Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
FY2021 Targeted Violence and Terrorism
Prevention (TVTP) Grantee Evaluation

Site Profile

# Teachers College, Columbia University

Developed for:

Science and
Technology

Developed by RTI International

May 2024

# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **ACC** | Austin Community College |
| **CEU** | Continuing Education Unit |
| **CP3** | Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships |
| **CTLE** | Continuing Teacher & Leader Education |
| **DHS** | Department of Homeland Security |
| **IMP** | Implementation and Measurement Plan |
| **IRB** | Institutional Review Board |
| **LMS** | Learning Management System |
| **TC** | Teachers College, Columbia University |
| **TVTP** | Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention |

# Executive Summary

The Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate contracted RTI International to conduct research and evaluation of the Teachers College, Columbia University (TC), FY2021 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) grant, aimed at increasing the capacity of educators to mitigate risks and amplify protective factors against targeted violence and radicalization in U.S. classrooms. The evaluation team conducted a process evaluation of all components of the grant project, with a focus on identifying project accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations for future grantees. The team reviewed training curricula and other materials provided by TC, observed two trainings in June 2023, and interviewed staff and project partners.

TC worked to develop a 10-course professional development training series for U.S. educators, titled Reimagine Resilience, based upon Dr. Amra Sabic-El-Rayess's Educational Displacement Theory. This theory states that isolation or exclusion in educational settings initiates the radicalization process and was developed after Dr. Sabic-El-Rayess studied Salafi radicals in Bosnia. As part of its grant, TC collected data from a convenience sample of educators and young adults about the prevalence of bias in U.S. schools to begin studying the relevance of Educational Displacement Theory in the United States.

TC launched one of these courses during the grant period of performance and delivered it in both an asynchronous online and hybrid format. In total, 363 individuals completed Course 1 online, with an unknown number of additional individuals completing it through a hybrid format. During the grant, this course was adapted for various audiences outside of the educational space, resulting in the delivery of 10 stakeholder workshops. Challenges emerged over the collection and reporting of data to capture grant activities against its priorities and the intensive staff resources needed to respond to added grant activities. TC plans to continue delivering trainings and workshops after the completion of the grant period, relying on its large network of educators and associated stakeholders built during the period of performance. A summary of findings is in Table ES-A.

*Table ES-A. Summary of Findings*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Objectives** | • Understand the experiences of bias and educational displacement among U.S. educators and students. |
| | • Design and implement a professional development course for educators about risk and protective factors for student radicalization. |
| | • Adapt and expand the professional development course for relevant stakeholders. |
| | • Disseminate research findings and ensure training sustainability. |
| **Outputs** | • Collected 421 completed surveys from students and educators. |
| | • Launched Course 1 of a 10-course asynchronous professional development training program for educators. |
| | • 1,200 participants enrolled in Course 1 online. |
| | • 363 individuals completed Course 1 online. |
| | • CEU/CTLE credits granted to 68 participants. |
| | • Adapted Course 1 content for hybrid and in-person engagement. |
| | • Delivered 16 hybrid educator trainings. |
| | • Adapted Course 1 content for non-educator stakeholders. |
| | • Delivered at least 10 stakeholder workshops. |
| | • Promoted the *Reimagine Resilience* program at nine invited talks or other events. |
| | • Published two book chapters on educational displacement. |
| **Challenges** | • Hypothesized project outcomes were difficult to measure based on data collection methods, inhibiting an assessment of project effectiveness. |
| | • Adapting the training curricula and format for different audiences required intensive staff resources not initially budgeted and complicated activity reporting. |
| | • Use of the Canvas LMS presented a barrier for user participation and data collection. |
| **Recommendations** | • Develop and revise project IMPs to reflect true project priorities. |
| | • Monitor grant reporting and ensure clear definitions to accurately capture grant activities. |
| | • Be mindful of the impact of project additions before adding new activities or data collection methods. |

CEU = Continuing Education Units; CTLE = Continuing Teacher and Leader Education; IMP = Implementation and Measurement Plan; LMS = Learning Management System

# Site Profile: Teachers College, Columbia University

Teachers College, Columbia University (TC), was awarded a 2-year grant by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) in 2021 and was selected to undergo an independent evaluation by RTI International. This site profile reviews TC's grant design,[1] implementation, accomplishments, challenges, and relevant recommendations for future programming in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP). After completing an evaluability assessment, a process evaluation was conducted on TC's FY2021 TVTP grant, the findings of which are detailed in this report. The evaluation team examined the processes TC followed when implementing this grant to learn what mechanisms may contribute to a project's effectiveness and detail project accomplishments at the output level. This report examines the evaluation findings, challenges encountered, and recommendations for the TVTP grant program.

## Teachers College, Columbia University

Teachers College is a graduate school of education, health, and psychology at Columbia University that is dedicated to supporting multidisciplinary research, policy engagement, and improvements to practice. While TC is located in New York, New York, the institution serves individuals across the country and internationally through remote and hybrid learning options. This grant project was inspired by a course led by Dr. Sabic-El-Rayess in 2021 at TC, which was based on her prior research into educational displacement. The funding awarded by DHS in FY2021 allowed Dr. Sabic-El-Rayess and her team to expand the project initially piloted in the course and establish a training available for those within and beyond TC.

## Grant Summary

TC's FY2021 TVTP grant began in October 2021 and ended in December 2023. This period included a one-quarter no-cost extension. TC's grant centered around the novel theory of educational displacement. This theory, developed by Dr. Amra Sabic-El-Rayess, hypothesizes that biased classroom practices are a significant initiating factor that leads youth on a path to explore alternative and ultimately violent radical ideas. Guided by Educational Displacement Theory, TC sought to provide educators with professional development about the risks and protective factors surrounding targeted violence and terrorism. This project consisted of four components: (1) Educational Displacement Theory research, (2) *Reimagine Resilience* training program development and implementation, (3) adapted *Reimagine Resilience* workshops, and (4) outreach and sustainability.

**Educational Displacement Theory Research.** The first stage of TC's project sought to gather data in support of educational displacement by administering surveys to young adults (aged 18–21) and teachers in the United States. These surveys asked respondents to identify biased behaviors they have experienced in the classroom and assess their own competencies for reducing harm.

