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## Family-Oriented P/CVE Programs: Overview, Challenges and Future Directions

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### **Abstract**

Many have pointed out families to play a crucial role, both as a risk and protective factor, in radicalization leading to violence phenomena. Over the past few years, researchers and practitioners have recognized the importance of ensuring that families are addressed as a prevention target, as well as recognizing the valuable resource that they represent in preventive efforts. Accordingly, the field of P/CVE has witnessed the burgeoning of a variety of prevention and intervention initiatives specifically addressed to families, either aiming to strengthen family resilience in the face of various fragilities or to support parents in the face of problematic situations related to radicalization and (violent) extremism. While the number of family-oriented P/CVE programs has increased over the last decade, the available literature on this topic remains scarce, with very few publications providing knowledge about the nature, objectives and different operating procedures of existing initiatives. In this article, we introduce a typology of family-oriented P/CVE programs, relying on an extensive review of existing initiatives at an international level. We aim to contribute to the current literature by providing a better understanding of the variety of prevention mechanisms for radicalization leading to violence dedicated to families, as well as to discuss the challenges and pitfalls of those initiatives designed for (and sometimes by) families. In doing so, this article provides highlights and lessons that may be useful for the design of future initiatives.

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### **Introduction**

Over the past decade, the literature on radicalization leading to violence<sup>2</sup> has examined a wide range of drivers associated with this phenomenon (Neumann & Kleimann 2013). While some

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have been the object of an intense focus by scholars and practitioners (e.g. social exclusion, individual vulnerabilities, psychological traits), others have attracted less attention. Several high-profile public cases of violent extremism<sup>3</sup> have questioned the role of the families and intimate environments<sup>4</sup> in radicalization processes, but this topic has so far received insufficient attention (Aaasgaard, 2017: 247; Carson, James & O'Neal, 2019: 2), with the exception of few scholars (e.g. Epstein, 2007; Hafez 2016; Harris-Hogan, 2014; Sikkens et al., 2017; Van San, 2018). The available body of literature remains limited and uncertain. For some, there is no doubt that families as “life-spheres”<sup>5</sup> can contribute — both as risk and protective factors — to radicalization dynamics and the shift towards violent extremism (Khosrokhavar, 2018: 265-316). However, others invite us to put into perspective the weight of family environments and kinship insisting on the indirect, and often anecdotal, influence,

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<sup>2</sup> Widely used, the concept of “radicalization” (and its extension “radicalization leading to violence”) remains vague and subject to semantic controversies and theoretical debates. Despite criticisms, the term “radicalization leading to violence (or violent extremism)” is now commonly used as a key paradigm to categorize the multiple forms of ideological extremist violence in contemporary societies. It refers to the process through which individuals or groups abandon ordinary means of debate and protest, in favour of a “radical” engagement into a violent logic in the name of an absolute ideological belief system. The process of radicalization leading to violence is, therefore, the intertwining of an ideologized and exclusive interpretation of the social world and gradual acceptance of the legitimacy of violence as a means of social transformation or advocacy. For an overview of the debates surrounding the notion of radicalization (leading to violence) in the academic and practitioner circles, see Ducol, 2015; Gemmerli, 2015; Kundnani, 2012; Malthaner, 2017; Sedgwick, 2010 and Schmid, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Public cases and high-profile events linked to radicalization leading to violence include examples such as the San Bernardino attack perpetrated by the couple Tashfeen Malik and Syed Farook in 2015 at the Inland Regional Center in California or the Paris (2015), Brussels (2016) or Barcelona/Cambrils (2017) attacks where siblings were part of operational cells that carried out terrorist actions. See also note 10.

<sup>4</sup> Terminologically, there is no single definition of the term “family,” and its conception depends closely on the cultural and social context in which social actors are located. Even within the same society, not all actors have the same understanding of what a family is. It can refer to a broad category of social configurations that can include a wide range of actors, with more or less, structured kinship ties and varied interactions. What characterizes the “family” as a concept is the socio-emotional bonds and lasting interdependence between individuals, a social object that should not be seen as static and that can evolve because of internal and external events (e.g. the arrival of a new child, divorce). For an extensive discussion on the family through a social science perspective, consult Bernardes 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Passy et Giugni (2000: 121) define the notion of “life-sphere” as follows: “The life of each of us is composed of life-spheres, which can be defined as distinct though interrelated “regions” in the life of an individual, each one with its own borders, logic, and dynamic. A life-sphere has both an objective and a subjective side. Its objective side is represented by the individual’s belonging to a group and the social relations arising from such belonging. The concept of social networks, as it has been used in the social movement literature, captures much of this aspect of life-spheres. However, the heuristic importance of the concept of life-spheres lies in their subjective side, which reflects the perception social actors have of their embeddedness in groups or networks”.

they seem to play on individuals' trajectories (Sikkens, Sieckelinck, Van San & de Winter, 2017).

Despite these current debates, families are increasingly being considered as a priority target for prevention by policymakers and practitioners in the field of P/CVE<sup>6</sup> (Koehler, 2015; Koehler & Ehrt, 2018). Whether raising general awareness about radicalization, strengthening family resilience<sup>7</sup> or counselling parents that may face radicalization situations with their own children, family-oriented P/CVE initiatives<sup>8</sup> have burgeoned over the past decade. These have taken various forms (government-led vs. non-profit initiatives), have been implemented at different levels (national vs. local programs) and aimed at intervening at different phases along the prevention continuum<sup>9</sup>. Meanwhile, the dearth of available information on those programs does not offer scholars, nor practitioners, a comprehensive understanding of their far-reaching variety and nature.

To fill this gap, this article attempts to provide a typological overview of current family-oriented P/CVE programs. Our goal here is not to offer an exhaustive list of existing family-oriented P/CVE programs, but to introduce an analytical typology that aims at clarifying this specific area of P/CVE. By doing so, we intend to provide a glimpse of the main courses of action that fall under the category "family-oriented P/CVE initiatives"

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<sup>6</sup> We use the acronym "P/CVE" to refer to the global category of prevention and countering of violent extremism initiatives. By "family-oriented P/CVE initiatives," we refer to initiatives or resources aimed at preventing and intervening in radicalization leading to (extremist) violence specifically oriented towards families, their components (i.e. parents, mothers, brothers and sisters) or their dynamics (i.e. parental skills, parents-children dialogue).

<sup>7</sup> According to Simon, Murphy & Smith. (2005), "family resilience" can be defined as: "the ability of a family to respond positively to an adverse situation and emerge from the situation feeling strengthened, more resourceful, and more confident than its prior state."

<sup>8</sup> It is important to note here that there is persistent confusion in both the public space and the scientific literature between initiatives to prevent radicalization leading to violence and deradicalization/disengagement programs aimed at intervening on individuals who are already engaged into extremism (Ashour, 2007). In reality, the term prevention covers several levels of action and several target groups that need to be clarified and will be defined below. A large majority of these initiatives fall under the umbrella of what is commonly referred to as "CVE" (Countering Violent Extremism - in the United States/UK context) or "PVE" (Preventing Violent Extremism - in European and Canadian context).

<sup>9</sup> The prevention continuum is a notion that refers to the interconnectedness of each step in the spectrum of prevention services. Accordingly, primary prevention targets the general population as a whole and focuses on raising awareness around prevention activities. Secondary prevention aims at individuals or groups with higher risks of engaging in radicalization processes, mainly working on reducing their vulnerabilities. As to tertiary prevention, (partially) radicalized individuals are targeted to help them in their disengagement and reintegration.

