



A Guide For Cities

Guide

For Preventing Hate, Extremism
& Polarisation

September 2023

Strong Cities
Network



Acknowledgements

The Strong Cities Network Management Unit would like to thank the many local government officials that contributed to this Guide, whether by participating in interviews, discussions or surveys, or in Strong Cities' activities since the Network's launch in 2015. A special thanks goes to Eric Poinot, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Coordinator, City of Strasbourg, France, who provided critical guidance and support throughout the drafting of this Guide.

This publication was made possible by generous support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the European Union and the US Department of State. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Strong Cities Network's membership in its entirety nor its donors, partners and supporters.

Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)

The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) worked with mayors and government partners to launch Strong Cities at a meeting during the opening of the UN General Assembly in 2015. Since then, ISD has expanded and supported Strong Cities membership and has delivered its programming. ISD continues to host the

Management Unit and contributes its research and expertise to meet the policy and practice needs of cities and local governments around the world.



Australian Government



**Co-funded by
the European Union**



Abbreviations

CSO

Civil Society Organisation

GCTF

Global Counterterrorism Forum

IDPs

Internally Displaced Persons

IJJ

International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law

IOM

International Organisation for Migration

MEL

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

NGO

Non-Governmental Organisation

NLC

National-Local Cooperation

OSCE

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

P/CVE

Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

UNDP

United Nations Development Programme

Glossary

Community: Individuals, social groups, and institutions that are based in the same geographic area and/or have shared interests. (See [Source](#))

Civil Society: “The arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, that is created by individual and collective actions, organisations, and institutions to advance shared interests.” (See [Source](#))

‘Do No Harm’: Through an understanding of the local context, relationships, and dynamics more broadly, this involves mitigating or avoiding negative, unintended consequences for the potential beneficiaries and implementers of prevention and seeking to influence these dynamics in a positive way. (See [Source](#))

Evaluation: “The assessment of whether project activities collectively achieved the objectives as intended or planned, and as articulated in a theory of change. Inherent to any effective evaluation effort is a clear understanding of the project objectives, the development of measurable and specific indicators, and access to reliable and relevant data.” (See [Source](#))

Gender-sensitivity: Awareness and consideration of gender power dynamics, gender (in)equalities and the differential needs, experiences and status of men, women, girls, and boys, sexual and gender minorities based on socio-cultural context while developing policy, planning or action. (See [Source 1](#) and [Source 2](#))

Interventions: The actions that a city is taking with the intention of making a difference at any given level of prevention to address an identified challenge. This Guide uses “interventions” to apply equally to community-based efforts as well as individual interventions. (See [Source](#))

Monitoring: “The task of ensuring that activities are completed on time and within a prescribed budget and plan. It is the assessment of progress toward project implementation – the completion of key activities for intended beneficiaries, implementers, and partners – and the measurement of quantitative outputs such as the number of participants engaged in the activities” (See [Source](#))

Primary prevention: Programmes and other measures designed to build community resilience against hate, extremism and polarisation and enhance social cohesion to resist these threats. These programmes target communities regardless of their vulnerabilities and come in a variety of forms. (See [Source](#))

Secondary prevention: Programmes and other measures that target individuals identified as being vulnerable to recruitment or radicalisation to hate- or extremist- motivated violence and seek to steer these individuals down a non-violent path. These interventions might include psychosocial support, mentoring, family counselling, cultural or recreational activities, theological debate, education and vocational training and/or support. (See [Source](#))

Tertiary prevention: Programmes and other measures designed to support hate- and extremist-motivated violent offenders in their efforts to leave their milieus, disengage from violence, decriminalise and reintegrate into society. This can also include families, as well as those who have not entered the prison system but who may demonstrate some level of support for violence, including those who have returned from territory once held by Islamic State, for example. These programmes, which can take place within or outside of a custodial setting, may offer educational and vocational training, psychosocial or ideological counselling, housing, and employment opportunities. (See [Source](#))

Theory of Change: is an approach for mapping how and why a desired set of changes are expected to happen in a particular context. It is typically presented as a narrative description accompanying an illustrative diagram. It can be presented in a narrative format, most simply as an ‘if, then, because’ statement explaining what effect certain actions, outputs and outcomes are expected to have and how they will combine to achieve a stated goal. This description is supplemented with a diagram which depicts the pathways of change arising from an intervention and will structure and guide how a city measures results across its effort(s). (See [Source](#))

Whole-of-society approach: An approach to prevention that envisions a role for multiple sectors at the national and local levels, as well as civil society actors. (See [Source](#))

About This Guide

The Strong Cities Network has been working closely with local government officials from across its more than 200 member cities globally since its launch in 2015 to unlock the contributions that local governments, whether in urban or rural settings, can make to whole-of-society approaches to preventing hate, extremism and polarisation¹. In this time, many local government officials shared that they would benefit from a better understanding of the roles that cities can play (and the responsibilities they have) in addressing hate and extremism. This includes by leveraging and learning lessons from existing crime and violence prevention frameworks and approaches. Many also said that they believe that a prevention toolkit designed for local governments would help them operationalise these roles and fulfil these responsibilities.

This Guide is an attempt to capture these experiences and package them in a user-friendly way for cities. This includes local governments that want to enhance existing policies, programmes and practices or develop new ones.

Whom this guide is for

This Guide is written to inform the rich diversity of different diversity of local government officials, including administrative staff and practitioners. It aims to be broad and not restrict guidance to any particular sector, geography or other context.

Strong Cities recognises that for some cities, access to support, guidance and an evidence base for developing prevention is readily available and that there are numerous resources that touch on these issues typically catering to European and North American audiences. Many of these are included in the Recommended Resources annex at the end of this Guide.

This Guide, which builds on Strong Cities' analysis to date, including its policy brief, [Why Do Cities Matter? 10 Steps That Cities Can Take to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism](#), is intended to complement other tools it has recently developed. These include a resource for mayors and other local leaders on prevention, recognising the unique role that they can play in shaping and driving city-led efforts to address hate, extremism and polarisation; an updated guide on city-led response to incidents of hate and extremist-motivated violence; and a resource to facilitate the implementation of the Global Counterterrorism Forum's good practices on strengthening National-Local Cooperation (NLC) for preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

¹ "Prevention" is used throughout this guide to refer specifically the role of cities in preventing hate, extremism and polarisation.

How this guide is intended to be used

This Guide compiles good practice examples and learnings on key aspects of prevention from mapping the issues in a community through to evaluating and sharing learnings from interventions at different levels². Not all components of this guide will be of practical use or otherwise relevant to all cities, and guidance is presented so that specific topics and content might be selected according to the needs of a given city. Beyond this publication, the content of this Guide will be hosted on Strong Cities' [Resource Hub](#) and will become a 'living document' where examples, practice spotlights and learnings will continue to be added and updated online to expand upon the introductory summaries of each aspect covered by the Guide.

Assumptions

As a diverse global network, Strong Cities' membership of more than 200 cities spans more than 40 countries. This Guide is designed to support the needs of local governments interested in strengthening existing or developing new approaches across a wide variety of different locations. It recognises, however, that the legal, political or practical conditions for a city to contribute to these topics vary greatly from one context to the next.

The Guide is designed to have broad applicability. However, it is likely to be of greatest use to cities in countries where the following three criteria are satisfied.

First, the central government recognises, at least to some degree, the importance of pursuing a whole-of-society approach to address hate, extremism and polarisation;

Second, the central government acknowledges the potential that cities have to offer in prevention and building peaceful and cohesive communities less prone to hate, extremism and polarisation; and

Third, the legal and political space exists for local governments to contribute to a whole-of-society approach.

Cities

Strong Cities uses 'cities' as a broad term to refer to all variations of local and sub-national units of government with which it engages, from capital cities, states, counties and provinces to rural towns, regional urban centres and smaller municipalities. Linguistically, this Guide uses 'cities' to refer collectively to the individuals working for the relevant local government, or the various public services and agencies under its purview – whether administrative officials, technical staff or 'frontline' practitioners engaging directly with communities and individuals. For this reason, pronouns are used throughout this Guide where cities are the subject (e.g., "a city whose awareness of national prevention strategy is limited.").

Preventing hate, extremism and polarisation

This Guide focuses on supporting cities to address issues of hate, extremism and polarisation, including that which manifests in violence. This framing is intended to capture a wider range of practice than 'traditional', often narrowly framed P/CVE-focused efforts. It also reflects a plurality of city-led approaches to tackling these issues, acknowledging differences in the prevailing definitions and understandings of these concepts in different contexts.

² This guide uses "interventions" to apply equally to community-based efforts as well as individual interventions. "Interventions" refers in a broad sense to the actions that a city is taking with the intention of making a difference at any given level of prevention to address an identified challenge.

At a basic level, this Guide focuses on enabling cities to contribute to a whole-of-society approach to addressing these challenges. It seeks to catalyse more local government-led efforts to tackle the conditions and enablers of hate, extremism and polarisation in their communities. It also aims to aid the development of more targeted city-led approaches to addressing specific issues, population groups or neighbourhoods that either pose or are targeted by a particular challenge or are otherwise deemed vulnerable. It also focuses on those interventions that aim to support specific individuals with a focus on their disengagement from 'pathways' to hate-

and extremist-motivated violence. It recognises that prevention is designed to mitigate these challenges but cannot be expected to eliminate them altogether. The term "prevention" is used throughout this Guide specifically in relation to cities' efforts to address the issues of hate, extremism and polarisation in a multi-disciplinary, cross-institutional and ultimately whole-of-society way. See *Unpacking "prevention"* in the Introduction to this Guide for more on the variety of efforts this might typically entail for a city.

What do we mean by hate, extremism and polarisation?

There is no universal definition for each of these concepts and each city's approach needs to be tailored to the local legal context and grounded in human rights and the rule of law. Hate, extremism and polarisation are – at their most basic – social challenges that undermine social cohesion, which can lead to violence and have long-term impacts on a city's socio-economic fabric. Whether it is inter-community intolerance and 'othering', feelings of non-belonging, an overall growing divide between a city's different communities or – at its most explicit – hate- or extremism-motivated violence, these threats have multiple manifestations and multiple causes.

Strong Cities refers to these issues together in recognition that all three are both drivers and consequences of social, economic and political disparities and marginalisation, instability and violence, and that all three necessarily require a localised response that addresses the contextual grievances that may fuel them.

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Foreword

By Eric Poinso, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Coordinator, City of Strasbourg, France

and Mzwakhe Nqavashe, Portfolio Chairperson: Safety and Security, City of Cape Town, South Africa

Our cities of Strasbourg and Cape Town joined the Strong Cities Network because of a fundamental appreciation that our work to prevent hate, extremism and polarisation is made more effective when we are learning from our peers in cities around the world. Whether it is our domestic counterparts or our regional neighbours, or even cities much further afield, we are united by a common recognition that global and transnational challenges like these often exploit the most local issues in our own neighbourhoods. Whatever the nature of the specific threats in our own communities and despite the significant differences in context, such platforms offer a rich pool of experience, expertise and support from one city to the next. In turn, our own cities share our learnings, offer our perspectives, and build relationships in the hope that no city need face these threats alone.

The City of Strasbourg has long voiced the need for developing a dedicated resource for cities that offers a comprehensive overview of the key aspects of prevention. The need is clear: to support the myriad professional sectors and services that make up the workforce of a local government with a reference guide that provides a basic summary when facing the challenges of hate, extremism and polarisation in their community. With cities all over the world having a daily responsibility for basic service provision and invariably being asked to do more with less, it had to be a guide written not for technical experts but for everyday practitioners and officials who needed to relate tackling these issues to their 'day job'. Whatever the context and

challenges of a city, it had to build a common understanding of why cities are relevant, what they can do, and how prevention can be part of existing and everyday functions rather than a complex, separate and entirely new endeavour.

When Strong Cities launched its East and Southern Africa Regional Hub last year, Cape Town called for a resource that could serve the needs of cities across the region equally and help cities understand the contribution they can make to issues that too often are treated as national security matters beyond the remit of a local government. It needed to be a guide that was built on the experience of others, that demonstrated core learnings and methodological approaches adopted in cities with very different resources, political conditions and governance frameworks. Local governments are often so stretched with balancing daily competing priorities and serving the objectives of different mayors and local leaders that the first question many have when they get together to talk about hate, extremism and polarisation is "what is my role?" or "why am I relevant?"

Both our cities have witnessed, and continue to experience, different threats and challenges related to hate, extremism and polarisation. These are often complex issues but ones that reach into the heart of local communities, feed on local tensions and divisions, and require multifaceted, coordinated and proactive responses that aim to prevent. Approaches that fail to recognise this are often reductive and insufficient.

Cities have so much to offer if we recognise that prevention and not only security are needed. Cities are closer to communities and they often understand local dynamics and vulnerabilities better than central governments.

This is not to suggest they should work alone; prevention is more effective when there is coordination and alignment between central, local and non-governmental approaches. But if cities are to realise their potential and be able to contribute positively and sustainably, they need help first identifying how they can use what they already do and the assets they already have.

We are pleased to introduce this much-needed Guide from Strong Cities and hope that your city will find something in here that speaks to the challenges you are facing and the practical steps you need to take to prevent them and keep your community safe.

We also hope you will feel motivated in due course to share what you learn from your own experiences and keep this community of practice thriving, supporting cities all over the world to address ever-changing needs.



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Introduction

Why cities?

Local governments of all sizes are uniquely placed to understand and engage with and to provide public services to their communities. Not only do they witness how wider tensions and conflicts play out locally, but they also bear the brunt of extremist and hate-motivated violence that disproportionately targets communities and infrastructure in urban areas. Equally, for residents, the main points of engagement with government actors are likely to be when they access services and interact at the local level.



Local resources and administration models vary, but around the world, there are an array of social, public health, youth-related, business-oriented, cultural and educational functions that local governments hold that offer potential for violence prevention and social cohesion. Even for those that do not have dedicated public safety functions, local governments can build trusted relationships to strengthen inclusivity, participation and resilience while breaking down segregation, hate and polarisation in their communities.

Realising this potential can make an immediate, more sustainable and very practical difference to the peace and security of urban and other local communities the world over.

Despite the numerous benefits that city-led approaches can offer – from early detection and warnings about emerging challenges to trust-building, participatory planning and awareness-raising, not to mention the interventions at all levels that this Guide will cover – cities are still too rarely recognised for what they can bring to addressing these challenges. On issues that often suffer from over-securitisation and top-down policymaking, local leadership and action offer a means to stopping risks from escalating further, addressing root causes, and gaining traction and support from the most marginalised and vulnerable groups. These are all difficult tasks for central governments otherwise acting alone and they are all areas that can benefit from alignment and cooperation between local and national approaches.

Those who seek to divide communities, stir hate, incite extremism or espouse violence often do so by trying to exploit hyper-local challenges before tapping into wider grievances and building polarising narratives. If we recognise that the challenge is in our neighbourhoods, streets and small towns, then involving local government in the effort to make these places strong, resilient and peaceful is clearly a vital step.

Unpacking “prevention”

Strong Cities considers prevention to incorporate all measures and initiatives that address potential causal factors (or ‘drivers’)

contributing to the rise of hate, extremism and polarisation. This includes developing and adopting strategies and policies, designing and implementing various frameworks and mechanisms that ultimately provide key services and delivering activities that aim to address one or some of the potential risks and drivers.

Such measures should be considered complementary to security and criminal justice efforts and are typically led by civilian governmental departments and agencies, such as education, social services and public health and may also involve civil society, youth, the private sector and, in some cases, local police. The specific stakeholders and city departments involved will depend on what services and departments fall under the jurisdiction of any given city, bearing in mind multiple potential contextual differences from one city to the next. It will also depend on what risks are identified, the level of intervention required and the methodological approach decided upon.

Prevention measures typically operate at three levels:

- **Primary** (building resilience and social cohesion in and across different communities).
- **Secondary** (targeting individuals or segments of the population identified as particularly vulnerable to becoming radicalised to hate- or extremism-motivated violence).
- **Tertiary** (targeting individuals who have already committed to violence, including ones in or leaving prison or seeking to disengage from violence).

For many cities, **primary prevention** is likely the area they will feel they are able to make the most difference. This is because primary prevention involves addressing the broader structural and societal issues that create an enabling environment for hate and extremism to take root, which cities can do through leveraging existing city service provision mandates, programmes and resources,

e.g., ones related to education, housing, psychosocial care, recreation, culture and youth engagement.

Addressing issues such as systemic discrimination, marginalisation, corruption and intercommunal tensions while also strengthening social cohesion, good governance, accountability, trust, representation and transparency are considered key components of prevention. Promoting and protecting human rights, gender sensitivity and ensuring that measures 'do no harm' should be fundamental principles for prevention efforts at any level. Considering the complex and multifaceted nature of how hate, extremism and polarisation affect a community, prevention measures should also aim to be multidisciplinary and whole-of-society in its approach.

Depending on the risks identified in a city, **secondary prevention** targeting particular groups or individuals showing behavioural signs of radicalisation to violence may also be possible. In some cases, **tertiary prevention**, which involves individualised interventions in the most serious cases may be part of a city's prevention apparatus, or a city may otherwise be required to play a role in tertiary prevention coordinated by other agencies or levels of government.

A city is unlikely to need to create new infrastructure, develop new policies or hire outside professionals to be able to deliver prevention. Despite the sensitivities and in some cases the specificity of the risks related to hate, extremism and polarisation, cities should not feel obliged to "exceptionalise" prevention and set it apart from the rest of what they do. In fact, prevention is in many cases more impactful, sustainable and participatory when it is considered a routine part of existing services in a way that encourages contribution and cooperation with local communities rather than fear and distrust. Finally, prevention also has to be realistic and work for cities where resources are limited and there are daily competing priorities around basic service provision.

Chapter 1

Mapping the Issues

A comprehensive mapping process marks the starting place for most if not all city-led prevention efforts. This chapter provides an overview of the key elements to prevention, showing how every aspect of planning, strategy, implementation and coordination depends on this critical first step. It then outlines a 10-step guide to the mapping process itself, covering the need to understand the challenges a city faces and the particular

ways they affect different parts of the community, emphasising that inclusive and participatory models at the outset will enhance cooperation and trust. This chapter covers methodological aspects and key principles, the need to identify key stakeholders from within the city and other local sectors and the benefits of identifying existing mechanisms that can be leveraged for prevention.



