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# RISK MANAGEMENT FOR **PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE) PROGRAMMES**

**GUIDANCE NOTE FOR PRACTITIONERS**



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# FOREWORD

International development programming takes place in an increasingly complex global context: over the last ten years, the scope and intensity of conflict has augmented for the first time since the end of the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> As outlined in Report of the Secretary-General in June 2017, since 2010 the number of major civil wars almost tripled, and from 2011 to 2015, there was a six-fold increase in conflict-related fatalities.<sup>2</sup> Climate change is wreaking havoc on lives and livelihoods worldwide as a result of flooding and endemic droughts; global and regional health crises are stretching capacities to the limit; migration is taking place on an unprecedented scale, leading to increased pressures for 'home' and 'host' countries alike; and, information now flows at a speed that defies human capacities to absorb, process and act upon it.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, displacement as a result of armed violence is also at its highest-ever level, involving more than 65 million people – representing a five-fold increase since 2005 – and more than 20 million people are currently experiencing famine in (northern) Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen<sup>4</sup> – all of which suffer from protracted crises and endemic levels of violence. Amidst these overlapping, multi-dimensional crises, violent extremism has emerged as a critical 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge, in most instances compounding and catalysing dynamics of conflict, instability and chaos.

In this context, risk management is no longer an option, it's an imperative. The ability to anticipate, understand and prepare for the effects of uncertainty on our programmes, institutions and on the countries in which we work lies at the heart of the work of all international actors. While development actors may speak of "building the resilience" of national actors, humanitarian actors of "increasing preparedness", and peace and security actors of "enhancing prevention capacities", we are all effectively speaking the same language: the language of risk management. However, while risk management is an inherent objective of the work of the international community, it remains insufficiently integrated into our approaches – undermining our ability to work together effectively and to use scarce resources efficiently.

The centrality of risk assessment to the achievement of development outcomes has been underscored by recent policy-oriented processes: the revised UNDAF guidelines, for example, note that embracing uncertainties and managing risks are instrumental for the UN to make informed decisions. Similarly, the Sendai Framework for DRR underscores the linkages between risk and development; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing for Development is underpinned by an understanding of the importance of risk; the Paris Agreement highlights the necessity of adapting to and managing climate risk; and, risk and resilience lies at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>5</sup>

1 Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations activities in support of mediation, 27 June 2017, A/72/115.

2 Ibid.

3 United Nations and World Bank Group, 'Pathways for Peace, Inclusive Approached to Preventing Violent Conflict', Main Messages and emerging policy directions, World Bank Group, 2017.

4 A/72/115.

5 Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation, Expert group meeting on risk and resilience, summary and priorities, 6th experts group meeting on risk and resilience, 27 to 28 October 2016, OECD, 2016.

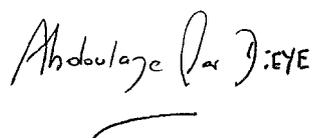
This Guidance Note (GN) on Risk Management for PVE programmes is designed – in simple, non-technical terms – to enhance practitioners’ understanding of risk management as an approach to working in complex settings. Simultaneously it brings attention to the contextual, programmatic and institutional risks associated with working on PVE programmes specifically, drawing attention to the ways in which a context specific, conflict-sensitive, ‘do no harm’ and human rights-based approach can help to mitigate many of these risks and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our programmes.

By demonstrating the manner in which risk management is an approach – and indeed, a mind-set – rather than a technical skill that must be undertaken by ‘experts’, it is hoped that the momentum around PVE, and the acknowledgement of the risks associated with work in this space will serve as an entry-point for improving risk management in other, related sectors and on other, equally important and relevant themes and conflict drivers.



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## ACRONYMS

CDA	Conflict and Development Analysis
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CT	Counter-terrorism
GN	Guidance Note
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HRDDP	Human Rights Due Diligence Policy
INCAF	International Network on Conflict and Fragility
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa (region)
NCTC	National Counter-Terrorism Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PDA	Peace and Development Advisor
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
RBM	Results-Based Management
RM	Risk Management
TOC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VE	Violent extremism

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## PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDANCE NOTE

THIS GUIDANCE NOTE (GN) IS DESIGNED TO INFORM RISK ASSESSMENTS OF PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES, AND INITIATIVES DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY RELATED TO PVE

Prepared for in-country practitioners, this GN seeks to increase understanding of how to undertake a risk assessment, and to raise awareness about common risks and opportunities associated with working on the PVE programmes.

As will become apparent throughout this GN, effective risk management depends on two key elements which cannot be captured easily in a global GN: the first is a deep understanding of the context in which you work - and the relationship between violent extremism and other conflict drivers within that context; and, the second is an appreciation of your team's appetite for risk, and the resources you have available to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of identified risks.

This GN, therefore, provides examples of PVE risks, elaborated on the basis of primary and secondary research.<sup>6</sup> Where possible, the GN avoids being either prescriptive and/or proscriptive. Rather than elaborating an exhaustive list of PVE-related risks and mitigation measures (an impossible task), the GN aims to be thought-provoking: it provides questions to ask, issues to consider, measures to explore, and potential strategies that can be tailored to the contexts in which you work.

The GN is designed to serve as a guide for practitioners, but should not be used as blue-print for the identification of risks or mitigation measures for your programme. Rather, it should serve as a catalyst for discussions amongst colleagues, and a starting point for the elaboration of a comprehensive risk management strategy. In this spirit, the GN is organized into four key modules:

- Module one explores definitional and conceptual issues related to both risk management and PVE, while also shedding light on the rationale for elaborating a PVE-related risk management strategy;
- Module two provides a step-by-step guide of how to undertake a risk assessment, using the most broadly accepted and easy-to-follow methodology - with key 'tips' that may facilitate the task and PVE-relevant examples, as and where appropriate;
- Module three focuses on the risks and opportunities related to work in the PVE space, providing examples of contextual, programmatic and reputational risks and opportunities, and suggestions on mitigation measures where appropriate;
- Module four explores guiding principles for effective risk management in the realm of PVE. Rather than enabling you to mitigate the specific risks that may emerge from a comprehensive risk assessment, these guiding principles will help contribute – at a broad level to risk-sensitive PVE programming.

<sup>6</sup> Including: a desk-based review; interviews with key experts; surveys completed by UNDP staff; focus groups conducted during the course of a workshop held by UNDP in Istanbul in late 2017; and, on the basis of the knowledge and experience of the specialist leading this exercise.

## 1. HOW TO USE THIS GN

If you are new to both risk management and to PVE programming, all four of the modules in this GN will be relevant to you. If, however, you are familiar with risk management as a tool, you may wish to begin using this GN from module three onwards which provides examples of PVE specific risks. If you are already familiar with core concepts of programming in sensitive contexts - such as context-specificity, conflict-sensitivity, and 'do no harm', for example - module four may simply serve as a reminder of these imperatives.



# 1 MODULE ONE

## UNDERSTANDING RISK MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE) PROGRAMMES

### WHAT IS RISK MANAGEMENT?

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO)<sup>7</sup> – an independent, non-governmental entity which brings together 162 national standards bodies – has pioneered work in the area of risk management, leading the development of the ‘go-to’ guide entitled, ‘ISO 31000: 2009, Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines’. ISO defines risk as ‘the effect of uncertainty on objectives’; the effect can be positive (provide benefit/opportunity) or negative (serve as a threat, provoke damage).

An effect is a **deviation from the expected**. Risk management, therefore, is the systematic approach and practice of managing uncertainty to minimize potential harm and loss,<sup>8</sup> and maximize potential opportunities and gains. The goal of risk management is “to set the best course of action under uncertainty by identifying, assessing, understanding, making decisions and communicating risk issues.”<sup>9</sup> It also includes efforts to balance risk and opportunity.<sup>10</sup>

Risk management is inherently an enabling process: rather than provoking decisions to stop programming, effective risk management processes create the conditions necessary for the programme to proceed, and, indeed, succeed.

Risk management enables programme managers to identify those factors that may impede or enhance programming, with effects on both the leading institution and the context. Rather than a one-off exercise, therefore, risk management is an integral part of programming, to be carried out prior to programme design and during programme implementation. What is required for effective risk management is three-fold:

- First, a mind-set shift: from being ‘risk averse’ to being risk-aware and risk-ready;
- Second, a behavioural shift: from treating risk management as separate from programming, to integrating it into the day-to-day essence of our work; and,
- Third, an awareness that risk management involves identifying deviations from an expected outcome of a both negative and positive nature. Consequently, the process involves identifying both risks and opportunities associated with programming.

With this approach in mind, it will become apparent that far from being risk-free, most programmes come with an infinite number of risks since the future is inherently unknown and uncertain. Programmes would only be risk-free if we were able to predict the future.

7 See: <https://www.iso.org/iso-31000-risk-management.html>

8 Hyslop, Daniel, Feasibility Study for a global risk informed development (GRID) platform, July 2017, page 16.

9 Expert group meeting on risk and resilience, summary and priorities, 6th experts group meeting on risk and resilience, 27 to 28 October 2016, 2016.

10 Stocktaking UNDP risk management practices, July 2016, UNDP, page 14.

Consequently, risk management is about identifying, prioritising and taking action in response to risks identified, and monitoring them over the course of a programme's life-span (for an example of the benefits of the risk management process, see Text box 2 on the UN in Tunisia).

## 2. THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS FOR THE UN IN TUNISIA

Countries from North Africa, including Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia have so far provided the largest share of foreign fighters to Syria.<sup>11</sup> Amongst these three countries, Tunisia is the largest 'exporter' of foreign fighters; according to the Soufan Group, 6,000 foreign fighters travelled to Syria from Tunisia since 2014, compared to 2500 from Saudi Arabia, 2400 from Russia, 2100 from Turkey and 2000 from Jordan.<sup>12</sup> In addition to 'exporting' violent extremism, between 2015 and 2016 Tunisia experienced four major terrorist attacks on its own soil. Since 2013, over 25 security/judicial measures have been taken to prevent the flow of militants and weapons from neighbouring countries, and to manage the domestic threat.<sup>13</sup>

Despite agreement that violent extremism is a pressing challenge for Tunisia, there were diverse opinions amongst UNCT members concerning the approach to address violent extremism; engagement in this sensitive area was seen by some as being particularly 'risky' and requiring additional reflection when compared to other domains where the UN in-country has been working for many years; there were also some fears that initiatives in this domain could 'backfire' on the UN, undermining other equally important development programmes in-country. When the Secretary-General launched the PVE Plan of Action in 2016, some agencies already had in place initiatives specific or relevant to PVE, both as part of regional programmes, and as additional windows to ongoing projects. Moreover, the UNCT had begun to engage in discussions concerning potential collaboration with National Counter-Terrorism Commission (NCTC) – which oversees the national strategy on counter-terrorism, with a pillar on prevention.

As a result of the request, UNDP and Peace and Development Advisor (PDA) decided to conduct a risk assessment on two programmes with a PVE component, and one programme concerning institutional support on PVE (related to the NCTC). A consultant with PVE expertise was hired to: help identify the risks; facilitate the elaboration of a risk management strategy; and, to provide an 'impartial' view on the programmes. On the basis of a desk review and interviews with key stakeholders, the consultant identified 47 risks, and made six 'baseline' recommendations to improve the risk-sensitivity of their work in this area. UNDP and the PDA then used the identified risks to bring colleagues together to assess the risk levels of the identified risks, and to elaborate a risk management strategy.

As a result of the risk assessment, the initiatives related to the NCTC were adapted, and the level of conflict-sensitivity enhanced. More specifically, the risk assessment assisted UNDP to draw 'red lines' concerning where engagement on PVE risked being perceived as being Counter Terrorism-related work, which could create security, operational and reputational risks for the UN.

11 Small Arms Survey, 'There and back, trajectories of North African Foreign Fighters in Syria', Issue brief, Security Assessment in North Africa, Number 3, Small Arms Survey, July 2015.

12 Foreign Fighters, An updated assessment of the flow of foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq, The Soufan Group, Dec 2015.

13 United Nations Development Programme for Tunisia, 'Revue Analytique: Les facteurs favorisant l'extrémisme violent dans la Tunisie des années 2010', UNDP, 2010.

As the project was being developed, the PDA was able to refer back to the assessment to 'steer' the design, with a significantly greater level of awareness of the challenges, and how to overcome them. Many of the risks for all three programmes concerned theories of change, and other Results-Based Management (RMB)-related issues which could be addressed through a more rigorous and robust programme design process, as well as due diligence.

As a result of the assessment, the UNCT decided to conduct a common context assessment, which has helped to generate a shared understanding of the PVE drivers and issues. And, subsequently, the UNCT used this shared understanding to develop a comprehensive UNCT-level PVE Strategic Framework. The UNCT-level PVE strategy also includes a comprehensive risk assessment and mitigation strategy.

## HOW CAN WE CATEGORIZE THE RISKS TO BE MANAGED?

Building upon the framework advanced by the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF)<sup>14</sup>, this GN used three risk categories, as follows:

- **Contextual risks and opportunities:**

Contextual risks and opportunities include the adverse or beneficial outcomes that may arise in a particular context, and which could have impacts on both programmes and institutions. The context traditionally entails the situation in a country or region, and may be associated with areas where programming is planned to take place/ already taking place. In the era of increased complexity, it is also vital to consider regional and international contextual dynamics that may also impact upon PVE programming.

- **Programmatic risks and opportunities:**

Programmatic risks fall into two main categories<sup>15</sup>. First, the potential for PVE programmes to fail to achieve their objectives, which may be as a result of: contextual risks (outlined above); flawed assessment of what needs to be done; management and operational failure; failures of planning and coordination; and/ or over-ambitiousness.

Second, the potential for PVE programmes to cause harm in the external environment and, indeed, to the very beneficiaries the programme seeks to assist or protect.

It is always important to consider both the positive and negative impacts that injecting aid/resources into a fragile context may have on the communities in question, the programme objectives and the institution.

