



Together for Safety

21 Ways Forward 2021



ISD | Powering solutions
to extremism
and polarisation



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Preface

Cities and their communities are at the coalface of today's rising tide of weaponised hate, extremism and polarisation. Around the world, we are witnessing democracy and our universal values of pluralism and human rights threatened by these growing challenges.

This past year, Covid-19 has placed greater demands on local leaders than ever before. Not only do cities, towns and urban areas bear the brunt of this historic public health crisis and the associated economic and social fallout, but they are also impacted by the massive proliferation of online conspiracy theories, dangerous disinformation and weaponised hate, all of which have had visible real-world repercussions.

Covid-19 has become the new information battlefield for hostile state actors, extremist movements and those intent on exploiting pandemic fears to divide societies and further their agendas.

In order to tackle these issues, it is vital that we learn from each other and work together to drive more effective local, national and international responses.

For this reason, Nordic Safe Cities and the Strong Cities Network, which is led by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, jointly launched Together for Safety, a series of online discussions that examined pressing safety and security issues in both the Nordic States and across the world. Together, these convenings sought to inspire national and local officials, practitioners, civic and youth leaders with innovative practices drawn from around the world and with new ideas to adapt to their countries and communities.

Across four online webinars in January and February of 2021, we explored the nature of the extremist threat during this Covid-19 era; the risks, responsibilities and opportunities that exist in our current digital landscape; innovative models for engaging young people through art, sport and drama; and the protection of the free, open and safe public spaces our communities require.

This report, 21 Ways Forward, summarises our four Together for Safety webinars and condenses their findings into 21 recommendations targeted at practitioners, policymakers and civic and youth activists. We invite you to read it, share it, and adapt the ways forward we've outlined to your own contexts.

Together, we can form a united front against hate, polarisation and violent extremism, and build safer, stronger, more resilient cities during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond.



Jeppe Albers

Founder and Executive Director
Nordic Safe Cities



Sasha Havlicek

Founding CEO
Institute for Strategic Dialogue



Introduction

We co-launched the Together for Safety webinars in January 2021 as a series of online talks to tackle pressing urban safety and security challenges with a key focus on addressing hate, polarisation and extremism across the Nordics and in cities around the world.

Over the course of four weeks, we heard from mayors and city leaders, policymakers, practitioners, youth, civil society and subject matter experts on ways that we can work together for a safer, more resilient future for our cities and communities.

This summary condenses some of the key findings and recommendations from our speakers into 21 succinct points which we encourage you to read. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but we hope it provides food for thought as we bring our cities out of the Covid-19 public health crisis and look ahead to the future. Each speaker's presentation has been recorded and linked for your convenience, should you be interested in learning more.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us:

[Nordic Safe Cities](#)

info@nordicsafecities.org

[Strong Cities Network](#)

info@strongcitiesnetwork.org

Webinar 1

21 January, 3–5 pm CET

Extremist trends during Covid-19 and what comes next



Focus

In this first webinar, we were pleased to be joined by five mayors and city leaders who highlighted key initiatives and approaches within their cities to help maintain a strong and safe society amid the Covid-19 crisis. These leaders shared their vision for how to safeguard their citizens from hate, polarisation and violent extremism throughout 2021 and beyond. We were also joined by three experts, Eric Rosand, Dr Magnus Ranstorp and Milo Comerford, who provided an overview of key extremist trends and narratives during Covid-19, and looked ahead to future challenges.

Mayor's vision



Stockholm, Sweden

We must also be a city for the hopeful. Let's not forget that a sense of belonging, a workplace, an education is very important in becoming a part of a cohesive community. It is also one of the core pillars of any crime preventive initiative.

*Mayor Anna König Jerlmyr,
Stockholm (Sweden)*

Challenges highlighted

right-wing extremism; Quran burnings; social exclusion.

Actions

Stockholm is focused on strengthening a sense of belonging within the workplace, creating a cohesive community through a holistic approach that includes a programme of education for practitioners within schools and social services.