Informed Prevention: A Pathway for Cities

Conducting an inclusive and participatory mapping is the starting place for all aspects of planning, implementation and coordination. Although developing prevention approaches beyond this may not be a strictly linear process – and should involve opportunities for adjustments and other updates (for instance in light of institutional changes, new threats or learnings/results) – it can be helpful to understand which elements are needed to inform subsequent steps through a basic pathway.

Understand the challenges and existing assets

Map the challenges and identify the threats affecting a city;

Identify key stakeholders and partners, both institutional and in the community;

Be consultative, participatory and representative; and

Include outreach to and perspectives from historically marginalised groups and minorities.

Develop/strengthen local mandate and NLC

Align local approaches with national frameworks;

Strengthen local government mandate for prevention and build awareness; and

Identify ongoing coordination mechanisms.

Consider strategic framework/ approach

Agree on key principles and priorities;

Identify best overall approach/model based on mapping;

Consider how to formalise framework and integrate within/connect to existing policies; and

Be consultative and participatory... again.

Identify, develop and institutionalise local coordination mechanism

Adopt a whole-of-society model, with key stakeholders identified in mapping;

Build on existing infrastructure and mechanisms; and

Strengthen sustainability.

Expand partnerships and coordination

Support community involvement and strengthen partnerships with civil society organisations (CSOs);

Build trust across communities, especially with historically marginalised and other vulnerable groups, including women and young people, and minorities; and

Strengthen information-sharing where relevant and possible.

Implement prevention interventions

Identify level of intervention and beneficiaries/target groups;

Identify methodological approach, roles and responsibilities;

Identify resources; and

Deliver interventions.

Incorporate Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Build theory of change and identify indicators and data collection methods;

Triangulate the data;

Analyse the data and evaluate impact; and

Develop institutional learning to inform strategic framework, coordination mechanisms and implementation, and identify any gaps that may require further mapping and planning to be addressed.

Share learnings

Be transparent and share successes, shortcomings and learnings with communities and all partners involved;

Promote good practices and support other cities; and

Contribute to an evidence base.

A 10-step guide to mapping

To take any action at all, cities first need to map their local landscape. This should include understanding the nature of the challenges/threats the city faces, its prevention-relevant needs and the vulnerabilities and protective factors in its communities. Throughout, cities should ask what existing infrastructure, approaches or initiatives are in place and what resources and expertise are available that can potentially be leveraged for prevention. Such a mapping, which should be informed by input and participation from local communities, including historically marginalised and minority groups, should direct what issues a city will address and indeed every subsequent action a city takes.

There are cities already developing and updating complex and multi-faceted local risk assessments, some of which receive significant support and input from central government and police³.

Equally, there are many cities either approaching this for the first time or who are working without any external support to develop a comprehensive picture of their own landscape.

The steps below represent the key recommendations and good practices relating to mapping that were highlighted by cities consulted for this Guide:

1. Think about who is contributing and developing participatory models, ensuring that local communities have regular opportunities to provide input.

Capture input from across different agencies/departments in the city and from any other relevant services and community stakeholders.

Disaggregate threats at a neighbourhood level where possible and consider the diversity of communities within the city, understanding how different challenges affect particular parts of the community uniquely. Ensure outreach includes historically marginalised groups and minorities where trust and understanding may already be low but whose perspectives and inputs can be critical.

If the city is not responsible for policing, can they coordinate with police in the relevant jurisdiction and request a briefing? Developing information sharing channels between a city and the police will benefit delivery, not just planning. Requesting input and insights on key challenges, backed up by any non-sensitive data they are able to share, can be a valuable first step.

Mapping should go beyond the information and data that police can share. See step 2 for a number of different sectors from which relevant data can potentially be leveraged.

³ This chapter uses the term “assessment” in the broadest sense to look at community factors. For details on/ comparisons of specific assessments tools developed for identifying individual risks [see here](#) and below in Chapter 3.

What can the city do to facilitate input from the public, keeping in mind that the data that informs the mapping should not only capture what the issues/existing mechanisms are but also how they are perceived?

This is critical for effective, community-based prevention against often complex, contested or otherwise sensitive issues.



London's Comprehensive Listening Exercise

When the [Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime \(MOPAC\)](#) in London, UK was developing its local action plan to prevent violent extremism, it [undertook](#) a “comprehensive listening exercise” with thousands of community members, stakeholders and experts across the city. The exercise, championed by the mayor, sought to “hear the voices of those who, in the past, have not been heard but who are the most important to listen to” and prioritised input from “minority and marginalised communities, women and young people.”

MOPAC worked closely with local grassroots organisations and organised stakeholder meetings, round tables and workshops with law enforcement, local authorities, civil society groups, charities, think tanks, regulatory bodies and members of different communities. The results of this mapping led to a series of recommendations, which are captured in a public [report](#) available on MOPAC's website.



Edmonton, Canada carried out extensive community consultations to map the needs and concerns of people of colour, resulting in a dedicated [anti-racism strategy](#). The strategy provides funding streams for civil society-led efforts to tackle systemic, institutional and wider racism and hate, as well as a dedicated office within the city administration and advisory committee to share community perspectives and perceptions with the City Council.

2. Contextualise the challenge

Hate, extremism and polarisation do not develop in a vacuum and local grievances and (mis)perceptions often feed into and provide gateways to wider narratives and ideological influences. It is not sufficient to name a specific 'outside' threat or group that poses a threat to a community without examining why it is gaining traction in a particular city or even in a specific neighbourhood, and what local issues are playing into this dynamic.

It is also important not to be prejudiced or unduly influenced by central government threat analyses, which in some contexts can focus disproportionately on external influences and overlook 'homegrown' threats.

Without expecting to be able to pinpoint causality, ensure that wider societal conditions are factored into the assessment, with the aim of better understanding the interplay between the particular issue/threat that the city wants to address and the wider environment that could have presented longer-term enabling factors.

For these reasons, cities should not just pay attention to 'hard' data such as arrest/incident numbers, particular offences or criminal activities and obvious intercommunal and social tensions. They also need to look more broadly at factors like demographic data, income, poverty, and employment data, and the availability of education, training, welfare and business support, as well as housing, health and sports and cultural services.



To ensure its prevention activities are evidence-based and respond to actual as opposed to perceived drivers of extremist-motivated violence, **Kumanovo, North Macedonia** carried out a [mapping](#) to better understand local dynamics of resilience by surveying an unbiased and representative sample of residents. It measured awareness of and attitudes towards violent extremism and local government prevention; and community resilience to radicalisation based on five core pillars. Not only was this used to identify vulnerabilities across age, gender, ethnicity and neighbourhoods, but it also offered the city a baseline of community resilience against which the impact of preventative measures in the city can be evaluated.

3. Consider online influences

A city may not have access to data around quantity/seriousness of hate, incitement to violence or mis/disinformation online that is targeting or otherwise affecting their community. However, it may be possible for a city to gain a basic understanding of the types of content, the key platforms used and the conspiracy narratives that are being spread.. Whether through consulting communities directly or seeking advice from civil society organisations, researchers and/or the private sector, it should be possible to include a basic assessment of how online activities are influencing offline challenges in the community.

4. Examine trust levels

Developing trust between cities and communities is a critical component of effectively addressing these issues. Trust in local institutions and the city administration will have a significant bearing on how successfully a city can implement its framework. Local governments should consider holding public consultations, focus group discussions or conducting basic surveys designed to understand how well communities trust local government on particular issues and why. Also, cities should solicit community input on what can be done to build better trust.



Safe Digital Cities

Pioneered under the umbrella of [Nordic Safe Cities](#), Safe Digital Cities aims to give municipal practitioners a deeper understanding of the online threat environment as well as tools to strengthen their digital work locally. **Malmö, Sweden**, used this initiative to [map online hate](#) relevant to the city to better understand the scale and scope of the problem using natural language processing algorithms. Findings showed that hate conversations online are reflected in offline activities, and spiral whenever there are tensions or an incident taking place in the city. Findings are used by the local government to improve coordination with law enforcement and civil society and inform its broader safety promotion work. **Aalborg, Denmark**, has similarly [investigated](#) online democratic conversations, with a particular focus on understanding what creates either positive or polarised online communities. The research informs the city's existing prevention work including the launch of a digital volunteer network and digital prevention team.

5. Work with representative, unbiased data

The city should aim to collect data and views that offer a true representation of a particular community. To this end, it should work with evaluation and surveying experts to ensure data collection methods are statistically representative of a given city. Equally, questioning potential biases in the data or how it is being interpreted – unconscious or otherwise – is essential. If data biases cannot be removed, they should be acknowledged in how the data is presented and the potential they may have in influencing how a city acts.

6. Leverage existing data

Many cities' first instincts may be to assume that since tackling these issues is not their primary function as local government, doing so requires gathering new data. There is a risk in assuming that the wealth of data – both quantitative and qualitative – that cities already generate or have access to is not relevant. While in many cases it is, whether it is statistics about school drop-out rates, planning disputes, licensing challenges or employment support on the one hand, cities have the opportunity to take views and feedback from existing community engagement fora and council meetings, which will likely provide rich insights into how hate, extremism and polarisation is affecting the community. Not all forms of data will be relevant from one city to the next, but the point is to consider what the city already has at its disposal, and how interpreting it anew might shed light on these challenges.

7. Be proactive and keep the mapping updated

Local governments should proactively conduct mapping to mitigate concerns as they arise in order to lessen both the impact of such concerns on communities and their potential to escalate to violence. Cities cannot expect to conduct a landscape mapping once and continue to work on the basis of the same assessment year after year. This is because circumstances will change, risks and vulnerabilities will evolve, new challenges will appear and the city will be differently positioned to address them. Therefore, if feasible, cities should aim to review and update their mapping on an annual basis.

8. Standardise the methodology

Cities will need to identify and define the methodological approach they will adopt for their mapping. If the city wants to observe how the landscape is changing in relation to the previous year, especially whether threats, needs and vulnerabilities identified have increased or lessened, they will need to be consistent in the methods used and repeat the same exercises to see how data is changing, if at all. Deviating from this significantly will mean that an assessment is not comparable, in data terms, to what came before. This does not mean that the methodology should not be periodically updated to improve data collection, filtering and assessment based on each city's changing risk profile and broader social context. Whenever changes are made, they need to be intentional and incorporate lessons learned from the prior implementation and any monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

9. Identify existing mechanisms

The mapping should identify the infrastructure, mechanisms and existing initiatives that could be leveraged for addressing one/multiple of the threats identified. For example, if a city identifies a specific challenge around ethnic tensions that are most visible between young people in certain communities, what are the educational, sports or cultural activities, societies or informal fora which are already in place through which the city may be able to facilitate improved understanding and cooperation? These can be both formal mechanisms, like a local peace committee or a residents' welfare association, or informal ones such as a sporting event or a parenting network, for example.

10. Map the key stakeholders and potential implementation partners

Consider not only which city agencies/ departments or other relevant local services need to be involved to address particular challenges, but also the key community stakeholders or other partners whose cooperation and support will be beneficial.

Chapter 2

Strategy

This chapter looks at how cities can develop or expand their mandate to deliver prevention and then discusses different strategic approaches that can be adopted and institutionalised to promote local ownership and sustainability. Finally, it addresses resource mobilisation, including human, financial and other resources that need to be considered by local governments, recognising existing limitations, other priorities that cities face and the potential efficiency and wider benefits of leveraging existing approaches.

Securing a mandate

For many cities, securing a mandate for prevention – meaning the authority, requirement and/or functional responsibility to engage in this work – is the first hurdle. It may seem obvious, but the strength, extent and potential opaqueness of such a mandate will have real implications for what a city can actually do.

Securing a local government mandate in the first place will be contingent on an awareness and understanding of the political will to address the hate, extremism and polarisation threats manifesting in the city.

This can involve a commitment to prioritise prevention alongside (or as part of) more traditional local government priorities, e.g., those related to public safety, violence prevention and social wellbeing. Securing a mandate also requires recognition at both the national and local levels that cities have a role to play in a whole-of-society approach to addressing these threats along with the political and legal space for them to assume such a role. This can typically necessitate a modicum of cooperation between national and local stakeholders National-Local Cooperation (NLC) in a particular context. NLC will be addressed in Chapter 4.

A city's mandate can come in different forms depending on existing legal and governance frameworks, the degree of decentralisation and the prioritisation of prevention in relation to the perceived threat, to name just some of the variables.

Below are examples of some of the ways in which a local government prevention-related mandate manifests in different countries:

- In **Bangladesh** cities are [mandated](#) by the central government to participate in local governance and engagement of citizens through the formation of a town-level coordination committee (TLCC), Ward-level Coordination Committee (WLCC) and a mandatory formation of a gender committee with a female councillor as the chair. These structures are then tasked to actively engage citizens through the development of a citizens' report card, regular town meetings and a citizens' complaint cell and mass communication cell. These structures feed into the development of a city development plan including a gender action- and poverty action plan.
- In **France**, local governments do not have a legal mandate to involve themselves in the prevention of hate- or extremist-motivated violence but they do have a [mandate in crime prevention](#) and are not prohibited from developing their own [policies on hate and extremism prevention](#).
- In **Indonesia**, the national action plan on preventing and countering violent extremism encourages local governments to become involved in addressing violent extremism and requires them to report to the national government twice a year on their efforts to implement the national plan.
- In **Iraq**, the central government provided the districts a clear mandate to develop prevention approaches as part of their efforts to facilitate implementation of the national strategy on countering violent extremism; seven districts have so far [developed localised plans](#) in coordination with the [National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism](#) and with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- In **Kenya**, County Governments are required to develop County Action Plans setting out the approaches and activities taken by local government in accordance with the [national strategy to counter violent extremism](#) and in coordination with the National Counter Terrorism Centre.
- In **Malaysia**, although there is no explicit mandate for cities on preventing hate and extremism, there is a public safety function served by cities with an associated budget line and [ongoing NLC](#) to explore the potential contribution local governments can make to hate and extremism prevention efforts.
- **North Macedonia's** [national P/CVE strategy](#) mentions the role local governments can play in implementation and the central government is directly engaging municipalities on this.
- In **Norway**, all cities were tasked with developing local plans to support the implementation of the [National Action Plan against radicalisation and violent extremism](#), but encouraged to leverage existing local crime prevention frameworks and structures for doing so.
- In **Poland**, although there is no national prevention framework, the city of [Dąbrowa Górnicza](#), leveraging its public safety mandate, established a local team, in cooperation with civil society, to address radicalisation to violence in the city.
- In **Serbia**, following the school shooting, the Ministry of Local Self Government has asked all cities/municipalities to form [Local Safety Councils](#), which would deal specifically with prevention.
- In the **UK**, under the national Prevent strategy, some local governments have a [legal duty](#) to manage local 'Channel panels' focused on individual interventions with "at risk" individuals, as well as wider requirements to develop or support community-wide prevention initiatives.

Key questions and considerations

- Does the city have an explicit mandate to contribute to a whole-of-society approach to addressing hate, extremism and polarisation? From where does this mandate derive, e.g., national framework or legislation, city council resolution or decision?
- Does the city have the authority to do so as part of a broader, existing mandate related to, for example, public safety, violence or crime prevention or social well-being?
- Is there an option for the city to adopt its own mandate, for example, based on a municipal council decision? This could also be done to further strengthen or provide a degree of local ownership alongside an existing mandate granted by the national government.
- Does the mandate only apply to specific threats, e.g., a single form of hate or extremism, or is it broader to include all forms or even a wider set of social harms?

Awareness

There are a number of other considerations beyond the formal 'granting' of the mandate itself. One frequently cited, if seemingly straightforward, challenge is making sure that relevant city departments and local services are aware of the mandate. Many local government officials consulted for this Guide expressed frustrations in cases where there is a national strategy that acknowledges or outlines a role for local government, but it has not been shared with cities, let alone benefitted from their input.

For instance, **Uganda** developed a National P/CVE Strategy, but [cities emphasised](#) in an April 2023 Strong Cities workshop that they are unaware of its existence because it has neither been publicly released nor shared with them, nor were they asked to contribute their local perspectives and needs when it was being developed. This has led to confusion around their mandate and a lack of structures, capacities, skills and resources to be able to implement the strategy at the local level.

Sharing relevant national frameworks with cities is thus a prerequisite to meaningful and sustainable involvement of local governments in a whole-of-society approach to the prevention of hate and extremism in their country. For their part, local governments need to ensure that awareness of these frameworks is not restricted to one or two city officials but is well socialised across different departments and with the political leadership of the city.

Is it sufficient?

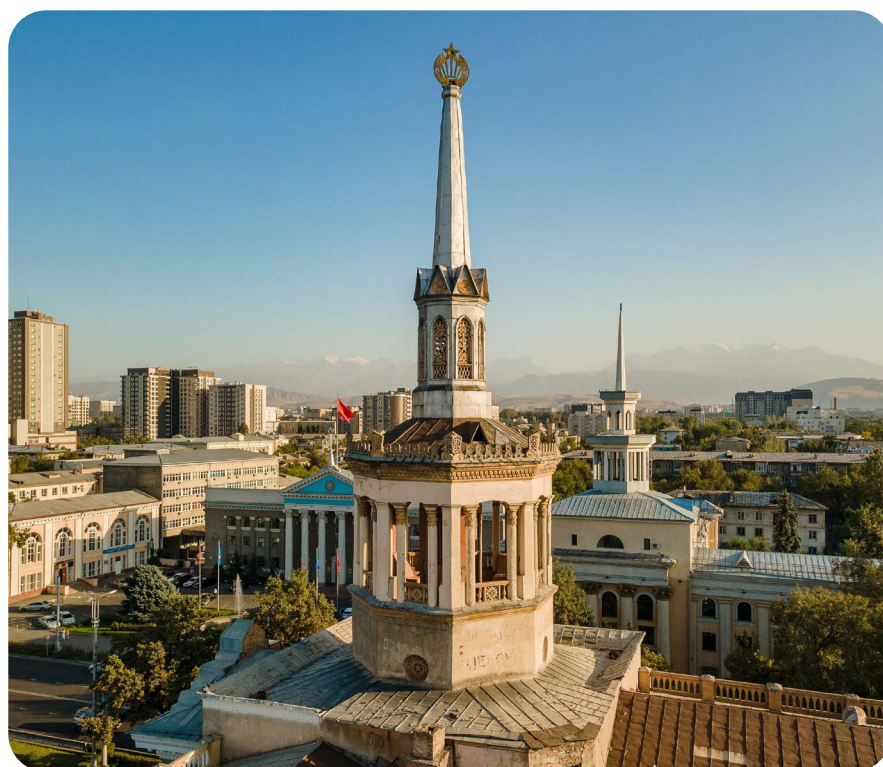
Next, cities need to consider if the mandate they do have is sufficient. Is it focused only on alerting security agencies in the event of an immediate concern or incident or does it also include a mandate to intervene earlier and develop community-level prevention programmes and activities? Equally, if the city has a public safety role, how expansive is this? Is it limited to practical security considerations, such as safeguarding public gathering places and other “soft” targets, road safety and/or CCTV installation? If so, then more work is needed to demonstrate that public safety extends beyond physical security infrastructure to broader questions of social cohesion and resilience. If the city does have a mandate that recognises this, does it cover the three commonly accepted levels of prevention (see below under *Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Prevention* in Chapter 2)? Does it address all forms of hate and extremism or is it limited to a specific threat or ideology? Does it allow for multi-agency cooperation and collaboration with civil society, communities and the private sector?

