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# RAN PRACTIONER'S EXCHANGE PROGRAMME



RAN Practioners Exchange Report  
EXIT-Deutschland  
November 2022

# INFORMATIONS AND OUTCOMES OF THE EXCHANGE

The practitioner exchange programme consisted of a 5-day programme focusing both on exchanging knowledge and participative experience in the context of exit work and deradicalisation. I was able to gain new knowledge around approaches and methods of intervention, particularly in relation to the role historical narratives can play in disengagement and rehabilitation as well as the use of biographical work.

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In addition to gaining new knowledge, it was particularly relevant to be able to connect the knowledge and expertise shared by Exit Deutschland within the context of field trips. The contextualisation of the tools and approaches in full immersion in historical environments gave me a much more in-depth cognitive and affective understanding of the power of Exit Deutschland practices. The practical case studies used during the PE really supported the sustainable and transferable exchange of practice.

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*Understand the importance and the usefulness of history pedagogical approaches in disengagement and rehabilitation of former violent extremists.*

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EXIT-Germany is an initiative assisting individuals, who want to leave the extreme right-wing movement and start a new life. Being the first to start such an endeavour in Germany, EXIT-Germany constitutes one of the most experienced programmes in deradicalisation and exit-assistance.

...IAN INTERIOR MINIST...

National...  
MAN NATIONAL ASSOCIAT...

19. JULI | JULY 19

20. JUNI | JUNE 20

...te Bewerber dürfen  
...ren ernannt werden.  
...ISCHEN INNENMINISTERS

...utscheine für Ehestandsdarlehen dürfen nicht  
...ften mit jüdischen Inhabern eingelöst werden.  
RICHTLINIE DES REICHSFINANZMINISTERS

Vouchers from marriage loans may not be  
redeemed in businesses with Jewish owners.  
DIRECTIVE BY THE REICH FINANCE MINISTER

20. JULI | JULY 20

...to Jewish women may  
...s government trainees.  
...SSIAN INTERIOR MINISTER

...daten müssen die nichtjüdische Abstammung  
...ihrer Ehepartnerinnen nachweisen.  
ERLASS DES REICHSWEHRMINISTERS

...ers must prove their wives' non-Jewish ancestry.  
DECREE BY THE REICH DEFENSE MINISTER

23. JUNI | JUNE 23

...hr als Vertrauensärzte  
...erung berufen werden.  
...S REICH SARBEITSMINISTERS

20. JULI | JULY 20

...us dem Staatsdienst entlassenen Juden kann  
...Zulassung als Rechtsanwalt verweigert werden.  
...GESETZ ÜBER RECHTSANWÄLTE UND EINIGER  
...Jews dismissed from state service  
...can be denied the license to practice law.  
...OF THE REGULATIONS FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION

...no longer be appointed  
...ers for social insurance.  
...Y THE REICH LABOR MINIST...

...tudienreferendare, befristet  
...ulamtsbewerber  
22. JULI

“  
While context matters,  
knowledge and practices know  
no boundaries and we all deal  
with one common agency, that  
is the human factor.”

# KEY FINDINGS

One of the main key learnings has been to understand the importance and the usefulness of history pedagogical approaches in disengagement and rehabilitation of former violent extremists. Although, Exit Deutschland focuses on violent right-wing extremism in a particular historical context that is of Germany, it could be easily argued that the historical pedagogical approach could only be limited to the German experience. In fact, the instrumentalisation of History cuts across in varying degrees nearly almost all violent extremist organisations in their mobilising and recruitment of individuals. Furthermore, for some individuals the historical narrative plays an important role in the legitimisation of the violence (eg. eye for an eye) and the dehumanization of the Other in their radicalisation process. In right-wing extremism, the historical narrative – the denial of the Holocaust – is an entire part of the neo-Nazi ideology and needs to be tackled progressively in the disengagement process of a radicalised individual.

This is where the experience of Exit Deutschland is particularly enlightening in how the historical pedagogical approach and practice can support the debunking of the extremist historical narrative of the Holocaust denial. Cognitive exposure to alternative historical narratives is helpful but it should also be supported where possible (and if needed) by an immersion in historical environments to appeal connect not only with a history but also with a place and a people – in a way this creates a link between the cognitive work and the affective work.

While this approach and practice is effective for some individuals both in their disengagement and rehabilitation process it is not a one size-fits-all. It is to be used on a case-by-case basis and only at a certain stage of the disengagement process which will support the intervention work and facilitate a reflective hindsight on the individual adherence to a particular narrative or in this instance the denial of certain historical facts.





Sachsenhausen or Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg was a German Nazi concentration camp in Oranienburg, Germany, used from 1936 until April 1945, shortly before the defeat of Nazi Germany in May later that year. It mainly held political prisoners throughout World War II.

