



Co-funded by
the European Union



Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) in Malaysia.

Handbook for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)



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UNDP Malaysia's Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) initiatives fall under the ambit of the EU-UNDP project titled 'Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Tolerance and Respect for Diversity' funded by the European Union. The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the ability of Southeast Asian countries to identify, respond to and prevent violent extremism. To achieve this objective, the project identifies three strategies to secure the overall objective outlined above:

Support ASEAN and national Governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand to further develop and implement policy frameworks for preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE), ensuring that NAPs are coherent with all international standards and commitments, and that they model the "whole of society" approach in each country as per best practice globally;

Strengthen knowledge management pertaining to violent extremism in Southeast Asia, and mobilise and facilitate a Community of Practitioners to engage on the issue at all levels – regional, national, and local;

Build the capacities of Government and key civil society actors in each country to disrupt processes of radicalisation and recruitment in the places where it is known to occur, while promoting civic engagement and voice, and indigenous cultural traditions of peace, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

Amidst COVID-19 pandemic, the overall strategy of the project is to capitalize on its development approaches to PCVE in order to respond to this crisis as well as its further socio-economic impact on vulnerable groups.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UNDP Malaysia and the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) would like to express their sincere gratitude to Mr. Thomas Koruth Samuel for his invaluable expertise and time in drafting the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) in Malaysia: Handbook for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

We would also like to extend a special thank you to Ms. Kimberly Maldonado from UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub, Mr. K. Shan from Pusat ASASI and Mr. Zairudin Hashim from ABIM Malaysia for reviewing the handbook and providing their valuable insights. Not to mention, the various individuals and organisations, from government, CSOs and across the UN system, who gave their honest views and thoughtful comments on how best to bring Malaysia forward in the context of preventing and countering violent extremism.

The development of this handbook was funded by the European Union.



INTRODUCTION

Gate keepers, both literally and figuratively, play pivotal and significant roles.

In this regard, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) are key gatekeepers of a community. Given this, Malaysian CSOs - besides already playing the roles envisioned by their leaders and members - could play a deciding role in both direct and indirect ways.

Let's set the record straight; it is not the purpose and intention of this handbook to convert or divert Malaysian CSOs to work on PCVE. Rather, the goal of this guide is to create awareness among CSOs in Malaysia on the violent extremism landscape in Malaysia, the drivers and indicators of violent extremism and the various ways, best practises and lessons learned, from Malaysia and all over the world, in preventing and countering violent extremism in the community.

Should this knowledge be utilised and translated into programmes and activities conducted and facilitated by CSOs for the community; well and good. However, should the CSOs decide to stick to their core business and have no direct role whatsoever in PCVE; there is little which is lost, for the knowledge and lessons learned here would still be useful for them.

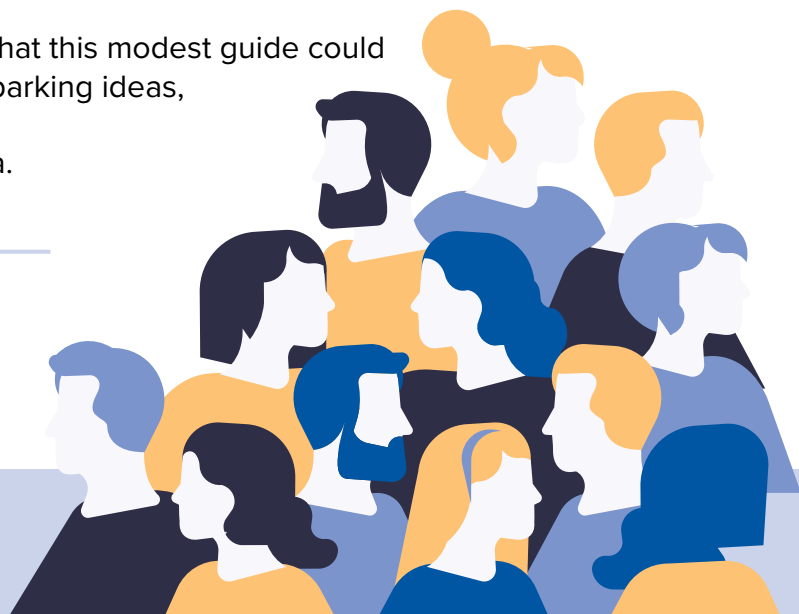
Why and how is this the case?

At the end of the day, regardless if a CSO is involved in PCVE work or otherwise, there are numerous numerous similarities in the work being done.

The target audience remains the same: the people in the community.

The final goal is essentially the same: to leave the people in the community in better shape than when we found them.

To this end, UNDP & SEARCCT believe that this modest guide could play a small role in raising awareness, sparking ideas, and guiding people in preventing and countering violent extremism in Malaysia.



A few words on definitions

Extremism is the quality or state of being extreme or ‘Use the advocacy of extreme measures or views’.¹ The term is primarily used in a political or religious context to refer to an ideology that is considered to be beyond the norm of mainstream attitudes of society.

Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) refers to the policies and initiatives, and the strategic and operational levels for countering and preventing radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremism and terrorism as part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy and framework.

Radicalisation happens when a person’s thinking and behaviour becomes significantly different from how most of the members of their society and community view social issues and participate politically. Only small numbers of people radicalise and they can be from a diverse range of ethnic, national, political and religious groups.² Not all radicalisation leads to violent extremism.

Violent extremism can be defined to have occurred when a person or group decides that fear, terror, and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change, and acts accordingly”. Violent extremism is an extension of radicalisation from a relatively benign expression of a viewpoint to the use of violence to achieve a particular goal.³

Terrorism can be defined as the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain political, economic, religious, or social goals through fear, coercion or intimidation.⁴

Violent Radicalisation refers to the process of adopting or promoting an extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence in order to advance political, religious, or social change.

A word of caution



Arriving to a consensus on the definitions of these terms remain elusive as the subject is highly contentious. In fact, Alex P. Schmidt in 1984 concluded that ‘academic researchers from many fields, have spilled almost as much ink as the actors of terrorism have spilled blood and yet have reached no consensus on what terrorism is.’⁵

For the subject of this study, the author would like to take Professor Kumar Ramakrishna’s approach⁶ of not ‘splitting hairs’ on the definitions but rather **looking at the motivating factors and radicalising pathways that violent extremists use to radicalise and recruit people and communities.**

Setting the record straight



Violent extremism is not exclusive to any one ethnicity, country, religion, culture, political leaning or nationality. Violent extremists, masquerading as champions of their ‘tribe’, have only one interest at heart; their own. They will not hesitate to use (or misuse) whatever means at their disposal; including race, religion, ethnicity, and culture to further their cause. This would then explain why violent extremism, like crime, can be seen in various forms in societies, political systems, cultures and religions.



¹ Definition of Extremism, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/extremism> (accessed on 2 December 2022)

² Living Safe Together, What is Radicalisation? Government of Australia. <https://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/Documents/what-is-radicalisation.PDF> (accessed on 13 July 2022).

³ Living Safe Together, Preventing violent extremism and radicalisation in Australia, Government of Australia, 2015. <https://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/Documents/preventing-violent-extremism-and-radicalisation-in-australia.PDF> (accessed on 13 July 2022).

⁴ Defining Terrorism, Global Terrorist Database. <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.

⁵ Gabriel Weimann, Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation, Columbia University Press (2015) <https://books.google.com.my/books?id=K3CrBQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=terrorism+in+cyberspace&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewilj6r1-6H8AhVeHb cAHRVbBIUQ6AF6BAGJEAl#v=onepage&q=terrorism%20in%20cyberspace&f=false>

⁶ Kumar Ramakrishna, Radical Pathways: Understanding Muslim Radicalization in Indonesia, Praeger Security International, 2009.



CHAPTER ONE

VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN MALAYSIA

Malaysia has seen numerous violent extremist organisations operate, plan, seek support and even have its beginnings in Malaysia.

For example:

- The **Communist Party of Malaya (CPM)**⁷ waged a deadly insurgency against the authorities in the early days of Malaysia's journey to nationhood.
- **Jemaah Islamiyah**, infamous for its deadly attacks in Indonesia, had its roots in Malaysia.⁸
- The **Japanese Red Army (JRA)**⁹ gained notoriety in this country with the hostage crisis in Kuala Lumpur in August 1975.
- Both the **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)**¹⁰ and **Babbar Khalsa**¹¹ tried to gain sympathisers and supporters in Malaysia.
- The **North Kalimantan Communist Party (NKCP)**¹² operated in the early 1970s in Sarawak.
- The **Lahad Datu incursion in Sabah by the followers of Jamalul Kiram III** in February 2013 tragically led to the death of six civilians and ten Malaysian security personnel¹³

Hence, violent extremist, in its various forms, is not new to Malaysia. In this regard, it is vital that those in the PCVE space, are aware of the environment that they are being confronted with. This chapter intends to shed some light into the current threat that Malaysia faces.

⁷ Leon Comber, *The Origins of the Cold War in Southeast Asia: The Case of the Communist Party of Malaya (1948–1960) – A Special Branch Perspective*, *Kajian Malaysia*, Vol. 27, No. 1 & 2, 2009

⁸ Kennimrod Sariburaja, *Al-Jamaah Al-Islamiyah*, Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, 2013.

⁹ Santha Oorjitham, *Guard shot by Red Army in AIA siege in 1975 KL recounts his nightmare*, *The Star*, 26 March 2015.

¹⁰ Kalinga Seneviratne, *Ghost of the LTTE Flickers in Malaysia*, *Inter Press Service*, 12 June 2014. <https://www.ipsnews.net/2014/06/ghost-of-the-ltte-flickers-in-malaysia/> (accessed on 28 January 2022)

¹¹ *Malaysia deports man with Babbar Khalsa links*, *Hindustan Times*, 28 June 2013 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/malaysia-deports-man-with-babbar-khalsa-links/story-eQMzDm2jmcif3UVHjeakjP.html> (accessed on 28 January 2022).

¹² Francis Chan and Phyllis Wong, *Saga of communist insurgency in Sarawak*, *Borneo Post online*, 16 September 2011.

¹³ Jasmine Jawhar and Kennimrod Sariburaja, *The Lahad Datu Incursion and its Impact on Malaysia's Security*, Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, 2016.

Threat Level in Malaysia

It is vital that the PCVE stakeholders in Malaysia are aware of the threat posed by violent extremists in Malaysia. According to the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), the terrorism threat level in Malaysia is assessed to be 'probable' and this is due to three factors, namely:

- (i) strong intentions and capabilities by terrorist actors;
- (ii) exploitation of ideology; and
- (iii) easy access to materials enabling radicalisation.

According to the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), since 2013, a total of 559 individuals were arrested on terrorism related issues. Out of these, 506 (90.52%) were males and 53 (9.48%) were females.¹⁴

Arrested Individuals in Malaysia since 2013

Year	Male	Female	Total
2013	2	2	4
2014	45	14	59
2015	85	10	95
2016	116	10	126
2017	104	5	109
2018	79	7	86
2019	68	4	72
2020	7	0	7
2021	0	1	1
2022*	0	0	0
Total	506	53	559

* As of May

Arrested Malaysians and non-Malaysians for Terrorism since 2013

Year	Male	Female	Total
2013	4	0	4
2014	47	12	59
2015	78	17	95
2016	106	20	126
2017	53	56	109
2018	41	45	86
2019	26	46	72
2020	6	1	7
2021	1	0	1
2022*	0	0	0
Total	362	197	559

* As of May

Since 2013, out of the 559 individuals arrested on terrorism related issues, 362 (64.76%) were Malaysians and 197 (35.24%) were non-Malaysians.¹⁵

¹⁴ Communications with DCP Normah Ishak (E8, Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police) on ASP Mohammad Muzhafar Mohammed Yusoff, E8, Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), 24 May 2021.

¹⁵ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

Charged and Convicted Individuals on Terrorism Related Issues since 2013

Year	Charged	Convicted
2013	3	2
2014	21	21
2015	36	33
2016	70	64
2017	48	47
2018	28	28
2019	46	32
2020	4	4
2021	0	0
2022*	0	0
Total	256	231

* As of May

According to the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP),¹⁶ since 2013, 256 individuals were charged on terrorism related issues in Malaysia and out of this, 231 individuals were convicted.

Malaysian Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs)



Did You Know?



Malaysians fighting in conflicts abroad is not new.

In the 1980s, there were Malaysians who travelled to Afghanistan to fight against the 'occupying' Soviet forces. After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, this 'Afghan Alumni' returned to Malaysia and went on to support or participate in violent extremism both in Malaysia and in the region through groups like *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), *Darul Islam* (DI), and *Kumpulan Militan Mujahidin* (KMM).¹⁷ In 2012, the RMP started detecting Malaysians recruiting other Malaysians to fight in Syria. For example, Yazid Sufaat was reported to have attempted to initiate the group '*Tanzim Al-Qaeda Malaysia*' as a tool to channel Malaysians into the conflict there.¹⁸

¹⁶ Briefing by a Senior Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) officer on 30 October 2019.

¹⁷ Ahmad El-Muhammady, Interview with Author in Kuala Lumpur on 4 December 2015.

¹⁸ Thomas Koruth Samuel, *Radicalisation in Southeast Asia: A Selected Case Study of Daesh in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines*, Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), 2016.

Estimated Malaysians linked to Terrorism Remaining in Syria and Iraq

Category	Number
Male	19
Female	11
Children (below 12 years old)	22
Adolescence (13 – 21 years old)	2
Total	54

According to the RMP, 54 Malaysians still remain in Syria and Iraq.¹⁹

These individuals transited a few countries before infiltrating Syria via Istanbul, Turkey. 90% of these Malaysians joined Daesh while the remaining individuals followed other groups like *Jabhat Al Nusra* and *Ajnad Al Sham*.

The RMP revealed that 17 Malaysians linked to terrorism had returned from Syria and Iraq to Malaysia.²⁰

Estimated Malaysian Returnees linked to Terrorism in Syria and Iraq

Category	Number
Male	10
Female	3
Children (below 12 years old)	4
Adolescence (13 – 21 years old)	0
Total	17

The reasons that they returned to Malaysia include:

- the feeling that they were unfairly treated;
- the perception that they were only given menial work such as sentry and domestic duties;
- the perception that achieving martyrdom or *syahid* was not achievable;
- family issues and problems; and
- injury or health problems.

The Malaysian FTFs returning from conflict areas have had exposure to violence and are experienced in various aspects of combat and fighting. Hence, they have the potential to play significant roles in Malaysia, which include:

- conducting terrorist attacks;
- planning and directing terrorist attacks;
- creating new terrorist groups or splinter organisations;
- reinforcing and strengthening current terrorist organisations in Malaysia or neighbouring countries; and
- using their status and credibility to radicalise and recruit new fighters both within the prison or in the community.

According to the RMP, Malaysia is one of Daesh's 'chosen state' as a 'safe haven' for its fighters due to the following reasons:

- visa on arrival (either for 14, 30 or 90 days);
- easy 'u-turn' re-entry extension of stay (ie. a foreigner coming into Malaysia obtains a visa on arrival for a certain number of days and just before it expires, the individual makes a 'visa-run').²¹

Added to that, the porous borders in the coastal waters of Sabah allow illegal travel to neighbouring countries, particularly the Philippines, making it very attractive to FTFs wanting to move in this region. According to the RMP, Sabah used to be the transit hub for regional militants to enter the Philippines.

¹⁹ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ 'Visa-runs' refers to the process in which a foreigner leaves Malaysia for a neighbouring country as their visa is about to expire and immediately re-enters back into Malaysia to receive a new extension of their visa.

Estimated Malaysians linked to Terrorism who were Killed or Died in Syria and Iraq

Category	Number
Male	43
Female	2
Children (below 12 years old)	6
Adolescence (13 – 21 years old)	0
Total	51

51 Malaysians have either been killed or died in Syria and Iraq.²²

In this regard, Malaysian involvement in Syria and Iraq was painfully made clear when two Malaysian suicide bombers, Mohd Amirul Abdul Rahim and Mohamad Syazwan Mohd Salim were reported to have killed themselves and others on 29 December 2015 and 3 January 2016 respectively. Mohd Amirul left his family for Syria in October 2014 and died when Daesh launched an offensive on the 44th Syrian Democratic Forces coalition. Mohamad Syazwan, on the other hand, was one of seven suicide bombers who targeted police forces undergoing training at the Speicher military base in Iraq. He died while detonating his suicide bomb that subsequently killed 12 policemen and wounded 20.²³ Prior to that, Ahmad Tarmimi Maliki had the distinction of being Malaysia's first suicide bomber when he drove a vehicle filled with explosives into a military headquarters in Anbar, Iraq, killing 25 military officers.²⁴

In total, according to the RMP, 122 Malaysians still remain, have returned back to Malaysia or were killed/died in Syria and Iraq.²⁵

Estimated Malaysians who Remained, Returned or were Killed/Died linked to Terrorism in Syria and Iraq

Category	Number
Male	72
Female	16
Children (below 12 years old)	32
Adolescence (13 – 21 years old)	2
Total	122

The RMP is of the opinion that the threat of international terrorist groups using extremist ideologies to motivate and inspire lone actors and smaller groups to use violence in Malaysia is real. In particular, they cite the *Islamic State* (IS) (also known as *Daesh*) *Al Qaeda* (AQ) and the *Abu Sayaff Group* (ASG) as the biggest threats for Malaysia.²⁶ They are also of the opinion that issues pertaining to politics, race, religion and the conflict in the Middle East are potential trigger points for violent radicalisation in Malaysia.

²² Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

²³ Aliza Shah, *Malaysian suicide bomber kills 33*, New Straits Times, 11 January 2016.

²⁴ *Police identify Malaysian suicide bomber in Syria*, eNCA, 9 December 2014, <https://www.enca.com/world/police-identify-malaysian-suicide-bomber-syria?msclkid=70924720c08c11ec88c59da800547153> (accessed on 20 April 2022).

²⁵ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

²⁶ Past groups that were a threat in Malaysia include the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM).



The Promotion of the Daesh Ideology in Malaysia

This report will focus more on *Daesh* and other similar violent extremist organisations on the basis that the authorities are of the opinion that currently, they are the biggest threat to Malaysia. Also, *Daesh* and its affiliates’ ability in communicating its goals and vision for an Islamic caliphate at the global level has been extraordinary, attracting approximately more than 30,000 FTFs, from as many as 100 countries,²⁷ including Malaysia.

