About YWCA Kenya

Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) of Kenya is a women and youth membership based, non-governmental development organization founded in 1912. It is affiliated to the World YWCA and its main purpose is to develop the collective power of girls and women in Kenya to achieve social, economic, political and cultural “emancipation”. YWCA is built on a strong Christian foundation, whose emphasis is integrated in all its programming.

The role of YWCA is to support the inter-religious platforms step-up initiatives that prevent and counter ideologies that enhance violent extremism.

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Word from Chairman, Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK)

In response to the faith based ideological challenge, YWCA through the inter-religious platform is supporting the government in preventing violent extremism activities by strengthening counter-narrative ideologies to ensure lasting success in end violent extremism.

The handbook represents a paradigm shift emphasizing preventive rather than countering services. It focuses on counter narrative dialogues to a wider public that promote healthy co-existence of individuals and communities in intersecting with the pillars laid down the national strategy.

I call on everyone – anti-violent extremist’s members and county governments – to take action to engage and invest in community protection so that we fulfil our ambition to prevent and end all forms of violence extremism. But we cannot achieve this alone.

Partnerships with civil society organizations, County government's agencies and Inter-religious actors, are crucial to making this happen.

Remember your faith stands for peace and together we can make the world safe for everyone.

Word from National General Secretary

This handbook was developed by the Young Women Christian Association through Interfaith engagement to prevent effects of religious marginalization for peace and justice in Kenya funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD) through KFUK-KFUM Global (Y-Global).

Despite the strong strategies put in place to PCVE many other committed organizations, youth all over the world continue to experience abuse, neglect, violence, unemployment and exploitation every day, and this continues to push the youth and vulnerable communities into violent extremism.

The Inter-faith approach intervention recognizes the untapped potential of CSOs, Youth catalysts, the media and the Religious Leaders as mediators and advocates of preventing and countering violent extremism. This user friendly handbook is therefore needed to provide vital guidance that strengthens the inter-religious efforts of strengthening youth resilience and CSOs' knowledge and capacity to promote their meaningful participation in dialogues and policy decision-making processes.

It is our sincere belief that a broad spectrum of stakeholders inter-religious platform, government, gender, education and media will utilize this tool in their dialogue deliberations and will reflect on practical solutions in leadership, policy, practice, and innovation for the advancement of SDG 16.

Ms. Deborah Olwal,
National General Secretary,
YOUNG WOMEN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
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The development of this Manual is the result of the involvement of various committed and specialized people and partners at various stages.

The handbook highlights the processes of preventing and countering violent extremism developed from the baseline and Needs Assessment Surveys.

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We hope this handbook will be helpful to the CSOs and the inter-religious organizations that work on building the resilience of youths, women and vulnerable groups against violent extremism.

*Roselyne Pepela*

Head of Programmes,
Young Women Christian Association
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Introduction

Events in our time have thrust Kenya to the frontline of a regional and global struggle against terrorist groups and violent extremists. The 1998 bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi by Al Qaeda, was perhaps the starting point of terrorist attacks in Kenya. Studies indicate that between 2011 and 2019 there were 265 terror attacks led by Al-Shabaab led in the country; an estimated 10% of the group's militants are thought to be Kenyan nationals. Unfortunately, there are many other terror groups operating in the country, just as there are diverse forms of violent extremism that we are encountering.

It is the ultimate goal of every stakeholder's actions in countering violent extremism in Kenya, including the YWCA Kenya, “to emphatically and continuously reject violent extremist ideologies and aims in order to shrink the pool of individuals whom terrorist groups can radicalise and recruit.” Achieving this goal calls for “Kenyans to individually and collectively embrace patriotism and service to the Nation; to appreciate the Kenyan Way of Life as represented in the Constitution; to delegitimise and reject violent extremist ideologies; to deploy accessible early warning and early intervention tools against radicalization, to disengage from membership of terrorist groups, and to embrace de-radicalisation and reintegration.”

It is also a call for call for implementation of sustained interventions by national, county and local stakeholders.

This handbook empowers faith leaders and youth leaders, key stakeholders in the field of countering violent extremism, with knowledge and skills to implement coordinated, innovative and impact-focused interventions. As such, it is designed to provide training for facilitators and animators of inter-faith dialogues in the field of countering violent extremism, whether or not they have prior experience with it. It is structured into nine learning modules and is accompanied by training materials including slide presentations and handouts to allow for multi-day trainings on its content. They include a series of activities for each module and links to illustrative videos that provide primers for discussion and reflection. Each module also includes a “Resources for Further Learning” section, which includes additional resources for more in-depth learning as well as some guiding questions on how to incorporate them into your own work. This training
This handbook delivers a contextually literate countering violent extremism and awareness-raising training program that is relevant to your context in an accessible way. It highlights the benefits of collaborative approaches beyond the use of military or securitized responses to violent extremism, drawing on good practices, and offers tools and guidance for easy adaptation to your local context and cultures. Finally, it encourages the early identification and mitigation of risks with programming, as well as ensuring a Do No Harm approach.

While this handbook will offer guidance around how to design, implement, and monitor constructive responses to violent extremism, an understanding of project management is assumed. Therefore, it is not a training program on general project management skills, monitoring and evaluation, or on fundraising. Since the problem of violent extremism is complex and highly context-specific, it is also not a guide to the drivers of violent radicalization in your local context, nor does it proscribe the programs and policies that would be most effective. Instead, it introduces you to the guiding questions and tools necessary to make informed and effective choices in your own efforts to counter violent extremism.

**Starting off the Workshop**

This handbook presupposes that the facilitator is sufficiently skilled in organizing the workshop, mobilizing participants and program for the training is already in place. While, the sessions can be modified for online delivery, the handbook further presupposes that the sessions will be delivered in a face-to-face setting. Some sessions require the facilitator to screen a short video, all of which are available online through links provided. Therefore a computer with working internet connection is required, as well as sound amplifying equipment.

The handbook starts off by reminding the facilitator to welcome participants into the training and introduce him/herself.

**Knowing each other**

Violent Extremism is an issue with multiple sensitivities. It is therefore important that all participants in the workshop get to know each other and are comfortable to work together. The facilitator is therefore requested to find relevant ice-breakers for this purpose, one of which is proposed below.

To allow participants to introduce themselves the topic of the training in an engaging way.

**Instructions**

Ask participants to stand up and move to an open area where they can move around. Explain that everyone will be participating in an activity called a “standing baseline” where they will demonstrate a fact about themselves or an opinion by standing somewhere on a line.

Designate one side of the space as the lowest number or the point of least agreement with the questions that will be asked and designate the other end of the space as the highest number or the point of most agreement with the question. The middle space can be neutral if it is for an opinion question.

Ask around 10 questions, one at a time, and ask participants to line up accordingly for each one.
With some questions, participants may need to ask others their opinion so that they can line up in the correct order. For example, if you ask how many children they have, a participant with four children will need to ask others on the line where those with three children and those with five children are standing so they can stand between them.

**The following questions are examples, but feel free to create your own:**

(These questions are opinions, so designate which side of the line is for which idea. These questions are answered in numbers, so designate which side of the line is higher or lower.)

1. Are you a morning person, or a night person?
2. Do you like coffee more or tea more?
3. Do you like cats more or dogs more
4. How many siblings do you have in your family?
5. How many children do you have?
6. How many cups of coffee or tea do you drink a day?
7. What time do you normally wake up every day?
8. How many countries have you traveled to?
9. How many languages do you speak?
10. How much of a fan of football are you?

After asking around seven or eight questions like those above, finish the exercise by asking the following questions to bring it back to the topic of the training:

a) How many years have you worked in the field of countering violent extremism?

b) In your opinion, how much of a danger will violent extremism be in your country over the next five years?

c) How confident are you that our collective work to counter violent extremism will be successful in preventing radicalization and violent acts after those five years?

Take note of these responses, perhaps even writing them down.

Following these last three questions, ask participants to return to their seats and then ask participants to introduce themselves quickly.

**Setting expectations and ground rules**

To clarify trainees' expectations for the training and to ensure a smooth training by establishing ground rules jointly with participants. This exercise will help participants set personal intentions to help them have achievable learning goals.

**Key Takeaways:** Creating ground rules collaboratively rather than set by the facilitator ensures better consensus and buy-in.

**How to facilitate:**

Be sure to follow up by the end of the training that expectations have been met. If possible, connect participants to resources that can help them reach any expectations that could not be met during the training.

Ensure that there is consensus regarding ground rules. If there is disagreement regarding particular rules (such as the use of phones), you may need to reach a compromise.
**Instructions**

1. Ask participants to form groups of three or four to discuss their intentions for the training. Guide their discussions with the following questions: What are your intentions for your participation in this training? How would you hope your work improves as a result of your participation and the things you learn?

2. After five minutes or when everyone has had a chance to share, ask participants to write their intentions on sticky notes.

3. Invite everyone to come back together and share their groups’ expectations, attaching them to the flip chart.

4. Display the intentions for the duration of the training in a place where everyone can see.

5. Ask participants to suggest what guidelines could help them meet their intentions and ensure a fun, educational, and safe environment. Lead discussions when there is any disagreement and help reach a consensus, editing guidelines as necessary until that consensus is reached. Then write the guidelines on a flip chart (perhaps during a break) and display them for the duration of the training in a place where everyone can see.
Module 1: Understanding Violent Extremism

Overview

Kenya is a country of diversity, with 43 tribes, many different religions, political parties and a wide range of resources. The climatic differences are major and natural resources are diverse. The challenge for Kenya, like in many other countries, is to accept differences while also promoting social cohesion. A breakdown in social cohesion can lead to a breakdown in community resilience. This in turn can lead to a wide range of social problems including conflicts and violence.

Kenyans have enjoyed a democratic space for many years now and the constitutions ensures that Kenyans have a right to express their opinions and ideas through peaceful means. Often this right is abused when people express themselves in violent ways that often end up in destruction of property and sometimes human lives.

The government has a duty to protect its citizens and so takes appropriate measures when the right of freedom and expression is violated. We all have a responsibility, as individuals or communally, to stop acts of violence before they occur. Most of the times, violence is a response to frustrations, to feelings of not being cared for, and may thrive among those cut off from family, friends and the larger community. Some ideologies, both religious and secular, promote the use of violence. The combination of frustration, isolation and being introduced to highly charged motives for violence is the most potent combination of factors in the process leading some to acts of violence.

Acts of violence occur at the end of a process that often starts quite some time before. It is during this 'time before' that preventive measures can be taken. At the very early stages these measures simply involve caring for vulnerable individuals. Such acts are motivated less by preventing violence than simply wanting to support and assist persons in distress. This type of care is a responsibility of all citizens but is also offered by social service agencies where more professional attention is required. In this unit, we will explore existing terminologies and concepts, emerging forms of violence and legal frameworks in the field of countering violent extremism.

Learning Objectives

After completing this module, trainees will be able to:

- Explain the field of countering violent extremism and how it has evolved through key international and regional documents and resolutions;
- Understand the importance of definitions in enabling collaboration across government and civil society actors in responding to violent extremism; and
- Identify both the scope of activities that can be considered as countering violent extremism as well as the opportunities and pitfalls in the field.

1.1 Essential terms and concepts

Key take away: How we define important terms, like terrorism and violent extremism, can have significant effects on how we shape programs and policies and target them. Unfortunately, there are no consistent definitions for these terms. Some definitions may even cause problems and harm, especially when they are incorporated into the law.

The field of Violent Extremism has a wide range of concepts and terminologies, some of which keep changing definitions. Definitions of concepts and terms are anchored in national or
international laws, and also in CVE programs. Definitions must be clear and focused. Definitions which are unclear or too broad, can threaten to criminalize or discourage legal behavior or activities. Even when a definition is clear, applying the “violent extremist” label to specific groups or individuals can be done in a biased or subjective.

Some of the most common terms and concepts used in the field of violent extremism are as follows:

- **Radical**: The word “radical” is popularly used to designate individuals, parties, and movements that wish to alter drastically any existing practice, institution, or social system. It denotes principles focused on altering existing structures through revolutionary means and changing value systems in fundamental ways.

- **Radicalization**: is a process by which an individual, or group comes to adopt political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

- **Radicalism**: denotes principles focused on altering social structures, through revolutionary means and changing value systems in fundamental ways. It denotes the beliefs or actions of people who advocate thorough or complete political or social reform. It also denotes the belief that society needs to be changed, and that these changes are only possible through revolutionary means.

- **Extremism**: the term is mostly used in a political or religious sense, for an ideology that is considered (by the speaker or by some implied shared social consensus) to be far outside the (acceptable) mainstream attitudes of society. But extremism can, for example, also be meant in an economic sense.

- **Violence**: The process of violating the feelings, rights, properties and bodies of the other. Violence can be: Verbal, Mental, Structural, Physical, Spiritual

- **Violent Extremism**: refers to the beliefs and actions of people who support or use ideologically motivated violence to further social, economic, religiously-based or political objectives.

- **Ambivalence of Religion**: R. Scott Appleby demonstrated that any Religion can be used to justify, encourage and create violence, while at the same time used to bring reconciliation.

- **Religious Violence**: Radical, Extremist, Violent Ideas dealing directly with Religion-Religious (Radicalism, Extremism, Violence)

- **Religious implied violence**: Radical Extremist, Violent social, political, economical, Or cultural Ideas employing/ referring to religion for unification, inspiration etc- Religious implied (Radicalism, Extremism, violence)

- **Terrorism**: is using violence, “including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.”

- **Counter-terrorism**: is the realm of coercive and non-coercive programs and policies to prevent and deny opportunities for violent extremist activity and to disrupt, arrest, prosecute, and/or kill violent extremist groups and individuals. Traditional, coercive, and forceful counter-terrorism measures are usually limited to government actors, such as the security forces or the military, but may include other institutions.

- **Countering Violent Extremism**: refers to the programs and policies which aim to dissuade individuals or groups from radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism and resorting to ideologically motivated violence to further social, economic, religiously-based or political objectives.
• **Vulnerability:** is a “condition produced by personal risk and protective factors which might make an individual more susceptible to [drivers of violent extremism] and ultimately, to radicalization leading to violent extremism.

• **Resilience:** is where individuals or communities have the positive capacities of “knowledge, skills and abilities to protect against factors that might lead to radicalization and recruitment.

• **Recruitment:** is the process where an individual shifts from “grievance/mobilization to partaking or supporting in a violent act. Recruitment requires at some level (even a very basic level) a personal connection to a violent extremist, even if that recruitment is done online.

**Conclusion**

• Being Radical and Extremist is not necessary bad.

• Radicalization is unavoidable.

• Our efforts should be directed in avoiding Radical and Extremist ideology to turn violence.

• As Christians/Muslims/Other Religion we should try more to understand (not tolerate) why individuals or communities are discontented.

• Our language should be sensitive to the pain of others and true to our calling.

• There is a need of joining efforts with moderates in the community to counter violent movements.

**1.2 Forms of Violence**

Actions by violent extremists are largely motivated by ideas, issues, ethno-nationalism or a combination of the following:

• **Ideological violence** (a) Political ideologies such as nationalist, neo-Nazi groups, white supremacy or hate groups that advocate the use of violence; (b) extreme interpretations of religious ideologies and beliefs that advocate the use of violence; or (c) violent left-wing, anarchist, and right-wing ideologies.

• **Issue-based violence** (a) Violent animal liberation and animal rights movements; (b) environmental or eco-related violent extremism; or (c) anti-government, anti-globalization or anti-capitalist movements that advocate the use of violence.
• Ethno-nationalist or separatist violence. Violent political or independence struggles based on race, culture, geography or ethnicity.

**TASKS / Ask learners to:**

• Classify the following as per the above motives: (i) a criminal gang in the community, (ii) tribal violence, (iii) terror violence, (iv) political violence. Hint: expect differences in classifications and perspectives. Foster a healthy discussion around these diverse opinions.


• Name some of the groups participants know of in the community, country or globally which could be violent?

### 1.3 The Cycle of Violent Extremism

Key learning points: Violent extremism has many levels of involvement. Each of the six levels of involvement has specific responses.

There are six levels of involvement in violent extremism. We discuss each level below.

1. **General prevention** is where countering violent extremism practitioners work with the general population to increase resilience to violent extremism, usually at the community level. Projects do this by addressing the sources of grievance and drivers of violent extremism, which can be very specific to an area or community (the next module will explore how we can understand these drivers of violent extremism according to a specific context). Examples of general prevention activities would include:

   • Establishing intercultural dialogues to build tolerance between cultures and identify areas of cooperation in the community in areas where divisions in the community are drivers of violent extremism.
   
   • Helping religious leaders to address the extremist interpretations of religion by violent extremists with the more tolerant, mainstream practice of religion in areas where religion is exploited to recruit people into violent extremism.
   
   • Improving access to justice, legal aid, and the effectiveness of the justice system in communities when these issues are drivers of violent extremism.

2. **Specific prevention** programming targets only those who have the characteristics that research has shown makes people vulnerable to the appeal of violent extremism. Of course, the presence of these factors or characteristics does not mean that these individuals are somehow “destined” to become violent extremists, and not simply because of these specific factors. Therefore, practitioners work with vulnerable individuals, as people and not as criminals, to help them develop the personal skills and capacities to be more resilient to the appeal of violent extremism, which individuals at this stage may have not even considered or even ever will. What is important is to help these individuals overcome the issues that make them vulnerable or develop the strategies that can help them manage these issues effectively. Examples would include:

   • Fostering social cohesion through inclusion and participation among marginalized social groups when these groups are found to be more vulnerable to radicalization for these reasons.
• Promoting critical digital and media literacy among vulnerable adolescents and young adults to be resilient to violent extremist narratives about everyday life, identity, religion, and social or political activities.

