



Strengthening Transatlantic City-Level Cooperation against Extremist- and Hate-Motivated Violence

The Role of Local Leaders and Local Governments: US – Nordic Experiences

6 – 7 December 2022
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Unofficial Summary*

Below is an overview of the discussions that took place during the workshop. It is intended to capture key elements from, rather than serve as an official transcript of, those discussions.

Local Threat Environments

Participants exchanged views on the nature of the threats facing cities in Nordic and US cities. They identified rising levels of hate, polarisation, far right extremism and anti-government sentiment as most concerning. We heard how violence and hate crimes targeting marginalised communities in the United States have grown exponentially in recent years. Speaking to the increase in mass shootings and gun violence in the United States, Dr. Torey Wilson, Dean of the University of Denver's Graduate School of Professional Psychology (GSPP), said that this is "not inevitable", adding that "they can be prevented through a comprehensive public health approach where governments, professionals and communities work together to keep people safe". A number of participants noted that motivations are less likely to be linked to one ideology and are instead more likely to be based on or draw selectively from several ideologies. It was noted that most violent movements in the United States are racially/ethnically motivated as well as driven by anti-government extremism. Participants noted inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches were pivotal for supporting individuals grappling with justifications for violence.

The [Anti-Defamation League](#) (ADL) spoke about how anti-Semitic incidents in the United States had reached an all-time high in 2021, and that hate crimes, although still under-reported, are on the rise. For example, Colorado has seen a 49% increase in anti-Semitic incidents. Interestingly, although 1.25 million Coloradans report being the target of a hate crime, only 281 hate crimes have been reported to the state's FBI presence. In addition to working to address under-reporting, including through law enforcement and community

* This document has been prepared by the Strong Cities Network's Management Unit. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the workshop co-hosts, co-sponsors or participants, or SCN members or partners.





trainings, ADL encourages political leaders and local governments to speak out following hate incidents and bias-motivated attacks to make it clear that any message of “you don’t belong here” does not resonate within their city or community. ADL’s framework is based on a “pyramid of hate”, which recognises the need to start at the bottom and address the hate speech, which fuels institutional discrimination and the overt acts of violence.

To help make inroads against rising levels of hate, ADL is building coalitions like “[Hate Free Colorado](#)” so members of different communities can be there for each other when hate does rear its head and there are trusted liaisons for law enforcement in communities where trust in police is lacking and thus under-reporting is likely to be more of an issue.

In Finland, it is a mixture of primarily far-right ideologies (linked with “[Siege Culture](#)”), with extremist groups targeting ethnic and regional minorities, as well as politicians, that is of most concern. The country also recently recorded its first increase in hate crimes (20% higher than previous year) since 2017. Similarly, Sweden is facing a “smorgasbord” threat. Individuals are pulling from different ideologies to form their own framework, with ideologies inspired by events and people around the world, with conspiracy movements also a growing threat. Teachers have been targeted by knife attackers and organised extremist groups in Sweden, which are struggling to recruit new members, are still represented on a local level.

Whereas each of the participating Nordic countries has a national mandate, the approach in the United States is more decentralised and disparate, involving different actors from across the country. Participants on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, however, emphasised the significant role that mayors and local leaders can and must play in building social cohesion, promoting inclusivity, preventing hate and extremism from becoming violent, and mitigating the damage it causes to communities if it does. They also underscored the need to work with cities and communities to understand and track threats and responses, and how multi-disciplinary, locally driven programmes offer the most promise as these are more likely to be reflect the local context and have buy-in from local actors.

Both Nordic and North American participants emphasised the value of a public health approach to addressing these threats, with collaboration between the police and non-law enforcement professionals a key ingredient to the success of such an approach. However, discussions noted and called attention to how these efforts manifest differently, depending on the country and context.

Representatives from the City of Oslo presented the city’s [SaLTo](#) programme – a crime prevention partnership between the city and the Oslo Police District to which a focus on preventing hate, radicalisation and violent extremism has been added. Participants highlighted how municipalities are leading actors in locally led prevention efforts in the Nordic





countries, with the relevant local policies and programmes framed around social cohesion or community dialogue and non-law enforcement professionals (such as social, health and education workers) playing a leading role, alongside police. It was noted that Canadian provinces and municipalities tend to follow a similar approach, with issues of extremism and targeted violence integrated in wider local approaches to violence prevention and/or social cohesion.

