



UNITED NATIONS
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



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LEARNING AND ADAPTATION STRATEGY

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**PEACEBUILDING PRIORITY
PLAN 2018-2021**

Kyrgyzstan



United Nations
Peacebuilding

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PART I: LEARNING AND ADAPTATION STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

The UN's 2017-2020 Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) for Kyrgyzstan consists of three projects which aim to deal with challenges arising from religious radicalization and violent extremism, and was approved by the UN Peacebuilding Fund in December 2017 for implementation by six UN agencies, namely UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNODC, OHCHR and UN Women. As the first comprehensive program to address violent extremism (VE) in Kyrgyzstan it is important that the program is as effective as it can be, and learns from international and local experiences with PVE programming. Furthermore, it is essential that the program is able to carefully consider the program's impact on the broader conflict context, and able to learn from experience and adapt programme implementation to this learning. Learning and adaptation are particularly challenging since the program is to be implemented by a consortium where different UN agencies and partners are implementing different parts of the program.

In February 2018 a Conflict Sensitivity and Effectiveness of PVE programming workshop was held in Bishkek, which led to

the agreement to develop a Learning and Adaptation Strategy, as an integral component of programme implementation. This Strategy presents the main rationale of the Learning and Adaptation Strategy, the ground work that is necessary for learning and adaptation to be conducted on-going basis, the mechanisms that will be established, the process of learning and adaptation, and the responsibilities for ensuring effective learning and adaptation takes place. The Strategy itself is followed by a Part II that presents tools and templates for the preparatory work, and a Part III that presents tools and templates for the on-going process of learning and adaptation.

The Learning and Adaptation Strategy aims to be a practical and easy-to-use guidance note for conducting effective learning and adaptation, tailored to the specific design and implementation modalities of the PPP of Kyrgyzstan. It draws heavily on the UNDP – International Alert toolkit for improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming, which all readers of this guidance note are encouraged to use as a key reference.

2 RATIONALE FOR A LEARNING AND ADAPTATION STRATEGY

There are three main reasons why it is essential to have a strong learning and adaptation strategy for the PPP in Kyrgyzstan:

- Relatively weak evidence for certain ToCs
- High interaction with context - need to be adaptive
- Adaptive programming requires a systematic mechanism of reflection & learning as a basis for accountability and enhancing programme effectiveness

Firstly, as discussed above, this is the first comprehensive program to address violent extremism in Kyrgyzstan. Although there is considerable peacebuilding experience to build on, the focus on preventing violent extremism brings about particular challenges for which ready-made solutions are hard to find. Also globally, governments, civil society organisations and international organisation are still searching for answers on how best to engage in PVE, trying to determine what works and what doesn't, and how to measure results.

As a result, the theories of change underpinning many of the activities that are currently implemented under the banner

of PVE (be it PVE-relevant or specific) are still based on relatively weak evidence. As standards for M&E of PVE-related activities are still being developed and tested (PUT FOOTNOTE), it is also not very easy to determine the effectiveness of PVE-related activities. This, therefore, requires a significant investment in assessing the validity of these theories of change in a systematic manner.

Secondly, all activities to prevent violent extremism need to be highly contextualised. Due to the high specificity of drivers of violent extremism, even within geographic locations, activities need to be closely adapted to the local situation. Furthermore, the context may change over time, with implications for project implementation. Although some of the more structural factors are unlikely to change fast, the enabling factors may, for instance when a new channel of extremist propaganda comes online, or protests against government authorities start to get organised. The project implementation needs to be able to adjust quickly to such changing circumstances. This is particularly relevant considering the highly sensitive nature of PVE.

Thirdly, PVE programming requires a more flexible and adaptive type of programming, where a continuous adaptation to changing circumstances or progressive insight is necessary. This needs to be accompanied by a systematic process of learning and

adaptation, which serves as an additional basis of accountability, as it provides a systematic justification of why project implementation may deviate from what was initially planned. PBF is a flexible donor, but will still require a record of what, why and how.

3 PREPARING THE GROUND FOR LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

In essence, learning and adaptation is about ensuring conflict sensitivity and enhancing the effectiveness of programming.

Learning and adaptation centres on four main questions:

- 1) What are the key changes in the context and does the project need to adapt itself to these?
- 2) What are the main risks for unintended consequences and are our risk mitigation strategies still valid?
- 3) How solid is our evidence for the validity of our theories of change, how can we strengthen the evidence and verify our assumptions?
- 4) In light of our progressive insight into above mentioned three questions, do we need to adjust anything in the project?

Regular reflection, analysis and decision-making is necessary on these four dimensions. In order to reflect on these on a regular basis, a degree of preparatory work is necessary .

