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The Prevention Project
Organizing Against Violent Extremism

The SDG 16 and PVE Agendas: Different Currencies or Two Sides of the Same Coin?

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Principal Authors:
Sanam Naraghi Anderlini
Eric Rosand

Contributing Author:
Melinda Holmes

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

P/CVE   *Preventing/ Countering Violent Extremism*

GCERF   *Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund*

GCRF   *Global Challenges Research Fund*

GSX   *Global Solutions Exchange*

HLPF   *High-Level Political Forum*

ICAN   *International Civil Society Action Network*

NAP   *National Action Plan*

ODA   *official development assistance*

OECD/DAC *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee*

PVE   *preventing violent extremism*

SDG   *Sustainable Development Goal*

UNDP   *United Nations Development Programme*

WPS   *Women, Peace and Security*

YPS   *Youth, Peace and Security*

Acknowledgements

About the authors

Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini is Founder and CEO of the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN). She is an adjunct professor at Columbia University's School of International Public Affairs (SIPA). For over two decades she has been a leading international advocate, researcher, trainer and writer on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, with expertise in gender and inclusivity issues. AT ICAN she spearheads the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) with civil society members in 40 countries and established the Innovative Peace Fund (IPF) the only independent global multi-donor fund dedicated to women's peacebuilding and prevention of violent extremism work. In 2000, she was among the civil society drafters of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Since 2005, she has provided strategic guidance and training to key UN agencies, the UK government and NGOs worldwide. In 2011, she was the first Senior Expert on Gender and Inclusion on the UN's Mediation Standby Team. In 2018, she was invited to join the Commonwealth's Panel of Experts on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and the Commonwealth's Network of Women Mediators. She is also a member of UNDP's Civil Society Advisory Council. Ms. Naraghi-Anderlini has published extensively on gender, peace and security issues, including Women building peace: What they do, why it matters (Lynne Rienner, 2007). She holds an M.Phil in Social Anthropology from Cambridge University.

Eric Rosand is the Director of The Prevention Project, a Nonresident Senior Fellow in the Brookings Institution's Foreign Policy Program, and Associate Senior Fellow with the Royal United Services Institute. Until March 2016, he was a senior counterterrorism official at the U.S. Department of State. Among other roles, he served as the department's policy coordinator for the 2015 White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism and its follow-on process. He also helped spearhead the development and launch of a number of international counterterrorism and P/CVE initiatives, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the platforms it inspired. From 2006 to 2010, he was a codirector of the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation (now the Global Center on Cooperative Security). He has also served in the State Department's Office of the Legal Advisor and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. He is the author of a number of reports, article, blogs, and op-eds on an a range of counterterrorism and P/CVE topics and holds a BA in history from Haverford College, a JD from Columbia University School of Law, and an LLM (Hons) in international law from Cambridge University

Melinda Holmes is Program Director at ICAN for the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) that brings together existing women's networks, practitioners, and organizations with long-standing experience in addressing extremism and promoting peace, rights and pluralism to improve practices in communities affected by violence, and inform and offer pragmatic policy solutions for the international community. A peacebuilding specialist, writer and strategist focusing on gender and political violence, Holmes is responsible for facilitating collaboration, analysis, advocacy and outreach on gendered approaches for preventing and responding to violent extremism at ICAN. Previously, Holmes was a 2016-2017 Visiting Fellow at LSE's Centre for Women, Peace & Security and worked with The Carter Center, where she advised on the engagement of religious and traditional beliefs, actors and communities in advancing peace and human rights. Holmes graduated with a Master's in international affairs from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, focusing on the gendered and religious dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding.

Introduction

In the past decade, counter-terrorism policymakers and practitioners have increasingly looked to broaden their approaches to extremist violence, moving beyond narrow, security-focused responses to ones that also address the political, economic, and social drivers of the violence. These efforts are broadly referred to as "preventing and countering violent extremism" or "P/CVE." A key impetus for this shift has been the growing body of evidence demonstrating first, how weak governance, corruption, injustice, marginalization, exclusion, and other grievances are among the most prevalent drivers of radicalization and recruitment to extremist violence, and second, how over-securitized responses exacerbate these drivers and can propel further radicalization.

The numbers tell the tale most starkly. Despite the more than $5.9 trillion[1] spent by the United States alone on a military-dominated approach to countering terrorism since September 2001, the violent extremist movement, ranging from ISIS to Boko Haram to right-wing or white supremacist groups in North America, Europe, and elsewhere, has metastasized to the point where the number of deaths from terrorism in 2017, although lower than it was the previous two years, was still three times the number in 2001,[2] and the number of Islamist extremist fighters in 2018 was 270% higher than 2001.[3] In addition, the security-oriented approach to counter-terrorism that has dominated since September 2001 has, in some instances, helped fuel the rise of authoritarianism and identity-based violent extremism across the world.[4]

The UN Secretary-General addressed these issues directly in the UN's 2015 Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, noting, "when governments embrace international human rights norms and standards, promote good governance, uphold the rule of law and eliminate corruption, they create an enabling environment for civil society and reduce the appeal of violent extremism."[5] The plan emerged in the same year that UN Member States were negotiating their commitments to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[6] Not surprisingly, the PVE plan encourages states to align their policies along the two agendas. There is clear recognition that efforts aimed at tackling the drivers of violent extremism are one side of the coin, while strengthening good governance, access to justice, and promoting inclusive societies that are stated pillars of SDG 16, are the other. Both approaches are necessary to foster sustainable and inclusive peace that also enables more effective prevention of violent extremism.

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1 Costs of War website, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University, https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/economic.
2 Institute for Economics & Peace. "Global Terrorism Index 2018: Measuring the impact of terrorism," Sydney, November 2018, p12, http://visionofhumanity.org/reports.
3 Jones, Seth G, Charles Vallee, Danika Newlee, Nicholas Harrington, Clayton Sharb, and Hannah Byrne, "The Evolution of the Salafi-Jihadist Threat Current and Future Challenges from the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, and Other Groups," Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 2018, p. IV, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/181221_EvolvingTerroristThreat.pdf.
4 See, e.g., Drivers, Incentives, and the Tipping Point for Recruitment," UNDP, 2017, http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content / downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf.
5 UN General Assembly, UN Secretary-General Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, 24 December 2015, paragraph 50, https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.
6 United Nations website, "About the Sustainable Development Goals," https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/.

Indeed, the SDG 16 and PVE agendas have much more in common. These include:
- The emphasis on strengthening civil society, particularly women and youth, and empowering local agents of change;
- Building social cohesion and resilience, and the role that inclusive cities can play in this regard;
- The need for government to be responsive to citizens' needs; and
- The importance of respecting human rights and addressing grievances and inequality.[7]

This nexus of factors appears in other policy frameworks, ranging from the long-standing women, peace, and security agenda (WPS); and its offshoot, the youth, peace, and security agenda (YPS); to the more recent Sustaining Peace Agenda; and the World Bank's forth-coming strategy on Fragility, Conflict, and Violence, encompassed in the concept of the so-cial contract. These issues are further reiterated in the 2018 'Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies' report, which highlighted that for SDG 16 to be fulfilled, there is an urgent need to scale up violence prevention (including extremist violence) strategies that particularly affect the most vulnerable segments of society.[8]

The vision and intent of both agendas are not only admirable, but essential and urgent. Yet progress on both has been far too slow and siloed. Many would agree with the assessment in UN Secretary-General Guterres' May 2019 report that "the global landscape for SDG implementation has generally deteriorated since 2015, hindering the efforts of governments and other partners."[9] In assessing progress on SDG 16 specifically, the report mentions nei-ther PVE nor violent extremism specifically, but states:

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7 The Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, "Enabling the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda through SDG 16+: Anchoring peace, justice, and inclusion," United Nations, New York, July 2019, https://www.sdg16hub.org.
8 Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies (2017), "The Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies: A Call To Action to Change our World," New York: Center on International Cooperation, http://www.cic.nyu.edu/pathfinders, p. 25.
9 United Nations, Secretary-General's Report on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, May 2019, para 12, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/22700E_2019_XXXX_Report_of_the_SG_on_the_progress_towards_the_SDGs_Special_Edition.pdf.

