

**UNDP Crisis Bureau**

**Annual Report on Prevention of Violent Extremism**

**Areas of PVE programming**



**United Nations Development Programme**

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**Annual Report on Prevention of Violent Extremism  
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## **About the UNDP Crisis Bureau and PVE**

The UNDP Crisis Bureau (CB) is responsible for UNDP's corporate crisis-related work and drives UNDP's vision and priorities for peacebuilding and crisis prevention, response, and recovery. Together with the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), the CB anchors the Global Policy Network (GPN), a network of global experts and practitioners providing timely development advice, delivering support to Country Offices and programme countries in a coherent manner – to connect countries to the world of knowledge, resources and networks of best practice they need to achieve development breakthroughs. In 2020, UNDP launched its new Global Programme '*Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions 2020-2022*' with four interconnected thematic work streams, 1) Conflict prevention and Peacebuilding; 2) Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE); 3) Core government functions, including local governance; and 4) Climate Security.

UNDP designs and implements risk informed, conflict sensitive and analysis-based development solutions for prevention of violent extremism at the global, regional and country levels, to meet the priorities set out in the [Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism](#), [UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy](#), UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and through participation in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

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## Introduction

UNDP contributes to the implementation of the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (pillars 1 and 4), as well as other UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions by supporting development solutions that target the root causes and structural drivers of violent extremism. The focus of UNDP's preventive approach is to look at the relationship between peaceful societies and inclusive development, rule of law and human rights, anti-corruption, good governance, civic engagement and political participation, and to address the horizontal inequalities that fuel radicalisation that can lead to violent extremism. In doing so, UNDP supports national state and not-state actors, including women, youth, religious leaders and their organizations as champions in Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) and helps create the opportunities for their active participation in PVE through building social cohesion at the community level.

This *2020 Annual Report on Prevention of Violent Extremism* covers the key results of UNDP's Crisis Bureau and initiatives supported through the Bureau. It presents an overview of the new frontiers, the partnerships through which results are achieved and the efforts to enhance approaches through learning. With this focus on Crisis Bureau-led and supported initiatives, the report does not attempt to encompass the results achieved through UNDP's regional, cross-border and national projects on prevention of violent extremism implemented across 40 countries in 2020. The report does make references to specific projects and highlight initiatives across UNDP's portfolio that showcase the experiences on the ground.

2020 was a year out of the ordinary and the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges for development and peacebuilding work across the world. Governments introduced restrictive measures to handle the pandemic with deteriorative effects on democracy and human rights in 80 countries according to an October 2020 Freedom House report.<sup>1</sup> The long-term effects of lockdown, curfews and disruptions on personal and professional life are yet to be seen but people across the world have been impacted by challenges in service delivery, experienced increasing stress and restrictions on livelihoods, mental health, economics, leisure time and education, whilst being subject to hate speech and misinformation.

In this shifting context, UNDP's work in PVE has continued with thorough consideration of new risk factors and implementation of mitigation measures. In some ways, these new challenges have presented an avenue for testing the use of online platforms and technologies in PVE programming on a different scale than before. Despite the underlying sensitivities of PVE programming, the experience so far suggests that shifting face-to-face activities to virtual spaces is possible and does allow for some positive opportunities such as increasing the number of people reached compared to offline activities. On the other hand, the use of the internet by extremist groups continues to grow and spread into new corners of the web, increasing the demand for UNDP to assess and address the online threat through social media monitoring and sentiment analysis. To this aim, an important priority for UNDP in 2020 was

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom House (2020). Democracy under Lockdown - The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Freedom. 2 October. <https://freedomhouse.org/article/new-report-democracy-under-lockdown-impact-covid-19-global-freedom>

to expand our partnerships, knowledge exchange and available tools to foster capacities on analysis, early warning and application of these in PVE programming.

Promoting and pioneering new frontiers was one of the headlines of UNDP's work on PVE in 2020. On Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), UNDP initiated a mapping of components related to PVE, whilst also becoming a strong advocate for MHPSS integration in peacebuilding more broadly. In promoting risk-sensitive approaches and evidence-based programming, UNDP has substantially expanded capacities to apply behavioural sciences in PVE programming at global, regional and local level through capacity building, establishment of partnerships and through conducting country specific experiments. This work contributes to the ongoing efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation, measurable impacts and risk management for PVE to ensure that our programmes are rooted in and uphold human rights principles.

Consolidating UNDP's Community of Practice on PVE has been another important priority supporting the establishment of programmatic objectives through enhanced knowledge exchange, communication and collaboration across the global, regional and country levels. In particular, UNDP hosted 14 PVE Practitioner Sessions on a range of topics, including behavioural science, MHPSS and Covid-19, related to thematic priorities, engaging a total of 1100 people from across the world.