***Reimagine Resilience* Training Program Development and Implementation.** The second component of TC's FY21 grant involved developing and implementing a formal training for educators based on Educational Displacement Theory, called *Reimagine Resilience*. During the FY21 grant period, TC developed and launched Course 1 of the *Reimagine Resilience* training, which included 6 total hours of instructional material. This course was offered

---

1 For TC's Implementation and Measurement Plan, which outlines its goals, target audiences, objectives, activities, inputs, time frame, anticipated outputs, performance measures, and data collection plan, contact DHS.

in two formats: asynchronous online or hybrid. Regardless of format, participants who completed the course could apply to receive Continuing Education Units/Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CEU/CTLE) credits. By the end of the grant period, 363 people had completed Course 1 and 68 received CEU/CTLE credits.

**Adapted *Reimagine Resilience* Workshops.** In addition to conducting formal trainings, TC offered adapted versions of the Course 1 training as workshops for a variety of audiences, including educational professionals and other interested parties. The content, format, and length of these workshops were tailored to fit the needs of each organization. This component was added following a realization by the project team that the training could be relevant for audiences other than educators. TC conducted 10 adapted workshops during the grant period.

**Outreach and Sustainability.** The fourth component of TC's grant project involved efforts to increase awareness and sustainability of the training. To boost awareness, TC conducted outreach to a variety of audiences both directly through outreach workshops, and indirectly through dissemination efforts. TC also built a network of individuals interested in continued collaboration. Because of these efforts, TC had scheduled numerous formal trainings and workshops beyond the end of the grant period.

# Process Evaluation Design and Methods

The research team conducted a process evaluation of TC's grant program, focusing on the four project components described above. This process evaluation examined how the project was implemented and considered how the grant program achieved identified outputs. The results of this evaluation revealed useful findings on challenges to project implementation and mitigation strategies that can inform future projects.

To conduct this process evaluation, the research team utilized data from a variety of sources. Beginning in March 2023, the evaluation team held regular meetings with the TC grant team to track progress toward project objectives. Researchers gathered original data by observing two educator trainings, conducting interviews with training coordinators, and surveying a convenience sample of trainees from one of the observed trainings. In addition, the research team analyzed project documentation, training materials, and data collected by TC.

# Findings

## Educational Displacement

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding Training Development and Research, which correspond with Goal 2, Objective 2.1 in TC's Implementation and Measurement Plan (IMP).

**OBJECTIVE 2.1:** Gain understanding of the impacts of biases of students and teachers in schools.

### Teachers College Fields a Survey to Assess the Prevalence of Predictors of Educational Displacement

The first stage of TC's project sought to gather data in support of its novel theory of educational displacement. This theory presents a model of radicalization that begins with an individual feeling excluded or isolated from traditional educational institutions (educational *displacement*). This feeling of educational displacement may lead the individual to look for alternative sources of mentorship and education, including extremist sources (educational *replacement*). The model of educational displacement includes 10 steps between the initial experience of displacement and exploration of militancy, outlined in Figure 1. As Sabic-El-Rayess summarized, "This radicalization model warns that failures in the formal education system push students to look for validation elsewhere, which is where they meet radicalizing alternatives."[2] This theory has not been tested or validated by other researchers.

*Figure 1. Model of Educational Displacement*
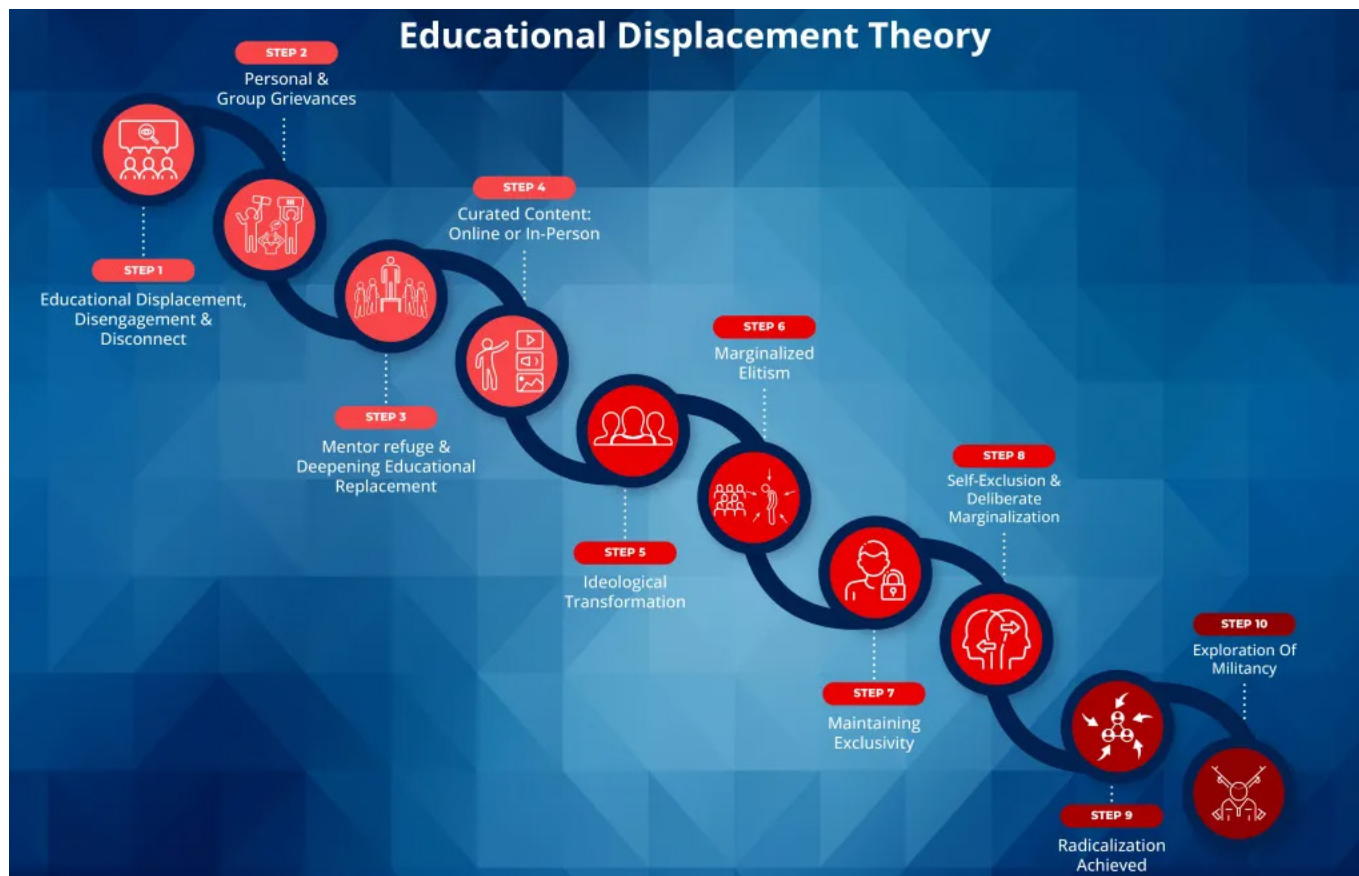


