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to prevent violent extremism and build sustainable peace"

Role of the Media and Youth in Engagement in Preventing Violent Extremism

Final Report, UNAOC 2018 Fellowship, MENA Cohort

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Introduction

French philosopher, Michel Foucault defines *Discourse* as the basis of knowledge; the way of producing meaning, governed by different power dynamics. Consequently, discourses perpetuated by the media are inherently powerful given the proliferation and the reach of their different channels of dissemination. Therefore, media is a major force of social construction that shape how people imagine the world they live in and the others around them. Traditional theorists claimed that media messages had a "silver bullet effect", whereby, media texts travel in a single direction: From producers to an audience with an absolute power of conviction. Yet, social media has challenged this initial assumption by the ownership it gave to users over what they produce/ reproduce.

The relationship between the media and violent extremism had been one of the central questions research has struggled with. It has become widely accepted that there is an almost symbiotic relationship between violent extremism and the media as the former provides for exciting and violent stories which help sell the news product and the media arguably provides terrorist groups with a means of spreading their message and creating fear among the general public. Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman (1988) compiled one of the most famous studies **[Table 1]** using 109 different definitions of *terrorism* and came up with a list of possible definitional elements which could be used to forge some sort of consensus definition. For that, this report acknowledges that there are different types of extremist discourses currently circulating in the media, we showcase two of them: Religious Extremism and Political Populism as they are the highlights of the contemporary news coverage.

Religious Extremism

This recent wave of global insurgency poses an imminent threat to peacebuilding efforts especially in areas most prone to conflict, namely the Middle East. A number of religiously affiliated extremist groups have emerged in Syria, Iraq and Libya capitalizing on political vacuums and governments' inability to effectively respond to people's grievances. These groups have successfully employed sophisticated social media strategies to **a)** drive online youth recruitment, **b)** disseminate their ideologies and messaging **c)** gaining sympathizers and invoking terror. For their online recruitment, these groups have taken advantage of young people's feelings of disenfranchisement and marginalization in their societies.

Political Populism

Increasingly, the media space is being occupied by content of a "populist nature": inciting hate, promoting violence and glorifying extremism. Populism is an ideology adopted by several political/parapolitical groups and figures, preying on real grievances with the intention of achieving rapid political gains. While populist figures use covert discourses of violence, their hate rhetorics have real-life consequences. For instance, increased anti-migrant discourses in the European public sphere has been linked to xenophobic and hate crimes across the EU[1].

Table 1: Frequency of definitional elements in 109 definitions

Elements	Frequency (%)
1. Violence, force	83.5
2. Political	65
3. Fear, terror emphasised	51
4. Threat	47
5. (Psych.) effects and (anticipated) reactions	41.5
6. Victim-target differentiation	37.5
7. Purposive, planned, systematic, organised crime	32
8. Method of combat, strategy, tactic	30.5
9. Extranormality, in breach of accepted rules, without humanitarian constraints	30
10. Coercion, extortion, induction of compliance	28
11. Publicity aspect	21.5
12. Arbitrariness; impersonal, random character; Indiscrimination	21
13. Civilians, non-combatants, neutrals, outsiders as victims	17.5
14. Intimidation	17
15. Innocence of victims emphasised	15.5
16. Group, movement, organisation as perpetrator	14
17. Symbolic aspects, demonstration to others	13.5
18. Incalculability, unpredictability, unexpectedness of occurrence of violence	9
19. Clandestine, covert nature	9
20. Repetitiveness; serial or campaign character violence	7
21. Criminal	6
22. Demand made on third parties	4

Source: Schmid and Jongman (1988:5)

Recommendations

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[1] https://www.dw.com/en/more-than-3500-attacks-on-refugees-in-germany-in-2016-report/a-37719365

However, media and information technologies have been hailed as a soft power used with transformational potential in the fight against violent extremism. Countering extremist narratives in the media requires the deployment of locally-tailored digital strategies to debunk the myths propagated by those extremist groups. It also entails equipping media producers and community leaders with the skills and know-how that allow them to carry out PVE efforts on a community level. For that, the next section is dedicated to recommendations and best practices derived from the existing literature on the role of media in PVE:

Media Literacy

The dominance of misinformation in a post-truth society became a reality to be faced and geared for in the field of PVE. The impracticality of eliminating the sources of misinformation leaves no choice but empowering audiences/ users to evaluate the media messages they are bombarded with on daily basis. The key element is to make accessible the tools that would allow users to gain critical thinking skills. These skills should be embedded in programmes across all levels of education. Particularly relevant to this conversation, is a publication produced by the UNAOC to provide information to educators and policymakers: 2016 *Yearbook: Opportunities for Media and Information Literacy in the Middle East and North Africa[2]*.

Covering Violent Extremism in the Press

Media framing of violent extremism is the main gateway of educating the public about the complex nature of the issue in hand. Hence, it is crucial that journalists and media practitioners are fully aware of the different nuances of this highly sensitive topic. An inaccurate coverage of violent extremism may backlash tremendously, causing the stereotyping of a certain group in the society as well as generalization and essentialization of a certain culture. A sensible media coverage of violent extremism has two main pillars:

I. Code of Ethics

Extremist insurgency has been a major topic of media coverage since the beginning of this century. Nonetheless, the current media pace had become incredibly faster with an increasing demand for content and fierce competition for the audience's attention. Previous media coverage of insurgency waves has been correlated with a rise in xenophobia, Islamophobia and an intense climate of othering and mistrust. The coverage of the latest wave of insurgency had been also flawed and repeated some of the past's pitfalls. Journalists have to take extreme caution when covering the incidents of violent attacks not be complicit in further disseminating hysteria within the community affected. This caution should be embedded in the editorial policy of any media outlet, governed by a clear code of ethics. Previous collaborative attempts
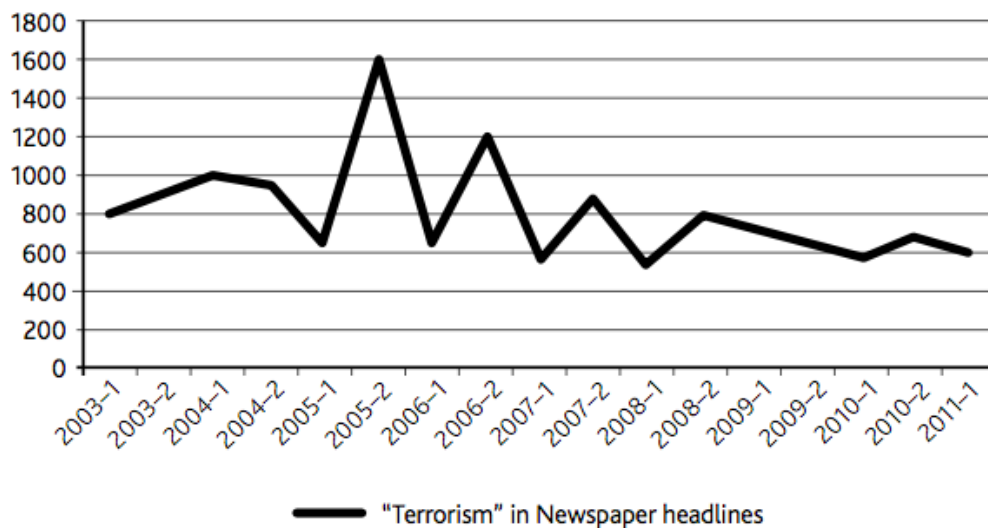
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[2] http://www.nordicom.gu.se/sites/default/files/publikationer-hela-pdf/opportunities_for_media_and_information_literacy_in_the_middle_east_and_north_africa.pdf