A 2020 Stocktaking report outlined the PVE landscape in UNDP in both qualitative and quantitative terms and coupled with an enhanced knowledge management system, the PVE portfolio is well defined in qualitative and quantitative terms. UNDP implements PVE programming in 40 countries<sup>2</sup> through a portfolio consisting of a global programme, regional programmes covering Asia Pacific, Central Asia, Africa and Arab States, cross-border and country projects.

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<sup>2</sup> In 2020, UNDP implemented PVE programming in 40 countries: Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan.



*Figure 1. Percentage of UNDP's PVE projects covering different thematic areas.  
Source: 2020 PVE Stocktaking report.*

National PVE projects continued to support national and local stakeholders to develop and implement PVE National Action Plans (NAPs) and programmes aimed to prevent violent extremism, hate speech and promote respect for diversity. These are efforts towards implementing the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy Pillars 1 on 'addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and Pillar 4 on 'ensuring human rights and the rule of law', and to avoid the risk of using only securitized approaches which are not enough to prevent terrorism and extremism in all its forms, including violent extremism.

In 2020, the UNDP Crisis Bureau provided platforms for demonstrating the work of the Country Offices (COs), convened knowledge sharing discussions, and provided both technical and financial support. Through overall coordination efforts, both technical and financial support was provided to five countries in Central Asia through the implementation of the joint UNOCT-UNODC-UNDP EU-funded STRIVE Asia project.

At the end of 2020, we look back at a year which in many ways was marked by isolation and distance, but which really brought together the global PVE practice as a community for driving the agenda forward at policy and programme level. This report demonstrates the key results that were achieved.

## Pioneering New Frontiers for PVE

### Integrating Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in PVE and Peacebuilding

Mental health and psychosocial wellbeing play a key role throughout radicalisation processes to prevent engagement with violent extremist groups, and during reintegration and rehabilitation of individuals and families back into their communities. However, the causal relationship between mental health and engagement in violent extremist activities remains underdeveloped and furthermore, processes by which mental health problems combine or interact with other factors during radicalisation continue to be poorly understood. To that aim, the UNDP CB PVE conducted a qualitative mapping which outlines key approaches on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). The mapping, which will be finalized in 2021, demonstrates the integration of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in pioneering PVE programming in 11 countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Niger, Nigeria, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, Tanzania, Trinidad & Tobago, Philippines, and Yemen) in efforts to prevent radicalisation and to reintegrate former fighters. For example, in UNDP Philippines, PVE programming was restructured entirely to integrate MHPSS and through this initiative, the CO found that many indicators of violent extremism were impacted by psychosocial factors. Further, UNDP Philippines have changed programming language to shift paradigms towards emphasis on positive transformation and used this opportunity to involve faith-based, women and traditional leaders and civic groups to accompany and strengthen programming initiatives due to the positive psychosocial impact on recipients they have been shown to have. The mapping will form the foundation of future capacity building and partnership for MHPSS in PVE programming.

#### **Assessing psychological needs of returnees in Morocco**

UNDP Morocco collaborated with the Fondation Mohammed VI and ICRC, to assess the psychological needs of returnees and their families carried out by a Clinical Psychologists upon return from detention centres. The MHPSS assessment concluded with a series of recommendations for the detainment of returnees, for referencing returnees and their families to pertinent psychological services, for the consolidation of professional mental health networks locally, and for providing parental guidance to families and adapted psychosocial support to children. The experiences from Morocco demonstrate that the MHPSS needs of project participants (returnees/families), as well as the capacities of local actors (Social Workers, mental health networks and professionals), can be extensively assessed in the framework of UNDP's PVE programming.

Through the mapping, it became clear that MHPSS needs reach far beyond PVE and that capacities and tools must be enhanced when it comes to broader peacebuilding efforts. Integration of multidisciplinary and context sensitive MHPSS initiatives in peacebuilding

processes is essential for ensuring sustainable peace. However, although great advances have been made towards including MHPSS in conflict and humanitarian responses, a substantive framework for integration of MHPSS does not yet exist within the peacebuilding architecture: MHPSS is not yet structurally and explicitly considered as part of broader peace building or conflict prevention efforts.