• Increasing the resilience of vulnerable individuals by helping them to develop skills to release stress, master their emotions, withstand radicalization and peer pressure, and solve conflicts using non-violent action.

3. **Early intervention and diversion programming** is needed once someone has begun to exhibit violent extremist attitudes or interest in violent extremist propaganda or even to begin to interact with radicalized individuals. These activities are implemented to prevent the individual from radicalizing any further by disrupting the radicalization process with individualized interventions such as counselling and redirecting them to effective (and non-violent) alternatives to violent extremism worldviews or approaches. While early intervention and diversion programming may include the police or other security forces who may identify individuals or collaborate on this process, this type of intervention usually occurs before the individual commits any violent act or crime. Therefore, these activities are meant to prevent further radicalization and the need for more coercive interventions like arrest, prosecution, and even imprisonment. Examples of early intervention and diversion programming would include:

• Recording and sharing the life-changing experiences of those who have been involved with or hurt by violent extremism to expose the dishonest propaganda of violent extremists that the target audience is receiving.

• Increasing the awareness of police and prison officials in detecting signs of radicalization at an early stage by strengthening their perception and assessment skills.

• Targeting those who search for violent extremist messaging online and redirecting them towards curated YouTube videos that debunk that group's recruiting themes.

4. However, once someone is **radicalized and/or becomes a member of a violent extremist group**, sometimes with the help of a trigger factor event that motivates the individual to cross that line, the police or other security forces (such as prison officials) may play a larger role. In the following kinds of countering violent extremism responses, some of the individuals may have already been arrested or imprisoned when interventions begin. These responses at the post-radicalization stage include the following:

5. **Disengagement** is the process of shifting one's behavior to abstain from violent activities and withdraw from a violent extremist group. Disengagement only includes the cessation of participating in violent extremist activities and does not imply that the individual no longer adheres to a radical ideology.” Examples would include:

• Implementing a strategy to help radicalized people getting out of violent extremist ideology by strengthening the bonds within the family and helping them find employment and positive social groups.

• Broadcasting radio programs into areas where violent extremist groups operate to encourage them to lay down their weapons and informing them about available government demobilization programs.
Deradicalization is the process of “countering and undermining the ideology related to violent extremism and suggesting an alternative ideology” by degrees. Therefore, by these definitions the term disengagement would be the opposite of recruitment and deradicalization would be the opposite of radicalization. Examples of deradicalization activities would include:

- Developing a program for persons in prisons who have been radicalized or have been convicted of violent extremism offenses that allows them to re-evaluate their worldviews and form meaningful relationships with those they have considered to be the enemy.
- Offering assistance and guidance to violent extremists and youth sympathizing with violent extremist ideologies willing to leave the scene and the surrounding radicalized spaces.

6. **Rehabilitation and Reintegration.** This is the sixth level in the cycle of violent extremism.

Rehabilitation is the process “where practitioners in community or detention centers are involved in rehabilitating individuals after they have been deradicalized and/or disengaged from violent extremist ideologies”. Examples would include:

- Assessing violent extremist offenders in prison regarding their motivating ideology and the strategies they have used to justify their offenses and offer pre-release counselling to help them see through these justifications and find better alternatives instead.
- Providing prisoners who are charged with or convicted of terrorism as well as inmates vulnerable to radicalization with mentorships to help them solve problems and conflicts by opting for a lifestyle free of crime, involving the inmates’ network outside prison and assisting with the challenges they will face after release.

Reintegration is the process “where practitioners help the transition of the completely rehabilitated individual back to society. Practitioners also work at the same time on society to ensure there is a positive response to the rehabilitated, and to mitigate social stigma. The ultimate goal of reintegration is to foster the social inclusion of the individual and prevent recidivism.” Examples would include:

- Facilitating the reintegration of former violent extremists into society by encouraging nonviolent political participation and positive actions in the community.
- Working with communities to prevent the stigmatization of affected children in families of foreign fighters or returnee families, which can cause marginalization or even encourage them to follow their relatives into violent extremism.

These kinds of post-radicalization responses face higher security concerns and should be guided by individual needs and risk assessments (as in pre-radicalization responses) to determine the kinds of safeguards, approaches, and goals that should be chosen for each case. Practitioners must also be careful to assess the success of these efforts, or the radicalized individual may seem to end their support or embrace of violent extremism and return to violence after programming has ended.
Conclusion

- Violent extremism actually has a lot of similarities to other types of organized or motivated violence such as gangs and rebellions with causes, pathways, and even opportunities to address or resolve it.
- The Countering Violent Extremism Cycle outlines the main stages or levels of radicalization as well as the kinds of responses found in countering violent extremism programming.
- Levels of involvement in VE range from the general population, to vulnerable individual, early stage radicalizing individual, radicalized/violent extremist, disengaged/de-radicalized individual and the rehabilitated individual.
- Responses in VE range from general prevention to specific prevention, early intervention/diversion, disengagement or de-radicalization, rehabilitation and finally, re-integration.
1.4 Policies and Strategies for CVE

Since it's the evolution of countering violent extremism, CVE Policies and strategies have become a central area of work under the Prevent pillar within most counter-terrorism strategies. This section gives an overview of some of the common CVE frameworks that have been adopted both at the international, national and county levels.

International policies include:

- The **Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** (2006)
- **Security Council Resolution 2178** (2014) on foreign terrorist fighters
- The **Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism** (2016).
- *Economic and Social Inclusion to Prevent Violent Extremism* by Shanta Devarajan et al. (World Bank)
- UN Security Council Resolution 2250 and
- UN Security Council Resolution 2419

Kenya’s has a key National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (NSCVE). The NSCVE articulates a clear vision of minimizing and/or eliminating violent extremism by mobilizing individuals and groups at the national and community levels “to reject violent extremist ideologies and aims in order to shrink the pool of individuals whom terrorist groups can radicalize and recruit.”

This vision is consistent with global policy on CVE, in particular, the UN Security Council’s Resolution 2178 (2014), whose focus is “preventing radicalization, recruitment and mobilization of individuals into terrorist groups and becoming foreign terrorist fighters.”

The Strategy has a clear set of inter-linked objectives and strategies that closely mirror those of the model 2015 UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Some of the shared policy objectives and strategies include:

- The promotion of national and community level cohesion,
- Constitutionalism and adherence to the rule of law by all;
- The disruption of the activities of violent extremists;
- Enhancing coordination and partnership of people and groups working on CVE;
- The provision of adequate resources for CVE work;
- Ensuring CVE interventions are evidence-driven.
The Mandate of National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC)

The NSCVE mandates the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC) to coordinate all counterterrorism and CVE-related activities of Government agencies and non-state actors as per the NSCVE. The implementation requirements for the NSCVE are quite elaborate and adequate for the Kenyan context.

- The NCTC is located in the Executive Office of the President, which demonstrates that the CVE agenda is a particularly high priority for the government, and theoretically enjoys the political cover and support of the President.

- The reach of the NCTC’s coordination role straddles the international, national, county and community levels. It oversees, advises and coordinates the CVE interventions of bilateral and multilateral partners and national security agencies, in addition to the field-level CVE work of County Security Intelligence Committees (a national government mechanism), county government agencies, NGOs, community level security mechanisms, such as Nyumba Kumi Committees and Community Policing Committees, among other actors.

NSCVE proposes the approaches, focus and work pillars to guide national CVE efforts and through it stakeholders with different capabilities and priorities are able to contribute to the end-goal. Approaches to prevention are at general, specific and individual preventive efforts. Each of these levels carries nine pillars as listed below

i. Psycho-social,
ii. Educational,
iii. Political,
iv. Security,
v. Faith-based and ideological,
vi. Training and capacity building,
vii. Arts and Culture,
viii. Legal and Policy,
ix. Media and online pillars.

The inter-linkages between the NSCVE and County Action Plans

- The strategy further distinguishes between national-level and local-level action. It retains NCTC as the national focal point with various initiatives and capabilities.

- County governments are more likely to enjoy greater local legitimacy than national agencies, and they are also likely to have stronger local knowledge on local security issues and the good practices that can be applied to address them.

- The NSCVE has demonstrated an alertness to this fact, and pronounces that success in CVE is dependent on collaboration between the national government and county governments. It therefore mandates county-level leaders, including governors, senators and county assemblies, to undertake CVE activities aimed at enhancing community cohesion, peace and patriotism, therefore mandates county level leaders, including governors, senators and county assemblies, to undertake CVE activities aimed at enhancing community cohesion, peace and patriotism, while denouncing extremism. “At the local level,” says the strategy “County Security and Intelligence Committees will consult with the NCTC and coordinate action with local and religious leaders, NGOs,
economic development organizations, the private sector, researchers and engaged citizens to launch de-radicalisation and disengagement efforts that are connected with national level initiatives.”

- The strategy also mandates the NCTC to provide capacity building and training to county leaders to enhance their capacities to carry out these activities. In fact, the County Security Intelligence Committees are the key sites of implementation of the NSCVE, and are expected to consult and coordinate closely with county government officials.

- Various counties affected by violent extremism, among them Kwale, Lamu and Mombasa, have in the past year succeeded in developing their own County CVE Action Plans.

- These action plans explicitly state that their success is partly dependent on the extent to which they are aligned to the NSCVE, and promote national government-county government collaboration in CVE work, particularly collaboration with the NCTC. In fact, all three plans contain vision statements and strategic objectives/pillars that are similar to those of the NSCVE.

- The three plans also envision county government partnerships with civil society, faith-based organizations (FBOs), media and other non-state actors in CVE work, as is the case with the NSCVE.

- The key priorities in the three plans is mobilization of all actors in the counties to play roles in preventing violent extremism, in addition to creating greater community cohesion.

Practical Exercise:

Ask participants to read, in advance, the CAPs of their respective counties. During the session, let the participants explore the provisions in the CAP of respective Counties. Facilitate a discussion around the different pillars and approaches.

In general:

- CVE focuses on countering the pull of terrorist recruitment and influence by building resilience among populations vulnerable to violent radicalisation.

- Any counter-terrorism policy should have one overarching goal - to create safety and security for citizens by addressing and tackling the causes of terrorism.

- If we misunderstand the causes of terrorism, we risk having ill-informed and counterproductive policies that disallow us from achieving this objective.

- The field of CVE Policies and strategies has evolved rapidly.
1.5 Resources for further learning

- Kenya’s National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, September 2016, downloadable [here](#)
- The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006)
- Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) on foreign terrorist fighters
- The Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2016).
- Economic and Social Inclusion to Prevent Violent Extremism by Shanta Devarajan et al. (World Bank) [Arabic] [English]
- » Human Rights and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) [Arabic] [English]
- » Plan of Action for Identifying and Countering Recruiters and Facilitators (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [Arabic] [English]
- » The Hague-Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Phenomenon (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [Arabic] [English]
- » Addendum to the Hague-Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Phenomenon, with a focus on Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [Arabic] [English]
- Preventing and Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism as Related to the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Threat (Hedayah and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC) [Arabic] [English]
Module 2: Drivers of Violent Extremism

Overview

Good countering violent extremism programs and policies are rooted in a local and contextual understanding of the drivers of violent extremism. This must be based on evidence gathered from reliable research.

For the context of this handbook, we offer the following definition of drivers:

Drivers of violent extremism are causes or reasons why groups or individuals might be attracted to supporting or engaging in violent extremism.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will have:

- Understood the drivers of violent extremism
- Gained skills to identify drivers of violent extremism in our context
- Ability to identify some of the risks of research on violent extremism and how do to avoid them

2.1 Factors driving Violent Extremism

**Key takeaways:** Drivers of violent extremism help explain why people might become radicalized or involved in violent extremist groups. However, these factors cannot predict whether someone will actually become radicalized, so they are meant to guide policies and programming to target:

1) The kinds of issues that are most influential and
2) Those individuals who are most affected by them in ways that increase their vulnerability to violent extremism.

- Good PCVE programs and policies are rooted in a local and contextual understanding of the drivers of violent extremism.
- Good PCVE programs & policies are based on evidence gathered from reliable research.
- **Drivers of violent extremism** are causes or reasons why groups or individuals might be attracted to supporting or engaging in violent extremism.

Show video on preventing violent extremism through education (UNESCO) Click here to watch the video or go to this link: [https://youtu.be/79MTkVumCcQ](https://youtu.be/79MTkVumCcQ) (Note: The video offers a basic framework to understand violent extremism. The terms “push factors” and “pull factors” are often used when discussing VE.)
Ask participants to:

- Discuss how experiences of the first two men in the video influenced their choices regarding violent extremist groups?
- Identify other factors they see in the video that might be considered drivers of violent extremism.
- This video was produced in order to explain how education can promote resilience to violent extremism. What were the benefits described and how might they help prevent students from being attracted to violent extremism?

Drivers of Radicalization:

- **Ideological Drivers**: There are multiple forms of violent extremist ideology. Some are secular while others claim religious legitimacy. At present, the ideology that is most responsible for radicalization in Kenya is disseminated by terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda, Dae’sh and Al Shabaab. Their Salafi-jihadi ideology utilizes a selective reading of some Islamic religious texts and histories to justify terrorist violence in the name of protecting and advancing Islam. They also use claims of global and local victimization of Muslims to create militant recruits willing to carry out suicide and mass casualty attacks against civilians and infrastructure. These groups often express an ambition to establish an Eastern African region of a global caliphate that would replace secular legal and governance systems it depicts as illegitimate under Islam. This ambition, as is evident from the actions of groups such as ISIS—is both a threat to world peace and a potent motivator of thousands of young people across the world that have been convinced to join the project. Experts in Islamic religion worldwide have strongly rejected the terrorist organizations’ claims to religious legitimacy. In reality, their ideologies have no support in religion. They are driven by a will to power over populations and nation states. They are radically anti-democratic and, in their authoritarianism, willingness to use mass violence, and refusal to embrace diverse beliefs, are comparable to Stalinism or Nazism.

- **Socio-Economic Drivers**: Adverse socioeconomic conditions create high levels of frustration and a sense of powerlessness — ideal conditions for persuading groups and individuals to embrace violent extremism and to oppose the political, social and legal status quo.

- **Political Drivers**: Real or perceived exclusion from political representation, discrimination, mis-governance and narratives of historical injustice are powerful drivers of radicalization. Violent extremists often invoke such injustices to inspire opposition to national political structures.

- **Personal Drivers**: These include the search for status, meaning, power, a sense of belonging and identity, or an all-encompassing theory to explain personal crises. Individuals (A) DRIVERS OF RADICALISATION 24 National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism personally susceptible to radicalization include those experiencing low self-esteem, a sense of victimization or alienation from normal social networks, boredom and frustration, and a sense of powerlessness.

- **Global/Geopolitical Drivers**: Global and geopolitical drivers in Kenya are the local effects of international struggles between violent extremists and their opponents’ worldwide. Anger over Western country policies and interventions in the Middle-East and other acts associated with a perceived ‘Western’ agenda, including Kenya and AMISOM’s intervention against Al Shabaab in Somalia, drive reactions in Kenya by sympathizers with violent.

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1 NCSVE, p.23-24
extremists. In addition, proponents of extremist ideologies abroad finance and facilitate the exportation of ideological extremism in the guise of religion.

- **Technological Drivers:** Technological drivers include the wide availability of social media—blogs and chat-rooms—for disseminating extremist propaganda. The increasing affordability of smartphones and data means that there is now borderless connectivity that allows extremist ideologies to be produced far from Kenya but consumed by millions of Kenyans. This allows for self-radicalization, and clandestine recruitment and training online. Technologies of encryption of digital communications further facilitate dissemination and evasion by radicalizers.

All the factors that drive VE, as identified above, can be categorized as follows:

- **Push Factors** are any condition or grievance that creates a sense of frustration, marginalization, and disempowerment which encourage people to seek out remedies including, but not limited to, joining extremist groups.

- **Group Dynamics** and relationships are factors that shape the issues, environment, and community in ways that make individuals or communities more vulnerable to violent extremism.

- **Pull Factors** are forces that can be attractive to potential recruits and specifically draw them into radical organizations, such as a sense of kinship, heroism, adventure, economic gain or self-realization.

- **Sources of Resilience:** Government or cultural norms that promote coexistence and dialogue e.g. kinship, heroism, self-realization.

### 2.2 Identifying drivers of violent extremism in our context

Radicalization is highly specific to context and local dynamics. Therefore, countering violent extremism programming needs to be tailored to address and undermine the drivers of radicalization, or build sources of resilience against violent extremism in the local context to be most successful.

Too often, researchers and practitioners will exclaim that we do not understand what drives violent extremism. While we may not fully understand the problem, a growing body of research has produced many great insights on how men and women come to be radicalized. Indeed, many interesting studies are included in the “Further Learning Opportunities” section at the end of this module.

In this section we explore a simple set of questions to guide you as you try to understand the nature, motivations, and pathways of violent extremism in your context. However, they are only starting points to begin an assessment in your local context.

Understanding violent extremism and radicalization in any context requires asking the right questions and setting out to find the answers. Here are 6 questions that are considered helpful.

**Question 1: What is the risk of violent extremism in your context and what are its forms?**

An important first step is understanding what forms of violent extremism and what violent extremist groups are present in your context. For example, are there organized or informal violent extremist groups operating or recruiting in your local context? To whom do they direct their violence? For instance, is it directed against the government, groups of people based on
some identity factor(s), a foreign government or group, or are they even acting in support of the government (with or without government approval) and direct their violence against the government’s opponents?