Developing a strategic framework

Any city needs to make a number of strategic considerations before implementing prevention programmes or initiatives in its communities. Whether these result in a formal strategy document explicitly associated with preventing and responding to hate, extremism and polarisation, another formalised framework (e.g., related to public safety, violence prevention or social wellbeing), or have no published strategy tied to them at all, will vary from city to city.

Some cities may be developing a new strategy for the first time while others could be looking to update, improve or otherwise change an existing strategy or approach. Whichever it is, a strategic framework should not just be an outline of what a city commits to doing; it should ultimately speak to the conceptual framing of how a city chooses to act on prevention. Cities should consider what works best for their particular challenges and circumstances, recognising that the proposed framework will need to be practical and achievable with their existing resources and local services.

Local officials and stakeholders will also need to be cognisant of the need in many cases to get approval from a mayor, council or other political body for their prevention strategy. Thus, the political message that could be signalled by adopting a particular approach should also be borne in mind. While prevention efforts and the strategies that frame them need to be depoliticised as far as possible, they do not exist in a political vacuum and in most if not all cases, they address issues that are at least contentious if not also inherently political. What is important is that there is awareness of the political and policy context during their development and an appreciation of how the involvement of local politicians or other policies is likely to be received differently across the community. Needless to say, it is critical that while such frameworks inevitably have a political context, they should not be used as political tools to attack or undermine political opponents. Many cities take their cue not only from what other cities are doing but from approaches endorsed by the United Nations or other international organisations.



Common examples of often inter-related frameworks include:



Public health: an interdisciplinary field that involves the organised efforts and informed choices of society, organisations, both public and private, communities and individuals. Such an approach seeks to address the causes of hate, extremism and polarisation by treating them at a societal level, as we would treat them pathologically in a medical setting. For more on how public health models can be applied to preventing hate and extremism, [see here](#).



Violence prevention: specific to targeting manifestations of violence and preventing crime through education, mediation and other social means. There are many examples of violence prevention models adopted around the world. One of the best known is the [Cardiff Model](#), developed in the UK as a public health approach and since tailored to applications in many other cities.



Community safeguarding and public safety: protection of the right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This may encompass a broad variety of different approaches, including those developed for safeguarding children and adults as well as wider public safety approaches. For an overarching approach, see UN Habitat's [Safer Cities](#) programme and the [New Urban Agenda](#).



P/CVE: a dedicated framework for addressing the drivers which radicalise individuals to extremist- and terrorist-motivated violence and strengthen community resilience. These are often linked to or under the umbrella of national counterterrorism strategies. For instance, Brčko District, Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted a dedicated [Action Plan](#) for the implementation of the National Prevention and Fight Against Terrorism Strategy.

These frameworks need not be mutually exclusive and may be used in combination. Whichever approach(es) a city adopts, the frameworks should emphasise the following principles. **The following principals should be incorporated in all cases:**

- **‘Do no harm’:** coming from the humanitarian and development fields, this [notion](#) indicates that an intervention should be mindful of unintended consequences and always improve, never deteriorate, a situation or pose harm to individuals or communities.
- **Gender-sensitivity:** awareness and consideration of gender power dynamics and gender (in)equalities and the differential needs, experiences and status of men, women, girls and boys, sexual and gender minorities based on socio-cultural context while developing policy, planning or action. (Definition drawn from [OSCE](#) and [UN Women](#) sources)
- **Human rights:** Prevention and response should protect and promote human rights and individuals enshrined in [international human rights instruments](#). This should not just be a statement; it must be considered at each stage of implementation and engagement.
- **Whole-of-society:** effective prevention requires the [participation of a diversity of government and non-government stakeholders](#), including government departments and public services spanning all relevant sectors and disciplines, as well as civil society, the private sector and community members. It should also not be limited to one specific agency alone without cooperation from others.

Additional Considerations

The following apply throughout the planning and strategic development of a city’s approach to prevention. Many, if not all, will be relevant to initial mappings as much as to subsequent implementation steps. In turn, initial mapping stages – and especially community and stakeholder consultations – will help equip cities to navigate these risks according to the specific needs and sensitivities of their community.

Avoid Securitisation

Cities should be mindful of avoiding the ‘trap’ of securitisation that is often associated with efforts to address hate and extremism, and even more so with policies that are explicitly framed using the concept of “P/CVE”. The concepts are frequently associated with counterterrorism and thus often, however correctly or otherwise, with ‘hard’ security. Especially at the local level, too close an association with these frequently contested concepts, which have at times been misapplied against political opponents or historically marginalised communities, leading to [human rights abuses](#), is unlikely to engender support from the very parts of a city where prevention efforts are most likely needed. Overall, such an approach risks increasing rather than mitigating any social tensions that might exist in a city.

Definitional Challenges

Whatever the chosen approach, it is crucial that each city reach consensus among different stakeholders on key definitions and conceptual issues. One example of a contested notion is the term ‘radicalisation’, as it poses ideological, cognitive and/or behavioural understandings that risk treating the individual in a social vacuum and thus potentially addressing only effects rather than causality. It may also be politically contested, aimed at identifying ‘radicals’ and thus inspire distrust, suspicion and fear among communities, and potentially open the framework to political misuse or abuse.

Participation & Trust-Building

Consultation and input from communities, who might be considered ‘end users’ or ‘beneficiaries’ of the framework, should be sought throughout the development of the framework, including on the conceptual approach adopted and the key terminology included. More widely, a city’s strategy will likely be more effective and better supported if it offers a true reflection of the concerns, values and priorities of communities. For this, and many other reasons, building trust between cities and local communities, as well as with key agencies like the police that might fall outside the purview of the city but are a necessary partner, is a critical ingredient throughout every step of strategic planning and implementation.

Harnessing Existing Approaches

A further challenge for approaches that focus heavily on ‘radicalisation’ and counterterrorism is the assumption that these threats are often perceived to be ‘exceptional’ or inherently specific and thus requiring a distinct approach for addressing. In fact, cities tend to report better results where strategies for tackling these issues form part of broader, existing mechanisms and approaches and are better positioned to adopt an integrated, ‘mainstreamed’ approach to prevention. This also encourages cities to avoid siloed working and develop better multi-stakeholder collaboration. This does not mean that terrorism and extremism cases/challenges will not require specific interventions, but rather, that they should be considered and deployed in an integrated way. This is a key area in which many cities have expressed a need for increased support, including training and capacity-building (see Chapter 3).

Institutionalising the approach

Even if city-led prevention is based on multi-stakeholder cooperation, the first task is to identify a lead entity, office, individual or group of individuals (e.g., a task force or coordination unit) to oversee the implementation of the framework. Having an office or individual(s) that champions prevention – as an approach and a philosophy – across a city is important. In putting together this Guide, local government officials shared that key individuals had been particularly critical in developing prevention in their city, influencing the approach of other agencies and winning the backing of their mayor or local political leaders.

As with much of prevention, there is no one-size-fits-all approach for how a city should organise itself to engage on these issues. Below are some options and considerations for each.

• Individual lead agency/department

+ Pros: Provides a clear, unambiguous line of responsibility and accountability.

- Cons: Other agencies may feel less involved, and responsibility may fall unequally on a specific lead.

Considerations:

- A further consideration here is whether a city appoints an existing agency/department as lead or creates a new unit, either as a standalone office or integrated within an existing agency/department. Resource constraints will also play some role in determining the course of action here.
- The choice of which agency/department should lead may also signal a particular policy emphasis and cities need to be mindful of how such choices will be perceived in their communities and affect trust and cooperation from potential target groups due to perceived prejudices and/or past experiences.

- **Shared responsibility across multiple agencies/departments**

+ Pros: Greater collective ownership and a clear expectation that prevention needs to be considered and contributed to by multiple agencies reflecting different functions and services that a city delivers.

- Cons: Risk of overlapping responsibilities, inconsistencies or competition between different agencies. Having multiple agencies per se is likely not the problem, but cities consulted on this felt challenges came when there were breakdowns in communication and cooperation (including around information sharing), for whatever reason, between different agencies.

Another option is to charge responsibility to a **city-wide network** that brings together relevant agencies/departments as well as CSOs and key community stakeholders. If a city's mapping process at the outset has been comprehensive and involved participation from across the community as well as different departments and services, this network may already largely be in place. There are also some further considerations with the network option:

- **Leverage an existing network:** many cities have already established thematic networks to address challenges facing local communities (e.g., to address ethnic/religious discrimination, integration issues or gender equality). A local peace commission, law and order committee, or public safety council are all examples from cities consulted for this Guide.
- **Create a new network:** The framing of the issue will be crucial and must fully reflect the aspirations of external partners, including community stakeholders. Also, this type of network may lack long-term sustainability if the subject is considered too specific or too narrow.

- **Form an expert group:** Particularly on complex subjects where external expertise adds value, a city may want to consider including individuals with specific technical, professional or academic expertise alongside local services and community stakeholders. This could be done by including them in a prevention network together with other stakeholders, or by setting up a separate expert group or advisory committee.

For more on local prevention networks and other multi-stakeholder coordination models that can support or lead city-level prevention efforts, see Chapter 4.

Whatever the model, directing a network to lead prevention should not absolve the city – at either a political or administrative level – of all responsibility or involvement. Not only is there a general need to build awareness of prevention priorities and approaches across the different parts of the local government, but the city should also have a direct relationship with a prevention network, even if just to facilitate meetings, coordinate different agencies or adopt recommendations. The wider city administration should also support a prevention network by offering infrastructure, human resources and funding, and by identifying existing mechanisms that might be leveraged to support prevention.

Sustainability

A couple of points on institutional sustainability need to be kept in mind:

- **Navigating political change:** Achieving results from a city's prevention approach requires long-term effort and investment, likely longer than a single mayoral or council term. Insulating the strategic approach from political changes, whether spurred by elections, new appointments, or changes in ministerial responsibilities, requires working to achieve consensus and buy-in from key administrative staff.

This might include prioritising any departmental/agency leads who (a) may continue in post despite changes at the political or executive level and (b) are well positioned to embed prevention into existing/updated guidance, approaches and mechanisms for delivering wider services in the city. Incoming political leaders and administrations should be briefed if details on the city's framework are not already part of the transition/handover discussions.

- **Securing a legal basis for a city's framework:** Not only can this further insulate a city's approach from short-term political changes, but also puts the framework on a statutory footing that will likely also improve its potential to be embedded within the wider legal responsibilities of a city and potentially support efforts to raise financial and other resources, for example by requiring its inclusion in annual budgets. Passing a city council motion or amending existing legislation to make provisions for a prevention framework is discussed earlier in this chapter in relation to strengthening a city's mandate, but it is also an important component of a city's sustainability strategy.

Identifying resources

It is not uncommon for a well-crafted prevention strategy to fail to deliver on its promise due to a lack of adequate resources. Considering that resources will always be limited and cities are often financially stretched to deliver existing public services, the question is often how to leverage existing resources to show results. If additional ones are required, then the challenge becomes how to mobilise new ones without adding a significant financial burden.

There are several types of resources, all of which are necessary for the success of prevention efforts – from human and financial resources to materials such as infrastructure and facilities as well as less tangible resources like particular skills, training and expertise.

The most basic aspects of resources should not go overlooked, as working conditions sometimes depend on these. All types of resources ultimately have financial implications (for example expertise requires training, which in turn requires a budget), but the impact can be limited by sharing the burden among different agencies. Given that cities already have policies and infrastructures in place, some resources can be (at least in part) mobilised by connecting with what already exists.

The following are examples from different global contexts of city departments that may be called upon to contribute to prevention efforts:

- Crime prevention/public safety
- Local democracy/citizen participation
- Urban development and planning
- Youth and education
- Health and social care
- Sports
- Culture
- Gender equality
- Integration/migrant resettlement
- Religious/ethnic harmony
- Welfare
- Housing

It follows that prevention of hate, extremism and polarisation will not necessarily need its own infrastructure, office, or staffing budget (see *institutionalising the approach*, above), but at a basic level it requires the same types of resources that other departments have access to.

If new resources are needed, a city might explore the following options (separately or in combination):

- **National government grants, budget allocation or other funding mechanisms:** This might pose particular opportunities for cities whose national governments have adopted a national strategy on prevention. Several countries do have regular calls for proposals for prevention initiatives, but keep in mind that having an entire prevention infrastructure dependent on competitive grant funding, particularly if tied exclusively to the national government and its priorities, can pose sustainability challenges in the longer-term.

- **Dedicated line in city budget:** This creates an expectation and a precedent for annual allocation, but it is also a demonstration of wider commitment and an important part of institutionalisation (see *Institutionalising the approach* above).
- **International donors:** Such opportunities vary considerably from country to country and from city to city. Funding procedures and application processes may be inaccessible to small cities that do not have the necessary staff or skills to formalise their projects. In many cases, an implementing partner which is not a government agency or other public body. It may be important to consider both whether there is alignment between international donors' priorities and those of a local community and whether receiving support from a particular donor might affect community perceptions of a city's prevention efforts.

Except for Strong Cities, there are few examples of funding for training or capacity building on extremism and hate targeting local governments specifically. Most of this support is focused on central governments and/or CSOs.

- **Private sector partnerships:** Some cities have successfully managed to secure resources from the private sector, whether from local business owners and chambers of commerce, or from multinationals with a presence in their city. Often designed as public-private partnerships, resources can often be skills, expertise and facilities in addition to financial contributions. This is covered in more detail under *Involving the Private Sector* in Chapter 4.



London, UK: In 2019, the Mayor of London and MOPAC launched the first iteration of the Mayor's [Shared Endeavour Fund](#), a grassroots funding initiative dedicated to supporting hyper-local responses to hate crimes, violent extremism and related threats in London. To scale the support available, MOPAC sought out a private sector partner that could match the funds provided by City Hall. After outreach and engagement with multiple potential private sector partners, MOPAC partnered with [Google.org](#), resulting in an £800,000 joint investment that supported more than 30 grassroots organisations across the city to build resilience within their communities.

Chapter 3

Implementation

This chapter outlines different ways in which cities can operationalise their approach, as well as how they can equip key stakeholders with the tools and capacities to play a role. It provides examples of city-led primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and also discusses how local governments can navigate potentially sensitive issues, including engagement with historically marginalised or minority groups or balancing public safety needs against free speech, for example.

Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Prevention

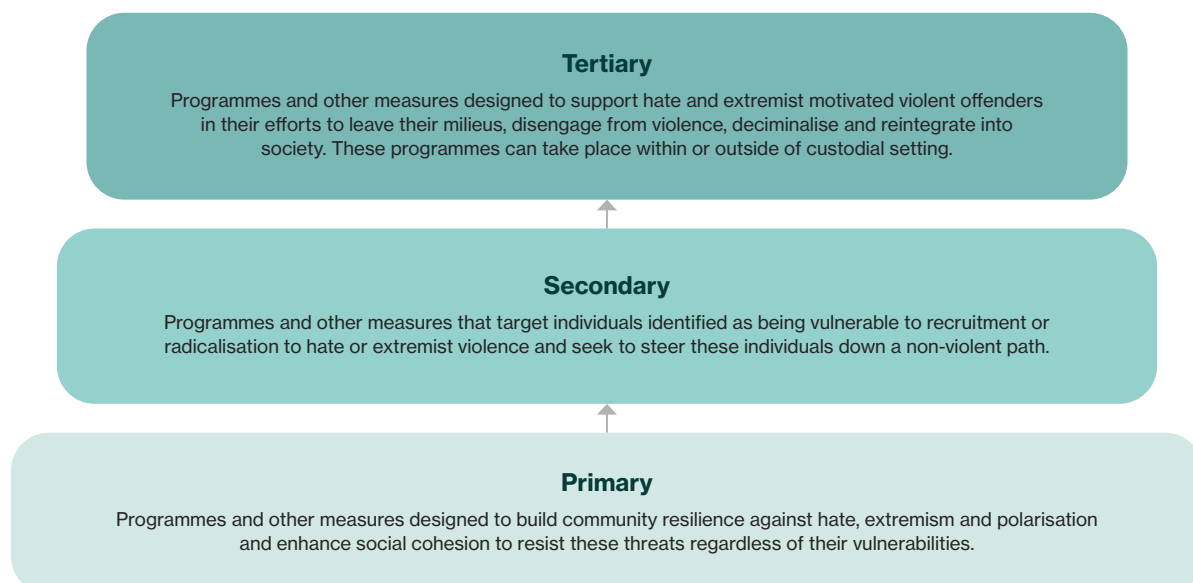
The concepts of primary, secondary and tertiary intervention come originally from the field of public health, referring to efforts to prevent disease and prolong life. This is increasingly applied to violence prevention, P/CVE, peacebuilding and related fields in recognition that these require the same three levels of effort

(broad population-wide measures, efforts to detect and mitigate risk, and efforts to reduce risk where it already exists).

There are many resources available on all three levels of prevention and how these are being applied in different fields. For the purposes of this Guide, we will adopt the understandings outlined in the diagram below.

This diagram should not be restricted to community-based or offline prevention only but should incorporate consideration of online risks and interventions too in a way that reflects an integrated, multi-faceted threat landscape.

At each level, this Guide will refer to “interventions”, which should be understood as actions that a city is taking with the intention of making a difference at any given level, rather than in a technical sense as applying specifically to individual interventions through, for example, one-to-one mentoring programmes.