- **Institutional risks and opportunities:**

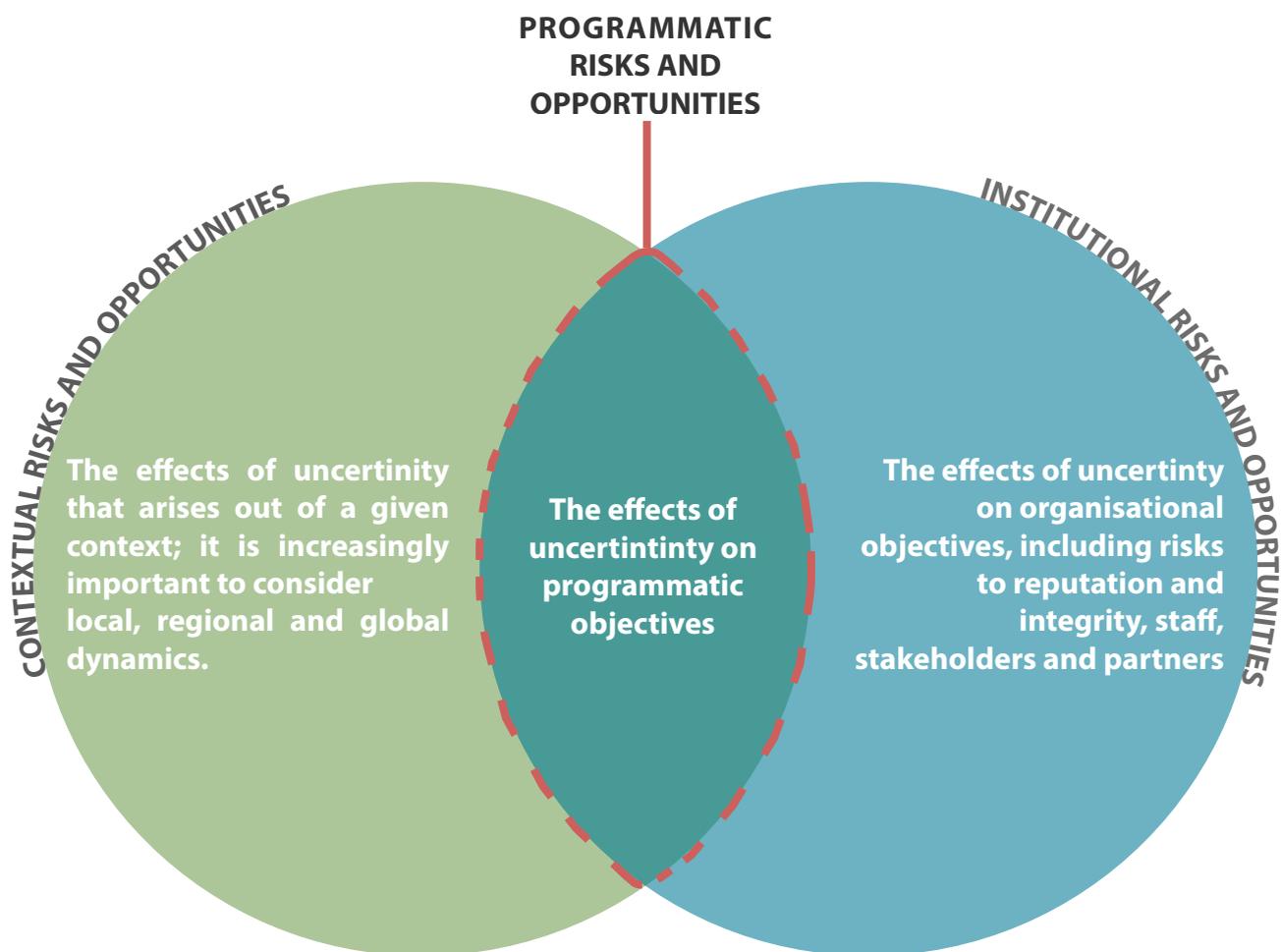
Institutional risks refer to the risks posed to the organization designing and implementing the PVE programme, and/or the donor and partners. These risks include risks to reputation, finances, integrity, security of personnel, stakeholders and partners, and other operational risks. For global organizations such as UNDP, institutional impacts can also result from programmes being undertaken elsewhere in the region or the globe, for example.

As demonstrated by Figure 1, one of the most important aspects of risk management to consider is the interaction effect between contextual, programmatic and institutional risks. This interaction effect – or the interdependence between these different categories of risk – means that there is almost always a trade-off between programmatic and institutional risks, and the broader contextual risk environment. For example, if your risk management strategy is to reduce the footprint of a programme and therefore the risks associated with it, the impact on the context is likely to be reduced and, therefore, the risks emanating from the context may increase. This trade-off underscores the need for integrated programmatic and contextual risk assessment.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/theinternationalnetworkonconflictandfragility.htm>

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Guideline to Risk Management 1.0, UNDP, August 2013.

## INTERACTION BETWEEN CONTEXTUAL, PROGRAMMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL RISKS<sup>16</sup>



### WHY RISK MANAGEMENT FOR PVE?

Violence by non-state actors has been spreading at an alarming rate, and becoming ever more deadly.<sup>17</sup> The 2017 Global Terrorism Index notes that while the global numbers of deaths and attacks has declined since its 'peak' in 2016, more countries experienced at least one death from terrorism – rising from 65 countries in 2015 to 77 in 2016.<sup>18</sup> Aside from the increase in ISIL-related terrorism in Iraq, there have been increased incidences of terrorism in South Sudan, Turkey, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>19</sup>

While the MENA region has witnessed the largest number of both attacks and fatalities, sub-

Saharan Africa has been the most deadly in terms of fatalities per attack, with an average of 4.8 deaths per attack in 2016.<sup>20</sup>

The humanitarian effects of these groups have been widespread: Boko Haram alone, for example, has displaced 2.6 million people over a period of seven years and UNICEF estimates that 1.3 million children were displaced by Iraq's war with Daesh.<sup>21</sup> Putting the tragic and numerically immeasurable loss of lives and livelihoods temporarily to one side, the global economic impact is estimated to have amounted to US\$84 billion in 2016.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Adapted from the 'Copenhagen circles'

<sup>17</sup> Names redacted, 'Terrorism and violent extremism in Africa', Congressional Research Service, July, 2016, page 3

<sup>18</sup> Global Terrorism Index, 2017, 'Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism', Institute for Economics & Peace, 2017

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Global Terrorism Index, 2016, 'Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism', Institute for Economics & Peace, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Middle East Monitor (MEMO), 'UNICEF: 1.3 million children displaced by Iraq's war with Daesh, January 20, 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Risk management in the realm of PVE - as in the fields of conflict prevention and peacebuilding - is an ethical imperative: improving programme prioritization as well as the effectiveness, efficiency and 'robustness' of programmes is likely to help save lives and build the resilience of communities to such phenomena. There is an additional impulse for guidance around risk management in this space: PVE work is considered by many in the development field to be a "risky endeavour". There are numerous reasons for this perception:<sup>23</sup>

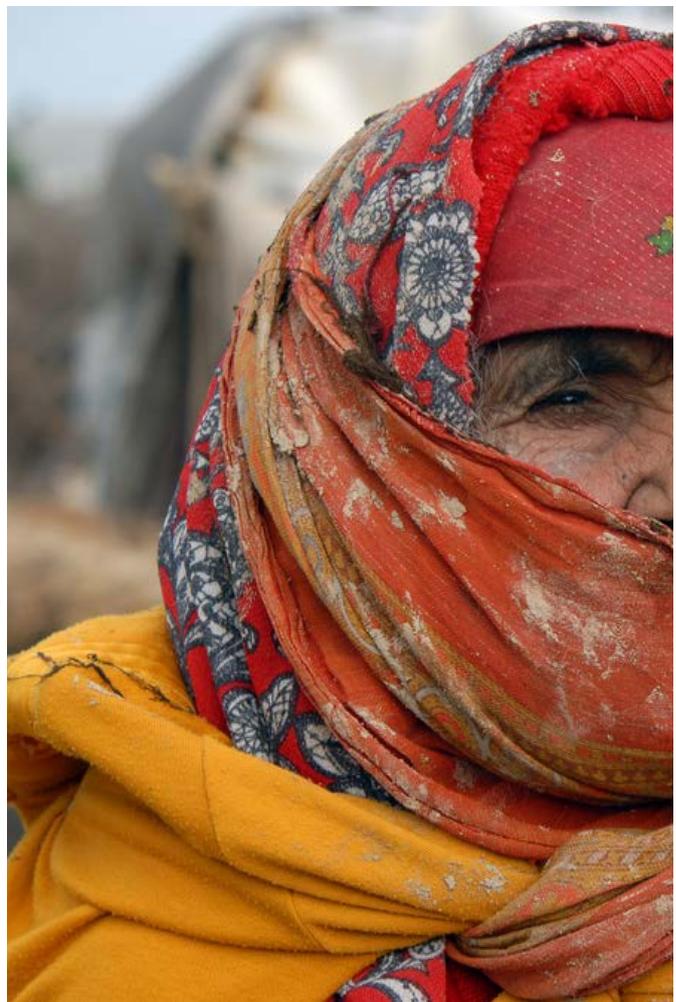
- Programming is relatively new and data on 'what-works-and-what-doesn't-work' is thin;
- There is ongoing disagreement and debate around what drives violent extremism and the extent to which it can be addressed by development programming;
- There is conceptual and definitional ambiguity around what violent extremism is and, therefore, how to also define 'PVE';
- Significant donor interest in this space is raising expectations; and,
- By default, much PVE work involves working closely with security actors - in a field which is deemed 'securitized' by some - increasing risks associated with perceptions of impartiality.

Given UNDP's extensive work in the realm of PVE, therefore, it is imperative that those who work on it are able to analyse and mitigate the associated risks of the programmes that will be designed and implemented. It is also important to ensure that the perceived 'riskiness' of a field is not a reason to shy away from engagement when engagement is required. On the contrary, if **risk aversion leads to inaction, this too comes with its own set of risks** - to the context, programmes and the institution - and, of course to communities affected by PVE.

It is hoped that a deeper awareness of the full range of risks in the PVE space, therefore, and how to manage them will lead to more **responsible**

**decisions** around when, how, where and with whom to engage with on PVE.

This, in turn, will lead to more efficient and effective PVE programmes - as well as an appropriate balance between PVE programmes and other equally important initiatives (for an example of how UNDP Country Offices have used risk management to improve their PVE strategies, see Text box 3 on the risk management process for the UN in Kyrgyzstan).



23 All of these risks, and many more, will be covered in greater detail in module three.

### 3. THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS FOR THE UN IN KYRGYZSTAN

Violent extremism in Kyrgyzstan is becoming an increasingly pressing challenge. As of September 2017, UNODC reports that 191 people were in 'closed-type' prisons, compared with only 111 people in 2014;<sup>24</sup> the total number of people convicted of violent extremism charges is 422. Movements such as the Islamist Jihad Union, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Hizb ut-Tahrir have long been a cause for concern, most notably in the Ferghana Valley area, and there is a proliferation of new extremist groups.<sup>25</sup> The Soufan Group has reported that, as of November 2015, approximately 500 Kyrgyz citizens were in combat zones.<sup>26</sup> Research indicates that most of those radicalized are from relatively affluent backgrounds, and tend to have secondary or higher levels of education. Radicalisation appears to be tied to the marginalisation of minority groups, and feeds into historical conflict and human rights issues that are yet to be resolved through a process of reconciliation or greater political inclusion.



Four UN agencies came together in Kyrgyzstan to conduct a risk analysis of a specific, joint PVE programme focused on women. Using external facilitators, representatives from the agencies concerned came together for four days to discuss the programme, and explore different risk factors. Amongst the more than 20 issues identified, one key risk concerned the perception that the programme was part of an agenda owned by the government and international partners – a common risk with PVE programmes. A decision was taken to foster open and transparent dialogue about the programme with non-state actors, including local NGOs and grass-roots organizations. Another identified risk concerned the short-term timeframes associated with PVE programmes – underscoring the need to engage donors in conversations about the long-term, structural drivers of violent extremism that need to be addressed. An additional risk concerned the different understandings of radicalisation amongst local counterparts on the one hand, and UN actors, on the other. The UN agencies present, therefore, agreed to conduct a baseline study to better understand how the phenomenon is understood and 'experienced' by local communities.

The risk assessment workshop, therefore, deepened understanding amongst the UN agencies of the challenges that the programme might face. At the conclusion of the workshop, decisions were taken to: refine the mitigating actions at a subsequent meeting; develop a joint M&E framework and a joint activity plan to avoid the risk of fragmentation; and, to develop a clear communications strategy to minimize misperceptions. These elements, therefore, formed the essential building blocks of a risk management strategy and proved to be vital - not only getting the four agencies in question on 'the same page' about the challenges they face, but also in terms of assigning responsibilities for monitoring and managing key risks if they emerge.

24 UNODC, internal source.

25 Speckhard, Anne; Shajkovci, Ardian; Esengul, Chinara, 'Analysis of the drivers of radicalization and violent extremism in Kyrgyzstan, including the role of Kyrgyz women in supporting, joining, intervening in, and preventing violent extremism in Kyrgyzstan, International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism, August 2017, page 1.

26 The Soufan Group, 'Foreign Fighters, An updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq', The Soufan Group, 2015.

## WHAT IS THE 'VALUE-ADDED' OF RISK MANAGEMENT FOR PVE PROGRAMMES?

The value-added of risk management includes the potential negative dynamics associated with risk-insensitive programmes on the one hand, and the benefits in terms of efficiency and effectiveness on the other hand. In the absence of a risk assessment, PVE programming may, for example: inadvertently stigmatize certain populations; reinforce power dynamics, including those around race, ethnicity, gender and age; exacerbate tensions with the government; lead to the targeting of beneficiaries, partners and/or staff by violent extremist groups; contribute to the diversion of scarce resources; create ramifications for the reputation of UNDP; and/or foster inefficiencies, including overlap with other programmes, under-utilization of opportunities presented, and/or programming in areas where PVE is not a priority.

