AN INTERVIEW STUDY ON EFFECTS OF A TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAMME

In this document an evaluation is described of a programme that aims to prepare trainers for conducting a training that makes adolescents more resilient against violent radicalisation.

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INTRODUCTION

In this focus paper a train-the-trainer programme evaluation is described. This programme was developed to enable trainers to implement the DIAMANT (DIAMOND) training (SIPI, 2010), which is an intervention that aims to increase resilience among vulnerable youth. The aim of this study is to evaluate the train-the-trainer programme, taking into account the perspectives of the trainers[1] and the supervisors. This document therefore serves as a case study as how to evaluate a train-the-trainer programme.

The DIAMANT training was developed in 2010 by the Foundation for Intercultural Participation and Integration (SIPI). Its main objective is to help young members of ethnic minority groups dealing with their multiple identities. Research has pointed out that having multiple identities (for example Moroccan-Dutch, or Turkish-Dutch) can lead young adults to distance themselves from the host society (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007) and can make them more susceptible to violent radicalisation (King & Taylor, 2011; Moghaddam, 2006). A struggle with multiple identities can induce insecurity, which can lead to increased identification with and feelings of superiority of the minority group, and radicalisation (Van den Bos, Loseman & Doosje, 2009).

The DIAMANT training (SIPI, 2010) uses the system approach and the resilience approach (see Lub, 2013) to create a strong identity among participants. This is done by, for example, increasing knowledge about how their identity is formed. Also schools and parent (the social system surrounding the participants) are involved in the training.

[1] In this paper, the persons being trained within the train-the-trainer programme are referred to as "trainers". The people who carry out the train-the-trainer programme are referred to as "supervisors". The young members of minority groups who participated in the DIAMANT training (SIPI, 2010) are referred to as "participants".

In three modules, different aspects of their personality and identity are explored:

- In the first module (Turning Point), participants learn to reflect on different aspects of their identity and important life events.

- In the second module (Moral Reasoning), they learn about goal setting strategies, dealing with different perspectives and opinions, and decision-making.

- In the third and last module (Conflict Management and Mediation), participants learn to deal with conflicts and aggression.

During the whole training period, individual coaching is provided to monitor the individual development of participants. The train-the-trainer programme, that is the subject of investigation in this paper, has the same three-module structure as the DIAMANT training (SIPI, 2010) and trainers also receive individual coaching. After completing the modules, trainers conduct the DIAMANT training themselves, with actual participants. Two supervisors of SIPI taught the train-the-trainer programme.

In the present study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with trainers and supervisors, evaluating the programme content, training materials, supervisors, group dynamics, personal development, knowledge and skills, and individual coaching. First, outcomes of interviews with trainers will be discussed. Outcomes of interviews with supervisors will be discussed afterwards.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

The nine trainers who completed the entire programme were interviewed. This group consisted of five men and four women (ages between 26 and 44; M = 36.3; SD = 6.9). Six trainers have a Muslim background, two are Christian, and one trainer is an atheist.

MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

A semi-structured interview was developed in order to evaluate the different aspects of the train-the-trainer programme. The interview was composed in accordance with the developers and supervisors of the DIAMANT project, and the existing documentation of the project (i.e., theoretical background as described by

SIPI, 2010). During the interviews, ten themes were discussed:

1. Trainer background;
2. Experience with conducting DIAMANT training;
3. Content of the train-the-trainer programme;
4. Training materials;
5. Supervisors;
6. Group dynamics;
7. Personal development;
8. Knowledge and skills;
9. Individual coaching;
10. General evaluation.

The interview was also conducted with supervisors, but with some questions rephrased. Trainers and supervisors were interviewed at the end of 2012; six months after the train-the-trainer programme had been completed.

CODING PROCEDURE INTERVIEWS

In order to examine the interviews, a coding scheme was developed. In Table 1, a section of the coding scheme is shown in which statements about individual coaching were structured.

Table 1. Excerpt of coding scheme that was used in the content analyses of the interviews

IX) Individual coaching	1. Coaching received during training	a. Sufficient
		b. Insufficient
		c. Other
	2. Coaching received during internship period	a. Sufficient
		b. Insufficient
		c. Other
	3. Preparation for giving coaching to pupils	a. Sufficient
		b. Insufficient
		c. Other

Two researchers coded the transcripts of the interviews. First, an interview was jointly coded. Discrepancies were discussed and alterations in the coding scheme were made when necessary. The rest of the interviews were coded separately. After coding a manuscript, results were compared and final discrepancies were discussed until there was complete consensus.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Content of the train-the-trainer programme:
Trainers especially valued the lectures given by the several specialized guest speakers, who were invited to speak about topics in the train-the-trainer programme (e.g. intercultural communication, radicalisation). Trainers also indicated that working in a group facilitated programme success. They also suggested that the programme could be shorter and more concrete.

"The people that were hired to speak were of very high quality, they really made you think, on a personal level."

Training materials: According to trainers, the materials used were well prepared. They were sometimes delivered shortly before the training session, which didn't allow trainers to properly read them in time.

"[...] we got the materials a bit late. Sometimes, this resulted in a race against the clock in preparing for a training session."

