

Role of Educational Institutions in Countering Radicalization / Violent Extremism of the Youth in Southeast Asia

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Abstract: Terrorism, whatever the underlying reason, is immorality. the impact of acts of terrorism is always negative, both on the socio-cultural life of the community, the unity of a nation, and the integrity of the state. there are many nations that have collapsed or been ruined due to acts of terrorism. educational institutions have a role in counteracting the thought of radicalism which is an embryo of terrorism. the role of educational institutions is to build human morality, love for peace, mutual respect for differences, instilling the values of harmony in life, and tolerance. education is an effective vehicle for developing these values. so that education aims at forming human beings who are full of love towards others.

Keywords: role of education, countering radicalization

I. INTRODUCTION

The threat of terrorism and violent extremism in different parts of the world is real and imminent. This social malady got its height after the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Since then, all kinds of violence perpetrated by these radicalized individuals are targeting almost everyone without discrimination. This indiscriminate strategy of the terrorists is espoused in one of the Al-Qaeda's warning illuminating:

"The confrontation that we are calling for with the apostate regimes does not know Socratic debates ..., Platonic ideals ..., nor Aristotelian diplomacy. But it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing, and destruction, and the diplomacy of the cannon and machine-gun. ... Islamic governments . . . are established as they have been by pen and gun by word and bullet by tongue and teeth." [italics supplied]

When the Islamic of State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) had successfully established, amidst short while, the Khilafah state in Syria, making Raqqa as its capital, its leader repeatedly mentioned in his Friday sermons the obligations of all Muslims in the world to support the DAESH. As presented in its propaganda magazine, *Dabiq*, the DAESH enjoins:

"As for the Muslim who is unable to perform hijrah from dārul kufr to the Khilāfah, then there is much opportunity for him to strike out against the kāfir enemies of the Islamic State. There are more than seventy crusader nations, tāghūt regimes, apostate armies, rāfidī militias, and sahwah factions for him to choose from. Their interests are located all over the world. He should not hesitate in striking them wherever he can..." [italics supplied].

Having a considerable number of Muslim inhabitants, the southeast Asia is one of the regions in the world that is most potentially threatened by violent extremism. This can be discerned from the speeches of some Southeast Asian leaders. For example, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong made a very alarming statement by saying that Southeast Asia had emerged as a

"key recruitment center" for ISIS. Parameswaran (2015) complimented this by emphasizing that "the threat is no longer over there; it is over here." And, "it is not-so far-fetched that ISIS could establish a base somewhere in the region, in a geographical area under its physical control like in Syria or Iraq... That would pose a serious threat to the whole of Southeast Asia." This is in conjunction with the perceived plan that the "ISIS is determined to declare at least one province in Asia in 2016." If this happens, it would "present far-reaching security implications for the stability and prosperity for a rising Asia."

Samuel (2016) noted that "in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, their sympathizers, supporters and recruits come from all walks of life; religious or otherwise, educated or uneducated, gainfully employed or without a job, both young and old, male and female" To many observers, this development confirmed that "Daesh has expanded its wings eastward to Southeast Asia. The threats of Daesh manifested in the sudden emergence of Daesh-affiliated groups in the region. In Indonesia alone, it is reported that at the present time, there are 32 militant groups pledged their allegiance (*bay'ah*) to Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed caliph of Daesh, followed by 16 and 6 groups from Philippines and Malaysia respectively"

In the light of this disturbing security challenge, what measures we could possibly adopt in order to counter this phenomenon? Are there any immediate programs and long-term strategies we could institute to save the future generations of potential recruits from being inflicted by this universally-condemned social movement?

Available literature on this topic disclosed that there are two major approaches in addressing violent extremism and radicalization. First is the hard method which uses intelligence, police and military means. Accordingly, it is curative in nature because this approach presupposes that a person is already radicalized and therefore influenced by extreme ideas. And, second is the soft method which is aimed at the complex social structures that serve as the foundation of extremism. This may include his values, orientation and worldviews. This is preventive in the sense that it is designed to prevent individuals from being influenced by radicalization. As

confirmed by numerous studies, the most fundamental aspect of the soft method is education, especially peace education.

