

Looking at the deradicalisation policy from a different perspective

Radical about children's rights

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since Syrian fighters are being pulled into the caliphate from Belgium - and especially since their return to Europe and the subsequent attacks in the West - Flanders, Belgium and the European Union are working hard on deradicalisation, which is also directly focused on children and young people. This does not only have a big impact on society, children and young people, but also the role of youth workers and their organisations.

Youth workers now have the feeling that, all of a sudden, it is their job to keep an eye on children and young people, in order to prevent and notify of any risks of radicalisation. But is that really their role? And what is radicalisation exactly? Is it necessarily dangerous?

At the same time, children and young people say that they feel like they are being watched. People continue to talk to them in a negative way, simply because of their Islamic background: in class, on the street, on the bus. Their identity is often reduced to 'Muslim' (and therefore: 'possibly dangerous').

Besides this they are also faced with a lot of injustice: discrimination, racism, unequal education opportunities, poverty, ... and they find that there isn't enough being done about it. They see how Islam and Muslims get a very narrow definition and that young people are spoken about, but they are not often spoken to.

You can guess the result. Without a policy customised for children and young people, powerful language about radicalisation gets the upper hand in the debate. Society is more polarised than ever before and this is reflected in the deradicalisation policy.

The attacks in Zaventem and Brussels on 22 March 2016 fuelled fear amongst children and young people even more. It was the starting point for many more deradicalisation projects in all kinds of fields: from justice to education and youth policy. Even the law was amended, for example the way in which shared professional secrecy was interpreted and in the way the Local Integral Safety Cell works regarding Radicalism, Extremism and Terrorism (*LIVC-R - Lokale Integrale Veiligheidscel inzake Radicalisme, Extremisme en Terrorisme*).

This text is an analysis of the deradicalisation policy and is structured around twelve recommendations. It is a shorter version of the Dutch publication "*Het deradicaliseringsbeleid anders bekeken: Radicaal voor kinderrechten*" (In English: Looking at the deradicalisation policy from a different perspective: Radical about children's rights). This study is an accumulation of many years of work. It is the result of discussions with academics, organisation, social workers, youth works and (of course) children and young people.

The analysis has a clear goal in sight: setting out, together with children and young people, to meet their needs and bring positive change to society. In our opinion, children and young people are not the problem, they are the solution. We take their insights and daily concerns into account in our work and we ask the same of the policy: listen to young people and together with them find answers to the challenges they face.

This study would not have been possible without the participation of loads of children, young people, youth (welfare) workers, youth community workers, social workers, academics and policy makers. The interesting insights, testimonies and analyses that they shared with us, form the basis of this study.

The text also primarily delivers an important message from children and young people. These children and young people are not only our future they can also play a key roll now. However, there is one important requirement: we need to listen to them and take the message that they are trying to communicate seriously.

For youth (welfare) workers and youth community workers this is their daily reality. Now it is policy makers and politician's job to do the same. Together we can create a space where the fundamental rights of all children are guaranteed, where young people feel at home, where they can be themselves and where they have opportunities to grow.

Let's radically opt for children's rights.

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2. ANALYSIS AND REFERENCES

- 1) **Radicalisation in itself is not an issue, however political violence is. The use of incorrect terminology stigmatises children and young people unnecessarily. So it is important to use the right name to specify the challenges.**

“On the last Friday that you have class, you are allowed to come to school dressed-up. The teacher asks me: “What are you going to dress up as?” I reply: “I don't know, Miss,” and she replied: “Not as a terrorist surely?”. It may seem small, she might laugh about it, but I take it seriously.”

When people think of ‘radicalisation’ they think of Muslims. The term was also introduced by security services after the attacks on the Twin Towers. The term therefore became stigmatising. Children and young people with an Islamic background tell us about offensive comments and bad jokes. Their behaviour was considered problematic much quicker simply because they are Muslim. This could seriously disrupt their identity development and it could have serious consequences at school, out on the streets, in youth work, ... Now more than ever, there is a need for more inclusive language, especially from people in dominant positions.

“For example, during Ramadan eating at the market. He [the mayor] really includes us foreigners in society. It's not that he is excluding us in any way. He is also not a mayor who just spends everyday sat behind his desk, he is busy every day. He is someone that drives around every day and says hello to everyone. I like that.”