"Advances in ending violence, promoting the rule of law, strengthening institutions, and increasing access to justice is uneven and continues to deprive millions of security, rights and opportunities and undermine the delivery of public services and broader economic development. Attacks on civil society are also holding back development progress. Renewed efforts are essential to move towards achievement of SDG 16."[10]

This pessimism was echoed in the civil society statement emerging from the UN conference on SDG 16 in May 2019,[11] which noted that since governments adopted the SDGs in 2015, funding for justice has decreased by 40%[12] and only 2% of total gross overseas development assistance is going towards conflict prevention in fragile contexts, with the lion's share spent on crisis response.[13]

Many of the roadblocks to achieving progress on the two agendas are the same. When it comes to PVE, the UN itself and many others have identified the overly-securitized responses to violent extremism, weak governance, corruption, injustice, marginalization, exclusion, and contracting civic space as key obstacles.[14] This is mirrored by assessments of the SDG 16 agenda. In the lead up to the July 2019 UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), a number of civil society groups identified "structural inequalities, rising authoritarianism, exclusion and tokenization, inadequate capacity, and lack of political will to address peace, justice, and governance issues" as limiting advancement of the agenda.[15] Given that 40 countries are already experiencing conflict and a further 92 are less peaceful than they were a decade ago, the SDG 16 and PVE agendas are both in need of urgent and critical attention.[16]

> *Given that 40 countries are already experiencing conflict and a further 92 are less peaceful than they were a decade ago, the SDG 16 and PVE agendas are both in need of urgent and critical attention.*

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10 See note 9, para. 37.
11 International Development Law Organization, "SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Societies – Civil Society Days Conference," 26 May 2019, https://www.idlo.int/SDG16Conference2019/civil-society-day.
12 "Amplified Commitments and Partnerships for Accelerated Action: Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+," May 2019, https://tapnetwork2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Rome-Civil-Society-Declaration-on-SDG16-FINAL-1.pdf.
13 Moreira da Silva, Jorge and Eric Rosand, "Prevention Calls for Strengthening Development, Humanitarian, Peace 'Triple Nexus'," Global Observatory, 25 April 2019, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/04/prevention-calls-strengthening-development-humanitarian-peace-triple-nexus/.
14 UNDP, "Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment," September 2017, http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf.
15 "Amplified Commitments and Partnerships for Accelerated Action: Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+," May 2019, https://tapnetwork2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Rome-Civil-Society-Declaration-on-SDG16-FINAL-1.pdf.
16 See note 2, Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Peace Index 2018," p.6.

This September, heads of state and government will meet for the first, four-year review of all 17 SDGs – the SDG Summit. They will take stock of achievement, progress, challenges, and the way forward. While the agenda will be packed, there is a particularly urgent need to focus attention on SDG 16. The urgency cannot be understated. If SDG 16 is sidelined, PVE is siloed, and peace and social cohesion are taken for granted, then other SDGs will become unattainable and efforts to prevent extremist violence will suffer. In effect, discussion on the development goals without attention to the foundations of peace is akin to providing Picasso with the best oils and most vibrant colors to paint a masterpiece on a shredded and torn canvas. Without a strong weave in the canvas, the painting could never exist. So, what can and must be done?

This brief provides a synthesis of the current challenges impacting the coordination and effective implementation of the Secretary-General's PVE action plan and SDG 16 and how to overcome them. It also highlights existing good practices, policy precedence and key entry points for immediate action by national, bilateral, and multilateral actors. It concludes with a series of policy-oriented recommendations aimed at a more integrated approach to the implementation of the SDG 16 and PVE agendas. The brief is informed by key informant interviews, desk research, and a one-day roundtable with policymakers, practitioners, and scholars across governmental, multilateral, and civil society institutions, convened by the Prevention Project – Organizing Against Violent Extremism, the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), held on July 15, 2019 on the margins of the HLPF.

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I. The Challenges: Silos, Fragmentation, and Political Sensitivities Despite a Common Goal

Different but related factors combine to create inertia on the PVE and SDG 16 agendas. For the past two decades, debates have raged, and lines have been drawn in efforts to delineate development, security, human rights, and peacebuilding agendas. At the UN it can appear like a complex alphabet soup of acronyms from SDGs and PVE to WPS and YPS. Ironically, despite the obvious interlinkages between the agendas, the steady drumbeat of high-level conferences, resolutions, action plans, policies, and programs focused on every single agenda, makes it more challenging to achieve what has become a repeated and predictable conclusion of each effort: to capitalize on the interlinkages between these agendas.

Invariably, each agenda has its own global army of advocates and practitioners guarding and advancing its specific concepts and stakeholders. In part, these silos have arisen because of concerns about the securitization of development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian efforts. The fragmentation is further reflected in multilateral organizations and national governments, with different coordination mechanisms, and donors who have discrete budgets to support each agenda.

They are also a function of the bureaucracies in which they are housed and the siloed nature of the disciplines and fields of expertise. The systems designed for 20th century challenges are slow to adapt to and address the complexity of transnational violence, and conflict or peacebuilding in the context of the 21st century's extremely pluralistic and connected societies.

The issue of governance is a case in point. The need for good governance sits at the heart of the SDG and PVE agendas. There is an urgent need for value-based governance that ensures and fosters a culture of responsiveness to and inclusivity of citizens, particularly at the local level and among marginalized segments of the population.

There is an ever-growing body of research, including that conducted by UNDP,[17] International Alert,[18] the International Republic Institute,[19] and Mercy Corps,[20] that draws attention to linkages between deficits in governance, particularly at the local level, and violent extremism in certain contexts. This includes studies on Indonesia, Jordan, Kosovo, Somalia, and Tunisia, as well as regions such as the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

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17 See note 4, "Journey to Extremism in Africa," UNDP, 2017.
18 "If Victims Become Perpetrators: Factors contributing to vulnerability and resilience to violent extremism in the central Sahel," International Alert and UNICRI, 2018, https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Sahel_ViolentExtremismVulnerabilityResilience_ EN_2018.pdf.
19 "Understanding Local Drivers of Violent Extremism in Kosovo," International Republican Institute, 2017 http://www.iri.org/sites/default/ files/2017-9-17_kosovo_vea_report.pdf.
20 "Investing in Iraq's Peace: How Good Governance Can Diminish Support for Violent Extremism," Mercy Corps, 2016, https://www. mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/Investing%20in%20Iraqs%20Peace_Final%20Report.pdf.

Yet, despite this growing evidence-base and ever-growing recognition of the role that governance, including at the local level, can play in the PVE space, it has yet to receive the necessary attention in PVE policy and programming conversations. The reasons vary. Among international PVE practitioners and stakeholders, there is a "reluctance to prioritize long-term, hard-to-measure — and often complex and politically sensitive — structural issues. Instead they tend to prefer short-term, easier to measure engagements, at least at the output level, such as those focused on countering extremist narratives and propaganda, including by empowering individual youth, women, and religious leaders."[21]

Meanwhile many governments prefer to blame religious or ideological reasons to ignore or obscure their own failures, such as prevailing governance inadequacies (e.g., lack of service delivery, corruption), or rely on an overly aggressive security approach, which may be more responsible for violent extremism. Others view the global PVE agenda as a "pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states and destabilize legitimate governments."[22]

Whereas governance often gets drowned out in the PVE discourse, it is front and center when it comes to the implementation of SDG 16. As such, more attention should be given to addressing governance-related PVE issues through the broader SDG 16 lens that is less securitized and has wider ownership from Member States. There is also good precedence. A 2019 report on SDG 16 implementation highlights innovative approaches to strengthening local governance in fragile and conflicted states such as Burkina Faso and Mauritania through local participatory governance mechanisms. It is unclear, however, whether such approaches are reflected in international efforts to address governance-related PVE issues or are otherwise leveraged to advance PVE objectives in these countries.[23]

Adherence to human rights by the security sector and access to justice is another shared component of the two agendas. As the seminal 2017 UNDP study demonstrates,[24] abuse by the security sector is a crucial driver of radicalization and violence. Further examples are documented in the 2019 ICAN/UNDP Invisible Women report.[25] The study reflects on changes needed to existing justice and security processes to ensure that women and girls (as well as men and boys) who may be accused of involvement with violent extremism movements (or implicated through family ties) are protected against violence and sexual abuse when interacting with state security actors. In other words, if more countries embedded respect of human rights, protection, and the rule of law into the ethos of the security sector, they would not only advance their progress to attaining the SDGs but would also contribute significantly to preventing violent extremism.

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21 Rosand, Eric, Emily Winterbotham, Michael Jones, and Franziska Praxl-Tabuchi, "A Roadmap to Progress: the State of the Global P/CVE Agenda," The Prevention Project and RUSI, September 2018, p. 30, https://organizingagainstve.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GCCS_ROADMAP_FNL.pdf.
22 See, e.g., Statement by Oleg Syromolotov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, OSCE Counter-Terrorism Conference, Rome, 10 May 2018, https://osce.mid.ru/web/osce-en/-/oleg-syromolotov-at-the-osce-counter-terrorism-conference?inheritRedirect=true.
23 Global Alliance, "Enabling the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda through SDG16+ --
Anchoring peace, justice and inclusion," July 2019, https://www.sdg16hub.org/system/files/2019-07/Global%20Alliance%2C%20SDG%2016%2B%20Global%20Report.pdf.
24 See note 4, UNDP Journey to Extremism in Africa, Ch. 4.2.
25 International Civil Society Action Network and UNDP, "Invisible Women: Gendered Dimensions of Return, Rehabilitation and Reintegration from Violent Extremism," 11 January 2019, https://www.icanpeacework.org/2019/01/11/invisible-women/.

When distilled, these agendas not only share the same goals and aspirations but are also rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter's promise of preventing the scourge of war for future generations.[26] Given that contexts and histories vary, and different political sensitivities exist across and within Member States, the diversity of peace and security related agendas offer diverse and creative entry points and much-needed opportunities to attain the goals.