The [2020 Report of the UN Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace](#) included a clear ambition towards enhancing the integration of MHPSS into peacebuilding: "*The further development of the integration of mental health and psychosocial support into peacebuilding is envisaged with a view to increasing the resilience and agency of people and communities.*" This inclusion should be seen as a result of global advocacy which UNDP made strong contributions to by stressing the development and peace perspective of MHPSS and ensuring a system wide cohesion across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. UNDP contributed to the development of a set of [key recommendations](#) in the Task Force led by the MHPSS team at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. To activate the integration of MHPSS in peacebuilding, UNDP co-hosted a global session in October with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, bringing together MHPSS stakeholders from academia, civil society and the UN to discuss the way forward for further integration of MHPSS into peacebuilding. In this session, UNDP's PVE programming was highlighted as an example of MHPSS integration through combining community-based actions which promote tolerance and respect for diversity, with support to individuals in the forms of mentorship schemes, counselling, skills development etc. These efforts will lead to the commissioning of a set of guidelines on MHPSS integration in peacebuilding in 2021.

## **Addressing Hate Speech and Advancing Social Media Monitoring**

PVE programming responded to the challenges related to violent extremism which were exacerbated by [hate speech](#) and [information pollution](#), including those relating to COVID-19. UNDP addressed hate speech as well as misinformation and disinformation globally both online and offline in a three-fold manner: by increasing understanding and monitoring of hate speech and its impact on societies; by offering alternative and positive narratives to counter hate speech in collaboration with our partners; and by identifying and devising programmes to address the drivers and root causes of hate speech.

PVE programming supported efforts to monitor and analyse hate speech in order to understand grievances driving hate speech, as well as the instigators and outlets of hate speech. This included enhancing CO capacity to target programming in line with the digital threat landscape by forming partnerships with academic institutions and the private sector. The Crisis Bureau also facilitated communities of practice to enhance peer-to-peer support and knowledge sharing of Country Offices utilising social media for hate speech monitoring. Programs utilising technologies, such as big data and artificial intelligence, and/or sentiment analysis tools to monitor hate speech and inform PVE programming were implemented in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Sudan and Tunisia, as well as the Arab States. Learning from these pilots will inform guidance in 2021. Through these pilots and research, UNDP has positioned itself to leading and defining the global conversation in taking a developmental, human rights-

centred approach to preventing violent extremism through use of the internet and AI technology.

### **Online sentiment analysis for prevention of violent extremism in Sudan**

The increasing use of the internet by extremist groups, spreading extremist propaganda and hateful narratives whilst recruiting individuals through online platforms is a challenge which has become even more pressing during the global pandemic. In Sudan, since the 2019 revolution, social media has been central to the information landscape, political expression, and calls to action. UNDP Sudan research indicates that significant recruitment to violent extremism is happening online which affects women more than men as women are expressing views more freely online than offline. The Crisis Bureau has supported the UNDP Sudan to secure funding through the [Digital X funding](#) mechanism to monitor PVE relevant online content and draw analytical insights on emerging threats which will inform government and multilateral agencies' response in the country. The project takes a south-south approach by bringing expertise on web-based AI platforms from a Myanmar based organization to establish civil society capacity on this issue in Sudan. At scale, the AI model will pre-screen content, increasing CSO's and UNDP's monitoring capacity, and provide existing UNDP crisis-tracking tools with live analytical capabilities. Such analysis is crucial to understanding online sentiment, which will inform policy responses to risk factors and UNDP's programming to prevent violent extremism.

UNDP also worked with partners to offer alternative and positive narratives to counter hate speech. Through use of technology and the arts and leveraging the power of storytelling, UNDP's PVE programming emphasised the role of culture and faith to reinforce the power of unity in diversity as the foundation of a cohesive, peaceful society. Information pollution surrounding COVID-19 has also been addressed and countered in several countries including Tunisia, Bangladesh, Somalia, Thailand and Indonesia. Additionally, by designing, identifying and scaling-up PVE programmes to address the drivers and root causes of hate speech, UNDP has supported digital civic education, critical thinking, and capacity for community engagement and intercultural dialogue in offline and online spaces.

To engage another key actor in this area, the Crisis Bureau partnered with the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) to provide guidance for parliaments on addressing hate speech. The parameters of the knowledge product were decided in 2020 with the research and training development work to be carried out in 2021. This will also advise on how parliamentarians themselves can help shape public rhetoric positively in response to current alarming trends of hate speech and encourage female representation in legislatures.

### **Online Engagement Efforts for PVE**

The ongoing [digital transformation](#), which has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, demands new solutions for programming and policy making aiming to prevent violent

extremism. UNDP programming has increasingly been taken online during the pandemic and with positive results. For example, under the implementation of the STRIVE Asia project in Kazakhstan, a five-day training aiming to support psychosocial factors and prevent the early signs of radicalization was shifted to an online format with 168 young people participating and a further 80 people provided with individual consultations by psychologists. The online format vastly increased the number of people reached and has formed a model for how to engage with target groups online.