Primary Prevention

Primary prevention will likely have the widest relevance to most cities across different contexts, drawing on their role in delivering basic public services and in some cases areas like health and education. Primary prevention can also be a first step, for example where a city lacks a mandate for, or is otherwise unable to deliver, more targeted interventions. The point of primary prevention is to take action that makes a city more resilient, more socially cohesive and less likely to develop vulnerabilities associated with threats like hate, extremism and polarisation. This includes actions a city might want to take anyway as part of its efforts to support thriving, integrated and peaceful communities, irrespective of any specific threat.

It is important to note that the prevention role played by the city administration may differ not only according to context or capability but also from one area of prevention programming to another. In some cases, a city will be the sole or primary actor instigating or delivering a particular programme. In others, a city may have a coordination or facilitation role to bring other stakeholders to the table. The role and the visibility of a city is something that should be determined in planning stages building on the findings of the landscape mapping and, where necessary, incorporated into a city's local framework or strategy.

Examples of primary prevention steps that cities may consider taking:

Community engagement: Trusted, accessible and transparent local institutions are a [better foundation](#) for security, inclusion and other potential layers of intervention. Community engagement would be considered a primary intervention if it focuses on fostering these linkages between a city administration and the communities it serves, without narrowing down to a specific type of risk or target group. This includes a focus on engaging different religious, cultural and ethnic groups and other communities that may feel less represented by or connected to the city's administration, including minorities and those who are historically marginalised. Community engagement could take any form, from organising neighbourhood meetings and intercultural dialogues to setting up an information desk at a local hospital or other service. It can be a standalone action in itself but may also be incorporated, as demonstrated by the interventions below, as a methodological approach.



Aurora, Colorado, USA has provided residents the opportunity to get directly involved in ensuring the city's security. Members of the [Aurora Key Community Response Team \(AKCRT\)](#) work alongside city officials during times of civil unrest to engage with communities and partner organisations. The AKCRT gathers once per month in an open, public meeting to discuss community safety and plan for upcoming events.



Cape Town, South Africa has a [Safer and Healthier Places of Worship](#) programme through which the city works to improve relationships among faith communities, and between them and the local government. The city initially brought these groups together to give them a forum to share their concerns and what they perceive as gaps in their ability to address them, as well as to establish a regular channel of communication between the city and its diverse faith communities. After the initial meeting, the city organised a three-day workshop that included security actors and focused on training on emergency scenario planning, including for first responders. Disaster Risk Management and other partners identified the need to be proactive in ensuring that places of worship are prepared and have an appropriate emergency response if an incident should occur. Overall, the programme is helping to build trust and improve relationships between the local government and different faith groups, as well as to equip the latter with the knowledge and information needed to proactively participate in prevention.



Mardan, Pakistan has a local peace committee which serves as a [city-led platform](#) for local government and community leaders to come together and address sensitive and complex social issues, including religious and ethnic tensions as well as challenges resulting from the resettlement of 1.5m IDPs fleeing violence in areas close to Afghanistan. Most recently, the city convened a meeting for relevant local stakeholders to discuss opportunities and challenges to strengthening social cohesion and tackling polarisation in the city. One of the proposed measures was to allocate a separate budget for addressing youth marginalisation and enhancing their inclusion in decision-making and other civic matters.

Education: Many cities have some jurisdiction over schools covering younger age groups and some also have control over secondary education institutions. There is also often a mix of public and private schools as well as, in some cases, more informal or traditional education settings. Religious schools may also exist in a city, with varying degrees of regulation and oversight on the part of the city administration. Whatever the relevant control over education institutions in a city, interventions at this level might incorporate, for example, adding inclusion, tolerance, critical

thinking, citizenship or digital literacy to the syllabus, or otherwise ensuring that schools help create awareness around social exclusion, isolation and hate, or even that they make children and families better aware of existing support services in their community. Cities consulted for this Guide felt it important to note that prevention in schools should focus on instilling positive values and attitudes, rather than framing the issues in a negative manner around risks and threats.



Novi Pazar, Serbia, a city which faced significant challenges of youth radicalisation to violent extremism, initiated [prevention programmes through education](#). Namely, it organised a conference on the most impactful ways to include prevention aspects in school curricula and raise students' awareness of the detrimental impact of hate, extremism and polarisation on livelihoods. This collaborative effort involved extensive consultations with CSOs, the national government and local institutions. The event also inspired a wider dialogue about incorporating prevention in schools and building youth resilience through early warning, dialogue and trust building with the local police and city institutions, including bodies leading prevention and youth engagement initiatives.



Rio de Janeiro, Brazil works with schools to protect education environments. Through the [Safe School App](#), the Municipal Secretariat of Education supports teachers and students by identifying cases of violence, self-harm and other threats and crises, including attacks on schools. It aims to provide rapid action support to management and connect schools to the Secretariat and other public bodies, simplifying coordination.

Youth engagement and empowerment:

Young people are often considered passive targets or recipients of prevention programmes, rather than active participants. Cities should offer an active role to youth in prevention activities and should give young people a genuine, and not tokenistic, stake in identifying the challenges and proposing ways to address them. Ensuring that young people have the skills and capabilities to raise concerns and advocate for their needs is key. Reducing barriers to accessibility and participation in city decision-making and policy development can positively impact the resilience of future generations and allow a city's efforts to better serve its community.

Such efforts might be achieved by supporting an active and representative youth council, hosting dialogues between city leaders and youth groups, or engaging with youth clubs, societies and grassroots organisations to promote debate and discussion of sensitive issues in a facilitated environment. Particular attention may be given to key issues like trust in police or other institutions and services. Care should be taken to accommodate people from different backgrounds and avoid excluding certain groups or reinforcing stigmatisation. Fundamentally, the issues discussed need to be raised by the youth themselves and not imposed.



Maputo, Mozambique has a dedicated Councillor for Youth and Citizenship, who is responsible for developing and overseeing city-led youth empowerment programmes. At a [regional workshop](#) Strong Cities hosted in Johannesburg for East and Southern African cities, the Councillor shared that through his role, the city has pioneered a number of youth-focused initiatives, which include involving youth in urban design to ensure there are adequate, safe public spaces where young people can socialise and engage in healthy recreational activities. The city also runs a youth innovation programme where young people are supported financially and with training to deploy projects to promote social cohesion, youth entrepreneurship and more, which are broadcast on local TV and social media channels to then encourage more youth to get involved.



Toronto, Canada: Recognising that youth have often been missed in the city's planning and strategy development processes in the past, Toronto set up a Youth Research Team of ten young people aged 18-29 who were tasked to connect with other youth to understand the issues they feel need to be prioritised by the local government over the coming years. This effort resulted in the development of a [Youth Engagement Strategy](#), which was "made for youth by youth" and provides a list of issue areas that young people consider as priorities (e.g., youth violence, safety and relations with law enforcement; employment; affordable housing). The Strategy also provides actions for the city to follow to address these areas while continuing to meaningfully engage with youth. are supported financially and with training to deploy projects to promote social cohesion, youth entrepreneurship and more, which are broadcast on local TV and social media channels to then encourage more youth to get involved.



Čair, North Macedonia: To address youth radicalisation in its communities, the city built and is operating a [Youth and Community Centre](#). It provides a space for youth to access resources and networks, build their skills and knowledge on civic engagement and active citizenship and work on local social impact initiatives. The city runs the Centre in cooperation with various local civil society and community-based organisations which organise different types of events.

Public health, including mental health and social services: Many cities will routinely engage with public health services even if they do not have direct control over them, for example on disease prevention or infection control. For many, the COVID-19 pandemic opened up new avenues for such cooperation and communication. Working to raise awareness among health practitioners on the city's approach to prevention as well as how to address concerns about the vulnerability of an individual or group might be a first step. In this event, the involvement and needs of the wider health sector should be considered as part of a city's mapping process with the inclusion of health professionals in a multi-stakeholder framework. Continuing to support

a healthier population should extend beyond physiological health to mental health provision and social services. While such services can also be involved in more targeted interventions, their role in primary interventions should be recognised as supporting healthy, active, connected and enabled communities. At the primary prevention level, their involvement is not prompted by any particular challenge around extremism, polarisation or hate, but because it fosters a more resilient, cohesive city in general which is in turn less vulnerable to division and hate.



Greater Manchester, United Kingdom: Through the [Greater Manchester Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Accord](#), Greater Manchester Combined Authority formalised a three-way collaboration between itself, the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and the city's voluntary and civil society sector to embed the role of voluntary organisations and community groups in the implementation of the [Greater Manchester Strategy](#). Through this Accord, Greater Manchester commits to ensuring voluntary organisations and community groups inform both the development and are included in the delivery of programmes to address issues ranging from mental ill-health (in partnership with the National Health Service and city-specific healthcare providers) to food poverty, addiction and homelessness, etc. The Accord also commits to ensuring civil society is represented in relevant municipal-led groups, such as the Gender-Based Violence Board and Employment and Skills Advisory Board. While the Accord is not specific to preventing hate and extremism, it offers an important example of how local governments can facilitate partnerships between key actors (in this case, health and social care and the voluntary and civil society sector) in a joint effort to address root causes of instability across the city.

Family support: Families can be among the most influential actors in prevention and many cities already offer general support to parents on a range of issues. There are also a number of risk factors around families where domestic abuse, coercive control, addiction issues, substance abuse, or exposure to criminal networks and activities, among many other things, can make an individual more vulnerable. A city can initiate discussion groups, peer support networks, or offer courses and

guidance on specific needs for parents, as well as generally raise awareness around risks, how to flag concerns and seek further support in a safe environment. As far as possible, all interventions should be based on existing and established family support activities and infrastructures, not only limiting costs but helping simplify how families access support and treat prevention challenges as relevant to other aspects of their lives.

MotherSchools: Developed and launched by [Women Without Borders](#), this programme supports mothers as the first line of defence in historically marginalised or otherwise vulnerable communities by strengthening their individual capacity, capability, emotional literacy and awareness of radical influences. It is run in close coordination with local governments in 15+ countries across the world. Cities in Central Asia and the Western Balkans and other regions are provided training to upgrade their social services to better understand and create prevention strategies for extremism, while at the same time providing in-kind support for programme activities.



Masaka, Uganda: In Uganda, poverty, unemployment and lack of economic opportunities are amongst the most pressing vulnerabilities exploited by extremist groups to recruit and otherwise mobilise young people. To address this challenge, Masaka has used its constituency development funds [to support youth economic empowerment programmes](#), and has favoured youth-led enterprises for municipal contracts and tenders (such as for public markets, commuter taxi parks, street parking, loading and off-loading services, public toilets, public abattoirs, etc.). In terms of tertiary prevention, the city also supports young people that have been released from prison through partnering with local organisations that hire these young people to clean the city (amongst other activities), ensuring they have wages and helping them become more productive members of society. These young people are additionally offered vocational training and counselling through dedicated rehabilitation hubs.

Business engagement, vocational

training and employment support: Many cities consulted for this Guide noted that unemployment and a lack of opportunities were key vulnerabilities for hate, extremism and polarisation in their city. A city may decide to engage with the private sector on anything from basic awareness raising and employee support mechanisms, but equally to develop or expand vocational training support, career development schemes and other forms of support. At a primary level, this would all be pursued with the general goal of reducing vulnerabilities and increasing resilience at the general population level, rather than responding to any specific threat or challenge in a targeted way or with specific groups.

Sports: Many cities leverage sports clubs and sporting activities in support of primary prevention efforts. In many cases, sports have the potential to unite people from across different parts of the community while also demonstrating values of respect and a 'zero tolerance' stance towards issues like bullying, racism and other forms of discrimination. Sports campaigns and associations with particular clubs and athletes can help project key messages and expand the audience reached. Some cities have also found that sports can help create common ground and a shared sense of belonging across otherwise divided or siloed parts of the community.



Gostivar, North Macedonia, with support from Strong Cities and in line with its local prevention strategy, a train-the-trainer programme for “youth development through sports”. The purpose was to equip physical education teachers from all schools and local coaches from the city to design and implement classroom and extracurricular activities that would help youth improve leadership and communication skills and empathy. Additionally, this allowed teachers and coaches a mechanism to promote social cohesion among young people in this multi-cultural city.

As a good practice, and again with support from Strong Cities, the same model was used in three counties in Kenya (Isiolo, Kwale and Nakuru) where local coaches and teachers were trained on youth engagement and inclusion, and then supported to develop and implement programmes that bring together young people from different backgrounds and communities to connect, interact and work together through sports.

Culture: Similarly to sports, cultural activities and engagements are often seen as helpful vehicles for reaching across communities, widening audiences, pushing key messages and fostering a sense of belonging. A city may also develop cultural dialogues designed to help different parts of its community interact, better understand the 'other', air tensions, discuss sensitive topics, and shed light on challenges that may otherwise be difficult to raise.

Cultural interventions at the primary level might also encompass, for example, efforts to open new libraries that prioritise deprived or isolated groups. Again, such interventions would fall under the primary level if they were designed to open or level access across different communities because of the multiple benefits they could bring, rather than because these are communities that necessarily show specific vulnerabilities related to hate, extremism and polarisation.



Monrovia, Liberia: To prevent a repeat of violence between the city's different religious communities, Monrovia helped establish a local [Interfaith Council](#) to connect religious groups with one another to jointly contribute to making Monrovia a safe space for all its faith groups. Since its launch, the council has brought religious groups and their leaders together to break bread, celebrate their respective faiths together (e.g., through interfaith Easter and Ramadan celebrations), discuss emerging concerns and jointly brainstorm solutions that can then be implemented with support from the local government.

Public space and urban planning: For many cities, planning decisions related to public, commercial, and private land and property is a key area of responsibility. Urban planning, therefore, offers a critical means by which primary prevention can be integrated and 'mainstreamed' within existing mechanisms and tools at cities' disposal. By including considerations related to public safety and specifically to prevention, local governments can often make a real difference to the safety and well-being of communities, as well as to their perceptions or feelings of safety, which are equally important.

This does not stop with public safety alone; a city could also incorporate values such as openness, accessibility, transparency, interaction and equality of opportunity into urban design and planning.

A city may intervene in this field in different ways. For example, this could be about planning initiatives developed by cities themselves, but it could equally be about adapting bylaws, enforcing regulations or reaching decisions to make such considerations a requirement of new applications and developments.



Helsinki, Finland has asserted its identity as an inclusive city through its inclusive housing policy, [Home Town Helsinki](#). This approach both helps people in need get housing and aims to prevent segregation and isolation by adopting mixed ownership and tenure models, making the most of public land ownership to provide a basic service and encourage a mixed housing market that promotes inclusion and breaks down barriers. More on Helsinki's approach can also be found on the [Housing 2030](#) website.



Rabat, Morocco has partnered with local organisations to address gender inequality and increase the safety of public spaces for women. For example, the city has partnered with a local feminist organisation, [Jossour Forum des Femmes Marocaines](#) (Joussour Forum for Moroccan Women), as well as architects, other grassroots organisations and community-based volunteers in a multi-actor effort to build a more gender-inclusive Rabat. As part of this project, the city and Jossour Forum arranged and took part in capacity-building workshops on [gender responsive urban planning](#), and organised hackathons for architecture and engineering students in the city, thus including youth in its approach to building more inclusive and safe public spaces. Through these partnerships, it has also launched targeted communications campaigns to address the intersecting nature of sexual harassment and other forms of violence, including those motivated by extremism and hate. This initiative ultimately offers a model for participatory governance and local government-led multi-actor collaboration, where the city convenes diverse community-based actors, leveraging their comparative advantages and different types of expertise (e.g., gender, urban planning) to create a safer and more secure Rabat for all its citizens.



Victoria State, Australia, has a [dedicated local government platform](#) for urban design and crime prevention, featuring numerous local case studies, reference materials and information for city planners, crime prevention practitioners and the wider community.

Communications and messaging: Many cities will have key public information platforms, from noticeboards, town magazines, newsletters to social media, which can be leveraged for positive messaging as well as awareness raising aimed at the general population. From developing ‘alternative messaging’ campaigns, which offer a positive alternative to the negative narratives of extremist, hateful or otherwise polarising content, to responding to mis/disinformation, or simply letting people know what the city is prioritising and why, there is much that a city can do in this respect. Cities need to consider how best to communicate such messaging, both in terms of format as well as who the ‘messenger’ or face of the campaign is. In some cases, it is best for the local government, or key city leaders, to be that face themselves. In other cases, it may be trusted members of the community, a civil society organisation, or another entity that holds credibility and can resonate with the intended audience. Cities should also:

- Consult their communities in a representative way in the development and planning of a campaign. This could be part of wider cooperation with a CSO and/or local business with particular expertise, experience or insights to offer;
- Translate key messages (where possible) to widely-spoken languages in the city to help ensure they reach all relevant communities;
- Be considerate in the vocabulary and imagery that is used to avoid fear-mongering and/or implicitly isolating certain community groups;
- Make use of different platforms - for example, social media channels may allow for more informal engagement with the public and could be a good platform to gather inputs/insights from local communities. Be mindful of who you want to reach and what platforms those demographics (e.g., youth) use; and
- Consider communication a means for not only prevention but also response. Public communications, from reassurance and community outreach to safety announcements and sharing vital information, are, are considered an essential part of planning for crisis response.

For more on crisis communications, see our **Response Toolkit**, where this topic is discussed in detail. For a particular focus on the role of mayors and local leaders in strategic communications, see our **Mayoral Guide**.

