The Living History Forum [1](Forum för levande historia) is a Swedish public authority which, using the Holocaust and other crimes against humanity as a starting point, works with issues on tolerance, democracy and human rights.

The Living History Forum produces exhibitions and educational materials about topics where it is obvious that general perceptions and/or ideas have led to terrible actions. The majority of the exhibitions and projects are aimed at high school students and their teachers. The Living History Forum works with a variety of themes in parallel. There is always an ongoing exhibition in their premises in Stockholm where skilled teachers guide and supervise the numerous school classes visiting the centre each day. When exhibitions leave the premises they generally go on tour all over the country.

In 2015, the Swedish Government commissioned the Living History Forum to embark on a three-year project dealing with racism and intolerance. [2] The project aim is to contribute to the building and maintenance of a society characterized by respect for every person’s equal value, but also to promote democratic values in general.

The project is carried out in collaboration with the Swedish National Agency for Education. The project results are disseminated in ways that primarily benefit students in elementary and upper secondary schools. The goal is to reach out to all pupils in compulsory and upper secondary schools in Sweden. The project started in 2015 and is prolonged until the end of 2019.

The Living History Forum takes or has taken following steps:

- an overview of Swedish and international research on racism and the different ways the concept
of racism is understood,
• gathering information on the current public debates on racism, in order to analyse trends and
different standpoints
• initiating educational initiatives in order to raise awareness, develop knowledge and to present
digital teaching tools and methods.

Throughout the project, further training for teachers, principals and other relevant professions within
elementary and upper secondary schools is conducted, in cooperation with universities and university
colleges. Regional conferences are arranged in cooperation with the Swedish National Agency for
Education (Skolverket).

The Bystander project [3] was one of the priority themes of the Living History Forum for the period
2006–2009. With the Holocaust as its point of departure, the aim of the project was to create
awareness concerning the role of the bystander. Some of the main issues were the following:

• what does it mean to be a bystander
• what is it that stops us from intervening against bullies, or in larger contexts, when human
rights are violated in a more serious way.

The Bystander project's comprehensive educational material is today part of the portfolio of pedagogical
materials that the Living History Forum provides to Swedish school teachers and pupils in the ages 12 to
19.

The campaign No Hate Speech Movement

On behalf of the government, Swedish Media Council runs the No Hate Speech Movement, a
campaign for raising awareness of racism and similar forms of hostility on the Internet among children
and young people. No Hate Speech Movement began as an international venture within the Council of
Europe. Since 2013, the Swedish Media Council has run the campaign on behalf of the government. In
2017, the authority was commissioned to carry out the campaign until 2020.

The No Hate Speech Movement aims to raise children's and young people's knowledge of racism and
similar forms of hostility on the internet, as well as strengthening their ability to use their freedom of
expression and respect human rights and gender equality.

The campaign includes the task of reaching children and young people with cognitive and intellectual
disabilities. The implementation also aims for stimulating critical thinking when using media. The
campaign work is carried out within the framework of the Government's National plan to combat
racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime [4].

Young people's rights

Government’s overall approach to safeguarding human rights in Sweden

The government and national and local government administrations are responsible for ensuring that
human rights are not violated. Many other actors – public and private, international and Swedish – are
however also involved in promoting and protecting human rights in Sweden.

The government's long-term objective is to ensure full respect for human rights in Sweden. To take a
coherent approach to human rights issues at a national level, the government has decided on two national action plans for human rights. The action plans referred to the periods 2002–2004 and 2006–2009 respectively.

**A Human rights strategy**

In 2016, the government presented a strategy for the national work on human rights (*Regeringens strategi för det nationella arbetet med mänskliga rättigheter*) ([7]). Among the actions in the strategy, the following three are aimed at young people:

**The UN Convention on the Rights of a Child**

The government has announced that the Convention should be incorporated into Swedish domestic law. The legislation will enter into force on 1 January 2020.

**Educational materials on human rights**

The Living History Forum (Forum för levande historia) has been commissioned by the government to survey the availability of educational materials on human rights in the ninth grade of compulsory school and in upper secondary school.

