Summary Note:

Improving the **impact of preventing violent extremism** programming

A toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation

Introduction

As the number of PVE programmes has increased – due to the urgency to prevent 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 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, comprising four sections, provides a comprehensive set of tools on all stages of PVE programming, responding to an urgent need to improve efficiency, targeting and design and M&E of such programmes.

The Toolkit is accompanied by a sortable Indicator Bank of almost 200 PVE-relevant outcome and output level indicators (quantitative and qualitative) which can be tailored to specific conflict contexts.

Aim and Structure of the Toolkit

The toolkit provides a practical resource for programme managers and teams to improve the design, monitoring and evaluation of their PVE programmes throughout the programme cycle. It comprises four sections, provides a comprehensive set of tools on all stages of PVE programming, responding to an urgent need to improve efficiency, targeting and design and M&E of such programmes:

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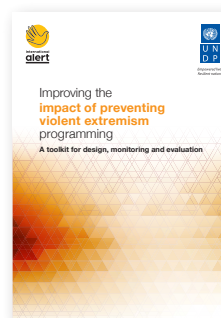
A toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation

1. Laying the foundations

Take a conflict-sensitive approach: Programming should begin with a robust analysis of what is happening on the ground and why, using this to inform programming to ensure that interventions 'do no harm' and support mechanisms that prevent conflict and build peace.

Define PVE: Ensure that there is a clear and shared understanding with UNDP and government and civil society partners of what PVE is from the outset.

Understand and plan for risk: PVE programmes are a politically sensitive field of activity conducted in complex and volatile contexts. Any PVE programme should include regular risk management throughout the project cycle.

Understand gender dynamics: Gender identities, and how they intersect with other identity markers such as age, class, geographic location, sexual orientation, marital status, disability and ethno-religious background, determine people's positions of relative power or vulnerability. Understanding how diverse groups are affected will support PVE efforts.

Think through targeting: Build a process to think through the nature of how a community-level PVE programme selects beneficiaries and understand the sensitivities and challenges around this.

Build capacity: Put in place a strategy for developing UNDP and partner personnel capacities, confidence and resources for M&E. This includes creating a culture of reflection and learning within a project team. Staff need to be able to discuss project successes and failures in a supportive environment.

Go to Online Toolkit at: http://www.pvetoolkit-undp.org/laying-the-foundations

2. Design the progamme

Analyse your context: This includes looking at the range of conflict dynamics in a given context, of which one outcome may be more people joining violent extremist (VE) groups. This helps prioritise the needs your programming should address, together with looking at whether VE is the priority.

Define and evidence theories of change (ToCs): Put into place the collaborative design and use of ToCs across all projects to support critical thinking amongst project staff, test assumptions upon which interventions are based, and define clear directions for the change that is expected.

Develop appropriate indicators: Develop indicators through a participatory process with relevant stakeholders. Use a range of indicators to mitigate against unrealistic assumptions about the programme impact on PVE. Use an adaptable indicator bank that offers a range of adaptable indicators covering the different UNDP programming areas.

Go to Online Toolkit at: http://www.pvetoolkit-undp.org/laying-the-foundations
the Indicator Bank is available here.

3. Monitoring strategy and data collection

Design your strategy for monitoring: Build time and budget into projects to test and pilot tools and approaches, with a focus on adapting based on results, as well as signposting points for review.

Think through data collection methods appropriate to the context, the project focus and those that guard against cultural, conflict and gender insensitivity.

Triangulate data collection methods to reduce the risks of bias, using a range of methods to contextualise and validate data and highlight gaps or limitations.

Go to Online Toolkit at: http://www.pvetoolkit-undp.org/monitoring-strategy--data-collection

4. Evaluation and learning

Key considerations for evaluation offering guidance on evaluation questions relevant for PVE programming based on the OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

Go to Online Toolkit at: http://www.pvetoolkit-undp.org/evaluation-and-learning

Principles underpinning the Toolkit

The Toolkit builds on evidence and learning on good practice in design, monitoring and evaluation in PVE based on review of literature and programming and evaluation documents, as well as consultations with practitioners, academics and donors. There are 9 principles to PVE programming and M&E:

1. **Take the context as the starting point.** Develop a clear and shared definition of PVE. Ensure this definition is contextualised and weighted in relation to other conflict, development or governance challenges.
2. **Good enough is good enough.** Build your monitoring system to suit the levels of capacity and resources available to you. The most important thing is to do what you can to track and understand the impact of your programme
3. **Set your level of ambition.** Be realistic about what you can achieve given your timeframe, mandate and the context.
4. **Build capacity.** Put in place an ongoing strategy for developing UNDP and partner capacities, confidence and resources for M&E.
5. **Understand gender as relational** and in conjunction with other factors such as age, ability/disability, class, geographical location and marital status.
6. **Establish a culture of learning.** Things go wrong and things go right in all programmes. The important thing is that we learn from them to maximise success and minimise harm.
7. **Ensure conflict sensitivity.** Consider the intended and unintended impact an intervention can have. Include context and gender analysis and a consideration of potential risks and harm in your programming.
8. **Use risk management as an integral and enabling part of programming.** Adopt ethical protocols, including the safety of staff and participants, data protection, data analysis, review mechanisms and child protection.
9. **Base targeting approach on context and risk analysis** and build flexibility into a programme to adapt if/ when necessary.

