

Focus: Initiatives focused on diverting youth from violence and extremism as well as strengthening communities

Goal: Identify components of successful cooperation and initiatives tackling the root causes of violence



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Violent extremism and terrorism are often treated as categorically different from other forms of violence, but responses to them benefit from integration in the public health approach.

- Per the public health framework, countering violent extremism (CVE) work has expanded from focusing on ideology to examining a person's vulnerabilities and risk factors
 - E.g. mental health, abuse, ACEs, exposure to extremist ideas
 - Person vulnerable to extremism may be victim as well
- Contested but better suited, including in addressing shift from group-perpetrated to self-initiated, non-ideological acts of terror

The recent integration of domestic violence services with CVE work provides an example of effective collaboration benefiting all services and those they serve.

- Based on frequency of domestic violence around referrals for extremism
- *Outcome:* Improved CVE risk assessments, interventions, and safeguards for survivors of domestic violence

Critical thinking and peer networks help build resilience to extremist ideologies.

- Difficult to challenge an ideology directly
- Easier to show negative effects of ideology on common values,
 - E.g. liberty, freedom of speech, women's rights
 - Build out from a singular point of passion
- Role models and peer-to-peer support more effective than external interventions
- Education alone does not safeguard against extremism if terrorism seems only option to gain voice, therefore initiatives to build awareness of democratic avenues to address grievances are also needed

More powerful than counter-narratives, positive alternative messages offer a path forward.

- Classic counter-narrative of "X is wrong" centers on X while positive alternative offers a vision of the future to work towards
- Positive alternatives are strongest when conveyed by someone trusted by the target audience who can offer credible alternative interpretation

In the absence of criminal activity, replacing the security lens and machinery with the public health approach, i.e. de-securitizing, is essential for establishing community support.

- Catch-22: one side must make first move to build fragile trust
- *Key challenge:* building political will, as de-securitizing is seen as risky
- Young women and mothers are important points of contact and are proven to build community resilience

Youth should be allowed to shape their own engagement within a common structure, while learning from the community.

- Convene rather than control and harness self-interest
- Developing "waterfall leadership" is building capacity of engaged youth to lead their peers
- Mentor/mentee programs can be very effective
- E.g. facilitating dialogue with police, between youth of different backgrounds
- Social media and innovations in tech remain under-utilized

Stick to the need, not the strategy.

- Conflicts arise over strategies, can be avoided by agreement on need and flexibility on strategy



KEY EXAMPLES

- [Peace Ambassadors Integration Organization](#) (Kenya)
- [Prevent strategy](#) (UK)



REFERENCED RESOURCES

- ["Channel: Vulnerability Assessment Framework"](#) from UK Government