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SOCLES

International Centre
for Socio-Legal Studies

Transatlantic Network Against Extremism

Project Report

TransNex

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"The content of this report was made possible only through the valuable insights, ideas, and contributions shared by the amazing individuals who attended the online workshops and the in-person symposium. Your collaboration and contributions were essential in shaping this work."

Honoring the Dialogue: A Call to Action for the PVE in the Education Settings

The success of our recent Transatlantic Network Against Extremism (TransNex) symposium, December 11-13, 2024, underscored the critical need for open, honest, and inclusive dialogue within the field of preventing violent extremism (PVE). Participants consistently highlighted the high quality of insights shared, emphasizing the importance of creating safe spaces for all stakeholders, including individuals with diverse perspectives and those who may hold extremist views.

A recurring theme throughout the discussions was the principle of "do no harm." Recognizing the potential for unintended consequences, practitioners are called upon to cultivate an environment of empathy, active listening, and respect for diverse viewpoints. For example, participants raised concerns about how overly broad definitions of "extremism" can stigmatize and marginalize entire communities or how focusing on persons with extremist views and actions can lose sight of the needs of the persons affected.

Building upon the valuable insights gained during the symposium, we would want to:



Maintain and strengthen our collective in the form of an intersectoral/international Community of Practice to enhance resilience by creating an international network:

Cultivating supportive networks within the PVE field is crucial for navigating the complexities of our work.



Foster collaboration and knowledge sharing:

By connecting with practitioners and researchers across sectors and international borders, we can leverage diverse expertise and develop more effective PVE strategies.



Embrace continuous learning and improvement:

The evolving nature of violent extremism and its role in societies demand that we continually adapt our approaches and refine our understanding of this complex challenge.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the project, the three online workshops, and the in-person symposium's key findings and recommendations. We encourage you to read on and join us in translating these insights into concrete actions that contribute to a safer and more inclusive future for all.

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Transatlantic Network Against Extremism (TransNex) Project Report

This report summarizes the activities and outcomes of the Transatlantic Network Against Extremism (TransNex) project, a collaborative initiative between the SOCLES International Centre for Socio-Legal Studies and the Canadian Practitioners Network for The Prevention of

Extremist Violence (CPN-PREV). Funded by the Government of Canada's Community Resilience Fund (CRF), TransNex aims to enhance international cooperation in preventing violent extremism.

The project's primary objectives are to:



Foster peer-to-peer learning:

Facilitate knowledge exchange and best practice sharing among frontline practitioners, subject matter experts, and policymakers from Canada, Germany, and other countries.



Identify key gaps in prevention programming:

Collaboratively assess existing approaches and pinpoint areas for improvement in preventing violent extremism.



Develop innovative solutions:

Work together to create new resources and training programs tailored to local needs and the evolving threat environment.

TransNex utilized a multi-faceted approach, starting with online workshops and concluding with an in-person symposium to achieve these objectives. The following details the project's online workshops, symposium, key findings, and recommendations for future collaboration in preventing violent extremism.

Online Workshops

Background and Context:

In the series of three half-day online workshops, participants explored the issue of violent extremism in educational settings.

Workshop 1 examined the current landscape in Canada and Germany.

Workshop 2 focused on learning from the experiences of education professionals.

Finally, **Workshop 3** centered on youth voices, allowing them to share their perspectives and contribute to developing effective prevention strategies.

All workshops followed a structured format with presentations, discussions, and group activities to facilitate learning and collaboration.

Overarching Goals:

The TransNex workshop series addressed the multi-faceted issue of violent extremism within educational, child, and youth welfare settings.

Objectives:

- To provide a platform for diverse stakeholders to share experiences, insights, and recommendations.
- To foster collaboration and knowledge exchange between Canadian and German practitioners.
- To develop a deeper understanding of the issue and identify effective prevention and response strategies.

Participants:

The workshops brought together a diverse group of 40 participants from Germany and Canada, including:

- Researchers
- Community workers
- Youth workers
- Policymakers
- Representatives from government agencies
- Youth representatives
- Educators (teachers, school administrators)

Workshop 1: Violent Extremism in Canada and Germany Educational Settings; a scoping review

Presenters: Prof. Diana Miconi (Université de Montréal), Leon A. Brandt (SOCLES)

Topics:

- Presented research findings and analyses on the landscape of violent extremism within Canadian and German educational contexts.
- Explored the nuances of violent extremism within educational environments.

Process:

Participants actively engaged in discussions, contributed their perspectives, and collaborated in breakout groups to:

- Analyze the presented information.
- Identify key challenges and potential solutions.
- Develop recommendations for enhancing prevention frameworks in educational settings.

Discussion Highlights:

Research in Canada and Germany highlighted the need to re-evaluate PVE approaches in educational settings, emphasizing data-driven decision-making, cross-sector collaboration, and youth participation.

