Prevention of Crime and Violent Extremism

Meta-synthesis
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This meta-synthesis was prepared by a team consisting of Dr. John Mathiason (team leader) and Ashley Hollister (gender specialist) in close consultation and collaboration with the Independent Evaluation Section (IES) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CAAFAG children associated with armed forces and groups
CBO community-based organization
CVE countering violent extremism
FN footnote
HRGE human rights and gender equality
HQ headquarters
IDE in-depth evaluation
IES Independent Evaluation Section
IISG Integrative Internal Security Governance
IPE Independent Project Evaluation
M&E monitoring and evaluation
NGO non-governmental organization
PVE prevention of violent extremism
SDG Sustainable Development Goal
SIDA Swedish International Development Agency
UCLA University of California – Los Angeles
UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID United States Agency for International Development
VE violent extremism
WBCSCI Western Balkans Counter-serious Crime Initiative
WMO World Meteorological Organization
Executive summary

■ Context and rationale

The Independent Evaluation Section (IES) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has a mission to lead and guide independent evaluations in order to provide objective information on the Office’s performance and to improve UNODC and partner countries’ accountability and evaluation-based decision-making. Through its mandate, and as a member of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), IES is committed to promoting a culture of evaluation throughout UNODC, the United Nations system, and beyond.

The importance of evaluation in informing policy-making and decision-taking has increased over recent years, driven by United Nations reform initiatives and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The demand for increased cohesiveness, cooperation and consolidation in the work of the United Nations within and between Agencies and Member States makes a strong case for aggregating, synthesizing and learning from the results of individual, independent evaluations. This need was also evident in the agenda of 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”. Though postponed, the agenda includes one dedicated workshop on “Evidence-based crime prevention: statistics, indicators and evaluation in support of successful practices”, which reiterates the necessity for providing information on evaluation methodologies, results, and best practices when evaluating crime prevention, including prevention of violent extremism (PVE).

■ Scope and objectives

In this context, 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 PVE – one of the themes of the Fourteenth Crime Congress and a UNODC mandates area of work. This meta-synthesis on crime prevention is a pilot and intended to lay the groundwork for a more extensive and methodologically rigorous meta-synthesis of evaluation approaches and results of crime prevention programmes and strategies, as well as other topics tied to the UNODC strategic framework, with the objective of enhancing utilization of evaluation results and facilitating sharing and learning from best practices for both internal and external stakeholders.

■ Methodology

This Crime Prevention Meta-synthesis collects and arranges content from relevant evaluation reports against criteria coded into search terms. The meta-synthesis is based on a social-research methodology employing qualitative analysis and quantitative assessment (i.e. frequency analysis) through document review of reports completed from 2014 to 2019. UNODC reports were supplemented with select external evaluation reports in order to provide a preliminary understanding of the types of evaluations being conducted on the prevention of crime and violent extremism. The United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice topics,
as well as the 2015 United Nations Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism were used to define the codebook and consolidate content from the evaluations. The methodology addresses both the assessment of best practices in policies and programmes and the analysis of crime prevention and PVE policies and programmes.

The meta-synthesis assessed 32 evaluations. The majority of these evaluations were conducted by UNODC (53 per cent); the remainder were conducted by government or bilateral institutions, other United Nations agencies, non-governmental and community-based organizations, or the private sector. The evaluations were conducted in 34 countries, with most having a global focus or operating in the Africa and the Middle East region.

The primary function of the meta-synthesis is to be utilization-focused, providing insights to inform discussion and policymaking. As such, the IES was closely engaged throughout the process to guide the selection of evaluation reports, co-design the codebook for analysis, and provide regular feedback to ensure the utility of results and deliverables.

Main findings

General focus of evaluation recommendations

In conducting a frequency analysis on the type of recommendations presented by evaluations included in the meta-analysis, the most frequent type of recommendation concerned improvements in the programme design process (28). Specifically, evaluations pointed to the need for conducting rigorous needs assessments, risk assessments, and stakeholder mapping at the onset of a programme. Another frequently cited recommendation was related to the importance of integrating human rights and gender sensitivity into programming (20). Finally, the alignment of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks was a prominent category of recommendation in the evaluations included in the meta-analysis (17). In particular, evaluations indicated that there needed to be improvements to the coordination between HQ and field offices, as well as between subregional field offices, on the use and application of M&E indicators and theories of change. Partnerships, and the need to strengthen and support them, were also frequently cited by the evaluations as a key recommendation for their country programme (18).

Design, monitoring and evaluation

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 M&E specialists assigned to programmes/projects and the conduct of participatory needs assessments and formative evaluations throughout a programme/project cycle.

Crime prevention and social and economic development

The promotion of an international approach to crime prevention is in accord with the UNODC mandate, as well as the mandate of the United Nations more broadly. As such, 25 per cent of all sampled evaluations (or 41 per cent of sampled UNODC evaluations) highlight regional cooperation as critical to urban crime prevention and legal reforms. Technical assistance from international legal experts was seen as a valuable contributor to legal reform, providing professional
advice and case experience to local implementors. In addition, the sustainability of urban crime prevention activities and outcomes was seen to be strengthened with prompt and clearly defined engagement with local and national counterparts, such as local government and/or police forces.

The prevention of children’s and youth’s involvement in crime was presented as a cross-cutting theme in nearly half of the 32 evaluations reviewed. Effective practices included the provision of context-specific technical assistance and organization of regional meetings to streamline and strengthen legislative frameworks in line with international resolutions for the protection of children. In addition, evaluation reports noted the importance of taking a preventative approach to child protection and crime prevention by building the resilience of children and youth through skill-building and strengthening social support and family systems to reduce the enabling environment for crime and improve opportunities for both economic and social inclusion. There were fewer findings drawn on community-based and inclusive policing, which primarily focused on engaging and strengthening existing community structures for the purpose of crime prevention. Best practices in this area noted the need for consistent and strategic engagement of community structures, leaders, minority groups and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of activities in order to ensure they do not appear foreign to community needs.

Finally, findings, lessons and conclusions on gender-sensitive and gender-responsive crime prevention urged policymakers to adopt multi-sectoral crime prevention strategies that address the root causes of violence and discrimination against women and girls in all spheres of life. Best practices involve mainstreaming gender into institutional policies, regulations, protocols, guidelines and communication strategies, as well as designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes, policies and strategies which are intentional in engaging women, promoting the realization of women’s rights and strengthening women’s economic independence. In addition, partnerships were highlighted as a need in order to benefit from the strategic competencies and value addition provided by the United Nations system, encourage innovation, and mitigate competition for resources.

Prevention of violent extremism

**Strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law** in the context of PVE involves improving the professionalism of security forces, law enforcement agencies and justice institutions, as well as ensuring effective oversight and accountability of such bodies in conformity with international human rights law and the rule of law. Additionally, the reform of national legal frameworks and penitentiary systems plays a prominent role – ensuring the security of inmates, which provides an environment through which to rehabilitate upon release. Finally, strengthening good governance includes disengagement and counselling programmes for persons already engaged in violent extremism.

An effective approach to PVE reflected in the analysis was dedicated human rights training for security forces, law enforcement agents and all those involved in the administration of justice regarding the prohibition of incitement to hatred and, more broadly, respect for human rights within the context of measures taken to counter violent extremism and terrorism. At the same time, it was noted that strained working conditions and lack of public service benefits available to prison staff often undermine human resource efforts in prison systems, including the uptake of learned practices which uphold human rights. Several reports pointed to the importance of
incorporating human rights language into training activities for law enforcement personnel, as well as developing policies which ensure justice staff feel supported, as it can have positive spillover effects on rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

Best practice for engaging communities in the context of PVE involves adopting community-oriented policing models which intentionally seek to engage youth in community decision-making bodies and activities. Several reports also noted the benefits of local and family-based mentorship models which, in the context of PVE, have shown how moderate religious leaders serve as effective mentors, having built-in community trust, which can help to prevent VE recruitment.

In the context of PVE, supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women remains critical. A comprehensive understanding of women’s roles in VE facilitates the development of targeted programme responses that include identifying the drivers that lead women to participate in VE but also understand how VE and terrorism affect their lives and the lives of their families. As such, best practices in PVE included investments in gender-sensitive research and data collection, as well as engagement of women in national law enforcement and security agencies.

Finally, in attempts to prevent violent extremism, strategic communications, the Internet and social media are critical to consider as they can serve as mechanisms for both the recruitment of youth into extremist groups, as well as for the mitigation of extremist ideologies. Conducting training sessions for media professionals and editors to responsibly and mindfully share stories of extremist incidences, or to share stories on positive youth behaviours, can help minimize recruitment at the grass-roots level.

