Civic Approaches to Confronting Violent Extremism

Sector Recommendations and Best Practices

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Contents

About the Authors 3

Acknowledgements 4

Abbreviations and Acronyms 5

Introduction 6

Key Findings and Recommendations 7

Methods 10

Findings:

1. Adopting a Holistic Approach to Combatting Extremist Violence 11
2. Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities 14
3. Rebuilding Trust Among Stakeholders 18
4. Ideology, Dissent, and Violence 22
5. Counter and Alternative Narratives 27
6. Sector Sustainability 30

Conclusion 34

Organizational Profiles 35

Participating Organizations 54

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ADC	Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee
CAIR	Council for American Islamic Relations
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GSU	Georgia State University
ISBCC	Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center
ISD	Institute for Strategic Dialogue
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
LAPD	Los Angeles Police Department
MPAC	Muslim Public Affairs Committee
M&E	Monitor & Evaluate
NCTC	National Counter Terrorism Center
NYPD	New York City Police Department
PAGAD	People Against Gangsterism and Drugs
RAN	Radicalization Action Network
RMW	Radical Middle Way

Introduction

Given the continued rise of transnational and domestic terrorism, countering the appeal of extremist ideologies and organizations is increasingly becoming a top policy priority for governments around the world. Crucial to challenging extremist ideology and violence is the role of civil society organizations that are operating in this highly contested ideational and social space. After years of unfruitful government-led strategic communications campaigns, policymakers are now focusing on empowering credible voices at the grassroots level to expand their communications reach among individuals and communities vulnerable to the appeal of violent extremism. Yet, while U.S. and European governments shift towards prioritizing a surrogate strategy for combatting extremist propaganda, there is very little understanding of the efficacy of counter-ideological civil society initiatives already operating in this space. As concerns about violent extremism grow, there is a troubling knowledge gap between those operating at the grassroots, community level and in government and law enforcement agencies. This report aims to fill that gap by highlighting best practices and identifying areas of vulnerability in CSO and private sector campaigns against extremism.

We have convened major non-governmental, civil society groups and private sector actors operating in the anti-extremist violence and propaganda space to identify and scope current best practices and expertise in the areas of (a) building resilience amongst communities to deflect the rise of extremism and (b) developing counter-narratives, alternative narratives and strategic communications. The closed-door workshops and follow up interviews helped to map the sector, facilitating clarity regarding best practices, shared challenges, and sector and policy-specific recommendations. The findings outline successful ideological efforts to counter extremist ideology, while identifying current gaps, potential future developments, and opportunities for collaboration across regions and sectors.

The enclosed organizational profiles and findings outline a range of counter-ideological programs, projects and activities operating across both Europe and the US. Technological platforms have become a crucial space for both extremist and alternative messaging, operating in between civil society, extremists and governments. This report also includes input from industry stakeholders operating in this space, as they play a crucial role in negotiating how content is accessed and delivered in the global public sphere.

By way of conclusion, specific sector and policy recommendations are offered to move towards a holistic, civil society-led, multi-sector approach to confronting violent extremism.

Key Findings and Recommendations

This report is based on discussions and interviews[1] with leading CSOs and private sector companies operating within the CVE, prevention, and resilience spaces.[2] Leaders from across the sector agree with policymakers on the urgent need to combat the rise in political and ideological extremism, terrorism, and xenophobia. Participants also agree on the urgent need to address coordination and collaboration gaps between the civil society and government actors in order to more effectively counter extremist violence. The following points reflect a consensus among practitioners on the current state of practices and recommendations for building improved programming:

Adopting a Holistic Approach to Combatting Extremist Violence:

- The CVE framework and brand are overwhelmingly perceived as toxic and virtually defunct. A holistic approach to combatting violence requires governments to continue to de-prioritize national security and intelligence agency-led methods, and increase support for CSO resilience and capacity building programs, as well as social services.
- There is a widespread perception that CVE and prevention programs overemphasize the danger of Islamic extremism. Both civil society and government practitioners should focus equally on all forms of violent extremism, including anti-government and right wing violence, and more robustly communicate this holistic approach to the public.
- Extremist groups leverage examples of religious profiling and persecution to generate sympathy and support for their cause. Law enforcement agencies need to be vigilant in investigating and prosecuting civil rights violations, and anti-Muslim hate crimes, in order to regain trust of CSOs and to actively combat the impression that Muslims are responsible for most violent extremism.

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities:

- The CVE, prevention, and resilience spaces need clearer lines of responsibility between governmental, civil society, and private sector actors in order to achieve improved cross-sector coordination and implementation.
  - **CSOs and social service agencies** should take lead in the preventative space by creating more opportunities for youth empowerment and building civically engaged and resilient communities. Law enforcement is a natural supporting partner, but should not be directly involved in programming on a routine basis.
  - **Law enforcement agencies** should focus on investigating criminal behavior. Preventative policing should be limited to activities that would likely lead to criminal behavior, while cognizant of the potential effects on protected activities (e.g. political speech) and employing the least intrusive means possible.
  - **Governments** should avoid monitoring minority communities in an effort to identify so-called "markers" of extremism due to potential encroachments on free speech as well and the fact that there is no

consensus as to how to predict a person's path to violent extremism. Self-efficacy and a willingness to engage in difficult issues in an open manner are central to maintaining healthy communities.

- **Technology companies** should operate transparently, aiming to protect the safety of users of their communicative platforms, which includes partnering with law enforcement in accordance with the rule of law and with CSOs in order to improve access to content promoting pluralism and multiculturalism.

- These stakeholders should routinely convene to improve lines of communication and forge a common vision for tackling sector-wide objectives, including identifying appropriate metrics for designing and assessing CVE and violence prevention programming.

Rebuilding Trust among Stakeholders:

- Despite previous attempts to address civil society grievances and build stakeholder confidence, there is an urgent need to fill the "trust gap" between governments and CSOs.[3] Previous law enforcement and surveillance practices have had a chilling effect upon CSOs who fear government outreach initiatives are duplicitous. CSOs also express concern over the lack of inclusion in government program design and inadequate transparency.

- Stakeholders agree that extensive public education programming—jointly convened by CSO and government bodies—on the protections for civil liberties, the legal boundaries of law enforcement practices, and clarity on what constitutes "material support" can help reduce the atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion that currently accompanies the CVE sector.

- CVE stakeholders, practitioners, and critics should quickly convene collaborative, highly visible public dialogues that accompany the public education programming activities mentioned above.

Ideology, Dissent, and Violence:

- Surveyed stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed that there exists no causal, predictive link between ideology and violence. Rather, practitioners have found that causes of violence were non-linear and complex, grounded in various psychological, social, and political forces.

- Safe spaces for the exploration of ideas, including unpopular ones, are part of the solution, not the problem. Practitioners should discourage policing of expressions and discussions of perceived or legitimate grievances. Shunned from public discussion, grievances are pushed underground and exploited by extremists. Critical thinking and a forthright discussion are needed to combat extremist propaganda.

- Given that there is little to no causal, linear link between particular Islamic beliefs and extremist violence, stakeholders engaged in discussions about religious ideology should be careful not to stereotype certain schools of thought and thereby alienate potential allies, including Salafi and Wahhabi religious orientations.

- A strong consensus exists among stakeholders that religious leaders, by virtue of their moral standing and popular appeal, play a central role in building resilience to violent extremism.

- High-level and state-sponsored declarations and summits aimed at providing a unified Islamic theological voice against extremism are largely disconnected from local, grassroots CSOs and faith-based networks. The field needs further research to assess how dissemi-

nation through public communications and educational institutions could improve their local impact.

Counter and Alternative Narratives:

- CSOs are uniquely suited to create and amplify grassroots-based alternative narratives, and should leverage their credibility to connect at-risk audiences with organic messaging.
- The most effective narrative interventions are taking place on an interpersonal basis, whereby former extremists team up with CSOs identifying individuals showing signs of extremism to engage on one-on-one basis. These repeated interventions facilitate a relationship-building process that is crucial to countering the influence of extremist narratives online.
- Improved communications practices are crucial to improving CSO capacity to help vulnerable youth. Robust and routine communications enable civil society actors to have a catalyzing effect on efforts to confront extremist ideologies, behaviors, and organizations.
- Governments should continue to avoid engaging in a direct informational confrontation with extremists, including theological and sectarian debates, focusing resources instead on explaining policies and countering false information in a timely manner.

Sector Sustainability:

- Sector leaders recognize that governments have access to resources—broadly defined—that are helpful in addressing the unique challenges faced by CSOs, and every successful program reviewed benefited from some level of cooperation or support from local or national governmental institutions. Sector actors should collectively identify the types of resources needed to enhance their work and communicate them clearly to their constituents and government stakeholders.
- Governments should commit to substantial and long-term funding in this space, and work with CSOs on navigating the process of applying for and managing public funding. A lack of resources slows collaborative CSO approaches, as organizations perceive funding as zero-sum. Governments should also encourage private sector support for civil society-led programs, as well as cross-sector collaboration and learning.
- In order to mitigate the stress of limited funding and material resources, CSOs should create resource and knowledge sharing platforms and mechanisms to enhance sector coordination. Government granting programs should incentivize collaborative approaches across the sector. CSOs need to adopt robust and consistent public communications strategies, be prepared to justify programs to both community constituents as well as policymakers, and actively conduct public outreach to facilitate a broader understanding of the important work they do.

Methods

This report is based on discussions and interviews with leading CSOs and private sector companies operating within the CVE, prevention, and resilience spaces. An initial meeting was convened in London in December 2015, and follow up interviews were conducted with actors across the sector, operating primarily in the United States and Europe.

The aim of the initial workshop and follow up interviews was to properly document the range of civil society-led efforts to counter and prevent violent extremism in the US and Europe, and to survey opinions on a number of crucial, and difficult, questions. These include: measurement and evaluation; communications strategies; program design theories of social change; relationship to government actors and resources; and the state of the CVE, prevention, and resilience sectors. Another workshop was held in Washington D.C. in May 2016 where the preliminary findings of this report were presented to stakeholders for feedback and detailed consideration. Following the second meeting, an additional round of interviews was organized for further input into this report's findings and recommendations.

All workshops and interviews were conducted under Chatham House Rule in order to facilitate direct discussion of a range of difficult issues.

This report is the first of three reports produced by the *Bridging Transatlantic* Voices: *Civic Approaches to Preventing Radicalisation and Violent Extremism* project (Civic Approaches for short). Civic Approaches is a European Commission funded (2015-2018) collaboration between the British Council, Georgia State University, and Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

Findings

1. ADOPTING A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMBATTING EXTREMIST VIOLENCE

There is a consensus among CSOs that the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) label is toxic, and that it stifles and in some cases prevents coordination between civil society and law enforcement. Some critics point to the fact that programs implemented under the CVE frame are used to target and surveil Muslim communities, as has been well documented by the ACLU.[4] But these programs aren't simply discredited because they presume Muslim communities are at higher risk. Rather, the CVE frame itself is flawed due to its consistent reliance upon outdated theories of radicalization, and thus, programs implemented under its guidance are unavoidably ill conceived. While many policymakers now recognize a need to move away from CVE discourse, they risk recreating a failed model unless there is shared understanding as to why the CVE frame was fatally flawed in the first place.[5] Stakeholders in this study confirm an already existing trajectory in government and civil society that resilience building through healthy community engagement and collaboration needs greater attention and resource allocation.[6]

What's Wrong with CVE?

CVE's primary challenge is the inherent presumption of an observable, consistent path towards radicalization across communities, a hypothesis that has been discredited by social scientists and practitioners around the world.[7] Government and CSO practitioners acknowledge that there are no statistically compelling indicators that can consistently or reliably predict a person's path towards radicalization or embrace of violent extremism. Instead, there a variety of actpush and pull factors contributing to attitude and behavioral change, including: economic insecurity; fear of victimization; perceived grievances; lack of access to social services and opportunity; hopelessness; desire for social recognition; perversion of religious ideology; and the allure of contributing to a cause larger than oneself. As research has shown, tracking these (and other) factors does not reliably predict an individual's path towards violent extremism.