Diagram 1: 9 Good Practice Principles for PVE programming
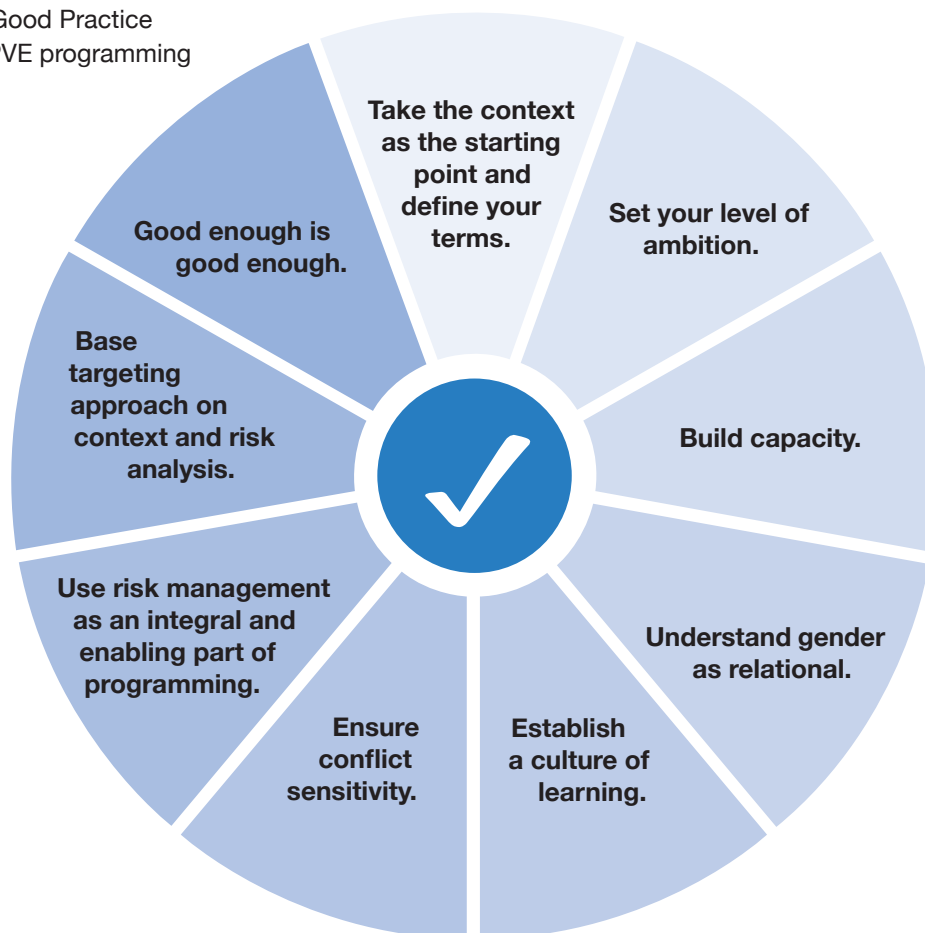
Using the Indicator Bank

The Indicator Bank contains a range of output and outcome indicators (quantitative and qualitative) that are relevant to, and have been used in, PVE programming. The Indicator Bank is organised around the core programming areas of UNDP following also the Secretary-General's Plan of Action for PVE (corruption, dialogue and reintegration, media, Human Rights and Rule of Law, National Action Plans, local government, youth engagement, schools and universities, Participatory Decision Making, social cohesion, Socio-economic Alternative, Faith-based/Religious Leaders and gender equality.

The Indicator Bank is designed to be used by practitioners and takes the form of a sortable database on excel, where users can sort by: programming area; example programme objective; target group; qualitative/quantitative, type (output or outcome), and whether it has been tested in a PVE context.

The indictor bank was not designed to be the definitive resource on PVE indicators, but to be used in conjunction with other resources, research and analysis. A range of institutions are testing, developing and adapting indicators for PVE policy and programming globally, other resources exist to help practitioners identify relevant indicators. In addition, given the relevant newness of the PVE sector and difficulty in accessing M&E data for PVE programmes, not all of the indicators presented have been tested in a PVE context and therefore should be used with caution.

Seven principles which underpin using the Indicator Bank:

1. **Understand the PVE rational for the indicator before you use it.** Ensure that the indicator is aligned to the Theory of Change, VE context analysis and that you have considered assumptions behind its use and its associated data collection methods.
2. **Use a combination of indicators to help mitigate against perverse assessments** that may not reflect reality.
3. **Triangulate and use different means of verification** to help verify the data and eliminate bias.
4. **Consider the relativity of design hierarchies in indicators.** One project's outputs can be another project's inputs. Ensure that the hierarchy of indicators are calibrated to the scope and parameters of the specific project.
5. **Indicators may not be able to capture the complex nature of PVE change,** therefore use several more tangible indicators of change together at the project level.
6. **Ensure assumptions behind indicators are unpacked and made explicit**, and that risks associated with using the indicators are considered and regularly reviewed.
7. **Indicators may need fine-tuning to suit specific project parameters.** Consider how sensitive or responsive indicators may be to the degree of change suited for programme timeframes.

The Indicator Bank is designed to be updated and refined through learning from using and testing indicators. We encourage practitioners to add or refine indicators based on experience and evidence from programming and research, including adding more contextualise indicators and indicators of change in other relevant programming areas.

> **PVE Indicator Bank: Hints to Remember…**
> Indicators should be contextually relevant and tailored to the context. Where possible use tried and tested indicators, which have generated useful and reliable data, context analysis and research can help to identify these. It is advised to develop indicators through a participatory process and reviewed to see where they have been used in similar programmes in the same context. Attempting to use these indicators 'off-the-shelf' without input from relevant stakeholders can be problematic, especially in the emerging field of PVE. When using this bank, a good vantage point for conversations is to ask: 'How does this indicator fall short in measuring the specific change we are interested in?' and 'What would we need to take into consideration to modify this indicator for our context and programming purposes?'