The process for undertaking a risk assessment should be viewed, furthermore, as an opportunity to increase trust, transparency and accountability within UNDP, within the UNCT, and amongst international and local stakeholders. The time invested in the process, therefore, will have **benefits that go well beyond the PVE programme or strategy** you have in mind.

By undertaking a risk assessment, you are enhancing the chance of your programme being a success, and therefore of having a meaningful impact on the PVE phenomenon. You are simultaneously protecting yourself, your colleagues, project beneficiaries, partners and the reputation of your organization.

## WHEN SHOULD A RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY BE DEVELOPED?

Risk assessments, and risk management strategies, should be undertaken prior to the development of a new PVE strategy, programme or initiative, and should remain an ongoing, iterative process of adaptation. However, even if PVE programmes/initiatives are already underway **it is never too late to undertake a risk assessment**. As you then begin or continue programme implementation, you should return to your risk management strategy to continue evaluating the evolving context - and the interaction effects between the programme and the context - and adapting the strategy and your programme as and where necessary (See Text box 4 for an example of the preliminary exploration of risks associated with PVE programmes in Nigeria).

### 4. A PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION OF PVE-RELATED RISKS IN NIGERIA

The concept of PVE is a relatively new phenomenon to the UN development arena in Nigeria. The concept first came into Nigeria national development lexicon in around 2014, following government acceptance to use the word 'insurgency' to describe the activities of Boko Haram. UNDP's initial programmes on PVE, funded by the Government of Japan, were implemented in 2015. The programme focused on the building the capacities of security agencies, judicial officers, religious leaders and civil society on PVE, de-radicalization, the protection of victims and witnesses, and counter-narratives. To deepen UNDP programming on PVE, the Regional Bureau for Africa provided funds to implement a project on 'Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Nigeria' in 2018.

The UNDP team has begun preliminary discussions around the risks related to PVE programmes in the Nigeria context and has put in place some mitigation measures to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of these risks. Given the nature of the risks that have been identified, UNDP hopes to initiate a more formal and comprehensive process for identifying and mitigating risks in the coming months. The risks identified so far are as follows:

- **Perceived conceptual weaknesses of 'PVE':** There is a degree of ambiguity about the term 'violent extremism' and 'terrorism' amongst partners and national stakeholders. This ambiguity could derail effective engagement of partners as well as a smooth implementation of PVE programmes.

The UNDP approach to mitigate this risk informed the design and implementation of the Japanese funded project on 'De-radicalization, Counter-Terrorism and Migration', by focusing on creating a shared understanding amongst the key stakeholders of the term and its implications.

- **Lack of national capacity for programming:** PVE is a new concept for most national development actors in Nigeria and the capacity to formulate and implement programmes on PVE is limited. Limited capacity can slow down PVE interventions or even result in diversion of funds meant for PVE programming to other similar projects – like peacebuilding. To mitigate this risk, UNDP is building national capacity on PVE programming through its catalytic projects.
- **Lack of co-ordination mechanisms for PVE programme in Nigeria:** The absence of an effective co-ordination mechanism for PVE programming risks the duplication of resources and makes results achieved in the thematic area difficult to track and report. To mitigate this risk, UNDP is working with the Office of the National Security Adviser to the President to establish an effective co-ordination mechanism for PVE programming in Nigeria.
- **Effectively managing stakeholder expectations:** Engaging with national stakeholders on the research aspects of PVE can raise expectations of follow-up, programmatic interventions. The failure to manage and/or meet such expectations can have effects on the quality of relationships with stakeholders, who may lose faith in words that are not followed by action. UNDP mitigated the risks by approaching RSC Addis Abba to make seed funding available for PVE in Nigeria – funds which were made available upon the development of a robust PVE project.



## 2 MODULE TWO

### FIVE KEY STEPS FOR DEVELOPING A PVE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

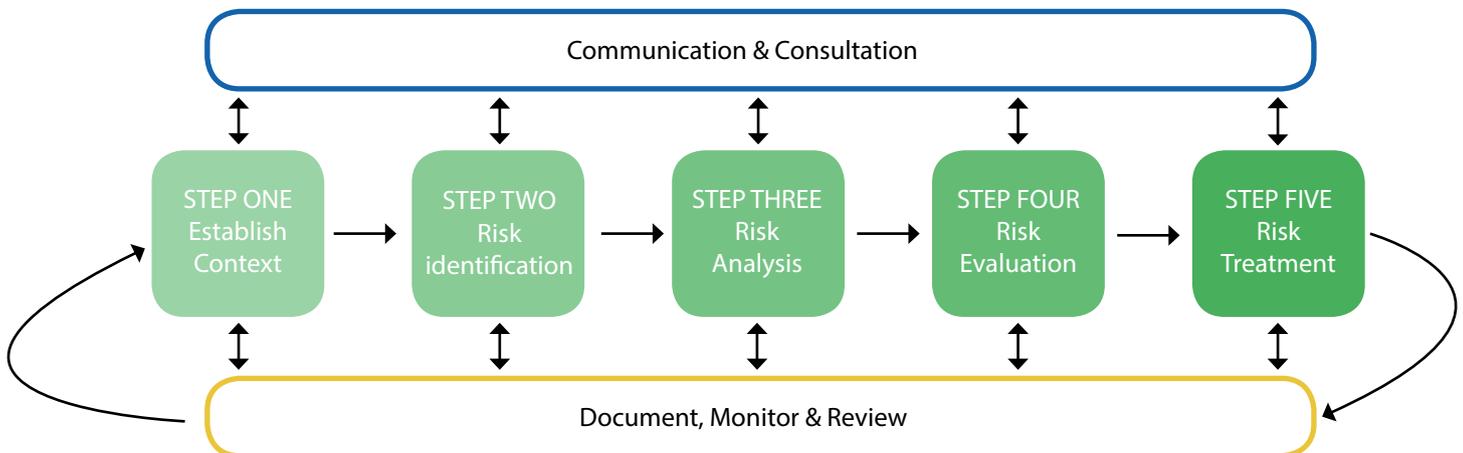
#### THE RISK MANAGEMENT 'MODEL'

A risk management strategy helps **identify and manage PVE risks in a comprehensive manner**. It involves the systematic application of five key steps (establishing the context, identifying, analysing, evaluating, and treating PVE risks) combined with consistent communication with key stakeholders and regular monitoring (as outlined in Figure 2). This iterative process for managing risks ensures that PVE programmes are tailored to the context, conflict-sensitive and infused by an awareness of the power dynamics in which they unfold.

with, a risk analysis strategy can be elaborated in the course of a day or two; with more time, you may be able to **develop something more comprehensive and robust**.

The development of a PVE risk management strategy does not take place in a 'vacuum': it is undertaken by a specific entity (in this case UNDP), at a given moment in time. Consequently, it can be helpful to think of the risk management strategy as being underpinned by a risk management model - a type of 'house' that provides the space in which the process will take place, and the formal and informal rules that will guide your work.

#### THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS<sup>27</sup>



A risk management strategy should be undertaken for any PVE event, programme or initiative in which UNDP has a leading or supporting role. How much time you dedicate to the risk management process will depend on the resources you are able to dedicate to it. Provided you have an analysis of the context and the right stakeholders to engage

The risk management 'house' is composed of three key elements<sup>28</sup> (see Figure 3):

- 1 Key '**principles**' that guide the creation of your risk management framework and help ensure that PVE programmes are as risk-sensitive as possible.

27 ISO 31000: 2009 Risk Management Standard

28 Ibid.

These principles can be thought of as the 'rules of the house' that guide your work. Key principles for PVE programming include: context analysis; conflict sensitivity and 'do no harm'; results-based management; and, human rights-based approaches (see Module 4 for more information). You may wish to add other principles to these based on your own experiences and/or which are pertinent to the context in which you work.

2

A '**framework**' that captures your overall approach to risk management. The framework can be thought of as the foundations and the structure of the house: It consists of the policies and procedures put in place to implement the risk management process; this includes: the scope of the exercise; the human and financial resources that can be allocated both to the process and to the risk mitigation measures; the time you have available to complete the process; and, the level of risks – and in which areas – your CO is willing to accept and not accept. The framework defines, in effect, the 'parameters' of the exercise.

3

Five key 'steps' i.e. the '**risk management process**' (RM process). The RM process can be thought of the different rooms of the house you need to go through in order to elaborate a comprehensive risk management strategy: these are the below five steps, combined with consistent communication with key stakeholders and regular monitoring (as outlined above in Figure 2). Lessons learned during the course of the RM process can feed back into the framework.

## THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE KEY STEPS

### Step one: Understanding the context

Understanding the context in which you will elaborate the PVE programme is a critical part of the risk management strategy. Without a full understanding of the internal (i.e. organizational) and external (i.e. national or local) context in which your programme takes place, the development of a strategy becomes an abstract exercise. There are two aspects to consider:

- ▶ **The internal context** includes: UNDPs governance and organizational structures; accountability processes; relevant policies, overall objectives and culture. Establishing a clear, shared understanding of what your organization hopes to achieve with its PVE programmes – and its presence more broadly in-country, and what contributions the initiative/programme will make to these objectives – is vital at this stage. The internal context should also include a discussion of the scope of the risk management activity; it is important to consider costs, resources (material and human), capabilities and whether additional capabilities are required, and what kind of documentation should be produced. For example, will you use an internal or external facilitator? Who will have access to these materials? All relevant internal stakeholders should be consulted.
- ▶ **The external context** comprises the broader context in which the PVE initiative/programme will take place, including the political, socio-economic, cultural, security, environmental, financial, religious and other dynamics. These dynamics may be at the local, national, regional or even global level, and the interaction between these different factors should be considered.

PRINCIPLES

FRAMEWORK

RM PROCESS

External factors are generally outside the control of your organization or activity, and, therefore, constitute important risks to be considered when designing your risk management strategy. All relevant internal stakeholders should be consulted during this process. Invariably, the lines between internal and external factors may be blurred or inter-related; it is helpful, therefore, to brainstorm the two at the same time.

Part of understanding the context includes developing your risk criteria, which is based on an understanding of your organization's risk appetite. Risk appetite can be defined as the balance between the potential benefits of embracing risk and the threats associated with such risks; knowing in advance what kind of balance your organization wishes to strike helps to guide you during the elaboration of this strategy, and helps ensure consistency (see text box below).

#### Step two: Risk identification (Risk assessment, phase one)

The first phase of the risk assessment process is risk identification. When identifying PVE risks, it is important to ask series of fundamental questions related to your activities that may positively or negatively impact upon the achievement of your objectives or outcomes (see Module Three for PVE-related questions to ask for contextual, programmatic and institutional risks).

Risks may arise as a result of both internal and external factors, so it is important to explore and identify vulnerabilities, and potentialities, related to the context, the institution and the programme.

The identification of PVE risks should be undertaken in participatory manner<sup>29</sup> - by bringing together certain stakeholders together in one room, and by implementing tailored engagement strategies for other stakeholders as and where necessary. For example, if you are elaborating a UNCT PVE Strategic Framework, all UNCT members should be present for this discussion; if, on the other hand, you are developing a UNDP Programme Document, relevant UNDP staff and implementing partners should ideally be present. One individual is not expected to have a deep understanding of all the internal and external risks: you will draw upon your collective knowledge as a team. You will need to consider carefully how and when to consult with external stakeholders, depending on time constraints, the scope of the programme, how the end product will be used, the risks posed to such stakeholders of engaging with the UN, etc.

## 5. ELABORATING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S RISK CRITERIA

Risk criteria can be thought of as a combination of 'red lines'/'no go areas' on the one hand, and areas where you have more leeway to 'push the boundaries' on the other. These should be decided upon collectively with UNDP or UNCT members involved in the design and implementation of the PVE initiative/programme. Your colleagues may have different levels of risk appetite for different types of risk. For example, your organization may decide that it will not take any fiduciary risks (e.g. risk of inadvertently funding individuals/CSOs with links to violent extremist groups), and the willingness to accept such risks, therefore will be low. However, your willingness to accept certain political risks may be high (e.g. insistence on engaging with 'returnees' despite government labelling them as 'terrorists'), since this aspect of the programme may be vital for achieving your goals, despite potential resistance. The criteria established should reflect the UNDP's policies, objectives, values, and the COs risk appetite.

<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that 'participatory' does not mean consulting all groups in the same way at the same time; you will need to adapt your consultation strategy to the power dynamics and particular needs of those whose views you wish to reflect, whether they are government entities, women, youth, elders, armed groups etc. – in order to ensure that the consultation process itself is not detrimental in any way to any of the groups concerned.

It is helpful to 'walk through' each aspect of the programme you are assessing with relevant stakeholders. You should consider how each aspect of the programme will relate to both the context and the institution, and how the interaction between these elements may impact the programme and vice versa. Brainstorming, surveys, scenarios and focus groups could be strategies used to identify risks. It is helpful to ask the 'what, where why, who, when and how' questions and to use Figure 4 as a guide:

- What kind of risks could arise from the context, the programme or the institution?
- What will the nature of this risk be?
- And, is this a risk to your reputation, your ability to deliver, or your staff, partners and beneficiaries?