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internationally. This process allows us in return to discuss some of the challenges and pitfalls faced by these initiatives. In the first section of the article, we provide a short synthesis of the literature on families and radicalization leading to (extremist) violence. Then, we discuss how the field of P/CVE is increasingly considering families as a critical target for prevention. In the third section, we introduce a typology of family-oriented P/CVE programs, detailing the various forms they can take and providing international case examples as illustrations for each category. Finally, in the light of identified initiatives, we discuss the challenges and the gaps that family-oriented P/CVE programs are facing and lessons that may be useful for the design of future efforts in the same area.

### **Families and Radicalization Leading to (Extremist) Violence: An Emerging Literature**

For long, social sciences have been interested in the understanding of family as a central institution of society and a key component in a wide range of social phenomena. Whether as a field of research (e.g. *Family studies*) (Morgan, 1996) or concerned with the study of a particular phenomenon (e.g. education, unemployment, cultural transmission, deviant behaviours), scholars have long explored the various facets of family living experiences. Regarding radicalization and violent extremism, academic interest in the family has been more recent and can be divided into three dimensions.

First, part of the literature has examined families as a central space of socialization, often acting as a primary source of learning for children and young people. Several studies have discussed the central role of parents and close relatives in the intergenerational transmission of beliefs and attitudes (Min, Silverstein & Lendon, 2012), including when the latter are extremist in nature. In some contexts, family life-spheres have been said to directly influence the radicalization process of a child or a relative by transmitting extremist beliefs and values pre-existing in the family setting (Carson, James & O’Neal 2019; Duriez & Soenens, 2009; Gielen, 2008). If parents or older siblings convey ways of thinking that are intolerant or incite hatred and violence, it might be more likely that the child will normalize

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the violence trivialized by its family members (Spalek, 2016). However, current knowledge on these transmission processes and how they interact with other factors remain imperfect, and more specific dynamics need to be further explored (Copeland, 2017).

Second, scholars have been interested in exploring the importance of family bonds on individuals' trajectories of radicalization. Empirical studies carried out in the Basque Country (Reinares, 2011: 61), Kurdistan (Dorransoro & Grojean, 2009), Colombia (Florez-Morris, 2007) or jihadist circles (Atran, 2006; Hafez, 2016; Bergen, Schuster & Sterman 2015; Klausen et al., 2018) have highlighted the role of family kinships in the process of individuals' engagement towards extremism. Several authors have underlined the fact that the prior presence of a relative in an extremist movement can have a substantial impact in terms of influencing other relatives to join (Bakker 2006; Harris-Hogan, 2012; Hafez, 2016). Kinship and friendship are recruitment factors that sometimes even prevail over other environmental or more macro factors such as social marginalization (Coolsaet, 2004). Intimacy and absolute trust that often-characterized family bonds might encourage individuals to engage in extremist groups alongside their siblings or close relatives (Coolsaet, 2011). In light of recent events<sup>10</sup>, it is more particularly that of ties between brothers that seem to be the subject of increasing attention today (Wallace-Wells, 2016).

A third part of the literature has explored the more indirect or accidental influences that family settings might have on radicalization processes. As stated by Simi, Sporer & Bulboz (2016: 546): « Clearly, experiencing an unstable family environment does not guarantee involvement in VE [violent extremism] or any other criminality, but that also does not mean that these early experiences are unimportant, nor should they be ignored. » Thus, family configurations marked by some vulnerabilities (e.g. socio-economic marginalization, cultural stigmatization) or internal issues (e.g. drug abuse, domestic violence) are recurring

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<sup>10</sup> Examples of include the al-Shehri (Waleed and Wail) and al-Hazmi (Nawaf and Salem) brothers who were among the 9/11 hijackers, the Tsarnaev brothers (Tamerlan and Djokhar) who carried out the Boston marathon attacks (2013), the Kouachi brothers (Saïd and Chérif) who carried out the Charlie Hebdo/Hypercasher attack (2015), the Abeslam brothers (Mohamed and Salah) involved in the Paris attacks (2015), the el-Barkraoui brothers (Khalid and Ibrahim), suicide bombers during the attacks at Brussels airport (2016) or the four sets of brothers involved in the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks (2017).

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features in many in radicalization pathways leading to violence (Aasgaard, 2017). Scholars have found that, although fragile family environments may not be the direct leading cause of radicalization, radicalized individuals often report experiencing disorders and dysfunctions through their family living experiences (Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks & De Winter, 2015). Amongst others, the absence of communication, lack of parental supervision or domestic abuse experiences (Spalek, 2016; Weine & Ahmed, 2012 :14) are factors that may foster alienation and disaffiliation of youth from their families and push them to substitute groups of affiliation that can offer them to restore a sense of belonging (Bjørgero & Carlsson, 2005). Other factors such as interparental conflicts, child maltreatment or poor parenting practices (e.g., excessive punitive attitudes, inconsistent control) may also affect the development of conduct problems and radicalization patterns among youth (Sikkens et al., 2017: 199; Hoeve et al. 2008). Distinguishing between the active role and the passive role of family settings in individuals' radicalization processes is essential. Accordingly, it would be wrong to consider on the same level direct and indirect family influences in connection to radicalization leading to violence and, further research should be carried to explore the various family settings' influences into individuals' radicalization pathways.

### **The Making of Family as Crucial Target in the P/CVE Continuum**

Families are increasingly considered as a crucial target for raising awareness, disseminating information and intervening upstream on radicalization leading to violence. Scholars have shown that siblings — as well as close friends — may act as "associate gatekeeper" in the prevention and could be critical for the success of prevention mechanisms (Williams, Horgan & Evans, 2015). Families have a pivotal role in identifying early signs of radicalization, but also a supporting one in interventions aimed at diverting individuals from extremism and violence. In that line, many have highlighted the importance of family members and close friends as they are the best suited to identify one's potential vulnerabilities and spot early behavioural changes associated with radicalization (Gill, Horgan & Decker, 2014: 433).

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Strong social ties (including family ones) are positively associated with disengagement and social reintegration, as demonstrated in criminology research (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Whether coming from parents or other close relatives, this support — both material and emotional — plays an essential role in motivating disengagement from deviant behaviours (Farrall, 2002), including extremism (Bjørge, 2009; Horgan, 2009; Koehler, 2017; Sivenbring, 2019: 113). Regarding radicalization leading to violence, a growing body of research suggests that family has a fundamental influence in promoting desistance between an individual and extremist groups or affiliations (Altier, Thoroughgood & Horgan, 2014; Bjørge & Horgan, 2009; Koehler, 2017; Sieckelinck & De Winter, 2015). Jacobson (2008) even suggests that individuals who joined an extremist organization and maintained links with family or friends outside the organization are more likely to disengage than the ones who cut ties with theirs. In the same line, the reconnection between a radicalized individual and his family is considered by many practitioners as a critical step and a positive sign along the reintegration process (Spalek & Davies, 2012).

As families have been increasingly recognized as key prevention actors to be mobilized, many international, national and local bodies have introduced family-oriented P/CVE programs. However, designing appropriate and effective P/CVE programs aimed at families first demands a deep understanding of the complexity of the situations they faced — the practical, emotional and social challenges — concerning radicalization leading to violence. It also requires identifying good practices, promising approaches and lessons that can be drawn from existing experiences. Because family-oriented P/CVE programs/initiatives are structured around different objectives and mechanisms, it is essential to clarify their diversity.