Zamboanga, Philippines

There should be a sense of security for the family.

*Mayor Maria Isabelle G. Climaco,
Zamboanga (Philippines)*

Challenges highlighted

Low trust and anger towards local government due to polarisation and misinformation; Covid-19 is taking a toll on mental health and capacity; loss of jobs and livelihood; the city also faces a particular challenge from female suicide bombers.

Actions

To deal with these issues, the city of Zamboanga is working to build and strengthen community resilience through continuing community dialogue across regions, as well as initiatives to boost employment.



London, UK

Even through the hardships we have seen some of the best of our communities with Londoners' willingness to look after each other, including delivering emergency food to those in need and securing accommodation for the homeless and domestic abuse victims.

Deputy Mayor Sophie Linden, London, UK

Challenges highlighted

Discrimination against religious minority communities; online hatred and misinformation.

Actions

London has established the Shared Endeavour Fund with Google to stem the tide of hate and misinformation online. This project is being delivered with a wider variety of partners, including schools, theatres, and sports teams.



Mombasa, Kenya

A robust, peaceful and safe city network within East Africa and across the African continent

Tendai Mtana, County Executive Committee Member, County Government of Mombasa (Kenya)

Challenges highlighted

Loss of jobs, especially for working class communities; connecting families across the Islands during lockdown; broader systemic challenges around poverty.

Actions

Creation of 'The Robust City Network of Mombasa' with help from the Strong Cities Network (SCN). This functions as an 'ark', providing space and homes in the centre of the pandemic and making nutrition and food relief programs. 225,000 people have been fed so far, helping to build societal resilience. The SCN has also helped to create community dialogue in cooperation with religious leaders to help communicate important Covid information to populations.



Louisville, US

Restoring the old economy is not good enough... We are working with businesses, organisations and people from communities to rebuild our economy in a way that addresses the problems we had before and makes it more possible for black Americans to get good-paying jobs, gain wealth and build homes. We call this 'Build Back Better Together'

Mayor Greg Fischer, Louisville (US)

Challenges highlighted

Highest level of polarisation for a decade; politicisation of Covid-19 crisis.

Actions

Three main steps: scaling vaccinations rapidly; recovering funds to individuals and small businesses for food and shelters for the poor; rebuilding the economy to address issues of racism through the 'Build Back Better Together' programme.

Key findings from researchers

In spite of the resilience and resourcefulness of cities to turn challenges into opportunities and create safer, more inclusive societies and strengthen prevention efforts, Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the landscape of violent extremism around the world. Research from [Magnus Ranstorp](#) (NSC) and [Milo Comerford](#) (ISD), as well as Eric Rosand (RUSI), shows that the way extremist groups have mobilised around the pandemic have a number of implications for how cities approaching monitoring, response and prevention efforts:

Propaganda and conspiracy theories

While we have seen a decrease in jihadist terrorism funding and attacks, there has been a significant spike in online propaganda. ISIS narratives are exploiting Covid-19 to attack its enemies, framing it as “a punishment for infidels” and blaming “crusader forces” for the virus. There is a perception that target countries are vulnerable and preoccupied with containing the virus, and Salafi-jihadists have called for attacks on critical infrastructure such as hospitals and vaccine facilities.

Right-wing extremist groups are weaponising conspiracy theories to target and blame minorities, including Jewish and Muslim communities, for creating and transmitting the virus, through a range of online platforms. The pandemic has also seen the strengthening and consolidation of right-wing extremist groups, who are exploiting existing angers, fears and economic insecurities during the pandemic as a recruitment tool and using propaganda against minorities to argue for the acceleration of a race-war, also referred to as a ‘White Genocide’ or ‘The Great Replacement.’

Gamification of extremism

Extremist groups are using the insecurity and isolation of the pandemic to target youth online by infiltrating gaming platforms such as Discord, social media sites and messaging boards. Gamification is an increasingly emergent tendency, particularly in the US where extremist groups have framed players as earning ‘points’ by carrying out real-world attacks. This shows a worryingly trend in violent extremism among young people in particular, and shows the need for governments to be abreast of a range of potential dangerous online spaces.