The importance of this first question is best explained in the Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism: Each violent extremist group should be evaluated separately, since a one-size-fits-all approach does not work in the case of violent extremism. Thus, responses and interventions should be group-specific. States can encounter different types of violent extremism and should acknowledge that each form has both unique and common characteristics. Any countering violent extremism policy or program should take into account these differences and similarities. Radicalization involves similar stages, regardless of the ideologies of violent extremist groups.

Considering this, it may be important to ask the remaining questions multiple times separately for different forms of violent extremism. It may even be helpful to inquire why certain forms of violent extremism are not present in a particular context, possibly to identify sources of resilience.

**Question 2: Why are people drawn to violent extremism?**

Perhaps the most frequent question that is asked about violent extremism is simply, “Why?” Indeed, it is the central question when conducting an assessment on violent extremism in a particular context. However, some people may refuse to even explore it out of concerns that it can be seen as sympathizing with violent extremists and prefer to simply consider them to be “brainwashed” instead.

But as the former Secretary-General wrote in the Plan of Action, Nothing can justify violent extremism but we must also acknowledge that it does not arise in a vacuum. Narratives of grievance, actual or perceived injustice, promised empowerment and sweeping change become attractive where human rights are being violated, good governance is being ignored and aspirations are being crushed.

It is here that we can explore the push factors, group dynamics and relationships, and pull factors we defined in the previous section.

- **Push factors:** What are the sources of grievances and tensions?
- **Group dynamics and relationships:** How are these conditions and grievances being discussed and resolved?
- **Pull factors:** What are the reasons why an individual or group would want to engage in violence because of these issues? Why a particular group and not another?

(Optional) Video 3 - The Promises of ad-Dawlah to Women [https://youtu.be/qZknfoA-O2k](https://youtu.be/qZknfoA-O2k) [English]

**Video reflection questions:**

- What were the special promises that the ISIL recruiter made to her that convinced her to take her four-year-old son and travel to Syria?
- This video appears to have used many clips from ISIL propaganda videos. What are some of the emotions that you think ISIL’s video producers wanted you to feel with those clips? How would those emotions or ideas appeal to people from your context?
Question 3: Who is being drawn to violent extremism?

- VE recruiters prey on vulnerability of individuals and groups
- Analyse recruitment patterns in a target area
- Identify patterns & criteria
- Ensure a gender-sensitive approach: do not overlook women and girls!
- **NOTE**: PCVE programs are most effective when they target individuals and groups that are the most vulnerable to being drawn to violent extremism.

![SOME VULNERABILITY FACTORS]

Question 4: Where are people being drawn to violent extremism?

- Identify geographical locations and particular venues (aka “hotspots”) where radicalization is occurring e.g after-school programs, formal and informal religious settings, prisons, or in online spaces.
- Insights shape policy and geographical scope of PCVE programming
- Be aware & plan for of tactical shifts by recruiters: camouflage, hibernation, transference etc

The primary places where radicalization is taking place include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Educational Institutions**: Extremist elements and actual terrorist operatives have managed to infiltrate some educational institutions including primary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities. There they spread terrorist ideologies, often taking advantage of environments in which free speech and inquiry are encouraged to disguise their mission. The social and economic conditions that enable radicalization—such as un/under employment—often have strongest impact on a rapidly growing youth population with high expectations of social and economic mobility.

- **Religious Institutions**: Extremist clerics seek to take control of Mosques, Madrassas and Islamic Welfare Institutions in Kenya, sometimes inciting radicalized youth to violently claim these institutions. Their control of these institutions offers them opportunities to radicalize Kenyans.

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2 NSCVE, p.24-25
• **Internet and Mass media:** Kenya has one of the highest internet connectivity rates in Africa. Kenyans, particularly the youth, increasingly gain their news and worldview from social media, blogs, and chat rooms. Other popular means of communication include electronic media (such as videos, CDs), mass media, and, especially, smartphone communications applications. These provide anonymous spaces for spreading violent extremist ideas and false propaganda. They also facilitate recruiting, training, and even the planning and coordination of attacks.

• **Remand Centres and Prisons:** Remand facilities and prisons play a critical role in the radicalization process. They provide jailed terrorists and their supporters with a captive audience of disaffected individuals, free of distractions. Recruiters exploit the vulnerability of their fellow prisoners by offering prayers, psychosocial support, and financial assistance during incarceration and after release.

• **Refugee Camps:** The presence of a large refugee population in Dadaab and Kakuma camps has provided extremist elements a platform to carry out radicalization and recruitment and to support terrorist activities. Violent extremists take advantage of the refugees’ protected and isolated status to carry out recruitment and provide logistical support to their colleagues.

• **Neighbourhood Dynamics:** Some communities and neighbourhoods provide fertile grounds for radicalization. Though this is occurring at every end of the economic spectrum, it is in poorer urban neighbourhoods that the bulk of radicalization is taking place. There, rapid demographic change due to urbanization has often outstripped the ability of the economy to absorb and support populations. The resulting frustration is exacerbated by the marked lack of social amenities that would positively occupy the youth in particular. Often, there is often a growing generational gulf between parents and their children in terms of worldview, and an increased resistance by youth to traditional authority figures.

• **Training Camps Locally and Abroad:** Active and sleeper training camps within Kenya and abroad provide operational and tactical training capability for the recruits, offering practical experience within the radical group ranks.
Question 5: How are people being radicalized?

Since no predictive profile can be drawn, John Horgan (a researcher on radicalization and violent extremism) suggests that the “elusive search for the root causes of violent extremism should give way to efforts to detect routes to extremism, and that instead of trying to identify profiles, [violent extremism] experts ought to concentrate on the pathways to violence.”57

This inquiry can further direct countering violent extremism efforts by finding out how individuals come in contact with violent extremism and how they can come to accept it. Examples of potential pathways include social and traditional media, families, forcible recruitment and coercion, violent extremist recruiters, political/government officials, religious leaders, and so forth.

This line of inquiry helps to close the critical gap between understanding someone’s support for violence and understanding someone’s actual engagement in violence.58

Here, it is important to expand on one of these pathways: forcible recruitment and coercion. While it is more likely for violent extremists to join willingly, there may be occasions where an individual is forced to engage in violent extremism through threats or violence. In such cases, individuals may engage in violence without truly supporting it. But the line between “voluntary” and “coerced” members is not a black-and-white distinction. Indeed, it can be considered to be a spectrum of how much pressure recruits received before joining and after joining (to maintain their membership or commit specific actions). While most legal jurisdictions do not accept this as a defense for engaging in the most serious crimes (such as murder), understanding this does help countering violent extremism practitioners design more targeted disengagement and rehabilitation programming.

In sum, therefore, it is important to find out:

- How do individuals come in contact with violent extremism and how they can come to accept it?
- Potential pathways include social and traditional media, families, forcible recruitment and coercion, violent extremist recruiters, political/government officials, religious leaders, etc.
- Pathways: joining willingly; forcible recruitment and coercion; voluntary vs coerced
- Differentiate between someone’s support for violence versus actual engagement in violence.
- Spectrum of pressure recruits receive before joining and after joining (to maintain their membership or commit specific actions).
- Insights help design more targeted disengagement and rehabilitation programming

Question 6: How do we find answers to these questions?

Finding the answers to the above questions can be through evaluating current research and conducting new research:

Evaluating current research

The first step should be an analysis of the research that has already been done in your local context and in the field of countering violent extremism. Perhaps some of their findings will have already addressed some of the questions above, or they can point out important research gaps that can highlight needs for additional research. Indeed, many helpful resources are included in the Further Learning Opportunities sections of this handbook.

However, we must maintain a healthy level of skepticism about what we read, as many (even prominent) resources have serious concerns with methodology or with findings and sometimes
overstate or overgeneralize from what they learn. A recent analysis of research on terrorism and violent extremism revealed that 34 percent of the items in the study sample were either methodologically or empirically poor, whereas 11 percent were both.59 For example, a series of interesting research reports from the RAND Corporation in places like Palestine and Yemen argued that their research showed that the “best way to undermine violent extremism is to strengthen those factors that motivate individuals to reject political violence.” However, it also argues that “redirected pathways do not diminish a propensity toward violence.”60 While this latter finding may dismiss the good countering violent extremism work many organizations are already doing, its rationale for this was based on a couple survey questions geared only towards political activism and not the kinds of non-violent activism common in countering violent extremism programming.61 These two findings are intuitive when we understand that violent extremism is often a form of political violence, but unless we read through the project’s methodology, we might have been convinced not to engage in what could have been effective programming! Therefore, appropriate care is necessary from falling into the many pitfalls we may encounter while exploring studies on violent extremism.

**Conducting new research**

If we have identified research gaps in our context, including as we begin to plan our own Local countering violent extremism strategy or activities, conducting our own research may be needed. While this handbook cannot guide you through all of the steps of research—including defining the more specific research questions, finding a research sample, designing data collection tools and approaches, and analyzing and sharing findings—this section will offer some general recommendations:

- Talk to a broad range of practitioners and donors and locals before determining the scope of your research.
- Once research has begun, it is often helpful to speak with a broader range of people, and not simply specific groups (for example, vulnerable individuals, former violent extremists, government officials, academics, and so forth).
- Ensure that you are talking to both men and women as well as young men and young women for a better understanding.
- Determine the appropriate tools to gather the necessary information, whether through surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, dialogues, workshops, or other means.
- Sometimes it may be helpful to have a gradual approach to research, focusing on specific questions at first and doing more rounds of research later to gain a better depth of understanding later or as work progresses.
- Use the research as a means of building trust between different parties, such as government and civil society actors, who may have different understandings of the problem and use different terms when talking about it, which may be helped through researching together.
- When necessary, talking about things like identity and security issues as proxy issues to begin talking about violent extremism, which can allow you to have better access to difficult areas or groups of people or get the conversation going.
- Support youth-led research in order to empower youth and allow them to guide the creation and implementation of research projects.
- Research is most effective when it is action-oriented and tied to immediate problems or activities.
Key things to consider when evaluating existing research:

- Must be current/upto-date
- Must be geographically relevant/ local context
- Must be in the field of PCVE
- Look out for methodology, findings, overgeneralization, overstatement,

Key things to consider when conducting new research:

- Determine scope of the research - talk to broad range of stakeholders: practitioners, donors, locals, community leaders, duty bearers, government officials, academics etc
- Determine tools for the study – observation, questionnaire, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, workshops etc.
- Build trust between research participants
- Find proxy issues to start off the conversation
- Talk to broad range of respondents: practitioners, donors, locals, community leaders, duty bearers, government officials, academics etc
- Ensure gender-balance of your respondents
- Talk across generations – young, old, middle-aged persons
- Support youth-led research
- Make the research action-oriented and linked to immediate problems & activities

2.3 Risks of research on violent extremism and how to avoid them

Setting out to understand the dynamics of radicalization and opportunities for interventions in your context can feel like an intimidating task. The following ideas can help us to be successful and to avoid some of the risks of this kind of research:

- Maintain a Do No Harm approach to the research conducted.
- Be conscious of how your research team may be perceived by participants.
- Participants must feel comfortable enough to participate and to give more accurate responses.
- Be particularly cautious when involving children in research.
- Ensure the security of researchers themselves.
- Have clear definitions and be consistent with their use
- Be appropriately skeptical of what you are told by respondents.
- Be realistic about what your findings tell you and how far you can draw conclusions from them.

Finally, many of the above pitfalls or concerns can be avoided by being upfront about our research. Especially if you choose to publish or share your research findings, it is important to explain both the methods that we used to get them as well as the limitations of that approach to those who will read or listen. Many research reports will include a “methodology” section.
with this information as well as a “limitations” section that acknowledges where there might be problems drawing some conclusions. Therefore:

Be transparent regarding your methodology and the limitations of your research when sharing it. This allows others to be informed consumers of the information you share, but also enables others to take your successful approaches and use them in other areas (such as neighboring cities), allowing for a greater understanding of violent extremism across your context.

2.4 Resources for further Learning

- Watch the video, “Not in Our Name,”. Click here to watch the video
- First United Nations Secretary-General report on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security pdf
- The North Caucasus Insurgency and Syria: An Exported Jihad? (The International Crisis Group) PDF
- Syria Calling: Radicalization in Central Asia (The International Crisis Group) PDF
- Kyrgyzstan: State Fragility and Radicalization (The International Crisis Group) PDF
- Hizb ut-Tahrir” in Kyrgyzstan: Conditions and Trends by N. Esenamanovna and R. Veytsel PDF
- Central Asia amid Global Threats by A. Amrebaev, B. Babajanov, and F. Talipov (Search for Common Ground) PDF
- The Myth of Post-Soviet Muslim Radicalization in the Central Asian Republics by John Heathershaw and David W. Montgomery (Chatham House) PDF
- How Can We Explain Radicalisation among Central Asia’s Migrants? by Edward Lemon and John Heathershaw (BBC) Click here to access the article.
- Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism by Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter (United States Agency for International Development - USAID) [English]
- Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review by Harriet Allan et al. (Royal United Services Institute - RUSI) [English]
- Radicalisation Research: Gap Analysis by Daniela Pisoui and Reem Ahmed (Radicalisation Awareness Network - RAN) [English]
- Beyond Radicalisation: Towards an Integrated Anti-Violence Rule of Law Strategy by Colm Campbell [English]
- Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories by Randy Borum [English]
- Rethinking Radicalization by Faiza Patel (Brennan Center for Justice) [English]
- Conducting an Extremism or Terrorism Assessment: An Analytical Framework for Strategy and Program Development by Guilain Denoeux with Lynn Carter (United States Agency for International Development - USAID) [English]
- Understanding Radicalization: A Literature Review of Models and Drivers by Neven Bondokji, Kim Wilkinson and Leen Aghabi (West Asia-North Africa Institute) [English]
- A Principled Approach to Conflict Sensitive Do No Harm Programming in the context of Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region [pdf]
Module 3: Engaging community leaders: Families, faith and other leaders

Overview
Our communities play a significant role in efforts to counter violent extremism. In the same communities are various types of leaders including faith leaders, cultural and civic (both elected and appointed) leaders, who are often best positioned to offer support and guidance to families or those potentially vulnerable to radicalization.

Family members also play a role in countering violent extremism. For instance, families are a conduit of values and traditions, positively shape the worldviews of children and youths, and identify early signs of vulnerability to radicalization, among other problems. This can also happen through engaging family members in disengagement and rehabilitation efforts for radicalized individuals.

Learning Objectives
After completing this module, trainees will be able to:

- recount the good practices needed to engage with a broad range of local community leaders, such as religious and customary leaders, in order to collaborate together to increase community resilience and mitigate the potential appeal of violent extremism;
- understand the difference and the connection between individual and community resilience;
- apply tools from previous modules to identify the level of participation and barriers to involvement in countering violent extremism;
- identify the roles family members can play in building resilience to the appeal of violent extremism through instilling values and providing support; and
- better support families to identify signs of vulnerability to potential radicalization and positively respond to them, while complying with the Do No Harm approach.
3.1 Individual vs Community Resilience

Resilience (recall the definition in Module 1) is where individuals or communities have the positive capacities of “knowledge, skills and abilities to protect against factors that might lead to radicalization and recruitment.

However, individual resilience is very different than the concept of community resilience, although the two terms are certainly linked.

Individual resilience is their capacity to reject the idea of violence or violent extremism when it may be tempting by leveraging personal protective factors and by reducing or removing personal risk factors. Therefore, individual resilience can be seen, for example, when individuals, despite having grievances and being urged to “do something” about them, reject the idea that violence and violent extremism are legitimate responses and pursue other strategies instead. For individuals, resilience can be built by establishing or strengthening personal protective factors and by reducing or removing personal risk factors. Programs that focus on building and strengthening individual resilience are usually tailored and implemented by trained professionals and practitioners in the community to work with individuals according to their unique needs. This meaning also resonates with the broader definition of the individual resilience used in the humanitarian sector, which might define resilience as the ability to withstand external crises.

Community resilience, on the other hand, is a community's positive capacities to reject violent extremism and having effective mechanisms for being able to prevent it, identify it, intervene against it, and contribute to the disengagement of those who come to support it or engage in it. For example, resilient communities would have community-level opportunities to express their problems or grievances and discuss solutions. They would be able to address the factors that may create vulnerability to radicalization.

“Generally, building community resilience for [countering violent extremism] purposes,” according to Hedayah, “means enhancing community-based participatory research, strengthened community partnerships, and participatory approaches.”

Even though they may be different, individual resilience and community resilience are linked because if all individuals are more resilient and better equipped to resist radicalization, the overall community will also be more resilient and safer. Vice-versa, the existence of community-level approaches and mechanisms to address grievances (community resilience), might be able to reduce the impact and importance of personal risk factors.

This concept of resilience emphasizes that successful countering violent extremism programming and policy at the community level requires broad, local engagement with a variety of actors in order to build skills and techniques to understand local drivers and to prevent and counter them—rather than simply instilling virtues of peace or tolerance. A resilience-minded approach requires research into how communities may be vulnerable to drivers of violent extremism and how community actors can reduce these individual and community-level vulnerabilities and provide additional tools to resist radicalization.

Practitioners can build community resilience by sustaining or strengthening existing factors of resilience across all areas of a particular community. For example, this can be done by increasing protection for children and youth by building their critical thinking skills and their relationships with community institutions, increasing the awareness of parents and community members to the threat of radicalization, and helping communities create strategies to address those threats. In this module, we will explore a variety of methods to engage community leaders and families in countering violent extremism in ways that build community resilience.
3.2 Benefits of locally-driven engagements

A growing recognition that countering violent extremism needs to be more focused on the local level where radicalization is occurring has led to a shift in focus as well as a growing support for community-based and grassroots organizations as they work in this space.