### **Family-oriented P/CVE programs: A Typological Overview**

While the number of P/CVE initiatives specifically addressed to families has increased, the available scientific and institutional literature on this topic remains scarce, with very few

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publications providing knowledge about the nature, objectives and diverse modalities of existing resources. To address this gap, we attempt to provide in the following section a typological overview of family-oriented P/CVE programs existing at the international level.

Typologies are well-established instruments in Social sciences (McKinney, 1969). At the most basic level, a typology intends to provide an analytical and constructed description of empirical reality. While the description is often seen as a mundane task, it should be considered as pivotal in the development of knowledge (Gerring, 2012). Whether descriptive, classificatory or explanatory, typologies may have different purposes (Elman 2009). However, they all aim at simplifying social complexity by establishing grouping categories or cases based on shared characteristics. By performing such grouping function, typologies allow us to make sense of entities — attitudes, situations or practices — that would otherwise be seen as disparate or unrelated. Those classification strategies can help researchers — but also practitioners — to better understand a field by labelling and classifying comparable practices under the same analytical category. Finally, typologies are initial steps in the scientific inquiry that allow further comparative analysis and theory-building (George & Bennett, 2005).

While there is no single typology design method, the initial step includes the definition of what entities should be enclosed or not in the overall typology. In our case, only P/CVE programs that exhibit concrete actions or measures targeting families were selected. Family-based services are sometimes part of more global initiatives at the national level or part of non-specialized initiatives already in place (e.g. child protection services). For example, a psychosocial support service dedicated to youth and families could develop a specialized program to provide care for families affected by situations associated with radicalization leading to violence. In the article's line purpose, we included them in the typology.

Building a typology requires collecting extensive information about existing entities and their characteristics, so to classify them and establish analytical categories. Accordingly, we collected information about existing family-oriented P/CVE programs at the international level. Through purposeful sampling, we collected data limited to information publicly available in four languages: French, English, German and Arabic. Using scientific literature,



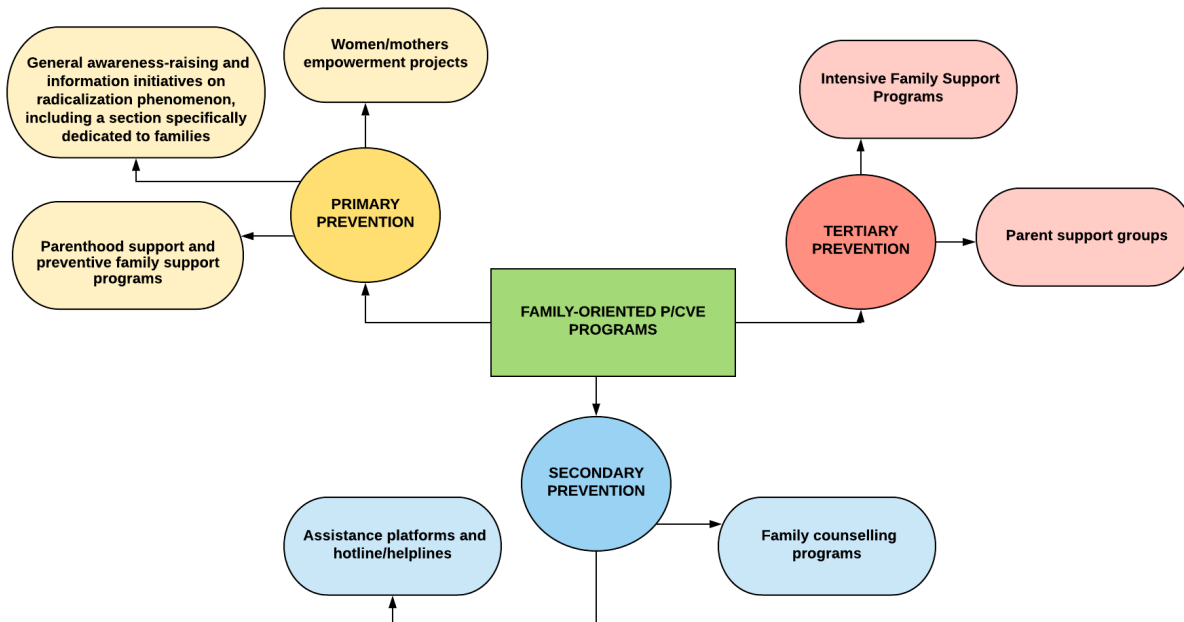
institutional documentation and the press, we were able to identify a comprehensive pool of (n=42) family-oriented P/CVE programs. Other inclusion criteria included a sufficient amount of information<sup>11</sup> (e.g. who is operating the initiative, the nature of activities, the kind of support/resources offered to families) available to make the classification as accurate as possible. This approach allowed us to reach gradual data saturation while ensuring the representativeness and the diversity of identified family-oriented P/CVE programs.

Based on the collected data, we were able to classify family-oriented P/CVE programs/initiatives along the three axes of the prevention continuum (see footnote 9): primary, secondary and tertiary. The classification allowed us to identify commonalities and shared characteristics that support the detailed typology (see Figure 1) introduced in the following section. It should be noted that for some programs, the inclusion in a subcategory should not be seen as strict and absolute. Indeed, some initiatives, in particular, national ones, sometimes include several subtypes of family-oriented P/CVE programs.

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<sup>11</sup> Our data collection process first involved collecting information about already publicly recognized programs or initiatives listed either as part of a collection of good practices synthesis (e.g. *Radicalization Awareness Network* best practices directory) or described in academic literature. Then, we supplemented this initial data sample with programs/initiatives which were not previously listed neither in academic nor institutional literature. Additionally, we paid considerable attention to ensuring that the different types of approaches and modalities (e.g. government vs. community-oriented initiatives, security vs. preventive strategies) in terms of prevention and intervention mechanisms were included in the data collected.

Figure 1 - Typology of Family-Oriented P/CVE Programs



*Raising Awareness and Strengthening Family Resilience: Primary Prevention Family-Oriented P/CVE Initiatives*

Primary prevention seeks to target the “root” causes and factors (individual, interpersonal, community, societal) associated with radicalization leading to violence, whatever its form. The basis for this prevention is, therefore, to raise awareness, to promote collective resilience and to organize prevention activities towards the general public (CPRLV, 2017). Divided into three subtypes, primary prevention family-oriented P/CVE initiatives include: (a) general awareness-raising and information initiatives, (b) parenthood and preventive family support programs and (c) women/mothers’ empowerment projects.

- a) General awareness-raising and information initiatives on radicalization phenomenon, including a section specifically dedicated to families

This subcategory encompasses initiatives aimed at raising awareness on radicalization leading to violence and its components (e.g. risk factors, worrying behaviours) as well as to provide information resources to help families cope with problematic situations. Most of the examples identified below are part of broader P/CVE initiatives that aimed at raising global awareness on radicalization and violent extremism where "family" represent only one targeted audience among others.

While the UK website *Educate Against Hate*<sup>12</sup> intends to provide information on radicalization leading to violence to the British public and school staff across the country, a specific section, the "Parents hub," is dedicated to parents. In the form of a "Q&A" section, families can access general information related to common concerns or questions about radicalization for which it is sometimes difficult to get answers (due to the fear of asking sensitive questions or the lack of access to professional resources to answer them) such as "How to talk to my child about extremism?" or "Is my child vulnerable to radicalization?". In Canada, the *Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence*<sup>13</sup> similarly offers several downloadable guides and tools (available both in English and French) for parents such as "Radicalization and violent extremism: How to talk to your child about it?", "What is radicalization leading to violence" or the "Behavioural Barometer" tool.