Sachsenhausen was a labor camp, outfitted with several subcamps, a gas chamber, and a medical experimentation area. Prisoners were treated inhumanely, fed inadequately, and killed openly. After World War II, when Oranienburg was in the Soviet Occupation Zone, the structure was used by the NKVD as NKVD special camp Nr. 7. Today, Sachsenhausen is open to the public as a memorial.

# FIELDTRIPS

To experience this approach and practice, Exit Deutschland organised fieldtrips in different sites of historical significance. One of these sites was the former Nazi concentration camp of Sachsenhausen, near Berlin. When asked about the intervention value of this immersion experience, Fabian Wichmann explained that this usually allows the disengaging individual to be confronted to and reflect on his/her own support of the denial of Holocaust.

This process usually brings the individual to experience sentiments of shame and guilt, which is what former Canadian right-wing extremist Tony McAleer described as “toxic shame”. This can then also lead to a process of re-humanizing the Other and a need for redemption.

Sachsenhausen Nazi Concentration Camp  
(Photo by Virginie Andre)



# HISTORICAL DIMENSION

Another site of historical significance which allowed for another immersive experience was the Jewish Museum of Berlin (the largest museum in Europe) which presents the repercussion of the Holocaust. The museum's specific architecture and exhibits was designed to offer particular sensory experiences to the visitor. Architect Libeskind designed the museum with the narrative of "erasure and void" following the Holocaust in mind. In Libeskind's own words "it's an experience, and some of it is foreboding (...). Some of it is inspiring, some of it is full of light. Some of it is dark, some of it is disorienting, some of it is orienting." [1] One of the artworks where we spent a considerable amount of time is "Shalekhet" or Fallen Leaves by artist Menashe Kadishman which displays more than 10,000 iron made screaming human faces covering the floor of the void. As you walk on the artwork, crashing sounds emerge from the metallic faces stirring painful memories of war and feelings of sorrow and loss.

This is where the cognitive work on disengagement from violent extremism brings in the affective dimension through its historical approach/practice and its interplay with object, meaning, significance and environment. A very powerful momentum which through its affective opening provides an opportunity for cognitive reflection on one's own narrative of denial, shame, guilt, reconciliation and in fine rehabilitation. This historical pedagogical approach however would not be sustainable without prior work around the individual's own biographical work.