Offline spaces for community engagement and communication cannot be directly transferred to online spaces but rather the two must complement each other. At the same time, the strategies for engagement, interaction and dialogue with communities in offline spaces cannot be directly transferred to online spaces. New technology, different facilitation approaches and support is required. To further enhance capacities to engage meaningfully with target groups in online spaces, UNDP initiated the development of an online 'Resource Hub' which curates existing resources and will collect field experiences from across UNDP on how to engage communities for PVE in online spaces. This project will, upon its completion in 2021, address some of the key challenges identified, including digital literacy, fostering meaningful participation and trust, and measuring the impact of online community engagement efforts. Through this work UNDP seeks to capitalise on the experiences within and outside UNDP to evolve, rather than duplicate learning. Associated training, workshops and published findings will accompany this process in 2021.

Across UNDP, an increasing number of initiatives are taking advantage of new opportunities for outreach through use of the internet. For example, in Bangkok the [Extreme Lives](#) initiative implemented through the Southeast Asia regional programme, has reached nearly 13 million Facebook users in its first three months of 2020 alone. The video series brings topics such as racism, extremism and identity into conversations that spark reflections and resets social labels. New partnerships focusing especially on impact measurement aspects of narrative campaigns were explored in 2020.

## **Advancing the Intersectionality Between Climate Change and PVE**

To assist UNDP in embracing the complexity and uncertainty of the future development landscape, in 2020, the [Policy Brief on the Climate Security Nexus and Prevention of Violent Extremism](#) was published. This explores initial lessons learnt from a climate security perspective on efforts to prevent violent extremism in politically and environmentally fragile contexts affected by climate change. The policy brief affirmed that while climate change does not directly cause conflict or violent extremism in and of itself, there is a need to consider climate-related security risks in PVE policy and programming, because of how they can impact drivers.

To better understand and address these issues as well as promote UNDP's integrated support to governments' 2030 Agenda planning, in 2021, Crisis Bureau will engage in a consultative process with the aim of strengthening PVE interventions globally and nationally, recognizing that climate-related security risks may affect the drivers of violent extremism.

## Gender Sensitive Approaches to PVE

UNDP is committed to implement programming and promote policies which are informed by the gendered dimensions of PVE, considering the effects of misogyny and role of masculinity in extremist narratives. To this aim, UNDP and UN Women published research and engaged stakeholders globally on [‘The Nexus between Masculinities, Femininities and Violent Extremism in Asia’](#) which expanded understanding of the global enablers of violent extremism by showing the importance of attitudes and norms linked to harmful ideals of dominant masculinity as drivers for violent extremism. Furthermore, UNDP is joining the efforts to revise indicators of the UN system-wide monitoring framework on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), with expected completed in 2021.

Realising the gap in women’s meaningful participation, UNDP has applied behavioural science to PVE programming (see chapter below) which demonstrated positive preliminary results demonstrating how evidence-based adjustments in project planning and implementation can increase women's participation in entrepreneurship workshops. Furthermore, applying behaviourally informed interventions, such as reminder cards, have demonstrated positive effects on women’s reporting of grievances to community gender desks in Pakistan. These preliminary results demonstrate the importance of tackling systemic challenges through addressing some of the biases that represent them.

As part of the Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on Adopting a Gender Sensitive Approach to Preventing and Countering Terrorism and in partnership with UN Women, UNDP supported the engagement of 140 women’s/women-led civil society organization’s representatives from 43 countries across the world to advocate for integration of gendered dimensions to the UN Global Counter Terrorism review process. The discussions were summarised in an [outcome report and a public statement](#), which will be used for global advocacy promoting a stronger consideration of the gendered dimensions of violent extremism and of the impact current measures for PVE have on civil society organisations’ work and rights.

## Protection and Promotion of Fundamental Human Rights in PVE Programming

As an initiative under the PVE Working Group of the UN Global Compact on Counter Terrorism, UNDP formed a partnership with the mandate on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism in 2020 to develop a Concept Note on “Measuring the Human Rights Impact of Efforts Aimed at PVE.” The proposal, subject to funding, aims to engage in a consultative process to develop the framework for measuring the impacts of PVE programmes on human rights in 2021. This is one aspect of UNDP's PVE work which aims to promote and deliver the aims of the SDGs and 2030 agenda in a holistic manner, ensuring that the work of the PVE unit is delivered, not only in deliverance with individual goals but in accordance with a ‘whole of UN approach’ that is grounded in human rights standards and principles. While UNDP has invested in tools and guidance to not only manage risks but also measure impact of PVE interventions, the important task of assessing

the possibility of risk for human rights violations and the principle of do no harm remains to be done.