Challenges:

Complexities of contexts, resource constraints, resistance within the education system, and lack of interagency coordination were identified.

Role of Educational Settings:

- Educational settings are crucial for PVE/CVE by fostering critical thinking, promoting social cohesion, and teaching conflict resolution skills.
- Schools can serve as safe spaces for discussing sensitive topics and build student's resilience against extremist narratives.

Key Audiences:

Student educators, and parents are all crucial stakeholders.

Strengthening Educational Settings:

- Capacity development for educators on PVE/CVE is essential.
- Integrating PVE/CVE primary prevention themes into curricula and strengthening school-community ties are crucial.
- Support systems within schools, including counseling services, are vital.

Prevention vs. Early Detection:

- Primary prevention focuses on broad-based strategies to reduce the likelihood of violent radicalization while early detection involves identifying and intervening with individuals showing early signs of radicalization.
- Understanding and distinguishing between these approaches is critical for effective interventions because the education setting should focus on prevention rather than detection

Youth Participation:

- Authentic youth involvement empowers them to contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes.
- It fosters trust and builds ownership among youth, leading to more effective and sustainable PVE initiatives.

Workshop 2: Learning from Experience

Presenters: Panel of specialized education workers from Canada and Germany, Cécile Rousseau (McGill University), Marie-Hélène Rivest (RAPS Team), Anna Gross (Springstoff Berlin)

Topics:

- Shared personal experiences and challenges faced by frontline workers in addressing violent extremism.
- Highlighted successful strategies employed in their work.

Process:

- Panel discussion with Q&A session.
- Breakout group discussions to analyze panelists' narratives and develop recommendations for enhancing the role of specialized staff in preventing/responding to violent extremism.

Discussion Highlights:

Building on the results of the first workshop on the fundamental relationship between PVE/CVE and educational settings, the second workshop focused on the role of front-line workers in educational settings. Inputs from Canada and Germany revealed numerous challenges for schools in promoting democracy and preventing extremism.

Challenges:

Schools face immense pressure due to multiple educational tasks, limited resources, and the lack of teacher training on recognizing and addressing extremist phenomena.

Dominant Extremism:

Right-wing populism and extremism pose the most significant threat. Coalitions between right-wing and other extremist actors are increasing. In Germany, the dangerous conflation of Islam and Islamism remains a concern.

School's Role:

- Schools are crucial for upstream PVE/CVE strategies, but often operate as repressive systems.
- Stronger networking between schools and specialized PVE/CVE organizations is needed.
- Family involvement and addressing student needs are essential.
- Schools should foster moderated discussions, teach democratic values, and develop emotional intelligence.
- Systemic restructuring is necessary to make democratic values tangible in everyday school life.

Long-term Systemic Approaches:

- Overarching systemic solutions are needed to address the interlocking crises faced by schools.
- Long-term strategies and follow-up projects are crucial.
- Federal systems must be considered and their limitations addressed.
- The goal is to free teachers from the burden of individual responsibility.
- Strategic approaches should be compared and integrated, with schools and other educational settings playing a key role.

In view of these complex, interlocking challenges, involving different actors, the question arises as to what contribution the international network of the TransNex project can make. This concern was broadly discussed during the three-day symposium.

Workshop 3: Amplifying Youth Voices: Listening to youth lived experiences

Presenters: Panel of youth representatives, Sharif Mahdy (Chief Executive Officer of the Students Commission of Canada), Lachlan Brown (Young Adult Facilitator of Hearing Unheard Moments)

Topics:

- Shared personal stories, challenges, and aspirations of youth related to violent extremism.
- Emphasized the importance of listening to youth voices and perspectives.

Process:

- Panel discussion with Q&A session.
- Breakout group discussions to explore youth perspectives and develop recommendations for reinforcing youth voice in schools.
- Open floor to add and reflect on strategies and experiences to encourage youth, parents, teachers, and community engagement.

Discussion Highlights:

The pilot year of the TransNex project focuses on the relationship between PVE/CVE and educational settings. The first workshop provided a research-informed overview and comparison between Canada and Germany. This was followed in the second workshop by the perspective of front-line workers. The panorama was completed in the third and last workshop by the young people's view of the topic and the associated challenges and conflict situations, as well as possible solution strategies. We were very privileged to have Sharif Mahdy (Chief Executive Officer) and Lachlan Brown (Young Adult Facilitator of Hearing Unheard Moments) from the Students Commission of Canada (SCC) present the work of the SCC and in particular the Hearing Unheard Moments (HUM) project.

