THE PREVENTION OF RADICALIZATION LEADING TO VIOLENCE

AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF FRONT-LINE WORKERS AND INTERVENTION ISSUES

August 2017
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Study produced by the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC)
This publication was funded in large part by Public Safety Canada. It is the follow-up to a study funded in large part by the Comité interministériel de prévention de la délinquance et de la radicalisation of France (CIPDR)

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Keywords: radicalization, prevention of radicalization, best practices

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ICPC: International Centre for the Prevention of Crime
CPRLV: Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence
CVE: Countering Violent Extremism
ISIS: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
ETA: Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
FARC: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
IRA: Irish Republican Army
LGBTQ: lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer
NGO: Nongovernmental organization
Prevent: United Kingdom’s counter-terrorism strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
RAN: Radicalisation Awareness Network
STREET: Strategy to Reach, Empower, and Educate Teenagers

ACRONYMS OF RESPONDENTS

SSAF: Worker in Sub-Saharan Africa or the Sahel
NAM: Worker in North America
ASIA: Worker in Asia
EUR: Worker in Europe
M-MO: Worker in North Africa or the Middle East
OCE: Worker in Oceania
How does counter-radicalization take place in actual practice? Several organizations have devoted some effort to pooling and standardizing practices and there are now several practice databases that exemplify this work. The most paradigmatic case is that of RAN (Radicalisation Awareness Network), a network of professionals who work on radicalization leading to violence. It is funded by the European Commission and its purpose is to encourage people to share knowledge and practices in this field. Every year, RAN publishes a report detailing counter-radicalization initiatives that have been undertaken (Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2016). A bird’s-eye view of the work being done to counter and prevent radicalization leading to violence around the world can be derived from experiences like those of RAN, from researchers’ observations, and from systematic reviews. Notwithstanding these efforts, the field of study concerned with counter-radicalization practices remains vastly underexplored. Much of the literature concerns the factors that explain why individuals become radicalized or that speed the radicalization process. Furthermore, research on intervention and prevention has historically occupied considerably less space than basic research on this subject. Our systematic review of documents published between 2005 and 2015 (ICPC, 2015) found that 70% consisted of basic research. The majority of the documents that do address the subject of intervention describe a practice, derive a generalization from one or more interventions, or present proposals concerning a general approach to prevention or intervention. In a large percentage of these cases, intervention is just one of many aspects considered.

Three aspects in particular have received little attention in the literature: evidence-based studies, project evaluations, and the experiences of front-line workers (or simply “workers,” “professionals,” or “practitioners” for the purposes of this report). Of all the scientific documents identified in our systematic review that discussed intervention, just 16% used primary empirical data, and of this number almost half were evaluations. Workers’ experiences were the least-studied aspect. A high percentage of the publications stated an objective of educating policymakers and front-line workers, yet only thirteen studies took workers’ opinions into consideration and only two were directly, although not exclusively, concerned with details of this field of practice. These observations, limited as they are, underscore how little we actually know about the work of counter-radicalization, and the prevention of radicalization more particularly. While the success of counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization efforts demands that additional empirical data be derived from basic research, the need to obtain such data in relation to intervention and prevention practices is even more urgent.

It is true that evaluations of practices yield essential information about the effectiveness of procedures, yet the skills of front-line workers have also, in more than one instance, been identified

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1 Unless otherwise specified, the terms “radicalization” and “radicalization leading to violence” are used interchangeably in this report.

2 The ICPC, as part of a project to develop a mechanism for France’s integration and probation services to manage and prevent radicalization leading to violence, is currently carrying out a research-action project that
as key factors in an intervention (ICPC, 2016a). Simply put, well-trained and equipped teams carry out more effective interventions (ICPC, 2016a). In the case of radicalization leading to violence, we found a positive and significant correlation \( (r=0.65, \, p<0.01) \) between the perception of preparedness among front-line workers dealing with radicalized individuals housed in open-custody facilities in the French prison system, on the one hand, and the workers’ self-assurance in such interactions, on the other.\(^4\) Moreover, the number of training hours on radicalization was positively and significantly correlated with workplace self-assurance \( (r=0.32; \, p<0.05) \), a perception of preparedness to deal with radicalized individuals \( (r=0.41; \, p<0.01) \), and a perception of preparedness as regards the identification of radicalized individuals \( (r=0.51; \, p<0.01) \).

To date, we have only superficial answers to the question with which this report begins: “How does counter-radicalization take place in actual practice?” We know a good deal about the existence and use of certain practices, but very little about how the process actually unfolds on the ground. For this reason, the ICPC, with the support of Public Safety Canada, undertook to investigate this issue by conducting an international study of counter-radicalization practice. Given the deficient state of empirical knowledge of front-line workers in both Western and non-Western countries, and the absence of studies focusing on them, we decided that the study should be exploratory in nature. The objective was to learn about the challenges, issues, and needs faced by front-line workers, as well as the most effective intervention models and measures, as seen through the prism of field work.

This study is the second phase of a project on the prevention of radicalization. The first phase was the above-mentioned systematic review of the scientific and gray literature (ICPC, 2015), which was divided into two separate reviews:

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3 The symbol “r” represents the correlation coefficient, which measures the linear correlation between two numerical variables, or the strength of the relationship between them. Its value ranges from –1 to 1. If r is close or equal to 0, the variables are linearly independent; if it is between 0.5 and 1.0, there is a strong positive correlation between them, and when it lies between –1.0 and –0.5, there is a strong negative correlation between them. The symbol “p” represents the p-value, which is the probability of obtaining the same result if the null hypothesis were true. The procedure generally employed consists of comparing the p-value to a pre-defined threshold (by convention, 5%). If the p-value is lower than this threshold, then the test outcome is considered “statistically significant.” If the p-value is lower than 1%, the presumption against the null hypothesis is very strong, and when the threshold is 5%, the presumption is considered strong.

4 Preliminary findings (late November 2016) from the questionnaire “Diagnostic des besoins concernant la prévention et l’intervention de la radicalisation en milieu ouvert” (Needs assessment for prevention and intervention on radicalization in the probation system) in the context of the ICPC project “Dispositif d’intervention sur la radicalisation violente en milieu ouvert: identification des difficultés et des besoins des professionnels des SPIP, aide à l’adaptation des pratiques,” in partnership with the Direction de l’administration pénitentiaire (France).
a) The first review was limited to literature contextualizing the phenomenon of radicalization in Western countries exclusively: patterns and contexts of radicalization and recruitment, determining factors, explanatory models, and radicalization trajectories.

b) The second review directly concerned strategies, programs, and projects for the prevention of radicalization leading to violence. Due to the small number of studies on this specific topic, we included every study found, without regard to geographical restrictions.

The systematic review identified a total of 483 documents.

The new study presented in this report was also divided into two segments. In the first, we conducted 25 interviews with 27 specialists from 14 countries. This enabled us to delineate the countries of interest and the workers to be interviewed as well as to refine the interview structure. In the second segment, we conducted interviews with 63 front-line workers from 23 countries, including 20 from non-Western countries. One of the findings of our systematic review was that there is a lack of information on radicalization leading to violence from outside Europe and North America, and the ICPC therefore chose to fill that gap. This decision was justified by the goal of obtaining information on under-studied regions of the world and by the likelihood that different contexts will give rise to different results. In short, the study was designed so as to identify similarities and differences between Western and non-Western contexts and generate recommendations applicable on a global level.

The approach adopted in this study was to concentrate on local- and urban-level interventions carried out in the context of primary and secondary prevention programs. Deradicalization and disengagement programs taking place in prison settings were not directly addressed. We chose the urban setting as our focus because the majority of attacks around the world have taken place in cities, on the one hand, and the community aspect has received less attention in the literature, on the other (ICPC, 2015, 2016a). Quite the contrary, most of the attention has focused on global and national approaches. The value of our strategy was confirmed by the specialists interviewed in the exploratory phase. They concurred that most of the factors explaining radicalization are rooted in local conditions, and that cities and communities are consequently in the best position to provide solutions adapted to local needs.

As in the systematic review, both Islamist and far-right extremism were included as objects of intervention, although not in equal proportions. As well, all the workers dealing with far-right extremists live in Europe or North America. Regardless of the type of extremism in question, the same operative definition of radicalization leading to violence was adopted:

[T]he process by which an individual or a group adopts a violent form of action that is directly associated with an extremist ideology of political, religious, or social content which contests the established political, social or cultural order (Khosrokhavar, 2014, pp. 8–9).

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5 A description of the study methodology is given in the appendices.

6 A few front-line workers did speak about their experiences in prison settings, but we did not solicit this information as part of this study.
This report is divide into three parts: a review of the literature on the issues and challenges associated with counter-radicalization measures; a description of the study's findings, and a set of conclusions and recommendations arising from the study.
A number of researchers concur that counter-radicalization remains a conceptually nebulous field (Harris-Hogan & Barrelle, 2016; Heydemann, 2014; Holmer, 2013; Romaniuk, 2015). Four factors are adduced to explain this situation:

a) There is no consensus on a clear definition of radicalization leading to violence.
b) Knowledge about the subject is scarce.
c) There is little difference between measures to prevent radicalization leading to violence and other forms of prevention.
d) Empirical research concerning intervention is almost non-existent.

With respect to the first point, the correctness of the term itself is contentious (Kundnani, 2012; Schmid, 2013). According to Romaniuk (2015), "violent extremism” is broader than “terrorism,” while radicalization is the process whereby an individual becomes an extremist. If terrorism refers to the violent act itself, violent extremism implies “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence” (USAID, 2011, in Romaniuk, 2015, p. 7). In other words, violent extremism denotes anything that provides support for a violent act, while not necessarily culminating in this objective; put another way, it denotes everything relating to an individual’s trajectory through the radicalization process. It remains a broad and imprecise concept. Other researchers stress that "the concept ‘violent extremism’ is often interchanged with terrorism, political violence and extreme violence. The literature covering ‘violent extremism’ employs the concept in a way that suggests it is self-evident and self-explanatory” (Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino, & Caluya, 2011, p. 9). The problem lies in the link between this process and the violent act. It is presumed that the radicalization of a person’s ideas can lead to a violent act, but there is no proof. The space between intellectual radicalization and actual violence has been theorized but remains a grey area. Finally, Kundnani (2012) points out that radicalization emerged as a concept designed to explain the path Muslims take toward violent extremism, and it has thus been a source of stigmatization.

Knowledge about radicalization is rather limited. Our review found that age and gender seem to be the only factors around which there is some consensus (ICPC, 2015). The same is true of trajectories: they are multiple, and no single causal factor can explain the route leading to violence (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2010). Other factors cited as causes of radicalization (lack of direction, identity problems, personal networks, isolation, segregation and alienation from the community, etc.) are not factors exclusive to radicalization: they are fundamental to numerous problems found in contemporary societies (ICPC, 2016a). "Radicalization leading to violence” lacks specificity: it seems to be better explained with reference to local contexts, and will vary depending on whether the process takes place in, say, Canada, France, or Niger.
This problem of definitional specificity also extends to the field of intervention. Neumann, for one, explains that “unlike counter-terrorism, which targets terrorists, counter-radicalization is focused on the communities that are targeted by terrorists for recruitment” (2011, p. 7). Counter-radicalization measures, also known as countering violent extremism (CVE), are characterized by being non-coercive. However, the definition remains vague, since they are defined in opposition to a concept — radicalization — that is itself ill-defined. CVE interventions are enormously varied; indeed, Neumann states that they are potentially unlimited. He argues that counter-radicalization measures do not all fit within a single strategy, but rather represent a theme to be addressed as part of a number of different strategies. It follows that the boundaries between these measures and the measures emerging from other fields are porous: “This blurring of boundaries reinforces perceptions of CVE as a catch-all category lacking well-defined conceptual, organizational, and empirical foundations as a field of practice” (Heydemann, 2014, p. 3). This lack of specificity was observed in both our systematic review and our comparison of the approaches used in nine Western cities (see Table 1) (ICPC, 2015, 2016a). With the exception of the counter-narrative and religion components, there is no significant difference between the prevention of radicalization and other forms of prevention. In certain cases, this lack of differentiation turned out to be advantageous. For
example, two successful local programs, carried out in the cities of Aarhus and Amsterdam, adopted pre-existing prevention frameworks: Aarhus had already used mentoring as part of an effort to prevent recidivism by individuals leaving prison, while Amsterdam’s social cohesion-based approach derived from its experience with crime prevention. Thus, it would appear that prior intervention experiences can prove useful in countering radicalization leading to violence.

A final element to consider is the scarcity of empirical data. This problem was mentioned in the introduction to this report and it is examined in greater depth below. Suffice it to say that project systematizations and evaluations are nearly non-existent and that there has yet to be a study focusing exclusively on front-line intervention practice. That said, several studies have included front-line workers’ evaluations of programs or solicited their perceptions with respect to radicalization.

The foregoing consideration lead to the remark that intervention in the area of radicalization leading to violence is an evolving and experimental field. Due to the political urgency of the subject and the demand for successful implementation in the short term, this field might more aptly be seen as an erratic, unstable, constantly shifting terrain. Policymakers and front-line workers alike have few benchmarks with which to measure the success of interventions or to identify sound practices. The prevention of radicalization leading to violence remains a field of intervention in search of a definition.

In the sections that follow, we will explore three important areas as an introduction to this study’s findings: the dimensions addressed during interventions; the methodological weaknesses of studies concerning counter-radicalization intervention, and the existing information on prevention practice.

1.1 Three approaches to intervention and prevention of radicalization leading to violence

What with the difficulties in defining both the phenomenon and the field of intervention, a number of classification schemes for intervention have been proposed. The systematic review by Mastroe and Szmania (2016) classifies programs into one of three types: prevention, deradicalization, or disengagement. Harris-Hogan, Barrelle and Zammit (2016) lean more towards a public health model comprising primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Neumann (2011, p. 18) proposes a classification that ties the goals of the measures put in place to the dynamic of the radicalization in question. This classification can serve as a guide to public policy but is less relevant to front-line work. He puts forward three categories:

   a) **Counter-grievance measures**: If the extremist’s goal is to exploit grievances, real or fictitious, this type of measure addresses these grievances or the perception thereof.
   b) **Counter-ideology measures**: If the goal is to promote an ideological narrative, the purpose of the intervention is to expose and counter this ideology.
c) **Counter-mobilization measures**: If the goal is to create cells and recruit followers, the purpose of the intervention is to help communities build networks, knowledge, and tools to resist such attempts.

In contrast, Romaniuk (2015, pp. 9–11) proposes a set of possible classification schemes based on the dimensions of an intervention:

a) **Scope of the intervention**: i.e., the level at which the measures act and the audiences at which they are directed. Interventions can be categorized as acting at the micro, meso, or macro level — or, as Harris-Hogan et al. (2016) propose, at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level.

b) **Causal mechanisms**: interventions are classified by the logic whereby they are intended to bring about the desired change.

c) **Implementing agent**: e.g., a government organization or an NGO.

d) **Activities undertaken**.

In our systematic review, we classified measures for the prevention of radicalization leading to violence using an ecological model with four categories (ICPC, 2015): measures focusing on the individual environment, the relational environment, the community environment, and the societal environment. In Romaniuk’s model, this categorization is of the first type, concerning the scope of the intervention. We decided to classify interventions by their simplest units — measures — as opposed to projects or strategies. To do this, we drew on the work of Bjørgo (2013), who distinguishes between counter-radicalization **measures** and **strategies**. A measure, for these purposes, is an action deliberately implemented in order to activate a specific mechanism, whereas a strategy consists of several measures organized in a coordinated manner. The majority of the projects and strategies we identified involved the implementation of multiple measures, making their classification complex. The Indonesian program, for example, comprises several components: psychological rehabilitation, religious rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, community involvement, and family support (El-Said, 2015; Rabasa, Pettyjohn, Ghez, & Boucek, 2010). For this reason, we focused on the simplest units of intervention.

This classification, as we emphasized in the systematic review report, does not presume to constitute an explanatory model, but rather a means of presenting information stemming from the systematic review. Therefore, no attempt was made to be comprehensive, and that classification is no longer adequate. Program complexity is not the only issue; there is also the possibility that a single program could cover various dimensions of intervention. For example, does a deradicalization program not, by its very nature, deal with membership in an extremist group? Very much so: this type of program generally measures its success based on the prevention of recidivism, defined as when an individual returns to active participation in an extremist group or is sent back to prison (Mastroe & Szmania, 2016). These two components can be present side by side within a single intervention.

Based on our categorization, we have derived a typology of three approaches to the prevention of radicalization:

1. Integrative approaches.
2. Behavioural and membership-based approaches.

These approaches do not represent fixed categories of reality, but rather dimensions to consider within each intervention program. Thus, a single program can work on one or more dimensions simultaneously.

The basic principle of an **integrative approach** is that a lack of integration, particularly of minorities and youth, has an influence on extremist violence. As mentioned, this approach can focus on communities and/or individuals. When the approach is used with communities, especially communities derived from recent immigration, it seeks to bring them out of their isolation, marginalization, and segregation and to facilitate their integration and dialogue with the majority community (ICPC, 2016a). We regard this approach to integration as a two-way process (ICPC, 2016a) in which the goal of integration is not of sole concern to the minorities in question but concerns society as a whole. Solutions in this case are fundamentally tied to intercultural dialogue and to social, professional, and educational integration measures, while not necessarily addressing ideological considerations. In other words, these are primary measures. This was the approach adopted by Spain, which opted for a strategy of intercultural dialogue between communities in the wake of the Madrid attacks (Belkin, Blanchard, Ek, & Mix, 2011). Training, too, can make a useful contribution to integration. In Amsterdam, for example, young Muslims facilitated workshops for journalists to sensitize them to language and representation that can be problematic and discriminatory (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2007). At the individual level, young people’s lack of bearings and quest for identity have also been considered a precursor to violent radicalization (Hogg, 2014; Khosrokhavar, 2014). Another consideration is the place occupied by youth in society. Interventions in this case have concentrated on social, occupational, and educational integration and on the rebuilding of individuals’ social, organizational, and institutional networks.

**Behavioural and membership-based approaches** focus on the resort to violence and on membership in extremist groups, without necessarily including ideological considerations. Here, interventions deal with the observable reality of extremism, not the subjective reality of radical ideas. This is probably the most traditional and long-standing model of intervention with extremist groups. It is the main component of the DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration) models often used with terrorist groups such as the IRA, ETA, or (in the present day) the FARC. Behavioural and membership-based approaches mainly consist of two phases: the first addresses the person’s allegiance to the extremist group and his use of violence, while the second sees to the reintegration of group members into society. As with deradicalization models, this type of prevention is tertiary in nature and is thus tied to social rehabilitation. Behavioural and membership-based approaches make use of a resource person, often a former extremist; they encourage disengagement and, where applicable, disarmament; they look after the individual’s safety and provide him with emotional and financial support (social welfare allowances); and finally, they attempt to restore the person’s support network and guide him toward the appropriate social services. In the case of violent radicalism, this approach has notably been used with the far right. The best known example is that of the Exit program. Exit Sweden, for example, is a voluntary program divided into five phases (Bjørgo, 2002):
a) **Motivation:** When an individual active in a neo-Nazi group begins to question his commitment, Exit puts him in contact with a reformed extremist.

b) **Disengagement:** When an individual decides to break free of neo-Nazism and, lacking a social network, fears retaliation, he is guided towards the required social services (police, psychosocial assistance, etc.).

c) **Establishment:** The individual has now cut off all contact with the extremist group and finds himself confined within a limited social network. Exit helps him build a new social network, possibly involving self-help groups composed of former extremists who have disengaged from the movement.

d) **Reflection and stabilization:** The final two phases correspond to the process of introspection that follows one’s disengagement from an extremist group. These are generally facilitated by psychological support.

In contrast to behavioural approaches, **cognitive approaches** directly address an individual’s ideas. Since radicalization involves a process mediated by (often narrow or binary) ideas about reality, this type of approach is central to radicalization prevention and deradicalization models. It is also the most widely used approach. In the same vein as cognitive-behavioural models in psychology, it presumes that an individual’s ideas function as mediators between the stimuli of reality and his (in this case, violent) behaviour (Beck & Fernandez, 1998; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005). The intervention is premised on the idea that if the person’s cognitive processes change, his violent behaviours will also be modified. The solution is therefore to educate the person about the dangers of binary thinking and show him how it may have affected him; inoculate him against narratives of hate (the counter-narrative strategy); induce him to adopt a different ideological framework (the Saudi example), and to understand different points of view and interpretations of reality; enhance his critical judgment with respect to religion and ideas, and so on. As a general rule, these interventions aim to show that there can be different interpretations of a single issue, so the majority of such programs focus on the development of critical thinking abilities. Cognitive approaches have been developed to counter Islamist radicalism, but intervention and prevention models used with the far right barely touch on the ideological component (ICPC, 2015).

Some measures, for example, aim to develop **personal skills**, either to increase individuals’ resilience with respect to radicalization or to sensitize and educate them about the issue. Training on radicalization may be given to front-line workers, but also to at-risk groups, in order to expand their knowledge about a specific subject. In the latter case, training may cover a range of topics with a view to increasing the participants’ knowledge of diversity within a single religion, equipping them to recognize radical interpretations, making them aware of manipulation and recruitment techniques used on the Internet, teaching them the basics of fact-checking on the Web, and so forth.

Personal skills are generally linked to the development of critical thinking. The underlying principle of such training is that the more knowledge a person has about a subject, the better equipped he is to handle radicalization-related situations or avoid being swept up in this process. Thus, the training is designed to enhance the participants’ skills so that they can rationally discern the components of the problem. That said, the development of critical thinking does not rely solely on
training. In some cases, it also involves *skills reinforcement*: learning to identify and relate to a diversity of opinions while maintaining respect for other people, reflecting on and questioning one’s views about identity in a non-judgmental atmosphere, developing one’s capacity to incorporate other perspectives, etc. The value complexity method of prevention used in the program “Being Muslim Being British” is the most interesting case (Liht & Savage, 2013; Savage, Khan, & Liht, 2014). This tested program strives to build people’s capacity to understand others’ views and values in a more nuanced manner. It consists of three steps: developing the capacity to discern different viewpoints or dimensions connected with a single issue (differentiation); learning to accept that different opinions and values can coexist (pluralism), and developing the perception of connections — an overarching framework — within which these various viewpoints coexist (integration).

The cognitive approach is also used in *counter-narrative* measures. While these measures were developed for the purpose of countering extremist narratives, the target audience also includes those at risk of becoming radicalized. These measures attempt to offer a counter-narrative aimed at increasing the discernment of persons exposed to extremist views. With the exception of surveillance and approaches aimed at suppressing extremist and hate speech, all counter-narrative models seek to foster critical thinking. Saudi Arabia’s Sakinah (Tranquility) Campaign is a notable example (Ansary, 2008). This campaign was created by volunteers with a mandate to visit extremist websites or forums, engage in dialogue with other visitors, and offer them alternatives to radical views.

The final example of the cognitive approach is *deradicalization*. Deradicalization is the process whereby one attempts to change an individual’s belief system so that he rejects extremist ideology in favour of majority values (Rabasa et al., 2010). It is, in short, a cognitive approach to tertiary prevention. Here again, it is extremist ideas that are considered dangerous. The progressive eradication of these ideas diminishes the risk of violence. This approach was developed, among other applications, for use in prisons, and it is therefore construed as having social rehabilitation as its primary aim. There are at least two different approaches to deradicalization. The first involves replacing the ideology with a different set of ideological bearings. In the Saudi example, training participants are invited to discover the “true teachings and lessons of Islam” (Lankford & Gillespie, 2011, p. 121). The second approach concentrates not so much on ideology as on the multiple possible interpretations of it. Success in this case is not achieved by securing the adoption of a new ideology but by making the original one less rigid. One example of this approach is Singapore’s deradicalization program (Briggs, 2014; Rabasa et al., 2010):

The goal of this instruction is to show inmates that Muslims can live in a secular environment and a multi-denominational society and that there are legitimate, non-violent means to help people suffering in conflict zones (ICPC, 2015, p. 91).
1.2 Empirical and methodological weaknesses of studies on radicalization leading to violence

One of the biggest criticisms of research on radicalization leading to violence is the lack of empirical studies, primary sources of reliable information, and methodological rigour. Succinctly put, knowledge about this phenomenon remains quite limited (ICPC, 2015). Silke (2001) conducted a literature review on terrorism-related papers and other documents published between 1995 and 1999 and found that just 31% of the documents used empirical data. Of these, a substantial majority (68%) used qualitative methods, especially interviews, and the remaining 32% was split between database analyses and surveys. Our systematic review of the literature also uncovered weaknesses in the sources used (ICPC, 2015). Since much of the relevant information is classified and reserved for the use of intelligence agencies, researchers must often turn to alternative, unclassified sources such as the media, Wikipedia pages, or Google searches, which are seldom totally reliable. These problems are compounded by methodological weaknesses. A meta-analysis by Neumann and Kleinmann (2013) of studies claiming to use an empirical approach found that 34% lacked either methodological rigour (procedure-related) or empirical rigour (concerning the type of data). The majority of studies (74%) used qualitative methods. Of these, only 26% demonstrated a high degree of methodological rigour, compared to the 94% of quantitative studies found to be rigorous in their execution.

That being said, this analysis mainly looked at basic research. The verdict on the quality of empirical studies done to date is less positive. Here, the majority of reviews agree on the dearth of evaluations or studies of actual practices (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010; Feddes, Mann, & Doosje, 2015; Hirschfield, Christmann, Wilcox, Rogerson, & Sharratt, 2012; Hirschi & Widmer, 2012; Mastroe & Szmania, 2016; Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). In our systematic review, 143 of the 483 documents identified dealt directly with the subject of intervention or prevention.7

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7 For a description of this study’s methodology, see Preventing Radicalization: A Systematic Review (ICPC, 2015, p. 130).
The overrepresentation of Islamist radicalism in the scientific literature has been discussed above, as has the underestimation of the far-right threat (ICPC, 2015, 2016a). In our review, documents concerning interventions that relate to radical Islamism far outnumbered the others (Figure 1).

Of the documents identified in our study (Figure 2), 23 use primary empirical data, including 8 corresponding to evaluations (6 project evaluations and 2 evaluations of the same national strategy, known as Prevent). The vast majority, however, present either a reflection or a review of the literature on one aspect of intervention, or propose a general theoretical framework for intervention. Of the 23 documents that use empirical data, the majority (18) concern radical

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8 The total is greater than 143 because some of the documents fall into more than one category.
Islamism while the remainder concern radicalism leading to violence more generally. Not all of these documents focus exclusively on intervention; 6 are broader in scope, with only one of their sections devoted to intervention results. For example, the report titled *Polarisation en radicalisation: une approche préventive intégrale* (Polarization leading to radicalization: an integrative approach to prevention) "examines how radicalization (leading to violence) can be approached from a preventive standpoint" (Ponsaers et al., 2015, p. 9), discussing the needs of Belgian counter-radicalization professionals in its final section.

**Figure 3. Empirical studies on prevention and intervention in the area of radicalization leading to violence (2005–2015; N=23)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Project or program evaluation</th>
<th>Transparent methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit Commission (2008)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beider &amp; Briggs (2010)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bjørko &amp; Horgan (2009)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Choudhury &amp; Fenwick (2011)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demant, Wagenaar, &amp; van Donselaar (2009)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El-Said (2015)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feddes, Mann, &amp; Doosje (2015)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hirschfield, Christmann, Wilcox, Rogerson, &amp; Sharratt (2012)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johns, Grossman, &amp; McDonald (2014)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kundnani (2009)</td>
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<td>Lakhani (2012)</td>
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<td>Lambert (2008)</td>
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<td>Lieberman (2010)</td>
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<td>Liht &amp; Savage (2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lindeklde (2012a)</td>
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</table>
The methodological breakdown of the 23 empirical studies (Figure 3) goes as follows: 14 studies exclusively used qualitative methods, 2 studies involved mixed qualitative and quantitative methods, 3 studies used qualitative methods in combination with other methodologies, and 4 studies exclusively used quantitative methods. Fourteen of the empirical studies were sufficiently transparent in their methodology, describing the study participants’ characteristics, the data collection and analysis tools used, and the procedure followed. Meanwhile, 5 out of the 6 studies involving quantitative methods were transparent, as were 10 out of the 19 studies using qualitative methodologies. Among the 8 evaluations found in these empirical studies, 6 were transparent.

The study participants came from a diverse range of backgrounds. The majority (18) of the studies included interviews with members of certain communities or with users of the program in question; 13 studies included front-line workers directly involved in the implementation of a program, but also police officers (5), local authorities (8), NGO employees or volunteers (5), and academics (2). Only 2 studies dealt with prevention as practiced by front-line workers. On the whole, empirical research on radicalization remains a major issue, and as for research on intervention, it is almost nonexistent.

### 1.3 Front-line workers: an overlooked perspective

Very few studies consider the point of view of front-line workers; moreover, when these workers are interviewed on this subject, the researchers often hear yet another expression of someone’s views as to the processes and factors that explain radicalization leading to violence. 

The majority of studies or scientific documents mention the importance of front-line workers in the implementation of effective interventions, but very few examine intervention practices. That said,

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there are some promising avenues for exploration. In this section we discuss some issues and challenges faced by front-line workers as regards intervention practices in the field of counter-radicalization. Much of this information does not come from the scientific literature, but from textual excerpts identified by our systematic review. Thus, this section is a reconstructed portrait composed of information fragments.

The great challenge facing front-line workers is that of building ties with other actors on the ground and with the community, for coordination and information-sharing purposes among other reasons. Romaniuk (2015), for example, argues that the biggest challenge to first-wave CVE approaches had to do with community relations. He identifies two waves of measures that followed the lead of the UK’s Prevent strategy — probably because most of the available unclassified data was produced by this national strategy (Beider & Briggs, 2010; Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011; Hirschfield et al., 2012; Kundnani, 2009; Lakhani, 2012). The Prevent strategy was modified twice (Fitzgerald, 2016). Romaniuk contends that the first modification of the strategy, in 2011, was the starting point for the second wave of counter-radicalization measures. Despite sharp criticism, this strategy strongly inflected the development of other national strategies. As it happens, the major criticism of the program’s initial avatar had to do with its impact on community relations. Several researchers concur that Prevent conduced to the stigmatization of the Muslim community as a “suspect community” (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011; Kundnani, 2009; Thomas, 2010). Githens-Mazer et al. emphasize that the majority of individuals interviewed for their study believed that “that these policies were having a negative effect on community relations, with many responses specifically mentioning that these policies were either ‘racist,’ alienating, or victimising of British Muslims” (2010, pp. 41–2). Hirschfield et al. (2012) state that at least two communities refused to work with Prevent because they considered it discriminatory. While this type of criticism was leveled at all front-line workers, the police bore the brunt of it. Choudhury & Fenwick (2011) found that the police were inexperienced in this area and that their actions could compromise relations with the community. Stigmatization is also an issue in other Western nations. Lindekiøde notes that “a number of studies have pointed out how much official counter-radicalisation discourse in northwestern Europe has been centered on Muslim communities...” (2012b, p. 339). By contrast, and as we shall see, stigmatization does not seem to be a concern in non-Western countries. All the same, there is a clear consensus in Western countries as to the community’s importance in preventing and countering violent radicalization. Hirschfield et al. (2012) recommend engaging the community, for this gives the intervention substantial credibility; taking the community’s needs into consideration, and enlisting local associations to help with implementation.