Awareness-raising is also carried out by organizations of parents or relatives who may have been directly affected by the issue. While first intended to provide peer support, these groups also aim at raising awareness on the reality of radicalization leading to violence. Existing initiatives at the international level include *S.A.V.E (Society Against Violent Extremism) Belgium*<sup>14</sup>, *MothersforLife*<sup>15</sup>, *Families Against Violent Extremism*<sup>16</sup> or

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<sup>12</sup> For more information on Educate Against Hate, please visit the website: <https://educateagainsthate.com/>

<sup>13</sup> For more information on the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV), visit its website: <https://info-radical.org/fr/>

<sup>14</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.savebelgium.org/>

<sup>15</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://girds.org/mothersforlife>

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*Parents4peace*<sup>17</sup>. Such parents or family-led initiatives are mobilizing as a priority around advocacy through the dissemination of personal testimonies from parents and relatives who have experienced the radicalization of a family member and its tragic consequences (i.e. disappearance, imprisonment or death). International networks gathering parents and families affected by the issue, such as *FATE*<sup>18</sup> (Families Against Terrorism and Extremism), also exist. In a similar vein, they are involved in raising awareness and advocacy work around radicalization and extremist violence through various social media meetings, conferences or campaigns.

Finally, some family-oriented organizations whose general mandate is not explicitly aimed at preventing radicalization leading to violence, also provide an information component dedicated to this topic. It is, for example, the case in the UK with the *National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)*<sup>19</sup>. While the primary mission of the organization is to prevent and intervene against child neglect and abuse, it has on its website a page dedicated entirely to radicalization leading to violence. Parents and professionals alike can learn about the phenomenon, about the potential signs associated with radicalization, but also be guided on how to address the matter with their children or relatives. At an even more local level, some schools, such as *Tipton Green Junior School*<sup>20</sup> in the UK, offer information about radicalization leading to violence for the attention of families on their websites. All these resources are good examples of the variety of organizations involved in awareness-raising and information dissemination dedicated to families (mainly parents) when it comes to radicalization and violent extremism.

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<sup>16</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://www.facebook.com/FamiliesAgainstViolentExtremismFAVE/>

<sup>17</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://parents4peace.org/>

<sup>18</sup> For more information, visit the initiative's website: <https://www.quilliaminternational.com/divisions/quilliam-global/programmes/fate/>

<sup>19</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

<sup>20</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.tgjs.org.uk/extremism-and-radicalization-advice-for-parents-an/>

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b) Parenthood support and preventive family support programs

Whether related to radicalization leading to violence or to other kinds of social issues (delinquency, violence, addiction), many public and community-led organizations offer "preventive family support" (Giuliani, 2009; Fagan, 2013): programs or tools that intend to help parents in their educational duties or to support families that may face social, economic or internal fragilities. These traditionally aim to prevent the emergence or aggravation of some intra-family issues and to limit the negative consequences those may have regarding the development of deviant behaviours by children and youth (Yoshikawa, 1994; Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003). In many respects, these parenting assistance programs are general since their work is primarily aimed at strengthening parenting skills without addressing specific social issues (Sanders, 2008). In Norway, the *Family Counselling Centre (FCC)*<sup>21</sup> offers, for example, a program to low-income families to help them solve a wide range of intra-family issues (Bufdir, 2017). Preventive family support interventions are mainly composed of family therapy and follow-ups designed to support parents in their responsibilities and resolving conflicts, whether they might be related to radicalization or not (RAN, 2018).

Some parenthood support schemes also aim to equip parents with the appropriate tools (e.g. communication skills, youth psychology notions) to deal with parenting challenges or deficits associated with intra-family challenges. In this respect, training parents to understand the context in which their children evolve, and at the same time the generational (and sometimes cultural) gap that may exist, is an essential tool of good parenting. The increased use of new digital technologies and social networks by youth also requires a proper understanding of these instruments on the part of parents and how their children may use them to ensure appropriate control over their digital life. Parenthood support, in this case, will aim to provide parents with the means to better understand new digital technologies and how social media work, and the risks associated with them for their

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<sup>21</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/sub/radikalisering/aktuelt/nye-tiltak-i-handlingsplanen-mot-radikalisering-og-voldelig-ekstremisme/id2542460/>

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children (RAN, 2017a). Similarly, *Parent Zone*<sup>22</sup> in the UK provides parents with practical tools to better understand their children's media consumption and digital use. Although the awareness offered by the organization covers a wide range of digital practices (e.g. presence and use of social media, video games and digital addiction,), the knowledge and advice offered is a form of secondary prevention of radicalization leading to violence, insofar as the parental attitudes promoted are relevant to the issue.

Canadian initiatives such as *Media Smarts*<sup>23</sup> (Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy), or the *Youth Online and At Risk: Radicalization Facilitated by the Internet program* supported by the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)* (Davies, Neudecker, Ouellet, Bouchard & Ducol, 2016; RCMP-GRC, 2011) offer resources to better equip parents with regard to their children's digital practices. *Media Smarts* proposes various guides, videos, fact sheets and workshops such as "The Parents' Network: Social Media and Your Children," "Discussing Hate Content in the Media with Your Children," and supports youth in their mastery of new information technologies and has a section dedicated specifically to parents. The RCMP's program is more directly focused on the risks associated with violent radicalization and the importance of the media (including the Internet) in some radicalization processes (RCMP-GRC, 2011). Both initiatives aim to encourage parent-child discussions about online radicalization issues and to prevent the phenomenon by equipping parents to manage better the digital challenge they and their children face.

Parenting support programs may also be part of a community perspective. In Belgium, the *Centre for the Future of Islamic Education* (in Flemish *Centrum voor Islamitische Educatie de Toekomst (CIET)*)<sup>24</sup> offers workshops focusing on education and identity in which both parents and children can take part. It seeks to provide parents, and the community, with the necessary knowledge to meet new challenges, particularly in terms of parental pedagogy and religious education in the European context. Still, in Belgium, the

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<sup>22</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://parentzone.org.uk/home>

<sup>23</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://mediasmarts.ca/>

<sup>24</sup> For more information, please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/CIET-741744109275373/about/>

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*IDARA*<sup>25</sup> (Islamic Development and Research Academy) has launched the initiative *Theological and Social Support for Families* (in Flemish *Theologische en maatschappelijke ondersteuning aan families*) around similar objectives. Supporting families to open up spaces for discussion with their children, but above all, to strengthen family ties and protective factors against the dynamics that may lead to violent extremism is at the heart of those initiatives. While focusing on apolitical-religious radicalization it aims to serve as a reference and a point of advice to answer the questions of families, young people, but also of any other person who feels concerned by a possible situation of radicalization.

Organizations such as *Family Support and Families Against Stress and Trauma (FAST)* offer a wide range of services to families in terms of parenting, education, conflict resolution, etc. These also include a component to raise families' awareness regarding radicalization leading to violence, emphasizing the cross-cutting nature of preventive family support. According to a similar principle, the *Parents Reach Out* scheme in Australia provides online parental support to parents to help them overcome potential problems with their children, but also to promote appropriate parenting and educational behaviour. This initiative offers a wide range of information and resources for parents on topics related to parenting, such as cyberbullying, anger management and identity diversity.

c) Women/mothers empowerment projects

A final subtype of primary prevention family-oriented initiatives are the ones focusing on the empowerment of women seen as a pivotal actor for the prevention of radicalization leading to violence. These projects are often based on the rationale that women, particularly mothers, because of their place in their own family and the community, have a leading role in family resilience and prevention (Ndung'u & Shadung, 2017). The literature has well emphasized the central participatory role of women (mothers, sisters or young women) in peace and conflict resolution processes (O'Reilly, Súilleabháin &

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<sup>25</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.idara.eu/>

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Paffenholz, 2015). In the same vein, many consider that women, especially mothers, have a central role in preventing radicalization leading to violence. In this sense, it is about giving women, mothers or sisters the tools so they can act as vectors of positive change within their communities and intimate circles (Giscard d'Estaing, 2017).