For these efforts to be most effective, they must be locally centered and expanded to include a greater focus on empowering community-level stakeholders such as family members, civil society organizations, teachers, religious leaders, youth activists, coaches and other local actors as key partners in designing, implementing, and evaluating the countering violent extremism agenda in their local context.

Locally driven approaches to CVE are beneficial because, they:

- allow for the early identification of vulnerabilities;
- build cooperation and trust between a number of actors;
- enable local solutions to local problems;
- empower local and grassroots institutions;
- reduce barriers for local actors to be leaders in the countering violent extremism agenda;
- focus efforts on the local level where radicalization is occurring.
- Promote ownership
- Are sustainable in the long run

3.3 Role of community leaders

The term “community leaders” includes a broad range of community stakeholders who may or may not have leadership roles in the community. It would include local government officials, local police, journalists, local charities and civil society organizations, teachers and educational institutions, religious leaders, activists, social clubs, coaches and more. While these diverse stakeholders may not appear to have a lot in common, they often share a number of things in common that are important for countering violent extremism such as a responsibility for other people, credibility and respect from community members and the power to bring them together for activities (sometimes referred to as a “convening power”), and implementing activities in the community.

Because of these qualities, community leaders are important to strengthening resilience to violent extremism. Their perspectives at the community level can help them to be well-positioned to understand the local dynamics and drivers of violent extremism. They can also share the perspectives from the grassroots level to those outside the community or at the policy level, giving important insights and helping to improve efforts to better meet community needs. Community leaders can also be trusted stakeholders that can implement countering violent extremism programs that would be more likely to reach vulnerable members of the community who may not feel comfortable engaging with people or organizations from outside the community they may not know.

The decision of which community stakeholders to engage in a particular activity should be guided by a review of their standing in the community, their potential to promote resilience in the community, and the opportunities and risks of engaging them (for example, whether certain parts of the community do not trust these stakeholders or whether engaging them
in countering violent extremism efforts will harm the public perceptions of their other activities. However, with evidence-led activities, a collaborative attitude, and a Do No Harm approach, engaging community leaders and stakeholders in countering violent extremism can effectively build community resilience, especially when these local actors have ownership over the process.

3.4 Role of faith leaders

One group of community stakeholders that requires special consideration are religious leaders. Religious leaders are often important and respected leaders in local communities. Like other community leaders, they can have the power to convene discussions, reach out to those in the margins of society, and may have resources and volunteers available for community efforts. In contexts where violent extremism claims to be connected to a particular religious practice, religious leaders may be sources of resilience in a particular community by using their status as authorities on religious interpretation to dispel violent extremist interpretations of the tenants of their faith. However, they may sometimes be reinforcing them. For these reasons, religious leaders are often considered important partners in countering violent extremism programming.

Women religious leaders are also critically important local stakeholders that build community resilience. In Morocco, the elite religious school, The Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams and Spiritual Guides (L’Institut Mohammed VI Pour La Formation Des Imams, Morchidines, et Morchidates), trains male and female religious leaders. According to the program’s director, Abdeslam El-Azaar, the female spiritual guides (morchidates) may be the most effective. “Women, just by virtue of their role in society, have so much contact with the people—children, young people, other women, even men,” he said. “They are the primary educators of their children. So it is natural for them to provide advice. We give them an education so they can offer it in a scholarly way.” These women work in mosques, schools, and homes to challenge violent extremist narratives and their interpretations of religion.

However, care must be taken when engaging with religious leaders and those who are religious. Oftentimes, we may focus on the most prominent religious leaders who might be considered to be “moderates” and not those along the margins of society who are unheard by the wider society, or who practice more observant or conservative forms of a particular religion. Since radicalization often occurs along the margins of a society, it is important to include a broad range of partners to be most effective. Countering violent extremism programming may also end up excluding those who are not religiously observant or who are not religious at all when we design projects for interreligious dialogue, for example. In addition, followers of local or traditional religions may be excluded when the focus is on major world religions.

Because of the diversity of religious belief and practice, it may sometimes be important to work on protecting religious freedom. Followers of minority religions (such as Christians, Jews, and Druze in the Middle East and North African region), or specific sects of the same religion (such as those who practice Shi'a or Salafi forms of Islam), or those who choose not to be religious at all, may feel marginalized because their beliefs are not the most common form of belief or because they feel like their beliefs are not respected. In the most serious cases, this marginalization can create tensions between religious groups and contribute to the individual and community vulnerability to radicalization when these factors intersect with other drivers.

Interreligious understanding and respect can help insulate communities from the risks of radicalization and violent extremism. For example, watch the following video about religious leaders in one of Morocco’s historically marginalized cities. As you watch, pay attention to the ways violent extremism affects the people in the video:
SHOW video of a Young Imam in Morocco: A Story of Bridge-Building (available from https://youtu.be/StMWYkepds4)

**Questions for Reflection**

a) The priest defined fundamentalism and radicalism as “the exclusion or the elimination of the other.” In what ways does exclusion contribute to violence and violent extremism? What might be some examples of exclusion in your area that may create vulnerability to violent extremism?

b) After watching the video, how do you see religious leaders as sources of community resilience?

c) The young conservative imam in the video (who has a sizeable social media following) decided to intervene in the case against the man who threatened him, choosing instead to talk with him and try to convince him to turn away from violent extremism. What can be the role of religious leaders in disengagement and/or deradicalization activities? Do you think that the man was more or less receptive to the imam because he was conservative, rather than practicing another form of Islam? What about if he was a Christian priest instead? Why? What does this tell you about choosing the most credible religious actors in a situation like this?

### 3.5 Role of families

Perhaps the most critical part of resilient communities and individuals are families. Families are often the first to identify signs of vulnerability and potentially early radicalization (although outward signs are not always appropriately captured) and the first to try to prevent it.

Therefore, a resilience approach must ensure that families are equipped and supported in their efforts to protect their family members from the influences of violent extremism. Another study revealed that often a radicalized person’s links with their parents (especially the mother) are the last to be broken in the radicalization process but were the first to be repaired during the disengagement process. Parents are therefore closely involved in both processes and need support in both.

While families could be active in trying to prevent the radicalization of their sons and daughters, they “appear to have lacked the skills and tools to identify their sons’ radicalization and act accordingly.” In addition to the things the families could do within the home, they may also need to find help in the community. This question of whether families decide to seek help about the radicalization of a family member from those outside the family or not are shaped by the society as well as gender.

SHOW video of Mothers School (available from https://youtu.be/hi6M5UGS7gA)

Women without Borders have created a Mothers School platform that links women-led organizations together and supports their implementation of local training programs for mothers regarding the threat of radicalization

**Questions for Reflection:**

a) One woman recounted how she stepped into prevent her son from being radicalized by a family member. One element of the Mothers School model is to raise awareness of radicalization and to educate mothers about warning signs. Are there always warning signs that family members can spot? What might be some examples of warning signs?
b) The main message of the video is that women (and particularly mothers) have power to prevent the radicalization of their children. To what extent do you believe that this is true in your context? In what ways do the benefits from the Mothers School extend beyond the women’s families?

3.6 Risks of engaging community leaders and family members

As with any countering violent extremism effort, involving community leaders and family members can present some unique risks that must be taken into account when designing and implementing these activities through focusing on the local and grassroots levels.

- **Lack of a Do No Harm** approach may lead to further marginalizing or discriminating against communities.

- **Not building the capacity of grassroots organizations** may leave them without the ability to implement projects well or monitor the finances or the impact of activities.

- **Self-appointed community gatekeepers** may require programming to be conducted narrowly through themselves.

- **Not recognizing the limitations of families, religious leaders, and other community leaders** can lead to unfair marginalization or discrimination against them.

3.7 Resources for Further Learning

- Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [English] [PDF]

- Developing a Community-Led Approach to Countering Violent Extremism (World Organization for Resource Development and Education - WORDE) [English] [PDF]

- Going Local: Supporting Community-Based Initiatives to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism in South and Central Asia by Rafia Bhulai (Global Center on Cooperative Security - GCCS) [English] [PDF]

- How Close Is “Whole of Society” Movement against Violent Extremism by Eric Rosand and Madeline Rose (International Peace Institute -IPI) [English] [PDF]

- Communities First: A Blueprint for Organizing and Sustaining a Global Movement against Violent Extremism by Eric Rosand (The Prevention Project) [English] [PDF]

- Strategy to Engage Communities and Address the Drivers of Violent Extremism (Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund - GCERF) [English] [PDF]

- Good Practices on Community Engagement and Community-Oriented Policing as Tools to Counter Violent Extremism (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [English] [PDF]
Module 4: Multi-sectoral approach to PCVE

Overview
This module offers guiding principles for engaging state and civil society actors in enabling more effective state responses and engaging a multisectoral approach. It explores the reasons why collaboration may not occur or be limited. The module then guides the participants towards identifying sectors or institutions where this type of collaboration would be ripest for their context.

Learning Objectives
After completing this module, trainees will be able to:

- learn and appreciate the value in government, civil society, and community collaboration in responding to violent extremism;
- understand some of the reasons as to why different actors may not collaborate;
- explore the risks involved when the collaboration is not effective; and
- learn the best practices necessary for building an effective government, civil society, and community cooperation.

4.1 Value of government, civil society and community collaboration

Just like how all of us have different skills, relationships, and responsibilities, government and civil society institutions bring unique capacities to the efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. But they are all different groups of actors.

Civil society is the broad term for organizations and institutions that act in the interests of citizens—including informal collectives, labor unions, activists, charities, religious institutions, and more. Civil society does not include government institutions or businesses.

Who or what is government?

On top of leading all counter-terrorism policies and programs, governments also play a central role in countering violent extremism. Governments often set the agenda by passing laws that define violent extremism and drafting national strategies and action plans to counter it. Governments bring a vast amount of resources to both of these efforts and are often held to account for their success: when violent extremism spreads or violence occurs, governments are sometimes blamed for not preventing attacks or doing enough to counter violent extremism.

These responsibilities of counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism may create challenges for governments, who may understandably prioritize the “big wins” and “fast results” of coercive counter-terrorism measures over the longer-term and non-coercive measures and goals of countering violent extremism.

In order for us to appreciate the value of government and civil society collaboration, we need to understand their strengths and challenges for us to understand how their collaboration is vital building on their unique strengths and challenges.

Strengths of government actors in PCVE

- Governments often set the agenda by passing laws that define violent extremism and drafting national strategies and action plans to counter it.
Governments bring a vast amount of resources to both of these efforts and are often held to account for their success.

**Strengths of civil society actors in PCVE**

- Capacity and experience in working on programmes that foster peaceful and inclusive societies, and mitigate structural conditions that are conducive to the spread of violent extremism.
- Civil society efforts are often locally rooted, have access, legitimacy and influence, and are driven by genuine concern for their communities' wellbeing and safety.
- Civil society often has extensive knowledge of the local dynamics, trends and drivers of violent extremism, and present the best “early warning” mechanisms for emerging threats. This positions them to provide timely interventions and context-specific responses.
- Civil society often works with marginalized groups, promotes political participation, and provides outlets for addressing demands and grievances.
- Civil society can be connected regionally and internationally to a larger community of civil society actors and practitioners who work across relevant disciplines. Being locally rooted yet more broadly connected positions them to exchange and refine good practices.

**Benefits of Collaboration**

In summary, the collaboration of government, civil society, and community in countering violent extremism can include the following benefits:

**Multiplies efficiency and impact**: Bringing together different perspectives offers unique benefits to addressing a complex problem. Effective collaboration reduces redundant work, helps to form shared understandings and goals, and leads to collective impact.

- **Expands the breadth of stakeholders actively engaging in countering violent extremism and expands the toolkit available**: Collaboration expands the kinds of tools and activities available to a society working to countering violent extremism.
Because different stakeholders have different strengths and different access to unique segments of the community, collaboration allows a greater number of options available when working to counter violent extremism. For example, governments often are not always able to conduct necessary research themselves, but actively benefit of the research of civil society and academia (some of which the governments themselves commission and pay for). Governments also bring an important understanding of the form and drivers of the problem, having access to captured or former violent extremists.

- **Highlights common goals and allows stakeholders to share the burden:** Both governments and civil society are working towards the same purpose (such as protecting people better and improving security) through different means. This allows different stakeholders to feel that they do not have to do everything alone to build community resilience to violent extremism.

- **Builds shared understandings of the problem and increases communication:** Through increased communication, stakeholders are more aware of how other stakeholders see the problem of radicalization, what responses are needed, and what they are working on to build resilience to violent extremism.

- **Increases system-wide cooperation and builds mutual trust:** Effective collaboration on countering violent extremism can open the door to improved relationships in other areas of mutual interest, such as education and governance reform. When governments and civil society organizations successfully collaborate, this can even result in reduced scrutiny they may have had for each other.

### 4.2 Value of inter-faith collaboration on PCVE

Violent extremism is not rooted in one cause alone – whether ideological, political or religious – neither can it simply be tackled with security or military means. The spread of violent extremism is primarily a development challenge and the drivers of violent extremism are complex, manifold and context-dependent. Factors such as socio-economic inequality, (perceived or actual) grievances, repression, social injustice, political marginalisation, corruption and poor governance often create an enabling environment for radicalisation and violent extremism. The role of religion as a factor of radicalization and violent extremism is highly contested in policy and academic debates, with research evidence rendering little support to a causal correlation between the level of religiosity and radicalization.

Nevertheless, religion continues to be successfully utilized as a legitimizing factor and instrumentalised by violent extremist groups to justify their atrocities. Nevertheless, religion should not be understood as a potential contributing factor to radicalisation. On the contrary, religious groups and communities, i.e. faith based organizations (FBOs) and religious leaders, play a vital role in preventing violent extremism. Indeed, their global reach and credible support enable preventive measures and strengthen social cohesion. This is best demonstrated in their presence in remote areas and ungoverned spaces. FBOs and religious actors are, therefore, potential key partners in preventing violent extremism (PVE). Moreover, a large number of youth activists is already involved in community work to strengthen social cohesion and prevent violent extremism.

Religion is a key factor in increasing understanding and reconciling differences in community relations. This ‘religious approach’ emphasizes on, among others, spirituality and religious identity, use of religious texts, use of religious values, utilization of religious rituals and involvement of faith-based actors in the process. It also leverages on the extensive local, national and international networks of religious organizations. Religious interventions rely on religious actors being perceived as legitimate by all parties involved. Inter-faith collaboration can take up a number of measures in countering violent extremism. These may include:
Advocacy: institutions are often trusted by the community in which they are part of. This makes religious leaders be seen as trustworthy, just, and to have a moral and spiritual locus standi. This gives religious leaders a unique position and ability to access both grassroot communities and high-level leaders. They are also able to mobilize faith communities, and sister communities, thus lending more momentum to CVE interventions. From these inherent strengths, religious leaders can participate in spaces where policy decisions are made.

Education and training: Religious actors play a role as educators and in bringing people together for countering violent extremism. They have a legitimate position from which to teach, including educating about other people’s religious beliefs and in preaching tolerance and understanding. Some faith-based actors have experienced success in their CVE efforts because they are rooted in faith teachings.

Convening inter-faith dialogues: Inter-faith dialogues are a unique way of building social capital at different community levels. It is a key tool for promoting greater understanding in situations where CVE has some inter-religious element. Interfaith dialogues can be convened in villages, sub-counties, counties, national and international levels. Other related strategies include religiously-mixed workshops, mixed-faith sports matches, workshops on non-violence, targeting different sectors such as students, and interfaith radio messages promoting community harmony. Interfaith dialogues achieve substantial results when combined with other approaches. Furthermore cooperation between religious and secular actors, between religious leaders and political authorities is crucial.

Mediation: Mediation is the process by which participants, together with the assistance of a neutral person/s, systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives and reach a consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs.3 Mediation processes highly value the neutrality and impartiality of the mediator, factors which are often provided by religious actors. Within Muslim communities, FBOs have successfully used traditional conflict resolution methods (suluhl) which are familiar and therefore legitimate.

4.3 Reasons for not collaborating on PCVE
Some of the reasons why people may not collaborate include:

- **Inaccurate information**: People and organizations may not understand the benefits of collaboration. They may not be aware of the motives or actions of potential partners, or they may have been inaccurately represented in rumors or assumptions. They may not have enough knowledge about countering violent extremism or may lack understandings on the drivers of violent extremism. They may not even know that others are working in the same space or are also willing to collaborate.

- **Incompatible attitudes**: Past negative experiences or fear may prevent people and organizations from collaborating. The environment may be characterized by a spirit of competition instead, such as when multiple organizations are competing for resources or access to particular areas. Even if a particular group has a desire to collaborate, they may be discouraged from doing so because of community attitudes that would disprove of it. There may also be stereotypes or prejudices that discourage collaboration.

- **Different interests or priorities**: Another important reason is different interests which is not the same of incompatible attitudes (incompatible attitudes are due to external circumstances while different interests or priorities are intrinsic of the organization, institution, or government department). To identify the interests and priorities behind

the action of different actors is the first step of the negotiation process to establish collaboration.

- **Lack the skills or resources to collaborate:** Even when there is interest in collaborating on countering violent extremism, people and organizations may lack the skills to do so—or even to do it well. These skills can include effective communication, fundraising, and advocacy, but can be anything related to the design and management of countering violent extremism programming. In addition, even if these skills are present, people and organizations may not have enough resources to dedicate for collaboration, such as time, staff, or funds.

### 4.4 Risks for an ineffective collaboration in CVE

Just as relationships of trust open doors to opportunities, distrust can close them. Indeed, when distrust is high:

- governments and civil society have fewer tools and opportunities to respond to the problem of violent extremism;
- those vulnerable to the appeal of violent extremism will be less likely to voluntarily participate in government or civil society programs that can rebuild their resilience or provide alternative paths to meet their needs;
- groups are less likely to share information about the work they do and the successes or challenges they have; and
- government and civil society actors are less likely to collaborate or combine their resources to a common goal.