Yet, despite acknowledgement of the failure of the "conveyor belt" theory of radicalization, many CVE programs continue to monitor for signs of potential radicalization in order to allow for an intervention before mobilization takes place. Worse, some still presume that there is a clear and direct line from holding certain religious and political beliefs to embracing the use of ideological violence. For example, certain CVE initiatives compel teachers and social and metal health workers to monitor and report to law enforcement on children in their care. For example, a 2016 FBI report advising educators on how to deal with violent extremism in schools notes that "students on the pathway to becoming radicalized or mobilizing, often exhibit behaviors, indicating support for extremist ideologies or highlighting future intentions."[8] In Minneapolis school staff monitor children

*Stakeholders in this study confirm that resilience building through healthy community engagement and **collaboration needs greater attention** and resource allocation.*

in the lunchroom and after school to identify signs of extreme beliefs.[9] The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) guidelines instruct teachers and social workers to monitor and evaluate students on a five-point rating scale according to factors like "trust in institutions and law enforcement," "perceived sense of being treated unjustly," "expressions of hopelessness, futility," and "connection to group identity (race, nationality, religion, ethnicity)."[10] FBI guidelines on when to report violent extremism encourage citizens to report people engaging in "suspicious behavior," including: "studying or taking pictures of potential targets (government buildings);" "Talking about traveling to places that sound suspicious;" and "Spending a lot of time…in chat rooms and password-protected websites."[11] Governments increasingly acknowledge that there is no path to radicalization, or distinct markers which can be reliably identified to indicate a likelihood of future extremism. However, existing CVE programs often continue to rely on this type of thinking. Additional training and re-education is needed to ensure that practitioners working in the field are operating in line with the latest mandates and research.

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A Holistic Approach

A holistic approach may refer to a resilience building approach to confronting extremist violence. However, what is resilience? Hard sciences define resilience as "the capacity of a material or system to return to equilibrium after a displacement."[12] Social scientists adjusted the term to refer to resources that support adaptation after a disturbance or adversity.[13] Yet, in the context of violent extremism, practitioners we interviewed raised another important question: "build resilience from what?"

A research-driven response to this question calls for programs that build capacities to confront the full range of push and pull factors, including funding for improved social support programing, education, health (including mental health) care, job training, as well as space for discussion of perceived grievances or a sense of loss. Practitioners should begin by drawing from the existing research on resilience as a means of community building, as pioneered by Fran et al (2007).[14] Building resilience is a multifaceted approach that calls for addressing a range of underlying factors contributing to disenfranchisement and violence.

Beyond Targeting Muslim Communities

Building capacities for resilience is needed in all communities that are coping with extremist violence, not just those with sizeable Muslim populations. Moving away from CVE gives governments the opportunity to once and for all prove that it understands this problem is not simply about Islamic extremism, but rather the rise in extremist attitudes and behaviors witnessed throughout the world, regardless of political, ethnic, or religious orientation. The 2015 mass-murder of a group of African Americans in a church in

Charleston, South Carolina, and the 2011 attacks on a Sikh temple in Wisconsin and government facilities in Oslo clearly show that extremist violence is not contained to Muslim majority communities, and it can be inspired by a variety of hateful ideologies.[15]

Governments and CSOs alike need to move beyond merely acknowledging the existence of non-Muslim extremist violence; programs and funding need to confront right wing and anti-government extremism with equal fervor. Continued targeting of Muslim communities contributes to ostracizing entire communities of citizens, a process that contributes to the creation of cognitive openings that make radicalization possible.[16]

2. CLARIFYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Programs aiming to increase individual, family and community resilience from radicalization and violence only work in environments where local actors can trust law enforcement, and vice-versa. In order to be effective, prevention and resilience-building programs need to build mutually respected relationships with local leadership. This requires a shift away from asking, expecting, or compelling local religious and civil society actors from serving as monitors and informants for law enforcement. Of course, when presented with the required legal documentation calling for cooperation with an investigation, local religious and civil society actors should cooperate. However, cooperation requires law enforcement to operate in a transparent way guided by an absolute respect for and understanding of recognized human and civil rights, including the right to freedom of expression, organize a peaceful protest, as well as the right to privacy. Resilience cannot be equated with blocking off access to information, or zealous preventive actions that punish individuals engaged in suspicious, but perfectly legal, behavior. This is why civil society and social services, not law enforcement agencies, should lead in the preventative space.

The dual mandate of government to enhance community relationships and optimize law enforcement strategies need not work at odds with each other. However, government efforts to respond to the threat of violent extremism have done just that.

Although the dual mandate of government to enhance community relationships and optimize law enforcement strategies need not work at odds with each other, in practice government efforts to respond to the threat of violent extremism have done just that largely due to a lack of effective collaboration with civil society.

The following sector-wide recommendations on roles and responsibilities of various actors operating in the CVE space aim to mitigate such obstacles.

Preventative Space

Prevention—programs working with certain populations to prevent them from preceding down a path towards embracing violent extremism—is best left to civil society and social services, as they have the local knowledge and trust of communities required to create the flexible programming able to confront this multifaceted challenge. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies should not be directly involved in this space for three reasons. First, active cooperation with these agencies will compromise the credibility of trusted local actors, making it impossible for them to reach groups at the greatest risk of turning towards violent extremism. Second, involving these agencies creates the perception, if not the reality, that showing signs of potential extremism is a criminal issue, creating a disincentive for groups to seek out help when they need it the most. This risk is compounded by several high-profile examples where family members of youth at risk of radicalization sought help from the law enforcement community, but instead of receiving support, were used as informants to pursue severe criminal sentencing for those they sought to help.[17] Third, intervention into this space reinforces the idea that there are particular

non-criminal markers that, if identified, mean someone is becoming a violent extremist. Not only has this idea been repeatedly disproven, but law enforcement presence, or the perceived presence in this space stifles open discussion of contentions issues, making it easier for extremist groups to seize on the very same issues as grievances.

Governments can provide funding and training, bring together the private and non-profit sectors for information sharing and coordination.

At the same time, local and national governments can help to support and enable civil society to be effective in this space. Governments can provide funding and training, exercise their convening power to bring together groups from the private and non-profit sectors for information sharing and coordination, and provide information about best practices and on issues of shared concern. Our interviews revealed that there are times when local actors aren't equipped to handle the range of issues they are confronted with, but avoid engaging with law enforcement due to a fear of being used against their constituents. For example, according to one interviewee, some CSOs do not have the tools to deal with youth facing serious identity crisis questions: "In Minneapolis, Imams who knew some of the guys who joined Al Shabab said they didn't know how to deal with the identity crisis that these young men were suffering from." Governments can play a crucial role, therefore, in creating access to the support and information civil society groups need to be effective, while focusing law enforcement resources on investigating criminal behavior and actionable intelligence. This would also help to build trust between governments and civil society groups, enabling improved coordination moving forward.

Government sponsored social services, too, play a crucial role in the preventative space. Public institutions and services, like schools, health care, job training, temporary need assistance, and housing subsidies, are integral to building healthy, resilient communities that are less susceptible to extremism. Culturally competent social services should work in tandem with civil society actors to support communities and identify individuals exhibiting at-risk behavior for early intervention, and offering the support required before any criminal wrongdoing takes place. CSO and social services, collectively, also need to focus on communicating their capacities to assist in this space, so that concerned parents, family members or friends know whom to contact if they fear a loved one is at-risk for radicalization. Moreover, improved access to and funding for social services should not solely focus on Muslim majority communities, as the threat of violent extremism comes from all types of communities.[18]

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Public institutions and services, such as schools, health care, job training, temporary need assistance, and housing subsidies, are integral to building healthy, resilient communities that are less susceptible to extremism·

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement agencies should focus on investigating criminal behavior. Preventative policing should be limited to activities that are likely to lead to criminal behavior, and law enforcement needs to be cognizant of the potential effects on protected activities (e.g. political speech) while employing the least intrusive investigative means possible. Law enforcement officials are natural partners of CSOs and social services, but there needs to be a clear line drawn, and enforced, so that neither is instrumentalized by law enforcement agencies for the primary purpose of gathering evidence of criminal wrongdoing. Additional training and scenario planning is necessary to help ensure that top-level mandates from law enforcement agencies are implemented and followed properly in the field.

Put another way, the primary purpose of CSOs and social services is to help people become and remain healthy, productive members of their communities whereas the primary purpose of law enforcement agencies is to investigate and hold accountable those responsible for wrongdoing, in order to preserve the safety and trust within a community. To highlight this distinction, in the United States, funding and grants for preventative and resilience building programs should be overseen by social service focused government agencies, like the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education. Governments should avoid monitoring attitudes or public discourse among minority communities in an effort to identify so-called "markers" of potential extremism and move towards a holistic social services paradigm to better support programs building community resilience.

Technology companies should operate transparently, aiming to protect the safety of users of their communicative platforms, which includes partnering with law enforcement in accordance with the rule of law and with civil society groups in order to improve access to content promoting pluralism and multiculturalism.

Government Support for the Sector

Governments have a key role in establishing a clear set of expectations and goals across the sector; however, they must do so without imposing a preexisting paradigm or framework. Specifically, governments can leverage their convening power to bring CSOs together to discuss and build consensus on issues of shared concern, as well as identify what the precise indicators of a resilient community are, how to best gauge and measure them, and create the architecture required for sharing best practices among the civil and private sectors. Governments are also crucial in bringing private sectors into this space, and in encouraging private sector engagement with civil society actors.

"If you look at the basic needs of a community, within a particular social and cultural context, then helping satisfy those needs will work hand in hand with trying to stop them from becoming extremists."

Moreover, governments should focus on spreading resources more equally throughout the sector, in order to reduce the perception that CSOs are competing with one another for a finite pool of resources. Requiring grant recipients, for example, to partner with at least one other organization can also help facilitate improved cross and intra-sector coordination and information sharing.

Funding and grants for preventative and resilience building programs should be overseen by social service focused government agencies, like the ***Departments of Health and Human Services and Education.***

Properly conceptualized, the benefits of a resilience framework are many. Broadening the goals of these programs could help re-build struggling communities, regardless of their ethnic or religious constitution.[19] Resilience also calls for long-term, sustainable paths towards building local capacity to deal with a variety of challenges, which will be beneficial as the world confronts the possibility of massive global climate change, or large-scale shifts in migration patterns, for example. As one interviewee put it, "If you look at the basic needs of a community, within a particular social and cultural context, then helping satisfy those needs will work hand in hand with trying to stop them from becoming extremists." As practitioners shift from a CVE to a resilience framework, CSO and policymakers have an opportunity to work together to define what success looks like, establishing measurable goals and principles to these programs moving forward.

3. REBUILDING TRUST AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

Surveyed participants overwhelmingly agreed that the securitization of the CVE paradigm has created an atmosphere of mistrust and antagonism between CSOs and government agencies that routinely impedes robust cooperation between the two sectors. This is regrettable considering that participants overwhelmingly agreed on the broad goals of both direct and indirect CVE initiatives, namely building strong, resilient communities able to combat cycles of escalating hatred and violence. It is safe to conclude that the success or failure of violence prevention initiatives emerging in both civil society and government largely depends upon the strength the relationship between the two sectors. All stakeholders contributing to this study call for greater measures of transparency, trust building, and coordination between government and civil society. Strategies and programs to increase stakeholder cooperation and coordination include:

"We need to enable educators and community leaders to discuss exactly the issues used to mobilize sympathy and support for extremists, but ***before the extremists do.****"*

- Joint CSO and government public educational programming on the guarantee of civil liberties, the legal boundaries of law enforcement practices, and clarity on material support. CSO partners should be drawn from those who have previously been unengaged in government affiliated CVE programming and government agencies should be drawn from outside of the law enforcement and intelligence establishments.
- The programs above should strive to have localized transnational public discussions on the need for reconciliation and cooperation between CSOs, private sector, and government in the joint fight against extremist violence. Successful models such as those reviewed below (Watts, Boston, Cape Town) should be further investigated to provide guidance to the sector.
- Public programming designed to provide transparency and increase stakeholder trust should be convened outside of the scope of local and national government, by a supranational organization, development foundations, or the private sector.
- Stakeholders largely agree that distancing future CVE programming from the security and law enforcement agencies to social service oriented agencies will increase stakeholder trust and cooperation.

Overcoming Disagreement

Whether fact or mere perception, current CVE paradigms are seen to be in the business of policing constitutionally guaranteed ideas and behaviors. Safe spaces for the exploration of ideas, including unpopular ideas, are part of the solution, not the problem. As one interviewee put it, "we need to enable educators and community leaders to discuss exactly the issues used to mobilize sympathy and support for extremists, but before the extremists do." Cultivating critical thinking skills requires safe and trusted spaces for a free exchange of ideas.

