STRONG CITIES

An ISD initiative

INSTITUTE *for*
STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

Launched at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, the Strong Cities Network (SCN) is the first ever global network of mayors, governors and local practitioners united in building social cohesion and community resilience to counter violent extremism in all its forms.

The SCN helps regions, cities and municipalities access the tools and insights needed to challenge and reduce the presence of violent extremism within their communities.

The SCN's strategic aims and activities include:

CONNECT

Connecting local practitioners through Regional Workshops and an annual SCN Global Summit to enable best practice sharing, new project inspiration, and increased practitioner confidence.

EMPOWER

Empowering city leaders and local practitioners to develop their own Local Action Plans and P/CVE programming that makes sense for their local and national context.

BUILD

Building local infrastructure and Prevention Networks to coordinate P/CVE policy and programmes as well as building long-term partnerships between cities through City Exchanges.

INNOVATE

Catalysing innovation through provision of Local Innovation Grants to grassroots organisations to develop new PVE models and foster cooperation between municipalities and civil society.

INFORM

Informing local practitioners of the latest research, P/CVE models and examples of best practice through the secure SCN Online Hub.

REPRESENT

Representing the needs of city leaders and local practitioners to national governments and international policymakers at the United Nations, the European Union and the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF).

OUR PRINCIPLES

The SCN is guided by key principles in everything we do. The following principles were agreed by the SCN Steering Committee and underpin the SCN's activities:

- Protecting human rights in all efforts to counter violent extremism
- Not associating violent extremism with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group
- Standing against discrimination of any kind through tackling bigotry and hate crimes
- Partnering with local communities on a collaborative basis
- Complete transparency of partners and funding sources

STRONG CITIES NETWORK

Member Cities

In 18 months, SCN membership has grown to 112 regions, cities, and municipalities from across the globe, demonstrating the strong demand for support for P/CVE at the local level. SCN's membership is highly diverse, including large megacities like London and Mumbai, to smaller municipalities such as Kristiansand and Tripoli. SCN members have a broad array of experiences and expertise relevant to P/CVE policy and programming. What unites SCN members is their desire to share their experiences, learn from others, and build community resilience against the divisive ideologies of violent extremism in all its forms.

The SCN is guided by a 25-city and region International Steering Committee. The Steering Committee's primary functions include:

- Determining the overall strategic direction of the SCN, as well as the annual thematic priorities for action and delivery.
- Sharing information related to existing projects, programming and practices, and working to populate the online platform with practices, programmes and lessons learned.
- Endorsing and publicising the SCN including assistance in the growth of the overall membership base.

SCN International Steering Committee members:

Aarhus, Denmark
Antalya, Turkey
Atlanta, USA
Beirut, Lebanon
Copenhagen, Denmark
Dakar, Senegal
Denver, USA
Kaduna, Nigeria
Kano, Nigeria
Kiffa, Mauritania
London, UK
Medellín, Colombia
Minneapolis, USA
Mombasa, Kenya
Montréal, Canada
Mumbai, India
New York City, USA
Oslo, Norway
Palermo, Italy
Paris, France
Puno, Peru
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Stockholm, Sweden
Tunis, Tunisia
Victoria, Australia

SCN members:

Antwerp, Belgium
Augsburg, Germany
Aurora, USA
Bar, Montenegro
Berane, Montenegro
Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Birmingham, UK
Bordeaux, France
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Bujanovac, Serbia
Cair (Skopje), Macedonia
Cali, Colombia
Centar (Sarajevo), Bosnia and Herzegovina
Cerrik, Albania
Chaguanas, Trinidad and Tobago
Chanchamayo, Peru
Chattanooga, USA
Cuenca, Ecuador
Dhaka North, Bangladesh
Dhaka South, Bangladesh
Diffa, Niger
Doboj, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Dresden, Germany
Elbasan, Albania
Envigado, Colombia
Ferizaj, Kosovo
Fuenlabrada, Spain
Gjakova, Kosovo
Gjilan, Kosovo
Gostivar, Macedonia
Gračanica, Kosovo
Guldborgsund, Denmark
Gusinje, Montenegro
Hani i Elezit, Kosovo
Helsinki, Finland
Jablanica, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Kaçanik, Kosovo
Karak, Jordan
Kicevo, Macedonia
Kolofata, Cameroon
Kousseri, Cameroon
Kristiansand, Norway
Kumanovo, Macedonia
Los Angeles, USA
Louisville, USA
Madjal Anjar, Lebanon
Malaga, Spain
Malé, Maldives