to produce such document can be found in: "Terrorism and the Media"[3], a handbook produced by UNESCO

II. Specialized training for journalists

Journalists, as members of the society, have their own beliefs, biases and perceptions that may unknowingly affect their news judgment. Therefore, institutional training is a basic part of the sustained effort to create a responsible media coverage of violent extremism. The logic behind a training is not to be one size fit all, but rather, accounting for the power dynamics in the newsroom. In other words, there is a need for customized trainings for different grades of the professional hierarchical ladder: Editors in Chief/ Senior Editors, reporters and translators etc…

—— "Terrorism" in Newspaper headlines

[4]

TABLE 2

Salience of terrorism in leading British newspapers

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[3] http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002470/247074E.pdf

[4] Source: https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/ahrc-public-policy-series/terrorism-and-the-media/

Terrorism as an important concern facing Britain
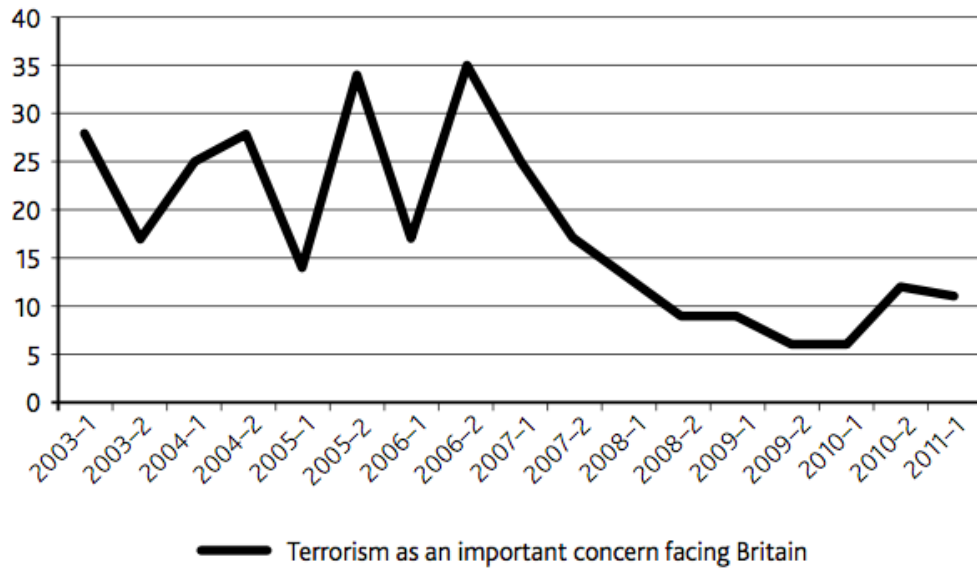
[5]

TABLE 3

Percentage of respondents naming terrorism as one of the two most important issues facing Britain 4

However, it is well understood that media outlets are of somehow limited resources and that training and development may not always be a top priority for expenditures. That's why it is important to consider the intervention by the civil society that has the capacity of planning and delivering those trainings as well as providing resources to keep the media accountable for its role in the society. Below is a non-exhaustive list of media development entities (local and international) carrying out specialized media trainings for journalists in the MENA region.

BBC Media Action, International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ), Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), Egyptian Media Development Program (EMPD), Open Society Foundations (OSF), Deutsche Welle (DW), Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), Internews, Search For Common Ground, Thomson Reuters Foundation.

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In the next section below, we are showcasing successful initiatives from the region, at the intersection of media, youth participation, and preventing violent extremism. Both case studies curated highlight the untapped potentials of information technologies (namely Artificial Intelligence) in the sustained efforts towards PVE.

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[5] Source: https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/ahrc-public-policy-series/terrorism-and-the-media/

Case Studies

Case Study I: Search for Common Ground - Radio Soap 'Our Neighbors, Our Family'

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to transform the way the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches, toward cooperative solutions. They work at all levels of society to build sustainable peace through three main avenues: dialogue, media, and community. For the purpose of this report, the focus will be on their work through media. SFCG has been designing and broadcasting programs through different media outlets to influence behaviors and attitudes towards certain issues in the countries they operate in.

Since its independence in 1962, Burundi has been through 2 genocides; one in 1972, where the Tutsi dominated army carried mass killings against Hutus, and the other in 1993, when the majority of the population, the Hutus carried mass killings against the Tutsis [6]. SFCG has been working on the process of peace and reconciliation in Burundi since 1995 through different programs that addressed and wide range of issues around the conflict, transitional justice, refugee integration, land conflict, sexual and gender-based violence, and youth manipulation [7]. One of their programs is a radio soap, 'Our Neighbours, Our Family' about the daily lives of two neighboring families, one Tutsi, and the other Hutu that tells the story of hope and reconciliation and provides a model for co-existence during difficult times.

Various independent studies were conducted around 'Our Neighbours, Our Family', and the majority of listeners who were a part of the study admitted the positive impact the series had on modifying and/or changing their attitudes and/or behaviour towards members of the other ethnic group [8]. In another study, the show was rated by 82% of respondents as having help reconciliation [9]. Such show was created to counter the "hate radio" used to spread hate messages towards other ethnic groups and widen the divide between them, and the team working on this show had an ethnically balanced team of journalists who work together to produce radio programs that promote dialogue, peace, and reconciliation [10].