Filling the void of state services

History shows that periods of uncertainty and economic hardship can create fertile breeding grounds for hate and division. Both jihadist groups and right-wing extremist groups actively seek to ‘fill the void’ of the state and step in as community organisers and service providers to both undermine political authorities and gain support in areas of political instability. Although the Nordics have strong states, this tendency is important to remember on a community basis, where individuals or families who have suffered mentally, socially or economically from the consequences of the pandemic, can become targets of local extremist groups, who try to build trust or provide support, jobs or direct aid.

Guiding principles for cities for preventing extremism during and post Covid-19

1 Take more proactive steps to understand the local online extremism landscape

Cities have a crucial role to play in using granular knowledge and expertise to better understand, map and counter challenges of online extremism at a local level.

Working in partnership with private sector and civil society partners, cities should develop technological capabilities to monitor and act on online harms for prevention and crisis management.

2 Prioritise mental health initiatives

Covid-19 has drastically increased the time individuals spend on the internet and social media, which has brought new challenges when dealing with mental health and radicalisation. It is important to strengthen mental health initiatives for communities as well as individual citizens to help build resilience against radicalisation.

3 Strengthen partnerships and cooperation with local communities

Establish strong partnerships with communities to make them more prepared for, and therefore more resilient to, crises. In cities like London such partnerships have been deployed to respond to a diverse range of crises, from pandemics to terrorist incidents.

4 Boost economy and employment, while continuing to prioritise long-term community building and prevention programmes

Make employment a central priority during the Covid-19 crisis and recovery process. Economic hardships in particular can lead to frustration and feelings of helplessness for individuals, making them more vulnerable and receptive to extremist propaganda and disinformation.

Support vulnerable individuals and families and maintain community dialogue; keep and sustain core prevention efforts to strengthen local community resilience to prevent violent extremism.

Include interdisciplinary approaches in prevention programmes; use the strength of sports and arts initiatives to contribute to cohesion efforts.

5 Educate practitioners in online and offline extremism and the impacts of Covid-19

Educate and support staff and employees in social services and schools with digital skills education. Social isolation and pandemic lockdowns create the perfect conditions for extremist groups to reach young people in particular. This poses a challenge for frontline practitioners to be more aware of their clients' online environment, in a time without the usual face-to-face interaction.

Webinar 2

28 January, 3–5 pm CET

United Against Polarisation and Hate

Focus

This session focused on the effects of the internet and social media on polarisation and hate. The talk examined online risks and the potential consequences of online regulation on freedom of speech, while also examining initiatives, policies and educational approaches that foster resilience against online harms and contribute to creating a safer online environment.

Key points

In their conversation [Jacqueline Beauchere](#), [Prof. David Kaye](#), [Shannon Hiller](#) and [Carl Miller](#) raised the following points.

Information warfare is increasing

Risks that sow hate and division are on the rise across the globe.

Jacqueline Beauchere

Digital civility has continued to remain low during the Covid-19 pandemic. There is an extension of information warfare – both misinformation and disinformation – beyond seismic global events to local elections and everyday conversations. This means that local actors can no longer ignore the digital space, but increasingly have to worry about what online hate speech is doing to the communities they care about.

How to regulate

Public law often is designed and should be designed to prevent harms against individuals, but right now, we are in a position where we rely on private companies to do that work.

David Kaye

It remains difficult to balance successful regulatory policies with fundamental rights such as freedom of speech. One of the key challenges within this conversation is to distinguish between a potential threat and actual harm.

Community involvement

Building online defence apparatuses for civic society will be one of the coming decade's most important questions to enhance digital civility.

Carl Miller

There are a growing number of analytical approaches, online tools and data-sets which can help local actors identify threats, but more work is needed to increase this number and bridge the gap between tech companies, scholars and local actors to make them more useful. [Civil society](#) in particular, with its capacity to connect with marginalised voices and communities, is a critical partner in this regard. Similarly, these approaches should be informed by the communities they serve, in ways that are transparent and understandable to civil society, and produce outputs that both allow for a civil societal response and are actionable.