Coordination is also mentioned as an important point to consider (ICPC, 2015, 2016a). According to Bjørgo (2002), at the local level. Coordinated measures achieve greater success than isolated measures working at cross-purposes. In acknowledgment of this, a number of multi-stakeholder bodies have begun to emerge for the purposes of facilitating coordination and sharing information, including RAN (mentioned in the introduction) and the municipal-level Strong Cities Network. At the national level, various countries have established coordinating bodies. In Belgium, the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles created the Réseau Anti-Radicalisme (RAR), which encompasses the range of services offered by the relevant government departments and is responsible for
coordinating and ensuring the coherence of interministerial action (2015). Another example is France’s Comité interministériel pour la Prévention de la Délinquance et de la Radicalisation, which coordinates various efforts in that country (ICPC, 2016b). In Birmingham, England, officials from a number of ministries are collaborating to identify emerging issues and solutions in this field based on local intelligence reports known as “counter-terrorism local profiles” or CTLP (Police and Crime Committee, 2015). As in the case of community relations, local partnerships are important. Along these lines, the audit commission recommended that Prevent emphasize existing local partnerships to improve the coordination process (Audit Commission, 2008). In Belgium, front-line workers mentioned that networking among local actors is necessary in order to adapt the intervention to local circumstances (Ponsaers et al., 2015).

Information-sharing, particularly with police and intelligence services, is also highlighted as an issue of concern. In the case of our study in France, probation workers expressed some apprehension about abuses by the state security apparatus, and particularly its encroachments on civil liberties; they worried that they themselves would be perceived as operatives of the intelligence agency (ICPC, 2016b). This concern is shared by front-line workers from quite a wide range of backgrounds. Kundnani, again referring to the United Kingdom, asserts that counter-terrorism police working within the “Channel” program infiltrated local communities to gather information. He also notes that front-line workers were concerned about increasing expectations that they will share information to which they are privy: “The imposition of information sharing requirements on teachers and youth, community and cultural workers undercuts professional norms of confidentiality” (Kundnani, 2009, p. 6). Other front-line workers did not share this view, even though they felt that the police-driven conceptualization of community relations as local intelligence-gathering does nothing to change this perception (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011). The role of the police on the intervention front remains problematic. It is a paradox that information-sharing requirements — as critical as they are to counter-terrorism efforts — can hinder counter-radicalization efforts. At issue are matters of confidentiality, trust on the part of program users, and front-line worker credibility. The workers know that relationships of trust and credibility are crucial to the success of any type of intervention (Fitzgerald, 2016), and this was also noted in our systematic review. Still, the concept of “credibility” remains broad: front-line workers considered credible are generally local community and faith leaders (Audit Commission, 2008), or persons such as reformed extremists with life experiences similar to those of the intervention participants. Indeed, it is common to employ ex-members of extremist groups in the context of these programs, the best known being “Exit,” in which they are integral to the disengagement process (Bjørgo, 2002). Montreal’s Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV) also works with former far-right extremists. For some observers, the question is whether front-line workers should engage with individuals holding illiberal or extremist views (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011). London’s STREET program is another interesting case in point. The program was started in 2006 by members of a South London Salafist community (Barclay, 2011). The credibility of the initiative and the level of trust it garnered were greatly enhanced by the fact that it came from the community itself; moreover, the practitioners have “street experience” and knowledge of Islam’s teachings (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). But because of its ties to Salafism, STREET was not funded through the Prevent strategy (Garbaye & Latour, 2016). The most pragmatic voices hold that it is essential to
work with anyone whose involvement can be of use in an intervention (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011).

Another group of issues concerns the lack of a clear definition of the field. Definitional issues were discussed in the introduction to part 1 of this report, but their practical implications now become evident. The problems plaguing the definition of key concepts such as “radicalization” and “extremism” translate into problems defining the scope of intervention. The majority of workers in the programs evaluated by Hirschfield et al. in England (2012) felt they had a poor understanding of the prevention of violent extremism. This situation could lead to problems affecting the referral and selection of participants. In the study by Hirschfield et al. (2012), several universal, primary-level interventions did not adopt a precise definition of the target participant, causing the referral criteria to be equally imprecise. Most respondents in the same study observed that these programs were not reaching the youth at greatest risk, and they admitted never having been referred a youth who was already radicalized. This could also be explained by the absence of clear referral criteria in the government program (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011). Vidino and Brandon (2012) recommend that governments adopt a communication strategy to explain their programs to the public, frontline workers, and the relevant communities.

Confronted with these issues, frontline workers must draw on their own experiences in other fields and on successful outcomes achieved elsewhere. They often make use of criminological models designed to prevent recidivism, as well as models of social cohesion derived from community work:

Faced with a paucity of evidence about risk factors for radicalisation and PVE-specific policy interventions, projects have tended to stick to what they are most comfortable and familiar with in meeting the challenges of the Prevent Strategy (Hirschfield et al., 2012, p. 74).

In England, modifications made to the Prevent strategy have attempted to answer the criticisms leveled at the programs by disaggregating the social cohesion and integration programs from the counter-terrorism component (Romaniuk, 2015).

The net result of all these entangled issues is that it has been difficult to broach the subject of radicalization with communities. As we shall see, this has proven to be a sizeable problem for frontline workers all over the world. Some workers are uncomfortable with the concept and refrain from using it in their work with communities (Hirschfield et al., 2012). As we shall see in the next section, this is due to both fear of stigmatizing the community and security concerns. In our research-action project in France, just one-quarter of the respondents felt comfortable dealing with cases of radicalization, and just 13.6% felt very comfortable addressing the subject in an interview.10 A further observation is that intervention with respect to radicalization is still an experimental field for governments and workers alike (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011; Romaniuk, 2015). This experimentation is still below the radar, since interventions are based on an unstable and rapidly evolving framework, and governments demand very short-term implementation time frames:

10 See supra, note 4.
“Some cited pressures in the initial pathfinder phase to have projects that delivered in a short period of time, without time for a clear consideration of the aims and objectives” (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011, p. 51). Evaluations, as we stated earlier, are another important issue, since local projects have difficulty establishing evaluation criteria (Hirschfield et al., 2012). But workers also have doubts about the possibility of assessing changes in extremist attitudes, since such change involves a cognitive process and the results will only be visible in the very long term (Hirschfield et al., 2012).
This part of the report is primarily devoted to the analysis of our interviews with experts and front-line workers. Its purpose is to present the main issues of intervention work, with particular emphasis on the challenges, difficulties, and methods of managing interventions. Where possible, we point up differences in perceptions between workers in Western and non-Western countries. This part is divided into six sections.

Section 2.1 is an introduction to the subject and it presents definitions of radicalization and prevention. The goal here is not to look for consensus definitions but to identify the definitional challenges posed and the main themes addressed when developing a definition within the framework of a project.

Section 2.2 homes in on the issues and approaches associated with the specific themes addressed by these interventions. We seek to answer the questions of how and why these subjects are addressed. Based on our literature review, preliminary interviews, and ongoing research in France, we included six themes identified as important by front-line workers: radicalization as such, ideology and politics, religion, behaviour and violence, grievances, and gender. Each of these is regarded by workers as a sensitive issue.

Section 2.3 is mainly concerned with training-related issues.

Section 2.4 is devoted to the problems and issues surrounding the implementation of these interventions; among them, the role played by funding and the identity of the target groups.

Section 2.5 is devoted to the issues that organizations face when attempting to build relationships with their institutional and organizational environments; in a word, it focuses on local, national, and international coordination.

Section 2.6 addresses evaluation, one of the most important issues relating to this type of program. That the lack of evaluation is a recurrent issue in today’s environment is well known. In this section, we focus on the factors regarded by front-line workers as favouring the success or failure of an intervention, as well as the indicators used to measure them.

In the concluding section, we cover three important transdisciplinary matters to be considered when establishing counter-radicalization programs: security, stigmatization, and the workers’ needs.

2.1 The problem of definitions

As noted in the introduction, radicalization leading to violence is a concept with many and varied interpretations and there is currently no consensus around a single, concise definition of the phenomenon. This lack of conceptual clarity as to the phenomenon at issue makes it...
understandably difficult to do effective prevention work. The respondents in this study were asked what radicalization means for them or their organizations, and, based on this understanding of the concept, how they go about preventing it.

**Definitions of radicalization**

How do front-line workers define radicalization? Is there a generally accepted definition of this controversial and sensitive subject? We wanted to find out. It should be noted that a clear, universally accepted definition of a phenomenon not only enables actors to align their action plans with one another, but also to hone and evaluate their interventions. It was with this in mind that we attempted to determine whether our respondents’ definitions of radicalization tend to be convergent or divergent. What we found is that there are differing views of how important it is to have such a definition and what themes it ought to comprise. We identified three approaches:

a) Violence as a central feature

More than half the respondents stated that they make a distinction between radicalization as such, and radicalization leading to violence. In their view, violent behaviour should be the target of the intervention, the line not to be crossed by those seeking to change society. On the other hand, they described the radical ideas expressed by certain public figures as not only normal in our (liberal) societies, but in fact desirable in that they can bring about changes in society. Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and the suffragettes are examples cited by the respondents to illustrate their position. The problem with radicalization lies in the use, acceptance, and justification of violence as a force for change. One respondent told us she has a problem with the term “radicalization,” to which she prefers the term “violent extremism.” In her view, this second term conveys the idea that it is violence that tears society down, whereas radicalization is a catalyst for changing people’s mentality. There is a legal aspect to this issue in that thought as such is not illegal — only violent action (including hate speech) is. Violent behaviour is problematic because it leads to societal breakdown and polarization. Radicalization leading to violence not only affects those directly involved, but the whole of society.

b) Radical ideas as a reference point

But some of our respondents are not (or at least not primarily) motivated by the prevention of violence so much as by the need to address the ideas of those who reject democratic principles, the rule of law, and other values of liberal societies. In this view, the definition of radicalization should include a broader spectrum of problems. One respondent identified three characteristics which, when exhibited by the same person, classify him or her as radical: (1) claiming to have the absolute truth; (2) rejecting plurality and diversity, considering them unnatural, and (3) dehumanizing others, calling them sinners. The problem does not begin when violence enters the equation, but much earlier. In this perspective, the definition of radicalization is closely associated with a lack of critical judgment on a set of problems (personal, familial, societal) that create a void and a social disconnect in youth, making them prey for recruiters. Extremist groups offer the youth what he is looking for by filling this void with a new set of social bonds: a new “family,” so to speak.
c) Do we need a generally accepted definition of violent radicalization?

A minority of respondents stated that they do not have a definition, either because they consider the matter to be self-evident in their local context or because they feel there is a subjective element in determining whether or not an individual is radical or will turn violent: one person’s extremists are another’s moderates.

Other respondents contended that radicalization or violent extremism are not new phenomena deserving of new and distinct definitions, but that they fall instead within broader pre-existing categories. This view was particularly common among the police officers and psychologists in our sample. One psychologist explained that problematic radicalization is just another psychological phenomenon; akin, perhaps, to addiction. The idea is to think in terms of symptoms, not causes and consequences; the process is not linear, but circular. For police officers, radicalization is one more form of criminal behaviour. Defining the risk of radicalization as a risk of crime has the advantage, for them, that it can then be handled with resort to familiar laws, partnerships, and tools and by drawing on a wealth of experience from the field of crime prevention. Several respondents stated, moreover, that the causes and factors explaining the trajectory of a young person who turns to crime are similar to those of a youth who becomes radicalized. One police officer compared the experience of working with radicalized youth to that of working with street gangs. For these officers, it serves little purpose to speak of a new phenomenon and one does better to broaden the framework of violence prevention. Hirschfield et al. (2012) make the same observation about youth work under the umbrella of the Prevent strategy. The majority of programs for the prevention of violent extremism were inspired by programs developed for other purposes (e.g., street gangs). Objections to a state-sanctioned definition take issue with the term “anti-democratic,” which is held to be too vague. The job of the police is to use arrests and/or preventive measures to protect the public; the police officer cited above explained that her unit does not want to become a “thought police.” She does think the police have difficulty distinguishing between legal and illegal activism, however, and could use training on this issue. Some respondents see an obvious difference between radicalization and crime at the level of motive: the criminal seeks personal gain while the radicalized individual or extremist wants to be useful to society.

It is important to point out that the definition of radicalization is influenced by front-line workers’ needs and motivations as well as by national sociopolitical and historical contexts. For one worker in Africa, radicalization is the death-knell of progress and modernity, while another explained that Islamic radicalization is normal and an integral part of his country’s history. These very different ideas show that the phenomenon is conceived of differently depending on a person’s standpoint and the context in which he or she operates.
One last observation is that unlike political definitions, which put greater emphasis on the security aspect, the definitions offered by front-line and secondary workers are much more nuanced in their interpretation of radicalization.

Definitions of counter-radicalization

For the respondents in our study, preventing radicalization is primarily, although not exclusively, a question of preventing violence. Beyond this, we noted differences of perspective between individual caseworkers, on the one hand, and workers involved in the implementation of broader social crime prevention strategies, on the other. Primary prevention, and to some extent secondary prevention, necessitate work on the ground (outside of certain social media-based measures, perhaps). How prevention is understood depends above all on the population with which one is working. Primary prevention workers seem to have a more integrative concept of what prevention should be; those working directly with individuals who are radicalized or becoming radicalized have a narrower focus, limited to the person in question and his or her close circle.

For both types of workers, preventing radicalization is essentially a matter of building people’s ability to reason, their critical faculties. Other prevention strategies — e.g., counter-narratives and online activism against hate speech, particularly on social media — take more direct aim at ideologies advocating violence and hatred. For one worker based in Europe, the Salafist ideology is, by its nature, dangerous to youth and the society they live in, and that means the work must tackle head-on the thinking and discourse of extremist ideologies — in this case, Salafism. Our respondents also concurred that prevention must be effected above all through dialogue — communicating the idea that radical ideas are not a problem, but that there are other ways to make change besides the use of violence. Where dialogue is absent, non-peaceful means may come to the fore. One European front-line worker explained that her prevention work involves attempting to identify the ideals, the humanitarian ambitions, by which the youth is inhabited, for in the absence of a confidant, adult, or association through which to give voice to them, the striving for these ideals may crystallize into violence or other anti-democratic activities. This respondent cited the typical example of a youth, who, moved by humanitarian sentiments, went to Syria to help the Syrian people fight the regime of Bashar al-Assad. In our respondent’s view, this desire to effect

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12 By way of example, here are the working definitions of radicalization used by three state intelligence services (Borum, 2011, p. 12):

- The UK’s Home Office: “The process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then to join terrorist groups.”

- The Dutch security service (AIVD): “Growing readiness to pursue and/or support — if necessary by undemocratic means — far-reaching changes in society that conflict with, or pose a threat to, the democratic order.”

- The Danish intelligence service: “A process by which a person to an increasing extent accepts the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to reach a specific political/ideological objective.”
change should not be suppressed, but redirected towards appropriate and peaceful avenues of expression.

Some strategies also construe prevention as the **transmission of skills and abilities** (personal skills, conflict resolution, etc.) that empower people to avoid reacting to situations with violence. Several respondents stressed the importance of **teaching conflict resolution, the elements of democracy and civics, and empathy and compassion** starting in the earliest grades. In the same vein, strategies for **building resilience** among youth and communities are regarded as limiting or preventing the emergence of radicalization.

Some of our respondents mentioned the role of **community integration and participation** in prevention projects. One European organization believes it is essential to develop local counter-radicalization projects adapted to the realities of the corresponding city districts. Another European respondent explained that an overall improvement in youths’ circumstances is needed, and that they must be offered options — more specifically, a greater variety of interesting activities in schools and youth centres — so as to **fill the cultural void and keep restlessness at bay**. Finally, one US police officer noted the importance of engaging with communities and doing outreach.

In contrast, secondary and tertiary prevention are said to involve **an individualized, case-by-case approach**. It is important to understand the challenges faced by the youth concerned, and to work with them on solutions and alternatives. A **multidisciplinary approach**, also mentioned by several respondents, treats the problem of radicalization from different angles by marshaling professional experiences from other disciplines. One police officer told us that counter-radicalization is a nascent field in which no true experts have emerged as of yet, but that certain experiences from other fields are cross-disciplinary and can be transposed to the field of preventing violent radicalization. On that score, a number of police officers remarked that counter-radicalization amounts, in their view, to nothing more nor less than **crime prevention**.

Another point is that effective prevention demands **training for front-line workers**, parents, and educators in general to enable them to identify the problematic aspects of radicalization and become conscious of the issues. The idea is to eliminate radicalization-related problems in the settings where youth fraternize: the school, the family, the youth centre, and so on.

Finally, effective prevention also requires the **institutionalization** of effective measures. One front-line worker would like to see the celebration of diversity institutionalized in her country, with better government support, the idea being that this would lead to a decrease in hate-motivated incidents and speech. Some respondents also opined that prevention and law enforcement go hand in hand and that both approaches ought to be institutionalized in order to ensure that they operate in synergy.

In short, prevention can be conceived of in broad or narrow terms. On the one hand, the systematic inculcation of skills starting early in a child’s life, and the use of awareness campaigns to target wider populations, help create a more critical and resilient society. On the other, individualized casework — identifying a young person’s risk factors and protective factors, unraveling their binary thought patterns, and involving the people close to them in the process — help to understand that person’s unique character. Many of our respondents opt for primary and secondary prevention with
a view to extending the reach of their actions beyond the limited sphere of casework with individuals who have already embarked on a process of radicalization.

Despite the definitional difficulties associated with the word “radicalization,” there is some consensus among the respondents that prevention is essentially effected at the level of ideas. This would explain why the above-mentioned cognitive approaches are widely used, even if they are also motivated by a desire to change behaviour and facilitate integration. The cognitive-behavioural-integrative prevention triangle is the cornerstone of counter-radicalization models worldwide.

Finally, we would like to underscore that it is difficult, based on the information collected, to distinguish between approaches focusing on “disengagement” and “deradicalization.” A number of our respondents appear to use the latter term indiscriminately to denote interventions intended to modify a person’s thinking/ideology and those designed to work on problematic behaviour.

2.2 Issues relating to content and themes addressed

This section is devoted more specifically to the content and themes addressed as part of interventions. The purpose is to understand which themes our respondents consider relevant to the prevention of radicalization, how these themes are addressed and, above all, why they are important. We asked the respondents about their approach to radicalization itself, and more specifically, whether this theme is candidly brought up during their interventions. Other themes we asked about were ideology and politics, religion, behaviour and violence, grievances, and gender and gender roles. Some of the respondents shared particular issues that they confront when addressing a specific theme, and these issues are also described in this section. In sum, we present the main approaches adopted by front-line workers in covering these themes, noting any observed differences between Western and non-Western settings along the way.

How is the prevention of radicalization addressed?

Do our respondents target radicalization directly, or do they conceive of the prevention of radicalization as just one aspect of a broader framework? Do the participants in an intervention know that the intent is to deal with radicalization, or is the word “radicalization” never mentioned? We wanted to find out how our participants approach the prevention of radicalization. The question is especially pertinent in that intervention in this area remains something of a nebulous endeavour (Harris-Hogan & Barrelle, 2016; Heydemann, 2014; Holmer, 2013; Romaniuk, 2015). Given the relative recentness of the term “radicalization,” as well as the ways in which it is bound up with people’s sense of security and the problem of stigmatization, it would seem important to establish where the prevention of radicalization falls within the security context. Should it be viewed as independent and unconnected to other social crime prevention measures, or is it in fact inseparable

13 We refer to the media coverage of the term “radicalization,” not the emergence of the phenomenon or the study thereof.
from them, since the phenomenon has to be situated within the broader context? Here it makes sense to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of expressly stating that the intent of an intervention is to prevent radicalization. Understanding the logic of workers on both sides of this issue is a way to place the phenomenon in its proper context. In short, two different approaches must be considered.

a) "Direct" approaches

It is not surprising to find that the majority of our respondents directly address the problem of radicalization. Their clients are, for the most part, people who are becoming, or at risk of becoming radicalized, while only a few of them work in tertiary prevention with already radicalized or indoctrinated individuals. As for secondary prevention, our respondents only do this kind of work with youth who demonstrate a willingness to change, or who are at least open to talking with a trusted front-line worker. The main reason for this limitation is that participation in the corresponding programs is voluntary.

The principal methods mentioned by our respondents are individual counseling and psychotherapy, but they also note the use of former extremists and family counseling. One respondent explained that the family’s cooperation gives the worker access to the information needed to plan the therapy and the counter-narrative. According to a psychologist we interviewed, family counseling is just as relevant in cases of radicalized youth as in, say, cases of addiction and delinquency. If the case involves persuading a youth to question the ideology he has embraced, former extremists are reported to have greater success. As mentioned earlier, the peculiar personal journeys of former extremists generally give them more credibility in the eyes of young participants, who can identify with their experiences. The former extremists use a counter-narrative approach, pointing out inconsistencies in the discourse and information purveyed by the jihadists (and other extremist groups). But the use of counter-narratives far from unanimous. Some interventions do use demystification to discredit extremist ideologies and attempt to refute false information. But others avoid counter-arguments, preferring to ask open-ended questions as a way of bringing the person to an understanding of the inconsistencies in his thinking: “[M]aybe you don’t have a job, not because the foreigners have taken all the jobs, maybe the fact that you never finished school is linked to the fact that you do not have a job” (EUR20). Dialogue is considered critical to building a relationship between the worker and the individual. This view concurs with that of Korn (2016), who explains that the determining factor in deradicalization is the interpersonal relationship. Radicalized individuals need someone to take a genuine interest in their lives, not just in their crimes or extremist thoughts.

Another form of intervention intended to prevent radicalization consists of raising people’s awareness, or in fact training them to recognize the signs of radicalization or alienation. Is the person withdrawing? Are they severing ties with their circle of friends or their sports club? These interventions are not limited to in-person training but can also be used on social media. One organization that took part in our study encourages youth to take a position against hate speech and to use counter-narratives online.
b) “Indirect” approaches

Indirect interventions are directed at a broader population and can be essentially categorized as a type of primary prevention strategy. For security reasons, certain counter-radicalization programs are not labeled as such. In other cases, radicalization is not perceived as a priority in the region, but one problem among many, and activities such as peacebuilding and conflict resolution are preferred. In the African region (sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East), the prevention of radicalization leading to violence is often effected through initiatives to facilitate the transition from school to work. In this instance, radicalization is considered first and foremost a problem of recruitment by terrorist groups and criminals, who exploit a situation of regional socioeconomic difficulty by promising young people a way out of poverty. In response, a number of our respondents have set up school literacy programs; training programs and workshops to teach leadership, organizational management, and other skills, and vocational training and internships to help youth find stable employment. Radicalization and “enlistment” are countered by developing youth livelihoods.

The prevention of radicalization is also addressed through general conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs. These programs are directed at communities that have endured episodes of violence and oppression, who are seen as vulnerable to radicalization. One worker explained that all her projects focus on peacebuilding and that counter-radicalization is just one aspect of them. Specifically, her organization addresses the problem of radicalization through the teaching of religion, the identification and training of community leaders, and the bringing together of different religious leaders. These programs are developed with the region’s specific issues in mind.

Finally, arts and culture programs, occupational therapies (e.g., sports), and youth and community capacity and resilience building can also be categorized as indirect forms of intervention.

Sidebar 1. Use of the word “radicalization”

There is some hesitancy to use the term “radicalization” in the context of an intervention. The majority of youth and child workers avoid it, but will discuss the subject if it is brought up. Arts programs, for example, may deal with issues specific to radicalization and terrorism, but amid a plethora of other subjects. In other words, the logic of many counter-radicalization activities is not to focus or dwell on radicalization per se, but to work on the underlying issues and their solutions. In the context of stigmatized communities — by which we essentially mean the Muslim population living in the West — initiation of contact can be sensitive, particularly for police officers. The use of the word “radicalization” can itself impede communication; as one respondent put it, “your radicalization is my political activism, your radicalization is my observant religiosity” (NAM8). Yet the issue of violence has to be discussed, and since a distinction between legal and illegal activism is difficult to draw, training for police officers would seem a necessity.

In contrast, radicalization awareness training directed at professionals and parents does not shy away from the subject. The individual may also be exposed to the term “radicalization” for
reasons of transparency: if they find themselves face to face with a psychologist or other caseworker, they need to understand the reasons why. Some interventions cannot avoid using this term, nor would avoiding it be desirable, since the goal is to change the individual’s thought patterns; this is particularly true when the intervention uses a counter-narrative or targets hate speech.

A concern for personal and professional safety may also lead workers to avoid the term “radicalization.” One worker in Africa recounted that it is difficult to raise the subject in the environment in which she works. Stigmatization between Muslims is real; counter-radicalization efforts can be misunderstood and cause problems.

All of our respondents try to counter the radicalization process by enhancing young people’s critical thinking skills. This approach is based on observations to the effect that radicalized youth show weaknesses in critical judgment and an inability to see things other than in black and white. Clearly, this problem should be dealt with upstream insofar as possible. Moreover, the decision to approach radicalization directly or indirectly, and to use or refrain from using the term “radicalization,” depends in part on the population in question. The goal of the intervention will be made more explicit where it is directed at adults and professionals (e.g., educators) than when it is directed at youth. The social and cultural context also influences the degree of transparency, as does the type of prevention being carried out. In other words, youth who are already radicalized, and those at high risk of becoming so, are generally informed of the purpose of the intervention, whereas this is not necessarily the case with primary prevention. Finally, we were unable to identify any significant difference between Western and non-Western countries on this score.

How are ideology and politics addressed?

Various explanatory models of radicalization suggest that ideology is an important precursor to the use of violence — thought precedes action, so to speak (ICPC, 2015). This is why numerous CVE measures have been designed with a view to averting the adoption of a particular ideology, anti-democratic opinions, or a belief in the utility of violence (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). But the ideological approach to CVE is not without its critics. Some point out that radical ideas have always shaped our world; they have called into question a status quo that was not always fair and equal for all (Bettison, 2009; ICPC, 2016a). Others stress that countering ideas considered extremist or radical with more normative or mainstream positions could make it more difficult to discuss divergent views and political issues openly (Kundnani, 2009). For these reasons, it can be delicate to address ideology and/or politics in an intervention. We asked our respondents whether ideology and/or politics are deliberately or explicitly addressed in their interventions, and if so, how. Here, ideology and politics are meant in the broad sense, and from this perspective, radicalization is the process whereby someone’s ideological and political outlook turns extremist.
a) Approaches

Several dominant currents were observed in our interviews.

First, an indirect approach is generally employed; that is, ideology and politics are subjects raised by the intervention participants, not the workers. The respondents noted that it is not usually their policy to address ideology or politics, but that they are open to requests from the participants to do so. For that matter, one respondent stated that he cannot pretend that youth are apolitical, and that it is important for him to let them express their opinions on sociopolitical affairs. On this subject, one school worker stated that youth seem to have a polarized and simplistic view of international affairs. This observation implies that it is incumbent on schools to provide the knowledge and the environment needed to foster the development of students’ critical faculties. A remark heard more than once during our interviews is that the important thing is not to address any particular topic, but to create an atmosphere of trust in which participants (in many cases youth) feel comfortable discussing issues and topics of concern to them, without judgment and with respect for one another. One North American respondent recommended that open debate be encouraged, even if limits have to be imposed from time to time.

Second, the respondents appear to be generally favourable to an approach consisting of alternative narratives rather than counter-narratives. Both of these methods of countering extremist propaganda have been identified by the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). As defined by RAN and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, the purpose of counter-narratives is to “directly deconstruct, discredit and demystify violent extremist messaging” (2015, p. 4). Several respondents specified, however, that they do not necessarily feel well-equipped to present the arguments it would take to refute an ideology or conspiracy theory. Alternative narratives, in contrast, are intended to undercut the violent rhetoric of extremist narratives and promote values of tolerance, openness, liberty, and democracy (RAN Centre of Excellence & Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015).

This approach has been adopted by the majority of the respondents: rather than discuss the content of an ideology, the veracity of its claims, they see it as preferable to discuss its implications. How will adopting this ideology impact my perception of others? How will I act towards groups that don’t share my point of view? In other words, the emphasis is not on one ideology or another, and therein lies the advantage. By not targeting a specific ideology but rather the implications of certain ways of thinking, one can explore the subject of extremism in its various forms. One respondent in North America noted that it is important for her to remind participants in her interventions that the fundamental problem she is trying solve is radicalization leading to violence, and that she is not interested in demonizing any specific ideology or form of extremism.

The use of alternative narratives is thus a combined cognitive-behavioural approach: it acts on both perceptions and the behaviour adopted to promote one’s ideas.

The resort to violence for political ends is also addressed. For many of the respondents, in the West and elsewhere, violence prevention involves offering participants prosocial avenues of expression. With youth and other participants who are enthusiastic about changing their society, discussing politics means exploring appropriate means of expression in society. Far be it from the
respondents to discourage youth from questing after an ideal; the goal of prevention is instead to problematize the use of violence as a means of achieving their objective, and to guide them towards more appropriate methods. The respondents stress that conflicts and differences of opinion are inevitable in a democracy, but need not be resolved with violence. One respondent explained that the message he tries to impart to youth through his organization is to continue to work for change but to do so through the existing system, not by violence. This approach garners support from the literature. Qureshi and Marsden (2010), for example, stress that any ideological intervention should strive to refute the belief that violence is a legitimate response to anything, or that it is the natural complement of radical beliefs.

One more recurrent observation in the interviews is that ideology is rarely addressed in isolation. There is indeed some skepticism as to the effectiveness of addressing the ideological dimension exclusively. For example, when asked about the reason for using counter-narratives, one respondent replied that she can work on modifying participants' thoughts and behaviours, but that she may fail if she focuses exclusively on his ideology. Another respondent emphasized that an ideology that legitimizes the use of violence is a risk factor to consider, but that it is only one factor among many, including a pronounced interest in weapons, substance abuse, a history of family violence, and mental health problems.

b) Issues

One issue raised repeatedly is the significant danger that front-line workers may stigmatize certain communities when they choose to address the theme of ideology. If an ideology is singled out for its alleged advocacy of violence, the result may be an implied association or correlation with a particular community. Sidebar 2 presents the approach used by one front-line worker to avoid stigmatizing the communities with which he works. We will also cover this subject more directly at the end of this section.

**Sidebar 2. Recommendations to avoid stigmatization: one worker’s approach**

One respondent in North America explained how he approaches the theme of ideology when working with certain communities so that they do not feel stigmatized. Two main recommendations emerged during this conversation:

1) **Address the problem from every angle**

The respondent stressed that to avoid stigmatizing certain communities, he takes care to mention all ideologies that can potentially lead to violence. He informs participants that his program aims to avert the use of violence, not adherence to any particular ideology. No ideology is presented as being more problematic than another.

2) **Address the issues of concern to the community**

For this respondent, it is critical that the ideologies addressed be the ones that matter to the communities he works with. For example, the Indian and Pakistani Muslim communities among his clientele regard white supremacy as a worrisome ideology. While the likelihood of an Indian
or Pakistani Muslim adopting this ideology is very slight, he or she could easily become the target of white supremacist violence. Furthermore, this respondent’s interventions are usually highly interactive, and he is often asked about recruitment by groups such as ISIS in the Muslim communities where he works. According to organizations in these communities, their youth are more likely to be attracted by the ideology of ISIS than that of white supremacist groups. As a result, he finds himself addressing a range of ideologies that are of interest to the participating groups.