**TIP**

**Keep a copy of this diagram at hand, and refer back to it each time you are trying to understand a risk that you have identified!**



**FIG. 4: RISK CATEGORIES – “RISKS FROM, RISK OF, RISK TO”**

**SOURCES OF RISK:  
“RISK FROM”**



**RISK TYPE:  
“RISK OF”**

- RESOURCE RISKS**  
Insufficient funds to cover programmatic needs
- FIDUCIARY RISKS**  
Loss of money (due to fraud, diversion of funds etc.)
- UN PRINCIPLES RISK**  
Violation of UN principles
- POLITICAL RISK**  
Risk of resistance to the plan from major actors
- SECURITY RISK**  
Risks of physical harm to UN and others
- OPERATIONAL RISK**  
Risks of disruption to the smooth running of operations

**RISK TARGET:  
“RISK TO”**



*Identify type of risk* →

*Identify risk target* →

### Step three: Risk analysis (Risk assessment, phase two)

Having identified the risks, you now need to analyse them. This means 'unpacking' everything you know about the risks you have identified, and using both quantitative and qualitative methods to determine the risk level. There are four central questions to be answered during the risk analysis phase for each of the risks you have identified:

- 1 What is the likelihood (or probability) of this event/or risk occurring? This is measured as a combination of whether the event is expected to occur and how often – measured on a scale of 'very likely' to 'rare' (see: Figure 5).
- 2 What will the consequence (or impact) of this event/risk be on the programme? This is measured on a scale of 'extreme' to 'insignificant' (see: Figure 6).
- 3 What is the risk level? This involves a risk matrix, which is used to combine the scale for measuring likelihood/probability and the scale for measuring consequence/impact into one generic 5x5 table, numerated to make the analysis more efficient (see Figure 7).
- 4 What does this analysis mean for UNDP? i.e. What kind of decision-making processes or actions will be triggered by these risk levels, when, how and by whom? Figure 8 provides examples of what each of the risk 'levels' could mean, but you should decide collectively what needs to happen as a result of each of the risk levels identified. The actions to be triggered are tied to your organization's risk criteria (see step one).

#### TIP

Deciding how to assess both the likelihood and consequences of various risks requires a deep understanding of the internal and external context. This exercise is best completed collectively, in a transparent and participatory manner – either at the level of UNDP Country Offices (COs), the UNCT or NGO field office, as appropriate. This process may appear 'technical' or daunting in the abstract, but once you have identified the risks collectively, the discussion will elucidate quite clearly the likelihood and consequence for each of the risks, while also helping to generate a shared level of understanding of the internal and external context.

**Fig. 5: Scale for measuring likelihood/probability**

LIKELIHOOD	OCCURENCE
Very likely	The event <b>is expected</b> to occur in most circumstances
Likely	The event <b>will probably</b> occur in most circumstances
Possible	The event <b>may occure</b> at some time
Unlikely	The event <b>could occure</b> at some time
Rare	The event <b>may occure</b> in exceptional circumstances

**Fig. 6: Scale for measuring consequence/impact**

CONSEQUENCE	OCCURENCE
Extreme	An event leading to <b>massive</b> or <b>irreparable</b> damage or disruption
Major	An event leading to <b>critical</b> damage or disruption
Moderate	An event leading to <b>serious</b> damage or disruption
Minor	An event leading to <b>some degree</b> of damage or disruption
Insignificant	An event leading to <b>limited</b> damage or disruption

**Fig. 7: Generic 5x5 risk matrix**

CONSEQUENCE LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCE				
	Insignificant (1)	Minor (2)	Moderate (3)	Major (4)	Extreme (5)
Very likely (5)	Medium (5)	High (10)	High (15)	Very high (20)	Very high (25)
Likely (4)	Medium (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)	Very high (20)
Possible (3)	Low (3)	Medium (6)	High (9)	High (12)	High (15)
Unlikely (2)	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)	High (10)
Rare (1)	Low (1)	Low (2)	Medium (3)	Medium (4)	High (5)

Impact/Importance in brackets () valued 1-25

**Fig. 8: Risk levels and actions required**

LEVEL OF RISK  RESULT

VERY HIGH		Immediate action required by executive management. Mitigation activities/treatment options are mandatory to reduce likelihood and/or consequence. Risk cannot be accepted unless this occurs.
HIGH		Immediate action required by senior/executive management. Mitigation activities/treatment options are mandatory to reduce likelihood and/or consequence. Monitoring strategy to be implemented by Risk Owner.
MEDIUM		Senior management attention required. Mitigation activities/treatment options are undertaken to reduce likelihood and/or consequence. Monitoring strategy to be implemented by Risk Owner.
LOW		Management attention required. Specified ownership of risk. Mitigation activities/treatment options are recommended to reduce likelihood and/or consequence. Implementation of monitoring strategy by Risk Owner is recommended.

**Step four: Risk evaluation**  
(Risk assessment, phase three)

Having analysed each of the PVE risks, you now need to evaluate them against the risk criteria established. This directly correlates to the UNDP CO/UNCT's attitude towards risk. At this point, you will need to initiate a discussion with key stakeholders concerning whether the risks are acceptable, manageable, unacceptable, etc. For example, the political risk of working with returnees may be very high, but if you have decided that this is necessary for the programme to proceed, this may be a risk you are willing to accept – and 'treat' (see Step five).

On the other hand, the risk of PVE funds being diverted may be 'medium', but this may be an unacceptable risk and one you decide to also treat by changing local partners, for example. This process will help you to determine if the UNDP risk processes already in place are sufficient or need to be adjusted/revised. For each risk you should consider the benefits (tangible/intangible) of proceeding against the potential harm (including unintended consequences).

At this point, you may like to bring together your work into one table or 'risk register' (see figure 9). The table allows you to:

- ▶ Categorize risks according to whether they originate from the context (local, regional, global), the programme or the institution;
- ▶ To identify the risk type (e.g. resource risks, political risk, UN principles risk) and the risk target (e.g. UN reputation, ability to deliver, staff/beneficiaries/partners);
- ▶ Add in the likelihood and consequence score;
- ▶ Calculate the combined risk level score;
- ▶ Describe what type of controls you have in place already to manage the risk;
- ▶ Identify the indicator(s) you can use to assess whether or not the risk is realized;
- ▶ Indicate what risk treatment you intend to provide (see step 5); and,
- ▶ Indicate a 'risk owner' will be (see Text box 6).

The table can evidently be expanded ‘downwards’ to include as many risks as you need to: a recent risk assessment conducted of a PVE programme for a UNDP CO, for example, identified 9 contextual risks, 28 programmatic risks, and 8 institutional risks. As you fill in the table, you will notice that there are significant overlaps between the different risks, which is to be expected.

**TIP**

Based on all the work you have completed so far, you are now in a strong position to provide recommendations to senior management on risk aspects of the programme. These recommendations may bring attention to potential mitigation or risk treatment options identified, and provide you with an opportunity to flag any particular concerns or potential benefits you have encountered during the assessment.

**6. IDENTIFYING ‘RISK OWNERS’**

Risk owners are individuals within the organization responsible for monitoring a particular PVE risk. Their job is to keep track of changes in the context and/or programmes and the impact these changes have on the risk ‘materialising’. The risk owner is responsible for ensuring that the risk treatment process in place is working and/or to initiative the required risk treatment process as and where necessary. By ensuring that each risk has an ‘owner’, you are ensuring that the risk management process remains dynamics and adaptable.

**Fig. 9: Risk register**

#	Risk description	Risk type*	Risk target*	Likelihood score (1-5)	Consequence score (1-5)	Risk level (L*C) (1-25)	Existing controls	Indicators	Risk treatment	Risk owner
CONTEXTUAL RISKS										
1	Local:									
2	Regional:									
3	Global:									
PROGRAMMATIC RISKS										
4										
INSTITUTIONAL RISKS										
5										

\*See Figure 4 above

### Step five: Risk treatment

The risk treatment phase involves deciding (collectively!) how you will approach and mitigate the risks you have identified. There are four options available:

**Option 1 - Tolerate the risk:** Tolerating a risk means accepting that the event may occur. You may decide to tolerate the risk because: existing controls to mitigate against any negative impact are sufficient; the risk level is within the organization's risk tolerance; and/or additional measures are not worth the effort. The decision to choose this option, as with the other options, is tied to your organization's risk appetite.

**Option 2 - Treat the risk:** There are three ways risks can be treated, with the goal of reducing the 'residual risk level' i.e. the level of risks once the additional measures are in place.<sup>30</sup>

- a) **Reduce the likelihood/probability:**  
These mitigation measures are designed to reduce the likelihood/probability of an event occurring.
- b) **Reduce the consequence/impact:**  
These mitigation measures are designed to reduce the consequence/impact of the event should it occur.
- c) **A combination of a. and b.**  
Depending on the nature of the risk in question,

**Option 3 - Transfer the risk:** Transferring the risk means engaging a third-party to take responsibility for the risk and/or to distribute liability for the risk; this decision may be taken in contexts where other actors are likely to have different and/or reduced risks. In humanitarian/development contexts, this happens frequently where donors transfer risk to the UN, for example, to ensure that funding for programmes is properly managed. Risk can be further 'cascaded' through the use of contracts to implementing partners: this carries other risks. It is imperative to recognize that there may be significant UN principles 'risks' involved in transferring risks and such decisions should be avoided and/or not taken lightly.

**Option 4 - Terminate the risk:** This option should be considered if the costs involved in treating the risk outweighs the potential benefits, or if they are simply too high. In this case, the organization terminates the activity/engagement that is generating the risk.

Once you have decided upon a course of action for treating the risks and elaborated a risk management plan it is important to conduct a "Stress Test"<sup>31</sup>, which is designed to assess the integrity of the plan(s) you have put in place for **certain high-level risks** (see Text box 7). The stress-test first requires you to answer the following key questions:

- ▶ Is the option scenario-dependent? i.e. what needs to happen (if anything) for this plan/risk treatment option to be 'triggered'? What will the indicator be? Who is the risk owner? etc.
- ▶ How adaptable/flexible is the option? i.e. is there scope for changing the plan/risk treatment option if the (internal/external) context requires it?
- ▶ How does the plan avoid "lock ins" i.e. courses of action which lack the required flexibility to deal with dynamic situations?

Look for opportunities!

The discussions around mitigation measures should seek to use required adaptations as opportunities to look for programmatic or institutional gains.

30 PVE specific examples are included in the next module.

31 Jacquand, Marc, Risk management presentation, Nairobi workshop, powerpoint presentation, no date.

## 7. STRESS TEST FOR HIGH-LEVEL RISKS

In some instances, the risk may be high enough to warrant additional analysis to ensure the mechanisms you have put in place will be sufficient to protect your programme, your institution, the partners and beneficiaries. The below three steps will help you to strengthen the mechanisms you have put in place:

- **Undertake a stakeholder mapping:** The stakeholder mapping requires you to gain a deeper understanding of the positions, interactions, interdependencies and points of influence of key stakeholders involved in the plan you have elaborated. This mapping ensures your plan is based on a comprehensive understanding of who is involved. Your goal is to understand who may be a: potential challenger, a key ally, could be mobilized, who is systemically and systematically excluded, and who should be avoided in the context of the risk and the plan you have envisioned.
- **Assess available resources:** Assessing the resources available for the plan you have envisioned: where will funding come from to support this plan? Do you have the right people with the right skill-set in place to support the plan? What assets are involved? And, therefore, how realistic is the plan?
- **Assess UN principles:** It is vital to consider the relationship between the plan you have elaborated and UN principles, such as gender equality, human rights, national ownership, meaningful youth participation, etc. Does the plan put stress on core UN principles?

### TIP

At this stage, you should consider how treating one risk may directly or indirectly affect the levels of other risks (e.g. does terminating one risk increase the probability/likelihood of other risks materialising?). Furthermore, any risk treatment strategy you choose will generate new or unforeseen risks (known as 'second order risks', see Text box 8).

## COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

The risk management process should begin with communication and consultation, and these efforts should continue at each stage of the process. Whoever is leading the design and development of the PVE programme should take the lead on initiating the development of the risk management strategy; in many UN contexts, these types of processes are coordinated by the UNDP-DPA Peace and Development Advisor (PDA) in close consultation with the RC. The privileged position of the PDA enables him/her to consult broadly both internally and externally to the UNCT, ensuring such exercises have the buy-in of all stakeholders. However, any staff member leading the development of the PVE programme should feel empowered to trigger a risk management process as and where necessary.

If the PVE programme is a joint, UNCT-wide programme, it will be important to ensure the risk management process takes place at the level of the UNCT - rather than at the level of individual agencies - in order to promote common understanding of PVE dynamics, drivers, challenges and risks. Other stakeholders to consult during this process should be decided upon collectively. As with all participatory processes, efforts should be made to take into account power dynamics when engaging stakeholders in such processes.<sup>32</sup> While it may be possible in some contexts to have diverse stakeholders in the room at the same time - such as UNCT colleagues, donors and other partners, for example - for other external stakeholders you may need to give more thought regarding how to engage them in the process.

### MONITOR AND REVIEW

Monitoring and reviewing the context, the risks identified and the processes put in place to manage them is an integral and systematic part of the risk management process. It ensures that our whole risk management framework remains 'fit for purpose'. Indeed, the risk management strategy must remain a 'living document'.

### TIP

You will identify all the relevant internal and external stakeholders during phase one. You may then decide to design a stakeholder engagement strategy, detailing how and where at each stage of the process you intend to promote communication and consultation. This can enhance accountability, transparency and, therefore, the effectiveness of your risk management process.

Monitoring and review, however, should take place at each of the above steps as a change in internal or external context could require a whole revision of the risk management strategy underway, underscoring the importance of continued context analysis, monitoring and review. UNDP has pioneered the development a 'Toolkit for Measuring the Impact of PVE programming' (see Text box 15), many aspects of which will help you develop relevant baselines and indicators to ensure you are monitoring the context in the most efficient and effective manner.

## 8. SECOND ORDER RISKS

A 'second order risk' arises as a result of the risk mitigation measure you have put in place; it is important to remember that no decision or action is risk-free. Second order risks must also be mitigated. For example: You may decide that one important aspect of your PVE programme carries risks that cannot be adequately mitigated with the resources you have available. Given that there are no suitable partners operating in the area you wish to work, you decide to terminate that aspect of the programme. If the programme was designed in a participatory manner, this may carry reputational risks as a result of 'mis-met' expectations amongst stakeholders. If violent extremism is a particular challenge in the community you have identified, the risk of non-engagement also increases the chances that the problem may get worse. How you choose to mitigate these second order risks will depend on the context and the resources you have available.

<sup>32</sup> Throughout the development of the risk management strategy you will need to ensure that your strategies are tailored to gender and other power dynamics. You will also need to ensure that typically marginalized groups have the possibility to have their diverse views heard in a manner that will not affect their safety or the ability to express themselves freely; this may mean engaging with different stakeholders in different times/places, or going through pre-existing local structures, such as religious or traditional authorities, for example.