United Against
Polarisation and Hate

Highlighted initiatives

The Safe Digital City Malmö

It is hard for local actors to have an accurate picture of how hate, extremism and racism navigates online. As safety workers, we often find ourselves being reactive, rather than proactive.

Malin Martelius

The Safe Digital City in Malmö seek to strengthen the municipality's preventive efforts, through a systematic and continuous digital analysis of the city's online landscape. The project uses artificial intelligence algorithms to collect data from public forums and create an aggregated map over the digital hatred in Malmö.

I See, You See Helsinki

ICUC aim to teach youth and school children how to live free from black and white thinking.

Anneli Portman

The programme supports and strengthens the wellbeing of individuals and communities by teaching communication skills on how to describe one's values and opinions in a way that is effective yet considerate of others.

Read more: <https://misi.hel.fi/en/>

The Bayt Al Hikma 2.0

We hired a team of 120 regional paid and volunteer young translators in 2017

Faisal Almutar

The Bayt Al Hikma 2.0 aims to solve the content scarcity problem for Arabic speakers by providing digital content on critical thinking, civil rights and science.

Read more:
<https://en.baytalhikma2.org/>

Guiding principles for standing united against polarisation and hate

6 Engage actively in the digital sphere

The hybrid challenges of disinformation, hate speech, extremism and manipulation online fuel polarisation and division and can impact significantly on public security and community safety. It is essential to have up-to-date insights drawn from online activity to inform interventions and preventative work, ensuring safe and resilient communities online and offline.

7 Build broad coalitions for effective information-sharing and response

Safety online requires a holistic approach and active involvement from a wide range of actors, from private companies, to governments, law enforcers, educators and parents. Bilateral connections and coalitions should be established between these groups to better identify threats and empower community actions.

8 Involve the public

People need a sense that the online space is subject to public oversight and democratic principles. Proactive efforts should be made to engage meaningfully with community groups to both understand the impact of online harms on these groups and where their concerns lie in malicious online activity, while also including them as part of the response.



9 Expand online educational initiatives efforts and teach good digital citizenship

Education initiatives can help boost awareness of and resilience to online harms, and help communities become more positive digital citizens. While these projects can be incorporated into existing channels and institutions such as schools and youth clubs, there is a broader need to boost media literacy and provide guidance on how to respond when encountering harmful activity online across a spectrum of ages to ensure a comprehensive approach.

10 Promote and support positive online initiatives

Identify, support and promote online initiatives that reflect and encourage positive behaviour. Consider funding or providing in-kind support to programmes through informal partnerships and collaborations.

The background image shows a man in a dark jacket and pants walking from right to left across a public space. In the foreground, there is a wooden bench. The ground is wet, and the man's reflection is clearly visible in a puddle. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent red color. In the background, there are windows with shutters on a building.

Webinar 3

4 February, 3–5 pm CET

Safe Streets and Public Spaces

Focus

Our third webinar outlined the critical challenges cities face in protecting free and open public spaces. We examined evolving challenges for cities in managing protests, with examples from Berlin (Germany), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Kristiansand (Norway) and the US to understand how protests have posed fresh practical, constitutional and polarisation challenges throughout the pandemic. The second part of the session looked specifically at the impact of terrorism on public space and design, with a case study led by urban architects on emergency preparedness and rebuilding public spaces in Oslo (Norway).

Key points

Urban safety policy demands integrated approaches, including on public space

Today's cities face multiple urban threats, from street crime and social unrest to extremism and cybercrime. To make urban spaces safer, cities need to develop joined-up policies that address interrelated challenges and invest in long-term social resilience strategies that weaken their hold. Understanding how agendas on equality, non-discrimination, social cohesion and participatory action can be leveraged through strategies across the spectrum of issues we face is paramount; a securitised approach alone will not tackle underlying and structural challenges. Improving the integrity of public space is a key example of how integrated policymaking that addresses practical and systemic issues can have tangible benefits. Applying learnings from behavioural sciences to understand how the built environment can have very real effects not only on criminal activities but on how our communities relate to each other and behave has produced important results in myriad global contexts.