Nevertheless, the agendas themselves, can and do trigger political sensitivities. For some governments, embracing the PVE agenda means acknowledging that violent extremist movements exist within and pose a threat to the state. This recognition, however, confers a degree of power and legitimacy to such groups, potentially resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy of violent extremism. The PVE framework can also require states to be more transparent and inclusive than traditional counterterrorism and national security approaches allow. Many state security institutions are resistant to such reforms, lest their poor practices and lack of adherence to human rights laws and norms be exposed. Further, it may well serve as (at least a tacit) admission of the role their practices may play in generating grievances that can drive radicalization to violence.

Meanwhile, communities and local civil society organizations (CSOs) rightly note that often the basic concerns ranging from access to education or issues of corruption and predatory local governance (and the above-mentioned poor security practices) when left unattended, create fertile ground for the spread and recruitment of violent extremist movements. They observe that the fight against extremism — which may not be a priority for them — often receives greater attention and resources from their own state and global donor community than more pressing community-level socioeconomic concerns and even other forms of violence.

A recent report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the protection and promotion of human rights while countering terrorism notes, many states—authoritarian and otherwise—are using the PVE agenda as an excuse to shut down or curtail CSOs in the name of security.[27] Some organizations are privately voicing a growing concern that since the UN leads on the PVE agenda, governments are thus using the UN as a cover to justify their crackdowns.[28]

The PVE framework can also require states to be more transparent and inclusive than traditional counterterrorism and national security approaches allow.

26 United Nations Charter, https://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/.
27 Dr. Charbord, Anne and Prof. Fionnuala Ni Aolai, "The Role of Measures to Address Terrorism and Violent Extremism on Closing Civic Space," Report prepared under the aegis of the Mandate of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism (2018), https://www.law.umn.edu/sites/law.umn.edu/files/civil_society_report_-_final_april_2019.pdf.
28 See note 27.

Given these sensitivities, focusing on SDG 16 offers a more positive framing of the issues, notably 'inclusive societies' and 'access to justice.' SDG 16 can serve as an entry-point for tackling factors that contribute to the spread of violent extremism, but through a more neutral, positive, and empowering agenda.

In addition, the fragmentation at the global level can impact donors' approaches and how they direct their funding. Too often, instead of conducting a comprehensive peace, conflict, and gender-sensitive assessment to determine the needs and priorities of local communities and channeling resources in a coherent and sustainable plan, there is fragmented analysis, and erratic and short-term funding that can fuel competition rather than cooperation.

Donors too often rely on separate funding streams to support work to the different global agendas. For example, funding for women's peacebuilding efforts may be allocated from donors' WPS programming, but it may be separate from the funds available for PVE work. This can result in donors themselves excluding a gendered approach to their PVE efforts, even though they may be ardent champions of the WPS, the SDG 16, and the SDG 5 (gender equality) agendas.

The prevailing siloed approach can also result in potentially redundant programs (using different labels), unrealized synergies, and overlooked needs and priorities. Perhaps more fundamentally, it perpetuates the trend of donors providing short-term, project-based support to local actors to deliver on a single issue rather than building the long-term capacity of these organizations (including through core organizational support and training on research and analysis, program design, proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation, communications and branding, and management) to serve as change-makers in their communities.[29]

SDG 16 can serve as an entry-point for tackling factors that contribute to the spread of violent extremism, but through a more neutral, positive, and empowering agenda.

29 Global Solutions Exchange, "Recommendations on Donor Engagement with Civil Society," September 2017, https://www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/GSX-Recommendations-on-Donor-Engagement-2017.pdf.

Recent research in Kenya and Tunisia, supported by the Coventry University Innovation Fund, highlights how problematic this can be. Where the local priorities tend to focus on jobs, development, and human rights, those of government and donors are focused on security and CVE.[30] The research found that an overemphasis on violent extremism led to an increased funding of security-oriented programs but a decrease in funding for the local priorities – development and peacebuilding issues – many of which are critical to addressing the structural and other drivers of violence (including extremism). Further, "many civil society organizations, particularly in Kenya, felt pushed to apply for CVE funding, work on CVE-related projects or label peacebuilding and development work as CVE in order to access funding."[31]

More fundamentally, fragmentation among development, humanitarian, and peace/security actors within bilateral donors and multilateral organizations has generated a series of unintended consequences. The Coventry research, for example, found a decrease in CSO-led activities focused on women's rights and gender,[32] even though VE movements have a strong focus on gendered ideologies. Similarly, while the rhetoric of conflict and violence prevention is echoed in conferences regularly, the resources are sorely lacking. As noted above, and according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), only 2% of overseas development assistance (ODA) is directed at prevention efforts and only 10% to peacebuilding.[33]

Breaking down these silos, including by bridging the gap between the SDG 16 and PVE agendas, is key in achieving measurable progress across the SDG 16+ targets by the next quadrennial review in 2023, through effective coordination of policies and programs aimed at preventing violent extremism, and promoting peace, justice, and inclusion as two sides of the same coin.

Breaking down the silos, including by bridging the gap between the SDG 16 and PVE agendas, is key in achieving measurable progress across the SDG 16+ targets

30 Sahla Aroussi, "Women, Peace, Security, and Violent Extremism from International Policy to Local Realities, 2017-2019," Coventry University Innovation Fund, Research synopsis, copy on file with authors.
31 See note 30.
32 See note 30.
33 Unpublished unofficial summary of Brookings Institution roundtable, "The Growing Role of International Development Institutions in Preventing Violent Extremism: What the Future Holds?", copy on file with authors.

II. Making Sense of the Alphabet Soup: Why Language & Labels Matter

There are typically three schools of thought on the subject of labeling and language. First, there are the "pragmatists" who do not think it matters how a project or activity is labeled: the focus should be on the work, whether it provides psychosocial support or economic opportunities to those in marginalized communities at risk of radicalization to violent extremism, or working to build trust between local police forces and community members.

Second, there are those who believe labels matter and assert that while a PVE label might be expedient in the short-term (e.g., in mobilizing donor resources) there are long-term consequences involved that should not be overlooked.[34]

Finally, there is a third category of practitioners emerging from the peacebuilding field who are conscious of the areas of overlap but recognize there is a specificity and difference between a PVE-related economic, justice, or education program versus traditional programming. Similar to experiences in conflict-affected contexts, it is important to identify if interventions are designed to work on, around, or in situations where violent extremism is prevalent. This lens can help determine which labels are best suited to the programs.

Nevertheless, the political and societal realities that PVE terminology can be perceived as securitization and thus can be polarizing, cannot be ignored. For example, a program working to build resilience or strengthen social cohesion to prevent violent extremism from taking hold in a community, may be rejected if it is labeled as PVE. The same program may be more palatable to local communities, if it is named 'belonging and social harmony' or other terms associated with SDG 16.

In fact, the information sharing and collaboration between law enforcement, other sectors of government, and local actors whose engagement and leadership is critical to reducing the threat of violent extremism, can become harder if the framing implies threats to national security, as opposed to supporting local priorities. This is particularly so in marginalized communities where there is a historic lack of trust between these communities and the government.

A 2019 report on youth-related PVE efforts, globally highlighted the importance of program labels and language.[35] The PVE terminology came in vogue as a result of the September 2015 global summit against violent extremism. But branding all forms of governance, education, or community building programs under the PVE label has proven to be counterproductive. Too often community actors, especially youth and women, are wary of PVE being in the hands of the security and intelligence sectors. If such institutions are not trusted, participation and engagement in these programs, particularly in marginalized sectors of the population that are also often the most vulnerable to recruitment, can diminish.[36]

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34 Discussions at the expert-level roundtable "Operationalizing linkages between the SDG 16 and PVE agendas", held on 15 July 2019, on the margins of the United Nations HLPF. The roundtable was organized by The Prevention Project – Organizing Against Violent, the International Civil Society Action Network, the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Challenges Research Fund.
35 See note 34.
36 See note 21, Rosand, Eric and Emily Winterbotham, et al, "A Roadmap to Progress."

III. Breaking down silos: Leadership and Innovation by Local Stakeholders

A core feature for both the PVE and SDG 16 agendas is the call for "whole of society" engagement involving multi-stakeholder partnerships between actors from national and local governments, the private sector, civil society (including youth- and women-led organizations), the media, and academia. Both agendas also call for "inclusive" localized approaches, where civil society and other local actors are engaged in the design and implementation of relevant programs and policies.

Such approaches may seem idealistic given the above-mentioned fragmentation of the agendas at the global policy levels. But in communities where the problems of violent extremism and the lack of social cohesion and peace are most acute, cooperation between stakeholders is the only option. From local governments to women- and youth-led CSOs, the linkages between PVE and peacebuilding (or SDG 16) are obvious. They see and experience how violent extremist movements seek to divide communities and elevate singular religious or ethno-nationalistic identities. They also understand the ways in which state actors can exacerbate insecurity and mistrust. So, they have devised deeply-localized initiatives that blend the countering and preventing of violent extremism with the promotion of inclusivity, rights, and belonging. Recognizing that a key antidote to the ideology and identity-driven messaging of violent extremist movements is promoting and celebrating the pluralism that defines most of our societies. Local actors are providing this antidote.