## **Return and Reintegration of Former Fighters**

The territorial collapse of ISIL and the ongoing crises in the Lake Chad Basin, Horn of Africa and Sahel regions have placed the issue of screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of many thousands of suspected or convicted terrorists—including foreign terrorism fighters (FTFs) and returnees, their families and associates—high on the international agenda. Thousands of suspected ISIL fighters, together with their families, have been detained in Iraq, Syria, and Northern Nigeria with acute security and humanitarian concerns. Their detention raises questions regarding jurisdiction, evidence and criminal responsibility, which require urgent resolution from the perspective of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. UNDP’s stocktaking showed that 17 Country Offices have extensive engagement on plans and strategies on the reintegration of ex-combatants and support to receiving communities: Chad, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Congo-Brazzaville, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan (Darfur), Libya, Kenya, Kosovo, Somalia, Mali, Mozambique, The Philippines and Tunisia.

### **‘Mashwara Para Ko Kapamulong’ (Conversations for Healing) Healing Returnees in The Philippines**

From 2019 to 2020, UNDP Philippines supported the Returnee Reintegration Program launched by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Provincial Government of Lanao del Sur in 2019 aiming to reintegrate members or sympathizers of the Maute-ASG-IS group that launched the Marawi siege. Fifty-three (53) Maute-IS returnees (individuals previously associated with violent extremist groups) participated in the programme which included group-based and individual consultation activities tackling intimate emotional and personal experiences, and also provided the tools and coping techniques with which to overcome their current situations. Returnees were provided with a safe and secure place to express their feelings, talk about their challenges and foster social healing and peaceful dialogue in a supportive environment in their own mother-tongue (Maranao dialect).

In recognition of the multiple challenges and complexities regarding the repatriation of foreign fighters, the draft “UN Support on Syria / Iraq Third Country National Returnees: Global Framework” was finalised in 2020 to articulate “the principles and minimum conditions, governance arrangements and programmatic direction and activities for the provision of support for the protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of foreign nationals returning from Syria and Iraq, who may have alleged or actual links or family ties to designated terrorist groups.” UNDP made substantial contributions to this global framework and provided technical support to enable a number of Country Teams to apply for funding (to be made available under the Global Framework in 2021). This included support

to development of programmatic frameworks in the Maldives, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Iraq.

## Application of Behavioural Science

Behavioural Insights (BI) combine knowledge from psychology, cognitive science, and social science with robust measurement approaches to understand how people make choices; they are used to design policies and initiatives that “nudge” people’s decision-making in a way that promotes positive social change, while preserving freedom of choice. In this context, behavioural science provides great opportunities to increase inclusivity and effectiveness in policy and programming. In recent years, UNDP has enhanced its capacity to conduct BI experiments within prevention of violent extremism (PVE) programming, leading the way within the UN system. BI has proven an essential tool for strengthening evidence-based programming and M&E, enabling actors to shed assumptions about what works in favour of experimentation, greater human-centeredness and inclusivity. Behavioural Insights represent a ‘state of the art’ addition to the toolbox for designing and measuring PVE interventions.

In 2020, UNDP conducted a series of online capacity development workshops in partnerships with [Nudge Lebanon](#) and [B4Development](#), which was followed by three in country experiments applying behavioural science to PVE programming on the ground. These experiments built on two similar experiments in Sudan and Yemen conducted in 2018 and contributed towards the development of practitioner guidance [“Applying Behavioural Science to Support the Prevention of Violent Extremism: Experiences and Lessons Learned”](#) on the application of BI in PVE which was launched in the end of 2020. The five experiments were featured in a recent [World Bank publication](#) mapping the use of behavioural sciences across 17 international organisations.

The three experiments are implemented in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan and focus on the following challenges:

**Uzbekistan:** How can we help youth who have been released from enclosed correctional institutions to reintegrate in society and the labour market?

**Tajikistan:** How can we increase the enrolment of young women from the Shahrituz District into professional training programs?

**Pakistan:** How can we increase the quantity and quality of grievances reported by young women to the Gender Desk, which offers free-of-charge services?

