



HUMAN RIGHTS

Transforming mothers into ambassadors for de-radicalization in their communities



EDIT SCHLAFFER

Ashoka Austria/CEE
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! PROBLEM

Frontline communities and families in extremism hotspots are often confronted with an environment characterized by discrimination, socio-economic inequality and violence. In this situation, many adolescents become vulnerable to radicalization and extremist recruitment.

💡 INNOVATION

With the help of trusted community leaders and NGOs, Edit approaches mothers who are concerned about violent extremism with regard to the safety of their children. MotherSchools provide a safe space where self-awareness, self-expression and self-empowerment are appreciated and encouraged. In a playful and highly interactive way, mothers learn about parenting, adolescent development and early warning signs of radicalization. This combination enables mothers to play a more influential role in their families, and to become ambassadors for de-radicalization in their communities.

❤️ MOTIVATION

Edit started to work as a sociologist in the 1970ies when the women's movement had great momentum. She soon found herself in the middle of a movement that was challenging different forms of discrimination against women in society. By implementing trainings on the topic of security issues, she noticed that women were usually assigned the role of victims rather than active contributors. This insight became the foundation of her mission to empower women to become contributors in the security arena and led to the design of the MotherSchool model.

🌍 IMPACT

The feedback from mothers of the MotherSchool very easily translates into real transformations of communication patterns in families. A communication that is open, emphatic and dialogue-oriented encourages family members to share their experiences and feelings instead of concealing them. A successful change in communication patterns may trigger changes in gender roles and hierarchic family structures. Mothers are in a position to respond to early warning signals of radicalization and to provide support to their children.

🎯 VISION

"I envision the MotherSchool Model becoming an integral part of all international and local counter violent extremism strategies, spreading to every community targeted by terrorism and building a united front of prepared family members well-equipped to tackle the growing problem of violent extremism on the homefront. I envision MotherSchools as the basis of a new, innovative security paradigm where prevention is prioritized, effective and efficient."

👥 CONTACT

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