

RadEscape: Game pedagogics in the prevention of violent extremism among youth (oral presentation)

Introduction

Save the Children Finland (SCF) works in primary prevention of violent extremism (PVE) and radicalization. SCF is the only organization in Finland that focuses especially on youth participation and capacity building. PVE work is conducted by arranging workshops in youth centres, consisting of a pedagogical escape room game and a debriefing session.

This oral presentation addresses the development and use of an escape room in PVE work focusing on both online and offline environments.

Methods

RadEscape was developed by experts in the fields of PVE, youth participation and game pedagogy, to create the most suitable tool for PVE work in the context of Finnish youth centres.

During the workshops, small groups of youngsters join the workshop session in their local youth centres. First, they are introduced to the rules of the game and given a mystery to solve together in a limited time: Where is their lost friend and what has happened to him? During the game, the participants solve puzzles similarly to Escape rooms. As they proceed, the story of their lost and radicalized friend starts to unravel. After solving the mystery and finishing the game, the workshop facilitators hold a debriefing session addressing the issues, feelings and relating points among the participants.

Results

The gamification of PVE tools enables addressing complex issues in an interesting and relatable way. Furthermore, the inclusion of a relatable story in the game enables the participants to recognize the socio-cognitive factors behind radicalization processes.

Conclusions

Communicative game pedagogy enables the participants to reflect and acknowledge many sides of extremism while offering a simulation in which it is safe to explore the feelings the theme evokes. Furthermore, the debriefing session strengthens agency by creating a platform in which PVE is discussed from the youth's viewpoint.