## **Behavioural Insights to Prevent Violent Extremism in Pakistan**

UNDP Pakistan carried out a randomized control trial (RCT) experiment aiming to increase the use of Gender Desk services in Multan, providing services to women living in vulnerable conditions. The Gender Desk offers functions as a referral centre to specialized partners for a range of services targeting women, including official documentation, health, education, legal services, domestic and gender-based violence, capacity building and more. The Gender Desks have been successfully implemented across multiple UNDP projects in Pakistan with a high rate of cases resolved, however women considered at-risk in remote areas, who are the most in need of its services, might not report their grievances due to numerous behavioural bottlenecks, including lack of awareness about the Desk and the full range of its services.

The experiment introduced the use of commitment cards and behaviourally informed reminders and it resulted in a statistically significant 105% increase (46 percentage points) in the number of participants reporting grievances from the treatment group as compared to the control group. The intervention also led to an increase in the total number of grievances reported, with women in the treatment group being 91% (44 percentage points) more likely to submit a single grievance. These results are encouraging as they demonstrate how small changes in UNDP's programming, using behavioural science, can have large effects on levels of participation in our interventions and the quality of it.

The approach of the experiments is to carry out randomised control trials (RCTs) in order to assess effects of the behaviourally informed interventions. For example, in increasing the inclusion of parents in programming aimed towards youth in order to reduce the likelihood of participation being prohibited, or in increasing the commitment of programming recipients through commitment cards and reminder texts, such innovations were seen to overcome issues that can hinder the effect of programming, simply because they fail to take the full human lived experience into proper consideration. The RCTs are used to both increase the evidence-base around the use of BI in PVT and to build the science-informed nature of PVE programming as well as M&E.

UNDP utilised the experiences and results of these efforts to [lead the global conversation](#) in behavioural science for PVE. The UNDP Administrator spoke at the [launch of the UNOCT International Hub on Behavioural Insights to Counter Terrorism in Doha](#).

## Collaboration and partnerships

### The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact

The [United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact](#) is an agreed framework between the Secretary-General and the heads of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force entities, which aims to strengthen a common action approach to coordination and coherence in the counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism (PVE) work of the United Nations system. The work of the Compact is coordinated through Working Groups, the Working Group on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (PCVE) is chaired by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and vice-chaired by UNDP, the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Through participation in this group, UNDP contributes to coordination and support of Member States to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

In 2020, UNDP contributed to the PCVE Working Group through several initiatives. First of all, UNDP ensured a linkage between the Working Group and the field by bringing UNDP Resident Representatives from Bangladesh, Somalia and Sudan to the discussions. Furthermore, UNDP updated existing mappings of research and an inventory of existing programmatic guidance for the benefit of Counter-Terrorism Compact entities to avoid duplication. Through this, UNDP identified thematic gaps on harnessing the opportunities for integration of behaviour science in PCVE programming; aspects of PVE and climate security; and further research in resilience factors. UNDP is a member of and contributes to several of the other Working Groups under the Global Counter-Terrorism coordination Compact.

### UNDP-UNOCT action plan and STRIVE Asia Project Implementation

UNDP has enhanced strategic and programmatic collaboration with UN entities including the UN Office of Counter Terrorism. Building on the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the strategic partnership between the UNDP and the UNOCT, an action plan to implement the MOU over the period January 2020 to December 2021 was developed. The Action Plan draws on the results of UNDP-UNOCT cooperation and collaboration over previous years and outlines concrete objectives and activities in three broad areas, namely information sharing, collective outreach and joint support. Within the first-year implementation of the Action Plan, UNDP and UNOCT initiated consultations on the topics related to PVE and Behavioural Insights, as well as the role of the Parliaments in PVE. Both organizations have discussed possible cooperation between UNDP Regional Bureaux and UNOCT Regional Offices in Doha (focus on behavioural insights and parliaments), Bishkek (focus on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Prosecution, Return and Reintegration) and Malaga (Role of Civil Society). UNDP and UNOCT started consultations on cooperation with the UNOCT Global Programme to PCVE and started preparation for the UNDP-UNOCT Directors Meeting to be held in 2021. Within joint efforts on resource mobilisation UNDP participated in several briefings for UN member states

on ongoing and future projects on PVE organized by UNOCT and supported preparation of the Second UN Appeal 2021 by contributing to the discussions on methodology and lessons learned from the MYA 2020.