In an article written by Melissa Jane Kronfeld (2013), she differentiated the hard method and the soft method in this wise:

“A ‘hard’ approach to counter terrorism entails employing strictly military or law enforcement techniques, including the use of force, intelligence and surveillance, as well as killing, capturing or detaining terrorists. A ‘soft’ counter-terrorism approach, ‘seeks to undo the radicalization process by engineering the individual’s return to moderate society, usually by providing them with a stable support network, probing their original reasons for radicalizing, and divorcing them from their extreme beliefs and social contacts.’” [Italics supplied].

Which of these two approaches is more effective? Commenting on the effectiveness of the hard method, the report of the UN Secretary General last December 24, 2015 on Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism reminded that “Over the past two decades, the international community has sought to address violent extremism primarily within the context of security-based counter-terrorism measures adopted in response to the threat posed by Al-Qaida and its affiliated groups. However, with the emergence of a new generation of groups, there is a growing international consensus that such counter-terrorism measures have not been sufficient to prevent the spread of violent extremism.” This pronouncement made by no less than the highest leader of the most influential world organization persuaded some to entertain the potential of the soft approach in finally quelling the challenges of radicalization. This method got its inspiration from various instruments. Foremost of which is the core thrust of the UNESCO which envisions at “Building peace in the minds of people”. This volition is reinforced by its preamble that runs, “if war begins in the minds of men then it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be built.” In similar vein, during the highlight of the global fight against the Daesh in Syria, former US President Barack Obama was quoted saying “Ideologies are not defeated by guns, but by new ideas.” This was his complementing pronouncement in responding to the remarks of the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon that: “Missiles may kill terrorists. But I am convinced that good governance is what will kill terrorism.”

II. RELATIONSHIP OF RADICALIZATION, VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

In order to understand better the dynamics of the soft method, we must first explore on such related terms as radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism as the basis of our discourse. The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research (2011) defined radicalization in this manner:

“an individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors

and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging. These can include either (i) the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes. The process is, on the side of rebel factions, generally accompanied by an ideological socialization away from mainstream or status quo-oriented positions towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view and the acceptance of an alternative focal point of political mobilization outside the dominant political order as the existing system is no longer recognized as appropriate or legitimate.” [italics supplied].

By this definition, a radical Muslim is one who had changed his attitude from the culture of tolerance, respect, friendship, accommodation, inclusiveness to the credo of suspicion, confrontation, violence, and discrimination. In sharp contrast to radicalization, “moderation is a process of relative change within Islamist movements that is mainly concerned with the attitudes of these movements towards democracy. Moderation can take place on two levels: on the ideological level, the key transformation is the acceptance of democratic principles, most importantly, the legitimacy of pluralism and the peaceful alternation of power. On the behavioral level, the key transformation is participation in electoral politics . . . Different levels of moderation can occur within both non-violent radical and moderate Islamist movements unevenly and across issue areas.”

What are the major agents of radicalization? Results of studies in the world have varied findings. However, they shared a common point of view that both one’s family and the super-imposing dictate of globalization are the strongest factors that facilitate recruitment to radicalization. The Enhancing Governance, Accountability, and Engagement [ENGAGE] Project (2018) posited “radicalization as a deeply social process that is embedded in social relations, in feelings towards and connections with one’s family and community.” In recognizing the role of globalization in the spread of the Daesh radicalization in different parts of the globe, El-Muhammady (2018) opined: “Riding the wave of globalization and superfast communication facility, the threat of Daesh has penetrated into Europe, North America, Canada, Australia, Africa as well as Southeast Asia.” At any rate, the term “radicalization is often used to describe the process by which an individual becomes a terrorist or a violent extremist.”

Violent extremism is the “use of facilitation of violence targeted on civilians as a means of rectifying grievances, real or perceived, which form the basis of increasingly strong exclusive group identities” In essence, radicalization is often regarded as an antecedent to engaging in violent extremism. In short, the former is the foundation of the latter although such a relationship is not automatic or direct for it is possible that an individual could be radical without necessarily carrying out violent

acts. In both theory and practice, terrorism is intertwined with the notion of violent extremism. As defined, terrorism refers to “any action intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilian or noncombatants when the purpose of such act . . . is to intimidate a population or compel an international organization to do or abstain them from doing any act.” Obviously, their common element is the targeting of civilian or the civilian object in order to threaten an intended audience. However, there are still scholars who are propounding that the outward manifestation of violent extremism is terroristic attacks. This means that violent extremism is the ideological foundation of terrorism. In this paper, radicalization and violent extremism are used interchangeably.