## 3 MODULE THREE

### IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PVE DOMAIN

#### OVERVIEW

The PVE risks associated with your programmes are dependent on the interaction between the context in which you work, the programme in question, and the nature of your CO. Examples of contextual, programmatic and institutional risks have been elaborated to help stimulate a discussion about the risks in your own context. Each of the three sections begins with examples of questions that can be used to help you identify risks. By way of example, some risks include a 'hypothetical risk description', outlining of potential sources of the risk, the risk type and the risk target.<sup>33</sup>

Since mitigation measures must be tailored to your context, your institution's risk appetite and the resources available to manage the risk, specific mitigation measures for each risk have not been elaborated. As you read through the risks, many of the mitigation measures will be self-evident; in other instances, text boxes with potential mitigation measures - or details that may help you develop some - have been included. Generally speaking, once you have identified your risks and the risk level, you should then decide for each risk whether you intend to: tolerate, treat, transfer or terminate the risk, as elaborated in Module two.

#### CONTEXTUAL RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PVE PROGRAMMES

Contextual risks and opportunities include the adverse or beneficial outcomes that may arise in a particular context, and which could have impacts on both programmes and institutions.

The context refers to the area where programming will/is already taking place, and traditionally entails the national context. In the era of increased complexity, it is also vital to consider regional/transnational and international contextual dynamics that impact programming.

#### Key questions:

- ▶ What could happen at the **local level** that could impact the programme, institutions, partners or beneficiaries? For example, is there a risk of protests or demonstrations – or other grievances - that extremist groups could exploit? Are mosques or other places of worship at risk of attack? Are there any non-VE specific events at the local level, such as crime, natural hazards, campaigns stigmatizing certain target groups etc., that could positively/negatively impact your programming, ability to achieve your objectives or UNDP/the UNCT?
- ▶ What could happen at the **national level** that may impact the programme, institutions, partners or beneficiaries? To what extent, for example, does the issue of violent extremism overlap with and play into political dynamics and schisms? Do you believe the government may take actions that reduce the democratic space or impact upon human rights? What would the consequences of a terrorist attack at home or committed abroad by a national of the country in question have on programmes, relationships and the institution?

<sup>33</sup> In reference to the diagram in Figure 4.

- ▶ Are there any non-VE specific events at the national level, such as elections, the passing of specific laws, national commemorations or milestones that could positively or negatively impact your programming, ability to achieve your objectives or UNDP/ the UNCT?
- ▶ What could happen at the **regional/transnational level** that may impact the programme, institutions, partners or beneficiaries? What is the probability, for example, of the return of foreign fighters, and what impact would this have? What impact may refugees – if relevant - have on the local context, on any fragile borders communities and dynamics of VE? What will be the impact of an increase in the trafficking of weapons? Would the gains or losses of VE groups in other countries impact your programme/ institution and how? Are there any non-VE specific events at the regional level, such as border closures, natural resource related tensions/conflicts or political dynamics that could positively/negatively impact your programming, ability to achieve your objectives or UNDP/the UNCT?
- ▶ What could happen at the global level that may impact the programme, institutions, partners or beneficiaries? To what extent will the dynamics of the global war on terrorism impact your programme and perceptions of your institution? Are there any policies at the global level that may impact the movement or lives and livelihoods of 'at risk' populations in your country? Are there any non-VE specific events at the global level, such as financial shocks or currency fluctuations, funding decisions on the part of international donors or climate change impacts that could positively or negatively influence your programming, ability to achieve your objectives or UNDP/the UNCT?



## 8 examples of contextual risks and opportunities

### 1 Contextual risk one (local): Increasing government restrictions on the freedom of expression, and other related human rights violations

As governments increasingly put CVE and PVE on their agendas, repressive approaches can emerge, which often reinforce the narrative of extremist groups. The majority of definitions of violent extremism are extremely broad and the described 'activities' are not consistently linked to the use of violence. This enables governments to label non-violent activities that are critical of their activities as "violent extremism", as noted by the Special Rapporteur on human rights and counter terrorism.<sup>34</sup> As a result: 'extremism' can be considered an offence in of itself, and governments routinely label political opponents, human rights defenders, young activists and other 'critics' as terrorists or extremists. The glorification of terrorism is also increasingly considered a criminal offense, despite the human right to support and privately share ideas that are unpopular.<sup>35</sup>

Efforts to address hate speech invariably violate the freedom of expression, and fail to tackle the reasons that individual may hold such views (see Text box 9).

### Hypothetical risk description

This contextual risk may present: a UN principles risk if UNDP/UNCT is perceived to be supporting initiatives that violate human rights; a political risk if attempts to elaborate PVE programmes using the UNDP/UNCT approach are resisted by the government; and, a security risk if affiliation with the government in this domain leads UNDP/UNCT to become a target for violent extremist groups. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation, UN ability to deliver on objectives, and to UN staff, partners and beneficiaries.

## 9. PVE AND THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

"...the Special Rapporteur would like to recall that freedom of expression applies to all forms of ideas, information and opinions, including those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any part of the population. While the right to freedom of expression is a qualified right that can, and sometimes must, be limited, these restrictions must not jeopardize the essence of the right. Thus, it must remain clear that simply holding or peacefully expressing views that are considered "extreme" under any definition should never be criminalized, unless they are associated with violence or criminal activity. The peaceful pursuance of a political, or any other, agenda — even where that agenda is different from the objectives of the Government and considered to be "extreme" — must be protected. Governments should counter ideas they disagree with, but should not seek to prevent non-violent ideas and opinions from being discussed..."

United Nations Human Rights Council, Thirty-first session, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism', Advance Unedited Version, 22 February 2016, page 14.

34 United Nations Human Rights Council, Thirty-first session, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism', Advance Unedited Version, 22 February 2016, page 9. v

35 Ibid, page 15.

**2 Contextual risk two (national):  
State responses exacerbate violent  
extremism**

The way in which the state chooses to address the phenomenon of violent extremism can exacerbate the problem. Research indicates that ‘triggers’ for individuals to enact violence or join a violent extremist groups are often tied to actions taken by the government or police/military forces; UNDP’s 2017 report on ‘Journey to Extremism in Africa’<sup>36</sup> demonstrates that 71 per cent of those interviewed “pointed to ‘government action’, including ‘killing of a family member or friend or ‘arrest of a family member or friend’ as the incident that prompted them to join.”<sup>37</sup>

The adoption of intrusive surveillance techniques and prolonged ‘states of emergency’ can also exacerbate the phenomenon: these actions tend to ‘pit’ the state against local populations, rather than putting the state in a position to protect them. While security actors have an important role to play in addressing violent extremism, the use of prolonged detention, house raids and house arrests, and other forms of treatment that may be considered unlawful create resentment - especially when certain communities or regions perceive they are repeatedly targeted, or targeted for the ‘wrong reasons’. These actions tend to marginalize and alienate already marginalized and alienated communities, thereby increasing the risk that individuals will choose to support or join violent extremist groups. The UN is well-placed to mitigate these effects (see Text box 10).

**10. POTENTIAL MITIGATION MEASURES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS-RELATED PVE ISSUES**

The UN, through the RC or other senior in-country representative, is well-placed to use its position as an impartial and often well-trusted third party to work ‘behind the scenes’ to work with the government to address some of these risks. PVE and CVE are considered important issues for many governments, presenting entry-points for senior UN officials to discuss sensitive topics related to human rights. The UN can use its position to help government align legislation with the principle of legality enshrined in Article 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to ensure that criminal liability, for example, is narrowly, proportionately and clearly defined.<sup>38</sup>

More broadly, the UN can advise the government on how to ensure its laws, policies and actions are in line with international human rights law, and how to implement such policies in a sensitive manner. The UN must be clear in its own programmes about what it means specifically by violent extremism, articulating clearly that ‘extremist’ actions that lead to violence and not ‘extremist’ ideas are targeted by such interventions. In some context where the government is not open to UN advice on such matters, the UN may also choose to work more closely with civil society organizations and to distance itself from government work on CT and CVE in order to protect PVE work.



36 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ‘Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping point for recruitment’, UNDP, 2017.

37 Italics added.

38 Ibid, page 9.

### **3 Contextual risk three (national): Shrinking space for civil society**

An active civil society is a key element of any democracy, and civil society actors play a vital role both directly and indirectly in PVE programmes (see Text box 11). Civil society is, however, often a target for governments seeking to limit freedom of association, expression, assembly and privacy in the name of CT, CVE or PVE efforts. The 2017 Global Risks Report, published by the World Economic Forum, suggested “a new era of restricted freedoms and increased governmental control could undermine social, political and economic stability”<sup>39</sup>; the CIVICUS Monitor, furthermore, demonstrated that 3.2 billion people live in countries in which “civic space” is either closed or repressed.<sup>40</sup>

undue restrictions on civil society and human rights defenders in the name of security are, therefore, increasingly common: governments may place limitations on foreign funding for NGOs/CSOs; increase the barriers for registration; meddle in the internal affairs of NGOs/CSOs, and other forms of harassment; and, certain NGOs/CSOs may be suspended due to alleged links with extremist groups in an effort to tighten grips on power. In many contexts, security is simply an excuse to ‘clamp down’ on civil society actors that are critical of the government, or those which seek to increase the transparency and accountability of government actions. Again, such efforts are likely to backfire, increasing rather than decreasing VE as a phenomenon. The efforts may limit opportunities for the UN to identify relevant partners with whom to work at the sub-national level or, indeed, it may provide opportunities to strengthen civil society as advocates for human rights in this realm.

## **11. THE VALUE OF CIVIC SPACE AND PVE**

“The Special Rapporteur affirms the value of civic space, public participation and critical engagement by civil society as an essential part of a human rights informed approach to counter-terrorism. The values of rights to association, assembly and expression are all key elements of the human rights treaty architecture, and have both intrinsic value but also promote the functionality of societies in which the dignity and equality of every human person is advanced. She notes her attentiveness to undue restrictions on civil society in the name of security and counter-terrorism. The Special Rapporteur will remain deeply engaged with both governments and civil society in the discharge of her mandate. Continual monitoring of the human rights impact of measures PVE/CVE, in particular on women, children, and ethnic and religious communities, and meaningful and independent oversight, are crucial to safeguarding human rights.”

United Nations Human Rights Council, Seventy-second session, ‘Promotion and Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism’, Special Rapporteur of the human Rights Council, 27 September 2017, page 13.

### **4 Contextual risk four (national): Polarisation of the national political space**

The issue of violent extremism invariably plays into powerful political discourses on the national stage. One political group may accuse its opponent of being ‘extremist’, of ‘turning a blind eye’ to extremism, or of actively supporting groups that are extremist in nature. These efforts seek to delegitimize

political opponents and present them as ‘enemies of the people’. This creates instability on the national stage with knock-on effects on constituencies that support different political groupings sub-nationally. In such a context, programmes that support PVE may be perceived to be aligned with a particular group or political party, playing into and reinforcing stigmatization and/or stereotyping being propagated at the national level. These discourses, furthermore, inherently politicize the PVE paradigm, and can compound historical patterns of suppression and exclusion of particular groups.

39 World Economic Forum, ‘The Global Risk Report 2017, 12th Edition, Insight Report, World Economic Forum, Geneva, 2017, page 29.

40 Taken from: United States Institute of Peace, ‘Maria J Stephan Testimony before the Tom Lantos Human Right Commission’, entitled, ‘Responding to the Global Threat of Closing Civic Space: Policy Options, USIP, March, 2017.

**Hypothetical risk description:**

This contextual risk may present: a political risk if there is resistance to UNDP/UNCT efforts to promote social cohesion at local and national levels; a security risk if tensions escalate; and, an operational risk if demonstrations, protests etc. erupt and make programme implementation difficult to achieve. These dynamics present risks for UN ability to deliver on objectives, and to UN staff, partners and beneficiaries.

**Contextual risk five (national):**

**5 Terrorist attacks destabilize the country and provoke harsh responses**

Terrorist attacks are evidently destabilizing events, creating havoc and sowing fear at national, regional and global levels. In the medium term, the economic consequences can deter investors and tourists alike, often fuelling unemployment and poverty. The global economic impact of terrorism is estimated to have amounted to US\$84 billion in 2016,<sup>41</sup> for example. Terrorist attacks may provoke more 'hard-line' responses to violent extremism, whereby governments opt for harsh CT measures that marginalize or completely override PVE concerns and initiatives, and undermine human rights as outlined above.

**Contextual risk six (regional):**

**6 Failure to integrate foreign fighters or 'returnees'**

Whether large numbers of individuals have travelled abroad to join violent extremist groups or are affiliated with groups in their own countries but decide to leave, the way in which such individuals are 'received' is likely to have implications at local and national levels. Individual families or communities may be hostile to such foreign fighters/returnees and unprepared to deal with how to integrate them. Returning foreign fighters who remain marginalized may recruit others and/or enact attacks on their own soil; and, many are likely to suffer

from post-traumatic stress disorders and will require psychological support – to mention only a few of the potential challenges of dealing with foreign fighters and returnees. State-led efforts focused on 'punishment' may further marginalize such individuals and broader constituencies, and also create disincentives for others still 'inside' such groups from leaving, just as efforts which are perceived as being too 'light-handed' may create resentment and a sense of betrayal amongst victims and their families.

**Hypothetical risk description:**

This contextual risk may present: A resource risk if the UN is requested at short notice to provide support on this issue but lacks sufficient funding to do so; political risk if PVE-oriented measures focused on re-integration are rejected by the government; and, a security risk if foreign fighters and returnees increase levels of instability and/or perpetrate attacks. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation, UN ability to deliver on objectives, and to UN staff, partners and beneficiaries.



41 Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index 2017, 'Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism', IEP, (2017) page 3.