“In the media they say ‘they are Muslims’, but at school I have not noticed it. I usually notice it in comments on Facebook, that's where you read things like, ‘there you go, it's the Muslims again’.”

The radicalisation policy mostly targets radical Islam. When it came to 9/11, people tried to explain the terrorists' motives through environmental factors such as war, inequality or exclusion. Since then, the analysis of terrorism has shifted and it now focuses more and more on personal characteristics and individuals' lives. Because of the attacks, Islam was targeted (Fadil, de Koning & Ragazzi, 2019).

Thus, radicalisation was not deemed a societal issue, rather an individual process, linked to a specific religion.

This narrow focus threatens to bury other important signals from children and young people: discrimination and racism, struggling with puberty or high stress among young people in a vulnerable position, who grow up in poverty. By identifying children and young people with just merely one part of their identity (and then immediately linking it to political violence) is bound to cause even more psychological damage. Children and young people - especially those with a Muslim background - do not dare to be themselves anymore, let alone revealing their needs and desires.

The term radicalisation does not mention anything about the danger that individuals and their behaviour actually entail. It overlooks the link between real acts of violence and the underlying structural causes. That is why we are better off referring to it as ‘political violence’.

- 2) **Stop making calls for projects ‘to prevent radicalisation’. Focus more structurally on children and young people’s needs in situations of vulnerability in society. Put the child’s interest first and prioritise youth (welfare) work, equal education opportunities, an efficient anti-discrimination and anti-racism policy and poverty reduction.**

The Flemish and local policy ‘preventing radicalisation’ is limited to short-term incentives in the form of calls for projects, whilst the underlying issues require a long-term structural and integral approach. In addition, the assumptions made in the policy are not well-founded in scientific research.

Moreover, research abroad shows that the radicalisation discourse and policy have exactly the opposite effect on young people. In Lindekilde's research from 2012, he describes the stigmatising effects that the Danish radicalisation prevention policies have on young Muslims. The discussion regarding the ‘radicalisation of Muslims’ means that these young people get the feeling that everyone in the community is a suspect. Some of them end up isolating themselves from society. Their distrust in the government also increases. Some young people change their behaviour in public spaces so that they do not get targeted (‘performing safety’). Many of them accept the basic values that the initiatives promote (democracy, active citizenship, dialogue, etc.) but if they are being sold the title ‘radicalisation prevention’, it is often met with resistance.

Besides the stigmatising effects, it can also have devastating effects on their own identity development. These ideas strengthen the current prejudice that Muslims are inherently violent and dangerous (Ragazzi & de Jongh, 2019). In the case of young Muslims, we see that teenager behaviour is ‘Islamicised’: suddenly it is a foreboding sign of ‘radicalisation’. The focus on young Muslims makes it harder to focus on other aspects of their identity. They are reduced to their religious background.

The radicalisation policy does not only have a negative impact on young Muslims, but also other young people. The exclusive focus on Muslims ensures that Islamophobic prejudices against ‘inherently violent and dangerous’ Muslims are confirmed. It increases polarisation within the community even more which in turn leads to children and young people feeling alienated. Some do take on extreme right ideas, because they see how prejudices are confirmed and even fuelled. Teachers and municipalities have also noticed this happening (Schepens, 2018 & Van den Broeck, 2019).

After the newsletters about ‘*Schild en Vrienden*’ in 2018, we got various notifications from youth works that young people were openly displaying neonazi symbols or they expressed their support for extreme right groups. This setup is, in turn, fuelling the flames for many children and young people with a migration background who see their distrust and suspicions of inequality being confirmed.

“Last year, some volunteers from the youth club, where I work, posted a photo on Facebook. On this photo, there is someone sitting behind the bar and they are showing their upper arm which had a swastika drawn on it. They said that it was meant to be a joke, but it still led to tension with the other young people [with a migration background] who visited the youth club. After the commotion, the youth club distanced themselves from the post on social media.”

Moreover, the concept of ‘positive identity development’, the core tasks of youth (welfare) work, that is deployed against radicalisation, lost its value when it was linked to ‘radicalisation prevention’. For as long as we can remember, youth work has been working on positive identity development. That’s why we do not need any calls for projects that link young people to violence, but rather structural support based on children and young people’s needs.

3) The current discussion surrounding radicalisation is counterproductive. It targets children and young people with a Muslim background. So, create an inclusive and structural policy that is based on children and human rights.