III. FACTORS OF EXTREMISM/RADICALIZATION

In a study conducted by the ENGAGE Project, 2018, the factors which incubates the radicalization of individuals in Mindanao, Philippines are classified as push and pull factors. The former includes: individual marginalization, lack of self-efficacy, social isolation, community marginalization and discrimination, general feeling that Islam is under attack, perceptions of employment prospects, human rights abuse, lack of land rights, low satisfaction/trust in government, corruption, insecurity, satisfaction with public services, poverty, revenge, gun culture, social conflict, lack of living wage, and lack of opportunity. While, the latter involves: education opportunity, income/livelihood, protect religion/community, social connection, personal status, purpose and respect. From these factors tested in the field research, only the following appeared as potential drivers which maybe predictors of support for violence and extremist ideas, viz: (1) feelings of community marginalization and discrimination, (2) belief that Islam is under attack, (3) support for revenge-seeking, (4) lack of self-efficacy, (5) the culture of guns, and (6) sense of personal social isolation and insecurity.

In comparing the two types of factors, the USAID (2011) identifies push factors as “important in creating the conditions that favor the rise or spread in appeal of violent extremism or insurgency” and pull factors as “associated with the personal rewards which membership in a group or movement, and participation in its activities may confer” It postulated that “pull factors can be contrasted by education through awareness raising, generating respect for others, and creating and maintaining cultures of peace and dialogue.” This most challenging task of countering radicalization through reeducating the radicalized segment of the youth population is subsumed in the term deradicalization program.

IV. DEFINITION OF DERADICALIZATION

By deradicalization is meant “a process in which radical group reverses its ideology and de-legitimizes the use of violent methods to achieve political goals while moving towards an acceptance of gradual, political and economic changes within a pluralistic context.” Viewed it as a means of mental cleansing, Rafique and Ahmed (2013) viewed the deradicalization program as “the process of abandoning an extremist worldview and concluding that it is not acceptable to use violence to

affect social changed - radicalization. It should not be considered soft, but strategic because deradicalization aims to prevent further escalation of violence.”

The different steps in the deradicalization program may consist of the following: (1) identification; (2) re-education; (3i) re-socialisation; (4) rehabilitation; and (5) monitoring and evaluation. The identification stage is targeting the actual terrorist suspect/prisoner, his family, and their network of activities to identify their perceptions and worldviews, map their network and collect data. This can be done by engaging the radical person and his family, those NGOs working on this subject, former terrorists, academics and even community leaders.

The re-education stage is intended to pursue the terrorist suspect and his family for the purpose of strengthening “the moral and ethical foundations of the terrorist suspect, to give correct religious education and to provide ‘life skills’ and vocational training.” In engaging them with the spirits of persuasion and dialogue, it is assumed that this component of the program may facilitate the cognitive cleansing and the eventual reorientation of his worldview. As a dynamic process, it requires the continuous ‘adapting and adjusting of the programme’ to ensure that it fits the needs. As reflected above, the most important component of this stage is capacity-building for the former radicals.

Re-socialization stage intends “to prepare former terrorists prisoners to now ‘reintegrate to the community’, prepare the community to ‘accept back’ and receive the former terrorists, to provide vocational training, to strengthen ‘moderate religious’ teachings, to ‘eradicate suspicion between former terrorists and their family with the community’ at large.” This involves four targets, such as: actual terrorist suspect/prisoner, the family, former terrorists, and the community.

As compared to the previous stages, rehabilitation phase targets only the actual terrorist and his family. It is aimed to change the terrorist’s mindset and that of his family thereby moderating the radical thought and attitude of both the incarcerated terrorist and his family members by providing the universally-valued religious education. The most vital component of this project is placing the terrorist prisoners in deradicalization centers.

The final stage of deradicalization program is monitoring and evaluation. This shall be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the program with respect to the radicalized person, his family and social activities. In effect, this may assess the condition of the actual terrorist before and after release from confinement.