Source: *Reimagine Resilience* online course

---

2  Sabic-El-Rayess, A. (2021). How do people radicalize? *International Journal of Educational Development, 87,* 102499. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102499

As part of this grant project, TC sought to collect data on the relevance of this theory in an American context. All previous research on this theory is based on a research study conducted in Bosnia that looked at the role of education in relation to Salafi radicalization.[3] With the goal of examining how this theory applied in the U.S. context, TC developed surveys for young adults (18–21) and educators. Participants in this study were recruited using convenience sampling: TC sent emails with survey links to individuals in their personal and professional networks, shared the survey on social media, and recruited participants during invited talks. Data collection took place from March 15, 2022, to December 31, 2023. By the end of the grant, TC had collected 421 completed surveys[4] from young adults and teachers.

## Survey Assesses Experiences with Bias and Self-Assessed Ability to Reduce Harm

TC developed separate surveys for educators and students. Both surveys asked participants to rank school-based factors that could contribute to a student feeling isolated and indicate whether they had observed any incidents of bias from teachers or students. The educator-specific survey included questions about the respondent's experience with trainings or initiatives focused on addressing biases in schools as well as educators' interest in completing such a training. Educators were also given a set of questions to gauge their experience with individuals of different backgrounds and beliefs related to inclusion and social connection.

The student survey asked respondents to identify biased behaviors they have experienced and types of bias they have witnessed within their school. For example, one question asks students to indicate how much they agree or disagree with the following statement: "Stories we read and analyze reflect my lived experience." Another question probes students' use of replacement materials, asking respondents to indicate how much they agree or disagree that "I don't have a need to search for other sources of information or learning outside school. I learn what I want or what I need in school."

None of the surveys directly address the connection between experiences of biased behavior and radicalization; therefore, TC's findings are unable to test the grantee's theory of educational displacement. Still, the surveys offer insight into respondents' experiences with bias in the classroom, which is the foundation of the theory. The statistical findings from both the teacher and educator surveys were incorporated into TC's training program and publications, discussed in later sections of this report. Survey data collection was conducted throughout the grant period, concurrent with the training development and delivery. Thus, the statistics presented during training sessions represented preliminary data and analysis.

---

3  Sabic-El-Rayess, 2021.

4  At the end of the grant period, 87 additional students and 123 additional teachers had started but not completed a survey.

# *Reimagine Resilience* Training Program

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding formal *Reimagine Resilience* trainings, which correspond with Goals 1, 3, and 4, Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, and 4.5 in TC's IMP.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1:** Produce multi-module training to counter biases and amplify protective factors against radicalization in the classroom and beyond.

**OBJECTIVE 1.2:** Launch and implement multi-module training among education professionals and key stakeholders nationally.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3:** Improve training by collecting and analyzing up to 500 pre-module and up to 500 post-module evaluations which will consist both of long and short surveys adapted to the institutions and audiences to whom the workshops are delivered. Enhance course content, delivery, and meet the needs of participating educators, educational personnel, and key stakeholders.

**OBJECTIVE 2.2:** Raise awareness about biases and educational displacement as well as their role in the radicalization process.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1:** Help educators, educational personnel, and other key stakeholders develop an awareness of both risk and protective factors against targeted violence and terrorism prevention.

**OBJECTIVE 3.2:** Ensure educators, educational personnel, and key stakeholders understand the factors that impact educational displacement and trigger radicalization.

**OBJECTIVE 4.1:** Ensure educators have the skills and knowledge to implement in-school practices to mitigate biases and educational displacement.

**OBJECTIVE 4.2:** Produce attitude shifts in participating educators and, educational personnel, and key stakeholders as they cultivate an awareness of both their own biased speech and conduct and identify biased speech and conduct in schools, educational institutions, and organizations.

**OBJECTIVE 4.4:** Help increase a sense of belonging among students in schools.

**OBJECTIVE 4.5:** Reduce instances of bullying or targeted violence driven by biases in schools.

## TC Develops a Training on Educational Displacement and Narrative Storytelling

While TC developed and implemented its survey, the project team worked to design a professional training on the model of educational displacement called *Reimagine Resilience*. *Reimagine Resilience* was originally conceptualized as an online, asynchronous training that would take 30 hours to complete. The training would include 10 courses, one to correspond to each step of the theorized radicalization pathway (see Figure 1). Within each course, content is divided into modules with associated assessment tools, as depicted in Figure 2.

*Figure 2. Reimagine Resilience Training Design*
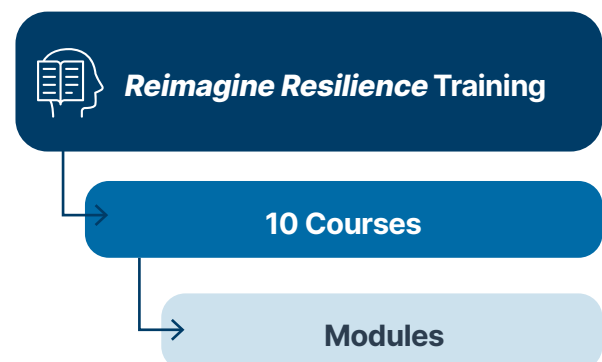
The project team began the process of designing the course by conducting a review of the literature. The team used an iterative process to develop and review training content. Each member of the team first worked separately to generate ideas for different modules of the training; the team then met weekly to discuss individuals' ideas and provide feedback. Once TC had finalized the general design for the modules, the team began working through the draft content to refine the phrasing and timing of each module. During development, TC realized that it would be beneficial to devote more time to the earlier stages of the educational displacement process, where educators could play a role in prevention. Therefore, TC designed Course 1 to be 6 hours long, with the remaining courses to be increasingly shorter.