In the case of Boston's CVE pilot program, we find an exemplary model of how governments in their convening power capacity can manage dissent and disagreement in the spirit of collaboration and shared interest. The program convened a working group of greater Boston stakeholders drawing upon dozens of experts and practitioners in the government, non-government, and academic sectors to discuss how the problem of violent extremism may be addressed through locally-led efforts. The collaboration resulted in the 2015 publication of "A Framework for Prevention and Intervention Strategies: Incorporating Violent Extremism in Violence Prevention Efforts," which overwhelmingly encourages local efforts in education, mentorship, and social services to address the potential of violent extremism gaining a foothold in their communities.[20] During the process, one area stakeholder, Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC), felt the overall CVE framework unduly targeted Muslim Americans and sought to withdraw from the collaboration. Despite being unable to reconcile their competing views the District Attorney's Office and ISBCC agreed to include a letter of dissent in the final published framework. While a letter of dissent may not address either the District Attorney's Office's desire to gain the trust of key community stakeholders or the ISBCC's concern that the CVE framework disproportionately targets Muslim communities, it does provide an important reference point of transparency and the responsible management of disagreement.

*Governments need to be far more transparent about program design and goals in order to **regain the confidence** of civil society groups.*

CSOs are more likely to trust potential government partners if they are vocal and open about program design in the past, present, and future. Merely entertaining dissent, however, can backfire into further mistrust as illustrated in the long-standing disagreement between community groups such as the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and the FBI over the latter's "Don't Be a Puppet" CVE program.[21] Despite the fact that a number of stakeholders raised concerns about the program's adoption and adherence to outdated theories of radicalization as well as fears about the program's call for public educators to monitor and report lawful practices, the FBI—according to its detractors—did not adapt or adjust its design according to broad-level community feedback. Moreover, it did not include these stakeholders in follow-up conversations or explain its decisions prior to the release of the program. The lack of communication and responsiveness in this process has led a large segment of the CSO community to believe that engagement and discussion are futile. This further entrenches feelings of mistrust and suspicion. If monitoring for signs of potential radicalization is no longer integral to these or other programs, governments need to be far more transparent about program design and goals in order to regain the confidence of civil society groups. CSOs won't trust potential government partners, nor will their constituencies, unless governments are vocal and open about how they have changed the operation of their programs.

Government Transparency

Governments possess unmatched financial and material resources to implement violence prevention programming while at the same time commanding prosecutorial and policing powers. Because of this, the onus of responsibility in building trust and facilitating transparency rests with state actors. In a climate of counter-terrorism and security, CSOs and government agencies need to arrive at regular points of mutual understanding and definitions of controversial topics such as the use of excessive force, material evidence, and lawful surveillance. When governments demonstrate their willingness

to hold their own agents and actors accountable for breaches or abuses of the law, they demonstrate their good will and cultivate trust in their institutional mandates. When government and law enforcement act outside of the law, the damage done to community relations and trust building can be irreparable.

For example, from 1971-1973, during the conflict in Northern Ireland, an undercover British Military unit by the name of the Military Reaction Force was implicated in the killing of unarmed civilians suspected to have been IRA members. Over forty years later, the extra-legal actions of this group continue to strain the process of reconciliation necessary for sustainable post-conflict stabilization.[22] When some elements of law enforcement pursue CVE work outside the scope of the law, while official government narratives call for greater inclusion of community stakeholders in the management and prevention of conflict, a perception of duplicity and deceitfulness thwarts government efforts over the long run. Consider for example the case of the Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts, infamous for six days of anti-police rioting in 1965. It took about fifty years for the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and community leaders to begin the process of reconciliation and 'join hands' in the fight against gang violence. The process required public acknowledgements by government officials of historic wrongdoings and systemic failings as well as trusted community brokers capable of delivering a viable political solution and path forward.[23] Incidentally, the relationship between the LAPD and the Watts Gang Task Force can be a potential model to prevent the escalation of tensions and violence between police and local communities around the United States.[24] At the time of writing this report, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) is in the process of settling a lawsuit brought against its Demographics Unit, which was established with the help of the CIA after 9/11 to monitor Muslim communities in and around the city.[25] At the same time, the NYPD's Community Outreach Division is working hard to build and maintain stronger relationships with immigrant and Muslim communities, creating a confusing and, at times, seemingly contradictory approach to engagement with civil society.

Extremists groups thrive on the idea that their radical violence is justified because their religion is under attack. Law enforcement agencies need to do everything in their power to stymy this impression.

Given that extremist ideology is now a shared transnational concern, policy makers and CSOs can and should draw upon a diverse repertoire of experiences to design, adapt, and optimize their CVE efforts. An exemplary model of government and community coordination comes from South Africa immediately following the establishment of its post-Apartheid constitution. In the climate of transition and weakened state institutions, criminal gangs and vigilante groups became deeply rooted in certain neighborhoods around the country. One such group, The People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) began as a popular movement against organized crime but rapidly devolved into an extremist Islamist vigilante militia. Researchers have noted that government adherence to due process and rule of law along with proactive efforts to include community leaders in the counter-extremist design strategy directly led to the successful disarming of the group. Today, PAGAD remains as an important activist group but its criminal and violent elements have faced prosecution and conviction thus reducing the threat to public safety once posed by the organization.[26]

When governments hold themselves accountable to the law and provide regular and robust measures of transparency, CSOs and their constituents are more likely to cooperate with government initiatives. CSOs are also more likely to work with governments to invest time and energy in the shared goals

of building resilience in civil society. In order to deepen the relationship between civil society and government beyond simple legal guarantees, stakeholders should attempt to foster secure environments for the airing of legitimate dissent and grievance.

Protect the Rights of Religious Minorities

Law enforcement agencies need to take civil rights violations, and anti-Muslim hate crimes, seriously in order to regain the trust of CSOs and to combat the impression that Muslims are responsible for all, or even most of, violent extremism. Religious profiling and persecution provide extremist groups with kernels of truth, discussed in the fifth finding, that are leveraged to generate sympathy and support for their cause. Extremists groups thrive on the idea that their radical violence is justified because their religion is under attack. Law enforcement agencies need to do everything in their power to stymy this impression, and to confront it by protecting Muslims from hate speech, crimes, or unjust criminal investigations. According to one interview, "the only way for law enforcement to regain the trust of the Muslim community is to prioritize investigations of hate crimes and attacks on Muslim communities."

4. IDEOLOGY, DISSENT, AND VIOLENCE

Consistent with current research on theories of radicalization, stakeholders in this survey overwhelmingly agreed that there exists no causal, predictive link between ideology and violence. This was the case for both right-wing ethno-nationalist ideologies and those propagated by violent Islamists. Rather, interviewees argued that causes of violence were non-linear and complex, grounded in larger social and political forces. As one recent study clearly states, "radicalization is not an individual process driven by religious ideology, but can more precisely be understood as a process of politicization."[27] This view is consistent with terrorism psychology expert Marc Sageman's long-standing thesis that when it comes to motivating violence, ideology not only takes a backseat to politicization but that process theories of ideological radicalization have overwhelmingly failed to deliver predictable models of violent behavior.[28] The idea of radicalization remains highly contested among analysts and is equally fraught among governments and intelligence organizations attempting to counter violent extremism at various phases in the development of the "phenomenon". Our findings suggest that the same situation exists for civil society organizations in Muslim societies as well as their private-sector counterparts.

Consistent with current research on theories of radicalization, stakeholders in this survey overwhelmingly agreed that there exists ***no causal, predictive link*** *between ideology and violence.*

Anthony McAleer, a former skinhead and now founding director of *Life After Hate*, a program designed to provide members of white-supremacist organizations a safe exit from their involvement in such movements, maintains that social and psychological motivations precede any sort of violent actor engagement with an ideology. In one interview, he notes from his own experience, "I believe that unresolved anger always expresses itself as violence. And because of that…I chose a radical ideology that gave me permission to justify my anger."[29] Joe Navarro, a former FBI agent and one of the founders of the Behavioral Analysis Program at the Bureau also points to psychological motivations as being more important than ideological indicators in the drive to violence. He argues, "The psychology is always the same" whereby "you have individuals who are collecting wounds, they're looking for social ills, or things that have gone wrong, and they are nourishing these things that they're ideating, that they're thinking about. The solution for them is violence."[30] He argues that individuals gravitating towards violent ideation will "certainly…begin to communicate this to people around them" and therefore, this stresses the important role family and friendship networks play in identifying potentially violent behavior. He maintains, however, that process theories of radicalization are not reliable: "You can't keep track of everybody that is approaching the precipice and will cross over. So I don't think that we have the answer. Theoretically, we have that model of how these individuals progress, but I don't think anybody has a really good predictive model."[31]

Following the logic that complex social processes are involved in "radicalization," Muslim CSOs largely reject the idea that Islamic theology plays a direct or even identifiable role in motivating violence. At the same time, there is also a consensus that religion plays an important, if not central role in building resilience to violent extremism. These two attitudes, though paradoxical in some ways, nonetheless influence the way CSOs manage the subject of theology in their programming. While there may be a glaring lack of consensus among analysts and practitioners on the ambiguous role of religion in inspiring and motivating

violent behavior, it is clear there is a direct correlation between the way an organization *perceives* the role of religion in violent political behavior and *how* they respond. CSO approaches reviewed in this report fall largely into two camps: (a) Those that believe religion and theology play an important, even catalytic role in motivating or causing violent behavior and therefore provide services and programming directly related to fostering a correct understanding of religion; and (b) Those that believe religion and theology play a negligible role in motivating or causing violent extremism and therefore provide little to no religious programming and/or services.

Terms such as Islamism or Jihadism tend to complicate consensus building among stakeholders.

CVE and Islam

The debate over the role of "Islam" in terrorist violence has continued for decades and has influenced the way the subject is discussed. The use of terms such as Islamism or Jihadism, for example, tend to stir debates that complicate consensus building among stakeholders.[32] Muslim CSOs and a wide-range of academic and policy analysts have overwhelmingly rejected labels that make direct correlations between the religion of Islam and politics. Opponents of this type of language argue that such labels not only unfairly and disproportionately single out Muslim communities as perpetuators of violent extremism, but also claim that the labels support that there exists a causal linear relationship between Islamic practices and violence. Others believe that not addressing the Islamic theological and ideological elements in terrorist and violent extremist propaganda leaves practitioners empty handed in countering their propaganda. The Obama Administration has also rejected the explicit use of the term Islamic in describing its CVE efforts, marking an important shift at the rhetorical and framing levels of this international conversation. However, despite government and practitioner efforts to the contrary, there is a widespread perception that CVE overemphasizes the danger of Islamic extremism. This perception demands that practitioners focus equally on all forms of violent extremism and more robustly communicate their programming to the public in general and target communities in particular.

Anti-Extremist Theological Initiatives

Well before the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS), Muslim religious scholars and civil society activists consistently condemned and confronted extremist ideas and behavior across the world. This occurred on local levels as well as through transnational networks and programs. Over the last fifteen years, these activities have increased dramatically and have taken on a more explicit theological tone.

In 2011 Shaykh Tahir ul-Qadri, the Pakistani born founder of Minhaj ul-Quran, a multifaceted Islamic NGO with a strong presence in the UK, published a 600-page book entitled *Fatwa and Terrorism* which claimed to offer a thorough theological denunciation of political violence committed in the name of Islam. A year prior, Minhaj ul-Quran held a three-day anti-terror summer camp at the University of Warwick where over a thousand Muslim youth were "taught practical ways of counter extremist views in their schools, universities, and communities."[33] Likewise, in 2015, Shaykh Muhammad al-Yaqoobi, a Syrian born Islamic scholar who currently lives in exile between Morocco and the UK, wrote a lengthy treatise aimed to vacate theological justifications for extremist behavior entitled *Refuting ISIS: A Rebuttal of its Religious and Ideologi-*

cal Foundations. This text, written in Arabic and translated into English, like ul-Qadri's *Fatwa,* is aimed at audiences around the world. Other attempts at combatting violent extremism include multilateral Islamic institutional efforts such as the Amman Declarations, The New Mardin Declaration, The Common Word Initiative, The Letter to Baghdadi, and more recently, The Marrakesh Declaration. These conferences and summits gathered an extraordinarily wide range of scholars, organizations, and educational institutions from nearly every sect and school of Islamic thought. The goal of these events is to arrive at consensus on issues in Islamic law and theology including, but not limited to: the legitimate and illegitimate use of violence; treatment of religious minorities; boundaries of apostasy within Islam; legitimate authority; and inter-faith relations. While high-level and broad-based support for these anti-extremist theological initiatives exists, more research is needed to determine how they influence local actors, CSOs, and faith based networks. Moreover, there is little to no indication that these state-level initiatives and commitments were implemented at the level of school curriculum and, or, public communications. Among the CSOs that participated in this review, only a few are connected to the initiatives mentioned above. However, the faculty members and leaders of a number of educational institutions, such as Bayan Claremont, Zaytuna Institute, and al-Maghrib Institute figure prominently in these anti-extremist efforts.