*Fempower*<sup>26</sup> (UK), *Sister's Against Violent Extremism from Women Without Borders*<sup>27</sup>(Austria) and *WomEx*<sup>28</sup> (Germany) are examples of such initiatives putting women at the heart of P/CVE. They all propose a gender-oriented approach and aim to equip women with the knowledge and skills, so they become drivers of resilience and prevention in their direct environment. As a result, these women gain necessary prevention skills, for example, the ability to recognize the early signs of radicalization in their relatives or being able to discuss and challenge sensitive subjects or extremist beliefs. Initiatives such as *Sister's Against Violent Extremism* also brings to light the testimonies of these women, indirectly victims of the radicalization of someone else. Their words become compelling narratives in the service of promoting peace and preventing extremist behaviour (Veenkamp & Zeiger, 2007).

Like the parenting support initiatives discussed in the previous subsection, the British *Web Guardians*<sup>29</sup> program, for example, offers computer courses targeting more specifically mothers to help them gain a better understanding of digital technologies and the way youth consume the Internet. Since the consumption of online content and information can be part of an individual's radicalization process (Edward & Gribbon, 2013), parents must be able to understand how their children use the Internet and, if necessary, to control or regulate their use. By focusing on mothers, the *Web Guardians* initiative aims to make women actors of change within their own family environment, mainly based on the idea that women are probably best positioned to supervise and discuss their children's digital uses at home.

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<sup>26</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://www.quilliaminternational.com/fempower/>

<sup>27</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://www.women-without-borders.org/>

<sup>28</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.womex.org/en/>

<sup>29</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://webguardians.org/>



*Assisting and Counseling Families: Secondary Prevention Family-Oriented P/CVE Initiatives*

Given the challenges posed by situations of radicalization, it seems essential to offer families facing potential situations of radicalization support structures on which they can rely and seek advice on how to best engage with their close ones. Concerning secondary prevention<sup>30</sup>, the majority of identified initiatives aim to listen, assist and counsel families who may be confronted with the potential radicalization of a loved one. If primary prevention initiatives have educational components for families and parents that can encompass general advice on the topic, secondary prevention initiatives distinguished themselves by the specificity of the individualized assistance and counselling they provide towards families. Beyond general awareness, this category includes programs or initiatives that provide concrete help to families facing in their intimate environments potential situations of radicalization leading to violence. Programs in this category can be divided between (a) assistance platforms and hotlines/helplines and (b) family counselling programs, both aiming at providing support and help measures for families facing radicalization situations from a child or a close relative.

a) Assistance platforms and hotline/helplines

Like many other existing assistance mechanisms for other social issues (e.g. suicide, domestic violence, sexual abuses), the primary aim of P/CVE help and guidance platforms is first and foremost to help and guide people who express a need for support in dealing with a potentially problematic situation. In the case of radicalization and violent extremism, these guidance platforms must enable relatives or any professional to be listened and supported, but also to be referred to specialized resources that may provide help or take charge of the targeted situation. With regard to existing mechanisms around the world, we

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<sup>30</sup> Secondary prevention focuses its efforts on individuals at risk of falling into a dynamic of radicalization. It aims to reduce the vulnerabilities and risk factors of the latter. It is also addressed to the stakeholders and the various actors who, if they are aware of the phenomenon and properly equipped to understand it - and, if necessary, to take charge of it - constitute formidable actors of prevention (CPRLV, 2017).

can distinguish two models of assistance and guidance platforms dedicated explicitly to radicalization leading to violence: (1) government-led assistance platforms/helplines and (2) community-led assistance platforms/helplines (Gielen, 2015).

In the phenomenon's wake of Western youth departures to Syria from 2014 onwards, several states have implemented assistance platforms aimed at parents or any citizen facing the radicalization of a loved one. Most often, these are operated at the national level by a dedicated ministry or service of the State. In Germany, the *BAMF Hotline*<sup>31</sup>, operated by the Counselling centre for radicalisation of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, aims to offer advice and guidance to the general public and families who may be confronted with radicalization situations. While the German assistance platform remains rooted in a state centred-logic, as do a large proportion of initiatives to prevent radicalization leading to violence, it is part of a more extensive network of collaboration that includes both governmental and non-governmental organizations<sup>32</sup>. In this respect, the *German Radicalization Counselling Centre* has a close link with specialized local organizations, such as *Hayat Deutschland*<sup>33</sup> or the *Violence Prevention Network*, which have professional and unique experiences tailored to the needs of families. Still, in Germany, the *Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution* (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz), the German intelligence services, has created several resources in the form of helplines to reach the "potential defectors" of neo-Nazi movements (Koehler, 2016), as well as extremist Islamist environments.

In a similar vein, the French government has set up a toll-free hotline, in 2014, in the context of the establishment of a national framework to prevent radicalization leading to violence in France (Ducol and Wood 2018). *Stop-Djihadisme*<sup>34</sup> is mainly addressed to families facing a situation of radicalization in their environment. However, the platform has

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<sup>31</sup> For more information on the initiative, please visit the website: <http://www.bamf.de/DE/DasBAMF/Beratung/beratung-node.html>

<sup>32</sup> For more information, visit the page:

<http://www.bamf.de/DE/DasBAMF/Beratung/Kooperationspartner/kooperationspartner-node.html>

<sup>33</sup> For more information on the initiative, please visit the website: <https://hayat-deutschland.de/>

<sup>34</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr/>

been the subject of mistrust within Muslim communities because of the initial hyper-focusing of the platform on Muslim populations and jihadi radicalization (Lindekilde, 2012). In Belgium, the *Support network for extremism and violent radicalism*<sup>35</sup> (government of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles) is offering a free and anonymous helpline since 2017. Operated by members of the multidisciplinary team, it aims at offering assistance, help and orientation to any person who may be concerned by radicalization and violent extremism<sup>36</sup> in its close circle.

Although assistance platforms implemented by governments represent an essential resource for families, they are also marked by several limits. First, fear that shared information may be used against a loved one may contribute to deterring several families or individuals from using such government assistance platforms (Grossman, 2018). As a result, those assistance platforms enjoy less trust, particularly among some minority communities, for whom state action is not always viewed positively. In response, assistance platforms operated by community organizations have emerged in several countries. In the Netherlands, *SMN Helpline*<sup>37</sup>, was created by the *Alliance of Dutch of Moroccan Origin* (in Dutch *Samenwerkingsverband Marokkaanse Nederlanders - SMN*). The organization provides guidance, parental training and professional resources to meet the needs of parents (mainly from the Moroccan community) facing radicalization situations. Supported by the Swedish National Coordinator for Combating Violent Extremism, the *Save the Children* helpline offers practical and emotional support, as well as act as a coordinator between families and professionals in the field (Sivenbring, 2019). From a similar perspective, the *Centre for the prevention of radicalization leading to violence (CPRLV)* offers through helpline assistance, listening and support service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, throughout the province of Quebec (Canada). This service, *Info-radical*, is confidential to allow the public, relatives or professionals to request help in the face of a potential situation

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<sup>35</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://extremismes-violents.cfwb.be/>

<sup>36</sup> In French, Centre d'Aide et de Prise en charge de toute personne concernée par les Extrémismes et Radicalismes Violents (CAPREV)

<sup>37</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.hulplijnradicalisering.nl/nl/Home>

of radicalization and to benefit from the advice and support of professionals without fearing of the risk of putting a relative under police monitoring.