3.1 Context analysis

A context analysis for PVE programming will include both the overall conflict related analyses of Kyrgyzstan – that helps to gain an understanding of root causes, proximate causes and potential triggers of conflict – as well as a more VE-specific context analysis that looks at the specific vulnerabilities and resilience for VE.

During the process of learning and adaptation, there will be a continuous focus on whether important changes in the context occur on which the project may have a particular impact, or that may have an impact on the project. In order to do this effectively, there needs to be a solid understanding of the context ex-ante. This is therefore part of the preparatory work.

Guiding questions for the analysis of vulnerabilities and resilience are provided in annex I.

Conflict sensitivity refers to the ability of an organisation to understand the context in which it is operating, and the interactions between its interventions and the context; it then requires an ability to act upon this understanding to avoid negative impacts.

A conflict-sensitive lens allows a programme to continue its intervention, confident that it is not having adverse effects on the context.

Using a conflict-sensitive lens leads to better development results and increased effectiveness.

Source: United Nations Development Group, Conducting a conflict and development analysis, 2016,. Drawn from IA-UNDP toolkit.

PREPARATORY TASKS TO BE CONDUCTED

1. Conflict related analyses & Distilling key Risks for Doing Harm
 - a) Identify and share key conflict analysis studies
 - b) Analyse the extent to which these conflict analyses are still valid and update if necessary
2. VE-specific context analysis
 - a) Country-wide analysis of vulnerabilities and resilience to VE
 - b) Strengthen analysis of issues of high relevance to PVE projects, if necessary
 - c) Localized analysis of vulnerabilities and resilience to VE (in project areas)

Outputs

1. Conflict analyses validated by the L&A team
2. Overview of main factors driving VE in the Kyrgyz context documented



3.2 Conflict sensitivity and risk mitigation

To be conflict sensitive, one must have a strong understanding of the context in which it is operating, as well as how the project interventions may interact with this context, and how these could potentially do harm. Such negative unintended consequences can take the shape of increased risk of conflict or heightened tensions in society, for instance by exacerbating existing grievances. Not all unintended consequences increase the risk of conflict however, there are also other types of unintended consequences, such as increasing the degree of political polarization or unwillingly legitimizing repressive state policies and practice.

Risks can be categorized as:

- **Strategic level risks:** potential unintended consequences of the program and projects related to their broader (political economy) context

- **Operational level risks:** potential unintended consequences related to the design and implementation of the projects

The strategic and operational level risks that were already identified during the Workshop are described in Annex #. To be clear, these are very different from programme implementation risks, which are the types of risks that are often described in log-frames, and are primarily intended to cover one's back when implementation targets or deadlines are not met (.e.g. lack of political will, deterioration in security, etc.)

During project implementation, there needs to be a close eye on these strategic and operational risks for unintended consequences, which is an essential component of the learning and adaptation process. In order to do this effectively, there needs to be a solid understanding of these risks ex-ante. When the main risks are known, risk mitigation strategies can be devised to minimize the potential negative impact. This is therefore part of the preparatory work.

PREPARATORY TASKS TO BE CONDUCTED

1. Distilling key risks for unintended consequences
 - a) Identifying and agreeing on the key risks for unintended consequences from the context analysis
 - b) Review and update risks identified at the Workshop together with partners
2. Develop risk mitigation strategies
 - a) Develop risk mitigation strategies (per outcome area)
 - b) Incorporate these risk mitigation strategies in the Project Implementation Plan

3. Develop a risk monitoring strategy
 - a) Identify the information needed to determine whether a risk is playing out
 - b) Identify ways to collect this information, formally and informally

Output

1. Short overview of main risks and risk mitigation strategies
2. Risk monitoring matrix (a potential template is provided in annex #)

3.3 Relative strength of the Theories of Change

The key question here is the solidity of the evidence underpinning our Theories of Change, and how this evidence can be strengthened.

It is important to clearly define these ToCs, as they provide the foundation upon which to judge their plausibility and validity. The project prodocs do have an outcome level Theory of Change defined, but this is not yet the case at the output level.

In order to assess the validity of a Theory of Change, it needs to be clear what exactly is desired to be achieved. This desired result

often goes beyond the very immediate result of the project activity, but relates to a behavioural change that is required. For instance, once certain skills are being transferred to security staff, one would also expect their behaviour to change accordingly, not simply for them to pass a test on the skills delivered.