The risk of creating mental associations between an ideology and a group in society does not concern front-line workers alone, for they also confront the difficulty of educating individuals who think radicalization doesn’t concern them — who think it is a problem for communities other than their own. For example, a respondent in North America recounted an experience where she explained to a teacher that her work involves helping communities become more resilient to violent extremism. The teacher unthinkingly replied that she should contact the school’s Muslim students’ association. The respondent explained to the perplexed teacher that she wished to address the entire student body, because radicalization concerns everyone. In this particular case, the respondent was given an illustration of the automatic association that some people make between violent extremism and Islamist extremism, hence with Muslim communities. She discovered that there is a need for awareness raising to alleviate this problem.

Finally, a respondent in Europe who works with incarcerated individuals from the far right recounted a particular difficulty encountered when applying an approach based on alternative narratives. She said that although there is consensus in practice on the advantages of avoiding ideological or political confrontations, certain participants will try to confront the worker’s vision with their own. She defined these individuals as “ideological leaders” who are characterized by their well-honed debating skills. In her opinion, such individuals constitute a risk factor in group interventions and require an individualized approach.

**How is religion addressed?**

The relationship between religion and terrorism is highly complex. Media coverage of acts of violence perpetrated by extremist groups in the name of religion has lent support to the notion of a link between religion and violent extremism, without establishing any causal relationship between the two phenomena. In fact, the scientific literature contains nothing approaching a consensus on the subject. Our systematic review (ICPC, 2015) included an enumeration of the various factors posited in the literature as explaining the radicalization processes. Religiosity is certainly one of these factors, but while some authors contend that individuals who become radicalized are not necessarily observant (Khosrokhavar, 2014; Sageman, 2004, 2007; Zammit, 2013), others consider religion an important factor (Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman, 2009), particularly among groups on the far right (Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006; Blee & Creasap, 2010; Rowatt, Shen, LaBouff, & Gonzalez, 2013). Despite this lack of scientific consensus on the role of religion in violent extremism, religion
remains a theme that is incorporated into many counter-radicalization measures. As indicated in our systematic review (ICPC, 2015), many interventions implemented around the world try to emphasize normative religious practices. The goal may be “to increase knowledge among individuals about the diversity that exists within the same religion or to equip them to recognize radical interpretations of Islam” (ICPC, 2015, p. 73). On this subject, the front-line workers interviewed in this study were asked about whether they address the subject of religion in their interventions and, if so, how. We present the approaches taken in subsection (a) below, and the issues raised by the respondents in subsection (b).

a) Approaches

The place that religions occupy in society — or indeed the question of religion in general — will of course vary from one region or country to another, and so will the reactions and questions elicited by these topics. Likewise, how prevention work approaches the theme of religion, and what issues these approaches raise, will also vary from place to place. That said, one particular approach was found to be employed in different contexts worldwide, albeit with certain evident differences between how it is implemented in Western versus non-Western countries.

A universal approach

A widely observed pattern, occurring in all countries or regions, is to turn to experts when discussing religion. For example, one European front-line worker noted that he is sometimes is unable to assess the accuracy of assertions made by young people about religious topics. He will usually then invite in a religious educator to initiate a dialogue on the matter in question. Another European respondent argued that he and his colleagues should not be expected to be experts on religion. Some actually are experts, having received advanced training on the history of religions or religious extremism. Others have different strengths, such as excellent interpersonal skills, which facilitate contact with participants. A single organization can boast a diverse roster of professionals with a range of skills suited to answering the participants’ various needs.

In addition to participating directly in interventions, experts on religion may also be consulted to produce guides and other tools. This happened in an intervention that took place in a non-Western country, where the worker turned to spiritual centres to help its organization produce a guide for imams. The imams had expressed a desire for a guide to help them disseminate accurate and appropriate information on the subject of extremism and to offer a clear distinction between traditional and non-traditional Islam.

Approaches in Western countries

Due to the greater number of interviews conducted with European respondents (32) as opposed to North American respondents (10), the patterns identified in this study mainly reflect the European context. In Europe, the question of religion is rarely considered in isolation from current debates on immigration and the integration of local Muslim communities. Consequently, when the issue of religion is raised, European workers immediately mention Islam; some do so directly, while others refer to Islamic extremism and the violent acts ensuing from it.
A notable constant in our interviews with Western respondents is the importance they accord to talking about religion with participants, especially youth. **Young people have questions about religion and wish to discuss it.** As mentioned earlier in this report, it is a matter of taking into consideration the themes of concern to participants, and creating an open and respectful forum in which to address such issues. Several workers also emphasized that religion is not a topic addressed in schools, or at least not to the satisfaction of young people seeking answers to their questions and concerns. In this sense, the respondents’ interventions can fill a void of sorts.

A variety of intervention approaches emerged during our interviews.

Certain approaches **capitalize on the subject of religion to talk about tolerance and diversity of viewpoints.** One respondent gave the example of her workshops on gender roles, where the subject of the veil is often raised. Her approach consists of encouraging participants to think about the symbolic meanings attributed to articles of clothing by both those wearing them and others, as well as the messages people intend to convey with their clothing decisions. What could have been a discussion of religious symbols becomes a springboard from which to address matters of identity and self-expression — which are meaningful to most participants, whether religious or secular. The goal is to illustrate the diversity of perspectives that may coexist on a given issue, and to present this diversity as a source of unity rather than division.

Another frequently utilized approach is to **discuss the place of religion in society more generally.** For some, any discussion of religion is intrinsically linked to a broader discussion on politics. A European front-line worker counseled that discussion of Islam should not dwell on the nature of that religion, but rather on the consequences of its stigmatization in Europe. In the same vein, another European respondent, who holds workshops in schools, would like to see discussion of the diverse ways of being Muslim, as a counterpoint to a public discourse that he sees as reducing Muslim communities to a single undifferentiated mass. As he put it, “we speak about religion without providing religious education” (EUR19). The idea is to address a subject often absent from classroom discussions. He finds that Muslim youth and others appreciate these discussions because the subject of Islam is not covered in the curriculum. One of the most important aspects of these discussions, he said, is that they afford recognition for the experiences of young Muslims. There is also the additional benefit of introducing the subject to non-Muslim students, who may not be inclined to broach these topics with their Muslim classmates.

Finally, several Western respondents stressed that it is better to **avoid engaging in back-and-forth religious and theological debates.** One opined that such an approach is counter-productive because it makes the participants wary and can easily undermine the possibility of establishing a relationship of trust with them. Another counseled against taking on the role of the “faith police,” the arbiter of good and bad Islam.

**Approaches in non-Western countries**

The approaches adopted in non-Western countries were somewhat different.

In contrast to our Western respondents, their counterparts in predominantly Muslim countries averred that they **make use of sacred texts to buttress their arguments,** and to explain to
participants how they define religious extremism. One respondent comes at the questions of peace and non-violence with reference to the teachings of the Koran, particularly when speaking to teachers in Koranic schools. This makes her approach more context-sensitive and she finds the teachers more receptive as a result.

Another approach is to **organize encounters between different faith communities**. One respondent took this tack in an effort to foster a sense of belonging in a community comprising Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians. He sought to promote dialogue among these faith groups and to minimize divisiveness between them, so as to lessen any unfavourable prejudices they might otherwise entertain towards one another. Another respondent explained that highlighting the cultural aspects of religion is an excellent way to build bridges with certain isolated communities. His institution tries to encourage dialogue and open-mindedness, and to reduce prejudice, by organizing youth trips to holy sites. It promotes intercultural interactions in which the emphasis is on the religious dimension (practices, values, etc.).

b) Issues

*Front-line workers’ limited knowledge of Islam*

For many front-line workers, religion is a thorny subject. Some prefer to avoid the issue altogether; it is too delicate, and they consider themselves unqualified for the task. One European respondent remarked that, as far as he is concerned, the distinction between a particularly conservative Muslim and a Muslim extremist is not especially clear. Another European respondent emphasized the difficulties he has in grasping the meaning of terms such as jihad or sharia law. According to him, when certain young Muslims are asked to define sharia law, they resort to “just because” arguments, or adduce unrelated ideas. These examples add weight to the argument that knowledge of Islam is a prerequisite for tackling the cognitive mechanisms in play when radicalization of a religious character takes place.

This phenomenon is not exclusive to Western countries. A respondent in Asia specified that her work includes teacher training on Islam, with a particular focus on the difference between what she terms traditional and non-traditional Islam. The participants receive a reference guide at the end of the training sessions. Feedback from participants indicates, however, that as interesting and potentially useful as they find the training and the guide, they still feel uncomfortable teaching religion to their students. The Ministry of Education in this respondent’s country has now begun working on integrating religion into the curriculum.

*Wariness on the part of participants*

Religion is a sensitive subject, particularly in the prevailing political climate, and participants and practitioners alike may be hesitant to bring it up. One respondent explained that he has discovered in the course of his work just how difficult it is to initiate a dialogue with youth on the issue of religious extremism: they immediately become suspicious that this is just an indirect way of criticizing Islam and then rush to the defence of their beliefs. The risk is that the participants’ trust in the front-line worker will be compromised. This respondent quickly realized that in order for an intervention to be effective, it must **be very specific about the fact that it is the violence at times**
**associated with extremism that is considered problematic.** This allows him to allay participants’ fears that their religion will be targeted or associated with violent extremism. In short, he specifies that the problematic issue he seeks to address in relation to extremism is the use of violence.

*Political tensions and Islamophobia*

Prejudices against Muslims in Western countries existed long before the attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York. However, those events and subsequent terrorist attacks have contributed to a climate conducive to the emergence of anti-Muslim sentiments in many countries (Amnesty International, 2012). In fact, recent studies show that tolerance for religious diversity is declining worldwide (UNDP, 2016). It can be hard for practitioners to talk about religion and violent extremism in such a tense political context, when participants may exhibit intolerance into the bargain. One European respondent explained that when she gives training sessions for teachers, she sometimes encounters participants who are firmly opposed to all forms of religion — for whom the very idea that a young Muslim woman can be proud, modern, and feminist yet still wear the veil is simply absurd and unacceptable. As mentioned above, these delicate situations require the worker to delineate that what is unacceptable is violent extremism and the precursors to it; she must help the participants learn to distinguish between behaviours that may indeed be worrisome, and those that — although eliciting differing opinions and disagreement — need not be considered problematic. Moreover, the secular character of certain countries brings workers face to face with a dilemma: is it permissible to bring up religion at all, or does secularism demand that it be passed over in silence? One respondent summarized the dilemma this way: “The organization thinks we must address the question of religiosity, even though it’s often avoided because [the country] is secular and, therefore, we can’t talk about religion. And yet, the organization thinks that we must talk about religion with youth, with the assistance of persons who are competent to do so” (EUR11).

As is the case with politics and ideology, discussion of religion tends to bring many questions and doubts into sharp focus. Moreover, some front-line workers have mimicked the media’s framing of religion as being bound up with politics by making reference to specify features of the international conjuncture. Consequently, the watchword in interventions is to observe prudence and tact when dealing with this sensitive issue, so as to avoid stigmatizing any given religion. This strategy is more applicable to the Western than the non-Western context.

**How are problematic behaviours and violence addressed?**

As mentioned in this report’s introduction, behavioural approaches have long been integral to interventions with extremist groups, particularly where the goal is disengagement. Behavioural approaches are not, however, exclusive to tertiary prevention; they may also be deployed well upstream, before an individual joins an extremist group. This section focuses on the use of behavioural approaches in counter-radicalization at all levels — primary, secondary, and tertiary. Respondents were asked whether and how behavioural issues are addressed during their interventions.
a) Approaches

This study identified several different approaches to intervention in which the behavioural aspects of radicalization and violent extremism are addressed. Some are used worldwide, while others are more typically found in Western countries.

Worldwide approaches

To begin with, the vast majority of respondents address the behavioural aspects of radicalization by focusing on violent behaviours in general. For some, this constitutes an indirect way of getting at violent extremism, which is the real target of their interventions. For others, violence is itself the focal point of the intervention, with violent extremism being one avatar of a more general problem. Their goal is the prevention of violence in general, not violent extremism in particular.

Respondents who work for government or law enforcement organizations stressed that it is not within their purview to pay attention to what people think, or to stop anyone from adopting a particular ideology. They do have to intervene when criminal or violent behaviour occurs or is at risk of occurring. One North American officer said:

“[V]iolence targeted at certain people because your belief system says they must be harmed because that is the only solution, that is a more universal language. I can feel very comfortable saying, look, I can't stop you from believing in your white supremacist view or your support of the ISIS caliphate, but when you say that the ISIS caliphate or white supremacist views require you to harm black people or non-Muslims, we can talk about that, that's a problem.” (NAM8)

This respondent stressed that the communities he works with are not necessarily concerned about violent extremism, due to the prominence of other, more worrying types of violence (domestic violence, guns, street gangs, etc.). Violent extremism is not seen as an entirely new issue requiring fundamentally different measures. If it is presented as just another type of violence to be addressed, then communities may feel more able to incorporate it into their existing priorities, instead of getting the impression of having to grapple with a challenge that is foreign to their concerns.

Another common approach is to offer a comprehensive definition of violence during the intervention. Several respondents reminded us that not all violent behaviour is physical: it may be verbal as well. Interventions must therefore non-violent communication in addition to conflict management skills. One European respondent emphasized that a comprehensive definition, including physical and other forms of violence, facilitates the detection of seemingly more "ordinary" violence that may be a precursor to more serious forms of violence. She added:

In the context I work in, physical violence is just not accepted. I will create the space where people are allowed to say what they feel and think, but there will be no way that any kind of physical violence will not be stopped immediately. But at the same time, violence comes in other ways; in attitude, in words, in beliefs. I will name the violence when I see it, and check with that person. People are not always aware that they are being violent. I think we are not sensitive enough to detect violence and we wait for extreme violence to happen. (EUR24)
Her remark underlines the importance of specifying what is to be considered violence, and making the participants conscious of what they are permitted to do and say.

A third approach identified by this study is to **sensitize people in a person’s social environment to the risk of his being radicalized**. This may consist of training these people to detect and react to problematic behaviour, or it may focus on developing awareness of their own behaviours and potential influence. One North American respondent explained that he models his work in part on “bystander training,” a practice developed in the context of suicide and sexual assault prevention, among other fields. This respondent explained that in many cases of sexual assault on university campuses, friends of the victim or the perpetrator may have witnessed certain behaviours that foreshadowed an assault, but didn’t know how to act or intervene. Their reasons for inaction often ran along the lines of, “I thought that someone else would do something,” “I didn’t think I had a role to play,” “I didn’t want to get my friend in trouble,” etc. The goal of bystander training is to show young people that they do have a moral responsibility to intervene and that there are different ways of going about it. In the context of radicalization leading to violence, bystander training consists of making youth aware of behaviours that might be signs of an individual’s drift into extremism, and presenting the range of responses and resources at their disposal.

Another type of “social environment” training is directed at teachers. An African front-line worker explained that she trains Koranic school teachers to use non-violent communication techniques with students; among other things, she encourages them to eschew corporal punishment. She hopes that teachers who adopt an approach with a greater emphasis on kindness, tolerance, and non-violence will, in turn, be able to impart these values to their students.

**Approaches in Western countries**

Certain approaches are more typically found in Western countries.

One approach is to **work on understanding the motivations underlying problematic behaviours**. This may involve talking to a young person’s friends, family, or teachers to find out what lies behind his problematic behaviour. This approach is used by one European respondent when working with parents and teachers who are worried about a person’s behaviour. She tries to get a better understanding of this behaviour by asking them about the ideas, emotions, and ideologies that might be motivating it. Another of her methods is to try to pinpoint the values underlying the actions that participants in an intervention are willing to take, by asking them how far they would be willing to go to defend their ideals, or to defend or oppose a cause: Would they sign a petition? Protest in the streets? Quit their jobs and devote themselves to the cause full-time? Turn to violence if they think it’s necessary? The object is to create a non-judgmental relationship of trust in which the participants feel listened to and the worker can gain a better understanding of how they feel. She then goes on to elicit discussion of the impacts and legitimacy of violence.

Another approach mentioned is to **focus on signs of alienation**, on emotional issues that may have led a youth to cut ties with family and friends, rather than on violent behaviours. One respondent explained:
Let’s take a youth who is overwhelmed by negative emotions, feelings of distrust and so on. He breaks away from his family and friends, he quits his leisure activities because he’s alienated and unhappy, he drops out because he’s convinced that teachers are paid to distract him and dull his critical faculties. The point is that these feelings and emotions precede and explain his behaviour. (EUR12)

The challenge is to reconnect the youth with his parents and peers so that his isolation does not render him vulnerable to recruitment by an extremist group.

b) Issues

When a counter-radicalization initiative that targets violent behaviours and promotes non-violence is deployed, the issues will differ depending on the particular sociopolitical context. As we shall see below, certain non-Western countries are confronting unique issues.

An important issue that front-line workers may confront is socioeconomic in nature: the phenomenon of **people who join extremist groups due to lack of economic opportunity**. One African respondent did a local study to determine why youth in his neighbourhood were traveling to conflict zones to join extremist groups. The main reason turned out to be the lack of job opportunities and labour market integration in their society of origin. Promoting non-violence and discouraging youth from joining violent groups may be difficult, it seems, if the broader context of their lives — in this case, their labour force integration needs — is ignored. This analysis led the respondent to orient his preventive action toward education, training, and labour market integration for those who may have left school early. In addition, he helps young people get in contact with employment agencies.

Interventions targeting violent behaviour may encounter a second major difficulty, which is that **the community may support the use of violence and oppose the promotion of non-violence**. This situation was reported by a front-line worker in a conflict zone who explained that his work at times involves talking to child soldiers and attempting to inculcate in them notions of human rights, civic duties and responsibilities and, ultimately, non-violence. But his work is heavily criticized by the community, which considers it acceptable and even desirable for these youth to take up arms in defence of their country. The respondent and his organization are blamed for having prevented the youth from protecting their community. Moreover, neither the government nor the rebel groups approve of the organization’s work, which hinders recruitment on both sides.

This section has presented the different approaches employed to address behavioural issues in the counter-radicalization context. A number of worldwide tendencies have been identified. Many front-line workers direct their efforts at violent behaviour in general (and not just violent extremism); they are careful to define what they mean by the term “violence” during their interventions; and they work with the family and friends of individuals at risk of radicalization, helping them see what roles they might play to prevent that from happening. In Western countries, two additional approaches were identified: trying to understand the underlying motivations of certain problematic behaviours, and focusing on behaviour indicating a breaking of close ties, rather than violence as such.
Finally, certain issues were only raised by workers in non-Western countries, although this does not necessarily mean that these issues do not exist elsewhere. Among them is the difficulty of discouraging the use of violence where young people join extremist groups due to a lack of economic opportunity, or where there is broad community support for youth to take up arms.

How are grievances addressed?

Grievances, often associated with radicalization, are a reality in many societies (Schmid, 2013). A grievance is a feeling of (real or perceived) oppression that emanates from frustrations caused by social inequalities (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). According to Schmid (2013) and Bjørgo (2005), leaders and recruiters of extremist groups play on such frustrations to bring new people into the fold. Radical groups may adopt other people’s grievances in addition to their own, proclaiming themselves the spokesmen for these causes. Nevertheless, grievances alone cannot explain why an individual becomes radicalized (Schmid, 2013). This section of the report seeks to understand how different grievance are dealt with in the intervention process, based on our interviews with the respondents. In other words, it identifies the relevant tendencies and issues relating to grievances. The interview questions concerned frustrations stemming from perceived stigmatization and lack of job opportunities, as well as criticisms of society and of government foreign policy.

a) Approaches

Alleviating socioeconomic frustrations

Our interviews brought to light divergent tendencies on the subject of socioeconomic grievances. In North Africa, two grievances seemed particularly significant where radicalization leading to violence is concerned: money and social conditions. According to one respondent, radicalization — or, more specifically, the fact of joining a terrorist group — is often connected with a desire for economic advancement:

It’s generally because of money. These youths have dreams and ambitions. They want money to do things, to build a house, to make a real life for themselves... so they’ll do a quick jaunt over there and make some money. (M-MO1)

For certain young people, then, joining an extremist group represents an opportunity for personal advancement and growth. This observation is consistent with the views of another respondent in Africa who explains that terrorist groups instrumentalize people’s socioeconomic problems for recruitment purposes.

In this regard, the purpose of interventions aimed at developing participants’ job skills is to reduce the frustrations stemming from a whole set of social conditions (e.g., in North Africa) that are conducive to radicalization leading to violence. These programs are predicated on developing the participants’ capacity to join the labour market by providing them with training and education. Several respondents in non-Western countries concurred with this general observation of a lack of youth job opportunities. Training designed to address this issue provides participants with the legitimate means to achieve their ambitions. In the words of a respondent in the Middle East:
Young people said, “The region needs agricultural training and here we are, unemployed. What are we supposed to do? Hold a sit-in? Smash up the police station? Set government cars on fire? What will it take for them to get that we need training and jobs?” So we provided contacts to help young people join the labour market. And now, none of the 45 youths we worked with accepts violence. (M-MO6)

A respondent in a Western country painted a different picture: namely, that while socioeconomic factors may be among the grievances addressed, they are not the main issue. For one thing, poverty is not a significant precursor to radicalization leading to violence (ICPC, 2015); for another, participants often come from a wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds.

**Developing critical thinking to reduce grievances**

Certain prevention programs in Western countries are premised on developing critical thinking to reduce grievances and offer alternatives to violence. This approach is based on the idea that certain individuals — and this is particularly prevalent among youth — have a dualistic vision of the world. According to a European respondent: “Many young people have what we call ‘trapped thinking’; so, on the one hand, their ideology will say that Western culture is evil and damaging to their country, and yet they will quite happily use McDonald’s restaurants, for instance, they will happily consume Western media, they will adopt Western clothing... they demonstrate this contradiction.” (EUR2).

The goal of these programs is to help participants develop a more sophisticated worldview and encourage them to assert their views using alternatives to violence. Apparently, this approach is used for all types of grievances. What is important here is that young people get the chance to discuss things together — even, perhaps, to express hate speech — with no authority figures around to suppress their thoughts and opinions. The point is to come up with concrete solutions that truly take account of the social conditions and issues experienced by youth. In this context, role-playing is very popular as a prevention method. It gives the young participants a chance to express themselves, to get into the details of their personal grievances, in an environment conducive to problem-solving:

> For example you are in a situation where you feel discriminated or something like that, how do you physically handle that situation? How do you keep your calm? Do you react upon a person that is discriminating you or not handling you fair? (EUR18)

**Feelings of injustice and police violence: the role of community policing**

One notable grievance mentioned by certain Western respondents concerns police violence. Youth are sometimes mistreated by police repression, by the use of excessive force, and this is a considerable risk factor that limits positive interactions and increases feelings of injustice. This dynamic tarnishes the image of the police, which becomes a force for oppression rather than protection in some people’s eyes. This being the case, youth and other individuals who do not see the justice system as a means for resolving their frustrations may go further down the path of violent radicalization.
Sidebar 3. The community policing model: proactive approaches used in a Western country

Two police officers (NAM5 and NAM6) explained their approaches to community policing. This model seeks to reduce grievances based on negative perceptions of the police, such as those that arose out of a series of controversial police shootings.

1) Developing police officers' knowledge of cultural communities
The respondents stressed that there was a real need for their organization to become better acquainted with local cultural or minority communities. Ignorance of these communities is an obstacle to developing ties with them, and can give rise to major grievances. More specifically, a lack of knowledge about the customs observed in places of worship can create tensions in these communities. Police officers do not always know what is and is not acceptable, or how to avoid overstepping boundaries.

2) Importance of establishing initial contact with refugees
The police officers in our study stated that a police presence when refugees arrive at the airport is a way to make a good impression. This can help allay the prejudices that new arrivals may have about the police, so that an effective partnership based on trust can be formed. It is important for the organization to show that it is there to assist the new arrivals and not to repress them.

3) Diversifying outreach
These respondents stressed the necessity of diversifying public outreach activities, especially those directed at refugees. Such activities could include:
   a) Weekly classes on the police: show that the police force is there to serve the public.
   b) Home visits to establish lasting bonds.
   c) Ensuring an ongoing and supportive police presence as refugees integrate into society.
   d) Networking: guide community members towards needed resources.

b) Issues

A deteriorating social climate
The flow of refugees into Western countries, particularly in Europe, is causing some complications for front-line workers. Whereas refugees were initially greeted with a wave of solidarity and support from local communities, a European respondent said that concentrations of refugees in certain regions are now changing the social landscape. Where the relocation process is slow, unemployment is rising, and resources are increasingly scarce, relations between the local community and the refugees can become strained:

Many do not wish to be here, some are adjusting to the idea that this is where they will live for the near future. In a country where austerity politics have impoverished a large number of people, where unemployment is skyrocketing and resources are diminished, this can become a challenge for local communities.
(EUR24)
Front-line workers find themselves working in an environment where the rise of xenophobia and Islamophobia in the host society is tangible. This fear of one’s neighbours (i.e., the migrants) is heightened by the media, rendering the professional’s work that much more difficult and delicate.

Grievances and radicalization take different forms in Western countries as compared with developing countries, and counter-radicalization programs — which address grievances as a function of specific social situations — reflect this difference. According to our non-Western respondents, socioeconomic marginalization is the dominant factor in their countries, whereas in Western countries, that factor is generally the perception and experience of discrimination and injustice. The concept of relative deprivation (Gurr, 1971) seems most apropos in terms of explaining the relationship between grievances and radicalization. If that is so, then the most pertinent approach for adding nuance to people’s interpretations of these injustices would be to develop their capacity for critical thinking, in conjunction with efforts to improve relations between the community and the institutions of government, most notably the police. In non-Western countries, such grievances are addressed with a more direct method such as vocational training.

**How is gender addressed?**

The question of gender was raised during our interviews. We wanted to know whether conventional gender roles have an impact on the phenomenon under study, and whether the concept of gender as such is explicitly included as a discussion topic in interventions. Although several researchers have studied how women fit into the phenomenon of radicalization leading to violence (Blee, 2005; Von Knop, 2007; Ness, 2005), our systematic review found that the gender perspective is largely absent from the radicalization literature, even though the sole explanatory factors on which there is a consensus are gender and age (ICPC, 2015). Studies indeed show that the majority of those involved in radicalization leading to violence are men (Bakker, 2006; Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman, 2009; Gill, Horgan, & Deckert, 2014; Pauwels & De Waele, 2014; Sageman, 2004). Nevertheless, the presence of women, and especially girls, engaged in jihad in Syria or elsewhere in recent years lends support to the idea that it is relevant to address the question of radicalization leading to violence from a gender perspective. In a word, the extent to which gender explains radicalization remains very much an open question. Our study therefore attempts to shed some light on the predominant tendencies and salient issues of gender and radicalization.

a) Approaches

Our analysis of the interviews served to identify two contradictory tendencies with respect to gender.

First, there is the dominant tendency that the gender question is not prominent among topics of discussion between front-line workers and their target audiences. Some argued that this is because more men than women join the ranks of radical and terrorist groups; as a European respondent put it, “we have yet to address the question of gender because we deal, after all, with a mostly male clientele” (EUR17). Several European respondents opined that the dominance of men in society may be part of the reason why gender comes up so rarely in these discussions.
Certain respondents specified that this theme tends to be raised in more circumspectly, much like the theme of radicalization itself, which can be difficult to mention explicitly in certain contexts. This approach to gender is illustrated by the remarks of one European respondent:

We don’t approach it, but there is a session in which the theme is emotions. So it’s really about working with feelings and emotions, and then I think I recall that we had a group discussion after an exercise, and that it was about showing emotions as a girl and emotions as a man. What is the difference? And what makes the boys [unable to] show their emotions sometimes? (EUR18)

Our study reveals the weight of stereotypes and traditions in the determination of social roles. As a factor contributing to radicalization, this tendency is particularly relevant in African societies and certain regions of Asia. A worker in Africa explained: “In some contexts or cultures, the man is expected to contribute for the needs of his family since the age of fifteen. The reality they face is the lack of jobs, as well as education.” (SSAF3).

Similarly, a respondent in Asia affirmed that: “In terms of traditions, the girls get married at seventeen and then they should take care of the children, the home” (ASIA5). This is one way of expressing the enormous influence of gender-related social determinants on the life trajectories of individuals.

It is worth noting that one issue often raised when gender is addressed, particularly in Western countries, is the distinctive clothing worn by Muslim women: the hijab, niqab, or burqa. Participants feel comfortable questioning whether these women are free to choose how they appear in public, and what impact such apparel will have on their socio-professional integration. Discussions on issues of attire also encourage individuals to refine and articulate their ideas and discourse around their sociocultural identity and the symbolic meanings of clothing selection, rather than talk about the theological principles underlying such choices:

For instance, we have one workshop focused on gender roles and we speak about clothing, because there are ultimately discussions about headscarf. So our intention is not to answer yes or no, or provide quotes from the Koran, but to bring them to think about clothing, why they are interested in certain pieces of cloth, or why put attention to a certain symbol. What is the message I want to transmit when wearing certain clothes, about my body, my identity. (EUR19)

As for the second main tendency, it expresses the position of the respondents who mentioned that they have developed projects focusing on gender. One European respondent was preparing to implement an initiative specifically concerned with the question of gender identity. She specified that issues revolving around gender, such as sexual orientation, sexism, and gender-based social roles would be addressed. She would be making ample use of theatre for this purpose.

Another respondent in Asia stressed that gender is included in her organization’s activities. However, it is important to note the common denominator in every organization where gender was a full-fledged programming priority: an entirely female membership. This fact perhaps explains the absence of socio-psychological barriers to expressing oneself on subjects as sensitive as gender.
and sexual orientation. However, in this case, the term “gender perspective” simply referred to the perspective of women, not to any broader consideration of the concept of gender.

Finally, it is worth mentioning a particular case in Africa where one respondent emphasized that women may show clear signs of intellectual radicalization without crossing the line into violence. Radicalized men were more likely to cross that line. Even so, this respondent continues to believe that men and women should not be segregated during interventions, since their attendance at the same sessions represents an opportunity to foster mutual understanding.

b) Issues

Among the gender-related issues raised during interventions on radicalization is the stigmatization that may plague certain women. Our interviews show that this is an issue in Europe. As discussed above, women who choose to wear the headscarf — a highly gendered issue — may be subject to stigmatization. Two European respondents told us that girls who wear it are unable to find jobs, no matter their qualifications:

> It’s this whole question of the headscarf. We see a lot of young women who have degrees, who are educated, but can’t find a job because they’re not allowed to work if they wear the hijab. It’s pretty hard to find a job if you wear the veil. So a whole segment of this generation is highly stigmatized and kind of vegetating, with no future prospects. (EUR17)

The results of our analysis suggest that the changes in mentalities necessary to discard certain preconceived ideas about gender will entail a long and undoubtedly eventful process, modulated according to the cultural context of the target audience. As this study reveals, front-line workers have plenty of work ahead of them in terms of exploring the gender/radicalization dyad. It is well documented that “[g]ender is probably one of the only certainties concerning radicalization; most radicals are men” (ICPC, 2015, p. 35). However, the gender perspective, when it does appear, is addressed in a wholly conventional manner: as the perspective of women, or through the prism of male-female power relations. In contrast, front-line workers barely touch on the question of how masculinity is constructed.