Conclusions and recommendations

The pilot of the crime prevention meta-synthesis revealed important lessons, particularly in highlighting good practice in processes for the design and measurement of crime prevention programmes and strategies. However, the pilot also presented challenges to the conduct of a similar, though more comprehensive and methodologically rigorous, meta-synthesis. Primarily, as PVE is a new and evolving field, there are few high-quality and methodologically sound evaluations to draw from, which could present gaps in information. In addition, best practice for the elaboration of lessons learned includes an appropriate analysis of evidential limitations and their application across different contexts, which was rarely observed in the reports. Evaluations of complex and multi-country strategies sometimes take more exploratory and qualitative approaches not guided by a clear theory of change or results matrix, and therefore end up drawing best practices from single point observations that do not sufficiently analyse the nuance of applying ‘best fit practices’ across contexts and sectors, which have broader policy-level implications.

There are several recommendations that have been recognized that can be applied in a broader policy context. These should be considered as both evaluation and crime prevention policies are developed.

There were few policy implications that could be drawn from the evaluations. 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 and line of questioning. This would make it easier to synthesize reports for consideration by international policymaking bodies. The terms of reference should also recommend evaluators to provide explicit analysis of how findings could be extended to different contexts and sectors.
In terms of addressing violent extremism, there was only one United Nations project evaluated that addressed the issue of dealing with young people who had been involved in extremist groups, and other reports analysed on this subject were 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 institutions/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 and frameworks, 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.
CRIME PREVENTION META-SYNTHESIS

Study context and rationale

The Independent Evaluation Section (IES) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has a mission to lead and guide independent evaluations in order to provide objective information on the Office’s performance and to improve UNODC and partner countries’ accountability and evaluation-based decision-making. IES addresses its mission through three pillars of work: (1) national evaluation capacity-building and supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); (2) generation of evaluation results through independent project, programmatic and strategic evaluations; and (3) the development of innovative evaluation knowledge products to generate strategic analyses and improve accountability and learning. Through its mandate, and as a member of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), IES is committed to promoting a culture of evaluation throughout UNODC, the United Nations system, and beyond.

The importance of evaluation to inform policy-making and decision-taking has increased over recent years, driven by United Nations reform initiatives and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The demand for increased cohesiveness, cooperation and consolidation in the work of the United Nations within and between Agencies and Member States makes a strong case for aggregating, synthesizing and learning from the results of individual, independent evaluations. In this context, IES produced, for example, a biennial Evaluation Meta-analysis of all published evaluation reports in UNODC from 2011 to 2014. The positive feedback received on this Meta-analysis (including from oversight bodies), along with the request of Member States for more information on the aggregate level, has encouraged IES to produce two additional meta-analyses of evaluation reports (for 2015–2016 and 2017–2018) and to further explore opportunities in this area.

This need for more aggregate evaluative evidence to inform decision-making was also evident in the agenda of 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”. Though postponed, the agenda includes one dedicated workshop on “Evidence-based crime prevention: statistics, indicators and evaluation in support of successful practices”, which reiterates the necessity for providing information on evaluation methodologies, results, and best practices when evaluating crime prevention, including prevention of violent extremism (PVE).

Scope and objectives

As a result, this set the stage for developing 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.

1 www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/meta-analyses.html
with a particular focus on PVE – one of the themes of the Fourteenth Crime Congress and a UNODC mandates area of work. UNODC reports were supplemented with select external evaluation reports in order to provide a preliminary understanding of the types of evaluations being conducted on the prevention of crime and violent extremism. This meta-synthesis on crime prevention is a pilot and intended to lay the groundwork for a more extensive and methodologically rigorous meta-synthesis of evaluation approaches and results of crime prevention programmes and strategies, as well as other topics tied to the UNODC strategic framework, with the objective of enhancing utilization of evaluation results and facilitating sharing and learning from best practices for both internal and external stakeholders.

**Methodology**

This section provides an overview of the methodology used by the research team, Dr John Mathiason and Ashley Hollister, to achieve the study’s objectives. Dr Mathiason is an Adjunct Professor at Cornell University, having previously held a 25-year career at the United Nations Secretariat. He has consulted on results-based management for the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), among others, and holds a Ph.D in Political Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ashley Hollister is a gender and social protection specialist, with over 10 years of experience providing technical support and evaluation

**Figure I: Evaluations by country of focus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa and Middle East</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia and Pacific</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West and Central Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
services to multilateral institutions, governments and international non-governmental organizations for programmes focused on the prevention and response to gender-based violence and economic inclusion of women, at-risk youth and refugees. She holds a Master’s in Public Administration and International Development from Cornell University and a Master’s in Social Work from the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor.

This Crime Prevention Meta-synthesis aligns with the methodological approach used in the previous two meta-syntheses conducted by UNODC, and collects and arranges content from relevant evaluation reports against criteria coded into search terms. The meta-synthesis is based on a social-research methodology employing qualitative analysis and quantitative assessment (i.e. frequency analysis) through document review of reports completed from 2014 to 2019. The methodology addresses both the assessment of best practices in policies and programmes and the conduct of evaluations of crime prevention and PVE policies and programmes.

The primary function of the meta-synthesis is to be utilization-focused, providing insights to inform discussion and policymaking. As such, the IES was closely engaged throughout the process to guide the selection of evaluation reports, co-design the codebook for analysis, and provide regular feedback to ensure the utility of results and deliverables.

The meta-synthesis assessed 32 evaluations. The majority of these evaluations were conducted by UNODC (53 per cent, 17 reports); the remainder of the evaluations were conducted by government or bilateral institutions (13 per cent, 4 reports), UNICEF (9 per cent, 3 reports), NGOs or community-based organizations (CBOs) (9 per cent, 3 reports), UN Women (6 per cent, 2 reports), UNFPA (3 per cent, 1 report), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) (3 per cent, 1 report) or the private sector (3 per cent, 1 report). The evaluations were conducted in 34 countries, as shown in figure I, with annotated evaluation counts.

Of the 32 evaluations, 53 per cent (17) were Independent Project Evaluations (IPE), whereas 41 per cent (13) were In-Depth Evaluations (IDE); only 6 per cent (2) of the reports reviewed were meta-syntheses.

Content analysis (i.e. frequency analysis) was used to convert content from relevant evaluations into quantitative data by recording frequency of

**Figure II:** Primary focus of independent project evaluation and in-depth evaluations
mentions within the evaluation reports, as well as specifically within lessons learned, best practices and recommendations. In doing so, the methodology consolidated a large range of content into defined categories and provided quantitative outputs that add contextual weight to a finding presented in the evaluation reports. Twenty-seven evaluations contained relevant content from the 2020 United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice topics; these categories were coded into search terms and used to consolidate content from the evaluations:

» Preventing the involvement of children and youth in crime, and building resilience
» Urban crime prevention
» Community-based and inclusive policing
» Gender-sensitive crime prevention strategies

Moreover, the majority of evaluations focused mainly on strengthening good governance (12 reports), followed by preventing the involvement of children and youth in crime and building resilience (5 reports), and Gender Equality and empowerment of women (4 reports) – please refer to figure II for an overview of the primary focus of the evaluations analysed.

Additionally, 20 of the evaluations included content relevant to the 2015 United Nations Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (VE) areas:

» Strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law
» Engaging communities
» Gender equality and empowering women
» Strategic communications, the Internet and social media

Several limitations were identified in conducting the analysis, as described below:

» Content was collected and coded against criteria based on the terms of reference and aligned to UNEG standards. As a result, the meta-synthesis focuses strictly on these criteria, which constitutes an implicit limitation by excluding information outside (or adjacent to) these categories. However, it was not seen to be a significant limitation, as the codebook included key questions for consideration and, based on the information available within reports, was sufficiently extensive to provide an in-depth analysis for this pilot study.

» Definitions of VE are not standard and universal. While the issue of VE is considered important and UNODC has a clear role in dealing with it, obtaining data from evaluations was not easy as a result of definitional differences. This is clearly reflected in the most thorough international agreement, the 2015 Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), which was welcomed in resolution 70/254. In that document, the Secretary-General noted that “[v]iolent extremism is a diverse phenomenon, without clear definition”. It is mostly about persons who join an organization that promotes VE and how to prevent and deal with this. As such, many of the elements in the broader approach apply to the meta-synthesis and were used to code the evaluations that were relevant.
FINDINGS ON BEST PRACTICES

DESIGN, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This section notes findings related to the design, monitoring and evaluation of crime prevention programmes, projects and strategies. 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 monitoring and evaluation specialists assigned to programmes/projects and the conduct of participatory needs assessments and formative evaluations throughout a programme/project cycle.

In order to strengthen good governance, human rights and the rule of law through relevant and effective interventions, several reports identified a need for programme managers and government institutions to more systematically measure the need for, and progress of, programme implementation.

This could be achieved by conducting systematic needs assessments during the programme design stage, strengthening coordination mechanisms with national statistical services to increase availability and accessibility of statistical data on patterns and trends of crimes, and developing more robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to produce reliable and up-to-date data, particularly at the outcome level.