The Hearing Unheard Moments (HUM) project, developed by the Students Commission of Canada (SCC), is a youth-led initiative that fosters deeper exchanges on controversial topics among young people. Recognizing the importance of peer-to-peer learning and the need for safe spaces, HUM encourages young people to create environments based on four core principles: Respect, Listen, Understand, and Communicate. By focusing on

these principles, HUM aims to cultivate critical thinking, respectful interaction, and empathy among youth, ultimately empowering them to navigate challenging social issues and resist the polarizing forces that impact their lives. The methodology emphasizes the importance of "having the conversation on how to have the conversation," focusing on respectful communication and an interdisciplinary approach to understanding various forms of hatred and contempt.

Challenges:

- Initial research and discussions revealed a limited understanding of the complexities of PVE/CVE within diverse educational contexts, both in Canada and Germany.
- Engaging young people meaningfully in PVE/CVE discussions proved challenging, requiring innovative approaches to ensure their voices were heard and their perspectives valued.

Role of Trainers:

- The success of the HUM project relies heavily on the role of skilled facilitators.
- Trainers in the HUM methodology require a delicate balance of providing structure and guidance while allowing for the development of individual personalities and facilitation styles.
- Authenticity and a commitment to the core values of respect, listening, understanding, and communication are essential for effective facilitation.

Resources:

- Implementing the HUM project requires significant resources, including trained facilitators, support staff (medical, logistical), and potentially mental health professionals for facilitator well-being.
- Funding for travel, accommodation, materials, and the ongoing support of facilitators is required.
- Organizing and managing large-scale HUM events requires considerable time and logistical planning.

Workshops' Synthesis

The workshops aimed to address the multifaceted issue of violent extremism within the educational, child and youth welfare and community settings by providing a platform for diverse stakeholders to share experiences, insights, and recommendations.



Workshop 1: Focused on understanding the landscape of violent extremism in Canadian and German educational contexts through scoping reviews, encouraging active participation and collaboration among participants.



Workshop 2: Shifted the focus to learning from the experiences of specialized educational workers, fostering dialogue and collaboration to enhance prevention and response strategies.



Workshop 3: Amplified the voices of youth, providing a space for them to share their lived experiences and perspectives, and explore actionable strategies for listening to youth voices in educational settings.

Schools and other educational institutions need to integrate long-term strategies that address the complexity of extremist violence, particularly within the context of the ongoing wars and the rise of right-wing extremism.

The participants identified issues of concern that are summarized per level of intervention as the following:

Systemic

Both Canada and Germany's federal systems demand critical reflection to address the specific challenges they pose to the implementation of PVE strategies. There is a call for harmonizing efforts across various actors to avoid competitive approaches and instead foster symbiotic, collaborative strategies.

Focus on Long-Term Solutions: The emphasis should be on creating sustainable, long-term solutions rather than short-term, innovative projects. Follow-up initiatives and research are crucial to ensure that systemic change is sustained.

Institutional Restructuring: Schools need to be restructured as spaces where democratic principles are integrated into everyday life. This requires teaching emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and skills to handle ambiguity and crises.

Structural Level

Educational settings, especially schools, are often burdened with multiple tasks but lack the necessary resources and support systems to effectively tackle PVE.

Proposed strategies were:

Strengthened School-Community Partnerships:

Schools should form stronger ties with specialized primary prevention community organizations to provide a broader support network for both students and teachers. This would help alleviate the pressure on schools to handle these issues alone.

Support for Educators: Teachers often face the challenge of recognizing and addressing violence phenomena and handling sensitive situations and discussions without adequate knowledge or training. The need to provide schools with resources, including professional development and training for educators in PVE was underscored.

Engagement with Families: Engaging families is crucial to extend PVE efforts beyond the school. This would create a more comprehensive network, where the lessons and strategies taught at school are reinforced at home.

Capacity Building

The capacity building of educators and institutions is vital for effective PVE. The following needs were emphasized:

Continuous Training: Educators require ongoing, specialized training to deal with extremist ideologies, including understanding early warning signs and how to implement preventive strategies in a sensitive and effective manner.

Curriculum Integration: PVE themes need to be seamlessly integrated into school curricula, particularly through lessons on critical thinking, media literacy, and social justice. This not only builds resilience but helps students understand and counter extremist narratives.

Support Systems: Schools should also strengthen internal support systems, including counseling services and peer support groups, to provide comprehensive care for students at risk of radicalization.

Youth Engagement

Youth engagement was highlighted as a critical element in PVE efforts. Authentic youth participation ensures that strategies are effective, relevant, and sustainable.

Beyond Tokenism: Youth must be genuinely included in decision-making processes related to PVE, as this fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility. By feeling valued, young people are more likely to engage actively in preventing extremist ideologies within their communities.

Listening to Youth Voices: Involving youth as stakeholders ensures that PVE initiatives resonate with their experiences and perspectives. This participation leads to more trust between youth and other stakeholders, such as educators and policymakers, fostering more effective collaboration.

Focus on Youth Needs: PVE strategies should prioritize the needs and challenges of young people. The aim should be to create spaces where youth feel heard, supported, and equipped to resist radicalization.