2.3 Training

This section considers training as an intervention model. By training, we mean any intervention that aims to instruct, or to impart knowledge and skills, with the goal of preventing radicalization leading to violence. Not included in this category are psychosocial interventions whose purpose is other than skills acquisition. We wanted to know whether the respondents offer training in the context of their interventions and, if so, how this takes place. Who is the target group? What precisely does the training consist of and why? The prevention of radicalization leading to violence is not possible without an educated population capable of weighing arguments. People who lack information are apt to develop flimsy arguments and are more easily manipulated by individuals with significant media power. Therefore, the premise of certain preventive interventions is that a good academic
education and/or vocational training can reduce the probability that an individual will join a violent criminal group to provide for his needs and those of his family.

In this study, we identified three categories of training: **skills development, information and awareness**, and **impacting values**. The first category refers to a wide variety of training events that enable participants to acquire skills or abilities apt to directly or indirectly favour the prevention of radicalization. More specifically, this category includes the following: general education and vocational training; development of critical thinking; identification and monitoring of suspicious behaviour; workshop creation and facilitation; trainer training; and techniques of conflict management, communication, resilience, and prevention of harassment and cyber-bullying. The second category includes the following subjects: human rights; religion; religious diversity, Islam, Salafist arguments and recruitment methods; secularism; radicalization and related issues; prejudices; civic education, and general information. The third category comprises initiatives specifically intended to impart and promote democratic values, tolerance, and pacifism. In short, we found that training can be broadly divided into initiatives designed to provide participants with skills, and initiatives intended to inform and raise awareness.

Training initiatives are aimed at a wide variety of persons and groups. These include government employees and police officers, students, women and children, youth, educators and teachers, various types of professionals, parents, isolated and victimized populations, and the general public. All training is voluntary. Certain organizations publicize their training work, while others wait for interested individuals or organizations to initiate contact. The latter approach is apparently a strategy to minimize the stigmatization of certain persons and populations.

**Skills development**

The goal of **general education** programs is to remedy educational deficits in communities, thereby reducing the risk of youths getting involved in violent and radicalized groups. A good education for youth and **continuing education** for adults can help them acquire the capacity to provide for their needs and, ultimately, reject the support of criminal and terrorist groups.

A policing strategy in a European country requires each police department to designate a counter-radicalization officer and to undergo training using a toolbox developed by a special unit of the national police. One European city has developed a counter-radicalization strategy that requires all youth educators and front-line youth workers to receive training on radicalization. Taking another tack, the police department in a North American city developed a partnership with its casinos, one of the major local tourist attractions, in which casino security officers are trained on how to take advantage of the potential represented by the surveillance cameras installed on these sites.

Training in **conflict management techniques** is directed at teachers and community leaders with the goal of introducing negotiation and diplomacy as alternatives to violence. The idea is to facilitate dialogue with students and communities in a manner that attenuates feelings of anger and grievances by giving everyone a chance to speak. Participants get to express their ideas, opinions, grievances, and problems in a safe environment free of violence and repression. The purpose of conflict management techniques is to encourage self-expression while at the same time avoiding intimidation and violence (both verbal and physical).
Strictly speaking, improving communication appears to be a training goal rather than the subject of a specific training session. A training event may result from a carefully weighed decision on the participants’ part; the group may include members from diverse faith communities or from different levels of government. It is important to adopt an inclusive approach that allows participants to get to know each other and engage in discussion outside of the formal training process.

Efforts to prevent harassment and cyber-bullying may indirectly contribute to preventing the radicalization of youth and their involvement in radicalized groups. For bullying victims, radicalized groups may play the role of a surrogate family or support group. The resulting feeling of belonging then becomes a feeling of loyalty to the group, their new family.

Others strive to counter radicalization leading to violence by working to strengthen protective factors such as resilience and critical thinking. Resilience is strengthened by means of a positive approach, with the focus being placed on the participants’ talents and strengths and an attempt being made to downplay their weaknesses and problems or their connection to radicalization. The BOUNCE program, with the resilience tools it offers, is perhaps the most comprehensive program of this type (see Sidebar 4).

Other training initiatives adopt an experiential, participatory approach. For children, these initiatives generally involve physical exercises to raise their heart rates, so that comparisons can then be made with mental states such as stress or anger. For teachers, introspection exercises help them compare their own past behaviours and thoughts with those of their students today. There can also be role-playing exercises in which participants have to put themselves in the shoes of another (make-believe) person and defend his or her position. In these exercises, participants come to understand the different types of reasoning that people use, and to feel the pressure that certain types of arguments and situations can provoke. Inevitably, experiential and participatory approaches emphasize discussion and interaction.

One European respondent launched a workshop on integrative complexity, an approach that inquires into the structure of thought, independent of its content. The goal is to ascertain the complexity of the participants’ thinking and develop their capacity to comprehend others’ views and values in more complex ways. Intensive research on local and cultural particularities is done in advance to ensure that the intervention is context-sensitive. Participant selection is rigorous and performed by social workers who know the young people in question. Training consists of six sessions spread out over several weeks.

Finally, mindful of long-term sustainability, several initiatives implement trainer training activities in the context of a governmental or organizational strategy. For example, one NGO has developed workshops that it offers to educational institutions, using this simultaneously as an opportunity to train volunteer teachers in workshop facilitation.

Sidebar 4. The BOUNCE project: resilience tools

BOUNCE is a package of three training and awareness-raising tools for youngsters and their social environment. The BOUNCE tools are designed as preventive measures when — or even
better, before — concerns about radicalization leading to violence arise. The three tools (BOUNCE young, BOUNCE along and BOUNCE up) are interconnected and complementary. BOUNCE favours the emancipation of youngsters and their networks, builds their resilience, and enables them to interact with their environment in full awareness and readiness to face the challenges posed by radicalization.

**BOUNCE young** is an early prevention psychophysical training initiative designed to help (vulnerable) youth strengthen their resilience in the face of radical influences, as well as to raise the awareness of their social environment. In ten (inter)active group training sessions, youngsters strive to consolidate different aspects of their resilience. Through a mix of action and reflection, a wide range of skills and aptitudes are strengthened, practiced, and related to the participants’ personal experiences. The participants are led to make the link between the training exercises and their personal experiences.

**BOUNCE along** is an awareness-raising tool for parents and front-line workers who interact with youngsters. It provides them with tips, insights, and practical exercises, helping them play a more proactive role in the early prevention of violent radicalization. BOUNCE along covers five topics: “a positive point of view,” “strengthening resilience,” “resilient relations and communication,” “concerns and challenging situations,” and “information and influence.”

**BOUNCE up** is a train-the-trainer tool for front-line workers. This tool instructs them in working with the BOUNCE young resilience training program and the BOUNCE along awareness-raising tool. By combining both tools, trainers can become an important supporting figure in the early and positive prevention of violent radicalization.

*Implementation phase:*

The project’s initial phase consisted of developing and testing the three tools described above. The goal of the second phase is to disseminate these tools to front-line workers and practitioners working with youth and their parents. To that end, ten European cities were selected where these resilience tools will be implemented and their impact assessed.
Information and awareness

Training may also have the goal of informing and educating participants in any number of subject areas. In this case, it will generally consist of factual presentations aimed at debunking prejudices and/or defusing tense situations. In essence, the strategy strives to improve relations between different actors: between police and immigrant populations, between teachers and students, or between front-line workers and youth. One police department in North America provides outreach courses to immigrants to explain how law enforcement works in their new country. This course is intended to counsel them against behaviours deemed unacceptable in that country, thus avoiding potential confrontations between the two parties.

Another goal of information and awareness training is to provide educators and youth workers with the tools they need to conduct healthy and constructive discussions with youth in the classroom or during extracurricular activities. Indeed, there seems to be a great need to train educators on youth radicalization: their discussions with young people will be more nuanced if they have a more sophisticated understanding of “Salafist” recruitment messages in the media, and more clarity on various aspects of history and religion. Youth, however, generally have large gaps in their knowledge of these subjects. In response, and to reduce the risk that youth will blindly adhere to the propaganda of certain hate-promoting groups, one NGO offers religion courses in the schools.

To return to the problems mentioned by several teachers, they face situations in which certain youths’ religious and cultural practices run afoul of school regulations and/or class rules. Moreover, some students may behave in ways that the teaching staff finds shocking or incomprehensible. A feeling of powerless can set in, creating tensions and driving a wedge between these students and their teachers. Training on cultural diversity, religion, and Muslim identity is designed to help teachers manage such situations and their own feelings. Certain training sessions ask participants (educators) to remember when they were young and how “radicalized” they were in comparison with today’s youth. The idea is to help the adults take some distance from their current opinions on youth.

Imparting values

Finally, certain training initiatives focus on imparting values to educators or students. Such things as democratic values, tolerance, and pacifism may be taught as either the direct or indirect goal of the training. One NGO in the Middle East is focusing on encouraging the education system to promote tolerance. It presents tolerance as a value in its own right, and one that is pivotal to counter-radicalization efforts. Using a participatory approach, trainers endeavour to illustrate the value of tolerance between students and teachers by offering a variety of examples of tolerant behaviour.
**Patterns in Western and non-Western countries**

This study sought to compare Western regions (Europe, Oceania, and North America) with non-Western regions (sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel, Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East) in relation to the categories discussed above. In terms of target groups or issues addressed, no major differences were observed, although somewhat more training appears to be provided to front-line workers in Western countries. The most important difference noted concerns educators’ needs. In Western countries, many educators said that they are unprepared to react to discourses concerning the Arab world and Islam; they feel helpless and uninformed in this regard. In non-Western countries, the situation is less clear due to the smaller number of cases surveyed. Front-line workers in Western countries tend to develop their own tools and interventions, while organizations working in non-Western regions borrow and adapt existing tools to their local contexts.

It’s worth noting as well that our study gathered more data from Western than non-Western countries. Finally, we would also like to point out an issue raised by the term “training,” which, in English, can signify either formal mechanisms for imparting information, such as classes, seminars, or workshops, or indirect mechanisms such as learning from a colleague or participating in an intervention. The information gathered for this study does not always permit a clear distinction to be drawn.

In conclusion, front-line workers are using tools to develop or carry out training initiatives. Some of our respondents create their own tools, while others use existing tools, such as bystander training and the gatekeeper model, the Rosenberg technique of non-violent communication, or the conflict tree model, adapting them to the local environment and the particular issues they face. Many have recourse to experts, such as jurists for discussion of legal matters, theologians for the history of religion and spirituality, and psychologists and specialized educators.

**2.4 Implementation**

**Goals of the intervention**

Goal-setting is an essential step in prevention programs. It gives meaning to the whole process and guides efforts to achieve the desired end state. This section analyzes the missions and objectives of the organizations surveyed for this study. We asked the respondents to tell us the missions and objectives they seek to fulfill with their intervention work, in order to analyze and comprehend the rationale behind their preventive actions. The number, variety, and depth of the interviews we conducted were substantial enough to bring many different objectives to light, which we categorized according to the methods employed in prevention activities. Radicalization is such a complex phenomenon, and the people it affects so diverse, that front-line workers need a multitude of tools and intervention strategies in order to grapple with it.

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14 See the methodological appendix for details of the respondents’ geographical distribution.
a) Towards a reduction in the use of violence

Our analysis of the interviews indicates the existence of a recurrent objective in both Western and non-Western countries: **diminishing the propensity for violence**. In essence, the goal is to divert radical visions so that they serve the public interest, while also promoting alternatives to violence. From a utilitarian perspective, the objective is to **transform the participants’ desire to bring about change in society into a force for collective good**, one that works in collaboration with legitimate social institutions. Non-violent radicalization, in this view, is potentially a driver of positive change.

A concrete example was provided by a non-Western respondent who promotes positive change by striving to involve veterans and youth in different spheres of society. Staunchly held beliefs can be difficult to change, and so it becomes necessary to put the emphasis on violent action. This observation is consistent with the objectives of certain organizations in North America and Europe, which state that their goal is not to turn radicals into democrats; on the contrary, the issue is to **reduce the use of violence as a means of making change in society, by working in collaboration with civil society organizations**.

b) Guided dialogue

**Communication (dialogue)** is an objective pursued by several respondents (in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa) as a means of promoting conflict resolution between hostile parties. Although there are a multitude of different reasons for facilitating communication, the particular form taken by conflict resolution will depend on the prevailing social and political situation in a given country. As one European respondent explained, the rise of the far right and the normalization of a form of dualist neo-Nazi discourse in contemporary political structures justify the use of a dialogue-based approach to conflict resolution. This approach is evidently also used in non-Western countries characterized by the multiplication and relative isolation of minority groups within society. The object in these cases is to foster communication between hostile groups with a view to dismantling cultural barriers perceived as negative and conducing to the integration of differences. Dialogue becomes a means for achieving the goal of tolerance, a *sine qua non* for the resolution of intercultural conflicts.

Similarly, there is a visible tendency in Western countries for front-line workers to **promote open-mindedness by the majority vis-a-vis minorities and vice versa**. One European respondent explained that his program seeks to **normalize cultural or religious behaviours perceived as deviant**. This is a core concept of his program, which is premised on objective criteria for determining whether a given behaviour is problematic or not. The idea is to use dialogue to work on prejudices, but also to identify problematic behaviour and thinking with the help of an analytical framework and indicators.

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15 The utilitarian doctrine of John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham emphasizes the consequences of an action and disregards its nature. On this view, if radicalization can be put to use making positive change for the good of all, this is something worth exploiting.
c) Offering a safe space for interaction and (re)creation

The goal of some organizations is to create positive recreational environments for youth. For example, humorous plays and skits are used to discuss sensitive subjects in a manner that avoids confrontation and stigmatization. Along the same lines, many workers in both Western and non-Western countries are interested in creating positive spaces for recreation. There are evidently three reasons for pursuing this goal.

The first is that a positive environment helps reduce the tensions that may arise during debates over sensitive subjects like religion or politics. Light-hearted skits that convey ideas with real-life social relevance can be useful to lighten the atmosphere.

The second is that recreational activities can reduce exposure to everyday risk factors. Several respondents, mainly in Western countries, affirm that the main purpose of getting youth involved in sports and recreational activities is to keep them busy, thereby reducing their exposure to risk factors that can have a negative impact on their personal development.

Finally, cultural and recreational festivities constitute excellent platforms for interaction and discussion in which tolerance and open-mindedness are emphasized. Front-line workers use these platforms to enact multicultural spaces that are open to all and based on respect and tolerance.

d) Educational goals

The information gathered by this study appears to indicate that increasing the knowledge of at-risk individuals encourages critical thinking on their part. Several respondents concurred that this strengthens these individuals’ resilience to radicalization leading to violence, and likewise lessens the prejudice that may stem from the ignorance on the part of certain groups in society. For these reasons, many Western and non-Western organizations put a priority on this protective factor. They use a variety of different pedagogical methods to stimulate participants’ critical faculties, reduce their susceptibility to propaganda, develop their capacity for nuance, and help them accept alternative viewpoints.

Many programs in Western countries also put a priority on developing knowledge and awareness of radicalization among intermediate actors (parents, families, teachers, etc.). Raising these individuals’ awareness serves to widen the net for detection of high-risk behaviours; it provides well-positioned members of society with practical tools for taking charge of problematic cases that emerge among the people they interact with. A Western respondent explained that given the gaps in the public’s knowledge on how to recognize a radicalized individual (risk indicators), who to contact (support networks), and how the case will be treated, this type of awareness raising is a crucial priority.

On this point, certain respondents in North America reported that one of their objectives is to disseminate knowledge by a variety of methods (training sessions, discussion groups, handbooks, etc.). This task is important in that there is a real need to give the general public the benefit of knowledge built up in the scientific literature, which is not generally accessible. Education seems to be a key factor in reducing prejudices that may lead to the stigmatization of minority
populations, and particularly Muslim communities in Western countries. The point is well illustrated by the initiatives of one Western organization that focus on creating training tools for the general public. The rationale is to disseminate the idea that violent radicalization, like criminal conduct, is a phenomenon arising out of specific social conditions, with the implication that the phenomenon concerns all communities.

A characteristic of our African respondents is the priority they put on job skills acquisition. They want to give individuals the tools they need to integrate into society and secure an adequate standard of living. One African respondent explained that many young people who join criminal gangs do so because they lack the resources needed to survive.

The European respondents in our study prefer an approach that fosters participants’ sense of accomplishment and their capacity to establish positive and enduring networks (of friends, family members, etc.) as protective factors.

In conclusion, the objectives set by the organizations represented in our study are multifarious, each organization responding to the dictates of its own particular circumstances. The success of these endeavours taken together would amount to a direct or indirect contribution to a more global counter-radicalization effort. The complexity and nature of the phenomenon in question is such that it demands a multidisciplinary vision, coupled with approaches that have points in common with crime prevention. This argument was in fact made by several respondents, who explained that their organizations expressly target general antisocial behaviours or risk factors that may also pertain to violent radicalization.

**Target audience**

Do the organizations in our study focus on primary prevention, considering the general public to be their target audience? Do they work with at-risk individuals or groups? Or does their work involve interacting with individuals who have already committed violence? We asked our respondents to identify the parties they work with and the reasons why they were chosen. We also sought to identify any differences between Western and non-Western countries in this regard. This section presents our analysis of the answers we received. We identified five main groups targeted by interventions: youth; families of young people as a way of reaching them indirectly; women; refugees, and the general public.

a) Youth (direct intervention)

Our analysis shows that the majority of our respondents identify youth as the main target of their programs for the prevention of radicalization leading to violence.

Moreover, the great majority of respondents use an approach based on primary prevention. Most described their counter-radicalization program as seeking to reach youth in general, as opposed to exclusively youth at risk of becoming radicalized. For example, one respondent from North Africa specified that his organization’s goal is to immunize youth against certain high-risk behaviours that
may lead to the use of violence. A sub-Saharan respondent informed us of the planned implementation of a youth education program focusing on the deconstruction of extremist propaganda using the counter-narrative technique. To illustrate the effectiveness of his methods, he cited the example of a youth recruited online who was on the verge of committing an extremist act, but did an about-face after watching a television program on the risks of extremism.

But some respondents, in both Western and non-Western contexts, take this prevention strategy further by asserting that the age factor must be taken into consideration. There was one particular case where a non-Western organization had initially focused on youth as its priority audience. It subsequently turned its attention towards women and children instead, having found the work with youth to be very difficult. The participants had considered the dialogue workshops a waste of time, a sterile exercise that could do nothing to satisfy their expressed needs — the primary one being to find a job. Other organizations, particularly in North America, have implemented programs to help children with therapy, school support, or work with the family.

Other respondents, in both Western and non-Western countries, focus on tertiary prevention, working with youth who have become radicalized or are reintegrating into the community. For example, a prevention program in Africa does outreach with formerly radicalized persons who have already acted on their beliefs. It seeks to help them change, and make a positive contribution to society.

b) Youth as an indirect target group: working with the social environment

According to some respondents, it is important to consider a young person’s immediate social environment: his family, the front-line workers he encounters, the community where he lives, and so on. And indeed, some counter-radicalization programs do not focus exclusively on vulnerable youth: they also work with the people responsible for their education.

Working with a particular population entails, among other things, partnership. In the process of building prevention programs for youth, several European respondents collaborate with universities, schools, or other non-governmental organizations.

In addition, some Western respondents have created workshops on radicalization and extremism directed at parents and front-line workers such as teachers, social workers, street educators, and even police officers, to train and equip them to address the relevant issues.

Others who are on a tight budget offer training for professionals who have regular dealings with youth, such as teachers and police officers. The idea is that these latter would then relay this knowledge to the principal interested parties; i.e., young people. In Africa and Europe, front-line workers offer training workshops for police officers so that they can integrate radicalization-related concepts into their practice.

In addition, several respondents stressed the importance of intermediate actors — particularly, the social environment. One European respondent said that it can be delicate to target young people directly, due to the risk of labeling and stigmatizing them as radicals. His prevention program instead focuses on making contact with professionals who work directly with this vulnerable
population, particularly street workers, police officers, and teachers who receive and respond to requests for help from young people or parents in distress.

As to differences between Western and non-Western respondents, these mainly relate to the choice of intermediate actors. Non-Western organizations focus more on the religious aspect than their counterparts in the West. They work with religious leaders and with teachers in madrasas or Koranic schools, encouraging them to develop alternative discourses as a bulwark against radicalization leading to violence. For example, a manual was developed for imams in an Asian country to address the differences between extremism and traditional Islam. The intent is for the imams to avoid inadvertently reinforcing extremist ideas among the most vulnerable citizens — youth.

Other organizations have attempted to institute inter-faith dialogue by bringing religious actors together. A respondent in Africa, for example, worked to establish an inter-faith dialogue between Muslims and Christians. She addressed a number of questions in her interventions, notably the inadequate attention paid by imams to the concerns of young Muslims.

The dichotomy between direct and indirect work with a target audience was also observed in certain Western organizations. One respondent in Europe specified that her work focuses on both the young people and their social environment. She works directly with youth arrested at the border by law enforcement agencies, and also attempts to reach these youth indirectly by talking to teachers and educators so as to inform and sensitize them to the psychological dimension of radicalization.

c) Women

It is a noteworthy fact that women are among the recognized target groups of interventions in the non-Western world. This fact suggests that the public awareness of women’s role in developing societies has made marked progress. To cite but one example, the goal of a program implemented by a respondent in an Asian country is to build the capacity of women to participate in community development, and this same organization mobilizes mothers to participate in counter-radicalization activities. In the West, and for a variety of reasons, many organizations have also developed a gender-specific approach. Ultimately, though, one core idea binds these different initiatives together: that of strengthening protective factors in communities, and more specifically among refugees, children, and families. For example, in Europe, certain respondents are trying to reduce the intense stress that child refugees experience on a daily basis by focusing on the persons closest to them: their mothers and teachers.

d) Refugees and two-way integration

A distinctive characteristic of the programs developed in Western countries is the frequency with which these programs are directed at refugees. In contrast, our study found very few organizations based in non-Western countries that work with refugees. This difference may perhaps be explained by the frequency of wars and natural disasters in certain regions of the Global South. Events such as the Arab Spring and the ongoing war in Syria have caused waves of refugees to move towards developed countries in Europe and North America.
One interesting finding regarding interventions focusing on refugees is that there seems to be a certain recognition, in theory if not necessarily in practice, of the importance of adopting a two-way approach to integration. As the ICPC has specified in previous publications (ICPC, 2014, 2015), the social integration of immigrants, refugees, and cultural communities into a host society must not be seen as a one-way effort, a responsibility falling solely on the groups seeking to integrate into a new society. A two-way effort is necessary, with both the host society and the newcomers playing a part. In this regard, a respondent in a European country that has recently welcomed a large number of refugees said: “One of the needs that I see is to address the discomfort, the fears and anxiety of the hosting community” (EUR24). She explained that conditions in the country are increasingly difficult for everyone; poverty and unemployment are on the rise and resources are growing more scarce. This creates a tricky context in which to welcome a large number of refugees. She therefore feels that it is critical to foster dialogue between the host society and newcomers. A respondent in the Middle East informed us of a European initiative to which she contributes, and how it has adopted this kind of two-way approach to integration. The initiative strives to develop understanding and trust between the Syrian diaspora and the communities that are taking in large numbers of Syrian refugees.

e) The general public

Our data indicate that certain organizations do not target any particular group, choosing instead to work with the population as a whole. One prevention program in Europe, for instance, works on strengthening bonds of trust within a community. These efforts help avert the possibility that certain members of the community will adopt violent extremist behaviours or join radical groups. The general public can also be reached through information campaigns; a European mentioned one such campaign on immigration and refugees that was actually directed at all the citizens of her country.

As mentioned above, the practice of targeting a broad audience is characteristic of African and Asian programs, though certain programs in Western countries also follow this approach. The major difference between these two universes, however, is the absence of the LGBTQ community as an explicit focus of interventions in non-Western countries. In the West, our data show that one North American organization includes the LGBTQ community as a target group alongside prisoners, the Muslim community, gang members, and refugees. This particular case suggests that Western front-line workers adopt a holistic approach; i.e., that they target the population in its entirety. A respondent in Oceania said that his work consists of helping families and the community as a whole become more adept at detecting signs of antisocial behaviour. To this end, his organization makes use of mentoring and multiplier programs in which youth participants complete the training and then pass on what they have learned to their peers. It is worth noting that this organization’s development of indicators of delinquent behaviour places makes it a leader in this particular area.

The foregoing remarks indicate that young people constitute one of the most frequent focuses of counter-radicalization programs in both the Western and non-Western worlds, whether directly or indirectly. The differences between these two sets of countries concern the choice of intermediate actors as a means of reaching out to youth. Whereas Western professionals target those of their
front-line colleagues who are in regular contact with youth, their non-Western counterparts tend to work through religious leaders. Despite this marked focus on youth, some organizations prioritize women, refugees, or communities, and some simply direct their messages at the population as a whole.

Funding

Funding represents a major challenge for counter-radicalization projects and programs. Stable funding is difficult to secure in a context where resources are still largely allocated to law enforcement and security-based counter-terrorism initiatives (Rosand, 2016). Government and international organization funding tends to go to known organizations, with the result that newer — and sometimes innovative — initiatives by local organizations may be neglected. And yet such initiatives could prove to be significant drivers of change in their communities (Rosand, 2016). We therefore asked our respondents to identify the issues they confront when attempting to fund counter-radicalization project(s). Our questions dealt with funding sources, donor influence over project implementation, and project sustainability issues.

a) Funding sources

The funding sources for counter-radicalization programs and projects may be broken down as follows:

- international organizations;
- foreign governments;
- national governments;
- regional or provincial governments;
- local or municipal governments;
- private foundations;
- donations;
- other sources.

Based on our interviews, there are two main patterns relating to funding.

The first pattern is dependency on multiple funding sources. The majority of the respondents said that they cannot rely on a single source of funding: they have to have more than one iron in the fire, so to speak.

The second pattern concerns the difference between organizations located in Western countries and their counterparts in non-Western countries. Prevention projects implemented in non-Western countries are mainly funded by international organizations (the European Union, UN agencies, etc.) or foreign governments. In our study, 8 out of the 11 respondents in non-Western countries received part of their funding from international organizations and 6 received funding from a foreign government. Meanwhile, only 2 respondents in Africa mentioned receiving funding from any level of their own government, whether national, regional, or local. One of these respondents stated further that these government grants are often insufficient and that associations
are forced to seek additional funds from foreign donors. Another respondent said that her organization belongs to a coalition of thirty or so local NGOs that reject all funding by their government to preserve their neutrality in the eyes of the public. That said, funding obtained from foreign governments can also provoke its share of reactions. Several respondents noted reticence on the part of certain local communities to take part in projects funded by Western governments, as they are suspicious of these governments’ motives and intentions.

In contrast, the 20 respondents in Western countries who discussed their organizations’ funding all mentioned receiving grants from one or more levels of government (national, regional, and/or municipal). Only one respondent acknowledged funding support from a foreign government, and only two acknowledged support from international organizations.

b) Donor agency influence

The respondents indicated that they received the majority of their counter-radicalization funding by submitting project applications in response to calls for proposals. Several issues were raised in regard to donor influence over project implementation.

Some respondents appreciated the donor’s flexibility as to how they intended to develop and implement their projects. One noted that the donor for his project considered counter-radicalization a relatively new field, one in which a period of trial and error would be necessary before truly effective programs could be developed. The donor gave the organization considerable latitude to implement and adapt its project as needed. This flexibility was also in evidence when the contingencies typical of CVE work arose. For example, one respondent explained that certain planned projects or events had had to be cancelled because the organization he worked for had received credible information concerning security threats. As the event or project was already scheduled and the money spent, it was necessary to explain to the donor why these funds had been “wasted.” In the event, the donor proved to be understanding.

However, as a general rule, practitioners find donor requirements to be restrictive. Some respondents deplored that funding is granted to projects that do not necessarily target the “real” problem; one employee of an organization in the United States, for example, lamented that the government remains largely fixated on jihadism and religious fundamentalism:

> Ninety-nine percent of the countering violent extremism strategies in the United States are based on jihadist or religious fundamentalism. That’s a little bit disturbing to me because the statistics in our country show that since September 11, more Americans have been killed on our soil by white supremacists than by any jihadists, foreign or domestic combined, by thirty times. (NAM7)

Donor influence may also be a constraint when determining the vocabulary to be used in interactions with the target audience. One respondent emphasized that her organization would rather use the term “hate speech” than “radicalization” but that the donor insists on “radicalization.” She also finds it unfortunate that her projects are restricted to youth, for she believes they could also benefit adults. But her government only funds youth projects at the present time, so she had to modify her project accordingly.
c) Project sustainability

Finally, the respondents expressed **concerns about the sustainability and longevity of their projects.** A variety of reasons were cited. For one, the project grants that they receive generally provide only one to two years worth of funding. Yet several respondents emphasized that successful CVE projects demand multi-year timelines with stable funding to match. The constant search for funding is a major issue, especially when many respondents fear that their projects could be jeopardized by changing fashions. While radicalization and violent extremism are current issues of concern, other issues could quickly supplant them. Furthermore, not only might radicalization lose favour, but donors might change their funding priorities as certain prevention practices gain popularity. A respondent in Africa observed that funding may be interrupted when a new government takes power — an indication of the importance of political and partisan affinities in certain cases. Summing up, if the respondent organizations wish to maximize their chances of being funded, they must adapt their projects to fit the donors’ priorities, even if they doubt that the initiatives funded are the most efficacious in terms of countering radicalization leading to violence.

### 2.5 Coordination among actors

Coordination is an important issue in the implementation of crime prevention strategies and programs. The same is true for radicalization, a highly complex phenomenon that demands the expertise and participation of numerous actors. Furthermore, the trend towards the transfer of decision-making powers to cities, which must make their way within a decentralized context that continues to evolve and change at unprecedented speed, points to the need for multilateral and multisectoral coordination (ICPC, 2016a). For these reasons, public policy development demands substantial involvement on the part of all actors in planning, goal setting, and implementation (Kliksberg, 1999). As to the public authorities (e.g., the municipalities), they must give consideration to both horizontal (non-hierarchical) and vertical (hierarchical) coordination procedures. Having coordination among different levels of government (local, regional, national) is an advantage in that it enables prevention policies to be developed in partnership with local communities and community organizations working in this field (ICPC, 2016a). One study shows, however, that anti-terrorism funding is not necessarily allocated to the actors who need it the most (Harris-Hogan & Barrelle, 2016). There is also reluctance on the part of the public to get in contact with organizations working to counter terrorism and extremism, even though the latter need to be working with the public. In short, the Harris-Hogan and Barrelle study shows that despite efforts to establish partnerships, there is a flagrant lack of cooperation between local counter-radicalization organizations and the organizations that receive financial aid. The first part of this study identifies a number of issues for workers relating to coordination and relations with other bodies. Emerging as the most important of these are community relations, information-sharing, user referral, and choice of participants.