In contrast, US participants discussed the emphasis now being placed on developing local, multi-disciplinary targeted violence prevention programmes – many with US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [funding](#) – driven by state governments or non-governmental actors, with state counter-terrorism (CT) fusion centres leading state-level efforts. Discussions highlighted how these efforts, many of which are nascent, are typically distinct from city-led initiatives to prevent hate and enhance social cohesion.

Participants highlighted benefits of state-led initiatives in the United States. These include being able to leverage existing coordination and information sharing mechanisms that emerged in the United States after the 9/11 attacks, and the capacity to reach and support small towns and large remote counties, which might not otherwise have the necessary capacities to develop their own prevention programmes.

Among the challenges law enforcement face on both sides of the Atlantic in the current environment is the blurry line between hate speech and direct threats. In the United States, it was noted that, due to strong free speech protections under the US Constitution, communities, school, cultural and political leaders – rather than government – are particularly relevant actors in influencing what is and is not appropriate language to use in public discourse. Participants debated the role that “big” influencers such as Kanye West are playing in the spread of hate, with some arguing that they are the symptoms rather than the cause. Instead, they pointed to poor quality education and lack of understanding of the “other” as key drivers. However, it was also acknowledged that these influences have massive audiences and that once hate speech is on social media, apologies do little to limit the damage.

Discussions addressed ways to limit the negative impact that hateful on-line content can have without infringing on freedom of speech. For example, it was noted how social media companies in the United States are being encouraged to enforce their own terms of service, which involves removing certain hateful content from their platforms and how the [Screen Hate](#) campaign in the United States is helping to teach parents what their children are being exposed to on-line and how to talk about it with them.

Participants shared how too often discussions around hate and extremism intensify only *after* violence erupts, with more attention focused on building trusted relationships and





collaborating with reliable partners *before* something happens. In this regard, participants suggested cities need to do more to leverage their convening power and relationships with different communities and collect accurate data. Further, the point was made that local governments need to ensure continuity of prevention policies, programs and expertise, something that can be jeopardised when there is a change in political leadership.

Finally, discussions focused on the importance of ensuring that resources are aligned with the current threat picture, particularly given its evolution in recent years. A contrast was drawn between the Nordic context, where resources are allocated based on a broad framing of the threat around all forms of extremism and hate, and the United States, where most of the resources in this area are still focused on addressing Islamist extremist violence, despite that threat being overtaken by far-right extremism as a concern for cities and communities.

Societal Differences Inform Prevention Efforts

Participants discussed some fundamental differences between Nordic and US societies that influence the resourcing of and possibilities for multi-stakeholder collaboration in and the sustainability of prevention efforts. These include: levels of trust in government and the police; the allocation of resources across policing, education, and health social services; the concepts of criminal justice (i.e., punitive in the United States and rehabilitative in the Nordic countries) and policing (i.e., a public good or an instrument of the state); the role(s) of the police (i.e., community safety and/or law enforcement); the reliance on statistics and data; and the role(s) that non-governmental organisations and governments play in society.

Colorado Resilience Collaborative

Participants highlighted the work of the [Colorado Resilience Collaborative](#) (CRC), which is part of a wider University of Denver program to provide trauma-informed support to survivors of torture, and active/former members of the military. In the hate and extremism prevention space, CRC provides coaching and other support health and other professionals involved in trying to understand and address concerning behavior of individuals of concern. It helps professionals respond to individuals with the appropriate community-led intervention(s), including by offering guidance on which practitioners and agencies might need to be involved in handling a particular case and how to liaise and work with them. Although CRC's training has been evaluated, participants shared how longitudinal studies on the effectiveness of interventions with individuals are generally lacking and where they do exist are too rarely shared.





Role of Local Leaders in Prevention and Response

Discussions focused on the role of local leaders and cities in addressing hate, extremism and polarisation *before* and *after* it leads to violence, through the different lenses of policies and programmes in four US cities: Atlanta, Las Vegas, Minneapolis and Seattle.