In Malaysia, *Daesh* was actively promoting the idea of Muslim unity, Islamic revival and resurgence, Syariah compliance and soldiers of the caliphate. They were able to do so by effectively harnessing social media channels in Malaysia through conventional Information Communication Technology (ICT) platforms such as Facebook, Whats App, Telegram, You Tube, Twitter and other more specific outlets. While the Malaysian authorities had shut down some of their online platforms, *Daesh* ideology and propaganda was still actively being disseminated in cyber space. In particular, the dark web, Telegram and Wickr²⁸ even contained details of planned attacks.

In terms of numbers, according to the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP),²⁹ since 2013 to May 2022, a total of 493 individuals linked to *Daesh* were arrested in Malaysia. Out of the 493 individuals arrested, 445 individuals (90.26%) were males while the remaining individuals (9.74%) were females.

Arrested Individuals in Malaysia linked to Daesh since 2013

Year	Male	Female	Total
2013	2	2	4
2014	45	14	59
2015	74	8	82
2016	109	10	119
2017	101	5	106
2018	78	7	85
2019	29	1	30
2020	7	0	7
2021	0	1	1
2022*	0	0	0
Total	445	48	493

* As of May

According to the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP),³⁰ out of the 493 individuals arrested, 342 (69.37%) were Malaysians while the remaining individuals (30.63%) were non-Malaysians.

²⁷ Richard Norton-Taylor, *Up to 30,000 foreign fighters have gone to Syria and Iraq since 2011*, The Guardian, 17 November 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/17/30000-foreign-fighters-syria--iraq-2014-terrorism-report?msclkid=1d3ab868cf7611ecae585861a907a8a2> (retrieved on 9 May 2022).

²⁸ The Wickr instant messaging app allows users to exchange end-to-end encrypted and content-expiring messages, including photos, videos, and file attachments.

²⁹ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

³⁰ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

Malaysians and non-Malaysians Individuals linked to Daesh and Subsequently Arrested since 2013

Year	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian	Total
2013	4	0	4
2014	47	12	59
2015	73	9	82
2016	106	13	119
2017	53	53	106
2018	41	44	85
2019	11	19	30
2020	6	1	7
2021	1	0	1
2022*	0	0	0
Total	342	151	493

* As of May

The Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) revealed that since 2013, 226 individuals were charged on terrorism related issues linked to Daesh. Out of this, 213 individuals (94.25%) were convicted.³¹

Charged and Convicted Individuals on Terrorism Related Issues linked to Daesh in Malaysia since 2013

Year	Charged	Convicted
2013	3	2
2014	21	21
2015	30	27
2016	70	64
2017	48	47
2018	28	28
2019	22	20
2020	4	4
2021	0	0
2022*	0	0
Total	226	213

* As of May

³¹ Ibid.

In comparison, since 2013, 66 individuals were arrested on terrorism related issues that were not linked³² to Daesh. Out of this, 61 (92.42%) were males and 5 individuals (7.58%) were females.³³

Arrested Individuals in Malaysia not linked to Daesh since 2013

Year	Male	Female	Total
2013	0	0	0
2014	0	0	0
2015	11	2	13
2016	7	0	7
2017	3	0	3
2018	1	0	1
2019	39	3	42
2020	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0
2022*	0	0	0
Total	61	5	66

* As of May

Since 2013, out of the 66 individuals arrested on terrorism related issues that were not linked³⁴ to Daesh, 20 (30.30%) were Malaysians and 46 (69.70%) were non-Malaysians.³⁵

Arrested Malaysians and non-Malaysians Individuals not linked to Daesh since 2013

Year	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian	Total
2013	0	0	0
2014	0	0	0
2015	5	8	13
2016	0	7	7
2017	0	3	3
2018	0	1	1
2019	15	27	42
2020	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0
2022*	0	0	0
Total	20	46	66

* As of May

³² 'Not linked to Daesh' would refer to other non-Daesh based-terrorist groups.

³³ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

³⁴ 'Not linked to Daesh' would refer to other non-Daesh based-terrorist groups.

³⁵ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

The Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) reported that since 2013, with regards to individuals in Malaysia on terrorism related issues not linked³⁶ to *Daesh*, 30 individuals were charged and subsequently 18 were convicted.³⁷

Charged and Convicted Individuals in Malaysia on Terrorism Related Issues not linked to *Daesh* since 2013

Year	Charged	Convicted
2013	0	0
2014	0	0
2015	6	6
2016	0	0
2017	0	0
2018	0	0
2019	24	12
2020	0	0
2021	0	0
2022	0	0
Total	30	18

³⁶ 'Not linked to *Daesh*' would refer to other non-*Daesh* based-terrorist groups.

³⁷ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

Drivers of violent radicalisation

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is a comprehensive global instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. Through its adoption by consensus in 2006, all UN Member States agreed to a common strategic and international approach to fighting terrorism. Hence, in January 2016, the UN Secretary-General presented to the UN General Assembly a Plan of Action (PoA) to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE). The PoA adopts a comprehensive approach when dealing with the issue of violent extremism that includes not only security-based counter terrorism

measures, but also systematic preventive measures that focus on addressing the factors conducive to violent extremism at the community, national, regional and international levels. In this regard, in July 2016, the General Assembly adopted a resolution inviting Member States, amongst others, to consider developing national and regional plans of action to prevent violent extremism that lead to terrorism.

Possible factors that lead to violent extremism include:



7

Global events (e.g. the situation in Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan) could be perceived as a global attack on Islam

by Western nations and breed frustration and anger leading to violent extremism. Also, human rights infringements and perceived aggression overseas could have the potential of radicalising diaspora communities.

8

Young men who are underemployed with frustrated aspirations and limited stake in society are

particularly susceptible to violent radicalisation. There is evidence to suggest that violent extremist groups focus on the unemployed and underemployed including those who might be relatively well-educated.

9

Poverty and deprivation could provide an environment which leads to violent radicalisation.

10

The failure of the authorities to provide security and justice, and the

people's negative experience with predatory and oppressive security organs of the government could lead to violent extremism.

11

Limited availability of information, low literacy, and a lack of diverse sources, lead to

issues being seen in black-and-white terms with little understanding of context, subsequently providing the environment that could make people more vulnerable to the narratives of violent extremists.

12

A misguided perception of masculinity and honour could

lead certain young people to consider violent extremism as a possible and attractive option. This 'toxic' masculinity could manifest itself in Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV).³⁸

13

Civil and political societies that continuously fail to achieve change despite attempting to engage with the state could resort to violent extremism.

14

Ineffective or blocked political participation, widespread corruption of the political process, elite domination, and

little hope of change, create frustration which could lead to violent extremism.



³⁸ Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on gender norms of patriarchy and unequal power relations. SGBV may be physical, psychological, sexual or socio-economic in nature. Common forms of SGBV include intimate partner violence, honour-related crimes, child marriage, female genital mutilation, trafficking, and conflict-related sexual violence.

Violent radicalisation cases in Malaysia

In Malaysia, the RMP had successfully foiled numerous attempts by *Daesh* elements to conduct attacks in Malaysia. 14 of these attempts were at the very early stages (experimental design plots), while 12 attack plans were in the second stage of planning, involving the use of handmade explosives. Most of the attacks were planned to take place out of the Klang Valley and were directed by Malaysian *Daesh* leaders both within Malaysia and in Syria. In total, 12 *Daesh* cells were broken and taken into custody under the SOSMA laws.



For example, the *Fisabilillah* Group led by Murad Halimudin Hassan³⁹ had plotted to kidnap individuals of high importance in Malaysia and exchange them with comrades who were imprisoned. They also had made plans to attack several key point installations and wanted to force the government to declare Malaysia as an Islamic state and to be part of the *Daulah Islamiah* Nusantara.⁴⁰ The RMP arrested 17 suspects, including Murad in April 2015 and subsequently he was sentenced to 18 years in jail.

On 25 April 2015, the RMP arrested 12 suspects of the *Daulah Islamiah* Malaysia near the Gunung Nuang, Selangor. They were planning to undergo military style training and explosives testing when they were arrested. They had intended to attack targets in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The suspects were arrested with, among others; 25 kg of Ammonium Nitrate, 25 kg of Potassium Nitrate, 2 litres of kerosene, 2 remote control units, detonators, PVC pipes and wires.

Besides *Daesh*, the *Abu Sayyaf Group* (ASG) has also been involved in acts of violent extremism in Malaysia. On 14 May 2015, Bernard Then Ted Fen and Thien Yoke Fun were kidnapped from the Ocean King Seafood Restaurant in Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia. Thien Yoke Fun was released from captivity on 8 November 2015. However, on 17 November 2015, Bernard Then was reported to have been beheaded, just before the APEC Summit in the Philippines. This was reportedly the first beheading case involving a Malaysian.⁴¹

On 11 January 2016, the RMP arrested a teenager in Sungai Petani, Kedah who held a Chinese woman hostage at knifepoint. This young boy was educated in a religious school and was ordered to carry out his attack by Malaysian *Daesh* members in Syria. He was instructed to just hold the lady at knifepoint with the intention of publicising the existence of *Daesh* to the Malaysian police and public. The then Malaysian Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar went on to say that the suspect had been “brainwashed into following *Daesh* ideology through e-mail and social media and wanted to prove that he was capable of such an act.” The suspect was also said to have viewed non-Muslims as *kafir harbi* (those that can be justifiably killed).⁴²

³⁹ Murad was a former member of the Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM) and was previously arrested under Malaysia's Internal Security Act (ISA). He was also a returnee from Syria. This was supposed to be an Islamic 'suprastate' comprising Southern Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Southern Philippines.

⁴⁰ This was supposed to be an Islamic 'suprastate' comprising Southern Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Southern Philippines.

⁴¹ Muguntan Vanar and Stephanie Lee, *Beheaded by Abu Sayyaf*, The Star, 18 November 2015.

⁴² G.C Tan, Farik Zolkepli, Nadirah H. Rodzi and Danial Albakri, *Teen stages IS 'lone cub' attack*, The Star Online, 13 January 2016, <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2016/01/13/teen-stages-is-lone-cub-attack/> (Retrieved on 5 March 2016).

In January 2016, the *Katibah Nusantara*⁴³ issued a video in Bahasa Malaysia threatening revenge on Malaysia, for the arrest of its members. The video, titled *Mesej Awam Kepada Malaysia* (Public Message to Malaysia), warned that, “If you catch us, we will only increase in number but if you let us be, we will be closer to our goal of bringing back the rule of the *Khalifah* (caliph).” The video showed *Katibah Nusantara* member, Abdul Halid Dari reiterating that “those who brand us as *khawarij* (dissenters), *Daesh* and even as *Mossad* agents are in fact *Syiah* and its allies”. He concluded saying that “we will never bow down to the democratic system of governance as we will only follow *Allah’s* rules.”

The only successful attack to have thus far taken place in Malaysia was the Movidia club attack in Puchong, Selangor on 28 June 2016. This attack was conducted by two individuals from the group *Gagak Hitam* (Black Crow) who lobbed a grenade which injured eight people. The two perpetrators were subsequently arrested and convicted. This attack was actually part of what was to have been a coordinated and simultaneous attack by cell members of *Gagak Hitam* throughout Malaysia.⁴⁴

On 10 October 2017, the RMP arrested three *Daesh* members in Kelantan, Malaysia. They were planning to conduct Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks in Kuala Lumpur during the October Fest celebration.⁴⁵

On 4 December 2017, four Indonesians were arrested in Sandakan, Sabah as they were planning to infiltrate Southern Philippines through Sandakan to join the ASG. They were charged for the following offences: (i) establishing a Telegram group to facilitate planning and travel for Indonesians wanting to travel to Marawi via Northern Sulawesi; (ii) Recruiting Malaysians to become members of *Daesh*; (iii) Possessions of items related to terrorist groups; (iv) Supporting the *Daesh* in Marawi; and (v) Transiting Malaysia to support the *Daesh* in Marawi.⁴⁶

On 20 April 2018, the RMP arrested a 17-year old student who was planning lone wolf attacks using Molotov cocktails targeting churches, Hindu temples and entertainment centres around Kuala Lumpur. This young man had produced six Molotov cocktails and had produced and uploaded a video threatening violence on a *Daesh* -related social media site.⁴⁷



In January 2020, the RMP arrested five members of the *Anshorullah At-Tauhid*. The group, led by Malaysian Wan Amirul Azlan bin Jalaludin, had declared allegiance to *Daesh* and was created to attack selected sites in Malaysia as well as to assassinate high profile targets in Malaysia including former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, former Islamic Affairs Minister Mujahid Yusuf Rawa, former Attorney General Tommy Thomas and former Special Branch Counter-Terrorism Director Ayub Khan.⁴⁸

⁴³ The *Katibah Nusantara Lid Daulah Islamiyah* or the ‘Malay Archipelago Unit for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria’ was formally launched on 26 September 2014. Based in Al-Shadadi, in the Syrian province of Hasaka, the *Katibah Nusantara* was basically a special unit within *Daesh* that catered specifically for the Malay-speaking fighters from both Indonesia and Malaysia.

⁴⁴ Ram Anand, *Cops link suspected beer fest attack plotter to Puchong bombing gang*, Malay Mail, 17 Oct 2017 <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2017/10/17/cops-link-suspected-beer-fest-attack-plotter-to-puchong-bombing-gang/1489079?msclid=17dc56c8cf7711ec9e426c407183d8b9> (accessed on 9 May 2022).

⁴⁵ Interview with E8, Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) on 24 May 2021.

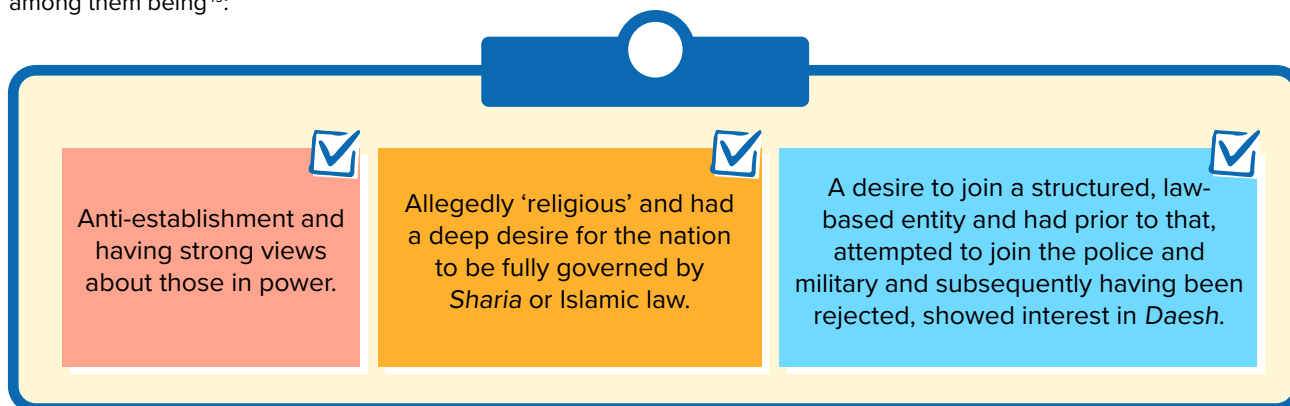
⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Hadi Azmi and Muzliza Mustafa, *Malaysian Police: Foiled IS Sympathizer’s Plot to Kill PM Mahathir Last Year*, 25 March 2021. <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/malaysian/my-is-plot-03252021174904.html> (accessed on 27 June 2022).

The recruitment process for Malaysians joining Daesh

According to the RMP, there were certain similarities among those who had been radicalised to join Daesh in Malaysia, among them being⁴⁹:



It was also significant to note that the RMP⁵⁰ highlighted that while in the past, Malaysian religious-based violent extremists tended to come only from religious backgrounds, was nevertheless able to attract Malaysians from diverse backgrounds such as those who were educated, jobless and even drug addicts. It was also disconcerting to note that there were some instances where the parents were supportive of their children's action to participate in the conflict in Iraq and Syria.

Counter Terrorism Legislation and Human Rights

The counter terrorism legislation in Malaysia includes the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act or SOSMA, the Penal Code, the Prevention of Crime Act (POCA), the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), the Special Measures Against Terrorism in Foreign Countries Act (SMATA), the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act (AMLA).⁵¹

In this regard, it is also vital to ensure that counter-terrorism legislation does not infringe on the rights enshrined in the Malaysian constitution. This tension and balance, which is not unique to Malaysia, while complicated and challenging, must always be maintained and defended.

“The promotion and protection of human rights for all and the rule of law is essential to all components of the Strategy, recognizing that effective counter-terrorism measures and the promotion of human rights are not conflicting goals, but complementary and mutually reinforcing.”⁵²



⁴⁹ Thomas Koruth Samuel, *Radicalisation in Southeast Asia: A Selected Case Study of Daesh in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines*, Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), 2016.

⁵⁰ Royal Malaysian Police, 2nd Roundtable Discussion on Radicalisation in Malaysia organised by the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Kuala Lumpur on 23 September 2014.

⁵¹ Act 613, *Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act (2001)* https://www.miea.com.my/sites/default/files/webmaster/AMLA%20Anti%20Terrorism%20Financing%20%26%20Proceeds%20of%20Unlawful%20Activities%20Act%202001%20Act%20613_1Aug2019.pdf (accessed on 27 May 2021).

⁵² United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, General Assembly Resolution 60/288.

Rehabilitation and Deradicalisation Programme

According to the RMP, the rehabilitation success rate for those involved in violent extremism is more than 95%. Only two (2) rehabilitated former prisoners are regarded as recidivists and continued their support towards the IS ideology.⁵³ Challenges in rehabilitating FTFs who have returned from Syria and Iraq include:

The difficulty in detaching extremist and radical ideology from the hearts and minds of the FTFs. Some detainees were steadfast in their beliefs and were reluctant to accept moderation into their lives and thus were less cooperative or receptive to the programme; and

Difficulties in implementing the rehab programme for the foreign detainees. This is because they are aware that after serving the sentence in the prison, they will eventually be deported to their countries of origin. In short, the programme would not benefit them in the long run.