V. EDUCATION AS A COMPONENT OF THE SOFT APPROACH (DERADICALIZATION)

As mentioned earlier on, the two general approaches of countering radicalization are the hard and the soft methods. The former may be categorized as the immediate or the short-term solution while the latter the long-term or the generational answer. In both, education plays the central role as confirmed by de Silva (2018) amplifying “Education has been leveraged to both radicalize and to de-radicalize young people and increasingly, governments in conflict-affected countries are interested in financing measures that counter violent extremism as part of education programs.” This view was

sounded further by some experts on the role of education in countering violent extremism who emphasized the “role of educational institutions as incubators and mitigators of violent extremism.”

How schools act as radicalizer? An expert on countering violent extremism in Southeast Asia, El-Muhammady (2018), was quoted amplifying that “Educational institutions turned out to be one of the recruitment grounds for militant groups. In recent cases, we have seen students and teachers being detained by the authorities for promoting and supporting terrorist organisations such as Daesh and planning to stage attacks against soft targets inside the country” To validate his observation, he interviewed a former Indonesian student studying in Pakistan at the highlight of the Afghan war. Said student revealed:

“We came here as students. But, when the war broke out in Afghanistan, we joined the jihad. When summer break was over, we returned back to madrasah. It was fun and a quite unforgettable experience. We learned a lot in the battlefield, much better than in a classroom” [italics supplied]

This then growing radicalization in the educational institutions was corroborated by the narration of one Bosnian veteran. However, his radicalization posture was strongly influenced by his mentor in an Islamic school. Said he:

“Our lecturers at the university [of Madinah] encouraged us to go. They have donors who funded the trip and many of us went there to fight. When semester break was over, we went back to campus again.” [italics supplied]

Be it inside or outside the schools, the recruitment process for extremism always considered the following elements of an easy and effective radicalization. First is the notion of an effective recruiter. An extremist is presumed to be an effective if he possesses charisma, respect, a revered position, and knowledge and is extremely convincing. Having a revered religious knowledge and conversant in the Arabic language are added enticing values for the recruiter. The next consideration is how impactful are the messages to be delivered to the targeted audience. This may “comprise of the narratives or stories that will be a building block for an ideology and functions as a motive for a struggle.” To solidify further its psychological impact to the prospect recruit, the “messages were combined with actual images, videos and dramatic music.” In other words, the second element involves the question of what facts are to be offered to the target audience in order to arouse his inept emotions.

After settling on the type of message, the next decision is how this message is to be communicated. Hence, such powerful tools as the social media and applications in smartphones are resorted to by the recruiters. In affirming the utmost impact of the social media as a tool for recruitment, a study in Malaysia found out that 85% of 39 militants cited social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Telegram and WhatsApp) as their main source of information.

Moreover, experts on violent extremism are not fully convinced that impactful messages and powerful tools alone do not guarantee an outright recruitment. They must be coupled by the assurance that the prospect-recruits must be vulnerable individual as the right target of recruitment. He is “a person who is in the process of change, has family problems, is in financial difficulty and is socially unfit.” De Silva (2018) asserted that “youth are often mentioned as the group that is most vulnerable to radicalization and therefore ongoing efforts have attempted to engage with youth as part of international counter-terrorism strategies. The easily recruitment of the youth for radicalization in schools can be attributed to the high regard and respect of the students to their teacher being the role-model among them. It is a common knowledge that in the classroom, the words of the teachers are laws in themselves. A former Jama’ah Islamiyah recruiter narrated how effective recruiters are the teachers to their students in this wise:

“In a class setting, when the lecturer says something, usually the students will easily believe it. So, let’s say I have 30 students in my class. Among these 30 students, it is not impossible to convince one or two students. This is more than enough actually. Teachers have great influence upon students and this makes them more effective recruiters.” [italics supplied]

A study conducted by the Office of Partner Engagement at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, entitled “Preventing Violent Extremism in Schools” enumerated the different risk-categories of targets in schools to include those (1) Disenfranchised students (i.e., those feeling lost, lonely, hopeless, or abandoned); (2) Having mental health problem students (i.e., those exhibiting a mental health disorder); (3) Group supporters students (i.e., those outwardly supporting a designated terrorist organization or a domestic extremist movement); (4) Active homegrown violent extremist inspired by the Al-Qa’ida or ISIL; (5) ‘Active shooter’ students who preferred to use violence to address a personal grievance; (6) Foreign traveler students desiring to go overseas and join a foreign fighter network; and (7) Criminally-inclined students who conduct criminal activities for financial gain.