The in-person symposium

After addressing all the previously mentioned urgent topics in the online workshops, the TransNex team acknowledged the importance of meeting in person in a safe space to discuss these topics further, reflect collectively, facilitate sharing ideas, and define upcoming tasks. For these reasons, the TransNex team held a symposium in Montreal, QC, December 11-13, 2024. TransNex brought together 45 participants from the fields of practice, academia and policy in Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States to share their knowledge in the field of prevention of violent extremism.

This symposium, hosted by the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (CSLP) at Concordia University, was built on the outcome of the series of online workshops organized by CPN-PREV and SOCLES between June and October 2024.

Background and Context



The TransNex Symposium followed a series of online workshops held between June and October 2024. As previously mentioned, these workshops addressed the growing concern of violent extremism within educational, child and youth welfare, and community settings. The TransNex team recognized the need for a collaborative international response and planned the 3-day in-person gathering to bring together researchers and practitioners from different countries to:

- Share experiences and best practices in preventing violent extremism and social polarization.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by schools and communities.
- Identify effective strategies for preventing violent extremism in educational settings.
- Foster ongoing collaboration between practitioners from Canada, Germany, and other countries.

Objectives



The symposium had the following key objectives:

- Create a safe space to address sensitive issues, inconsistencies and developing thoughts when sharing knowledge and experience.
- Build a shared understanding of the existing research and knowledge on preventing violent extremism in educational settings.
- Identify gaps and areas for further exploration in research and practice.
- Explore successful practices and models for preventing violent extremism.
- Develop recommendations for strengthening collaboration and future directions for the TransNex network.

The objectives were derived from the workshop synthesis.

Participants



The symposium brought together a diverse group of participants, including:

- Researchers on violent extremism
- Educators
- Academics
- Youth workers
- Community workers
- Policymakers
- Representatives from government agencies
- Youth representatives

Process-Driven Format



Building upon the insights gained from the three prior workshops, the symposium design prioritized a collaborative and inclusive approach. The symposium's format was grounded in Indigenous Research Methodologies, recognizing the importance of trust and diverse experiences. This facilitated active participation, knowledge exchange, and the collaborative development of solutions, mirroring the collaborative spirit cultivated throughout the TransNex project.

Conclusions from the plenary session



Challenges Faced by Teachers in Addressing Difficult Topics in Schools

Teachers are often left out of the broader systemic conversation when addressing sensitive school topics, leaving them feeling unsupported and undervalued. Many educators report that they are not adequately equipped to handle challenging discussions, such as those involving race, gender, mental health, or violent behavior, due to a lack of training and resources. This sense of being underprepared is compounded by systemic crises, where teachers lack confidence in the education system's ability to provide a safe, supportive structure for addressing sensitive issues. Teachers frequently feel pressured to report on children and youth while navigating communication with parents, external partners, agencies, and law enforcement. These dual responsibilities (cooperation with children and parents as well as cooperation with other professionals) can create a tense dynamic in which educators feel torn between their role as guides/educators and mandatory reporters. Many teachers struggle to confidently approach sensitive topics in their classrooms without safe spaces to process their own experiences or address these challenges.

Good Practices for Navigating Difficult Topics in Schools

To address these challenges, schools need to create environments where teachers and students feel safe discussing sensitive issues. A key good practice is engaging youth in ways that are meaningful to them, allowing their voices to shape the topics and discussions they feel are most relevant to their lives. Teachers can also work to connect these discussions with their schools' core values and beliefs, aligning conversations with broader educational and community goals. Another effective practice is establishing peer networks for teachers to share strategies, resources, and experiences related to challenging discussions. Incorporating anti-oppressive frameworks into the curriculum can also empower teachers to address sensitive topics in inclusive and impactful ways. Creating opportunities for collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and external experts further strengthens the sense of community and shared responsibility in navigating these challenges.



Specific Recommendations for Supporting Teachers

Education systems must prioritize their well-being and professional development to better equip teachers for addressing sensitive topics. Schools should provide targeted training that builds teachers' confidence in managing sensitive conversations, such as workshops on trauma-informed teaching, cultural competency, and conflict resolution. Clear, systemic policies that protect teachers from undue backlash and outline their responsibilities can help reduce fear and uncertainty. Additionally, schools must prioritize creating safe spaces where teachers can address challenging situations—these could take the form of reflective practice groups, mentorship programs, or confidential peer support circles. Schools can also establish partnerships with community organizations, mental health professionals, and social services to share expertise and reduce the pressure on teachers to act as sole responders. Finally, fostering open communication with students and parents can ensure that sensitive topics are approached collaboratively, promoting mutual trust and understanding within the school community.