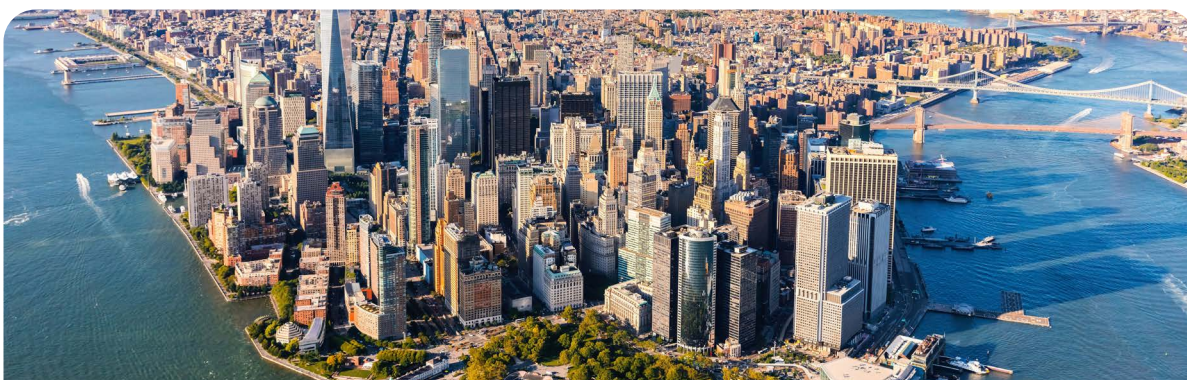


Christchurch, New Zealand: In 2022, Christchurch launched its new [Te Haumako Te Whitingia Strengthening Communities Together Strategy](#), which outlines the city's strategy for "working with others to build a healthy, happy and resilient Christchurch and Banks Peninsula" across four pillars: People, Place, Participation and Preparedness. To ensure the Strategy is both accessible to and reflects the city's multicultural population, it is available in thirteen languages outside of English. The English version also incorporates Maori throughout, in recognition of New Zealand's rich Maori heritage. The Strategy is also available in video format, where a sign interpreter runs through the document, thus ensuring the city's hard-of-hearing residents are equally informed. Overall, this provides a model of accessible communications.

Civil society partnerships: As with community engagement efforts and communications, working with civil society should be considered a means to approaching all of the above areas of intervention as well as an effort in its own right. On the latter, recognising where there are challenges around trust, access, marginalisation or siloed communities is a key step in understanding how a city can do more to reach everybody and develop connections and understanding between communities and local services/institutions. But it may also demonstrate that a city is sometimes not best placed to build such linkages alone and that intervening as the city may even harm rather than improve the situation. In such cases, developing outreach and partnerships with CSOs on a whole range of local issues is a good means to establishing better connections and having in place the partnerships when more specific needs arise with a particular group.

Developing funding schemes to support civil society engagement and partnerships in a particular priority area is one way to foster these relationships.

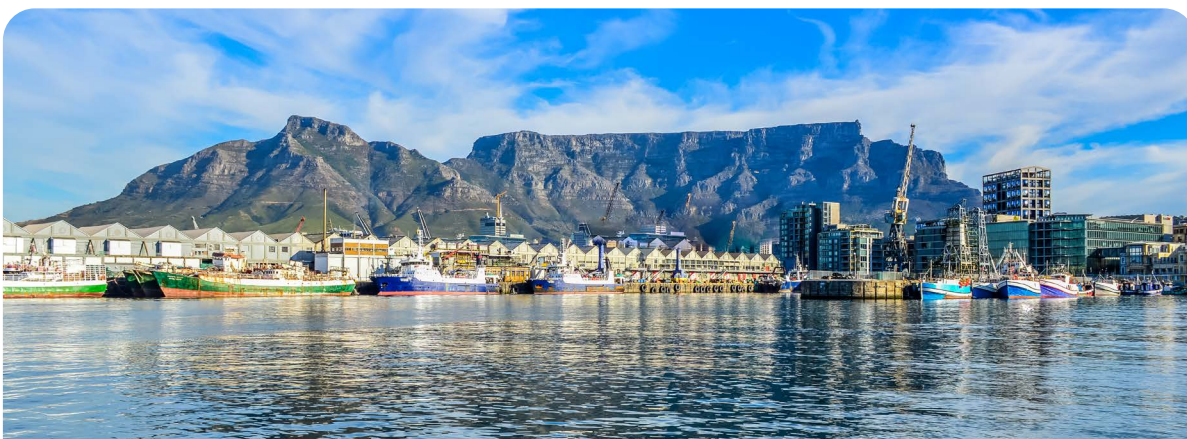
For key learnings around such schemes, see our [10-Step Roadmap for Enhancing City-Led Support for Community-Based Programmes to Address Hate and Extremism](#). Cities can also support CSOs by putting other resources at their disposal, for example by offering technical support, expertise, training, access to information, or by sharing contacts and good practices.



New York City Supports its Communities

New York City's [Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes \(OPHC\)](#) is engaging with communities across the city by supporting a range of community-based actors. It coordinates 25 city agencies involved in service delivery across the city (e.g., housing, police, education, parks, health and sanitation) to better understand threats, identify gaps in response and scale existing community safety and well-being initiatives.

OPHC also provides capacity building for its community partners, upskilling the organisations it works with to “meet communities where they are at” and help professionalise and sustain grassroots responses to hate and polarisation.



South Africa's Community Safety Forums (CSFs): First piloted in the Western Cape, CSFs are local multi-stakeholder collaborations that bring together municipal services, NGOs, and other partners [“to provide a means for sharing information and encouraging and coordinating interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral approaches to violence and crime prevention.”](#) Amongst their functions is the development of local social crime prevention capacities, to conduct community safety needs assessments to then inform programmes and such capacity building and to facilitate coordination amongst relevant municipal and civil-society led services.

Secondary prevention

Secondary prevention focuses on ways in which a city can take action that responds to a more specific risk or challenge identified either from and/or to a particular group or individual(s) in its community. Unlike primary prevention, it is not aimed at the general population and is developed and delivered to tackle a particular issue relevant specifically to hate, extremism and polarisation. For this reason, secondary prevention is even more reliant on comprehensive local mapping and should closely correlate to the key vulnerabilities and needs identified (see Chapter One).

Vulnerable Groups

For key vulnerabilities identified for specific groups in a community (e.g., a lack of critical thinking skills coupled with particular exposure to hateful dissemination; a concern about racial or ethnic discrimination; or a challenge around marginalisation and feelings of distrust, isolation and disenfranchisement), all of the areas of intervention used for primary prevention still apply and are relevant. However, the specific methodologies followed, objectives identified and messages relayed will be more targeted. Interventions may also be over a longer period and follow a particular programme or other sequencing. It should be noted that a city's training needs will likely be more significant and/or specialised, depending on the context, the particular vulnerability it is addressing and the professional backgrounds and competencies of the relevant local government offices or practitioners.

Individuals

In relation to secondary prevention with individuals, this Guide will focus predominantly on [referral mechanisms](#) of various kinds, in line with the priorities expressed by cities consulted for this Guide. Referral mechanisms have emerged in a number of fields, including human-trafficking, drug abuse, gender-based violence, violence reduction and P/CVE. They typically involve a formal or informal process whereby front-

line practitioners, community members, family members or peers can refer individuals demonstrating certain concerning behaviours or vulnerabilities to a group of practitioners and professionals from different disciplines and/or agencies and organisations to identify, assess, assist, and treat those individuals.

There has been growing recognition of the added-value of locally-led referral mechanisms in the hate and extremism prevention space, as policymakers, front-line workers and even security professionals have increasingly prioritised the need to identify those most vulnerable to or already on the path to violence and to steer them down a non-violent path. In recent years, they have emerged in different local contexts, in some cases city-led and managed. In some contexts they aim to prevent a variety of social harms (including extremist violence), in others they are narrowly focused on P/CVE. Different labels have been used for these mechanisms, such as "[situation tables](#)" (Canada), "[info-houses](#)" (Denmark), "[safety houses](#)" (the Netherlands), "[partner tables](#)" (Belgium), "[Anchor teams](#)" (Finland) and "[Channel panels](#)" (the United Kingdom).

As reflected in the [OSCE guide](#) on the topic, although there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the design and operationalisation of a referral mechanism, it is typically a multiagency and/or multidisciplinary programme, platform, or initiative that has a number of common features.

- It includes representatives from a range of city or other government agencies and CSOs from across different disciplines, for example, including education, health, social welfare, housing, youth, sports, and, if appropriate, police;
- It receives referrals from community or family members, front-line workers and government officials, of individuals identified as most vulnerable to, or on the path to engaging with hate- or extremist- motivated (or other forms of) violence but who have not committed to violence;

- It assesses the risks, needs, vulnerabilities and protective factors of the referred individual to determine the appropriate course of action; and It designs, delivers, monitors, and evaluates individually tailored interventions or support plans that address the needs and vulnerabilities of those deemed most at risk of or vulnerable to becoming violent and helps steer them down a peaceful path.

In the hate and extremism prevention space, these processes can offer concerned family members or peers an alternative to calling the police and potentially risking immediate and heavy-handed security action. They can facilitate the early involvement of a range of professionals who might be well-placed “to deliver an effective and preventive intervention because they have particular competence, expertise, perceived credibility or legitimacy that the police . . . do not possess”.

Their effectiveness relies on the commitment, skill and experience of the practitioners involved with the referred individual. It also depends on the level of trust among the

different professionals and agencies involved in the mechanism, and between those professionals and agencies and the relevant local communities. Since such mechanisms need to rely heavily on front-line workers, service providers and community-based organisations, while enabling cooperation among them, local governments can play central roles in supporting and managing them.

Considerations for Cities

Types of Referral Mechanism

Referral mechanisms can be operated by city employees, social/youth workers, local police, CSOs or almost any of the stakeholders and services discussed throughout this Guide, provided that training is offered and there is a robust ethical framework. They can ‘target’ a certain audience (for example families) or be open to the general public, including friends, neighbours, or colleagues. Self-referral is another possibility, especially where an individual actively seeks support to mitigate risks they have become exposed to, but lacks the resources, motivation, or confidence to do so entirely independently.

Examples of ways to make a referral

- Telephone helpline
- Website reporting mechanisms
- Mobile applications
- Institutional ‘signposting’ (where a local institution or service provider raises a concern or directs individuals to an appropriate service)

Risks/challenges associated with different methods of referral

- Stigmatisation
- Data security and personal information See *Information-sharing systems*: 5 top tips in Chapter 3
- Fear of criminalisation
- Improper use or abuse to serve political or other ends
- Requires 24/7 staffing
- Tech-based platforms require maintenance, updates and added security for data protection. They also will not suit everybody, where familiarity, access, language and other issues pose barriers

Overall, any referral mechanism should:

- Rely on context-specific local research and include factors linked to the targeted population;
- Consult with local professionals and practitioners, including for the purposes of relying on multiple sources of information;
- Take into account the wider political and social contexts;
- Account for protective and resilience factors, as well as for extremism-related risks;
- Be informed by and linked to available interventions and support services.

Source: [OSCE, Understanding Referral Mechanisms \(2019\)](#)

Avoiding Stigmatisation

The basic goal of any referral system is to collect information about individual cases and the nature of the concerns that have been raised. This requires the identification of some basic indicators (for example, what should be considered a sign of potential vulnerability to extremist-motivated violence?). Identifying and answering these questions (a) requires consultation with and input from a multi-stakeholder team and may require additional professional input and (b) will determine the key areas in which the referral mechanism may risk causing or exacerbating stigmatisation. One way to reduce stigmatisation is to focus on objective behavioural signs, rather than personality characteristics. Any referral mechanism should avoid targeting specific religious or political groups or ideologies. Referred individuals should not be portrayed as potential criminals or security threats but should, at the very least at the first stage of assessment, be regarded as vulnerable individuals in need of help and support to avoid causing themselves and others harm.

Screening and Assessment

Once an individual has been referred, the first step will generally be a screening ahead of a full assessment.

An initial screening enables basic verification of the details included in the referral and an assessment of suitability and relevance for a referral. This enables signposting to other services in cases where an individual's needs may be better addressed outside of the mechanism and triggers potential community engagement or other forms of intervention if needed. Individual cases that meet the eligibility indicators identified are then put forward for a full assessment, which should be conducted by a multi-stakeholder board or panel with different services/departments and professional expertise represented.

The assessment will determine to what degree the person is exposed to a particular risk, based on clear methodology and shared and objective indicators. The assessment should also serve to identify risk/vulnerability and protective factors, which will open avenues for potential intervention. [Assessment tools come in all forms](#). Some of them are merely indicative, whereas [others](#) incorporate checklists or are more formalised and involve [structured professional judgement](#). There is also significant variation in how easily transferrable these tools are to new contexts.

Keeping in mind that no such tool can ever be perfect, it is crucial to select or develop assessment tools that practitioners and professionals feel comfortable with. The assessment should inform the type of intervention as well as the best-placed intervention provider, either a particular service or profession and/or a specific individual. It is also critically important to mitigate possible harms during assessments (to individuals and communities but also, by association, to the integrity of and trust in a city's approach) and to understand the risks, needs and strengths of different approaches.

Types of Intervention

Hate, extremism and polarisation are complex, social phenomena that cannot be reduced to one area of risk or set of causes alone. The interplay between different risk factors and potential causes, or drivers, is as important as the context in which they develop. Interventions must therefore be multidisciplinary and based on strong cooperation between different services, agencies, departments, or stakeholders, and involve a cooperative approach.

Cities with individual intervention models that contributed to this Guide felt it important to emphasise that, in most cases, addressing hate, extremism and polarisation is not intrinsically different from dealing with other social issue. The intervention provider will address these issues in line with their professional practice and while there may be specialised training or background needed to approach a particular case (for example, trauma-informed care or how to recognise extremist symbols), the basic approach and activities will often remain consistent.

In this respect, it was felt that most cases benefitted from cities incorporating the challenges of hate, extremism and polarisation into existing professional approaches, rather than creating a new profession or model entirely.

Intervention programmes can take different forms, based on particular and recurring needs and priorities, but also based on available resources at the local level. The following options, or a combination thereof, were highlighted by cities as common areas of intervention.

- **Social/youth work:** the intervention will focus on living conditions, education, social integration, access to training and employment, etc;
- **Mentorship:** the intervention will be based on a personal and fully agreed relationship between a mentor and a mentee;
- **Psychology and psycho-social support:** the intervention will focus on psychological wellbeing and state of mind, but only rarely psychiatric disorders; it will simultaneously address the influence that different social environments can have on the individual's physical and mental health; and
- **Family:** the aim of the intervention is either to support a family and parents in fostering caring and educational environments or to address a risk identified within a family setting.

Important:

- Interventions should address something that matters to individuals/families;
- Interventions should be supportive, facilitate dignity and avoid stigma;
- Interventions should be mindful of ‘unintended consequences’.

Source: [IJJ Training Curriculum: Developing Multi-Actor P/CVE Intervention Programmes – Implementing a Whole-of-Society, ‘Do No Harm’ Approach \(2021\)](#)

A key challenge that many cities raised was that most individual interventions at the secondary prevention level are based on voluntary participation. This requires investment from the individual themselves to engage in the intervention and for the individual to see the value of engaging in the first place. It also requires interventions to meet the needs and expectations of the individual themselves requiring additional, thorough assessment. Understanding what will motivate an individual or family to participate is key, as is ensuring that people are not overloaded by too many interventions and that the intensity of an intervention corresponds to the level of risk posed.

Supporting Existing Mechanisms

Cities may choose not to establish their own referral mechanism, perhaps in an effort to avoid duplication with a national one or perhaps because they lack a sufficient mandate to develop one. Alternatively, they may focus on leveraging an existing mechanism and integrating aspects of preventing hate and extremism into structures already addressing different harms (e.g., sexual violence, people trafficking or wider crime prevention).

Even when cities are not developing or leveraging mechanisms at local or regional levels, they can often play an important role in promoting national mechanisms, building trust in them, and combating mis/disinformation and conspiracy narratives relating to them. A number of countries have general crime prevention hotlines, with a growing number (including Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany and Luxembourg) having put in place dedicated helplines for concerns around hate and extremism.

Safety House Model, The Netherlands: In the Netherlands, “Safety Houses” are local networks that bring together municipal representatives, the police, community-based organisations and others to discuss and jointly develop programmes to address different community safety concerns. While originally focused on broader crime prevention, the model expanded to include extremism prevention following the departure of several Dutch citizens to join ISIS.

In some contexts the choice may not be limited to either local or national mechanisms; there are also examples of regional mechanisms.

In British Columbia, Canada, rather than setting up a programme in different cities across the geographically expansive territory, the provincial government set up a single programme ([Shift-BC](#)) to support the secondary prevention requirements of cities and their residents across the province. On an as-needed basis, the province – through its Department of Public Safety, and with funding from the federal government – connects individuals who may be at risk of extremist-motivated violence with local counselling, social services, or other tools. The programme also provides training to psychosocial and other relevant service providers across the province who work with those referred to them by Shift. As reflected in the IJJ Training Curriculum, this approach may have “appeal where resources and capacities are limited, and the expected caseload may not warrant investing in standing mechanisms in different parts of the country, state, or province.”

If a central government has already opened a hotline or website to collect referrals, a city might also provide additional support and information to concerned families or individuals. This may be helpful when a party is hesitant or unsure about making a referral and wants to receive advice short of actually making the referral. In such cases, avoiding overlap and making very clear the distinction between the two services and what the city is responsible for is imperative.

Depending on demand, there may also be a need to support a twin approach that combines government-administered and CSO-administered hotlines and other mechanisms. This might cater both to those people who feel more comfortable contacting a government hotline and to those who prefer speaking to a non-governmental, community-led one.

Tertiary prevention

Tertiary prevention programming typically targets individuals who have radicalised to violence (including but not limited to terrorist offenders) and possibly their families, as well as those who, for various reasons, have not entered the prison system but who may demonstrate some level of support for hate- or extremist-motivated violence. This includes returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) who, for one reason or another are not prosecuted, and their family members.

This type of prevention work, which generally focuses on enabling the rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) of the individual into their community, often occurs in a prison or probation setting or directly in the community. Although secondary and tertiary prevention programmes have different targets and goals, they share a number of common elements, e.g., religious, psychosocial, family counselling, sports and culture, job training and placement, housing and mentoring interventions, and thus can involve the same types of professionals and practitioners.

As in secondary prevention, the intended beneficiaries of tertiary prevention measures are likely to have a diversity of needs and vulnerabilities; as such, a single practitioner or institution is unlikely to be able to address them all. Thus, as with secondary prevention, a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach is required, albeit one where the practitioners and organisations involved will likely need specialised training needed to work with a cohort that is more likely to pose a security risk or has suffered from trauma more than that those with whom they typically work.

Yet, despite these similarities, examples of city-led tertiary prevention efforts are few and far between. Instead, national law enforcement and other security actors have generally been the primary actors in this sphere.