This clearer articulation is essential preparatory work for two main reasons:

- 1) it provides clarity on what is aimed to be achieved, which helps to identify the right indicators, which can further strengthen the M&E framework

Example of assumptions and weak points in a ToC

If we build capacity of local authority actors to conduct outreach with local CSOs and communities in areas affected by VE, then local authorities have better, more contextualised understanding of the VE problem (and how it impacts men and women differently) within their municipality and develop more targeted and effective solutions to address VE. If we build capacity of local authority actors to conduct outreach with local CSOs and communities in areas affected by VE, then CSOs and communities in areas affected by VE have the opportunity to engage in and inform local PVE actions and if local authorities, CSOs and communities are jointly involved in planning and delivery of these projects, then trust will be built between local state and non-state actors with an interest in PVE.

Assumptions: There is sufficient local authority will, capacity and power to lead on PVE-related issues; decentralisation process provides an opportunity to engage local actors more fully and there is an environment of increased political will. CSOs and communities are willing to work with local authorities.

Weak points: Local authorities lack will and capacity or have no power vis-à-vis central state. This plays into 'promises unkept', reducing trust and damaging relationships. That initial trust is so low that it is not possible to conduct effective outreach (so trust-building required). That only a small, non-representative number of CSOs, etc. are consulted, or that consultations are 'window dressing'.

Source: Slightly adapted from UNDP-IA toolkit

- 2) it helps to think through on what assumptions this ToC is based, and what some of the weaknesses are the ToC may suffer from.

As a further preparatory step, the assumptions and the weak points of the Theory of Change will be surfaced. This will help determining what additional testing (additional data collection, surveys, or even tailored research will be necessary to strengthen the validity of the ToC. See box # for an example of assumptions and weak points in a ToC.

Some guiding questions for identifying assumptions and weak points in the ToC are provided in annex #.

The different ToCs will further be assessed for their relative strength. Those that are acknowledged as having the weakest assumptions or the weakest evidence base may require an additional strategy to strengthen its evidence base, and will receive additional attention in the learning and adaptation sessions.

PREPARATORY TASKS TO BE CONDUCTED

1. Review and refine the outcome and output-level ToCs (Annex IV provides some suggestions for possible formulations of the operational level ToCs)
2. Surface their assumptions and weak points and assess their relative strength (Guiding questions and a suggested template are provided in annex #)
3. Develop a strategy for strengthening the evidence for these ToCs (what data to collect, what surveys to do) and incorporate this into M&E plan
4. Identify the weakest ToCs and develop a strategy to strengthen the evidence base

Outputs

1. Refined and agreed upon ToCs at outcome and output-level, including additions to the M&E plan
2. Overview of assumptions, weak spots and relative strength of ToCs

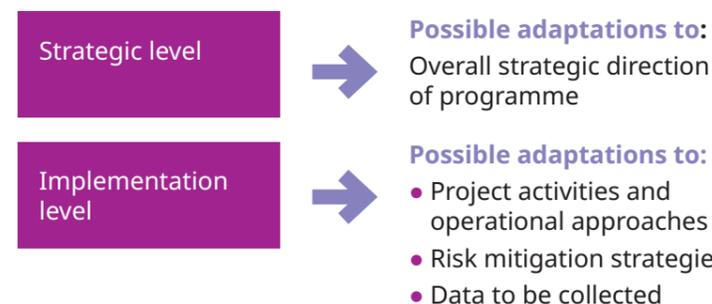
4. ESTABLISHING THE MECHANISMS FOR LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

4.1 Different levels of learning and adaptation

Learning and adaptation will be conducted at different levels:

- at strategic, overarching level of Peacebuilding Priority Plan (3 Outcome projects)
- at operational level

Depending on the level, the adaptations to be made will be of a different nature, as the graph below shows:



For learning and adaptation both levels are important, as important issues that may effect the conflict sensitivity and programme effectiveness can arise at both these levels. Learning and adaptation at both levels will therefore influence each other.

Generally however, it is expected that risks for unintended consequences are more likely to occur 'where the rubber hits the road', so at project implementation level. The reflections, analysis and suggested adaptations at the project implementation level will therefore serve as the key input to the learning and adaptation sessions at strategic level.

4.2 Learning and adaptation at regular intervals

Learning and Adaptation sessions will be held at regular intervals.

Strategic level:	Interval
PPP level:	every 6 months at the Joint Steering Committee
Development partners coordination meeting:	Every 3 months
Implementation level:	Interval
All three Outcome projects jointly	Every 2 months
Per Outcome project	Every month
Agency specific project level	Every month
If applicable; per geographical target area	Every 2 months

The timing of these sessions will be organized in such a way that the main findings from one session will feed into the session at a higher level.

4.3 Actors to involve

At the different levels different actors will be involved:

Strategic level:

At the strategic level, there will be internal learning and adaptation sessions, as well as sessions involving the government partners.

The key actors for internal learning and adaptation are:

- The Resident Coordinator
- The Heads of UN Agencies
- Senior project staff of the 3 projects under the PPP
- Implementing partners

The main findings of the internal strategic learning and adaptation sessions will be shared with the government partners. The government partners will be invited to further reflect on these findings, and – if necessary – give their approval for the proposed adaptations or propose alternative ways to address the main issues brought to them.