While children and young peoples' needs in vulnerable situations in society are so high, the radicalisation projects ignore and gloss over these needs. What is being done 'to prevent radicalisation' should actually be done in response to the right to education for everyone, protection against discrimination, (child) poverty, accessible care, ... The latter is under the most pressure, though it is being expanded and being made easier to access for young people who pose a security risk due to 'radicalisation'. What is worse is that in the policies and calls for projects, children and young people with a migration background are literally specified as the target group. It would be better to establish an offer that meets all children and young peoples' needs in both a qualitative and quantitative way.

The policy should also focus on an atmosphere that brings children and young people together, by working on an anti-discrimination and anti-racism plan and by providing more safe places. First and foremost, minors should be protected and supported. The best way to do this is through voluntary care and exceptional youth aid. Accessibility and culture sensitivity are important factors in this kind of prevention. So teachers, youth workers and social workers need to get enough support to promote and shape young peoples' positive identity. This can be achieved through training or intervision. Children and young people who are a real danger to themselves and society are approached through the applicable decrees and laws (The Convention on the Rights of the Child, legal assistance with a decree, ...).

4) Create a clear policy regarding the collection of data and the accompanying databases. Prioritise children and human rights.

"I am a 22-year-old man. Three years ago, I was a victim of a stabbing. Out of nowhere I was stabbed. It was not just a physical blow, but it was a serious mental blow. To overcome it, I benefited a lot from my youth work. I have been going there for around 8 years. In the past few years I have gotten involved in a project where you are deployed to events in the area to work as a steward. I love doing it and I get a lot of responsibility. I find it very important to make sure people feel safe because I myself have felt so unsafe."

"For four years, I have been doing voluntary work as a steward at a youth club in the city. This summer I applied for a role to be in charge. I got an email to say I was accepted. But the day before I was going to sign my contract, the coordinator told me I could not start. I had not passed the screening. He referred me to a local police officer, but he could not tell me what had come out as negative in my screening.

When my youth worker approached their contacts at the police, they said that a screening had not happened. The worst thing was that I could work as a steward in the youth club. I kept doing it because I enjoy doing it so much and all my friends also come to the youth club.

I never received anything on paper. I have never had a criminal record and I have never been contacted by the police. Except for once, a long time ago, when I was a minor. I was out in the neighbourhood with my brother to go and do the shopping. At the same time, there was a forbidden demonstration taking place, from an extremist Islamic organisation. We were surrounded by the police. My brother was allowed to return home because he was working as a journalist at the time and could show them his press card. I was taken to the police office and I needed to go to a municipal administrative sanctions officer. He assigned me community service.

I never meant to take part in the demonstrations. I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. The municipal administrative sanctions officer told me then that it would definitely be removed from my criminal record. I think that I am still somewhere in the database though and that is why I did not make it through the screening. Even when I catch a flight, they take me out the queue for an inspection and they tell me that I am blacklisted.

In September, I am planning on registering for a security training. I am scared I will not make it through the screening for that either. It is still my dream to work in the security sector.

This whole situation really upsets me. I find that society is ungrateful. I have done my best for young people and youth work. I have done so much volunteer work for the city. Being linked to terrorism hurts.”

We are hearing more and more stories about young people that have been blacklisted by security services because of the time and place or due to their surroundings, even though there is clearly no security risk (anymore). The information that security services are allowed to collect, store and process has seriously increased since the terrorist attacks. The authorities who are able to see the databases has also expanded. Except we have noticed that the overview on this has been lost and people’s rights regarding who stores their information has been limited (Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, 2019 & *Liga voor Mensenrechten*, 2018). However, this can have serious consequences on daily life; for example, when people want to travel, want to do certain jobs, opening bank accounts, ...

The parliamentary research committee for terrorist attacks, but also human rights organisations, warn that this proliferation of data collection can cause problems. Which leads to incorrect or out-of-date data not being automatically deleted (*Belgische Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers*, 2018 & *Liga voor Mensenrechten*, 2018).

We can already see the impact that these databases have on children and young people in real life. Especially for children and young people who pose no danger, it feels like a great injustice. They feel like they are being cast out by society.

Monitoring and evaluation are also not a part of most radicalisation programmes (Gielen, 2019). It is also important to get civil societies involved. They pick up signals much faster and they gain more trust than the targeted groups.