TC launched Course 1, "Prevention, not Intervention: Introducing Educational Displacement," in October 2022. By the end of the grant period, approximately 1,200 individuals were enrolled in Course 1 and 363 individuals completed Course 1 online. Courses 2–10 were in production but not yet published as of the end of the grant period. TC hopes to refine and publish them in the spring of 2024. TC utilized the capabilities of Canvas's learning management system (LMS) to present content in different ways, including interactive graphics, instructional videos, and voice-over scripts. TC built a series of assessments into the training, including discussion posts, activities encouraging self-reflection, and quizzes within each module. The evaluation team was unable to review participant responses to these assessments, as TC's Institutional Review Board (IRB) did not allow for the sharing of these data.

While several of TC's objectives and associated performance measures for the course in its IMP were centered around knowledge gain, the evaluation team learned that TC's primary interest was in promoting cognitive transformation. Thus, most of the course design and assessments were focused on self-reflection as opposed to the acquisition of specific knowledge or skills.

The training was designed to meet CEU/CTLE requirements. At the end of the grant project, 68 participants had received CEU/CTLE credits after completing Course 1.
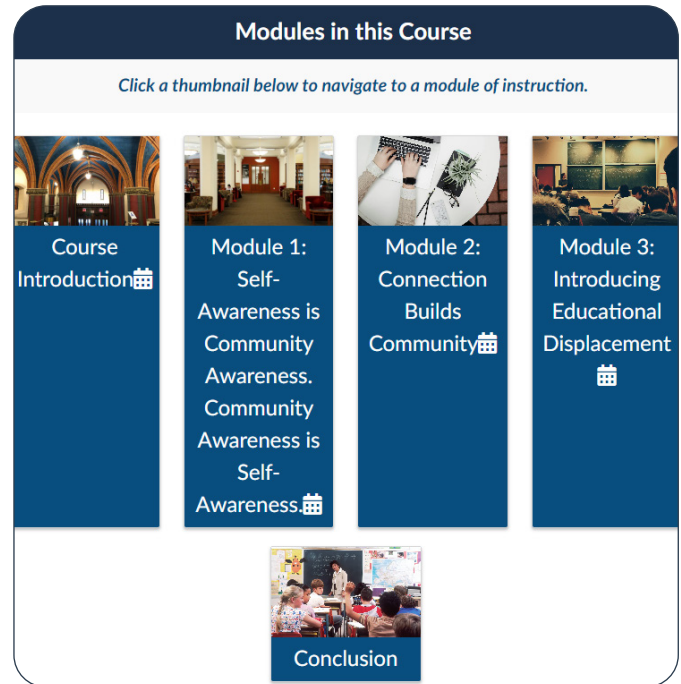


Source: *Reimagine Resilience* online course

## Course 1 Raises Awareness of Educational Displacement and Targeted Violence Protective Factors

Course 1 consists of three related modules with the primary goal of raising awareness of protective factors that may prevent students from feeling disconnected and disengaged at school. Module 1 begins by introducing the concept of positionality—the idea that "elements such as personal values, view, or social/physical location can shape your outlook on the world."[5] Throughout the module, participants complete a series of activities designed to prompt reflection on how their own positionality may impact their approach to the classroom. Participants are encouraged to think about whether their students see themselves in classroom narratives and how feelings of connection or disconnection can affect the strength of the classroom community. With these concepts established, participants complete a set of activities to help them think about ways to build community in their classrooms. The module ends with a self-assessment survey.

---

5   *Reimagine Resilience* online course

# 1.1 Module 1 Learning Outcomes ⬆️

**Hover your mouse over the classroom image to explore this module's learning outcomes.**
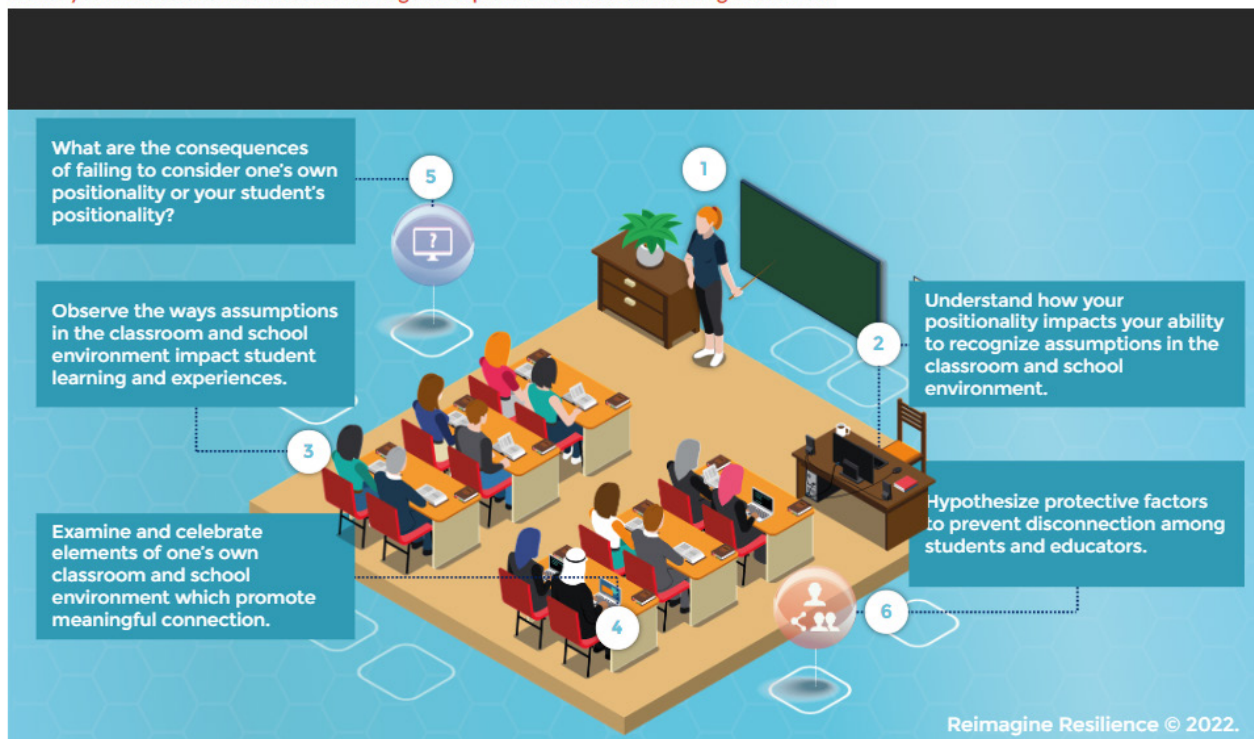


Source: *Reimagine Resilience* online course

Module 2 introduces the concept of educational displacement. The course discusses what can make students feel less visible and how instructors can make them feel more connected in the classroom. Participants are introduced to the different types of educational displacement identified in TC's theory—curricular, social, representational, structural, and pedagogical—and are led through activities to explore how different structures can cause feelings of displacement. The module then discusses how educational displacement can lead to radicalization and how social connectedness can serve as a protective factor against this. The module ends with a discussion of how to build community and a self-assessment survey.