226 Malaysians linked to Daesh and similar groups have undergone the Deradicalisation and Rehabilitation Programme.⁵⁴

Deradicalisation and Rehabilitation Programme for Malaysians linked to *Daesh* and similar groups

Category	Number
Male	200
Female	20
Children (below 12 years old)	0
Adolescence (13 – 21 years old)	6
Total	226⁵⁵

In comparison, the RMP also reported that 14 non- Malaysians linked to Daesh and similar groups have undergone the Deradicalisation and Rehabilitation Programme.⁵⁶

Deradicalisation and Rehabilitation Programme for Non-Malaysians linked to *Daesh* and similar groups

Category	Number
Male	14
Female	0
Children (below 12 years old)	0
Adolescence (13 – 21 years old)	0
Total	14

⁵³ Written response from E8, Special Branch on 2 August 2021.

⁵⁴ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.

⁵⁵ All 226 Malaysians who joined the Deradicalisation and Rehabilitation Programme were arrested due to their involvement with Daesh. These includes the 17 Malaysian returnees from Syria and Iraq.

⁵⁶ Communications with Special Branch, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in May 2022.



CHAPTER TWO

RISK FACTORS AND INDICATORS TO VIOLENT RADICALISATION

Risk factors and indicators are at times used interchangeably but have different meanings.

Risk factor

- A characteristic that could make an individual more susceptible to recruitment by violent extremist organisations and could be addressed through prevention activities.

Indicator

- A behaviour that suggests an individual could have already been radicalised into violent extremism and might be in need of direct and immediate intervention.

Source: FAQ Sheet: What are risk factors and indicators, Department of Homeland Security.
https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/risk_factors_and_indicators.pdf (accessed on 13 July 2022)

Having one or multiple risk factors does not necessarily mean that an individual will in the end engage in violent extremism. However, it could indicate the need for closer monitoring or engagement.

The aim would be for CSOs to consider a range of general to specific efforts or a 'continuum of interventions' to address both risk factors and indicators. However, before that is possible, it would be necessary for CSOs to be first able to identify risk factors and indicators.

CSOs could play a vital and significant role in:

- addressing risk factors prior to a vulnerable individual experiencing them;
- address individuals with risk factors to prevent the development of indicators; and
- address indicators by developing a referral and intervention programme.

The following charts highlight specific indicators and the manner in which they could be seen in a particular individual at the onset of early radicalisation, during possible radicalisation and in the event of imminent radicalisation. However, there is a need for caution and wisdom when interpreting indicators and it is vital that the 'do no harm' principle guide our course of action when it comes to PCVE.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF EARLY RADICALISATION⁵⁷

INDICATORS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR?
Selling personal belongings or assets in an unusual manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposing material possessions before leaving to fight or raising funds to support the new cause. • For example, violent extremists in this region sold and disposed their properties prior to going to Syria and Iraq.⁵⁸ • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online contacts and law-enforcement officials.
Engaging in violent ideologically motivated arguments, outbursts, fights with family, friends, religious authorities, fellow employees and students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily triggered and prone to frequent outbursts degenerating the status quo and a low tolerance for perceived theological deviance.⁵⁹ • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, community members and law-enforcement officials.
Blaming external factors for failure in career, relationship or school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting a 'victim' mentality and attributing all personal failures to external interferences. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, colleagues at workplaces, teachers, fellow students.
Displaying an unstable mental state and violent behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not stable and erratic behaviour. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, colleagues at workplaces, teachers, fellow students.
Choosing to isolate and breaking contact with family and friends due to association with extremism or extremist doctrine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This isolation is often times prompted by the extremist group as 'outsiders' are considered to be the 'enemy'. • This behaviour can be observed by family and friends.
Rejecting mainstream voices in favour of violent extremist ideologies or ideologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting and manifesting the ideological principles of the violent extremist group. • Adopting a very extreme and legalistic interpretation of a religion or belief.⁶⁰ • These behaviours can be observed by family, friends and the community.

⁵⁷ Homegrown Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators (2017 edition), National Counterterrorism Center. https://www.larimer.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2017/2017_homegrown_violent_extremist_mobilization_indicators.pdf (accessed on 9 May 2022).

⁵⁸ Communications with a Senior Royal Malaysian Police Officer.

⁵⁹ Gartenstein-Ross, D. & Grossman, L. (2009). *Homegrown Terrorists in the U.S. and the U.K. – An Empirical Examination of the Radicalisation Process*, Foundation for Defence of Democracies (FDD). http://www.defenddemocracy.org/content/uploads/documents/HomegrownTerrorists_USandUK.pdf (accessed on 19 November 2019)

⁶⁰ Ibid, Homegrown Terrorists in the U.S. and the U.K.



INDICATORS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR?
<p>Promoting and disseminating violent extremist narratives.</p>	<p>Examples of such narratives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The West is waging war against Islam. • The religion is under threat. • We are the ‘victims’ and they are the ‘aggressors’. • Democracy is against religious principles. • Parliament is a man-made institution and not compatible with religious principles. • Violence is the only option. • Leaders of most Muslim countries are apostates and that mainstream Muslim scholars have sold out. • Trusting select religious authorities.⁶¹ This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online contacts and social media users.
<p>Dehumanising, harassing and abusing people who do not share similar beliefs or worldviews.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binary outlook on worldviews in which those who do not support the extremist ideologies are considered the enemy. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online associates, religious community, fellow students and teachers.
<p>Replacing family and friends with extremist social groups instead.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer possible to have links and relations with previous friends and family as they may not subscribe to the newfound ideology of the extremist group. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, community and online associates.
<p>Using communication security techniques and methods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing mobile phone SIM cards and phone numbers and using ‘burner’ phones. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online contacts and law-enforcement officials.
<p>Discussing operational security or ways to evade the detection of law-enforcement officials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends and online contacts.
<p>Praising past successful or attempted extremist attacks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing and glorifying violent extremist attacks. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online contacts, social media users and law-enforcement officials.
<p>Lying to law enforcement officials and obstructing or hampering investigations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deceiving law enforcement officials on possible extremist activity and to protect the extremists from possible legal action. • This behaviour can be observed by law-enforcement officials, family and friends.

⁶¹ Ibid.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF VIOLENT RADICALISATION

INDICATORS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR?
Criticising the behaviour and lifestyle choices of parents, colleagues, friends and family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claiming that the clothing, reading materials, religious practices, interfaith friendships and levels of religiosity of family and friends are not acceptable and not on par with what is expected of them. • Attempting to impose their religious beliefs and views on others.⁶² • This behaviour can be observed by close friends, family, online contacts, social media users and law enforcement officials.
Producing, consuming or disseminating violent extremist videos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Especially via social media networks. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online and social media contacts, bystanders, people with access to computer search history and law-enforcement officials.
Displaying and demonstrating allegiance, commitment or intent to engage in violent extremist actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledging allegiance, posting extremist icons and flags, and images of leaders/figures of extremist organisations. • Leaving unusual post-death instructions to family and expressing unusual goodbyes friends, family and contacts.
Expressing the acceptance of violence as a necessary means to achieve ideological objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing such acceptance verbally or via social networks.
Trying to radicalise those closest towards violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to persuade friends and family to sympathise or support violent extremism.
Joining or creating an exclusive group that is solely focused on promoting extremism and violence to rectify perceived social, political and ideological grievances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This group could either be online or offline. • For examples, violent extremists in this region, established links & 'chat groups' discussing the situation in Iraq & Syria.⁶³
Conducting suspicious financial transactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such transactions include unusual applications for credit increases, multiple lines of credit, receiving funds from unknown sources abroad, etc. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, sellers, sales/ bank records, travel agents, customs and law-enforcement officials.
Creating or engaging in physical/ virtual simulations of an attack or assault.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on local and foreign targets. • This behaviour can be observed by employees and security officers of the targeted institution, family and friends.
Employing counter-surveillance techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, law-enforcement officials and educators.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Communications with a Senior Royal Malaysian Police Officer.

INDICATORS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR?
Changing behaviour or using new linguistic expressions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These changes reflect the new sense of purpose relating to the recently found and adopted violent extremist ideology. • This behaviour can be observed by close family, friends, online contacts and co-workers.
Engaging in suspicious travel activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would include fraudulent application for passports, unusual purchase of one-way tickets, use of pass-through hubs and false excuses for supposed travel. • This behaviour can be observed through ticket reservations, travel and customs history and by close family and friends.
Using encrypted media applications to communicate and engage with unknown overseas individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using powerful encryption which often times are embedded in electronic devices and online messaging apps to communicate securely and store information. • This behaviour can be observed by law-enforcement officials, close family and friends.
Identifying and monitoring potential targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying potential targets and observing security protocols of potential targets. • This behaviour can be observed by security guards, law-enforcement officials and community members.
Being a member or associating with an extremist group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online contacts and law-enforcement officials.
Planning or attempting to travel to a conflict zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving to the conflict zone to fight and support the cause. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online contacts, travel agents, custom and law-enforcement officials.
Calling for violence on Western targets (depending on the ideology of the group), particularly military or even civilian sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived irreconcilable divide between the West and Islam.⁶⁴ • Calling for attacks on both the infrastructure and the people of the West. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online contacts, religious leaders and educators.
Participating in online groups that promote extremism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking part in social media networks introducing, supporting or glorifying extremist groups. Also, hooked on violent extremist material. • For example, violent extremists in this region were hooked on IS's propaganda in Syria and Iraq.⁶⁵ • These types of behaviours can be observed by family, friends, social media and gaming contacts.
Communicating with, retweeting, or linking to extremist groups via the Internet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively communicating or pushing the content of extremist groups. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, social media contacts, people with access to computer search/history.

⁶⁴ Gartenstein-Ross, D. & Grossman, L. (2009). *Homegrown Terrorists in the U.S. and the U.K. – An Empirical Examination of the Radicalisation Process*.

⁶⁵ Communications with a Senior Royal Malaysian Police Officer.

INDICATORS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR?
Looking to start a relationship with foreign, convicted or incarcerated terrorists, either within the country or beyond the borders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the Internet to meet and even get married to terrorist fighters as seen in the case of the so-called <i>jihadi</i> brides phenomenon. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, online contacts, correctional or law-enforcement officials.
Sending funds, electronic equipment or survivalist gear to possible individuals or groups linked to extremism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the extremist cause by providing resources such as money and telecommunications devices. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, money services, banking institutions, shops selling survivalist and electronic equipment and shippers of the goods.
Expressing the intention to travel to conflict areas to support or fight with an extremist group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly idealising living among extremists and fighting for possible liberation or the ushering of a new world order. • For example, violent extremists in the region spread the news to their friends and relatives of their impending plans to travel to Iraq & Syria.⁶⁶ • These types of behaviour can be observed by family, friends, travel agents and law-enforcement officials.
Conducting research over the Internet for target selection, acquiring technical skills, planning and logistics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking to the Internet for information and assistance to enhance skill-sets necessary for planning and execution of an extremist act. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, bystanders, and law-enforcement officials.
Obtaining maps and blueprints through suspicious means.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining these resources to prepare and equip themselves to either launch an attack or support a terrorist attack. • This behaviour can be observed by people with access to computer search history and municipal/town officials.
Being excluded, ignored or kicked-out from family or community networks due to violent extremist outburst or conduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could happen both in the physical or virtual world. • This behaviour can be observed by family, friends, community and religious members both online and offline.

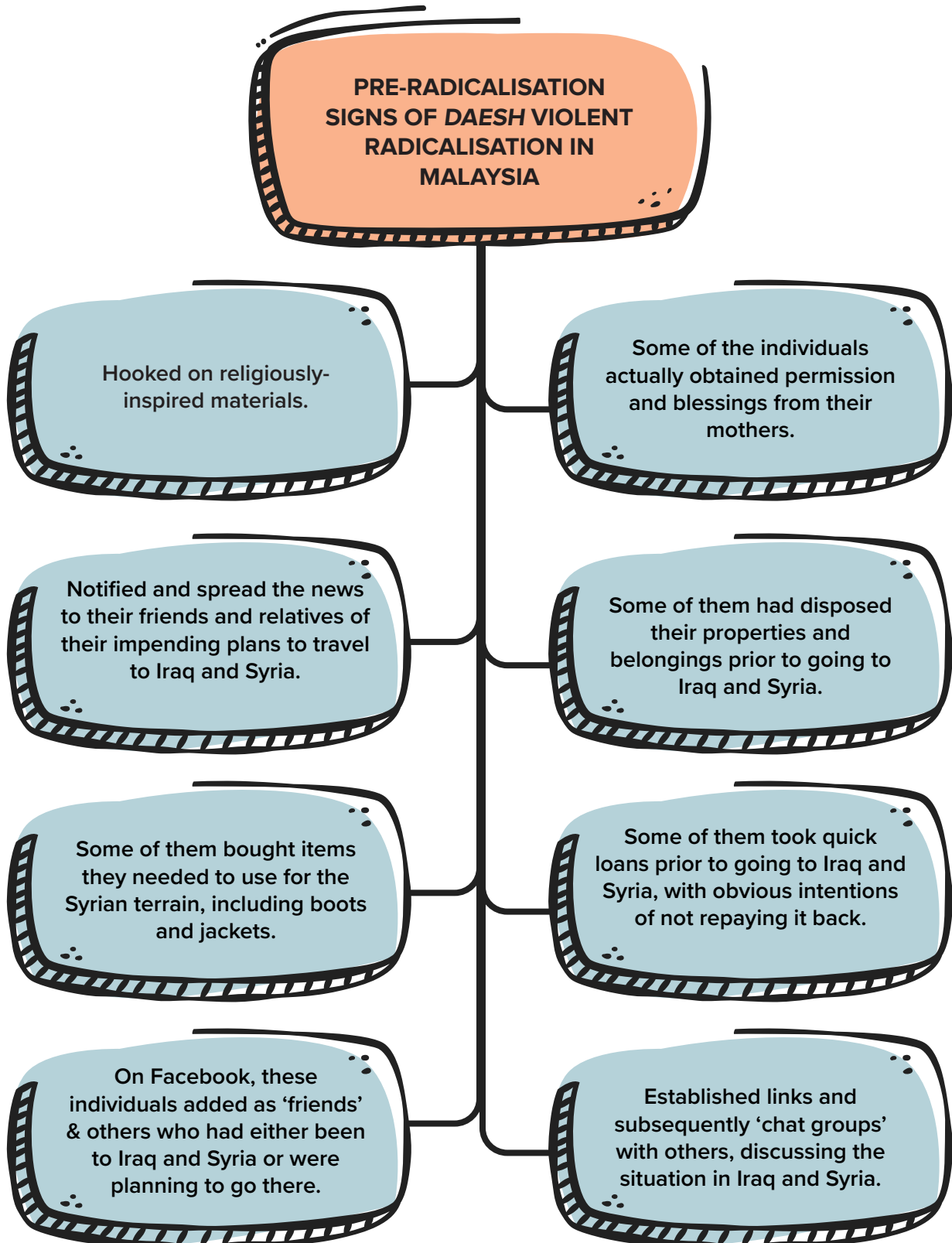
⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

IMMINENT SIGNS OF VIOLENT RADICALISATION

INDICATORS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR?
End of life preparations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing & disseminating a last will/manifesto/ martyrdom video statement.
Seeking help and support from family and friends to travel overseas to join terrorist groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation to fight with or support a violent extremist organisation.
Planning or seeking to travel to conflict zones to fight or support an extremist organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching and looking for travel routes, buying tickets and looking for further information on how to travel.
Looking for religious and political justification for acts of extremism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking permission, affirmation and sanction to engage in violent extremism from religious authorities, family, friends and online contacts.
Attempting to mobilise others such as family members and close friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to persuade and encourage others to join as active supporters or even passive sympathisers.
Purchase of unusual military-style tactical equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing such equipment to either launch an attack or support a terrorist attack.
Suspicious, unexplained or illicit acquisition of weapons/ammunitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing such equipment to either launch an attack or support a terrorist attack. • This is normally done by using borrowed or stolen identification to purchase firearms.

Unique pre-radicalisation signs of *Daesh* violent radicalisation specifically in Malaysia

Based on the arrests and subsequent questioning of *Daesh* suspects in Malaysia, there were certain tell-tale signs present for those who were radicalised and on the verge of going to the conflict zone.⁶⁷



⁶⁷ Discussions with Special Branch Police Officer on 17 February 2015.



CHAPTER THREE

PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PCVE)

It is not enough to simply counter violent extremism, there is a need to prevent it.⁶⁸ Hard power, often times wielded by states might not be a sustainable solution.

What could be more potent and effective than weapons, war strategies and battle plans?

Perhaps, the time has come to also consider structural changes, community engagement and the building of resilience.⁶⁹ Specifically, there is a need to:

- identify early signs of radicalisation;

- mitigate individual and collective grievances; and

- address structural factors that are the reasons for the drivers and triggers of violent radicalisation. It is precisely in these areas that CSOs in Malaysia could play a significant and vital role in PCVE.

The key actors that need to be engaged include local stakeholders, women, youth and civil society. In short, the community.

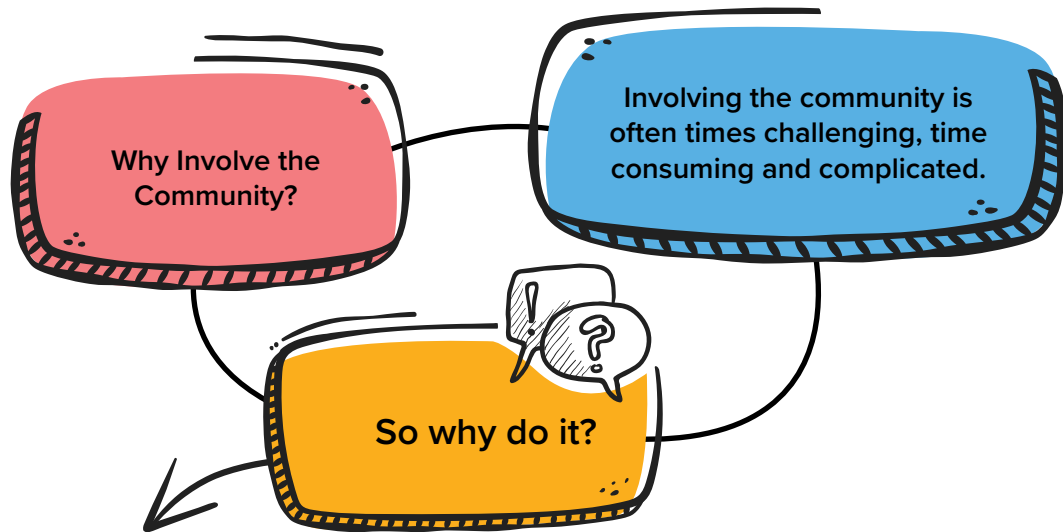
⁶⁸ Preventing Violent Extremism, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). <https://en.unesco.org/preventingviolentextremism> (Accessed on 25 January 2021).