In the context of this report, the term **coordination** is limited to the prevention of radicalization and to processes of interaction between the respondent and his or her organization on the one hand, and their partners on the other. The idea is to understand the organizational aspects of the
various stakeholders; to know more about the difficulties they encounter and the specific measures they adopt in the interest of facilitating coordination.

For this study, we borrowed the definition given in the United Nations’ *Handbook on the Crime Prevention Guidelines*:

> Cooperation/partnerships should be an integral part of effective crime prevention, given the wide-ranging nature of the causes of crime and the skills and responsibilities required to address them. This includes partnerships working across ministries and between authorities, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, the business sector and private citizens. (UNODC & ICPC, 2011, p. 22)

We have divided this dimension into three categories: vertical, horizontal, and international relations. The purpose of this division is to analyze the coordination process as a function of the power dynamic among the partners involved. **Vertical** coordination or relations refers to unequal decision-making power between the partners — for example, between a local NGO and a government body — while **horizontal** coordination or relations consist of situations in which the partners are on an equal footing, as might be the case with two local NGOs. Finally, the **international** category refers to a partnership with a foreign organization or government. This categorization serves to analyze the degree of influence exerted by the actors over one another and its impact on the efforts of front-line workers.

### Vertical relations

This section focuses on professional cooperation in which there is a power imbalance between the actors. The fact is that strategies and action plans implemented by governments for the prevention of radicalization and extremism call for coordination, at times even adaptation. We therefore asked the respondents to tell us about the role played by the government in developing and supporting initiatives to prevent radicalization. In addition, we tried to elucidate their professional relationship with the government and, more specifically, how the collaboration works, what difficulties and successes they encounter on the ground, and how they view the necessity of collaboration with the government.

a) **Approaches**

*Importance of collaboration and partnership*

The great majority of countries have now implemented national anti-terrorism strategies, but the same is not true of prevention strategies. Our respondents told us that national governments have a mandate to preserve national security and handle terrorism cases, whereas local governments are better placed to implement prevention strategies and programs since they are in closer proximity to the population. The respondents in our front-line worker cohort repeatedly stressed the importance of collaboration between national and local governments. However, the involvement of local organizations, the private sector, and of course the general public was also described as indispensable to the implementation of local strategies and programs.
That said, some respondents criticized law enforcement-based strategies, failures to work collaboratively, and their government’s lack of interest in a preventive approach.

A worker in the Middle East spoke of a paradox wherein his government claims to work on the problem of radicalization and terrorism, when in reality, nothing is done. Another in the African region explained that her national government is ignorant of regional and local problems, and that she tries to make up for this by raising awareness among government officials. As to the lack of interest in the preventive approach, a worker in the Middle East suggested putting the emphasis on local organizations instead of the national government, which has done nothing to prevent radicalization. Similarly, a North American worker finds it regrettable that his government provides hardly any support for local prevention activities, and deplores his government’s law enforcement-based approach. He went on to say that it is up to local actors to define roles, develop coordination strategies, and implement local prevention initiatives. Finally, a worker in Europe would like to see greater investment by local governments in counter-radicalization work.

Despite the problems relating to inadequate investment in prevention by national governments — and, to a degree, by local governments — almost all the respondents evinced an interest in working with their government. Maintaining ongoing relations with municipalities has helped one North American worker home in on and make contact with the communities of interest. For others, coordination with government departments creates conditions under which professionals can more easily refer cases to another agency, thus taking advantage of a pluridisciplinary network. This is especially important for the police officers in our study, since their mandate does not permit them to be involved in a youth’s case from beginning to end; they depend on other agencies to dovetail with them for the follow-up and support work. Along these same lines, one North American worker strives to build collaboration among different entities and to persuade the competent government agencies to work towards offering a support service for victims and offenders, even while encouraging communities to contact the police:

What we’re trying to get them to see is “Look, if somebody calls you up and says, ‘I’m concerned, my loved one, friend, … is exhibiting these behaviors,’ and you say, ‘Oh, this doesn’t sound like a drug or alcohol issue as much as it sounds like a criminal issue, you need to call 911.’” Then of course, what happens, they call 911, 911 gets involved, the police gets involved, they realize that “No, there’s nothing here, there’s no criminality yet.” Now the trust has been eroded between the person who was going to intervene and the person who is, maybe, exhibiting the behaviors that were of concern. No services have been provided. What we’re trying to get people in the government agencies that provide services to recognize is that, “Look, you need to broaden the scope of, you know… when you see a child being abused, you don’t only think about calling 911. Of course you think about calling 911 for immediately protecting that child, but then you think about rehabilitative services, protective services, not just for the victim but for those parents as well.” We need to broaden that thinking in radicalization to violence as well. With a lot of these cases, there might have been underlying behaviours, problems, issues, that had they been addressed, ameliorated or completely taken care of, you know, the person may still have had radical
beliefs, but he ... or she may not have then moved on that path towards feeling that violence
was the solution. (NAM8)

Finally, a European worker argues that government support facilitates the prevention of
radicalization but is not essential for the work to be effective. While the support of the authorities
helps obtain funding and build a larger network, any work done on the ground is perceived as
important.

There are, however, a few respondents who see no point in collaborating with the government. This
is either because the authorities have done very little or because the organization wants to preserve
its independence. A Europe-based worker explained that he is willing to support his government’s
efforts and to criticize them when needed, but that he wants to keep his distance so as to preserve
his professional independence. He added that governments are not necessarily the actors best
suited to presenting a counter-narrative; that work, he thinks, is better done by civil society and the
relevant organizations.

Complementarity of national- and local-scale efforts

Relations with the government have generally been the outgrowth of a rational choice that has
led the respondents to engage in a strategic search for partners and contacts. The reasons to
establish a relationship with the national government are not the same as the reasons to establish
one with a regional or local government. Moreover, several respondents explained that
coordination between different levels of government — national, regional, local — is essential to
the effectiveness of counterterrorism strategies. National governments and departments would
generally be responsible for coordination, since they have an overarching vision of the action plan.
They have access to large budgets, more extensive expertise (as a rule), and access to information
(e.g., police and intelligence agency databases) that is off-limits to the public. Local authorities, in
contrast, are said to have a better understanding of local needs and specificities as well as access
to the populations of interest. Coordination of these various actors and their resources would help
ensure complementarity among everyone’s efforts. Several front-line workers in our study stressed
the importance of having a national strategy and adapting it to local needs, which latter is the
responsibility of local governments and NGOs. In other words, integrative strategies are
recommended. Finally, our respondents said that coordination efforts should do a better job of
including the relevant organizations and front-line workers, who are said to be left out to varying
degrees.

The respondents explained that the usual goal of partnership with the national government and its
departments is to obtain funding. They make connections with key officials and try to convince
them of the importance and value of their projects. The implementation and continued existence
of a project are ultimately contingent upon the donor’s contribution. The relationship with local
governments — departments, cities, regions — is more collaborative in nature. On the one hand,
local governments have access to communities; on the other, they have more direct access to
funding bodies and to the national government in general. Therefore, organizations most often
work with municipalities and regional governments on the implementation of local projects and policies.

**Type of relationship with the government**

Relations with the government are not always continuous and stable. Some organizations work with the government on specific, short-term projects, others are called in as advisors or experts, and still others carry on a continuous relationship and participate directly in national, regional, or municipal anti-terrorism strategies. Some organizations, however, are only involved in information-sharing. In other words, a distinction can be made between local organizations that participate indirectly in their government’s strategies, or in a supporting role, and those that participate directly in policy development and implementation.

According to several of the respondents, partnership with government is in some respects complementary to governmental initiatives. They explained that their initiatives are designed to dovetail with and complement the strategies of their respective governments. In other cases, their participation is more direct, consisting of cooperation with various government departments on the development of political projects, laws, or strategies on counter-radicalization. Such cooperation generally takes place within the framework of a project having a fixed time frame.

Relations may be established sporadically when the government calls in local workers as advisors or experts. One thinks, for example, of workers who give training sessions, but also of difficult cases that demand particular expertise. As an illustration, one organization in Europe gets referrals from its regional government, particularly in cases where the radicalization process is well underway. Partnership can also be essentially obligatory, as in the case of one organization that writes advocacy reports for government institutions and NGOs in order to induce them to adopt certain measures:

> For example, in the case of violence on soccer fields, we submitted a report to the departments of the interior, national education, and youth and sports to educate them about the need to take certain measures and get involved in this process. (M-MO1)

Finally, partnership can also take the form of regular structured meetings. The Danish model has been taken up by the city of Oslo, Norway, where the heads of various bodies (police chiefs, city managers, probation managers) meet to improve information-sharing with a view to optimizing the coordination of prevention strategies, but also to developing and operationalizing a local network of professionals. Other specialized police units have implemented similar committees to improve information-sharing and coordination. An Asian municipality implemented district committees to facilitate work with civil society. One respondent explained that these committees support and promote her organization’s activities, which is tantamount to saying that the government endorses its peace promotion efforts. Another example concerns a European city that

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16 School social police (SSP system).
formed three groups which meet regularly to administer and operate the network of institutions implemented within the framework of a counter-radicalization strategy (see Sidebar 5).

**Influence of government on front-line workers’ activities**

The government obviously has some influence over the work of front-line workers, but the authorities generally give local organizations a free hand to conduct their affairs as they see fit. The influence is more structural, legal, and financial in nature. First, national, regional, and local strategies determine goals and guidelines by implementing a chain of responsibilities, information-sharing structures with varying degrees of flexibility, committees, and specialized cells. These strategies also determine the budget allocations to the various regions/communes. Second, the constitutional provisions of the country place certain limits on interventions and restrict the workers’ options; put another way, the arguments they use with their clients cannot violate the constitution. In certain cases, organizations must obtain local government approval to hold events. Others depend on government funding, which affects the scope and continued existence of their projects, but also the rhetoric they can adopt and the populations they can work with. One African NGO has to have government approval in order to give training for police forces, and this is not obtained without lobbying. The same is true for another worker in the African region who helped implement an NGO coalition to lobby politicians, the clergy, and the media. Another NGO in Africa explained that it does not need national government approval to carry out its projects, yet prefers to avoid confrontation with the authorities by letting them know about its events.

The government generally has no influence over the design and implementation phases of projects as such. Some national governments do express an interest, which generally takes the form of project funding. An institution in North America that receives funding from the regional government is accountable for the types of expenses it makes. The purpose of oversight in these cases is to avoid wasting money or underwriting needless expenses.

The information obtained from our interviews points to a legislative difference between Western and non-Western countries that is corroborated by other work: namely, that Western countries show greater interest in the prevention of radicalization than non-Western countries (Rosand, 2016). This generally translates into legislation, as well as national, regional, and municipal strategies, from which front-line workers can draw support. In addition, as underscored by Rabasa et al. (2010), European workers generally enjoy great freedom and flexibility in their work. The European authorities are aware that the prevention of radicalization entails a process of learning and experimentation.

b) Issues

**Government anti-terrorism actions and strategies**

The activities of front-line workers are clearly shaped by local issues, but also by the national government’s counter-radicalization strategies. Responsibilities resting with the national government in one country may be devolved to the regional governments or municipalities in another. In the United States, radicalization is the responsibility of the federal government, while
the role of cities is to put emergency preparedness measures in place. **France** implemented multi-actor administrative cells in each prefecture, and these liaise with the central government on matters concerning radicalization. More specifically, the central government is in charge of national security issues, and it assigns cases under its responsibility to the regions and/or prefectures. The prefecture in turn may assign tasks to certain organizations. **Belgium**, too, has divided up responsibilities among its communes through the implementation of anti-extremism cells. In **Norway** and the **Netherlands**, prevention is the responsibility of both the national government and the cities. A national action plan was implemented along with a number of municipal plans, each detailing a set of strategies tailored to the city in question. In addition, the Norwegian national police has trained contact people on radicalization in each region. Similarly, the Netherlands has a decentralized prevention policy, with each municipality developing its own approaches. The national government, acting by the departments of social affairs and education, coordinates these activities. In **Germany**, each *land* has created a prevention centre that it administers in its own fashion. Bavaria, for example, adopted a centralized approach with two counter-radicalization centres, while other *länder* have centres in as many as 16 different cities. Finally, some non-Western countries lack a national counter-radicalization strategy. **Kenya** recently adopted a new constitution that changed its system of governance, dividing the country into regional governments called “counties.” The national counterterrorism centre is responsible for implementing a strategy, but it is not a very transparent process and the county governors feel compelled to take on some responsibility for security governance. In other words, there is more than a little confusion, and the new governmental structure appears to be having difficulty communicating roles clearly within the framework of security governance. Consequently, Kenyan workers have been developing counterterrorism strategies in collaboration with the county governments.

**Influence of government messaging**

A change of government can have a major effect on the efforts of front-line workers — a fact greatly resented by one European respondent in our study. The new national discourse and concomitant legislative changes in her country have to some extent destroyed the work done to date, along with the relationships that have been created. She argued that what should have been done was to institutionalize methods that have proven themselves to be consistent and effective. In addition, the climate of collaboration has changed; professional relations among the various actors have become more strained because their differences of opinion are too great. Government messaging has also had a financial impact on one North American worker. In his view, the emphasis placed on religious radicalism does not reflect his country’s on-the-ground situation. The more serious problem there, he contends, is far-right extremism, yet government funding to support work on that issue is drying up.

**Personal relations and quality of coordination**

On the whole, the respondents said that they are fairly **satisfied with their collaboration with the government, although not always with its coordination efforts**. While personal relations are generally good, the civil servants’ lack of professionalism, coupled with the absence of transparency, clear objectives, or an action plan, can make coordination difficult. In addition, bureaucracy at times
renders coordination a lengthy and arduous process. As one respondent told us, the larger and more complex the organization, the slower and more difficult the coordination process tends to be.

That said, the quality of the working relationship appears to be specific to the person and the organization. A front-line worker in the Middle East explained: “The quality of the workers, and the quality of the association, determine to a large extent whether the government will want to cooperate with the association to address the problem of radicalization” (M-MO2). For a respondent in Asia, collaboration with legislators is easier than with bureaucrats, since the latter are constrained by the protocols they must follow, and therefore have much less flexibility. One government organization in the Middle East enjoys a privileged status; its cases are processed more rapidly and its members have the government’s attention. The status of an organization, its affiliation, and its partners likewise play a role in relations with the government.

More than anything, a working collaboration depends on developing and maintaining ongoing relationships. Several respondents said that this involves meeting and talking with people in person, that personal contact needs to be a priority. In addition, the durability of a partnership depends on the quality of the relationships developed, but also on the capacity to ensure that contacts are transferred to another employee when the original contact leaves the organization. A police officer in our study explained that she prefers to work with people she knows and that the same is true for her community partners, who prefer a degree of stability in their interactions with the police. Another worker explained that coordination with the municipality greatly depends on the quality of interpersonal relations.

The quality of the relationship is also attributed in part to the consistency of the various partners’ messaging, the clarity with which they state their objectives. If the issues are not clearly defined and the purpose of the strategy clearly delineated, or if the actors cannot agree on the approach to be taken, the collaboration is likely to fail. One North American front-line worker said that multidisciplinary collaboration is only feasible if all the actors share the same professional objective. For a European worker, collaboration was good until the national government changed its messaging, at which point divisions arose among the actors: “There were people who were in the right place and who shared the same basic postulates and interpretive framework. So they were able to be very consistent and functional” (EUR10). In other words, a professional relationship is more likely to work when the individuals meet and agree on the professional plan, and build mutual trust.

**Barriers to institutionalization**

Two front-line workers in our study are waiting for approval from their government or department to institutionalize their literacy projects in Koranic schools. Several respondents need government approval before their projects can go through a process of institutionalization and obtain reliable and adequate funding, thus ensuring their sustainability. Another respondent has a project on resilience training for youth that is awaiting funding and government approval. That training program could, for example, be incorporated into the school curriculum, made a standard component of educator training, or become a volunteer program administered by the organization.

**Funding: an omnipresent issue**
Front-line workers need money to develop and carry out their projects. Among our respondents are some whose organizations are almost entirely staffed by volunteers. These organizations work primarily on very inexpensive projects, whose costs basically amount to printing and some other small expenses. Other respondents, by contrast, are attempting to fund major projects. The work time they must devote to fundraising is considerable, and funding uncertainty often means that projects cannot be planned out over the long term, or even the medium term. As mentioned earlier, many organizations have no choice but to get involved fundraising, to look for donors and convince them to provide project funding. Several respondents deplored the irregularity of their partnership with government bodies due to lack of financial support.

Sidebar 5. Example of a municipal strategy

The city of Vienna set up a network of municipal and federal institutions including the police, the domestic intelligence agency known as the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, youth employment services, youth protection, probation services, and new institutions specializing in youth radicalization like the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) and DERAD.

The diversity among the members (government and civil society organizations) creates a climate of competition that calls for finesse and constant adjustment. It is important to make sure that the member organizations are not over loaded, but rather stimulated to continue. Furthermore, the necessary adjustments must be presented as suggestions and recommendations, while taking care not to act condescendingly. Finally, mutual accommodation is necessary since each institution moves at its own pace. The larger the organization, the slower it is to change and adapt.

In short, the network strives to bring together the shared resources needed to act collectively.

1) Mandatory training for all educators on the phenomenon of radicalization:
The city’s strategy consists of training on radicalization for over 600 permanent staff members and more than 200 part-time employees, who include street workers, activity coordinators at youth clubs, educators, and others.

2) A network of institutions and organizations:
The network was designed for the purposes of networking, information-sharing, and case management. Collaboration among institutions and services makes it possible, for example, to follow the case of a young convict as he moves through the legal system and after he leaves it. In this case, the partnership would involve the school board, the youth support service, and the probation office.

3) Committees:
Also included in the strategy are regular meetings of the partners, as follows:

- An assembly of centres of competency where network members meet.
- A supervisory group where judges and the municipal council meet to administer the network.
A political committee where politicians are briefed on the work being done.

Sidebar 6. Interactions with police and security agencies

As stated above, relations between front-line workers, police departments, and intelligence agencies are often fraught, particularly where information-sharing is concerned. However, not all our respondents are fully in accord with this view.

Views of non-police officers

Many respondents said that they do not work with the police, and relations with intelligence agencies are even less common. Several workers explained that it is counterproductive to collaborate with the police on prevention work with youth, since the police have a different understanding of counter-radicalization and approach it differently. Indeed, several respondents refuse to work with the police because they do not want to be involved in security work. They are not interested in partnerships that require them to collect information on the youth and communities they are trying to help. In certain African countries, the presence of the police can be a danger signal; as one respondent put it, terrorist groups have spread the message that the police are “Muslim killers.”

However, the communication of certain information to the police is also a legal matter. Prevention workers are required to notify the police of any development that could represent an imminent danger. That said, it is more common for information or case files to move in the other direction, from police departments to local organizations, without any feedback necessarily being received. That is to say that these organizations are known to the police forces, who involve them in their work. Several respondents explained that communication is one-way: the police relay files and information to the organizations without any expectation of follow-up, and it is at the latter’s discretion to get back in touch with law enforcement if they so desire. An organization in the Middle East said that it receives information from the police that is intended to protect the organization:

[I]f something happens that threatens our goals or our mission, the police work with us and keep us informed. For example, we can receive information telling us to avoid certain individuals, donors, or organizations because they maybe have ties to a political party. So we’re asked to keep our distance from certain parties. (M-MO3)

Other workers, particularly in Africa, said that they share information with the police and the intelligence agencies, but did not specify what kind of information. There is also the case of one European respondent who stated that her organization shares all information with the police, by virtue of the police being in the room when youths are interviewed. The police, for their part, sometimes ask her organization for advice.

Several organizations offer training for police officers. Some must obtain government approval, while others are commissioned by the government or the police to provide services.
In several cases, organizations collaborate with the police on specific projects, possibly including analysis projects, weapons-related issues, or relationship-building between the police and the community. For example, an organization in Oceania developed a glossary to demystify prevention and radicalization. In the United Kingdom, a report of the audit commission for the Prevent program corroborates the idea that vocabulary can serve as a liaison mechanism, provided that the worker begins by determining the appropriate vocabulary for the target audience (Audit Commission, 2008). For the police, this project serves to build public trust:

[It provides them with the right language. That's one of the most important things, the language that you actually start to conduct or communicate with, in terms of winning trust of a community so that they can actually engage with you and be confident enough to share their problem or issue with you so that we can actually resolve it. So this has a sort of language, because it's based on the whole concept of antisocial behaviors, and violent extremism or radicalization is one of those pathways that people can go down, whether it's Muslims or non-Muslims. (OCE1)]

**Police officers and specialized units**

Individual front-line police officers and specialized prevention units entertain a narrower relationship with police departments and intelligence agencies. In Western countries, action plans have been put in place to provide for more streamlined communication between police departments and municipalities as well as to define the roles and responsibilities of each. In particular, several specialized units have been implemented with a view to promoting preventive approaches to violence that place an emphasis on closer police-community relations. Some officers are exclusively assigned to liaison and community work, while others devote a percentage of their time to this approach.

Terrorism cases generally come under the jurisdiction of intelligence agencies, leaving police officers to handle lower-risk individuals. One officer explained that his unit is solicited to speak to communities that are hesitant to cooperate with other government bodies (e.g., intelligence agencies). One prevention unit collaborates on the “Info-house” project, which involves coordination with other police departments. One officer among our respondents did opine, however, that NGOs should not deal with individuals who move in radicalized circles — that this job should be left to the police. NGOs, he said, should work on primary prevention, since they are inadequately trained and prepared to work in violent settings. Another police officer mentioned that the law prohibits certain organizations from talking to radicalized people due to the difficulty of this work.

For the police, community relations are an indispensable means of prevention. This approach can provide useful information in the context of police investigations. Put succinctly, the police officers in our cohort are striving to create partnerships guided by a vision of shared responsibilities. The job of the police is to preserve law and order, that of the community to help them do so. To optimize cooperation, the police regularly hold information campaigns and sessions in various settings (schools, airports, mosques, etc.) with a view to raising awareness to the signs of radicalization. In a similarly preventive vein, the police officers interviewed seek to
collaborate or at least make contact with religious institutions, and especially mosques. Several units have liaison officers who work with mosques and other religious/spiritual groups. The strategy of a specialized unit consists in establishing trust with the community (Muslim faith communities in this example) by offering security services, but also by having a presence on site during cultural and religious events.

But coordination with governmental and nongovernmental organizations remains necessary in order to adequately redirect certain problematic individuals towards specialized services. Aware of their limits, the police officers in our study rely on their networks to make sure that persons of interest are not left stranded without professional follow-up. Finally, our police respondents stated that information transfer between police and intelligence agencies is very transparent:

[One rule is that] if you go to Syria or another conflict zone, we will automatically report you to the intelligence service. If we find out through our assessment that there is an immediate threat or there is a bunch of indicators that people are planning something, we will turn over the information to the intelligence service. (EUR6)

Horizontal relations

This section focuses on instances of professional cooperation in which the power balance between actors is either equal or unimportant to the relationship. That is, it largely concerns relations carried on by the respondents with other organizations for counter-radicalization purposes. We asked the front-line workers to tell us about their professional relations with other actors operating at the same level of power: “Do you do counter-radicalization in partnership with other organizations?” “What have been your difficulties and successes in terms of coordination?” “How would you describe the quality of this coordination?” In addition, we solicited their opinion on the necessity of working with other organizations (NGOs, think tanks, research institutes, etc.).

Earlier, we discussed issues relating to relationship-building, coordination, and information-sharing. Counter-radicalization coordination is said to rely first and foremost on the capacity to refer people to the right service. Hirschfield et al. (2012) show that the number of cases flagged and referred increases if there is a better understanding of CVE programs and if promotional materials are prominently displayed at key locations. This same report explains that numerous workers involved in the Prevent program (schools, youth centres, community organizations, etc.) have had difficulty obtaining the cooperation of the community, even though it is the community that is ideally positioned to identify individuals who have been radicalized or are at risk of radicalization. What is more, a person’s vulnerability to extremism can change rapidly. Confronting this problem therefore entails the pooling of experiences among all the relevant disciplines (Audit Commission, 2008).

a) Approaches

Value of partnership and types of interaction
The work of front-line workers cannot be done without collaboration of some sort. As a general rule, partnerships are formed for the purpose of working together on projects, sharing knowledge and experiences, but also offering or requesting support or expertise. Several respondents said that other organizations had sought them out for collaboration because of their expertise. One respondent’s organization intervenes in difficult cases, while another’s holds mediation sessions between hostile communities. Other groups invite key actors and professionals to attend their cultural activities or training sessions. Requests for assistance can even become onerous, as in the case of one European respondent. She and her team are solicited “24-7” by local organizations and other actors, and have “tried to help them, coach them, teach them to handle requests from parents, or what to say if they get the youth back.” (EUR10).

Finally, a European worker used the term “bilateral relations” to characterize his relationship with other organizations: “with some organizations we have a bilateral relationship, meaning they do something for us, we work with them, we inform them” (EUR3).

Partnership sometimes affords opportunities to obtain government funding. This happened with one European organization that was working on the nexus between radicalization and drug use: it entered into a partnership with addiction prevention centers in order to better serve their common target audience.

Some respondents stated that collaboration among local actors — committees, schools, health sector, prisons, community groups, etc. — can be necessary to obtain approval and support for program implementation.

The relationship can also entail facilitation of interaction between different actors. One respondent holds a position enabling him to act as an intermediary between communities and government agencies. Part of his work consists of counseling communities and referring them to the right agencies, particularly social services and healthcare:

[The communities] don’t know where they should turn to, I can help them, I can say ok, you know, I have contacts with the government mental health service providers, I have contact with hospitals or doctors, and then my job will be to help and be there as a resource for them. So that’s the kind of work that [is being done], as a concrete example of what we’re doing to actually develop a program of prevention and intervention here, at the community level. (NAM8)

Conversely, he uses government bodies to get in contact with the communities of focus. Local agencies know the various communities’ needs and have already built bridges with them. Collaboration with these government services facilitates identification and initial contact:

I try to reach out to schools, public schools, I reach out to faith-based organizations, I reach out to inter-faith groups, I reach out to local units of government that have a lot of interactions like public service-type entities that have very community relations components to them. So, maybe it’s like middle schools, social service agencies, they would be somebody that I would reach out to. So I reach out to these groups and that’s my conduit into a community. (NAM8)
Value of networks

Networks of front-line workers and institutions make it possible to join forces to lobby decision-makers on behalf of minority groups, or for consideration of alternative perspectives, but also for development of bolder projects. The analysis of the interviews points to the existence of numerous networks of NGOs and other groups (e.g., groups working on security issues) in which front-line workers are active participants. One respondent in fact acts as the coordinator of an NGO coalition formed for the purposes of lobbying, media relations, and other collective tasks. Networks of NGOs and individual workers are thus useful in forming a common front vis-à-vis state or religious authorities. Large networks, particularly those created in the context of municipal strategies, provide a forum for developing strategies to meet the needs of returning extremists so that they do not become invisible after being repatriated.

That said, the experience of another respondent shows that the role or purpose of a network changes over time. While the initial goal may be to discuss the implementation of a specific project, the network may then expand its purview to encompass other issues, or move on to tackle new projects and initiatives. Professional collaboration is, in short, a must for workers in both non-Western and Western countries if their interventions are to succeed. Europe is notable for its formalization of structures allowing for the creation of institutional and professional networks, a phenomenon much less visible in non-Western countries or even North America. That said, several European respondents are of the view that such structures for sharing of information and experiences take a great deal of time to put in place, that they lack transparency, and that they are highly complex, albeit functional. Nevertheless, Europe appears to have the largest number of counter-radicalization initiatives.

As to types of extremism, there seem to be few organizations working on the prevention of far-right radicalization; according to certain respondents, this is because of either denial or lack of interest on the part of governments. Consequently, there are limited prospects for workers to develop partnerships in this area.

Returning to Europe, the recent terrorist attacks there have had a considerable impact not only on policy but also on community organizations, whose internal discourse appears to have changed. Certain respondents from Belgium nonetheless stated that the terrorist acts have not created divisions among front-line workers; quite the contrary, they have created new opportunities for coalition-building.

Types of actors with which to collaborate

The importance of focusing on the media, identified as one source of problems, was expressed by several respondents in non-Western countries. Certain media are partisans of political parties or religious leaders and spread propaganda on their behalf, thus helping to inflame public discourse. According to one respondent, some journalists are themselves radicalized, or at any rate use excessively radical language in their articles. For this reason, some organizations are trying to work
with the media, and more specifically with journalists, inviting them to attend training sessions or participate in cultural events or roundtables.

Our interviews show that a number of front-line workers strive to work with **mosques and other spiritual and religious institutions.** Programs that include visits to religious establishments (mosques, synagogues, churches, etc.) may be organized. Other respondents collaborate more particularly with mosques in an effort to involve the Muslim community in identifying and, as necessary, referring to the partner organization individuals who are at risk or considered problematic. According to one European respondent, however, cooperation with Muslim institutions becomes difficult when it comes to agreeing on the goal of the collaboration. Another example is that of a respondent in an Asian country who mentioned a problem posed by certain **imams** in her region. Local representatives and teachers mistrust these imams, she explained, believing that young people are manipulated in their mosques. The imams are believed to exert a strong influence on the population; youths are said to want to spend their time at the mosque instead of going to school. And yet young people are said to exhibit gaps in their knowledge of traditional Islam. For this reason, her organization is working with the spiritual centre and the person responsible for religious affairs to develop a manual for imams.

There is also an interest in collaboration with the **private sector.** One research centre is working with companies due to their capacity to supply quality products and services (e.g., tech products). According to one respondent in Oceania, many companies are already providing financial support for prevention and job retraining initiatives, but the potential may be much greater. The private sector, she said, is motivated to go beyond mere grantmaking. Her organization therefore works to educate the private sector about social factors that could lead an individual to take the path of violence, citing unemployment and lack of education as examples. One solution could be for companies and banks to help reduce the unemployment rate in certain communities that are exposed to greater risk. She gave the following example:

> [J]ust the other day, for this Islamic leadership program, the Commonwealth Bank, not only are they sponsors, but they took a group of ... 12 young Australian Muslims and put them into a designed lab to help them build their own networks ... to help them become business entrepreneurs, and things like that. That's what [businesses] can do. That's the relationships we have. (OCE1)

Finally, several respondents said that they collaborate with **universities** on various projects, including evaluation studies, specific research on local problems, interventions, tools, indicators, and so forth.

b) **Issues**

Collaboration is generally regarded as being good and satisfactory, with the exception of typical difficulties such as **meeting coordination, funding,** and **how to address certain subjects or issues.** Some respondents did express **some concerns about the heterogeneity of the partners.** Collaboration and coordination become very difficult when there are differing interests and ideas, but also when partners have donors with conflicting priorities. It was recommended to opt for partners with similar professional interests. This is not always feasible, particularly in the case of
roundtables or meetings taking place within the framework of a municipal strategy (e.g., a partners’ roundtable). The issues here concern confidentiality and upholding one’s mandate. As discussed earlier, numerous front-line workers cannot and do not wish to speak freely about their clients or participants in the presence of police officers or other authorities. Confidentiality is also a dilemma that gets in the way of information-sharing during meetings with counterparts. These issues appear to be of particular concern for those who do personalized casework.

In addition, one African respondent named fraud as a hindrance to coordination. His organization is accountable to other organizations and committed to transparency.