‘Support to Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Reform (GLOT63)’ (2018), the ‘Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration: towards the promotion of a culture of lawfulness GLOZ82)’ (2018), and the ‘Global Programme on Strengthening the Legal Regime against Terrorism (GLOR35)’ (2015), among independent evaluation reports, highlighted some opportunities to improve programmes’ and strategies’ impact measurement, both in terms of having a clear and common set of global- and national-level outcome and impact indicators, as well as in the planning and coordination of monitoring activities between headquarters (HQ) and field/regional offices.2

The evaluation of GLOR35 highlighted the absence of a global indicator framework as a noticeable challenge in the monitoring of the project. In particular for country-specific work the gathering, using and communicating meaningful information on impact was challenging. GLOT63 and GLOZ82 similarly recognized this gap, with the former evaluation offering

47% of evaluations highlight good practices and lessons in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

2 See the independent evaluation of GLOT63; external evaluations from UNFPA, USAID CVE Kenya and Somalia, UCLA Los Angeles; meta-synthesis from Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation.
recommendations to extend monitoring of results from outputs to outcomes; for example, monitoring both the number of police officers trained in stress management techniques, as well as more clearly defining and collecting information on indicators measuring the extent to which these techniques have helped officers to better manage stress related to cases of gender violence.

**Best practice**

- Development and use of common indicators and measurement strategies (especially for PVE programmes) and a common data storage facility based on clear data sharing protocols are prerequisites for effective monitoring and information sharing for complex programmes and projects.
- Evidenced by five reports (Footnote (FN) 2)

Several evaluations also noted a similar need within the context of human rights and gender equality frameworks. As an example, the GLOZ82 midterm evaluation noted: “The Programme would benefit, in its analysis of effectiveness and results, from a more detailed and visible emphasis on the integration of human rights and gender equality frameworks, through Programme initiatives, with beneficiary agencies and target groups, and from a more systematic approach to collecting and analysing data on the impact of the Programme, according to disaggregated indicators of human rights and gender equality.”

Evaluations\(^4\) offered recommendations to replicate best practices across global programmes and strategies, including integrating more participatory planning and situation/gap analyses prior to the start of activities, as well as the conduct of evaluations and self-assessments early on in the programme cycle to initiate a culture of data gathering and learning. The GLOR35 evaluation highlighted how the Colombia counter-terrorism programme developed a follow-up system, which included a five-pronged approach: self-evaluation; six-month post facto evaluation; follow-up through the Observatory of Jurisprudence webpage/platform; participation as observers in real prosecution cases; and continuous feedback from the COPT (Inter-institutional Committee).

The ‘UNODC Independent Formative Evaluation of the Western Balkans Counter-serious Crime Initiative (WBCSci) in the context of the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) mechanism’ report (2019) similarly noted this approach and, in particular, highlighted a best practice in the use of formative evaluations in early stages and its potential to be sustained and replicated across global programme counter-terrorism activities to support a culture of organizational learning.

**Best practice**

- Integrating participatory approaches to programme design, monitoring and situation/gap analyses, including completing a comprehensive needs assessment and baseline at programme start. In addition, the conduct of formative evaluations in the early stages of establishing organization and coordination mechanisms instils a culture of evaluation and learning.
- Evidenced by eight reports (FN 4)

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\(^3\) Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration – towards the promotion of a culture of lawfulness’ (GLOZ82), 2018, p33.

\(^4\) See the independent evaluation of XAP/X37, IISG-WBSCi, XAC/X50; external evaluations from UNFPA, New South Wales Government COMPACT, USAID CVE Kenya and Somalia, UCLA Los Angeles; and meta-synthesis from Institute for Security Studies East Africa.
Two IPEs, as well as the meta-syntheses, noted the importance of having dedicated M&E staff. The ‘Final Independent Project Evaluation of the UNODC Criminal Justice Programme in the Kyrgyz Republic (KGZT90)’ (2017) was one of the programme evaluations to note the presence of a robust M&E system, highlighting the employment of a full-time M&E Officer as key to the KGZT90 programme’s success in this area. The M&E Officer developed separate M&E frameworks and plans for each programme component and strengthened the programme team’s capacity in terms of results-based monitoring, evaluation and reporting to ensure systematic monitoring of results.

In addition, the specialized officer improved collaboration with the national statistical service of Kyrgyzstan, whose efforts ultimately resulted in more data-driven programmes and criminal justice system in Kyrgyzstan and, consequently, a more robust evaluation report. Improving the analytical capabilities of national statistical services to collect, analyse and publish official statistics and crime digests on the incidence and drivers of reported crime, and ensures the availability of accurate and timely statistical data on patterns and trends of crime for use in policy and programmes. In addition, country participation in international standardized surveys and the use of shared databases further strengthen national systems, enhancing the consistency and international comparability of crime statistics and use of crime data by national Governments.

Under the ‘Strengthening Criminal Justice Capacities of Central Asian Countries to Counter Terrorism in Compliance with Principles of Rule of Law’ project (XACXSO) (2014), the ‘Surveys of Legislation on Compliance with International Instruments on Suppression of Terrorism and Observance of Human Rights’ undertaken in each Central Asian country provided content on international terrorism legal instruments and status of ratification, as well as compliance with international counter-terrorism instruments and standards of human rights in combating terrorism, facilitating comparative analyses and exchanges of expertise to shorten the learning cycle for States and providing a platform for legislative review and change.

The kNOwVAW data tool used by UNFPA deploys a dedicated survey, leverages existing data collection efforts and links to population databases to provide representative, reliable, comparable, and independent data on prevalence of interpersonal and intimate partner violence, facilitating regional studies on trends and risk factors and driving evidence-based theories of change for more effective programming.

**Best practice**

» Devoted M&E and Communication Specialists have improved results measurement and facilitated both internal and external capacity building for programme staff, Member States and local partners.

» Evidenced by four reports (FN 5)
Challenges

» The short time frame of programmes, projects and workplans imposes risks and challenges to delivering on and measuring medium- to long-term outcomes. This was seen to be insufficiently considered.a

» Some M&E frameworks and effect/outcome indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) were not well formulated or measured at baseline. M&E systems assessed primarily focused on the output level (with variability in the quality and granularity of reporting at this level), and contribution to (and interlinkages between) outcomes, including normative and institutional change, was seen to be insufficiently considered.b

» In some instances, the absence of human rights-based and gender-sensitive indicators and integration of the SDGs into M&E frameworks posed a challenge to ensuring Human Rights and Gender Equality (HRGE) frameworks and the ‘leave no one behind’ principle was adequately considered in programme design and monitoring, and subsequently integrated into analyses of effectiveness and impact.c

See the independent evaluation of GLO/R35, Global Maritime (XEA/X94, XAM/X74, SOM/X54, SOM/Z15, SOM/Z16 XEA/X20, XEA/X93, XSS/X11, XEA/Z22, GLO/X99, GLO/Z06 MUS/X55, XAM/T72, XEA/X67); external evaluations from UNFPA, NSW Government COMPACT.

See the independent evaluation of GLOT63, GLOZ82; external evaluation from NSW Government COMPACT.
CRIME PREVENTION, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Most publications included in the evaluation report inventory focus on initiatives undertaken at the level of programmes or projects, whereas fewer publications focus on higher-level policies and strategies. Within the review, key themes emerged on how to more effectively design, implement and measure comprehensive crime prevention plans, with a focus on preventing the involvement of children and youth in crime, and building resilience, urban crime prevention, community-based and inclusive policing and gender-sensitive crime prevention strategies.

PREVENTING THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CRIME, AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

This section notes findings related to the prevention of children and youth’s involvement in crime, which was a specific focus of only 5 of the reviewed evaluation reports but presented as a cross-cutting theme in nearly half of the 32 evaluations reviewed. Effective practices included the provision of context-specific technical assistance and organization of regional meetings to streamline and strengthen legislative frameworks in line with international resolutions for the protection of children. In addition, evaluation reports noted the importance of taking a preventative approach to child protection and crime prevention by building the resilience of children and youth through skill-building and strengthening social support and family systems to reduce the enabling environment for crime and improve opportunities for both economic and social inclusion.

While only 16 per cent of the evaluations had a specific focus on preventing the involvement of children and youth in crime, this topic emerged as a cross-cutting issue within 47 per cent of the evaluations reviewed, including within evaluations focused on gender-sensitive crime prevention and strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law.7

Skills development programmes were effective in building resilience and preventing the involvement of youth and children in crime by increasing their economic opportunities. External evaluations, such as the ‘UNIDO Countering Violence and Extremism through Skills Training and Livelihoods Support’ project for at-risk youth in Kismayo (2016), the ‘UN Women Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism Project Evaluation’ (2018), and the ‘USAID Mid-term Evaluation of Three Countering Violent Extremism Projects’ in Somalia and Kenya (2013) provided women and at-risk youth with technical skills training to improve their participation in economic activities and support income-generating prospects.