This is due to a number of including: 1) the heightened security risks that are typically associated with the targets of this type of prevention work; 2) the limited access local governments and local service providers

generally have to this population, which in turn leaves them with limited experience in engaging with them and thus little added-value to show; and 3) because of the heightened national security sensitivities surrounding these individuals, central governments are more likely to view tertiary prevention (as opposed to primary and secondary prevention) as their exclusive responsibility. As such, the instances where local governments are either provided with or see themselves as having a mandate in this area are more limited than with other levels of prevention.

The Role of Cities in Tertiary Prevention

However, this is gradually changing as many countries are dealing with the return of citizens who had travelled to the conflict-stricken regions of Syria and Iraq to join the so-called Islamic State. While some can be prosecuted, the majority – some of whom may have been radicalised to violence and many of whom will have suffered significant trauma as a result of their experience, will return to the communities from which they originated. Their successful reintegration is now viewed as both a security and humanitarian imperative. It is one where local governments, for many of the same comparative advantages they offer in the secondary prevention space, are increasingly, seen as having an important role to play in the rehabilitation and reintegration of those returnees who do not end up in prison or those who are released after serving what are typically short sentences.

For their part, national governments increasingly realise the need for local actors to become more involved in supporting the returnee process and are creating opportunities for them to contribute.

As the practice of a number of cities demonstrates, local governments, if properly mandated, resourced and capacitated, can take on a range of responsibilities in a field where multiple stakeholders are involved; and enabling and sustaining coordination and cooperation among them is likely to be essential.

For example, it can:

- Serve as a point of contact for all relevant stakeholders (e.g., family members, service providers, members of the community, law enforcement, local government agencies);
- Coordinate and/or contribute to a comprehensive assessment of the risks, needs and vulnerabilities of each targeted individual;
- Establish and manage a network consisting of the varied stakeholders involved in the reintegration process, which can enable an efficient exchange of information and good practices among them, as well as the public;
- Engage with local businesses, schools and families to mitigate the stigma that a returnee is likely to face as they try to reintegrate;
- Provide essential information and support to service providers involved in the process;
- Develop guidelines, drawing on international good practices, to inform the work of the different professionals and practitioners who are likely to be involved in supporting the individual targets of tertiary prevention interventions; and overall;
- Bridge the gaps in mindsets between security actors and psychosocial providers, child protection workers, etc;
- Enable a cohesive multi-stakeholder approach by navigating between the relevant national and local frameworks; and
- Create a robust support structure that aids the reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees back into the city, balancing their individual needs with the broader requirements of national security.

Special Considerations for Cities Looking to Engage in Tertiary Prevention:

- **Heightened trauma:** The beneficiaries are more likely to be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other forms of trauma as a result of their exposure to violence and are typically further along the path to radicalisation to hate- or extremist-motivated violence.

As a result, those involved in tertiary prevention programmes may require more specialised training and engagement on psychological, ideological, and theological issues than those working in prevention more broadly.

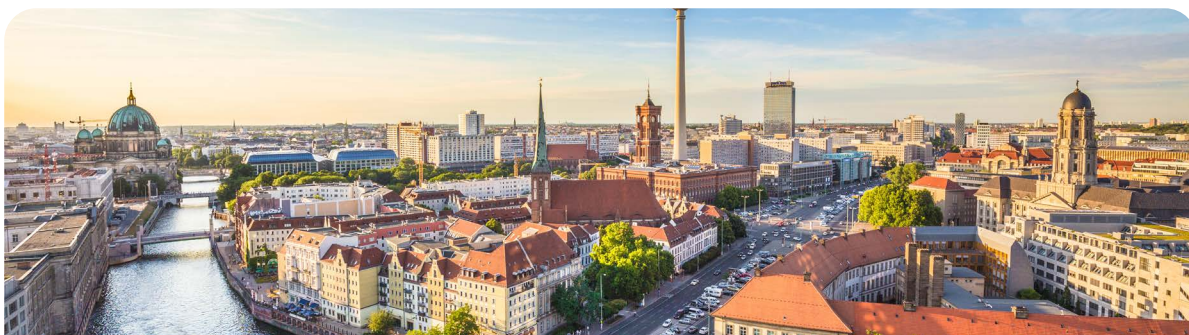
- **Intensive/sustained support:** Tertiary prevention targets returning to their communities (e.g., after serving time in prison or returning from a conflict zone) often will need more intensive and sustained support on a range of practical issues (e.g., housing, job, education) to facilitate their re-entry into society than those who are the targets of secondary prevention efforts.
- **Increased stigma:** Cities will need to be prepared to confront and mitigate the stigma these individuals may receive from the wider community and the potential for this not only to undermine reintegration efforts but encourage recidivism. As well as working with the communities receiving such individuals, cities can also do important work to engage local businesses, schools and the media in an effort to minimise stigmatisation and allow individuals not to be defined by their past behaviour. Unless mitigated, stigma has been shown to complicate efforts to enable individuals to access critical psychosocial, education, housing, financial and vocational support.
- **Coordination with National Security Actors:** Unlike in secondary prevention, some level of two-way information sharing or other coordination with national security actors is likely to be needed given the nature of the individuals targeted by tertiary prevention efforts. Thus, cities will need to navigate the general reluctance among the security services and the police to share what they view as sensitive information with the local government about the targets of tertiary prevention efforts. However, the inability to access such information could undermine the city's ability to understand and thus address the needs and vulnerabilities of the targeted individual.

City-Led R&R Efforts



The Hague, Netherlands works closely with a range of national agencies and civil society organisations on this topic has developed a “Returnee Manual”, a confidential document for all city-level and national stakeholders involved in managing returnees to the city. The document describes the municipal policy as well as actions that can be taken with regard to returnees. It focuses on the role of local actors but also places this within the national framework and the need for this work to be done in consultation with national stakeholders.

This approach highlights the importance of national and local actors, including the city, having a common understanding of the overall approach to managing returnees and the roles and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders involved. As such, it clarifies that the role of the city here is focused on overseeing the care for former violent extremism prisoners and the adults and minors who return to the city from Syria and Iraq but do not land in prison.



Berlin, Germany developed an R&R strategy which is based on a comprehensive whole-of-society approach and is overseen by a single point of contact embedded within the local government, who coordinates multiple actors – social workers, community-based organisations, police and others – to ensure the appropriate support is provided to returnees upon their arrival in Berlin. The strategy offers a long-term vision for R&R, recognising that the R&R process may take several years per individual.



Cërrik, Albania is the first city to pilot an R&R programme in its country, a few years before the initial national government-led repatriation. The local government worked closely with CSOs with experience in psychosocial support as well as the national government in coordinating R&R services. It approved individual plans for structured support based on the needs of families that returned to Cërrik. Additionally, the city provided safe spaces and facilitated additional in-kind support for the programming delivered by civil society and community-based organisations.

Training and capacity building

Prevention is best achieved through a whole-of-society approach in which different actors can play their part effectively in support of the city's plan or policy. This may require upskilling different actors through training and resources, especially for those whose role does not explicitly deal with preventing hate and extremism or who do not otherwise have any experience with it. To get the most out of their team and other contributing stakeholders, the city should identify specialised expertise and provide access to training and resources that help enhance:

- Familiarity with hate, extremism and related threats to public safety, local democracy and social cohesion and understanding of how misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy narratives are fuelling them. This can include theoretical background and approaches as well as specific threats facing the city, such as Islamophobia, anti-migrant, anti-LGBTQI+, anti-Semitic or other forms of hate, anti-establishment sentiments and the local dynamics that might contribute to extremist and hate-motivated violence.

The knowledge and skills needed to design, manage and evaluate prevention projects that follow a 'do-no-harm' approach. This is equally important for civil society and community actors who may seek support to run programmes in their communities.

- Familiarity with local and national strategic prevention frameworks and their role in supporting them.
- Processes for reporting and responding to potentially dangerous situations.
- Local government-led communication and engagement with the city's residents, especially when working with potentially vulnerable individuals.

Cities should keep in mind the need to ensure that training and other support are made available on an ongoing basis. That way each actor can build relevant skills and knowledge in a sustained way, rather than through single-day sessions, and stay up to date on new developments and approaches.

Defining training needs

Recognising that specialist training may be needed to equip cities to tackle hate, extremism and polarisation is not to “exceptionalise” the topic. Rather, it recognises that while all stakeholders will apply a skillset to tackle any given problem in accordance with their professional background and the responsibilities of their role, there may be some specific gaps that need to be addressed when confronting these particular challenges.

These gaps should all be identified in the context of responsibilities outlined in a city’s local plan or framework, not just how much or how little a specific individual knows about prevention in general. Many gaps will likely also be identified through the initial mappings that are conducted; again, provided that such mapping is comprehensive and inclusive, it will continue to inform every aspect of a city’s prevention approach and needs.

General vs specific needs?

There will likely be different levels of need for different stakeholders, depending on their professional background, existing competencies and role in the local approach.

Some examples of general training needs expressed by cities include:

- Awareness raising around what prevention can entail, why cities are relevant and what other cities are doing and have learned;
- Awareness of local threats and familiarisation with national strategy, if relevant; and
- Background understanding related to different ideological aspects of extremism, polarisation and hate and key narratives and vulnerable groups.

These examples are intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive, and to demonstrate that cities will have more specific, specialist needs as well as more general gaps in the knowledge and capacities of different stakeholders.

Some examples of more specific training needs expressed by cities include:

- Gender sensitivity training;
- Child protection;
- Domestic violence and coercive behaviour;
- Psycho-social support and individual mentoring;
- Online harms, including understanding conspiracy narratives and mis/disinformation;
- Referral systems, data protection and coordination mechanisms/protocols.

Stamford (Connecticut), USA: “[Stamford Stands Against Racism](#)” is a collective of human service and faith-based organisations that works with elected officials, the school district, the Police Department, and others to engage and create awareness about institutional racism, train members of the public and community groups on anti-racism curriculum and educate about social disparities and inequalities. Other groups include the Stamford Youth Mental Health Alliance, the Concerned Clergy, the Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut, and Stamford Cradle to Career.

Isiolo County, Kenya: To scale local prevention efforts, the [County of Isiolo](#) arranged intensive training on prevention of hate and extremism for its multi-disciplinary Community Engagement Forum, which comprises county officials, education institutions, traditional and religious leaders, and civil society organisations. Training covered topics ranging from psychosocial support, how to monitor and evaluate activities, to how to engage the private sector on the topic of hate and extremism prevention.

Seattle, Washington, USA, conducted city-wide training on [preventing hate and polarisation in the workplace](#). The local government worked together with a think-tank to develop and deliver pilot trainings, after which feedback and other input were used to improve and introduce a new training programme. This also helped the city develop policy and practice improvement recommendations to address workplace polarisation.

Key Principles for Training and Capacity Building

- Capacity building programmes should be based on actual needs and tailored to individual stakeholders. These needs should be identified in initial mappings but could potentially require further assessment.
- The programmes should cover a range of topics that are relevant to a stakeholder’s role whether engaging at a community or individual level. This should include practical skill building related to the pursuit of multi-stakeholder models that support project management, communication, MEL and more.
- Training should not be restricted only to ‘hard’ skills. Given the nature of extremism, polarisation and hate and the sensitivity and nuances that need to be understood when engaging on these issues, it should also involve an examination of preconceived notions, unconscious bias and assumptions.
- Although there may be a need to make certain training mandatory, in general all training is usually more effective when participation is voluntary, and the person being trained is invested in its outcomes.
- Where appropriate, local governments should leverage existing international good practices and build on lessons from other cities.

- Training should incorporate, where possible, practical exercises that enable participants to connect knowledge and skills to real-life application. Such approaches should be targeted to address specific issues that stakeholders are likely to encounter, rather than employing a generalised training curriculum. This should include interactive learning tools such as tabletop exercises that test participants' knowledge and skills and support them to apply them critically.
- Each stakeholder should be considered individually to provide the training they need to play their particular role, and collectively to promote a cooperative approach in which each role reinforces the efforts of the others.
- Where possible, cities should adapt existing capacity building tools and models to meet prevention needs, rather than creating dedicated curricula from scratch.
- Local governments should consider opportunities to partner with civil society, private sector and multilateral organisations that specialise in prevention training to fill gaps.
- Cities should invest in 'train-the-trainer' models that are scalable and can be adapted to local and hyper-local needs to enhance sustainability and maximise reach.

Note: this advice includes guidance from the NLC Implementation Toolkit

Training providers

In many cases, individual agencies, departments, or organisations will be responsible for procuring/delivering training to their own employees. When it comes to addressing some of the particular dynamics of prevention, it may be useful to open training sessions to professionals from different backgrounds (e.g., local/city administration, central government agencies, CSOs, faith groups, youth/community centres, sports clubs, etc.) This could be a helpful way to break down institutional barriers and build trust by allowing different actors to share a common experience and offer insights reflecting their different positions.

Cities are unlikely to develop training resources themselves. Instead, local officials can work with experts to identify and adapt existing resources or commission new ones to be created that are specifically tailored to support the different stakeholders in their city.

Not everyone is equipped to be a trainer and for some needs, very specialist professional qualifications and experience will be needed.

Nonetheless, here are some basic distinctions among types of training provided:

- **In-house training:** a professional from within the city administration, maybe following a train-the-trainer programme, can offer the training.
- **External trainer:** cities should consider, funding permitted, issuing a call for proposals (or any similar procedure) to select the most qualified trainer, based on specified criteria. If funding is unavailable, they should work with partners, such as civil society organisations, national government and/or the international donor community to identify and procure experts to address capacity gaps.
- **Local government associations:** these exist in many countries, with one of their functions often being to organise and/or deliver training activities. [The South African Local Government Association](#), for example, invests in significant learning opportunities for South African cities on violence prevention. For example, it encourages local governments to engage with [Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading](#), which brings cities together with a focus on implementation of interventions in crime hotspots.

Peer experience: depending on the needs, a city may want to build on what other cities have already learned. Expertise held by other cities might be helpful and can be accessed through Strong Cities and other partners.

For example, after Strong Cities workshop, representatives from **Busia, Kenya** organised a learning visit to the City of **Cape Town, South Africa** focused on their recently launched prevention framework and how they have integrated this with their broader crime prevention efforts. In addition, [Dialogues for Urban Change](#) has facilitated a partnership between four cities in both South Africa and Germany to share learnings on how urban planning and design can contribute to safety and security.

When cities or organisations need to train a significant number of professionals, train-the-trainer programmes – where a smaller group of participants are equipped to deliver the training to a wider audience, maximising reach – may be a good model to adopt.

Navigating difficult issues

In delivering prevention, cities will very likely need to face specific issues that pose heightened sensitivities or difficulties for interventions. The areas highlighted below are far from exhaustive but were among the top issues raised by cities consulted for this Guide.

Engaging with historically marginalised or hard-to-reach groups

Exclusion and marginalisation offer fertile ground for hate, extremism and polarisation and make specific groups particularly vulnerable. While this makes them important target groups for secondary prevention, they are by definition more difficult to engage. Such exclusion can also be a two-way process: if a group is marginalised consistently over a long time period, they may end up self-excluding and resorting to their own mechanisms for support outside the services provided by a city. Trust is likely to be extremely limited, if there is any. The following key learnings in particular were highlighted by cities for such engagement:

- Engage via a trusted intermediary or third party who may be able to mediate engagement based on an understanding of the needs and perspectives of both the city and the marginalised group. This could be a civil society organisation, or another trusted stakeholder with credibility in the eyes of the group.
- Invest in building long-term relationships with such groups that exist separately from any specific intervention around security or hate, extremism and polarisation. Cities need to engage communities in good faith, not merely to gather information about threats. Historically marginalised groups that hold longstanding feelings of exclusion need to feel valued and validated rather than viewed only as a potential threat, which would likely just reinforce perceptions of exclusion and/or discrimination.
- Remember that the objective of trust building exercises is not necessarily for all parties to agree. Instead, it may be more important for all parties to hear and understand each other's perspective, establish common goals and open up a safe space for dialogue.

Balancing immigration, refugees and other new arrivals with social cohesion

Cities are places where new people arrive all the time; their diversity and growth can be a valuable asset in building a respectful, tolerant and inclusive society. At the same time, the challenge of welcoming significant numbers or responding to sudden refugee or displacement crises can stretch services and resources and create challenges with integration and social cohesion, especially where resentments build, tensions grow, and volatile situations are manipulated or inflamed by those sowing division and hate or fanning polarisation by spreading disinformation and conspiracy narratives. Some key learnings from cities experienced in managing such difficulties include:

- Establishing welcoming plans and/or committees and identifying induction and activities like familiarisation with local services and institutions as well as cultural and religious dialogues.
- Prioritise language provision, which can mitigate the risk of exclusion and marginalisation and empower newcomers to engage more with a city's services as well as with other communities.
- Offer wider education, training and employment support, or identify partners that can.
- Develop public communication and awareness raising on the benefits of immigration as well as tackling prejudices and discrimination.
- Recognise that integration is a two-way process: newcomers must have a desire and a motivation to integrate into a new society or community, but the welcoming community must also be willing to accommodate the newcomers and may need to better understand cultural and religious norms as well as the circumstances and needs of different groups.

Supporting social cohesion and welcoming new arrivals: city examples



Communication & Addressing Misinformation & Disinformation

Bilbao, Spain has a section dedicated to “Awareness and Social Impact” in its [Third Intercultural City Plan](#), which recognises that no integration or inclusion strategy is complete without efforts to actively address all forms of intolerance and discrimination. The Plan therefore commits to sensitisation and awareness campaigns (delivered via social and traditional media) to dispel anti-migrant narratives and otherwise promote tolerance and “positive narratives” about the “advantages of diversity”. The city also [produced a documentary](#) and publications to highlight the key roles of migrants (with a focus on migrant women) in enriching the city, presenting them as “professionals, leaders, thinkers, politicians and entrepreneurs”, and thus addressing anti-migrant narratives that claim they only burden (rather than contribute to) a city's social and economic landscape.



Support

Bratislava, Slovakia, [set up a Crisis Centre](#) to support and integrate incoming Ukrainian refugees. The centre coordinates local NGOs, local police and national agencies to deliver substantial support to deal with the crisis.



Columbus, Ohio, USA launched the [New American Initiative](#) to help refugees and immigrants who move to Columbus have immediate access to city services and programmes to help them settle into their new home faster and become “productive and equitable residents.”