Tackling disinformation online must be a priority for community-level polarisation

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought home the threats posed by dangerous disinformation and the interconnectedness of social media more powerfully than ever before. The spread of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories, amplified by algorithms, has played a significant role not only in peoples offline actions but in their perceptions of polarisation and attitudes to others. While global solutions are sought to protect democratic institutions and freedom of speech, at the community level,

as one city leader put it, we need to practise not just "offending less" but also "being less offended"; resilience in that respect has to work simultaneously in both directions.

Data, data, data

Cities need to adopt evidence-based approaches instead of resorting to empirically weak policies that are quick to be employed but achieve very little. For example, preparing for a protest requires law enforcement as well as cities to fully understand the threat level and potential for violence. Securing public spaces against a potential terror attack requires stakeholders to conduct a vulnerability assessment. Evidence-based approaches – including hot spot mapping, social media analytics and hot spot policing – enhance preparedness and ensure a tailored and effective response.

Our responses need to reinforce our values, not succumb to division

Whether designing a new public space, managing a protest or communicating in the aftermath of a terror attack, it is crucial to adopt a uniting approach. To quote Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway at the time of the Oslo bombings in 2011, the answer should always be "more democracy, more openness and more humanity".

Safe Streets
and Public Spaces

Highlighted initiatives

Safe Spaces Task Force, Nordic Safe Cities

There's no one size fits all when designing safe spaces. It's very important to understand the local context of space and to develop an intervention that fits with community values, the resources and the restrictions of the area:

1. Create local alliances.
2. Start with the people.
3. Include rather than exclude.
4. Work site-specific.
5. Design for positive behaviour.

Read more [here](#).

Bridging Divides Initiative, Princeton University

In order to prevent violence and de-escalate protests:

1. Know your risk. understand the blend of extremism and disinformation driving conspiracies and increasing risk.
2. Know your laws. Plan to enforce them.
3. Connect and coordinate with key stakeholders.
4. Communicate early and often, and use your platform to amplify voices of influential leaders in your community.

Read more [here](#).

Rebuilding Oslo, SLA Architects

How does integrated terrorism prevention go hand in hand with open and democratic public spaces?

Security principles:

1. Create vehicle barriers but keep the space open for the public.
2. Create a space that preserves views to the street.
3. Create spaces that reduce vehicle speed.
4. Create distance without creating barriers (e.g. car-free zones).

Read more [here](#).

Guiding principles for ensuring safe streets and public spaces

11 Build trust and dialogue together

Whether a regeneration project or an initiative that seeks to protect public spaces from violent attacks, fostering participation and building trust and dialogue with your constituency is key, especially for police attempting to improve their relationship with communities. City initiatives should always start with people and seek to create local alliances: invite your constituents and understand what their needs, wishes and challenges are.

12 Adopt interdisciplinary approaches

To ensure integrated approaches that will benefit several areas at once (e.g. safety and security, ecology, social cohesion), it is central to seek cross-disciplinary collaboration. Such an approach allows cities to do more with fewer resources and reach more communities.

13 Include evidence from open source intelligence gathering and social media monitoring

Ensure your team is capable of using online data to inform initiatives and responses, which may require new training schemes. See Bellingcat's [Online Investigation Toolkit](#) or Annex 2 in the SCN's toolkit [Responding to a Terror Attack](#) for examples.

14 Communicate effectively

In order to maintain safe streets and public spaces, communicate openly, sensitively, clearly and through various channels (e.g. community leaders) where necessary.

15 Enhance preparedness

As cities continue to grow, they need to be prepared to respond to incidents – from violent protests to terror attacks. Comprehensive and tailored strategies informed by data ensure that cities are well positioned to deliver smoother responses that preserve the safety of public spaces.