Please note that government partners may also be involved at the project implementation level, as they are often deeply involved in actual project implementation.

Implementation level:

At the project implementation level, learning and reflection will take place for:

- Three Outcome projects jointly
- per Outcome project
- per Agency together with implementing partners
- if applicable; per geographical target area

For all three Outcome projects jointly, the key actors to include are:

- Senior project staff of all three Outcome projects
- Other project staff
- Government partners
- Implementing partners
- Other Outcome working group members

Per Outcome project, the key actors to include are:

- Senior project staff
- Other project staff
- Government partners
- Implementing Partners
- Other Outcome working group members

Per Agency, the key actors to include are:

- Head of Agency or Senior management member
- Senior Project staff
- Other project staff
- Implementing partners

Per geographical area, the key actors to include are:

- Project staff (UN and Implementing partners)
- Government partners – if relevant and appropriate
- Community representatives – if relevant and appropriate

For each situation, conflict sensitivity will be the lens through which to look when inviting actors, as there may be security, political or social risks involved. The Do No Harm principle will apply here.

4.4 Integration with existing coordination mechanisms

To the highest extent possible, the learning and adaptation sessions will be integrated into existing coordination mechanisms. The last session of any given coordination meeting will be devoted to learning and adaptation. These are:

Strategic level:	Interval	Coordination mechanism to link to
PPP level- internal session	Every 6 months	UNCT meeting
PPP level – session with government partners	Every 6 months Every 2/3 months	JSC meeting Outcome Working Group meeting
PPP level – session with development partners	Every 3 months	Development partners coordination meeting, self-organized or the one organized by State Commission on religious affairs
Implementation level:	Interval	
All three Outcome projects jointly	Every 2 months	Regular coordination meetings Regular Outcome Working Group meeting
Per Outcome project	Every month	Outcome coordination meetings
Per Agency together with implementing partners	Every month	Staff/Programme meeting
If applicable; per geographical target area	Every 2 months	Field team coordination meetings

5 CONDUCTING LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

On-going learning and adaptation has a phase of joint reflection, a phase of analysis of the implications of this analysis, and finally a phase of making the necessary adaptations to the project and documenting these.



5.1 Main principles of learning and adaptation

This reflection, analysis and adaptation will be done:

- on a regular basis
- jointly with the project staff, the implementing partners, and where possible and relevant other stakeholders, including beneficiaries.
- as participatory and consultative as possible
- as much as possible based on evidence – but also allowing for the ‘intuitive’

5.2 Conducting learning and adaptation sessions

On a regular basis, joint reflection, analysis and adaptation sessions will be held. These sessions will build further on the preparatory work that has been done, in relation to:

- context and conflict analysis
- risk analysis and risk mitigation strategies
- validity of ToC

The guiding questions for these learning and adaptation sessions are relatively simple and open-ended questions, such as described in the box on page 11. These are deliberately kept simple, as they allow for more open discussion and reflection. They are also deliberately kept the same for the strategic and operational level, as the content may differ but not the overall logic.

The analysis will – where possible - be built solidly on the data that was collected in the period preceding the learning and adaptation session. However, also more intuitive ‘hunch’ that the information collected does not provide all the necessary insight, will be encouraged to be shared and reflected upon, as this may need to new insights that may require further testing.

5.3 Documenting the analysis and adaptations

During the learning and adaptation session, the discussions can be quite open-ended and free flowing. However, at the end of the session the main conclusions will be captured and documented in a systematic manner, for instance in an Learning and Adaptation matrix. The filled matrix, and the minutes of the meeting, will serve:

- to show that effective learning and adaptation takes place
- to provide a paper trail and justification for adaptations that are made to the project
- as input into the validation workshop in March 2019, a mid-term evaluation and final evaluation

Part III provides the template for recording the analysis and adaptations.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION, ANALYSIS AND ADAPTATION

Context



Identification of key changes:

- What, if any, are important changes in the broader conflict context? How significant are these changes?
- What, if any, are important changes in the VE-specific context analysis? How significant are these changes?



Analysis:

- Potential effect of Project on Context: What (positive or negative) effects can our on-going or planned project activities have on these changes in the context?
- Potential effect of context on project: How are these changes in the context likely to affect our on-going or planned project activities?



Adaptation:

- Do we need to adjust our on-going or planned activities?
- What adaptations can we already implement ourselves? What recommendations do we need to bring to the higher level of decision-making?



Risk monitoring

Key risks for negative unintended consequences:

- What were the key risks identified?
- Have we detected any new key risks that we had not identified ex-ante?