5) Make sure there is a clear procedure so that people who do not promote or perform political violence can request to be removed from the blacklist.

People who believe that they have been wrongfully blacklisted by security services, can send a request to local police to carry out an investigation. They can decide if a certain person can be removed from the blacklist. There is no formal procedure to do this. It seems that this kind of investigation is more dependant on political goodwill than policies. In addition, the person in question will already have a few instructions that will be stated on their blacklisting: a screening for security clearance that has gone wrong, terminating services by the bank, problems when crossing the border.

The LIVC-R can also play a role in this.

“Last year we organised a party. Several volunteers, all Muslims, were rejected as security by the municipality. We never found out why. They do not have a criminal record.” (Youth worker)

6) Ensure there is extensive monitoring and evaluation of radicalisation programmes and include civil societies.

Up till now, there still has not been an evaluation of the radicalisation prevention policy. Furthermore, we have noticed that the debate surrounding the topic is often lacking the voices of children, young people and civil societies. Nevertheless, their experience is crucial. Sometimes youth organisations and civil societies are put under pressure if they make criticisms. Therefore, the space where young people can express their frustrations and ask questions in a safe way is restricted. From a preventative perspective, this is counterproductive. Moreover, children and young people have the right to talk about measures that concern them.

7) Protect youth workers' trust relationship and the deontological code.

“The safe spaces for young people, and especially for young people in vulnerable situations with loads of questions, are continually decreasing. There is a lot of pressure from politicians and researchers to expose everything. So, I can imagine that some young people do not want to come to our youth club anymore. It is not safe anymore, because police enter and raid the place or because journalists are hanging around the area. This is the kind of security policy that leads to more insecurity because more and more young people go underground.”

(Quote from a youth worker in Flachet & De Backer, 2019)

The trust relationship is the most important tool for youth workers. In order to protect them they use deontological rules. Various measures taken as part of radicalisation prevention, put this trust relationship under pressure. Youth workers are expected to detect and report on signs of radicalisation, or local authorities expect them to systematically share information with police in exchange for subsidies. Of course, youth workers need to deal with any signs that are concerning but they should do this first and foremost in the interest of the children and young people that they are working with. It is not a good idea to expect youth workers to carry out security services' work. Experience has taught us this, but scientific research has also proven this. Furthermore, it restricts the safe space that young people need to develop themselves and experiment even more.

Youth workers have enough tools and room for manoeuvre to share confidential information with governments and security services, if they decide that it is necessary. Over the past few years, Uit De Marge vzw has developed various frameworks that make the collaboration between youth workers and third parties (including security services) possible, in a way that does not damage the trust relationship between young people and youth workers.

The youth worker is often one of the few people the children and young people trust when they are in a vulnerable situation in society. They are the only person who can intervene if the child or young person end up in a dangerous situation or are a danger to themselves or others. Policy makers and legislators should trust youth workers' professionalism as well as other social work professions.

Therefore, preserve and enhance the safe spaces and counsellors.

8) Youth workers, teacher and social workers do not belong in a LIVC-R. Opt to invest in other platforms instead, like a youth welfare consultation.

The LIVC-R is a tool used “to fight against violent radicalisation by detecting people who are in the process of radicalisation and to develop a personalised follow-up process for them.”¹ They work in close collaboration with a Local Task Force (LTF).

Whereas a LTF focuses on a responsive and repressive approach (through police and courts), the LIVC-R is based on the individual in an inclusive society. This is reflected in how the consultation structures are made up.

Police services, security and intelligence services and the Public Prosecutor’s offices are located in LTFs. In an LIVC-R it is mostly local societal partners represented. With the exception of the local police (*Information Officer*) who make the link with the LTF, no LTF members are present in the LIVC-R.

Since 2018, Belgian cities and municipalities were obliged to create a LIVC-R. Even when there are absolutely no signs of ‘radicalisation’ from residents, the LIVC-R still needs to meet up at least once to do the drill. Then the LIVC-R can go into ‘standby’ until there are signs of ‘radicalisation’.

The LIVC-R primarily wants to prevent terrorist crimes. This does not rule out that “the intended discussion can be organised with a purely preventative aim regarding particular crimes or a particular issue, without effectively registered or signalised crimes” (2017)

The LIVC-R is called together for a “personalised case-study based follow-up of people that show signs of a process of radicalisation” (2018). The mayor is responsible for arranging the agenda; however, all LIVC-R members can state people they suspect of radicalisation. The LIVC-R can develop a personalised follow-up process based on this and follow-up on it.