Integration

Wrocław, Poland, has taken various measures to support refugees and promote social cohesion. It has established an [Integration Centre](#) which leads migrant integration by partnering with 140+ government and civil society organisations to provide its services. It is the key body which supports the integration of Ukrainian refugees. When the influx of refugees happened, they supported the registration of children in schools, providing housing and social services and where necessary humanitarian assistance. However, the Centre also has regular services it provides to all migrants at no cost, such as Polish language classes. Additionally, the local government also established a [Centre for Social Development](#) to promote social cohesion, support migrants and refugees, address hate, polarisation and disinformation and facilitate inter-cultural dialogue. It cooperates with community-based organisations from all over the city to run activity centres in 22 neighbourhoods. On refugees and migration, the Centre operates an online platform [WroMigrant](#) which is designed to meet the needs of foreigners, who encounter various types of formal and legal difficulties, language and cultural barriers, hindering their functioning in everyday life.

Further Case Studies: Migration & Refugees



Koboko, Uganda is a border town in Uganda that hosts a high number of Congolese and South Sudanese refugees. In the past, the city experienced tensions and violence between local communities and refugees, partly caused by the impact of changing demographics on critical infrastructure and access to services, as well as disputes over land given to refugees.

To address this challenge, Koboko did the [following](#):

- It first made an explicit effort to map out the concerns and needs of both refugees and host communities.
- It then used its needs mapping to develop and implement a number of projects focused on the integration of refugees in all aspects of the city: social, economic, cultural, etc. This included building a trauma centre offering psychosocial support to refugees, as well as building additional schools, markets and sanitation facilities to ensure each refugee had access to basic services.
- To sustain this effort, the city then offered training in entrepreneurship and support with seed capital to help refugees start their own businesses and thus contribute to and feel part of the local job market.

Importantly, throughout these efforts, the city emphasised inclusion through ensuring that services and support are equally offered to refugees and long-time residents.



Sousse, Tunisia, an affluent coastal urban centre, has experienced a significant influx of internal rural-to-urban migrants, further compounded by a recent surge in new arrivals. This influx of newcomers has placed immense strain on the city's capacity to provide even the most basic living essentials to all its residents, including adequate housing. As a result, the emergence of informal housing, high rates of school dropouts, and unemployment in these disadvantaged areas have become a pressing concern.

The city has implemented a number of initiatives to address these challenges, and to ensure both new arrivals and long-time residents are receiving the services they need. Firstly, Sousse partnered with the IOM and National Office for Family and Population to deploy a mobile unit that is able to provide immediate, hands-on support in communities with high volumes of migrants, and to raise awareness of the services and support (both by the local government and IOM as an international partner) available to them.

Partnership with the National Office for Family and Population also resulted in the development of resources on migration for both new arrivals and service providers. This includes the creation of a referral mechanism, “cheat sheet” that outlines the agencies/stakeholders responsible for different types of service provisions for migrants.

Separately, the city has launched awareness campaigns through which it is dispelling anti-migrant narratives and established a “migrant orientation desk” that serves as a dedicated resource for social integration. The Sousse has also advocated strongly for the national government to recognise and support the role of local governments in managing migration challenges, earning it the title of “A Solidary City, with Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers”.

Managing protests and balancing free speech against public safety

The fundamental human right to protest and challenge authority can be undermined and abused by those who stoke hate, extremism and polarisation and aim to enact or incite violence. As the sites of protests and sometimes their direct targets, cities face these challenges particularly when applied to physical gatherings and demonstrations. Working closely with central governments and police, cities are often required to identify and then uphold the subtle balance between free speech and public safety.

A clear and simple point of reference is [Article 5 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#): “Nothing in the present Covenant may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms recognised herein or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for in the present Covenant.” The Article provides that no individual’s rights extend to the right to infringe upon the rights of others, providing an indicator of where the line is crossed and public safety may be at risk in the example of a protest or demonstration.

Managing organised rallies and opening communication with organisers, as well as those of any counter-demonstrations, should be pursued from the outset with lines of dialogue and negotiation made clear. Such engagement should set behavioural expectations and explain why the activity is taking place. Similarly, community engagement and outreach should be conducted with all groups affected by the demonstration, including any specific groups that are targeted by those protesting.

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.

Local governments 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. On policing, cities consulted felt that the goal is for law enforcement not to make the situation worse and therefore, while a visible police presence should be limited during a march, police need to be on site should something go wrong.

Crisis response

Cities invest in prevention in the hope that they will be less likely to suffer violence and terrorist-related attacks and incidents. Yet they must also recognise that the worst can happen and they must then be ready to respond. Responding after an attack and supporting victims of terrorism or hate crimes require anticipation and preparation.

In the case of a large-scale terrorist attack, training is considered by some to be of limited use: most practitioners will be trained at a certain point in time, for an event that may take place years later, or may never happen. When they must react, they may have forgotten their training entirely, or they may be (understandably) too stressed or otherwise immobilised to react adequately or quickly enough. Exercises and simulations are often considered more useful forms of training, either in table-top or in real life format. This includes building networks and connections between practitioners, agencies and institutions relevant to response, agreeing on respective roles and responsibilities, and stress-testing cooperation in different scenarios. For more on training and capacity building in general, see Chapter 3.

Preparation should take place in times of peace and not in times of crisis. When something occurs, cities need to have crisis management plans and procedures already in place. Preferably, these plans and procedures should be formalised and updated regularly. The line of command should be clear, even if national government agencies will likely take the lead in a particular case.

In the immediate aftermath, and depending on the incident, the role of a city might be restricted to providing logistical support and adequate facilities. Beyond this, issuing clear public communications, public safety notices and reaching out to communities will likely be an area of support. A distinct role for mayors and local leaders may also be appropriate (see Strong Cities **Mayoral Guide** for more on this). Support for victims should be made available as early as possible to mitigate the long-term impact, and it should cover all the necessary fields: medical, psychological, social, legal, administrative, financial, etc. This support should be provided as much as possible by trained professionals, given the importance and the scale of the potential damage.

After the crisis, cities face ongoing responsibilities for resilience, remembrance and renewed prevention. It is then essential to listen to all the victims and allow them to take key decisions on certain areas themselves (for example on the construction of a memorial site). Reconstruction is a long-term process and local communities can remain affected for years after an attack.

Finally, cities are responsible for 'helping the helpers' by protecting and safeguarding local practitioners and responders, starting with their own staff. They should offer care and support, including mental health services, as needs determine. Some practitioners will probably have to be prompted to seek help as they may not realise the psycho-traumatic impact of the incident.

For more on this, see Strong Cities **Response Toolkit**.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

MEL is not only a necessity for resource mobilisation or justifying continued investment in a city's prevention efforts. More fundamentally, it is a set of actions and considerations that a city can incorporate into the planning and delivery of activities to understand whether they are working as intended. Effective MEL should determine whether identified objectives are being supported and expected outcomes met, in order to determine the impact interventions are having and how an approach might be altered or improved in light of this information. Cities should develop and [follow a process](#) for MEL, using results to strengthen the strategic coherence and impact of their overall approach.

Local governments should also incorporate MEL into their P/CVE programs and support mechanisms to understand and demonstrate impact. MOPAC's Shared Endeavor Fund in **London, UK** is one such example. [Currently in its fourth round](#), it has provided almost £3 million of funding for CSOs across London. This kind of funding is critical for the sustainability of community-led hate and extremism prevention efforts, and to ensure they can sustain this kind of support, MOPAC commissioned an [external evaluation](#) of the Fund. An independent evaluator worked with each of the grantees to evaluate their projects, using a standardised suite of data collection tools to assess their impact. The findings were published in a public report at the end of each round (see [Call One](#) and [Call Two](#) reports). These evaluation reports showcase the importance of supporting civil society and community-based P/CVE and have provided critical learnings both for improving the performance of the Fund for each round and the field more broadly, as it covers a broad range of approaches and offers key takeaways for organising local funding schemes.

Similarly, the State of **New South Wales (NSW), Australia** has developed and launched the [Community Partnership Action \(COMPACT\)](#) Programme to strengthen community resilience and social cohesion. Established following the Martin Place siege in Sydney in December 2014, the initiative has supported more than 60 grassroots community organisations, charities, NGOs, private sector partners and other relevant local stakeholders and empowered more than 50,000 young people to contribute to social cohesion. COMPACT has been [independently evaluated](#) as “first of its kind” based on a detailed [programmatic Theory of Change](#). One of its key recommendations is to maintain investment in evaluation to ensure that the long-term outcomes of initiatives are assessed and any impact on communities sustained.. To that end, COMPACT projects are reviewed frequently and evaluation findings discussed at a regular peer-learning forums to ensure that lessons are integrated into future delivery.

Applying MEL to Cities

Although practical guidance on MEL may be more obviously applicable to individual programmes and other activities, the information presented below is equally applicable to the coordination mechanisms and specific intervention frameworks that cities already have in place or may want to develop. For both activities and systems, goals should be identified and impact needs to be understood. The steps presented here can be followed regardless of what a city is trying to measure or assess, provided consideration is given to different types of indicators.

There are a [number of resources](#) available to inform and guide MEL approaches, including [several related to preventing hate, extremism and polarisation](#).

The majority are developed with a non-governmental audience in mind to inform project design and measurement of results. Despite often being developed for CSOs, NGOs, development contractors and international agencies, much of the technical learning applies equally to developing approaches to city-led prevention. Arguably the emphasis on sustainability, institutionalisation, local ownership and the cycle of incorporating learnings to adjust implementation may take on additional importance for cities where, regardless of resource availability and changes in political direction or broader policy, communities will continue to feel the impact, knock-on effects, or lack of success of prevention efforts in the longer term.

Definitions

Monitoring: refers to *“the task of ensuring that activities are completed on time and within a prescribed budget and plan. It is the assessment of progress toward project implementation – the completion of key activities for intended beneficiaries, implementers, and partners – and the measurement of quantitative outputs such as the number of participants engaged in the activities”* (See [Source](#))

Evaluation: refers to *“the assessment of whether project activities collectively achieved the objectives as intended or planned, and as articulated in a Theory of Change. Inherent to any effective evaluation effort is a clear understanding of the project objectives, the development of measurable and specific indicators, and access to reliable and relevant data”*. (See [Source](#))

Develop a Theory of Change

At a basic level, a Theory of Change identifies what is expected to change as a result of an intervention and how this change can be expected to be achieved. It can be presented in narrative format, most simply as an ‘if, then, because’ statement explaining what effect certain actions, outputs and outcomes will have and how they will combine to achieve a stated goal. This narrative is typically accompanied by a diagram, or logic model, which depicts the pathways of change arising from an intervention and will structure and guide how a city measures results across its effort(s). Although there are few limits to the amount of detail or technical complexity of such theories and models, it should be remembered that transparency and engagement, especially with non-specialist community stakeholders, is an important broader principle in a city’s approach. Simpler models may aid this and ultimately serve more ends. Cities also may not need a comprehensive model of a one-off activity or isolated initiatives and resources. Time and technical expertise should be expected to be limited for many cities and therefore impact practical feasibility.

The Theory of Change diagram should identify different levels of change, as well as the inputs, assumptions and environmental factors which may influence a city’s ability to achieve such change. Inputs are the financial and human resources, equipment and staff training that enables the delivery of particular activities. Groups of activities should then be listed that together form a few key ‘outputs’, i.e. the direct products or services that stem from an intervention. These are the most immediate results of an intervention and are often quantitative (e.g., the number of people engaged in a particular activity or the number of people in a particular target group reached by a specific communication campaign). They can also capture the relevance and usefulness of trainings or other activities, as perceived by beneficiaries.

‘Outcomes’ are the next stage of change, typically but not exclusively visualised in a hierarchical or pyramid format and focus on what happened as a result of the outputs and what change has been achieved. In the short-term, outcomes typically consist of changes in knowledge, awareness and attitudes, and in the mid-term, changes in behaviour, practice or performance.

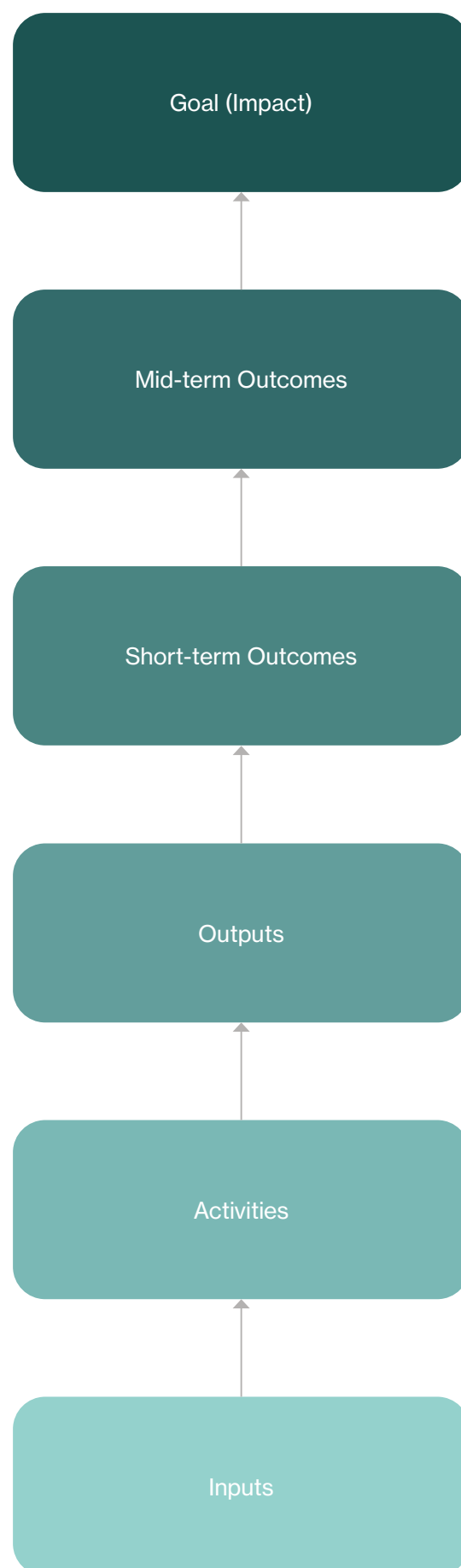
Finally, a goal or impact level should be identified, which an intervention can reasonably expect to contribute towards in the long-term as a result of successfully meeting the combined outcomes. At every stage, other layers and intermediate steps may also be identified, depending on the complexity or scope of the intervention or what may be required by donors and other partners.

As well as establishing a causal relationship between the action taken and what it is expected to achieve, or the impact anticipated from an intervention(s), a Theory of Change should identify key causal assumptions and environmental factors that may influence a city's ability to achieve change. For example, a causal assumption might be made that individuals/groups targeted for secondary interventions are themselves invested in the intervention. If they are motivated and want help and support because they see the merits of engaging, the initiative is more likely to achieve results than if they are non-compliant or only attending and engaging for another reason (for example, to meet conditions of employment support). This example will be all the more pertinent where, as discussed, such interventions are likely to depend on voluntary participation. Equally, environmental conditions such as a stable political environment or the presence of family or other support networks might be identified as factors that permit an intervention in the first place or otherwise give it a better or worse chance of success. These should be factors outside of a city's control.

For more guidance on developing a Theory of Change and for developing a results framework, see [this guide](#) from Global Affairs Canada.

Develop a results framework including indicators and data collection methods

A results framework (or logframe) is typically presented as a table that lists the various levels of change (i.e., outputs and outcomes) identified in a Theory of Change and then outlines the ways in which a city will be able to demonstrate that the threshold for success has been met (indicators), as well as the data collection methods employed.



Typical data collection methods that cities consulted had employed include surveys, interviews, focus group discussions and direct measurement. Cities should also consider the range of existing data they already collect (for example, user data for specific services, or existing indices and census data) and how they can be relevant to the indicators identified. For more on leveraging existing data, see Chapter One. For a list of indicators already developed specifically for the P/CVE field, see the [UNDP Indicator Bank](#).

Two important points on indicators and data collection should be emphasised in particular:

- Wherever possible, establish 'baseline' data (showing the results for the relevant indicator before any intervention is made) so that the magnitude or nature of change following intervention can be assessed.
- For outcome-level change in particular, aim to identify longitudinal changes and consider collecting data at different intervals (e.g., immediately following a given output, three months later, six months later, etc.) and recognise that attitudinal and behavioural change is complex, multi-faceted and takes time.

Triangulating the data

The data identified in a results framework may give only a partial picture of the breadth and nature of changes – positive, negative and unexpected – achieved by the intervention(s). Capturing other ways to understand impact could be important to tell the full story. For example, a city might want to identify individual success stories, profile particular experiences, or even ask participants to maintain a video diary or other journal. Anecdotal, informal or testimonial data is still valid, provided subjectivity is acknowledged and any findings are not presented as representative. For more on data collection and analysis, see [this guide](#) from INTRAC.

Invest in MEL

Many cities shared that they felt either themselves or partners engaged in local activities had previously treated MEL as an afterthought and merely a technical requirement for funding mechanisms. A key learning expressed by many was the need to invest dedicated time and resources in MEL – from design, data collection and analysis to learning – throughout the lifecycle of their prevention interventions. This recognises that MEL efforts can and should influence how cities engage and potentially prompt changes to their approach is critical. In addition to planning and resource requirements, basic steps such as building in time during activities and follow-up for data collection and carrying out surveys, for example, is also a tangible improvement that cities felt could be made to their approaches. For one of the best-recognised guides to the full MEL process, see the World Bank's [Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System](#). For guidance tailored to a hate, extremism and polarisation context, see [this toolkit](#) from UNDP and International Alert.

Share learnings

Analysing the data collected is not the endline objective in itself. The analysis should not only shed light on whether an initiative is generating impact or are otherwise on-track but should also elicit learnings and other findings that might inform alterations to the approach and improve overall performance. Ensuring that learnings are shared with all involved in order to maintain a feedback loop where results constantly inform practice is essential.

Beyond this, sharing the learnings and results from a city's MEL activities with wider audiences, including where possible, community stakeholders and the wider public, also serves the wider aim of increasing transparency, openness and public engagement – all valuable objectives of city-led prevention efforts.

Chapter 4

Coordination

This chapter expands on the different types of coordination and partnerships that cities should consider when developing their prevention efforts. It looks at how cities can build effective coordination with central governments, before exploring how whole-of-society multi-stakeholder approaches can be developed into city-level operational coordination models. Finally, it also discusses how cities can consider engaging with the private sector as key stakeholders in their prevention efforts as much as potential resource partners.