**7 Common contextual risk seven (regional):  
Spill-over effects from neighbouring countries and border areas**

Violent extremist groups are not constrained by borders. The ramifications of such groups tend to be felt at regional and global levels. Whether its refugees fleeing violence, the trafficking of weapons and drugs, or groups themselves committing cross-border attacks, the so-called 'spill-over' effects of violent extremism can have significant impacts on national contexts. Refugees may also suffer from 'scapegoating' dynamics, whereby they are labelled as actual or potential extremists as part of efforts to curb refugee inflows. Cross-border areas, where the government's reach may be non-existent or limited, can be particularly fragile and, as a result, may be targeted by violent extremist groups.

There is a risk, therefore, that border areas become sites for recruitment, 'hiding' of extremist group members, or areas where attacks are committed. If context analysis is insufficiently 'regional' in nature, such spill-over effects may come as a surprise, leaving the UN ill-equipped to deal with them.

**Hypothetical risk description:**

This contextual risk may present: resource risks if programmes need to be extended to fragile border areas or to deal with cross-border dynamics that have not been sufficiently captured in existing programmes; a political risk if the government and other major actors are unwilling to dedicate resources to PVE efforts in 'marginalized' areas; security risks if cross-border dynamics and spill-over effects destabilize the national context; and, operational risks if programmes are disrupted as a result. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation, UN ability to deliver on objectives, and to UN staff, partners and beneficiaries.

**12. HOW TO DEAL WITH CONTEXTUAL RISKS?**

While some contextual risks such as those related to human rights and political dynamics may provide entry-points for UNDP in terms of programming and dialogue with national counterparts, others – such as spill-over effects from neighbouring countries or the international military engagements abroad, for example, may be beyond UNDP's control. If you and your colleagues have decided that the risk requires treatment, you have two options: reduce the likelihood/probability of the event occurring; or reduce the consequence/impact. When events are beyond the control of UNDP, you will need to focus on reducing the consequence/impact on your programmes:

- For example, if spill-over effects are likely to impact a particular area of the country in a manner that could derail your programme, you may decide to focus on establishing 'pilot' initiatives in other areas first, before venturing into these more challenging contexts.
- Alternatively, you may decide that the spill-over effects are likely to be so destabilising that you will focus all of your efforts on that particular border area, and partner with other international actors in order to be able to contain that risk (this is an example of a trade-off: your decision to focus on containing the impact of spill-over risks may increase the level of risks for your programme, for example).
- With regards to the international military engagements abroad, UNDP is not necessarily in a position to influence how these dynamics impact the programme, but it can reduce the consequences/impact. It may be choose to do this by not accepting financing for PVE programmes from countries involved in the such engagements for example, as this may compromise UNDP's impartiality in the eyes of stakeholders.

## PROGRAMMATIC RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PVE PROGRAMMES

Programmatic risks fall into two main categories.<sup>42</sup> The first refers to the potential for a development programme to fail to achieve its objectives, which may be as a result of: contextual risks (outlined above); flawed assessment of what needs to be done; management and operational failure; failures of planning and coordination; and/or over-ambitiousness. Potential gains relate to opportunities to innovate/ catalyze the impacts of programming. The second category refers to the potential for programmes to cause harm in the external environment; in this instance, programmes may provoke, exacerbate or mitigate contextual risks. It is always important to consider both the positive and negative impacts that injecting aid/resources into a fragile context may have on the communities in question, the programme objectives and the institution.

### Key questions:

- ▶ **Targeting:** How will beneficiaries of the programme/initiative/project be selected? What effect may this selection have on those particular beneficiaries as well as on those who have been excluded? How have the selection criteria been developed and to what extent may targeting increase stigmatization or marginalization of certain populations? Could working directly with vulnerable populations make them more vulnerable?
- ▶ **Thematic focus:** How have decisions about what to focus on with regards to PVE been arrived at? What will be the consequences of focusing on one theme rather than another? What are the potential perceptions and conclusions that stakeholders could draw about UNDP/UNCT as a result of this focus?
- ▶ **Prioritization:** To what extent does the focus on PVE detract away from other pressing priorities? To what extent does the PVE programme address some of the contextual risks and drivers of violent extremism?

Will the PVE programme be able to address some of these competing issues? What will the consequences be of choosing PVE over and above these other issues? What is the rationale? How will this be perceived by stakeholders?

- ▶ **Power dynamics:** Does the programme distribute or further concentrate power? To what extent does the engagement strategy for ensuring stakeholder participation reinforce or contribute negatively to power dynamics? Could an appreciation of power dynamics be better integrated into programme design? Which actors are empowered and disempowered by the programme and to what effect? Does the programme have the potential to create fear about speaking out about dynamics in their communities?
- ▶ **Coordination:** Will you coordinate with other actors, how and when? Which actors will be included and excluded from coordination processes? What kind of coordination will this involve e.g. joint analysis, joint work, establishment of a UN-convened coordination mechanisms, etc.? How will collaboration effect stakeholder perceptions? How will decisions not to coordinate impact upon your ability to achieve your objectives?
- ▶ **Gender:** How does the programme affect different members of the population differently? Does the programme challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes? Does it identify different results for men and women, boys and girls? Are there visible potential programmatic differences between older and younger members of society? Does the way in which the programme has been framed risk diverting funds away from women and girls, for example? Does the programme instrumentalize women? To what extent are women, men, girls and boys put in any danger by the programme?

- ▶ **Youth empowerment:** To what extent does the programme respond to the needs of young people/advance youth (both women and men) empowerment? Does the way in which the programme is designed risk stigmatizing young people as a problem to solve? Or does it run the risk of only triggering tokenistic participation by young people? Are young people included in harmful/dangerous/discriminatory spaces/processes/ programmes? Does the programme offer positive incentives for young people to engage? Does the programme work with youth?
- ▶ **Participatory approaches:** To what extent will local populations be included in the design of the programme? What impact will their inclusion have on how the project is framed and how the organization is perceived? Who is included and excluded, how are they selected, and what impact does this have on the nature of your programme?
- ▶ **M&E:** How will you know if your programme is having the desired (or undesired) impact on the dynamics of violent extremism? What kind of data will you need and how accessible is the data?
- ▶ **Security:** Will the programme work in the geographical space of recruitment? Could staff/partners be targeted by the government or by violent extremist groups? What kind of resources do you have in place to protect staff and those you are working with?

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- ▶ **Coordination:** Will you coordinate with other actors, how and when? Which actors will be included and excluded from coordination processes? What kind of coordination will this involve e.g. joint analysis, joint work, establishment of a UN-convened coordination mechanisms, etc.? How will collaboration effect stakeholder perceptions? How will decisions not to coordinate impact upon your ability to achieve your objectives?

- ▶ **Gender:** How does the programme affect different members of the population differently? Does the programme challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes? Does it identify different results for men and women, boys and girls? Are there visible potential programmatic differences between older and younger members of society? Does the way in which the programme has been framed risk diverting funds away from women and girls, for example? Does the programme instrumentalize women? To what extent are women, men, girls and boys put in any danger by the programme?

## Examples of programmatic risks and opportunities

### 1 **Programmatic risk one: Initiatives that target 'at risk' communities/that present individuals as 'threats' stigmatize vulnerable populations**

PVE programming frequently references the need to target 'at risk communities' or 'vulnerable youth', thereby labelling entire populations based on the presumption that they may or may not commit violence. This approach can be discriminatory, leading to the stigmatization of minority, ethnic, religious, indigenous or 'age'-related groups.<sup>43</sup> The practical need for programming to be targeted, therefore, can result in increased stigmatization, or increased tensions if some groups feel they are excluded from programming on the grounds that they are not 'at risk'. From a human rights perspective, programming that repeatedly presents youth, women, or entire communities as either a threat or an opportunity obfuscates the fact that all youth, women and members of all communities are in fact rights-holders. Consequently, approaches that target on such grounds may have counter-productive effects.

#### **Hypothetical risk description:**

This programmatic risk may present: a UN principles risk if certain individuals or communities experience harm as a result of programmes; a security risk if individuals or communities are actively negatively targeted by the government, recruiters or attacks; and, operational risks if tensions are created between individuals/communities that do/do not benefit from programming. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation, UN ability to deliver on objectives, and to UN staff, partners and beneficiaries.

### 2 **Programmatic risk two: Over-emphasis on ideological and/or religious aspects of violent extremism**

There is a risk that some PVE programmes place a disproportionate emphasis on the role of on ideology and/or religion (specifically Islam) as a contributing factor of extremism. While ideology and religion may indeed play a role, programmes that focus directly on religious affairs - including efforts to help communities/individuals distinguish between 'good' and 'bad Islam' - can discredit religious institutions on the one hand, or entirely backfire - leading to accusations that the UN is 'meddling' in religious affairs.<sup>44</sup> As highlighted by the Brookings Institution's 'Prevention Project', a "growing body of research on drivers and analysis of violent extremism and broader conflict dynamics reveal that the principal triggers include economic inequality and lack of educational opportunity, previous exposure to violence (and desire for revenge), sense of injustice, or poor governance"<sup>45</sup>, and such drivers should be targets of PVE programming over and above issues related to ideology and/or religion. This is not to say that ideological or religious elements of extremism should not be addressed, but such efforts should be proportionate and take into account that local actors, including insider mediators (such as well-placed Imams, for example) are often in a better position to address such drivers, with UN support only as and where needed.

43 United Nations Human Rights Council, Thirty-first session, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism', Advance Unedited Version, 22 February 2016, page 12.

44 Holmes, Melinda, 2017 (page 86).

45 Brookings Institution, Lessons from development actors on integrating PVE: Challenges and opportunities, Brookings institution, Washing DC, The prevention project, organizing against violent extremism, July 27, 2017, page 10.

**Programmatic risk three:**

**3 PVE lens diverts attention from other equally important needs/objectives/groups**

A focus on violent extremism, especially if programming is not based on a sound analysis of conflict drivers and other manifestations of violence and conflict, can divert UN attention away from equally important and pressing issues. For example: a PVE programme on children in armed conflict may lead to a focus on children associated with groups labelled as 'extremist', leaving behind those children that are victims of violations by other armed groups. However, in most contexts, children who are not radicalized are recruited at a significantly higher rate than children labelled as being 'radicalized'. On a broader level, PVE programmes lead us to focus on the marginalized populations, whereas traditional development programming focuses on the 'poorest' populations. These programming choices have long-term implications which must be considered when priorities on themes, populations and other issues are being decided.

**Hypothetical risk description**

This programmatic risk may present: a UN principles risk if certain individuals or communities in need are excluded from

UNDP/UNCT programmes unnecessarily or due to an agenda that may or may not be the most pressing; and, a resource risk if a focus on PVE leads to insufficient resources to work on other equally important issues. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation and UN ability to deliver on objectives.

**Programmatic risk four:**

**4 Programming feeds into pre-existing power structures and/or reinforce stereotypes**

PVE, CVE and CT programmes are often perceived as being state-led and state-owned; significant levels of programming, therefore, focus on building or strengthening state capacity in this domain. There is recognition that the state can play a role in creating and/or perpetuating contexts in which violent extremism flourishes, and it can be challenging to encourage the state to recognize its own role in producing the issue it seeks to address (see Text box 13). Programmes that reinforce the state, therefore, can reinforce power structures that give rise to violent extremism.

PVE programmes can reinforce pre-existing power structures in other ways also; for example, many programmes give a prominent role to male religious leaders who, in some contexts, may already have considerable power; programmes often also emphasize women's engagement in ways that reinforce gender stereotypes, just as efforts that focus on men and boys because they are more 'at risk' may divert resources in a way that further marginalizes women and girls.

**13. LESSONS CONCERNING THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN PVE PROGRAMMES**

"Recognize the important role that the state plays, but don't work exclusively with or through national authorities when engaging on PVE. The state can be a promotor of PVE and a fomenter of violent extremism and development agencies and other actors need to be conscious of this when engaging on PVE at the national level. The national PVE action plan process provides an opportunity for meaningful examination of the role of the state in PVE and a possible first step in reaching a shared understanding of the drivers of violent extremism in the particular country. While recognizing the importance of securing the buy-in of national governments for PVE engagement, national and multilateral development agencies involved in PVE should also intensify their engagement with local authorities, civil society, and the private sector. This could include intensifying support for mechanisms that provide small grants to local actors without having to work through the national government."

Brookings Institution, Lessons from development actors on integrating PVE: Challenges and opportunities, July 27, 2017. Brookings institution, Washing DC, The prevention project, Organizing Against Violent Extremism, page 2.

Attempts to work with civil society are often met with similar power dynamics: many local CSOs may lack capacity in the PVE area, or may be subject to increasing limitations as a result of the shrinking space for civil society, leading the UN and other actors to work with international NGOs or more established, and powerful, CSOs.

### **Hypothetical risk description**

This programmatic risk may present: a resource risk and a political risk if UN resources are directed to a state that is not willing to acknowledge and change its own role in creating violent extremism; and, a UN principles risk if power structures and stereotypes are reinforced as a result of programming. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation and UN ability to deliver on objectives.

### **Programmatic risk five:**

## **5 Fragmentation of approaches and lack of coordination to PVE lead to inefficiency and ineffectiveness**

The fragmentation of PVE programming leads to duplication, gaps, wasted resources and inefficiency. Part of the problem is tied to insufficient coordination between development, humanitarian, human rights and security actors, in turn related to definitional, language, 'cultural' and highly practical issues.

Given the significant humanitarian and development needs in violent extremism-affected contexts, coordination with humanitarian actors is critical to ensure effective risk management approaches to PVE programmes. The proliferation of small PVE programmes in the absence of any national planning<sup>46</sup> and the lack of a common approach to PVE programming amongst donors, development implementers, furthermore, can undermine the collective ability of actors working on PVE to have a meaningful impact (see Text box 14).

### **Hypothetical risk description:**

This programmatic risk may present: a resource risk if scarce resources are used on programmes that are duplicative/create gaps; a political risk if there is resistance from political actors to collaborate; and, operational risks if programmes are implemented in contexts where UNDP/ UNCT is unaware of what other actors' programmes. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation and UN ability to deliver on objectives.