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[6] http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/commissions/Burundi-Report.pdf

[7] https://www.sfcg.org/burundi/

[8] https://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/pdf/manual_01_part1_en.pdf

[9] https://people.umass.edu/estaub/radio%20article%20--January%202008.pdf

[10] https://www.sfcg.org/Documents/Programs/Burundi.pdf

Such programs are merely used to entertain the audience, but the goal is rather delivering a powerful messaging that gets across, even though entertainment needs to be a big part of it as well for it to be a success. In producing 'Our Neighbor, Our Family', the team was very careful and subtle about embedding the message in the story not to turn away listeners. It does not directly deliver the message of co-existence and reconciliation but allows them to form their own conclusions, which is stronger and a more sustainable type of change that will have huge effect on the daily lives of people living in conflict areas or ones that are prone to radicalization and extremism. To be successful the messages must be subtly incorporated into the plot and not driven into the audience's minds with a sledgehammer.

Case Study II: Humanitas Technologies - My Project: Youth-led Projects Across Marginalized Areas in Jordan

Like many other countries in the MENA, Jordan has a young population, with more than 70% of the country's 6.5 million citizens under the age thirty; youth between the ages of 15-24 making up 22% of the overall population [11]. Despite these numbers, youth are still marginalized and are challenged by limited natural resources, growing unemployment numbers, regional instability, rapid population growth, lack of social and recreational activities, and limited opportunities to engage in civic society. Youth in Jordan face layers of exclusion and marginalization from the government and society that are interconnected with socio-economic, political, religious, national, sectarian, sexual, and gender dynamics. With such pressures and despite the fact that radicalization is more complex in genesis, youth are pulled closer to violent extremism [12]. On top of that, Jordan has faced a big influx of Syrian refugees that especially destabilized the host communities.

With knowledge of all these factors, Humanitas Technologies, a Stanford-based Technology company that aims to enhance the interaction between government, private, civic organisations, and youth to mainstream positive information loops, saw a need for youth programs in the country and has been operating through an after school program in collaboration with Madrasati, an initiative by Queen Rania of Jordan, in high schools across Jordan, empowering young people and kickstarting youth-led projects in the most marginalized areas. 85% of Humanitas' youth-led initiatives focused on host communities were Syrian and Jordanian youths could work together on building projects that positively affect the community and create a collaborative friendly environment between Jordanian and Syrian youths to foster mutual understanding amongst them indirectly [13].

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[11] The youth are defined here as persons between the age of 15 and 24. U.N. Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly, A/36/215, 1981.

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf

[12] https://www.brookings.edu/research/marginalized-youth-toward-an-inclusive-jordan/

[13] https://ssir.org/articles/entry/digital_natives_collect_community_needs

The company's approach was to reach out to youth through means that are already integrated in their daily lives; social media in particular. Humanitas created a gamified community app powered with artificial intelligence that understands community actions enabling anyone to easily make evidence-based decisions in youth development. What is most important to link the youth's online activity with the offline opportunities on the ground, and have youth engage in their community building a sustainable altruistic behavior.

Since January 2018, Humanitas Technologies has enabled organizations and youth leaders to deploy ~$80,000 USD impacting 30,000 youths via 68 community initiatives spread across 17 clusters in Jordan.

Conclusion

The potential of mass media and youth engagement in influencing communities and individuals is clear and the evidence of its effectiveness in areas with high levels of violent extremism and instability has been proven in multiple cases across the world. The internet and social media platforms continue to expand every day, with information and resources with far greater reach than any other traditional communication platforms; which makes it a powerful tool to be used to spread messages that counter radicalization and encourage youth engagement and inclusion in societies. However, it is of importance to have the right strategies and use the right methods and messaging to be able to have a positive impact rather than having it backfire. There is also no one size fits all solution, each case is unique and needs to looked at through a local lens to assess the needs and identify the means needed to be able to influence the biggest number of people as no media strategy has been able to influence everyone.

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PVE: Civil Society and Governments' Repressive vs. inclusive approaches

Yamsine Chaouch (Tunisia) and Zied Touzani (Tunisia)

From CVE to PVE

Since 2001 -highlighted by the 9/11 attacks- violent extremism movements have widely spread throughout all continents. Al Qaeda, the Islamic State (ISIS), Boko Haram and Al Shabab can be considered as the biggest extremist movements in Africa and in the MENA region.

The concept of CVE first emerged after the 2004 attacks in Madrid and the 2005 attacks in London. In 2015 the movement gathered more attention and traction after attacks in France claimed by Daesh (ISIS). Members of the European Union and the US oriented their strategies previously focused on preventing violent extremism (mostly targeting Al Qaeda in the 90s and early 2000) to countering violent extremism.

The CVE Summit held in February 2015 in the White House chaired by Barack Obama was an initiative aimed at understanding Violent Extremism, which presented the best strategies to counter the phenomenon, raise awareness, and promote community led interventions. Ministers from more than 70 countries attended the summit, with the common goal of creating a global partnership to actively work on CVE.

The summit was followed by a high-level meeting hosted by the UN with representatives from 100 countries and 120 civil society structures. During this meeting, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon announced a "UN plan of action to counter violent extremism".

Although aligned with counterterrorism strategies, PVE approaches only tackle factors at a micro-level, which push individuals to join extremist groups, and lead them to subjugat4d by an ideology to comment violence.

During the fellowship, we had the opportunity to visit different governmental and non-governmental structures working directly or indirectly on PVE and youth empowerment.

Civil Society approaches to PVE

We visited different civil society structures in the United States, Spain and Germany. Different countries have different approaches in tackling PVE and in promoting the role of youth in sustaining peace.

Civil Society Groups in the US

In the US, we met with six NGOs. Three of them undertake PVE related activities on the ground i.e. in MENA countries, mainly in Tunisia which sparked their interest since the January 2011 Revolution, which toppled down the former oppressive Ben Ali Regime, while the three other NGOs exclusively work in the US on youth empowerment, and include in their programs PVE related activities.

1- Search for Common Ground - SFCG

Search for Common Ground's work is based on prevention and raising awareness, disengagement, advocating against violence by encouraging the state to adopt a non-military approach and amplifying positive narratives to cover negative discourse. SFCG is not involved in policy making in the US and only does advocacy work in its offices around the MENA region. The main strength of SGC is that it mainly relies on locally based civil society groups to convey its message and targets youth through capacity building workshops and awareness raising campaigns. SFGC's local partners are mostly engaged in education and cultural awareness projects. However, SFGC does not engage USG bodies and institutions, which could considerably contribute to settling peace in the MENA region.

2- Islamic Relief - IR

IR is a Virginia based organization that mainly relies on volunteers and has limited staff. They work to raise awareness, inform and educate youth of various age groups throughout the US. IR/US is member of the global Islamic Relief network active in various parts of the World. Their activities mainly target areas hit by natural disasters by providing shelter, food, medical care and basic relief support regardless of the faith of victims. Their most notable donor is the Mormons Church. IR's main message is that Islam, as other religions, bring people close together, reinforce harmony between religions, and promote the culture of peace and tolerance. IR's principal pitfall is that most their projects are not strategically geared towards providing support throughout the year but rather react in post-disasters situations only.