These community-led assistance platforms and helplines, which are independent of government authorities and therefore of intelligence and police services, have several advantages, starting with the possibility of reaching individuals or families who do not wish to share a sensitive situation with public authorities. They, therefore, represent an essential alternative support mechanism for families who do not wish to turn to the authorities (including police services). Anchored in a community perspective, these platforms often appear more accessible, less intimidating (sometimes linked to barriers such as language, cultural norms or shame) for many families or individuals who may face potential situations of radicalization (Gielen, 2015).

#### b) Family counselling programs

Programs, both government and community-driven, offering specialized support and counselling for families (i.e. family counselling) faced with the radicalization of a loved one have multiplied in recent years (Koehler & Ehrt 2018). These initiatives, which take many forms and depend on local contexts, are based on the shared perspective that makes the family a central node for early intervention. As it is not always possible to intervene with the individuals engaged in a radicalization process (for multiple reasons) directly, the family circle is a privileged space for indirect intervention strategies (RAN, 2016). Support and counselling initiatives for families have several objectives depending on the situations concerned:

- Support families who might deal with the radicalization of a relative;
- Equip parents to take the appropriate actions to maintain a dialogue with the loved one in a situation of radicalization;
- Enable parents to benefit from listening to the situation and the multiple challenges

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(i.e. emotional, relational) associated with it;

Support and help to families are essential since it ensures the strengthening of support and attachment structures (emotionally, and with regard to the opinions and values of radicalized people) between parents and radicalized relatives, increasing the chances that the targeted situation will not deteriorate or even be resolved (Koehler, 2015).

In the United Kingdom, initiatives such as *Families for Life*<sup>38</sup> and *Hideaway Project Manchester*<sup>39</sup> provide support and counselling resources for families affected by the radicalization of a loved one. The aim is to improve parents' interpretation of possible signs of radicalization and cope with the consequences of the phenomenon. Emphasis is placed on the acceptance of the differences of the individual in a situation of radicalization by all the actors in his environment (i.e. parents, brothers, sisters, friends), but also on encouraging the rapprochement and maintenance of family bonds around common values or activities, whether art, sport, food, or even travel (RAN, 2016). In Austria, the *Information Centre on Extremism*<sup>40</sup> (Beratungsstelle Extremismus), a government-led centre offers both a support platform in the form of a helpline accessible to the entire Austrian population, as well as personalized support and counselling services for families (Götsch, 2017). In France, the *Centre for action and prevention against the radicalization of individuals* (in French CAPRI)<sup>41</sup> also offers to counsel families having to deal with the radicalization of a relative.

In Germany, the *Praefix R*<sup>42</sup> program offers coaching services aimed primarily at parent detainees who have themselves followed a path of radicalization (mainly in the far right) or at parents whose children are at risk of switching to extremism. The individual or group interventions seek to strengthen parenting skills and reinforce family ties in the context of incarceration to reduce the isolation between parents and children. Similarly, the

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<sup>38</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://familiesforlife.org.uk/>

<sup>39</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://thehideaway.org.uk/>

<sup>40</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at/>

<sup>41</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://radicalization.fr/>

<sup>42</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://www.ifgg-berlin.de/praefix-r.htm>

*Nationwide Institute for Right-Wing Extremism and Family*<sup>43</sup> (an initiative of the *Lidice Haus Education and Training Centre*), also offers a counselling service for parents whose children are involved or at risk of radicalization in right-wing extremism. The *Recall* initiative (*Parents Against the Right*)<sup>44</sup> also dedicates its services to families affected by right-wing extremism. Families receive information for a better understanding of the situations they face, improve their daily parenting practices as well as get referrals to other initiatives. Among them, *HAYAT Deutschland*<sup>45</sup> is one of the main initiatives supporting families affected by radicalization in Germany. They consider the direct environment of radicalized individuals as a vector for "decelerating and reverting" the radicalization process (Koehler, 2013: 185). By offering free, confidential services in several languages, they try to reach and support as many families as possible.

While in the vast majority of cases, the counselling programs for families are voluntary, some authorities have implemented coercive measures to encourage parents to intervene in potential situations of radicalization of their relatives and to engage in programs set up to support them. Thus, the *Forældrepaalægget* program set up by the City of Copenhagen since 2013 allows the revocation of family allowances to families who refuse to take part in the support and care program, if a relative is in a situation of radicalization<sup>46</sup>. This coercive principle aims to encourage parents to intervene and become more actively involved with their children's life, especially if they are at risk or in the process of radicalization. So far, this coercive approach has been vigorously debated, and it has not been evaluated in terms of benefits or greater parental involvement than with voluntary support and assistance (RAN, 2017a).

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<sup>43</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.congress-intercultural.eu/en/initiative/228-nationwide-institute-for-right-wing-extremism-and-family.html>

<sup>44</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.buendnis-toleranz.de/archiv/themen/extremismus/163165/recall-mit-eltern-gegen-rechts>

<sup>45</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://hayat-deutschland.de/english/>

<sup>46</sup> It should be noted that in the case of this type of program, parents are generally not the source of the request for assistance. Conversely, these are more external reports to the family body, explaining why families are not necessarily willing to voluntarily participate in a program of accompaniment and support related to radicalization leading to violence.

*Families at the Heart of Intervention Measures: Tertiary Prevention Family-Oriented P/CVE Initiatives*

Tertiary prevention refers mainly to mechanisms aimed at intervening on individuals in proven situations of radicalization and promoting their social reintegration (CPRLV, 2018). Insofar as the family environment is a critical factor in social reintegration, it seems essential that P/CVE interventions schemes include “intensive family support” mechanisms. Tertiary prevention initiatives refer to more or less formal mechanisms of support groups or circles between parents, sometimes set up in the absence of available public resources or response to the particular needs expressed by families affected by the radicalization of a loved one. Tertiary prevention family-oriented P/CVE initiatives are more limited, as this level of prevention involves more specialized work with few clients than the two others. Programs in this category can be divided between (a) Intensive family support programs, and (b) Parents support groups.

a) Intensive Family Support Programs

Compared to counselling programs offered mentioned in the previous section, intensive family support schemes refer, at the tertiary prevention level, to intervention measures and resources dedicated to families aim at slowing down an ongoing radicalization process or at initiating the disengagement/deradicalization process of a relative (Koehler, 2015). For example, the *Dutch Family Support Unit* offers families specialized interventions and tailored disengagement and de-radicalization strategies while being independent of the Dutch government (RAN, 2016). Intensive family support sessions are held directly in the families' homes to equip them to support the desistance process from the extremism of their loved ones. From a similar perspective, the *Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV)*<sup>47</sup> offers in the Québec context voluntary intensive support to create a family environment that is conducive to the disengagement or social reintegration

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<sup>47</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://info-radical.org/fr/>

of individuals affected by a situation of radicalization leading to violence.