⁶⁹ Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). <https://www.unitar.org/sustainable-development-goals/peace/our-portfolio/preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-conducive-terrorism> (Accessed on 25 January 2021).

The Community

It is not rocket science but for a community programme to be successful, the community must be involved. Regardless if it is a PCVE programme or otherwise, if the communities are not genuine stakeholders, the chances of the intervention making a lasting impact of significance is slim. Hence, the pointers below are not just meant for PCVE initiatives but could also be utilised in other initiatives such as building national unity, as well as developing and strengthening social cohesion.

PCVE and the Community



1

An involved community is a participatory and educated community – getting the community involved increases their knowledge and participation in PCVE related issues. Also, exposure to the authorities on issues pertaining to PVCE could possibly enhance the community's defences against violent extremism.

2

Tak kenal maka tak cinta i.e. know your client – It is difficult to meet the needs of the community when we hardly know them.

3

If it's important for you, it's important for us – there is a need to understand the communities' priorities, aspirations, fears, hopes and challenges when designing PCVE initiatives. In this regard, community engagement provides a platform for the communities to speak allowing the voices of the grassroots to be heard by the authorities.

4

We got your back (Kita Jaga Kita) – Building confidence and trust on the authorities.

5

We can't do this without you (Tanpa Kamu, Tiada Kita) – Not involving the community when doing PCVE work within the community is a step in the right direction; to failure.

6

No favourites – Reduces the risk of authorities catering solely for a party/group.

7

More is better – More ideas on how to address violent extremism.

8

Better results – Involving the community in PCVE increases the chance of penetration and acceptance by them. Community engagement has the potential to build multistakeholder partnerships that could lead to tailor-made solutions for each location/community, thus increasing the chances of success.

9

Improving and changing the perceptions of the authorities – Engagement increases interaction between the community and the authorities and could possibly remove preconceived ideas of the authorities when working on PCVE.

In this regard, engagement with the community could act to reduce biasness and prejudice that authorities could potentially harbour on certain communities.

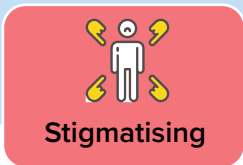
10

Enhances the competency and performance of the authorities – Community involvement tends to increase the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of the authorities.

11

Strengthening unity, cohesion and social bonds – The relations between the various diverse groups within the community could be brought closer through community engagements.

Risks When Involving the Community in PCVE



Stigmatising

At times, selective PCVE engagement with a particular community could lead to the perception that they are considered a threat.



Securitising

Community engagement on PCVE could be viewed as securitising the relationship with the community.



Spying

Engaging the community in PCVE efforts could at times even be seen as a method for authorities to spy on the community.



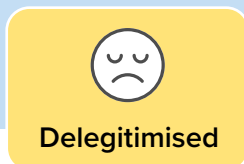
Threat

There could be a risk for those who are engaging with the authorities on PCVE as they could be seen as a threat by other members of the community.



Selective support

At times, when the authorities engage a particular community on PCVE, it could lead to the impression that the authorities favour that particular party, which in turn could potentially alienate other communities/parties.



Delegitimised

Members of the community who engage or associate with the authorities in the field of PCVE might inadvertently lose their credibility in the eyes of other members within the community.

Criteria for a successful PCVE community engagement

Humility – The realisation that we do not have all the answers (sometimes we do not even know what the questions are!) and at times, we do not know what to do or where to start. However, just because we don't know does not mean that they do not know. Humility allows for better knowledge and information exchange between the community and the authorities.

Commitment – When engaging on PCVE, all parties should emphasise honesty and transparency.

Perseverance – Partnering with different communities in PCVE is challenging and complicated. Hence, there is a need to overcome suspicion, lack of initiative and lack of support.

Readiness – The willingness of all parties to share goals and objectives, seek alternatives and if necessary, compromise to reach a consensus when dealing with PCVE issues in the community.

Strategies to translate the key principles into practice:

Possible Steps



1

Map the landscape

Identify and take stock of the resources, willingness to collaborate and the capabilities of the relevant stakeholders.

2

Visible and easily accessible

The community is fully aware of / aware about where and how to find the authorities.

3

Understand the composition of the community

Authorities have experience, gender balance, cultural and religious sensitivity, and diversity when dealing with the community they are serving.

4

Seek permanency

Authorities dealing with the community do so for an extended period of time to build trust and credibility.

5

Going the extra mile

The authorities must be prepared to work and assist the community on issues that go beyond PCVE.

6

Proactive

The authorities must be seen to be active and diligent in problem-solving.

7

Inclusive

The authorities must be inclusive and seen to be inclusive when dealing with the community.

8

Whole-of-Government approach

The authorities are even able to comprehensively address non-security matters affecting the community.

9

Whole-of-Police approach

The authorities go beyond PCVE and also engage the community on other security matters.

Recommendations to sustain community engagements in PCVE



Initiating a PCVE programme in the community can be challenging; sustaining it can be even harder.

Certain things to consider to ensure the programme's sustainability include:

The impact of PCVE interventions on women

Often times, when PCVE interventions are crafted, its implementation and impact on women are not carefully studied and evaluated. Hence, it is imperative to consider the gender perspective in PCVE, not just because it is the politically correct thing to do, but more importantly, because it is the **correct** thing to do. In this regard, including a gender perspective in PCVE requires emphasis on:

- Females as victims of violent extremism;
- Females as perpetrators, facilitators and supporters of violent extremism;
- Females as agents in the fight against violent extremism; and
- The impact of interventions against violent extremism on women.⁷⁰

Creating an enabling environment for civil society

- Providing and developing an institutional and regulatory framework for CSOs and individuals in the community to help them function and operate.
- Ensure a legal basis and safeguards for civil society to engage in PCVE.
- For example: if there are no legal safeguards, CSOs engaging with and promoting the reconciliation of violent extremists could be prosecuted for supporting terrorism.

Supporting civil society capacity

- Increase access to funding and resources, particularly the technical capacities/capabilities of CSOs on project management, financial administration as well as monitoring & evaluation mechanisms.
- Support women and youth-led CSOs as they tend to be under-represented in PCVE programming and their contributions often not realised.

⁷⁰ *Integrating gender into counter-terrorism*, United Nations Security Council, Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/content/integrating-gender-counter-terrorism> (Accessed on 9 March 2022).

Engaging civil society in relevant policy formulation and implementation processes

Local Level

- Collaborate and partner with CSOs, local government and law-enforcement agencies to ensure that community dynamics and local contexts are taken into account in PCVE.

National Level

- Engage with civil society when developing national action plans, strategies and laws on PCVE.
- Facilitate platforms for networking and cooperation between CSOs, locally and globally.
- Support and/or create networks for CSOs and community leaders to facilitate sharing of experiences and lessons learned in PCVE.

Flexibility

- Consider greater flexibility in project design, particularly when engaging target audiences, adjusting deliverables and/or timelines of the programme, especially for communities in sensitive environments where security conditions may be unpredictable.

Supporting stakeholders in developing quantitative and qualitative research

- Partner CSOs with academic institutions to research PCVE issues.
- For example: CSOs could tap into research outputs of graduate students who are studying and evaluating issues of violent extremism in the community. That data could then be translated into on-ground interventions.

Good Practices for Community Engagements in PCVE



Good practices to consider when conducting PCVE efforts would include:⁷¹

1. Prioritise engaging women as positive change agents in their communities.
2. Prioritise engaging youth and leverage on schools to develop and disseminate positive messages.
3. Designating specific individual/s who are trusted and accepted in the community, to be the point person for engagement within the community.
4. Engaging victims of terrorism as well as rehabilitated violent extremists familiar to the community (whenever deemed suitable) to be messengers in communicating alternative and counter narratives.
5. Ensuring that community engagement and community-oriented policing is viewed as a long-term, sustained strategy and not merely seen as the 'flavour of the month' activity.
6. Understanding the local nuances, challenges and grievances in order to ensure that the local community is not targeted solely for security reasons but is instead engaged for its own benefit.
7. Aiming for transparency and sensitivity in efforts to build trust within the community.
8. Ensuring that community engagement efforts are broad-based and fully inclusive - not solely focused on one community and/or ideology.
9. Including a process for an independent review of the PCVE initiative implemented in the community.
10. Recognising that successful PCVE-based community engagement involves the authorities establishing, developing and sustaining enduring relationships with the community.

⁷¹ *Good Practices on Community Engagement and Community-Oriented Policing as Tools to Counter Violent Extremism*, Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). https://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/159885/13Aug09_EN_Good+Practices+on+Community+Engagement+and+Community-Oriented+Policing.pdf (accessed on 9 November 2020).



CHAPTER FOUR COMPONENTS OF A PCVE PROGRAMME



Theory of Change (ToC)

Theory of Change is an explanation of how and why an action is believed to be capable of bringing about its planned objectives. In other words, **the changes it hopes to create through its activities**, thereby revealing underlying assumptions.

Hence, a clear theory of change helps to articulate the logical flow from the starting point (analysis) to the action (objective) to the change the organisation wants to achieve.⁷²

Simply put, a ToC will show the connection between the PCVE activities and its desired results. Hence, we will be in a position to test the impact of the PCVE intervention.

⁷² Ris, Lillie and Anita Ernstofer, *Borrowing a Wheel: Applying Existing Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Strategies to Emerging Programming Approaches to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism*, New York: CDA Collaborative, March 2017, <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Applying-Existing-DME-Strategies-to-Emerging-PCVE-Approaches.pdf>, p 16

The results of the ToC can be categorised into:⁷³

Outputs, which are normally quantifiable products. An example of an output would be the number of PCVE capacity building programmes conducted.

Outcomes, which are usually the intended results of the outputs. Outcomes are normally expressed in terms of change in behaviour or attitudes. An example of an outcome would be the change in attitude towards the use of violence to achieve a political goal.

Impact, which is the final goal or objective of the programme. This is at times extremely difficult to measure. Given that impact might not be visible or easily measurable, outputs and outcomes could indicate the possibility of impact being achieved. An example of an impact would be the reduction of violent extremist cases in the place where the PCVE intervention took place.



Essentially, a ToC statement can be expressed through an “If”“then”.....“because” statement.

For example: **If** a youth realises the power of non-violence in achieving political goals **then** he might not be drawn into violent extremism **because** he realises that there are other ways to achieve his political aspirations.

Goals and Objectives of PCVE Programmes

Possible goals and objectives for PCVE programmes include three broad categories, namely:

- (i) Changing attitudes;
- (ii) Changing behaviours; and
- (iii) Getting institutions involved in PCVE.

Changing ‘attitudes’⁷⁹

Increasing knowledge and awareness on issues related to PCVE interventions

Increasing understanding of the ‘other’ i.E. Other religions, cultures, etc

Getting the community to view law enforcement as partners in countering and preventing violent extremism

Increasing awareness and knowledge of push and pull factors that lead to violent extremism

Changing ‘behaviours’

Inspiring others to act in non-violent ways to address grievances and bring about change.

Disengaging from violence or inspiring others to disengage from violence.

Playing an active role in the community to counter the propaganda and rhetoric of violent extremists both on and off-line.

⁷³ Cristina Mattei & Sara Zeiger, *Evaluate your CVE Results – Projecting Your Impact*, Hedayah, July 2018. Microsoft Word - Impact Framework for Countering Violent Extremism 3.docx (hedayahcenter.org) (accessed on 19 October 2021).

Getting institutions involved in PCVE



Changing the way institutions (both private and government) think and operate to address root causes of violent extremism.



Developing and institutionalising PCVE policy or strategy into the organisation or branches of government.



Getting institutions (both private and government) to **play a proactive and significant role in the National Action Plans (NAP) on PCVE.**

Questions to consider when designing PCVE interventions⁷⁴

? After assessing the data collected, what are your actual results?

What is the local context of the country or community of implementation?

? How will the data on these indicators be collected?

What is the identified problem in the country or community of implementation, with regard to radicalisation leading to violent extremism?

? Possible questions to consider when designing PCVE interventions would include (but not limited to) the following:

What is the context of the PCVE program and what problem are you attempting to solve?	Does your programme seek to reduce the drivers of radicalisation, build sources of resilience, or both?	What is the target population of your programme (age, gender, socioeconomic status, region located etc.)?
What do the results mean, and how will the results be used to change or trilor current or future programming?	How will the results be evaluated in terms of outputs, outcomes and (projected) impact?	What are the resources available for monitoring, measurement and evaluation?
What are the drivers of radicalisation in the country or community of implementation?	How do your goals and objectives relate to your ToC?	Who are the stakeholders who need to be involved to assist in achieving your goals and objectives?
What is the goal or objective of the PCVE program/ project?		

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Developing a PCVE Spectrum

Many CSOs in Malaysia, while not focusing solely on PCVE, are working on areas that either border this work or have a target audience who might be vulnerable and susceptible to violent extremism.

These ‘PCVE-fringe CSOs’ initiate and implement valuable activities and programmes that are important in countering violent extremism here in Malaysia.

For example, CSOs in Malaysia that work on developing critical thinking among the youth, increasing women empowerment, enhancing digital literacy, alleviating poverty, bridging religious and racial divides and building social cohesion and national unity are all extremely significant in ensuring that individuals and communities remain resilient against violent extremist propaganda and rhetoric.

It is unfortunate that often times, there is a push by PCVE advocates to ‘convert’ these CSOs to focus exclusively on PCVE-related work. This would be counter-productive.



Potential challenges and drawbacks of existing CSOs jumping into the field of PCVE:

- It will take time to build expertise and develop the necessary skill sets in the field of PCVE; and
- The risk of leaving a ‘gaping hole’ in the fields and areas that those CSOs were already focusing their attention and working on prior to them leaving for the field of PCVE. This would be detrimental in the long-run.

A more viable option would be co-opting CSOs.

Co-opting CSOs refers to getting them to consider spending some of their valuable expertise, time and effort to **complement PCVE work** that is being conducted in Malaysia. Hence, while they remain committed to their core function, they are also involved in PCVE.

It is vital for the PCVE authorities to provide an eco-system that would allow these ‘PCVE-fringe’ CSOs to play a role (whatever and however big it may be) in countering violent extremism. In essence, there is a choice given to these CSOs to determine the manner and to what extent they would like to get involved in the field of PCVE.

CSOs in M’sia

Option 1

Converting them to do PCVE work

Option 2

Co-opting/ Coordinating/ Cooperating/ Collaborating with them to do PCVE-work



The ‘Monitoring, Measuring and Evaluation’ (MM&E) mechanism in PCVE

The need for Monitoring, Measuring and Evaluation (MM&E)⁷⁵

MM&E has the potential to show **the impact (or lack of) that the PCVE programme has had** in playing a role to reduce violent extremism.

Positive results derived from MM&E in one project can be a **catalyst to get further funding and support** for future PCVE projects.

Successes (and failures) are **valuable ‘lessons learned’** for other organisations involved in PCVE work.

The MM&E component will show **how the PCVE programme will meet the planned objectives and goals.**

In most cases, it is **a requirement stipulated by the donors/funders** of PCVE programmes.

Results that are generated from MM&E would **justify the resources, time and money that have been spent** on PCVE activities by the donors, taxpayers and/governments.



⁷⁵ Cristina Mattei & Sara Zeiger, Evaluate your CVE Results – Projecting Your Impact, Hedayah, July 2018. Microsoft Word - Impact Framework for Countering Violent Extremism 3.docx (hedayahcenter.org) (accessed on 19 October 2021).

No standardized framework for MM&E making it difficult to compare and contrast results.

Resources (in terms of budget and programme design) are limited for MM&E interventions.

Extremely difficult to measure the intent, capacity and capabilities of potential violent extremists and therefore difficult to ascertain the role that PCVE interventions played in an individual not becoming radicalised.

Challenges when building MM&E⁷⁶ components into a programme

Difficult to gather data for PCVE interventions both in terms of safety (physical location) and access to the affected communities.

There are no valid (significantly tested) scales to measure levels of support for violent extremism among individuals.

Certain results take time and hence might not be seen let alone measured, within the time period the programme or activity took place.

Also, data relies primarily on self-reporting, observation of behaviour, & expert judgement, which subsequently makes reporting, measuring and evaluating very subjective.

The various stakeholders working on PCVE might be hesitant to share results due to the political, cultural and religious sensitivities.

PCVE work is sensitive and programmes in the community are often times based on 'fragile' trust between various stakeholders, which can have an impact on the results.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Factors to consider before MM&E⁷⁷

Remember!

You need to incorporate the MM&E at the earliest stage when designing your programme.

Here is a step-by-step process of how you might do this:

- 1 Define the context of your PCVE intervention and clearly state the problem that you intend to address.
- 2 Develop a theory of change (ToC) and write a ToC statement
- 3 Clearly set the goals and objectives of the PCVE intervention and make sure that they are clearly linked with your subsequent PCVE activities.
- 4 Have very clear indicators and measures of success based on the goals and objectives of your PCVE intervention.
- 5 Ensure that you are able to evaluate the results and are able to distinguish between outputs, outcomes and impact
- 6 Determine the tools and methods to obtain the data required for you to do the MM&E exercise.
- 7 Ensure that your staff have the expertise to both understand and use the tools required for the MM&E exercise.



Factors to consider when measuring PCVE interventions

It is vital that key indicators (used to measure the impact of the CVE interventions) are:



Culturally and locally sensitive and relevant



Time and geographically sensitive



As comprehensive and detailed as possible to be able to measure the goals and objectives of the PCVE intervention



Cost and time efficient based on the resources and parameters of the PCVE intervention



Developed in tandem with the goals and objectives of the PCVE intervention so as to ensure that they are able to meaningfully capture the results



Measurable, either quantitatively or qualitatively.