Analysis:

- Does the information we collected provide evidence or indications for unintended consequences?
- Do we have any sense that unintended consequences are taking place, but not captured by the information collected? What, anecdotal or hard, evidence exists for this ‘hunch’?
- In light of the above, are our mitigation strategies sufficient and still valid?



Adaptation:

- Do we need to adapt our mitigation strategies?
- Do we need to start collecting different information?
- Do we need to make changes to the way we implement the project?
- What adaptations can we already implement ourselves? What recommendations do we need to bring to the higher level of decision-making?



Validity of ToCs

Selection of weakest ToCs:

- What were the main ToCs identified as being weak?
- What were their main assumptions and weak points?

Analysis:

- What information have we collected in relation to these ToCs?
- To what extent does this validate or falsify our ToCs?



Adaptation:

- Do we need to start collecting different information?
- Do we need to make changes to the way we implement the project?
- What changes can we already implement ourselves? What recommendations do we need to bring to the higher level of decision-making?





6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main responsibility for learning and adaptation lies with the project managers themselves, as they are the ones that need to ensure the right information is collected, their 'antennas' are continuously scanning the environment for possible unintended consequences, and are critically reflecting on the impact of their activities on a daily basis. Learning and adaptation is a daily practice, not something that happens only when formal learning and adaptation sessions are held.

The formal responsibility for learning and adaptation is placed in a Learning and Adaptation Team. The Learning and Adaptation team will:

Ensure the preparatory work gets done, through:

- Collecting documents, conducting analysis, and making recommendations to outcome teams (e.g. for clarifying ToCs)
- Encouraging outcome teams to conduct their part of the preparatory work and hold them accountable

Organising the learning and adaptation sessions, through:

- Organising learning and adaptation sessions or assigning project staff to do so (inviting actors, preparing agenda)
- Facilitating the learning and adaptation sessions, or mandating and equipping staff with the skills to do so

Ensuring the correct flow of information:

- Between the levels of learning and adaptation
- Ensuring proper file management
- Provide summaries of learning and adaptation, when necessary

Prepare for Learning and Adaptation Evaluability / Validation workshop

- Liaise with PBF and PeaceNexus on the ToR for the Learning and Adaptation Evaluability workshop
- Prepare documentation for the Learning and Adaptation workshop
- Conduct analysis on data collected as part of learning and adaptation, to present to the Learning and Adaptation workshop

The Learning and Adaptation team will be chaired by the PBF Secretariat.

PART II: TOOLS AND TEMPLATES FOR PREPARATORY WORK

The following section provides tools and templates for the preparatory work. These tools and templates can be adjusted over time, to make them better fit for purpose.

I. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Guiding questions for VE Vulnerability & Resilience analysis

Useful guiding questions can be found in the IA-UNDP toolkit, partially represented in the table below (page 41).

Vulnerability factors	Resilience factors
Structural/institutional	
What are the root/structural causes of VE? What is the role of institutions in VE?	What sources of resilience at a structural level can help prevent VE? How are institutions playing a role in PVE?
What is the state capacity and willingness to engage marginalised groups in decision-making?	To what extent are formal decision-making process inclusive and support the involvement of a diverse range of actors in prevention?
How do these underlying causes and factors of VE influence vulnerability or resilience of different groups (men, women, boys, girls, those who identify as other, different nationalities, ethnic, religious ...)?	
What are the other institutional/structural factors related (such as governance issues) to the broader context that interact v/ith the VE factors listed above?	
Social	
What social factors exacerbate vulnerability? What tensions/conflicts exist between groups? Are specific groups stigmatised? Do specific groups feel a sense of injustice? How is armed violence perceived within communities? What are attitudes towards gender-based violence? What are attitudes towards values such as diversity?	What are the social factors that support resilience? What are communities' capacities for resolving conflicts? How strong are networks across social divides? How inclusive are social networks? How strong is the rejection of violence (including armed violence and gender-based violence)? How strong are pro-peace attitudes? Do people have skills and/or mechanisms for resolving conflict without violence?
How do these factors differ amongst different groups (men, women, boys, girls, sexual and gender minorities, different nationalities...)?	
Individual	
What are the individual risk factors? What psychological factors are important in VE? How do broader issues around marginalisation, stigmatisation, etc. play out at an individual level?	What individual factors are important in prevention?
How do individual perceptions vary based on gender, social/economic and other identity factors?	
What are the other individual factors related (such as governance issues) to the broader context that interact with the VE factors listed above?	

Please note that this toolkit uses a slightly different categorisation of drivers of VE than used in the February workshop; but social factors are very similar to the concept of 'enabling factors', which was used in the workshop.