The *Steunpunt Sabr*<sup>48</sup> initiative in the Netherlands offers an intensive family support program through a parent support group component that mainly targets parents whose children have left for Syria by offering them appropriate support, particularly in establishing healthy relationships with a child who may return from a war zone. Such schemes not only intend to promote the rehabilitation of the child but above all, to support parents through the questions or the practical dilemmas they may face in such situations. The initiative also acts as a bridge between families and government authorities or municipalities when necessary (RAN, 2017b). In Germany, the *Family Counselling: Support for parents of "foreign fighters" or the Youths at risk to be radicalized* program of the *Violence Prevention Network*<sup>49</sup> has set itself the dual goal of preventing the radicalization of vulnerable young people, but also of supporting parents whose children have gone to fight in Syria or who have returned. Through an intensive support programme, parents and relatives can receive a follow-up and counselling from specialized professionals with the primary aim of building the family environment as a "safety net" for individuals in the process of desistance from extremism. Many other disengagement programs focus on families as a pivotal element to success. For example, Saudi Arabia has long been promoting the primary role of families as a factor that can permanently influence individuals' disengagement from radicalization as a critical dimension of its own deradicalization program (Casptack, 2015).

Finally, intensive family support schemes may also be targeted at parents or families grieving the death or disappearance of a radicalized loved one. However, in a vast majority of cases, the families concerned are more oriented towards peer support groups than towards institutional resources.

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<sup>48</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.steunpuntsabr.nl/>

<sup>49</sup> For more information, visit the website: <https://violence-prevention-network.de/>



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b) Parents support groups

While in several states, public authorities have implemented intensive family support schemes, these do not always exist, are sometimes deficient or do not necessarily correspond to the particular needs expressed by families. In response, several families have chosen to form support groups between parents affected by the radicalization of loved ones (Sikkens et al. 2017: 193). In a vast majority of cases, these parents support groups have focused on three main areas : (1) offering a space for mutual and non-judgemental understanding between parents facing similar personal situations (2) promoting advocacy towards governmental authorities in relation to practical issues that are directly affecting families facing radicalization (e.g. the impossibility of obtaining a death certificate for a relative who has died abroad or the repatriation of a relative who has left for a conflict zone), and (3) raising general awareness about radicalization leading to violence in order to ensure that other families won't be affected by the same consequences.

Parents support groups are most often local initiatives, although there are some national and even international examples. The *S.A.V.E (Society Against Violent Extremism) Belgium*<sup>50</sup> initiative founded by Saliah Ben Ali, whose son Sabri left for Syria in 2013 and died 4 months after his arrival, aims at both the creation of a support circle for families affected in their intimate circle by a situation of radicalization and the implementation of a broader awareness approach aimed at informing about the risk of radicalization leading to violence to various audiences (schools community centers, etc.). Still in Belgium, several initiatives, such as *Intensieve ondersteuning aan moeders*<sup>51</sup> (*Intensive Support for Mothers*) and *Moedergroep "Van Moeder tot Moeder"* (*Mother-to-Mother" Mothers' Group*) aim more particularly to support mothers through various activities: by offering them a safe discussion space and by allowing them to create relationships with other mothers living a similar situation related to the radicalization of a loved one. This principle of mutual assistance and support is at the core

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<sup>50</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.savebelgium.org/>

<sup>51</sup> For more information, visit the website: [www.jihadvandemoeders.com](http://www.jihadvandemoeders.com)

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of other parents support initiatives such as : the *Syrien ne bouge, agissons*<sup>52</sup> association (France), founded in 2014 by Dominique Bons, whose two sons left to join jihadist groups in Syria and died on the spot, *Sons and Daughters of the World*<sup>53</sup> (Denmark), founded by Karolina Dam following the departure and death of her son in Syria or *Parents4peace* (United States) co-founded by Melvin Bledsoe after his son Carlos was radicalized and committed a deadly act of terrorism on US soil. Founded by Christianne Boudreau, mother of Damian Clairmont, a young Canadian who left for Syria in 2012, the international network *Mothers for Life*<sup>54</sup> also aims at bringing together parents facing radicalization, to support them and allow them to discuss the various issues they might encounter in the light of exceptional situations they are going through. It is also an advocacy platform that allows parents around the world to be heard by the general public and governmental authorities. The network includes families from 12 countries among its network: Canada, United States, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden, France, Norway, United Kingdom, Tunisia and Italy. Although the contribution of parents support groups is undeniable, very often the lack of structure, theoretical foundations and evidence-based interventions do not allow this type of initiative to work as a single prevention actor. As suggested by Koehler & Ehrt (2018: 15), these types of initiatives must implement a “structural interlink” with other more professionalized entities, whether government agencies or non-profit organizations, in order to overcome this challenge.

### Challenges, Gaps and Future Directions

The typology of family-oriented P/CVE programs introduced in the previous section illustrates the wide variety of existing initiatives in this field. It also allows identifying some of their challenges and gaps. Indeed, very few P/CVE initiatives developed over the past decade have been subject to evaluations and in-depth reviews. As a result, there is little

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<sup>52</sup> For more information on the initiative, please visit the website: <http://syriennebouge-agissons.com/>

<sup>53</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://sonsanddaughtersoftheworld.com/>

<sup>54</sup> For more information, visit the website: <http://www.mothersforlife.org/en>

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knowledge available on good practices, and on the elements that may determine the success or failure of such programs. This lack of evaluation is even more pronounced in the case of family-oriented P/CVE programs (Gielen, 2015; Bousetta, Dethier & Lecoyer, 2018). While few articles discussing the evaluation of these types of initiatives have been published (Gielen, 2014) and some evaluations — including short-term or output evaluations — have been conducted at the international level (Koehler, 2013), the available literature remains scarce. In response to that, this subsection aims to provide a general overview of the various challenges and gaps, based on the examination of data collected during the typology building process.

The first set of challenges identified relates to the institutional sustainability, the degree of professionalism and the public credibility of family-oriented P/CVE programs (Sidlo 2017: 5). A detailed observation of the initiatives reviewed suggests a wide disparity, particularly in terms of the financial support available and the level of professionalization they can rely on. Several community-led initiatives appear to struggle with financial instability or a lack of qualified personnel that can jeopardize the continuity of services offered to families in need. Besides, public authorities are sometimes reluctant to recognize the credibility and the work done in this area by community-based organizations because they do not know those actors on the ground, or they had limited past interaction with them (Sidlo 2017: 4).

Working with parents and relatives who have experienced radicalization in an effort of prevention can raise a series of issues. Just as involving formers in P/CVE programs creates its set of challenges (RAN, 2017c; Tapley & Clubb, 2019) working with families who have faced the radicalization of a loved one should not be done without some considerations. Dilemmas around their labelling (i.e. “parents of radicalized individuals”), their possible lack of professional training in the field or even the risk of getting re-traumatized through prevention activities should be areas of concern (Galloway, 2019) for P/CVE practitioners and policymakers. In that sense, family-oriented P/CVE initiatives should ideally rely on a sound structure able to provide support and training, enhance

professionalism as well as reduce adverse impacts such as mentioned before.

Lack of professionalism may also lead to scandals or controversies. In the case of *HAYAT Deutschland*, a controversy emerged when a Salafi preacher they were working with was accused of working as a recruiter for ISIS (Wolf, Röhmel & Lierheimer, 2017). In Belgium, the non-profit association “The concerned parents” (in French “Les parents concernés”) was dissolved in 2016 following accusations “for terrorist financing, terrorist recruitment and attempted terrorist recruitment” of one of its members (Fadoul, 2016). Public scandals such as this one can gravely undermine the entire action of an organization and tarnish the reputation of the whole P/CVE field. Similarly, the French state-subsidized association “Family Prevention” (in French “Prévention Famille”) saw three parents-member being charged with "terrorist financing" following the possible misappropriation of public funds intended for the association (Millet, 2017). These examples widely reported in the media demonstrate how the work of associations and, above all, public confidence in family-oriented P/CVE programs can easily be undermined when initiatives do not demonstrate sufficient professionalism and credibility.

