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"Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism" (P/CVE) is a global State-led approach that is part of a broader counter-terrorism agenda. This "whole-of-society" approach aims, through a wide range of mostly non-coercive activities, to address the root causes that may ultimately result in "violent extremism" and acts of "terrorism". Given the political and sometimes contested nature of the approach, there was a need for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to have clear guidance and a certain degree of alignment on the subject in accordance with its Fundamental Principles. The purpose of this document is to promote a common understanding across the Movement of the P/CVE global political agenda and to offer some practical guidance to National Societies in particular on how to position themselves and address some of the dilemmas related to P/CVE. However, this document does not aim to influence P/CVE policies or to provide a definition of "violent extremism" - which is not the role of the Movement. Likewise, this document is not a guide on how to develop P/CVE programmes. Movement components are discouraged from getting directly involved in such programmes (owing to their political nature, their potential for generating protection-related concerns, and the perception risks attached), although it is recognized that some Movement components may be meaningfully involved in some indirectly related activities. Violent extremism is a threat to peace and tolerance. It is not enough to counter it, we must prevent it. Because no one is born a violent extremist, but they are made and fueled. Disarming the process of radicalization must begin with dialogue and respect to human rights and the rule of law. Education is a powerful tool to build learners' resilience to violent extremism and mitigate the drivers of this phenomena. It helps strengthen resilience to non-violence and peace, in particular by addressing hateful and violent narratives. This crucial work starts as early as possible, on the benches of schools. UNESCO's collective actions through education, science, culture and communication and information, allow prevention efforts to strengthen resilience factors at the individual, community and societal levels. Through its work, it equips learners of all ages and backgrounds with the knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviours they need to take action against violent extremism. To raise awareness of the threats linked to violent extremism and to enhance international cooperation, the United Nations General Assembly (in its resolution 77/243) declared 12 February the International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism. The resolution highlights the important role of intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academia, religious leaders and the media in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism Online Radicalization & Strategic Communication Harmful narratives, mis- and disinformation, and hate speech legitimizing extremist ideologies can fuel violent extremism. Strategic communication can help counter such harmful narratives and reduce the threat of terrorism. Governments, civil society actors, regional organizations, and media representatives all have a key role to play in strategic communications efforts to ensure information integrity online and offline and address hate speech conducive to violent extremism. UNOCT's Global Programme on PCVE provides interactive training on PCVE strategic communication initiatives, across ten key modules: Situation and environment analysis Stakeholder identification and mapping Setting objectives Building and utilizing a coherent narrative Measurement and evaluation Proactive communications (including campaigns and interventions designed to promote positive narratives) Reactive communications (including countering misinformation and communicating during a crisis) Countering hate speech conducive to violent extremism and misinformation Communications to support the reintegration of returnees and their family members The Programme has also published a suite of publications to further support capacity-building in strategic communication and provides expert advice and technical support, for example on building a comprehensive strategic communication plan with civil society organizations, or working with Member States to strengthen inter-agency coordination in strategic communication delivery. Youth Engagement Youth are often at the forefront of challenges related to violent extremism as they are both targeted as recruits and impacted by terrorist violence. At the same time, their involvement is critical to the success of efforts to prevent violent extremism, promote tolerance and value pluralism, and build resilience in their local communities and societies. UNOCT/UNCCT is committed to investing in young people as positive agents of change to strengthen UN-wide efforts in prevention efforts in peace and security. The Global Programme on PCVE has delivered three key initiatives with young people: The Youth Engagement and Empowerment Project (YEEP) in Southeast Asia (2022) and East Africa (2023) which supports young people to become leaders in PCVE policymaking. Empowering Dialogue and Interfaith Networks (EDIN) (2021) which supports young religious leaders and young media makers across the globe to develop media campaigns championing religious harmony. Young Leaders for Online PCVE (2023) which supports young people in Southeast Asia to develop online PCVE strategic communication initiatives. In 2024, UNOCT will establish a PCVE youth network so that young people from across our projects can continue to collaborate. Policy Assistance Many Member States and regional organizations require support to design, implement and measure PCVE national and regional action plans (NAPs and RAPs). The Global Programme on PCVE provides tailored technical support to ensure these plans contribute to effective PCVE efforts, as recommended by the overarching United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. This includes: Technical support to develop or update PCVE NAPs and RAPs in line with international best practice. Technical support to effectively implement PCVE NAPs and RAPs, including advice