## **14. MITIGATING THE RISK OF FRAGMENTATION AND INEFFICIENCY OF PVE PROGRAMMES**

Coordination at the country level amongst the government, donors, key actors, CSOs and between development and security actors should be encouraged as much as possible. Creating formal and informal information-sharing and collaboration platforms can be helpful in this regard, but such initiatives will need to be complemented by significant efforts to agree on: an analysis of the context, the drivers of conflict and how these overlap with drivers of VE; key principles that guide work in this area; how to share and incorporate lessons into programming; and, how to incorporate regional dimensions and work with regional partners. It should be noted that collaboration between security and development actors need not necessarily mean "joint" work where joint work is not necessary; collaboration requires discussions on each other's respective role, where these roles overlap, where coordination would be helpful and where a certain level of distance is required to protect each other's mandates.

46 Brookings Institution (2017).

**Programmatic risk six:**

**6 The sensitivity of programmes leads to the exclusion of local populations in their design and implementation**

Whereas the field of development has embraced more collaborative and participatory way of designing programmes, PVE programmes are often considered 'too sensitive' to engage with external stakeholders. The secrecy and/or lack of transparency around such programmes results in initiatives that are not consistently aligned with the needs and expectations of local populations. National and local stakeholders need to feel comfortable with the activity, the approach and rationale for PVE programmes as a result of clear, open, transparent and honest dialogue during project design, and implementation.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, participation should not stop at design, but include regular check-ins and opportunities for dialogue throughout the engagement.

Failure to include local stakeholders may increase resentment and alienation since they may feel they are the objects of programmes rather than the participants; this may also underline trust between donors, implementing agencies and local populations.

**Programmatic risk seven:**

**7 The impact of PVE programmes is difficult to measure**

PVE programmes are not consistently designed in a manner that lends themselves to effective monitoring and evaluation: theories of change, for example, which serve as the starting point for measuring impact, sometimes fail to make a strong linkage between the programme inputs, and impact (see Text box 15). This risk is compounded by the difficulty of accessing viable data related to PVE from governments who may not be willing to share information they consider 'security-sensitive'. Consequently, there is tendency with PVE programmes – as with many other types of programmes – to focus on micro-level, single programme-level outputs, rather than seeking to understand the contribution of a collection of programmes to social cohesion and PVE, for example.

**15. IMPROVING THE IMPACT OF PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PROGRAMMING. A TOOLKIT FOR DESIGN, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

As the pace of specific PVE programming has increased – due to the urgency around preventing a rise in violence and deaths as a result of extremist behaviour - so too has the pressure to find a silver bullet of 'what works'. A community of practice is developing to better inform PVE programming. However, the systems and tools for understanding the suitability of PVE as an approach and the impact that PVE interventions have in different contexts have not yet been made available.

The objective of the toolkit is to help close this gap. It provides guidance to development practitioners and specialists to improve the design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes that focus on PVE. The toolkit provides a comprehensive set of tools at all stages of PVE programming, responding to an urgent need to improve efficiency, targeting and design and M&E of such programmes. It has four modules:

2017. Brookings institution, Washing DC, The prevention project, Organizing Against Violent Extremism, page 2.

47 See case example on Kyrgyzstan, Text Box 2.

48 Brookings Institution (2017), page 4.

- ① Laying the foundations explains approaches and principles that need to underpin projects related to PVE, including conflict and gender sensitivity.
- ② Building the framework offers tools for identifying factors of vulnerability and resilience to violent extremism in the project context, building theories of change, and developing indicators and monitoring.
- ③ Monitoring strategy and data collection provides guidance and tools on developing a monitoring strategy and discusses and compiles different data collection methods.
- ④ Evaluation and learning provides details on evaluating PVE projects.

The Toolkit is accompanied by a sortable Indicator Bank, comprising of over 190 PVE related indicators at outcome and output level which can be tailored to specific conflict contexts.

The Toolkit and Indicator Bank are available for download here:

[http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/global-policy-centres/oslo\\_governance\\_centre/pve.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/global-policy-centres/oslo_governance_centre/pve.html)

## INSTITUTIONAL RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PVE PROGRAMMES

Institutional risks refer to the risks posed to the organization designing and implementing the programme, and/or the donor. These risks include risks to reputation, finances, integrity, security of personnel, stakeholders and partners, and other operational risks, for example. When you are in the process of identifying the risks in your own contexts, you are likely to note the overlap between some of the contextual, programmatic and institutional risks; you may choose to 'merge' certain risks, but you should keep in mind the nuances you identify and the different ways in which such risks manifest.

### Key questions:

- ▶ **Relationships with partners and donors:** Have you conducted your 'due diligence' (see text box 16) on potential partners? Which donors will you accept funding from? Will accepting funding from certain donors negatively impact your relationships with stakeholders and, ultimately, the programme? Is the relationship with donors open and transparent? If contextual and programmatic risks lead to required changes for the programme, will you be able to communicate these to the donors? What does accepting funding with an explicit focus on PVE mean to local partners?

- ▶ **Relationships with the national stakeholders:** Do you believe the government genuinely wants to work on PVE? Is there a risk that the UN name and logo will be used for 'blue-washing'? Do you have the necessary access to make the programme a success? To what extent is the government 'part of the problem' and will this impact how you and your programmes are viewed? Are there any issues on which you will not collaborate with the government? If the government does not have a national PVE action plan, to what extent will you work on PVE, if at all, and how will this be communicated?
- ▶ **Development principles:** Is the objective of your programme oriented primarily towards development or security goals? Are you able to stay true to development programming principles while working on PVE? Are there any 'red lines' that you will not cross as far as working on CVE or CT programmes? Does the shift in programming towards PVE leave any vulnerable stakeholders out of programming? How does work on PVE affect how you are viewed as a development actor? Does working on PVE affect other programmes? What kind of due diligence will be required before UNDP can effectively work with police, military and/or intelligence officers for example?

► **Resource/fiduciary issues:**

Have you conducted 'due diligence' with regards to the partners you will engage with/fund? Can you be sure that funds will not be diverted by violent, criminal or extremist groups, and what mechanisms have you put in place to that effect? Do you have the right resources in place to design and implement the programme? To what extent is the programme shaped by elements that are not tied to the context e.g. resources, expertise, imposed timeframes, etc., and to what effect?

► **Security issues:** Will the programme expose staff, partners or stakeholders to increased security risks? Does UNDP have the resources in place to manage these increased security risks? Do these risks also pose a threat to UNDP buildings, assets, information etc.?



## 16. MITIGATING RISKS BY EXERCISING 'DUE DILIGENCE'

"In all its operational work, the RC, UN Country Team and entire UN system must always exercise appropriate due diligence to avoid actual or perceived complicity or association with human rights violations and to promote compliance with human rights standards. There is a need to consider engagement with the full range of other actors and stakeholders...". Due diligence must be carried out with regards to any work with: the private sector; private security companies; de facto authorities; individuals accused of serious human rights violations; non-state armed groups; and security forces.

For more information see: [UNDG Guidance Note on human rights for Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams.](#)

### Examples of institutional risks and opportunities

#### **Institutional risk one:**

**1 The absence of a definition of violent extremism exposes the UN to accusations of: 'rebranding'; all work being labelled as 'PVE'; and/or operational mistakes**

There is an increasing interest in the field of PVE amongst donors, and international actors are naturally responding to that interest and the needs on the ground. There is a risk of 'window dressing' i.e. labelling pre-existing programmes on community security, social cohesion or conflict prevention as being explicitly 'PVE programmes'.

While few international actors would do this deliberately, it is vital to be very clear about how programmes may or may not contribute directly or indirectly to PVE and how. Reputational risks of engaging in this space broadly speaking need to be managed effectively through a pro-active approach to risk management; often, this means engaging with risks and attempting to turn them into opportunities (see Text box 17).

## 17. TURNING PVE RISKS INTO OPPORTUNITIES

The UNCT in 'Country Y' may decide that there is a risk to UN reputation (see Figure 4 below) as a result of the PVE programme, specifically since one component of the project proposes close engagement between the UN, security forces and communities on violent extremism in fragile border areas. As in other contexts where collaboration with security forces is proposed, an exercise is undertaken to understand potential human rights violations of the security forces through the deployment of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP). The exercise demonstrates that such support will be consistent with UN's purposes and principles in practice, but the risk analysis raises concerns about the perceptions such collaboration will project.

Given the sensitive context some staff are concerned, for example, that collaboration with the security forces in the area of PVE opens the UN up to accusations of 'policing' communities and potentially alienating them – despite the fact that collaboration is clearly geared towards protecting communities and creating greater resilience. VE groups have been very effective at creating divisive narratives, and the UNCT wishes to avoid any potential opportunities to 'feed' these narratives in any way. Since this risk is deemed 'high', the UN decides to 'transfer the risk' to a local NGO, which has a strong record of working in this particular community - and with the UN - and which has expressed interest in working on this particular issue.

Given that the Government of Country Y is keen for this project to go ahead, the RC decides to use the project as an opportunity to create an entry-point with the Government to discuss how to engage with a country-wide network of NGOs on PVE issues, thereby seeking to create greater linkages between the government and civil society in this sensitive domain. Despite initial resistance, the RC is able to use the project as an opportunity to create a civil society, military, government platform for addressing PVE issues, with a focus on sensitive border areas. This collaboration helps create greater levels of trust and enables the UN to play a strategy support role 'behind the scenes', thereby encouraging greater national ownership.

### 2 Institutional risk two: Government engages in PVE narratives with the UN for 'bluwashing' purposes

Governments may 'use' PVE programmes and provide 'support' in a way that masks ongoing human rights violations, and which may actually exacerbate violent extremism as a phenomenon. This risks the UN entering into initiatives in which it is "blue-washing" i.e. providing the UN logo, support and name to initiatives that are not driven by UN principles (see Text box 17).

#### Hypothetical risk analysis:

This institutional risk may present: a UN principles risk if UN engagement perpetuates, facilitates or masks human rights violations; a political risk if the government resists attempts to fully

support PVE initiatives; an operational risk if government involvement in the programme derails certain aspects of the programme or has negative effects; and, security risks if UN engagement with the government leads to a perception of 'collusion' in human rights violations. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation, UN ability to deliver on objectives, and UN staff, partners and beneficiaries.

## 18. UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING 'BLUEWASHING'

In the late 1990s, the term 'greenwashing' was employed to denounce companies who inaccurately used their 'eco-credentials'<sup>49</sup> to boost their bottom line. The term 'bluwashing' soon emerged in the context of the UN Global Compact, used to describe businesses who use the UN flag and logo to improve their reputation despite their dubious human rights and environmental records. The term has since been used more broadly to refer any attempts to instrumentalize the UN to further goals which violate its core principles. The term is used with regards to PVE by critics who believe that engagement by governments in discourse around PVE is superficial at best, and counter-productive at worst, enabling governments to mask and avoid the necessary efforts to address the root causes of violent extremism.

Bluewashing can be avoided by: engaging in direct and honest discussions with the government; using PVE as an opportunity to engage with the government – behind the scenes where necessary – on their role in furthering violent extremism; and, by being clear with the government about the contexts under which UN support in this domain would need to be suspended or withdrawn. In some contexts, a joint conflict/context analyses with a PVE focus can assist with avoiding 'bluwashing'. A steering committee, for example, made up of CSOs and bilateral partners can oversee the process and ensure transparency and accountability, and the subsequent analysis used as a starting point for addressing all the drivers of violent extremism, including the government's role in exacerbating such issues.

### **Institutional risk three:**

#### **3 Short-term timeframes undermine the ability to achieve PVE-related results**

Many donors provide funding for one, two or sometimes three year programmes. It is extremely difficult, however, to measure significant impacts to the violent extremism-related landscape over such a short period of time. There is a risk that funding is accepted for 'short term' programmes, but that it is difficult to demonstrate results, leading to fractured relationships with the donor in question.

### **Hypothetical risk analysis:**

This institutional risk may present: A resource risks if UNDP has insufficient funds to meet the programme objectives; operational risks if attempts are made to 'squeeze' long-term processes into short-term time horizons. These dynamics present risks for UN ability to deliver on objectives, and UN staff, partners and beneficiaries.

### **Institutional risk four:**

#### **4 UNDP is accused of securitizing development**

Work on PVE may lead UNDP to be accused of 'securitizing' development. In traditional development work support is provided to populations in need due to ethical imperatives. In PVE work, there is a risk that this development imperative is 'hijacked' by security imperatives since PVE work contributes to security objectives. While the end result may be the same i.e. more resilient societies, the underlying rationale for initiatives matter, especially if PVE work is seen to be diverting resources away from traditional development initiatives. How PVE programmes are presented therefore, and what the 'end goals' are require careful consideration.

49 Schotts Vocab, 'Bluwashing', The New York Times, February 4, 2010

### Hypothetical risk analysis:

This institutional risk may present: a resource risk if UNDP/UNCTs core donors believe its agenda is being 'hijacked'; a UN principles risk if development agendas become skewed to security objectives; and, operational risks if stakeholders resist working with UNDP due to the perception that they have 'ulterior motives'. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation, UN ability to deliver on objectives, and UN staff, partners and beneficiaries.

### Institutional risk five:

#### 5 Fuzzy lines between extremism and terrorism lead to accusations that UNDP is supporting counter-terrorism efforts

The lines between PVE work and CVE or CT work are deemed by many to be 'fuzzy'; some UNDP practitioners expressed the belief that if work is PVE-specific (and involves targeting a specific group of people, in a specific area) then it is CVE work, and should not be undertaken by UNDP. There is a concern amongst many practitioners that work on PVE will lead to 'mission creep' whereby the scope of PVE programmes increases, and becomes merged and intertwined with CVE and CT programmes. Many development practitioners insist that they will not work on CVE or CT programmes, but the criteria for what this means is

poorly defined, and 'red lines' are rarely discussed. Given that PVE is an area where collaboration with security actors is often required, the risk of UNDP being accused of supporting counter-terrorism efforts increases if there is insufficient due diligence on where, how and under what circumstances such collaboration can take place. UNDP/UNCT needs to avoid accusations that it is 'policing communities' or using stakeholders for intelligence purposes, for example. The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) is used to help mitigate the risks associated with working with security actors (see Text box 18), but other efforts may be required to overcome perceptions of securitized approaches.