**Human rights consideration in higher education**

The [Swedish Higher Education Authority](http://www.universitetskanslersaembetet.se) ([8](#)) has been commissioned to identify how human rights issues are taken into account in higher education study programmes leading to the following degrees: midwife, pre-school teacher, teacher, law degree, medical degree, psychology degree, psychotherapist graduation, nurse, social work graduate and dental exam. The assignment also includes reporting good examples of how human rights are taken into account in those programmes.

**Children’s and young people’s rights**

The government has in 2014 commissioned the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society ([MUCF](#)), in cooperation with the Ombudsman for Children ([10](#)), to promote children’s and young people’s rights.

The task is to disseminate knowledge to decision makers and professionals in municipal and county council levels on the rights of the child and on the youth perspective, including facts, theories and practices.

**Equal rights for young LGBT people**

Efforts in Sweden to secure equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression has been and is being carried out through a number of initiatives in various sectors of society.
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons are still affected by discrimination and other violations in Swedish society. The government has therefore in 2014 presented a strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

The focus is on equal rights and equal opportunities. The areas covered by the strategy are:

- violence, discrimination and other violations
- young LGBT persons
- health, health care and social services
- private and family life
- culture
- civil society.

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) has been appointed by the Government to support young LGBT people’s rights.

**Actions to support young LGBT people’s rights**

The government has, since 2014, commissioned the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) to, in cooperation with the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket), promote young LGBT people’s rights in schools. The work is still ongoing in 2019.

The agencies have produced training material – *Open School!* (Öppna skolan) – for professionals working in schools. The training material highlights the situation and the rights of young LGBTQ people. The goal is to make every school a safe place for all students regardless of their gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation. The main targets groups are grade 7–9 schools and upper secondary schools. The training material is also free for downloading at the Agency's website.

Based on 'Open school!', the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society provides training for staff working in schools to increase their skills to create safe schools for all, in collaboration with the Swedish Youth Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL Ung).

**Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism**

The Swedish Government defines violent extremism as ideologies that accept and legitimise violence as a means by which to realise extreme ideological opinions and ideas. The activities and ideologies of violent extremist groups cause problems that touch on many areas.

The government implements measures to safeguard democracy against violent extremism (åtgärder för att göra samhället mer motståndskraftigt mot våldsbejakande extremism). The goal of the government’s measures is to make society more resilient against violent extremism.

The aim of these measures is to improve our knowledge of violent extremism and develop preventive initiatives and methods. These measures will enable authorities, municipalities and civil society organisations, including faith communities, to contribute in a more coordinated and effective manner to safeguarding democracy against violent extremism. The government's prevention of violent extremism is divided into five areas:
the National Coordinator's work against violent extremism
2. preventive measures addressing young people and radicalisation
3. improving the support provided to persons at risk of radicalisation
4. measures to encourage individuals to leave violent extremist movements
5. intensified Nordic and international sharing of knowledge and experience.

National Coordinator to safeguard democracy against violent extremism

The National Coordinator to safeguard democracy against violent extremism is the most far-reaching initiative currently underway, to develop the government's efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. The National Coordinator was commissioned by the government in June 2014 to activate cooperation and develop preventive efforts in Sweden.

The task is to develop and reinforce the work taking place at local level and ensure that there is collaboration between government authorities, municipalities and organisations, including faith communities. Besides this, there is a remit to educate people who come into contact with young people about violent extremism and how it can be prevented. In a supplementary directive of June 2016 the task was prolonged until January 2018.

In January 2018, the Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism (Center mot våldsbejakande extremism) was established. The primary aim of the center is to prevent ideologically motivated criminality and terrorism in Sweden. The center is placed under the auspices of Brå, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention.

The center has four main tasks:

- Promote the development of preventive work on national, regional, and local levels.
- Work to attain a higher degree of coordination and effectiveness in respect of the preventive measures.
- Provide support tailored to the needs of municipalities, agencies, and other actors whose work includes addressing issues involved in preventing violent extremism.
- Collect and disseminate knowledge, based on research and proven experience, regarding prevention of violent extremism, and work towards knowledge-based practices.