3- Chemonics – Center for Applied Approaches to CVE

The center's goal is to gather knowledge and data about violent extremism in order to develop the most suitable PVE approaches amongst youth in the MENA region. Their aim is to share their analyses with field workers, mainly including local authorities, to promote good governance at the grassroot level and to monitor the implementation of various CVE/PVE projects making use of their research studies.

Chemonic's key strength lies through building their research on work developed by local CSOs, and strive to involve local associations in their research and field work.

4- Muflehun – Arts and Resistance through Education (ARTE) – Bronx Documentary Center

The common characteristic of the three organizations is that they work exclusively at the community level. Their activities generally respond to needs emerging from their local

communities. They all target youth to educate them on the values of tolerance and mutual understanding and to raise their awareness about education and self-satisfaction opportunities. Their goals to reinforce resilience of youth and protect them against external risks and threats.

Civil Society Groups in Europe

Spain

1- Garage Association

This association adopts an innovative way to mentor youth and protect them against risks of violence and isolation. In fact, through arts, mainly Rap music, the association promotes participation of youth from marginalized areas in national festivals, encourages youth to engage in street arts projects, enhances their initiative and creativity, and reinforces their self-confidence. The main goal being to reduce violence amongst youth in underserved and impoverished areas.

Garage Association today represents a success story with considerable impact, as it could transform youth at risk into creative and self-confident citizens through music and arts.

2- Movement against intolerance

Active in a highly mixed and multicultural community, this movement aims at reducing tensions between minority groups and promoting the culture of harmonious cohabitation. Their activities include awareness raising campaigns and collective community actions, such as street concerns, to train local residents on the values of collaboration, solidarity and tolerance.

Germany

1- Sea Watch - KIRON

The two German associations aim at providing support to asylum seekers by providing them with shelters and education opportunities. While Sea Watch works primarily on illegal migrants crossing the Mediterranean to look for better opportunities in Europe, KIRON's objective is to provide education to refugees fleeing oppression and dictatorship in their countries.

Although Germany is not directly concerned by the flow of illegal migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea, Sea Watch seeks to rescue the most vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers by taking them on its own vessels to Malta. It also incites European institutions to offer a better framework for legal migrants.

On the other hand, KIRON addresses problems impeding access to education of youth coming from war-torn areas. It established partnerships with a number of universities across Europe and built an online learning system, hence enabling dozens refugee students to attend online academic courses while making necessary arrangements for formal learning.

   2- Neighborhood Network

To overcome tensions regularly affecting relations between youth and law enforcement authorities, this association holds different activities, including football games bringing together police officers with vulnerable youth exposed to the risks of violence and marginalization. This association established a cooperation bridge between the local church and mosque by holding joint activities serving the community.

Conclusion and recommendations

What was very noticeable during our visits to all the different structures are the approaches adopted in the United States, Spain and Germany by both civil society and the government?

NGOs in the United States working on PVE in the MENA region strongly advocate for raising awareness and social behavioral change but are not directly involved in policy making with the Department of State. The civil society structures visited recognize the heavy implication of the United States in the ignition of different conflicts across the MENA region and most of them condemn the military interventions that only generate more violence, but they do not work on advocacy with the Department of State nor they push for policy change in the United States. Instead, they work on the repercussions and the results of the conflicts across North Africa and the Middle East; refugees, foreign fighters, etc.

In Spain and Germany, the approaches to PVE and youth empowerment are more collaborative. Both governments recognize the need for a partnership with MENA countries in order to deploy effective projects and programs to prevent violent extremism and promote youth resilience in building sustainable peace unlike the US where a repressive approach towards target countries are adopted.

Whether in the United States, Spain or Germany, NGOs working on a community level have successfully reached their target in mobilizing young people and empowering them, enabling easy access to education and art and raising awareness on a local level on different youth related topics. This community approach succeeded simply because the projects were "custom-made" for a specific region with a well targeted group.

Bigger organizations tend to duplicate projects that worked in region A and deploy them in region B without acknowledging the different dynamics and the target groups. Although those big organizations have larger funds, most of them do not take the time to study the target regions.

When designing a project targeting youth, a field study is necessary in order to consider every aspect that would help or slow down the deployment of the project. The field and the target study become more essential when it comes to PVE related projects where all the work is focused on the micro-level factors pushing individuals towards violent extremist groups.

Youth Initiatives Efficiency in Peace Building

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Introduction

With the growing tension in the international scene the world of today is witnessing, many concurrent social illnesses have evidently been emerging on the side such as xenophobia, violent extremism, intolerance and hatred. However, the United Nations has highlighted in its recently-launched Youth Strategy that "the world today is home to the largest generation of young people in history" making up "1.8 billion" of the world's population, i.e. around 25%[1]. Therefore it is safe to say that whatever issues we may be facing at the present, young people most definitely make up a large part of both the problem and the solution. This shows the vitality of young people's role as "agents of change" when addressing any issue, and examining causes as well as solutions. Many young people around the world have not stayed still but took it upon themselves to launch serious initiatives that aim to contribute to the development of their communities, provide innovative solutions, and effect change or drive social progress. Yet unfortunately, these youth initiatives do not seem to entertain much interest or support despite their major achievements and efficiency, which in many cases surpass that of government agencies and established organizations, which lead these initiatives to be vulnerable to dissolution.

Thus, in this report we aim to highlight the role played by youth civil initiatives in building peace and social cohesion, and the extent of their efficiency in performing that role. The report will survey examples of youth initiatives from Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar, as well as other international examples we, the writers, have come across through our UNAOC Fellowship program of 2018 in the United States, Spain and Germany. Each youth initiative will be examined through its objectives, target group, activities, achievements and tools used to accomplish objectives. Furthermore, each initiative will explain how they contribute in peacebuilding in their context, and how belonging to the young generation has provided and added to their work.

Finally, we conclude our report with a set of recommendations based on our observations through our UNAOC Program, and the research conducted for the purpose of this report.

Iraq as an Example:

Iraq has an estimated population of 39.34 million, which ranks 38th in the world [2]. 19.25% of population is the age group of 15-24. While 33.84% is the age group of 25-54[3]. The two percentages show how young the Iraqi population is which about 30% is from age 15-35.