In Module 3, Dr. Sabic-El-Rayess draws from her own experience as a survivor of the Bosnian genocide to demonstrate the role of narrative storytelling in building social connectedness and community in educational settings. Participants learn how feelings of exclusion can lead individuals to look for alternative sites of belonging, then engage in

interactive exercises about addressing and countering hate and handling contentious conversations in the classroom. Participants are then asked to complete an educational climate survey to assess social connectedness in schools before completing a final self-assessment survey.

## TC Delivers *Reimagine Resilience* Training in Multiple Formats

As TC developed its curriculum, the team decided to also offer a hybrid version of Course 1. The hybrid course involves partial live instruction—in-person or over Zoom—and partial asynchronous instruction over Canvas. Like the asynchronous course, the hybrid course involved a total of 6 hours of instruction: 3–5 hours of synchronous instruction and 1–3 hours of asynchronous instruction (Figure 3).

TC emailed all hybrid training registrants a link to the Canvas LMS approximately a week before the scheduled training and

*Figure 3. Reimagine Resilience Course Formats*

**Asynchronous**

| Canvas Modules | 6 hours | | Assessment (optional) |

**Hybrid**

| Live Instruction | 3-5 hours | | Canvas Modules | 1-3 hours | | Assessment (optional) |
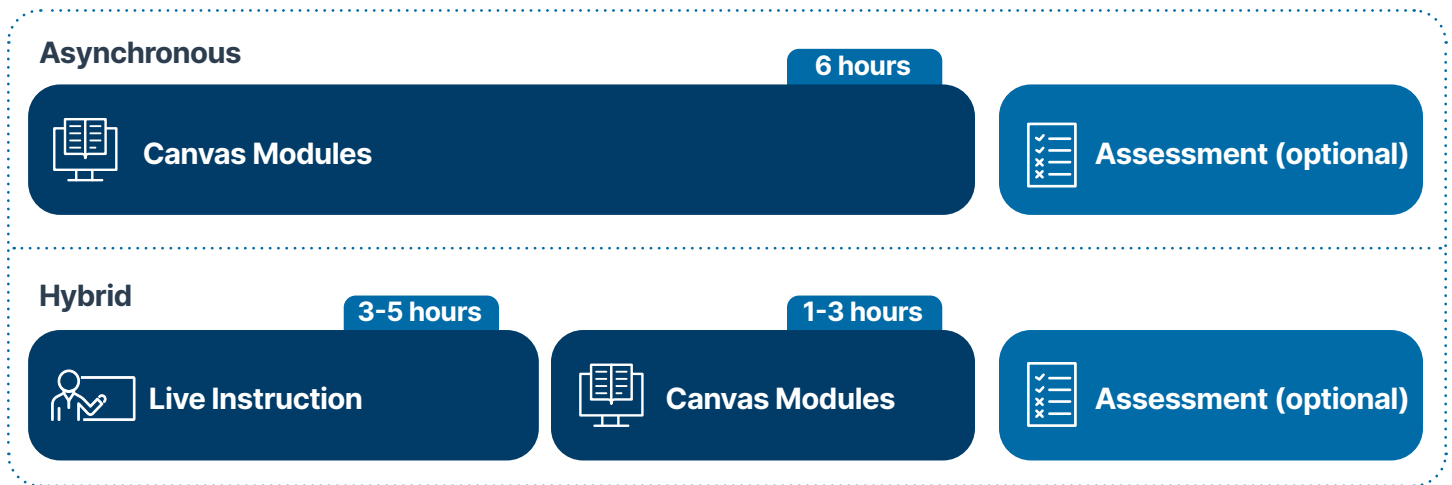
asked them to create an account and complete the pretest. Participants who were interested in obtaining CEU/CLTE credits could obtain a certificate by completing the course assessments on their own time to demonstrate learning. TC delivered at least 16 hybrid trainings during the grant period, reaching approximately 530 educators.[6]

Once Course 1 launched, TC continued reviewing the content of each completed module and feedback gathered from course evaluations to identify any necessary revisions. Revisions fell along three dimensions: technical (e.g., problems navigating Canvas LMS), content (e.g., adding more examples to a particular section), and conceptual (e.g., expanding beyond educational institutions).

## Multiple Data Collection Efforts Implemented, but Evaluators Unable to Measure Knowledge Gain

TC implemented several forms of data collection to assess the outcomes of its training. From October to June 2023, TC administered a survey at the beginning and end of the Canvas course. This survey included questions asking participants to assess their own knowledge attainment and confidence implementing the material in the classroom. Following discussion with the evaluation team, TC revised its questions to include empirical knowledge-testing questions. These revised instruments were administered beginning in June 2023.

Respondents scored an average of 55.24% correct on the pretest and 74.92% correct on the posttest. However, these results should

be interpreted with caution: 190 participants took the pretest, whereas only 49 of those (26%) took the posttest. Collectively, the group of individuals who took the pretest is likely to be representatively different from the group who took both pre- and posttests. For example, individuals who took both surveys may have had a higher level of interest in the topic than the pretest-only group, leading them to have higher overall scores. TC chose to administer the pre- and posttests anonymously in order to minimize the likelihood of identification of the participants. The evaluation team therefore could not isolate individuals who took both surveys. As such, these results should only be viewed as potentially indicative of overall knowledge gain.

When TC began implementing the knowledge-based pre-/posttests, it also received IRB approval to administer an additional survey at the end of its hybrid *Reimagine Resilience* course using a retrospective pre- and posttest method. This survey was provided to attendees prior to the wrap-up of the live portion of the training, whereas the traditional posttest was provided after completing all course assessments in Canvas. The additional survey's questions ask the respondent to self-assess their understanding of key concepts after the training on a 100-point scale, and then think back to before they had taken the course and self-assess their prior understanding of those same concepts. The evaluation team did not review these data to measure outcomes related to knowledge gain for two reasons: (1) the RPPs use self-assessment questions measuring self-reported confidence in knowledge rather than objective knowledge and (2) the use of RPPs to measure objective knowledge gain is a subject of scholarly debate.[7]

---

6  The evaluation team was not provided descriptions of all the events that TC reported, creating difficulties in determining how many formal educator trainings TC held.