Main drivers of VE identified during February Workshop

The table below shows the main drivers of VE that were identified during the February workshop. The relative importance of each of these will need to be determined during the localized context analysis, as this may differ greatly per locality.

Structural motivators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of global and regional politics (sense of Western hypocrisy and meddling) • Horizontal inequalities, political exclusion & mistreatment of minorities (notably Uzbeks) • Unemployment and limited opportunities for upward mobility • Injustice & corruption • Rejection / dissatisfaction with the socio-economic and political system • Weak state capacity to provide basic services • Lack of a common national identity • Mistrust between secular and religious groups • Fragmentation of religious community and weakness of traditional clergy • Other human rights violations
Enabling factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventure • Belonging & acceptance • Status • Material enticements • Social networks with VE associations, locally or abroad • Unrealised potential • Individual grievances
Individual incentives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of radical mentors & promoters • Social networks with links to VE • Access to radical online communities • Radicalization in prison and weak social reintegration of VE offenders • Links to other criminal or extremist groups • Lack of critical thinking & open discourse • Ignorance and lack of religious knowledge • Access to weaponry or other relevant items

II. RISK MONITORING AND RISK MITIGATION

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR IDENTIFYING KEY RISKS

Strategic risks:

- What influence may the project activities have on state policies and responses?
- What influence may PVE programming have on other peacebuilding programming?
- Can PVE programming put the UN in a difficult position regarding its neutrality?
- Can PVE programming exacerbate tensions between communities?
- Can PVE programming unwillingly promote certain values?
- How may PVE programming be perceived by different communities?
- What can the effects of PVE programming be on gender relations?



Operational risks:

- - How will different stakeholders perceive the programme?
- What resources does your project introduce? How might these affect relationships?



- Does the project touch on pre-existing power dynamics or introduce new ones? What might be the intended and unintended consequences of this?
- What security risks are involved for all stakeholders (project staff, implementing partners, other stakeholders, beneficiaries?)
- How may the influence of the project be different for different social groups? (especially youth and gender)
- How UN Agencies are coordinating their work between themselves and with other development partners to avoid duplication? What are the risks that emerge as a result of lack of this coordination?



There will be gendered differences in the risks and risk mitigation strategies, which will be taken on board.

Main risks identified during February Workshop

Strategic risks
<p>Legitimizing a certain political agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International and national security-type approaches ->making PVE harder • Risk of unwillingly supporting the government's strong agenda of secularization • Over-reliance on data provided by government / security services > risk of buying into their frame • The extent of the threat of violent extremism in Kyrgyzstan is debated and may well be exaggerated for the certain political agenda • There is a lack of understanding of the distinction between religiosity, radicalisation, extremism and violent extremism. • Other forms of extremism (e.g. extreme nationalist groups) are not receiving attention
<p>Over-emphasis on violent extremism vis-à-vis other peacebuilding issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over emphasis by government and donors on VE versus other conflict issues and peacebuilding opportunities • Focus on VE stifles public debate on issues of peacebuilding importance • Risk of losing momentum, not building on past experience (sustaining peace as bridge?) • Insufficient knowledge on what makes communities resilient may lead to ineffective approaches, that may even backfire
<p>Over-labelling and stigmatization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labelling and stigmatizing a certain group and thereby reinforcing a sense of discrimination and unfair treatment > thus further driving extremism • Implying that religion is the main drivers, therefore risk of equating religiosity with extremism • Tendency by the security services to equate radicals/extremists with all forms on non-traditional Islam
<p>Unwillingly promoting certain values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PVE perceived as "Western meddling" • Program doesn't have consensus on role of religion in addressing VE • Unwillingly promote values we don't agree with because of our partners (e.g. sharia) • 'Salafi mimicking Hanafi' -> risk of legitimizing extremist preachers who pretend to be moderate • Being pushed to take sides between different interpretations of islam, e.g. to support traditional Islamic education
Operational risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exacerbating tension between and within communities • Stigmatizing group or individuals by labelling them as VE • Stakeholder dissatisfaction with effectiveness or focus of PVE project • Safety of local partners and beneficiaries • Being pushed to work with extremist group -> security risks • Bringing external practice but may not be contextual /effective here

Template for Risk Mitigation Strategies – for entire PPP and per Project

Main risks for unintended consequences	Risk mitigation strategies

Template for Risk Monitoring – for entire PPP and per Project

Main risks for unintended consequences	Information / data needed for monitoring risk	Ways to collect this information (formal, informal)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

III. CLARIFYING TOCS

Tentative formulations of outcome and project-level ToCs

Please note that the Alliance for Peacebuilding report 'Assessing the evidence for key theories of change' has collected evidence on a number of often-used Theories of Change, which can be helpful to use as a resource. The UNDP-IA toolkit has a good checklist for the quality of the ToC at page 58, which can also be helpful.