The City of Atlanta has taken steps to respond to rising gun violence and gang activity. This includes opening an [Office of Violence Reduction](#), which is gathering relevant data across communities to better inform city policies and drive city crime prevention initiatives, focusing more attention on “policing alternatives and diversion” in lieu of incarceration. Engagements with faith and ethnic communities have been intensified, particularly in the wake of the 2021 “spa shooting” which killed eight, including six Asian Americans. More is being done to engage young people in their communities, including through “Midnight Basketball” and strengthening the Office of Youth Engagement by investing in summer employment programmes in city agencies and businesses for young people, funding for early childhood education, and working work with influencers (e.g., TI, Cardi B, etc.) to leverage the power of social media. In addition, a “Community Navigator” programme is providing a platform through which individuals who know the community can share community concerns with the government. Such concerns have included police wearing uniforms in community meetings about violence prevention and a lack of access to city services in foreign languages.

Discussions emphasised how hearing and responding to such community concerns inspires, builds and strengthens trust. More broadly, participants noted the importance of each city understanding its strengths and weaknesses when it comes to prevention and ensuring that challenges can be addressed comprehensively so that all aspects of the problem can be addressed, but with separate offices playing to their respective strengths.

The [Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department](#)’s approach of working to build personal connections with community members over time has helped it establish trust; pivotal for effective and sustainable violence prevention work. Trust, which is “essential to everything the department does”, is built and strengthened through “a series of successive transactions and having law enforcement available when communities need them, not just ‘9-to-5’”, said one participant. It has been facilitated, at least in part, by the department being independent from the city or other local government and led by a non-partisan sheriff. In addition, it was noted that by integrating counter terrorism and targeted violence prevention work within a wider violence prevention framework the police department has been able to avoid some of the stigmatisation around that work that a siloed approach can create.





In the City of Seattle, the [Office of the Ombud](#) is addressing workplace polarisation and extremism across the City's workforce by creating safe environments to express feelings and engendering trust. It has developed an anti-polarisation curriculum and training that includes a focus on how to ensure individuals see each other as "humans" and avoid "othering" regardless of their political beliefs. With some city staff having been present during the 6 January 2021 insurrection at the US Capitol in Washington, DC, the training was particularly important to ensure that city service delivery is not viewed as or becomes polarised and to create space in which staff can disagree with each other without viewing those they disagree with as the "enemy".

In Hennepin County, which includes Minneapolis, the Sheriff's Office has developed and follows a comprehensive approach to engagement with different ethnic and religious communities. The approach is grounded in multi-lingual and multi-platform communications, education, youth engagement, trust-building and inclusivity. The importance of reaching out to "hard to reach" young people to identify what they like and experiencing, and then leveraging that for pro-social means was highlighted.

Role Cities Can Play in Preventing/Mitigating the Impact of Online Hate from Manifesting in Offline Harm?

Discussions explored the impact that rising levels of mis/disinformation is having on local communities in different contexts. In the state of Colorado, for example, mis/disinformation is manifesting and impacting differently in various locations. More urban areas have public affairs officers who can try to correct the record, whereas most rural areas lack the resources to push back. As a result, and as reinforced by [Moonshot's](#) data, mis/disinformation is more likely to proliferate in rural areas.

Colorado has seen an increase in mis/disinformation following significant incidents (which includes COVID-19 and the recent Club Q attack). It was noted that, in a moment of chaos and uncertainty, people are seeking clarity and reassurance and are less likely to think critically about what they are reading or hearing. As such, law enforcement seeks to share "facts" with relevant communities as soon as possible following an incident to mitigate the risk of mis/disinformation spiraling out of control. At times, law enforcement will simply tell community members that it does not have all the information yet, which is better than remaining silent and more comforting to community members desperate for clarity and information. Recognising the importance of preventing and countering the rise of mis/disinformation, and its increasing weaponisation by extremist groups, the state of





Colorado has awarded its [Fusion Center](#) funding to enhance state-level prevention and response capabilities in this area.

In Hawaii, mis/disinformation surrounding LGBTQI+ events (e.g., that those involved were grooming children for sexual assault) increases the likelihood of violence against LGBTQI+ people. Although law enforcement makes efforts to inform relevant communities of what sexual grooming involves, anti-LGBTQI+ groups are using social media to amplify the disinformation at a speed that is difficult to counter through government-led efforts.

Swedish participants shared how disinformation about how social services kidnap children when they are removed from broken homes affects social services' ability to operate in certain municipalities. Although generated from outside of Sweden, this disinformation is picked up by different actors at both national and local levels, who spread word through their own networks. Local leaders in Sweden lack the resources to be able to counter this disinformation.

