



# Strong Cities Network

POLICY AND  
PRACTICE MODEL

# ESTABLISHING LOCAL PREVENTION NETWORKS



The Strong Cities Network's (SCN) Local Prevention Network Model: A model for the establishment of grassroots-owned and municipality-led infrastructure for the coordination of community led approaches to building social cohesion and preventing violent extremism. *This model has been trialled in Lebanon and Jordan from 2016 to 2019*

*Launched at the United Nations in 2015*, the SCN is the only global framework for sharing experience and expertise on building community resilience to violent extremism directly between cities and municipalities on a global scale.

The SCN engages cities across the world, drawing on a membership of **120 cities** that spans different levels of expertise, experience, and programming to prevent and counter violent extremism in all its ideological forms.

## ESTABLISHING A LOCAL PREVENTION NETWORK

One of the most important roles for municipality-led prevention work is to coordinate and facilitate a local network leveraging existing professional groups who already work with communities. In Europe and North America, municipal 'multi-agency' models lead community efforts to prevent violent extremism. In 2016, the SCN adapted the local multi-agency model for Lebanon and Jordan. The SCN has helped the municipalities of Saida, Tripoli and Majdal Anjar in Lebanon, and Zarqa, Karak and Irbid in Jordan, to successfully establish Local Prevention Networks.

In addition to informing national P/CVE policy formulation and supporting its implementation, a locally-owned platform like a Prevention Network that involves community professionals dedicated to prevention, can facilitate the coordination of activities such as:

- ▶ Identifying general and local causes of risk behaviour and concern factors.
- ▶ Raising awareness about propaganda or recruitment tactics of violent groups.
- ▶ Identifying and sharing knowledge about activities that could help protect communities.
- ▶ Motivating and inspiring other institutions and professionals to work with prevention.
- ▶ Developing yearly action plans for prevention of radicalization and extremism in the local area.



Based on lessons learned from Lebanon and Jordan, this How To Guide has been designed to help other municipalities, with the approval and leadership of local Mayors, to establish their own Local Prevention Network.

## STEP 1

### **COORDINATE WITH NATIONAL PVE UNIT AND MINISTRIES**

While municipalities are the lead actor in Local Prevention Networks, it is vital that municipalities first coordinate with relevant national authorities, such as the National PVE Unit in Lebanon, or the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in Jordan. These national authorities can help to support your efforts to establish a Local Prevention Network.

## STEP 2

### **IDENTIFY PREVENTION NETWORK COORDINATOR OR FOCAL POINT**

Local Prevention Networks need a Focal Point or Coordinator. This person is ultimately responsible for the actions and activities of the Local Prevention Network. The Focal Point should be a specialised employee/civil servant of the municipality who displays a critical understanding of the local context, strong local networks, interpersonal skills, and the ability to convene, motivate and inspire Local Prevention Network members. Good organisational skills are vital.

## STEP 3

### **IDENTIFY PREVENTION NETWORK MEMBERS**

Selection of Prevention Network members is critical to success. A Local Prevention Network should consist of 8-12 members who represent various religious and ethnic community groups to effectively represent their community. Prevention Networks need to bring together professionals with a variety of expertise, perspectives, and access to different constituencies, particularly youth. Members could also include national government representatives at the local level, local police (depending on the context) and community and family protection units. Members need to be professional, apolitical, open-minded, collaborative and comfortable working with youth. Above all, they need to have a good positive attitude and be motivated to improve their local community. For sustainability, it is important to ensure that members have the backing of their organisations and employers so they are not only able to commit themselves in their free time.