Malmö, Sweden
Meri/Diamaré, Cameroon
Mitrovica South, Kosovo
Mokolo, Cameroon
Montgomery County, USA
Montreuil, France
Narayanganj, Bangladesh
Novi Pazar, Serbia
Nowshera, Pakistan
Ohrid, Macedonia
Peja/Peć, Kosovo
Peshawar, Pakistan
Pignon, Haiti
Preševo, Serbia
Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prishtina, Kosovo
Prizren, Kosovo
Rožaje, Montenegro
Saida, Lebanon
San Diego, USA
Sarcelles, France
Srebrenik, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Struga, Macedonia
Tetovo, Macedonia
The Hague, The Netherlands
Tirana, Albania
Tripoli, Lebanon
Tutin, Serbia
Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ulcinj, Montenegro
Utrecht, The Netherlands
Viborg, Denmark
Vilvoorde, Belgium
Viti, Kosovo
Vushtrri, Kosovo
Yaoundé II, Cameroon
Zanzibar, Tanzania
Zarqa, Jordan

SCN CORE OUTCOMES

- Cities at the forefront of prevention efforts on a global scale
- Increased capability of local practitioners to tackle extremism and its causes
- Driving sustainable resilience through adaptable, scalable models across multiple global contexts
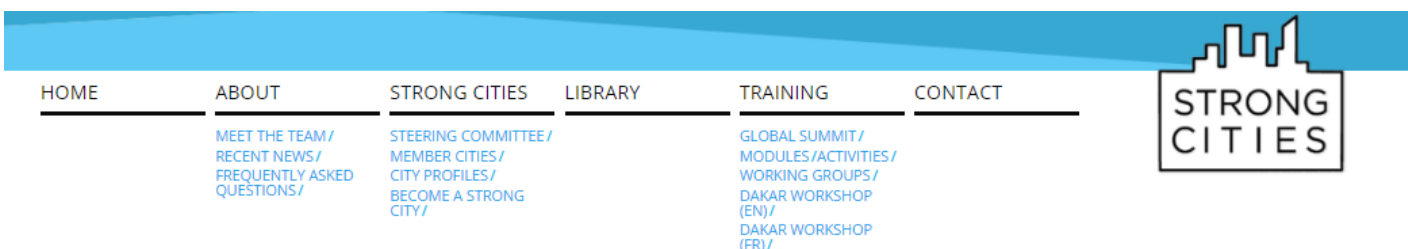
IMPACT

- **95%** of practitioners attending SCN global meetings and workshops on average reporting increased knowledge and skills, better equipping municipalities to counter violent extremism
- **Local Prevention Networks** established in six cities across Jordan and Lebanon, bringing together over 90 local practitioners to design PVE projects and coordinate practical local responses
- **Local Action Planning Framework** developed and approved by the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), including co-development of a Risk Assessment Framework with international development organisation Creative Associates International
- **SCN Regional Workshops** delivered in three global regions, including Africa, the Balkans and South Asia. The first Regional Workshop took place in March 2017 in Dakar, Senegal, bringing together 15 cities from across 10 East & West African countries
- **SCN International Visitor Leadership Program** bringing 33 local practitioners from across 12 priority countries to learn from US cities' experiences
- **City twinning programmes** delivered for six cities, creating bilateral partnerships to improve local P/CVE implementation in cities impacted by extremist recruitment across Turkey, Senegal and Kenya

SCN IN NUMBERS

- **112** cities from **43** countries
- **1000** local practitioners trained
- **275** practitioners engaged online
- **30** international events where SCN was represented