⁷⁷ Ibid.



The process to develop indicators

Indicators are ‘clues, signs or markers’⁷⁸ that can be used to measure a particular aspect of a programme/ activity and show how close it is to achieve its intended goal or objective. **Indicators make it possible for us to demonstrate results.** Specifically, indicators enable us to:

i

Measure progress and achievements;

ii

Clarify consistency between activities, outputs, outcomes and goals;

iii

Ensure legitimacy and accountability to all stakeholders by demonstrating progress; and

iv

Assess project and evaluate staff performance.

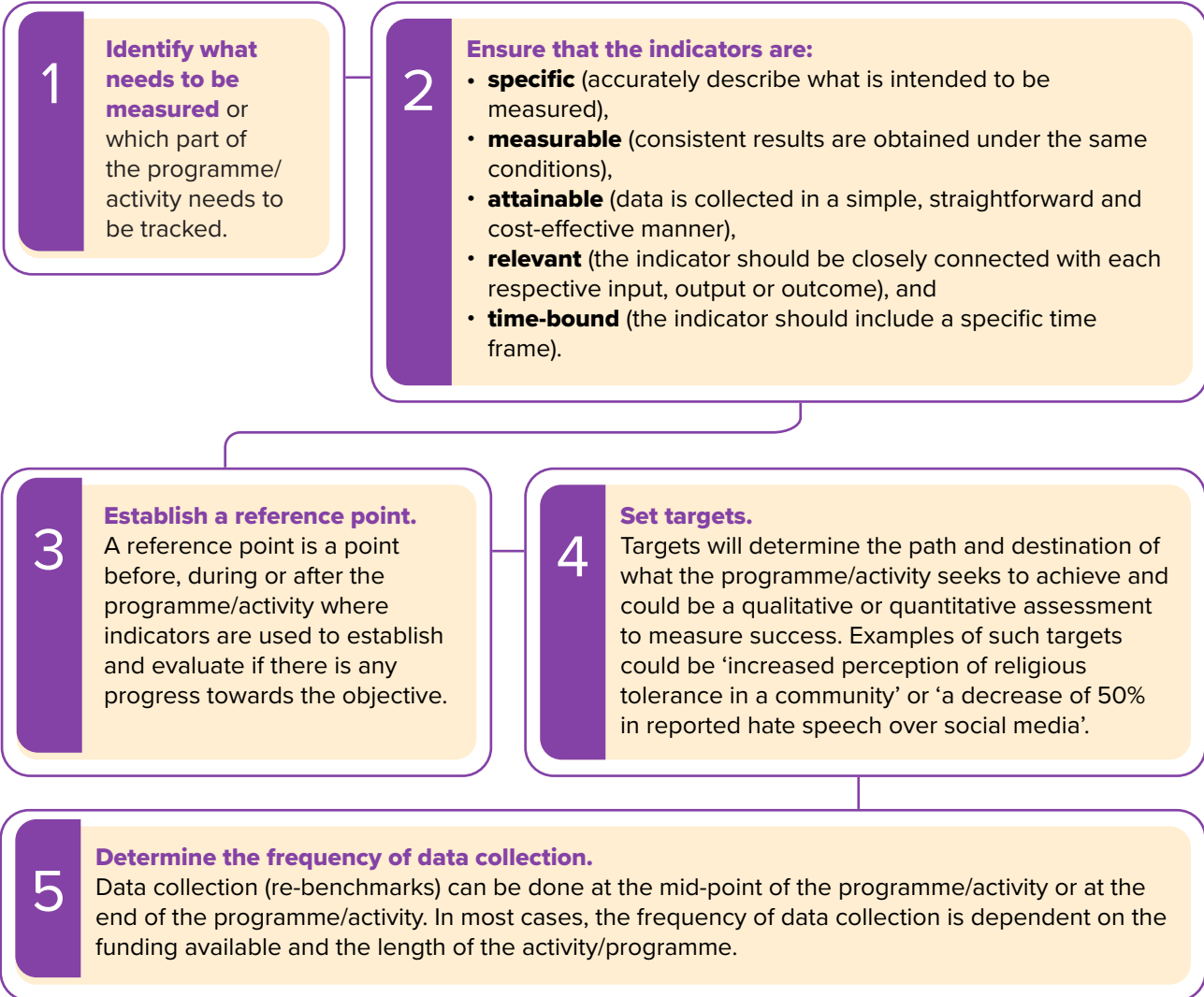
By showing and verifying change, indicators enable us to showcase progress when things are going well and conversely, provide early warning signals when things are going wrong.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *What are indicators and Types of Indicators?*, M & E Studies, <http://www.mnestudies.com/monitoring/what-indicators-and-types-indicators> (accessed on 21 April 2022).

⁷⁹ Ruby Sandhu-Rojon, *Selecting Indicators for Impact Evaluation*, UNDP, <https://communityindicators.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Selecting-Indicators-for-Impact-Evaluation.pdf?msclkid=2675ddd4c10811ecb108d7ff43f0a637> (accessed on 21 April 2022). How to Develop Indicators, The Compass, <https://85>



How do we do it?⁸⁰



⁸⁰ www.thecompassforsbc.org/how-to-guides/how-develop-indicators?msclkid=23ee73b1c12f11ec9afe8a9cb0f56b60 (accessed on 21 April 2022).

The ‘Do No Harm’ component in PCVE

WHAT IS THIS?

Derived from the ‘**Hippocratic Oath**’ 2,400 years ago, the idea here is that ‘the wellbeing of the people we are trying to help must be the focus of our efforts to help them’.

In other words, the cure must not be worse than the disease.⁸¹



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN THE PCVE CONTEXT?

Any **unintentional consequences** of our interventions should be **critically examined** and any potential **negative consequences negated.⁸²**



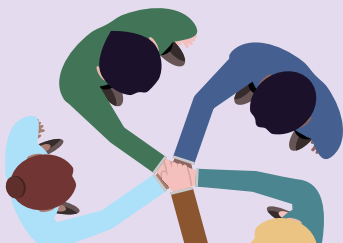
WHAT CAN WE DO?

Ensure that designed programmes follow certain standards and adapted to local circumstances, culture and customs.

Conduct a needs assessment with local stakeholders from affected communities

Closely monitor the implementation of projects

Assess project results and include feedback mechanisms for targeted groups.⁸³



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN THE PCVE CONTEXT?

Common Misunderstandings of the ‘Do No Harm’ principle⁸⁴

Misconception #1

The ‘do no harm’ principle focuses solely on potential harms and subsequent negative impacts of an intervention. It does not focus on improving a situation or producing positive impacts.

In reality: ‘Do no harm’ is there to remind us to **think before rushing to do good** and not to stop us from considering the good altogether.

Misconception #2

The ‘do no harm’ principle is used to justify inaction. If there is the slightest possibility of doing harm, then nothing should be done at all.

In reality: Doing nothing when people are in need is clearly to do harm towards them.

⁸¹ Marshall Wallace, *From Principle to Practice: A User’s Guide to Do No Harm*, October 2015. <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/from-principle-to-practice-a-users-guide-to-do-no-harm/> (accessed on 13 July 2022).

⁸² *Guide for the Military 2.0 (101 Series)*, United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), May 2017. *Guide for the Military v2.pdf* (unocha.org) (accessed on 18 October 2021).

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Marshall Wallace, *From Principle to Practice: A User’s Guide to Do No Harm*, October 2015. <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/from-principle-to-practice-a-users-guide-to-do-no-harm/> (accessed on 13 July 2022).



CHAPTER FIVE

DEVELOPING AN EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE (EWER) MECHANISM FOR PCVE

The Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) System is an ‘organised collection and analysis of open-source information on violent conflict situations by local, national, and international actors’. The information collected is then linked to ‘formal and institutionalised response mechanisms with the intention of preventing violent conflict before it even occurs.’⁸⁵

Early warning is seen as a possible tool to initiate an early response with the hope of preventing and countering violent radicalisation.

When designing and implementing a community-based EWER, it is significant to note that the advantage of the early warning component lies in its ability to respond, and the effectiveness of the response mechanism in turn depends on the quality of the early warning information.

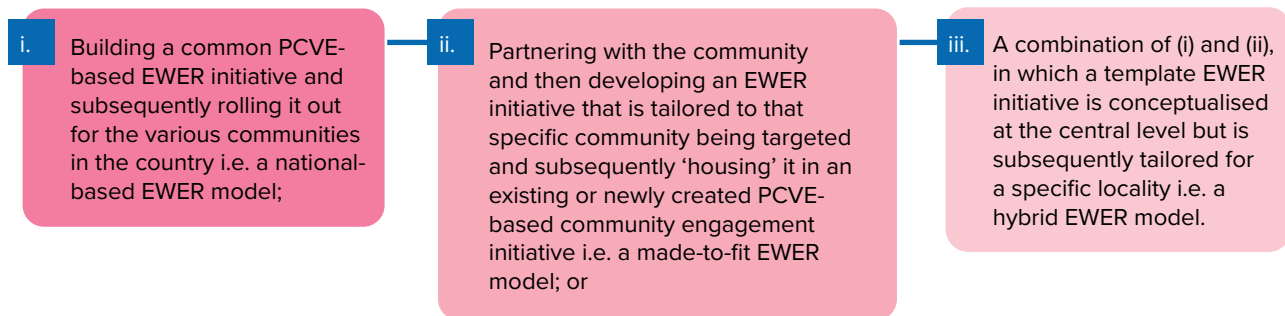
It is a mechanism that allows the community to get the attention of the relevant authorities when they ‘shout out for help’. In response, the authorities are able to deliver the appropriate assistance in a timely and efficient manner.

The whole thrust of this proactive approach is to prevent and counter violent extremism before it actually takes place.

⁸⁵ DB Subedi (2017) *Early Warning and Response for Preventing Radicalization and Violent Extremism*, *Peace Review*, 29:2, 135-143, DOI: 10.1080/10402659.2017.1308185

EWER and PCVE in Malaysia

When contemplating building a PCVE-based EWER in Malaysia, three possible implementation models⁸⁶ could be considered, namely:



Template of a National EWER Model

- National EWER Model**
- (i) A common PCVE-based EWER will be formulated at the national level, taking into consideration the needs and challenges of the particular nation.
 - (ii) Emphasis will be put into developing a comprehensive EWER initiative at the national level and all that is subsequently needed is to 'plug and play' i.e. to 'roll-out' and implement the standardised initiative into the existing communities in the respective countries.
 - (iii) The model would be conceptualised at the national level and be uniformly implemented with the community at the societal level.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Little time is wasted in conceptualising and formulating novel EWER mechanisms for individual communities. Instead, a standard, 'pre-fabricated' template would be the foundation for the whole initiative. Hence, numerous EWER initiatives could be immediately and simultaneously launched in various places thereby reducing bureaucracy, time and redundancy.	This option does not give much attention and emphasis to the views and feelings of the community in which the EWER initiative is implemented. This could lead to the possibility of a lack of buy-in from the community.
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, gender dynamics and other sensitivities can already be taken into consideration and put-in place at the very onset in the 'pre-fabricated' template EWER initiative to ensure that nothing significant or essential is left out.	A central-design EWER mechanism (as opposed to a community-led EWER) would discount local nuances, sensitivities and dynamics, thereby limiting the efficacy of the initiative.
In terms of logistics, the template EWER is presented to the community and thereafter immediately implemented.	



⁸⁶ 'Thomas Koruth Samuel, 'Radicalisation in Southeast Asia: A Selected Case Study of Daesh in Indonesia, Malaysia & the Philippines', Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), 2016.



Template of a Tailored EWER Model

Tailored EWER Model

- (i) A collaboration between the authorities and the local community.
- (ii) Both parties would jointly conceptualise and develop an EWER model, taking into account specific nuances, challenges, limitations and context of the community in question.
- (iii) Would entail close involvement and partnership with the community to collaboratively develop a tailored-EWER mechanism specific for that particular locality.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Since it is a collaborative approach, the chances of community buy-in would increase, which would positively affect the outcome of the initiative.</p> <p>A collaborative approach would incorporate local nuances, sensitivities and dynamics of the community.</p>	<p>Partnering the community and getting their buy-in could take additional time, expertise and resources; all of which might not be available or could be better channelled elsewhere.</p>
	<p>Tailored EWER mechanism that fits into a specific community might require localised expertise and help, which may be readily available.</p>
	<p>No assurance that attempting to get the community's support or buy-in might be successful even after spending time, manpower and resources.</p>
	<p>Time consuming as it is not possible to duplicate or replicate existing models.</p>
	<p>The model uses a longer time to reach and impact the most number of people.</p>



Template of a Hybrid EWER Model

Hybrid EWER Model

- (i) Combination of both the National and Tailored EWER models.
- (ii) At the national level, the authorities would conceptualise a National EWER template.
- (iii) The template would be introduced to specific communities who would tailor it as part of a PCVE-based community engagement initiative.
- (iv) Hence, while the template is conceptualised at the national level, it would be contextualised when it is allowed for the views and nuances of the members of the community to be heard and incorporated.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Given that the model is conceptualised at the national level, the concerns and emphasis of the authorities would be taken into account when the model is implemented.	Time consuming and requires additional expertise and resources that could be better channelled to other initiatives.
Partnering the community and allowing them to amend and change the template would give the community space to address their concerns. This would increase their chances of buy-in and participation, which in turn could positively affect the outcome of the initiative.	
Having a template to start with could also save time and avoid duplication/replication when formulating the EWER initiative. Lessons learned, best practices and creative ideas gained from one community could also be shared and further developed in other communities.	
Getting the community involved from the very beginning would ensure that the EWER mechanism being developed takes into account the local nuances, sensitivities and dynamics, that vary from community to community.	

Conclusion

Determining a suitable EWER model (i.e. a *national-based EWER model* or a *Tailored EWER model* or a *hybrid EWER model*) would depend on:

- (i) The perception of the authorities on the threat level posed by the violent extremists;
- (ii) The perception of violent extremism within the community; and
- (iii) The readiness and willingness of the community to accept a PCVE-based intervention.



CHAPTER SIX

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS IN PCVE

“Over the past two decades, the international community has sought to address violent extremism primarily within the context of security-based counter-terrorism measures adopted in response to the threat posed by Al-Qaida and its affiliated groups. However, with the emergence of a new generation of groups, there is a growing international consensus that such counter-terrorism measures have not been sufficient to prevent the spread of violent extremism.”⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Report of the Secretary-General, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, United Nations General Assembly, A/70/674, 24 December 2015, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/816212?ln=en> (Accessed on 1 December 2020).

Introduction

Violent extremist messaging is actively taking place, particularly on digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Telegram. In this regard, the ability of these violent extremists to create an impressionable brand and flood cyberspace with their stories and propaganda has led to a severe ‘content-imbalance’ for anyone searching for information or insights, particularly when it comes to the situation in conflict zones.

Violent extremist groups in the region have shown tremendous capability and capacity to identify, entice, radicalise and recruit individuals. In most cases, the group’s ability to do so starts with, starts with creating a compelling and creative narrative and secondly, they have the capability to disseminate this narrative to all levels of society. Simply put, they target a general and wide audience.

Hence, there is an urgent need to debunk the propaganda and rhetoric of violent extremism as well as to combat the dangerous influence of violent extremist groups on the Internet, particularly on social media platforms, by utilising soft approaches via strategic communications.



Strategic Communications

The Global Counter Terrorism Strategy stressed the need to address the threats posed by the narratives being employed by violent extremists and recommended Member States to engage local communities and CSOs in developing “tailored strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative.” The United Nations Secretary General in his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism identified strategic communications as one of seven priority areas.⁸⁸

In this regard, what is the current situation with regards to violent extremist messaging and our subsequent response in the region?

<p style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; color: green;">1</p> <p>Firstly, the narrative (be it ideological, religious, emotional or opportunistic) put forth by violent extremists is one of the primary factors that draw both individuals and communities in this region to sympathise, support and join these groups.</p>	<p style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; color: green;">2</p> <p>Secondly, the counter and alternative narratives currently being employed to tackle violent extremist ideologies are at times structurally weak and disjointed.</p> <p>It also lacks sufficient creativity and passion and is hindered by a weak delivery mechanism as well as limited trained personnel to make a credible and long-lasting impact (there are however exceptions).</p>	<p style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; color: green;">3</p> <p>Thirdly, there is a need to build a comprehensive selection of counter and alternative narratives that are tailor-made to suit environments, conditions and circumstances found in the various countries in this region.</p> <p>It is equally as important to deliver them in a manner that reaches the widest audience and brings about the greatest impact.</p>
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Given the importance of strategic communications, it is recommended that member states initiate the setting up of a dedicated PCVE strategic communications entity which could work closely with CSOs. This dedicated entity would have three primary functions, namely:

- to contest the rhetoric and agenda of the violent extremists by exposing their misinformation and disinformation;
- to produce counter/alternative narratives to win the hearts and minds of the people; and
- to develop a ‘whole-of-government’ and ‘whole-of-society’ approach when training for the development and dissemination of narrative-based end products.

Specifically, the strategic communications entity would focus on:

- studying and understanding the messages, nuances and strategies employed in violent extremist messaging;
- conceptualising and crafting specific counter/alternative concepts;
- developing online and offline counter/alternative end products;
- disseminating the counter/alternative narrative end products to various online and offline platforms; and
- multi-stakeholder training to participate in crafting and disseminating counter/alternative narratives.

⁸⁸ *Strategic Communications*, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/cct/strategic-communication> (Accessed on 11 December 2020).

Examples of strategic communications entities would include the Digital Strategic Communications Division (DSCD)⁸⁹ in Malaysia, the Sawab Centre⁹⁰ in the United Arab Emirates and the Global Engagement Center⁹¹ in the United States. As part of the whole-of-nation approach, CSOs involved in strategic communications could choose to work closely with such government entities to develop and enhance counter-messaging efforts, or even to provide constructive criticism.