It is important the follow-up of dangerous individuals is not carried out by the LIVC-R but rather the LTF: “Finally, the most important element for the LTF from the LIVC-R point of view, is the question whether a certain individual is in a phase where he/she is capable of committing terrorist acts. Individuals for whom there is not too much of a threat, who are prepared to work with local authorities and who do not have too much contact with the social environment, get their first follow-up from the LIVC-R” (Chamber of Representatives, 2018).

Members of the LIVC-R:

- the mayor (or their representative);
- the superintendent (or their representative). In practice, it is usually the Information Officer who makes the link with the LTF;
- the prevention officers.

On the mayor’s invitation, the following people can take part in the consultation (depending on the matter at hand and the local reality):

- the employees in the municipality or other services that work at a municipal level;
- the service members who are granted authority for the community and other regional authorities by the respective governments by or by virtue of a decree or ordinance. That decree or ordinance decides the terms for participation.

(Source: Chamber of Representatives, 2018)

¹ Definition as described by the Internal Administration Agency (Local Integral Safety Cell (LIVC), n.d.).

It is clear that participation in a Local Integral Security Cell, where ‘signs of radicalisation’ are discussed with the mayor and the police, do not go hand in hand with youth workers’ duty of confidentiality. Make sure that they are not obliged to take part. A better solution is creating a youth welfare consultation. That is based on the youth welfare work’s deontological code and where the welfare of children and young people are always the top priority. There are signs shared instead of personal information.

“I am a youth worker in a Flemish municipality. Last year I was invited to come to a LIVC by the mayor. The organisation that I work for and myself did not think this would be a good idea because of the trust relationship we want to have with the young people. We decided to take up the offer once with the purpose of making our point of view clear. Namely: we do not want to be a part of LIVC because it goes against the way we want to work with young people. We want to work with young people from a place of respect, trust and open communication.

When we arrived at the meeting, they let us know that “all information stays here”. That way, they still tried to make me share information. I explained that we talk with young people, not about them. Then I was asked to answer one more question. They showed me a photo and asked me if I knew the person in the photo. I recognised the boy from the neighbourhood where I work.

I had never noticed anything about him that could be seen as signs of radicalisation. So, I was very surprised and I still ask myself today why he is being followed.

I told the police that I know him. But that is all. I bumped into him a couple of times in the street after that but never told him what happened.”

9) Describe the rights of people who are reported by a LIVC-R at a supra-local level. Prevent minors from being reported.

The law that regulates the LICV-Rs, does not take minors into account at all, nevertheless they have special protection under Belgian law. Although the LIVC-Rs - and the matters discussed - come from a place of anxiety, the starting point and the welfare of minors is of little importance, but rather his/her risk of committing acts of violence.

Are people informed if they have been reported to the LIVC-R? Do their files get inspected? Do they have the right to defend themselves? What if they do not agree with the support offered?

The way in which the term ‘radicalisation’ is defined, is especially problematic. They are working based on a process, but there are not any criteria or specific risk-assessments laid-down. In this way, the ‘thought police’ are not far away and there is a greater danger for discrimination and ethnic-religious profiles.

10) Make sure there is more transparency over the data being spoken about in a LIVC-R. Create an action framework to do so.

It is unclear what happens with the information collected by the LIVC-R and who has access. The risks involved are mentioned above.

Moreover, the rights and obligations of people who are reported by a LIVC-R are not described anywhere.

11) Create space for youth welfare workers to inform, advise and strengthen the policy. Start working with the signs they receive and pass them on.

The civil societies - a specific kind of youth work - should not hesitate about revealing structural issues that have a direct effect on their target group. Without fear of being targeted, without threat of losing their assets. When it comes to sensitive topics that affect children and young people, they should always feel like they can talk about it, with full openness and with mutual respect and trust.

The subsidy provider can play an important leading role, by not only focussing on short projects but also by providing structural support. The latter give youth work the space to create a solid basis to build up on, in an environment where trusted faces walk around. It also gives them the necessary time, because the follow-up and support of young people in vulnerable situations cannot be reeled in just like that.