A national strategy to counter violent extremism

Developing a national strategy to counter violent extremism has been a core part of the role of the National Coordinator. The strategy was presented in June 2016 (Nationell strategi mot våldsbejakande extremism). The strategy has three dimensions – promotion, prevention and preemption.

The promotion dimension involves boosting the development of social skills, critical thinking and awareness of democratic rights and obligations. An education system characterised by inclusion and relationships based on trust can combat young people being drawn into violent extremist environments. Promotion efforts are part of day-to-day work at schools, in after-school and holiday activities and in clubs and societies. This forms the foundation of a good environment and upbringing for children and young people, and makes society resilient to attacks on democracy. Good relations between public institutions and civil society help to create a solid basis for active citizenship and
participation in local society.

The prevention dimension focuses on groups and individuals receptive to recruitment to violent extremism. These are found within a high-risk environment and have shown signs of behaviours that may lead to violent extremism. Examples of such behaviours may be glorification of violence, derogatory attitudes or extolling anti-democratic acts and ideologies.

Teachers, youth workers and preschool teachers are examples of occupational groups that work closely with children and young people and may notice changes in health, attitudes, social relationships and activities. These types of changes do not necessarily have to be signs of an individual being about to enter an environment that advocates violent extremism but may be due to many different factors. Being aware of radicalisation and violent extremism enables the occupational groups above to prevent young people from becoming affiliated with a violent extremist environment by talking to them and paying attention.

The preemption dimension focuses on measures geared towards individuals in violent extremist environments and their relatives. The aim is for them to leave the environment that advocates violence. These individuals are mainly the focus of work by the law enforcement authorities but various municipal operations are also involved to a certain extent. Relatives play an important role in the preemption dimension. It is important that support for relatives is in place at local level. It is often parents, siblings or other relatives that notice changes in an individual and have the opportunity to warn the authorities at an early stage. Work at intervention level demands close cooperation, mainly in terms of exchanging information between law enforcement authorities and the municipalities.

Preventive measures and improved support addressing young people and radicalization

The government's measures in this area mainly address professionals active in schools and education, in social work, the police force and in faith communities. In order to be able to prevent a young person from being radicalized it is important that professionals who come into contact with young people can identify signs pointing to attitudes, values and behaviours that may lead to violent extremism.

Measures that are particularly important for young people are shortly presented here, more complete information is presented at the Government's website and in Government Communication Actions to Make Society More Resilient to Violent Extremism.

Training material for local actors

The National Coordinator distributes training material for local actors. The training material, Conversation Compass (Samtalskompassen) contains information of various extremist environments, support for dialogue with young people and support for cooperation groups in the country. The aim is to prevent radicalisation of young people, by supportive and preventive talks, strengthening young people's resilience to extreme ideas and offering other ways to influence.

The material is aimed at professionals who meet people at risk of radicalisation, particularly young people in their everyday lives, such as social workers, teachers, local police officers, school nurses, youth workers and others who, with help of Conversation Compass, can increase their competences to prevent violent extremism.
School programme aiming to raise awareness of racism and intolerance

In order to increase awareness of racism and other forms of intolerance, the government has mandated the Living History Forum to conduct a comprehensive training programme on various forms of racism and intolerance.

The goal is to reach out to all Swedish pupils in primary and secondary schools. The investment will help to create an egalitarian society characterized by respect for the equal dignity and rights. The assignment includes forms of intolerance such as afrophobia, antisemitism, anti-gypsyism, islamophobia, homophobia and transphobia, and shall consistently have a gender perspective.

Training material - Handbook for violence prevention

The government has tasked the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) with supplementing the resource No reason to wait – Handbook for violence prevention work with children and young people with information about violent extremism. The aim is to complement the work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism with a gender perspective and, by updating the handbook No reason to wait, make this area visible to municipalities and others who in their efforts to prevent violence can use the handbook. In 2017, Crack the code was presented.

Measures to strengthen the prevention of violent extremism among youth in institutional care

The government has, in October 2016, commissioned the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care to implement measures to strengthen the prevention of violent extremism among youth in institutional care, that is, in special residential homes for young people.

In addition, the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care is commissioned by the government to strengthen the dimensions that address democracy and human rights within their educational activities.

