for organizations with different ideological orientations. *Diyanet*'s programs, conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice since 2001, lack a comprehensive understanding of radicalization and deradicalization as psychological, social, and economic processes. Instead, they primarily focus on providing correct teachings of Islam. The SARE project represents the most theoretically developed program; however, cultural incompatibilities of certain activities, such as those requiring physical contact, hindered the coordinators' ability to implement them. Both the SARE and *Diyanet* programs are implemented within prisons, but the physical conditions of Turkish prisons present an additional obstacle. Insufficient security personnel available for reassignment to these programs resulted in a lack of safety and enthusiasm among both SARE administrators and preachers. The SARE activities did not account for the absence of internet connection in Turkish prisons, the absence of separate activity rooms, and the inability to provide necessary logistical requirements such as stationery or cooking devices. *Diyanet* preachers also lacked comprehensive training to effectively respond to the prison environment.

These three deradicalization programs offer valuable lessons for future projects. Firstly, unless Turkey develops a comprehensive policy framework for deradicalization involving legal and education experts, civil society organizations, social workers, and psychologists, the deradicalization programs will remain limited and insufficient. The feelings of injustice and grievances among radicalized individuals have solid and multifaceted reasons. Therefore, deradicalization programs should also address the factors that contribute to radicalization and implement effective reintegration programs to prevent recidivism.

## Bibliography

Akbaş, G.G. (2020) *Türkiye'nin deradikalizasyon faaliyetlerinde Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı'nın rolü: Cezaevi vaizi örneği*. Master's Thesis. TOBB ETÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.

Basra, R. (2022) 'Review of Evidence: Prison-based interventions targeting violent extremist detainees', *XCEPT Policy Brief* [Preprint].

Baştuğ, M.F. and Evlek, U.K. (2016) 'Individual Disengagement and Deradicalization Pilot Program in Turkey: Methods and Outcomes', *Journal for Deradicalization*, Fall(8), pp. 25–45.

Çınar, F. (2016) 'Ceza İnfaz Kurumlarındaki Din Hizmetlerinde Cezaevi Vaizlerinin Karşılaştıkları Sorunlar', *Journal of International Social Research*, 9(43), pp. 2401–2018.

Della Porta, D. (2009) 'Leaving underground organizations: The Italian case', in T. Bjørgo and J. Horgan (eds) *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*. Routledge, pp. 49–65.

*Din Hizmetleri Raporu 2019* (2020). *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* Yayınları. Available at: <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=%E2%80%9C17+Eylu%CC%88l+-26+Ekim+2018+tarihleri+aras%C4%B1nda+267+ceza+infaz+kurumunda+299+program%E2%80%9D> (Accessed: 18 June 2021)

*Din Hizmetleri Raporu 2020* (2021). *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* Yayınları. Available at: <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=%E2%80%9C17+Eylu%CC%88l+-26+Ekim+2018+tarihleri+aras%C4%B1nda+267+ceza+infaz+kurumunda+299+program%E2%80%9D> (Accessed: 18 June 2021)

Duşu, D.-M. (2021) 'DERADICALISATION: BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE', *Strategic Impact*, 4(81), pp. 33–46.

Koehler, D. (2016) *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism*. London: Routledge. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315649566>.

Öztürk, A.E. and Sözeri, S. (2018) 'Diyanet as a Turkish Foreign Policy Tool: Evidence from the Netherlands and Bulgaria', *Politics and Religion*, 11(3), pp. 624–648. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S175504831700075X>

Rabasa, A. et al. (2010) *Deradicalizing Islamist extremists*. RAND Corp Arlington VA National Security Research Div.