

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

AUSLANDSBÜRO JORDANIEN

Oktober 2016

SOPHIA WELLEK  
IMKE HAASE  
DR. MANUEL SCHUBERT

[www.kas.de/amman](http://www.kas.de/amman)

## Countering Radicalization among Jordan's Youth

**Event:** Workshop Series

**Date, Place:** 24 September 2016 in Zarqa, Jordan; 25 September 2016 in Tafileh, Jordan; 26 September 2016 in Irbid, Jordan; 01 October 2016 in Amman, Jordan

**Organizations:** KAS Jordan Office, MEMPSI

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## Project Background

KAS Jordan Office in cooperation with MEMPSI and youth centres in Zarqa, Tafileh and Irbid organised workshops on radicalization for 109 young people aged 15 to 26. 50% of the participants were female, 50% male. The major goal of the project is to raise awareness about the definition of extremism, what it can lead to and how it can be combatted, thereby following a thought-provoking approach rather than merely circulating information.

The workshops were held by Arab trainers in order to make sure the young people felt connected to them. Mrs. Amani Hammad and Dr. Ali al-Khawaldeh conducted the workshops in Zarqa, Tafileh and Irbid. The different tasks were accomplished in groups, which enabled an exchange between young people of different social backgrounds or gender. Moreover, the workshops related to the study "Youth Radicalization Survey" conducted by KAS, MEMPSI and NAMA, and referred to similar questions and topics. In a final workshop, the most enthusiastic participants met in Amman, exchanging ideas and reflecting on their different experiences.

## Project's Content and Discourse

The following topics were treated in each workshop in the cities of Zarqa, Tafileh and Irbid: The first task was to define radicalization and extremism. The group discussions showed that the participants knew the notions, but could not offer a precise definition. The second task was to pinpoint the motives of radicalization as well as the influence of social media and religious channels on the radicalization process, thereby revealing the participants' personal experiences with their families and circle of friends. The third question was about the consequences of radicalization for individuals, the family and society. Fourth, a brainstorming session was held on how to resolve the issues of radicalization and extremism in order to inspire the participants to develop ideas to combat it on the individual as well as the state level. Fifth, the 'Amman Message', which aims to promote

values of tolerance and unity in the Muslim world, was closely examined by the participants. Launched by King Abdullah II of Jordan, the 'Amman Message' stresses the need to re-emphasize Islam's core values of compassion, mutual respect, tolerance, acceptance and freedom of religion.

The seminars in the different regions of Jordan provided varying results. Specifically in Tafileh, but also in Irbid, the participants felt overwhelmed due to the mixed gender workshops. Moreover, the young people in Zarqa participated more actively and critically than in Tafileh. The final workshop in Amman, with selected motivated participants, enabled an exchange of different results and experiences between participants from different cities. A film about changes in Zarqa subsequently promoted a discussion about the infrastructure and perspectives in the provinces of Jordan. Finally, the "Youth Radicalization Survey" was presented and discussed.

## Conclusion

Altogether, the workshops were popular and well attended. Unlike the permanent feeling of senselessness in regard to political participation, the participants felt they were taken seriously and given a voice during the project. Simultaneously, the project contributed to a better qualitative understanding of the origins and reasons of radicalization as well as the effectiveness of de-radicalization and counter-radicalization projects.