Throughout history, Iraq has been facing different religious, political and ethnical conflicts which affected the population in various means; psychologically, economically, socially, and even fatality of many civilians with no reasonable causes. Recently the ISIS war increased the tensions among people of different religious groups Muslims, Yazidies and Christians living in Iraq. However, in addition to the global support from different UN agencies and INGOs, many local initiatives are taking place to rebuild bridges among people of different religious and ethnical groups in Iraq. Most of the initiatives are led by young people which are witnessing quite positive and progressive impact in enhancing social cohesion and coexistence among people of different faiths.

There are many young people who are leading peace building initiatives either through NGOs or through other civil movements. These initiatives are important in building peace to emphasize the role young people play in leadership of peace building. Young people are actively promoting peace building and coexistence through innovated approaches. Some of the initiatives are selected for this report that are taking place in Iraq as examples of how young people are efficient in their roles in peace building.

Shughel Shabab[4]:

Shughel Shabab is an advocacy campaign which aims to showcase the valuable role of young people in the process of peace building in the Arab States and calls for their inclusion and support in their work. The campaign is led by young peace builders coming from across the Arab States in partnership with the UNESCO and the UNDP. Shughel Shabab is also working to promote the recommendations of Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) and the recommendation out of the regional consultation on Youth Peace and Security 2016, as well as the results of the progress study carried out globally. Iraqi young people have obvious role in leading this campaign; two Iraqi young women are in leading positions, one being the founder out of 6 founders, and both in management role of the movement. One of the main activities of the campaign is to share success stories of young people in peace building. The goal is to share 100 stories from 22 Middle East countries, up to now 5 stories of Iraqi youth initiatives in peace building have been shared. There have been over 500 young Iraqis engaged in both

online and national campaigns of the movement. The participation of Iraqi young people in Shughel Shabab clearly represents the willingness of young people in building peace in Iraq. The young participants are encouraging more youth to take part in the campaign to promote (2250) and build peace in their communities.

Middle East Sustainable Peace Organization [5]:

The Organization is a youth-founded, youth-led, politically and religiously neutral organization promoting peace and globalization through education, peaceful dialogue, and resolution of conflicts caused by religious, ethnic, political, and other differences. The organization aims to create strong sustainable cultural bridges between communities within Kurdistan, Iraq, Middle East and throughout the world by means of empowering youth and utilizing their skills and talents[6]. Young leaders of this initiative are implementing different projects like (Religious Pluralism, Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Peace Education…etc) to promote peace and rebuild the broken bridges among the people of different faiths and ethnicities in Iraq. This initiative could reach more than 20,000 people in a short period and they could create a network of 800 young volunteers from different ethnicities and faiths. A good number from these volunteers are continuing in implementing peace activities with the organization. This organization has proven the ability of young people in spreading ideas and applying new and innovative ways quickly and effectively.

Better World Organization for Community Development [7]:

The organization is a humanitarian, non-governmental organization, independent and non-profit that works to advocate for peace and coexistence in the community, improve social, psychological and economic situation of people. The organization is focusing on women and youth through projects which ensure protection and empowerment for them[5]. The organization was established by a group of young females and males who envision a world where all people live in peace and happiness regardless of their different religious and ethnical backgrounds. The leaders of this initiative were able to implement different projects that engaged young people from different faiths and communities to celebrate harmony and coexistence. The projects achieved great success in a short time as 60 young females and males were trained on peace education, and involve the 60 trainees in a wider network in which they all together implemented peace activities in their communities. The young participants of these activities highlight the concept of the importance of young people role in peace building in which they are motivated, enthused and energized enough to deliver any message in efficient way and

short period of time. The young people showed the creativity in implementing new approaches to building bridges of peace among people and spreading happiness to other age groups and vulnerable people.

<u>Kuwait as an Example:</u>

Since its establishment as an independent State with a democratic political system, Kuwait has given substantial space for civil society to engage in public decision making and influencing dynamic social change. This has led to the emergence of a vibrant civil society, playing an important role in representing public interest and lobbying the government for policy changes in the social, cultural and political arenas[1]. Over the years, civil society in Kuwait has been noted to have scored significant achievements, such as advocating for women's right to vote, or changing the electoral system. According to the latest review of the Central Statistical Bureau, there were 230 officially registered CSOs in 2016, varying in interest between professional associations, charities, and non-governmental organizations that deal with specific issues whether political, health-related, social or economic[2].

In the present time, youth in Kuwait who comprise around 60% of the population according to the Ministry of Youth, have found the civic space an effective outlet through which they could contribute their talents towards the community's development and the common good[3]. In recent years, with the country's policy directed towards further youth engagement, youth led initiatives have been on the rise, some of which demanding significant changes, or advocating for serious and sensitive issues. In the following, a few examples of successful youth initiatives that have had an impact in bringing members of the community together and generating social cohesion.

<u>Democratic Youth Forum</u> [4]:

The Forum is an initiative that aims to bring youth together to promote the values of democracy, social justice and tolerance, as well as highlight the importance of self-development. The Forum also aims to develop young leaders and enhance and showcase their skills and talents. Through the Forum, members are given the opportunity to discuss issues related to them and the community, and participate in the public sphere, whether political, economic and social, all for the objective of bringing positive change. Target group of the Forum is youth in the ages of 16 to 35 year old, and it organizes different activities that relate to culture, literature, sports, politics and human rights. Social Media is the main tool used by

The Forum to communicate with members, announce events and activities and promote its achievements. Being an initiative that is led entirely by youth, the Forum has been successful in creating a community of youth with a sense of a collective awareness, shared responsibility and acceptance.

Mw6iny (My Home) [5]:

Mw6iny is an initiative that aims to increase environmental awareness through beach cleanup activities. The initiative's goal is to show people the devastating effects of littering and incorrect disposal of waste and plastic have on marine life and water quality in the sea. It also seeks to raise awareness on responsible consumption, and the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling. Even though the leaders of the initiative welcome everyone, their target audience is specifically youth of the ages of 12 to 35. Mw6iny started beach cleanups in January 2017 after receiving a grant, and they have been holding beach cleanups every weekend from January to the first week of May 2018. They had multiple environmental campaigns and were successful to hold multi-ethnic, mixed gender beach cleanup ups. In Sept 2018, Mw6iny was selected by the UN Environment to take part in Clean-Up the World Day, marking the first time for Kuwait to participate in this global event. In Oct 2018, they released their nationwide campaign "Yistahil W6any (My Homee is Worthy)" where 22 different entities in Kuwait collaborate to increase environmental awareness and promote for the reduction of using "single-use-plastic". Mw6iny relies mainly on promoting their activities in Social Media, but have also have used Radio, TV, word of mouth and collaboration with other local organizations. The director of Mw6iny, Latifah Al-Wazzan, has expressed that being a youth initiative has opened doors to interact with the youth on a more interpersonal level. Moreover, she added that other than raising environmental awareness, the initiative builds on tolerance, acceptance, and coexistence as the activities are carried out in an environment with mixed ethnicities, religions, and genders. Not only that, Al-Wazzan also highlighted that they do not work in a hierarchy and do not use salutations, they rather operate on a first name basis regardless of educational or professional backgrounds.