For example, Tunisia faces a continuous violent extremist threat. The government and the UN, along with civil society, attempt to address this threat by strengthening the resilience of the society. An All-of-UN approach is being developed for coherent support of national PVE efforts. The UNDP programme includes institutional support to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) for PVE, as well as fostering a strong state-society engagement. By strengthening the involvement of civil society and local actors in fostering a whole-of-society approach to the prevention of violent extremism, this effort therefore aimed to put the spirit of SDG 16 into action.

In Bangladesh, an online initiative is another case in point. Concerned about the threat posed by extremist online content as millions of its citizens gain access to the Internet each year, Bangladesh launched an initiative focused on engaging young people in hackathons to develop digital platforms that promote tolerant or inclusive visions of the country. The program was framed not as a "PVE" initiative but as part of Bangladesh's ongoing commitment to the implementation of SDG 16.[37]

Both agendas also call for "inclusive" localized approaches, where civil society and other local actors are engaged in the design and implementation of relevant programs and policies.

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37 UNDP, "Frontlines – Young People at the Forefront of Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism," 22 May 2019, p. 49, https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/frontlines.html.

The Critical Significance of Women-led and other Civil Society Organizations

Where state and society relations are more fraught and fueled by decades of mistrust or conflict, CSOs have often filled the void, despite the risks they may encounter from the state, VE movements, and communities. They have become the bridge between sectors of society and communities — particularly marginalized ones — and the state. Many have been working in the same communities for years, whether to strengthen cohesion, build resilience, counsel families, or resolve disputes peacefully. They have thus laid the foundation for leading initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism. They demonstrate why having a vibrant and independent civil society that contributes to addressing the spectrum of PVE challenges and in achieving the SDG 16 "peace, justice, and inclusion targets" is essential.

In North Macedonia, for example, Search for Common Ground, building on the peacebuilding work it has undertaken in communities across the country for nearly two decades, is helping municipalities develop holistic, local PVE action plans and to develop community action teams to help address a range of local challenges. As the organization's local Macedonian director notes, "if we didn't have the history of working for many years in those communities to build social cohesion and peace, it would have been difficult to have earned the trust in the communities that has allowed us to engage with them on more sensitive issues of violent extremism and how to prevent it."[38]

This approach of peacebuilding and promoting social cohesion blended with PVE work, i.e., simultaneously addressing the two sides of the SDG and PVE coins, resonates with women-led and other CSOs across the world. They are not as encumbered by the "siloing" and fragmentation that is hindering state and multilateral entities.

This approach of peacebuilding and promoting social cohesion blended with PVE work resonates with women-led and other CSOs across the world.

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38 See note 34.

For example, members of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) that are local, independent women-led CSOs active in PVE and peacebuilding across some 40 countries, recognize through experience that designing interventions that are specific to 'countering' or even 'preventing' violent extremism is necessary, but not sufficient. To have sustainable impact, they must provide positive viable alternatives too. In their work across communities, WASL members address the grievances and fulfill aspirations of those most vulnerable to recruitment into violent extremism. This includes pioneering positive sociopolitical, cultural, and economic alternatives that are rooted in a culture of peace and pluralism, and enable trust building and engagement with local government.[39] In other words, in their daily work they embrace and put into practice the principles of the SDGs, particularly SDG 16. They also design multi-stakeholder programs that enable trust building between communities and authorities.

In Kenya, a WASL member organization, Advocacy for Women and Peace and Security in Africa tackled the issue of fear and mistrust between the police and community women in the Mombasa area through "police cafés" set up twice a month.[40] The cafés provided a formal and safe space for dialogue between the police and 20 women leaders to discuss community security issues related to violent extremism and relations between the police and women in the community. This focus on building trust and initiating reform from the ground up is sustainable and cost effective, and the impact is evident immediately.

Women

From Pakistan to Nigeria, women-led CSOs have established volunteer youth and women's groups that combine the promotion of pluralistic identities and non-violence alongside livelihoods training and support to enable the rehabilitation of women and men associated with violent movements. Youth volunteer groups in Pakistan have also led cultural activities to enable awareness raising about violent extremism and provide youth with alternative means of belonging and purpose. PAIMAN Alumni Trust has documented at least 12 cases when the groups have worked with the police to prevent terror attacks between 2016 and 2018. CSOs help strengthen the social compact by being a key interlocutor and bridge between state and society. In Iraq for example, women-led community CSOs have organized sociocultural programs to enable dialogue and reconciliation between Muslims and Yazidis, as well as in areas where Daesh was in control. This fostering of social cohesion is a means of mitigating the ostracism and exclusion that might make the youth vulnerable to future recruitment into violent extremism.

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39 Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, "Challenging Conventional Wisdom, Transforming Current Practices: A Gendered Lens," in Transformative Approaches to Violent Extremism, eds Beatrix Austin and Hans J. Giessmann, Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series No. 13 [Berlin: Berghof Foundation, 2018], https://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Handbook/Dialogue_Chapters/dialogue13_violentextremism_naraghi_anderlini_com.pdf.
40 Facebook page for Advocacy for Women in Peace and Security Africa (AWAPSA), https://www.facebook.com/Advocacy-for-Women-in-Peace-and-Security-Africa-Awapsa-518818428456831/.

Despite the mounting evidence of positive impact and the rhetoric about "inclusivity" and a "whole of society" approach, some governments remain suspicious of civil society actors engaging in the PVE space or seek to exert undue control over CSOs involved in PVE.[41] Others frame CSOs as vehicles for spreading or funding oppositional and extremist sentiments. More broadly, national authorities in too many jurisdictions remain reluctant to relinquish control or resources over to what they perceive to be national security concerns, a sphere in which they have historically enjoyed exclusive control.

Further, and as a consequence of this, though disparate CSOs are invited to multilateral PVE workshops and conferences, they are typically excluded from discussions among UN Member States about the implementation of the PVE agenda. There are no formal mechanisms in place for systematic interactions or written inputs to such discussion. This is in contrast to the elaborate multilateral architecture that facilitates the involvement and contributions of civil society actors to the implementation of the SDGs. The UN-organized, May 2019 review conference around SDG 16 was a case in point. Civil Society representatives from around the globe not only participated but were fully involved in drafting an assessment of the progress and obstacles facing SDG 16 implementation and providing a set of recommendations to the formal HLPF review in July 2019.

Given this precedence and the years of CSO partnerships with the UN and Member States at the global and local levels on the WPS agenda, it is logical to establish similar platforms to enable their interactions on the PVE agenda. The Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) platform that the Norwegian government initiated with ICAN and other CSOs in 2016 is a viable example. GSX events have enabled in-depth analysis of issues ranging from education[42] and economic[43] policies, to community security and policing,[44] as they intersect with PVE with the inclusion of sectoral experts, policymakers, and local practitioners. With a focus on solutions, the analysis invariably reinforces the connections between PVE, SDG 16, and other SDGs. But such platforms need to be strengthened and further integrated into the global, regional, and national venues and processes where PVE is addressed.

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41 For example, the national governments in both Kenya and The Philippines have recently taken steps to regulate the involvement of CSOs in PVE. See Kenya National Counter Terrorism Centre, "Citizen Support Mechanism to Counter and Prevent Violent Extremism," https://citizensupport.go.ke/about/; and Republic of the Philippines, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Memorandum Circular, "Engagement of all Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and International Agencies (IA) in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Insurgency (P/CVEO) Projects and Activities in the Philippines," 24 July 2019, https://dilg.gov.ph/PDF_File/issuances/memo_circulars/dilg-memocircular-2019724_a9f8eff710.pdf.

42 International Civil Society Action Network, "Education, Identity and Rising Extremism," September 2017, http://www.icanpeacework.org/2017/09/19/education-identity-rising-extremism/.

43 International Civil Society Action Network, "From the Ground Up – The Nexus of Economic Policy, Gender and Violent Extremism," September 2017, http://www.icanpeacework.org/2017/09/19/economic-policy-gender-violent-extremism/.

44 International Civil Society Action Network, "Preventing Violent Extremism, Protecting Rights, and Community Policing," September 2017, http://www.icanpeacework.org/2017/09/19/preventing-violent-extremism-protecting-rights-community-policing/.

Cities & Mayors

Cities, municipalities, and mayors are, similarly, focused on addressing the practical concerns of their citizens that cut across the different global agendas, including those related to PVE and SDG 16. They have no choice but to meet their needs, whether housing, psychosocial, healthcare, education, jobs, housing, and more. They are often compelled to grapple with a set of related and difficult questions about social integration, polarization, hate, and violent extremism. They face many bureaucratic constraints that can impede global and national level policymakers, but they have no option but to work around them.

Through the development of local PVE action plans, they are focusing attention on local (as opposed to national) drivers and priorities, ensuring that potentially stigmatizing and often politically sensitive issues related to violent extremism are framed in a manner that resonates with local communities.[45] They are playing an important role in fostering belonging and inclusion, strengthening trust in fellow citizens and institutions, and ensuring equality before the law — all key elements to preventing violent extremism from taking root in its communities and in advancing SDG 16 implementation.