*While high-level and broad-based support for these anti-extremist theological initiatives exists, **more research is needed** to determine how they influence local actors, CSOs, and faith based networks.*

The Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC) has a long track-record in addressing extremist ideology and behavior in the United States, going back nearly twenty years. In 2014, MPAC launched *Safe Spaces* a pilot program consisting of a community-based tool-kit for Muslim leaders and institutions to address extremism in their midst.[34] MPAC released an updated version of the program in 2016 to alleviate community concerns that the original document lent itself to justify the surveillance of Muslim groups. An important dimension of the *Safe Spaces* program is to identify some religious sources that are seen as part of the ideological matrix of violent extremism. These include a number of Qur'anic verses, sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (hadith), and prominent Islamic thinkers from the medieval and modern period such as Ibn Taymiyya and Seyyid Qutb, both extremely popular and widely read authors. It should be noted that these source materials were drawn from a West Point study on militant ideology and thus significantly blurs the lines between civil society and government in this CVE approach.[35] The inclusion of these sources seems to reinforce the outdated thesis that particular ideas lead to acts of violence and confirms critic's concerns over potential free speech infringements and violations, although MPAC has actively attempted to mitigate such concerns. Like MPAC in the USA, The Quilliam Foundation in the United Kingdom also takes on the problem of "bad theology" directly. It has released a series of reports authored by Dr. Usama Hasan, its senior Islamic studies researcher, on the subjects of Islamic identity, law, and the ethics of modern citizenship.[36] Outside of MPAC and Quilliam, few other CSOs take the explicit step in directly relating violent extremism to Islamic texts, interpretations, or scholars.

Although MPAC and Quilliam are often at the frontlines in working with government in CVE work, generally, organizations that currently partner with government are largely isolated from grassroots organizations and mainstream institutions in the Muslim community such as mosques, charities, and student groups. For example, in Southern California, the Islamic Consultative Committee (Shura Council) rejected MPAC's

request to present its *Safe Spaces* initiative at its forum. Furthermore, the local chapter of CAIR (The Council for American Islamic Relations) produced and distributed an anti-CVE toolkit.[37]

Most other CSOs in this space adopted a resilience-based approach in their community work, which in their terms, fosters a holistic approach to individual and social development in the Muslim community by way of offering correct and healthy understandings of religion and spirituality at a broad level. These CSOs believe a robust, multilevel approach to community engagement will help prevent extremist ideas from ever entering the community environment. For example, Radical Middle Way (RMW), a UK-based non-profit, regularly sponsors internationally recognized Islamic clerical authorities that promote ecumenical interpretations of Islamic law and encourage young Muslims to actively contribute to their civic environment. While the RMW has enjoyed a large base of support from its constituents, critics contend that reach is limited by its theological scope. That is, its supporters and event attendees are likely to come from constituencies already predisposed to classical, traditionalist oriented Sunni Islam, which is already inclusive of spiritual, tolerant, and pluralistic ethical teachings. This is opposed to more austere and puritanical interpretations that do not as readily lend themselves to democratic and civil society culture.

While non-engagement with Islamists and quietist Salafis may be a deliberate choice arrived upon by stakeholders, it may be the case that they are ***discounting a vital asset*** *in the struggle against violent extremism.*

Bayan Claremont, a graduate level theological seminary housed in Claremont Graduate School of Theology, also takes an indirect approach to cultivating an Islamic ethic of resilience amongst its students. Instructors and students at Bayan, it should be noted, hail from the full spectrum of Islamic sectarian and theological orientations; a characteristic that its administrators point to as an example of its commitment to pluralism and critical thinking. Its program, *Shaykhs and Shakes*, which has a large following on YouTube, features casual tabletop conversations about a range of critical issues with prominent American Muslim leaders, scholars, activists, and academics. Also operating through culture, arts, and mixed media is the example of Khayaal Theatre, a performing arts community organization established in 1997. Khayaal leaders, rarely if ever directly address theology. Rather, their aim is to "revive, re-present and mainstream the rich aesthetic, artistic, craft and literary traditions of the Muslim world in the dramatic arts" and in doing so promote a sense of reconciliation and integration between Muslim and British histories and societies. Again, the concept of resilience for organizations like Khayaal reaches far beyond the scope of CVE.

What's Missing?: Non-violent Islamists and Quietist Salafis

The CSOs and private-sector stakeholders reviewed for this report are largely organizations that have some level of engagement and history of cooperation with government. This report therefore has largely been unable to account for important segments of Muslim civil society space that are directly relevant for the subject of resilience building against ideological extremism: namely, non-violent Islamists and Salafi networks. Although the discourses that undergird these communities and organizations do not readily lend themselves to the liberal and democratic values that are often associated with a strong civil society, as

conventionally understood, they too are often in pitched ideological battles against extremist ideologues and recruiters. Whether to engage with these social and political networks is the subject of ongoing debate in academic, security, and think-tank circles.[38]

Engaging moderate Islamists and quietist Salafi networks remains a controversial subject given the potential political and ideological consequences of that relationship. If the goals of a resilience-building program include, for example, promoting healthy democratic values and practices in a given community, and one of the program stakeholders disavow participating in elections on religious grounds, the programming would be seen by many as antithetical and counterproductive to the basic premises of resilience building. However, the counter argument would stress that if these same groups and thought leaders are able to engage the most ideologically closed quarters of the Muslim community and provide a framework that can help prevent violent behavior, then it becomes incumbent upon civil society leaders and government officials to engage those actors. While non-engagement with Islamists and quietist Salafis may be a deliberate choice arrived upon by stakeholders, it may be the case that they are discounting a vital asset in the struggle against violent extremism. It also guarantees that there will continue to be a significant opportunity cost that foregoes the knowledge and experience these groups may be able to share. Lastly, a non-engagement policy promises to continue to unfairly stereotype them as "being part of the problem," placing them at substantial risk for unwarranted state targeting and social backlash. A robust assessment and review of resilience building programs will need to consider these points in order to develop and optimize future programming.

5. COUNTER AND ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES

Research has shown that the rhetorical power of extremist narratives often first comes by way of their appeal to a widespread, legitimate, and long-set political or social grievance. The second step then involves building a series of arguments legitimizing and promoting violent behavior aimed at offering redress to this widely recognized, but unresolved, protest.[39] ISIS' savvy use of social media platforms drives interest in developing and employing "counter narratives" to compete with and combat radical jihadi propaganda. While there is certainly a need to directly confront rumors and false information spreading virally online, simply challenging radical propaganda is not enough. Alternative narratives are equally if not more useful in reaching so-called fence sitters (those not fully opposed or supportive of extremist messages), as research indicates they are more capable of capturing audience interests and directing at-risk audiences in a more productive direction.[40]

Our interviews reveal that CSOs and private-sector actors overwhelmingly prefer the development of alternative narratives over and above counter-narratives in addressing the complex terrain of violent extremism. This finding is congruent with CSO preference for building resilience as opposed to engaging in direct CVE work. Here we highlight key alternative messaging best practices.

Addressing the Kernel of Truth

*Alternative messaging must at some level acknowledge, even tacitly, the **"kernel of truth"** that extremist narratives address and exploit.*

Given that most of our interlocutors in the CSO space identify social, cultural, and political grievances to be at the core of extremist thought and practices, they consistently advocate that alternative messaging must at some level acknowledge, even tacitly, the "kernel of truth" that extremist narratives address and exploit. In addition to recognizing perceived grievances, alternative narratives must also identify and integrate pre-existing myths[41] and foundational beliefs into their messaging that are widely accepted among their target audiences. For example, one of ISIS' widespread narratives has been the claim that it is reestablishing a pre-colonial Islamic order through its simultaneous revival of the Caliphate as well as its literal and symbolic dismantling of colonial borders. Both of these political practices resonate broadly and deeply at the mythological and ideological levels across a wide swath of Muslim societies. In addition to acknowledging the legitimate grievance underlying extremist messaging, alternative narratives need to build on pre-existing ideologies that already form some notion of collective identity.

For a wide range of reasons, accepting the "kernel of truth" framework may be difficult for government actors to consent. Civil society actors are well suited for this task, as many may tacitly, or even explicitly, share concerns with existing institutions and/or policies. CSOs help to constitute the space between citizens and the state, and are best suited to explore nuanced critiques of the status quo that offer alternative narratives to extremist propaganda.

Leveraging Cultural Capital

In today's complex global media environment, having a good idea and sufficient resources to ensure its robust distribution is not enough to guarantee effective messaging. Rather, political and cultural capital are just as, if not more, important to ensure a communications campaign receives substantial public attention. In the UK and Pakistan, for example, two highly successful programs—Mosaic and Burka Avenger, both profiled in detail later in this report—are led by well-known authority figures: HRH The Prince of Wales[42] and a celebrity pop-singer Aaron Haroon Rashid, respectively. These trusted actors are able to raise the profile of the campaign, and lend it legitimacy. They are also helpful in raising human and financial resources required for longevity, as well as handling social and political hurdles that inevitably arise in this contested ideational space. Alternative narratives are most effective when they emerge organically and are disseminated by trusted community leaders who already have credibility and an understanding of the kinds of messaging that will connect with at-risk audiences. Crucially, these trusted opinion leaders may not be traditional celebrities or mainstream politicians; YouTube stars and viral personalities may be the most effective in spearheading next generation efforts to connect and engage with youth at risk of violent extremism.

Alternative narratives are most effective when they emerge organically and are disseminated by trusted community leaders who already have credibility and an understanding of the kinds of messaging that will connect with at-risk audience.

The case of politically charged Hip-Hop serves as an example of the potential success of alternative messaging emerging in Muslim civil society that ultimately failed due to government cooptation. For example, Columbia University's Hisham Aidi reviews the way in which two rappers in France--ʿAbd al-Malik and Medine—have radically divergent reception trajectories. ʿAbd al-Malik of Congolese ancestry has received acclamation from France's highest cultural institutions for his artistic ability in blending spoken word verse with Jazz all while promoting a pluralistic message of Islam's compatibility with French republican ideals. Medine, of Algerian extraction, offers a politically charged message grounded in a more strident heavy-beat style. In Aidi's findings, "The more praise showered upon the clean-shaven Sufi poet, the less appeal Malik's brand of flow and Islam has, with critics speaking of the rise of 'lackey' hip-hop and 'good Muslim' rappers versus 'bad Muslim' rappers."[43] This pattern has replicated itself across Europe, the UK, and the United States. As an organic form of transnational youth culture, Hip-Hop has served as a space of creative self-expression and cultural critique. Unfortunately, according to one interviewee, governments are cautious in supporting such projects for fear of losing control of the message.

Another theme that emerged over the course of this survey is the importance, and palpability, of drawing from themes and symbols of national identity. National identity can be drawn on as bedrock for cultivating impressionable and multifaceted stories capable of alternative messaging that both builds resilience and counters extremist ideology. While the success of Burka Avenger, for example, cannot be explained by any one factor, its overwhelming popularity is in a large part determined by the fact that it is a show made and produced by Pakistanis for Pakistanis.[44] Speaking in the vernacular language and drawing upon the aesthetic sensibilities grounded in Pakistani national identity, the show's artistic curators seamlessly weave powerful and diverse social forces into a coherent, resilient whole. Nation-based frames also help in cultivating a collective responsibility for addressing violent extremism and other problems in a given

society, rather than relegating it to simply a "Muslim problem." Or, as one interviewee put it, "messaging shouldn't be anti-extremism, but rather in favor of integration." Here, again, the work of building resilience at the level of national identity, by default, can help address the problem of extremism.[45]

Online and Offline Engagement

The most effective narrative interventions are taking place on an interpersonal basis, whereby former extremists team up with CSOs identifying individuals showing signs of extremism to engage on a one-on-one basis. These repeated interventions, like those carried by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue's One2One program, facilitate a relationship-building process that is crucial to countering the influence of extremist narratives online.[46]

Just as there are numerous paths towards becoming a violent extremist, a range of messaging strategies are needed to engage the diverse array of youth at risk of violent extremism. No single message will work across the spectrum. The greater the diversity of messages, disseminated across a spectrum of online and offline media, the more capable CSOs will be able to engage with disaffected or vulnerable groups. Moreover, there is value in producing a multitude of messages, even if there is no verifiably viral result. As one interviewee put it, "it is almost more important to just punch them back than it is for you to have the perfect punch." This is to say, the current media ecosystem is dominated by extremist messages, which creates an echo chamber effect, at times creating an impression of communicative strength and dominance that may not actually exist. Alternative messages aren't merely about connecting with at risk populations, but it is also about challenging the extremists themselves. Similar to how bullies need to be directly confronted, so do extremist propagandists.[47]

Alternative messages aren't merely about connecting with at-risk populations, but it is also about challenging the extremists themselves.

6. SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY

CSO Coordination

Many civil society actors operating in the resilience building space are, generally speaking, relatively young and, oftentimes, still maturing. While the collective work of these groups is formidable and crucial to combatting extremism moving forward, the sector is in need of leadership and coordination. The most effective programs work not only because they are well conceived, theoretically grounded, and adeptly implemented, but also because they are championed by local opinion leaders who understand their value and are willing to expend social and political capital to help ensure program effectiveness. While such leadership exists on a case-by-case basis at the local level, what is lacking is a sense of collective leadership and organization, standards for evaluating programs, portals for shared knowledge and best practices, and agreement on priorities and goals.

CSOs working directly or indirectly in the resilience building space should quickly move to establish a coordination association tasked to share best practices, deliberate and establish shared rules and norms for ethical conduct, and represent the sector's shared interests to policymakers. This association may be modeled after private sector trade associations wherein businesses, including those in competition with one another, work together to identify shared challenges and goals for their industry. Based on our interviews and review of best practices, the following reflect points of consensus and needs that sector actors have the opportunity to optimize.

Many CSOs reported that their budgeting and human resource priorities are committed to developing and implementing their programming goals, ***leaving little to no room for public communications.***

Public Engagement

Given the current state of religious tension in Europe and the United States, it is imperative for CSOs to adopt robust, consistent, and effective public communications strategies.[48] Many CSOs reported that their budgeting and human resource priorities are—as is to be expected—committed to developing and implementing their programming goals, leaving little to no room for public communications. When faced with controversy, or accusations of wrongdoing, CSOs can struggle to respond in a timely and professional way. CSOs operating in this space should be prepared to justify decisions and programs to both community constituents as well as policymakers, and actively communicate with publics in order to improve broader understanding of the important work they do. CSOs need to get ahead of the news cycle and consistently contribute to public dialogue on issues of concern to their constituencies.

Especially among Muslim CSOs, robust public communications is crucial to improve cross-cultural understanding. Nearly every CSO and thought leader interviewed for this project agreed that a symbiotic relationship existed between extremist ideology/violence and anti-Muslim or Islamophobic attitudes prevalent in popular and political culture. Sector representatives argued consistently that anti-Muslim rhetoric

and discrimination added credence to extremist narratives that promote a binary, either-or vision of Muslim/Western societies. It also adds to feelings of alienation among Muslim populations, making the goals of integration and civic engagement more difficult.

Many leaders fear that by consistently condemning extremist violence, Muslim leaders are inadvertently reinforcing the under-recognition of Muslim civic engagement in other areas of society and culture and pigeonholing themselves into a policing role against extremism.

How CSOs confront this cyclical phenomenon varies. On the one side, there are groups that are proactive in dissociating extremist violence from Islamic principles and beliefs. These groups regularly engage in public condemnations of extremist acts committed in the name of Islam. In the words of Salam Marayati, director of MPAC, "Perception is reality and right now the American public is hysterical." On the other side, many leaders fear that by consistently condemning extremist violence, Muslim leaders are inadvertently reinforcing the under-recognition of Muslim civic engagement in other areas of society and culture and pigeonholing themselves into a policing role against extremism.

Improved communications practices, which include more robust and timely messaging, as well as embracing the variety of ways in which digital information is disseminated, will not only help CSOs move beyond a terrorism-driven communications strategy. They could also improve their capacity to help youth at risk of violent extremism. As one interviewee noted, "improved outreach could help in situations where a community member knows of a family member or friend who is increasingly engaging with ISIS, but is afraid to go to the police. It could help save a life." Greater understanding of civil society's role, and capacity to help, would make it easier for members of the broader public to be actively involved too. Robust and routine communications enable civil society actors to have a catalyzing effect on efforts to confront extremist ideologies and behaviors.

Finally, dialogue-driven public communications practices could help to connect CSOs to other, mainstream institutions and actors. Engaging with the public helps to integrate the CSO's constituency, and their perspectives and concerns, into the local community. Directly meeting and discussing with non-Muslim and Muslim actors helps to encourage shared understanding, commonality, as well as supporting greater and sustained integration of Muslims into local social and political institutions. Such measures may be far more effective in confronting Islamophobia than, for example, denouncing the latest terrorist attack.

Measuring Success

Another area in need of greater attention is how CSOs monitor and evaluate (M&E) the effectiveness of their programming.[49] Effective M&E in the arenas of counter-radicalization, de-radicalization, and counter-extremism remains one of the most persistent challenges faced by practitioners in civil society, government, and the private sector alike. Identifying metrics of success in this sector is particularly challenging for a number of reasons including but not limited to: public scrutiny, resource constraints, ambiguous outcome goals, and data-collection strategies.[50] Moreover, definitions of radicalization vary, and experts

caution against simply using a set of attitudinal and behavioral markers as indicators of proclivity towards violent extremism. As much of this work occurs at the preventative stage, there is a related research design challenge: how do organizations measure for something that, if their programs effectively prevent, never appears?

However, CSOs should not discount anecdotal evidence. As one interviewee put it, "if we can simply get through to these people via our mosques and community centers with people then reporting back to us that they're able to engage in these discussions and talking about identity issues then that to me is success." Valuable information is gathered, even if considered anecdotal, when this knowledge is properly archived and aggregated over time. Information sharing across the sector could help to scale anecdotal measurement and evaluation reporting, improving the validity of the reported data's findings over the long-term.

That said, there is a clear trend among the groups reviewed in this survey to increase focus on and professionalization of the M&E process. In some cases, this means developing and testing a tailored set of metrics based on the specific goals of an organization's programming. As one interviewee described, "we have implementation metrics and are creating what we are going to call effectiveness metrics, which would be more qualitative." Mosaic, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, and Radical Middle Way, in particular, are leading the way in this space and could offer leadership to other organizations interested in more vigorously and systematically assessing the impact of their programs. It should also be noted that a consortium of organizations in the UK and Europe emerging from the Radicalization Action Network (RAN) and Prevent initiatives are currently beta-testing an evaluation took-kit for CSOs working in the CVE and resilience building space. The IMPACT toolkit draws upon decades of research and practice in combatting in Islamic, right wing, and gang violence and ideologies. The U.S. Department of Justice is also supporting M&E in this space, allocating specific funding for researchers to collaborate with community-led groups to develop CVE (or resilience) assessment tools. Despite the unique challenges faced by this sector, CSOs working in resilience building should coordinate and develop information resources sharing mechanisms to optimize the sector's M&E practices.

Government Engagement

"If we can simply get through to these people via our mosques and community centers…then that to me is success."

Among the most contentious issues within the civil society community, especially the Muslim CSO community, is how to manage relations and contact with local and national governmental entities. On the one hand, CSOs naturally fear that cooperation with law enforcement officials can hurt their credibility with constituents, especially in situations where law enforcement officials are themselves perceived as hostile to or biased against the particular community in question. On the other hand, CSOs across the board recognize the legitimate need for government officials to seek assistance in preventing criminal activity in addition to the role government can play in convening human, financial, and logistical resources to further the effectiveness of CSO programming. Striking a balance on the terms and nature of engagement with government remains one of the most significant challenges faced by the CSO sector and is an area that sector leaders can address concretely in the short-term.

Healthy engagement with government demands that civil society is not instrumentalized. In order to accomplish this, CSOs need to communicate clearly, on the record and in public when possible, the boundaries and terms of any relationship or interaction with government. For example, according to one interviewee, "from the beginning, we said we would not spy on or monitor the behavior of our members. Each time we met with law enforcement, we reiterated our policy, so there was no confusion or misunderstanding." Not only might this type of engagement protect civil society from questionable encroachments from law enforcement, it would also democratize the process of engagement and thus provide greater transparency and reduce suspicion in communities concerned with the reach of the state. Sector-wide training in civil rights and information sharing among CSOs can help develop professional protocols and best practices for engaging with government that would serve to protect both the interests of government and civil society.

CSOs working in resilience building should coordinate and develop information resources sharing mechanisms to ***optimize the sector's M&E practices.***

From information sharing to resource distribution, engagement with government has overall net benefits. While not every CSO needs to share resources with or receive funding from government agencies, every successful program reviewed for the purposes of this report has benefited from some level of cooperation or support for local or national governmental institutions. Although these relationships have varied from positive to destructive, sector leaders recognize that governments have access to resources that are helpful in addressing the unique challenges faced in the CVE and prevention spaces. Sector actors should collectively identify the types of resources needed to enhance their work and communicate them clearly to their constituents and government stakeholders.

Influence in steering policy is another tangible benefit emerging from government engagement. As one participant put it, "Engaging the government puts us in a better position to influence the policy, direct it, and gain funding to do public services for the community." Specifically, engaging is seen as crucial to improve how law enforcement treats Muslim communities: "by engaging we are in a better position to change the FBI's behavior in the future." Even the staunchest critics of government intervention in this space concede that it is not engagement in and of itself that is the problem, but which type of engagement.[51] Likewise, CSOs most engaged with government programming are simultaneously highly critical of existing government-led CVE programs.[52]

Despite a range of previous setbacks and predictable risks for CSOs engaging with government, there is little to no other choice than to participate in the current political climate. Negative consequences of non-engagement may, for example, further the impression that Muslim groups are unwilling to help to confront violent extremists, an unfair perception that unfortunately anti-Muslim elements exploit in the United States and Europe. According to one interviewee, refusing any government cooperation or funding "directly plays into the narrative of Muslims not doing anything about the problem." Worse, shutting government actors out can increase the proclivity for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to utilize informants, which would only further erode trust. Empowering CSOs in their legal and political capacity along with delineating the "how and why" of government engagement are areas that sector leaders can address in the short term to further increase the effectiveness of their work in the prevention and resilience building spaces.

Conclusion

This report summarizes the findings of an expansive survey of local and transatlantic civil society organizations working to prevent extremist violence. These groups operate at the front lines of this struggle, implementing a range of programs at the local level that aim to build resilient and productive communities. Understanding the importance of the various, and often competing elements of this sector, and supporting the scaling of and continued innovation in its programs, is crucial to combatting all forms of extremism that can tear apart communities and countries alike. Key findings from the report include:

Adopting a Holistic Approach to Combatting Extremist Violence: The CVE label is "toxic", and based on an outdated and empirically false theoretical paradigm. Counter-extremism or resilience programs need to focus on preventing all forms of violent extremism. Targeting Muslim communities alone lends support to the foundational extremist idea that they are engaging in a just, religious war.

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities: CSOs and social services should lead in the preventative space. Governments need to support these programs, through funding, training and information sharing. Efforts to use civil society to monitor and surveil for certain behaviors backfire.

Rebuilding Trust Among Stakeholders: There is an urgent need to address the trust gap by convening a broad range of stakeholders to discuss perceived and real grievances and forge shared goals for combating extremist violence.

Ideology, Dissent, and Violence: Religion does not drive people towards violent extremism. Political actors utilize religion to mobilize support and justify violence and criminal behavior. Preserving safe spaces for the exchange of opinions, including critical and unpopular opinions, is crucial to combatting the resonance of extremist narratives.

Counter and Alternative Narratives: Alternative narratives must begin by addressing the "kernel of truth" that forms the foundation of extremist narratives. Alternative messaging is effective when produced organically and disseminated via trusted social and interpersonal networks. One on one interventions conducted by former extremists are proving to be a powerful means of combatting extremist influence online.

Sector Sustainability: CSOs should prioritize improving their public communications tactics and strategies, developing robust measurement and evaluation tools, and form productive, yet bounded, relationships with relevant government agencies. Governments should prioritize providing sector-wide leadership for establishing priorities and bringing private sector actors to the table, focus on combatting religious discrimination, and improving public policies related to minority integration.