Webinar 4

11 February, 3–5 pm CET

The Power of Youth

Focus

Our last webinar focused exclusively on young people. Youth not only have the potential to drive positive change, but are already actively involved in building stronger, safer and more inclusive societies daily. The webinar explored inspirational youth-led activities from around the world, while also examining ways that cities can positively engage youth in building stronger, safer and more inclusive local communities.

Key points

The importance of youth involvement and inclusive institutions

Paktaw Hajipouri, the former youth mayor of Sarpsborg, Norway, spoke about how young people should feed into policy and practice. At just 16 years old, she has worked with the municipality to involve youth more directly through the city's **Youth Council**. As a result, they have made a youth action plan and delivered five workshops about Covid-19's effect on youth. The Council has brought many new ideas to make their community more peaceful for all its residents, including ways to address hate crime, free speech and extremism in schools, and parent training for safe debate, and have organised meetings between politicians and youth to discuss hate speech.

Saji Prelis, Director of Children and Youth Programmes at **Search for Common Ground** and co-chair of the **Global Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security**, emphasised the importance of involving young people. For years, youth have been perceived as merely part of the problem – perpetrators of violence and crime, and often in a very gendered way. This limited perception has fuelled prevailing stereotypes that influence engagement with youth. When asking which factors drive radicalisation, the real question – why are most youth peaceful? – has been ignored. The establishment of the UN Security Council resolutions 2250 (in 2015), 2419 (in 2018) and 2535 (in 2020) has led to a large shift in the perception of young people as partners, instead of troublemakers.

Julius Kramer, a youth peace and security officer in the **United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia**, spoke about the consequences of young people's limited power. In Somalia, for example, 70% of the population are under the age of 30. Despite this, society is strongly shaped by age-based power structures and gendered experiences that disempower youth. Young men are often perceived by politicians as violent, while young women are viewed as passive victims of violence and discrimination with no agency. By excluding youth from decision-making and peacebuilding opportunities after decades of conflict, we miss out on an entire generation and their expertise. However, by investing in young people we invest in peace. Youth have often been filling gaps where state institutions have failed, for example by acting as dialogue facilitators in incidents of intra-clan violence.

Gent Toska has initiated a new apolitical project called My Voice Cair, which focuses exclusively on the municipality of Cair in North Macedonia. With support from Young Cities, Gent and his team have created a platform to showcase the accomplishments of young people and are facilitating opportunities for more youth to get involved in decision-making processes in the municipality of Cair. By working directly with the municipal government and with young people, Gent is helping to close the gap between the youth of Cair and municipal decision-makers.

Using sports to prevent extremism

Sports play a significant role in strengthening youth people's feelings of belonging, identity and purpose. These youth-led initiatives focused on strengthening engagement for vulnerable audiences through sports.

Nagin Ravand, ambassador in the Danish football association **YAK Sport**, helps minority women get involved with sports. Growing up as a refugee in Denmark, Nagin found her place through football and she now works with other women to help them do the same. Getting involved in football has made them more confident, able to speak up and strive to be better, which has reflected on their performance at school and at home. It also taught them to think collectively and not individually: "The girls were not there to become elite footballers, they were there to be part of something bigger and fill the need inside of them to feel crucial and like they have something to contribute with." Nagin hopes to create equality between women of all backgrounds, ethnicities and religions on the football pitch, which can transfer into wider society.

Mwanaisha Kuwania is a co-founder of **SAMBA Sports (Kenya)**, a youth-led, community-based organisation in Kwale, Kenya. Samba Sports works with boys in Kwale to build their resilience to recruitment into violent and extremist groups and gangs. They engage with the boys using football, combining sports with training sessions and emotional support. The project's three pillars are to inspire and encourage positive behaviour, to prevent vulnerabilities, and to provide young people with a safe space to express themselves.