- **Youth engagement models** developed for North & East Africa, connecting over 100 youth activists to 30 municipal policy makers, putting young people at the forefront of advancing solutions
- 55 applications received for **local innovation grants** awarded to three grassroots NGOs to empower new actors, broaden impact in local prevention efforts and foster better collaboration between civil society and municipalities
- Over 275 practitioners from over 100 cities actively engaged in the **SCN Online Hub**, with access to the world's largest library of local P/CVE resources for cities including **case studies, toolkits, city pro iles** and **training resources** on counter-narratives, interventions and de-radicalization, and youth engagement

SCN ONLINE HUB

www.strongcitiesnetwork.org

Launched at the 2016 Global Summit in Antalya, Turkey, the SCN Online Hub provides a member-only online resource and training centre with valuable digital training resources including a library of research and case studies, city profiles and online training modules and toolkits.

LIBRARY

A one-stop-shop for research, strategy papers and analysis related to local P/CVE, the SCN members' library is a central repository featuring more than 200 documents of interest to member cities. As well as collating public documents for ease of access, the library also hosts documents contributed by member cities, including local action plans and evaluations. All documents are available for download, and can be easily searched and sorted by theme, city, region or language. Visit the library at **www.strongcitiesnetwork.org/library**.

CITY PROFILES

The SCN's aim is to increase the opportunities for peer learning across cities around the world. New for 2017, we have launched online city profiles for SCN member cities, providing comprehensive overviews of the core challenges and approaches in each of our cities. City Profiles are searchable by thematic tags, making them a practical resource for frontline practitioners and policymakers. If your city is interested in developing activities and programming, for example in mentoring or youth engagement, you can search these themes to bring up a selection of cities carrying out leading work in these areas. If you find specific programmes you are interested in learning more about, the SCN team can put you directly in touch with a relevant counterpart in another member city.

ONLINE TRAINING MODULES & TOOLKITS

Delivering world-class practical training to our member cities is central to the work of the SCN. In addition to face-to-face training sessions and capacity-building workshops, members can access online training modules and toolkits via the Online Hub. Each of the SCN working groups has a dedicated toolkit, covering background research, interest pieces, case studies from around the world, and relevant work in member cities. Documents are easily accessible and downloadable. Interactive training modules to support practitioner development are also available covering topics including counter-narrative campaigns and individual interventions. Online training resources can be accessed at **www.strongcitiesnetwork.org/training**

REGIONAL PRACTITIONERS' WORKSHOPS

Dakar, Senegal: 9-10 March 2017

Throughout the year, the SCN will deliver three Regional Practitioners' Workshops, training city-level practitioners in East and West Africa, South Asia, and the Western Balkans. The first SCN Regional Practitioners' Workshop of 2017 took place on 9-10 March, hosted by the City of Dakar, Senegal. The event brought together 50 participants, including local frontline P/CVE practitioners from 15 cities drawn from 10 countries across East and West Africa.

Participants demonstrated the importance of stronger regional dialogue on local P/CVE initiatives, highlighting the role of civil society actors, greater municipal coordination of local activities, and the need to strengthen vertical cooperation with national governments. Taking these discussions forward, cities outlined their current challenges, risk profiles and core local partners as part of an in-depth practical training session on developing local action plans.

Over the course of the training session, practitioners were asked to:

- Analyse the local risk profiles of cities
- Map local P/CVE partners
- Allocate partners to appropriate risks
- Identify appropriate mitigation and prevention approaches

100% of participants surveyed felt that the local action planning session improved their understanding in the following areas:

- Categorisation of local risk factors
- The role of different partners in the development and delivery of local action plans
- The challenges, risks and initiatives in other cities across East and West Africa

More than **90%** felt that the session also helped them identify how municipalities could take on a coordinating role in local P/CVE action planning and that it improved their knowledge of prevention and mitigation strategies.

More specifically, **75%** reported an improvement in their knowledge and skills in mitigation, intervention and referrals and the production of counter-narratives. **83%** noted improved knowledge and skills covering mentoring, de-radicalisation, and disengagement initiatives.