The Role of CSOs in Strategic Communications

Strategic communications in this regard is all about reaching the community through various forms of messaging that would serve to curb sympathy, radicalisation, indoctrination, and recruitment into violent extremism. Given the vital role that CSOs play as gatekeepers to the community, their contribution in this particular area could make a significant impact in winning the 'hearts and minds' of the people. CSOs can potentially play an important role in:

- Understanding the messages, nuances, strategies and medium employed in violent extremist messaging;
- Developing appropriate counter and alternative narratives;
- Designing online and offline counter/alternative end-products;
- Disseminating counter-narrative products to online and offline platforms; and
- Training community leaders and key stakeholders to craft and disseminate counter/alternative narratives.

(i) Understanding the messages, nuances, strategies and medium employed in violent extremist messaging

In the rush to develop counter or alternative narratives, there is often a tendency to assume that firstly, we know the narrative of the violent extremist. This might not be the case. Also, the authorities might not be in a position to be aware of the content, context and tone of the violent extremist messaging that is disseminated to the community. Meanwhile, by virtue of being on the ground and working with the people, CSOs are in a prime position to:

- Identify the various violent extremist groups operating within the community;
- Identify the key ideologues/propagandist in those groups who are operating in the community;
- Identify the mediums that are being used to transmit and disseminate violent extremist narratives in the community; and
- Identify the narrative/message that is being pushed within the community.

⁸⁹ In 2016, Malaysia established the DSCD in the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT). The DSCD is aimed at addressing the threat of terrorist messaging, particularly on the digital platforms. Besides its focus on messaging, the DSCD is also involved in sensitising, training and equipping 'messengers' in Malaysia and in the region to both create and disseminate counter and alternative narratives.

⁹⁰ In July 2015, the United States and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) launched the **Sawab Center**, the first-ever multilingual online messaging and engagement initiative in support of the Global Coalition against *Daesh*. The centre utilises direct online engagement to counter violent extremist rhetoric. The Centre aspires to increase the intensity of online debates by presenting moderate voices from across the region and amplifying inclusive and constructive narratives. The Centre also intends to engage and expand the network of people willing to speak out against the propaganda of violent extremist groups.

⁹¹ **The Global Engagement Center**, established in 2016 and placed under the US State Department is in charge with coordinating U.S. counter-terrorism messaging to foreign audiences. Specifically, the Center aims to lead and coordinate efforts of the US Federal Government to recognise and counter foreign state/non-state actors propaganda efforts that seek to undermine the security of the United States and its allies. The Centre played a key role in the Obama Administration's revamped strategy to counter *Daesh* messaging. The Center uses modern, cutting-edge technology, employs expertise from both government and the private sector and is focused on partner-driven messaging and data analytics.

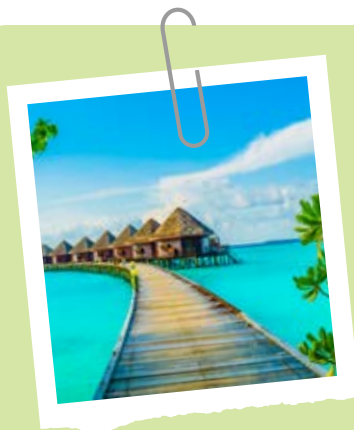
(ii) Developing appropriate counter and alternative narratives

After having gained an understanding of the narrative of the violent extremists, CSOs then could conceptualise and develop counter ⁹²/alternative ⁹³ narratives of their own. They would then need to determine the target audience of the counter/alternative narratives. By virtue of being embedded in a community, CSOs have the potential to have a thorough understanding of the people and that would go a long way in ensuring that the narratives being crafted resonate with the people.

At this juncture, CSOs would need to decide the kind of narrative that they seek to develop. Possible options would include emotional-based; logic-based; or hybrid-based (both emotional and logic based) counter/alternative narratives CSOs would also be in a better position to monitor and evaluate the counter/alternative messaging that is being disseminated and to subsequently ensure that it remains sensitive, relevant and effective.

(iii) Designing online and offline counter/alternative end products

After understanding the terrorist narrative and conceptualising our response, CSOs could then consider developing tangible and concrete online and offline counter/alternative narrative end products. These online and offline narratives would act as tools with the objective of creating 'mental firewalls' and winning hearts and minds.





Case study #1: Promoting positive alternative messages in Maldives



The Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) initiated In Other Words - a social media campaign to counter violent extremist narratives among young people in Maldives. Firstly, a series of focus group discussions were held with the civil society representatives to understand the violent extremist narratives in Maldives based on those narratives, discussions were held to craft counter narratives.

Subsequently, the participants attended a 'tech camp' in India to learn and develop their skills in designing and implementing an online campaign against violent extremism. This cumulative process resulted in 15 video messages over Facebook tackling issues that were being raised by violent extremists. This social media campaign was also successful in leading to several spin-off initiatives, including spreading the counter and alternative narratives through television, radio appearances and participation in a youth festival.

Examples of online and offline counter/alternative narrative end products:

Offline 	Online: 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Books and guides on counter/alternative narratives; ● PCVE-based songs for different age groups; ● Short modules to be included in the education syllabus at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels; ● Public Service Announcements (PSA) over traditional media on PCVE; and ● Comic books. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digitizing all the offline efforts; ● Digital memes, banners and posters; ● Podcasts; ● Animation and PCVE-based videos over social media platforms; ● Online games; ● Digital videos of testimonies of rehabilitated violent extremists; and ● Digital videos of the testimonies of survivors of violent extremism. It is also important to note that CSOs can seek help from various sources when carrying out these activities (e.g. the Hedayah counter-narrative library)

⁹² Counter-narratives would be a point-by-point debunking of the ideas and narrative that has been conveyed by violent extremists. It is both reactive and confrontational in nature.

⁹³ Alternative-narratives would be general ideas/themes/stories that speak about 'bigger' things in a positive manner. This would include subjects like the power of unity and the need for empathy and compassion.



Case study #2: The Hedayah Counter-Narrative Library

This online resource library provides content and materials on counter and alternative narratives for practitioners and civil societies working on preventing violent extremism. The library has a wide range of materials that include informative and emotional videos, articles about former extremists and survivors of terrorism, ideological and religious narratives, government campaigns and factual counter-narratives and alternatives to violence.

Narratives are available in multiple languages and users are also able to contribute new counter-narratives to the library, subject to the approval of the administrator. To access the library and ensure that the materials are not used for the wrong purposes, users are required to first register their particulars, after which they will be provided with a username and password.

(iv) Disseminating counter-narrative products to online and offline platforms 🔍

Once CSOs have understood extremist messaging and subsequently developed counter and alternative messaging, they then need to ascertain the best manner to disseminate such content. A possible starting point would be to identify the manner in which violent extremists have disseminated their narrative and for CSOs to follow suit.

Possible offline dissemination routes that CSOs could consider would include public awareness talks, lectures, forums, town halls and focus group discussions (to create awareness on counter/alternative narratives). Possible online dissemination routes that are available for CSOs would include digitizing offline routes (ie. lectures, forums, discussions, etc) and streaming them over digital platforms; blogs, video blogs (Vlogs⁹⁴) and Podcasts of YouTubers, social media influencers and local/international celebrities; webpages of the CSOs themselves; and messaging via mobile phones.



Case study #3: Targeting and Preventing Extremism for Youths (TAPESTRY) in Malaysia. 🔍

This initiative was aimed at encouraging youth participation in countering extremism and building resilience, through video production, specifically by using their mobile phones. Undergraduates from universities across Malaysia were briefed on how violent extremists were targeting, radicalising and recruiting in Malaysia. They were then exposed to various counter and alternative narratives available.

Utilising what they had learned, and using only their mobile phones and free software readily available on the Internet, the participants proceeded to create and disseminate digital narratives (e.g. digital banners, posters and memes) that they felt could impact their peers in Malaysian in a positive manner.

Besides the various conventional online and offline platforms, CSOs could also tap into other conduits to reach out to the people. Educational institutions (e.g. universities, high schools, and primary schools), religious institutions, faith-based organisation, and specific niche groups (e.g. mothers, village cooperatives, young people, etc.) play a prominent role in Malaysia and might have both the capacity and capability to reach and impact other Malaysians. Given their existing presence on the ground and the relationship they already have established with various segments of the population, it would be both significant and strategic to involve them in the dissemination process.

⁹⁴ Video blog or video log (vlog) is a form of a blog for which the medium is video via web television. Vlog entries often combine embedded video (or a video link) with supporting text, images, and other metadata.



Case study #4: Empowering Mothers in India and Pakistan Through Media



The organisation *Seeking Modern Applications for Real Transformation* (SMART) pioneered the 'Mothers on Air' podcast to broadcast stories of mothers from India and Pakistan who had been affected by conflict-related violence. SMART and its partners identified stories and experiences of mothers who had been impacted by acts of violent extremism. They then produced 30 stories for the *Mothers on Air* podcast, with 15 episodes from Kashmir and Kerala and 15 episodes from Pakistan.

The aim of these stories was to evoke an emotional response from the audience by sharing the pain and suffering those mothers experienced when their children became victims of terrorism and violent extremism or left home to join these groups. SMART envisioned that these stories would inspire other mothers to speak up against violent extremism occurring in their families and broader communities.

(v) Training community leaders and key stakeholders in crafting and disseminating counter/alternative narratives.

Effective PCVE efforts can no longer be confined only to select agencies such as the police, prisons department and intelligence entities. In realising that terrorist messaging plays a critical role in the radicalisation and recruitment pathways of violent extremists and the importance of strategic communications in PCVE, the authorities need to consider widening the scope and range of actors to actively involve CSOs.

At the national level, a whole-of-nation approach for strategic communications should then be considered, where stakeholders from the government, CSOs, communities, religious institutions, universities, think-tanks and the private sector are involved in crafting and disseminating counter and alternative narratives.



CHAPTER SEVEN

POSSIBLE INITIATIVES TO EXPLORE IN ADDRESSING DRIVERS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Introduction

Different strokes for different folks.

Hence, this chapter would look into two distinct areas that could serve as catalysts for Malaysian CSOs in the PCVE fields.

Firstly, to consider various case studies of PCVE programmes, projects and initiatives that have been implemented in different parts of the world. These are ‘hardcore’ PCVE initiatives and have been grouped under several thematic areas to include:

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PCVE & the youth ➤ Interfaith collaborations ➤ Raising awareness ➤ Peace and reconciliation ➤ Community engagement ➤ PCVE models ➤ Understanding the extremist narrative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PCVE & education ➤ Violent extremism among women ➤ Resolving conflict ➤ Resolving radicalisation ➤ Understanding radicalisation ➤ First responders & PCVE ➤ PCVE & social media |
|--|---|



Secondly, to study Malaysia's National Unity Policy and to consider novel ideas, initiatives and capacity building programmes that are focused on issues pertaining to national unity, social cohesion and resilience. These 'PCVE-lite' initiatives could be suitable for Malaysian NGOs that are not directly involved with PCVE but nevertheless play a vital and significant role in the health and well-being of the nation and its citizens.

PCVE Case Studies

PCVE & THE YOUTH



Case Study 1: The Youth4Youth Initiative (Aarhus, Denmark)

The initiative was conceptualised in 2003 to deal with the high crime rate among Somali youth in Aarhus. The activities were primarily sports-based and proved to be highly successful in reducing the crime rate among young Somalis in the community. Due to the project's success, the initiative was extended to include all young boys in the community regardless of ethnic backgrounds. Girls were subsequently included in this programme in 2006. In 2011, the initiative was extended from one local area to another three in the city. In 2015, the Youth4Youth initiative became part of the Youth Centre in Aarhus. Specifically, the Youth4Youth network is run by volunteers focusing to provide role models and generate positive change among young people in socially vulnerable areas. The initiative leverages on the potential of the community to create opportunities for its young people. The initiative is preventive by nature and focuses on targeting audiences from the ages of 8 to 15 years.⁹⁵



Case Study 2: The Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) and Hebat Youth Positive Expressions (HYPE) Campaign (Malaysia)

In 2019, SEARCCT launched a campaign, The *Hebat* Youth Positive Expressions (HYPE), a content creation campaign that aimed to encourage Malaysian youth to formulate creative community-based solutions in order to address potential drivers of radicalization such as intolerance and racial prejudice. The notion behind HYPE was essentially to provide Malaysian youth with a safe platform to explore their creativity in voicing out their opinions and solutions on relevant societal issues. The campaign kicked off with a video competition in which participants submitted videos based on the theme 'bringing communities closer together'. SEARCCT received overwhelming responses and the ten winning videos were subsequently showcased at the HYPE youth carnival.⁹⁶



⁹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/collection-inspiring-practices/ran-practices/youth4youth_en (accessed on 13 July 2022).

⁹⁶ <https://www.searcct.gov.my/en/projek/> (accessed on 7 July 2022).



Case Study 3: Youth and Police Dialogue (Nepal)

The Nepal Peacebuilding Initiative (NPI) initiated a project that focused on developing interaction and regular engagements between the Nepali police and young people (18 to 25 years old) in the Kailali district of Tarai. For this project, a series of dialogue sessions between the police and youth, as well as community activities were organised to help establish more significant channels of communication between the two entities with the aim of then reducing the risk of the youth getting involved in violent extremism. During the sessions and discussions, the young people shared their grievances, which included cases of discrimination and ill treatment by the police. The law-enforcement officials both listened to the grievances and subsequently acknowledged that their limited capacity and resources often times prevented them from adequately addressing the concerns of the community. On the practical side, the high-ranking police officers also provided their mobile numbers to the youth to enable the young people to contact them directly. In evaluating the dialogue sessions, many of the young participants expressed a more positive attitude towards the police and also felt that the sessions had enabled and empowered them to interact with the law enforcement officials, which was something they would not have considered before.⁹⁷



Case Study 4: Street Art Against Extremism (Nice, France)

This project involved the participation of 15 young people between the ages of 16 to 19 who were experiencing difficulties at school and at home. Facilitated by a teacher or a group leader, they were asked to discuss and come up with a public message and from that message create an original artwork on a wall in a public space. The values that the young people hoped to display through their artwork included tolerance, love, hope, resilience and the community. This project has tremendous potential to be scaled up in other parts of the country.⁹⁸



⁹⁷ Rafia Bhulai, *Going Local: Supporting Community-Based Initiatives to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism in South and Central Asia*, Global Center on Cooperative Security, December 2017. https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Going-Local_PCVE-in-South-and-Central-Asia.pdf (accessed on 7 July 2022).

⁹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/collection-inspiring-practices/ran-practices/street-art-against-extremism_en (accessed on 13 July 2022).



Case Study 5: Mobilising Youth Groups (Sri Lanka)

The Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (CPBR) developed a youth-based initiative to promote non-violent strategies for conflict transformation at the individual and community levels. Eight youth groups across four districts in Sri Lanka comprising 40 young people from diverse backgrounds and religions were involved in this project. These young community organisers were given the responsibility to design and implement youth-led programmes that focused on and promoted peace and non-violence. The youth groups subsequently organised exhibitions for dialogues to raise awareness with regards to conflict-related issues afflicting and affecting their respective communities. These exhibitions provided much-needed opportunity for members of the community, government officials, religious leaders and other stakeholders to understand and discuss issues that were deemed significant to the young people. These issues included war, poverty, sexual violence and environmental disasters. Following this initiative, these young people went on to use their newly acquired knowledge and skills they learned and experienced in mobilising their communities to spearhead other projects and programmes such as workshops on conflict transformation and reconciliation, youth camps, volunteer-mentoring projects and a mobile phone photography group.⁹⁹



PCVE & THE MEDIA

Case Study 1: #SenjataSaya (#MyWeapons) (Malaysia)



Under the Malaysian Voices Opposing Violent Extremism (MOVE) banner, SEARCCT launched its first ever media campaign called #SenjataSaya (Translation: #MyWeapons). In this campaign, SEARCCT worked with five local influencers to produce a series of audio and video Public Service Announcements (PSAs), which were then disseminated on SEARCCT's social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram as well as radio stations, namely, Suria FM, Rakita FM, and KK12FM. For this project, SEARCCT worked with an advertising agency to create and build the #SenjataSaya concept, which sought to redefine the word “weapon” into something more positive. The concept suggests that even ordinary citizens can be heroes as they have “weapons” that can be used to make a meaningful difference.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Rafia Bhulai, *Going Local: Supporting Community-Based Initiatives to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism in South and Central Asia*, Global Center on Cooperative Security, December 2017. https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Going-Local_PCVE-in-South-and-Central-Asia.pdf (accessed on 7 July 2022).

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.searcct.gov.my/en/kempen/> (accessed on 7 July 2022).



Case Study 2: Black Box Sounds (Pakistan)

Black Box Sounds (BBS) is the largest development-communication company in Pakistan specialising in productions aimed at social and developmental issues, behaviour change communication and mass awareness. Their work is primarily in the fields of education, health, childcare, women development, youth affairs, poverty alleviation and counter terrorism. BBS works with clients to produce documentaries, television and radio dramas, talk shows and animated videos. In the field of PCVE, BBS has been involved in both radio and television campaigns supporting initiatives to counter terrorist narratives and provide alternative narratives promoting peace and tolerance. For example, the *Think Twice Pakistan* (TTP) campaign was designed to provide a counterpoint against religious extremism and violence. It gave voice to the victims of terrorism, shifting the focus from the terrorists to the actual targets. Another initiative was *Karwa Sach* (The Bitter Truth), which was a series of fifteen real-life documentaries which interviewed families of victims of those who had died as a result of terrorist attacks. The idea behind this series was to showcase the aftermath of the lives of the survivors of terrorism, thereby allowing them to share their stories.¹⁰¹



Case Study 3: PCVE and the Radio (Malaysia)

Recognising the continued importance of radio in Malaysian society, SEARCCT teamed up with Suria FM to produce the *Bongkar!* Series, which culminated in the creation of eight webisodes episodes hosted by a talented and popular Suria FM Announcer. The visual episodes were aired for a total of 8 weeks on Suria FM's Facebook page. This project was mooted with the agreement that even though issues of terrorism and radicalisation should not be trivialised, there was still a need to repackage these complex issues into one that was more digestible for the Malaysian audience. Given that the radio station Suria FM's franchise was well-known for its entertainment value, it was agreed upon that the various visual episodes would encapsulate humorous elements as well as emotionally-charged themes, particularly with regard to family dynamics. The videos focused on both direct and indirect messages related to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), such as the importance of digital literacy, dangers of online anonymity on social media and gaming platforms and unity in diversity. The videos can be viewed on SEARCCT's website.¹⁰²

PCVE RESOURCES



Case Study 1: Extreme Dialogue



Extreme Dialogue is an initiative designed to provide young people with the tools that they need to challenge extremism in all its forms. They utilise a series of compelling films of those affected by terrorism to tell the story of how violence, exclusion and hate change lives. The free Extreme Dialogue films are designed to be delivered by teachers, facilitators or the youths themselves. The Extreme Dialogue website also provides training resources and detailed training guides for facilitators to use together with their films when conducting sessions with young people.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ <https://www.blackboxsounds.com/projects>

¹⁰² <https://www.searcct.gov.my/en/projek/> (accessed on 7 July 2022).