Organizational Profiles

The following are organizational profiles of key civil society and private sector actors:

Educational and Cultural Institutions

Bayan Claremont

Connect: Neighborhood Approach

Khayaal Theatre Co

Cure Violence

Exit US

Hedayah

Life After Hate

Mosaic

Radical Middle Way

Southern Poverty Law Center

Think Tanks and Academic Centers

Institute for Strategic Dialogue

Quilliam Foundation

Private Sector

Affinis Labs

Burka Avenger

Facebook

Fifth Tribe/Project Katalyst

Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund

Jigsaw

YouTube

Bayan Claremont

MISSION AND ROOTS: Bayan Claremont was established in 2011 in order to provide graduate-level higher education to Muslim religious and organizational leaders, and to create an institution that could participate in an inter-religious partnership with existing Christian and Jewish theology schools in Southern California. The Claremont School of Theology, accredited by WASC and ATS, hosts Bayan Claremont as a division, thereby providing campus infrastructure and services. The institution's mission is to offer a world-class non-sectarian education in order to produce dynamic and ethical leaders and scholars grounded in the Islamic tradition.

PROGRAMMING: Bayan Claremont offers three Master's degree programs each academic year in Islamic Studies & Leadership, Islamic Education, and Islamic Chaplaincy. The 25 courses cater to an average of 30 students and are broken into fall/spring semesters and summer/ winter sessions. In addition to graduate classes, Bayan Claremont organizes two yearly academic conferences and workshops featuring panelists from multiple faith traditions focusing on practical leadership skills. Using social media as a tool for exposure, Bayan Claremont developed the YouTube show Shakes and Shaykhs to shed the light on contemporary issues such as women's rights, pluralism, environmentalism, ethics, and more.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Bayan's M.Div. in Islamic Chaplaincy is the first 72-unit graduate degree at an accredited U.S. institution that directly focuses on Islamic Chaplaincy. The graduate student-body comes from rich multicultural and multi-sectarian backgrounds. Bayan graduates have gone on to become leaders in their communities, professional imams, pursue Doctoral studies in theology and religious studies (in institutions such as Al Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt), and start their own NGOs related to religious work.

TAKEAWAYS: For an institution that is part of a Jewish and Christian seminary, Bayan Claremont has been able to work directly on interfaith dialogue through the development of a robust and inclusive inter-faith curriculum that is integrative for students. The success of Bayan highlights the importance of partnering with other faith-based organization and the positive impact that results from the creation of safe spaces for inter/intra-faith religious discussions.

As a young institution, Bayan's main challenge has been exposure. The institution plans on increasing its marketing efforts in order to propagate awareness among the Muslim American community. Bayan intends to steadily grow the student body over the next few years and continue to refine their design of customized academic programs that offer added value to traditionally trained Ulama (religious scholars). As an institution seeking to provide an authentic avenue for contemporary Islamic thought to be produced and disseminated, Bayan plans to reach an increasingly large number of individuals worldwide through conferences, public speaking opportunities and seminars.

Connect

MISSION AND ROOTS: Connect was created in 2006 as an Amsterdam City Council funded community-based program. The initiative supports the important role young people play in building healthy communities through Youth Prevention Teams. Connect provides young men and women with the necessary skills and a healthy professional environment for them to become and remain valued citizens in their communities. The organization's mission is to offer Amsterdam's Muslim youth a reliable community-based alternative that can help young people reach their full potential.

PROGRAMMING: Connect has developed a Youth Prevention Program which collaborates with community leaders, Mosques and neighborhood cultural centers to select a specific group of 'at-risk' young adults in the community. On average, Connect engages with 40-60 youth on a yearly basis,creating cohorts of approximately 10 young men and women who are directly linked with program mentors and work as neighborhood security teams. The initiative has developed a strong community network and operates throughout various neighborhoods in the city of Amsterdam. The Youth prevention Teams work together to increase security in their own districts without having direct contact with law enforcement agencies.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Since 2006, Connect has been the stepping-stone for many young men and women in disadvantaged communities allowing them to pursue their professional careers. As of 2016, the initiative's graduates have gone on to become police officers, security guards, enrolled in university programs, or found internship with local companies and civil society groups. Additionally, the organization's strong ties with neighborhood leaders have allowed them to identify and enroll young men and women with criminal history in the program as a practical alternative.

TAKEAWAYS: Programs such as Connect highlight the importance of smaller initiatives working within the local communities. As a grass-root initiative, Connect has the local credibility that enables it to have extraordinary reach, penetration and positive community outcomes.

Maintainable funding is one of the main challenges that the group faces. Part of the Amsterdam City Council funding is a renewal process, which requires the organization to lobby their case yearly. This can create some issues for the credibility of the organization on both governmental and community levels. Additionally, the nature of the initiative's work requires a very close training of the mentors and constant follow-up with the recruits. Connect plans on becoming the go-to reference in youth prevention teams by scaling up and cultivating their methods.

Cure Violence

MISSION AND ROOTS: Founded by Gary Slutkin, M.D., former head of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Intervention Development Unit and Professor of Epidemiology and International Health at the University of Illinois/Chicago School of Public Health, Cure Violence is a teaching, training, research and assessment NGO focused on a health approach to violence prevention. The organization's mission is to reduce violence globally through the use of disease control and behavior change methods. Cure Violence ultimately envisions to shift the worldview of violence that averts prosecution and focuses on prevention.

PROGRAMMING: The Cure Violence Health Model is an innovative disease control method to reduce violence. The NGO carefully trains selected members of the community to anticipate where violence may occur and intervene before it erupts. The Cure Violence Health Model adapts the same methods used to stop the transmission of some of the most deadly diseases. These disease control methods work by 1) interrupting transmission of the disease, 2) reducing the risk of the highest risk, and 3) changing community norms.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Cure Violence first launched in West Garfield Park, one of the most violent communities in Chicago, and was quick to produce results, reducing shootings by 67% in its first year. From 2000-2008, Cure Violence (as CeaseFire Chicago) focused its activities in the United States, quickly expanding to Baltimore, New York, New Orleans, Oakland, Loiza, Puerto Rico and other sites. Cities and organizations implementing the Cure Violence health model have regularly experienced reductions in violence within the first year ranging from 40-70% and greater reductions in subsequent years. The organization is currently focusing their efforts on scaling up in three parts of the world: the United States, Latin America, and the Middle East/North Africa.

TAKEAWAYS: The Cure Violence Model presents communities with a unique approach allowing them to be at the center of preventing violence. The organization intends to fundamentally change the discourse on and approach to violence by empowering and activating voices and resources throughout our comprehensive health system and establishing violence prevention as an imperative health sector responsibility.

Hedayah

MISSION AND ROOTS: Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, was created in response to the growing desire from the members of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and the wider international community for the establishment of an independent, multilateral center devoted to CVE in all of its forms and manifestations. During the ministerial-level launch of the GCTF in New York in September 2011, the UAE offered to serve as the host of Hedayah. In December 2012, H.H. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Foreign Minister of the UAE inaugurated and launched Hedayah at the GCTF Third Ministerial Meeting with its headquarters in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Hedayah promotes an effective evidence-based approach centered around research. The organization successfully serves as the premier international hub for CVE policy makers, practitioners and researchers to enhance understanding and share best practices.

PROGRAMMING: Hedayah focuses on three core areas of programming. Through their dialogue and communications programs, the organization provides a platform to facilitate focused discussion and collaboration among national and local actors, civil society, researchers and community leaders involved in CVE. Additionally, Hedayah engages in a multitude of capacity building programs in order to provide collaborative training and practical tools to enhance the capacities of government and non-government partners to design and implement effective policies, programs and projects to counter violent extremism. Finally, the think tank research and analysis programs catalogue existing CVE research while conducting and commissioning new research to gain a deeper understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, and which approaches are effective in countering it.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: In 2015, Hedayah started the implementation of a four year STRIVE Global Program funded by EU. The overall objective is to build the capacity of state and non-state actors to effectively challenge radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism, while continuing to respect human rights and international law. Hedayah has also partnered with the international Institute of Justice (IIJ) to establish a Global Capacity Building Program on Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (RFTF).

TAKEAWAYS: While Hedayah was initiated by the GCTF and has close relationships with its members, it has also been tremendously supportive of CVE efforts of other countries and CVE stakeholders through continuous encouragements and collaborations. Hedayah has built and leveraged partnerships with governments, existing international and regional training centers and think tanks, relevant academic and research institutions, and multilateral organizations, as well as CVE experts and relevant private sector and non-governmental organizations from around the world.

Khayaal Theatre Co.

MISSION AND ROOTS: Khayaal Theatre Co. was created by a group of multi-cultural and multifaith artists in the summer of 1997. Khayaal is dedicated to actively demonstrating reconciliation and integration between tradition and modernity in the life of the contemporary young Muslim. The organization provides an inclusive socio-cultural and participatory artistic outlet especially, but not solely for young Muslims. Khayaal's mission is to offer attractive and inspiring alternatives to criminality, disaffection, and extremism.

PROGRAMMING: Khayaal's primary activities and programs are centered on researching, translating, cataloguing and producing universalist tales, stories and materials of dramatic potential within Muslim world heritage and literature, making them available to the public through performance. The organization actively develops and presents a multitude of original productions and theatre-education programs involving both Muslim artists and those of other faith and secular traditions exploring Muslim world literature. Khayaal uses a wide network of artists as a primary source to collaborate with government and community based Islamic cultural sensitization projects with audiences ranging from primary school students to senior citizens.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Between 2007-2011, Khayaal worked in partnership with the Home Office, the Department for Communities and the Department for Education under the Community Leadership program to deliver a community safety project aimed at promoting citizenship and integration and building resilience to extremism. This involved a national and international (USA and Pakistan) delivery of plays, workshops and storytelling offerings revolving around the Hearts & Minds and Sun & Wind productions and Muslim World Storytelling repertoire. Over the 4 years, Khayaal delivered 8 seasonal national tours of over 320 performances and workshops reaching over 25,000 young people in over 100 venues and working with more than 70 partners throughout England. This work was recognized as a 'best practice' case by the Department for Education, E.U. and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

TAKEAWAYS: Using art as an open medium, Khayaal is able to actively dispel ignorance and misconceptions about Muslim world culture through storytelling and theatrical productions. The main challenge the organization faces relates to the availability of resources. This derives from a lack of understanding of socio-cultural capital on the part of Muslim communities and translates into the prevalence of exclusion, prejudice and discrimination limiting Khayaal's access to public sector funding and investment. Khayaal plans on scaling up through continuous cultivation of cultural capital and a focus on their history of success generated over the years to accelerate their growth and seize more opportunities.

Life After Hate

MISSION AND ROOTS: Created in 2009 by former members of the American violent far-right extremist movement, Life after Hate is a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring individuals, who identify as far-right group members, to a place of understanding and forgiveness, for themselves and others.

PROGRAMMING: Through powerful stories of transformation and unique insight gleaned from decades of experience, Life After Hate serves to inspire, educate, guide, and counsel. The organization focuses on academic research, with reputable partners, to understand individual-level pathways into and out of extremism. Their second area of programming is outreach: Life After Hate works directly with individuals who have the desire to change their lifestyle, disengage from extremist movements and begin the process of deradicalization. Additionally, based on their decades of experience as members of extreme far-right groups, Life After Hate specialists have developed an educational component in order to support schools, community groups, NGOs, and other organizations that have a desire to understand, prevent, and counter racism and violent extremism in their communities.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Life After Hate has developed successful programs such as ExitUSA. Founded and run by former hate group members who have led successful lives post-movement, ExitUSA helps individuals who wish to disengage from the white power movement and build a more positive life. This is done through a variety of strategies, including public awareness campaigns, individualized education and job training programs, and leveraging strategic community partnerships to help individuals get their life back on track and on their way to making positive contributions to society. Life After Hate is also an active member of the Against Violent Extremism Network, a global network linking world efforts to push back extremist narratives and prevent the recruitment of 'at risk' youths.

TAKEAWAYS: Through personal experience and unique skillsets, Life After Hate has developed a sophisticated understanding about what draws individuals to extremist groups and, equally important, why they leave. Whether working with individuals who wish to leave a life of extreme violence, or helping organizations (educational, civic, government, etc.) seeking knowledge and insight on the roots of intolerance and extremism, Life After Hate works to counter the seeds of hate we once planted.

Mosaic

MISSION AND ROOTS: Founded by HRH The Prince of Wales, Mosaic was created to inspire British young men and women from deprived communities to realize their talents and potential. Mosaic's mentoring programs in schools and prisons are delivered by volunteers who lift the aspirations of young people and close the gap between those aspirations and their attainment. With the help of volunteer mentors acting as role models, Mosaic aims to bridge the aspirations-attainment gap. By linking young people with inspirational role models, the organization is able to personally connect with them on an individual level and boost their confidence, self-efficacy and long-term employability.