Supervisors: Trainers indicated that the supervisors were motivating, reliable, and open to feedback. They conveyed the contents of the train-the-trainer programme well, but it was emphasized they could sometimes be more concrete and, when possible, more brief.

"They are a perfect match. One supervisor is concise, the other is sensitive and caring."

Group dynamics: Trainers valued the exchange of knowledge amongst themselves during the train-the-trainer programme. There was an atmosphere of trust, which enabled the sharing of perspectives.

"[...] you can share experiences with each other, because there were several other professionals, and it was great to hear how they do things. "

Personal development: Trainers reported an increase in insight in their own identity, goal-orientation, ability to deal with feedback, self-confidence, perspective taking, conflict management, and intercultural sensitivity. Reported intercultural sensitivity increased in Muslim trainers as well as in non-Muslim trainers. Table 2 depicts the number of trainers who reported improvement, for each of the personal development goals

Table 2. Number of trainers who reported
improvement on personal development goals

Development goal	Number
Insight in own identity	◖
Goal-orientation	◖
Ability to deal with feedback	●
Self-confidence	◖
Perspective taking	◖
Conflict management	◖
Intercultural sensitivity	◖

Note. ◖ 1-2 ; ◗ 3-4 ; ◖ 5-6; ● 7-9 trainers

Knowledge and skills: According to trainers, the train-the-trainer programme provided sufficient knowledge and skills with which to carry out the DIAMANT training. Skills that could receive more attention during the train-the-trainer programme were: dealing with participants' resistance to participate in the training and giving individual coaching to participants.

"During the training sessions, we're talking about the ideal participant. But in reality, ideal participants do not exist. You're dealing with rebellious youths; how do you cope with them?"

Individual coaching: Trainers were satisfied with the individual coaching they received and emphasized this was an important part of gaining confidence in giving the training.

General evaluation: Trainers found the train-the-trainer programme effective. The module Turning Point was reported as most useful.

In depth: Trainers mentioned that the train-the-trainer programme, as well as the training materials, were mainly focused on Muslims. Two trainers reported that a non-Muslim pupil dropped out of the DIAMANT training because she had problems identifying with the practice cases. This poses the question whether both the train-the-trainer programme and the DIAMANT training itself are suitable for all minority groups or just for Islamic participants. Intercultural sensitivity increased in Muslim trainers as well as in non-Muslim trainers. Here, one should again wonder if this intercultural sensitivity generalizes to a broad range of cultures (i.e., Muslim but also Hindu).

EVALUATION BY SUPERVISORS

The two supervisors who carried out the train-the-trainer programme are co-founders of SIPI. They have co-developed the DIAMANT training as well as the train-the-trainer programme. Since this was the first time they conducted the programme, it was a pilot. This meant that the training materials were still in development, even during the course of the train-the-trainer programme. This explains the occasional late arrival of materials. Supervisors indicated that they would like to incorporate in the training material the experiences trainers have from conducting the DIAMANT training. These experiences could serve as case material for subsequent train-the-trainer courses.

The supervisors emphasize that working with different modules (e.g., Identity, Conflict management) works very well. The duration of the programme increased the risk of dropouts, but also gave trainers time for the necessary personal development. Both supervisors felt that the programme could be completed in a shorter period of time. One way to do so might be the exclusion of the Mediation part in the third module. This part proved to be less relevant than others. What did seem relevant was the skill of giving individual coaching. According to the supervisors, this part should receive more attention during the train-the-trainer programme.

The results of this evaluation study indicate that the train-the-trainer programme adequately prepares trainers to conduct the DIAMANT training. Trainers obtain sufficient skills and knowledge and report personal development that is consistent with the goals of the DIAMANT training. As should be expected with any starting project, some recommendations were outlined for further improvement of the train-the-trainer programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- More compact and concrete training materials and presentations makes the train-the-trainer programme less intensive.
- Excluding less relevant parts, like mediation, makes the train-the-trainer programme less intensive and makes way for more relevant parts, like individual coaching.
- By making the assignments more relevant and concrete, the trainer is better prepared for conducting the DIAMANT training.
- By making the content of the train-the-trainer programme more universal, not merely focusing on Islamic trainers, the programme would be more accessible to non-Muslim trainers.

This evaluation can serve as a case example in how to examine effectiveness of a train-the-trainer programme. It was illustrated that due to practical constraints, these evaluations are often done post-hoc, so after completion of the training. Lub (2013) states that the majority of anti-radicalisation and –polarisation interventions are not based on a scientific foundation and effectiveness has not been proven in an empirical way.

By means of this qualitative (interview) study we aimed to provide more insight in the effectiveness of the training. It was observed that the train-the-trainer programme was mainly based on the knowledge and experience of its developers. Lub (2013) stipulates that scientific literature does not always translate to day-to-day experiences. However, whereas experience can make up a valuable process of bottom-up reasoning, scientific literature can provide a valuable, possibly complementary top-down approach. This notion can serve to be beneficial in the further development and re-development of training programmes aimed to prepare trainers for giving resilience trainings.

To conclude, this document presented a case study in how to evaluate a train-the-trainer programme by means of an interview study. By including both trainers and supervisors both perspectives could be taken into account. Discussing the results assists in further improvement of the programme as well as informs the methods that can be used to evaluate effectiveness.

LITERATURE

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