7 See the independent evaluation of GLOT63, XAPA10, KGZT90.
In the latter case, private sector stakeholders reported they were more likely to employ a youth applicant who had been through a USAID-supported skills programme as they displayed market-relevant skills and confidence – one noting that programme youth ‘learn how to sell themselves’ in the interview, and that this was a defining factor in their employability relative to other applicants. Both evaluations demonstrated how skills training resulted in increased incomes, with the latter evaluation reporting that the proportion of participants with ‘no income’ decreased from 88.7 per cent prior to 14.6 per cent over the programme course.

Similarly, technical skills development programming was particularly effective in building resilience and preventing the involvement of youth and children in crime when paired with ‘soft skills’ and ‘conflict minimization approaches’.8

The UNIDO evaluation, the ‘Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE) in the Horn of Africa’ report funded by the European Union (2017), and the UNICEF evaluation of the Project ‘Integral Model for the Prevention and Response to Violence Against Children and Adolescents’ in Mexico (2018) noted best practices in inclusive group enrolment; merging youth from different clans into the same programme or engaging diverse youth in a school setting were effective means to reduce intra-community conflict, specifically when small-group conflict minimization (e.g. soft skills) programming is included as a wrap-around component for technical skills programming. In the UNIDO evaluation, the training increased participants’ reporting of ‘respect’ for their communities, increased communication between clan groups, and decreased the likelihood of joining local armed groups.

Reaching out to parents and working with family systems or community institutions, such as religious organizations, has also been demonstrated to be effective in reducing youth involvement in criminal activities within evaluations external to those produced by United Nations agencies. Notably, the evaluation of Australia’s COMPACT Programme (2018) for promoting community resilience and countering hate in society and abroad among youth highlighted how

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8 See the independent evaluation of BRA:16, GLO:82, KGZ:T90; external evaluations from UNICEF Mexico, UNIDO Somalia, EU STRIDE, NSW Government COMPACT, USAID CVE Kenya and Somalia, UCLA Los Angeles; and meta-synthesis from Institute for Security Studies East Africa.
a pilot programme in Kenya cooperated with moderate religious leaders (imams and ukhtis), building their preaching and youth engagement capacity then leveraging their position to spot early warning signs of radicalization.

The USAID Mid-term Evaluation found that youth gangs often recruited members as young as 10 years old who were out of school; involving the parents and families of marginalized or at-risk children is therefore critical to halt early entry into criminal activity. These same practices of strengthening familial bonds and support systems and leveraging community leaders’ positions for crime prevention and mentoring youths has application to general crime reduction strategies among the youth population.

Involving youth in the design and implementation of programming is also a prominent best practice communicated by the evaluations reviewed. Criminal activity is motivated both by economic circumstances but also feelings of social exclusion: when youth and children feel excluded or marginalized they are more likely to engage in criminal activities. Criminal activity (including violent extremism) can represent an ‘escape’, a sense of ‘purpose’, and a form of ‘inclusion’ in a group for such youths. Programmes targeting youth should therefore work to ensure that the participants feel ownership of how the programme is implemented; specifically, they should have a voice in the content of technical skills training and other components of programming.

**Lessons**

- For Member States to develop and implement integrated and holistic strategies for preventing and responding to violence against children, it is important to mobilize the various state- and non-state actors early to establish coordination, consolidate roles, and define working arrangements and synergies with existing initiatives. Strengthening inter-institutional alliances and consolidating care and protection networks for children can serve as catalysts for sustained institutional coordination and child- and youth-sensitive policies across sectors (e.g. health, education, justice).

- Members of youth gangs are often under the age of 18, and risk factors such as poor parenting and/or school quality and supports can drive youth into crime. Prevention measures should analyse trends in youth’s external developmental assets across contexts/cultures/demographic groups and emphasize broad stakeholder engagement, particularly the engagement of parents and schools, to reduce the enabling environment for crime and violent extremism.

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*See the independent evaluation of BRAX16; external evaluation from UNICEF Mexico.*

*See the independent evaluation of XAP/X37; external evaluations from UNICEF Mexico, UNICEF El Salvador, EU STRIVE, NSW Government COMPACT, USAID CVE Kenya and Somalia.*
URBAN CRIME PREVENTION

The promotion of an international approach to crime prevention is in accord with the UNODC mandate, as well as the mandate of the United Nations more broadly. As such, 25 per cent of all sampled evaluations (or 41 per cent of sampled UNODC evaluations) highlight regional cooperation as critical to urban crime prevention and legal reforms. Technical assistance from international legal experts was seen as a valuable contributor to legal reform in the country programme evaluations studied, providing professional advice and case experience to local implementors. In addition, the sustainability of urban crime prevention activities and outcomes was seen to be strengthened with prompt and clearly defined engagement with local and national counterparts, such as local government and/or police forces.

The lessons and recommendations related to urban crime prevention drawn from the sampled reports primarily relate to inter- and intra-State cooperation, multi-stakeholder engagement and political buy-in. However, there were fewer evaluations providing practical programming or policy-level recommendations in this category, or cases where the content was more cross-cutting and fitted within other coding categories, and therefore the findings within this category are more limited and drawn from fewer observations.

The promotion of an international approach to crime prevention is in accord with the UNODC mandate, as well as the mandate of the United Nations more broadly. As such, 25 per cent of all sampled evaluations (or 41 per cent of sampled UNODC evaluations) highlight regional cooperation as critical to urban crime prevention and legal reforms.9 The IPE of the ‘Strengthening and Enhancing the Capacity of Law Enforcement Officials in Combating Child Sex offenders in Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam (XAPA10)’ (2018) and GLOR35 noted the particular relevance of international cooperation and strengthened regional and national frameworks for the prevention of child trafficking and terrorism. XAPA10 highlighted annual meetings, joint working groups, and other efforts to share information and align international frameworks among neighbouring countries as an effective means through which to reform countries’ legal systems.

Technical assistance from international legal experts was a valuable contributor to legal reform in the country programme evaluations studied, providing professional advice and case experience to local implementors.10 For example, the XAPA10 evaluation noted how another programme in the region (XSPT33) was effective in

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9 See the independent evaluation of XAP/X37, GLOZ99, Cluster XAC/Z60, TAJ/E24, TAJ/H03, RER/H22, XAC/K2, IISG WBCSCI, GLO/R35, XAPA10, XAC/X50.

10 See the independent evaluation of GLO/R35, KGZT90, external evaluations from EU STRIVE.
strengthening police investigation capacity on child sexual exploitation cases and relevant for judges and prosecutors in their conduct of investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse offenders.

The political will of Governments makes it possible to establish these fundamental strategic alliances to achieve results. However, fluctuating situations in countries, including budgets and resources, can affect countries’ ability to respond and efficiently coordinate across levels of governance. The effectiveness of urban crime prevention is also reliant on political will, which can change over time in response to the country context, including available budgets and resources, competing priorities and restructuring in leadership and institutions.\textsuperscript{11}

### Best practice

- **To strengthen and deepen Member States’ buy-in to programmes, and increase programme sustainability, prompt and effective engagement, collaboration and regulation among local governments, police and national counterparts are needed.**
- **Evidenced by three reports (FN 10)**

\textsuperscript{11} See the independent evaluation of GLOZ99, MEXZ93, KGZT90; external evaluations from NSW Government COMPACT.

### COMMUNITY-BASED AND INCLUSIVE POLICING

This section notes findings related to community-based and inclusive policing, which primarily focused on engaging and strengthening existing community structures for the purpose of crime prevention. Best practices in this area noted the need for consistent and strategic engagement of community structures, leaders, minority groups and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of activities in order to ensure they do not appear foreign to community needs.

While fewer evaluations noted good practices and lessons related to engaging and strengthening community structures for the purpose of crime prevention, there was depth in the content provided through numerous examples of best practice in community engagement and inclusive policing provided, particularly in evaluations focused on programming for the PVE.

As previously mentioned, conducting needs assessments before implementation of activities was found to increase the relevance of activities/strategies, and it was also seen to be an effective contributing factor towards engaging with local communities.\textsuperscript{12} KGZT90 conducted a needs assessment to ensure that programme activities were aligned with existing prison security audit findings, local crime prevention needs, and minority group composition in the police and prison services.

Similarly, the UNIDO and STRIVE evaluations demonstrated that the programmes amended training methodologies and implementation strategies based upon feedback provided by programme beneficiaries; the presence of positive

\textsuperscript{12} See the independent evaluation of GLOT63, KGZT90; external evaluations from UNIDO Somalia, EU STRIVE.
feedback loops worked to attenuate the targeting of project activities to local community needs.

**Best practice**

» Conducting participatory needs assessments before implementation of activities was found to increase the relevance of activities/strategies, and it was also seen to be an effective contributing factor towards engaging with local communities and increasing trust in the police. Stakeholders engaged should include donors, relevant government ministries and specific justice sections, field staff, civil society and other end beneficiaries, including the general population.