on interagency coordination. Technical support to measure the impact of PCVE NAPs and RAPs and promote continuous improvement, including through our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit. New Frontiers PCVE is an evolving field of policy and practice. This portfolio aims to generate dialogue around emerging topics - such as the nexus between violent extremism and video games, Artificial Intelligence, climate change, mental health & psychosocial support, and migration. The Global PCVE Programme achieves this through: Commissioning original research in partnership with leading academics and think tanks to inform capacity building efforts Preparing discussion papers and other thought leadership products on emerging topics Convening dialogues to share insights, build practitioner expertise and promote discussion Terrorism prevention programs are structured and 'systematic preventive steps to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to radicalize and join violent extremist groups.' [1] How can these programs be designed and implemented at the community level, and what are the most promising practices for addressing radicalized individuals before their ideologies manifest into violence? Here's what research, including studies funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), tells us about community-based terrorism prevention programs. 1. Community-based terrorism prevention programs should be constructed and implemented in close consultation and coordination with intended beneficiaries. Community-based terrorism prevention programs are designed to prevent radicalization to violent extremism or terrorism through a "whole-of-society" approach, moving past a singular securitized/law enforcement response. Instead, they should develop localized infrastructure and multidisciplinary community partnerships to: Build awareness and trust. Provide educational opportunities for community stakeholders. Improve the likelihood of reporting by those who may see warning signs. Intervene, communicate, or deliver services as appropriate to prevent and reduce the likelihood of terrorism. Different communities have different needs. Community-based terrorism prevention programs should be developed in close consultation and cooperation with the intended audiences to avoid harmful impacts and ensure program commitment, efficacy, and relevance. This can help prevent unintended stigmatizing and alienating effects that target or single out members of particular communities as potential national security threats. [2] It is essential to gauge program participants' expectations and concerns about terrorist threats in their respective communities before implementing and designing prevention initiatives. Discussing sensitivities around this subject can help avoid adverse outcomes and ensure program relevance and buy-in from the community. 2. Effective community-based terrorism prevention programs should employ rigorous and proactive collaborations. Effective community-based programs should engage local community partners (for example, mental health and social service providers, educational entities, faith-based and/or non-profit organizations, local law enforcement) to build trust and bolster community resilience. These frontline community members/providers must be trained on how to support reporting. In addition, multiple reporting methods should be available (such as telephone, in-person, website, or app). [4] Centralized structures for triaging these reports increases transparency in the reporting process. [5] Successful programs identify barriers to reporting, share knowledge on detecting early warning signs, formalize a curriculum, and implement training (such as peer gatekeeper training). [6] These programs bridge communication gaps between gatekeepers and service providers. Examples include: Identifying general and local causes of concerning behavior and risk factors. Raising awareness about propaganda/recruitment tactics of violent extremist groups. Identifying and sharing knowledge about activities that could help protect communities. [7] 3. The impact of terrorism prevention programs can go beyond terrorism prevention itself. Findings across NIJ-sponsored evaluations point to a potential for broader benefits and social outcomes from community-based terrorism prevention programs. These benefits range from personal skill-building to receiving valuable methods for dealing with non-terrorism-related interpersonal issues. [8] Beneficiaries of these efforts go beyond program participants and include law enforcement (better community relationships) and service providers (expanded social or professional networks), among others. 4. Including terrorism prevention in broader violence prevention and public health programming can be more successful than standalone terrorism-prevention programs. Standalone programs, particularly primary prevention programs, designed to address violent extremism are unlikely to succeed if participants do not believe it is an issue in their community. Potential participants may find the idea that their community needs "violent extremism" programming insulting or stigmatizing. [9] Violence prevention, public health, and community resilience may be more acceptable program focus areas and, thus, a more viable way to include anti-extremism and anti-terrorism information as part of a broader framework. [10] However, program development and implementation teams should take care not to confuse participants or over-securitize public health frameworks. It is crucial to provide full transparency about covered topics to ensure trust between the program staff and participants. [11] 5. Understanding the efficacy, suitability, and impact of community-based terrorism prevention programs is key to achieving policy priorities and serving community needs. Programs should be designed and developed with an evaluation component (through research and evaluation partnerships) to assess the efficacy, long-term impact, and potential changes in attitudes or behaviors associated with programming. It is vital to understand whether the program and its components are producing the desired outcomes. Still, even the best evaluations have limitations, including the inability to establish a treatment and control or comparison group, participants unexpectedly