Breakout Sessions



From the breakout sessions, participants concluded the following about PVE in education settings:

Good practices

- Educators are working at full capacity and have implemented practical ways to deal with forms of violence in the classroom.
- Specific organizations have developed ways to connect with youth, prepared them to participate actively in social issues, and engaged other actors who have contributed to strengthening working with youth.
- Initiatives like TransNex allow researchers to collaborate and learn from each other's successful stories. This collaborative interaction has led to a more exhaustive assessment and refining of PVE strategies.

What is missing:

- Safe spaces, genuine community building, and belonging.
- A standard evaluation framework to assess teachers' work on violence prevention and learn about and replicate successful practices.
- Comprehensive/integrated framing of PVE.
- Sustainable funding.
- Professional development and training for teachers and community workers.
- Better understanding of the generational impact and external factors such as social media interactions, globalization, and online radicalization.

What is recommended:

- Establish and support the creation of inclusive and respectful dialogue spaces (i.e., safe spaces) where individuals with diverse perspectives can engage in meaningful conversations on polarizing or controversial topics and feel they belong. These spaces should prioritize active listening, empathy, and the development of shared understanding while fostering a sense of community and belonging for all participants.
- Invest in programs that allow youth to be heard and that foster in-person connection and exposure to diverse viewpoints and beliefs.
- Secure long-term, sustainable funding to support the developing and ongoing refinement of a

robust evaluation framework for PVE within the educational settings. This framework and tool should measure program effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and inform future program development and policy decisions.

- Invest in comprehensive, ongoing professional development programs for teachers and community workers that focus on:
 - Developing critical thinking and media literacy skills in youth.
 - Fostering inclusive and respectful classroom environments. Building strong relationships with students and families.

Invited speakers



- **David Waddington** (Concordia University/CSLP): Discussed the polarized classroom and pondered how teachers deal with controversial issues from legal, empirical, and normative angles.
- **Dimitri Pavlounis** (Civix), Sylvia Weiss (Interdisciplinary Center for the Prevention to Radicalisation and Democracy Promotion), Arne Augustini (Green Bird), Götz Nordbruch (Berghof Foundation): Shared and assessed best practices in PVE across sectors, such as public health, education, social justice, and youth.
- **Joachim Langner** (German Youth Institute/DJI): Presented "What makes 'Good Practice' in Preventing Violent Extremism?" and shared the perspectives found in current research conducted by the German Youth Institute.
- **Leon A. Brandt** (SOCLES): Presented research findings on violent extremism in educational settings.
- **Marie Helene Rivest and Annie Lebrun** (Polarization Team Montreal), Sharif Mahdy (Students Commission Canada), Julian Stoermer (Violence Prevention Network): Elaborated on successful practices and models to inform future work in PVE.
- **Sebastien Brouillette-Alarie** (CPN-PREV): Discussed good practices in preventing violent extremism and reflected on the path towards evidence-based and consensus-based guidelines.

Moving Forward Together: Recommendations

Shared Challenges:

A key takeaway from the symposium was the recognition of the challenges faced by practitioners, educators, and youth in navigating social injustices and polarization. These shared experiences fostered a sense of solidarity and a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of global issues.

Importance of Safer and Courageous Spaces:

The symposium consistently emphasized the critical need for creating safe and trusting as well as courageous and respectful environments where individuals (e.g., youth, teachers, social workers, etc.) with diverse viewpoints can engage in open dialogue, knowledge sharing, and exchanging experiences.

Multi-Stakeholder Approach:

Participants strongly advocated for a multi-stakeholder approach to PVE, emphasizing collaboration among educators, youth, community workers, policymakers, teachers, and other relevant actors. This inclusive approach ensures that diverse perspectives are considered and interventions are tailored to local communities' specific needs and contexts.



Teacher engagement and support for teachers:

The symposium recognizes and values the current conditions in which teachers are required to teach and proposes strengthening the relationship with teachers to set an open communication channel with them to learn how to support better teachers dealing with violence in schools, and establish support systems within schools and across the community.

Youth Engagement:

The symposium highlighted the crucial role of youth voices and perspectives in developing and implementing effective PVE strategies. Youth engagement is essential for ensuring the relevance and sustainability of interventions and empowering young people to become active agents of change in their communities.

Focus on Best Practices:

Day 2 of the symposium provided valuable insights into best practices in PVE, featuring presentations and discussions from experts in various sectors, including public health, education, and youth services. These presentations showcased innovative approaches and successful interventions that can be adapted and implemented in different contexts.

Long-Term, Systemic Approaches:

Participants underscored the importance of long-term, systemic approaches to PVE that address the root causes of violent extremism in local and societal contexts. These approaches require sustained effort, ongoing collaboration, a commitment to addressing the underlying social, economic, and political factors contributing to extremism's rise, and the provision of the necessary resources.