There are also about 20 cases of concern involving students who are learning from and being inspired by school attacks around the world; the [Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism](#) is working with schools to better equip them to handle these situation through early intervention and to teach students about fact checking whenever they see something interesting.

Participants underscored the need to build media literacy skills in all school classes, reinforce critical thinking skills to support evaluation of news sources and other information, and teach students that it is okay to disagree but not to demonise those with whom you disagree. They discussed the challenges of countering mis/disinformation if the government itself is the target. This underscores the importance of a whole of society response, with state and local governments, the private sector and community-based organisations each having important roles to play. It was emphasised that local government needs to listen to the community itself about who is a trusted messenger and to support their efforts to push back on mis/disinformation.

While praising the work of DHS' Center on Prevention Programs and Partnerships and the various state CT fusion centers working to counter mis/disinformation in the context of terrorism and targeted violence prevention, participants highlighted the importance of a whole of government approach that addresses this challenge in the wider hate and extremism prevention space. The point was made that education rather than security actors are crucial stakeholders, but that in many US states the focus remains on the former. For example, it was





noted how Colorado has yet to map all the relevant state-level actors that should be engaged in prevention work, which would provide a foundation for identifying and involving such actors.

Some participants encouraged the federal US Department of Education (DoE), as well as state-level departments of education and school boards, to prioritise the teaching of media literacy and critical thinking skills. Participants noted that neither DHS nor state fusion centers will be the most credible messenger to influence teachers on these topics, instead recommending that the involvement of the US DoE on these issues could help catalyse more involvement from state-level education agencies.

Building and Sustaining City- and Community-Level Partnerships for Prevention

Participants exchanged views on how to build and sustain city and community-level partnerships for prevention, with a particular focus on how to do so after an acute crisis passes (at which point energy and attention can move on).

Discussions highlighted the importance of providing a toolbox for identifying core issues driving people towards hate and extremism, noting that simply correcting mis/disinformation or counter-messaging is often not effective. A representative from [Parents4Peace](#) underscored how quickly vulnerable kids can be groomed into extremism, regardless of the grievance or perceived grievance, noting that ideological belief is generally very shallow, with individuals shifting from one ideology to another. The point was made that what vulnerable kids have in common – regardless of their contexts – is “victimhood identity”. Families often know something is wrong but often may not know where to turn. It was argued that young people turn to extremism and hate to numb pain; they are coping mechanisms, much like drugs and alcohol. Participants noted the importance of understand the type of pain someone is trying to numb when they use hateful speech or start exhibiting extremist behaviour. It was also emphasised that helping parents break the taboo and stigma around seeking support is essential, with peer support groups often an effective way to do this. Sharing stories from families thanking P4P for their help and support drew a lot of positive attention from organisations who want to work with them. Participants also discussed the role of “formers” in prevention, noting how Parents4Peace is developing a training course to facilitate their responsible and efficacious involvement in this work.

A representative from the City of Denver shared how being an *inclusive* city and one that celebrates *diversity* can be the foundation for effective and sustainable prevention efforts. Rather than a narrow, siloed approach that focuses on crime prevention or public safety, the





City of Denver is promoting a holistic approach that includes a strong focus on primary prevention, which involves public health, housing, food and education. For example, the city has set up hubs in schools that allow parents and kids to access free food and clothing, as well as public health clinics on school grounds, as part of a collaborative approach among different city agencies and NGOs.

There was broad consensus that sustainable programming requires that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) be embedded into program design from the start. Integrating someone with evaluation experience from the beginning, as opposed to relying on external evaluators, was highlighted as a best practice. In addition, running tabletop exercises with all stakeholders involved in the program (including programme evaluators) to run various scenarios to see how all would behave in a given one can help build and strengthen trust among stakeholders, expose gaps and allow all involved to go back and figure out how they would address them. Rather than being viewed as “outside judges”, evaluators can offer real-time support to help sustain and refine the programme.

Police and/or Social Workers in Prevention: What is the Right Balance?

Discussions highlighted the need for multi-disciplinary prevention approaches to be inclusive, while noting that the role of different professionals might vary depending on the nature and context of the programme. For example, whereas police involvement in cases involving individuals further down the path to becoming violent or in response to 911 calls is typically unavoidable, the involvement of law enforcement in cases or programs dealing with individuals further upstream may be less significant or less advisable; context is key.

