

THE CARTER CENTER

Designing Interventions for Community Resilience and Empowerment

April 29—May 1, 2019

Executive Summary

Violent extremism continues to capture headlines. As recent events in New Zealand, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere illustrate, violence is increasingly seen as an option by the angry, marginalized, and disaffected. Governments continue to push an aggressive security response to some threats while ignoring others. However, state-led, security-focused efforts to address the problem are insufficient. Empowering visionary, grassroots leaders to build resilient communities and prevent the anomie that leads to violence is critical for a sustainable response to violent extremism.

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extremism, civic engagement, and emotional support over 18 months in order to build resilience and empowerment among youth. Recruitment of mothers and imams and training activities will focus on five regions in Tunisia that had a high flow of foreign fighters to Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

- Europe: The project will develop an online consultation platform with local communities, aiming to encourage Muslims to reclaim their narratives, create synergies among different grassroots leaders, and to encourage French and Belgian Muslims, especially Muslim

organization. Participants agreed that the interactive exercises were intense but incredibly helpful in allowing them to refine, proof, and ultimately strengthen their project proposals.

Bringing the Cohorts Together: Networks Designed for Sustainable Impact

The second cohort of PVE practitioners marks the final cohort in the Center's PVE project. On the third day of the workshop, members of the first cohort joined for introductions and exercises, and to provide advice on the second cohort's revised project proposals. Moving forward, the fis M

A community leader remarked that she is opposed to PVE on principle because of its negative impact on Muslim communities in the United States, but that the program's design and methodology, its concern for all forms of extremism, its ability to bring together faith and community leaders across political and ideological divides, and its commitment to centering Muslim voices persuaded her to work on these issues. Several participants also expressed their gratitude to the Center for speaking out publicly against Islamophobia. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants created a private online discussion platform that incorporates the two cohorts for information sharing, networking, and ongoing collaboration. Participants feel well prepared to work together, carrying on the work of prevention both within their communities and across geographic and ideological borders.

Conclusions

The three years of the Carter Center's engagement on PVE issues shows that the grassroots contributions of religious and community leaders are essential to a long-term solution to violent extremism. Social justice, inclusive societies, economic opportunity, and good governance at all levels are critical to sustainable peace and long-term prevention.

The Center will transition out of the PVE project and will place its network of PVE practitioners at the forefront by convening a closing workshop with current cohorts to pitch their local projects to government representatives, foundations, and donors. The closing workshop will serve as a catalyst for ongoing dialogue, promote engagement, and bridge the divide between government representatives and grassroots leaders. This event will further solidify the rich community of practice and enable workshop cohorts to take ownership, source funding, and scale up, resulting in multiple, autonomous, and locally adapted PVE initiatives.

Extremism prevention is not separate from the work of social justice or a robust respect for human rights. When change comes, it will come from below, and from grassroots leaders working outside the headlines. The expanded network of practitioners in the Center's two PVE cohorts are deeply committed to the prevention of all forms of violent extremism in their local contexts and to the broader effort of peacebuilding within their communities.

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