» Evidenced by four reports (FN 12)

The evaluations also revealed that programmes were more effective when implemented through existing community structures to ensure that they were not regarded as “alien” or external to community needs. For example, in the STRIVE project, the activities were implemented through the NGO United Trust Associations. This partnership resulted in increased capacity of community committees and women’s groups to understand Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and sustainable transfer of training outcomes to community leaders and youth.

Similarly, engaging with specific interest groups, such as women, was typically implemented through partnering with local NGOs and public institutions. For example, the ‘Expressive Youth: citizenship, access to justice and culture of peace (BRAX16)’ programme supported the creation of women’s groups, focused on young mothers. In this case, BRAX16 raised awareness and provided relevant information to this interest group through 20 third-party organizations – as a result mobilizing networks of support for 18-29-year-olds in the region.

**Best practice**

» Implementing activities, including community education, awareness-raising campaigns, and inter-group dialogue, through existing community structures (e.g. infrastructure, established groups, schools, religious institutions) establishes trust, improves community relations and builds social cohesion, so that activities are not regarded as “alien” or external to community needs.

» Evidenced by six reports (FN 13)

The KGZT90 evaluation noted the importance of infrastructure in increasing citizen satisfaction with the justice system, as well as ensuring migrants’ safe integration into national systems. Kyrgyzstan, a lower middle-income country with under-developed social protection and labour systems, is positioned on a migratory pathway, involved in several unresolved border disputes, and therefore exposed to threats to country security as a result of corruption, organized crime, illicit drug trafficking and radicalization.

The KGZT90 programme constructed and equipped community-friendly police stations in three multi-ethnic border areas with modern reception rooms, offices of district police officers and juvenile inspectors, as well as separate rooms for social and preventative centres. The evaluation noted the importance of these community-friendly spaces as examples of how police can better link with residents to improve public security and prevent crime.

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13 See the independent evaluation of Cluster XAC/Z60, TAJ/E24, TAJ/H03, RER/H22, XAC/K2, GLO/R35, KGZT90; external evaluations from EU STRIVE, UCLA Los Angeles, USAID Burkina Faso.
FINDINGS ON BEST PRACTICES

Challenge

» Community-oriented policing can enable the adoption of specialized responses to crimes against children or sexual- and gender-based violence, and helps to build a police force with representation of minority or particularly vulnerable groups. However, training of a ‘critical mass’ of minority or vulnerable groups, or providing training of sufficient length and depth, has largely been identified as a challenge to long-term institutional changes in representation.¹

¹ See the independent evaluation of GLOZ99, EGYZ33, MEXZ93, XAPA10, Global Maritime (XEA/X94, XAM/X74, SOM/X54, SOM/Z15, SOM/Z16 XEA/X20, XEA/X93, XSS/X11, XEA/Z22, GLOX99, GLOZ06 MUS/X55, XAM/T72, XEA/X67), KGZT90; external evaluation from EU STRIVE.

GENDER-SENSITIVE AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE CRIME PREVENTION

Gender-sensitive and gender-responsive crime prevention entails not only improving the safety of women within the justice system, but also expands beyond to include multisectoral crime prevention strategies that address the root causes of violence and discrimination against women in all spheres of life. Best practices involve mainstreaming gender into institutional policies, regulations, protocols, guidelines and communication strategies, as well as designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes, policies and strategies which are intentional in engaging women, promoting the realization of women’s rights and strengthening women’s economic independence. In addition, strategic partnerships should be developed to benefit from the strategic competencies and value addition provided by the United Nations system, encourage innovation, and mitigate competition for resources.

Gender-sensitive and gender-responsive crime prevention entails not only improving the safety of women within the justice system, ensuring a ‘do no harm’ approach, but also expands beyond to include multisectoral crime prevention strategies that challenge duty bearers’ attitudes and behaviours and address the root causes of violence and discrimination against women in all spheres of life. This involves mainstreaming gender into institutional policies, regulations, protocols, guidelines and communication strategies, as well as designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes and policies which promote the realization of women’s rights and strengthen women’s economic independence.

The Report of the Secretary-General on Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding (A/65/354-S/2010/466) aligns with these principles through a seven-commitment action plan to track progress on the integration, representation and promotion of women in peacebuilding, including post-conflict planning and financing, rule of law and economic recovery.
Within the evaluation reports, there have been varied levels of action and success in promoting gender-responsive crime prevention. The UNICEF Evaluation in Mexico, BRAX16, the ‘In-Depth Thematic Cluster Evaluation of the Projects: XAC/Z60, TAJ/E24, TAJ/H03, RER/H22, XAC/K22’ (2018) and the UNIDO evaluation, among others, noted that gender was not a specific focus of the strategy and/or projects, which was noted as an oversight as women can play active or passive roles in crime as the primary caregivers for youth, wives of armed group members, or as direct recruits into extremist organizations. Lack of recognition of the multiplicity of women’s roles in the programme planning phases meant that, on occasion, the right partners were not engaged and/or the gender-transformative aspects of the activities were not measured or realized.

In GLOR35, the programme was assessed to have taken a more limited ‘gender-sensitive’ approach, meeting minimal expectations of including women in training activities and sharing sex-disaggregated data on participants in project reports. However, the evaluators suggested that more could be done to ensure gender-responsive programming, meaning that more action was needed in respecting the sex-disaggregated staffing figures for criminal justice actors across organizational levels, ensuring careful analysis and response to case statistics from a diversity perspective, and following up on the extent to which training activities and outputs advanced gender equality.

The IDE of the ‘Global Maritime Crime Programme’ (2015) also found little evidence of mainstreaming gender justice and equity issues in prison reform efforts, noting broadly that the same human rights frameworks were similarly applied for both male and female prisons, with female and male staff receiving training. It was

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**Statistics**

| 3 | Evaluation Reports |
| 2 | Independent Project Evaluations (IPE) |
| 1 | In-Depth Evaluations (IDE) |
| 0 | Meta-synthesis |
| 101 | Stakeholder interview participants |
| 49 | Focus group participants |
| 397 | Survey respondents |
| 10 | Lessons learned and best practices shared |
| 10 | Recommendations developed |

SOURCE: Data Collection/Evaluation Primary Focus = “Gender-sensitive crime prevention strategies”.

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**Best practice**

» Gender and human rights are cross-cutting issues addressed by the United Nations system – strategic partnerships should be developed to benefit from the strategic competencies and value addition provided by the United Nations system, encourage innovation, and mitigate interagency competition for resources. As such, human rights and gender equality should be considered from planning phases, including the selection of implementing agencies and community partners, appointment of staff, the development of strategy/programme documentation and frameworks, and ongoing joint advocacy to optimize impact in this area. This was noted as both a good practice implemented, as well as an area for improvement.

» Evidenced by 10 reports (FN 14)

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14 See the independent evaluation of XAP/X37, BRAX16, Cluster XAC/Z60, TAJ/E24, TAJ/H03, RER/H22, XAC/K2, KGZT90; external evaluations from UNICEF Mexico, UNFPA, UN Women Ivory Coast, UN Women Kenya, UNIDO Somalia, USAID CVE Kenya and Somalia.
therefore recommended that further support be provided to ensure gender-responsive police reform and associated long-term impact, including increasing the participation and representation of women and minorities in the police and improving the complaints handling procedures and legislation for improved working conditions and protection of police labour rights.

Gender equality objectives were sought through both representation in the police force, as well as capacity to respond to gender-based crimes and issues. The ‘Strengthening Security of Groups in Vulnerable Situations project in Mexico (MEXZ93)’ (2019) provided training to police units and emergency call operators in participating states to improve their ability to identify, attend to, and triage cases of gender-based violence. The IPE noted the training’s efficacy in increasing police and operators’ awareness of Women’s Justice Centers and other aid agencies, and thus referrals were provided; however, the evaluation did not find evidence that the training increased coordination between the justice centres and the police, a critical link in ensuring the gender-responsiveness of policing and reduction in violence against women and girls.

Engaging women as informants both before and during the implementation of activities was found to be an effective contributing factor towards developing gender-responsive programmes and crime prevention plans. Within KGZT90, women actively coordinated and participated in community-level discussions on public safety, and crime prevention working groups engaged women in discussions on gender-based violence and other safety concerns. Women’s engagement in these discussions led 33 per cent of the working groups in priority districts to identify and respond to gender-based violence as a core safety issue through district-level plans.

However, women’s capacity to contribute to crime prevention is largely dependent on the country context. In the UN Women programme, women were actively engaged in the PVE and facilitation of peacebuilding. Activities included training women on entrepreneurship skills and/or psychosocial support services to develop their skillsets and expand employment opportunities, thus supporting their economic independence. The activities increased the number of women-owned businesses and community-based organizations focused on peacebuilding, as well as increasing the number of women with paralegal certification, enabling them to support victims of VE on a voluntary and income-generating basis.