PROGRAMMING: Mosaic UK offers a multitude of programs accredited through the National Mentoring and Befriending Foundation's Approved Provider Standard. This is the national quality standard for mentoring schemes, recommended by Government. The Primary School Group Mentoring Program seeks to equip young girls with the skills to connect education to work at an early age through inspirational female mentors from a range of different sectors and professional backgrounds.. The Secondary School Group Mentoring Program uses positive role models to improve students' confidence, self-efficacy and employability. The Mosaic Enterprise Challenge is an annual national competition for secondary school students across the UK where teams of students work with a mentor from the business community to learn about becoming future business leaders, play a simulation game, and come up with the winning business ideas. The Ex-offender mentoring Program provides focused support and mentoring opportunities to prisoners aged 18 to 35 years old approaching the end of their custodial sentence. Finally, the International Leadership Program brings together 80 international young leaders aged 25-35 to participate in a two-week residential training conference, featuring world-renowned leadership trainers and speakers.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Mosaic's secondary group mentoring and Enterprise Challenge programs are highlighted in statutory guidance to all schools issued jointly by the Department of Education and Department of Business as examples of best practice for providing inspiring careers guidance for students.

Mosaic has also received the Prime Minister's Big Society Award in 2013, and most recently was included in the Department of Education's statutory guidance on careers advice, with the Apax-Mosaic Enterprise Challenge cited as exemplar practice for schools to adopt.

TAKEAWAYS: Mosaic holds a unique position amongst the community, the British government and private partners due to the Prince's endorsement. With the help of its school mentoring programs, the organization is able to reach a large audience throughout England's disadvantaged (majority Muslim) populations. The organization faces some challenges when it comes to the evaluation of their success and impact in the community. In addition, when it comes to their work in the various school districts, Mosaic has had to shift their approach depending on the district and the capability for collaboration with different institutions.

Radical Middle Way

MISSION AND ROOTS: In the wake of the 7/7 attacks, Radical Middle Way (RMW) was established as non-profit organization by Fuad Nahdi, the founder and editor of Q News Magazine, a progressive Muslim magazine that ran from 1992 to 2011. The network's mission and scope is to utilize existing human and intellectual resources within the Muslim community to promote a healthy, holistic, and vocal approach to Muslim identity in UK. In RMW's vision, an enduring outcome of such an approach would help meet the challenge of extremism on a variety of levels. Since its inception, RMW has appealed to constituents and followers of 'traditionalist' Sunni Islam promoting classical Islamic civilization, science, and theology as a bedrock to cultivate healthy sensibilities of Islamic identity in the modern world.

PROGRAMMING: RMW's integration into the network of traditionalist scholars and discourses has allowed it to extend its reach far beyond the borders of the UK, which gives its programming a level of international exposure and legitimacy rarely enjoyed by non-profit Muslim organizations of its kind. While its traditionalist posture has been a tremendous asset for RMW, it has also served as a source for one of its consistent critiques: its theological and sectarian isolation. RMW has also weathered criticism from within and without the Muslim community for its ties to the UK government's PREVENT program, having hosted or conducted over 230 programs in the UK, Pakistan, Sudan, Indonesia and Mali. The nonprofit's programs focus on understanding Islam as a religion of peace, defining and responding to extremism, using art to spread messages of peace, workshops with female-lead Muslim scholars, and workshops to study religious texts in order to understand the ways that extremists misinterpret religious scripture.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: RMW brings together religious scholars, community groups, sports personalities and creative artists together to articulate a confident centered ground. The initiative has organized over 170 offline events, ranging from panel debates to poetry and Islamic hip-hop to deliver a message that is not only authoritative, informed and legitimate but also disseminated in an entertaining and engaging way. The group also works internationally, with engagement activities in countries such as Mali, Pakistan, Sudan and Indonesia. In its landmark summit in Timbuktu, Mali in 2009, leading religious scholars and community leaders attended. To its credit, RMW has weathered controversies for nearly a decade and continues its grassroots work even as it has divorced itself from direct engagement with government sponsored counter-extremist work.

TAKEAWAYS: RMW has been able to keep a clear scope of work through the implementation of an explicitly theological agenda: radically in the middle and openly opposing religious extremes. For the past 10 years, RMW has promoted a holistic approach to identity, theology, and social development. RMW has navigated this field through a continuous and conscious balance between its network of Muslim religious leaders, countless government agencies, and its target audience of young Muslim men and women.

Southern Poverty Law Center

MISSION AND ROOTS: Founded in 1971 by Civil rights lawyers Morris Dees and Joseph Levin Jr., the Southern Poverty Law Center originally aimed to ensure that the promise of the civil rights movement became a reality for all. Since then, the SPLC has been dedicated to fighting hateful speech and organizations. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC continues to directly work with various communities towards the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity.

PROGRAMMING: The SPLC has been involved in many high profile lawsuits that have toppled institutional racism and stamped out remnants of Jim Crow segregation; destroyed some of the nation's most violent white supremacist groups; and protected the civil rights of children, women, the disabled, immigrants and migrant workers, the LGBT community, prisoners, and many others who faced discrimination, abuse or exploitation. The Intelligence Project is an internationally known program for tracking and exposing the activities of hate groups and other domestic extremists. The Teaching Tolerance program produces and distributes – free of charge – anti-bias documentary films, books, lesson plans and other materials that reduce prejudice and promote educational equity in our nation's schools.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: The SPLC is the premiere U.S. organization monitoring the activities of domestic hate groups and other extremist organizations. The organization successfully tracks over 1,600 extremist groups operating across the country through an interactive online Hate Map. The SPLC also periodically publishes investigative reports, trains law enforcement officers, and offers expert analysis to the media and public. Over the years, the SPLC successfully terminated some of the country's most notorious hate groups – including the United Klans of America, the Aryan Nations and the White Aryan Resistance – by suing them for violent acts committed by their members or by exposing their activities.

TAKEAWAYS: As a law center, the SPLC has been able to put end to organized extremist hate groups across the United States. The organization has positioned itself as one of the top centers in the nation for tracking and exposing the activities of hate groups and other domestic extremists.

Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)

MISSION AND ROOTS: The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) is a London-based 'think and do tank' that works on policy and operational responses to the rising challenges of violent extremism and inter-communal conflict. ISD was established in 2006 with a focus on European policy, including international relations, social cohesion, and cross-cultural exchange.

ISD aims to research and produce real world programs that help counter extremist recruitment and activity in a variety of on and offline environments all over the world.

PROGRAMMING: ISD operates about 10 primary programs including the Strong Cities Network (global network of municipalities), Policy Planners Network (European network of policy makers), YouthCAN (global youth CVE network), the One to One program (one to one interventions), counterextremism.org (online library of CVE best practice), counter-narrative monitoring and evaluation research, the Women and Extremism program, LIAISE (European local authorities CVE network), Club of Three (European policy network and events), Extreme Dialogue (educational counter-narrative projects), and various global CVE capacity building projects (Kenya, Indonesia, Balkans, etc.). The ISD has created a strong worldwide programming network which engages with over 1,000 people every year.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Some of the organization's success stories include leading counter-narrative pilot projects with social media partners (Google, Facebook, Twitter) that demonstrate an impact in changing the behavior of those at risk for radicalization. Also, the creation of a global youth network (YouthCAN) that actively produces counter-narrative content, a global network of municipalities sharing best practice in CVE (Strong Cities Network), and pioneering research on Women and Extremism.

TAKEAWAYS: Being at the forefront of forging real world, evidence-based responses to the challenges of integration, extremism and terrorism, ISD has combined research and analysis with government advisory work and delivery programs to reach its audience and trace its successes. One of the key challenges that the organization faces lies in improving capacity building for grassroots networks of credible voices to produce counter-speech to counter extremist recruitment and propaganda. Furthermore, ISD is always seeking to further improve and up-scale initiatives that demonstrate impact in countering extremism and/or changing behavior in at-risk individuals, increasing the breadth of partnerships and geographies around the world.

Quilliam Foundation

MISSION AND ROOTS: Established in 2007 by three former Islamist Hizb ut-Tahrir members Ed Husain, Maajid Nawaz, and Rashad Zaman Ali, Quilliam is heralded as the first counter-extremism think tank that was seeded to address the unique challenges of citizenship and identity in an increasingly globalized world. The organization aims to generate creative, informed and inclusive discussions to counter the ideological underpinnings of terrorism, whilst simultaneously providing evidence-based recommendations to governments for related policy measures.

PROGRAMMING: The organization's strategic civic interventions are materialized alongside government, third sector, media, arts organizations, and police and armed forces. This ensures that policies are able to effectively tackle challenges, maintain a level of awareness, creatively address issues faced, and sensitize individuals to these nuances. Lastly, Quilliam targets individuals adhering to Islamist and extremist narratives by seeking to undermine their networks, communication strategies, and political ideologies, whilst maintaining these individuals' civil liberties.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: A primary belief of the think-tank is that 'challenging extremism is the duty of all responsible members of society. In seeking to achieve this, Quilliam targets numerous audiences comprising of Muslim and non-Muslim, social and governmental, domestic and international. The organization conducts and disseminates original research for the education of individuals at all societal levels, offering consultation and advising on response methodologies. In addition, Quilliam works directly with youth to build societal movements and cultivate lasting social change.

TAKEAWAYS: The organization maintains a highly active presence through their frequent media and press releases, events, publications, and social media. Quilliam officials are frequently approached as a source of leading knowledge in the field as the organization.

Affinis Labs

MISSION AND ROOTS: Founded in 2015 by former senior White House official Shahed Amanullah and a Silicon Valley entrepreneur Quintan Wiktorowicz, Affinis Labs is a start-up incubator with a focus on for-profit businesses that have a positive social impact on Muslim communities around the world. Affinis Labs helps innovative entrepreneurs take advantage of lucrative global market opportunities and grow their companies while providing social benefits to the markets they serve.

PROGRAMMING: Through its capacity as an accelerator and an incubator, Affinis Labs provides a comprehensive setting for companies to have a direct impact on the community. Through the organization of hackathons (intensive team competitions where ideas are prototyped, iterated, tested, and pitched to a live audience, an online crowd, and a panel of judges), the accelerator brings together experience, and networks of talent to generate innovative solutions to counter violent extremist narratives. Another function of the organization is the development of comprehensive communications campaigns for social impact in collaboration with entrepreneurs and creative specialists from the world by fusing public relations, social media, community engagement, partnership building, and grassroots collaboration. Affinis Labs has announced the launch of Rising Margins (June, 2016): a series of hackathons and training sessions to support entrepreneurship and job creation for socioeconomically disadvantaged communities around the world.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Affinis labs has developed some of the top apps on the market today such as QuickFiqh, an app that gives easy access to main modern Islamic scholars, and LaunchGood, a faith-based crowd funding platform supporting Muslim communities across the world. In February of 2015, Affinis Labs held a three-day hackathon with Google and Facebook. The event was aimed at designing campaigns to fight online hate and extremism. Activate Your Squad, an app that allows users to send out an alert to call for online support to counter extremist online messaging won six months at their local incubators.

TAKEAWAYS: The founders' knowledge of the field and experience has allowed Affinis Labs to directly target and invest in niche markets, like countering extremist messaging directly through the work they are able to refine in the Muslim communities. The organization continues to engage with rising startups and broaden economic inclusivity by empowering communities as grassroots drivers of economic growth and social change.

Burka Avenger

MISSION AND ROOTS: In 2012, after many years of experience as a music producer and singer, Pakistani pop star Aaron Haroon Rashid launched the cartoon TV show Burka Avenger. The show originated from a politically charged environment in Pakistan where the Taliban was shutting down girl schools. Burka Avenger storylines combine education with entertainment and feature a female superhero striving to engage, empower and inspire young viewers. Burka Avenger uses animated messages promoting peace and tolerance in society and Public Service Messages (PSMs) related to various relevant social issues to educate the youth, including anti-sectarian and CVE messaging.

PROGRAMMING: Burka Avenger is broadcasted on the national television channel in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, Nickelodeon, and viewed by tens of millions of people regularly and millions of views online through its YouTube Channel. The production company employs around 50 to 60 staff members. Each episode of the show addresses a specific and timely social issue. In parallel to the TV series, the production company works with various civil society organizations using Burka Avenger's cultural capital and popularity to promote various social awareness campaigns. For example, in conjunction with UNICEF, Polio comic book and flash cards were developed and distributed to more than 40,000 polio health centers across Pakistan by Unicorn Black Productions (Burka Avenger's mother company).