When trust in governments is damaged, societies may witness changing forms of political participation—whether apathy or increased activism and increased protests—which can differ on the group or individual levels. Civil society organizations, including human rights defenders, may increase their criticism of government policies.

At the same time, government actions against violent extremism may sometimes increase tensions, marginalization, or even conflict in ways that can increase radicalization and the spread of violent extremism—especially when efforts to counter violent extremism are reduced in favor of security-oriented counterterrorism approaches.

When distrust for governments is high, communities may sometimes see civil society as a more legitimate actor to work locally on preventing and countering violent extremism. A recent international survey showed that when people believe that the ‘system’ is failing them, non-governmental organizations were seen as the most trusted institution—more than businesses, the media, and the government.¹⁰¹

Where relationships of trust exist between the government and civil society, they can engage in important conversations to promote more effective government responses to violent extremism—conversations which may be too sensitive in environments characterized by distrust.

### 4.5 Good practices for effective collaboration

Some good practices include:

- Building trust
- Formalize collaboration in regional or national strategies or action plans when possible and appropriate.
• Be careful using channels to coordinate on countering violent extremism for different purposes.
• Do not use programs to prevent and counter violent extremism as a cover for broad law enforcement or intelligence gathering activities.
• Use broad collaboration to reduce the initial fears to engage.
• Respect concerns over confidentiality
• Define roles and responsibilities collectively and discuss limitations.
• Recognize that personal collaboration and institutional collaboration are different things that require specific efforts.

4.6 Resources for Further Learning

• Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [English]
• Human Rights and Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism by Ulrich Garms and Conor McCarthy (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC) [English]
• Key Principles and Recommendations for the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC) [English]
• Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe - OSCE) [English]
• Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [English]
• Addendum to Rome Memorandum on Legal Frameworks for Rehabilitation and Reintegration (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [English]
• Recommendations on the Effective Use of Appropriate Alternative Measures for Terrorism-Related Offenses (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [English]
• The Rabat Memorandum on Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [English]
• Handbook on Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC) [English]
• Prison Management Recommendations to Counter and Address Prison Radicalization (Global Counterterrorism Forum - GCTF) [English]
• Responses to Returnees: Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Their Families by Marije Meines (Radicalisation Awareness Network - RAN) [English]
• Creating Inclusive National Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism by Allison Peters (Inclusive Security) [English]
• Guidelines and Good Practices: Developing National Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Strategies and Action Plans (Hedayah) [English]
• 12 Principles for National Action Plans (International Centre for Counter-terrorism - ICCT) [English]
• National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism: A Gendered Content Analysis by Rosalie Fransen et al. (The Women’s Alliance for Security Leadership - WASL) [English]
Module 5: Understanding Gender Dynamics

Learning Objectives
At the end of this module, the learner will be expected to:

- Understand what is gender and its relevancy to countering violent extremism
- Explore the gendered ways that women and girls are drawn to violent extremism
- Research on some of the gendered ways that men and boys are drawn to violent extremism
- Articulate and discuss best ways to engage and support women and girls in countering violent extremism

5.1 Key Concepts and Terms used in Gender and CVE

Each society has its own definition of what it considers appropriate behaviours for men and women. In this regard, here are some definitions of key terms and concepts used when discussing matters of gender in PCVE programming.

Gender: “It refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed. While most people are born either male or female, they are taught appropriate norms and behaviors – including how they should interact with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities and workplaces”.

Gender norms: “Are the roles, responsibilities, and standards of a particular society, culture and community that are socially acceptable for men and women, based on their actual or perceived sex.”

Gender-blind: “Projects, organizations, staff, and activities that do not recognize or that deny the gender dimensions and implications of their work.”

Gender-sensitive: “A project, organization, or activity that is designed, implemented, or assessed by taking into account the different roles, needs, and interests of women and men.” It also means being careful to ensure that both men and women are involved in the solutions and that both men and women are benefitted by them.

Gender Analysis: “Identifies, assesses and informs actions to address inequality that come from: 1) different gender norms, roles and relations; 2) unequal power relations between and among groups of men and women, and 3) the interaction of contextual factors with gender such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, education or employment status.”
Gender-Sensitive Research:

- Gender-sensitivity is an approach to analysis. It means asking the right questions in order to properly understand the problem: specifically, how women, men, girls, and boys experience violent extremism and how they might find appeal in it differently.
- Conducting gender-sensitive research can begin as easily as changing the question “Why are people drawn to violent extremism?” into “Why are men drawn to violent extremism?” and “Why are women drawn to violent extremism?” In this way, we remain conscious that men and women (as well as girls and boys) may have separate reasons for supporting or engaging in violent extremism.
- There is need to conduct and gather gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalization for women, and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women’s human rights and women’s organizations, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses.

Common Gender Stereotypes in PCVE

- Women are not recruited by violent extremist groups
- Women only support violent extremism when they are coerced or because of connections to male violent extremists.
- Men take part in violent radicalism due to a personal desire to change their societies, while women have other reasons
- Women do not commit violence in violent extremist groups.

5.2 Benefits of Gender Consideration in CVE

- Be more effective, as we are able to design interventions that are specific to the unique ways that different people are drawn to violent extremism;
- Avoid ignoring the risks women and girls may have to the appeal of violent extremism; and
- Challenge the violent forms of masculinity and femininity that violent extremist groups promote and try to socialize their supporters and recruits into.

5.3 Role of women and girls in VE and CVE

Too often, researchers and policymakers overlook women and girls’ roles in supporting, perpetuating, and engaging in violent extremism. This results in gender-blind approaches that analyze their roles solely through the lens of traditional gender roles. This can be perpetuated when our analyses of the drivers and the nature of violent extremism in a particular context only engage the ‘elites’ of the target communities (such as local government officials, academics, religious leaders, and community leaders), often on the assumption that such elites understand these trends well. But since violent extremism often occurs along the margins of a society. We must delve deeper and include a broader range of society in order to fully understand a particular context. Women are only one such example of a part of society that is often excluded from these research efforts. When gender-sensitive research is conducted, it shows
that women can be just as likely to hold extreme views and are usually supporting or engaging in violent extremism along with men.

- **Women and girls can play diverse roles in relation to violent extremism:**
  a) victims – women and girls are increasingly being deliberately targeted by VE groups for multiple reasons, e.g. to intimidate the target population, incentivise recruitment (offering wives), sexual slavery, financial gain (trafficking), forced labour;
  b) perpetrators – most violent extremist acts are carried out by men, but evidence exists that women have been involved in violent acts as well. Women's participation in combat roles varies by group;
  c) supporting roles – including radicalization and recruitment to the group, mobilising funds and carrying out financial transactions, transporting weapons/goods, medical treatment, domestic chores, producing children (future generations) for the group.

- **There is gender differentiation in factors driving support for violent extremism** – drivers for men (e.g. anger at socio-political conditions, fanatical commitment to religious/ideological beliefs) also apply to women, but additional factors such as a reaction against gender-based inequality, and search for sisterhood and camaraderie, are women-specific.

- **It is important to take a gendered approach to CVE** – gender stereotypes portray women solely as victims of violent extremist groups, or as incapable of violent acts, or as being manipulated by men to carry out such acts. Such stereotypes deny women agency, and critically – lead to significant shortcomings in CVE policies and programming, which are exploited by violent extremist groups. Gendered analysis of VE would allow for effective responses, enhanced by women's perspectives and contributions.

- **Women can play many roles in CVE** – Women (as mothers, sisters, etc.) can help counter violent extremism within their family circle and neighbourhood/community, especially when they speak as victims/survivors of extremism. Their integral position in families/communities makes them ideally suited to detect and report on signs of violent extremism, especially because women themselves are often the first targets. Women can be critical interlocutors with government/security agencies, helping shape CVE policies and programmes. It is particularly important that women are represented in security agencies: this builds trust with communities and allows access that would be difficult for men.

### 5.4 Gendered ways drawing men and boys to VE

Like women, VE groups appeal to men in highly gendered ways to try to attract recruits. This is best illustrated in the video which analyzes the recruitment videos of one VE group. (ISIS videos are sickening. They are also really effective). As you watch it, look for the gendered ways that ISIL tries to appeal to men and boys using gendered motivations.
SHOW VIDEO

ISIS videos are sickening. They’re also really effective. (available from https://youtu.be/18lf1kpBgRk)

VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. The expert in the video explains how the men and boys ISIL tries to appeal to may be lacking a sense of purpose, dignity, or respect. Think of your own environment. How might these issues affect how the men and boys see themselves as “manly”? How could this affect their vulnerability to violent extremism?

2. How does the video make the foreign recruits look like heroes? How might this be compelling to young men and boys in your context?

3. This video uses many clips from a number of videos which feature foreign fighters from all over. What are the gendered ways you see these clips try to appeal to men and boys in your context?

Some of the gendered ways that VE groups appeal to boys and men include:

- Use of propaganda material that promotes a violent form of masculinity that is characterized by dominance over other men and women.
- Parading children in front of other children, in public demonstration of “manliness” of new recruits and to encourage other children to follow their lead.
- Calling on men and boys to perform their gender roles as “protectors” of women and children.
- Leveraging on women to attract male recruits. Local and foreign women are recruited to marry male fighters. Sexual slavery is also practiced wherein women are used as a reward, making both less likely to back to their homes.
- Leveraging on misinterpretation of religious scripture, such as the promise of 72 virgins for martyrs.

5.5 Engaging women and girls in PCVE

Women’s full contribution to this field would require us to ensure that women are involved at all levels and at all stages of countering violent extremism programming and policy.

- This includes from the policymaking level to the grassroots level and roles among government institutions as well as civil society organizations.
- Women should be engaged and supporting in the design, implementation, and evaluation of countering violent extremism projects.
- Women should lead and participate in research to learn about the local dynamics regarding the radicalization of both men and women.
- However, gender norms across the world often work to limit women’s full engagement. These norms, of course, are different according to the different societies where women are trying to get involved.
- The Video below (breaking the mould) offers a great example of the kinds of barriers that one young woman in Yemen has to overcome to become a respected local peacebuilder.
SHOW VIDEO
Breaking the mould: Woman mediator challenges gender norms in Yemen By: Search for Common Ground. (available from https://youtu.be/gdDv4BBj-1c)

VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What barriers did this woman have to overcome? Which of these barriers were specifically because of gender norms in her home country of Yemen?
- Would this woman face similar barriers in your local context?
- What are the specific barriers women in your local context might face when trying to get engaged in countering violent extremism or other security or community issues?

5.6 Risks involved when engaging WAGs in CVE

Indeed, there are a number of risks that we might face when trying to ensure women and girls’ full participation in the field of countering violent extremism. A few examples would include the following:

- Women and girls may only be incorporated as participants in programs and activities, rather than as leaders.
- Women and girls may sometimes be relegated to only working on research and programming that just target women and girls or “women’s issues” rather than the full scope of countering violent extremism.
- Countering violent extremism policies may risk the securitization or instrumentalization of women and girls’ concerns (such as, “We need gender equality because it helps to counter violent extremism”) rather than because they are the right thing to do. This would be problematic because if the risk of violent extremism decreases, these efforts to promote gender equality can be cast aside.
- Women and girls may face unique security risks when they are expressing leadership in this field because their empowerment is seen particularly threatening to violent extremist groups or traditional male leaders.
- If the parents of girls or the male relatives of women and girls are not also engaged in these processes, they may sometimes resist women and girls’ full participation due to a lack of understanding.

5.7 Good practices when engaging WAGs in CVE

With these potential risks in mind, the following selection of good practices from the Global Counterterrorism Forum are helpful in ensuring the engagement of women and girls in all levels of the countering violent extremism field:

- Include women and girls and gender mainstreaming in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all policies, laws, procedures, programs and practices related to countering violent extremism.
- Ensure that countering violent extremism efforts counter women and girls’ involvement in violent extremism, including by identifying gender dynamics in radicalization leading to terrorism and preventing it among women and girls.
Recognize and promote the different roles of women and girls as critical stakeholders in countering violent extremism, including in developing more localized, inclusive, credible, resonant, and effective approaches.

Protect the human rights of women and girls, including their equality, non-discrimination, and equal participation, and ensure that countering violent extremism efforts do not stereotype or instrumentalize women and girls.

Involve men and boys in mainstreaming gender, advancing women and girls’ participation in countering violent extremism, and inclusive efforts to prevent and respond to violent extremism.

Ensure the security of women and girls involved in countering violent extremism, including in civil society, taking into account when labeling their efforts as such might be dangerous or counterproductive.

Prioritize engagement at the grassroots level with women in civil society and civil society working in the field of women’s rights, to build upon local practices and support local ownership.

Increase the participation of women at all levels, especially those marginalized, and mainstream gender in the security bodies and other public authorities involved in countering violent extremism.

5.8 Resources for Further Learning

- Women in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Europe and Central Asia: A Training Manual by Anne Speckhard and Ardian Shajkovci (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) [English]
- Women and Radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan (The International Crisis Group) [English]
- Women and Violent Extremism in Europe and Central Asia: Executive Summary and Recommendations (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) [English]
- Women and Violent Extremism in Europe and Central Asia: The Roles of Women in Supporting, Joining, Intervening in, and Preventing Violent Extremism in Kyrgyzstan by Anne Speckhard, Ardian Shajkovci, and Chinara Esengul (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) [English]
- Women and Violent Extremism in Tajikistan by Anna Matveeva and Bahrom Faizullaev (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) [English]
- Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action (International Alert) [English]
- Engaging and Recruiting Girls in Peacebuilding Programs by Adriana Grau and Lakshitha Saji Prelis (Search for Common Ground) [English]
- A Man’s World? Exploring the Roles of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (Hedayah and Global Center on Cooperative Security) [English]
- Different Roles of Women in Countering Violent Extremism (Hedayah and Global Center on Cooperative Security) [English]
- Women and Violent Extremism by Becky Carter (Governance and Social Development Resource Centre - GSDRC) [English]
- Women and Countering Violent Extremism by Iffat Idris with Ayat Abdelaziz (Governance and Social Development Resource Centre - GSDRC) [English]
- The Role of Gender in Violent Extremism (Radicalisation Awareness Network - RAN) [English]
- Additional resources on the gendered dimensions to radicalization as well as women and girls’ roles in countering violent extremism (in English) can be downloaded here.
- Gender and countering violent extremism (CVE) in the KenyaMozambique region, can be downloaded here.
Module 6: Engaging Youth

Overview

Any successful approach to the threat of violent extremism (VE) in Kenya must address the vulnerability of youth to radicalization and recruitment. Youth resilience against violent extremism can be addressed through education/information awareness, social-economic empowerment and interfaith dialogues.

This module offers guidance for understanding young people’s roles in society, drawing upon other initiatives which constructively engage young people in the context of countering violent extremism. It includes tools that highlight social, cultural and emotional dynamics that are key when seeking to understand the variety of relationships, networks and needs within the youth population in a particular context that can affect countering violent extremism policy and programming. It explores the ways in which youth engagement can be fostered at the policy, programmatic, and grassroots levels, including the leadership and ownership of programming. Finally, the module also explores the opportunities and risks within the relationships that young people establish with other stakeholders, such as the security sector and local authorities. It offers examples where youth have been able to build collaborative relationships with government stakeholders in countering violent extremism, including within the civil society and government sectors.

Learning Objectives

After completing this module, trainees will be able to:

- Understand why it is important to engage and support youth in CVE
- Explore how we can engage youth in CVE
- Learn the different levels of participation that youth might have in CVE programming and how such participation affect effectiveness
- Discuss barriers to youth participation in CVE
- Have a look at some of the potential risks of involving youth in CVE

6.1 Importance of engaging and supporting youth in CVE

Youth make up the majority of the population in Kenya. Therefore, in the words of the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: “We will not be successful unless we can harness the idealism, creativity and energy of young people and others who feel disenfranchised. Young people, who constitute the majority of the population of an increasing number of countries today, must be viewed as an asset and must be empowered to make a constructive contribution to the political and economic development of their societies and nations. They represent an untapped resource. We must offer them a positive vision of their future together with a genuine chance to realize their aspirations and potential.”

Youth are often more likely to be attracted to violent extremism than other age groups. Violent extremist groups have proven themselves to be very good at engaging young people and providing them with avenues that promise (often falsely) to help them achieve their goals and resolve their grievances, which only resonates more with youth when they have a sense of exclusion and marginalization.

To avoid “policy panic” situations. A “policy panic” is a situation where governments and civil society groups see youth through a security lens. For example, they may see the demographic growth of youth populations (sometimes referred to as “youth bulges”) as a source of heightened risk of violence and violent extremism as societies are not able to provide opportunities for them, rather than seeing the potential of youth and the importance of political, social, cultural and economic inclusion of young men and women. Policy panics are often a result of problematic policy assumptions about how youth unemployment and lack of education might lead to violence and violent extremism.

Youth as a source of positive change. You are a source of potential for positive change and even active players in countering violent extremism, particularly when they are given opportunities and enabled to pursue the right experiences or initiatives.

Unique perspectives. Different generations offer different perspectives on community challenges and problems, and young people have a similar frame of reference to other young people. As such, young people may be able to offer a useful perspective or insight to a challenge facing youth, like violent extremism, because they are able to relate to the problems and experiences that other young people face.

Unique solutions and ideas. Today’s youth organize differently than previous generations, particularly thanks to the rise of new technologies and platforms for social exchanges. For example, youth in some areas prefer to organize at the grassroots level around a particular cause, rather than as a more formal organization that may focus on a number of issues. Young people's comfort with working with new technology and social media can improve program effectiveness. Youth are also quite innovative and often come up with creative approaches to counter violent extremism that use tools like technology, art, sports, activism, and so forth.

