

## Examples of Programming Risks

Sources: the information included in this document draws on FHI 360's own experience in addition to several resources (described in the Resources section), including:

- Risk Management for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Programmes: Guidance Note for Practitioners
- Transforming Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilder's Guide
- Improving the Impact of Preventing Violent Extremism Programming: A toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation
- Operational Guidelines on the preparation and implementation of EU financed actions specific to countering terrorism and violent extremism in third countries
- Innovative Approaches to CVE Programming: Insights and Lessons from the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives Lebanon Community Resilience Initiative (2014-2017)
- Manual: 3 Steps for Working in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (WFCs)

This document does not aim to anticipate the risks that will be applicable to your P/CVE project or to prescribe for what risks you should be planning on your project. It is an illustrative list of risks that other P/CVE projects or implementers have identified and some guidance to assess and address these risks. This list is not comprehensive or necessarily relevant to your project. Look at it as a resource to help your organization start thinking about the categories and types of risks that could be relevant to you.

What is the risk?	Key questions to assess and mitigate the risk
<p>Working with donors, particularly foreign governments or organizations, could affect how others (your government, local community, or other local organizations) perceive you or their actions towards you. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks to credibility and legitimacy: your organization could be perceived as biased or seeking to advance foreign interests.</li> <li>• Risks to safety: your organization or its staff might suffer increased scrutiny and event harassment by the government, security agencies, VE groups, or others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are your donors perceived by different stakeholders?</li> <li>• Are there other projects your donor is currently implementing in your community/country? If yes, how are these projects perceived?</li> <li>• How will accepting funding from certain donors impact your relationships with different stakeholders?</li> <li>• Are there specific groups who would hesitate or refuse to work with you due to the source of the funding?</li> <li>• Will working with this donor affect your ability to implement some activities safely and effectively?</li> <li>• How can you frame and communicate about your relationship with this donor to mitigate these risks?</li> </ul>
<p>Who your project includes or excludes could create risks and have a negative impact on your program, the beneficiaries/partners you engage, and the context more generally. These risks could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alienating or further marginalizing individuals, groups, or areas that are not selected</li> <li>• Stigmatizing individuals, groups, or areas that are selected or exposing them to risks, including to their safety.</li> <li>• Reinforcing or negatively contributing to existing power dynamics and patterns of marginalization in the community</li> </ul> <p>TIP: for a more detailed discussion on potential issues for including or excluding youth, see the <i>Youth Involvement in Programming</i> section in the <i>Implement Module</i> <a href="#">[link to the section on “How should you develop your plan to reach and select youth?”]</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who does your project include? How does including them impact your project, your relationships with other individuals/groups, and the power dynamics in your community?</li> <li>• Who does your project exclude? How does excluding them impact your project, your relationships with other individuals/groups, and the power dynamics in your community?</li> <li>• How will you select who will be engaged in the project as beneficiaries or partners?</li> <li>• How will we communicate about our selection process and its results?</li> <li>• Will information we collect about project beneficiaries and partners potentially put them at risk? How are we sharing and protecting information we collect on communities and individuals within them? What information are we sharing with partners – such as donors or government agencies – and are there potential risks for sharing this information?</li> <li>• If you will partner with or engage the government and its agencies, how will involving them impact your project, particularly if some groups view government performance or action as a problem?</li> <li>• If you will not partner with or engage the government and its agencies, will that affect your project’s access and its results?</li> </ul>
<p>Focusing your project on P/CVE, particularly if this is a new programming area for your organization, could present some risks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It could affect how you are perceived by other actors in your community and your credibility in their perspective. For example, if P/CVE work is seen as efforts targeted against a specific group, you might be viewed as biased against that group.</li> <li>• It might detract from or impact other work that your organization has been doing. For example, while peacebuilding and youth engagement work might feed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How could working on P/CVE projects affect your relationships with different actors and groups in the community?</li> <li>• How can your outreach and stakeholder engagement efforts help mitigate these risks?</li> <li>• Would focusing explicitly on P/CVE affect your organization’s ability to work and possibly the safety of those involved in its work? If yes:</li> </ul>