The evaluators noted some indirect and direct impacts as a result:

“some of the women have become financially independent and built support groups among themselves, something that can be linked to their resilience to VE due to the enhanced feeling of solidarity. Women have also been involved in

Best practice

» Developing women’s capacity to engage in economic activity and access the formal labour 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. In addition, economic independence can build both young women’s and their children’s resistance and resilience to crime, including violent extremism, by addressing the ‘pull’ effects of poverty and social isolation.

» Evidenced by numerous reports (FN “a” under “Lessons” below.)

15 See the external evaluations from UN Women Kenya, UNIDO Somalia, USAID CVE Kenya and Somalia.
security matters as a result of synergies built between various stakeholders during capacity building and discussion forums. For example, although the specific number was not determinable, it was reported that some women who benefited from the intervention are now part of different community policing (Nyumba Kumi) structures, district peace committees and other security structures because of their acquired skills.16

However, the evaluation also noted that patriarchal norms constrained women’s full participation: “It was reported that some women beneficiaries had received threats in form of ‘polite appeal’ to cease from their engagements because it was against religious and cultural practice, something that breeds fear and discouragement.”

**Lessons**

- Following on from the key finding on representation of minority and vulnerable groups in the police force, several evaluations noted the particular importance of engaging women and barriers to entry. More purposeful integration of women and gender topics into police/multisectoral training and materials (beyond simply attendance of women), as well as gender-responsive facilities, services and policies responding to women’s specific needs are required.8

- Crime prevention strategies should be multisectoral and address the root causes of violence, including gender norms which discriminate against women in all spheres of life. Religious and cultural norms and practices continue to limit women’s mobility across contexts and engagement in crime prevention and peacebuilding. In addition, reductionist interpretations of social norms programming, which do not tackle the structural determinants of marginalization, are limited in their contribution to addressing crimes involving women, both as victims and perpetrators.9

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8 See the independent evaluation of GLOZ99, EGYZ33, MEXZ93, XAPA10, KGZT90, Global Maritime (XEA/X94, XAM/X74, SOM/X54, SOM/Z15, SOM/Z16 XEA/X20, XEA/X93, XSS/X11, XEA/Z22, GLOX99, GLOZ06 MUS/X55, XAM/T72, XEA/X67).

9 See the independent evaluation of EGYZ33, KGZT90; external evaluations from UNICEF Mexico, UNFPA, UN Women Kenya, USAID Burkina Faso.
There were 20 evaluation reports which had content related to PVE. Evaluations focused on preventing VE were more concentrated on Africa and the Middle East (8), Central and Eastern Europe (1), and East Asia and the Pacific (3) regions. The majority of PVE programming assessed in the meta-analysis focused on social policy interventions and political responses (i.e. governance); only one of the evaluations focused on communicative approaches to PVE.

Findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned were sought that related to the measures set out in the Report of the Secretary-General on the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) which, in its section IV.B on Taking Action, specifies elements that countries can address. Actions were reviewed and four areas selected based on those that are of relevance to UNODC. Documents were analysed according to search terms defined under the following areas:

- Strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law
- Engaging communities
- Gender equality and empowering women
- Strategic communications, the Internet and social media

In conducting a frequency analysis on the type (or category) of recommendations presented by evaluations included in the meta-analysis, the most frequent type of recommendation related to improvements in the programme design process (28). Specifically, evaluations pointed to the need for conducting rigorous needs assessments, risk assessments, and stakeholder mapping at the onset of a programme. Another frequently cited recommendation related to the importance of integrating human rights and gender sensitivity into programming (20). Finally, the alignment of M&E frameworks was a prominent category of recommendation in the evaluations included in the meta-analysis (17). In particular, evaluations

**Figure III: Recommendations – categories (content analysis)**

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<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 Evaluation Reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>1799 Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>4149 Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128 Focus group participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>72 Lessons learned</td>
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<td>175 Recommendations</td>
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indicated that there needed to be improvements to the coordination between HQ and field offices, as well as between subregional field offices, on the use and application of M&E indicators and theories of change. Partnerships, and the need to strengthen and support them, were also frequently cited by the evaluations as a key recommendation for their country programme (18).

Less frequently cited, but still prominent, recommendations included the need to improve sustainability practices and streamline funding processes (13); improve coordination in the implementation of programme activities between subregional offices (8); and the need to increase the visibility of the programme through communication and awareness-raising campaigns (5).

Within the PVE evaluations, the most frequently presented category of lessons learned related to the adoption of consultative approaches to design and implementation of programming (12). It was also common for evaluations to indicate that improvement to project (programme) management and procurement practices was important (10). Finally, the alignment of M&E frameworks and indicators to local realities – and embedding flexibility within field office implementation to reflect those realities – was key to effective programming (9).

The evaluations included in the meta-synthesis also indicated that the quality and alignment of training content to local needs was a critical lesson learned in their assessment of the specific country programme (7). Similarly, as with recommendations regarding the alignment of M&E indicators, the evaluations pointed to the importance of adjusting indicators to local contexts and allowing for flexibility at the field office level to incorporate local realities (6).

Related to recommendations regarding programme design, a major lesson learned in the evaluations was the importance of comprehensive baseline data that supported the fidelity of M&E over the course of programming (2).

**Figure IV:** Lessons learned – categories (content analysis)
STRENGTHENING GOOD GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW

Strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law in the context of PVE involves improving (a) the professionalism of security forces, law enforcement agencies and justice institutions as well as ensuring effective oversight and accountability of such bodies, in conformity with international human rights law and the rule of law. Additionally, (b) the reform of national legal frameworks and penitentiary systems plays a prominent role – ensuring the security of inmates, which provides an environment through which to rehabilitate upon release. Finally, (c) strengthening good governance includes disengagement and counselling programmes for persons already engaged in violent extremism.

In total, 12 evaluation reports included in the meta-analysis focused on strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law, and therefore overall findings in this section were based on fewer observations.

**Strengthen the professionalism of security forces, law enforcement agencies and justice institutions**

An effective approach to PVE reflected in the analysis was dedicated human rights training to security forces, law enforcement agents and all those involved in the administration of justice regarding the prohibition of incitement to hatred and, more broadly, respect for human rights within the context of measures taken to counter VE and terrorism.

An evaluation of the UNODC project on counter-terrorism in South and Southeast Asia (XAPX37) (2018) found that there is scope for expansion of training efforts including by engaging with a wider number of countries and by considering the addition of new subjects and/or programmatic approaches, for example, de-radicalization and preventing VE (more local and contextualized measures instead of translated imports from other countries); work in prisons; understanding vulnerabilities; children/youth and counter-terrorism and links to juvenile justice; role of women in counter-terrorism; the role of social media; community mobilization, public awareness campaigns and mass media, etc.

Several reports pointed to the importance of incorporating human rights language into training activities for law enforcement personnel as it is seen to have positive spillover effects to reintegration efforts.\(^\text{17}\) When the fight against VE is presented

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\(^{17}\) See the independent evaluation of XAP/X37, GLO/R35, KGZT90.
as a ‘war’, participants in VE are not seen to have rights by law enforcement agencies. With regard to rehabilitation in prisons, this type of effort is best implemented across all inmates – rather than focusing specifically on VE offenders. This is because distinguishing human rights approaches to non-VE and VE prisoners is counter-intuitive. The IDE of the ‘Global Maritime Crime Programme’ pointed to the problems dealing with VE inmates ‘separately’ from other inmates; such an approach can cause resentment and tension within the prison system and is counterproductive. Therefore, embedding human rights language is best achieved universally for the entire justice system.

Best practice

- Embedding human rights language in constitutional documents and laws is not enough to change the behaviour of enforcement officials. Incorporation of human rights language into more actionable/frequently used documentation (such as national prison inspection forms) as well as training for law enforcement personnel (such as modules on scientific police investigation methods), can be more effective and have positive spillover effects on reintegration efforts.
- Evidenced by three reports (FN 17)

Reform national legal frameworks and penitentiary systems

Penitentiary systems are sometimes under-staffed and under-resourced, with Governments facing logistical challenges that can limit their capacity to implement reform. For example, KGZT90 noted that the prison system faced many challenges including lack of material conditions, difficulties faced in separating and controlling the prison populations, breakdown of state prison industries and lack of the prison staff training needed by a modern civil prison. Reforming penitentiary systems to mitigate radicalization is therefore set against this context. In the case of the KGZT90, UNODC provided support in implementing the National Development Strategy of the penitentiary system and implementing the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules). Marginalization drives radicalization of inmates to VE; improving prison standards and treatment thereby mitigates the spread of VE.

Beyond developing standards, UNODC supports implementation of those standards on the ground through mentorship and capacity-building. For example, the IDE of the ‘Global Maritime Crime Programme’ included looking at how external advisers were able to improve the conditions in at least one of the prisons where prisoners convicted of VE and piracy were placed. Prison mentors proved particularly effective in developing sustainable changes in the way prisons are run, and the evaluation took particular note of the success of the Norwegian prison mentors in Garowe, leading to a commitment to reforming the role which prisons play in the justice system with a significant shift away from simply detaining prisoners to the rehabilitation of prisoners wherever possible.

Introduce disengagement, rehabilitation and counselling programmes

Disengagement of marginalized groups from VE requires community engagement, gender-sensitive programming (to co-opt women), and programming focused on children and youth. For example, GLOR35 – Nigeria, a European Union-UNODC-CTED Partnership on Strengthening

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18 See the independent evaluation of XAP/X37, GLO/R35 Nigeria segment, KGZT90; external evaluation from EU STRIVE.
Criminal Justice Responses for Multidimensional Security (Terrorism) (2018), involved the development of human rights training modules. This programme has been undertaken in support of local ownership that included the practitioners’ perspective in the different modules to complement the more theoretical, academic orientation of the current drafts as a positive approach.

Similarly, the evaluation of the UNICEF Community-based Reintegration Programme for Children Released from Armed Forces and Armed Groups in Boma State (former Greater Pibor Administrative Area) in South Sudan (2018) developed findings related to approaches of disengagement and rehabilitation that worked with existing community structures. The evaluation found that school attendance among youth was key to reintegration efforts; a lack of ‘life structure’ and guidance was a risk factor associated with recruitment (and re-recruitment) into VE and related criminal activities.

One challenge with a school-based approach is that it risks missing out on young girls, who may not attend formal schooling in VE hotspots. Gender sensitivity needs to be considered from the very beginning of the programme design process. In the case of the UNICEF programme in Boma State, this entailed ensuring that there was a concerted effort to collect data on identifying girl children associated with armed forces and groups (CAAFAG) and their children, respecting their privacy in the process, as well as making gender considerations mandatory in programme design. Without this, any intervention risks ignoring an important segment of the CAAFAG population in South Sudan, as well as perpetuating gender inequity.

Lessons

- Strained working conditions and lack of public service benefits available to prison staff often undermine human resourcing efforts in prison systems. When justice system staff feel unsupported it creates favourable conditions for radical extremism among inmates. In addition, human rights embedment into VE programming must be done in conjunction with human resources embedment into the overall criminal justice system. Improving human resourcing issues among VE inmates can have the unintended consequence of demonstrating to non-VE inmates that they are ‘special’ and warrant additional rights. This can create tensions within the criminal justice systems’ response to non-VE and VE crime.

*See the independent evaluation of KG2T90, Global Maritime (XEA/X94, XAM/X74, SOM/X54, SOM/Z15, SOM/Z16 XEA/X20, XEA/X93, XSS/X11, XEA/Z22, GLOX99, GLOZ06 MUS/X55, XAM/T72, XEA/X67).
ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Best practice for engaging communities in the context of PVE involves adopting community-oriented policing models which intentionally seek to engage youth in community decision-making bodies and activities. Few reports also noted the benefits of local and family-based mentorship models which, in the context of PVE, have shown how moderate religious leaders serve as effective mentors, having built-in community trust, which can help to prevent VE recruitment.

Engaging communities is key to mitigating radicalization and recruitment to VE. Effective community engagement means adopting community-oriented policing models and approaching communities as ‘partners’ in programming. Additionally, developing local and family-based mentorship programming focused on at-risk groups (e.g. marginalized youth) or those that have been previously charged/convicted with VE offences is an effective means through which to discourage re-offending and can dampen re-recruitment into VE.

**Adopt community-oriented policing models and programmes**

This would increase public awareness and vigilance and improve police understanding and knowledge with regard to communities, thus enhancing their ability to be proactive and identify grievances and critical issues at an early stage, and was one of the elements found in GLOZ82. This evaluation found that the combination of sports activities with life skills is innovative in the crime/drug prevention field. Partnering with international sports organizations and local NGOs has been useful for getting a clearer understanding of sport as a vehicle for reaching out to vulnerable youths.  

Local knowledge and rigorous research methods are being used for identifying target groups and

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**Statistics**

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SOURCE: Data Collection/Evaluation Primary Focus = “VE: Engaging Communities”.

field locales. Because of difficulties in attributing causality to a single intervention, and many additional variables, neither the impact on youth involvement in crime, nor the impact on youth at risk can be established or even predicted at this point. However, process and impact assessments are under way, and may make a valuable contribution to the evidence base in the field of sport-based crime prevention.

**Develop local and family-based mentorship programmes**

Mentorship within PVE programming typically took the form of working through religious leaders as existing community agents; they have
built trust, have a platform and visibility in their communities; and have access to youth who may be radicalized and participate in VE.20 Supporting alternative (moderate) voices through religious leaders (e.g. imams) is an effective means to mitigate radicalization. This can include targeted capacity-building for religious leaders and radio presenters (and sermon guides for religious leaders). These efforts should focus on improving the ‘skill set’ of moderate voices and include guidance on how to mentor congregants and members of the religious group who seek advice from their religious leader.

Mentorship has also been seen to be an effective way to mitigate radicalization and prevent VE when paired with market-based skills training. The UNIDO skills training programme in Kismayo, Somalia produced graduates who were less likely to (re-)join militant groups, more easily able to integrate within their communities and felt better equipped to manage local conflict and tensions. The programme paired small-group mentorship focused on life skills and conflict minimization with vocational skills training activities. An adjacent programme in Kenya found similar results: the STRIVE programme paired one-on-one mentoring with group-based dialogues and vocational/livelihood training, focusing on hotspots for VE recruitment in urban areas of Kenya (Majengo, Nairobi).

In this case, one-on-one mentoring was targeted at the most ‘at-risk’ youths participating in the programme. The theory of change guiding this programme stipulated that vulnerable youths would be more resilient to the “narratives and incentives” offered by extremist recruiters if they had one-on-one counselling that identified and responded to their specific personal needs and conditions.

20See the external evaluations from EU STRIVE, UCLA Los Angeles.

Best practice

» Supporting alternative (moderate) voices through community agents (often religious leaders) is an effective means to mitigate radicalization and VE recruitment. Extant community leaders have built trust within their communities. Attendance of mosques and consumption of radio material operates as a ‘market’; highly skilled imams attract larger audiences.

» Evidenced by two reports (FN 20)

Lessons

» PVE must be aware of community norms, structures, and tensions in the design phase. For example, tensions between ‘elders’ and ‘youth’ in community structures are associated with increased risk of radicalization, and thereby create hotspots for VE recruitment. The allocation of benefits, application of community rules (according to age), and land ownership are frequently cited sources of elder/youth tension. If a feeling of ‘us’ v. ‘them’ is permitted to develop, this can be exploited by VE recruiters. Furthermore, working with young girls in their school setting requires that young girls attend formal schooling, which is not always the case.

See the external evaluations from UNICEF South Sudan, Peaceworks / USIP Kenya.
GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERING WOMEN

Best practice for supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of PVE noted the particular importance of investing in gender-sensitive research and data collection, as well as engaging women in national law enforcement and security agencies. A comprehensive understanding of women’s roles in VE facilitates the development of targeted programme responses that include identifying the drivers that lead women to participate in VE but also understand how VE and terrorism affect their lives and the lives of their families.

Invest in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women’s roles in VE

Investing in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women’s roles in VE facilitates the development of targeted programme responses that include identifying the drivers that lead women to participate in VE but also to understand how VE and terrorism affect their lives and the lives of their families. Additionally, including women in national law enforcement agencies has been shown to be an effective approach to community-based policing – especially in the case of counter-terrorism and PVE frameworks.

Gender equality in the context of VE was taken up in two evaluations included in the meta-analysis. The first, Women’s Active Participation in Preventing and Response to Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Kenya, was done by UN Women. One element of the project was a gender analysis of the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism to incorporate a gender pillar and a research on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among security personnel. The production of the gender analysis was consultative and ensured women’s voices were heard by visiting and listening to their views in the grass roots, which were later incorporated into the recommendations of the report. Although it may be early to judge the project’s impacts, its recommendations to include a gender pillar in the national strategy is a huge success, as it can be a key driver for future gender-sensitive national engagements in preventing combating VE.

XAPA10 also found that a peer learning scheme, for which the project took an approach of organizing a regional legal research group meeting – a coordination and information sharing mechanism – was very effective in stimulating recipient countries’ initiatives for further actions necessary to tackle the issues and challenges, including about gender equality.

The Nigeria-European Union-UNODC-CTED Partnership on Strengthening Criminal Justice
Responses for Multidimensional Security (Terrorism) (GLOR35) evaluation found that there was a need to give more attention to case statistics to support a stronger inclusion of women's human rights issues (such as female victims and witnesses) from a diversity perspective in training activities and outputs. This approach must be applied in other projects to strengthen gender mainstreaming and advance gender equality.

The evaluation of the final Report on the PCVE Project Evaluation included the following quote, obtained during one of the interviews:

“We had only heard about al-Shabaab recruitment in passing and thought that it was an issue for the police and so we did not concern ourselves with it; but after the meeting at White Sands hotel when we met Madam Khadija, an al-Shabaab returnee who narrated her experience, and the sessions from an NCTC representative, we noticed how vulnerable we all are. Since then we try to talk to our peers about the dangers of VE. We are thankful for this opportunity and request for more so that we can understand VE issues better and further extend our support to our peers who are alienated deep in the grassroots.”

In other words, empowering women within the criminal justice system’s response to VE should be motivated by women’s involvement in VE (as perpetrators, victims, witnesses, etc.). For example, evidence suggests that increasing women’s representation in police forces in VE ‘hotspots’ has spillover effects among women in that community, who report being better able to spot radicalization indicators in their family members (through improved communication with policewomen).

Include women and other underrepresented groups in national law enforcement and security agencies, including as part of counter-terrorism prevention and response frameworks

There was more attention paid to including women in national law enforcement and security agencies.23 As the GLOR35 evaluation noted, gender mainstreaming has mostly been understood as including women in training activities and sharing sex-disaggregated data on participants in project reports. More could be done to acquire further sex-disaggregated staffing data (including levels of seniority) of the criminal justice actors involved in project activities. KGZT90 noted the need for further support to ensure long-term impact under the police reform (in the area of increasing the participation and representation of women and minorities in the police) and forensic components. As such, a mentorship programme was launched in seven priority areas of Kyrgyzstan, and included both the capacity development of policewomen and the organization of promotional work among youth in priority areas.

Best practice

- In certain cases, affirmative action has been seen to be an effective means to increase women’s representation in higher management levels of the criminal justice system – specifically with regard to VE programming. Mentorship programmes for policewomen have supported their progression through the ranks, and their representation in specialist law enforcement areas such as VE.

- Evidenced by three reports (FN 23)

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23 See the independent evaluation of KGZT90, Global Maritime (XEA/X94, XAM/X74, SOM/X54, SOM/Z15, SOM/Z16 XEA/X20, XEA/X93, XSS/X11, XEA/Z22, GLOX99, GLOZ06 MUS/X55, XAM/T72, XEA/X67); external evaluation from UN Women Kenya.
districts to encourage more young women and ethnic minorities to consider a career in the police.

Collecting gender ratio data at conferences and capacity-building events is a best practice employed by many programmes. This gender empowerment approach can also be brought forward into administrative tasks during recruitment, by requiring ‘gender’ be specified in the list of proposed training candidates. However, it is difficult to ensure a gender-neutral composition of training/event participants in certain contexts as there may exist an over-representation (or skewed distribution) of one gender in upper management levels and certain sectors. This focus on gender ratios (without disaggregation by seniority) can be addressed by giving more attention to case statistics (e.g. female victims, witnesses, facilitators of VE) from a diversity perspective.

Strategic communications, the Internet and social media serve as critical pathways for both the recruitment of youth into extremist groups, as well as for PVE. Conducting training sessions for media professionals and editors to responsibly and mindfully share stories of extremist incidences, or to share stories on positive youth behaviours, can help minimize recruitment at the grass-roots level.

PVE programming assessed in the meta-analysis included activities that empowered and enabled victims of VE to transform their loss into a constructive force for preventing further VE in their communities.

**Media and online forums**

Providing targeted capacity-building and engagement activities to media practitioners was observed to be an effective method of targeting VE. Separate training sessions for editors and reports to discuss VE cases and advise on appropriate reporting methods had a downstream effect on grass-roots VE recruitment.

The evaluation of the UNODC Criminal Justice Programme in Kyrgyzstan noted that it was the

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See the external evaluations from EU STRIVE, UN Women Kenya.

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### Statistics

| Evaluation Report | 1 |
| Independent Project Evaluations (IPE) | 0 |
| In-Depth Evaluation (IDE) | 1 |
| Meta-synthesis | 0 |
| Stakeholder interview participants | 63 |
| Focus group participants | |
| Survey respondents | 2321 |
| Lessons learned and best practices shared | 6 |
| Recommendations developed | 0 |

SOURCE: Data Collection/Evaluation Primary Focus = “VE: Strategic Communications, the Internet, Social Media”.

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See the independent evaluation of GLOZ99, GLOR35, XAPA10; external evaluation from EU STRIVE.
only UNODC programme in Central Asia – at the time of the evaluation in 2017 – which had its own web page on the UNODC website and used a variety of communication tools to raise awareness about the programme’s activities, including social media (Facebook), organizing information campaigns, producing videos, developing and distributing publications (news briefs, articles, press releases, leaflets, infographics, analytical reports).

The evaluation of Countering Violence and Extremism through Skills Training and Livelihoods Support for At-risk Youth in Kismayo noted that the project used a more dynamic approach with social media such as YouTube and Twitter to provide visible updates from the field. Media concerned particular project activities, training methodologies, milestones and graduation ceremonies, and occasionally included responses and tweets from the donor. YouTube tutorials, for example on simple blacksmithing, were also used as a form of visual training to supplement more traditional training methods, and the project’s managers reported that visual tutorials encouraged active technical discussions between trainees.²⁶

Best practice

» Incorporating first-hand victim stories into radio broadcasts can reduce radicalization of listeners by presenting VE against personalized losses. These personalized stories can be embedded with positive topics of coexistence and tolerance. In addition, exposure to pro-social media and positive role models can influence adopted social norms (especially among youth).

» Evidenced by two reports (FN 25)

²⁶ See the external evaluations from EU STRIVE, USAID Burkina Faso, USAID CVE Kenya and Somalia.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The pilot of the crime prevention meta-synthesis revealed some important lessons, particularly in highlighting good practice, and lessons in processes for the design and measurement of crime prevention programmes and strategies. However, the pilot also presented challenges to the conduct of a similar, though more comprehensive and methodologically rigorous meta-synthesis. Guided by the UNEG standards, best practice for the elaboration of lessons learned include an appropriate analysis of evidential limitations and their application across different contexts. However, evaluations of complex and multi-country strategies sometimes take more exploratory and qualitative approaches not guided by a clear theory of change or results matrix (as evidenced in the findings), and therefore end up drawing best practices from single point observations which do not sufficiently analyse the nuance of applying ‘best fit practices’ across contexts and sectors. Therefore, in many cases, the lessons identified are focused on practices and processes targeted at a specific intervention/programme/strategy and their design, and do not extend to the broader policy-level implications.

In addition, PVE is a new and evolving field and the presence of rigorous evaluations to draw from is minimal. Based on the pilot meta-synthesis, the larger meta-synthesis may face gaps in information. There is limited information on preventative measures across contexts and sectors, with many evaluations focused on youth engagement in conflict-affected areas like Kenya and Somalia. For example, the evaluation of the programme in Los Angeles, United States, was the only evaluation to note the importance of integrating PVE in public health programmes in order to identify early warning signs and risks. A more extensive and systematic literature review, building on other meta-syntheses in the area of PVE, would significantly contribute to broadening and strengthening the evidence base.

In summary, there are four recommendations that have been recognized that can be applied in a broader policy context. These should be considered as both evaluation and crime prevention policies are developed.

There were few policy implications that could be drawn from the evaluations. This was because the evaluations were purposed to focus on how the programmes and projects were implemented to achieve specific results, and not on drawing broader policy implications within the key lessons learned. 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 and line of questioning. This would make it easier to synthesize reports for consideration by international policymaking bodies like the World Congress.

In a few cases, broader lessons could be drawn, particularly in terms of national policies. Most of those had to do with the subjects of Agenda 3 of the Congress, showing that national laws and programmes were essential to developing clear responses to the problems of crime prevention. As with the recommendation on incorporating
overarching policy lessons into evaluations, the terms of reference should also recommend evaluators to provide explicit analysis of how findings could be extended to different contexts and sectors.

In terms of addressing VE, there were few United Nations projects evaluated that addressed the issue of dealing with young people who had been involved in extremist groups, and other reports analysed on this subject were meta-synthesis. The main report was a UNICEF project in South Sudan that worked to re-integrate former child soldiers in the community. The lesson learned was the importance of community engagement to bring VE/child soldiers back to normalcy, and that a concerted effort could be successful. Community engagement, and engagement of support systems like parents and religious institutions/leaders, was a key theme in other PVE evaluations external to the United Nations as well.

Finally, in terms of the cross-cutting theme of gender equality, programmes need to be moved towards being gender-responsive, or gender-transformative, not only gender-sensitive. This implies integration of gender considerations into planning processes and frameworks, 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.
## Annexe.

### Evaluations referenced

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