Given the range of risks and needs that can manifest in a given setting, participants cautioned against being exclusionary. For example, an effective intervention or management plan needs to draw on those professionals or other people who are playing a significant role in the targeted individual’s life.

Participants considered the benefits and challenges associated with police-social worker collaborations in prevention. For example, in the City of Aurora, a police department social worker joins a police officer when responding to emergency calls. This can help send the message that the police are there to help, including by directing the individual of concern to a social worker who can decrease the likelihood that the individual will end up in prison. In British Columbia, however, although its [secondary prevention programme](#) receives most of its referrals from the police, law enforcement is not involved in the consideration of the case,





let alone the development of the treatment plan. Instead, these are the responsibilities of mental health and social workers and other non-law enforcement professionals.

Some participants shared that asking the police to engage in prevention work, something they are typically not trained in, is essentially setting police up for failure. On the other hand, the point was made that social workers not only often lack experience working with extremist populations, but also the authority and training to knock on the front door of an individual of concern; they typically need a law enforcement officer to join them.

Participants discussed how, in contexts in which social workers and police do not collaborate, it is difficult for the former to intervene with individuals who have been referred to the police for concerning behaviours but are still in the pre-crime phase; on the other hand, without such collaboration there is little the police can do to help.

Discussions highlighted how the different legal, cultural and political contexts in Finland and the United States impact how prevention work is conceptualised and operationalised, including as it relates to the role of the police and social and health workers. For example, whereas there are over 18,000 police departments across the United States, there is a single police force in Finland, where the health sector (city-led) is 14 times bigger than the police sector. The two countries also regulate free speech differently. For example, whereas the US Constitution's First Amendment makes it difficult for the government to limit freedom of expression, the criminal code in Finland includes provisions addressing hate speech targeted at one person or a group. Policing in Finland is both reactive and preventive, with the latter providing safety services and engaging in communities and on social media.

The [Helsinki Safe City Network](#) was cited as an example of a comprehensive, city-led, multi-stakeholder prevention platform, which includes police, municipal services and NGOs. The Network focuses on crime, gang and hate prevention, helping residents recognise threats and support victims. [Anchor](#) teams have been set up in a number of Finnish cities. They involve police, youth, social and health workers working together in the same room to assess risks and needs and develop intervention plans for individuals of concern who have been referred to them, whether by schools, parents or others in the community.

In Sweden, a practitioner mobile support team, whose members include social services, police, education and community engagement officers, provides tailored support to municipalities that need to respond quickly to an emerging threat.





Building an “All Violence”/Holistic Model for Addressing Violence

Participants discussed the benefits and drawbacks of pursuing an integrated approach to violence prevention, rather than one framed around discrete forms of violence (e.g., extremist/hate-motivated, targeted or gender-based violence). More broadly, discussions highlighted the benefits and limitations of using a violence prevention or community safeguarding/wellness framework. The dynamic discussion also drew out different views on key ingredients for successful programmes in this space.

Municipalities in Nordic countries adopt an integrated approach to violence or crime prevention, with Oslo’s SaLTo programme being offered as one example where issues of extremism and radicalisation were incorporated into an existing platform that had been set up years before to focus on crime and drug prevention.

In Sweden, the Center for PVE has developed a multi-disciplinary local prevention model focusing on violent extremism that is being piloted in 18 municipalities, many of which have said they will use the model for a wider set of issues than just violent extremism.

Canadian practitioners shared how municipalities there tend to favor multi-disciplinary prevention models that focus on all forms of crime, rather than targeted violence specifically. New emphasis being placed on developing municipal community safety and well-being plans, with a growing number of municipalities convening community members from across different sectors to diagnose the local needs and challenges and develop a roadmap for how to address them. [Community Action Tables](#) (CATs) are often created to address particular issues in a city and the CATs discuss with each other what each is doing. Sometimes this work can receive dedicated funding from the municipality itself. Participants identified ingredients for a successful programme of this sort in Canada include inter alia sustained funding, training for relevant practitioners, local leaders acting as champions, having all stakeholders at the table, relying on a backbone organisation to manage the programme and to bring resources to bear. The point was made that targeted violence prevention could be integrated into this model.

Participants also noted that youth showing signs of extremist behavior or radicalisation to violence “are not unicorns ... they are not exceptional cases”; the point being that they can be treated similarly to other cases. However, some argued that there are differences, emphasising that “each case is unique and require unique arrangements of services to address their specific issues”.