Two cornerstones of the partnership with UNOCT are the implementation of two flagship joint projects in Southeast Asia and Central Asia, of which the latter is coordinated directly through UNDP Crisis Bureau. The Strengthening Resilience Against Violent Extremism in Asia ([STRIVE Asia](#)) project is a 48-month joint EU-UN initiative implemented jointly by UNOCT, ONODC and UNDP. The project supports Member States in the implementation of UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE). UNDP implements Output 3 which reads 'Local resilience of at-risk communities is strengthened through the support of community led initiatives in the P/CVE area' in five countries in Central Asia, namely Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

In 2020, the project implementation started in [Kazakhstan](#), Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, following an inception process, which included country visits, extensive stakeholder consultations and joint discussions across the implementing UN entities and the EU. Implementation will start in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in 2021 due to delays in endorsement of activities. To mitigate the effects of the pandemic, implementation was taken online and in Kazakhstan for example, the reach of a training programme increased threefold by utilising the internet where face-to-face contact was not possible. The project has piloted two research experiments on behavioural science as it relates to PVE (in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) which has expanded capacities for application of behavioural science in PVE with UN staff and local stakeholders, as well as being used to drive forward global discussions on the application of innovations such as behavioural science to ensure effective programming for PVE.

The joint UNOCT-UNDP regional programme on PVE "Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Tolerance and Respect for Diversity in Southeast Asia Phase II" was finalized in 2020 with support from UNDP Crisis Bureau towards developing a rigorous results framework and technical advice for design and measurement of both regional and country level activities, as well as overall framing of the regional programme. As a result of this contribution, several PVE projects in the region are building national capacity to produce, collect and use data relevant to PVE, including at national and local level.

## **New partnerships for innovation**

Partnerships for innovation and scale have remained critical to drive forward the thematic priorities of the PVE practice, including for experimenting on behavioural science in PVE programming, addressing online challenges and channelling external expertise for sustainable solutions to hate speech and misinformation. Upon embarking on new frontiers of PVE UNDP established partnerships which not only provide the required expertise, but also, efforts were made to support and enhance local and regional expertise for PVE through partnerships with organisations from the global south. For example, UNDP partnered with NudgeLebanon and B4Development to test behaviourally informed interventions and Myanmar-based software

developer KoeKoe Tech to monitor hate speech in Sudan. Additionally, efforts were made to strengthen the evidence-base of programming through partnerships with academic institutions such as the Cyber Threats Research Centre and Oxford Internet Institute.

Engagement with the private sector is increasingly important for UNDP's work on PVE in the recognition of the accessible audience violent extremist groups have online. Notables are partnerships with social media platforms and tech companies like Google, Facebook and YouTube. Under the Southeast Asia Regional Programme for example, partnerships were formed to increase outreach of online campaigns to millions of users through programs like the [ExtremeLives](#) campaign.

## **Enhancing the evidence base for PVE and promoting global learning**

### **Advancing Monitoring and Evaluation for PVE**

In 2020, UNDP positioned itself as a global leader in risk-based programming, grounded in M&E, encompassing UNDP's growing commitment to conflict sensitive approaches and prioritising [risk management](#) considerations. Building on the development of an online [PVE toolkit and indicator bank](#) and in collaboration with International Alert, two additional publications were released in 2020 on [Monitoring National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism](#) and on [Measuring protective factors against violent extremism](#). These papers were launched through online sessions which demonstrated solid practice from the ground and outlined existing challenges and opportunities.

To complement the toolkit, development of an M&E Resource Pack began in 2020 to build further UNDP capacity on M&E, by compiling and succinctly communicating the core concepts and case studies in the following areas: institutional support, conflict prevention, employment creation, behavioural change, measurement of online counter narrative campaigns, hate speech and data security. This approach aims to evolve M&E beyond its traditional focus, encouraging Country Offices to prioritise participatory and innovative methods which consider creative digital solutions in partnership with private sectors, academia and civil society. Such solutions to the challenge of impact assessment are aimed to bring diverse stakeholders into designing development – youth, differently able, vulnerable groups, local and regional government, business – helping build trust and inclusion, and mobilizing private finance for change at scale.

### **Building a Community of Practice and a shared knowledge base**

2020 was indeed a year of online events and UNDP was on several occasions recognised by Member States for the work on PVE and invited to share these insights in global events. The 2020 push to online work had a positive effect on the level of global exchange on PVE across

UNDP's offices. A planned New York based workshop was transformed into a series of PVE Practitioner Sessions which sparked discussions and reflections on the practice throughout the year, engaging member states, civil society organisations and academia. Through 14 sessions, with over 1100 participants, these sessions facilitated discussions of immediate challenges such as COVID-19, climate and connectivity, return of foreign terrorist fighters, MHPSS and enhancement of monitoring and evaluation for PVE. The sessions promoted collective creative approaches to shared challenges from a wide array of stakeholders and allowed for honest critical reflection. These sessions have become the backbone of UNDP's Community of Practice on PVE which also includes a [PVE specific dashboard](#) on UNDP's Online Community Engagement platform 'SparkBlue' was also created to foster consultations and discussions, enable widened and simplified access to information and resources and engage with CSO and Government stakeholders. The creation and strengthening of the Community of Practice across global, regional and national levels through coordination, research, codification of knowledge and conceptual clarity, enabled UNDP to drive forward global policy discussions on emerging areas of PVE and drive global advocacy on the frontiers of PVE programming.