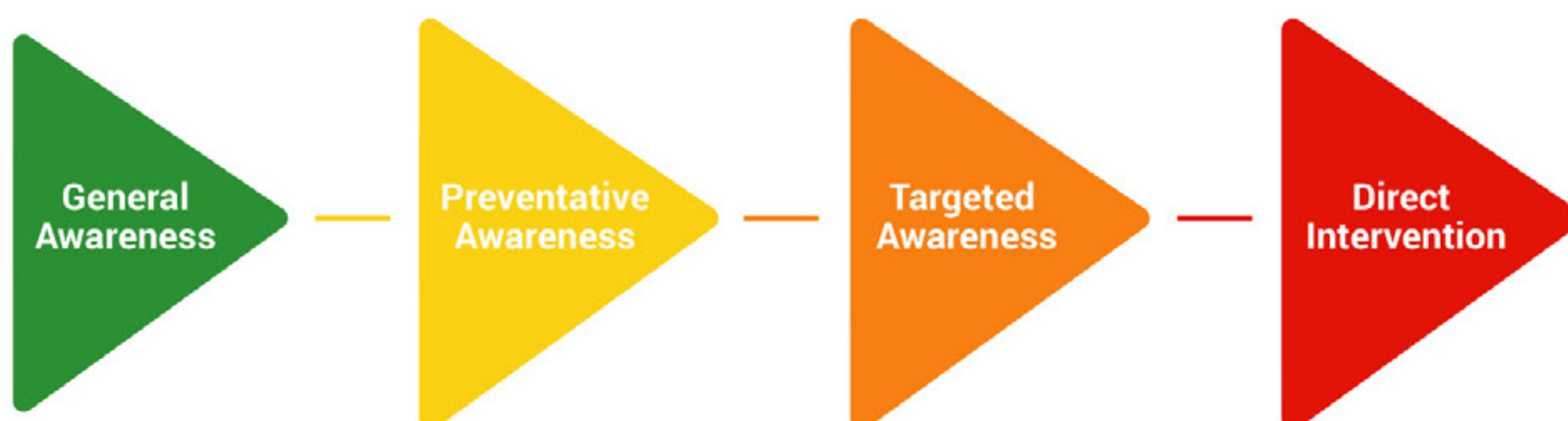


# STEP 4

## SKILLS AUDIT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Before activities can begin, an initial audit of member skills, knowledge and capacities should be undertaken by the Focal Point. This will help form the basis of initial training programmes. The SCN website provides training resources including online training modules in Arabic. Initial meetings should include team-working exercises and agreement on Terms of Reference outlining the mandate of the Prevention Network. A useful tool that the PNs use as part of their context analysis is the 'Prevention Triangle' of risks and interventions. Through this tool, PNs can identify the level to which they are willing and capable of responding.

- ▶ **'General Awareness':**  
Activities catering for whole community. Focus on social skills, critical thinking and a sense of responsibility in children and young people.
- ▶ **'Preventative Awareness':**  
Activities for areas or neighbourhoods that may be vulnerable or prone to violence.
- ▶ **'Targeted Awareness':**  
Activities with individuals who may be vulnerable or prone to violence.
- ▶ **'Direct Intervention':**  
Activities with individuals previously active in extremist groups or deemed susceptible to violence or other criminal acts.



# STEP 5

## COORDINATION AND TRAINING

The frequency with which local coordination mechanisms like PNs should meet varies depending on local needs. Prevention Networks in Lebanon and Jordan tend to meet every 1-2 months. Coordination meetings allow Prevention Network members to receive training and research briefings on different aspects of PVE policies and programmes, build trust with their fellow Prevention Network members, and design and implement P/CVE activities for the local community. Training for Prevention Network members is delivered through workshops with experts and experienced local practitioners, exchanges with other municipalities and Prevention Networks, as well as 'action learning' in the form of the co-design and delivery of PVE projects. Focal Points or Coordinators should also be trained in monitoring and evaluation of Prevention Network activities.

# STEP 6

## LOCAL PRIORITIES AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Once established and trained, Local Prevention Networks should play the lead role in identifying the needs of the local community by conducting a local risk assessment and making a list of priorities. Based on these priorities, Prevention Networks can design community engagement activities. For example, PNs in Lebanon and Jordan have delivered community PVE activities including:

- ▶ Dialogue sessions
- ▶ Development of resources such as PVE guides
- ▶ Development of a religious sermon PVE agenda
- ▶ Arts and PVE trainings for youth
- ▶ PVE in education trainings for teachers and scout leaders

## WHAT IS THE COST FOR OPERATING A LOCAL PREVENTION NETWORK?

Operating a Local Prevention Network requires only a small cost from municipalities. Focal Points should be municipal employees, but with an expanded remit to lead Prevention Network activities, so salaries are already covered by the municipality. Prevention Network members volunteer their time and only require a small reimbursement for local travel. Community activities can be free or low cost. SCN can support Prevention Networks to identify and apply for funding for community activities.



## VISUALISING THE LOCAL PREVENTION NETWORK