The following cities were represented at the East and West Africa Regional Practitioners' Workshop:

Cameroon	Djibouti	Kenya	Mali	Mauritania
Kousseri Waza Reserve	Tadjourah	Kwale Lamu Mombasa	Bamako	Kiffa
Niger	**Nigeria**	**Senegal**	**Tanzania**	**Uganda**
Diffa Naimey	Kano State Lagos	Dakar	Zanzibar	Kampala

LOCAL ACTION PLANNING AND RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Designing a Local Action Plan is often the first step for cities to build an effective and sustainable counter extremism strategy. The SCN has designed a comprehensive Local Action Planning methodology, leveraging the expertise of SCN member cities and partners, to work with cities directly to design effective P/CVE local strategies and action plans.

Delivery Methodology

The SCN Local Action Planning process is designed to work with cities to build a local evidence base from which to design targeted risk reduction programmes. Cities can develop a locally-owned and tailored P/CVE action plan drawing on global expertise, established best practice, and local insight from across the SCN enabling them to: analyse the local risk profiles of cities; allocate partners to appropriate risks; map local P/CVE partners and identify mitigation and prevention approaches that may be required.

To support the broad range of needs of our members, the SCN can offer flexible support and training to cities including on-demand consultancy support, advice and access to a central repository of international learning to strengthen P/CVE delivery. Local Action Planning can be delivered in the following ways:

Regional workshops

- Providing frontline training to local municipal representatives and city officials seeking to develop their understanding of local P/CVE action planning development

National workshops

- Focusing on identifying national drivers through multi-city local action planning workshops

One-to-one consulting

- Co-designing a local action plan development and delivery framework in consultation with a city, and where necessary, national and regional bodies

Partners

The SCN is proud to be partnering with the Global Center on Cooperative Security to support SCN members with Local Action Planning. The SCN Local Action Planning process has been developed and approved by the GCTF CVE Working Group with the creation of the **Strong Cities Local Action Plan Task Force** to complement the existing P/CVE National Action Plans Task Force led by Hedayah and the Global Center for Cooperative Security.

Risk Assessment Framework Delivery Methodology

An effective Local Action Plan process rests upon the development of an accurate risk assessment. In support of our SCN members, we are excited to launch a transatlantic partnership between Creative Associates International and ISD to deliver a state-of-the-art city-level Risk Assessment Framework, which combines the respective expertise and methodologies of our two organisations.

Uniting 10 years of lessons derived from ISD's pioneering research and programming in P/CVE and counter-polarisation with Creative's 40 years of experience in development, governance and capacity building, we are uniquely positioned to help global cities implement sound P/CVE programming based on a comprehensive analysis of local risk factors. Leveraging Creative's existing FRAME assessment tool focussing on local governance systems as factors for vulnerability and resilience to VE, and ISD's methodologies in online and offline mapping and analysis of the drivers of extremism, cities have a unique opportunity to build an evidence base to apply data driven approaches to P/CVE programming. Existing tools in the sector often fail to grasp both the structural and more nuanced drivers of extremism and community polarisation. With ISD and Creative's integrated capabilities, the joint Risk Assessment Framework is a compelling and comprehensive approach that works interactively with local stakeholders to identify local risks and needs, forming a baseline for SCN cities to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of P/CVE programme delivery over time. The information derived from this process will create the most comprehensive global repository on risk and mitigation to date.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PREVENTION NETWORKS

Lebanon and Jordan

The Strong Cities Network helps municipalities build the local infrastructure necessary to coordinate and deliver local P/CVE strategies and programmes. This is a vital first step in building municipal capacity to drive community resilience and undertake prevention.

The Strong Cities Network is working with the municipalities of **Majdal Anjar**, **Saida** and **Tripoli** in Lebanon and **Al-Karak**, **Irbid** and **Zarqa** in Jordan, to establish six local Prevention Networks. Each is coordinated by the municipality and consists of a dozen local stakeholders, including teachers, youth workers, religious leaders, youth representatives, NGO representatives and psycho-social intervention providers.

The Prevention Networks provide the key local body for determining local P/CVE priorities, local strategies and for the design and delivery of local projects.

The Strong Cities Network can provide support to member cities and municipalities in building local strategy and coordination networks. The SCN works closely with national and local partners to establish a model that fits to their cultural and institutional context.