Warshat Alkutab (The Writers' Workshop):

This initiative is basically a group on the smartphone application (Whatsapp). The aim of the initiative is to enhance the writing skills of all the group members, which constitute 75

participants from different Arab countries who share an aspiration for a literary career. Through the group, the participants peer review each other's texts, and they are offered the opportunity for having established newspapers and magazine editors to recognize their literary productions. Admittance policy in the group has no conditions except for the prohibition of promoting any sort of political agenda. Since its establishment in Jul 2018, the group has successfully produced 150 articles in Arabic and English that were published in Kuwait, Egypt, Turkey, Morroco, Saudi Arabia, and Oman, on a wide range of topics. The articles were published in various magazines and newspapers, electronic and print. The virtual workshop started with a few unemployed English literature graduates who couldn't find a job. This made the group appealing to other fellow graduates, and it soon grew to the point that established editors started to consider it a source of "fresh blood" writers, with new attitude and contemporary topics. The Admin of the Group, Jeri Al-Jeri remarked that the group contributes to peacebuilding in an indirect way, as it created a transnational community that is based on shared interests, and disregarding of differences.

Qatar as an Example:

Qatar is a wealthy oil and gas country with strong economy. GDP in Qatar averaged 42.81 USD Billion from 1970 until 2017. Which makes it one of the strongest and staple economy in the world. Qatar has an estimated population of 350 thousand. Based in world meter website the latest counts it is 2,711,620 in total. 88% are an expats and foreign workers. The government is taking good care of their youth especially it is relay on them when it comes to developing the country. The invest in human capital and the well care of the government provide good opportunities to empower youth to makes them feel they are part of the future of the country that by itself help people to avoid being exposed and easy target to radical thoughts and ideology.

Some of the project that the government provide for the youth in Qatar are:

Youth Capability Enhancement for Lifestyle

Nama as a social development center, "Youth Capability Enhancement for Lifestyle" program. It came to empower youth and enhance their self-confidence and abilities, to help them overcome obstacles and meet challenges that would assist youth to become active and influential in society. The program targeted 13-17-year-old male/female students. It aimed to enable students to build a confident and responsible personality and to raise parents' awareness of the importance of bridging the gap between them and their children, in addition to

emphasizing the need to build a positive relationship with children, to reflect on their future. Which help parent and children to connect with youth and reduce the mental gap between both generations.

Youth Council: Empower Youth

Youth Council for the Minister of Culture and Sport, the idea started in 2016 when the Minister of Culture and sport believed that the ministry needs to reach more to youth in society and tighten the relationship with them. The Youth Council form by chosen 20 representative of youth from different background and experience. 10 male and 10 female their work are to represent Qatari best example, being the connection between the minister and youth and vise versa. Also, giving advise to the minister in future and existence projects that has been targeted youth. This initiative help empower the youth and give them the say on what they want. It also help refreshing the relation between the state and the citizen.

Khulugona Award: celebrating values and Morals

Moreover, Qatar is believing in the concept of morals and values by example if we start appreciate the values and the morals which is very essential that is taken from our religion Islam and highlight the good aspects that Islam is reflecting to humanity for example giving back to society and for whom are in need locally and internationally, transfer knowledge, getting along with different people an show respect to other people. Respect elderly and appreciating them value their advice and wisdom that will add value to the youth and will let people courage to do more and show that in their daily life. To do that Her Highness Al Shikha Mouza bent Nasser decided to go for new creative idea is to appricate the people who give back to society in morally ways and appricate them by the state. She announce in 2016 on an award called Kholugona . Youth from all around Qatar decided to start new initiatives that help most of the youth in Qatar and build in harmony. Every year her excellency is the one who gave and appricate the owner of the award by herself. They believe engaging the youth with the state to build the moral and to value their works and time as the higher authority that will impact the give back aspect between the youth and the state. In that regard youth will feel protected and observed by the government appreciated and look up to which will not be easily for any wrong ideology to get in to their brain or break the bond between the state and the society.

Global Examples: US, Spain and Germany

During the UNAOC Fellowship Program, the fellows have visited many local initiatives working to promote peace in the selected countries. Most of the initiatives are led by young people or targeting young people. It is worth mentioning that almost all the places the fellows visited during the trip whether governmental or non-governmental have emphasized the importance of the role that youth can play in peace building in their communities. The visited initiatives shared their enriching experiences of how they could change lives of many people through engaging them into projects which improve their wellbeing and educate them on peace. The following are some of the examples:

Extremely Together - A Kofi Annan Foundation Initiative:

Extremely Together is made up of 10 Young Leaders, all active in preventing and countering violent extremism in their communities and beyond. Their task was to produce the world's first guide, by young people for young people, on how to counter violent extremism in the community. Extremely Together aims to inspire and engage the next generation of leaders and empower them to tackle violent extremism. Violent extremism threatens us all, but young leaders are uniquely placed to counter its terrible appeal and inspire the next generation through creating an optimistic vision for the future. Extremely Together works to equip young people in communities around the world with tools and methods on how to promote and advocate for peace and acceptance, and prepare them to inspire their peers. One of the 10 leaders of the initiative, Mimoun Berrissoun from Germany, conducted a session for The UNAOC MENA fellows where he explained how this initiative took new approaches to intervene and help those young people who already joined extremist groups or those who are in the way to join. Individual support to the radicalized young people through individual sessions is one of the main work this initiative is doing. Moreover, various kinds of activities are conducted for young people to prevent them from thinking of joining any extremist group as well as promoting peace. What distinguishes this initiative, is the fact that it reach out to youth at risk from extremism through social connections and networks and by use of benign and friendly means, which has contributed to its efficiency in comparison with security and intelligence forces.

ARTE - Art and Resistance through Education:

ARTE is an organization, located in New York, which aims to amplify the voices of young people and organize for human rights change through the arts. ARTE uses art, design, and technology to empower young people to develop creative solutions and bring awareness to local and global human rights challenges, fostering leadership opportunities to train and

organize other young people in their own communities[7]. During the meeting with the founder and director of ARTE, Marissa Gutierrrez Vicario, she explained the concept behind using art as a tool in promoting peace and advocating human rights as it creates a safe space where young people can express themselves without boundaries, respect each other's spaces and connect on a subliminal level.