7  Hill, L.G. (2020). Back to the future: Considerations in use and reporting of the retrospective pretest. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 44*(2), 184–191. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025419870245

## Evaluators Observe the Course 1 Training

The evaluation team observed two iterations of the Course 1 training, one in-person and one hybrid. The in-person training was conducted at Austin Community College (ACC) on June 23, 2023. As with other in-person training events, participants were provided with a link to the Canvas LMS days before the training took place and asked to create an account. Approximately 50 people participated in the training, which included 5 hours of training and two 30-minute breaks to complete online assessments, for a total of 6 hours.

The training began with introductions and an overview of the course. The TC project team gave participants a few minutes to complete the pre-course survey; however, many participants had not yet logged into Canvas. Therefore, several participants were observed using that time to create an account for the LMS. The training continued following the structure of the asynchronous course, but with several "checkpoints" built in to assess participant reactions using Mentimeter polls, which participants could respond to using their smartphones. The Mentimeter polls included open-ended questions such as, "Do you feel that hate narratives are connected transnationally? In what ways does that connection manifest?" Because these polls contained personal reflections with potentially sensitive information, these data were not shared with the evaluation team. The first section of the training concluded with a discussion break and a final Mentimeter poll before a break for lunch and the first assessment. The evaluation team observed several people using this time to log into Canvas and complete the pre-course survey. These participants had therefore already been exposed to the first half of the course by the time they took the pretest, which means that their results do not represent an accurate assessment of their knowledge before taking the course.

After the break, participants reconvened for the second section of the training, which included further presentations from TC before small group discussions and closing assessments. After the second assessment break, the TC team shared their contact information and provided a brief overview of Project Belonging, a related project funded by a FY22 TVTP grant. The training concluded with a Q&A session.

Evaluators surveyed training attendees 1 month after the training. Of the 11 participants who responded to the survey, 82% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I will be able to apply what I have learned from this training to my job." Only 25% of respondents reported taking the course due to the CEU/CTLE credit offering. Mirroring anecdotal reports by the TC team, respondents shared that their interest in the content and its relevance to their job were more important factors when deciding to attend.

The evaluation team also observed an online hybrid training on June 28, 2023. As with the in-person training, all registered attendees had been sent information about enrolling in the Canvas course prior to the training date. Approximately 50 individuals from across the world joined the 3-hour training hosted on Zoom. The first hour of the course introduced participants to Educational Displacement Theory and the importance of storytelling as a protective factor. The second section of the course reviewed Educational Displacement Theory in more detail, providing examples of types of displacement. Finally, the third hour consisted of guided discussion and Q&A. Participants were engaged throughout the training, asking questions both verbally and in the chat in addition to responding to the discussion prompts. At the end of the live training, attendees were encouraged to complete the additional 3 hours of asynchronous work necessary to finish Course 1.

# Adapting *Reimagine Resilience* for Additional Stakeholders

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding TC's Adapted *Reimagine Resilience* Workshops, which correspond with Goals 1 and 3, Objectives 1.2, 3.1, 3.2, and 4.2 in TC's IMP.

**OBJECTIVE 1.2:** Launch and implement multi-module training among education professionals and key stakeholders nationally.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1:** Help educators, educational personnel, and other key stakeholders develop an awareness of both risk and protective factors against targeted violence and terrorism prevention.

**OBJECTIVE 3.2:** Ensure educators, educational personnel, and key stakeholders understand the factors that impact educational displacement and trigger radicalization.

**OBJECTIVE 4.2:** Produce attitude shifts in participating educators and, educational personnel, and key stakeholders as they cultivate an awareness of both their own biased speech and conduct and identify biased speech and conduct in schools, educational institutions, and organizations.

## TC Expands Its Target Population to Adopt a "Whole-of-Society" Approach

In March 2023, TC submitted a modification to its IMP to expand its target audience from solely educators to include an additional population of "key stakeholders" in its grant project, growing its scope to the "whole-of-society." TC developed this component in response to requests from non-educator audiences to adapt the *Reimagine Resilience* content to other settings. While its theory is based on formal educational settings, TC felt that these key stakeholders—such as law enforcement, journalists, students, and others—were a relevant audience for the *Reimagine Resilience* curriculum because they play a role in violence prevention and are involved in informal education efforts.

Since adopting this expanded approach, TC scheduled and completed 10 adapted workshops with organizations including law enforcement agencies, human rights organizations, a private company, and educational spaces such as public libraries and college lecture series (see Figure 4). TC reached approximately 625 people through these adapted workshops. In response to the wide range of stakeholders that TC engaged through this component, TC customized each workshop. Thus, no two workshops were the same; they varied in length, modality (in-person vs. online), and what material from the *Reimagine Resilience* curriculum was covered. TC did not clearly note in its reporting how each workshop varied along these dimensions. While these participants were not added to the Canvas course as part of the workshop, they were provided with information about how to enroll in the asynchronous course for further learning opportunities.

*Figure 4. Key Stakeholders Engaged*

- *Education Week* editorial staff
- Michigan State Police
- Nexamp
- Paramus Public Library
- Schoolcraft College students
- Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom at Rutgers University
- South by Southwest EDU
- The University of Arkansas
- The University of Arizona
- The World Outside my Shoes

# Outreach and Sustainability

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding Outreach and Sustainability, which corresponds with Goals 1 and 4, Objectives 1.4, 1.5, 2.3, and 4.3 in TC's IMP.

> **OBJECTIVE 1.4:** Secure Columbia University Teachers College certification.
>
> **OBJECTIVE 1.5:** Develop partnerships with schools and, institutions of higher education, and other organizations to offer this professional development training as part of their on-boarding process for new hires and continued continuing education for existing hires.
>
> **OBJECTIVE 2.3:** Disseminate and publish work apropos the impacts of biases and educational displacement of students and teachers in schools.
>
> **OBJECTIVE 4.3:** Through sustained outreach and engagement, build a network of educators and key stakeholders interested in continued collaboration and learning.