“The TransNex Symposium was a significant event that brought together international researchers and practitioners to address the critical issue of violent extremism in educational settings”

Conclusion

The following is a summary of the overall significance and impact of the symposium

Significance:

Fostered International Collaboration: The symposium was a crucial platform for fostering international collaboration between researchers and practitioners from Canada, Germany, and other countries. This cross-border exchange of knowledge and expertise proved to be essential for developing effective and globally relevant strategies to combat violent extremism.

Shared Learning and Knowledge Exchange: The event provided a valuable opportunity for participants to share their experiences, insights, and best practices in preventing violent extremism. This sharing in an international group facilitated reflection of the own practice and beliefs on how things should be done. In consequence it enabled a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by different communities and the development of more informed and effective prevention strategies.

Youth-Centered Approach: The symposium again brought to light and emphasized the importance of youth voices and perspectives in developing effective PVE strategies. The symposium participants insisted that youth's unique experiences and insights must be incorporated into the recommendations and future directions of the TransNex network.

Focus on Evidence-Based Practices: The symposium identified and discussed evidence-based practices in preventing violent extremism. This emphasis on evidence-based approaches is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of PVE interventions and to avoid unintended negative or even harming effects.

Impact:

Development of Recommendations: The symposium resulted in the development of a set

of concrete recommendations for strengthening collaboration, improving PVE practices, and guiding the future direction of the TransNex network. These recommendations will inform future research, policy development, and program implementation.

Enhanced Understanding of the Issue: The symposium deepened the understanding of the complex challenges associated with preventing violent extremism in educational settings, including the role of social media, the importance of addressing social justice issues, and the need for long-term, systemic approaches.

Building a Broad Network: The symposium facilitated the building of a strong network of diverse practitioners, researchers and policy makers committed to collaborating on PVE prevention efforts. This network will continue to share knowledge, support and challenge each other, and work together to address the defiances of violent extremism.

Raising Awareness: The symposium raised awareness of the interdependencies between violent extremism and educational settings as well as the importance of taking proactive steps to prevention. This increased awareness can help to mobilize support for PVE initiatives and encourage greater public engagement in addressing this critical issue.

Development of Recommendations: The symposium resulted in the development of a set of concrete recommendations for strengthening collaboration, improving PVE practices, and guiding the future direction of the TransNex network. These recommendations will inform future research, policy development, and program implementation.



The Path Forward: A Collective Call to Action

As this project concludes, we stand at a pivotal moment, equipped with valuable insights and a shared commitment to action. We have witnessed the power of diverse perspectives, from educators grappling with the complexities of PVE in the classroom to youth articulating their own experiences and needs. These shared experiences have illuminated critical pathways for moving forward.

We need to prioritize the creation of dialogue spaces that are truly safe enough and inclusive and where all voices are heard and respected. This requires a collective effort to ensure that everyone feels safe, valued and respected. All aspects need to be negotiated, understood and defined. Stronger partnerships between schools, communities, and youth organizations are essential. We can leverage diverse expertise and resources to create more effective and sustainable PVE prevention programs by working together.

Investing in ongoing professional development and a support system for educators is crucial. Educators should not be left alone with the challenges. We must equip them with the knowledge and skills to navigate the complexities of PVE in the classroom. We can develop more relevant and effective PVE practices and models that build resilience in both students and

educators by actively seeking and incorporating teacher insights. Integrating concepts to create a togetherness of respect as persons for all into the curriculum is paramount. This should include a sensitization for social injustice, critical media literacy, and developing the skills necessary to navigate a complex and interconnected world.

Teachers should not be left alone with the challenges. We need to create a support system surrounding them which includes accessibly consultancy on critical situations and issues, training on the basics of creating educational settings in which everyone is heard and respected, and in which diverging beliefs and opinions can be voiced and respected.

To ensure the effectiveness of our efforts, we must develop and implement a standardized evaluation framework to assess teacher practices and identify successful PVE prevention models. This data will inform future initiatives and allow us to continuously improve our approaches.

Finally, youth must be active partners in all aspects of PVE prevention efforts. Only by engaging young people as stakeholders and decision-makers we can ensure that our programs are relevant, responsive, and truly effective.

Appendices

Appendix 1: In-person Symposium Agenda

Day 1

Review and Expand on the Synthesis and its knowledge base.

Objective: Build a shared understanding of the existing synthesis and explore gaps or areas for further development.

9:00 AM

Welcome and Opening Remarks

9:30 AM

Overview of symposium objectives and agenda.

Part 1: Review and Expand on the Synthesis

9:30 AM

Presentation of Synthesis Findings.

11:00 AM

Present current synthesis report findings (break down into thematic areas).

Q&A and discussion on key takeaways.

11:00 AM

Break

11:15 AM

11:15 AM

Identifying Gaps and Opportunities.

12:30 PM

Identify central topics of the synthesis.

Identify gaps, opportunities for further exploration, and areas for refinement.

12:30 PM

Lunch Break

1:30 PM

1:30 PM

Continued working on identifying gaps and opportunities.