Give Something Back to Berlin:

GSBTB is an award-winning project platform and network fostering community integration, intercultural dialogue and participation among Berlin's diverse migrant populations. GSBTB creates tools for community integration bringing more "privileged" migrants, locals and refugees together. Through their extensive grassroots initiatives, they work to create meeting points between groups that normally would not come in contact with each other, building inclusive networks and countering anti-migrant discourse[8]. The UNAOC fellows had the opportunity to visit this unique initiative which includes various activities to build bridges among people from different backgrounds by holding projects that involve art, trauma therapy, music, language learning, cooking and job coaching. This initiative was able to reach more than 20,000 people of different faiths, ethnicities, and backgrounds. What was most inspiring for us, was the fact that the initiative has had no history of conflict or disagreements occurring during its activities, despite the extremely diverse range of their audience. The team also remarked that to their surprise, the host community in Berlin even though a hesitant at the beginning, has shown an remarkable keenness to interact with refugees in all different activities.

Recommendations:

1. Young people feeling of detachment and the unnecessary bureaucracy results in youth's loss of trust towards State institutions. The goal is to engage youth in the public sphere and their communities' issues, and equip them with the necessary awareness and agency that would prompt them to participate in social development and brining positive change.

2. Youth need intensive capacity building in different fields to better understand the root causes of extremism/radicalization and how it leads to violence. Not only theoretical approaches are needed to be used but also innovated practical approaches that let young people to get into the deep knowledge and solution of the global issue of extremism/radicalization.

3. Through the examples mentioned in this report, it becomes evident that young people need the support from government, UN agencies, and INGOs to continue performing the work they do with better advanced approaches. It is worth to mention that 2250 UNSCR on Youth, Peace and Security was a significant initiative by the UN, We find it important to refer and focus on the recommendations of the progress study through this report to insist on the huge support needed. Governments, UN agencies, INGOs and even Private Sector should focus and apply what recommendations shared in the progress study of 2250 UNSCR.

4. Civil society organizations have the most substantial role in raising the awareness of young people and implementing projects which build social cohesion and peace as they form a link between the community and the government. Moreover they are close to communities and they can understand how communities will better respond to the new ideas they present to them.

5. Established Civil Society Organizations must heed their role in offering mentorship to the young in order to insure the sustainability of their work, and contribute to creating an active section of youth, that is well-equipped to practice their public role and provide positive example for their peers.

Conclusion:

All the above mentioned examples reflect the fact that young people not only participate but lead peace building initiatives around the globe. Furthermore, this mirrors that young people have the ability to change the world to a better place in which all people can live peace and enjoy their rights without any discrimination. Young people should be supported and encouraged by all means to continue in providing grass-root solutions to develop their communities and prevent and challenge risks of extremism and social injustice. If young people are provided with the needed opportunities and space to practice their knowledge and capacity, they would become indispensable "agents of change" the international community can rely on to bring about the aspired sustainable peace.

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Evaluation of PVE-CVE project Feasibility before implementation
Report Delivered Post UNAOC fellowship 2018.

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide guidance about the Evaluation of PVE (Preventive Violent Extremism) project before implementation. Throughout the year, people living within their communities are more happier than people living in isolation in most cases. This because that an individual can express his pains and interests when living in a community rather than be isolated with no one to hear him. Isolation could be a result of various reasons; for example a person can avoid being involved in his community due to being bullied or ignored by his fellows. Moreover, a person can avoid his community because he has no common ground to share with others. Although some might find this style of life convenient, society might not be aware of threats that this style of living may impose, as this might make the victims more susceptible to violent Extremism especially youth category. To avoid putting youth in this situation PVE should target youth failing prey to such thoughts. Youth with violent extremism can be a timing bomb and they are considered to be fuel for the extremism. The program need to be assessed and evaluated for feasibility and most be implemented in a manner that suits the society needs and compatible of their daily routine. PVE is a term used to face such thoughts and preventing youth from being victims while CVE (Counter Violent Extremism) is shaped/designed to handle youth who were victims and try to contaminate them within the society after being extremisms.

Literature Review

Counter Violent Extremism projects may involve community debates on sensitive topics, media messaging, interfaith dialogues, training of state governance and security actors.
Key issues relating to program monitoring and evaluation:
1- **Target 'at risk' individuals**
2- **Explore possibilities for experimental and quasi-experimental designs**
3- **Mitigate risk without being excessively risk-averse**

Definition of violent Extremism is different according to different organizations:
The concept of VE is generally used to refer to both the creation of ideologically motivated or justified violence and support for such acts.
For instance, USAID defines the term as:
Advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives.
The Australian National Counter-Terrorism Committee similarly treats the concept as:
A willingness to use or support the use of violence to further particular beliefs, including those of a political, social or ideological nature.
CVE is widely understood to be a preventative and no coercive form of programming involving, for instance, community debates on sensitive topics, media messaging, interfaith dialogues, training of state governance and security actors, and a variety of initiatives, such as vocational training and mentorship programs, that engage with Individuals deemed to be 'at risk' of attraction to violence. As noted by Naureen Chowdhury- Fink, CVE 'has evolved in response to an understanding that while conventional militarized and repressive counter-

terrorism (CT) strategies may be necessary, they are insufficient in ending terrorism when employed alone.

CVE programs should be considered to have two core features. The first is that they should be designed to counter the key drivers of VE in the specific locations in which they occur, the second core feature of CVE programming is that it should aim to target individuals specifically identified as 'at risk' of being drawn to violence as far as this is feasible in any given location.

Conclusive definition:

Countering violent extremism programs involve a broad range of non- coercive and preventative activities that are united by the objective of counteracting the key drivers of violent extremism specific to the locations in which the programs are taking place. Such programs include activities that target individuals specifically identified as potentially 'at risk' of being drawn to violence to the extent that this is feasible in each location.

Risk reduction programs involve a wide range of non-coercive activities (such as vocational training, counseling, exposure to counter-ideologies, assistance with social networking, livelihood support and so on) applied with the aim of ensuring that individuals who previously contributed to violent extremism (for instance, through perpetrating attacks, manufacturing explosives, planning, financing, collecting intelligence, recruiting, and so on) do not r return to such activities.

Violent Extremism Actors:

3 groups of actors playing role in violent extremism to who should the programs directed.

• **VE perpetrators:** These individuals are involved in the creation of ideologically or politically motivated violence to varying degrees, including explosives manufacture, reconnaissance, attack logistics, and recruitment, among other activities. Despite their active participation, however, they do not all necessarily support this violence; in certain cases they may be driven primarily by economic incentives, fear of repercussions as a consequence of their non-compliance, and so on.

