

Working at the Heart of Communities and with Local, Regional and National Bodies to Tackle Extremism

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Prevent Objectives (2011)

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address



Respond to the ideological challenge: Islam V ISIS

- ISIS: Islamist extremists subscribe to an extreme, fundamentalist, puritanical, supremacist, far right and violent interpretation of Islam known as Salafi-jihadism
- Rather than rooted in the classical Islamic tradition, this ideology is in fact a modern religious-political ideology but which falsely portrays itself as being authentic Islam – which can be confusing to people (Muslims and non) whose understanding of Islam may be weak.

Working with communities and local authorities: Teaching counter-narratives

- Working in partnership with local authorities and local women's groups
- Example: Leeds
- Many participants expressed low self-esteem, lack of assertiveness, little confidence
- Ability to communicate effectively in the English language was an impediment as well as wider social, religious and cultural barriers that often debilitate these women
- Prior to programme, participants had little knowledge of theological counter-narratives to extremist ideology

- Programme analysed religious, political and ideological outlook from 7th century Khawarij, 11th-13th century Ismaili Assassins, upto modern day al-Qaida. The extremist narrative espoused by Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, Usama Bin Laden, Anwar al Awlaki and others was dissected.
- Vulnerabilities that may be exploited to hook young people into an AQ mindset
- Messages and methods used for recruitment by extremist organisations, which included the use of false dichotomies of 'Islamic values v British values'
- AQ narrative of a global conspiracy of oppression and double standards towards Muslims by the West and the decontextualised use of medieval precedents.
- Dispelling belief militant jihad is compulsory on all Muslims as articulated by AQ and ISIS
- Islamic theology highlighted how citizenship is a sacred contract which must be respected.

Counter-narrative: Do Muslims need to make hijrah or live in an Islamic state?

- The example at the time of the Prophet Muhammad pbuh
- Muslims migrated to Abyssinia – did not migrate to Medina when the Prophet lived there. Continued to leave under the rule of the then Christian King Negus who was described as just and fair.
- Muslims even served in Negus' army. Similar to Muslims today.
- No obligation to make hijrah – view advocated by those who believe in outdated and binary worldview of Dar al Islam v Kufr
- History testifies to there being many different Muslim states with multiple leaders as opposed to a single Caliph and state
- Many classical scholars considered it a form of extremism to exaggerate the issue of the caliphate

Impact

- *“if I knew this information ten years ago when my children were teenagers, I would have taught them about the issues raised in this course. This is the first time I’ve been educated on such a crucial and important topic.”*
- Muslim women wanted to actively do more to reclaim their faith from violent extremists who they felt had hijacked Islam to commit acts of terror.
- Very few women were aware of ideology or counter-narratives.

Respond to ideological challenge

Campaigns

1. Jihad Against Violence (2011)

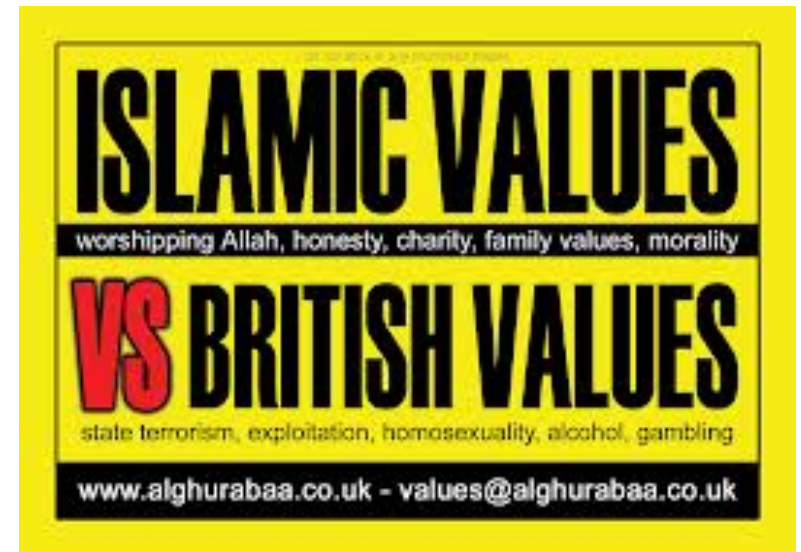
- encouraged women and men to stand up to all forms of violence, to educate and raise awareness, and to challenge those who perversely use Islam to incite or carry out terrorism
- people from over 32 countries signed the JAV Declaration

2. Standing up to extremist Anjem Choudary: National Memorial Arboretum (2010)

Respond to the ideological challenge:

Key issue: Identity and belonging

- Common arguments of both far right and Islamist extremists:
- You can't be British and Muslim!
- British Values V Muslim Values!
- Important we address anti-Muslim prejudice and issues of belonging.
- But understand radicalisers try to suggest The 'West is at War with Islam,' create an environment of alienation



Responding to ideological challenge

Working with the Media

1. Countering the British V Muslim argument
2. Sun editorial: **TOGETHER** we can defeat IS
 - “First we must not give way to Islamophobia.”
 - IS represents tiny minority of Muslims – most British Muslims are proud to belong to both a nationality and a religion which value peace, tolerance and the sanctity of life.”
 - “They consider IS a disgusting perversion of their faith, not its lion hearted champions.”