¹⁰³ <https://extremedialogue.org/> (accessed on 7 July 2022).

Case Study 2: PCVE and Fat Bidin (Malaysia)

Fat Bidin is an organisation that focuses on non-fiction multimedia content and strategy. Since 2000, Fat Bidin has been working on three distinct PCVE initiatives in Malaysia, namely three feature documentaries, two hyperlocal YouTube channels and mentoring collaborations with five news organisations. For the three feature documentaries, Fat Bidin selected three young directors and journalists to mentor in producing CVE content. The three documentaries that were produced were *Perempuan Radikal*, *Oretulo* and *Dari Laut*. Fat Bidin has partnered up with Astro AWANI to broadcast the three documentaries (Perempuan Radikal has already been broadcast). Once all three films have been completed and broadcast, it will also be brought on a roadshow to be screened around Malaysia. Two hyperlocal YouTube channels have also been created to serve the Kelantan (Hok Kelate) and Sabah (Di Bawah Bayu) communities. Along with the YouTube channels, Fat Bidin trained five local YouTubers to produce the content and manage the channels. Under the mentoring initiative, Fat Bidin, along with five news organisations, worked with one specific journalist from each of the news organisations to produce one special report that is PCVE-themed. The special reports will then be published on the respective news organisations platforms.¹⁰⁴

Case Study 3: The Hedayah Counter-Narrative Library

The Hedayah Counter-Narrative Library is a database tool that provides information, content and materials to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and practitioners working in the alternative and counter-narrative space. The library has a broad spectrum of counter-narratives displayed through informative and emotional videos, articles, blog posts, government campaigns, social media campaigns, comic books, documentaries, books, websites, TV series, cinema and art productions, interviews, events, radio broadcasts, and podcasts. Counter-narratives often include stories of former foreign fighters and extremists, victims of extremism, and families affected. The videos are available in multiple languages. At present, the Library contains several collections, including regional collections on Southeast Asia, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), East Africa, and two thematic collections on Daesh Defectors and the Radical Right. Users are required to register to access the content in the Counter-Narrative Library.¹⁰⁵

Case Study 4: Curbing Ideologies of Violent Extremism Through Comics and Technology, CIVETCAT (Malaysia)

There is a need to employ a variety of means to counter the proliferation of violent extremist ideologies in both the virtual and non-virtual spaces. Based on this premise, SEARCCT worked together with established Malaysian comic artists to produce twelve PCVE-based comics. Comics are an effective medium, particularly because it is a visual medium that allows complex ideas to be broken down to easily consumable images. Also, comics are believed to be fairly popular among the target demographic of vulnerable groups, the readers being between 17 and 30 years of age. The resulting comics were disseminated online as well as utilised as resources in SEARCCT's outreach programmes.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Communications with Mr. Zan Azlee, founder of Fat Bidin.

¹⁰⁵ <https://hedayah.com/resources/counter-narrative-library/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.searcct.gov.my/en/projek/> (accessed on 7 July 2022).



INTER-FAITH COLLABORATIONS

Case Study 1: Peace Station (Thailand)



Buddhists for Peace, an organisation in southern Thailand hosts *Peace Station*, a weekly radio program that attempts to demystify ethno-religious differences and debunk negative stereotypes. Buddhist and Muslim guests are invited to examine controversial topics that concern both communities, including the construction of safe public spaces, access to justice, cross-cultural activities, the role of youth in the ongoing peace process, and the notion of living in a pluralistic society. This has helped foster constructive dialogue. Excursions and study trips have also helped to re-establish relationships among members of the older generations, while fostering newer bonds between younger participants from diverse backgrounds. Interviewees of the radio station emphasized that their role is not only to focus on cases of extreme violence, but also to prevent violence before it takes place.¹⁰⁷

Case Study 2: Shoulder to Shoulder: Inter-Faith Action Against Xenophobia and Hate Speech (Finland)



Shoulder-to-Shoulder is an inter-faith collaboration model for generating grass-root, local-level collaboration between communities of various faiths on local issues in Finland. Often times, religious communities or religious places of worship can become the target of violent extremists, hate speech and hate crime. The Finn Church Aid (FCA) working with religious communities, facilitated and developed interventions which faith communities could employ to support each other when threatened by the ideologies of violent extremism. Specifically, the model provides tools that promote inter-faith collaboration. For example, in 2016, the FCA facilitated connections between local congregations and Islamic communities as well as inter-faith collaborations that increased contact and understanding between the different faith groups. The success of these programmes even led to both the faith groups eventually carrying out initiatives of their own accord at the local level.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ *Prevention from Below: Civil society efforts to prevent violent extremism in Southeast Asia Report*, The Asia Foundation, October 2020. https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Prevention-from-Below-Civil-Society-Efforts-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism-in-Southeast-Asia_full-report.pdf (accessed on 28 June 2022).

¹⁰⁸ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/collection-inspiring-practices/ran-practices/shoulder-shoulder-inter-faith-action-against-xenophobia-and-hate-speech_en (accessed on 13 July 2022).

RAISING AWARENESS

Case Study 1: Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG), Singapore

The RRG is a voluntary group consisting of individual ulama and a community of *asatizah* (Islamic scholars and teachers) in Singapore. The RRG's mission is to correct the misinterpretation of Islamic concepts and dispel extremist and terrorist ideologies. Besides its primary counselling and rehabilitation work, the RRG is involved in building social resilience in the community through its outreach programmes. The RRG has also published information booklets to counter the terrorist and extremist interpretations of Islamic concepts. Examples of such publications include *The Syrian Conflict and The Fallacies of the Islamic Caliphate: A Brief Explanation*. The RRG also reaches out to schools and madrasahs (religious schools) as part of its community engagement initiatives. These initiatives include mosques as partners where clerics from the RRG conduct Friday pre-/post-sermon talks to the congregation focusing on issues related to the threat of extremism; ethics and the Internet; role of parents; search for knowledge and values in living in a multi-racial and multi-religious society. Through its Resource and Counselling Centre, it serves members of the public who wish to seek clarification on radical ideology and violent extremism as well as provide counselling services. The RRG religious counsellors are available at the Centre to provide counselling service and advice on matters related to countering radicalism.¹⁰⁹

Case Study 2: Community-based Paralegal Training (Sabah, Malaysia)

In the Malaysian state of Sabah, former migrants from the Philippines remain formally illegal and do not have identity cards. CSO interventions with former migrants and other marginalized communities have been based on the premise that their status within Malaysian society increases their susceptibility to violent extremist ideologies and limits the scope of government agencies to respond. In this regard, one approach provides community-based paralegal training on residents' rights under the legal system of Malaysia. The community-based paralegals inform people of their rights and help with problems of local justice. Paralegals are also directly involved in community education. They teach communities about the mechanisms for protecting and exercising their rights, and familiarize village leaders with formal processes like obtaining marriage licences or proper documentation for obtaining citizenship so that they can train others.¹¹⁰

Case Study 3: Raising awareness and PCVE (Tajikistan)

Javononi Peshsaf, an NGO, initiated a project to raise awareness about violent extremism and to prevent and counter violent extremism among the various stakeholders in the city of Panjakent in Tajikistan. Stakeholders included religious leaders, law-enforcement officials, women, students and teachers. *Javononi Peshsaf* started the project by firstly meeting with the authorities to inform and discuss with them the initiatives, objectives and goals. They then signed a memorandum of cooperation with the local municipality to carry out the various programmes. The initiative involved a series of informational campaigns for approximately 300 students and 25 teachers in high schools across 7 villages. They undertook this project because they felt that many students in Tajikistan graduated with few chances to land a job and as a result migrated to Russia to seek employment. It was discovered that when those individuals did not get jobs in Russia, they were disillusioned and susceptible to Islamic State (IS) recruitment. The purpose of the initiative was then to create awareness among the students nearing graduation on the dangers and consequences of violent extremism, including the possible legal and punitive action taken by the law-enforcement authorities.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ The Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG), Singapore. <https://www.rrg.sg/> (accessed on 28 June 2022).

¹¹⁰ *Prevention from Below: Civil society efforts to prevent violent extremism in Southeast Asia Report*, The Asia Foundation, October 2020. https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Prevention-from-Below-Civil-Society-Efforts-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism-in-Southeast-Asia_full-report.pdf (accessed on 28 June 2022).

¹¹¹ Rafia Bhulai, *Going Local: Supporting Community-Based Initiatives to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism in South and Central Asia*, Global Center on Cooperative Security, December 2017. https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Going-Local_PCVE-in-South-and-Central-Asia.pdf (accessed on 13 July 2022).

Case Study 4: National Ulama Conference (Philippines)

In the Philippines, religious bodies and figures take the lead in countering violent extremism. The National Ulama Conference of the Philippines, for example, is a network of Islamic leaders who work to prevent violent extremism through weekly religious sermons and by creating carefully crafted and field-tested materials that they subsequently distribute to religious leaders across the country. These resources are also complemented by materials developed by education experts for religious schools. The ulama particularly emphasize disseminating messages in schools and mosques located in “hot spots” across the southern Philippines, such as Basilan and Cotabato.¹¹²

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Case Study 1: IMAN Research and vulnerable communities (Malaysia)

IMAN Research Berhad (IMAN Research) is a not-for-profit research house that looks at community resilience in PCVE in Malaysia. IMAN’s recent research projects focusing on migrant and refugee communities in Malaysia include ‘*Trauma-care education for social workers working for Rohingya refugee communities in Malaysia*’ and ‘*Mental Health Intervention and Training focused on Patani migrant communities in Malaysia*’. The first study aimed to identify the risk of radicalisation among the Rohingya refugee community in Malaysia. The research concluded that the community had a low risk of radicalisation despite being psychologically and emotionally distressed. Subsequently, IMAN conducted trauma-care education for social workers to educate them as first responders for the Rohingya refugee community in Malaysia. The second study focused on Patani migrant communities in Malaysia and sought to shed light on their migration to Malaysia and how it affected their mental health. The study showed that the community had a higher prevalence rate for mental health issues which was akin to general data collected among refugee communities. Subsequently, IMAN then designed a mental health intervention for Patani communities in Kelantan as well as mental health training for social workers working with Patani communities in Malaysia.¹¹³

Case Study 2: Center for Human Rights and Community Security (Pusat ASASI) (Sabah, Malaysia)

Pusat ASASI works to address disenfranchised communities in Sabah, Malaysia on peace building and PCVE. Specifically, it focuses its attention on four issues, namely: (i) The lack of effective engagement between communities and the authorities to resolve grievances, particularly affecting those in Eastern Sabah; (ii) Disenfranchisement of the migrant and stateless communities, with particular attention on youths; (iii) The lack of nation-building initiatives and efforts to include and empower the young people; and (iv) Developing youths as influencers and building their leadership skills to reach out to their fellow peers, particularly in promoting shared values and countering extremists narratives. In line with this, Pusat ASASI has been working on ‘building bridges’ and ‘connecting’ security agencies in Sabah with disenfranchised communities, focusing on peace and community security at local levels. Through workshops on peace building and counter messaging, they have created conversation on sensitive socio-political issues with all stakeholders to address both the trigger and entry points of radicalisation and recruitment.¹¹⁴

¹¹² *Prevention from Below: Civil society efforts to prevent violent extremism in Southeast Asia Report*, The Asia Foundation, October 2020. https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Prevention-from-Below-Civil-Society-Efforts-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism-in-Southeast-Asia_full-report.pdf (accessed on 28 June 2022).

¹¹³ Communications with Ms. Dina Zaman (IMAN Research) on 1 July 2022.

¹¹⁴ Communications with Mr. K. Shan (Pusat ASASI) on 2 July 2022.

Case Study 3: Rethinking Radicalisation: Community Dialogue (UK)



A tailored programme of activities held in safe, neutral spaces for the local authorities and the communities they serve to engage and dialogue on the issue of radicalisation. The Community Dialogue initiative increases awareness on the issue of radicalisation while providing a carefully cultivated space for the constructive airing of grievances. The aim of this endeavour is to localise the solutions to controversial issues that drive radicalisation and also the national strategies designed to prevent it. The programme also aspires to train 'community champions' that could advocate within the communities to find solutions against violent extremism. The programme is facilitated by the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Foundation which was founded by in 1995 by Colin and Wendy Parry, who lost their 12-year old son, Tim Parry in the 1993 Warrington bomb attack perpetrated by the Provisional Irish Republican Army.¹¹⁵

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Case Study 1: The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (Ireland)



The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation acts to provide people from diverse backgrounds with a space to tell their stories, through a facilitated dialogue process. For example, the centre invites former members of paramilitary organisations or youth at risk of becoming involved in violent extremism for their programmes. These initiatives encourage the participants to reflect on their own personal journeys particularly focusing on what were their reasons for getting involved in violent extremism, the impact it has had on their lives and on the lives of others. The facilitators create a safe space for such a dialogue and also question and challenge the assumptions on the legitimacy of violence. Through this process of stressing on the human experience and attempting to move beyond the hurts of the past, the facilitators from the centre hope to introduce the potential for human and community transformation. This process facilitated by the centre helps to prevent the youth in the community from connecting and engaging with violent extremist groups. Former extremists are also able to feel a greater sense of integration and usefulness within communities. At the same time, such activities allow those not at risk within the community, an opportunity to see the complexities of the radicalisation process and subsequently how they can play a significant and positive role. This process also has the possibility of offering hope to survivors and victims of extremism who would like to regain their ability to be active and contribute towards fighting extremism and simultaneously shaping their communities.¹¹⁶

PCVE & EDUCATION



Case Study 1: Training female teachers (Bangladesh)



Realising the significant and important role that women play in countering violent extremism in the community, the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) initiated and facilitated a series of capacity-building programmes for secondary school female teachers in Bangladesh. The teachers were trained on how to effectively guide students and their respective families in discussions that centred on tolerance and diversity, interfaith communication, identifying warnings signs of radicalisation and reaching and engaging at-risk young people. The BEI concluded that training and empowering female teachers in the community to disseminate values of pluralism, diversity, tolerance and human rights to students and their families had significant effects in strengthening the communities' resilience and social cohesion against violent extremism.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/aug/31/colin-and-wendy-parry-parents-of-warrington-bombing-victim-we-dont-want-to-know-who-did-it> (accessed on 13 July 2022).

¹¹⁶ <https://glencree.ie/> (accessed on 13 July 2022).

¹¹⁷ Rafia Bhulai, *Going Local: Supporting Community-Based Initiatives to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism in South and Central Asia*, Global Center on Cooperative Security, December 2017. https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Going-Local_PCVE-in-South-and-Central-Asia.pdf (accessed on 7 July 2022).

PCVE-Related Initiatives

PCVE-*Lite* initiatives refer to programmes that focus on general themes such as unity, social cohesion and resilience, which in turn plays a significant role in issues related to violent extremism.



National Unity, Social Cohesion and Resilience

Malaysia’s National Unity Policy

The Malaysian principle of unity is based on the premise of ‘unity in diversity’. In the eyes of the government, the peace and stability that Malaysia has at present is simply ‘social cohesion’ while the final goal for Malaysia would be complete ‘unity’. Hence, the objective from their perspective is to move from ‘social cohesion’ to the end-goal of ‘unity’.

The National Unity Policy is a long-term policy paper that envisions the unity of Malaysia. The strategies formulated in this policy is supported by the National Unity Blueprint (2021 – 2030) which underpins the national unity vision. The National Unity Action Plan (2021 – 2025) subsequently translates the National Unity Blueprint into clear national unity objectives, goals and policies for the short, mid and long-term encompassing the government, private sector, NGOs and civil society.

The National Unity Policy has three main objectives.

Firstly , to build and strengthen unity and national integration based upon the federal constitution and the <i>Rukun Negara</i> .	Secondly , to forge a national identity based on the core values of patriotism, care and concern, tolerance, mutual respect and a shared sense of responsibility.	Thirdly , to nurture and develop a Malaysian society that appreciates and practises unity.
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To achieve the objectives of the National Unity Policy, three thrusts were envisioned, namely:

- (i) Patriotism and democracy
- (ii) National identity
- (iii) A unity-based ecosystem

Each of these thrusts’ have specific strategies outlined to ensure that it is achieved.



National Unity Policy of Malaysia

Thrust One: Patriotism and democracy	Thrust Two: National identity	Thrust Three: A unity-based ecosystem
Strategy #1:	Strategy #4:	Strategy #7:
To increase and enhance the understanding and appreciation of the federal constitution and the pledge of allegiance and to ensure that it becomes the central foundation for unity in Malaysia.	To strengthen the role of language as a medium of integration and unity.	To enhance the effectiveness of communication with the intention of increasing social awareness within a community.
Strategy #2:	Strategy #5:	Strategy #8:
To increase and enhance the understanding and appreciation of the Malaysian history.	To enhance the religious, cultural and societal norms of the various ethnicities.	To maintain, build and strengthen the foundations of unity.
Strategy #3:	Strategy #6:	Strategy #9:
Strengthen national integrity.	To mould and shape a society that has character, integrity and values.	To strengthen the role of the authorities in forging unity through strategic cooperation.
		Strategy #10:
		To build and strengthen the institutions of the family and society.
		Strategy #11:
		To enhance law enforcement and the effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms.
		Strategy #12:
		To strengthen the role of leaders as catalysts for unity.



Possible Initiatives Focusing on National Unity, Social Cohesion and Resilience

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #1: *Building MalaYsian ConnectionZ (BMyCoZ)*

This initiative seeks not just to teach about the various ethnicities and races but also connect the various ethnicities and races in Malaysia.