VI. COMPREHENSIVE ROLES/PROGRAMS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR DERADICALIZATION

In emphasizing the vital role of schools in the deradicalization process, de Silva (2018) pointed that “education can be leveraged to both radicalize and to deradicalize young people. therefore, it is critical that governments and development partners work together to identify the many ways in which education can be utilized to build resilience and reduce radicalization to violent extremism. In the lens of deradicalization, there two general types of interventions commonly used by the education sector. First, to provide an easy access and quality education to all as a form of social capital enabling the vulnerable recruits to address such issues which are considered as the “root causes” of violent extremism, like marginalization, inequality,

unemployment, and others. And, second, the specifically-targeted countering violence extremism programming intended to capture the most vulnerable sectors for recruitment which may include those recent religious converts, specific ethnic or clan groups, those with existing familial links to violent extremist entities, former terrorists who returned to the folds of law, those who were raised in an close culture, and the like.

Believing the indispensable contribution of education in the deradicalization of individuals who are afflicted by radical ideas, El-Muhammady (2018) advanced that universities and schools can act as detector, preventer, planner and producer of ideas to tackle the threat of violent extremism either in their communities and society at large. He then enumerated the ten priorities schools should adopt in countering radicalization in their respective communities.

First, school leaders must be more proactive in detecting extremist elements in their communities. This is a form of aggressive pursuit in identifying who among the students and the residents are potential extremists in their communities. This requires a regular psychological engagement and mentoring by the school experts with the students and the out-of-school youth.

Second program is the exhaustive background checks on prospective lecturers and teachers. Inasmuch as possible, psychiatric exam must be made a prerequisite for admitting new students and recruiting new faculty in the teaching force. This “includes identifying prior contacts with terrorist organizations, prior involvement in militancy, educational background and ideological orientation.” This is intended “to prevent the potential extremist and terrorist from spreading their virulent ideologies to students and to safeguard campuses and schools from being the hub of terrorist recruitment.”

Third, professor and teachers should play the dual function of a detector and a guide. While teaching the students on how to deal with extremist ideologies, they must also be alert to report to the university authorities any indicia of radicalization observed from the students for further action.

Fourth, universities and schools should redesign their syllabi as well as their teaching materials and strategies in order to incorporate peace studies elements and values in teaching. They must “introduce new forms of syllabi to mitigate the spreading of extremist ideologies.” It is believed that the incorporation of a peace studies subjects can be an instrument in creating a more resilient generation of students in countering the emerging trend of radicalization in schools.

Fifth, more inter-university collaborative researches on violent extremism issues must be conducted. Specific emphasis of such research undertaking must be: (1) how education affects the push-pull factors related to radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism? (2) how access to education may increase or decrease radicalization? and (3) what interventions do not work and why? The most needed experts on this endeavor include professors in security studies, sociology, psychology and Islamic studies.

Sixth, community-based programs must be encouraged which ensures the participation of student bodies, associations and clubs to be initiated by

educational institutions. To be an effective agent of deradicalization of the youth, schools must play the facilitative role in building interconnectivity among student bodies, civil society and the communities in conducting community gatherings, intercultural presentations and social activities that promote respect, peace, tolerance, understanding and moderation.

Seventh, school programs intended to counter and prevent violent extremism must also focus on the marginalized sectors as well as those youth residing in rural areas. A research in Malaysia disclosed that 32 out of 37 extremist prisoners in that country are residing in rural areas.

Eighth, universities must strengthen their cooperation and collaboration with existing civil society organizations (CSO) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Said effort must be directed especially to those organizations which are dealing directly with the “issue of extremism, interfaith dialogue and promotion of positive values.”

Ninth, any community project designed to counter and prevent violent extremism must be inclusive and participatory of all stakeholders, particularly ethnic groups, religious communities, marginalized sectors, and the like. In this effort, schools must play the central role as facilitator, initiator and sponsor.

Tenth, the spirit of civic-mindedness must be promoted in the community to ensure the active interaction and collaboration among families and educational institutions in countering and preventing violent extremism. It is said that “the work of detecting early warning signs, ‘mental transformation’ and ‘behavioral changes’ is difficult without cooperation from families or parents.”