They are also working to build social cohesion and resilience against violent extremism by creating more open physical spaces with universal access to reduce segregation, polarization, and perceptions of isolation and non-belonging, and enable more safe spaces for people to discuss and exchange different viewpoints.[46]

Cities such as Chattanooga, London, and Paris, which have experienced Islamist-motivated attacks, to Charlottesville, Luton, and Dresden, which have experience in managing demonstrations by white supremacists and xenophobic populist groups, offer examples of how cities are responding effectively to terrorist attacks, violent protests, and demonstrations, "while actively working to improve social cohesion, [promote inclusion, and build resilience] through community and grassroots initiatives, which have the local knowledge, connections, and ability to counter these issues at the local level."[47]

> *Cities, municipalities, and mayors are... focused on addressing the practical concerns of their citizens that cut across the different global agendas, including those related to PVE and SDG 16 … and face many bureaucratic constraints that can impede global and national level policymakers, but … have no option but to work around them.*

45 Mombasa County Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism 2017-2022, http://www.mombasa.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/FINAL-REVISED-MAPPING-REPORT.pdf; a number of other counties in Kenya have developed P/CVE plans, including Lamu, Kilifi, and Kwale, see, e.g., "Reconciling Community Perceptions of Conflict with Government Responses in Coastal Kenya," Search for Common Ground, April 2018, https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/201804-Kenya-Policy-Brief.pdf.

46 "Workshop on Multi-Disciplinary Thinking and Innovative Action: Collaboration Around the P/CVE Agenda Summary," Oxford University, 20-21 June 2018, http:// www.organizingagainstve.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/31Jul18_OxfordSummary.pdf.

47 Birdwell, Jonathan and Joseph Downy, "Why Livability Indexes Need a Rethink," Global Post, 4 September 2018, https://theglobepost.com/2018/09/04/liveability-index-rethink/.

The commission on preventing hateful extremism and promoting social cohesion that was established following the June 2017 terrorist attack in Manchester, highlighted links between a lack of public services and feelings of isolation and marginalization in some communities and how this limits opportunities for people from both different backgrounds to meet naturally and have conversations, which in turn can exacerbate fear and suspicion of the "other."[48]

With support from the Strong Cities Network (SCN), a number of municipalities across Jordan and Lebanon have developed prevention networks that work on issues that are at the intersection of the PVE and SDG 16 agendas: promoting locally-coordinated efforts to prevent violent extremism and build peaceful, cohesive communities.[49]

In short, mayors and municipalities are inspired more by the need to "get things done" for their constituents rather than a particular global agenda or framework. However, when it comes to building global networks to allow for more city-to-city sharing, learning and global engagement and advocacy, the silos reappear. As a result, the increased recognition of the comparative advantages cities has led to a proliferation of global networks often duplicating rather than reinforcing and coordinating efforts. These include SCN, the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, the Global Network on Safer Cities, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, 100 Resilient Cities (resilience), and United Cities and Local Governments.

Youth

UNDP's recent global report on youth and PVE highlights how the PVE and SDG 16 agendas intersect when it comes to maximizing the contributions of young people to prevent violent extremism. The report shows how young people are increasingly on the frontlines of efforts to prevent violent extremism, but how the effectiveness and sustainability of these endeavors requires more attention be paid to young peoples' "holistic development priorities… and their participation in decision-making."[50]

More broadly, the report takes stock of some of the progress and challenges that remain in promoting young people's involvement and getting governments to include them in decision-making processes linked to PVE. The report highlights some of the obstacles. These can include trust deficits between governments and young people that can make it difficult to engage exclusively on PVE. Moreover, entering what could be a highly securitized PVE space could place "young activists and youth organizations, movements, and networks under increased surveillance." Further, there are concerns that engagement via the PVE agenda could "be manipulated to crack down on human rights and freedoms, civil society, minority groups, or legitimate political opposition." As a result, the report cautions stakeholders looking to promote the role of young people in PVE to be attentive to both the opportunities and the risks, particularly given that government actors coordinated efforts to address the violent extremist threat "might be unaware or unsure of how to engage them constructively on this issue."

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48 The University of Manchester, "Greater Manchester extremism commission publishes its findings," 31 July 2018, https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/manchester-extremism-commission-findings/.

49 Strong Cities, SCN Lebanon & Jordan: Official Launch Of Four Local Prevention Networks, 12 December 2017, https://strongcitiesnetwork.org/en/scn-lebanon-jordan-official-launch-four-local-prevention-networks/.

50 UNDP, Frontlines – Young People at the Forefront of Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism, May 2019, p. 49, https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/frontlines.html.

To enable constructive collaboration between young people and policymakers around PVE in city or community settings, the report recommends framing the discussion on agendas that might carry fewer sensitivities, such as the SDGs or UNSCR 2250.[51] Particularly where marginalized youth are involved, rather than focusing on their participation in "PVE" dialogues with governments that seek to define and institutionalize youth priorities, the report recommends framing the discussions around SDG 16 and the 2030 Agenda.[52]

In Tunisia, Mobdiun, a local CSO working with marginalized youth in areas where recruitment into Daesh was high, offers an example of how these seemingly diverse agendas come together in practice. Mobdiun was founded by a young woman and is a member of WASL. In conducting early assessments among key populations, they determined that while violent extremism was a critical concern, the terminology of violent extremism or terrorism could not be used. The interventions they designed address the needs of vulnerable youth and affirm their sense of belonging, aspirations, and voice.[53]

IV. Paving the Way Forward: Promising Multilateral Trends for SDG 16-PVE Integration

A number of multilateral actors, including the World Bank, UN, and OECD, are currently restructuring and reforming to prioritize prevention of violence and conflict and to enable more synergies across often disparate agendas and frameworks; there is a need to ensure these efforts are mutually reinforcing.

Within the UN system, UNDP was the first entity to acknowledge (following their 2016 global PVE meeting) the clear need for linking the PVE and SDG 16 agendas. In his preface to the meeting report, UNDP Assistant Administrator Magdy Martinez-Soliman stated that:

> "The universal targets under SDG 16, aimed at reducing violence; ensuring access to justice; reducing organized crime and corruption; developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels; ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making; and protecting fundamental freedoms, provide a useful platform for, and commitment to, the global efforts to address the drivers and push factors of violent extremism."[54]

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51 See note 50, p. 82.
52 See note 50, p. 83
53 "Empowering Young People Across Tunisia," http://mobdiun.org/.
54 UNDP, "Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance, and Respect for Diversity," Global meeting, 14-16 March 2016, 14 July 2016, p.5, https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/preventing-violent-extremism-through-promoting-inclusive-develop.html.

UNDP is currently taking stock of its PVE efforts to date as it looks to elaborate the next phase of its work in this area. These efforts have so-far involved work in 34 countries through UNDP field offices, including support for 19 PVE NAPs, ,regional PVE initiatives, and several global conferences. Taking stock is part of a wider effort to link PVE to the wider peace-building and sustaining peace agendas at the UN and realize more coherence among those working in the historically siloed prevention, peacebuilding, and humanitarian sectors within the organization, including in the field. Among other things, this has led to the formation of the Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding, and Responsive Institutions Unit (CPPRI), which works on the integration of governance, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding interventions within the Crisis Bureau.

UNDP's PVE efforts put SDG 16— "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels"—into action by focusing on supporting Member States to develop the institutional capabilities to govern diverse communities; providing services to diverse populations through inclusive and participatory processes that engages people in design and delivery of those services, and in prevention efforts more broadly. [See Annex A for country examples demonstrating how UNDPs PVE programmes put SDG 16 into action, as a means to accelerate progress on all of the SDGs.]

The World Bank, following in the footsteps of the UN-World Bank Pathways to Peace report,[55] is elaborating a new Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) Strategy, which is due to be finalized later this year.[56] Key elements of the draft plan include: more consistent World Bank focus on the drivers of fragility; better understanding of grievances before allocating Bank resources; more staff in the field; more partnerships with humanitarian and development partners and local organizations; and additional International Development Association funding for prevention and financing for governments willing to address grievances that could lead to violence.

This report builds on a growing trend at the Bank to incorporate PVE objectives into interventions developed and led by different global practice groups, including ones focused on strengthening the governance, education, and social and urban resilience institutional capacities of client governments—clearly relevant to progress towards the SDG 16+ goals.

Moreover, the Bank's State and Peacebuilding Fund is now being used to support projects aimed at strengthening individual and community-level resilience to radicalization and violence among at-risk individuals and the capacity of local institutions to support PVE programs.

55 "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict," United Nations and World Bank, 2018, https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic /fragilityconflictviolence/publication/pathways-for-peace-inclusive-approaches-to-preventing-violent-conflict. https://www.pathwaysforpeace.org.
56 World Bank Group, "World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020–2025 Concept Note," 2019, https://consultations.worldbank.org/Data/hub/files/consultation-template/world-bank-group-strategy-fragility-conflict-and-violence/en/materials/conceptnote_06_041519.pdf.