Using drama and entertainment to prevent extremism

Drama and storytelling play a key role in building resilience and preventing extremism. Representatives from youth organisations in Denmark, Kenya and Pakistan shared their experiences using storytelling, theatre and activities to engage young audiences on a number of challenging topics.

Jesper Holm Pedersen from **C:NTACT (Denmark)** shared his personal story of radicalisation and rehabilitation. Following a tour in Iraq with the Danish army, Jesper began openly to resent and discriminate against Muslims. Fuelled by post-traumatic stress disorder, his anger and resentment led him down a violent and erratic path, as part of a violent hooligan-rooted group. Through the support of his family and connections at C:NTACT, he was able to transform his life and now uses the platform to share his story as a lesson to others.

Nick Reding from **S.A.F.E. Kenya** described how they use street theatre, film and community programmes to educate, inspire and deliver social change. S.A.F.E. Kenya started in Mombasa 23 years ago, and in the last few years have focused on combating the growing challenge of extremism. "Winning hearts and minds is a vital first step in behaviour change." The project uses films and plays to provide information and facts to dispel myths and superstitions. All performances are devised in close collaboration with community members and local activists, and S.A.F.E. employs actors from the communities they serve to ensure they reflect the local challenges accurately. Humour is used as a central tool to challenge prejudice.

Naheed Israr, co-founder of **Diverse City Tours**, organises tours of Islamabad, Pakistan, as a way to connect youth from different communities and show them the diversity of their city. The project collaborates with community leaders in different minority communities around the city to engage with the participants using storytelling and performance, and host a discussion. The tours are designed to create more openness and understanding between communities by engaging with different communities directly and giving them the chance to dispel common misconceptions and negative stereotypes.

Building partnerships with youth

Sefer Selim, founder of **Democracy Lab** in North Macedonia, is working to build community resilience and promote a sense of active citizenship with young people. Sefer was a prominent activist in his youth, and now creates new spaces and opportunities for other young people to do the same. Democracy Lab works closely with youth-led organisations, local businesses and municipal authorities. They helped establish youth centres in Gostivar and Cair where youth can meet and organise activities. The centres serve as a meeting point for youth from different backgrounds, providing a critical bridge in these ethnically diverse cities. Democracy Lab runs multiple informal education programmes to help young people develop life skills and connect them to build resilience and confront divisions that could otherwise be used by radical groups to promote their ideologies.



Guiding principles for unleashing the power of youth

16 Examine your methods and motives

Look internally to your structures and ways of working. Check your narratives – what biased assumptions do you have about young people? How are you working with them?

17 Let youth be leaders and innovators

If you are attempting to involve more youth in your programme or want to get their views, allow young people to be spokespersons and ambassadors and give them responsibilities. Don't just include young people to tick a box. Speak to them and ask how they want to be engaged, while considering what resources you can contribute. Let young people lead, contribute new and fresh ideas, and don't be afraid to think outside the box with your approaches. Ask them how it can be meaningful and fun to participate in a programme and ensure you begin a process to engage more youth that is based on their advice and recommendations.

18 Invest in youth-led organisations, solutions and agency

See young people as partners, rather than targets. Think about the social return on investment when investing in young people's work, in their peers, communities, state institutions and the private sector. Look for in-kind support from within the communities you work for. Look around for how available resources can be used to make innovative interventions; local companies often want to promote youth and inclusion.

19 Use a collective impact approach to enable joint action

In cities, use a collective impact approach that is based on trust. This could be the collective impact approach that follows the five pillars: partnership, participation, prevention, protection, and disengagement and reintegration.

20 Support youth in key city policies

When given a chance, youth have played a vital role in providing avenues for social cohesion and prevention efforts, among others. By building in policies that support, empower and entrust youth and the invaluable community services which serve them, cities can help bridge the trust gap between youth and decision-makers.