Prevention Networks can help municipalities to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Community buy-in:** Prevention Networks can help secure community cooperation and buy-in through the inclusion of key community stakeholders

- **Strengthen municipal role:** Coordinating local community Prevention Networks helps municipalities build trust and good relations with local NGOs, youth activists and faith leaders

- **Creation of Local Prevention Strategies and Action Plans:** Prevention Networks can provide the key hub for the deliberation and agreement of local P/CVE action plans and strategies

- **Design and delivery of P/CVE projects:** Prevention Networks can serve as the key body for designing and delivering prevention related projects and community outreach

With support from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

LOCAL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN P/CVE

Municipalities are not only uniquely positioned to amplify independent youth initiatives and campaigns, but are also crucial in involving young people as key partners when it comes to policy design, integrating young voices into local resilience-building efforts.

Catering for different local and municipal contexts, the SCN offers two distinct workshop models:

Model 1: CREATE: Youth Innovation Labs

These 2-day workshops connect youth activists with local artists, creatives and tech-sector experts to learn best practices, collaborate and create new, innovative online P/CVE campaigns.

These workshops represent a first step towards building regional youth networks that can quickly produce counter-narratives and alternative-narrative campaigns that are more likely to resonate with local youth populations. These workshops also provide an opportunity to consult youth on policy recommendations and local youth grievances.

Model 2: CHANGE: Youth Policy Workshops

These 3-day workshops bring together municipal leaders and local practitioners with local youth to strengthen relationships and increase youth engagement in local decision-making.

These workshops aim to help local practitioners reach vulnerable youth and those most in need, leverage existing local structures and services in P/CVE, boost independent youth initiatives, and create safe spaces and arenas for interaction.

Delivery

Working with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the SCN and YouthCAN are delivering a series of joint workshops in the Middle East and East Africa across 2017. We are also pleased to be partnering with Nordic Safe Cities to deliver collaborative workshops across the Nordic region, with the following key outcomes:

- **Youth capacity-building:** Provide youth with skills and knowledge to devise new peace-building initiatives and gain technical and social media training

- **Counter-narrative campaigns:** Support young activists in creating and managing innovative messaging and campaigns

- **Knowledge sharing:** Set the foundations for future collaboration and cooperation between youth and local decision makers

- **Municipal capacity-building:** Build local government capacity on youth engagement in P/CVE efforts

- **Building city-level networks:** Convene local government representatives and practitioners with local youth to build sustainable city-level networks and catalyse their involvement in local policy formation on P/CVE

- **Amplification of local youth voices:** Provide youth voices with access to design and impact policy in their community

With support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Children and Equality

NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND EQUALITY

ISD | INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

For over a decade ISD has been at the forefront of forging innovative real-world solutions to the rising challenge of violent extremist movements and the ideologies that underpin them.

ISD's mission is to research, innovate, build and accelerate replicable and sustainable models rather than one-off programmes. We are mounting a soft power strategy that is proportional in output, professionalism and scale to the ever-more sophisticated propaganda and recruitment machinery of extremists.

As demonstrated through the Strong Cities Network, ISD's approach is designed to adapt to diverse and localised issues and populations across geographies, creating locally relevant solutions. This includes a detailed understanding of drivers and models which can work in certain contexts, with local approaches that vary accordingly.

POLICY & GOVERNMENT ADVISORY

ISD advises over 15 governments worldwide, and facilitates the exchange of best practice between policymakers and practitioners to coordinate counter extremism efforts. Current programmes include:

- **Strong Cities Network:** Uniting mayors, municipal-level policy makers and practitioners to build social cohesion and resilience to counter violent extremism in all its forms

- **Policy Planners' Network:** Facilitating the first intergovernmental network of Western counter extremism policy chiefs

EDUCATION

ISD builds resilience to extremism through educational and digital literacy programmes, working to inoculate younger generations to the online tactics and propaganda of ex-tremists. Current programmes include:

- **Digital resilience:** Increasing resilience of young people to extremist grooming and propaganda on social media

- **Extreme Dialogue:** Inoculating young people against extremism through our interactive educational resources for parents and teachers

NETWORKS

- **YouthCAN:** Uniting young activists, creatives and tech entrepreneurs to amplify efforts to counter violent extremism