• **VE supporters:** This group supports ideologically or politically motivated violence but does not directly contribute to its creation, and as such they can be said to 'free-ride' on the efforts of perpetrators.

• **Advocates of 'extreme' change through non-violent means:** These individuals support extreme political or socioeconomic transformations, but oppose violence as a means through which to achieve such ends. Of course, 'extreme' is a relative concept that can only be understood in relation to the norm, and as such it is unavoidably subjective.

Real Life experience:

Iceland Government

Iceland has a very successful example of dealing with youth and preventing them from being addicted to smoking, drinking and drugs. According to their experience, youth need to fill their spare time with guided activities to avoid being easy victims to such abusive. Due to their weather, outdoor activities were unsuitable for resident in Iceland so they build indoor playground to allow them to do activities regardless of the weather conditions. As a result, the youth being victims in addicting drugs was dramatically decrease were the percent of being addict went down to 5% from 42%. This ring a bell that youth need more attention and rest of world need to consider Iceland experience to protect youth from drifting to the extremism.

Dubai Police

Dubai Police has launched a program called "Positive Soul" targeting youth, aiming to guide youth potential abilities and to empower them to choose what is useful for them instead of doing useless activities. These activities will be guided and designed carefully to deliver the

ideas behind them and eliminate the other ideas that might be target youth by extremism. The idea of the program is that the police will organize some sport tournaments in a hotspot area a day weekly. The day chosen is in the weekend since on that day most youth tend to be directed toward committing some violent actions. By doing such tournaments the police is offering alternatives for the youth and even if some of the youth don't show up they will think twice before doing anything since the police are here.

Designing PVE/CVE Programs:
Program must reflect the distinctive features of the specific environment in which a particular VE group or movement operates. To be sure, many such movements present similarities in their characteristics and the dynamics that sustain them; they often are influenced by the same regional or global forces as well.

Evaluation of PVE-CVE project Feasibility before implementation
• **Impacts**: Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
• **Outcomes**: The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs.
• **Outputs**: The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention.
• **Activities**: Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilised to produce specific outputs.
• **Inputs**: The financial, human and material resources used for the development intervention.
• **Monitoring:** data collection throughout the duration of the program to assess indicators along the way and make appropriate changes if necessary.
• **Outcomes :** intended results of program activities or services (usually qualitative). Often outcomes are expressed in terms of change in behavior or attitudes.

Questions to be answered in the evaluation of PVE programs:
Relevance
• To what extent is the program suited to the policies / priorities of the donor?
• To what extent is the program suited to the policies / priorities of the recipient government?
• To what extent is the program suited to the priorities of the target population?

Impact
• To what extent has the program achieved its intended impact?
• To what extent has the program driven other positive effects?
• To what extent has the program inadvertently driven negative effects?

Effectiveness
• To what extent have the programme's outcomes been achieved?
• To what extent have the programme's outcomes contributed to the achievement of the intended impact?
• To what extent have the programme's outputs and activities contributed to the achievement of the intended outcomes?

Efficiency
• Have the programme's outcomes contributed to the intended impact in a resource efficient manner in relation to feasible alternatives?
• Have the programme's outputs and activities contributed to the intended

outcomes in a resource-efficient manner in relation to feasible alternatives?
• Have the programme's components been optimally sequenced to maximize efficiency?
• Have the programme's systems (budgetary, information management, etc.) been designed and applied in a manner that optimizes efficiency?

Sustainability
• Will the programme's benefits be sustained after the involvement of the donor / implementer ceases?

Coherence
• To what extent have donors / implementers ensured complementarity with other initiatives, including those funded by other donors?
• To what extent have lessons been shared between relevant programs? Successful programs in Prevention of violent extremism should follow some facts Related to violent extremism:
• Understand that VE is motivated and enabled by multiple factors.
• Understand that VE tends to be partly driven by legitimate grievances.
• Understand that there is no standard pathway to VE.
• Understand that physical responses *and* messaging are important.
• Understand that civil society actors have an important CVE role.
• Acknowledge the potential negative effects of security force excesses.
• Acknowledge the potential deleterious effects of stereotyping.
• Understand the legal framework in the relevant location.

There remains a need to ensure that responses are more closely tailored to the context in which they are implemented. Not prove sufficient.

Impact of counter violent extremism programs :
1- Sustainable peace and security
2- Sustainable development
3- Achievement of Human rights and the rule of law
4- Successful Humanitarian action involvement

Monitoring, measuring and evaluating the results of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programs :
There are a number of challenges that practitioners and program designers may face when measuring the outcomes or impact of their CVE program. For example develop over long time and the effects are not seen immediately or within a program management cycle.
The nature of CVE is sensitive and entails heightened emotions including fear. Trust takes time to develop and can be severed quickly affecting results.
There are no valid (significantly tested) scales to measure levels of support for violent extremism among individuals, so data relies primarily on self-reporting, observation of behavior, & expert judgment.
It is difficult to measure intent and capability of potential terrorist and therefore difficult to ascertain the actual impact of an individual not becoming radicalized.
Causality is difficult to prove in terms of the program's impact on an individual or group. The collection of data for P/CVE program implementers is challenging both in terms of safety (physical location) and access to communities.
In general, there is a lack of resources to dedicate to MM&E in program design and budgets (time, funding, and number of staff).

There is not one standardized framework required by international donors, and therefore it is difficult to compare results.

Number of key principles that are used in monitoring and evaluation of counter violent extremism projects :
1-USABLE
The assessment is not an end in itself the results should enable decision making for the project or program.

2-VALID
Assessment design and evaluation should be based on high quality data and high quality analysis.

3-OBJECTIVES LED
As with any good evaluation, the assessment should be related to derived from the goals and objectives of the project or program.

4-ACHIEVABLE
The assessment itself should be designed in a way that the results can be delivered, despite the challenges of the operational environment. This is particularly important when developing key indicators and ways to measure those indicators

Conclusion
Frameworks for real CVE programs:
1- DEFINE THE CONTEXT of your CVE program or project and state the problem being addressed.
2- DEVELOP A THEORY OF CHANGE.
3- IDENTIFY THE GOALS & OBJECTIVES of the program/project and link them to the program's activities.
4- DETERMINE THE KEY INDICATORS and measures of success based on the goals and objectives.
5- DETERMINE THE TOOLS & COLLECTION METHODS used to obtain the desired dataset.
6- DETERMINE WHETHER STAFF HAS ALL THE APPROPRIATE CAPACITY to use those collection methods and tools to measure the key indicators.
7- ASSESS THE RESULTS on the basis of the data collected, distinguishing in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact