

# EX POST PAPER

# GUIDELINE EVALUATION OF

# PCVE PROGRAMMES AND

# INTERVENTIONS

## Summary

European Union Member States have rapidly implemented programmes and interventions for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism (PCVE), but the evaluation of these measures is still in its infancy. Evaluation, however, is indispensable if we want to identify what works in PCVE and to design evidence-based interventions.

The extent to which PCVE programmes and interventions have been evaluated in EU Member States differs enormously. Some Member States struggle before they even begin due to the difficulties existing around PCVE evaluation.

This step-by-step guideline provides practical recommendations for the evaluation process, which involves three phases (preparing for evaluation, conducting evaluation and outcomes of evaluation), and relates these steps to the area of PCVE. A checklist is provided to help evaluators fulfil a qualitatively high-standard evaluation process. In addition, helpful tools and formats are shared in the annexes. This guideline has been developed to assist anyone working in the area of PCVE and who is interested in conducting or commissioning evaluation.

This guideline on evaluation of PCVE programmes was developed by **Merel Molenkamp and Lieke Wouterse** of the RAN Centre of Excellence and researcher and evaluation expert **Amy-Jane Gielen**. This guideline does not reflect the official views of the European Commission or Member States.

## Phase 1: Preparing for evaluation

### Specify objective and purpose of evaluation

When preparing for an evaluation, the first questions concern the unit of analysis: What do you want to evaluate? Do you want to evaluate an entire programme or one or several specific interventions?

A *programme* (which in this paper also refers to a strategy, action plan, local approach etc.) is characterised by containing the overarching policy principles and strategies that should lead to preventing and countering radicalisation, as well as a number of interventions that contribute to achieving this greater goal.

*Interventions* are specific activities and methods (e.g. a mentoring intervention) aimed at a specific target group (e.g. young offenders between the age of 18 and 24) with a specific aim (e.g. building resilience and disengaging from extremist mind-set).

When no prior evaluations have been conducted, interventions provide for an easier and better demarcated starting point for evaluation.

One precondition for conducting an evidence-based evaluation of a programme is to have all the interventions in the programme evaluated first in order to determine their separate outcome and effectiveness. This can provide insights into the effectiveness of the programme as a whole. However, as this requires a large number of resources, as well as a lot of time, the alternative would be to conduct a theoretical programme scan. This is explained in paragraph 2 on evaluation type and design but should be considered when making the decision about what you want to evaluate.

One should also categorise the PCVE programme or intervention based on its desired outcome. A useful tool for this categorisation is to distinguish between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention<sup>1</sup>.

- *Primary prevention* focuses on early prevention of radicalisation and often consists of awareness-raising and resilience-building. It is aimed at the general public or specific larger groups in society (parents, teachers, youngsters in school etc.). These types of interventions and programmes are often not only focused on radicalisation, but on all kinds of social issues that may arise from vulnerability. As such, it is challenging to evaluate them specifically on their effectiveness to prevent radicalisation.
- *Secondary prevention* consists of interventions for people showing signs of radicalisation and a vulnerability towards this particular process. They have not yet acted upon this vulnerability by engaging in criminal acts and are still in the pre-criminal space.
- *Tertiary prevention* is aimed at working with those who have engaged in illegal, criminal activities related to violent extremism and terrorism. They are part of the criminal justice system and are viewed as radicalised people. Therefore, interventions mainly consist of deradicalisation or disengagement to prevent reoffending.

Another important question to ask is why you want to evaluate. What do you want to know? What is the purpose of evaluating? This can be about determining effects, cost-effectiveness, improving the process, the quality, etc.

Determining the purpose of the evaluation is a first step in defining the evaluation type or method and research questions.

#### Checklist: objective and purpose

- We know which intervention or programme we want to evaluate
- We have categorised our intervention or programme into primary, secondary and tertiary prevention to understand what we want to achieve with this intervention/programme
- We have established the purpose of the evaluation

## Create (political) buy-in and involve stakeholders

There are barriers to perform the evaluation of PCVE programmes and interventions. One major barrier is the risk of reputation loss when the evaluation is not conclusive enough or when the programme or intervention has turned out to be less effective than expected. Media play a role in framing results and tend to focus on 'negative' aspects, creating political tension. A lack of previous research on PCVE programme or intervention evaluations also makes it harder to start evaluating. It is not always clear where or how to begin.

Due to these barriers, it is essential to create (political) buy-in and to involve stakeholders when evaluating. Stakeholders such as intervention providers, the target group, the financial sponsor etc. need to be included in the evaluation to ensure access to data, to ensure their interest is taken to account in the evaluation and to ensure their willingness to do something with the outcomes.

The following reasons and arguments should be highlighted when discussing evaluation with (political) leadership and other stakeholders:

- *Evaluation will emerge as a bigger topic on the PCVE agenda.* The pressure to 'do something'

is now accompanied by the need for knowing the effects of the interventions.

- *Performing evaluation improves practice.* By evaluating your practice, you can improve it, which is also in the interest of stakeholders. Having a sound theory of change (annex 2.) can help as it provides a clear summary of what it is you want to achieve and how you plan to do this.
- *Evaluation avoids malpractice.* Some people take advantage of the pressure to 'do something', which leads to an industry of practitioners without expertise claiming to have the solution to radicalisation ('deradicalisation industry'). In addition to the societal risks and impact, this also poses a big political risk.
- *Ensure sustainable funding.* For stakeholders (e.g. the ones providing or benefitting from the intervention), evaluation can help ensure sustainable funding since it can, for example, prove effectiveness.

#### Checklist: political and stakeholder buy-in

- We informed our stakeholders about the evaluation and their role
- We developed a clear case for the need to evaluate this programme/evaluation

## Ensure resources

### *Financial*

Ensuring resources is another important aspect that should be covered in the phase of preparing the evaluation. Involving stakeholders and creating political buy-in may help secure financial resources. When sufficient financial resources are difficult to achieve, one possibility is to start with a pilot evaluation so as to ensure resources for one evaluation first.

### *Time*

In addition to financial resources, time is a valuable resource when it comes to evaluation. Given that it is best to start as early as possible, evaluations should be reflected upon and planned as a normal start of interventions. At this stage, it is still possible to define what you will need for your evaluation and it provides more possibilities regarding data collection and evaluation methods.

### *Expertise*

Another resource needed for evaluation is expertise. Independent researchers and/or research institutions can contribute to evidence-based evaluations since these are based on the scientifically proven effectiveness of an intervention. However, these may be hard to find or achieve due to lack of prior research. In this case, it would be easier to start with practice-based evaluation. This is based on an evaluated practice that shows the effectiveness of an intervention. Practice-based evaluations can be raised to a higher level if they are more structured, methodologically sound and preferably have before and after measurements.

To improve the quality of data and bring evaluations to a higher level, researchers could join practitioners from the beginning of the intervention. They can help each other in understanding the importance of reporting specific issues in a certain way as to help evaluation. This can be the starting point for a multi-agency evaluation network that encourages the exchange of information. These multi-agency settings help in discovering the underlying mechanisms and patterns.

### *Access to data*

When evaluating, it can be hard to retrieve all necessary data due to privacy, patient confidentiality or security restrictions. More informal multi-agency settings can help to obtain

more information without necessarily receiving the data itself.

### *Commissioning evaluation and self-evaluation*

Research commissioned by the government is often limited by a restricted framework that can obstruct open evaluation. Government or policy advisors should pay attention to how they commission for evaluation. Evaluations by independent researchers or research institutions have the advantage of being more objective than self-evaluations. When conducting self-evaluation, it is not always easy to be critical on the weaknesses of the intervention. Self-evaluations, however, do require people to reflect on their own intervention and responsibilities.

When commissioning evaluations, it is important to highlight the main objective and purpose as this will determine how external evaluators will organise the evaluation. It is also important to be critical about the budget and timeframe and to what extent it is feasible to undertake the foreseen evaluation within the set boundaries. The checklist in this guideline can also help those commissioning evaluations to draft their assignments and track progress.

#### **Checklist: resources**

- We ensured necessary financial means to perform the evaluation
- We ensured sufficient time to complete the evaluation
- We ensured the relevant expertise to conduct the evaluation
- We ensured access to the relevant data for the evaluation

## Phase 2: Conducting evaluation

### Develop evaluation type and design

Once you have secured the preconditions to prepare for the evaluation, the next step is to decide on the type and design of the evaluation. The type of evaluation is strongly correlated with the objective of the evaluation.

There are different **types of evaluation**:

- *Effect evaluation/ impact evaluation*; did the intervention have the foreseen effect or impact? This evaluation focuses exclusively on output and impact.
- *Pragmatic evaluation*; oriented towards meeting the needs of programme decision-makers and stakeholders. Evaluations should provide them the most useful information. For this, you will need to know beforehand what it is that they want to know.
- *Process evaluation*; what happened and why? The evaluation incorporates performance audits and focuses on whether performance standards were achieved. It is mainly concerned with output and investigates whether an intervention has been implemented as planned.
- *Mechanism evaluation*; focuses on why the intervention worked (or did not work) as planned. This is a layer of analysis added to the process evaluation.
- *Theory-driven evaluation*; focuses on the 'theory of change', looking at how and why a certain intervention theoretically leads to a desired outcome and how this reflects on the actual output and outcome of a programme or intervention.
- *Economic evaluation*; this is related to the costs of the intervention. It could be a cost-benefit analysis, cost-utility analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis or cost-consequence analysis.
- *Realistic evaluation*; what works, in which context, for who and how? The aim is to identify the combination of mechanisms and contexts leading to outcome patterns.
- Mixed types of evaluations

The type of evaluation you choose may also correlate with the stage the programme or intervention is in. In general, the earlier you start working on the evaluation, the better. Preferably, evaluation is already part of the design of the intervention or programme before it is implemented. This will ensure you are able to create a theory-of-change, collect the relevant data, and carry out before and after measurements.

If you start evaluating when the intervention or programme is already being implemented (but not yet finished), it is still important to take stock of the initial plan, research whether changes have occurred and whether these changes are likely to influence the evaluation. A before measurement will, in most cases, not be possible. But this depends, for instance, on whether contact with the target group has already been established. It is still possible to start collecting relevant data if this has not happened before.

In many cases, the evaluation only follows once the project has finished or is in its final stages. When the project is finished, evaluations can only be based on the available data, which is not always the most relevant data. Also, as a before measurement is not possible, nothing can be said about whether the intervention or programme contributed to change. Therefore, these limitations should be considered when evaluating

an intervention or programme that has already finished.

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### *Theoretical programme scan*

The evaluation of a programme poses specific challenges, as discussed in phase 1. A first step can be to conduct a theoretical programme scan. This is a scan based on a document analysis and, if possible, interviews or questionnaires. The scan touches upon the following three key evaluative issues:

- Does the programme respond to the current threat and risks surrounding terrorism/radicalisation/extremism? (e.g. analysis shows there is a jihadist and right-wing extremist threat in the area, the programme's intervention mainly focuses on jihadism)
  - Is the programme comprehensive in its approach or are there gaps? Can these gaps be accounted for? (e.g. experience and research show the importance of involving young people in preventing radicalisation. The programme only addresses parents and teachers)
  - Are the interventions that are part of the programme suitable to tackle the issues at hand? (e.g. research has shown that training for multi-agency groups is more effective than training participants from one professional group. Have these insights been considered?)
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After selecting the evaluation type, the next step is to develop the **evaluation design**. This refers to a more detailed plan for your evaluation. A tool to help make this design is shared in Annex 2 (via IMPACT Europe) and Annex 3. Also, Annex 3 contains a question list which has also been used as an exercise during the Member States workshops.

### Checklist: evaluation type and design

- We decided on the type of evaluation
- We considered at which stage of the programme or intervention we will start the evaluation (planning, implementation, completion)
- We developed a design of the evaluation

### Collect data

Within your evaluation design, you have considered what type of data you need in order to answer your evaluation questions. There are different forms of data collection that can be used for evaluation. The most common ones used in PCVE evaluations are:

- *Questionnaires* can be used before and after the intervention. The questionnaires can be completed by different stakeholders, such as the target audience, their (family) network, practitioners involved in the intervention etc. (see indicator models in Annex 1 for types of questionnaires)
- *Interviews* with the abovementioned stakeholders. Questions can focus on output (number of participants), process (did the implementation go as planned, what went well, what could have been improved) and outcome (what they learned from the intervention, what changed since the intervention)
- *Participant observation* is where the researcher is essentially a 'fly on the wall' during the intervention. He or she is concerned with how the practitioners conduct the intervention and how the target audience responds to it.
- *Document-analysis* is a form of close reading of the essential documents that are related to the PCVE intervention, for example

practitioners manuals, guidelines or notes and minutes.

When collecting data to evaluate PCVE programmes or interventions, the following issues should be considered:

- The target group, especially in tertiary prevention programmes and interventions, may be relatively small and difficult to access. E.g. when you only have one or two charged or convicted terrorists in your Member State, the outcomes of evaluating a programme on, for example, effectiveness might not be representative. In your evaluation design, you can consider taking on board knowledge and information of similar evaluations to strengthen the basis of your own evaluation.
- Sometimes the target group (or those surrounding them) are burdened by many requests for interviews and participation in research. This may have a negative impact on themselves and may also lead to a reluctance to cooperate. In your evaluation design, you should consider who to approach and how and what would be their benefit in participating in this evaluation.
- Also, for professionals working in this field, collecting data for evaluation may seem like a daunting task. In your evaluation design, you should consider how data collection can become an integral part of professionals' work instead of an add-on to their existing workload.
- As mentioned earlier, some of the data you might need or want may be restricted. For this target group, much of the data is confidential. In your evaluation design, you should address how you will either gain access to the data or find other ways to gather the information you need.

#### **Checklist: data collection**

- We know what kind of data we need based on the evaluation design
- We decided which methods of data collection we will use
- We took into account the considerations and risks regarding this data collection and have integrated this into our evaluation design

## Analyse data and formulate outcomes

Having data does not in itself directly support or prove anything. The data available needs to be contextualised within an analytical framework and assigned meaning based on the evaluation objective, type and design.

Two elements can help with the analysis of the data:

- The theory of change behind the programme/interventions
- Indicators related to the theory of change

The theory of change (see Annex 2) helps to clarify how and why you believe the programme or intervention will lead to the desired outcomes.

An indicator is a measurable variable which is a representation of an associated factor or quantity, which cannot be directly measured. For example, there is much interest around the EU to evaluate the effectiveness of exit-interventions. In general, these interventions have a specific aim that should contribute to someone disengaging from violent extremist or terrorist actions and/or mindset. One often-used intervention is ideological counselling, which is aimed at helping someone develop a different, non-extremist worldview. However, a worldview is not something that can be measured. Therefore, we should identify a behaviour that indicates that someone is changing their view in a particular direction (away from extremism). The

question is: which indicator(s) may show this is happening? In this case, we could say an indicator is: *the extent to which someone denounces his or her extremist ideology or group*. When you then have collected transcripts or observation reports of the counselling session in which the individual has claimed to ‘now hate extremist group X’, this supports the indicator and with that the likelihood someone is changing their worldview.

Although not many, there are examples of indicators that have been developed or used in the PCVE area. Annex 2 provides examples of these indicator lists.

One of the challenges related to the analysis of data is having to address the inherent subjectivity of data provided, for example, by professionals working on the same case. Sometimes, the different data collected may not match or may even be contradictory. In these cases, it is important to investigate and identify the causes of these differences. In multi-agency settings, the different focus and interest of stakeholders (e.g. the police or a social worker) may account for differences in observations.

During the analysis, it is important to keep in mind how you want to present your outcomes. When possible, use a combination of quantitative methods (to explain outcomes with numbers, percentages and graphs to provide an indication of trends or patterns) and qualitative methods (using anecdotes, quotes, case-studies to provide in-depth understanding and context).

#### Checklist: analysis and outcome formulation

- We developed an analytical framework (for example, a ‘theory of change’ model) to analyse the collected data
- We formulated measurable indicators
- We formulated outcomes quantitatively and qualitatively

## Phase 3: Outcomes of evaluation

### Cross-check outcomes

Once you have a clear overview of your outcomes (specific to your programme or intervention), it may be beneficial to cross-check them. This may be achieved by comparing other local, national or international evaluations in the same or related fields (e.g. organised crime, cults). If similar interventions show similar outcomes, this might strengthen the case in favour or against this intervention. This information is relevant when presenting the outcomes.

Having multiple evaluations of multiple PCVE programmes and interventions help support a stronger evidence-base for your activities. As such, it may be beneficial to create economies of scale by commissioning and conducting several evaluations simultaneously. This is especially valid if the input of a small target group (e.g. terrorist offenders and their families) is needed. Therefore, it would be good to combine data collection from the target group for several evaluations with different purposes. It may also help overcome the difficulty of reaching the target group. Practically, this would mean that one questionnaire or one interview touches upon information relevant to different evaluations. Another example can be when one service provider is delivering an intervention in several local contexts. Local authorities can pool resources to commission an evaluation and differences of context can be taken into account. Efficiently collecting and using data is also more cost-effective. This implies, however, that different evaluations should start around the same time or are at least be synchronised during the data collection period.

It is also important to cross-check outcomes with initial thoughts, assumptions and the ‘theory of change’ behind the programme or evaluation. Were these correct assumptions? Have the

circumstances influencing the programme or interventions (context factors) remained the same or have they changed significantly (e.g. due to a terrorist attack and its ramifications)? Have new insights been formed during the process of implementation which might explain outcomes that you did not expect? These reflections will also help position your outcomes within a wider context of theory and practice.

#### **Checklist: cross-check outcomes**

- We cross-checked our outcomes with other local, national or international evaluations within the same or related fields
- We cross-checked our outcomes with our initial thoughts, assumptions and the 'theory of change' and have considered any significant changes during the implementation and evaluation process that may have influenced the outcomes

## Presenting outcomes

One important aspect of evaluation is to help shape and improve policy and practice. This requires organisations, practitioners and policymakers to adapt the outcomes of evaluations to be put into practice. This highlights the importance of presenting the outcomes in an insightful and accessible way.

However, in view of transparency and reliability, it is also important to clearly explain the aim of the evaluation, as well as how it was conducted and how the findings have been analysed into outcomes and how these outcomes can be viewed from a practical and/or research perspective (see Checklist: cross-check outcomes).

In practice, this means it is advisable to develop a comprehensive evaluation report that describes the process and methods. It is also recommended to provide a short policy paper, PowerPoint presentation or infographic to highlight the main

outcomes and show the value for practitioners, researchers and policymakers working in this area. Also, be aware that this short deliverable will probably be used more frequently than the comprehensive report, which is more for your own reflection, legitimisation of the commissioned assignment or interested researchers and journalists.

#### **Checklist: presenting outcomes**

- We developed a comprehensive evaluation report explaining the objective, type and design of the evaluation, the methods and analytical framework and the outcomes
- We developed a brief version of the evaluation report with the most important insights for practitioners, researchers and policymakers

## Translating outcomes into future policy and practice

For stakeholders, the question they would like answered is whether the outcome of the evaluation requires a change in policy and practice. However, this is a question that evaluators and researchers cannot always answer, especially when based on a single evaluation. As the discussion above highlights, this largely depends on the type of evaluation and the claims that can be made based on a single evaluation. Instead of claiming that PCVE intervention X or Y does not work, it is better to highlight the underlying mechanisms that led to promising outcomes or important contextual conditions that need to be met for the programme or intervention to work.<sup>ii</sup>

Preferably, there should be a forum of (ongoing) reflection between researchers, policymakers and practitioners. What does the outcome of this evaluation mean for policy and practice? Are there other evaluations (cross-check) that suggest a

reason to adjust the intervention, programme or policy? What is the best way forward? The RAN network could be one of the places where this type of exchange can take place.

**Checklist: future policy and practice**

- We considered whether the evaluation gives cause to change the intervention, programme or policy
- We ensured a communication exchange between policymakers, practitioners and researchers on PCVE evaluation

## Annex 1: Checklist PCVE evaluation

*How to work with this checklist? The checklist consists of statements that require a 'yes' or 'no' answer. The checklist can be used throughout the evaluation process, not all boxes can be ticked at the beginning. To achieve a qualitatively sound evaluation process, all the statements should be answered with a 'yes'. If there is a 'no', this does not mean you cannot proceed or continue the evaluation or that it will be irrelevant or not insightful. Instead, it suggests there is a risk factor that might influence the quality of the evaluation. Be aware and discuss ways to mitigate this risk and communicate this to your stakeholders and client (when evaluation is commissioned).*

### 1. Objective and purpose

- We know which intervention or programme we want to evaluate
- We categorised our intervention or programme into primary, secondary and tertiary prevention to understand what we want to aim for with this intervention/programme
- We established the purpose of the evaluation

### 2. Political and stakeholder buy-in

- We informed our stakeholders about the evaluation and their role in it
- We developed a clear case for the need to evaluate this programme/evaluation

### 3. Resources

- We ensured necessary financial means to perform the evaluation
- We ensured sufficient time to do the evaluation
- We ensured the relevant expertise to conduct the evaluation
- We ensured access to the relevant data for the evaluation

### 4. Evaluation type and design

- We decided on the type of evaluation
- We considered at which stage of the programme or intervention we will start the evaluation (planning, implementation, completion)

- We developed a design of the evaluation

### 5. Data collection

- We know what kind of data we need based on the evaluation design
- We decided which methods of data collection we will use
- We took into account the considerations and risks regarding this data collection and have adopted this in our evaluation design

### 6. Analysis and outcome formulation

- We developed an analytical framework (for example a theory of change model) to analyse the collected data
- We formulated measurable indicators
- We formulated outcomes quantitatively and qualitatively

### 7. Cross-check outcomes

- We cross-checked our outcomes with other local, national or international evaluations within the same or adjacent fields
- We cross-checked our outcomes with our initial thoughts, assumptions and the 'theory of change' and have considered any significant changes during the implementation and evaluation process that may have influenced the outcomes

### 8. Presenting outcomes

- We developed a comprehensive evaluation report explaining the objective, type and design of the evaluation, the methods and analytical framework and the outcomes
- We developed a short version of the evaluation report with the most important insights for practitioners, researchers and policymakers

### 9. Future policy and practice

- We considered whether the evaluation gives cause to change the intervention, programme or policy
- We ensured a communication exchange between policymakers, practitioners and researchers about the PCVE evaluation

## Annex 2. Tools

### 1. Examples of indicator models for outcome evaluations

Measuring impact is one of the most challenging aspects of the PCVE evaluation. Preferably, a baseline assessment or ex ante evaluation is conducted prior to the implementation of the PCVE programme or intervention. This, however, requires answers to questions related to measuring the outcome.

There are several existing questionnaires, scales and frameworks that can be used to formulate outcome indicators.<sup>iii</sup> :

- **Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale<sup>iv</sup>**: Change in radical and/or extremist beliefs and intentions can be measured with psychometric scales. This scale is designed specifically as an indicator of fundamentalism.
- **Violent Extremist Risk Assessment (VERA) Tool**: This tool is designed to assess the degree of risk of 'violent political extremism' among individuals with a history of extremist violence or a conviction for a terrorist offence.<sup>v</sup>

Alternatively, and especially when interventions are aimed at preventing violent extremism at an early stage, it is recommended to draw inspiration and learn from scales and frameworks developed within other domains. Such is the example below:

- **Child and Youth Resilience Measurement (CYRM) Tool**: This tool measures the protective factors (individual, relational, communal and cultural) that are available for youth between the ages of 12 and 23, and which may help to increase their resilience.<sup>vi</sup>

The abovementioned scales and tools may be used for a before and after measurement as part of an experimental and quantitative evaluation. Alternatively, Member States might also make use of tools that have been tailored to meet country-specific needs.

For evaluations that do not have an experimental design but draw on qualitative methods, the use of different indicator models is necessary. Through interviews or participant observations, indicators may focus on changes in attitudes, behaviour and context.<sup>vii</sup> For example, a qualitative evaluation of a PCVE educational programme, which aims to increase resilience against extremist narratives, should not be limited to whether certain attitudes about extremist narratives have changed (the main goal of the programme). Instead, indicators should be developed to determine the underlying goals of the programme. In this case, the underlying goals are to enhance self-esteem, promote civic rights and values and to stimulate discussion and dialogue. To achieve these goals, indicators should also centre on behavioural change (e.g. more contact with people from the "out-group"). In turn, this leads to changes in context (e.g. less tension between groups in a specific neighbourhood).<sup>viii</sup>

For the evaluation of interventions of a more curative nature, such as de-radicalisation and disengagement programmes, the pro-integration model that Barrelle has developed may be applied. It can serve as an indicator to assess the levels of 'disengagement', which may be particularly relevant to exit programmes. The model identifies five different domains and three levels of (dis)engagement. The maximum outcome includes the following: 1) positive social engagement (disengagement), which implies positive family relations (positive social relations); 2) the ability to address personal issues and function in society, e.g. work, education (positive coping); 3) no form of identification with the extremist group (identity); 4) no violent

extremist views (ideology) and 5) no legitimisation of violent (action orientation).<sup>ix</sup> This model may be used as a before and after measurement tool to assess the extent of ‘engagement’ with violent extremist networks.

## 2. IMPACT Europe toolkit

Funded by the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and running from early 2014 to mid-2017, the IMPACT Europe project aimed to fill the gap in knowledge and understanding of what works in tackling violent extremism. Specifically, IMPACT Europe has helped front-line workers, policymakers, and other related actors to counter violent extremism. The project’s toolkit is specifically aimed at PCVE interventions and its Evaluation Guide is useful to consult throughout the different phases of evaluation, as outlined in this paper.

The table below presents links to the IMPACT project’s website that contain useful information about the different phases of evaluation.

| Phase                       | Link   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Preparing for evaluation | When specifying the objective and purpose of your evaluation in the preparation phase, it may be useful to consult the website’s page on ‘Evaluation Purpose’:<br><a href="http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/design/purpose">http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/design/purpose</a>  |
| 2. Conducting evaluation    | To design a theory of change:<br><a href="http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/repository/32/whatisit">http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/repository/32/whatisit</a><br><br>To support development of evaluation design:<br><a href="http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/design/start">http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/design/start</a><br><br>Concerning the phase of collecting data, the website has information about “Data Collection”:<br><a href="http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/design/purpose">http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/design/purpose</a><br>There is also information about how to analyse data retrieved:<br><a href="http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/conduct/analyse">http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/conduct/analyse</a> .<br><br>A section of the Toolkit is dedicated to different methods of data collection. It is also possible to compare the advantages and disadvantages of different types of methods:<br><a href="http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/repository">http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/repository</a> |
| 3. Outcomes of evaluation   | The website contains useful tips about how to present and communicate outcomes:<br><a href="http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/conduct/write">http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/guide/conduct/write</a>   |

### 3. Examples of existing evaluations

The evaluation of PCVE interventions and programmes remains limited in number.<sup>i</sup> However, there are several examples of different types of existing evaluations that should be cited as sources of information – to draw on and learn from:

- Feddes *et al.* conducted an effect evaluation of a Dutch resilience training programme called Diamant (Diamond). This three-month training focussed on how to prevent the radicalisation of young adult and adolescent Muslims (both male and female). It consisted of three modules focused on dealing with a dual identity, intercultural moral judgement and intercultural conflict management. According to the findings of the quantitative longitudinal evaluation of the Diamant resilience training, there was a significant increase in engagement and some increase of reported self-esteem, empathy and perspective taking was found. The evaluation confirms that the training has the potential to counter violent radicalisation as attitudes toward ideology-based violence and own violent intentions have been shown to decrease significantly over time. In short, this evaluation finds that the Diamant training may have promising outcomes for vulnerable groups and the prevention of radicalisation at a very early stage. However, the study cannot draw upon any of the conclusions about whether a training programme could be an effective intervention for more curative intervention targeted at actual violent extremists. Instead, it is important to implement and evaluate the training in different contexts.<sup>x</sup>
- Williams *et al.* evaluated the CVE programme of the World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WORDE), a community-based Muslim-led organisation in the United States. The programme focused on community education, Islamic training for law enforcement and social services cooperation, as well as volunteerism and multicultural programming. The evaluation draws on grounded theory and mixed methods. The authors claim it is the first evidence-based CVE-relevant programming in the United States and has the potential to be effective in other US-municipalities.<sup>xi</sup> Whilst the results are very promising, the notion of context is highlighted by the authors, who argue that further research is needed to confirm if the programme works in other municipalities.<sup>xii</sup>

In addition to outcome evaluation, several process evaluations have been conducted in the PCVE domain:

- The UK Youth Justice Board conducted a process evaluation of several programmes aimed at preventing violent extremism in the youth justice sector.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Schuurman & Bakker have also conducted a process evaluation of the Dutch Probation Services which focused on the re-integration of formerly imprisoned violent extremists.<sup>xiv</sup>

Although both studies cannot provide hard conclusions on the impact of the Probation Services or youth justice sector, the evaluations are particularly helpful. They illustrate crucial contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of re-integration efforts aimed at violent extremists.

## 4. Theory of change model

A theory of change is a model that can be used to help describe how and why a programme or intervention will lead to the expected output, outcome and eventually the impact. It can be summarised in the following model<sup>xv</sup>:



Theories of change explain the causal relationships between input, activities, output, outcome and eventually impact. As such, they help in understanding the combination of factors that influence the intervention or programme. They may also help build the theoretical basis of your programme or intervention and ultimately help in building your evaluation design. Especially relevant for evaluations is the ‘black box’ that exists between the ‘input and activities’ and the ‘output, outcome and impact’. How does one lead to the other? In reality, the causal linkages between the different chains are not always linear. However, understanding the ‘theory of change’ behind one’s intervention can help to sharpen the approach, develop a better implementation and support better evaluation. Having a clear ‘theory of change’ is helpful for identifying the data that need to be collected for evaluation and how they should be analysed.