For example, instead of teaching about the Dayaks in Sarawak, the initiative would seek to connect Sarawakian school children of the Dayak heritage to other school children of various ethnicities from all over Malaysia. The schoolchildren from the Sikh community are given a platform to present their culture and heritage to other school children from all over Malaysia. The school children of the Bajau Laut heritage in Sabah are given the opportunity to showcase their unique way of life to other students all over Malaysia.

In this way, school children are not just learning facts and information about another race or culture but are actually connecting and forming friendships with those from that particular race or culture. Also, in this way, the young people from the various ethnicities are empowered and given the opportunity to share with their peers and subsequently take pride in their own culture and heritage.

While there are issues of digital divide and internet connectivity, given that the authorities are currently investing heavily in this area, this particular effort of 'connecting and learning' has the potential to revolutionise not just the way we learn and teach, but in also connecting and building relationships between races and ethnicities in Malaysia.

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #2: *REdiscovering the RUKun Negara (ReRuN)*

The *Rukun Negara* is recited by students all over Malaysia. However, translating a set of principles into something more tangible into the lives of the students is imperative if we intend to make a lasting impact.

In this regard, the *Kelab Rukun Negara* under the *Jabatan Perpaduan Negara dan Integrasi Nasional* (JPNIN) would be a strategic starting

point to instil the principles of the *Rukun Negara* in young Malaysian minds.

However, efforts in this particular area must be undertaken to ensure that the *Rukun Negara* is viewed and presented in an interesting, exciting and more importantly youth-based manner. Among these *Rukun Negara* based activities for Malaysian students could include:

▶ Organising poetry slams;

▶ 3D mural paintings in different parts of the locality where the school children live;

▶ *Deklamasi* (recitation) *sajak*, *syair*, *pantun* on the subject of *Rukun Negara* held 'live' and on-line over social media with school children from different parts of the Malaysia voting for their 'winner';

▶ Incorporating dance or using interpretive dance to tell the story of the *Rukun Negara*;

▶ Sketch competitions involving local celebrities on the subject of the *Rukun Negara*;

▶ Short movie competitions;

▶ Anime drawing competitions;

▶ Living 'History Projects', where school children conduct interviews with well-known personalities who were involved/are involved with nation-building;

▶ Reality-based singing competitions on the theme of national unity;

▶ A virtual conference involving selected school children from all over Malaysia giving them a platform to speak out on what the *Rukun Negara* means to them; and

▶ Local celebrities and students making short video clips on what the *Rukun Negara* means to them.



Unity@Malaysia Interventions #3: *The Rukun Negara @ August Initiative (Rukun Negara@August)*

During the month of August (which coincides with the Malaysian independence on 31st August), government institutions, private business, educational institutions, entertainment outlets and sports venues organise the singing of the national anthem and recitation of the *Rukun Negara*.

For example, government and private entities will make the voluntary initiative of singing the national anthem and reciting the *Rukun Negara* once every week in the month of August; cinemas and theatres would encourage their patrons to sing the national anthem and recite the *Rukun Negara* during every movie screening on 31st August, spectators in stadiums for sporting events or concerts would commence their games and concerts after singing

the national anthem and reciting the *Rukun Negara* in the month of August, both government and private tertiary institutions of higher learning would be encouraged to organise events where the students would raise the Malaysian flag, sing the national anthem and recite the *Rukun Negara* on a certain day of the week during the whole month of August.

This could also involve inviting the presence of those who were involved in nation building then or now. The idea here would be to reintroduce and reignite patriotism in the hearts and minds of Malaysians by singing the national anthem, raising the Malaysian flag (whenever possible) and reciting the *Rukun Negara* in the month of August.

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #4: *RE-Xploring - FEDeral CONStitution (Rex-FedCon)*

An excellent starting point on rediscovering the federal constitution would be the book titled '*Document of Destiny: The Constitution of the Federation of Malaysia*' written by Datuk Shad Saleem Faruqi.

The Ministry of Education could consider this book as reading material for compulsory courses such as '*Tamadun Islam dan Tamadun Asia (TITAS)*', '*Hubungan Etnik (Ethnic Relations)*' and '*Malaysian Studies*' in institutions of higher learning. The book could also be adapted to suit primary school children by making it into the form of comics.



Unity@Malaysia Interventions #5: Guardians of the MALaysian Digital Space (G-MaDS)

An initiative that trains individuals and communities in Malaysia to generate and disseminate positive and encouraging content with regards to the issue of unity, social cohesion and resilience.

They would also be trained to flag prejudiced or bigoted content over social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tik Tok and Instagram as well as know the correct authorities to report such materials. The trainings in the form of simple modules could be provided virtually to societies and clubs in schools such as the Kelab Rukun Negara.



Unity@Malaysia Interventions #6: HIStory-LIVES! (MyHis MalaYsian – Lives!)

An initiative that involves Malaysian students identifying and interviewing Malaysian individuals who have been involved in significant events that shaped the country.

For example, the initiative would get the students to interview Malaysian farmers, fishermen, railway workers, activists, writers, journalists, politicians, soldiers, police officers, sports men and women, public servants, estate workers, tin miners, housewives, business people who lived or played a pivotal role during:

The Japanese occupation of Malaya (1941-1945);

Pre-independence (before 1957);

First Emergency (1948 – 1960);

Second Malayan Emergency (1968 – 1989);

Confrontation with Indonesia (1963 – 1966); Formation of Malaysia (1963); and

The racial riots (May 1969).

The purpose of this initiative is to recognise the contribution of the various races, communities and ethnicities in developing Malaysia to become what it is today and to reflect over the collective effort that it took from all of us to make Malaysia a success story.

In addition to that, identifying and interviewing people who lived during those pivotal moments of Malaysian history could make history more relevant and possibly 'come alive' to young Malaysians as opposed to the traditional method of facts being conveyed by the teacher to the student.



Unity@Malaysia Interventions #7: Agree 2 Disagree Initiative (A2D Initiative)

This is an initiative that teaches young people on how to disagree without being disagreeable. It is based on the premise of respecting another's view even when one might oppose such a view. Students are taught on:

- How to voice out their own views and concerns;
- Listen respectfully to views that they might oppose or disagree with; and
- Agree to disagree while still respecting each other's views and remaining friends.

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #8: Malaysian Young Citizen JournalistS (MyYoungCJs)

Training the Malaysian Digital Journalist is an initiative to teach young people on how to report, analyse and disseminate news content in a manner that is constructive and impactful in fostering unity in Malaysia.

Through on-line teaching modules, young people will be taught by journalists, storytellers and media personnel on ways to report and craft stories in a way that is not condescending yet able to bring about positive change.

Focus would be on reporting issues that instil unity, build resilience and develop social cohesion. This would also act to empower youths and make them a partner in developing unity, social cohesion and resilience in Malaysia.



Unity@Malaysia Interventions #9: Malaysian Tolerance (MyT): “NOT BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO, BUT BECAUSE YOU WANT TO”

This initiative aims to teach the following principles at different levels, namely:

- Primary level: (i) Tolerance is a compromise that you willingly make for a ‘family member’ that you love and respect; and (ii) Malaysia is one big family.
- Secondary level: (i) Living together means making compromises and; (ii) Compromises are necessary for a harmonious and peaceful relationship.
- Tertiary level: (i) Case studies in history where tolerance and compromise led to strength; and (ii) Case studies in history where countries collapsed when tolerance and compromise was ignored and abandoned.



Unity@Malaysia Interventions #10: “Sounds of Malaysia”

Given that Malaysia is a melting pot of various cultures and races, this initiative would showcase the rich heritage of Malaysian musical instruments. Examples of such musical instruments would be the *serunai* (traditional Malay wind musical instrument), *bebendil* (used in traditional performances in Sabah), *rebana* (Malays traditional drum), *seruling* (traditional bamboo flute), *gendang* (used in traditional Malay performances), *gambus* (traditional Malay stringed instrument), *angklung* (traditional bamboo musical instrument), *canang* (Malay traditional musical instrument), *dizi* (a traditional Chinese flute), *dhol* (double-sided Indian barrel drum), *kompang* (traditional Malay small

drum), *tabla* (Indian twin hand drums), *erhu* (two-stringed Chinese vertical fiddle), *sape* (traditional lute found in Sarawak) and *sitar* (plucked Indian stringed instrument).

The idea would be to introduce such instruments in schools and higher institutions of learning for Malaysians of all races to learn and take pride in each other’s musical culture and heritage. This could also culminate to forming Malaysian Orchestras at the school, state and national levels using such musical instruments traditionally played by the various races and ethnicities in Malaysia.

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #11: *Cartoon, animations and dramas in the Malay Language*

Children learn when they are interested and excited about the subject matter. In this regard, developing cartoons and animations in the Malay language (such as the hugely popular *Upin and Ipin* series) as well as translating English cartoon and animations into the Malay language would be a creative and productive way in getting young Malaysians to grow to their love for the national language.

Similarly, developing television Malay serial drama shows (as witnessed by the popularity of Korean drama shows in Malaysia), that cater to all Malaysians would go a long way in increasing the command of the people in the national language. In short, creative ways are needed to get people of all ages in Malaysia to develop a love for the national language.

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #12: *'Jom: Share My Space – MalaYsia' (JOM: SMS-My)*

This is an initiative that connects students of various ages with their peers of other ethnicities in various parts of Malaysia through digital platforms.

This e-penpal concept seek to introduce young Malaysians to other young Malaysians of various ethnicities through the various social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Whats App, etc.

The Ministry of National Unity, with the help on the Ministry of Education, would mix-and-match students of various ethnicities to allow them the chance to learn, discover and experience life through the lenses of another race, culture and religion via cyber platforms.



Unity@Malaysia Interventions #13: *Building MalaYsian Parenting Skills (BMyPaSS)*

Parents are expected to teach and nurture their children to be effective citizens of Malaysia but do they have the necessary skills and knowledge to do so and can it be enhanced?

In this regard, the Ministry of National Unity could consider working with NGOs, civil society and religious institutions to develop modules and guides that builds the skills and knowledge of parents to be better able to understand, reach out and influence their children with the aim of not only making them better parents, but also instilling values, character and a love for Malaysia to their children.

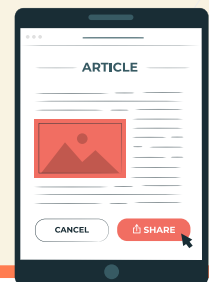
Specific areas to focus on would be: (i) Effective communication and listening skills with your children; (ii) Leadership by example (parents setting good examples for their children); (iii) Being kind and respectful to one another (not just in the family setting but also beyond the home); (iv) Appreciating one another; (v) Being responsible citizens; and (vi) Being a blessing to fellow Malaysians.

These guides could be developed in multiple languages and made available online. Training modules for trainers could also be developed and disseminated to ensure that there is a capable front-line that can deliver these interventions to the parents. These trainers would come from NGOs, civil society, religious leaders and use all available platforms to reach out to Malaysian parents. The idea here would be to equip Malaysian parents to impact their children in a positive and significant way.

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #14: BUILD MalaYsian DIGital LITeracy (BuildMyDigLit)

There are numerous guides and modules readily available that could be adapted to suit the Malaysian need to enhance digital literacy. Such guides include:

- (i) **Digital Literacy Classes** by Microsoft is a free programme that aims to enhance the ability to find, navigate, evaluate and communicate effectively in the digital realm using reading, writing, technical skills and critical thinking.
- (ii) **Media Information Literacy for Teachers by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)** seeks to create awareness on: (i) the functions of the media, libraries, archives, and other information providers in democratic societies; (ii) the conditions under which news media and information providers can effectively perform these functions; and (iii) how to evaluate the performances of these functions by assessing the contents and services they offer. The purpose of this module would be to equip citizens with “critical thinking skills enabling them to demand high-quality services form media and other information providers”.
- (iii) **Countering Online Misinformation Resource Pack** by UNICEF provides access to various types of resources (tools, reports, toolkits, journal articles, etc.) that can support the development of tactics and plans to counter misinformation. The pack also provides a summary of what the research indicates as potential solutions to tackle misinformation. The pack also includes specific ways to counter misinformation during this current pandemic.
- (vi) **Journalism, ‘Fake News’ and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training** is a guide by UNESCO specifically for journalists. This handbook explores the nature of journalism with modules on why trust matters; thinking critically about how digital technology and social platform are conduits of the information disorder; fighting against disinformation and misinformation through media and information literacy; fact-checking 101, social media verification and combatting online abuse.



Unity@Malaysia Interventions #15: Building MalaYsian COMMunity and RELigious Mediators (B-MyComReM)

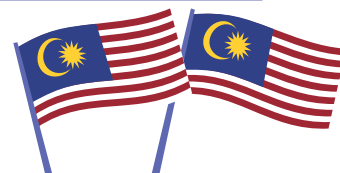
There is tremendous human capital in Malaysia among community and religious leaders that could be tapped, particularly when it comes to mediation and conflict resolution. Hence, this initiative would seek to:

- Build a module and guide for mediation;
- Identify community and religious leaders to participate in this programme;
- Train these community and religious leaders in mediation and conflict resolution;
- Highlight their availability and disseminate information with regards to their services to the public; and
- Provide these community and religious mediators with continuous training and support.

Given that conflicts can be localised in nature and that those needing such help might not be able to afford professional assistance; the idea here would then be to identify and train individuals within the community itself who have the ability, credibility and trust to reach out to others through their expertise in mediation and conflict resolution.

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #16: *National Unity Integration Week*

A school exchange programme where children from national schools spend a week in national type-schools and vice-versa. Something similar could be conducted among teachers, where specialist teachers from national schools would spend a period of time in national-type schools and vice-versa. The objective would not only be to learn and appreciate the different school cultures but to also build friendships and relationships between students and teachers from the two different types of schools from an early age.



Unity@Malaysia Interventions #17: *Reinvigorating the Rukun Tetangga: My Home = My Neighbourhood (MyH=MyN)*

This initiative aims to get residents to 'take back' the responsibility not just in watching over the security of their neighbourhood but also in building unity at the community level. This initiative envisions that the local town/district council, Member of Parliament, various religious leaders in the neighbourhood, police officers from the nearest police station in the particular neighbourhood and the Ministry of National Unity cooperate and collaborate in reinvigorating the *Rukun Tetangga*.

The Ministry of National Unity could draw up programmes and activities that focus on utilising the neighbourhood facilities and spaces to instil unity. For example, residents could volunteer to provide health talks and aerobics/dancing classes to the elderly, the police could schedule safety talks, religious leaders could organise unity games where participants of each team consist of members from different faiths and beliefs, young adults could take the initiative to provide transportation for the vaccination of the elderly in the neighbourhood, residents could celebrate special occasions such as Independence day (31st August) and Malaysia Day (16th September) by raising the Malaysian flag, singing the national anthem and reciting the *Rukun Negara*.

The emphasis would be to look beyond your immediate home and to instead consider the wider neighbourhood as your new extended home. The aim would be to use the community as a platform to come into contact, learn and appreciate one another, regardless of one's race, culture or religion.

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #18: ***Building the Family Unit: Training the Trainers (ToT)***

There is a spectrum of expertise and skills among civil society, religious institutions, and residents associations when it comes to training individuals in building a stronger family unit. This being the case, the first thing to do would be to develop a simple module that would encompass the fundamentals of building a resilient family unit.

This module, after being pilot tested and undergoing the necessary evaluations and amendments could be the basis of the training programme on strengthening the family unit. Subsequent modules addressing more complicated and challenging issues pertinent to the family unit would then be designed and developed.

The modules would serve as the basic text for the next stage of training the trainers. To reduce cost and reach the widest coverage possible, the trainings could be developed online.

The subsequent step would be to identify potential trainers among the NGOs, religious institutions,

academic institutions, residents associations and civil society.

It is important to note that these modules and trainers would act to provide preliminary and basic awareness and education on strengthening family units. They would be akin to those who have been trained in first aid dispensing assistance as first responders until better or more comprehensive care is available.

Their role is not to take over counsellors, psychologists or professional mental care workers but rather to provide the initial assistance during first contact to those who would otherwise, have been deprived of any care what-so-ever.

Training these 'first responders' within the community to reach out to parents and help them in enhancing their roles would be a vital step in ensuring that the parents are better equipped to address the needs of their children.

Unity@Malaysia Interventions #19: ***Bringing in the Malaysian Champions (B.My.Champ)***



This initiative will focus on bringing in 'champions of unity' to speak to leaders and advocate for unity. In most cases, leaders are not lacking with regards to theoretical knowledge on the importance of national unity but rather, due to various considerations, might have to place other interests ahead of national unity.

This initiative seeks to inspire our leaders by getting them to listen and be inspired by 'champions of unity', with the hope that they would then be able to look beyond their own narrow interests and agenda and to instead give unity the rightful priority it deserves. Hence, this programme would seek to gather such inspirational leaders and visionaries and get them to present their ideas to our current leaders at the village, community, institutional, state, national and parliamentary levels.

Examples of such leaders would include Datuk Mohammad Nor bin Mohammad Khalid (commonly known as Lat), Datuk Lee Chong Wei (former Malaysian badminton player) and Datuk Nicol David (former Malaysian squash player).



CONCLUSION

CSOs in Malaysia play a significant and vital role in the well-being of this country. Their role and impact are often not fully recognised but by no means does that diminish their significance and value. In this regard, while the authorities play the leading role in PCVE in Malaysia, CSOs nevertheless are strategic and important stakeholders in this process. With their nimbleness and organisational agility, formidable presence on the ground and diverse set of talents, CSOs can go places and reach into communities in a way that few other entities can match. It is in this context that the argument is being made for CSOs for them consider contributing more extensively into the field of PCVE.

Hence, there is a need for policy makers and law-enforcement authorities in Malaysia to have a better grasp and understanding of the work that CSOs are doing on the ground. Equally important, CSOs in Malaysia should be aware of the challenges and complexities faced by the authorities when dealing with violent extremism. In this regard, there is potential to explore collaboration, cooperation and coordination (if agreed by both parties) to reach out to the community in PCVE efforts. It must be stressed that the call is not for CSOs to leave the important work that they are presently doing, but rather to play a role (the extent of which would be determined by them) in PCVE.

The 'whole-of-society' approach is seen as a powerful tool to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism. It is in this context that the role of CSOs is highlighted and reiterated.

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