

# KNOWLEDGE BRIEFS

## META-SYNTHESIS

# PREVENTION OF CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

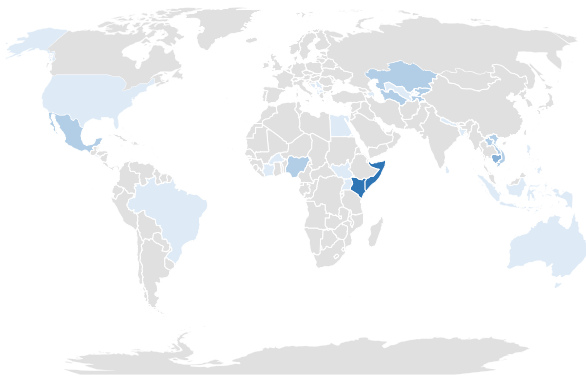
The importance of evaluation to inform policy-making and decision-taking has increased over the past years, driven by United Nations reform initiatives and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This need was also evident in the planned Fourteenth Crime Congress in 2020 in Kyoto, Japan, on “Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda,” which includes a dedicated workshop on evidence-based crime prevention. In this context, the IES sought to pilot the development of an evaluation-based meta-synthesis of UNODC evaluation results on crime prevention, as well as related evaluation methods and best practices identified in these evaluations to prevent crime, with a particular focus on countering violent extremism - one of the themes of the Fourteenth Crime Congress. This work draws on IES’ extensive and recognized experience in conducting meta-syntheses of UNODC evaluations, highlighted as a best practice by the UNEG Peer Review of IES (2016).

**Team:** Dr. John Mathiason (Team Leader) and Ashley Hollister (Gender and Social Protection Specialist) under the supervision and guidance of IES

Full report: [www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Meta-Analysis/UNODC\\_Crime\\_Prevention\\_Meta\\_Synthesis.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Meta-Analysis/UNODC_Crime_Prevention_Meta_Synthesis.pdf)

## METHODOLOGY

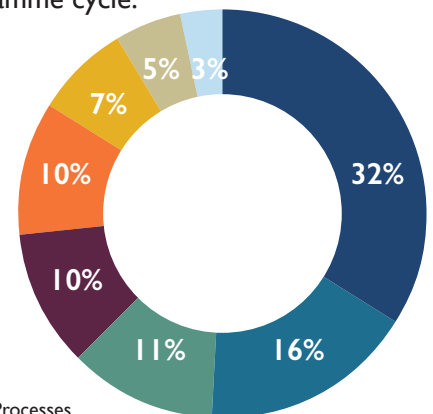
The Meta-Synthesis arranges content from an initial desk review of 32 relevant evaluation reports conducted from 2014 to 2019. The majority of these evaluations were conducted by UNODC (53%) and supplemented by select external evaluation reports from bilateral institutions or governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental and community-based organizations, and the private sector. The Crime Congress Discussion Guide as well as the 2015 UN Secretary General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (VE) were used to define the codebook and consolidate content around key themes.



Global: 7 (23%)	West & Central Asia: 2 (6%),
Africa & Middle East: 12 (39%)	Cent. & Eastern Europe: 2 (6%)
Lat. Am & Carib.: 4 (13%)	South Asia: 1 (3%)
East Asia & Pacific: 3 (10%)	

## MAIN FINDINGS

Nearly half of the reviewed reports noted a need for more systematic measurement of programme progress and results achievement, starting from the planning phases. Best practices highlighted included the development and use of common indicators, measurement strategies, and data storage facilities, especially for complex and multi-country initiatives, as well as instilling a culture of evaluation and learning through dedicated specialists, participatory needs and risk assessments, stakeholder mapping at programme onset and formative evaluations throughout a programme cycle.



- Unclassified / Other
- Improve Program Design Processes
- Integrate Human Rights & Womens Empowerment
- Alignment of M&E Frameworks
- Strengthen Partnerships
- Improve Sustainability Practices
- Improve Coordination
- Improve Programme Visibility Through Communication

# SELECTED BEST PRACTICES

## CRIME PREVENTION

### URBAN CRIME PREVENTION

Urban crime is linked to human mobility and the flow of people both within and between countries. UNODC's facilitation of technical assistance and dialogue through workshop convening is important for ensuring regional cooperation and response.

### COMMUNITY-BASED & INCLUSIVE POLICING

Consistent and strategic engagement with existing community structures, minority groups and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of activities can increase trust in police.

### PREVENTION OF CHILDREN & YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME

Preventative approaches that build resilience through skill-building (both technical and soft skills) and strengthening of social and family systems improve opportunities for youth economic and social inclusion.

### GENDER EQUALITY & EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Developing women's capacity to engage in economic activity and access the formal labor market – through market-relevant skill-sets and networks – can enhance women's status in their communities and enable their participation in peace-building / violence prevention structures.

### GENDER SENSITIVE CRIME PREVENTION

Mainstreaming gender and human rights into planning processes, strategic partnership considerations, and institutional policies, protocols, communication strategies and programme frameworks can optimize impact and innovation.

## PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

### ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Engaging youth in community decision-making bodies and activities, such as at schools or through sports events, and supporting mentorship by families and community leaders can build community trust and prevent VE.

### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA

Conducting training sessions for media professionals on responsibly sharing stories of extremist incidences or stories on positive youth behaviors and role models can support increased exposure to pro-social media and influence social norms amongst youth.

### STRENGTHENING GOOD GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS & THE RULE OF LAW

Embedding human rights language into constitutional documents/ laws and more actionable documentation as well as trainings for law enforcement personnel can be effective and have positive spillover effects to reintegration efforts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There were few policy implications that could be drawn from the evaluations, with most recommendations noting areas to improve programme frameworks and coordination. This can be corrected if the evaluators are asked, as part of their terms of reference, to suggest broader policy implications of what they have observed, integrating these discussions into the evaluation design.

As PVE is a new and evolving field, the presence of rigorous evaluations to draw from is minimal, which could present gaps in information across geographies and sectors. Most evaluations focused on conflict-affected areas of Africa, for example, and few noted the importance of public health programmes in the prevention of violent extremism. A more extensive and systematic literature review would significantly contribute to broadening the evidence-base.

In terms of addressing violent extremism, there was only one UN project evaluated that addressed the issue of young people's involvement in extremist groups, and other

reports were external meta-syntheses. The primary lesson learned was the importance of skill-building (both technical and soft skills) and engagement of support systems like parents and religious leaders, which should be intentional, planned early, and monitored.

Finally, in terms of the cross-cutting theme of gender equality, programmes need to move towards being gender responsive, or gender transformative, not only gender sensitive. This implies integration of gender considerations into planning processes, programme models and outcomes, and measurement strategies. It is not simply the inclusion of women in activities and measurement of sex disaggregated data, but also understanding and influencing harmful gender norms and women's economic empowerment.



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SECTION  
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/unodc-ies@un.org>