



The Global Solutions Exchange*

A Global Civil Society Advocacy, Policy Analysis, and Collaboration Platform Dedicated to Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)

The Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) is a global civil society advocacy, policy analysis, and collaboration platform dedicated to preventing violent extremism (PVE) and supporting the implementation of relevant global frameworks at the regional, national, and local levels.

The need for systematic and structured civil society-government interactions around the global PVE agenda, including for the purpose of helping to ensure that PVE policies and programs are informed by on-the-ground realities particularly for and by women-led organizations, was the primary impetus for the initial [launch](#) of the GSX in September 2016 by the Royal Norwegian Government in partnership with International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) and the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) which it spearheads. Its overarching purpose is to enable more systematic engagement between CSOs and governments, and multilateral bodies, to share knowledge, perspectives, and solutions in promoting a “whole of society”, gender-sensitive approach to PVE policies and practices and to promote greater collaboration among independent civil society organizations (CSOs) at the local, national, regional, and global levels working to prevent violent extremism and promote peace, rights, equality and pluralism as necessary elements to countering the spread of violent extremism. The GSX is committed to providing policymakers with concrete, practical recommendations to enable them to develop and implement sustainable “whole of society” approaches to reducing radicalization and recruitment to violence.

*The GSX seeks to bring policy makers and practitioners from different sectors and perspectives together to share knowledge and solutions. While we welcome this diversity of opinions as a means of reaching better outcomes, the views expressed at GSX events, by steering group members or other partners do not necessarily reflect the views of all such members and partners.



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Promoting Extension by Promoting Rights, Peace & Pluralism





1.0 OVERVIEW

1.1 Mission and Vision

Civil society is the first to feel the impact of rising extremism and therefore best placed to initiate preventive measures. The GSX seeks to amplify their voices and efforts at the national, regional, and international levels, along with other community-based actors who have the trust and authenticity to engage locally.

The GSX is committed to supporting such efforts by collaboratively working on its core objectives (see section 1.2) to help both sustain a ‘communities-first’ approach to PVE and ensure proactive interactions with national and multilateral policy makers. Its purpose is to enable the exchange of effective solutions and recommendations to ensure a collective and therefore more sustainable impact on the prevention of violent extremism than any single organization or sector, working alone, could have.

A “whole of society” approach to PVE recognizes that governments are not able to prevent and counter violent extremism on their own, but are dependent on communities and local actors. It also recognizes that an independent vibrant civil society sector is itself a critical bulwark against the rise of extremism, as it can allow for constructive dissent and engagement by civil society actors on government approaches to this issue. This requires a comprehensive and strategic approach that empowers and engages civil society at all levels, enabling them to be more effective in influencing national and multilateral policies and programs to address underlying drivers of violent extremism. It is critical that civil society entities - many of which come to the PVE domain with extensive experience in related fields such as conflict prevention, youth empowerment, women’s rights, human rights, education, and peacebuilding - are able to coordinate more strategically around the PVE agenda and further contribute to promoting “whole of society” approaches to address violent extremism.

1.2 Objectives

The GSX’s overarching objective is to facilitate systematic and durable exchange around challenges, effective solutions and recommendations among civil society groups, in particular women-led and youth organizations, to influence government, and multilateral actors for policy and programming around the PVE agenda. To achieve this, the GSX will pursue a range of inter-related objectives. For example, it will:

- A. Promote more horizontal (among CSOs) and vertical (between CSOs and national, regional, and global-level actors) cooperation and coordination on the PVE agenda.
- B. Elevate and amplify local civil society voices in global, regional and national PVE policy conversations- voices that are too often absent or otherwise not heard. In this context, the GSX will seek to ensure that CSOs and other local actors become more aware of the global PVE framework, which includes the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism (UN Plan of Action), as well as other global frameworks in related fields such as women, peace and security (e.g., UNSC resolution 1325 (2000/2008/09/10/13/15) and 2242 (2016), and youth, peace and security (UNSC





resolution 2286 (2016) and 2250 (2016) and development (*i.e.*, the Sustainable Development Goals);

- C. Enable governments to learn of the negative impact or side-effects of existing PVE policies and practices on affected populations, and hear of the solutions offered. The GSX will furthermore assure that the perspectives and experiences of these local actors inform the efforts of international, regional, and national actors to implement these frameworks in an integrated manner.
- D. Encourage more in-depth focus on issues and solutions across sectors, notably security, governance, economic, education, and other spheres that are relevant to long-term prevention and peacebuilding beyond security-oriented responses;
- E. Enable lesson-learning vertically between local CSOs and governmental partners from different countries facing similar manifestations of violent extremism, including highlighting ‘know-how’ and good practices;
- F. Facilitate analyses to increase the knowledge of the gender dimensions of violent extremism and the conditions that enable it with a focus on solutions, including early warning, preventive action and gender-responsive initiatives;
- G. Foster greater trust and understanding between governments and CSOs in their efforts to promote rights, peace and pluralism, and push back the tide of extremism and militarism;
- H. Connect the growing number of existing networks including global, regional, national, and sub-national PVE or PVE-related civil society initiatives;
- I. Enable coordinated advocacy at the global, regional, and national level in support of the ‘whole of society’ PVE agenda; and
- J. Ensure that the PVE policy and programming efforts avoid siloes of ‘youth’ or ‘women’, and instead ensure inclusivity in all gatherings, programming, analysis, reporting, resource allocations and policy advocacy.