Participants noted how many risk assessment tools are not useful for developing a treatment plan that actually addresses *specific* violence risks. To address this gap, practitioners at [Boston Children's Hospital](#) (BCH) have developed a new tool – T-SAM – to help providers develop violence prevention-focused treatment plans by pulling out unique drivers of violence for each person and creating a treatment plan aligned that tends to those drivers.

Participants discussed the importance of balancing the need to adopt a more integrated approach to violence prevention while taking into account the potentially unique aspects of terrorism and targeted violence prevention work. One model offered was in the Boston area, where basic “wrap-around” community-based services – augmented by some training – can handle about 90% of the cases, with a BCH special team then providing specialist support in cases involving potential terrorism or targeted violence. Law enforcement might be involved in the latter but not the former cases.

In Boston, practitioners carefully considered where to situate a new multi-disciplinary secondary targeted violence prevention programme and ultimately landed on a public health framing, housed at BCH. Through this programme, needs and risks assessments are conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of experts for each referred individual. Among the key ingredients for success identified include developing trust with individuals and families who may feel aggrieved by schools or health services; taking the time to understand the vulnerabilities and concerns of each family, including the source of their pain; and generally responding to the needs of the people the programme aims to support.

Some participants urged an end to the “exceptionalisation” of the risks for terrorism and targeted violence prevention, while others pointed to some of their unique attributes. The consensus was that there is some truth to both arguments and the goal should be to develop an approach that can accommodate each. Discussions highlighted how professionals from different disciplines are generally willing to collaborate around addressing risks to different forms of violence; however, when it comes to extremist violence or terrorism, they tend to shy away, thinking that special expertise for handling such cases is needed.

Breakout Sessions

Getting Secondary Prevention Right: How to identify and intervene against early signs of target violence while avoiding stigmatisation?

Participants exchanged views on the different problematic behaviors that could be signs of radicalisation to violence, while underscoring that it is behaviors rather than beliefs that





should be the focus of attention. They considered how applicable privacy and free speech laws impact what may be concerning behavior. For example, participants debated whether membership in a hate group constitutes concerning or protected behavior if the individual has not engaged in violence. They explored inherent biases among practitioners, including whether they are more or less likely to view someone as a threat who shares a similar background, and/or whether it is easier to observe concerning behaviors in perceived “others”.

Discussions explored the potentially stigmatising nature of secondary prevention work, with some participants asserting that stigma is more likely to be introduced if the perception of risk is linked to identity and/or individuals’ assessments are focused on risk (rather than needs and/or vulnerabilities). It was noted, for example, that some Canadian secondary prevention programmes avoid terms like “risk factors” or “risk assessment” tools because they find such terms to be stigmatising and such instruments to be biased. Some US local practitioners shared how it is good practice to use “structured professional judgment tools” to prevent bad outcomes and create a repeatable assessment process to mitigate risks of liability and bias. Practitioners from North America agreed that when these instruments are used, they should not be the sole determinant when assessing risks and needs. In fact, participants underscored how a deeper understanding of the context around the concerning behaviors can lead to a more informed intervention strategy, reduce assessment bias, and prevent individuals from being put on the radar unnecessarily and inappropriately.

Participants exchanged perspectives on the efficacy of allowing secondary prevention programmes to receive referrals from the wider public, as opposed to limiting referrals to those from certain professions, where individuals are more likely to have received training on how to identify concerning behaviors. One Canadian practitioner shared that public referrals are more likely to be guided by personal bias and misinterpretation and could lead to more false positives. Some argued, therefore, that limiting referrals to police and school officials and other trusted/trained sources is more appropriate.

The concept of self-reporting received attention, noting how programmes like [Safe2Tell](#) have facilitated more self-reporting, especially in cases involving suicidal ideation. Discussions highlighted how, in order to incentivise self-reporting, policies need to be in place to protect self-reporting individuals from punitive action by their employer or a school.





Exploring Approaches to Widen the Lens – Ensuring Multi-Stakeholder Prevention Approaches are Inclusive

Discussions centered on the importance of mapping local threats (and overall problems), as well as needs and existing local infrastructure for addressing them, as a first step to developing a multi-stakeholder approach to prevention that is responsive to the concerns and priorities of communities and leverages existing resources and expertise. Rather than static, this mapping should be regularly updated based on regular data collection efforts of different departments within a local government and the use of data dashboards. Part of this mapping should include gaining an understanding of the individuals who are best placed to lead engagement with historically marginalised or other communities that might be hard for local government officials to reach. Participants agreed that those who are trusted by the target community should lead outreach to that community.