NATION UNITES TO DENOUNCE JIHAD TERROR

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UNITED AGAINST I.S.
"Everyone should support the Sun's campaign against Islamic terrorism. It's a fight we all have to win."
JAMES HARRIS, 21, STUDENT FROM LONDON

UNITED AGAINST I.S.
"We live in a country where everyone is free to practice their religion. We should stand together against those who would take away that freedom."
JAMES HARRIS, 21, STUDENT FROM LONDON

UNITED AGAINST I.S.
"The Sun's campaign is a fantastic way for us to show our support for the British values of democracy, the rule of law and individual freedoms."
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UNITED AGAINST I.S.
"I don't like seeing any religion being used as an excuse for violence. We should all stand together against those who would use religion to justify their actions."
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By MARTIN PHILLIPS

THE Sun's campaign launched yesterday saw people across the nation answer our call to unite against the evil of Islamic State.

Thousands — from all faiths — led a backlash against the jihadist terrorists behind the radicalisation of impressionable UK youngsters.

The politicians and celebrities have been slow to do so, but the Sun's campaign has been a force to be reckoned with. It has been a real success story for the newspaper.

Among the hundreds of letters and e-mails, the Sun's campaign has been a real success story for the newspaper.

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ONE VOICE

Britain gets behind Sun campaign

UNITED AGAINST I.S.
"Islam is a peaceful religion but it has been hijacked by terrorists. We should stand together against those who would use religion to justify their actions."
JAMES HARRIS, 21, STUDENT FROM LONDON

UNITED AGAINST I.S.
"We should not let our religion be used as an excuse for violence. We should all stand together against those who would use religion to justify their actions."
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Help us to make a stand

SAJID JAVID
Labour MP

ANYONE who has watched the news knows that the British people are united in their opposition to the barbaric and cowardly acts of terrorism.

That's why I want to make a stand with all the people of Britain against terror.

I don't see anyone who has said they are against it, but I see a message to all those who support our values.

Britain stands together in opposing evil and supporting good.

Islam is peace, not evil

ANILA BAO
Teacher

ISLAM is a religion which teaches peace. It is not a religion of violence.

The Islamic faith is based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

There can be no religion based on the world being someone's religion. It is a religion of peace, tolerance and respect for all.

The Quran tells us to love our family and our neighbours. It does not tell us to hate anyone.

It is not Islam that is the problem. It is the people who use it to justify their actions.

Please say No to hate

PIAZ MUHAMMAD
Student

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After Tunisian Massacre: Manifesto Against Hate

Muslim Leaders Join Forces with Sun to Combat Extremism in the UK

1. Democracy and rule of law
2. Report extremist propaganda
3. Respect of different faiths
4. Community inclusion
5. Stamp out hate preaching
6. We are all British
7. Educate our young people
8. Defence in the home
9. Open the door to the young
10. Feel empowered



Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism

Working in Communities: Making A Stand



Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism: Making A Stand

- 9 cities across England and Wales, engaged directly with hundreds of Muslim women
- Taught women theological counter-narratives to extremist ideology
- Helped them to recognise early signs of radicalisation
- Signposted them to external agencies who could provide help to vulnerable individuals in their family or community
- Encouraged them to take the lead in challenging extremism in their communities and to exert influence in their mosques and communities.

Language barriers

Lack of engagement with agencies

Parents closing down debate
Lack of religious knowledge

Media

Cultural gap

Misogyny/female leadership

Concerns about madrasa &
Mosque curriculum

Concerns about preachers

Weak Muslim leadership

Internet

Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism

Resources: Combatting ISIS Social Media

- Videos by young Muslim men and women speaking directly to the camera discouraging people from travelling to Syria – 20'000 views
- A community response to extremism with Avon and Somerset police
- After Bethnal Green girls, Letter to young girls went viral. Was being read out in assemblies: 40'000 views in one day
- Other videos have included Boko Haram's abuse of women and girls: 75'000 views
- Developed free online countering extremism resources²⁴ with London Grid for Learning, a consortium made up of the 33 London local authorities and 2,500 schools, which provide extensive ICT services.

Working with sectors and institutions:

Schools and police

- Delivered training to approximately 3000 teachers and schools across the country on how to safeguard children from extremism whether far right or Islamist.
- Focussing on vulnerabilities, role of schools, open up discussion
- Schools maybe the only place where a child is given assistance or whose view maybe countered.
- Not about spying, criminalising or closing down discussion
- Challenging anti-Muslim prejudice
- Helped support Met Police and local police campaigns to discourage travel to Syria.

Challenges

- Rising above the hysteria, fear mongering and myths about Prevent which currently exists
 - “Prevent is about the criminalisation of Muslims and/or Islam”
 - “This is about encouraging front line workers to spy on pupils”
 - “Prevent is Islamophobic”
- Do not always rely on the reporting of media stories
- Inability to distinguish extreme views from conservative Muslim practice
- Parents may not be on your side
- Perception that all Muslims oppose Prevent: Not true
- Preventing Prevent lobby: seek to misinform public and Muslim communities about Prevent and create fear

Our work is an example of Prevent in action

- Protecting the most vulnerable
- Tackling far right and Islamist extremism which dehumanise others and can encourage violence
- Challenging anti-Muslim prejudice, anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred
- Promoting British Muslim identity
- Protecting our country from terrorism



Further Information

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