2:30 PM

2:30 PM

Break

2:45 PM

Part 2: Good practices

2:45 PM
4:30 PM

Panel Discussion: Good Practice; just an aspiration or evidence? Input: Sebastien Brouillette-Alarie.

What do we know about what works – or does not?

What should we know? What should make us skeptical or hopeful?

4:30 PM
5:00 PM

Closing Remarks and Reflection.

Day 2

Best Practices (Radically) Revisited.

Objective: Hear from experts and practitioners about successful practices and models that can inform future work..

9:00 AM
9:15 AM

Opening Remarks

9:15 AM
10:45 AM

Panel Discussion 1: Best Practices.

Presentation from experts on best practices across sectors (Marie Helene Rivest et Annie Lebrun, Sharif Mahdy, Kawser Ahmed).

10:45 AM
11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM
12:30 PM

Panel Discussion 2: Best Practices

Presentation from experts on best practices across sectors (David Waddington, Dimitri Partounis).

12:30 PM
1:30 PM

Lunch Break

1:30 PM
3:00 PM

Working Groups: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice.

Challenges in implementing good practice.

How to implement practices in the light of ongoing scarce resources.

Involvement of Youth.

What other practices are needed?

3:00 PM
3:15 PM

Break

3:15 PM
4:30 PM

Continued discussions on recommendations regarding best practices.

4:30 PM
5:00 PM

Closing Remarks and reflection

Day 3 Reflecting and Presenting Recommendations

9:00 AM
9:15 AM

Opening Remarks

9:15 AM
11:00 AM

Plenary discussion Will former and current concepts work in the future?

What can PVE/CVE achieve in the face of the current erosion of democracy nearing mainstream?

What can we learn from the past and other fields (e.g. about the loss of certainties) and how do we have to develop these findings regarding new (social) media?

11:00 AM
11:15 AM

Break

11:15 AM
1:00 PM

Concurrent Group Discussions: Future Vision for PVE in the educational setting and the future of TransNex.

Participants work in concurrent groups by context/country to discuss their vision for the future of the educational, child and youth welfare and community settings.

This session will bring together Canadian, German, and international educators, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers to explore actionable collaborative strategies for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) within educational settings. Building on insights from the two days of discussions, the participants will delve into the specific challenges faced by schools, including the need for long-term, systemic approaches that address local realities amidst socially polarized times. Key themes will focus on strengthening partnerships, empowering educators with ongoing professional development, integrating violence prevention-focused curricula that address social justice and critical media literacy, and engaging youth and community partners as active stakeholders in prevention efforts. The session will culminate in presenting recommendations for sustainable collaboration.