Furthermore, the study of the Federal Bureau of Investigation - Office of Partner Engagement, 2016, suggested the following recommendations for preventing violent extremism in schools. First is the establishment of the threat assessment teams (TAT). This group has the role of policing those students whose deviant behavior driven by personal and ideological factors poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students.

Second, schools must educate its constituencies on the role and dynamics of interventions in the deradicalization program. As proposed, “a typical intervention is comprised of a multidisciplinary team representing various job roles within the local community, including schools.” Faculty members are indispensable partners in detecting at-risk youth and in initiating the disengagement process among potential radicals, especially in the classroom activities.

Third, school boards, administrators, and faculty must be empowered to initiate disengagement activities or introduce affirmative messaging that dissuades youth from extremist leanings. These efforts may counter the temptations of extremist messages and violent agendas perpetrated by extremist recruiters. In addition, the schools must always be on the forefront of advocating for diversity in school activities, daily interactions, and academic gatherings to counter cultural stigmas, intolerance, and prejudice.

Fourth, there must be enhancement of domain awareness among the stakeholders. In this activity,

schools must conduct an inventory of sectors which can easily be mobilized in times of emergencies, such as trusted community partners, mental health practitioners, social services, and local/tribal law enforcement institutions. These groups may build a much-needed localized collaborative network.

Fifth, strengthening of family outreach and engagement programs which may facilitate the education of families about the various forms of violent extremism. Said intra-community engagement will also help parents to identify at-risk youth on the threat of radicalization. This is premised on the notion that family members or community leaders are the closest individuals to the prospect-recruits. Thus, they are in the right position to detect the earliest warning of extremist tendencies.

Sixth, there is the pressing necessity to implement regular violent extremism awareness training among high school students. The core curricula must incorporate a compulsory at least two-hour weekly awareness training on violent extremism to educate the youth on the perils of violent extremism and its damaging effect on their lives, families, and communities. This is an interactive engagement consisting of group games, quizzes, and media exposure.

Seventh, institution of student-led focus groups to address safety concerns in order to promote open communication among the studently. Through this body, student concerns and problems are vindicated in the earliest opportunity before becoming more complex which might be exploited by those with extremist tendencies. These groups may serve as the grievance machinery for students which can potentially address such safety issues as gangs, bullying, violent extremism, human trafficking, and online predators.

Eighth, schools must strengthen afterschool programming such as those during sports or club activities. It is believed that student vulnerabilities are highly expected during afterschool hours since their activities are no longer closely monitored. To avoid this, students must be persuaded to actively participate in those sanctioned activities that promote the culture of inclusion, team work, and belongingness among them.

Ninth, making alumni as role-model for affirmative messaging. Most students in their younger years get inspiration from their elders. Thus, alumni can always impart positive messaging to the student body highlighting, for instance, their best practices on how to effectively counter daily stressors of academic life which may have the potential to be the source of deviant behavior.

Finally, develop an intra-community relational life lines in which different trusted partners, community and civic leaders, local enforcement, and faith-based groups, come together to promote community cohesiveness and resiliency against public emergencies.

In addition, findings of research conducted by de Silva (2018) posited the following key lessons for education sector to ponder in designing programs purposely to counter radicalization in schools.

First, among primary secondary levels, it was believed that high drop-out rates have contributed significantly to recruitment to extremist groups. Therefore, the first important step in countering the

recruitment of young people into violent extremism is by addressing the issue of high drop-out rates. This is because experience shows that youth who have no access to formal education are the most vulnerable targets of recruitment. Thus, school administrators must initiate incentives for parents to ensure children have access to basic education.

Second, in designing counter violent extremism programs, they must recognize the peculiarities of the specific environment in which a particular group operates. Conducting localized research to identify the key drivers of radicalization is an important step to make the program context-sensitive.

Third, there must be sensitivity on semantics and labeling of countering radicalization programs. "As much as possible these CVE programs should be integrated into the everyday curricula and teaching methods rather than being introduced as a discrete initiative." This is to avoid making the programs sensationalized so as to prevent its implementors from becoming the target of radical groups. Terms to be employed in any project countering radicalization must be carefully deliberated to avoid "securitizing the education sector."