On the question of competition among organizations (briefly mentioned in sidebar 5), a respondent explained that her organization has to vie with others for grants from the city, since it belongs to a network created within the framework of a European municipal strategy for prevention of radicalization and extremism:

It is difficult. The city is also providing money to different programs. So they gave the money to the two largest organizations. And our organization gets a very small amount. You see that grassroots initiatives get little money, but big institutionalized youth organizations get most of the money. So there is a kind of conflict. The municipality, the city, tries to prevent the conflict, to solve it in a peaceful way. But that can jeopardize cooperation sometimes.

(EUR3)

In conclusion, developing relationships takes a great deal of time and maintenance, which demands considerable effort and resources from front-line workers and their organizations. Trust — whether between colleagues or on the part of the community — has to be earned. Forced collaboration stands a good chance of being counterproductive. This is also true for the promotion of projects, which require time to gain visibility and attract people’s interest. Donors have to be made aware of this. Other organizations capitalize on their regular contacts, with whom they work on other issues (e.g., health and social services-related issues). To repeat, building professional relations is difficult, since familiarity is reassuring and to some extent expedites the work. Networks — structured groupings of workers and institutions — are highly appreciated. Beyond the benefits in terms of information-sharing and facilitation of project-based partnerships, these structures serve to increase the scope of interventions, either by giving access to a greater range of resources and services or by reaching a larger number of individuals. Finally, networks exploit the strengths to be gained from unity, notably for the purposes of lobbying.

**International relations**

This section focuses on the respondents’ work relations with international structures. We asked them if they collaborate with overseas organizations and if they encounter any difficulties doing so. We also wanted to know if they consider it important and necessary to maintain international relations — and if not, why not?

Human contact is easier to establish with in-person meetings. Consequently, entertaining relationships with international partners often means traveling abroad or organizing networking
events and interactions. In addition, given that organizations are increasingly dependent on project-based funding, many front-line workers rely on contacts and on their organizational visibility. Furthermore, the role of foreign partners takes on great importance in a globalized world. Approaches must be adapted to local issues and contexts, as a great majority of respondents told us, but funding can no longer be shouldered exclusively by national actors. In addition, there is an ever-increasing need for cross-border coordination of initiatives and actors. A number of countries are working to coordinate their counterterrorism strategies, particularly in Europe, where many cities have joined forces to put across a clear and unanimous message, but also to develop harmonized counter-radicalization strategies.  

a) Types of partnership

There are a variety of reasons to build relationships with foreign partners. The first concerns project-focused partnerships. The most common reason for seeking foreign collaboration is for joint development of local projects. The next reason has to do with knowledge exchange. Many workers attend international conferences to present their own projects and draw inspiration from work being done elsewhere. Some respondents mentioned that they invite foreign researchers and hold conferences to which they invite foreign experts, “because exchanging ideas offers a more rounded offer.” (EUR2). The third most common reason is replication of a project in other countries. Front-line workers travel abroad to give training sessions, assist with interventions, and participate in presentations. Finally, several respondents stated that they belong to an international professional network, such as the Europe-based RAN mentioned previously. One respondent explained the value of this network:

You also need a global strategy and vision for the efforts. An element would be to have an inclusive, broader message provided by the mayor to the city: one that talks of safety without marginalizing some members of the society. (EUR28)

Our respondents pursue relationships with a wide variety of international actors, including governments, embassies, cities, EU and UN organizations, networks like RAN and the Strong Cities Network, international NGOs (e.g., the International Red Cross and the International Center for Transitional Justice), research centres (e.g., the International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence), think tanks (e.g., the Institute for Strategic Dialogue), and the private sector. One respondent has even worked with Facebook to develop an Internet-based initiative to combat hate speech.

b) Inter-city networks

In Europe, several cities have recognized the importance of having a counter-radicalization strategy, or at least a counterterrorism strategy. Certain municipalities have even outpaced their national government on the implementation of counterterrorism strategies. European cities are now mobilizing to develop a network of municipalities and improve coordination around the prevention of violent extremism. The initiative titled “Towards an Alliance of European Cities against

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17 See, e.g., the following initiative: Towards an Alliance of European Cities against Violent Extremism (https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/alliance-of-european-cities-against-violent-extremism)
Violent Extremism” is designed to create a platform for interaction and discussion among cities, and to mobilize local and regional European authorities around the prevention of radicalization leading to violence. The fact that municipal councils are close to residents makes them uniquely positioned to build resilience and to counter violent extremism thanks to integrative strategies, including inter-agency collaboration. Coordination initiatives between municipalities and their national government for the prevention of violent extremism are also proliferating in the Arab world, according to one respondent. There is, for instance, a knowledge-sharing initiative that was developed jointly by Beirut and Copenhagen. The respondent explained:

One example is a recent agreement between the municipalities of Copenhagen and Beirut to engage in a mutual swap of competencies, where Beirut will provide PVE expertise to Copenhagen in return for clean-tech expertise and green solutions. An innovative take on inter-city collaboration. (M-MO11)

c) Funding sources

Our analysis of the interview data shows that issues surrounding funding are one of the primary reasons to pursue international relations. The European region has the largest number of contracts with our study participants. Funding is mainly from foreign governments — the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, France, etc. — and international institutions such as the European Union and the United Nations. Several embassies, including those of the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, also provide financial support for the respondents’ work. Certain projects receive additional funding from international NGOs such as USAID, the International Organization for Migration, and the United States Institute of Peace. Finally, several respondents named Open Society Foundations as being among their financial partners.

d) Patterns in Western and non-Western countries

Our data reveal a fundamental difference between Western and non-Western countries at the level of international partnerships. Very few Western respondents said that they receive grants from foreign governments or organizations, with the exception of institutions of the European Union. In contrast, respondents from non-Western countries said that international relationships with governments, international NGOs, and embassies are to a significant extent motivated by funding issues. International partnership is a necessity for organizations in non-Western countries that receive no financial support from their own government. In addition, a respondent explained that he prefers to work with international organizations because he finds his own government’s work to be subpar:

Only international projects are reliable in [African country]. Regional, national [authorities] are not producing strategies that work well. The [national] community relies more [on] the international community for help. (SSAF4)

Another notable difference between the two regions concerns the diversity of international activities. With the exception of foreign donors, partnership revolves around projects. Only a few

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non-Western respondents mentioned having traveled to attend international conferences. International involvement looms larger for workers in Western countries. They travel abroad to share expertise and are active in international professional and institutional networks. It should be noted that our European respondents mainly operate within Europe itself. When one considers the importance of RAN, of which several respondents are members, it is clear that collective transnational contacts and projects play a prominent role in this field. Meanwhile, only two respondents (Asia and Middle East) stated that they participate in regional networks.

The influence of foreign donors is limited. As a general rule, it can be stated that front-line workers enjoy considerable autonomy with respect to project implementation. If their work is circumscribed by anything, it is the framework of the project. However, in the context of their work and projects, several non-Western organizations apply the guidelines of the European Union or the United Nations, of which they are partners. The international NGO SOS Children’s Villages International requires the whole staff of a Middle East-based organization to sign its child protection policy and code of conduct, and to complete its training program on child protection. And when one European organization extended its services to other countries of Europe, it found itself obliged to adapt its interventions to the new social and cultural setting. In short, the international influence brought to bear on the respondents as a result of foreign partnerships remains limited.

Participation

Are interventions tailored to the local context? Do they accommodate the needs, demands, and resources of the populations that the workers are trying to reach? It is known that efforts to involve various stakeholders in the implementation of counter-radicalization measures serves to pool their expertise and lead them to work in a more concerted fashion (Lindekilde, 2012b). According to Rabasa, Pettyjohn, Ghez, and Boucek (2010), European strategies are intended to be flexible so that local authorities can adapt their activities to the characteristics and needs of their community. Indeed, where strategies are too inflexible, they tend to be relatively ineffective; people are less inclined to participate, perceiving them as too far removed from the facts on the ground. Encouraging participation, then, is a means of overcoming stakeholders’ passivity. The question then becomes: to what extent should stakeholders participate in the design and implementation of interventions? To answer this question, we asked the respondents about the types of actors who participate in implementation and the stages of the process at which they are involved. With the help of our respondents, we were able to produce a portrait of participation in the development and implementation process. By “participation,” we mean the process whereby an organization makes efforts to integrate the participants and main subjects of interventions into the design, content, and implementation of a program.

Three types of participants emerge from our data: government organizations (local, regional, national), community participants (the general public, the population in question — e.g., youth, women, immigrants), and professionals (front-line workers, jurists). Each actor has skills and knowledge which, if pooled, would yield better results (Lindekilde, 2012b). Moreover, RAN stresses
that the creation of networks is indispensable, and that a worker cannot and must not work alone with an at-risk individual (2016). As an example, imagine a local NGO that is trying to implement a project to prevent radicalization in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. It cannot do so without the tools and expertise possessed by certain professionals. Conversely, professionals cannot intervene without access to the NGO’s knowledge and local contacts. The value of a relationship between a national and a municipal government is equally evident. The first generally has the financial resources and a comprehensive vision; the second has more direct access to community and religious leaders. For these and other reasons, integrative participation is necessary. One African NGO set up an advisory group made up of community leaders (women, youth, religious representatives) sitting alongside business and local government representatives. This group meets throughout the life cycle of a project, from design to implementation to evaluation.

a) Phases of involvement

An intervention project breaks down into several phases, beginning with research, continuing with selection of the themes to be addressed, and ending with evaluation. Our analysis shows that stakeholder participation is not homogeneous. Governments and professionals are more involved at the phase of project creation and definition of the issues, while the populations in question (and often the local leaders) are brought in to help understand the needs and themes to be addressed during the intervention. The population's participation in the project development process also serves to establish trust. This was the case for an NGO in East Asia that sought to work with isolated communities and conflict victims. The first step was to gain their trust. According to the respondent, it was necessary to involve the communities in the implementation of the project in order to achieve this. In addition, our data shows that primary prevention work, particularly that which focuses more directly on youth, families, and communities, strives to be flexible enough to allow for a more thorough understanding of local needs and particularities. Moreover, young people’s potential and interests are allowed to influence the choice of themes to be addressed. In contrast, we also find some respondents stating that they do not include stakeholders at the project development phase.

b) Towards mass participation

Another participation-related pattern emerging from both Western and non-Western countries is the use of a specific target audience as a conduit to other populations. Two examples suffice to illustrate this point. The first is that of a respondent in North Africa who explained his organization’s strategy for ensuring the participation of a large number of prisoners in targeted training sessions. The principle is that of the multiplier effect, in which key actors receive the training session and then go on to relay what they have learned to other actors, and so forth. This method puts tools in the hands of certain people who, because of their position, have the opportunity to train others. The figure below illustrates the training sequence used by respondent M-MO1’s organization:
Another model of participation used in Western countries makes room for upstream participation of certain communities in the design of the prevention program. The target audience takes ownership of the program and, in so doing, feels more comfortable disseminating information about it within the community. They come to feel they have a stake in the program, leading them to have more confidence in it and participate more actively.

c) Patterns in Western and non-Western countries

Our study also includes a comparative analysis by region: Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel, North America, Asia, Western Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. The data shows that all the regions use participation as a means of adapting interventions to target populations and local specificities, as well as defining the issues and strategies to adopt. However, Asian and African governments appear to be more active at the project design stage. Finally, in Asia and the Middle East, participation by isolated and at-risk communities serves also to gain their trust. Communities, as witnesses to and victims of conflict, injustice, and lack of resources, tend to regard such initiatives with suspicion, according to our respondents, and this means that outreach efforts must be made.

Our data is insufficient to determine whether participants in project implementation are on an equal footing (horizontal approach) or whether a hierarchy tends to set in between the parties (vertical approach). That said, organizations that reach out to experts, governments, and the community tend to adopt a horizontal approach. In regard to the project phase at which participation is solicited, our data shows that youth play a major role in the choice of themes addressed. Youth are afforded a large margin of freedom when it comes to the design of art projects (plays, short films, etc.) to be presented and discussed in public. Finally, we did not find any information to suggest that certain organizations might be presenting themselves as all-knowing experts coming to the aid of a “poor and uneducated” population.
2.6 Subjective and objective evaluation of interventions

As noted in the introduction to this report, interventions aiming to prevent radicalization and violent extremism are still too infrequently evaluated. To fill this gap, front-line workers involved in the prevention of radicalization can draw on their own experiences to offer some suggestions about the kinds of interventions they have found to be successful and effective. We asked the respondents for their general impressions about which aspects of their interventions work well or poorly, as well as what types of formal evaluation — perhaps involving indicators — they use to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention.

## Success factors

The respondents were able to identify a number of factors that were conducive to the success of their interventions. These factors fall into the following categories:

- Approaches adopted during an intervention that favour its success.
- Factors related to the worker.
- Factors related to the organization carrying out the intervention.
- Factors related to the community context.
- Factors related to the sociopolitical context.

Before presenting the different factors identified in each category, it is important to mention one cross-cutting success factor that was repeatedly brought up: trust. The various ways to promote trust on the part of the participants in an intervention are detailed in Sidebar 7. But although these methods have enhancing trust as their primary aim, it may be noted that the other success factors presented in this section can also help achieve this goal.

### Sidebar 7. Trust: A cross-cutting success factor

Establishing a relationship of trust with the participants in an intervention was repeatedly mentioned as a crucial success factor, and a number of measures can be adopted to enhance this relationship.

**Transparency** at every stage of an intervention emerges as pivotal to gaining the participants’ trust. An African respondent stated that because the very subject of radicalization arouses suspicion, it is important for the participants to be given a fair and transparent explanation of what the intervention will consist of, what are its goals, and what methods or activities will take place as a part of it. Transparency also means specifying, in concrete terms, the specific aspects of extremism that the workers consider problematic — as discussed above, the use of violence itself is often the target — and why they wish to intervene in this area. To this end, the workers...
must themselves exhibit transparency and sincerity. A European respondent explained that participants of all ages have no trouble detecting if she is playing a role and concealing her true feelings. She underlined that sincerity and honesty are critical in her interventions: she must clearly state her disagreement with certain things that participants might say and explain why she disagrees, even while remaining open-minded and curious to know their opinions.

The respondents frequently mentioned an empathic, non-judgmental approach as a factor conducive to the success of an intervention and the development of the participants’ trust. A success factor previously identified in our systematic review on the prevention of radicalization (ICPC, 2015) and reiterated during the interviews for this study is to employ credible front-line workers. These could be ex-members of extremist groups whose similar life experiences put them in a better position to understand the reasons why an individual might join a group, and the difficulties he might experience when trying to leave it. Alternately, the front-line workers could simply be other young people or community members. A respondent in Asia stated that one factor in the success of his interventions is that young people themselves administer the program. The participants, who are also youth, feel more comfortable sharing their stories and feelings because they share a similar vocabulary and lived experience. As a result, trust is more quickly established. A similar effect occurs when the worker is a member of the community of focus and knows its dynamics and issues.

Finally, the front-line workers in our cohort specified that fostering a relationship of trust requires that their organization build ties and a degree of proximity to the community with which their interventions are carried out. A respondent in Asia explained that one of the most important factors in his organization’s success has been its ability to develop relationships with the communities in which it works, although this is a “long and painstaking” process (ASIA4). In another case, a police officer stressed the importance for his organization, his colleagues, and himself to develop intercultural competencies so that they can build bridges to the whole community, in all of its diversity. A bond of trust between the organization and the community also takes the form of good relations with the other organizations in the community.

a) Approaches conducive to the success of an intervention

Several approaches were mentioned by the respondents as being conducive to the success of their interventions. One is an experiential and interactive approach. A European respondent gave the example of conducting some exercises with a group of young participants and then having a group feedback session on the activity, giving everyone a chance to derive the lessons from it. Our systematic review (ICPC, 2015) likewise recommended the experiential approach as a useful option for interventions.

Another recommendation by a European respondent is to adopt a positive approach: instead of focusing on participants’ negative behaviours or weaknesses, address their strengths, positive qualities, projects, and ambitions.
Finally, as mentioned a few times in this report, an empathic, comprehending, open-minded approach greatly lends itself to the success of an intervention. Several front-line workers from different continents stated that the key to their success is to listen carefully to their participants and try to understand their point of view, even if they hold different opinions or ideas. Interventions frequently aim to develop the participants’ open-mindedness, and it is therefore crucial for the front-line workers to be equally open-minded, rather than merely intent on defending their own positions at all costs.

b) Worker-related success factors

Certain success factors related to the workers were also identified. Some European respondents stressed that a multidisciplinary team is a success factor in their interventions. One respondent explained that having facilitators, educators specializing in prevention, and mediators on his team enables them to respond simultaneously to a number of issues affecting the youths they work with.

A second success factor identified is the workers’ experience and the fact of working in an area familiar to them. For example, and as discussed above, if the workers use tools they are already familiar with, they may feel more comfortable carrying out the intervention. A respondent who works for a law enforcement organization stressed that the tool used by his organization for the prevention of radicalization was developed in response to different crime-related issues, such as drug use. He explained that radicalization is not a phenomenon that police officers frequently encounter, but that they nonetheless have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the use of the tool during other types of interventions. This makes them more comfortable working on the issue of radicalization, even if it is less familiar to them, because they already know and feel confident in their ability to use the tool.

The worker’s personality and the relational aspect of the work can also play a role in the continued existence and success of a project. A police officer in North America stated that, having herself played a part in developing the intervention project being implemented by her department, she feels particularly attached to the project and devotes a good deal of her time to it. She fears that whoever takes over the file when she leaves may not have the same commitment to it and will assign it a lower priority, which could have an impact on its continued existence and its success. Much of the relational work she does on a daily basis with community groups served by her department is volunteer work, over and above her regular workload, and her successors may not be willing to make the same investment. Choudhury and Fenwick, too, emphasize the influence of personality as a success factor, particularly as regards the bond of trust built up between communities and the police. They derive the following observation from their focus groups with residents of four regions of England and their interviews with local and national front-line workers:

> Across all the case study areas a consistent theme was the extent to which relationships of trust between the police and communities are often critically dependent on relationships with particular individuals, and are shaped by the personality and commitment of individual officers (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011, p. 16).
c) Organization-related success factors

Other success factors identified are more a function of the organization carrying out the intervention. One European respondent stated his view that it is important for an organization of know its limits and the limits of its mandate, so as not to overstep them in an attempt to “save everybody.” He said:

One big, big, how I can say this, mistake that many people or organizations we have seen make is to believe they can fix everything with everyone, which is never the case. We try to be as focused as possible, we have this population right now, we can do this and that, this we can’t do so let’s not go there, maybe some people are better at that than we are. (EUR25)

According to him, it is useful to be conscious of his limits, the things his organization should not try to do because of the small likelihood of success. The idea is to favour a multisectoral approach, so that problems are handled by the organizations best equipped to address them. This brings us back to the importance of proper referrals and knowing how to make them.

A second organizational success factor raised by a European respondent is remaining flexible and supremely adaptable so as to best meet the participants’ needs. One of her organization’s greatest strengths, she says, is its capacity to react and adapt when the time comes to hold a meeting with an at-risk youth who is participating in an intervention. The youth is given a large margin of freedom to choose the meeting place, in his preferred neighbourhood, so that the meeting can happen without delay.

A third factor identified is the importance of creativity and willingness to take risks in order to steer a CVE program to a successful outcome. As stated in the introduction of this report, radicalization remains a poorly understood phenomenon with its share of uncertainties. A trial-and-error process may be necessary if one is to develop a truly effective prevention approach. One European respondent said that she benefited from such a process when developing her program and that her interventions were greatly improved as a result. A respondent in North America went further, declaring that an entrepreneurial mindset and a willingness to take calculated risks are beneficial and even desirable when developing CVE interventions. Innovation, he believes, is a key factor in this field; the people responsible for developing prevention programs have to be creative and willing to get off the beaten path.

Finally, a European respondent stressed the importance for an organization to continually take stock, to reflect on whether the approach being used is the right one and what can be done to improve its programs and interventions.

d) Community-related success factors

Our respondents indicated that a range of community-based approaches can be used to favour the success of an intervention. Several of them emphasized the importance of adopting an integrated approach: working not only with young people but also with their parents and teachers, so that the intervention does not take place in isolation. This makes it possible to marshal the collective efforts of all concerned with a view to achieving success.
Other respondents raised a point previously identified in our systematic review (ICPC, 2015), which is to promote a **local approach**. Put another way, programs aimed at preventing radicalization and violent extremism are more likely to succeed if they are adapted to local realities and issues. Adopting a local approach can mean, as an example, having local, community-recognized organizations take charge of interventions.

As mentioned previously, a **multisectoral approach** has also been identified as conducive to the success of an intervention. Radicalization and violent extremism cannot be prevented by a single organization acting alone; to maximize the success rate of interventions, it is crucial to involve a suite of local actors and to coordinate their activities (ICPC, 2015).

Several respondents in non-Western countries stated that a **community participation approach** has greatly contributed to the success of their interventions. One African respondent even stated that involving the communities in the development and implementation of prevention programs is the most important recommendation he can make:

> Too many practitioners think they know everything and want to immediately go to communities and tell them what to do. From my experience, what they know “up here” is absolutely different from what communities feel and experience on a daily basis. Go to the communities, talk to them, understand them, and only then develop interventions based on that. (SSAF1)

A respondent in Asia noted that 95 percent of her organization’s programming is determined by the community — a guarantee that it will feel a sense of ownership over the projects and a commitment to their success. A second respondent in Asia stated that the most important factor in the success of his interventions is that youth participants can take ownership over the whole program. They are offered the resources necessary to conduct the program as they see fit and using their own vocabulary. They feel acknowledged and listened to, something the respondent believes to be crucial when working with youth.

**e) Success factors relating to the sociopolitical context**

Certain respondents identified elements of the sociopolitical context that have contributed to the success of their intervention. An African respondent stated that the **current vogue around the issue of radicalization** is conducive to her intervention. Radicalization being a national concern, a range of actors (the government and the communities) have shown a willingness to support her organization and encourage its work. This public priority placed on the issue of radicalization has also led to new funding for their activities; it has given them the financial resources needed to experiment.

Some European respondents stated that what has greatly favoured the success of their intervention is the fact that it fills a cruelly neglected need: namely, it provides a **space for dialogue in society**, a place where participants feel free to express themselves and interact with one another in an atmosphere of respect and empathy.
Causes of failure

Our data also serves to enumerate certain causes of failure that can be derived from front-line workers’ experiences. This section primarily discusses the subjective and objective factors leading to results that may impede efforts to prevent violent radicalization. Among other things, we asked the participants about the types of interventions that do not work, the reasons for the failure of these interventions, and any recommendations that may help avoid making the same mistakes.

Deliberately or otherwise, certain interventions can lead to situations of confrontation, especially where there is a lack of knowledge of the culture and customs of the community; where the approach is perceived as coercive, top-down, or authoritarian; or where the approach ignores local specificities and traditions.

a) Incompatibility of certain prevention programs with local values and customs

Some of our non-Western respondents explained that a major cause of failure relates to the incompatibility of certain prevention programs with local values and customs. When a program neglects cultural particularities and attempts to impose a certain vision or set of values, confrontation and resistance may ensue. Put more bluntly, a program whose logic runs counter to the beliefs of a specific group is destined to fail. Several respondents gave the example of interventions in which women are given a prominent, proactive role in certain spheres, such as education. This approach can elicit resistance in societies where gender roles are rooted in traditional cultural practices.

You can’t go into a traditional society and tell religious leaders that you will counter violent extremism by empowering women. You need to find an entry point that will allow negotiation. It is about finding the individuals that are thinking along the same line as you and open to discuss the issue. (SSAF9)

b) Ignorance of community realities

By analogy with the cultural incompatibility of certain programs, certain kinds of discourse on the workers’ part can create barriers to communication with the participants because of an ignorance of the communities they are trying to help. This remark is corroborated by two difficult experiences reported by a European respondent. Her organization was giving a presentation and attempted to provoke discussion and reflection by presenting an image that directly insulted the prophet Mohammed. This image was extremely problematic for the young Muslim participants: one girl left the room and a group of boys became very aggressive. The image was replaced by that of a pig with the title: “I like Muslims!” — still a provocative image, but not an insulting one. As to the second difficult experience, she discussed what happened after she made some unfortunate remarks in a workshop directed at women.

I had a class of people who want to work with young children, 0 to 4, childcare. They were 95% Muslims and they were wearing all black clothes, the women, young women. I was a bit shocked, because it was not even a legging and a blouse, but it was the long clothes until the floor. First 45 minutes I just listen to them, how they think, and I found out that half of them never want to go to work
but want to be mothers. Those were the more strict Muslims. Some people want to go to work, they were a bit more open-minded. At one moment I said: You are all wearing black clothes and you are going to work with young children, isn’t that a little dark, and could you not wear a little bit brighter colors? Then they found it very impolite of me, and they said black is the most beautiful color there is. So, I went too far by saying this, it was wrong, because they closed up towards me and I have no contact anymore. (EUR5)

While these experiences show how ignorance of the culture can lead to failure, they also illustrate the need to experiment and make mistakes in order to improve.

Another issue raised is that programs involving cooperation among adversarial actors can give rise to conflict. While it is true that dialogue-based problem-solving approaches are generally intended to be inclusive, the organizers of such events need to give thought to the suitability of bringing together certain dialogue partners in a project; they need to ascertain if their willingness to participate is tied to any particular agenda. If such a partnership proves ineffective, it may be, here again, because the organizers were unaware of an existing conflict. One North American respondent explained that the involvement of specific groups that are in conflict with the target audience must be avoided.

Another critical point is if your target group is Sunni Muslims but you consult Shia/Ismaili/Ahmadi Muslims. If those that help you implement the program aren’t part of the target group, you are inviting failure. It can bring a conflict that isn’t necessary. (NAM12)

c) Persistent law enforcement-based approaches

On another note, persistent law enforcement-based approaches can also lead to tensions between different parties. A European police officer explained that the repeated exposure of certain individuals to interactions with the police based on suspicion has a negative impact. To be sure, police work includes a coercive dimension that is inseparable from the officer’s legitimate monopoly on physical violence (Brodeur, 1994). This point applies more particularly to far-right individuals known to one municipal police department, who were under heightened surveillance even in the absence of wrongdoing. Continued exposure of radicalized individuals to police action, especially unwarranted action, may cause these individuals to feel legitimized in their beliefs, at times resulting in tensions.

Failures: we have learned with the right extremists in the streets of Oslo that you can’t do suppression over a very long time. You cannot go after them all the time, because if they haven’t done anything wrong for a couple of weeks but we, the police, come and check all the time, it becomes easy to see the police as the enemy. So we need to be sensitive when working against them, because if they haven’t done anything recently, it is difficult for us to stop and check. If we are not enough sensitive in the way we use the pressure ... so we go after them, we will become counterproductive, because they will recruit on our behavior. We don’t want that to happen. (EUR7)
d) Counter-discourse

Finally, a large proportion of the respondents explained that counter-narratives do not work. This approach leads to confrontation; it is likely to put participants on their guard and shut down subsequent dialogue. One respondent explained that religious counter-narratives are particularly futile because most participants know nothing about the subject. These comments are supported by another respondent in Europe who explained that this approach is much too didactic; it incorporates a power dimension that can be unwelcome to participants. But if counter-narratives are going to work, said a third respondent, they need to focus on changing both the participants’ ideas and their behaviour; an intervention limited to attempts at ideological persuasion is bound to fail.

Indicators

The following section concerns the indicators used by front-line workers to assess the effectiveness of their interventions with respect to predefined goals. We asked the respondents if they do formal evaluations of their projects and, if so, what indicators they use to measure success.

a) Knowledge tests

Pre-test/post-test evaluation is evidently the most common method used in training-based approaches. The idea is to test the participants before and after training, and compare the results in order to measure the new knowledge acquired. For example, did the participants increase their knowledge and skills around the identification of risk factors and protective factors with respect to radicalization?

b) Qualitative feedback approach

Some respondents mentioned that they use a qualitative feedback approach, in which the participants are asked for their opinion on the success of the program. As an illustration, a European respondent explained that her organization evaluates the coherence of group interventions. The participants are asked to engage in an exercise of self-criticism in which they share their opinions and feelings about their current situation as compared with their situation at the start of the intervention. It is worth mentioning that this approach seems to be mainly oral (interviews and focus groups). This method yields qualitative information on the process of implementing an intervention and serves to identify any weaknesses in that process. Another respondent agreed as to the importance of feedback, stating that this form of evaluation helps make changes to programs based on the workers’ and participants’ experience of the program, and even the comments of certain outside experts.

c) Regular personalized evaluation

Where individual casework is being done, personalized evaluation of program effectiveness seems to be a method endorsed by various organizations in both Western and non-Western countries.

Respondents in North America explained that personalized evaluation is done because they lack standardized indicators for evaluation purposes. Instead, they monitor each person’s tangible
progress on the cognitive, behavioural, and/or integrative planes. Several respondents in North America and Asia explained that they evaluate individual cases on a case-by-case basis, observing day-to-day progress over a specific time period to determine whether the individuals are exhibiting positive changes:

- at the level of discourse;
- at the level of attitudes (e.g., with respect to other cultures and religions, or their desire to go to Syria);
- at the level of their social circle;
- in terms of the time they devote to an activity that may render them vulnerable to extremist ideas.

In other words, this approach serves to track each participant’s individual progress in the absence of a predefined set of indicators to guide the evaluation. In addition, some approaches try to elicit the perceptions and opinions of the person’s immediate social environment (e.g., his family).

Three evaluation-related problems

a) The vicious cycle of lack of evaluation

The observations on indicators bring us back to a key point raised in the introduction to this report: that evaluation of counter-radicalization programs is sorely lacking. This deficiency seems to be having a negative impact on the possibility of implementing prevention initiatives and, by the same token, conducting further evaluations, as reported by one public-sector respondent in North America. He explained that there is a vicious cycle in which, in addition to the negative connotations associated with CVE programs, key actors believe that the lack of empirical evidence constitutes a valid reason for rejecting further initiatives of the same kind. However, as the respondent explained, such empirical evidence cannot be obtained if no intervention is ever implemented and subsequently evaluated. To put it another way, the very newness of this field of intervention means that the risk has to be taken that a program will fail, since no one can claim to know the right way to do something without first experimenting with it and learning from his or her mistakes. Hence the paradox in which insufficiently frequent evaluation contributes to a further reduction in evaluation initiatives.

b) Gaps concerning indicators and evaluation tools

There is a major gap in terms of measurement instruments that can be used to evaluate the impact of prevention programs. A large proportion of the respondents said they have only a qualitative model with which to evaluate programs and prevention success. The few respondents who gave us information on this point mentioned the use of impact measurement indicators which do not necessarily justify the conclusion that violent radicalization has been reduced. One respondent in Africa explained, for instance, that her program’s effectiveness is measured with indicators such as the literacy rate and the percentage of Koranic schools that abolish corporal punishment. These
goals may well be the ones her program strives to attain, but their causal link to reduced radicalization remains speculative at best.