## TC Conducts Outreach to Spread Awareness of Reimagine Resilience

The fourth component of TC's grant project involved activities to ensure the visibility and sustainability of the educator training. TC began outreach efforts to raise awareness of the training in the first quarter of the grant period. The project staff utilized a range of efforts to raise awareness, including email marketing campaigns, social media efforts, and outreach workshops and events. To get in front of educators, the TC team posted in local educator Facebook groups and utilized email lists published by the Department of Education. By the end of the project, approximately 70,000 individuals had signed up for the *Reimagine Resilience* email listserv.

TC also created a public-facing website for Reimagine Resilience, which was officially launched in the fall of 2022.[8] This website includes information about the training and the Theory of Educational Displacement. Interested individuals could register for upcoming trainings on the website and contact members of the TC team (Figure 5).

In addition to these marketing efforts, Dr. Sabic-El-Rayess was invited to attend nine conferences and other events as speaker or host. She also used these events to promote the *Reimagine Resilience* program (see Figure 6).

*Figure 5. Reimagine Resilience Website*



---

8  https://reimagineresilience.org/ [↗]
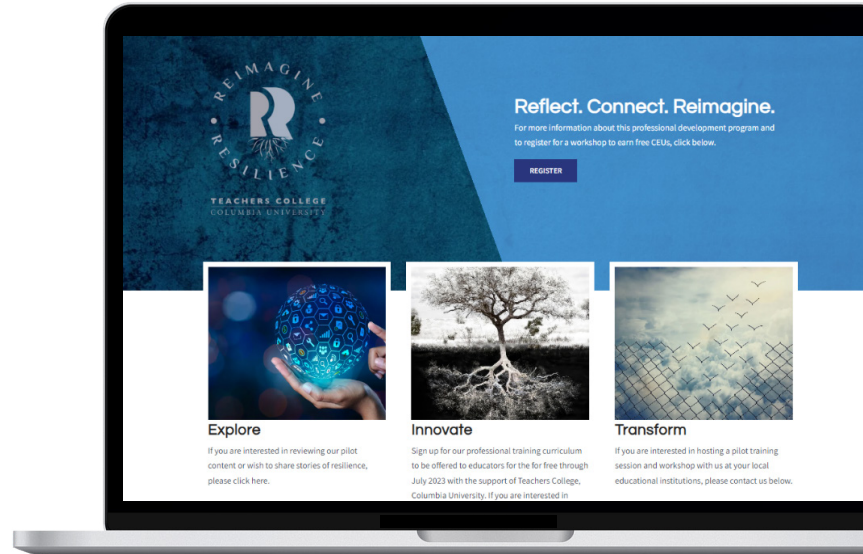
*Figure 6. Events Where Reimagine Resilience Was Promoted*

- The Academy for Human Rights
- Afton High School
- Columbia University Colloquium Address
- The Holocaust Museum and Education Center of Naples, FL
- Mental Health Faith-Based Summit
- National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Annual Convention
- New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) Annual Convention
- Victor High School

## TC Reaches Additional Audiences through Dissemination

TC produced four scholarly products during the grant period. Two book chapters titled "Ending Educational Displacement"[9] and "Witnessing the Pathways of Misinformation, Hate, and Radicalization: A Pedagogic Response"[10] were published in edited volumes. Two articles were in press at peer-reviewed journals at the end of the grant period and have since been published.[11] In addition, the TC team published a series of articles for practitioners and the public. These pieces appeared in *Education Week*,[12] *RealClearPolicy*,[13] *Newsweek*,[14] and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.[15]

# Challenges

**Data Collection Methods.** TC experienced several difficulties related to data collection. Much of the measurement the team undertook was labor intensive, drawing on project resources. For example, the TC team described sending out thousands of emails to get responses to the parent and student exploratory surveys. In addition, TC was unable to measure several hypothesized outcomes of their project, such as changes in classroom practices, due to the anonymity of data collection and inability to follow up with participants, or rates of bullying, as they did not collect data to measure such changes.

**Capacity to Deliver Additional Workshops.** The TC team endeavored to be highly adaptable during the project, leading to the delivery of training to unexpected audiences. However, this required significant resources that had not been foreseen in the initial project design, as TC created unique presentations for each audience. This additional component also posed challenges for tracking and reporting events, as the distinction between a full educator training and stakeholder workshop was not always clear in TC's reports. Similarly, the adaptation of the training to be held in various hybrid formats required additional staff resources.

**Limitations of the Canvas LMS.** The *Reimagine Resilience* course was hosted on Columbia University's Canvas LMS. The TC team reported that this created a barrier for users, as they had to create an account and learn to use the system. In addition to potentially dissuading some users from taking the course, this sometimes inhibited data collection efforts, as participants used time designated for pretests to create and sign into their accounts, as observed during TC's educator training at ACC. In addition, the TC team reported that there were limitations to Canvas that inhibited the overall course design and delivery.

---

9  Sabic-El-Rayess, A. (2023). Ending Educational Displacement: Storytelling as a method for transformative learning, healing, recognition, inclusion and empowerment. In D. Karabegovic & A. Karamehic-Oates (Eds.) *Bosnian Studies: Perspectives from an emerging field.* University of Missouri Press.

10 Joshi, V., & Sabic-El-Rayess, A. (2023). Witnessing the pathways of misinformation, hate, and radicalization: A pedagogic response. In L. Parker (Ed.), *Education in the age of misinformation* (pp. 97–117). Palgrave MacMillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25871-8

11 Sabic-El-Rayess, A., Joshi, V., & Hruschka, T. (2023). Building resilience to hate in classrooms: Innovation in practice and pedagogy to prevent extremism and violence in U.S. schools. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 51(4)* (pp. 313–331). https://doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2024.2305562; Sabic-El-Rayess, A., Joshi, V., & Hruschka, T. (2023). The epistemology of extremism, bias, and violence in American schools: the shift from religious and racial profiling to social belonging and an identity-agnostic perspective. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 51(4)* (pp. 292–312). https://doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2024.2324248

12 Sabic-El-Rayess, A. (2022). How do you write the story of your future when every day might be your last? *Education Week.* https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-how-do-you-write-the-story-of-your-future-when-every-day-might-be-your-last/2022/06

13 Sabic-El-Rayess, A. (2023). American schools get hate speech wrong. *RealClearPolicy.* https://www.realclearpolicy.com/articles/2023/02/10/american_schools_get_hate_speech_wrong_880971.html

14 Sabic-El-Rayess, A. (2023). Why are we seeing a repetition of humanity's darkest hours? *Newsweek.* https://www.newsweek.com/why-are-we-seeing-repetition-humanitys-darkest-hours-opinion-1812063

15 Sabic-El-Rayess, A. (2023). A generation after the Bosnian genocide, we still haven't broken the cycle of hate. *The Sydney Morning Herald.* https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/a-generation-after-the-bosnian-genocide-we-still-haven-t-broken-the-cycle-of-hate-20230710-p5n0m.html

# Discussion

## IMP Accomplishments

TC fielded 421 surveys and discussed these results in its training curricula and scholarly publications. These surveys were intended to understand the experiences of biases and educational displacement among U.S. educators and students (Objectives 2.1 and 2.3), though it should be noted that these surveys were conducted using a non-representative convenience sample.