Particularly, given its reputation as an "honest broker" to facilitate policy dialogues with governments on the drivers of violent extremism and to encourage governments to tackle the governance challenges such as political exclusion, regional imbalances, or youth integration, increased Bank involvement in PVE has the potential to lead to increased integration between the PVE and SDG 16 agendas.[57]

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) is prioritizing the mainstreaming of addressing fragility in the global partnership on development cooperation, shifting from reaction to resilience and deepening investments in prevention. This shift is driven in part by the estimates in the OECD's States of Fragility 2018 report[58] that by 2030, 80% of those living in extreme poverty will be in fragile contexts. Though the volume of ODA going to fragile contexts is growing – now representing more than one-third of Official Development Assistance (ODA) – only 2% is going to prevention and 10% for peacebuilding. The investments in prevention are insufficient as compared to humanitarian assistance and refugee support.[59]

The new OECD/DAC legal recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is intended to generate more coordination across and coherence among actors in these fields, with the shared goal of "prioritizing prevention always, delivering development whenever possible, and complementing with humanitarian action when necessary."[60] This new recommendation seeks to incentivize shared analysis and joined-up, evidence-based strategic and programmatic planning across development, humanitarian, and peace actors, within the 30 DAC member bureaucracies, as well as interested non-DAC members, including governments, multilateral bodies, NGOs, and private sector entities, many of which were involved in the DAC process that led to the recommendation. Because DAC members will need to reflect this recommendation in their funding and coordination mechanisms — and implementation efforts will be assessed through the DAC peer-review process, the recommendation could, inter alia, help realize more coherence between the SDG 16 and PVE agendas.[61]

57 Eric Rosand, "To Prevent Extremism, Don't Forget the Existing Multilateral Architecture," 4 March 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/03/04/to-prevent-extremism-dont-forget-the-existing-multilateral-architecture/.
58 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "States of Fragility," 17 July 2018, http://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-2018-9789264302075-en.htm.
59 See note 58.
60 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus," adopted 21 Feb 2019, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-5019.
61 Remarks by OECD official during 15 July roundtable.

Conclusion

Despite these promising trends, and as highlighted throughout this brief, more work is needed to break down the silos (including among policymakers, practitioners, budgets, and coordination mechanisms) at the global and national levels that stand in the way of deeper integration between the PVE and SDG 16 agendas. This would allow progress in tackling the drivers of violent extremism and strengthening good governance, promoting inclusive societies, and ensuring access to justice. As illustrated in this report, in spite of their global and national counterparts, community-based actors are often at the forefront of efforts to implement both agendas and, due to necessity, are working to do so simultaneously. Yet too often, conversations at the global and national level are siloed and fail to adequately reflect the voices, perspectives, and priorities of local actors. More attention should thus be given to how conversations around justice, peace, and inclusion at the global and national levels can strengthen and further empower, rather than, as is sometimes the case, impede progress on locally-led action to achieve these inter-related objectives.

With this in mind, below is a series of practical recommendations for governments, multilateral organizations, and civil society to consider.

In spite of their global and national counterparts, community-based actors are often at the forefront of efforts to implement both agendas and, due to necessity, are working to do so simultaneously.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Global Level

1. Leverage existing initiatives and develop a global platform to allow for regular multi-stakeholder discussions around the PVE and SDG 16 agendas. The purposes include to:
   a. connect the largely separate communities of practice that have emerged around each agenda;
   b. provide regular opportunities to explore ways in which a more integrated approach to implementation could benefit both agendas;
   c. offer civil society and local actors a seat at the table with national and global actors for discussions concerning the progress in, and obstacles to, implementing the two agendas; and,
   d. provide a space for national and international actors to hear from grassroots CSOs and other local actors on what's working and what is not to address these challenges and ways in which national and global entities can better support efforts to address them (e.g., through a change in policies, funding priorities, etc.).

   OECD Member States should consider recommending that the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State Building—an OECD platform for civil society and government interactions that currently includes the G7+ and civil society — be expanded to serve this purpose.

2. Advocate for an independent, vibrant civil society sector, which is critical to the realization of the "whole of society" approach that underpins the PVE and SDG 16 agendas. This should include more joined-up advocacy at the global, regional, and national levels, and other collaborations among the different CSO networks and other constituencies that have emerged around the discrete, interrelated global agendas (e.g., PVE, SDG 16, WPS, YPS, and Sustaining Peace).

National Level

3. Develop country-based platforms in fragile and conflict-affected states that cut across the PVE and SDG 16 agendas. These would bring together the often, separate communities of stakeholders working on the two agendas. The platforms could be used to consider ways to progress on both agendas through a more integrated approach to needs' assessments, program design, and implementation. In addition, they could be used to discuss when and how the SDG 16 agenda could be used as an entry point for discussions about PVE priorities, for example, where there may be sensitivities within certain communities or among particular stakeholders about discussing security and terrorism. Such fora could provide the opportunity for representatives of national governments, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the often sensitive issues in an open and honest way and increase the willingness of CSOs to take risks and offer recommendations to or constructive criticism of their governments and the likelihood that government representatives will listen.

4. Enhance national-level interconnectivity among multiple, interrelated strategies. Often at the behest of the UN, governments are developing distinct national strategies in different thematic areas related to peace, security, and development, such as counter-terrorism, PVE, rule of law, gender-based violence, WPS, or YPS. Despite the interconnections among them, each framework often involves its own set of actors, advocates, funding streams, and coordination mechanisms. As a result, opportunities for realizing more integrated approaches to policymaking and programming, maximizing synergies, and realizing economies of scale are few and far between.

5. Ensure meaningful involvement of civil society and other local actors, including municipalities, in policy formulation and programming decisions: Donors should ensure that local actors, including civil society and municipalities, are meaningfully involved in the development of funding strategies, recognizing that such actors are often best-positioned to define the needs of their cities and communities, but that their voices and perspectives are too often insufficiently reflected in policymaking and programming processes and decisions. Formal consultative approaches that guarantee a few seats to local representatives on a national SDG (or SDG 16) council or committee or PVE task force, but fail to incorporate any of their recommendations in relevant policies and programs or involvement of a few civil society actors via surveys, workshops, or other singular events, do not constitute "meaningful involvement."[62]

Donors and Funding

6. Local analysis and priorities should drive funding strategies: Local priorities should be informing policymaking and programming decisions at every level. Independent, qualitative, and data-driven local research should inform funding strategies for addressing extremist violence and promoting justice, inclusion, and peace. Donors should coinvest in, share, compare, and regularly update local risk and needs analyses to inform their strategic funding priorities. This analysis should be shared with existing or potential implementers whenever possible. Donors should avoid making decisions, without data, based on assumptions or theories on what the local needs or priorities are.

7. Pursue more multi-donor funded initiatives that incentivize CSOs' other local actors to develop proposals that cut across the SDG 16 and PVE agendas. Donors should more often pursue "pooled funding" arrangements, recognizing that they create more opportunities for longer-term projects and upscaling through sustained economies of scale. Such initiatives further reduce the political burden on CSOs by reducing the possible impression of being aligned with one government's agenda or foreign policy. Donors should issue "requests for proposals" that require local organizations to explain how the project will advance both SDG 16 and PVE agendas.

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62 Marie Laberge, "Is Africa Measuring up to Its Goal 16 Commitments? The road to HLPF 2019 and Beyond," UNDP and South Africa Institute for International Affairs, March 2019, p. 22, https://www.sdg16hub.org/system/files/2019-06/SAIIA_SDG16_A4_Brochure_V9_LD.pdf.

8. Establish multi-donor funds at the country level to support locally-led projects that promote peace, justice, and inclusion (and include those aimed at preventing violent extremism). Such funds should be locally owned and driven by the needs and priorities of the relevant national and subnational government and nongovernmental stakeholders. They should ideally be public-private and aligned with a grants program that provides technical assistance and other capacity-building support to grantees and incentivizes collaboration and networking among CSOs and other local partners across the different relevant global agendas. Where appropriate, such funds could be linked to and managed by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), possibly in collaboration with the UNDP.

9. Leverage the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) and other funding mechanisms that support locally-led PVE interventions to incentivize donors to support programs that integrate SDG 16 and PVE objectives. This could begin with having GCERF incorporate SDG 16 indicators in its calls for proposals and gather and share data on how GCERF-funded projects are advancing both sets of objectives. The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund strives to break down silos between Women, Peace, and Security; development; and humanitarian agendas. Integrating PVE objectives would be a natural next step. Finally, ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund can be looked at as an example from the independent civil society space of a global fund linking peacebuilding and PVE objectives, with a gender perspective.

10. Address practical challenges to allow more resources to be channeled to the community-based actors often at the intersection of the PVE and SDG 16 agendas: These challenges include donors preferring larger grants while small CSOs often can only manage small amounts of money. At the same time, small CSOs often lack capacity to comply with the often, onerous donor monitoring and evaluation and oversight requirements. Donors typically prefer funding CSOs that have a history of receiving donor money, which often removes small CSOs from consideration.[63] Donors should offer flexibility commensurate with the different security, political, social, and organizational contexts in which CSOs are operating. Donors should be more cognizant of the logistical and operational constraints CSO grantees face, the demands of recipient communities, and the security concerns of individual practitioners. Awards should include adaptive management, both on the donor and grantee sides, and streamline approval processes to make changes to awards as needed. Consider different contractual mechanisms and transfer modalities, adjusting not only to the context but also to the needs of the grantee.