Outcome 1: Justice and security sector institutions, national and local authorities, civil society apply socially inclusive approaches and participatory decision-making in order to prevent violent extremism.

Current Outcome-level ToC:

IF state institutions, justice and security agencies are equipped with inclusive methodologies and expertise on PVE and if they are able to effectively implement participatory decision-making and legislative reforms in line with Human Rights and Rule of Law norms with the support of civil society representatives, THEN they will be able to engage in a more positive engagement with citizens leading to the reduction of potential drivers to violent extremism.

Suggested Output-level ToCs:

- 1) IF state authorities have expertise and capacity to design and implement socially inclusive, gender sensitive, human rights compliant policies and legislation applying participatory approaches reflecting the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys, THEN they will design and put into practice more inclusive and human-rights based policies that have the potential to reduce the drivers of VE.
- 2) IF law enforcement, judiciary have expertise and capacity to engage with stakeholders, including human rights organizations, experts and communities and learn about international human rights standards, THEN they will engage in a positive manner with citizens, in line with international human rights standards.
- 3) IF civil society actors with a special focus to youth and women are capacitated to actively engage in the field of prevention of violent extremism with duty bearers, THEN the duty bearers will take these perspectives into consideration and adapt their policies and practice accordingly

Note

- It could perhaps be more clear in the ToC if the desired result is improved policies and practice, or also an increase in confidence in the state by citizens.
- The output-level ToCs could be more specific in relation to which state authorities and which policies they are referring to (e.g. are we talking about PVE policies? Or about a broader set of policies that can be considered PVE-relevant?)
- Please note that there are some strong assumptions underpinning these ToCs, which relate to the actual commitment and will of these authorities to engage positively with citizens and / or in line with international human rights standards. Just capacity is not sufficient.

Outcome 2: Penitentiary and probation officers, as well as police and forensic experts effectively prevent and address radicalization to violence by ensuring adequate safeguards in compliance with national and international standards

Current Outcome-level ToC:

IF sound forensic expertise is used to adjudicate terrorism and extremism related crimes, IF adequate measures for the prevention of radicalization to violence are applied in prisons and probation settings, violent extremist offenders are adequately assessed, confined and/or supervised according to the risks they present, AND IF disengagement and social reintegration services are provided, THEN the forensic service, the prison and probation system, as well as the police and community services can effectively contribute to the prevention of radicalization to violence in Kyrgyzstan

Suggested Output-level ToCs:

- 1) IF penitentiary staff enhance their expertise on addressing violent extremism in prisons by developing methodologies for the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons as well as on disengagement interventions for violent extremist offenders, THEN adequate mechanisms for the prevention of radicalization to violence and disengagement interventions for violent extremist offenders will be developed and applied in prisons, which will prevent (further) radicalization in prison and reduce recidivism
- 2) IF probation staff and police officers effectively facilitate the social reintegration of violent extremist offenders into the community and promote community partnerships to prevent violent extremism, THEN violent extremist offenders will be socially integrated into their communities and less attracted to violent extremism
- 3) IF forensic experts provide high-quality expertise in terrorism and extremism related cases, THEN the adjudication of terrorism and extremism related crimes will be based on sound forensic evidence, which will?.

Note:

- For the third output-level ToC it is not very clear what positive effect the right use of forensic evidence will lead to. To adherence to fair trial? And how will that lead to reduced VE?

Outcome 3: Women and men, boys and girls in target communities take a more critical stance on ideologies instigating violence and have a better sense of belonging to their communities and participate in local development and dialogues over PVE

Current Outcome-level ToC:

IF women and men, boys and girls in the communities have critical thinking skills AND are able to positively claim and exercise their rights through civic engagement, THEN they will become resilient to violent and manipulative ideologies, BECAUSE they will have a sense of belonging to their communities and confidence in the State.

Suggested Outcome-level ToC:

IF youth, adolescents, women and men take a more critical stance on ideologies instigating violence, have a better sense of belonging to their communities and are able to engage effectively with the authorities on ways to reduce VE, THEN they will be less inclined to support or engage in violent extremism.

Suggested Output-level ToCs:

- 1) IF youth, adolescents, women and men in target communities gain civic competencies in schools, homes and the community AND are able to positively claim and exercise their rights through civic engagement, THEN they will take a more critical stance on ideologies instigating violence
- 2) IF Youth and adolescents, women and men in target communities engage in collaborative measures to address local vulnerabilities leading to violent extremism; THEN they will feel empowered to and capable of addressing vulnerabilities in their communities, will have a stronger sense of belonging to their communities and confidence in local authorities, and will therefore be less inclined to support or engage in violent extremism
- 3) IF the capacity of opinion leaders, civil society activists and religious leaders is strengthened to provide alternative and positive messages and build meaningful dialogue and exchange, THEN there will be less exposure to and willingness to believe in violent ideology by at-risk populations

Note:

- Especially the first two ToCs are based on the assumption that the youth can indeed see the impact of their engagement and that their voices are being heard by the local authorities and the community. If not, it may actually increase their sense of disenfranchisement.