This is illustrated by the following example of evaluating an **awareness raising training programme for teachers**:

| Theory of Change model   |
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| <p><b>General objective:</b> teachers can support early prevention of radicalisation by recognising signs and reporting to the relevant organisations.</p> <p><b>Assumption:</b> an intervention is necessary to reach this objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers feel insecure and unable to understand signs of radicalisation in their classroom<br/>They feel this way due to a:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of knowledge of radicalisation as a phenomenon</li> <li>- lack of knowledge about ideologies</li> <li>- lack of knowledge about behaviour that may indicate radicalisation.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>This assumption is being supported by: surveys amongst the teacher population, number of reports in schools compared to numbers of radicalisation/extremism-related incidents at schools</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Teachers do not know how to respond to signals of radicalisation and therefore do not do anything. This is because:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They are afraid the matter will directly go to the police</li> <li>- They do not know who within the school they should talk to</li> <li>- They feel insecure about their own competences.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> |

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| <p><b>Intervention:</b> The objective can be reached by providing teachers with an awareness-raising training on radicalisation. Training is proven to be a suitable intervention strategy in related fields, other national/international experience etc. Training should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase knowledge and skills</li> <li>- Raise awareness and clarity about the reporting process</li> <li>- Increase confidence to act upon their observations and professional judgement</li> </ul> |   |   |
| Input   | Input can relate to funding, human resources or material; anything used to execute the intervention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X Euro budget</li> <li>• 4 trainers</li> <li>• 1 planner/organiser</li> <li>• Training material, training spaces, etc.</li> </ul>  |
| Activities  | Activities refer to what is being done in the intervention or programme                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start questionnaire</li> <li>• Preparatory e-learning</li> <li>• 20 one-day training sessions</li> <li>• Follow-up questionnaires for participants after 3 months</li> </ul>   |
| Output  | Output refers to the measurable, tangible and direct products of the activities                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 280 teachers answered the start questionnaire</li> <li>• 320 teachers registered for the e-learning</li> <li>• 400 teachers trained in the sessions</li> <li>• 230 follow-up questionnaires answered</li> </ul>  |
| Outcomes  | Medium-term results of the programme or intervention  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 195 of 400 teachers feel more knowledgeable</li> <li>• 210 of 400 teachers better understand the reporting process</li> <li>• 205 of 400 teachers feel more confident to signal and report</li> <li>• Within the schools involved in the training, reporting of cases of potential radicalisation increased 40 %</li> <li>• Of the reported cases, 75% came from trained teachers</li> </ul> |

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|        |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the reported cases, 27% indicated a need for follow-up with the local prevention team as they were not yet known</li> <li>• Of the 27%, 16 % were cases of radicalisation in an early or more developed stage. Tailor-made interventions were presented to deal with these cases</li> </ul> |
| Impact | Impact is the long-term effect such as a drop in the number of incidents or terrorist attacks. This is usually the ultimate goal to achieve with PCVE intervention. It is often very difficult to determine to what extent one intervention or programme has contributed to the overall impact, but the likelihood can be presented. | In this case, the training is likely to have resulted in identifying at least several individuals who could potentially pose a radicalisation risk in the future.   |

\*This is a fictional example

For more information about the 'theory of change' model, please consult the database of IMPACT Europe (<http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/repository/32/whatisit>) and Patricia Rogers' guide for UNICEF ([http://devinfohive.info/impact\\_evaluation/img/downloads/Theory\\_of\\_Change\\_ENG.pdf](http://devinfohive.info/impact_evaluation/img/downloads/Theory_of_Change_ENG.pdf)).

### Annex 3: Example questionnaire evaluation design

#### Evaluation guidelines framework

| Checklist questions  | Answers: |
|--|----------|
| Name and target audience of one intervention   |          |
| What are the main goals of the intervention?   |          |
| Is the intervention aimed at primary, secondary and/or tertiary prevention?  |          |
| Does your PCVE intervention address risk factors and root causes? If yes, which ones?  |          |
| What is the purpose of the evaluation research you would you like to conduct (effect, mechanism, implementation and/or cost-benefit) and what are the evaluation research questions? |          |
| Outline the theory of change   |          |
| 1. Input   |          |

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| <p>2. Activities<br/>3. Output<br/>4. Outcome<br/>5. Impact<br/>What assumptions will you make in this 'theory of change'?</p> <p>(e.g. training in which information is provided on violent extremism will lead to increased knowledge base)</p> |  |
| <p>Which contextual factors (e.g. demographics, geography, target audience, intervention providers, institutional infrastructure) play a role in the intervention?</p>  |  |
| <p>Provide indicators for the intervention:</p> <p>1 structural indicator (organisational)<br/>1 process indicator (output)<br/>1 outcome indicator (effect)</p>  |  |
| <p>What types of data collection would be suitable for the evaluation (e.g. interviews, survey, participant observation)</p>  |  |
| <p>At what point would you involve evaluation researchers?</p>  |  |

## References

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