- **AVE:** Empowering former extremists to work together to push back against extremist narratives and prevent the recruitment of 'at-risk' youth

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

ISD develops targeted, scaled counter-narrative campaigns, bringing credible voices from our grassroots networks together with leading technology and marketing capabilities. We also facilitate direct interventions across the ideological spectrum with radicalised individuals online. Current pro-grammes include:

- **Hope Speech:** Mobilising the world's first-ever counterspeech content curation engine to aggregate and amplify pre-existing campaigns in one place

- **Online civil courage initiative:** Combating hate speech and extremism across Europe through our online counter-extremism hub in partnership with Facebook

- **One-to-One:** Facilitating direct interventions between former extremists and young people who show extremist tendencies online

- **Innovation Hub:** Combining credible voices with tech and communications support to scale-up counter-narrative creation and dissemination

RESEARCH & INSIGHT

ISD produces pioneering research into extremism across ide-ologies through:

- **Primary datasets:** Developing unique primary datasets to inform our wider research projects and strategic interventions

- **Digital analysis:** Developing digital approaches to monitor extremist communications and evaluate counter-speech campaigns online.

INSTITUTE *for* STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

Join the SCN

- If your city, town or region is interested in joining the network, you can submit an enquiry via the online signup form on our website at www.strongcitiesnetwork.org. In order to apply for membership, you must have approval from the relevant mayoral office or local political authority. Please note that membership is for cities, municipalities, or subnational regions on an official basis.

Subscribe to our mailing list

- Keep up to date with the latest news and activities from the Strong Cities Network, including developments in more than 100 cities around the world. Members and non-members receive a monthly newsletter with news, research, case studies and more. You can subscribe today by visiting our website.

Register for access to the online hub

- Hosted on the SCN website, the SCN Online Hub is a unique member-only portal offering a research and resource library of more than 200 documents related to local P/CVE and community resilience policy and delivery, as well as profiles of member cities, practitioners' toolkits and online training modules. Municipal officials and practitioners in member cities can apply online for login details to generate their own account.

Share your best practice

- The SCN Online Hub makes sharing best practice and lessons learned from one city to the next simple. If you are a registered user from a member city, you can upload your own local strategy documents, research, evaluations or case studies to the library, enabling members around the world to learn more about local initiatives and exchange knowledge and learning at a local level and on a global scale. If you are not a registered user in a member city but would like to share research or relevant best practice with SCN members, please contact the team at info@strongcitiesnetwork.org.

Build your city profile

- This year we launched our online SCN City Profiles for members, showcasing not only the challenges shared by many cities around the world but also the wide variety of innovate local initiatives, strategies and activities led by cities to counter violent extremism and build safe, inclusive and resilient communities. All City Profiles are tagged with key thematic areas of expertise, enabling users to search for best practice examples in key fields and quickly access leading knowledge and experience from across the network. To create, develop or add to your city profile, please contact the team at info@strongcitiesnetwork.org.

Participate in our activities

- In addition to the SCN Global Summit, the network delivers regional workshops, city exchanges and a range of other offline training and capacity-building activities. Following the SCN Regional Practitioners' Workshop in Dakar, Senegal, the SCN will deliver regional training to practitioners in member cities in the Balkans, South Asia and the Middle East in 2017-18. For more information or to register your interest in these or any of our other activities, please contact the team at info@strongcitiesnetwork.org.

CENTRE DE **PRÉVENTION** DE LA RADICALISATION MENANT À LA VIOLENCE

ICMA Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

International Observatory of Mayors **Living Together**

LIGHT ON LIFE **Nordic Safe Cities**

Nordic Council of Ministers

LIFEAFTERHATE

GLOBAL CENTER ON COOPERATIVE SECURITY

European **F**orum *for* **U**rban **S**ecurity

M&CSAATCHI

We are grateful to Creative Associates International and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their generous support for the Strong Cities Network Global Summit 2017.

CREATIVE

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

The Strong Cities Network is run by the **Institute for Strategic Dialogue**,

a UK registered charity with charity number 1141069

For more information please contact **info@strongcitiesnetwork.org**

strongcitiesnetwork.org