The second set of challenges of family-oriented P/CVE programs is related to the ability to transmit useful knowledge and bias-free information to families in a context of great confusion surrounding radicalization and violent extremism issues. As with other issues (e.g. drug addiction, delinquency, sexual risk behaviours) that may concern families, it is not easy to ensure a nuanced and non-stigmatizing awareness adapted to the variety of family audiences. Reaching out families, especially those who are already marginalized or afraid of institutional actors, is considered by many practitioners in the field as a real challenge to make awareness effective. In some countries, minority communities have expressed their strong concerns about how government bodies are addressing the issue of radicalization leading to violence through a caricatural and stigmatizing approach, leading them to fear collaboration with public authorities regarding radicalization (Awan & Guru, 2017: 10-11). More than ever, there is a crucial need for reflection on how to better approach families for awareness-raising purposes.

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It is not possible to discuss the challenges facing P/CVE initiatives for families without addressing the issue of trust and legitimacy granted to families. Families are often perceived by the authorities through a binary frame, either as responsible for radicalization or as a source for information and intelligence. This reductive vision tends to antagonize families and increase the importance of some families' mistrust of official authorities. It contributes to the resistance that some families or relatives of radicalized or at-risk individuals may feel towards prevention initiatives, particularly when public authorities lead them or when public security actors (intelligence services or law enforcement) are involved. Indeed, several elements can influence families' decisions to approach support and counselling resources in order to seek help in the face of a situation of potential radicalization, including, among others, the assurance of confidentiality, credibility or the perception of safety with regard to intervention measures (Koehler, 2015).

The third set of challenges identified is in connexion with dealing with unstable family configurations and the various vulnerabilities that characterize them (Spalek, 2016: 42; RAN, 2018). To achieve the implementation of appropriate support and preventive measures, it is essential for prevention workers and actors to position themselves with regard to the involvement of the family unit in the process of radicalization of the relative concerned. In this way, the assessment of the role that the family environment may have played in the radicalization process is essential, although not very obvious in practice. It requires a thorough knowledge of the phenomenon of radicalization and minimum of information on the family context faced with the situation of radicalization. It should be considered that in some cases the absence of a family or a stable family environment is in itself a significant obstacle to the reintegration of individuals in a situation of radicalization or disengagement (RAN, 2018). The implementation of support is often conditional on the existence of a “support net” on which individuals can rely. The absence of this relational circle or stable family environment can also lead to a non-reporting of risk situations or relapses because the individual affected by radicalization cannot be permanently monitored by the workers involved in support programs or initiatives.

The fourth set of issues relates to the practical and operational limitations of family-oriented P/CVE initiatives (RAN, 2017, b). Intervening in an effective preventive logic with families requires a minimum collaboration between the various authorities and prevention actors. Some situations may have to be transferred to one authority to another (i.e. community, school, government) for logistical reasons or obligations in cases where the situation presents a danger to society or the individual himself. This dependence of different services at different levels can slow down the prevention process if the parties do not collaborate. Often, this collaboration - which can be voluntary or forced - can generate tensions, especially in the case of information sharing and confidentiality issues. Confidentiality (or its lack thereof) is often brought forward as something that discourages families from taking part in the process of prevention, as they lack trust in the messenger of the initiative and fear repercussions.

The fifth challenge consists of mobilizing all the actors of the family unit in the prevention and intervention measures of radicalization leading to violence. More and more existing programs tend to emphasize the importance of women (especially mothers) as actors in prevention. However, paternal figures are still too often excluded or absent from these prevention efforts (Veenkamp & Zeiger, 2007). Like mothers, fathers can act as both a factor of vulnerability and of protection, making them an asset in a child's radicalization prevention or rehabilitation. In many ways, P/CVE measures are rooted in a gendered vision of parenting that tends to make mothers more empowered and aware about prevention, thus ignoring the essential role of fathers in this area (Hunt, 2012) and reinforcing gendered stereotypes in particular communities (Awan & Guru, 2017: 6).

The sixth and final challenge facing radicalization prevention initiatives is related to their longevity. Family-oriented P/CVE programs have to deal with the presence of other existing structures, and it is not uncommon for initiatives to have similar goals and overlapping activities. However, the competitive nature of this overlapping can lead some initiatives to their end. Even though it comes with its own set of challenges and it has to be well thought and balanced, partnerships between private-public organizations, governmental-

and non-governmental agencies, can become a valuable solution (Beutel & Weinberger, 2016; Koehler & Ehrt, 2018). This venue should, therefore, be explored in the field of P/CVE as those partnerships may complement the strengths and weaknesses of each party. In addition to all this, the evaluation of these programs remains underdeveloped. This issue is not limited to initiatives aimed at families, since it is, in fact, transversal to the whole field of prevention of radicalization leading to violence. Although the increase in research on these phenomena and the implementation of prevention initiatives in the field, too few studies have yet examined their evaluation (Gielen, 2017; Romaniuk, 2015). Nevertheless, evaluations could allow programs to develop and ensure themselves longevity in the long term. It is this scarcity of information on good practices that motivated the present typological review. Therefore, more attention should now be focused on the elements shaping the success or failure of such initiatives, and on the development of appropriate P/CVE evaluation tools.

## Conclusion

Despite the current debates about the role of families in radicalization pathways, parents and siblings are becoming priority targets in the field of P/CVE. While the number of family-oriented P/CVE programs has increased over the past few years, the available literature on this topic remains limited. The above typology does not have the pretension of being exhaustive, nor it is not exempt from limitations. However, we hope that it will serve as a milestone to inspire more in-depth studies about family-oriented P/CVE programs.

The article allows us to recognize the wide variety of existing family-oriented P/CVE initiatives. It also offers the ability to reveal the shared characteristics and differences between existing efforts at the international level. Families are considered not only targets for prevention, but also significant resources by P/CVE professionals. More than ever, family-oriented P/CVE programs need to be expanded to offer better and more efficient help to families having to deal with the radicalization of a loved one. Overall, the current typology not only aims at enhancing the common understanding of what “family-oriented P/CVE”

means, but it also highlights prevailing challenges and pitfalls that should be addressed in this particular field of practices. Based on the cross-examination of programs and initiatives, several guidelines should be considered to improve the current state of affairs:

- Reinforce the dissemination of non-sensational and bias-free public knowledge about radicalization leading to violence aimed at deconstructing common misconceptions about the phenomenon that often prevent sufficient awareness;
- Support the effective transmission of easily understandable information about radicalization processes and their mechanisms as well as early signs of engagement into extremism towards all families (and not only families considered “at-risk”);
- Promote credible gatekeepers and community figures that can be in a position to reach parents and relatives having to deal with the radicalization of a loved one in a non-judgmental nor stigmatizing way;  
Increase the involvement of families both in the design and the establishment of P/CVE programs and activities, both at the local and national levels;
- Strengthen the credibility of family-oriented P/CVE programs by ensuring their financial sustainability, their transparency and the qualification of professionals working on the ground;
- Enhance the possibility of establishing more private-public and governmental-nongovernmental partnerships to improve family-oriented P/CVE resources;
- Produce empirical and rigorous evaluations of family-oriented P/CVE programs, which will contribute to building knowledge around the “good practices” and ensure evidence-based interventions in a field that is for now mostly experimental.



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