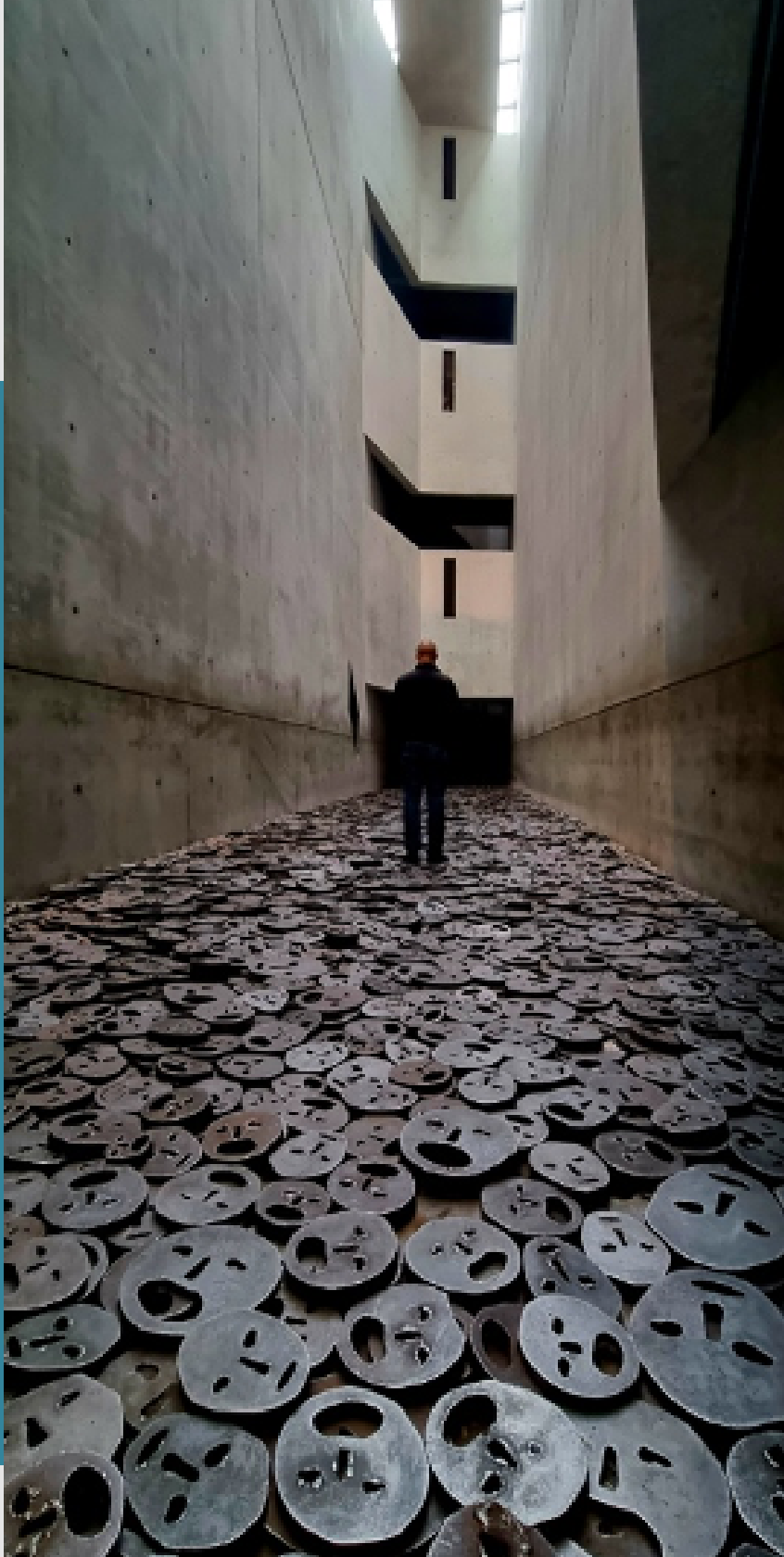


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## SHALEKHET – FALLEN LEAVES

The Memory Void, one of the symbolic spaces on the ground level of the Libeskind building, includes the installation Shalekhet (Fallen Leaves) by Menashe Kadishman. More than 10,000 faces with open mouths, cut from heavy round iron plates, cover the floor of the ground floor void. (Photo by Virginie Andre)



# HISTORICAL PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The PEP allowed me to further and gain new knowledge on biographical work as tool to support both an individual's disengagement process together with his/her own self introspection into one's own journey into violent extremism is particularly insightful. The tool offers the possibility for the individual to revisit their journey, make sense of it and with the practitioner identify the challenges within and emerging from this journey. and with the practitioner identify the challenges within and emerging from this journey. This places the individual at the centre of his/her process of disengagement – ie. giving agency and responsibility.

## VICTIMS & PERPETRATORS

The case study of a former convicted neo-Nazi which was examined during the study visit showed how biographical work was done through storyboarding and allowed the former violent extremist to reflect on his own story which several years later after his prison release led him to seeking reconciliation by revisiting the place where the crime was committed.

## VICTIMS OF RWE IN GERMANY

Fatalities of right-wing extremist violence in Germany have existed since its foundation. Until 1990, they were not recorded separately by the state. The Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) only registered right-wing extremist motives for homicides since 1990 as "hate crime" against certain victim groups, such as foreigners, the disabled, homosexuals, the homeless or ethnic German immigrants. Since the right-wing extremist murder attacks on asylum seekers and people of Turkish origin in Germany from 1990 onwards, victim protection initiatives began to register the numbers of these attacks and their victims.

By 30 September 2020, the German government recognised 109 murders since 1990 as being motivated by right-wing extremism. However, joint research by the newspapers Frankfurter Rundschau, Der Tagesspiegel and Die Zeit found right-wing extremist motives in at least 78 other murders since 1990, for a total of 187 fatalities. The Amadeu Antonio Foundation (AAS) counts at least 219 fatalities of right-wing extremist violence in Germany and 16 suspected cases from 1990 to the end of 2021.



# CASE STUDY

## NAME

Finally, Exit Deutschland gave me the opportunity to learn more about their approach to prevention and intervention work through sports. On 11th November 2022, Exit Deutschland launched their raising awareness campaign in Munich at an important football match which has a large neo-Nazi hooligan fan base.

My colleague Fabian Wichmann walked me through the mammoth mechanics and the delicate PR dance behind the event's public campaign. The key takeaway of this campaign is to understand and know the target audience and with which media to reach them.



Example of Exit Deutschland raising awareness campaign slogan during the football match  
(Photo by Exit Deutschland)



rechts, bitte  
**aussteigen.**

mit Deutschland, das aussteigt aus dem rechten Europa.



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Mit dabei



# GENERAL FEEDBACK

It has been an immense privilege to be able to observe, exchange and learn new knowledge and gain insights into the approaches, tools and practices of Exit Deutschland. Several of the approaches are relevant to the work we do at Kare Ry and will be considered for implementation in our own work. I would like to thank Exit Deutschland for their collegiality and patience as well as the EU RAN Practitioners for offering Kare Ry the possibility to pursue this exchange which with no doubt will support and develop further our own work.

While context matters, knowledge and practices know no boundaries and we all deal with one common agency, that is the human factor.

Fieldtrip to Sachsenhausen