If youth work request for subsidies, the figures should not be the most important deciding factor. The process that the youth workers go through with the children and young people is nearly as important. If not crucial. Moreover, we must not forget that youth workers do not only have an assignment for the group, but they are also often asked individual questions. Recognising and supporting them in this role, is a must.

The current discussion about (de)radicalisation has had many reverse and unintended effects. We need to break out of this vicious circle, but that can only happen if we dare to change the basis approach. That means not based on (de)radicalisation, but rather in the interest of the child.

12) Get children and young people involved in the development of the policy. Listen to them and continue to act in the interest of the child.

Each child and young person have the right to safety. The interpretation of this changes from person to person. It depends on the context that a child grows up in and the living conditions of the young person. For one it could mean access to running water, for another it could be their own youth operations. For some children and young people there needs to be an end to the politicised debates, while for another it is more important to know where they will sleep in the next few months or whether they are going to continue being bullied at school.

Children and young people's living situations are complex and filled with various challenges. In order to face these challenges together, it is crucial that we listen to them and get them involved. That is the only way we can come to understand their living situations. That is the only way we can offer them answers and solutions compensate for the issues they are struggling with. Children and young people are not the issue, they are the solution.

3. CONCLUSION

The radicalisation policy from recent years has a serious impact on children, young people, youth works and the whole community. The terms 'radicalisation' and 'deradicalisation' surface irregularly but lack a clear framework. Furthermore, the existing policy, was developed in the margins. The structural issues that children and young people struggle with, were not handled.

In perception, the policy does show decisiveness, but in practise it is not changing much. The existing projects are temporary. They do not break into policy areas that are directly applicable to children and young people in vulnerable positions in society: accessible youth care, equal education opportunities, an anti-discrimination and anti-racism plan, personalised youth work, ... Measures in the margins are not enough to solve these issues. Structural changes, that help children and young people, that is what we need today.

Above all, the focus on a specific target group in the discussion - Muslim children and young people - is concerning. It is stigmatising and it polarises society even more. The result is that more children and young people feel alienated. They feel targeted and they will fight back against the measures that stigmatise them. An important side effect is the extreme right philosophy amongst children and young people, who feel empowered in their beliefs. When it comes to this trend, the policy remains (due to the focus on Muslims) blind for the most part, even today.

As a direct result of the policy carried out, youth welfare work and youth welfare workers have been put under more pressure. They are expected to help young people deradicalise and pass on potentially dangerous signs on time. This entails a huge amount of responsibility, whilst it is not what their main task is, or should be.

The strengths of youth welfare workers are that they offer children and young people a safe place, where they can be themselves and they can develop their identity in a positive way. If they want to continue with this work, it is crucial that they continue to respect the deontological code of youth welfare workers. A youth welfare worker does not belong in a LIVC-R and should not be assigned the role of a police officer.

The policy should trust youth welfare workers more and the way they work. They have the experience to be able to predict when a child or young person is putting themselves or others at risk and they also know how to get the necessary assistance. Which leads us to another issue: there is a serious lack of accessible care adapted to children and young people in vulnerable positions in society.

The negative side effects of an excess in databases, of the LIVC-Rs and the signal of children and young people, for the most part still elude the government. For example, there is hardly a framework around data collection. When data ends up in a database, it is not clear who is allowed access to it and in what way and to what extent it can be shared. Clear agreements about what is allowed to happen with this data are still lacking.

That is why we do not know how many children and young people are in the lists, why they are on the lists and how or when they can be removed from them. Furthermore, it is concerning that there is no clear procedure for children and young people who have been wrongfully reported. Dealing with this void, should be a priority if the government believes in human rights in general and children's rights in particular.

The government should also be more cautious with how minors' data is managed. They do not belong in LIVC-Rs and certain databases. A better solution is creating a youth welfare consultation. That is based on the youth welfare work's deontological code and where the welfare of children and young people are always the top priority everywhere in order to guarantee children's rights. How we can achieve this together is an important challenge.

Children, young people, youth welfare workers and youth workers should be allowed to be considered in the policy, with the signals they receive from the environment as the basis and common theme. The government should also give them space and consider them as the first interlocutor when they develop a policy on not only security, but also policy areas that affect them.

Children and young people are the key to this story. It is therefore simply logical that the government also protects them as the foundations upon which the policy is built. We can only guarantee and develop children and young people's rights - and society's as a whole - if we prioritise children and young people.

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