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Burka Avenger is the most watched children's TV show in Pakistan and has received support from wide-sections of Pakistani, Afghani and Indian society. The absence of pushback from mainstream conservative religious schools as well as extremist groups is a major indication of success in and of itself. This may be explained by the depth of cultural capital that the show both depends on and cultivates through its successive iterations. The show has been internationally acclaimed and recognized through a multitude of awards: Peabody Award, International Emmy Nominee, International Gender Equity Prize at Prix Jeunesse, and named by Time Magazine as one of the most influential fictional characters of 2013. The production company teamed up with some of the most popular children's retail brands in Pakistan and is currently distributing Burka Avenger merchandise in stores across the country.

TAKEAWAYS: The show's success is directly linked to its culturally sensitive content. Although Burka Avenger pushes the boundaries on traditional issues, the show's local production and domestic investment has made it that much more effective and popular. In addition, the use of local talent (popular singers, producers and other artists) has made Burka Avenger a product of and by Pakistani culture. Unicorn Black productions is currently seeking to air Burka Avenger in multiple countries in order to reach more viewers worldwide. One of the challenges the production company faces is the lack of English dubbing as it is difficult for international networks to ascertain the full potential of the show just by watching the show in Urdu. Burka Avenger is aiming to secure distribution deals with multiple regions in order to scale up while keeping culturally appropriate content at the forefront of the production. Future projects include the Burka Avenger movie with strong gender empowerment and CVE messages for an international audience.

Facebook

MISSION AND ROOTS: With almost 1.5 billion users, Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites making it a key ground for violent extremist organization recruitment. Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. The social media platform is used all over the world by government entities, private businesses, NGOs and private individuals alike. Unfortunately, violent extremist organizations have used the platform as a tool to stay connected and make their online presence more invasive than ever.

PROGRAMMING: As the leading online social media platform, the organization focuses on creating a safe environment for its users through a continuously updated website user policy. Facebook has capitalized on promoting safety, inspecting content and encouraging active users to report suspicious activity. In parallel, Facebook reaches out to civil societies and smaller grassroots groups to offer various workshops and training sessions that help them navigate social media tools and use them to their advantage. As of February 2016, Facebook has engaged in serious conversation with the Department of Justice and the White House in order to spearhead a more proactive CVE approach.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: Throughout a series of engagements with government entities and private CVE efforts, Facebook Inc. has offered social-media training and advice to American Muslim communities and nongovernment organizations. The organization aims to make the world more open and more connected by managing a balance of respect towards its users' privacy while also making the platform intolerant of any abusive or graphic content.

TAKEAWAYS: As a private company, Facebook has been rather open to work in collaboration with a variety of government entities and is actively engaged in several efforts that cater to creating and maintaining a safe online environment. As the world's number one social media platform, Facebook has kept its corporate integrity and continued to protect the rights of its users while simultaneously engaging with available government efforts. The main challenge that the organization has been working to overcome is the lack of channels leading to dedicated and focused engagement with civil society groups in order to help them more effectively communicate through social media.

Fifth Tribe: Project Katalyst

MISSION AND ROOTS: Fifth Tribe is a digital consulting agency that serves businesses, government agencies, and social impact organizations with a variety of tech solutions. Project Katalyst is a non-profit organization established by Fifth Tribe as its primary CVE geared outlet in early 2016. The leading consulting agency originally established itself in the CVE field by developing campaigns through various collaborative efforts with several government entities. Fifth Tribe's has reframed, restructured and consolidated in order to make Project Katalyst a comprehensive counter-messaging center. Katalyst's mission is to create a global resilience network and amplify credible messengers throughout the American Muslim community.

PROGRAMMING: The agency focuses on a variety of CVE programs that are centered around counter messaging content creation, consolidation, and amplifying credible messengers. Fifth Tribe focuses their work on tracing and tracking violent extremist group messages in order to tailor programs with counter narratives they then deliver through online platforms. Fifth Tribe has led a multitude of micro one-on-one engagements, YouTube video campaigns and Twitter campaigns.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: The agency won the 2014 Hedayah Hackathon by creating tech solutions that redirected content using ad words to alternative websites such as 'halaltube.com'. Through other projects, the agency launched a series of micro engagements on the open web to communicate with online supporters of violent extremist organizations as part of their research work. These efforts lead to the successful tailoring of counter content with multiple credible messengers, which had over 1 million views, in three different languages, in a period of 10 days.

TAKEAWAYS: As a tech and branding consultant, Fifth Tribe was able to closely work on a variety of government CVE programs. The consulting group brought together multiple disciplines to offer solutions in the field through a constant and steady creation of counter and alternative messaging. As a young non-profit, Katalyst's biggest challenge will be funding. The organization must be able to have full time resources and coordinate with the right teams to ensure that all of the operating systems and programs are secure and effective. The non-profit plans to develop into a center for global counter-messaging against hate and violent extremism with a worldwide network of credible messengers serving both as gatekeepers and amplifiers. Finally, Katalyst will create a new evaluation system to measure their success with implementation and effectiveness metrics.

Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF)

MISSION AND ROOTS: A public-private partnership, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund was established in 2013 to serve as the first global effort supporting local, community-level initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience against violent extremist agendas. The organization operates at the nexus of security and development: GCERF is committed to working in partnership and consultation with governments, civil society, and the private sector in beneficiary countries to support national strategies to address the local drivers of violent extremism.

PROGRAMMING: GCREF recognizes the importance of collaboration. The organization has positioned itself a part of a comprehensive international response to violent extremism. Its niche is in funding local communities and its focus on prevention while simultaneously working with security and development actors, and the private and public sector, to avoid overlap and ensure that the international community as a whole has a coherent approach that is making a difference.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: GCERF has successfully piloted the Core Funding Mechanism (CFM) in three countries. As a relatively young organization, GCERF has been able to raise its global profile by vigorously engaging with state representatives from around the world and attracting international interest. During its pilot year, National Applications from Bangladesh, Mali and Nigeria were submitted responding to the geographic, demographic and thematic foci offered by GCERF in order to provide access to the grassroots organizations as intended and to identify innovative responses to violent extremism.

TAKEAWAYS: Recognizing the critical importance of resilience building, GCERF has been able to achieve a lot in terms of organizational establishment and strategic expansion in its first 18 months. However, much remains to be done if GCERF is to maintain the momentum and fully seize upon its considerable potential. While 2015 was GCERF's pilot year, the organization is looking to continue its efforts and track its performance.

Jigsaw

MISSION AND ROOTS: Jigsaw, formerly Google Ideas, is a cross-sector, inter-disciplinary think tank created in 2010 by Google, and now operated as a subsidiary of Alphabet Inc. Jigsaw is dedicated to understanding global challenges and applying technological solutions. The think tank is creating tools to stop hackers and digital attackers: it is Google's primary online CVE arm. Jigsaw has engaged with multiple governmental and community based actors in a variety of programs in efforts to promote a safer open web.

PROGRAMMING: Jigsaw has had an unconventional approach when it comes to its CVE programs and efforts. Jigsaw has been able to be a part of the international conversation on CVE by engaging on different fronts. They have worked closely with government agencies to 'disrupt ISIS' and find solutions to close down ISIS supporting websites.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: The organization is actively pushing an online counter-narrative, similar to targeted online advertising. For example, earch engines thatplant advertisements showing stories of arrests of individuals caught trying to travel to Iraq or Syria to commit violent jihad or various online content that displays the dangers of joining these organizations. Another method has been a mobilization and empowerment of the opposition on the Internet: alternative narratives can fill the vacuum making violent extremist organizations no longer able to fight effectively in cyberspace. Finally, a multitude of grants have been made available to nonprofit organizations to use Google AdWords to display competing ads alongside the search results for those extremist-related terms.

TAKEAWAYS: As a technology think tank, Jigsaw has been actively present on various CVE programming fronts by engaging with both government led efforts and grassroots resilience building and amplifying counter/alternative narratives.

YouTube

MISSION AND ROOTS: Founded in 2005, YouTube is a video-sharing online platform. Now operating as one of Google's subsidiaries, the website allows individuals to upload, view, rate, share, and comment on videos. As terrorist organizations move their online presence to social media outlets, YouTube has become one of the target platforms for violent extremist content. YouTube efforts to manage this type of content have been based on their set of community guidelines aimed to reduce abuse of the site's features.

PROGRAMMING: When it comes to programming, YouTube has described their policies as straightforward: they ban certain types of content in accordance with their own terms of service, and require court orders to remove or block anything beyond that. Anyone can report, or flag, content for review and possible removal. In their efforts to eliminate violent and extremist content from the website, the video-sharing online platform relies on its users to flag the content of videos as inappropriate. YouTube then works in conjuncture with the policy team at Google, whose role is to enforce community guidelines and monitor flagged content.

NOTABLE SUCCESSES: In December 2010, YouTube added "violent or repulsive content - promotes terrorism" to the list of reasons users can give when flagging a video as inappropriate. The organization has also expanded a little-known "Trusted Flagger" program, allowing groups ranging from a British anti-terror police unit to the Simon Wiesenthal Center, a human rights organization, to flag large numbers of videos as problematic and get immediate action. There are two programs being tested by Google to make sure the positive messages are seen by people seeking out extremist content: one to make sure the "good" kind of videos are easily found on YouTube, the other to display positive messages when people search for extremist-related terms.

In 2015, the company removed more than 14 million videos from YouTube for reasons ranging from copyright infringement to terrorist content. YouTube members also flagged more than 100,000 videos as being inappropriate content.

TAKEAWAYS: As an online platform, YouTube has had to take a rather reactive approach to countering extremist speech.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

The organizations listed below were consulted, interviewed, and/or involved in one of the workshops organized in support of this report. **Inclusion below is not an indication of support for any of the report's findings.**

Bayan Claremont

Burka Avenger

City of Boston

City of Voorhees

Connect: Neighborhood Approach

Cure Violence,

EUROPOL

European Commission

Fifth Tribe

Facebook

GCERF

Global Center on Cooperative Security

Institute for Strategic Dialogue

Khayaal Theatre Co

Life after Hate

Middle East Broadcasting Network

Mosaic

MPAC

NYC Government/Strong Cities

NYC Law Department

Project Katalyst

Quilliam

Radical Middle Way

SPLC

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Department of Defense

YouTube

Endnotes

1 An initial meeting was convened in London in December 2015, and follow up interviews were conducted with actors across the sector, operating primarily in North America and Europe. Another meeting was held in Washington D.C. in May 2016 where the preliminary findings of this report were presented to stakeholders for feedback and detailed consideration. Following the second meeting, an additional round of interviews was organized for further input into this report's findings and recommendations. The closed-door workshops and interviews helped to map the sector, facilitating clarity regarding best practices, shared challenges, and sector and policy-specific recommendations. This report is the first of three produc*ed by the Bridging Tran*satlantic *Voices: Civic Approaches to Preventing Radicalisation and Violent* Extremism (Civic Approaches) *project. Civic Approaches* is a European Commission funded (2015-2018) collaboration between the British Council, Georgia State University, and Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

2 Given the divisive nature of some violent extremism-related discourse, we offer the following definitions to clarify our use of terms in this report. Countering violent extremism refers to "Proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence" (*USAID & Department of State Joint Strategy on CVE*, 2016). Prevention refers to "collective efforts aimed at closing a range of gaps and social openings by which violent extremist ideologies can find legitimacy" (Department of Homeland Security, "The LA Framework for CVE," 2015). Resilience refers to "the capability of people, groups and communities to rebut and reject proponents of terrorism and the ideology they promote" (*UK State for the Home Department Prevent Strategy*, 2011).

3 In the US, since September 11, 2001, numerous federal and state agencies have organized meetings with civil society groups and Muslim communities. For example, according to Amna Akbar (62 UCLA Law Review 834, May 2015), "CRS has held more than 750 town halls and community meetings nationally…FBI also held town halls around the country to 'foster dialogue' with Muslim communities. FBI field office regularly visit local mosques and community centers, even requiring all new agents to meet with Muslim community leaders and mosques."

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CIVIC APPROACHES TO CONFRONTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

As concerns about violent extremism grow, there is a troubling knowledge gap between those operating at the grassroots and community levels on the one hand and those working in government and law enforcement on the other. This report aims to fill that gap by highlighting best practices and identifying areas of vulnerability in civil society and private sector campaigns against extremism. Having consulted dozens of organizations, thought leaders, and government practitioners, the findings in this report identify consensus points and practical ways forward for those invested in a collaborative effort to tackle the shared problem of ideological violence and extremism.

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