Bridging Divides Initiative
at The Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs

The Bridging Divides Initiative seeks to understand polarization in the United States – including underlying root causes of power and inequality, identity, violence, extremism, the role of the economy, and of media and misinformation. Drawing lessons from decades of work around the globe in violence prevention, community cohesion and addressing polarization in post-conflict and highly politicized environments, BDI seeks to adapt these lessons to domestic efforts to do the same. It brings students, the academic community, and practitioners together to promote this goal.

LISD addresses cultural phenomena negatively affecting the ability of humans to self-determine a positive future. There is a powerful discrepancy between the American ideal and the reality of inequality and growing polarization. Understanding polarization and its effects from individual Americans to national and international policy furthers LISD’s work on the role of self-determination in global peace and stability.

Current initiatives focus on near-term prevention and mitigation of politically motivated violence within the context of a need for longer term reforms and community reconciliation efforts. It’s work builds from a map of risk factors for political violence and resources to respond, then supports existing actors at the national and local levels as well as future leaders.

Initial initiatives from the BDI team include:

1. **Online Resource and Risk Map** - A resource for community building organizations and individuals to increase their network, coordinate, collaborate and focus resources in areas of higher risk for political violence. The map may expand to incorporate further networks, and machine learning models for predicting risk of political violence.

2. **Community Toolkit** - A resource for local leaders and citizens to empower their community, prevent political violence, and respond to incidents that do arise. The toolkit combines lessons from international early warning initiatives with domestic expertise in US emergency management, faith-based, and community-building networks.

3. **Supporting a National Strategy** - A resource and catalyst for emerging efforts to efforts think nationally about political violence prevention. Using its research, convening ability and partnerships, BDI supports gathering relevant stakeholders to discuss prevention and early warning plans, and support electoral violence prevention.

4. **Building Bridging Leaders** – A resource for graduate and undergraduate students at Princeton University, by incorporating them in the work and leadership of the initiative and building expertise for future leadership.

https://lisd.princeton.edu/projects/bridging-divides-initiative-bdi