<p>into and inform P/CVE work, there might also be some tensions when you prioritize one programming area over the other, or if your P/CVE work causes actors to hesitate to work with you on other types of programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is it appropriate to frame your project differently? If you do, how do you balance that with the need for your organization to be transparent and credible?</li> <li>• Is P/CVE work a priority in your community and for your organization? If it is, how was that determined?</li> <li>• Does your focus on P/CVE detract from or impact your ability to do other types of programming? If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the potential impact?</li> <li>- What can you do to respond to or mitigate this impact?</li> <li>- What is the rationale for prioritizing P/CVE work?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>P/CVE projects often operate in unstable or fragile environments with particularly high security threats, including from violent extremist groups, other violent or criminal groups, or possibly state actions. These threats could prevent organizations from accessing certain areas or groups, from implementing activities on the ground, and could affect the safety of individuals involved in the project. Accordingly, it is essential for the organization to continuously assess security risks and take appropriate measures to mitigate and respond to them. However, it is equally important that the organization understands and mitigates the potential risks of its own security measures and how they are perceived by others. For example, moving the location of an event to outside an insecure area might make it difficult for key stakeholders to participate, or requesting police presence at an event to ensure security might raise the profile of that event and cause the community to no longer feel comfortable attending it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the security situation in the areas on which your project will focus?</li> <li>• Are violent groups, including violent extremist groups, present or operate there?</li> <li>• Will the project expose staff, partners or beneficiaries to increased security risks?</li> <li>• What processes, measures, and resources do you have in place to protect staff, partners, and beneficiaries?</li> <li>• Do your staff have the necessary knowledge and training to respond to security risks if they arise?</li> <li>• How are or will the security measures that you have in place be perceived by others in the context? What are the potential consequences of taking certain measures?</li> <li>• Can building trust and relationships with local partners and stakeholders increase safety and security?</li> </ul>
<p>There are risks related to your project’s use of resources during implementation, and these are particularly relevant in environments where conflict or violent extremist groups are present. Without proper controls, funds from your project might be diverted to illegal or criminal groups or could reinforce the illegal or conflict-related economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What measures are you taking to ensure that funds will not be diverted or used to benefit illegal or criminal groups?</li> <li>• Where are the resources/materials for your project coming from and who benefits from selling/renting them?</li> </ul>
<p>Your team members can also be a factor in causing or mitigating risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who you have on your team matters; for example, if your project is in a community with ethnic or religious divisions, if your team, particularly the senior staff and decision makers on it, are from one of these groups, your project might be perceived as biased. Also, if some of your team members are affiliated with a particular political group, there is a risk that could alienate members who oppose that group.</li> <li>• If team members don’t have the necessary knowledge and training to understand and respond to conflict dynamics or to engage individuals who</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do your recruitment and HR procedures incorporate diversity, inclusion, and conflict sensitivity, as appropriate?</li> <li>• How does the background of staff and their positions on key factors related to conflict and VE affect your project?</li> <li>• Do staff have the necessary knowledge and training to recognize, understand, and respond to conflict dynamics and social tensions?</li> <li>• Does your team composition and hierarchy take into account and respect diversity (ethnic, religious, social, political, etc.) in your context?</li> <li>• Does the community and/or specific groups within it perceive your team as neutral?</li> </ul>

<p>support extremism or violence, that could risk undermining your project's impact and in some situations the safety of staff and participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does your team members' background or characteristics (their ethnic/religious background, political affiliation, gender, etc.) affect what type of activities they could be involved in or where they can go in the community?</li> </ul>
<p>While this is true of any project, the phasing out and closing of P/CVE projects in particular may create tensions and risks if not handled carefully and in a conflict sensitive manner. P/CVE projects often operate in communities that have been disadvantaged or marginalized and cutting off services or support could exacerbate issues and frustrations, particularly if the community doesn't expect the project to end or understand why these services and support are changing or stopping. In addition, funding for P/CVE programs can be unreliable and often depends on the funding cycles and priorities of international donors. Often, although what is needed to address VE drivers is long-term engagement, your organization is only able to find funding for a series of short-term activities that are sometimes difficult to design and implement as a cohesive program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the possible negative effects for stopping services or support started under the project?</li> <li>• Does your team have a clear plan for phasing out and closing your activities and project?</li> <li>• What elements can you include in your design of activities to ensure the activities or their results are sustainable after project close out? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can partner with local actors and promote their ownership of certain initiatives so they can continue efforts after the end of the project?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What measures can you take to manage the expectations of partners, beneficiaries, and the community from the beginning of the project and until its end? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How can you ensure that you don't raise unrealistic expectations while engaging partners, beneficiaries, and the community to gain buy-in and support for your project?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do project partners, beneficiaries, and community more generally know the project is ending and understand why it is ending? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What methods (meetings, consultations, communication material, etc.) are you using to prepare your partners, beneficiaries, and the community for the closing of your project or the end of your support for specific activities?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>