The Benefits of a Local Coordination Platform

Given its multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary nature, coordination among different sectors and actors is a prerequisite for effective and sustainable prevention. Operationalising a whole-of-society approach necessitates integrating contributions from a multitude of offices, organisations and individuals. This includes frontline practitioners like social, health and youth workers and teachers; community leaders such as religious, tribal, youth and respected members of community groups; and different government agencies. This applies as much to local as national efforts and includes cooperation between these two levels. Cities should bear this in mind whether they are looking to become involved in prevention for the first time or to deepen and broaden their existing involvement.

In general, there are a number of modalities for enabling coordination: this includes creating dedicated centres, networks or bodies, or by appointing an As reflected in the NLC Toolkit, local coordination mechanisms can serve a number of purposes. mechanisms can serve a number of purposes.

For example, they can:

- provide a single point to organise and collate the input and activities of local actors;
- facilitate both implementation of relevant local prevention programmes and coordination with the national government;
- connect local stakeholders – from across government and civil society – to discuss and address issues of concern to local communities and pursue cooperative solutions;
- coordinate information-gathering and sharing to both inform local actors and help ensure local perspectives and needs are communicated to the national level;
- provide or facilitate the delivery of relevant capacity building that is tailored to relevant front-line workers and community actors; and
- manage and disperse funding for locally-led prevention initiatives.

Cities should be mindful of the importance of ensuring there is a mechanism in place to enable the sustained involvement of a diversity of local stakeholders in prevention. For many, this is not an issue on which they necessarily feel comfortable working, whether due to a lack of resources or expertise. Cities should recognise the need for some level of cooperation with the national government.

Sindh Province, Pakistan: is administratively divided into 29 districts totalling a population of 47.9 million which makes it challenging to develop policies and programmes that will be relevant to all its constituencies. Like all provincial governments of Pakistan, Sindh has developed the [Apex committee](#), a coordination and cooperation mechanism to enhance vertical and horizontal connectivity. It does not only serve as a platform for strengthened cooperation with civil society and other relevant actors, but also between the district governments. The Apex committee has permanent members and can also summon officials as and when needed. The coordination and cooperation mechanism focuses on a couple of aspects including information sharing, resource allocation, ameliorative action and collective decision making with lower tiers of government.

The Importance of National-Local Coordination

As a result of its engagements with scores of cities around the world, Strong Cities has found that some level of NLC is needed for cities to unlock their full potential in prevention. At a fundamental level, NLC encompasses the structures, resources and approaches that cohere national strategies with the localised needs of a city's approach, with both national and local stakeholders able to work collectively and maximise the impact of their respective efforts.

Since its Third Global Summit in 2018, Strong Cities has been at the forefront of efforts not only to highlight the critical role that meaningful NLC plays in operationalising a whole-of-society approach to P/CVE, but to develop practical guidance for national and local stakeholders, including cities. This includes its support for the development of the GCTF's 13 NLC good practices and the above-mentioned Implementation Toolkit that provides recommendations, case study examples and other resources that local governments may find helpful to apply and tailor to their own contexts. The toolkit breaks down NLC into six core competencies: Trust; Inclusivity; Coordination; Communication; Capacity; and Sustainability.

Cities are encouraged to refer to the Implementation Toolkit for detailed guidance on each component. Note that the operational and coordination approaches outlined in this toolkit, although developed primarily for the P/CVE field, are applicable and relevant across the wider spectrum of prevention efforts.

Local Multi-Stakeholder Coordination Models and Lessons

Some local governments have had success pursuing a coordinated approach in which they develop municipal-led, multi-stakeholder and/or multidisciplinary frameworks or mechanisms for preventing violence, hate and extremism and/or other social harms. These locally-led, multi-stakeholder platforms often involve a diversity of representatives from the community, including religious leaders, educators, social workers, youth workers and law enforcement, as well as representatives of the national government. These bodies can help identify and engage frontline actors across the city in prevention. They also help to build an appropriate and coordinated response to issues of hate and extremism that is both tailored to the local context and in line with national prevention frameworks.

This approach is sometimes referred to as a 'local prevention network' (LPN) and leverages the advantages of multiple actors to support prevention within their existing mandates. The power of LPNs stems in part from their proximity to, and immersion in, the day-to-day issues and challenges prevalent in their communities. This can contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the individual and structural factors that might lead to violence motivated by hate or extremism than if each actor engaged separately.

The following key learnings were raised by cities consulted in relation to some of the common challenges they experience when trying to expand or develop multi-actor coordination through various local models:

- Everybody supports collaboration in principle but there are always reasons why it is difficult to achieve. These might typically span differences in working cultures and legal limitations around information-sharing or be symptomatic of a more fundamental lack of trust. Cities need to navigate these issues and build understanding around the key concerns each part of the local government has, as well as how varying institutional approaches or professional disciplines will inform different perspectives. Where there are legitimate barriers, for example, legal restrictions around information-sharing or confidentiality, these need to be explained at the outset.
- Building on existing institutional partnerships can give cities a head-start in building the working-level trust and cooperation required to address complex, contentious or sensitive issues.
- Balancing input from police and security actors against contributions from non-security stakeholders, including health and social care professionals, can be difficult, but it is critical. Whether these specific partners are part of a city's prevention network or are able/willing to come to the table and cooperate with a city will vary from one context to another.
- Running an inclusive mapping process from the outset that involves all the stakeholders likely to be key in implementation will inform the specific partnership, information-sharing and institutional cooperation challenges in any given city. This is likely to be more useful than building a theoretical list of the various partners and stakeholders that represent an ideal model. (See Chapter 1).
- Each partner needs to understand the value of the other and appreciate what they are contributing to planning and implementation. Developing working level trust and effective teamwork needs to be part of training and capacity building efforts and not left until it is needed in an emergency response situation. Scenario planning exercises and basic roles and responsibilities need to be agreed upon.
- Information-sharing will inevitably be a challenge. Developing protocols and guidelines can help to avoid confusion, bring clarity, provide accountability and reassure partners, but they are not sufficient to create trust by themselves.

Information-sharing systems: 5 top tips

Information-sharing systems do not need to be costly, complex or technologically advanced platforms. They may not even need to be digital. Regardless of the system a city already has or wants to put in place, these principles apply to support the effective flow of information and ensure that stakeholders use it with a common purpose and understanding.

1. Train stakeholders not only in how to use the information-sharing system but also in understanding the ethical considerations, data protection regulations, and the wider context. For instance, ensure that their information-sharing systems comply with local, national, and (where applicable) international data protection regulations;
2. Establish a clear purpose for the information-sharing system, e.g. outlining goals, type of information to be shared, and primary users;

3. Direct pertinent information to the engaged civil society stakeholders (if they are authorised to receive such information);
4. Have standardised formats. Different agencies might use different terminologies or data structures, which can hinder effective communication; and
5. Periodically review and update the information-sharing systems to remain effective and the chain of information required may differ depending on the type of intervention deployed or issue being addressed.

These tips are adapted from [lessons from R&R efforts in German cities](#) but are of wider applicability.

Coordination platforms, which come in different shapes and sizes, have contributed to operationalising a whole-of-society approach to prevention that draws on existing city-level agencies and resources and includes civil society and other community partners.

For example, several cities in **Bangladesh** have [Town-Level Coordination Committees](#) (TLCC) that are headed by the mayor and made up of representatives from local government, education, law enforcement, social work, civil society, and members of the community. TLCCs meet regularly to discuss issues facing the city and oversee the delivery of projects. In Tangail, according to its Mayor, the TLCC has taken up issues related to prevention. TLCCs across the country have also been critical for [elevating marginalised voices](#), like those of women and the impoverished.

In **North Macedonia**, with support from Strong Cities, a number of municipalities (with a mandate from the national government) have created Community Action Teams (CAT), local government-led multi-stakeholder groups that facilitate coordination around the implementation of local prevention plans. For example, the CAT in [Kumanovo](#) has helped build the prevention-related capacities of its members, which include representatives from the city, religious communities, sports and youth organisations, teachers, and CSOs to inspire its members to lead prevention efforts and to share their experiences and learn from city level professionals in other cities in the region and beyond.

New York City Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes (OPHC) coordinates the implementation of whole-of-city community-led hate and extremism prevention efforts across the city. This involves overseeing an interagency committee that includes more than 25 city agencies, including ones related to law enforcement, criminal justice, housing, parks and recreation and community engagement and liaising with community-based organisation across the city.

Several counties in **Kenya** created [County Engagement Forums \(CEFs\)](#); [Counties should lead in Countering Violent Extremism » Capital News \(capitalfm.co.ke\)](#) to coordinate the delivery and evaluation of their P/CVE County Action Plans (CAPs). While the structure and make-up vary per county, the multi-stakeholder platforms are all co-chaired by the County Commissioner, who is appointed by the national government, and the elected County Governor. They serve as CAP implementation [steering committees](#) that bring together national and local government actors, civil society, the private sector, religious leaders, traditional elders, youth groups and women's groups. [Community Teams](#) were also developed in three Kenyan counties in collaboration with the National Counter Terrorism Centre and a number of municipalities in **Jordan** and **Lebanon**, with guidance from Strong Cities, established [similar structures](#).

Drawing from its wide-ranging experience supporting the development of city-led, multi-stakeholder coordination and engagement platforms, **Strong Cities has identified 10 lessons for cities interested in heading down a similar path:**

1. Design a structure to fit the specific context
2. Identify and articulate a clear remit for the body
3. Tailor the mandate to fit the needs and priorities of the city and the communities it serves
4. Emphasise local knowledge and context
5. Leverage existing community structures and initiatives
6. Maximise strategic and action planning and resource deployment for prevention
7. Coordinate and/or deliver local programmes aligned with an action plan
8. Enhance coordination with relevant national actors
9. Institutionalise communication and coordination mechanisms with the community
10. Provide safe spaces

Regardless of the approach a local government pursues, it should try to utilise existing departments, policies, positions, programmes and materials wherever possible, rather than disregarding the creations of their predecessors. Prevention must be pursued over the long term and disrupting or ending programmes prematurely can undercut a city's progress and cause a backlash among those who are directly affected, potentially undermining future efforts.

Involving the private sector

Private companies generally benefit from a stable and safe environment, yet few actively participate in specific prevention activities, much less at a local or city level.

Companies in every sector can be relevant to prevention, not just the seemingly more influential stakeholders like large multinational tech companies involved in regulatory issues over harmful/hateful content, for example. Many cities felt that beginning with understanding the role that local businesses and employers can play is a more accessible starting place for developing collaboration with the wider public sector.

Cities consulted for this Guide highlighted two primary reasons for engaging the private sector in their approaches:

As stakeholders actively participating in a city's approach

Companies can contribute to prevention planning and potentially be part of a local network or multi-stakeholder model (see *Institutionalising the approach* in Chapter 2). More broadly, the workplace is also an everyday domain no less vulnerable to risks and challenges than other spaces in a city.

This may necessitate engagement with the private sector in specific interventions and at different levels of prevention. Private companies might, for example, establish processes and support efforts to combat hate, violence, intimidation, discrimination, stigmatisation, exclusion or other challenges in the workplace, whether between colleagues or as part of any external engagement. In some cases, a city may be positioned to support companies by providing basic training and support and raising awareness around key risks as well as the approach and broader principles the city is adopting.

The potential impact companies stand to make is not limited only to their employees; companies can also be vital partners in, for example, providing job support, training and employment and career development opportunities, which might form part of a city's chosen approach.

As resource partners

Cities might also turn to the private sector for resources – financial, human, material, facilities, and/or expertise – that can support their prevention approach. This may be a significant or a more modest contribution, but in either case, demonstrating investment in, and partnership with, the private sector can help make a stronger case for continued public investment too. For more on public-private partnerships, see Identifying resources in Chapter 2.

Another area in which cities can potentially attract investment in prevention approaches is by accessing corporate social responsibility or equivalent schemes that many companies develop. Demonstrating how the private sector can support community work that creates a general social good, or how local employers and businesses can 'give back' to the community is an important first step. Some companies may also recognise the 'business case' for prevention, where safer and more cohesive communities support better commercial outcomes as well as social ones.

Conclusion

Irrespective of context, most cities can play a role in prevention.

This Guide was prompted by the requests of local government officials to enable them to better fulfill this role. It is designed to help them better understand what others are doing and provide a basic overview of what prevention entails for a city and how it can be applied in the context of diverse, often conflicting, priorities of daily service provision to communities. It is intended to be accessible to local government officials and practitioners in different parts of the world and from different professional backgrounds.

The intention of this Guide is not to provide a blueprint or expect every element to be of relevance to every city. Readers are encouraged to self-select what is important to their city, areas of support that speak to their most pressing needs, and examples that can translate or be adapted to their specific contexts. Importantly, developing effective city-led prevention on the issues of hate, extremism and polarisation should not involve a blanket obligation to set up new structures, develop new policies, and treat these issues in a way that removes us from the fact they are and have long been a part of public life in our communities, albeit with changing manifestations and particular challenges. As such, this Guide aims to demonstrate how, in several areas, prevention approaches can and should be integrated into existing services, mechanisms and approaches cities already have to address a range of social and public safety needs.

Effectively tackling these issues requires an inclusive and nuanced approach, given the sensitivity of the issues and their often complex historical, cultural, social and political dimensions. Inevitably, engaging in prevention involves navigating inter-communal tensions, government-community trust deficits and/or tensions between the national and local governments, among other challenges. This is

why the guide recommends that the first step for any city wanting to engage in prevention is to conduct a comprehensive and inclusive mapping process at the outset and before anything else. This serves as the basis for understanding the particular challenges a city faces, how they affect specific parts of the community differently and the existing mechanisms and key stakeholders that need to be leveraged for prevention.

Cities need to work together to implement prevention – with other cities, from one sector to another, with central and other levels of government, with civil society and other partners, and with communities. This Guide supports the role that local government officials and practitioners play in effecting this cooperation and in building common ground. It is complemented by a **Mayoral Guide** and a **Response Toolkit** as well as by the **NLC Implementation Toolkit** developed in collaboration with the GCTF, supporting other key components and stakeholders at local levels to address hate, extremism and polarisation.

This Guide, as with all other Strong Cities tools, will be hosted on Strong Cities' [Resource Hub](#). The Guide be a living document, added to and updated based on Strong Cities engagement with cities, and a starting point for local officials on the myriad ways cities can and have developed and delivered prevention. The Guide also provides an outline of the types of support cities can look to Strong Cities and other partners for and how future training, capacity building and engagement might focus on the particular needs cities identify in relation to their prevention journey. As such, it continues to support Strong Cities' ongoing effort to build a community of practice between cities that crosses national and regional boundaries and transcends differences in context and resourcing, with the basic aim of sharing experiences, good practices and key learnings, in order to unlock the prevention potential of cities.



Annex I:

Recommended Resources

Companion Guides

Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). (2023). A Toolkit for Actioning the Memorandum on GCTF Good Practices for Strengthening National-Local Cooperation for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism the Leads to Terrorism. <https://strongcitiesnetwork.org/resources/>

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Annex II:

City Practices

Location	Practice
East and Southern Africa	
Cape Town, South Africa	<u>Safer and Healthier Places of Worship</u>
Isiolo County, Kenya	<u>Community Engagement Forum</u>
Koboko, Uganda	<u>Addressing Local Tensions</u>
Maputo, Mozambique	<u>Councillor for Youth and Citizenship</u>
Masaka, Uganda	<u>Constituency Development Funds (CDFs)</u>
Western Cape, South Africa	<u>Community Safety Forums (CSFs)</u>
Multiple counties, Kenya	<u>County Engagement Forums (CEFs)</u> <u>Community Teams</u>
South African Local Government Association	<u>Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading</u>
Europe	
Aalborg, Denmark	<u>Online Democratic Conversations Mapping</u>
Berlin, Germany	<u>Rehabilitation and Reintegration Strategy</u>

Bilbao, Spain	Third Intercultural City Plan
Bratislava, Slovakia	Ukrainian Refugee Crisis Centre
Cardiff, United Kingdom	Cardiff Model for Violence Prevention
Greater Manchester, United Kingdom	Greater Manchester Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Accord Greater Manchester Strategy
Helsinki, Finland	Home Town Helsinki
London, United Kingdom	London's Comprehensive Listening Exercise Shared Endeavour Fund
Malmö, Sweden	Safe Digital Cities
The Hague, the Netherlands	Returnee Manual
Wrocław, Poland	Integration Centre Centre for Social Development
Žilina, Slovakia	Integration of Minority Groups
Middle East and North Africa	
Rabat, Morocco	Partnership with Jossour Forum des Femmes Marocaines – Gender Responsive Urban Planning
Sousse, Tunisia	IOM Partnership Service Provision for Migrants Cheat Sheet

North America

Aurora, CO, USA	<u>Aurora Key Community Response Team (AKCRT)</u>
Columbus, OH, USA	<u>New American Initiative</u>
Edmonton, Canada	<u>Anti-Racism Strategy</u>
New York City, NY, USA	<u>New York Supports its Communities – Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes</u>
Stamford, CT, USA	<u>Stamford Stands Against Racism</u>
Seattle, WA, USA	<u>Plan to Prevent Hate and Polarisation in the Workplace</u>
Toronto, Canada	<u>Youth Engagement Strategy</u>

Oceania

Christchurch, New Zealand	<u>Te Haumako Te Whitingia Strengthening Communities Together Strategy</u>
State of New South Wales, Australia	<u>COMPACT (Community Partnership Action Programme)</u>
State of Victoria, Australia	<u>Urban Design and Crime Prevention Platform</u>

South America

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	<u>Safe School App</u>
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South Asia




Mardan, Pakistan	<u>Local Peace Committee</u>
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Sindh Province, Pakistan	Apex Committee
Multiple cities, Bangladesh	Town-Level Coordination Committees (TLCC)
West Africa	
Monrovia, Liberia	Interfaith Council of Monrovia
Western Balkans	
Brčko District, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Prevention and Fight Against Terrorism Strategy
Čair, North Macedonia	Youth and Community Centre
Cërrik, Albania	R&R programme
Gostivar, North Macedonia	Train-the Trainer – Youth Development through Sports
Kumanovo, North Macedonia	Community Resilience Study Community Action Teams
Novi Pazar, Serbia	Prevention programmes through education
Prishtina, Kosovo and elsewhere	MotherSchools



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