leaving the program, [12] or the inability to conduct randomized studies. [13] Evaluators, funders, and programs should coordinate to identify viable means of addressing these limitations and to design the most rigorous studies possible so the field can learn what works. Learn more: Opinions or points of view expressed in this document represent a consensus of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position, policies, terminology, or posture of the U.S. Department of Justice on domestic violent extremism. The content is not intended to create, does not create, and may not be relied upon to create any rights, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party in any matter civil or criminal. National Institute of Justice, "Five Things About Community-Based Terrorism Prevention Programs," December 18, 2023, nij.ojp.gov. In response to high-profile attacks by violent extremists, the field of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) has drawn increasing attention and funding since the early 2000s. Today, countries in all regions across the globe have put in place dedicated policies and measures to prevent extremism and support deradicalization alongside evolving threat patterns. But without a sound evidence base and careful consideration of (un-)intended effects, activities to prevent and counter violent extremism can do more harm than good. Building on existing comparative research, this report provides an overview of the state of P/CVE evaluation as well as its current challenges and outlines ways forward. The insights presented here are based on the first iteration of an online expert survey conducted with 37 experts about 14 countries. The survey questions related to three themes: the general P/CVE landscape, trends in extremist phenomena, and evaluation practices for extremism prevention and related fields. Below are summaries of key findings across each theme, followed by recommendations for funders and implementers. Extremism Prevention A diverse set of actors and funders contribute to the prevention of violent extremism across a wide range of policy fields. Government authorities remain the key coordinators and funders, but civil society is crucial for holistic prevention efforts. The relationship between government and civil society varies across contexts and can be contentious. Building trust is crucial to enable effective prevention. Innovation in P/CVE activities occurs through multi-stakeholder cooperation, prison-based initiatives, a focus on resilience building, and the use of new technologies. Violent Extremist Threats Current violent extremist threats and tactics as well as expected future threats vary across countries, but the most prominent are related to religiously motivated extremism, right-wing extremism, and new types of single-issue extremism. Evaluation Key challenges for the evaluation of P/CVE efforts are funding constraints, methodological difficulties, capacity constraints, insufficient awareness of the value that evaluation provides, as well as a lack of coordination and standardization. As key initiators and funders of P/CVE evaluations, governments hold significant power over whether and what type of evaluations are conducted. Dedicated funding mechanisms can help improve evaluations for both accountability and learning purposes. The use of quasi-experimental methods and digital tools for evaluation needs to be decided case by case, after carefully weighing benefits and risks. Evaluation results are published and shared infrequently. Constraints on resource and data sharing often impede knowledge-sharing and cooperation. Informal networks remain essential for exchanging good evaluation practices. The extent to which evaluation results are used to improve P/CVE policies and activities remains largely unclear. Methodological and practical skills for evaluation need to be strengthened. Low-barrier, capacity-building resources like evaluation toolkits should be complemented with additional support formats. Experts find inspiration for innovative evaluation approaches in adjacent fields as well as in scientific research and other countries. Recommendations All P/CVE stakeholders should approach evaluations as an opportunity to build trust between each other and achieve more coherent and effective prevention efforts. A first step toward this is to openly share their respective goals, intervention logics, and experiences to foster mutual understanding. Stakeholders should ensure adequate funding for high-quality evaluations. They can do so by requiring implementers to budget for evaluations at the proposal stage and by developing dedicated funding mechanisms for evaluation. Stakeholders should ensure that evaluations follow learning strategies with clear uptake mechanisms, so that evaluations are seen as tools to improve P/CVE policy and practice rather than instruments to control implementers. Wherever possible, funders should support and enable the sharing of evaluation results and lessons learned, for example, through an accessible evaluation database. To address confidentiality concerns, evaluations can be published as summaries or redacted reports. Stakeholders should invest in building the capacity of implementers and government officials to conduct and manage high-quality evaluations and learning processes. This means developing evaluation capacity-building tools that consider different learning needs and help translate evaluation results into improved practice. Stakeholders should continue to invest in P/CVE (evaluation) research and international, interdisciplinary exchange. Funders should continue supporting high-quality meta reviews and inclusive formats for knowledge sharing, like conferences. Although existing P/CVE evaluation networks are largely informal, they can serve as entry points for stakeholders in research, civil society and government to exchange experiences. For more details on the state of P/CVE evaluation and how progress can be made, read the full report. This research was funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior as part of the project "Evaluation and Quality Management in Extremism Prevention, Democracy Promotion and Civic Education: Analysis, Monitoring, Dialogue (PrEval)." More information on PrEval can be found here and on the project's website.