Being an Engaged Bystander

Participants explored a number of different initiatives implemented in the United States to raise awareness within communities about extremist and other forms of targeted violence, including potential behavioral warnings which should be reported (without bias) to law enforcement. Discussions highlighted a number of considerations: the need to engage social workers, nurses, faith leaders, parents and teachers about indicators so they can identify and then report concerning behavior; find a trusted figure in that individual's life who can talk to them; ensure that reporting will be safe; and identify/understand which are the most appropriate reporting platforms. Participants shared that concerning behavior is often reported to technology companies, which do not take any action; this can make people feel that reporting is useless. More broadly, however, some emphasised that trust in law enforcement is more important than having community members have detailed knowledge about preventing targeted violence

Education and Digital literacy in Prevention

Participants shared different approaches cities and other local actors are taking to improve digital literacy among young and older people and to teach tolerance and respect for the "other" at a young age. The McCain Institute's [Screen Hate](#) – Prepare Talk Prevent – program helps parents and other concerned adults identify the platforms or apps being used by their children, to understand levels of encryption and to give them resources to better understand fundamental concepts. [Common Sense Media](#) offers trustworthy information to families about what is available on the Internet, making it easier to choose high-quality, age-





appropriate and diverse content for children at home and in school. Participants shared how the Swedish Center for PVE is training and supporting teachers to identify red flags when they see how their students are spending their time online.

Discussions highlighted the need to include older people in digital literacy training. Senior citizens, for example, who have free time and limited experience with the Internet may be more susceptible to online mis/disinformation than younger people. With this in mind, the ADL has started to engage with the American Association of Retired People (AARP) on the online vulnerabilities of older people and the need for senior adult digital literacy programmes. Participants also encouraged more involvement by media companies and journalists in prevention efforts, underscoring the powerful role they could play in this space, including by promoting positive stories of those standing up against hate and extremism in their communities.

Connecting City-Led Prevention and Response

Discussions emphasised the importance of cities building trusted relationships with different stakeholders in the community and continuously investing in them, not just after something happens. These relationships enable local government to understand the concerns and threats within a given community, which can aid in prevention. Further, they allow cities to know whom they need to communicate with about available support if violence manifests and to identify credible voices they can rely on in each neighbourhood to connect with those who are hard to reach.

Similarly, participants highlighted the importance of involving young people early and consistently in prevention work, including through youth advisory boards for hate and extremism prevention; not just reaching out *after* an incident. More broadly, it was noted that local government engagement with young people on this agenda should not be siloed, but part the city's whole of community approach to prevention and response.

The need for consistent and long-term mental health support was cited as a key ingredient for both prevention and response. Such support for front-line workers should be in place before an attack occurs. Moreover, it was emphasised that cities need to ensure that this support is made available to these workers, and survivors and victims, beyond the immediate arc following an incident as there will be long-term trauma-response needs that require attention.





In this context, it was also noted that survivors, victims, first responders and families are too often overlooked when it comes to the multi-disciplinary prevention programmes that have been developed to support those individuals identified as being on the path to radicalisation to violence.

Responding to Threats/Demonstrations: Balancing Free Speech and Public Safety

Discussions highlighted the dilemmas cities on both sides of the Atlantic typically face when faced with the prospect of a public demonstrations or protests that could lead to violence. There was broad agreement that free speech rights are paramount and that cities should not cancel such demonstrations or protests absent clear and present risks to public safety.

Participants identified steps that cities could take to minimise the risk of violence erupting and the damage it would cause if it were to. For example, they said that cities, whether through the police or community partnerships or the mayor's office, should engage beforehand with the communities who will be marching or could be impacted by the march. Such engagement should set behavioural expectations and explain why the activity is taking place. Cities need to be aware of groups that may take advantage of the planned march or demonstration to further their own agenda, including via social media. Participants said cities should be mindful of the risks that counter protests can create, underscoring the need to avoid having the two events in proximity to one another. Turning to the role of the police, there was consensus that visible police presence should be limited during a march but be on site should something go wrong. The goal is for the police not to make the situation worse.