IV. UNCOVERING ASSUMPTIONS, WEAK POINTS AND RELATIVE STRENGTH OF TOCS

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Main assumptions:

- Will these activities always lead to the desired result?
- Can you imagine ways in which these activities might not lead to the desired result?
- What else may need to happen for these activities to really lead to the desired result?



Weak points in ToC:

- How strong is the evidence underpinning this ToC?
- Where do we not feel very confident that we will achieve the desired result and why?
- Where do we feel that we've tried this so many times before and the desired result was not achieved?
- What are some of the largest concerns that we have with this ToC?



Outcome –level ToC : *put here the outcome-level ToC			
Main assumptions & weak spots	Main concerns regarding the validity of this ToC	Degree of confidence in validity of this ToC (0-5)	
Output-level ToC : * put here the first output –level ToC			
Main assumptions & weak spots (including activity level assumptions)	Main concerns regarding the validity of this ToC	Degree of confidence in validity of this ToC (0-5)	
Output-level ToC : * put here the second output –level ToC			
Main assumptions & weak spots (including activity level assumptions)	Main concerns regarding the validity of this ToC	Degree of confidence in validity of this ToC (0-5)	
Output-level ToC : * put here the third output –level ToC			
Main assumptions & weak spots (including activity level assumptions)	Main concerns regarding the validity of this ToC	Degree of confidence in validity of this ToC (0-5)	



PART III: TOOLS AND TEMPLATES FOR LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

The following section provides tools and templates for the actual learning and adaptation sessions. These tools and templates can also be adjusted over time, to make them better fit for purpose.



GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION, ANALYSIS AND ADAPTATION

Below are the basic guiding questions, as presented in the Learning and Adaptation Strategy. The UNDP-IA toolkit also provides guidance questions, which can be useful to jumpstart conversation or serve as additional inspiration. Please refer to page 93 and 96 of the UNDP-IA Toolkit.

CONTEXT

Identification of key changes:

- What, if any, are important changes in the broader conflict context? How significant are these changes?
- What, if any, are important changes in the VE-specific context analysis? How significant are these changes?

Analysis:

- Potential effect of Project on Context: What (positive or negative) effects can our on-going or planned project activities have on these changes in the context?
- Potential effect of context on project: How are these changes in the context likely to affect our on-going or planned project activities?

Adaptation:

- Do we need to adjust our on-going or planned activities?
- What adaptations can we already implement ourselves? What recommendations do we need to bring to the higher level of decision-making?

RISK MONITORING

Key risks for negative unintended consequences:

- What were the key risks identified?
- Have we detected any new key risks that we had not identified ex-ante?

Analysis:

- Does the information we collected provide evidence or indications for unintended consequences?
- Do we have any sense that unintended consequences are taking place, but not captured by the information collected? What, anecdotal or hard, evidence exists for this 'hunch'?
- In light of the above, are our mitigation strategies sufficient and still valid?



Adaptation:

- Do we need to adapt our mitigation strategies?
- Do we need to start collecting different information?
- Do we need to make changes to the way we implement the project?
- What adaptations can we already implement ourselves? What recommendations do we need to bring to the higher level of decision-making?

VALIDITY OF TOCS



Selection of weakest ToCs:

- What were the main ToCs identified as being weak?
- What were their main assumptions and weak points?



Analysis:

- What information have we collected in relation to these ToCs?
- To what extent does this validate or falsify our ToCs?
- Are the assumptions still valid?



Adaptation:

- Do we need to start collecting different information?
- Do we need to make changes to the way we implement the project?
- What changes can we already implement ourselves? What recommendations do we need to bring to the higher level of decision-making?



B. Template for recording changes in context

Key changes in context	Potential impact of these changes	Adaptations implemented
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
<p>Recommendations for further adaptation – to be channelled to next level</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>		

C. Template for recording changes in risk analysis and risk mitigation

Key risks identified	Information collected (give summary here; present data as accompanying docs)	Summary of Analysis	Adaptations implemented
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
<p>Recommendations for further adaptations – to be channelled to next level</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>			

D. Template for recording Validity of ToC

Weakest ToC identified (describe ToC and its main weaknesses)	Summary of information collected (give summary here; present data as accompanying docs)	Analysis	Adaptations implemented
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
Recommendations for further adaptations – to be channelled to next level			
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