Moreover, although a certain number of evaluation scales do exist, a European respondent explained that the validation of the tools leaves something to be desired. Validation refers to a whole set of characteristics, including content validation (i.e., the relevance of a test’s content to the phenomenon evaluated), that serve to determine whether a tool effectively measures the phenomenon one is seeking to evaluate. In short, the scientific validation of the measurement scales used to evaluate radicalization leading to violence appears to be deficient.

c) Partnerships
The lack of valid, standardized indicators creates a difficulty at the level of evaluation for several organizations. The result is that most programs establish partnerships with the academic sector to fill this gap. However, it appears that program evaluation, despite its importance, remains a non-priority for many organizations, given that such initiatives are still at an exploratory stage. A respondent in Europe explained that “evaluation is no longer a constraint, but a fulcrum” (EUR11).

2.7 Other issues
This section dwells on three additional issues related to counter-radicalization interventions: the safety and security of workers and organizations; the risk of stigmatizing the communities targeted by interventions; and the specific needs of workers in order to help them improve their interventions.

Worker safety and security
Are safety and security issues for our respondents? What are their feelings about their own physical and psychological safety? This section focuses on the respondents’ perceptions of their safety in connection with their work activities. It was obvious to us, given the sensitive areas in which they operate, that more needs to be learned about events they have experienced, feelings they have had, and measures that have been taken to improve security.

a) Workers’ experiences: insecurity and danger
Generally speaking, the respondents do perceive that there is danger associated with their work. More than half stated that they have felt unsafe at least once in the course of their work. Others are not very concerned for their personal safety but have nonetheless implemented security measures. Finally, a minority of front-line workers said that the security situation is continually fraught and difficult, for themselves as much as for their colleagues and families. This last group works in difficult neighbourhoods or regions where extremist groups and terrorists operate. A team leader for an organization based in Europe said she has been targeted by a terrorist group. Due to the prominence of her position, she and her family have been given government-ordered protection. However, these security measures are invasive and restrict her freedom of movement. Furthermore, some of her colleagues who have also been targeted by terrorist groups do not have this same protection. The ICPC analyst who conducted an in-person interview with this respondent
had a chance to observe the extent of the safety measures taken to protect her. The analyst was met by a security officer and taken to meet the respondent, who was flanked by a considerable number of bodyguards. This small anecdote shows how seriously the danger, whether real or perceived, is being treated by the authorities.

With this sole European exception, all the other respondents who reported having experienced situations of grave danger work in African countries. The omnipresence of terrorists instills great fear in the respondents. They fear that their prevention work will be made public, exposing them to the risk of being targeted by extremists. One African organization explained that suspicion on the part of certain religious chiefs, who think that efforts to prevent radicalization are just a war on Islam in disguise, heightens its workers’ feeling of danger. Some even feel as though they are under surveillance by members of terrorist groups who might try to infiltrate their organization: they are operating within a pervasive climate of suspicion. A respondent in Asia explained that the public’s ignorance of the issue of radicalization can also have a negative impact on his personal safety and that of his organization. Community and government support for their work is often lacking because the value of the work is not recognized. This makes them more vulnerable to reprisals by radical groups.

**Other respondents said that they do feel safe.** Our data indicates that these respondents are all operating in Europe, with the exception of one in North America. Their interventions are generally voluntary in nature, without constraints or strictly regulated relations between participant and worker. What concerns this group is not their own physical or psychological safety, but rather the risk of stigmatizing the populations they work with. Being labeled as counter-radicalization organizations could compromise their effectiveness, in that this reputation could result in a stigma becoming attached to the communities and youth they are trying to serve. Preserving confidentiality is another fear expressed by certain respondents. To return to the question of security, while Europe has the largest proportion of respondents who expressed no sense of danger associated with their work, it is also the place where the most threatened and heavily protected worker operates. And this is not a unique case: other Europe-based respondents have also experienced episodes of fear and insecurity. Nevertheless, most respondents operating in Africa, the Middle East, or Asia said that they tolerate and accept the dangers connected with their work.

b) Workers’ experiences: incidents and security measures

**The experiences of workers in relation to safety and security are highly variable:** while most workers did not report having gone through tense security situations, others said that they have received death threats, been victims of physical attacks, and experienced periods of even greater fear. A police officer recounted having lost two of her colleagues who were targeted and killed by extremists because their uniforms marked them as government representatives in the attackers’ eyes. An organization in Africa said that it received threats from the government itself: its offices were bugged and several of its employees were incarcerated for short periods in connection with their work. These appear to have been sporadic, isolated events. “The risk is there,” said one respondent (M-MO4); another opined that danger has in some respects become normalized. Others have yet to experience any threats, although they remain aware that they run certain risks because
of their work and the place where they operate. One respondent told us that she does not fear for her life, but rather that she might wind up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Indeed, several of her meetings have had to be canceled because a reliable source tipped her off to a credible threat.

The great majority of the organizations represented in our sample have adopted security measures. However, the level of danger is not necessarily correlated with the measures taken; i.e., security measures do not necessarily increase with the actual level of danger. We counted four respondents who are affected by significant levels of insecurity yet are not covered by any protective measures. Work-related danger has become normalized in some cases, and several respondents appear to accept this fact: “I think the best precautionary measure is saying to yourself the symbolic phrase: ’Today is a good day to die!’” (EUR24). Watchfulness — no more, no less — has become their method of protection. Others probably lack the financial means to institute further security measures; either that, or the situation simply does not allow for anything further to be done. A front-line worker in North America explained that he may one day targeted for death by ISIS, as has been the case for one of his colleagues, because, as a Muslim, he openly denounces terrorist practices.

One strategy for eluding danger is to avoid attracting the attention of radical groups. More specifically, this means not being publicly identified as a counter-radicalization organization and not naming extremist groups explicitly. Several respondents take the further step of ensuring that their names are never associated with counter-radicalization campaigns, and an important aspect of this strategy is to control the information broadcast over the Internet and social networks. For one North American police officer, educating younger colleagues about Internet-related dangers is necessary nowadays, but also difficult. She explains to them that they cannot live their lives on social networks like other people do. One European respondent found her project concerning homophobia being discussed on a website belonging to a far-right group, exposing her organization to a barrage of hate speech. What scares her the most is that her name is now and forever associated with her work in Google searches. One organization even asked the police to delete its employees’ private addresses so as to preserve their anonymity. In short, anonymity is an important security measure for the employees of organizations working on the prevention of radicalization.

Other security measures involve the installation of devices such as panic alarms and cameras, as well as setting up special rooms (e.g., with two doors) to allow for quick egress in case of attack. Additionally, when interventions involve home visits or when a person unknown to the front-line workers requests a meeting, certain organizations have specific protocols in place: never make a home visit alone, and always ask the police to conduct a risk assessment before meeting an unknown person.

It may be concluded that security is an important issue to consider in both Western and non-Western countries. Our interviews reveal a mindset that can be termed courageous: everyone is aware of the risks and accepts them. But the level of danger is not necessarily proportional to the security measures adopted, particularly for respondents in non-Western countries, where higher-risk conditions prevail and resources may be insufficient to provide for adequate protection.


**Stigmatization**

Stigmatization is a major issue in that it can contribute to a person’s being more receptive to radical messages. The Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (2016) reports that individuals facing situations of stigmatization, discrimination, frustration, or humiliation are more inclined to doubt the collective values of society and their position in it. In Western countries more particularly, terror attacks, counterterrorism measures taken in their wake, and public reactions to these events have touched off a wave of rhetoric conflating moderate Muslims with radicalized splinter groups and terrorists. The resulting discrimination and Islamophobia exacerbates Muslim communities’ feelings of stigmatization, isolation, and alienation, weakening their ties and allegiance to the country of residence and playing into the hands of jihadist recruiters (Schmid, 2013). The European respondents said that they take the issue of stigmatization seriously. Experience with counter-radicalization has demonstrated the dangers and problems that stigmatization can cause. This was particularly true of the Prevent strategy discussed in Part 1 of this report, a policy that has been revised repeatedly, notably after it aroused criticism and controversy due to its stigmatizing approach to the Muslim populations it primarily focuses on (Kundnani, 2009; Romaniuk, 2015; Thomas, 2010). Yet this model has had significant influence on similar policies developed in other Western countries (Neumann, 2011; Ragazzi, 2014). But the issue of stigmatization is not exclusive to Western countries: an African respondent working in a majority-Muslim country explained that stigmatization can occur between different Muslim groups. She attributes this to the fact that Islam encompasses many different tendencies, some moderate and some less so, and that frictions can potentially arise between different groups. Such frictions may greatly contribute to the radicalization of certain individuals: as she put it, “people tend to get radicalized because they are stigmatized, accused, and condemned, not because they are Muslims” (SSAF5).

The issue of stigmatization has been discussed earlier in this part of the report; here, the goal is to describe how it manifests itself during interventions, and what initiatives the respondents may have developed to alleviate this problem.

a) Climate of mistrust

Suspicion of counter-radicalization strategies is a reality faced by front-line workers, especially those whose organizations have an explicit public counter-radicalization mandate. It is they who have the greatest difficulty creating a relationship of trust with their target audience and convincing the community to work with them. This problem especially applies to organizations whose involvement in this work is clearly identifiable because of their name, partners, or donors. One centre addressed this handicap by striving for transparency through dialogue, with the ultimate goal of developing a relationship of trust with the community and the participants. Dialogue is indeed the method used by almost all the respondents. In the interests of avoiding stigma and allaying suspicion, their organizations try to establish a dialogue guided by the dictates of transparency. The approach of one group of police officers is to present themselves as being interested in the person and wanting to know his views, as well as the reasons why his behaviour has changed. Another respondent thinks that people know when there is a problem in their
community and that it is best to talk about it openly: “[I]f people are honest with themselves, they know the risks of their community and they can all discuss it quite openly” (EUR2).

b) Building a sense of trust

Admitting that there are problems in one’s community is difficult and painful, and this is why it is important to work on critical thinking, according to one Europe-based respondent.

It is essential for people to have an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions openly, without feeling put on the spot or stigmatized because of their religious denomination, according to another European organization. This organization strives to explain that the equation between Islam and terrorism is false, as is the equation between terrorism and radical ideas. During individual casework and school visits, the respondents try to reframe such generalizations and the feelings stemming from them. The strategy of one police unit to gain the trust of Muslim communities and counter the problem of stigmatization is to warn them of the danger of far-right groups even as they engage them in a conversation. Although this the far-right is a genuine concern, these communities are mainly interested in problems they perceive as being closer to home; as a North American respondent put it: “If I’m a Muslim community organization, I’m probably more concerned about young kids, peers being lured into that ideology [of ISIS], more so than white supremacy” (NAM8).

c) Expanding the target issue

Adopting a narrow vision of the target issue — e.g., by dwelling on a specific type of radicalization in the context of an intervention — can rapidly lead to the stigmatization of certain communities. The obvious case is the unfortunate public conflation of Islamic radicalization with Muslim communities. Such reductive associations can also be fueled by prevailing societal prejudices toward certain groups or communities. A North American respondent noted that the majority in society exhibit a degree of ignorance about the cultural diversity to be found within these communities. This ignorance leads to different ideas being conflated in the public mind, which plays a role with respect to stigmatization, especially when radical Islam is implicated in high-profile acts of violence:

[P]rejudice, because most people think that, that Islam is this kind or that kind of religion, which is totally a construct fabricated out of a deluded perception that they have about the world. Because in reality, Islam is an extremely multivalent, and extremely diversified religion, but most Westerners don’t understand that. They can see all the subtleties that there are in Christianity, but they have the impression that Muslims are all one thing. (NAM2)

The targeting of specific communities with interventions focusing on a single set of issues reinforces an isolationism that works at cross-purposes to the prevention of radicalization. According to certain workers, broadening the target issue makes it possible to avoid associations between radicalization and certain communities, hence to reduce the risks of stigmatization stemming from an intervention. The Western respondents are particularly sensitive to this issue and use a variety of strategies to minimize its effects. To build a vector of social cohesion, they tend to put the emphasis on the common features of radicalization leading to violence, irrespective of ideology.
For other respondents, the approach is to refrain from putting the whole focus on counter-radicalization. Instead, they discuss a whole set of problematic behaviours that might be adopted by any individual, so that these behaviours are not presented as being characteristic of any given community. As an example, a respondent in a Western country explained that his interventions focus on the prevention of antisocial behaviours, for this is a society-wide issue that calls for collaboration — collective action — among all communities. Radicalization leading to violence is categorized as one form of antisocial behaviour, on a par with other crimes that tend to be less associated with Muslim communities. Others avoid labeling by promoting intercultural recreational activities conducive to the development of prosocial behaviour.

In an effort to reduce its clientele’s perception of the amount of attention paid to the phenomenon of radicalization, a North America-based centre strives to diversify its interventions: it works on a whole range of issues connected to radicalization in one way or another. It also gives training sessions to outside professionals who have already gained the trust of a clientele that regards the organization with suspicion and cannot otherwise be reached.

In conclusion, the potential for stigmatization must be reckoned with if efforts to prevent radicalization are to succeed. On the one hand, terrorist incidents committed in the name of an ideology give rise to public conflation of this ideology with certain communities, who come to feel isolated as a result. On the other, the climate of mistrust thus instilled in the population seems to be counterproductive to preventive action. On this score, the approaches used in prevention programs must rely on a whole set of tools to allow for an adequate level of trust and an openness to the needs of isolated minorities. Reducing stigmatization and isolation puts the conditions in place for a partnership with the target audience so that a common goal can be achieved.

Workers’ needs

The context navigated by professionals who work on the prevention of radicalization leading to violence is often difficult and underappreciated by the authorities. Governments too often give priority to national security and law enforcement agencies using conventional law enforcement-based procedures, to the detriment of counter-radicalization programs and particularly community-based programs (Bakker & Singleton, 2016; Rosand, 2016). This seems to be especially true for non-Western regions, where funding for community programs to prevent violent radicalization is practically non-existent (Bakker & Singleton, 2016). Given this situation, we asked the respondents to discuss their needs, if any, in the context of their intervention work. Funding difficulties were, unsurprisingly, the main problem that they reported. In addition to the crying lack of financial resources with which numerous organizations must contend, the considerable time spent on fundraising reduces the time they have available for the core work of intervention.

a) Sharing of best practices

First of all, numerous respondents from Western and non-Western countries alike emphasized a key idea: namely, that it is desirable, indeed imperative to ensure the dissemination and availability of best practices. Making such a resource available would allow countries and
organizations working on the prevention of radicalization to select from a catalogue of best practices those that best meet their needs. For example, one respondent in Europe would like his country to pass a confidentiality law similar to the one enacted by Denmark. The law allows organizations and individuals to report problems to the police without the information revealed being used in the context of a criminal investigation. The advantage of this kind of provision is that it helps build a climate of trust and dialogue between civil society and law enforcement. This idea of police/community proximity resembles the method used by one European city, where police officers took part in a roundtable with various partners, with the proviso that any information relating to a possible offence could not be used by the police to initiate prosecution. The respondent specified that this arrangement only allowed for police intervention in the event of a demonstrated security need.

One respondent from Asia told us that civil society organizations in that region need to draw upon foreign experiences in order to improve the effectiveness of the practices they adopt and the utility of the training sessions they deliver. This same logic, concerning the need to stay informed of national and international developments and to monitor practice advances being made elsewhere, also applies to Africa, according to another respondent: “Comparisons allow to gain more insight about other solutions found in other countries and communities” (SSAF2).

b) Need for training to fill technical gaps; lack of time

Front-line workers in both Western and non-Western regions have extensive training needs. Several respondents complained about the lack of time and resources needed to further their reading and understanding of radicalization. One European respondent said: “Out of necessity, we’re caught up in day-to-day concerns, so there’s never enough time to get trained and get perspective on the issues — anyway, to the extent that we would want to” (EUR8). The respondents are aware that advances are being made in this area and that their on-the-ground work leaves them little time to reflect on their interventions and work methods, or even to think about the issues. They have a great desire to broaden their knowledge of the phenomenon of radicalization. One member of a European association made an enlightening remark to the effect that employees of civil society organizations are competent at an operational level — that is to say, they are active and effective in their work — but in need of professional development in the area of project conceptualization. Our interviews show that this observation is endorsed by workers in countries of the South as well. A respondent in Africa stated:

Sometimes there are people who have gained experience on the ground, but they’re continually making the same mistakes, to the point that it becomes a habit. It’s best to deal with this kind of limit head on; for example, with measures targeting youth empowerment, the question of how to build their capacity or raise their awareness to the harmful consequences of radicalization. So we need prototypes of partnership or projects so that this type of training can be provided. (M-MO3)

Front-line workers do not lack for ideas, nor for the motivation to put forward new projects, but they are held back by various impediments. Our study points to weaknesses at the level of writing and project management, particularly among actors from North Africa and the Middle East:
[T]he recommendation is to build the project management capacity of these actors, or their ability to write project proposals, things like that.... For example, there are people who don't know how to write a fact sheet or a project proposal (M-MO3).

Another factor hindering certain workers from pursuing their professional development has to do with their discomfort with certain information technologies and/or lack of fluency in foreign languages such as French and English.

As to the Western context, a European respondent highlighted the importance of academic conferences and meetings as a way of filling epistemic and methodological gaps that arise in practice. He mentioned that the organization he belongs to has a prevention plan touching on the phenomenon of radicalization in a general way, but sometimes feels powerless in the face of specific situations such as when parents are concerned about their children, or teachers about their students.

While working on the implementation of a school-based social crime prevention program that included resilience training, one respondent greatly benefited from training sessions, workshops, and symposia in figuring out how to incorporate the question of radicalization into her syllabus. She and her team were able to find answers about how to identify and react to problematic situations, as well as how to prepare themselves to address parents’ questions and concerns. The training sessions, in short, readied her to address specific concerns and needs related to the phenomenon of radicalization in the school setting.

  c) Towards participant involvement

Better integration of participants into prevention projects was stated as a need by several respondents from non-Western countries. One said that not just religious educators (imams, theologians) and youth, but also women need to be given a voice. In the African context, women have an important role in the family, especially in education, and within their communities. Mothers, they said, are in a good position to influence their sons.

  d) Issues regarding workers’ needs

One constant emerging from the study, across various regions of the world, concerns funding. Respondents in Europe, North America, North Africa, and the Middle East all mentioned that the prevention of radicalization leading to violence calls for greater financial resources. One North American respondent put it clearly and succinctly: “The major problem is funding” (NAM7).

Another issue that we heard specifically relates to schools in the North American context: to wit, a degree of **disciplinary compartmentalization among certain teachers**. According to the respondent, some teachers reject the idea of addressing radicalization in their classes due to government-defined curricular requirements and/or the nature of the subject matter. These educators feel themselves to be ill-equipped to do counter-radicalization. The respondent made special note of science and technology teachers (chemistry, biology, etc.), who claim to be more poorly equipped than social sciences and humanities teachers in this area. Finally, it was stated that non-Western countries are contending with a **lack of qualified human resources** that can deliver ongoing relevant training on the phenomenon in question:
In regard to the associations, they lack the trainers or the human resources necessary to work on these issues. There is also a problem in terms of management in these organizations. We should realize that the missing element resides in civil society itself, where there aren’t any strong actors capable of addressing the subject. (M-MO2)
PART III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: FRONT-LINE WORKERS, BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

With this study, we sought to fill two of the most salient gaps in the scientific literature concerning interventions for the prevention of extremism and violent radicalization: evidence-based studies, and the experience of front-line workers in practice. Concerning the first aspect, we have derived a wide-ranging evidentiary panorama of counter-radicalization from our interviews with 89 respondents on five continents. Due in part to the comparative approach we used in addressing this subject — the scientific literature having often focused on the realities of Western countries — it is an especially rich and diverse source of information.

As to the second aspect, we stated in the introduction that, until now, the experience of front-line workers had remained relatively unexplored terrain, if not terra incognita. This study has therefore been exploratory in nature. In fact, it is the first international-scale study to consider the experiences of these professionals at the level of practice. As a result, it has yielded much positive information as well as bumping up against some obvious limits. As a portrait of lived realities, we hope that this study will serve to inform people about the practice of prevention, but also, to guide further exploration of a much-neglected subject.

Effective prevention of radicalization leading to violence obviously depends on a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon, particularly at the local level: not just the factors that drive people to consider committing violent acts, but also the capacity, experience, and effectiveness of front-line workers. These individuals are often regarded as invisible cogs in a prevention machine; only rarely are their needs or skills vis-à-vis the phenomenon in question considered. And many workers indeed feel ill-equipped to handle this work. As we saw at the end of part 2 of this report, they want more support in terms of training and dissemination of practices. All the same, despite the peculiar features of the phenomenon of violent radicalization, the approaches used by workers in this field are no different from those used in other types of prevention work. This lack of specificity, discussed in our introduction, can be considered from two angles: the value assigned to nonspecific success factors, and the fact that workers often fall back on their professional experience and background.

a) Nonspecific success factors

Among the factors described in this report that contribute to the success or failure of an intervention, many resemble what are called in psychotherapy “nonspecific” or “common” factors (Huibers & Cuijpers, 2015). Despite the diversity of approaches used to address psychotherapeutic change, many approaches ultimately arrive at similar positive results. Researchers deduced that there must be a common factor, a factor unconnected with the specific content of the intervention: namely, a strong, positive psychotherapeutic alliance (Huibers & Cuijpers, 2015). Frank (1993) posited four key factors conducive to change: a functional patient-therapist relationship based on the patient’s confidence in the therapist’s work; a context conducive to healing; a rationale that justifies and legitimizes the psychotherapist’s methods, and a number of procedures that structure the psychotherapy. The content of the intervention itself appears to be of lesser importance. On the contrary, the most important factor is the relationship of trust. And, as we have learned,
trust is also considered the most important factor in the effectiveness of counter-radicalization work. This is why front-line workers take such great care to avoid anything that might damage trust (lack of transparency, breaches of confidentiality in connection with requests for information, and so on). Simultaneously, they stress the importance of factors that can improve this relationship: providing opportunities for free expression, taking a non-judgmental approach, being flexible and open to the needs and realities of individuals and communities, etc.

b) Drawing on one’s experience and professional background

The respondents essentially use all three of the intervention approaches discussed in part 1 of this report: integrative, cognitive, and behavioural/membership-based approaches, the second type being the most widespread. Still, according to Neumann (2011), there is a potentially unlimited number of specific types of intervention. This is probably due to the fact that most of the respondents believe the factors explaining radicalization at the local level to be not much different from those explaining other social problems, an observation previously emphasized in our systematic review (ICPC, 2015). That is, counter-radicalization tools resemble the tools used for other issues and contexts; known tools tend to be borrowed and adapted before new tools specific to radicalization are developed. Since the prevention of extremism and radicalization leading to violence is an emergent and changing field, the respondents also draw on their experience and professional background to fill gaps and adapt to new contexts. We return to and elaborate on this subject below. The result is that the practice of prevention of radicalization leading to violence is not different from other types of interventions.

Finally, the big issue in the prevention of radicalization (and equally self-evident in psychotherapy) is the users’ motivation to change. Intervention on radicalization leading to violence is not necessarily a need for communities or individuals, or even in certain cases for front-line workers. One respondent in North America stated, for example, that this issue is less important than criminal violence at the local level. In our research-action project in France, on a scale of 1 to 10, probation officers gave violent radicalization an average rating of 2, or very low, in their day-to-day work. Thus, the motivation to change comes from governments or from society at large.

As we shall see below, counter-radicalization workers find themselves between a rock and a hard place: between the constraints and dictates of donors and governments on the one hand, and the needs of the communities they work with on the other. Establishing a relationship of trust with them demands a sustained, long-term effort that is poorly compatible with arbitrary timelines.

We now proceed to present the main conclusions of this study, which are divided into three parts. The first part addresses the main observations and issues arising out of the study; the second presents some recommendations stemming from it, and the third dwells on its limits.
3.1 Principal observations and challenges

Lack of a shared conceptual framework; impacts on intervention

This report has demonstrated that the lack of a consensus definition of radicalization and counter-radicalization is not exclusive to the academic realm: it is reproduced by front-line workers as they struggle to operate within a field whose contours remain to be firmly established. Workers lack a common understanding of radicalization, and do not necessarily agree on which of its aspects are problematic enough to be addressed. For some, "radical" ideas are not a problem in and of itself: it is the resort to violence that causes the problem. For others, it cannot be denied that a person’s ideas constitute a risk that must be taken into consideration. The lack of consensus around the concepts of radicalization and prevention leads to four consequences:

a) In the absence of a clear, generally accepted definition of radicalization, **front-line workers conceptualize and address radicalization as a function of their own knowledge, experience, and professional background.** Workers trained in psychology will tend to conceive of radicalization as a psychological phenomenon on a par with others, such as substance abuse. Police officers will be inclined to regard radicalization as one criminal trajectory among many. These different interpretations of radicalization will obviously have an impact on how prevention is viewed. In attempting to navigate this conceptual uncertainty, workers will tend to draw on the repertoires and tools with which they are familiar.

b) To this end, counter-radicalization workers apply **tools derived from other fields.** For their work on radicalization, our respondents have drawn on and adapted measures that have proven their worth in violence prevention, public health, or suicide prevention. We have previously observed that the number of particularly innovative interventions that have taken place in this field, or that are truly specific to it, is small (ICPC, 2015). The borrowing of tools from other disciplines can be explained in part by the fact that workers facing an issue that remains ill-defined must draw on knowledge derived from other fields and, by the same token, on tools they know.

c) **This lack of conceptual consensus affects the possibility of establishing partnerships and collaborations with other organizations.** One European respondent clearly stated this issue when he deplored the absence of coordination between different counter-radicalization initiatives in his country, knowing full well that his organization is not the only one dealing with these issues. Indeed, two organizations could both be working on radicalization but from different angles: one might be trying, say, to help its participants develop critical thinking skills, while the other might be presenting itself as a violence prevention organization helping participants with conflict resolution. Although neither is labeled as a counter-radicalization organization, both may have the prevention of radicalization as one of their goals.

d) **The diversity of counter-radicalization actors means that clear and specific roles have yet to be defined for each type of professional.** Some front-line workers are doing jobs that go somewhat beyond the bounds of their job description. A good example is that of police
officers who, in the interests of integration, play a role more typical of social work than police work with certain populations, in contrast to their usual enforcement-based repertoire.

A phenomenon broader than the intervention framework

The respondents are aware that radicalization is a cross-cutting societal phenomenon and that they cannot solve the problem working alone. Collective efforts at different levels are necessary, and while their intervention can contribute to the solution, it is not the whole solution. One respondent in Europe explained that intervention with participants is only a minute part of the latter’s everyday lives. Outside of the hours they spend with the worker, they can easily be exposed to different conditions that lead to the development of radical or extremist tendencies.

Prevention versus law enforcement: A fraught coexistence

Preventive efforts frequently have to coexist with enforcement-based measures that can counteract the progress made on prevention. According to certain respondents, the law enforcement authorities often have an insufficiently thorough understanding of violent extremism; they do not realize that police action affecting families, friends, and others close to individuals suspected of radicalization can exacerbate the problem of radicalization among ethnic minority youth. Others point out that in the wake of high-profile terrorist attacks, law enforcement measures are often tightened not just in general, but specifically for radicalized youth who are already participating in a program. These respondents said that it is particularly counterproductive to take a punitive approach with youths who are gradually regaining their trust in adults and making progress. Indeed, it can jeopardize everything they have accomplished to that point.

A greater need for coordination and collaboration

The often articulated need for coordination of crime prevention strategies and programs also emerges when counter-radicalization is at issue (ICPC, 2016a). However, not much attention has been paid to this theme in the literature. Our study makes an important contribution to knowledge of cooperation and collaboration among counter-radicalization workers and, more particularly, to understanding of their needs.

The following observations can be made in regard to coordination:

a) In the context of vertical coordination, the respondents stressed the importance of a national strategy that is flexible enough to accommodate local realities.

b) They also expressed a strong desire to collaborate with different actors, including the government, the media, religious actors, and the private sector.

c) Several mentioned that the relational aspect must not be neglected if one hopes to create a functional collaboration with partners and assure the continued existence of relationships.
d) The experts interviewed at the exploratory phase of the study also stressed the importance of stepping up international coordination to address the issue of radicalization.

e) The front-line workers, for their part, expressed a need for more extensive sharing — i.e., dissemination and availability — of best practices. A reader might be puzzled by this expressed need, given that platforms and networks of promising initiatives for the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism already exist; one thinks of RAN, mentioned several times in this report, which serves as an umbrella for inspiring initiatives and practices implemented in Europe,11 or the FREE Initiative, an online clearinghouse of experiences and best practices used in a dozen European countries by people responding to far-right extremism (ICPC, 2015). But the fact that the respondents expressed this need indicates that there must still be gaps in terms of the dissemination, accessibility, or diversity of databases of best practices in the field of counter-radicalization.

Importance of the sociopolitical context

As mentioned repeatedly throughout this report, a major challenge raised by the respondents is that their work is closely tied to current events and ongoing sociopolitical debates. Several European respondents explained that their constant struggle against domestic Islamophobia and rejection of Islam suffers a setback with each new attack, whether it is an incident like the ones in Paris and Brussels or an attack on mosques by right-wing extremists. The respondents’ work, e.g., with groups of teachers, is hindered by the concomitant reinforcement of the participants’ prejudices against Muslims and Islam.

Persistent evaluation difficulties

Evaluation remains the Achilles’ heel of counter-radicalization, whose value is frequently impugned due to a lack of empirical data confirming its effectiveness. Our respondents lack specific indicators that could enable them to ascertain whether their intervention is in fact helping prevent or defuse a process of radicalization. Some evaluation is done, but mainly in the context of training: the purpose of training is, after all, to increase the participants’ knowledge of a subject, and pre- and post-testing is a straightforward way of determining whether this has actually taken place.

Relationships of trust: fragile, yet essential to partnership

As emphasized in our systematic review, a collaborative approach with the communities involved in an intervention is a necessity (ICPC, 2015). These communities are in the best position to know the local landscape and detect the signs of an individual’s potential radicalization at an early stage. Collaborative work with communities helps front-line workers get closer to local realities and adapt their interventions to them. Conversely, ignorance of the communities one is trying to help can cause an intervention to fail, as can the incompatibility of certain prevention programs

with the values and customs of local populations. The community’s involvement in counter-radicalization interventions is especially important in allaying any suspicions it may harbour towards interventions that focus on radicalization. In addition, community input can serve to prioritize the more specific problems and issues it is facing.

As mentioned previously, the respondents consider a relationship of trust — with the participants or the community — to be essential to the success of an intervention. However, maintaining this relationship, as well as the credibility and transparency of the organization, are big challenges for any front-line worker. Credibility can rapidly dwindle; the work of proving one’s sincerity to participants and communities is a continual necessity. A respondent in North America gave the example of a difficult situation she confronted after a meeting with the national government on the subject of CVE: the council of a community she works in contacted her after the meeting to inquire about her ties to the government, the purpose of her presence at the meeting, her involvement in the CVE campaign, and so on. The respondent quickly realized that too close cooperation with the government could damage her relations with the community; she then declined to apply for a government grant so as to avoid compromising her relations with the community. She concluded: “Suspicion from the community is the enemy of this work; this is a continuous struggle” (NAM4).

In some cases, if the name of the organization clearly indicates that its work targets radicalization, this can arouse suspicion on the community’s part. A North American organization stated that it overcomes this challenge by explaining to communities and community organizations that it is concerned with a range of social issues, radicalization being only one of them. On this basis, it is able to build a relationship of trust and avoid a situation where a community feels stigmatized if it receives services from the organization.