*Figure 7. Challenges to Data Collection*

**Individual pre- and posttest results could not be connected.**

**Retrospective pre-/posttests are not an established measure of objective knowledge gain.**

**The evaluation team was unable to review in-course assessments.**

TC partially achieved its objectives related to development and dissemination of a professional development course for educators and key stakeholders (Objectives 1.1 and 1.2). TC published a 6-hour asynchronous version of Course 1 (out of 10 courses) and developed hybrid variations. This course was certified by Columbia University in the fall of 2022 (Objective 1.4). Per its IMP, TC sought to hold a minimum of 15 educator trainings and 5 stakeholder workshops, and for up to 1,000–2,000 educators and key stakeholders to have enrolled in the asynchronous course. In total, evaluators were able to confirm that TC conducted a minimum of 16 educator trainings and 10 stakeholder workshops, meeting their objective. Approximately 1,200 educators and key school personnel were enrolled in the Canvas system, across both the asynchronous and hybrid formats, as of the end of the grant. Additionally, a total of 363 individuals completed Course 1 online, while an unknown number of additional individuals completed the course through a hybrid format. As such, Columbia met its targets, although it should be noted that their target was a maximum threshold as opposed to a minimum (e.g., train *up to* 500 people) and that course enrollment does not necessarily mean course completion.

Throughout the project, the TC team utilized formal and informal feedback from participants to adapt the course content to meet the needs of participating educators (Objective 1.3). In addition, TC adapted the course content to be delivered to a wide range of key stakeholders, which was an additional activity added to its IMP after receiving requests from various non-educator audiences to adapt the content for their own settings.

However, the evaluation team was unable to empirically assess whether this training course improved participants knowledge or skills (Objectives 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2) due to challenges with data collection (outlined in Figure 7). During the course of the project, the evaluation team also learned that, contrary to the metrics in the IMP, TC's priority was to promote self-reflection and cognitive transformation through their trainings, rather than knowledge gain. However, evaluators could not assess progress toward these intended priority outcomes because IRB restrictions did not allow for the sharing of self-reflective exercises built into the course.

In Objectives 4.4 and 4.5, TC stated that it sought to cause secondary effects through delivering the *Reimagine Resilience* curriculum. Namely, TC sought to increase a sense of belonging among students in schools and thus reduce instances of bullying or targeted violence driven by biases in schools. The evaluation team did not have the data necessary to assess these effects, as the data TC collected would not measure students' sense of belonging or instances of bullying or targeted violence in schools where it had trained educators.

Lastly, while courses 2–10 were designed and created during the grant period, they were not published as of the end of the grant. As such, the evaluation team was unable to review this curriculum to understand its content. However, TC plans to publish these courses in spring of 2024 and stated that the team has already begun delivering some of this content during workshops.

TC achieved many of its objectives related to outreach and sustainability. Throughout the course of the project, the TC team connected with many educators and associated stakeholders through a combination of online outreach,

in-person engagement, and word of mouth (Objective 4.3). While the team did not establish formal partnerships with organizations to offer this training, the TC team reported that they expect to continue providing the training to several K-12 schools and universities after the end of the grant period (Objective 1.5).

## Sustainability

TC intends to continue delivering the *Reimagine Resilience* course after end of the grant project. The *Reimagine Resilience* training program will be hosted by TC's Interfaith Lab, run by Dr. Sabic-El-Rayess and the rest of the project team. The TC team had several trainings scheduled for after the end of the grant period. In addition, they intend to launch Courses 2–10 in 2024, creating additional opportunities for engagement.

In addition to continued delivery of *Reimagine Resilience*, the TC team is expanding their work on educational displacement with FY2022 and FY2023 TVTP grant projects. Project Belonging (FY2022) seeks to engage with middle and high school students, providing training on educational displacement and engaging these youth in service projects to increase belonging at their schools. The FY2023 project aims to design a training program for educators focused on storytelling as a protective factor against targeted violence.

## Recommendations for the TVTP Grant Program

⊘ **Develop and revise project IMPs to reflect true grant priorities.**
Grantees should ensure that the objectives and performance measures in the IMP reflect the true aims of the project. If necessary, grantees should revise their IMPs to adequately capture evolving goals and objectives. In addition, all outcomes and performance measures should be measurable and verifiable. This will help to ensure that data collection is able to capture progress toward the grant's true priorities.

⊘ **Monitor grant reporting and ensure clear definitions to accurately capture grant activities.**
While TC's adaptability was an overall strength of its project, it created challenges related to grant monitoring and data reporting. Specifically, the evaluation team faced difficulties delineating between formal educator trainings and adapted workshops in Columbia's reported data as the project progressed. Without clear definitions for

these different activities and a clear distinction between them in grant progress reporting, it is difficult to accurately measure grant results. Grantees should be careful to clearly identify and report on grant activities to avoid similar confusion. In parallel, DHS CP3 should monitor grant progress and reporting to ensure that grantees are using clear, accurate definitions of their grant activities and reporting their results in line with these definitions.

⊘ **Be mindful of the impact of project additions before adding new activities or data collection methods.**
Before adding additional activities, grantees should consider how these changes will affect overall project performance. A lack of resources due to the addition of workshops was a theme throughout the evaluation, so grantees are advised to weigh the benefits of any new activities against the costs to the project in terms of time, material resources, and staff capacity.

**Developed for:**

The U.S. Department of Homeland
Security (DHS) Science and
Technology Directorate (S&T)

Science and
Technology

**Developed by RTI International:**

Sarah Cook*

Meagan Abel

Elise Roberts-Ingleson

Ariane Noar

*Corresponding author: scook@rti.org