The fourth lesson to be taken into account is who delivers the intervention. The author maintained that channeling intervention programs to formal governments or through secular education may not be very attractive to the communities deeply penetrated by radical elements. Oftentimes, community of radicals do not trust formal government which they see it as their potential enemies, nor are they comfortable with secular education which they consider "as being a tool of western donor governments/international NGOs." Therefore, it is vital to ensure that intervention programs are delivered through agencies which are seen as neutral in these circumstances. Designing CVE programs in order to be seen as a means of promoting the wellbeing of communities shall make them attractive to families of whatever ideological persuasions.

Fifth consideration is how to make the schools safe for its constituents. When the school campus is a safe place for academic activities it would foster a sense of community within the school. In addition, a properly-fenced schools will make it so difficult for outsiders to gallivant within the school premises for possible victims of radicalism recruitment.

Sixth, to impart critical thinking skills among students and capacitate them on democratic conflict settlement competencies. Youth should be "introduced to logic, critical thinking, problem solving, and negotiation skills." They must be taught how to examine issues in an objective and value neutral manner, thereby respecting others viewpoints. They must learn the wisdom of compromise and consensus, and the art of listening in dealing with fellow students. It is advanced that "empowering students to think critically, teaching them to challenge ideas, construct rational thoughts and engage in meaningful debate will be critical for them as they grow up."

Seventh, in order to make the teachers as detectors of the early signs of radicalization, they must undergo a rigid training for countering radicalization. They need such capacity building measure to detect in the earliest

opportunity any sign of potential radicalization. They must be equipped with the necessary tools and proper support so as not to undermine their relationship with the students as well as their role in the community.

Eight, it is also a must to address trauma experienced by students from their exposure to conflict situation. Students who are previously exposed to violence “may be more susceptible to recruitment and radicalization to violence” which situations can be competently handled by the school authorities. Schools and education authorities must prioritize such countering radicalization programs which are able to provide students with the proper mental care and support that they need.

Ninth, strengthening of sports and extracurricular activities is highly encouraged. It is a popular knowledge that incorporating extracurricular activities as part of counter violent extremism programming can be an alternative avenue for young people who are prone to radicalization and violence. The challenges of participating in sports, arts and culture can also help students to develop their constructive goals, leadership and social skills.

Tenth, the complementary role of the family, the school and the community in molding the minds of the youth for civic efficiency is highly sought in making the school more resilient to the influence of radicalization. “Therefore, CVE programming must go beyond the school to reach and involve families, communities and even local religious institutions.” Such social activities as barangay *bayanihan* (team spirit) services, interfaith activities, team sports, and adult literacy classes must be promoted to strengthen the link between the school and the community it is serving.

Finally, there must be uniform decentralized intervention programs which would capacitate local governments to target the fertile grounds of recruitments and the social networks of recruiters. This localized system of countering radicalization would encourage the youth to support community development initiatives which shall activate their community involvement.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The security challenge posed by radicalization in the globe is becoming more complex and complicated. This can be discerned from the latest updates on this issue which is termed by some security experts as New Threat Landscape (NTL). It is characterized, inter alia, by the following, viz: (1) simultaneous emergence of multiple threats; (2) from state actor to non-state perpetrator; (3) shifting from hardware to software (cyberspace) use; (4) from the military power to the power of ideas as tools; (5) from collective action to “lone wolf” suicides; (6) from the exploitation of social media networks to smartphone applications; (7) daily massive migration of conflict refugees to developed countries and its social and security implications; (8) the scattered rise of radicalization and violent extremism; (9) the return of Islamist fighters sent to foreign lands; (10) the alarming rise of islamophobia across the world; (11) the massive recruitment in the social media; (12) re-grouping of terrorist organizations globally; and (12) sophisticated form of suicide attacks.

Since this is a battle of ideas, the peace-loving peoples of the world, especially those in the education sector, must be reminded by the illuminating wisdom of General Peter Pacei on how to effectively end radicalization without the use of bullets. He reminded that “We can keep fighting and we can keep killing them, but if somebody’s not working on draining the swamp, we’re never going to be finished with this.” In view thereof, it is my humble conviction that in order to arrest the growing influence of radicalization and violent extremism especially among the youth, world leaders must join force and focus their attention, resources and power to take full advantage of the public re-education programs as a mode of deradicalization. Leading universities and competent school authorities are morally bound to design a comprehensive and multi-sectoral strategy of deradicalization measures to be incorporated in the curricular, extracurricular and out-of-school activities of educational institutions.

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