Assignment to the Ombudsman for Children to raise awareness about children's experiences of violent extremism and terrorism

The government has, in October 2016, commissioned the Ombudsman for Children to contribute to better knowledge of children's experiences of being affected of travelling from Sweden to conflict zones for terrorist purposes.

The aim is to improve knowledge on how to better protect children from harmful experiences of terrorism, based on children's perceptions and experiences. The Ombudsman for Children shall also compile research and other studies on children and young people who directly or indirectly are being affected by violent right- or left-wing extremism. The results are to be disseminated to public
authorities, municipalities and other actors working with children.

**Support for social service’s work**

Social services meet children and young people who have been linked to violent extremism, for instance, when reported by worried parents. Their ability to prevent violent extremism can be enhanced by providing better guidance. On behalf of the government, the National Board of Health and Welfare has therefore prepared support for social service’s work with children and young adults who are at risk of becoming involved or are already involved in violent extremism.

**Methods and practices that aim to prevent violent extremism in the special residential homes for young people**

In 2015, the government commissioned the National Board of Institutional Care (Statens institutionsstyrelse) to conduct a survey of methods and working practices that can be used in work to prevent violent extremism in the board’s special residential homes for young people.

Within the scope of this commission, the board is to gather information about how work to prevent violent extremism is conducted in systems for care of young people in a selection of other countries. The board is to produce a compilation of the examples of methods and working practices that are used in Sweden and abroad that have emerged in the survey. In 2016, the board was commissioned to implement such methods.

**A national helpline to support families and others**

Family members and relatives are important in countering radicalisation and recruitment to extremist groups. The government has therefore given the National Coordinator the mission to improve the support to families. Since January 2018, the Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism has the responsibility for the helpline. Families and relatives who are concerned when those around them show sympathy with extremist movements need support to be able to handle it. Even government agencies, municipalities, organisations and faith communities are in need of training, to be able to give support to families who need advice.

**Better knowledge on preventive methods**

The government has commissioned the University of Gothenburg to develop knowledge on methods of how to prevent people from being recruited into violent ideologies and movements, and into racist organisations. The Segerstedt Institute was therefore established at the University of Gothenburg in 2015. The function of the institute is to contribute to the development of knowledge on how to prevent racist organisations and violent ideologies and structures.

In 2016, the institute has published a review on social work, education and work against violent extremism and a report on development work to counter recruitment to organisations who use violence in the name of Islam.
Measures to encourage individuals to leave violent extremist movements

The Government has taken initiative for measures targeted at individuals who are or have been involved in violent extremist movements, with the aim of reintegrating them into society, allowing them to see the consequences of violent actions and activities, and ensuring that they refrain from further violence.

These initiatives can involve investigating, adapting the range of services offered and measures such as mentors, support workers or educational support.

Develop local initiatives for individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements

The government has tasked the National Coordinator with supporting relevant actors as they develop their work with individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements. There is a lack of services for individuals who want to leave violent left-wing extremism or Islamist extremism. There are few local organisations that can identify and take care of individuals who need support and assistance to leave violent extremist movements. It is primarily civil society organisations that have developed such services, with focus on those who want to leave right-wing extremist groups.

Additional actors need to work with initiatives that help people leave violent extremist movements. These services need to be expanded and local efforts involving these individuals developed. In March 2015, the government tasked the National Coordinator with supporting relevant actors to develop their work with people who want to leave violent extremist movements and individuals who return to Sweden and are suspected of having participated in armed conflict in other countries.

Grants to services that support individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements

The government has tasked the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) to allocate government grants to services that support individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements.

The government states that civil society organisations have unique opportunities to create trust among individuals who may have a low level of trust in the authorities. Organisations’ opportunities to provide support constitute an important alternative to the initiatives government authorities and municipalities are able to implement.

Since 2012, MUCF has allocated funding to civil society organisations to prevent violent extremism. In December 2014, the government gave MUCF a continued remit to allocate funding to services that support individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements to cover the period 2015–2018, in accordance with the Ordinance on Central Government Grants for Activities to Safeguard Democracy.