In 2020, UNDP initiate the establishment of a global research portal for UNDP publications on PVE from country, regional and global levels. This is expected to be launched in 2021 by the Oslo Governance Centre. At the same time, UNDP enhanced knowledge management efforts through establishing a global database for UNDP project documents and collection of best practices from Country offices. This process is evolving in 2021 to an online database to better monitor capacity and help more accurately facilitate country-to-country learning. This will ensure a strong future understanding and foundation to amplify best practice, identify needs, increase knowledge sharing and development of the PVE practice.

## **Selected UNDP 2020 publications**

Across UNDP, a range of research projects, evaluations, briefs, and analysis were developed in 2020. The list below does not constitute a complete repository but only indicates core publications from regional and global research. Country specific publications are not included.

- UNDP Policy Brief: [Climate Security Nexus and Prevention of Violent Extremism](#)
- UNDP: [Entry and Exit Points: Violent Extremism in South-East Asia](#)
- UNDP and UN Women: [Conflicting Identities: The Nexus between Masculinities, Femininities and Violent Extremism in Asia](#)
- UNDP: [Measuring the Economic Impact of Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism in Africa](#)
- UNDP and International Alert: [Measuring Protective Factors Against Violent Extremism](#)
- UNDP and International Alert: [Monitoring National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism](#)
- UNDP: [M&E for Preventing Violent Extremism \(PVE\) resources](#)

## **Crisis Bureau support to Regional Bureaus and Country Offices**

Through facilitating knowledge exchange, global discussions and providing technical support, the Crisis Bureau has supported the UNDP's rights-based, human-centred PVE agenda that builds on human security from a development lens in a long-term manner, strengthening trust and cohesion in order to build resilience. Examples in previous chapters have highlighted the linkage between global policy initiatives, partnerships and programming at regional, national and local level.

One key method of support is to the formulation and implementation of PVE National Action Plans (NAPs) in order to implement UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy pillars 1 on 'addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and pillar 4 on 'ensuring human rights and the rule of law'. A second key theme of assistance is strategies which prioritise participatory approaches which engage key governmental and non-state stakeholders—especially youth, women and religious leaders, and multilateral and bilateral partners at national and international level—to advocate for development solutions to VE. A third theme of support is on monitoring and evaluation where Country offices in Southeast Asia in particular have been supported to develop participatory and innovative methods which take into account creative digital solutions in partnership with the private sector, academia and civil society.

In addition to technical support, the UNDP Crisis bureau provided financial support to several Country offices, including to Iraq and Pakistan through funds from the United Kingdom (FCO) and the Swedish International Development cooperation Agency (SIDA); to Sudan, Cameroon and Trinidad and Tobago through the UNDP funding window mechanism; and to Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan through the EU-funded STRIVE Asia project.

## Looking towards 2021

The UNDP Crisis Bureau looks towards 2021 as a year that will consolidate, disseminate and showcase the results of good work initiated in 2020 in the priority areas highlighted above. The Third Oslo Global Preventing Violent Extremism Conference hosted by UNDP is planned for June 2021 and will bring together stakeholders to discuss the forward-looking approach to preventing violent extremism. Partners and stakeholders will also be engaged through global consultations hosted in 2021 as part of guidance development for integration of MHPSS in peacebuilding and guidance for parliaments on addressing hate speech.

In 2020, UNDP noted a high demand from the country level for programming related to prevention of violent extremism coupled with an increased interest in PVE from Member States. UNDP will continue to foster broad partnerships with Member States, academia, civil society, private sector and UN entities to drive forward the PVE agenda at global, regional and local level. The new frontiers outlined in this report provide opportunities for broad collaboration and new partnerships providing expertise, sustainability and scale. For example, on behavioural science, UNDP will expand behavioural insights capabilities within PVE programming and support experiments across the 40 countries in which UNDP has PVE programming. This work will depend on establishing broad partnerships to provide contextualised expertise, resources and build capacities locally.

UNDP will continue to contribute to policy development and driving thought leadership on PVE through facilitating global discussion on the PVE frontiers, publishing policy briefs on areas such as the utilisation of online and artificial intelligence for PVE, and by further strengthening the evidence base for human rights centred approaches to PVE.