Better reach to vulnerable and/or radicalized individuals. Engaging young people engaged in countering violent extremism may have the ability to better reach vulnerable and/or already radicalized individuals, especially their peers. Youth that might be vulnerable to radicalization and already radicalized youth are often distrustful of government institutions or civil society organizations and may be unwilling to participate in activities that aim to strengthen their resilience. Therefore, young people’s special position in the community may be very helpful in reaching these youth, who are more likely to trust and engage with their peers. Young leaders can also be able to better establish trust with already radicalized youth and support their disengagement, rehabilitation, and reintegration processes.

6.2 UNSCR 2250 and UNSCR 2419

The shift from seeing youth as victims or perpetrators of violent extremism to partners in countering violent extremism is fast becoming the new normal for the international community. Indeed, the need to effectively engage young men and women in building peace and countering violent extremism was formalized during the year of 2015.

Numerous events and key documents helped to transform perceptions about youth and countering violent extremism and helped to form the basis of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace, and Security. The resolution was adopted in
December and urged Member States to “consider ways to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict, including institutions and mechanisms to counter violent extremism.”\(^5\)

The Resolution was later reaffirmed in June 2018 with Security Council Resolution 2419 (2018), which called on “all relevant actors, to consider ways to increase the inclusive representation of youth for the prevention and resolution of conflict, including when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to take into account, the meaningful participation and views of youth, recognizing that their marginalization is detrimental to building sustainable peace and countering violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism.”\(^6\)

### 6.3 How to engage youth in CVE

Various reasons underpin the poor engagement of youth in PCVE programs. These may include:

- Youth are seen by stakeholders as simply “beneficiaries” or “target groups” of governance or programming, but not as leaders or changemakers in their own right or as partners we can engage.
- Stakeholders simply may not know how to reach out and maintain the engagement of youth.
- Stakeholders may keep youth at low levels of engagement without offering opportunities of leadership or ownership.

However, young people can be better engaged in PCVE by answering some or all of the following questions:

**Question 1: What are young people seeking, or what do they need?**

A key gap in engaging youth in countering violent extremism is that programming fails to meet their needs, focusing instead on the broader society's needs for security. Therefore, practitioners who try to reach vulnerable youth need to have a solid understanding of youth's needs and offer real opportunities to meet them. Vulnerable and radicalized youth may not be interested in participating in or leading countering violent extremism activities out of their own needs to secure their own futures, such as getting an education, starting a career, or building a family.

Therefore, it is key to ensure that countering violent extremism efforts are based on a thorough understanding of individual needs, contexts, and practical opportunities. In particular, youth-led initiatives can be particularly successful as youth leaders may be more credible than others to interact with vulnerable and already radicalized peers. At the same time, youth-led initiatives can also increase the sense of empowerment of the young leaders themselves, who may find respect and support for their efforts from the government and civil society groups.

Engaging youth must be based on:

- the recognition that most young people are not involved in violence or violent extremism and are already contributing to their societies in positive and constructive ways and

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• a robust understanding of their individual needs, to include the need of being considered credible partners.

Question 2: Where can young people be included in countering violent extremism?

For youth to fully contribute to countering violent extremism requires them to be involved at the 1) policy level, 2) practitioner level and 3) the grassroots level. Youth should be empowered in all three areas, enabling them to be able to be involved in and even lead the decision-making process, be engaged in countering violent extremism initiatives and research, and be fully supported on the projects and initiatives they lead in their communities and/or with their peers. Indeed, youth should even be included before the implementation of programming and with strategy development efforts, as they are critical players for understanding the nature and threat of violent extremism in a specific area. They are also critical players for the designing of activities to respond to each stage of the radicalization process, from simple vulnerability to engagement in violent extremism.

Resolution 2250 promotes five pillars through which young people can be engaged meaningfully to shape the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda: Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnership, and Disengagement and Reintegration. Again, when we use the term “engaged” we are referring to the full spectrum of participation, from participation to implementation to leadership.

Question 3: What are specific roles that youth might have in countering violent extremism programming that can improve effectiveness?

A few select roles and activities are listed below. Feel free to discuss more and add them on the list.

Transforming relationships that have been barriers to trust and collaboration

Sometimes, supporting youth engaged in countering violent extremism or engaging them in new efforts will first require transforming relationships that may have previously created barriers to their involvement or even sources of distrust. This can include the need to facilitate collaborative relationships, built on trust, between youth and security institutions or government leaders. This can be through seizing opportunities for groups that distrust each other to work towards common goals, which can be an effective way to transform the relationships between them.

For example, the National Democratic Institute implemented the Cross Tribal Youth Council Program in Yemen, where they established youth councils in two cities with the objective of engaging youth in conflict mitigation efforts within their own communities. The program encouraged municipal and tribal leaders to advocate on youth issues and trained young men and women under the age of 30 on conflict prevention and mediation. These youth became involved in “resolving 12 tribal conflicts, establishing peer mediation teams in 20 local schools, and developing awareness campaigns centered around conflict prevention which have reached more than 2,500 citizens.”

Mapping youth-led organizations and youth efforts

Mapping what youth are already doing to build resilience to violent extremism is important to understand what skills and activities are already in place. This would likely lead to improved outcomes. This process is made even more effective when it is youth-led. The purpose of youth-

7 See www.ndi.org/Yemen-Cross-Tribal-Youth-Council-Program. [English]
led mapping exercises is to:

- identify youth leaders;
- understand how youth are already organizing to counter violent extremism (such as whether they are providing practical opportunities for vulnerable youth or creating alternative narratives);
- understand how youth-led groups (registered and unregistered) are structured;
- understand their methodology and how they are capturing community and individual needs;
- explore the ways youth influence their communities; and
- engage youth in the whole process.8

Developing and conducting a youth-led mapping exercise in your context can help you learn about what youth are already doing to build resilience to violent extremism and what youth-led organizations are active in your area. Consider the following benefits this can offer:

- Meet different youth leaders throughout the country;
- Explore the issues that most concern young women and young men, to include their individual needs;
- Hear about different types of initiatives important to these youth leaders;

  Engage young people both locally and as part of a community’s decision-making structure, reinforcing the importance of their work (and when possible, can lead to the creation of opportunities for youth-led efforts);
- Identify the diversity of youth perspectives and voices that make up the rich texture of the context (this is especially important when working in countries torn apart by conflict and protracted violence);
- Explore and understand how young women and young men leaders are guiding their peers; and
- Identify different methods of leadership and organizing capabilities.

Engagement through Research

Another important avenue for engaging youth in countering violent extremism is through research. Youth-led research improves outcomes by allowing diverse groups of youth and other stakeholders to learn about each other and build upon their commonalities while reaching their research objectives. Research topics relevant to countering violent extremism may include (but are not limited to):

- Researching drivers of violent extremism in a particular context;
- Mapping youth-led organizations or other civil society groups that are working on countering violent extremism or related efforts (as discussed in the previous section);

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• Researching the individual needs of vulnerable individuals in a specific area;
• Researching on the recruitment tactics of existing violent extremist groups (both online and offline);
• Researching on disengagement and deradicalization methods;
• Researching on how to foster the practical disengagement and full reintegration of radicalized individuals and to understand which resources, narratives, and practical opportunities can be used;
• Conducting risk and opportunity assessments on youth in particular areas to include their skills and capacities; and
• Identifying public perceptions on issues relevant to violent extremism and the level of tolerance towards ethnic, religious, and other minority groups.

These research topics do not have to be limited to those involving youth. Youth-led research has additional benefits, such as building a foundation for youth leadership and advocacy, increasing access to communities and vulnerable populations where research by other stakeholders may be seen with more skepticism or distrust, improving community relationships with youth, shifting perceptions on youth from potential threats to credible partners and leaders, and greater flexibility in research application. As it is in the case of other research projects, youth-led research needs to comply with professional research standards and may need to receive technical advice. They also need to draw upon conflict sensitive and Do No Harm approaches.

Youth-led research for the purposes of countering violent extremism may embrace many different approaches, but the following two approaches are particularly recommended:

**Participatory Action Research**, which can be defined as “a process through which people investigate meaningful social topics, participate in research to understand the root causes of problems that directly impact, and then take action to influence policies through the dissemination of their findings to policy makers and stakeholders.” This approach emphasizes focusing on immediate learning needs to shape and inform immediate solutions.

**The Listening and Learning approach**, developed by Search for Common Ground and based on the principles of participatory action research, shifts the act of gathering information from a one-sided interview, where only [research] subjects share intimate and private information, to an exchange of experiences where the researchers themselves participate in the sharing of personal views, experiences, and emotions in a non-adversarial manner. By allowing vulnerability to be mutual, this two-sided participatory dialogue alters power dynamics and induces a more sincere and fruitful conversation.

This approach builds greater trust with research participants and encourages the transformation of relationships and may be particularly helpful in contexts where distrust of researchers is high or where they may be “research fatigue” when potential research participants may have already participated in multiple rounds of research without seeing programmatic responses to these previous research projects.

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10 See SFCG's 2017 Listening and Learning toolkit by Lakshitha Saji Prelis and Hélène Delomez at [https://www.sfcg.org/youth-led-research/](https://www.sfcg.org/youth-led-research/). [English]
Engagement through Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Finally, including youth as partners and (as much as possible) as leaders in the design process is important to create programs and activities that will be more successful. In addition, youth should also be included in the monitoring and evaluation of designed programs and activities. Their observations on the effectiveness or the intended or unintended outcomes of programming may improve the quality of the overall process (see Module 10 for more information on monitoring and evaluation).

6.4 Levels of youth participation and their effects on effectiveness

Youth participation is not simply a factor of whether youth are participating or not. In fact, youth participation may be so limited that it can be frustrating for youth, rather than empowering. As one young person from Central America complained, “We young people are only called up when it’s time to wave flags or put up posters. When we want to share proposals they don't take us into account and when we voice criticism we are sidelined.” Instead, we should consider youth participation, leadership, and ownership at any level (grassroots or even policy levels, for example) as being on a spectrum: from the bottom, where youths' voices are used or co-opted by stakeholders or institutions to send their own messages, to the top, where young people lead projects with buy-in and support from other stakeholders.

In the Measuring Positive Youth Development Toolkit from YouthPower Learning and Making Cents International, the authors describe these various degrees as “steps” on a ladder. A summary of those steps are, from bottom to top:

- **Youth are manipulated and not informed** — Stakeholders and institutions use youth’ voices or actions to send their own messages, possibly even altering the youth’s original intentions.
- **Youth are “decoration”** — Youth are invited to attend events or participate in activities without understanding their purpose or being able to contribute to the central purpose.
- **Youth are “tokens”** — In these cases, youth engagement is intended but poorly thought out. For example, youth may be invited to participate as observers or one or two youth may be invited to a committee. In the end, these young people may not be able to participate fully, and the intention may have only been to “appear” as if youth are participating.

> These first three are not considered forms of “participation” because of the way they exploit, rather than build, youth. The other steps include:

- **Youth are assigned but informed** — Young people are given roles or responsibilities and understand the purpose of the activities.
- **Youth are consulted and informed** — Youth provide input and perspectives that impact the design and implementation of activities, but other stakeholders still design and do the overall management.
- **Stakeholder-initiated and shared decisions with youth** — Youth are involved from the beginning of the project and are able to influence the design and implementation of it.

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11 Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites. Available at [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c4af5d_1baa49c3ed2c40ad9be79a83ecbb783a.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c4af5d_1baa49c3ed2c40ad9be79a83ecbb783a.pdf) [English]
**Youth-initiated and youth-directed** — Youth design and implement their own activities (whether or not they target other youth), but may seek input or support from outside stakeholders and institutions.

**Youth-initiated and shared decisions with other stakeholders** — Youth design and implement their own projects and include other stakeholders, with whom they share in the decision-making. Here, the inclusion of other stakeholders on an equal footing with youth empowers the youth even more than programs entirely initiated and directed by youth.\(^{12}\)

**Examples of youth engagement**

Let us look at some examples of youth engagement with different levels of participation. These examples are included in order to identify these levels and how they can increase or change over time with new or different activities.

In the first example, the Lebanese organization **MARCH**\(^ {13}\) used theatre to engage with young men and women from two neighborhoods in the city of Tripoli. These neighborhoods had been in violent conflict for years, with violent clashes taking place between Sunni and Alawite armed groups. Residents of both neighborhoods also traveled to Syria to fight for different sides of the conflict there, including with ISIL and al-Qaeda. However, MARCH was able to bring in many of these former fighters and transform their lives and the way they viewed those across the frontlines by using theatre. Watch the following short video, which introduces their work and their first play. If you would like to gain a better perspective on the context in Tripoli, first watch the brief clip from a VICE News report in Video 9 below before watching Video 10 on the play.

**SHOW VIDEO 9 and 10/ Lebanon's Illegal Arms Dealers, by VICE News**


Original Link: [https://youtu.be/XxumsQMXLE](https://youtu.be/XxumsQMXLE)

**REFLECTION:**

MARCH's engagement with these youth did not stop after the play ended. For example, they learned that many of these young men and women were stateless because their births had not been registered, leaving them unable to work and without access to government services or education. This led MARCH to advocate for changes in the law and to partner with local organizations to create a café where the youth could be employed. This café was placed on Syria Street in Tripoli, the former frontline of the clashes, and was also intended to be a place where their transformed relationships could be spread to youth from both neighborhoods. Watch the following Video *(The ‘Qahwetna’ Cultural Café (Trailer))* on the opening of the café and how it built upon the previous project.

**VIDEO 10:** *“Love and War on the Rooftop” - The Documentary (Trailer) By: MARCH Lebanon (click here to watch)*

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13. www.marchlebanon.org
SHOW VIDEO

VIDEO 11: The ‘Qahwetna’ Cultural Café (Trailer) By: MARCH Lebanon (click here to watch)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS (video 11)

1. Refer back to the ladder of youth participation. What do you think was the level of participation of the youth in the play? Do you feel like this was enough? Why or why not?

2. How about later? What do you think was the level of participation of the youth when they were able to run the café and its activities to promote better relationships? How did their level of participation change?

3. What are the ways you can identify that this organization worked to expand the project’s impact beyond those who were involved in the play or the café?

4. Reflect on the conflicts that led to the division and violence between these two neighborhoods. Why did this organization believe it was important to work in these ways? How does this compare with your context?

6.5 Barriers to youth engagement in CVE

Participation of youth in Kenya’s governance and development processes is more than just creating an opportunity. The level of participation often depends on a number of factors that help create the conditions needed for meaningful engagement. By adapting the Positive Youth Development framework, we can set out and try to identify the barriers to youth engagement and leadership as well as measure the current levels and forms of youth engagement. This framework is different from other approaches to youth by rejecting stereotypes that underestimate the capabilities of youth and emphasize trying to correct what is “wrong” with them or their behavior. Instead, this framework emphasizes building the following four factors that contribute to healthy and meaningful youth development and engagement:

Assets: Kenya’s efforts to build the asset-base of her youth are anchored in elaborate policy, legal and institutional frameworks. These include: a number of international declarations; the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and some enabling legislations; the Kenya National Youth Policy 2007 and Kenya Vision 2030; and the Directorate of Youth Affairs in the Ministry of Devolution and Planning and the National Youth Council.14

Other assets include the personal assets youth possess (such as communication skills, education, self-control, critical thinking) but also the ability to establish trust with vulnerable and/or already radicalized peers. Assets also include the financial and physical resources they have that can facilitate their engagement with them. This may include things like technology, enough free time, transportation, and so forth. This also intersects with the issue of disability. Disabled youth may also be further marginalized from participation in countering violent extremism and other relevant efforts. Therefore, it is important to be conscious of these factors and consider how to make the extra efforts needed to include and empower them.

Agency: Do youth have (and perceive they have) the ability to leverage their assets and aspirations to seize control over their own lives and pursue their goals? When engaging with

14 Youth Agenda, Youth Participation in Governance and Development Processes in Kenya: The Case for Affirmative Action, p.9, available here
other stakeholders and institutions, are youth given the agency to shape the decision-making process to achieve their own goals?

**Contributions:** These include specific opportunities for engagement. It is helpful to divide these contributions into distinct activities. For example, do youth help design activities? Do they lead or contribute to research? Do they implement activities? Do they monitor and evaluate activities?

**Enabling Environment:** As defined in one toolkit, an enabling environment encourages and recognizes youth, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive. The term ‘environment’ should be interpreted broadly and includes: social (e.g., relationships with peers and other stakeholders), normative (e.g., attitudes, norms and beliefs), structural (e.g., laws, policies, programs services, and systems) and physical (e.g., safe, supportive spaces).

**SHOW VIDEO/ Meet the People of Beb al-Dahab (Golden Door)
By: MARCH Lebanon Original Link: https://youtu.be/4_xHIJ5DkT0**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**
1. Refer back to the Positive Youth Development framework above. What are some of the limitations or barriers these youth had in terms of assets, agency, contributions, and the enabling environment?
2. What were the ways this project worked to address these limitations or barriers? How would this build their resilience to violent extremism?

### 6.6 Potential risks of engaging youths in CVE

The following are some risks of engaging youth, and which need to be mitigated:

- Limited understanding among PCVE practitioners. Some practitioners may not have the necessary tools or flexibility to understand young dynamics in their context or may embrace negative stereotypes of youths.
- When youth are engaged, they may not be given an equal say or equal representation.
- Youth may not be properly prepared for engagement or fear that they will be perceived as tools of other organizations or institutions.
- Information gathered through engaging youth may be used in ways that damage the relationship or the perception of the partnership.