### 19. HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE POLICY (HRDDP)

"The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) is a particular UN system-wide policy that applies specifically to UN support to security forces that are not part of the UN—including support provided by member agencies of UN Country Teams—and in any context, whether conflict or non-conflict. It requires the UN entity to: (1) conduct risk assessments on whether the entities receiving support might commit grave violations (as defined by the policy); (2) provide support only when risks of grave violations do not exist or are mitigated through the adoption of specific measures (so-called mitigatory measures); (3) establish procedures for monitoring the conduct of recipient entities during the time support is provided; and, (4) bring allegations of grave violations to the attention of national authorities with a view to bringing these to an end, should they be committed during the period of support, and, should that be ineffectual, potentially to suspend or withdraw support. The HRDDP is primarily aimed at encouraging UN entities to ensure that support to non-UN security forces is consistent with the UN's purposes and principles."

For more information, see: <https://undg.org/human-rights/undg-guidance-note-on-human-rights/ensuring-the-un-is-exercising-due-diligence-vii-d/>

**Institutional risk six:**

**6 UNDP resources are co-opted by individuals or groups that support violent extremism**

In today's transnational and highly interconnected world, tight financial controls are required to ensure that funds are not diverted by governments, individuals or groups involved in violent and/or criminal activities. The possibility of funds being diverted or co-opted by such governments, individuals or groups are often increased in fragile and/or conflict affected contexts where formal and informal institutions are weaker, and competition over scarce resources intensified by conflict dynamics. For UNDP, the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) can assist with some of these risks.<sup>50</sup>

**Institutional risk seven:**

**7 Staff and partners become targets both for the government and for violent extremist groups**

PVE can be a sensitive field to work in for staff, stakeholders and implementing partners alike. There is a risk that through working on PVE programmes, staff, stakeholders and partners become potential targets for violent extremist group. Human rights defenders, journalists and activists, for example, may also be targeted by the government. Security of information may also be compromised if donors, host governments or others request micro-analyses of certain contexts, which may involve gathering information from trust local community partners who may not be comfortable with such information being shared with governments.

**Hypothetical risk analysis:**

This institutional risk may present: A UN principles risk if the UN puts staff and partners in harm's way; and, a security risk. These dynamics present risks for UN reputation, UN ability to deliver on objectives, and UN staff, partners and beneficiaries.



50 The Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) framework was first adopted in 2005 by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP2 (then UNDG ExCom Agencies) pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 56/201 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The HACT framework represents a common operational ('harmonized') framework for transferring cash to government and non-governmental Implementing Partners (IPs) (irrespective of whether these partners work with one or multiple United Nation agencies). The objective of the HACT framework is to support a closer alignment of development aid with national priorities and to strengthen national capacities for management and accountability, with a view to gradually shift to utilizing national systems. It is understood that 'harmonized' in the context of the HACT framework refers to agencies implementing a common operational framework using the same, consistent, standardized approach and tools. See: United Nations Development Group, 'Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) Framework, January 2014.

## 4 MODULE FOUR

### HOW TO DEVELOP RISK-SENSITIVE PVE PROGRAMMES? GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Policy-experts and practitioners all point to the same four, common principles for PVE programming which, when implemented effectively, can serve as mitigation measures for many of the common risks outlined in the previous module. Indeed, the specificities of the context in which you work, the resources you have available, and the risk-appetite of your institution means that 'abstract' mitigation measures for each and every common risk identified would be misleading at best, and irresponsible at worst. However, an approach grounded in your risk assessment and the following four key principles is likely to drastically improve the effectiveness, efficiency and 'robustness' of your programmes. Since these principles are covered extensively elsewhere, the below serves as an indicative 'introduction' to the terms for those who might not be familiar with them, and combined with some PVE-relevant considerations that may assist with applying these principles in practice.

#### **1 Principle one: Context analysis-based PVE programming**

PVE programmes must be based on an analysis of the context. There are several issues to consider when undertaking a context analysis for the purposes of PVE programming.

- ▶ Context analysis should be as inclusive as possible and updated frequently; inclusivity when conducting analyses means being sensitive to gender and other power dynamics, both in terms of the content of the analysis and in terms of the nature of the outreach/engagement strategies used.
- ▶ PVE-specific analysis is not always advisable. A PVE-specific analysis places violent extremism-related actors and communities at the heart of such an exercise, which may lead to a 'skewed' analysis - making violent extremism appear to be the most urgent and pressing of all in-country issues, rather than one of many conflict-related issues requiring attention. A broad context or conflict analysis with PVE components is likely to be much more constructive as this will enable you to see how violent extremism ties in with, and feeds into other, conflict drivers at the national, regional and international levels.

- ▶ The methodology you use for your analysis is important, as it will dictate the type of 'lens' through which you view the conflict, violent extremism-related issues and peace drivers. The UN Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA, see Text box 20) can be a helpful place to start; political economy-related context or conflict analyses can also be insightful given the focus on power, politics, relationships and influence.



## 20. THE UN-WIDE CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS (CDA)

A Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA) - or simply conflict analysis - is a tool that assists with analysing a specific context and developing strategies for reducing or eliminating the impact and consequences of violent conflict. It provides a deeper understanding of the issues that can drive conflict and the dynamics that have the potential to promote peace in a wide variety of countries where the United Nations (UN) operates. The CDA has been developed as a versatile tool for UN staff and other practitioners. It facilitates a deeper understanding of conflict drivers, conflict stakeholders, the key dynamics of the conflict, as well as engines of peace. This type of analysis contributes to the development of clear and attainable peacebuilding programming and policy objectives, and indicators for measuring and monitoring results.

For more information see: [Conducting a conflict and development analysis, UNDG, 2016](#)

### 2 Principle two: Conflict-sensitivity and 'do no harm' for PVE programming

Conflict-sensitivity refers to the ability of an organization to understand the context in which it is operating, and the interactions between its interventions and the context; it requires an ability to act upon this understanding to avoid negative impacts.<sup>51</sup> In essence, "conflict sensitivity refers to the practice of understanding how aid interacts with conflict in a particular context, to mitigate unintended negative effects, and to influence conflict positively wherever possible, through humanitarian, development and/or peacebuilding interventions."<sup>52</sup> Some key points to consider:

- ▶ Conflict-sensitivity is particularly essential in fragile or conflict-affected environments, where the majority of PVE programmes are implemented; even in contexts that are not fragile or conflict-affected, conflict-sensitivity is vital due to the highly politicized nature of PVE programming.
- ▶ With insufficient attention to the manner in which PVE programmes are designed and implemented, programmes can inadvertently have negative impacts upon the conflict or a given country or region, and upon the UN's ability to continue providing support in this crucial domain.

51 United Nations Development Group, 'Conducting a conflict and development analysis', UNDG, February 2016.

52 <http://cdacollaborative.org/what-we-do/conflict-sensitivity/>

- ▶ A conflict-sensitive lens allows a PVE programme to continue its intervention, confident that it is minimizing adverse effects on the context – or that such adverse effects will be well-mitigated if and when they arise.
- ▶ Conflict-sensitivity is closely related to the concept of ‘do no harm.’<sup>53</sup> The ‘do no harm’ framework called for a ‘re-design’ of assistance programmes to ensure good intentions do not, inadvertently, translate into bad outcomes and is highly relevant for work on PVE.

### **3 Principle three: Results based management (RBM) for PVE programming**

Stakeholders engaged with for the purposes of elaborating this GN highlighted the importance of Results-Based Management (RBM) for PVE programming. RBM is a “life cycle approach” to designing, implementing and evaluating projects. Simply put, it ensures that international actors focus on demonstrating real and meaningful results, in a transparent and accountable manner. The following points are key for RBM programming in the PVE domain:

- ▶ As far as PVE is concerned, the whole RBM approach is of relevance of course, but designing robust theories of change (TOC) is particularly important. Too often, PVE-related TOCs can be vague and many fail to clearly articulate how the intervention will contribute to PVE, rather than conflict prevention, social cohesion or other important and relevant goals.

- ▶ Monitoring, evaluation and learning is always critical.
- ▶ In the field of PVE many donors have expressed willingness to support PVE programmes that are ‘innovative’ or ‘creative’, underscoring even further the need for rigorous M&E approaches and systematized approaches for sharing insights with the broader PVE community.

Refer to the ‘Toolkit’ mentioned in Text box 10 for more information`.

### **4 Principle four: Human rights-based approach (HRBA) for PVE programming**

A human rights-based approach (HRBA) to programming outlines a framework for enhancing human development that is based on international human rights standards and designed to promote and protect human rights.<sup>54</sup> This approach seeks to analyse inequalities that often lie at the heart of development challenges, and to “redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impeded development progress.”<sup>55</sup>

- ▶ The HRBA approach ensures that PVE programming design and implementation decisions aim to fulfil and/or protect human rights, viewing and promoting capacities of stakeholders as both rights-holders and duty-bearers accordingly.<sup>56</sup>

53 Initially advanced by Mary Anderson in her book entitled, ‘Do no harm: How aid can support peace – or war’, the concept - that emerged in the 1990s - was the result of a collaboration with civil society organizations.

54 <http://hrbaportal.org/faq/what-is-a-human-rights-based-approach>

55 Ibid.

56 Statement on a Common understanding of a human rights based approach to development cooperation, endorsed by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Programme Group.

- ▶ It is vital to link PVE programming with international human rights norms, standards, principles and instruments; these linkages create entry-points for programmes, as they use impartial and universally recognized standards as a yard-stick for programming – allowing for prioritization and advocacy where necessary.<sup>57</sup>
- ▶ It is important to combine top-down and bottom-up approaches when elaborating and implementing PVE programmes; they should engage both policy- and decision-makers, and community-level actors<sup>58</sup> / non-state actors. The UN can use its comparative advantage in this regard to serve as ‘convenor’ or ‘bridge’ between different actors, especially on contentious issues. This lesson is pertinent for PVE programmes which are often perceived as being government- and/or state-led, owned and run.

## 21. PVE-RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS

- The international community has committed to adopting measures that ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/288 (2006). Member States have resolved to take measures aimed at addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, including lack of rule of law and violations of human rights, and ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with their obligations under international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law. Biennial review resolutions have confirmed and strengthened this commitment and added the importance of the gender dimension in these efforts.
- The 2016 Secretary-General Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674, 2015) emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism that goes beyond “law enforcement, military or security measures to address development, good governance, human rights and humanitarian concerns”. That approach includes addressing conditions conducive to violent extremism and terrorism and the human rights, gender and youth empowerment dimensions of that issue.
- Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/RES/30/15 on human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism, Member States contains human rights guidance for the UN on the subject. The related Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on best practices and lessons learned on how protecting and promoting human rights contribute to preventing and preventing and countering violent extremism (A/HRC/33/29, 2016) provides examples of relevant issues and approaches.
- The UN’s work in the area of countering violent extremism, human rights and gender is also guided by Security Council resolutions 1624 (2005), 2178 (2014), 2242 (2015) and 2250 (2015).

Source: Adapted from: <https://undg.org/human-rights/undg-guidance-note-on-human-rights/specific-human-rights-issues/>. See this link also for guidance that the Resident Coordinator and the UNCT can play in promoting the issue.

57 Berman, G., ‘Undertaking a Human Rights-Based Approach: A Guide for Basic Programming - Documenting Lessons Learned for Human Rights-Based Programming: An Asia-Pacific Perspective - Implications for Policy, Planning and Programming’, UNESCO Bangkok, 2008.

58 *ibid.*

# ANNEX I

## REFERENCED TOOLS AND TOOLS – A SUMMARY

RELEVANCE	TITLE / ORGANIZATION	LINKS
<b>Context / Conflict analysis</b>	UN 'Conflict and Development Analysis', 2016.	<a href="https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDP_CDA-Report_v1.3-final-opt-low.pdf">https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDP_CDA-Report_v1.3-final-opt-low.pdf</a>
	British Foreign Office Stabilisation Unit's 'Political Economy Analysis', October 2014.	<a href="http://sclr.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/publications/what-works-series/489-what-works-analysis">http://sclr.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/publications/what-works-series/489-what-works-analysis</a>
	Clingendael's Institute's 'Framework for Strategic Governance and Corruption Analysis (SCAGA), October 2007.	<a href="https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20071000_cru_occ_unsworth.pdf">https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20071000_cru_occ_unsworth.pdf</a>
<b>Do no harm/ conflict sensitivity</b>	The Do No Harm framework: A brief description of seven steps	<a href="http://www.donoharm.info/downloads/level000/Seven_Steps_English.pdf">http://www.donoharm.info/downloads/level000/Seven_Steps_English.pdf</a>
	Collaborative Learning Projects, 'The do no harm handbook, The framework for analysing the impact of assistance on conflict', A produce of the Do No Harm (Local Capacities for Peace Project)	<a href="http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/the-do-no-harm-framework-for-analyzing-the-impact-of-assistance-on-conflict-a-handbook/">http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/the-do-no-harm-framework-for-analyzing-the-impact-of-assistance-on-conflict-a-handbook/</a>
<b>Results-based management</b>	United Nations Development Group, 'Results-based Management, Handbook, UNDG, October 2011.	<a href="https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf">https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf</a>
	UNDP Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating PVE Programmes	<a href="http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/library/Dem_Gov/improving-the-impact-of-preventing-violent-extremism-programming.html">http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/library/Dem_Gov/improving-the-impact-of-preventing-violent-extremism-programming.html</a>
<b>Human rights based approaches</b>	United Nations Development Group, Guidance on Specific Human Rights Issues	<a href="https://undg.org/human-rights/undg-guidance-note-on-human-rights/specific-human-rights-issues/">https://undg.org/human-rights/undg-guidance-note-on-human-rights/specific-human-rights-issues/</a>
	Human Rights-Based Approach Portal	<a href="http://hrbportal.org/faq/what-is-a-human-rights-based-approach">http://hrbportal.org/faq/what-is-a-human-rights-based-approach</a>

## ANNEX II

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