1:00 PM

Lunch

Appendix 2: List of Participants

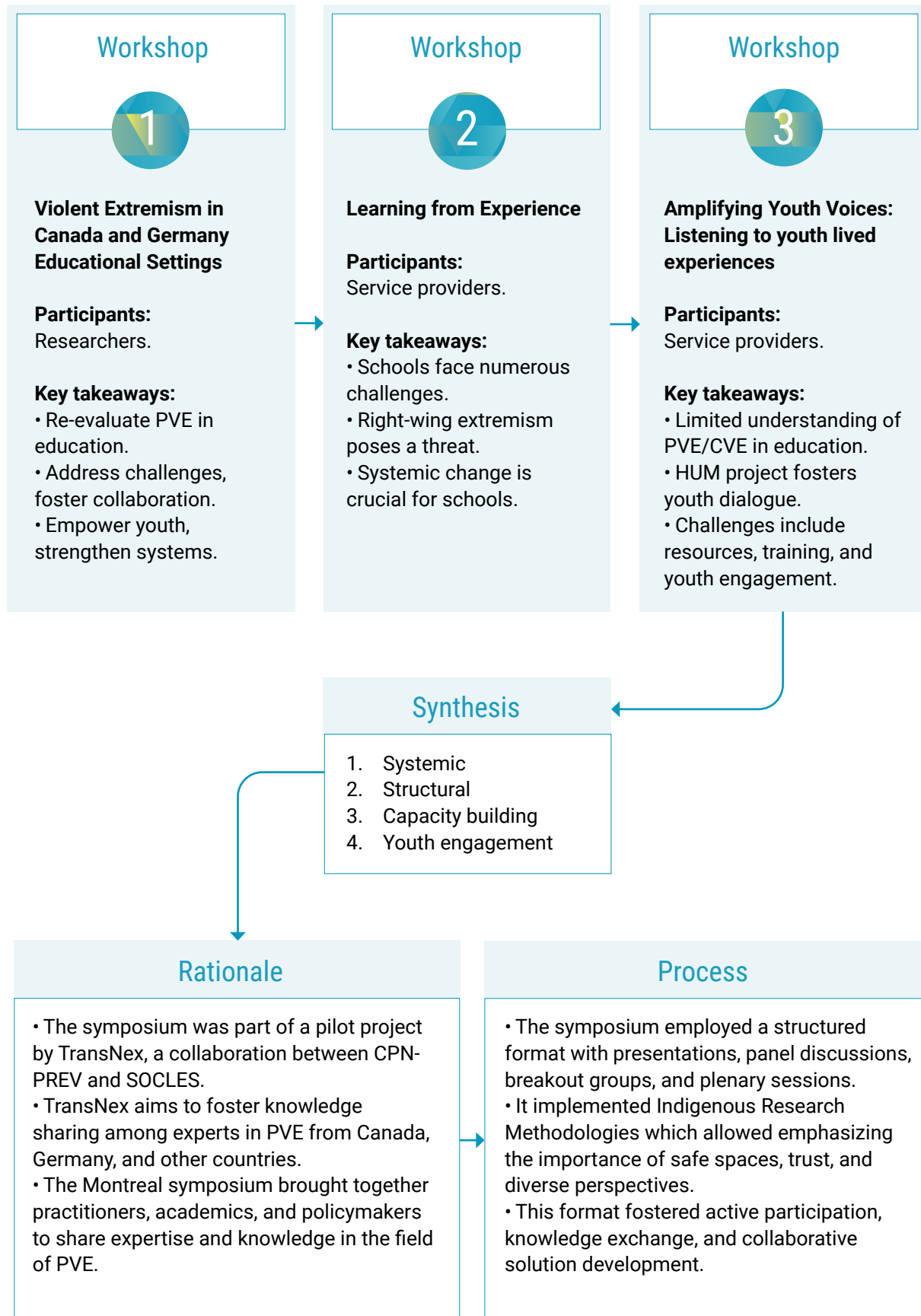
Name	Organization
Ahmed, Abdikheir	Aurora Family Therapy
Ahmed, Kawser	Erim (Canada)
Alexander Sievers	VPN (Germany)
Ammour, Imane	CPN-PREV
Augustini, Arne	Green Bird (Germany)
Bächler, Maja	Federal Agency for Civic Education (Germany)
Brandt, Leon	Socles (Germany)
Brett, Kubicek (he, him)	Canada Centre
Cecile Rousseau	Polarization Team Montreal
Dhali, Helal Hossain	UQAM
Edward McMurchy	Queensland CVE Engagement and Diversion Program (Australia)
Hadzifejzovic, Hana	John Howard Society Ottawa
Hassan, Ghayda	CPN-PREV
Ismail-Allouche, Zeina	CPN-PREV

Jeanne Plisson	CPRMV
Langner, Joachim	German Youth Institute (German)
Lebrun, Annie	Polarization Team Montreal
Lola Iwanowski	Boston Children's Hospital (US)
Mahdy, Sharif	Students Commission Canada
Meysen, Thomas	Socles (Germany)
Miconi, Diana	Université de Montréal
Nordbruch, Götz	Berghof Foundation
O'Brien, David	Yorktown Family Service / ETA
Paillé, Sabrina	CPN-PREV
Parker, Morgan	OPV
Parlounis, Dimitri	Civix (Canada)
Pel, Andrew	Moonshot
Ray Finch	Explore NZ/NZ Health Group (New Zealand)
Rivest, Marie-Helene	Polarization Team Montreal
Ruxandra Mihaela, Gheorghe	Canada Centre
Sara Grenier	CPRMV

Steven Barracosa	Youth Justice New South Wales Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Unit (New Zealand)
Stewart, Rebecca	Polarization Team Montreal
Störmer, Julian	VPN (Germany)
Toma, Traian	CPN-PREV
Van Winkel, Bibi	International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (Netherlands)
Waddington, David	CLSP Montreal
Weiss, Sylvia	Interdisciplinary Center for the Prevention to Radicalisation and Democracy Promotion (Germany)
Wilson Hernandez	Concordia
Yuzva Clement, David	Canada Centre
Zarama, Gabriela	John Howard Society Ottawa
Amarasingam, Amar	CANSES / Queens University
Baudon, Antoine	International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (Netherlands)
Davies, Garth	CANSES
Emily Balla	OCDSB
Juliet Robinson	OCDSB
Kara Brisson-Boivin	MediaSmarts

Keene, AJ	OCDSB
Laurence Beaulieu-Lacas	Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec
Luc Cousineau	Canadian Institute for Far-Right Studies
Maclean, Tessa	McGill
Mariel Cooksey	Canadian Institute for Far-Right Studies
Maxwell, Bruce	Université de Montréal
McDonough, Kevin Dr	McGill
McLarnon, Mitchell	Concordia
Nicole Fournier-Sylvester	Canada Centre
Omi Hodwitz	University of Idaho
Patterson, Marnie	OCDSB
Paula St-Arnaud	Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec

Appendix 3: Project flow and synergy



STAY IN TOUCH



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