### 6.7 Resources for Further Learning

- The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security by Graeme Simpson (United Nations General Assembly and Security Council) [English]
- Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle by Anna Lührmann (United Nations Development Programme - UNDP) [English]
• Youth in Central Asia – Kazakhstan by Tolganay Umbetaliyeva, Botagoz Rakisheva, Peer Teschendorf (Friedrich Ebert Foundation - FES) [English]

• Youth-Led Research: Guidance Note Supporting the Design and Implementation of Youth-Led Research Projects by Caitlin Kelly et al. (Search for Common Ground) [English]

• Youth-Led Research: Toolkit Listening and Learning Toolkit by Lakshitha Saji Prelis and Hélène Delomez (Search for Common Ground) [English]

• Youth-Led Research: Two-Pager (Search for Common Ground) [English]

• Draft Conclusions on the Role of the Youth Sector in an Integrated and Cross-Sectoral Approach to Preventing and Combating Violent Radicalisation of Young People (Council of the European Union) [English]

• Countering Violent Extremism: A Guide for Young People by Young People (Kofi Annan Foundation) [English]

• Youth Action Agenda to Prevent Violent Extremism and Promote Peace (Global Youth Summit against Violent Extremism) [English]

• Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding: A Practice Note by James Rogan et al. (United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development - IANYD) [English]
Module 7: Role of Narratives and Media in Violent Extremism

Overview
This module enables participants to understand the concept of narratives and how media (traditional and social media) can be harnessed in countering violent extremism efforts, both online and offline. Participants are equipped with reflective tools to understand how credible and constructive narratives can be supported, and how to better understand the channels of influence of more destructive or extremist narratives.

Learning Objectives
After completing this module, trainees will be able to:

- understand what narratives are and how they are used by violent extremist groups to build support and drive radicalization;
- more effectively use narratives to prevent radicalization or recruitment or promote disengagement or deradicalization; and
- promote and amplify local alternative and constructive narratives.

7.1 Narratives and their Relevance to P/CVE
Changes in ideas, perspectives, and even behaviors are often less about learning something or receiving new information and more about personal connections and experiences. These are often more important for creating personal shifts in perspectives. Transformative narratives are more than just messages. They include experiences, facts, emotional needs, and resonance with other narratives.

Narratives are a set of ideas, facts, perspectives, and experiences that inform the way an individual or group perceives their place in the world around them. They:

- blend elements of historical truth with constructed storyline
- resonate deeply with people’s sense of self and how they make sense of events in their own lives
- can be positive or negative and function as natural part of the human experience.
- guide people to understand their place in the world, their past, and their future.

Narratives used by violent extremists are divisive and undermine social cohesion. They claim victimhood to gain sympathy, reframe the grievances their potential supporters experience by offering a meaning to grievances and assigning blame for them. They call for recruitment and violent acts by dehumanizing their opponents, justifying brutality against them. Violent extremist narratives also deny their own crimes, intimidate opponents, and offer rewards for participation.

Violent extremists often misinterpret religious scriptures to further their own causes. The Quran, for instance, contains at least 109 verses that speak of war with nonbelievers, usually on the basis of their status as non-Muslims. Some are quite graphic, with commands to chop
off heads and fingers and kill infidels wherever they may be hiding. Muslims who do not join the fight are called "hypocrites" and warned that Allah will send them to Hell if they do not join the slaughter. Some of these verses and their proper interpretations/responses are below:

- **Quran (2:244)** - “And **fight in the Way of Allah** and know that Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.”
  
  From “fight in the Way of Allah” misinterpreters conclude that it means to kill innocent persons. However, Islamic scholars agree that the **The passage does not endorse killing of innocents.** “In the way of” means “according to the rules of” (rather than “for the cause of”).

- **Quran (4:74)** - “Let those fight in the way of Allah who sell the life of this world for the other. Whoso fighteth in the way of Allah, be he slain or be he victorious, on him We shall bestow a vast reward.” The martyrs of Islam are unlike the early Christians, who were led meekly to the slaughter. These Muslims are killed in battle as they attempt to inflict death and destruction for the cause of Allah. This is the theological basis for today’s suicide bombers.

- **(Quran 8:12)** - “I will instill terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers: smite ye above their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them.”

The Christian Bible also contains various passages on war and violence. These verses in the Bible can be misread in exactly the same way as some verses in the Quran. Some of these are:

- **Bible (Deuteronomy 20:10-17)** - “When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace. If it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you. However, if it does not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. When the LORD your God gives it into your hand, you shall strike all the men in it with the edge of the sword. Only the women and the children and the animals and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourself; and you shall use the spoil of your enemies which the LORD your God has given you. Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes.”

- **Bible (1 Samuel 17:46)** - “This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, Then David ran and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him, and cut off his head with it.... And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.”

- **Bible (Matthew 10:34-35)** - “Do not think that I have come to send peace on earth. I did not come to send peace, but a sword. I am sent to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law”

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15 What makes Islam so different?, Countering Islamic Propaganda: 2:244 (thereigionofpeace.com)
16 Ibid., Countering Islamic Propaganda: 4:74 (thereigionofpeace.com)
7.2 Effective use of Narratives for P/CVE

Narratives can either be positive or negative. Positive narratives are much more than just media products and are most effective when they meaningfully connect people or offer them opportunities to be positively engaged on the issues that concern them.

There are multiple ways that narratives can be used to counter the appeal of violent extremism. The three main categories (which we will refer to as “positive narratives”) commonly used in PCVE are:

- **Alternative narratives**: challenge the relevance of violent extremist narratives by offering more effective and non-violent understandings of grievances as well as approaches to addressing them.

- **Counter narratives**: directly challenge, refute, or discredit violent extremist narratives by exposing the error in their ideologies, theology, or framing of a conflict or local issues and exposing lies and hypocrisy.

- **Government strategic communications**: undermine violent extremist narratives by explaining government actions and policy in ways that refute misinformation and a lack of clarity.

The next video (you are my son) shows a good example of a positive narrative campaign that 1) uses multiple formats, 2) engages multiple actors collaboratively, and 3) offers insights on how the campaign might have been effective.

SHOW VIDEO 19

You Are My Son

By: MullenLowe Group for The Colombian Ministry of Defense

Original Link: https://youtu.be/qYrofD8l1-k

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Would you consider this campaign an example of a counter narrative, alternative narrative, or government strategic communications? Or does it include multiple elements? If so, which elements are examples of which category and why?

2. What was the goal of the campaign?

3. Who were the central messengers of the campaign’s message? How was the campaign an example of cooperation?

4. What were the different formats for the campaign?

5. Colombia has had a long-running disengagement and reintegration program for militants and violent extremists from various groups. Did this campaign highlight this program? Why or why not?

7.3 Goals and Objectives for Narrative Campaigns

- **DISENGAGEMENT**: changing behavior where an individual’s involvement in violent extremist activities reduces or ceases.

- **DIVERSION**: preventing individuals from being interested in violent extremism in the first place, and instead diverts them on other alternative means of expressing opinions or grievances.
• **UNDERMINING APPEAL [TO VIOLENTEXTREMISM]**: diluting the appeal to vulnerable individuals, including discrediting the narrative or message of violent extremists to make it less attractive.

• **LIMITING IMPACT [OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST NARRATIVES]**: isolating the narrative or propaganda of violent extremists to limit the effects to an individual or small group.

• **RAISING AWARENESS**: providing information related to certain aspects of violent extremism.

### 7.4 Key Elements in effective narratives

Effective narratives stand out with four key elements. That is, they:

- Identify the target audience
- Determine effective messenger
- Develop content and logic of message
- Identify formats for sharing messages

**Identifying target audience:**

- Identifying a target audience is important so as to build an effective message.
- As from the CVE cycle, our audience may be among the following: General population, vulnerable individual, early stage radicalizing individual, radicalized individual, disengaged individual and rehabilitated individual whereas each stage of involvement has a specific response.
- Since we cant reach out to every audience, we need to identify a specific audience and reach out to them.
Determining effective messenger:

- How the target audience will be receptive to messages is tied to a number of factors, but perhaps the most important factor is **who they are receiving the messages from**.
- This factor affects whether the audience will even listen to the messenger or whether they will be seen as credible.
- For example, marginalized communities that have serious disagreements with other communities or the central government may not trust statements from them.
- Or a religious leader from a mainstream religious community may be less credible than a religious leader from a more conservative religious community when addressing certain groups or individuals that believe that the mainstream is somehow “impure” or “incorrect” in its teachings.

Developing content & logic of message:

- You must thoughtfully consider how you will achieve the objective of your campaign because it is not going to be easy.
- Remember that narratives shape the way we see issues, conflicts, and the world around us and are unlikely to change with a simple message.
- One needs to ask critical questions like, Does your campaign need to address multiple points? Does it need to connect groups of people, or highlight a new program? Does it need to call people to action to address their grievances in effective and non-violent ways? Does it need to highlight exit paths for violent extremists when they begin to doubt or consider leaving the group?
- Messages as part of a positive narrative campaign should be considered based on the following factors:
  - **Factual information**: information, data, stories
  - **Self-disclosure**: what the messenger shares about themselves (such as their values, feelings, motives) either intentionally or unintentionally
  - **Relationship**: the relationship between the messenger and the audience, including what the messenger thinks about the audience
  - **Appeal**: what the audience wants.
- The following chart demonstrates how these factors may interact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Messenger</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identifying format for message sharing

There are several considerations that shape the formats that are best to share campaign messages. For example, if the relationships between messengers and the target audience are very strong, perhaps personal interactions would be best.

If the goal is to raise awareness of a specific program, it could be advertised on a number of platforms where the target beneficiaries will be most likely to see them.
A campaign may use multiple formats to share the messages.

### Examples of positive narrative campaigns that use different methods, strategies, and formats to counter violent extremism

- **Video 20** is a television commercial from a private company based in Kuwait that shares a message against violent extremism to raise awareness during the month of Ramadan. The online version of the commercial was widely shared and has been viewed nearly 16 million times. Zain Ramadan Commercial. [CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)
- **Video 21** is from Victim's Voices and features a program that brought former violent extremists and victims of violent extremism to vulnerable schools in Indonesia to share their experiences. Empowering Terrorism Victims in Indonesia. [CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)
- **Video 22** is about EXIT Germany's innovative T-Shirt campaign to offer disengagement support for far right extremists. Trojan T-Shirt. [CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)

Discuss the reflection questions

**VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Answer these questions for each video):**

1. At what stage of intervention is each narrative campaign targeted to (for example, general prevention, early intervention and diversion, or deradicalization)?
2. Why might this campaign have been influential? Why not?
3. How would you measure this campaign’s success?

Participants to watch out for: different groups of people that are involved (victims, perpetrators, government officials, and so forth), the different formats used, and how the core messages are thought to counter violent extremism.

### 7.5 Good Practices in using Narratives

For a narrative to be effective, it is good to stick to the following good practices:

- Messenger is more important than the message. Who can best influence?
- Going local with local ownership. What are the existing, effective local narratives?
- Do not dismiss violent extremist grievances, but transform the way the grievances are characterized and the response to it. What is your call to action?
- Reinforce community and religious norms rather than try to discredit their interpretations. How do we resonate with those at risk rather than further marginalizing them?
- Engage broad actors (public, private, independent, civil society) with sharing messages. How do we amplify narratives without a whole of society approach?

### 7.6 Using Traditional and Social Media in Countering Violent Extremism Efforts Online and Offline

Alternative and counter narratives often focus on messaging campaigns in two specific formats:

1. **traditional media and journalism**

   These formats include a variety of mediums, such as television, radio, and print journalism and entertainment programs. Already, the media is central to creating popular narratives through
reports, photographs, video, and headlines, which can shape what people believe, what ideas they buy into, and whom or what they support.

2) **Social media and online platforms.**

Social media has great reach in many communities, particularly with youth. Online platforms and social media also provide better tools for getting messages and narratives to specific individuals or groups of people.

### 7.7 Risks of using Narratives to Counter Violent Extremism

- Governments may sometimes decide to prosecute those who share messages similar to those being shared by violent extremists (such as expressing grievances) rather than positively engaging with these ideas and offering alternative narratives and solutions.
- The possession of violent extremist content may be illegal, which may make studying them difficult or risky.
- Be careful in the use of violent extremism content when building counter-narratives, which can end up spreading violent extremist narratives.
- Marginalizing vulnerable communities by causing them to feel that their values or perspectives are being attacked, rather than listened to.
- Using the wrong messenger can undermine narratives and result in campaigns losing credibility or being seen as propaganda.

### 7.8 Resources for Further Learning

- Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in the Middle East and North Africa: A How-To Guide by Lilah Elsayed, Talal Faris, and Sara Zeiger (Hedayah) [English](#)
- The Secret of Attraction: ISIS Propaganda and Recruitment by Abu Rumman and Mohammad Suliman et al. [English](#)
- Messages, Images and Media Channels Promoting Youth Radicalization in Kyrgyzstan by Inga Sikorskaya (Search for Common Ground) [Russian] [English](#)
- Public and State Responses to ISIS Messaging: Kazakhstan by Noah Tucker (Central Asia Program) [English](#)
- Public and State Responses to ISIS Messaging: Kyrgyzstan by Noah Tucker (Central Asia Program) [English](#)
- Public and State Responses to ISIS Messaging - Uzbekistan by Noah Tucker (Central Asia Program) [English](#)
- Public and State Responses to ISIS Messaging - Tajikistan by Noah Tucker (Central Asia Program) [English](#)
- Public and State Responses to ISIS Messaging - Turkmenistan by Noah Tucker and Rano Turaeva (Central Asia Program) [English](#)
- Islamic State Messaging to Central Asian Migrants in Russia by Noah Tucker (Central Asia Program) [English](#)
• Making (Social Media) Deradicalization Work: Case Study - Kyrgyzstan by Mirgul Karimova and Sheradil Baktygulov (Search for Common Ground) [English]

• Journalists’ Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon (United Nations Development Programme) [English]

• Conflict-Sensitive Reporting - State of the Art – A Course for Journalists and Journalism Educators (Training Manual) by Ross Howard (United Nations Educational Scientific, and Cultural Organization) [English]

• Guidelines for Broadcasters on Promoting User-Generated Content and Media and Information Literacy by Martin Scott (United Nations Educational Scientific, and Cultural Organization) [Russian] [English]
Module 8: Utilizing an Innovative Toolbox: Leveraging New Media and Technology

Learning Objectives
After completing this module, trainees will be able to:

- research how violent extremists use technology to promote radicalization and draw recruits in their context;
- better reach and engage people through social media and technology;
- avoid common pitfalls when using technology to build resilience to violent extremism.

8.1 How violent extremists use tech-based platforms and new media

a) Internet plays a facilitative role: online messages are rarely a sole factor in driving radicalization and recruitment.

b) Online spaces connect vulnerable people who consume or interact with online messages to recruiters and those already in the violent extremist groups.

c) VE groups use online spaces to spread narratives: use websites and social media to spread propaganda, sow hatred amongst groups, terrorize their target communities, and draw support and recruits.

d) Online recruiters use internet forums, chat rooms, social media, messaging apps, and even video gaming platforms to find sympathizers and recruit them.

e) To coordinate attacks.

f) To train members on how to commit attacks.

g) Our focus is to use online spaces to counter violent extremism.

8.2 How can new media and technology be used to counter violent extremism?

a) Provides opportunities to connect people, engage in transformative dialogues, and disseminate information.

b) Expand the reach of programming.

c) Effectively build community resilience to the pull of violent extremism.

d) Risk: Tools require engaging and user-friendly development, specialized moderators, and maybe even longer-term commitments.

e) Risk: may create suspicions that these tools are used for monitoring by security forces.

f) Risk: Hashtag can be hijacked by violent extremism individuals or organizations, who use the online discussions to introduce their own narratives to new audiences.

g) This module offers good practices to make online campaigns against VE most effective, provide examples of projects and initiatives, and (via the 9.5 Further Learning Opportunities section) connect you to resources to explore this issue further in greater depth.
8.3 Good practices on using new media and technology to prevent and counter violent extremism

a) State your goal clearly (eg. Raising awareness about the threat of radicalization and violent extremism; Sharing positive narratives to undermine the appeal of violent extremism)

b) Identify the right tech platform (online space where your target audience is largely found eg. Telegram, Whatsapp, Facebook etc)
   a. What are the most popular social networking websites and apps in your area?
   b. Does the vulnerable community you want to reach out to and connect with on the same platforms, or do they prefer others? If so, why?

c) Target a specific audience

d) Use photographs or videos to grab interest

e) Use photographs or videos to grab interest

f) Use hashtags to build a broader campaign

g) Call your audience to action and link technology with programming and interactions

h) Engage with those that interact with your posts:
   • Address multiple layers of push and pull factors (such as economic, political, religious, and ideological)
   • Communication is only one part of the solution
   • Engage in a multi-faceted approach
   • Engage in a whole of society approach
   • Ensure consistency and coordination

Examples of projects and initiatives that leverage technology

- Video 23:Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Trailer https://youtu.be/DSW7kleimF0
- Discuss reflection questions for video 24

VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Engagement with the teams occurred over an entire semester and ended with the competition. How can it be beneficial to sponsor a “hackathon” style event and to bring people together like this?

2. The projects and initiatives featured in the video involve technology. In what ways are they adaptable to different contexts, and in what ways might they need to be adapted for each context?

3. Further funding was made available for projects deemed to be the best. Is this a good incentive for projects? Why or why not?
8.4 What are the risks or challenges to using new media and technology?

Below are some risks and challenges that may arise when using new media in PCVE programming.

