LEADERS AGAINST INTOLERANCE AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

There is widespread agreement that civil society needs to be involved to effectively address the conditions conducive to terrorism, including the spread of violent extremism. Civil society stakeholders are often better placed in terms of credibility, specialized expertise, understanding of local dynamics and/or access to different groups in society, to identify and help address concerns related to violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT). They can act as multiplying forces to mobilize their constituents and peers and strengthen resilience against VERLT.

The ‘Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism’ (LIVE) initiative will encourage and build the capacity of leaders in civil society to effectively undertake efforts to prevent and counter intolerance and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, in ways that are realistic and safe, building on their existing assets and tailored to their local context. The LIVE initiative will activate civil society leadership to foster the growth of diverse and localized responses to VERLT and its drivers, and in turn help increase bottom-up resilience.

The LIVE initiative will support the implementation of OSCE Ministerial Council Declaration No. 4/15 on Preventing and Countering VERLT. It is consistent with UN Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014), 2242 (2015) and 2250 (2015), as well as the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

The LIVE initiative seeks to enable civil society efforts in particular for:

- Grassroots and peer-to-peer awareness-raising against violent extremism
- Counter-messaging to challenge and delegitimize violent extremism and terrorism
- Promoting alternative narratives and opportunities for positive engagement that mitigate the lure of violent extremism and radicalization to terrorism
- Policy advocacy in support of effective measures to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism

The LIVE initiative will draw on the OSCE’s cross-dimensional expertise and extensive field presence, in combination with external partnerships, to:

- Develop and deliver tailored training for youth leaders, women leaders, as well as religious and traditional leaders
- Facilitate networking among LIVE graduates
- Further support promising ideas developed by LIVE graduates
- Highlight and amplify the work of LIVE graduates turned LIVE Ambassadors.
As a first step, the OSCE is implementing a project to develop three LIVE training courses tailored for youth leaders, women leaders, as well as religious and traditional leaders. The courses will be designed to coach participants through a process of identifying and effectively planning actions, from within civil society and appropriate for the local context, which can safely and realistically contribute to preventing and countering VERLT.

The objective of the LIVE training course is not only to increase the knowledge but also influence the attitudes, intentions and behaviours of civil society leaders to encourage their involvement in support of preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Each course will provide varied examples and experiences of how civil society can help, and will also promote peer-learning and networking among the trainees.

The courses will comprise two weeks of face-to-face training emphasizing interaction and practicing, separated by an interim period (3 to 6 months) during which trainees will return home.

- During the first module, participants will gain or strengthen necessary knowledge and skills to identify a relevant action idea they could undertake, and identify steps for careful and effective planning.

- During the interim period, they will work to plan their action idea in more details, including through stakeholder consultations and coalition building, with some limited seed funding provided in support along with remote-based advice.

- In the second and final module, participants will reconvene to share successes and identify collectively and individually ways to overcome difficulties, with a view to finalize their respective project for action. They will commit to subsequently try and implement this action and inform the OSCE and its partners of their progress.

“COACHING CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST INTOLERANCE AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL”

Partners to date include:
- EU Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN)
- The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers
- Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF)
- Human Security Collective
- ConnectFutures
- IREX
- Inclusive Security
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

For more information, please contact Mehdi.Knani@osce.org