Together for safety The 21st Learning: Work Together for Safety

Thank you to all of our speakers

Faisal al-Mutar

Ideas Beyond Borders

Jacqueline Beauchere

Chief Online Safety Officer, Microsoft

Mayor Maria

Isabelle G. Climaco

Zamboanga (Philippines)

Mayor Greg Fischer

Louisville (US)

Ahsan Habib

Assistant Professor, Green University of Bangladesh (Bangladesh)

Paktaw Hajipouri

Former Youth Mayor, Sarpsborg (Norway)

Louise Fil Hansen

Partner and Design Director, SLA Architects (Denmark)

Shannon Hiller

Co-Director, Bridging Divides Initiative, Princeton University (US)

Naheed Israr

Diverse City Tours (Pakistan)

Mayor Anna König Jerlmyr

Stockholm (Sweden)

David Kaye

former special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Julius Kramer

Youth Peace and Security Officer, United Nations

Mwanaisha Kuwania

SAMBA Sports (Kenya)

Deputy Mayor Sophie Linden

London (UK)

Amy Marshak

litigator, ICAP Georgetown University (US)

Malin Martelius

& Eske Vinter

A Safe Digital City, Malmö (Sweden)

Carl Miller

Centre for Analysis of Social Media, Demos (UK)

Tendai Mtana

County Executive Committee Member, County Government of Mombasa (Kenya)

Robbert Muggah

Co-Founder of Igarapé Institute (Brazil)

Lars Neumann

Director, Berlin Police, City of Berlin (Germany)

Anneli Portman

City of Helsinki (Finland)

Saji Prellis

Co-Chair at Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security, United Nations

Magnus Ranstorp

Research Director (CATS), Swedish Defence University (Sweden)

Nagin Ravand

YAK Sport, Mino Ung (Denmark)

Nick Reding

S.A.F.E. (Kenya)

Eric Rosand

President of PVE Solutions and Senior Associate Fellow, RUSI

Sefer Selim

founder and CEO, Democracy Lab (North Macedonia)

Mary Tesfay & Jesper Holm

Pedersen

C:NTACT (Denmark)

Gent Toska

My Voice Cair (North Macedonia)

Torbjorn Urfjell

Director of Culture and Citizen Dialogue, City of Kristiansand (Norway)

Peter van de Crommert

PRoTECT Project Coordinator, EFUS (France)

Nordic Safe Cities

Jeppe Albers

Founder and Executive Director

Lotte Fast Carlsen

Deputy Director

Cianna Flyger

Project Coordinator

Gustav Plantin

Project Manager

Institute for Strategic Dialogue

Sasha Havlicek

Founding CEO

Kelsey Bjornsgaard

Senior Manager, Campaigns and Capacity Building

Chloe Colliver

Head of Digital Policy and Strategy

Milo Comerford

Head of Policy and Research, Counter-Extremism

Jacob Davey

Head of Research and Policy, Far-right and Hate Movements

Joe Downy

Coordinator, Strong Cities Network

Daniel Hooton

Head of Strong Cities Network, International Programmes

Jennie King

Senior Policy Manager, Technology, Communications and Education

Marta Lopes

Manager, Strong Cities Network

Together for Safety

21 Ways Forward

- 1 Take more proactive steps to understand the local online extremism landscape
- 2 Prioritise mental health initiatives
- 3 Strengthen partnerships and cooperation with local communities
- 4 Boost economy and employment, while continuing to prioritise long-term community building and prevention programmes
- 5 Educate practitioners in online and offline extremism and the impacts of Covid-19
- 6 Engage actively in the digital sphere
- 7 Build broad coalitions for effective information-sharing and response
- 8 Involve the public
- 9 Expand online educational initiatives efforts and teach good digital citizenship
- 10 Promote and support positive online initiatives
- 11 Build trust and dialogue together
- 12 Adopt interdisciplinary approaches
- 13 Include evidence from open source intelligence gathering and social media monitoring
- 14 Communicate effectively
- 15 Enhance preparedness
- 16 Examine your methods and motives
- 17 Let youth be leaders and innovators
- 18 Invest in youth-led organisations, solutions and agency
- 19 Use a collective impact approach to enable joint action
- 20 Support youth in key city policies
- 21 Work together for safety