- Tech tools and platforms can be expensive and difficult to develop.
- They may (depending on need) require specific aspects to be most successful including an engaging and user-friendly development, specialized moderators to manage the platforms, and/or longer-term commitments to keep the platforms active.
- Technology and social media tools can also run the risk of not reaching the right audience if their design was not informed by adequate research.
- Many vulnerable communities may have different levels of access than others in their context.

8.5 Resources for Further Learning

- Youth and Violent Extremism on Social Media: Mapping the Research (Summary) by Séraphin Alava, Divina Frau-Meigs, and Ghayda Hassan with the collaboration of Hasna Hussein and Yuanyuan Wei (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) [English] Full version here: [English]
- International Conference on Youth and Information and Communication Technologies - Preventing Violent Extremism in Cyberspace (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) [English]
- Digitally-Enabled Peace and Security: Reflections for the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda by Raouf Farrah, John de Boer and Robert Muggah (SecDev Group) [English]
- Role of Youth in Peace Building via New Media: A Study on Use of New Media by Youth for Peace Building Tasks by Sumit Narula (Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism) [English]
- Youth Innovation Labs: A Model for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism by Dr. Erin Marie Saltman, Moli Dow and Kelsey Bjornsgaard (Institute for Strategic Development) [English]
- The Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime) [English]
- Promoting Online Voices to Counter Violent Extremism by Todd C. Helmus, Erin York, and Peter Chalk (RAND Corporation) [English]
- Using Social Media to Communicate against Violent Extremism (Australian Government) [English]
Module 9: Monitoring and Evaluation of Efforts in Response to Violent Extremism

Overview
This module introduces the basics of monitoring and evaluation, including definitions of important terms, and guidelines for developing a theory of change and a monitoring and evaluation strategy. It offers examples of how ongoing monitoring can strengthen initiatives while ensuring continuous learning and adapting to the shifts in context. This module briefly reviews a number of practical frameworks, tools, methodologies, and indicators that might be adaptable for their context.

Learning Objectives
After completing this module, trainees will be able to answer the following questions:

- What are the components of monitoring and evaluation and why are they important for programming?
- How is the monitoring and evaluation of countering violent extremism programming challenging?
- What insights can be gained from other fields to help overcome these challenges?
- What are the good practices in monitoring and evaluating countering violent extremism programs?

9.1 Why monitor and evaluate CVE programs

- Efforts that help promote scientific assessments of CVE programming are critical. Evaluations can assess the impact of program activities to counter violent extremism (CVE) and can inform decisions about whether to sustain, scale up, or discontinue current efforts.
- The overall goal of M&E for Countering Violent Extremism is to help those responsible for CVE programs determine whether their activities produce beneficial effects, to identify areas for improvement, and, ultimately, to guide the responsible allocation of scarce resources.

9.2 Key concepts and terms used in M&E

- Impact: the measurable effect a programme has on its target audience, to help assess an intervention's success; can be qualitative or quantitative.
- Effectiveness: the extent to which a CVE programme's objectives were achieved.
- Monitoring: the capturing of data throughout the cycle of a programme as a means of indicating how well a programme is performing.
- Evaluation: the methodological assessment of a process in order to gauge its value towards a certain cause or aim.
- Outputs: the direct and measurable products of a program's activities or services, often expressed in terms of units (hours, number of people or completed actions).
- Outcomes: the results or impact of these activities or services, often expressed in terms of an increase in understanding, and improvements in desired behaviors or attitudes of participants.
• **Indicators** are measurements of types and processes of change, such as attitudes, behaviors, and relationships.

### 9.3 How is M&E of CVE programming challenging?

- Monitoring and evaluation can be costly, meaning that smaller organizations may not be able to do it.
- Monitoring and evaluation are also technical and require training and skill (often by staff or outside agencies devoted to it).
- Programs are not always labeled as “countering violent extremism” in order to bring in beneficiaries, making it more difficult to explore the links between outcomes and the intended impact.
- Programs often have many outputs, which makes it difficult to connect specific outputs to specific outcomes and impact. This is in consideration of the fact that factors external to the programs may also influence the outcomes and impact, especially since there are often blurred boundaries between countering violent extremism and other fields of practice.
- In a related manner, change is a dynamic and rarely linear process, especially in context affected by conflict and violent extremism. These dynamic changes may clash with monitoring tools and logical models that are less flexible.
- Change may also take a long time over many projects to be seen, while many countering violent extremism programs are more short term.
- Further on the above point, the design of programs may not be flexible enough to respond to a changing context or to seize on new opportunities. If programs do change, the monitoring and evaluation of it must also be flexible and adaptable as well.
- Countering violent extremism is concerned with behavioral and attitudinal changes, which are not easy to measure (whether by observing from outside or by asking beneficiaries themselves).
- Violent extremism is a sensitive topic, making it difficult to make inquiries about. Beneficiaries and community members may perceive questions about these kinds of topics to be part of an intelligence gathering process.
- Violent extremism is relatively rare, so it is difficult to observe changes of already small samples of individuals or events.

### 9.4 Evaluation tools

This section examines several examples of tools that can be used to measure the effectiveness and impact of interventions. Each model has different strengths in demonstrating particular aspects of a programme, depending on the purpose and object of the evaluation. It is important to note from the outset that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ model of evaluation, and CVE programmes should use a typology of common models.

**Logic Model**

A logic model uses visual illustration to show how a programme is expected to work to mitigate a problem. Logic models are widely used in the planning and design of new interventions, in the management and, increasingly, in the evaluation of interventions post implementation.
In order to come up with a logic model, one needs to do a logic mapping which requires you to identify and describe a number of key elements of your intervention. These typically include:

- The issues being addressed and the context within which the intervention takes place.
- The inputs (resources and activities) required in order to achieve the intervention's objectives.
- Outputs (for example, target groups to be engaged, roads built and products developed).
- Outcomes (short- and medium-term results, such as changes in traffic flow levels and modal shifts).
- Impacts (long-term results such as a better quality of life, improved health, environmental benefits, and so forth).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Immediate outcomes</th>
<th>Intermediate outcomes</th>
<th>Final outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1</td>
<td>Output #1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2</td>
<td>Output #2</td>
<td>Immediate outcome #1</td>
<td>Intermediate outcome #1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3</td>
<td>Output #3</td>
<td>Immediate outcome #2</td>
<td>Intermediate outcome #2</td>
<td>Final outcome (long term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4</td>
<td>Output #4</td>
<td>Immediate outcome #3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 5</td>
<td>Output #5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**How is it Used?**

Logic models are widely used by government and non-government actors to demonstrate the causal relationship between investments, activities and outcomes of a particular programme. They do so by outlining a logical sequence of inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

**What are the Advantages?**

Logic models provide a clear framework and point of reference for participants to determine whether a programme is moving in the intended direction. They are useful for bringing together areas of planning, execution and evaluation under a shared approach.

**What are the Disadvantages?**

Although logic models can illustrate a logical pathway of events towards expected outcomes and impact, this does not necessarily end up being the case, especially if the intended outcomes are too ambitious. Thus, logic models are helpful for explaining intentions, but may not address the reality on the ground to the same degree of clarity. Logic models for CVE evaluation fall short when they become over-complicated and do not reveal resource use, reach or support other ‘oversight’ requirements. Finally, logic models are limited in providing robust evaluations in the short term and are best suited to long-term evaluations; this has limitations for evaluations intended for ministers who would prefer to show deliverables in the relatively short timelines of government cycles.
Theory of Change

What is it?
Why is it a theory? It is a theory in the sense that it represents the best idea we have about how we can support changes and we recognize the fact that these ideas need to be tested constantly and refined so that we can have a stronger theory next time.

ToC – An ongoing process of reflection to explore change and how it happens and what that means for the part we play in particular context/sector/group of people etc.

ToC links outcomes and activities to explain how and why the desired change is expected to come about. The aim of ToC is to identify individual ‘interventions’ or changes that bring about specific outcome(s). This aim is often represented in a chart format that lays out all of the inputs, processes and outputs relevant to a programme.

How is it used?
• ToC works essentially as a series of critical-thinking exercises that provide a comprehensive picture of the short- and medium-term changes in a given programme that are needed to reach its long-term goals.
• ToCs differ from other evaluation models by starting with the result or end vision and working backwards in order to identify the steps required to achieve the end result, and then find the indicators for each precondition which can be used to measure success.

What are the Advantages?
• ToC evaluations are specific, and break programmes down into measurable compartments in order to identify best practice.
• They are able to specify the individual requirements needed to bring about a certain result, and are quantifiable and useful to measure specific goals and targets.
• ToC requires users to identify underlying assumptions, which can be tested and measured, and encourages participation through being a ‘living’ framework.
• It is highly useful for identifying and measuring the success of a general strategy, rather than of short-term goals. Developing and reviewing ToC helps to clarify purpose, understand results and derive lessons learned.

What are the Disadvantages?
• ToC can be seen as overly progressive and simplistic in its emphasis on end results.
• It does not look at structural imbalances, problems encountered or negative inputs that affect the causal nature of a process.
• It can be seen as overly inclusive and complex in its incorporation of external factors.
• The method is often regarded as being of greater use to programme managers than to programme designers and implementers, who may prefer to use logic models as they attempt to depict programme components so that activities match outcomes.

9.5 The nine stages of Evaluation
• Identify why you are carrying out the evaluation and establish what the research question should be (for example, how much impact does the CVE programme under review have on terrorist recruitment?)
• **Decide how you will measure the impact of the project or initiative.** It is important to have some idea of what success looks like.

• **Identify what data you will need for the evaluation and for setting up the processes for collecting that data.** This will also help to establish what the gaps are.

• **Decide how you will analyse the data.** What is the timescale? How long does it take to see the results of CVE programmes?

• **Look at the logistics.** Consider issues such as the control of the outputs of the project, the importance of leadership and partnership working, and the resources of the partners in terms of time, human-resources and financial input.

• **Identify who is responsible for making the evaluation.** Engagement with CVE experts has highlighted the importance of understanding how the profile of the evaluator contributes different elements to an evaluation. An insider can offer understanding of a project's key drivers and be focused on lesson learning, but an outsider can offer challenging and new perspectives, and focus minds on impact. One approach may be to conduct a peer review where evaluators have subject-specific knowledge but also are independent and so free to challenge effectively.

• **Carry out the evaluation** – collecting and analysing the data and arriving at your conclusions.

• **Publish your findings.** Consider robustness of evidence and sharing new ideas. Develop best practice and share lessons learnt.

• **Understand how the findings will be acted on.** Consider the level of detail and the required audience (it is usually beneficial to produce reports at several different levels).

### 9.6 SMARTER Principles of designing indicators

The indicators should be:

• **Specific:** all targets should have specific outcomes – for example, to reduce violent crime.

• **Measurable:** the outcome should be capable of being measured – for example, to reduce instances of violent behaviour in a given region.

• **Achievable:** reaching the target can be challenging, but it must be possible to reach it within the established timescales, as well as with the resources and skills available.

• **Realistic:** targets should not be set too high and should be physically possible to achieve.

• **Time-bound:** a timescale should be set with a fixed deadline for achieving the target.

• **Evaluate:** As opposed to winging it and hoping that by the end of the process you have achieved your goals, continuously evaluate your goals all the way along the process.

• **Re-adjust (reward or revisit):** take a step back and re-adjust. Re-adjusting doesn’t mean throw away the goals and get new ones, it’s a means to an end, a way of getting around your problems.

### 9.7 How to identify the right type of evaluation

Evaluations can be designed to answer many questions on topics such as how the policy was delivered, what difference it made, whether it could be improved and whether the benefits justified the costs.

There are two main types of evaluations; formative and summative.
**Formative evaluations** tend to be ongoing evaluations, examining programme delivery and quality of implementation. The evaluation itself acts as a learning experience and is intended as a basis for improvement, by identifying any weaknesses or obstacles to achieving the programme’s objectives. Assessments typically examine factors such as the progress of participants towards achieving the intended outcome, the efficiency of processes and examples of good practice.

**Summative evaluations** tend to be undertaken at a programme’s closing stages, assessing a programme’s level of success. The evaluation examines the outcomes of the programme and compares them to pre-existing standards or benchmarks. This type of evaluation also helps to determine whether the programme can be said to have caused the outcome, to estimate the relative costs associated with the project, and to ascertain whether the programme should be repeated or replicated.

The most suitable form of evaluation primarily depends on the core question being asked. If it is broad in scope it would benefit from a process evaluation, whereas if it is geared towards finding specific measures then an impact evaluation would be more successful.

The choice of evaluation approach will therefore depend on issues such as:

- How complex the relationship between the intervention and the intended outcome is and how important it is to control for other drivers influencing the achievement of this outcome. If control is important, this might point towards an impact evaluation approach. Simple relationships can often be investigated just as robustly by process evaluations. More complex relationships often require impact evaluation.

- The ‘significance’ of potential outcomes to overall policy objectives. More limited, intermediate outcomes might be more readily evaluated robustly, but might not give a close or direct measure of the benefits of the policy.

- How significant the intervention is in identifying changes to processes and practices. This affects the extent to which the intervention could be expected to generate sufficient effect to show up amid other factors and drivers.

It is important to note that sometimes it is rarely possible to evaluate everything due to limited resources and therefore, it is suggested that there is a need to prioritise in the following areas:

- The success of activities and organisations that have been funded and whether they offer value for money.

- How CVE activities have contributed to other agendas; for example, women’s empowerment, youth empowerment, leadership roles, interfaith engagements, educational outcomes and wider community safety.

- Providing policy-makers with evidence on what types of projects are effective and the resources required to support them.

- Providing practitioners with evidence on what works and what does not, and how they can best implement their projects or programmes.

### 9.8 Learning from other fields

This section addresses what can be learned about evaluation from other social-policy fields: crime prevention, gang prevention, overseas development and peace-building.

While these fields are very different from CVE, their evaluation systems are more mature and
elements of their programmes can help to inform the approaches and methodologies used in CVE evaluation.

The aim is to identify instances of good practice and lessons that can be applied to future CVE programmes.

**Overarching Lessons Learned in Crime Prevention**

In order to develop models of evaluation that take into account longer-term results:

- Evaluations should not be limited to measuring outputs or even outcomes, but examine the underlying assumptions on which programmes are based.
- Evaluations should not be undertaken on an ad hoc basis once every few years, because there is no basis for comparative evaluation of the value of alternatives.
- The most useful evaluations are those that are planned and receive support from all involved.
- M&E should be built into the planning phase of each programme, not added on at the end.
- Indicators to measure outcomes should be agreed on by the stakeholders, as should be commitment to data-gathering.
- The evaluation designs need to take account of milestones and steps that signify progress towards achievement of goals and objectives.
- The designs also need to be flexible – should progress evaluations indicate a need for change, so too should the target of the evaluation change.
- Evaluations need to be both internal and external.
- The internal evaluations should focus on monitoring the key indicators and maintaining the documentation that will give substance to an external evaluation.
- External evaluations should meet the need for summative and formative purposes, for the assessment of efficiency, effectiveness and quality.

**9.9 Good practices in M&E of CVE programs**

- Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of programs are: **objective - led, Useable, Achievable, and valid.**
- Begin the design process with the community's needs and the context.
- Be conflict sensitive and include a Do NO Harm approach in all levels.
- Incorporate gender in every part of the monitoring and evaluation process.
- Allow for flexibility to pursue new opportunities that arise or to adapt in ways that avoid risks.
- Clearly outline your theory of change and revisit it frequently to maintain focus.
- Evaluations should evaluate whether they link to each other in the ways assumed in the ToC.
- Safeguard the data from your monitoring and evaluation activities.
- Use local researchers or organizations in the M&E process that understand the context fully, speak the local language, have better access to participants and partners and understand the CVE field.
• Engage governments, local researchers, and program partners in the design of the process.
• Share the results to help others learn about what works or does not work in a given context.
• When developing an evaluation culture, it is important to note that only long-term investment in people and skills has a substantive impact.

9.10 Resources for Further Learning

• Evaluate Your Countering Violent Extremism Results: Projecting Your Impact by Cristina Mattei and Sara Zeiger (Hedayah) [English]
• Program Evaluation Toolkit for Countering Violent Extremism by Todd C. Helmus et al. (RAND Corporation) [English]
• Development and Pilot Test of the RAND Program Evaluation Toolkit for Countering Violent Extremism by Sina Beaghy et al. (RAND Corporation) [English]
• Improving the Impact of Preventing Violent Extremism Programming: A Toolkit for Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation by Lucy Holdaway and Ruth Simpson (International Alert) [English]
• Learning and Adapting: The Use of Monitoring and Evaluation in Countering Violent Extremism by Laura Dawson, Charlie Edwards and Calum Jeffray (Royal United Services Institute) [English]
• Surveys and Countering Violent Extremism: A Practitioner’s Guide by Matthew Nanes and Bryony Lau (Asia Foundation) [English]
• Borrowing a Wheel: Applying Existing Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Strategies to Emerging Programming Approaches to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism by Lillie Ris and Anita Ernstorfer (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects) [English]
• Evaluating Countering Violent Extremism Programming: Practice and Progress by Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Peter Romaniuk, and Rafia Barakat (Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation) [English]
• Does Countering Violent Extremism Work? Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism by Peter Romaniuk (Global Center on Cooperative Security) [English]
• The Counter Narrative Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook by Louis Reynolds and Henry Tuck (Institute for Strategic Dialogue) [English]
• How to Measure the Impact of Your Online Counter or Alternative Narrative Campaign (Radicalisation Awareness Network) [English]
• Countering Violent Extremism: Developing an Evidence-Base for Policy and Practice by Sara Zeiger and Anne Aly (Hedayah) [English]
• Monitoring and Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods, and Approaches (World Bank) [English]
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