Executive Summary

Research Objectives

The objectives of this mapping are threefold:

1. to identify Canadian initiatives working in the area of secondary and tertiary prevention of radicalization and violent extremism;

2. to document these initiatives in terms of size, structure, content, model, resources, and challenges; and

3. to illustrate the initiatives through an interactive map.

This report is the first of a series of three and provides a comprehensive description of identified Canadian organizations. As such, it answers the questions Who, Does What, and Where in the area of secondary and tertiary prevention of radicalization and violent extremism in Canada.

Procedure

A qualitative research approach was employed to map secondary and tertiary prevention organizations working in the context of radicalization and violent extremism in Canada.

The mapping was carried out in three main phases:

1. Identification of key players in the field of prevention of radicalization and violent extremism in Canada;

2. Documentation of the practices of individuals and organizations working in secondary and tertiary prevention of radicalization and violent

extremism in Canada through semi-structured interviews with practitioners; and

3. Analysis of interview data, writing reports, and creating an interactive map of existing resources.

A total of 32 organizations were interviewed by the mapping team between November 2018 and March 2020. Six organizations were excluded from the sample based on the team's inclusion criteria. The interviews were analyzed in-depth to identify relevant information for documenting organizations in terms of size, structure, content, models, resources, and challenges.

Key Results

Several key findings emerged from the data analysis:

1. The field of prevention of radicalization and extremism is still in its infancy in Canada. Prevention programs are very young and, in many cases, non-specialized. Moreover, professionals receive very little training in the field.

2. Organizations providing secondary and tertiary prevention in the context of violent radicalization are unevenly distributed across the country. Indeed, they are mostly concentrated in large cities in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. Furthermore, as many areas of the country lack specialized resources, practitioners from other regions are required to take on additional cases, which subsequently puts more pressure on their own organisations.

3. Canadian practitioners do not feel sufficiently equipped to work with

individuals at risk and/or in the process of radicalization, and they feel anxious when called upon to intervene in this context.

4. Although multi-sectoral and inter-team collaborations are desired and encouraged, they remain difficult to establish. The difficulty is in part due to competition for funding as well as differences in approaches to intervention and information sharing, particularly between the psychosocial and security sectors.

5. Researchers play multiple roles in intervention programs. These roles sometimes extend beyond research. Some researchers, for example, occasionally become involved in client interventions or the design of intervention programs. Such blurring of roles may be due to a lack of practitioners and resources, or confusion about the skills needed to carry out interventions in the field.

Recommendations

1. Continue to support and promote the plurality of values, structures, and sectors, as well as the multidisciplinarity of teams.

2. Ensure consistency between an organization or team's size and capabilities and its needs on the ground.

Given that realities on the ground can differ, strengthening collaborations between organizations and their partners in the field could allow for a better distribution of resources, thereby strengthening the capacity to respond adequately to needs that are as varied as they are multifaceted.

3. Renew funding for potentially effective programs to ensure their proper implementation and avoid failures resulting from a lack of resources.

4. Encourage exchanges between practitioners from different organizations and teams to maximize knowledge sharing, improve practices, and prevent repeating the same mistakes in different places.

5. A) Promote exchanges between practitioners and the communities they work in to develop a better understanding of upstream needs.

B) Support program officers to develop a strategic plan, vision, and medium-term objectives.

6. Organizations would benefit from developing explicit theories of change that are articulated and in harmony with the organizations' founding values and missions.

Such theories would help clarify objectives and ensure that these objectives are measurable.

7. Organizations should clarify their case management models and explicitly specify their objectives. This would help structure their actions and enable them to evaluate their successes, failures, and needs better.

8. Foster trust and collaboration by facilitating sustained contact between organizations/teams through, for example, communities of practice.

9. Make training accessible and ongoing so that practitioners are aware of developments regarding good practices and research.

Promote exchanges between practitioners from different organizations/teams.

10. Establish communities of practice or meetings for "simulation exercises" between the police/security and psychosocial/community sectors. Doing so will make it possible to develop consensual solutions for important challenges in the field (e.g., recognizing each sector's culture, understanding national and provincial legal frameworks, and framing the issues of consent, confidentiality, and information sharing).

11. Encourage the existence and involvement of community policing in communities of practice and in establishing collaborative links with organizations.

12. A) Promote a sustained dialogue with the media community to sensitize them to the delicate balance between disseminating information and their ethical and safety responsibility towards individuals.

B) Engage web and social media giants to face their responsibility in propagating the phenomena of hatred and radicalization or violent extremism and, consequently, their capacity for preventing the phenomena.

C) Hold media and web and social network giants responsible and accountable for their actions should they break pre-established agreements with organizations/teams.

13. Diversify funding sources, particularly for newer, smaller, under-funded initiatives that rely primarily on volunteers to operate.

14. A) Revise the budget envelopes allocated to research and field initiatives to improve equity and balance of funding.

B) Encourage collaborations between the research and practice communities by putting research into practice.

15. Opt for a decentralized approach by developing resources in diverse communities and fostering collaboration between these different resources.

16. Assess whether needs exist at the provincial or territorial level and either develop initiatives or optimize existing structures (for example, by giving them a new mandate or providing training) to offer services wherever needed.

17. Promote sustained dialogue within communities of practice to share knowledge, tools, and experiences around the issue of risk assessment and management.

The sustained dialogue will also permit the co-development of frameworks and consensus guidelines, especially as the current state of the literature does not allow for the generation of convincing recommendations on the subject.

In Conclusion

To date, there has been no directory or description of organizations working in the area of radicalization and violent extremism in the country. This mapping is, therefore, the first of its kind in Canada.

This report is devoted to describing these organizations. It will be followed by a second report that will focus on issues of collaboration and a third report that will examine intervention models and issues related to interventions.