11. Be sensitive to language: Despite the plethora of PVE conferences, workshops, action plans, and programs and discussions about how to address the threat posed by violent extremism, the use of PVE or "violent extremism" terminology has proven to be counterproductive in certain local contexts, as it can negatively impact actual work on the ground. In certain circumstances, this language can alienate communities by

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63 For a more comprehensive set of donor-focused recommendations aimed at strengthening civil society-led PVE initiatives see, "Recommendations on Donor Engagement with Civil Society on Preventing Violent Extremism," Global Solutions Exchange, September 2017, https://www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/GSX-Recommendations-on-Donor-Engagement-2017.pdf.

giving the impression that there is something wrong or needs fixing and that the beneficiaries are a threat.[64] Recognizing this, international and national actors should allow locally-led programs to be framed around issues (e.g., social cohesion, resilience, justice, peace, and economic empowerment) and use labels and other language that are most likely to resonate with the beneficiaries and the wider community, irrespective of the global agenda or donor-funding "bucket" to which they might be linked.

Data, Analysis, and Assessments

12. **Promote more joined-up assessments that are informed by local practitioners, experts, and researchers:** Donors should end the all-too-prevalent practice of conducting "niche" assessments around single issues such as gender, violent extremism, youth, conflict, democracy, and justice. Instead, and where appropriate, they should move towards conducting joined-up, more comprehensive assessments that can better highlight the integrated nature of the needs and priorities of countries and communities. The assessments, which should be shared, as appropriate, with other donors, should be informed by local practitioners, experts, and researchers and consider perspectives from marginalized/border communities and not just the capital.

13. **Enhance data collection and analysis on the inter-linkages between the SDG 16 and PVE agendas and how they can be further strengthened:** This could involve:
    a. Reviewing the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action on PVE, including the development and implementation of NAPs inspired by the Plan and Member States' progress on advancing SDG 16 objectives, on a biannual basis. Currently, there are no opportunities to integrate SDG 16 perspectives into consideration of the PVE agenda at the UN, because that agenda is given limited attention at the intergovernmental level in New York. Rather, PVE is treated as an appendage of the wider counter-terrorism agenda, with it being subsumed under Pillar I of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which is reviewed on a biannual basis. There is no separate treatment of PVE by UNGA and there has yet to be any systematic stocktaking by the UN on progress on and challenges to implementation of the PVE agenda.
    b. Including SDG 16 as a recurring agenda item in the semiannual meetings of the PVE community of practice (CoP): Members of the CoP could be asked to report on where and how the SDG 16 agenda has been implicated in their PVE programs and policies and on how PVE assessments have influenced SDG 16 planning, as part of a wider effort to encourage national governments to think about the relationship between SDG 16 and PVE and how they are "two sides of the same coin"; and
    c. Taking stock of which PVE activities are being undertaken in furtherance of SDG 16 in future reviews of this SDG.

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64 "Innovations in Civil Society and Other Locally-Led Efforts to Prevent Violent Extremism," Global Solutions Exchange, Overview Recommendations: GSX#2017, 7 November 2017, http://www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/GSX2017-recommendations.pdf .

14. Leverage OECD DAC statistical and analytic capacities:[65] As a result of the 2016 update to the OECD's ODA guidelines, the 35 OECD Member States can report funding for PVE activities — including education, rule of law, working with civil society to prevent radicalization, security and justice systems capacity building, and research into positive alternatives to violent extremism — as part of their annual development target. Though it is difficult to quantify the precise amounts, this change has allowed for additional development assistance to be used to address the drivers of violent extremism. However, there is more the OECD could be doing to influence the direction and quality of PVE programming, which in turn would facilitate understanding when and where PVE programs are advancing the SDG 16 goals and where programmatic synergies between the two agendas could be enhanced. This includes:

   a. Updating its PVE guidelines and further populating the ODA Casebook on Conflict, Peace, and Security activities to include more varied examples of PVE assistance to provide donors greater clarity on the specific activities that fit within the PVE guidelines and to facilitate the identification and sharing of both good and bad PVE practices;

   b. Assigning a Creditor Reporting System "code" to PVE in its databases to enable the Secretariat to gather data on how much OECD members are spending on PVE (as part of their ODA-eligible expenditures), where the money is being spent, and on what types of specific activities;

   c. Leveraging its program evaluation, peer review, and networking tools for purposes of improving the quality and effectiveness of PVE aid.

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65 See note 20, Rosand, Eric and Emily Winterbotham, et al, "A Roadmap to Progress."

ANNEX

PVE in action: Examples of UNDP's work on PVE and its relevance to SDG 16

UNDP implements PVE-specific projects in 34 countries: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Guinea Bissau, Indonesia, Jordon, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, the Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkmenistan Uganda, and Uzbekistan.

UNDP's PVE efforts put SDG 16's goals to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels" into action by focusing on supporting Member States to develop the institutional capabilities to govern diverse communities; providing services to diverse populations through inclusive and participatory processes that engage people in design and delivery of those services; and in prevention efforts more broadly. The following country examples demonstrate how UNDP's PVE programmes put SDG 16 into action.

Kosovo

UNDP supported the Government of Kosovo to research,[66] develop, and implement a National Strategy on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, in a process that engaged entities from across government agencies, civil society, religious organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. As part of these efforts, UNDP supported the development of related institutional functions necessary to ensure that the plan is implemented at the local level. This included supporting Municipal Community Safety Councils in developing safe community plans based on crime audits and problem analyses, and inclusive referral mechanisms,[67] through which participants — which include local authorities, police, local communities (including religious leaders), psychologists, representatives from the education sector and social welfare services — identify early warning signs of radicalization, assess the nature and extent of these threats, and the most appropriate institutional processes to address them. Individuals identified as being at risk of radicalization — or foreign terrorist fighters seeking to reintegrate as contributing members of society — receive a tailor-made package of support, which mainly consists of employment assistance, religious education, social welfare support, family counselling, and psychosocial support. To boost youth involvement in the summer of 2017, the municipality organized a consultation with young people to raise their awareness about the Mechanism and to gather their inputs and ideas. UNDP also supported the development of a Teacher's Manual on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, to help teachers participate in early identification of radicalization among students.

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66 This included preliminary research (baseline assessment at national and municipal levels) to identify conditions leading to radicalization and gender-disaggregated data on returned foreign fighters, and innovative data collection efforts to support monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy's implementation. UNDP also collected gender disaggregated data on returned foreign fighters.
67 Kosovo's first Referral Mechanism was established by UNDP in cooperation with the municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Since research identified limited economic opportunities as an issue that led to the rise of foreign fighters to Syria, Kosovo's Central and Local Youth Councils teamed up with UNDP and UN Volunteers to run a youth employment project in five municipalities in Kosovo. The Councils view their work as directly related to wider efforts to address local root causes of violent extremism. In each of the municipalities, up to 20 young people receive skills and employment training in a sector of their choice, typically one in which the municipality has a comparative advantage. Following the training, the Councils provide seed funding to the group to jointly start up initiatives. Though relatively small-scale, the project has had success in generating income for participants, which in turn has garnered the interest of young people for a second round of training.

Finally, in addition to these PVE-specific initiatives, UNDP supports complementary initiatives that support the success of the National Strategy on Prevention of Violent Extremism, and realization of SDG 16 indicators. For example:

- Small arms control, firearms, and explosives risks mitigation, including through efforts to increase trust in the police, crime prevention, reduction of demand for weapons, local root causes for radicalization, and the impact of weapons and radicalization on women and children as victims.
- Youth co-design (with government and civil society counterparts) of innovative solutions to address pollution and local environmental concerns.
- Members of diverse communities participate in a joint endeavor to rehabilitate, renovate, and beautify religious and cultural sites, while building trust, tolerance, understanding, and respect between them.
- Justice and security sector actors develop capacity to address structural and proximate drivers of violent extremism such as corruption, availability of firearms, lack of legal literacy, and capacity to access justice.
- Local governance structures through which households jointly agree on their priorities, present these to government officials, and agree on strategies to meet their needs. These civil society-supported structures aim to ensure that local people's voices are heard in decision-making processes, and that provided services respond to their needs.
- Economic empowerment measures which have helped thousands of people to achieve economic dependence and provide for their families through on-the-job training, wage subsidies, self-employment grants, and internship schemes.
- Support to media coverage of development challenges — including structural drivers of violent extremism — such as corruption, poverty, discrimination, and human rights has helped to elicit accountability for action to address these issues. While media and press freedom in the region has regressed, press freedom in Kosovo has risen (from 90th in 2016 to 75th in 2019).

These complementary programmes also prioritized women and youth participation, supporting meaningful engagement and belonging within a process to make Kosovo a better place for everyone. Civil society organizations have either a lead or contributing role in all of them.