2.0 ACTIVITIES

2.1 Notional List of Activities

In order to achieve its objectives, the GSX will seek[†] to undertake the following activities in 2017-2018.

1. **Thematic:** GSX partners will lead thematic, cross-regional working groups to enable in-depth interactions between civil society, and government, and multilateral actors on issues that intersect with the complex dynamics of violent extremism and in some cases contribute to drivers of radicalization (e.g. abusive security interventions or intolerance in educational systems). These working groups and other GSX thematic workshops will provide a safe space for exchange of experiences, lessons learned, and analysis of effective programmatic and policy solutions to inform and improve government and multilateral strategies (such as national PVE action plans), as well as a mechanism for monitoring progress and new developments.

[†] The scope and pace of GSX activities will be determined, to some degree, by the availability of funding.



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2. **Regional:** GSX partners will convene workshops together with regional and other multilateral bodies and/or on the margins of inter-governmental conferences organized by such bodies to ensure the diverse perspective from civil society are reflected in regional PVE discussions and so that regional responses are more likely to capture the range of thematic issues needed to achieve a “whole of society” approach to PVE.
3. **Global Advocacy:** GSX partners will mobilize, and where appropriate, coordinate, relevant CSOs and international NGOs to advocate for “whole of society”, gendered and human rights-based PVE policies and programs at the national, regional, and global levels.
4. **A global PVE impact database:** The database will capture information on civil society-led PVE programs and PVE policies worldwide as a basis for a global meta-evaluation of the impact of PVE, as well as more detailed, region-specific impact studies. This work will also inform the GSX’s policy analysis and recommendations.
5. **PVE analysis and policy recommendations focused on global, regional, national, and local stakeholders:** GSX partners will, relying, inter alia, on the discussions in and outputs from other GSX activities, produce:
 - a. an annual report on the state of “whole of society” global PVE efforts that includes policy-relevant recommendations informed by the global PVE impact database;
 - b. discrete thematic, policy-relevant issue briefs focused on specific PVE aspects; and
 - c. good practices and lessons learned (including for national governments) across a range of PVE issues from the perspective of civil society. This will be linked to the database to help ensure that findings are acted upon and that more positive practices in a country or community are shared to potentially be adapted and adopted by others.
6. **Small-grants program:** Some GSX partners have independent funds[‡] dedicated to channelling resources to local network partners that are at the frontlines of PVE work and innovating local solutions aimed at promoting peace, pluralism, and preventing violent extremism.
7. **Information sharing and communications:** GSX partners will initiate a monthly newsletter to the GSX network. The newsletter will primarily support the quest to strengthen horizontal collaboration among CSOs to allow for sharing of experiences, joint capacity-building, training, project opportunities, and impact assessment. The newsletter will provide CSOs with the opportunity to highlight and showcase their work by elevating and amplifying local civil society voices and create new opportunities for potential collaborations amongst each other

[‡] This will leverage, inter alia, ICAN’s existing Inclusive Challenge Fund (ICF) grants capacity and the Global Center’s relevant small grants programs, as appropriate.





by enhancing the visibility of the CSOs and their work. It will also initiate a “PVE blog”, which will serve as an online forum for promoting the viewpoints of CSOs and other local actors working to prevent violent extremism in their communities, and well as for promoting pragmatic PVE and PVE-relevant solutions that policymakers and practitioners face.

- 8. **Strengthening capacities of civil society around the PVE agenda;** GSX partners will offer training to representatives of civil society organizations, government and multilateral entities on PVE-related topics, particularly with regard to the gender dimensions and lessons regarding support to local communities. GSX partners also commit to secure funding to support financially the participation of civil society representatives.

3.0 ABOUT THE GSX

3.1 The GSX Steering Group

The Steering Group will be co-led by ICAN, in its capacity as coordinator of WASL, and the Prevention Project during its initial phase from 2017-2019 with the Global Center, GCSP, RUSI, and Search for Common Ground as the other initial members. This group may expand over time depending on the needs and requirements of the GSX. Individual members will assume a discrete role in leading implementation, drawing on their relevant expertise, and ensuring inclusion and collaboration with other steering group partners in each area of activity.

3.2 Other Partners

Activities will be coordinated closely with other key partners including: GCERF; Hedayah; M&C Saatchi; the RESOLVE Network; the Youth, Peace and Security Network; the UN (including the soon-to-be established Office of Counter-Terrorism, the CTITF and its relevant entities including CTED and UNDP); as well as relevant regional and local civil society organizations and networks, to draw upon the data they are collecting in the field about good practices as well as challenges. This initiative will also make referrals to GCERF and PVE donors concerning its findings, including prioritized civil society recommendations for future investments.