Building and maintaining a relationship of trust with the community is a long process that requires continuity, and the respondents understand the demanding nature of this mandate.

**Fear of stigmatization**

Stigmatization of communities is an issue taken seriously by the front-line workers in our study, particularly those operating in Western countries. Our systematic review revisited the problem of stigmatization of Muslim communities in the context of the UK’s Prevent program (ICPC, 2015). Our respondents have developed strategies to avoid stigmatizing certain communities, one predominant approach being to enlarge the focus of their work beyond a specific type of radicalization. Organizations may decide that their purview comprises the whole field of extremism leading to violence, or all violent or antisocial behaviour of any kind, and not specifically Islamic or far-right radicalization.

This approach ties in to the idea that, in the end, workers must narrow down the field of counter-radicalization and devote themselves to certain specific aspects of it. These aspects might consist of the use of violence for ideological reasons, or the use of hate speech against certain groups. By specifying the attitudes or behaviours they condemn, these workers position themselves to avoid
stigmatizing certain groups, since these attitudes and behaviours could be adopted by anyone from any group or community.

In contrast, stigmatization does not appear to be present or relevant in non-Western countries.

Desire for reinforced two-way integration
The importance of a two-way approach between majority and minority groups in society was also raised. For example, refugee integration might be promoted by facilitating meetings and dialogues between teachers and the parents of refugee students. The parties could discuss each person’s role and cultural realities as well as the possibilities for building bridges between the different cultures. In a word, the responsibility for integration does not rest on the shoulders of one party or another, but demands the efforts of all.

Creating spaces conducive to dialogue
One of our observations is that what is most important about an intervention is not necessarily to address any particular theme, but rather to create a setting in which the participants feel comfortable addressing the issues and themes of concern and importance to them. People who feel that society ignores their opinions, who feel isolated and reduced to silence, are more likely to contemplate avenues of expression unsuited to a democratic society. Encouraging participants to express themselves, to share their ideas even if controversial or seemingly antithetical to the majority view, would appear to be a higher priority for the respondents than discussing specific themes.

Worker safety: A blind spot in the literature
This study makes an important contribution to worker safety. Very few studies have directly focused on the views of counter-radicalization workers concerning the security risks they run and their feeling of safety, or lack of safety, in their day-to-day work. We observed that security is an issue for both Western and non-Western workers but that the gravest security situations are found in Africa. The respondents fear becoming the targets of local terrorist groups if knowledge of their prevention work should happen to spread. All the respondents appear to be aware of the risks they run, and they accept them. Certain security measures have been implemented, but the available resources are in some cases insufficient to provide for effective security.

The gender perspective: A big missing piece
Gender is one of the only factors that is known to be clearly correlated with radicalization. There is a consensus in the literature that most of the individuals who become radicalized are not just young, but young men (ICPC, 2015). However, the great majority of our respondents do not adopt a gender perspective in their interventions. Our systematic review (ICPC, 2015) notes the absence
of a gender perspective, and it was observed again in the context of this study. The respondents are quite conscious of the gendered dimension of radicalization: they know that men become radicalized in larger numbers than women, probably for a variety of reasons. In certain countries, the cultural pressure on young men to meet their family’s needs as very young adults may push some low-income youth to join extremist groups that offer them wages and resources. But having this knowledge does not imply that the respondents frequently include a gender perspective in their interventions. In fact, the opposite is true: rarely do they address the implications of gender, the construction of gendered roles for men and women, or the construction of masculinity.

Several of the respondents, it seems, conceive of the gender perspective simply in terms of the target audience; i.e., that the content of their interventions might have to change depending on whether they are working with women, men, or both. They would not necessarily be addressing gender issues per se with any of these groups.

In conclusion, another contribution of our study has been to elicit specifically responses from front-line workers in the field of counter-radicalization about the gender dimension.

**Religion: a Western issue?**

While radicalization, ideology, and politics can be sensitive issues, religion seems to be a particularly delicate subject for Western respondents. The non-Western workers in our study appear to be more comfortable discussing religion directly; for example, they may attempt to debunk what they see as religious extremism by making reference to sacred texts. Western workers tend not to address religion directly, but rather to discuss the place of religion in society. This discomfort can in part be explained by the political context in Western countries, where tensions are running high around immigration, and Islamophobic feelings and rhetoric are spreading in the wake of recent terrorist attacks (Amnesty International, 2012). With religious tolerance declining around the world (UNDP, 2016), workers find themselves navigating a tense landscape in which religion is a particularly delicate topic.

**Differences in terms of funding**

In terms of funding, we were able to observe that the funding sources for Western and non-Western organizations are somewhat different. It appears that the majority of the respondents in Western countries have received project funding from one or more levels of their own government, while a number of organizations operating in non-Western countries have received funding from international organizations or foreign governments. Two African respondents did state that they received funding from their own government, but that the amount proved insufficient, forcing them to look for additional funding elsewhere.

An important funding-related issue facing the respondents is worry about the continued existence of their projects. When funding dries up, it can put an abrupt end to an initiative; add to this the insufficient institutionalization of counter-radicalization as a field and the resulting
initiatives continue to have a short-term outlook, with no way to anchor them in a more permanent substructure. In addition, donors are generally looking for quick results. The intervention has to be put in place without delay, and the project funding is typically disbursed over a period of one or at most two years. Yet our respondents were at pains to point out how rare it is to obtain immediate results with CVE. They would like to be able to implement longer-term projects that can get to the root of the problem, such as initiatives to strengthen communities and make them more resistant to all forms of extremism. However, these initiatives take considerable time and could scarcely be carried out with the funding obtained so far.

### 3.2 Principal recommendations of the respondents

The respondents in our study felt it important to make certain recommendations. In addition, the authors of this report would like to put forward some recommendations of their own, further to our analysis of the interview data and, more generally, the recurrent aspects of counter-radicalization projects and programs and the factors in their success. It is important to mention that several recommendations arising out of this study correspond to recommendations emerging from the literature, particularly those enumerated in our systematic review (ICPC, 2015). This section divides these recommendations into four categories: recommendations for preparing interventions, recommendations for conducting an intervention, recommendations concerning collaboration and coordination, and general recommendations.

**Recommendations for preparing interventions**

a) **Favour approaches adapted to local specificities**

Perhaps the most important recommendation, or at any rate the most frequently mentioned one, is to adapt CVE initiatives to local conditions. The importance of this recommendation is emphasized not only in the literature (ICPC, 2015) but also by the respondents in this study. Whether it is a project being executed by a local organization or a government strategy, the importance of adaptation to local realities is frequently emphasized.

It is important to identify the needs and problems of the local context, but also its strengths and assets. To avoid failure or rejection of a program, it must **take account of local dynamics and respect the local culture**. An intervention must not impose a different vision or run counter to the customs and practices of the community it is intended to help.

Ignorance of communities and their cultures often leads to failure. Without adequate preparation and front-line workers who know the terrain and culture, the danger of offending someone jeopardizes projects and the trust on which they are based.
b) Prioritize the participatory approach with youth

Several respondents opt for a relatively flexible intervention framework in order to accommodate young people’s suggestions as to the content that should be addressed, or, for individualized casework, in order to adapt the work to the specific needs of the youth and those around him. It is recommended to adopt a participatory approach allowing for better accommodation of participants’ needs and demands, for this will help win them over to the benefits of the intervention.

c) Incorporate religious leaders

Religious leaders have considerable influence over a segment of the population. In some cases, their capacity to influence and reach out to the population outstrips that of front-line workers and local authorities. It is recommended that these leaders be more fully integrated into prevention programs and that their role in countering violent extremism be recognized. Returning to the issue of worker credibility, certain communities tend to hold the opinions of religious leaders in especially high regard.

Other workers see the rhetoric of certain religious leaders as problematic. Once again, the recommendation is to involve them in counter-radicalization programs so that a collective effort can be devoted to finding solutions.

d) Incorporate community leaders

Community leaders are also identified as people who have influence over their communities. Helpful at a number of levels, they possess specific knowledge of their local environment, are closer to the local population, and have political influence. It was therefore recommended to include them in counter-radicalization programs.

e) Work with the family and friends of individuals at risk

For those who work with youth at risk of radicalization, it was recommended to enlarge the scope of the intervention to include others close to these youth: family members, school staff, youth centres, and so forth. With psychosocial casework, including the family helps to bolster familial support, which is considered a protective factor. Another advantage of cultivating relations with the person’s family and friends is that it opens up channels of communication about changes observed in the youth, or factors that may have led him to take a problematic course.

It was also recommended to provide the people close to at-risk youth with information on radicalization leading to violence, along with tools they can use to identify problematic behaviour and help the youth renounce the use of violence.

Recommendations for conducting an intervention

a) Use credible front-line workers

Several respondents mentioned the importance of using workers who have credibility in the eyes of participants. Interventions addressing certain questions or issues should be delivered by specialists: jurists, for legal aspects; theologians, for the history of religions and spirituality;
specialized psychologists and educators for individualized casework; formerly radicalized individuals to assist radicalized youth with disengagement, and so on. To consider an obvious case, it would be counterproductive to have a non-Muslim explain the basics of Islam to a group of Muslim youths. The exercise would become futile due to a lack of credibility.

Interventions derive their effectiveness not only from invited experts but also from the credibility of the lead worker, a fact previously noted in our systematic review (2015). Examples include the Solas Foundation’s programs and the STREET project. Our study shows that certain disengagement programs for right-wing extremists are directed by former neo-Nazis or extremist group members. According to them, they are better able to understand the difficulties faced by individuals who are trying to leave an extremist group or movement. In short, it is the front-line worker credibility is a critical factor in gaining the participants’ trust.

b) Create spaces for expression

It was strongly suggested to create spaces for expression at both a societal and an individual level. The population, and especially youth, lack safe spaces in which to express themselves. According to the respondents, it is a mistake not to consider youth full-fledged actors in society. Spaces for expression allow youth, but also society at large, to express opinions, make proposals, and identify issues they feel need to be discussed. Dialogue around a particular subject and artistic expression are methods offering people an opportunity to alleviate tensions and frustrations while learning from one another.

In addition, a safe, non-judgmental space for expression should be an integral part of casework with an individual and his family. A trusting relationship can only be forged with the individual, and with his family and others close to him, by giving them opportunities to express themselves. Otherwise, the intervention could be perceived as coercive.

This tool allows caseworkers to create a relationship of trust with the individual and the community, who feel listened to and valued. It also helps align the project with local realities, or personalize psychological casework with an individual, as the case may be.

c) Create a relationship of trust

A trusting relationship between worker and participant is perhaps the most decisive issue in the success or failure of an intervention. Where the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism is concerned, trust is, to say the least, not something that can be taken for granted. These initiatives are generally regarded with suspicion by the populations in question. A relationship of trust can be even harder to create with communities of recent immigrants, who often experience problems of isolation, marginalization, and segregation. It is important to facilitate their integration and to encourage dialogue with the majority communities (ICPC, 2016a).

Whether one works with a community or with individuals, he or she would do well to heed a number of recommendations as to how front-line workers can build trust, but also how they can maintain it, for trust remains a feeling that can easily slip away, especially with a subject as sensitive as radicalization. First, adopt a policy of transparency. The participants have to know the goal of the intervention. Provide a safe, non-judgmental space for the participants to express themselves.
freely. Listen carefully and empathetically. Ensure that workers are credible in the participants’ eyes. Finally — and this advice is specifically directed at donors — building trust is a long-term process whose continuity must not be interrupted. Short-term results are highly unlikely, and such expectations put undue pressure on front-line workers.

d) Adopt a positive approach

One fruitful method is to concentrate on solutions that capitalize on people’s strengths, rather than focusing on their problems and weaknesses. This approach is mainly used to develop resilience in the face of radicalization. One of the goals is to strengthen young peoples’ critical thinking skills so that they can avoid falling into the binary thinking typical of radicalized youth.

Recommendations concerning collaboration and coordination

a) Reduce stigmatization to facilitate partnership with the community

This report has repeatedly noted the importance of alleviating the problem of stigmatization. From an operational standpoint, numerous Western respondents recommended avoiding measures that could stigmatize the communities one is attempting to reach. The perception of stigmatization engenders suspicion in partner communities and makes them less receptive, hence less willing to participate in prevention programs. Precht (2007) stresses the importance for governments to collaborate with Muslim communities, not on the basis of religious identity or vulnerability as a group, but by treating them as equal citizens. Only by doing so can a sense of belonging and shared values be instilled.

b) Involve the private sector

It was recommended to strive for greater involvement of the private sector in job creation for youth who are may be induced to join terrorist ranks because of their socioeconomically disadvantaged status. Indeed, increasing numbers of companies are willing to play an active role in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. Collaboration with the private sector not only provides access to a new source of funding, but also makes it possible to take advantage of the skills and tools available in the private sector. The private sector is also in a good position to create jobs that will benefit youth.

c) Encourage networking (among civil servants, professionals, front-line workers, private sector stakeholders, scientists, etc.)

The need for discussion and for pooling of information and experiences has been raised numerous times. In this report, we have discussed networks and their importance in the eyes of front-line workers and municipalities. The advantages of networks are that they permit counter-radicalization actors to exchange relevant data, best practices, research methods, and lessons learned. We recommend focusing on regions and workers who lack the opportunity and/or means to belong to networks. Zeiger and Aly (2015) stress the fact that collaboration efforts between governments and researchers have been undertaken, and networks developed, but that a common platform is still missing, hindering efforts to assemble a clearinghouse of information.
d) Develop multisectoral and multidisciplinary approaches

The complexity of the phenomenon of radicalization is reflected in the inability of researchers to agree on the factors leading to violent extremism or the nature of the radicalization process. The respondents concurred that the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism must involve a diverse range of actors in the governmental, nongovernmental, civil society, and private sectors. Coordination of these various stakeholders is the order of the day, and poses a major challenge.

As to multidisciplinary approaches, the respondents recommended involving people from different disciplines in order to allow for consideration of multiple issues and problems related to radicalization and its prevention. Moreover, comprehensive programs covering the different aspects of the radicalization process have proven more effective (e.g., the rehabilitation programs of Saudi Arabia and Singapore).

General recommendations

a) Review and revise the curriculum

The school setting offers a unique opportunity for the deployment of counter-radicalization efforts. It is a setting in which youth gather and interact, as well as a place conducive to learning and experimentation. For these reasons, educators and school administrators have an important role to play in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. The recommendations here concern curriculum review; i.e., a review of teaching priorities. The development of critical thinking through dialogue and programs favouring intercultural communication are among the many initiatives that can be implemented in schools. Consequently, more time and resources should be afforded to educators and students; in addition, course materials should be revised and adapted to help young people develop critical thinking skills.

b) Increase job opportunities

It was recommended to devote special attention to the employability of young men living in communities whose members are targeted for recruitment by terrorist groups. It was mentioned that such groups exploit the lack of professional opportunities as a recruitment tool. Youth may join extremist groups because they are promised financial support for themselves and their families. Non-Western respondents in particular recommended that the authorities offer job opportunities for youth, giving them a chance to participate actively in society and feel useful.

c) Increase youth involvement in the social sphere

Youth are the future of society: this message is heard from so many actors and organizations, yet the actual involvement of youth in the public sphere remains limited. In contrast, they are the ones generally targeted by programs designed to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. Therefore, it is important for society to put a premium on youth involvement and recognize their contribution in terms of solutions.
d) Adopt an experiential approach

Since counter-radicalization is a relatively new field, front-line workers must be allowed to refine their approaches through experimentation. It is important to understand that interventions evolve and improve as experience is gained and mistakes are made, and the evaluations demanded by donors must allow for this process. Indeed, some local and national governments have come to the realization that workers must be given a flexible working environment and that funding must be made available to support their experimental work over the long term.

e) Build workers’ capacity

We have discussed the needs expressed by the participants of this study, observing that numerous front-line workers take training sessions to further their understanding of the subject matter and exchange experiences with others. However, some workers lack the skills necessary to expand the scope of their initiative, for financial reasons among others. It was therefore recommended to facilitate access to training in project management, project design, and project proposal writing. The example of this study shows that workers from non-Western regions and those who are dedicated to a cause because of their personal and professional history (e.g., former members of extremist groups, veterans) may potentially need additional training to improve their grant application writing skills.

f) Offer support to workers

It is strongly recommended to offer support to front-line workers whose activities relate to the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. It takes a great deal of support to be able to face such difficult situations on a daily basis, and workers must make sure that their own health and well-being are not compromised by their work. Specific issues confronting workers include dangerous situations, suspicion on the part of governments and community and religious leaders, and pressure from donors, participants, and their own government.

To our knowledge, there has yet to be any study on the specific needs of workers and their safety. We recommend implementing programs and funding to identify safety and security needs and issues so that appropriate support can be offered. For example, the Aggredi program office in Finland has a special room that workers can use whenever they need a break (Ramalingam, 2014).

3.3 Limits of the study

Our study sought to make a distinction between the realities of Western and non-Western front-line workers. To this end, we interviewed 59 people in Western countries and 31 in non-Western countries. These numbers put limits on our comparative analysis of the two regions, and particularly on any generalization one might wish to derive from it. Nevertheless, the data point up a number of important patterns and differences.
For reasons of data triangulation, the initial method consisted of interviewing three people per organization: two front-line workers and one person responsible for project management and coordination, such as a project manager or director. In practice, it was difficult to plan an interview with several members of the same organization. Most often, we obtained an interview with either a project manager or a coordinator, for a total of one to two interviews per organization.

Another limit concerns the conceptual framework for the study, which proved too broad for the time allotted to each interview. One hour was often insufficient to address all the themes of interest. The lack of time forced us to prioritize our questions and ask only the most important ones. We chose not to exceed the one-hour period, since interview fatigue tended to set in (on the part of both researchers and respondents) after that time.

Furthermore, connection problems disrupted some of the interviews, considerably reducing the allotted time: questions had to be repeated several times, or the length of the interview extended. This was because most of the interviews were conducted by Skype, telephone or (in some cases) WhatsApp. Connection problems particularly plagued the interviews with people in non-Western countries.

Finally, although this is a reality with all qualitative research, it is worth mentioning the loss of information throughout the data processing phase of the research. In some instances, comments were hard to make out due to the poor quality of the audio recordings or the connection (Skype and WhatsApp), and had to be excluded. Second, all our interviews were transcribed, but — due to time constraints — not necessarily verbatim. The earliest transcripts, in particular, tended to consist of summaries of the respondents’ remarks rather than direct quotes, resulting in lost information. In addition, some information was lost during the coding of the interviews. Since several analysts worked on the coding process, it is possible that there were divergent understandings or interpretations of the codes, resulting in lost information. This could be true even though the analysts shared a comprehensive, standardized code list with descriptions of each code. Finally, the analysis work, which by definition consists in reorganizing information, inevitably entails a loss of information.
Empirical studies


**General references**


UNDP. (2016). *Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Dignity*. Oslo: UNDP.


A.1 Appendix 1 — List of participating organizations

**Sub-Saharan Africa and Sahel**

**Ghana**  
West Africa Centre for Counter Extremism (WACCE)

**Kenya**  
HAKI Africa  
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) – Kenya

**Niger**  
Cercle de réflexion et d’action pour un développement local innovant (Cercle. DEV)

**Senegal**  
Timbuktu Institute, African Center for Peace Studies

**Somalia**  
Social-life and Agricultural Development Organization (SADO)

**North America**

**Canada**

Canadian Friends of Somalia  
Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV)  
Collège de Maisonneuve  
Université de Montréal  
Someone Canada

**United States**

Boston Children's Hospital Refugee Trauma and Resilience Center  
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)  
Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department  
Life After Hate  
The Prevention Project: Organizing Against Violent Extremism

**Asia**

**Indonesia**

Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN)

**Kyrgyzstan**

Mutakallim

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19 At the respondents’ request, the names of three organizations were kept confidential.
Search for Common Ground - Kyrgyzstan
Pakistan
Chanan Development Association (CDA)
PAIMAN Alumni Trust
Search for Common Ground - Pakistan
Singapore
International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University (NTU)
Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG)

Europe
Germany
Amadeu Antonio Stiftung
ufuq.de
Violence Prevention Network e.V.

England
Ealing Council, Safer Communities Team
Institute for Strategic Dialogue
Peace Direct

Austria
Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft

Belgium
Arktos
Service Prévention de la commune de Molenbeek-Saint-Jean
City of Vilvoorde

Denmark
East Jutland Police
Municipality of Aarhus

France
Association Espoir 18
Centre d’action et de prévention contre la radicalisation des individus (CAPRI)
Centre de Prévention contre les Dérives Sectaires liées à l’Islam
Conseil départemental du Val d’Oise
Université de Nantes, Laboratoire de psychologie des Pays de la Loire (LPPL)

Greece
Association for the Social Support of Youth (ARSIS)
Processwork Hub

Norway
Oslo Police District

Netherlands
International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT)
Peace Education Projects — Fortress of Democracy
RadarAdvies
University of Amsterdam

Switzerland
Kantonspolizei Zürich, Prevention Department, Anti-violence Unit

Middle East and North Africa

Jordan
Mercy Corps — Jordan
United Nations Development Program — Jordan

Lebanon
Fighters for Peace
Permanent Peace Movement

Morocco
Association Raouabit Assadaka
Centre régional des métiers de l’éducation et de la formation (Agadir)
Rabita Mohammedia des Oulémas
Tigmino

Syria
Mobaderoon Network

Tunisia
Association tunisienne de l’action culturelle (ATAC)

Oceania

Australia
Australian Multicultural Foundation
Deakin University
A.2 Appendix 2 — Methodology

Respondents

In the course of this study, a total of 90 participants from 64 organizations based in 27 different countries were interviewed. The primary respondents were front-line workers who do intervention work aimed at preventing radicalization leading to violence at the urban and local levels. As a preliminary phase of the study, we also conducted interviews with experts and specialists in this subject area.

The term “front-line workers” is defined for our purposes as any worker having direct, in-person contact with the participants in an intervention. The front-line workers in our study came out of varied professional profiles and backgrounds: they include psychologists, social workers, youth workers, police officers, teachers, and former extremists.

Interventions in prison settings were excluded from this study since, although these institutions may be found in urban or peri-urban environments, the approaches used therein are too different from the kinds of urban approaches considered here. Some of the respondents have nonetheless worked in prison settings, but they have also worked elsewhere, and it was these other settings about which they were interviewed.

The interviews were divided into groups:

During the exploratory phase of the study, 27 experts from 24 organizations based in 14 countries — Canada, Denmark, France, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Senegal, Singapore, Syria, the United Kingdom, and the United States — were interviewed.

During the second phase of the study, 63 front-line workers from 43 organizations based in 23 countries — Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Singapore, Somalia, Switzerland, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, and the United States — were interviewed.

a) Breakdown of respondents by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number (experts)</th>
<th>Number (workers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Breakdown of respondents by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number (experts)</th>
<th>Number (workers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

THE PREVENTION OF RADICALIZATION LEADING TO VIOLENCE 132
c) Breakdown of organizations by type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of organization</th>
<th>Number (experts)</th>
<th>Number (workers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit organization</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research institute</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institution</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d) Breakdown of organizations by type of radicalization targeted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of radicalization targeted</th>
<th>Number (experts)</th>
<th>Number (workers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamist radicalization</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far-right</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All forms of radicalization</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection tools

Our data was obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews designed to elicit discussion of the personal experiences of front-line workers involved in counter-radicalization.

As a prior step, a conceptual framework comprising the study dimensions and variables was developed. Examples of dimensions are coordination, evaluation, workers’ needs, and miscellaneous intervention-related issues. The variables were operationalized as questions for inclusion in the interview guide.
Procedure

Interviews

For each phase of the interviews, an interview guide was developed and used. This guide comprised a list of open-ended questions, and its main purpose was to remind the interviewer of the themes and dimensions to be addressed. An interview guide is not the equivalent of a questionnaire, a structured instrument used in quantitative research and containing closed-ended questions that the respondent must answer (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). An interview guide offers more flexibility during an interview, in which the interviewer must be prepared to change course as the discussion goes on, asking the questions not in a specific order but as a function of the themes raised by the respondent. The presence of the guide ensures that the most important questions will be not neglected.

Due to the geographical locations of the respondents, most of the interviews were conducted by Skype. Certain respondents were interviewed in person, such as those who work in Montreal, and even some of the ones working in Europe, on the occasion of visits by ICPC analysts in the course of this study. Only five of the interviews conducted throughout the study, including the exploratory phase, were group interviews, in which several experts or workers (from the same organization) were all present at the same interview. With the respondents’ consent, all interviews were recorded with a cellular phone or other recording device.

In certain cases, significant logistical difficulties made it difficult to conduct interviews, particularly where the difference between time zones was too great. In these cases, the interviews were conducted in writing; that is, the interview guides were used as questionnaires and e-mailed to the respondents for a written reply. This strategy was used with one expert during the exploratory phase and with one front-line worker.

The number of interviewers present during an interview varied. The initial interviews were generally done in the presence of two analysts so that they could familiarize themselves with the interview guide, identify any issues it raised, and consider how best to adapt it. Subsequent interviews were generally conducted in the presence of a single interviewer.

The presence of more than one interviewer did have some advantages: it afforded the possibility of elaborating on certain questions, since different interviewers might have different but complementary ideas about how to follow up on the questions. These interviews were generally richer and more productive as a result.

a) Exploratory interviews

The first phase consisted of interviewing experts in the field of radicalization and its prevention with a view to guiding us towards countries, cities, and organizations pursuing interesting and/or promising lines of work in this field, as well as referring us to potential participants in the second phase of the study.

The effort to recruit these experts involved e-mailing or phoning over 160 specialists, researchers, organizations, research centres, and centres of expertise on radicalization and terrorism in about 40 countries to invite them to take part in an interview.
Radicalization leading to violence is a multiform phenomenon that can be identified under a great variety of expressions. However, for the sake of this research, our team chose to focus on two specific forms of radicalization leading to violence, Islamic extremism and far-right extremism. As a consequence, this choice led to the exclusion of several regions of the world from the scope of this study. Latin America, especially, has known very specific forms of radicalization leading to violence processes, deeply intertwined with its own historic, cultural, social and political dynamics and constructs, thus setting this region aside in terms of our initiative. Furthermore, the researchers and interns involved in the study only had mastery of French, English, Spanish, Farsi, and Arabic, meaning that correspondence and communication (the initial e-mails and the interviews) had to take place in those languages. These linguistic constraints limited our study to countries and organizations that could communicate with the team in these languages.

One researcher in the study was invited by one of the participants in the exploratory interviews to take part in an international workshop on countering violent extremism (CVE). This workshop gave the researcher the opportunity to meet various experts and front-line workers in person, explain the study to them, and invite them to take part in an interview. Several respondents were recruited through this workshop, and they subsequently referred others.

b) Interviews with front-line workers

Front-line workers were recruited for the study using a snowball sampling strategy. Hennink et al. (2011) offer the following description of this method:

> It involves asking a study participant or a key informant whether they know anyone else in the community who meets the study criteria, and asking them to refer this person to the researcher; then, after interviewing the referred person, asking them whether they also know others in the community with the specific criteria, and so on. (p. 100)

The advantage of the snowball technique is that potential respondents are introduced to the study by a familiar, trusted person who has previously taken part in an interview, making them less suspicious of the study and more inclined to participate in it. In addition, this method is particularly useful for recruiting harder-to-reach participants; since radicalization is a delicate subject, certain workers may be hesitant to take part in a study that reveals the work they do, especially if it raises the profile of their counter-radicalization work and thereby impinges on their interventions or their personal safety.

A shortcoming of the snowball sampling technique is that it can lead to recruitment of individuals all belonging to the same social network, since it draws on the network of one individual to reach others. However, this limit can be overcome if several different starting points are used (Hennink et al., 2011). In this way, respondents can be recruited from different social networks and contexts, leading to a more heterogeneous sample. This was the case in the context of this study, since the experts who served as respondents during the exploratory interviews acted as multiple starting points for recruitment of front-line workers.
Transcription

For lack of time, it was not possible to produce verbatim (word-for-word) transcripts of all the interviews. Instead, we made use of an interview grid reiterating the conceptual framework developed in advance for the purpose of drafting the interview questions. The grid included these same questions, and the transcribers copied short excerpts from the interviews into the appropriate boxes of the grid as a function of the questions being answered by the respondent. These excerpts were recorded verbatim; the transcriber was not permitted to edit or rephrase them. Finally, verbatim transcripts were in fact produced for some interviews.

Coding

A simplified version of grounded theory was used in the context of this study. Grounded theory is a process for the development of theories based on empirical data (Charmaz, 2014). The purpose of drawing on this methodology in the context of this study was to produce models for the prevention of radicalization leading to violence based on our data. However, time constraints prevented us from developing such models in the context of this report. A subsequent report will be devoted to deriving such models from the data obtained.

The first step of analysis within the framework of grounded theory is coding (Paillé, 1994). Initial coding, as described by Paillé, consists in “discerning, identifying, naming, summarizing, thematizing the text of the corpus in question, nearly line by line” (1994, p. 154). In other words, the step consists of a meticulous analysis of data — in this case, interview transcripts. For initial coding, Charmaz (2014) recommends identifying the concepts in each data segment instead of forcing them into pre-existing categories. However, given the large quantity of data collected in this study, it was not feasible to perform line-by-line coding for each interview transcript. Instead, we opted for a combined deductive/inductive approach to code development. Most of the codes were developed on the basis of the conceptual framework produced during the initial phases of the study, which constituted a deductive approach. But our use of grounded theory also demanded that allowance be made for the interview data to suggest emergent codes; otherwise, certain unique issues raised by the respondents, that were not anticipated during development of the conceptual framework, stood to be ignored and lost. Therefore, the interview coders were tasked with identifying any information they considered relevant to the study that did not necessarily correspond to a pre-existing deductive code, and then develop a new inductive code to include that information.

In other words, our approach resembled the second stage of grounded theory, or categorization (Paillé, 1994), also called selective coding (Charmaz, 2014). The idea at this stage is to “raise the analysis to a conceptual level by developing a richer and more comprehensive nomenclature for the phenomena, the events emerging from the data … [the researcher] must situate her or his reading at the conceptual level and try to name the broader phenomenon to which the account refers or relates” (Paillé, 1994, p. 159). As mentioned earlier, the categories used at this stage of selective coding were not all directly constructed out of the data: most came from the dimensions of the conceptual framework that had served to develop the interview guide.
A free version of the QDAMiner application was used to code the interviews. All coders were given a short training session in the use of the software before beginning. Since the coding was done by more than one person, a document containing a description of each code was produced so as to standardize the interpretation of the codes. Emergent codes were added to this document as they were identified.

**Analysis and writing**

Data collection and analysis was not a linear but rather a circular process; that is to say, the analysis work began while the data collection was still underway. This approach, one of the underlying principles of grounded theory (Hennink et al., 2011), served to enrich the data collection because our codes enabled us to identify missing subjects or themes that had perhaps only been touched on during the initial interviews. During the follow-up interviews, the researchers were aware of the themes for which more information was needed and could phrase their questions so as to elicit the missing information.

We preserved the respondents’ anonymity by excluding their names and organizations from the report. Only their location is mentioned, using phrases such as “a worker in North America,” in view of our objective of distinguishing between the approaches and interventions used in Western and non-Western countries.