Cameroon

The complex humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding challenges and regional dimension of Boko Haram necessitate a regional, holistic approach involving the four countries of the Lake Chad basin — Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria—across sectors of government and development specialists. UNDP's PVE project in Cameroon builds on the success of national programming on PVE, coordinates the national elements of two regional projects for stabilization and PVE in the Boko Haram-affected areas around Lake Chad, and focuses efforts at the community-level, mainly in the Far North region worst affected by the Lake Chad Basin crisis.

UNDP's PVE programme's approach incorporates a number of key elements: 1) Re-structuring and integrating smaller-scale projects into a multi-dimensional response to reach more beneficiaries and bring tangible change, given the extent of participation and level of engagement necessary to effectively prevent VE. 2) Targeting those who are at risk of being left behind: women, children, and youth in host communities, and whose life chances can be transformed through their active participation in C/PVE programming. Also, minority tribes and clans; returnees, internally-displaced persons, and refugees; those living in ungoverned areas; those who have already been radicalized or who are part of violent extremist groups as foot soldiers, recruiters, funders, advocates, facilitators, and indirect supporters. 3) Adopting a rights-based approach that focuses on building the capacity of state authorities and communities to discuss, identify, and implement strategies to prevent violent extremism, including through dialogue processes that take into account the voices of marginalized persons. 4) Promoting a whole-of-society approach by working across government—in partnership with 15 national Ministries (lead Ministries are Economy, Planning, and Regional Development; and Territorial Administration), as well as elected and appointed bodies at the national and local level, political parties and groups, traditional leaders, security providers, CSOs, faith-based organizations, academia, and national and local media. The project prioritizes CSOs—especially women- and youth-led organizations' engagement in local governance processes.

Bangladesh

UNDP's Partnerships for a Tolerant and Inclusive Bangladesh (PTIB) is a multi-year initiative to understand and prevent violent extremism in Bangladesh. It responds to the Secretary-General's call for every country to develop a coherent and contextual strategy to prevent violent extremism, while reaffirming the need for inclusive institutions, transparent politics, and a commitment to fundamental human rights. In line with this spirit of SDG 16, PTIB seeks to:

- Build local research capacity into possible drivers of extremism, and integrate those findings into project activities and national, regional, and global PVE discussions. By helping to develop the evidence-base for effective policy and action in this way, the project supports implementation of SDG 16.6.
- Develop a range of targeted online and offline citizen and government engagement activities for a diverse range of stakeholders to have a meaningful voice. These engagement activities focus on youth, women, and vulnerable groups, and aim to enhance inclusivity and tolerance. Key activities include:
- A database platform, Bangladesh Peace Observatory Facility, launched as a joint effort with the Centre for Genocide Studies of the University of Dhaka, and in partnership with development organizations, government institutions, academia, CSOs, and the media. The Peace Observatory aims to fill the knowledge gap that has so far restricted these groups from effectively discussing and addressing the obstacles to peace. To date, limited data systems have failed to highlight the full range trends over time, location, and impact of violence. Policy and practice have been limited by this gap, and the platform has been established to provide data, mapping analysis, research, and education opportunities to better understand the state of violence and its narratives in the country and guide effective policy responses. It seeks to create one common platform that will help make better public policy decisions, tailored interventions and programming, enhanced research and effective advocacy campaigning for social cohesion and peace based on evidence, data, research, and critical analysis. The Peace Observatory is working on the principle of "open data" as a platform freely available to everyone to use without restrictions (SDG 16.10).
- In partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, UNDP is engaged in promoting young people's digital literacy to improve their capacity to become more digitally aware online, and build resistance to divisive, exclusionary, and violent rhetoric. Though few Bangladeshis interact with extremist content online, there are concerns that these numbers will rise as millions of Bangladeshis gain access to the Internet each year. As a preventative measure framed by Bangladesh's ongoing commitment to the implementation of SDG 16, the initiative is harnessing the creativity of young people by engaging them in hackathons to produce digital platforms promoting tolerant, inclusive visions of Bangladesh. The initiative is building a network of activists and entrepreneurs to sustain action – both online and offline – and expanding to regions outside of the capital.

- In partnership with Google, co-sponsored by Facebook and the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Technology, and organized by social enterprise Affinis Labs, PTIB hosts the Digital Khichuri Challenge: a digital storytelling competition to accelerate achievement of the SDGs by promoting a peaceful and inclusive society. The competition celebrates Bangladesh's rich, celebrated tradition of storytelling and history of coexistence and pluralism. Selected teams are invited to imagine and create new digital stories and online campaigns that can promote the strength of Bangladesh's diversity and promote peace. The winning team won for their innovative idea of using an online game with a superhero theme to stop "fake news." The second prize was awarded for ideas on Artificial Intelligence and Counter Narrative, respectively. As part of the Challenge, UNDP hosted "Peace Talk Café," a dialogue for youth and speakers from diverse backgrounds, conceived to underline the fact that building peace in not only the responsibility of technical specialists, rather the youth has a strong role to play. The dialogue explored the role of creativity, art, and culture as a weapon against violent extremism. Van Nguyen, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Bangladesh: "If we want to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 16, which is 'Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions', we need to bring peace in every sphere of life including social media and digital space. Peace Talk Café is an initiative to give youth a platform to discuss this issue and work for a peaceful and tolerant society….When your message creates harm, it is no longer free speech, it is just hate speech and when you see hatred on social media, do your part to change that, your message of positivity can certainly make an impact."

Tunisia

UNDP provides institutional support for the establishment of effective whole-of-government mechanisms for the prevention of violent extremism in Tunisia. To this end, the project is supporting government entities involved in implementation of the PVE NAP, which is coordinated by the National Counter-Terrorism Commission.[68] The project focused on building capacity to mainstream human rights into their strategic planning process, and all aspects of their coordination and leadership on Tunisia's P/CVE efforts—including development of a monitoring framework (with a budget for its operationalization) to measure implementation and the impact of identified interventions within the NAP.

Support to enable the number of government institutions leading this effort to work closely with a broad range of partners and stakeholders (including the parliament, independent bodies, civil society, the private sector, and development partners, and independent oversight bodies,) to jointly identify priority issues and ensure that they are later implemented in a participatory, transparent, and concerted manner. By strengthening the involvement of civil society and local actors in fostering a whole-of-society approach to PVE, this effort aimed to put the spirit of SDG 16 — on effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions underpinned by participatory processes — into action. This element of the project is centred on the notion that robust communication and public awareness on various elements of PVE (policies, research, etc.) is central to promoting transparency and accountability, and builds public trust at large (i.e., SDG 16.10 on access to information). To strengthen the engagement of civil society and the general public on P/CVE, the project supported the government to develop a PVE communication and awareness plan based on a 2017 baseline survey to ascertain public perceptions of the threat of VE, public confidence in the national security apparatus, motivations to join extremist groups, and strategies to strengthen anti-extremist efforts. The communications plan involves: media engagement and facilitation of public consultation processes through town hall meetings and creation of a national CSO platform on P/CVE. The national CSO platform is designed to raise awareness at the local level, strengthen information exchange and learning between local and national levels, unify civil society voices vis-à-vis the government, when defining and later implementing the PVE NAP, and ensure stronger collaboration with the women and youth organizations whose ownership is needed to support implementation of the plan. These efforts have proven successful: so far, the project has supported a number of civil society initiatives aimed at strengthening the role of rural women in PVE (517 women have benefitted from economic empowerment initiatives, 251 women were trained in dialogue and conflict management, and 68 female members of local security committees became facilitators of dialogue and consensus building in communities).
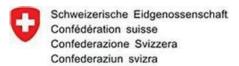
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68 The primary project partner is the National Counter-Terrorism Commission (CNLCT), which is composed of representatives of 14 government ministries.

Parallel to this national-level programming, the project supports local authorities in the Medenine region to create their own platform to identify and implement multi-stakeholder long-term actions on PVE that are aligned with the priorities set out in the National Action Plan, and adapted to the local context. The project supports local interventions to address the root causes of VE by promoting human security, inclusive dialogue and conflict prevention, strengthening good governance and the protection of human rights, community engagement, youth and women's empowerment, and generating employment. A key organizing principle of this pilot and the national component is that to achieve its objective to prevent VE, the project must support inclusive and accountable mechanisms that bring together different actors and allow for concerted and evidence-based action while promoting a human rights-based approach to P/CVE. In October 2018, a High-Level meeting, held as part of the Medinine pilot was attended by the country's President, the National Counter-Terrorism Commission, several regional leaders, representatives of civil society, UNDP, and Swiss Cooperation. The workshop discussed and set in train the process of developing a local PVE action plan and a local partnership mechanism bringing together local authorities, the private sector, and CSOs. Around the same time, the National Counter-Terrorism Commission convened in Medenine for its first-ever meeting outside the capital.

UNDP also supports an initiative which helps to achieve SDG 16 indicators: the RESPECT Program (Redevabilité, sécurité et prévention de l'extrémisme violent pour les citoyennes et citoyens tunisiens - Accountability, Security, and Prevention of Violent Extremism for Tunisian Citizens), which assists the state and society in developing policies and reforming the security sector to contain factors that can encourage VE.