



Evaluation

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CREST SECURITY REVIEW

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FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

Welcome to this issue of the CREST Security Review which focuses on counterterrorism and counter-extremism evaluation. The articles reflect the challenges and opportunities of understanding ‘what works’ in this field, and describe recent developments in what is a vibrant field of research and practice.

Articles cover macro questions, such as Erika Brady’s perspective (p. 4) on key considerations when trying to understand the impact of national and international counterterrorism strategies. Organisational-level processes are addressed in Daniel Koehler (p. 6) and his colleagues’ article on the quality control and management practices developed by Competence Center Against Extremism in Baden-Wuerttemberg Germany (konex). Whilst efforts to understand individual-level dynamics are covered by Sian Watson and Jonathan Kenyon’s piece (p. 10) on how to measure change in terrorism offenders.

We bring together different perspectives on evaluation, including practitioners such as Kiren Vadher (p. 14) who highlights the importance of evaluation for accountability, effective decision making, and identifying and managing risks. Matt Allen and Andrea Walker (p. 16) draw insights from the broader field of implementation science to examine the factors which influence the sustainability of community-based violence prevention programmes.

The place of gender equality and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in programme evaluation is covered by Jessica White and Isabella Vogel’s analysis (p. 18) which argues that, as part of a commitment to gender mainstreaming, counterterrorism and military operations need to adopt an intersectional gender lens to fully understand the impact of interventions on all aspects of society.

Several articles focus on programmes to counter and prevent violent extremism. Irina van der Vet and Leena Malkki (p. 20) draw on their experience with the INDEED

project to set out five principles programmers should foreground when trying to nurture an evaluation culture. Adrian Cherney (p. 22) outlines the pros and cons of five methods for evaluating the outcome of CVE programmes. Whilst Michael J. Williams and Tim Hulse (p. 26) share their experience of using shared metrics to develop ‘cross-project comparisons and portfolio-level insights.’

In an article on evaluation in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention programmes, James Lewis and Sarah Marsden (p. 30) argue for a change in emphasis, to focus less on asking “what works” to understanding “how programmes work.” Whilst Gordon Clubb (p. 32) examines the delicate balance between transparency, communication and evaluation, describing the potential pitfalls of overly transparent communication in sensitive security contexts. Bianca Slocombe and Rachel Monaghan (p. 34) describe the EVIL DONE framework for interpreting terrorist targeting, and Ardi Janjeva (p. 36) explains the important role evaluation can play in identifying and mitigating risks from generative AI.

Together the articles reflect the breadth and depth of research and practice in the field, highlighting the challenges that still need to be addressed, and the advances made to date.

Finally, addressing the broader aspects of security research, Nick Dale (p. 38) outlines the security risks associated with current vetting methods. For further research underpinning these articles and additional reading, refer to the ‘Read More’ section.

Sarah Marsden
Guest Editor, CSR.



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ERIKA BRADY

KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN EVALUATING COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGIES

This article outlines four key areas that should be considered when attempting to evaluate counterterrorism strategies.

Evaluating counterterrorism (CT) strategies is a daunting task. While both academics and practitioners acknowledge the value in being able to understand the impact of these strategies, their complexity, perceived scarcity of high quality and independent data, and methodological challenges means the field lacks an understanding of what works in CT. This article outlines some key areas that should be considered when attempting to evaluate CT strategies.



1 APPLYING A HOLISTIC (OR WHOLE OF STRATEGY) APPROACH

CT is complex and multifaceted. Strategies need to protect the public in a range of ways and at multiple levels. While some valuable research has explored the various programmes and activities of CT strategies, there is a need for research that explores CT holistically. By understanding how the different facets of the strategy function and interact, the impact of the strategy as a whole can be better understood.

Taking a holistic approach is very challenging in its scope. It requires an understanding of the range of data sources that might be relevant, and an appreciation of the variations in quality and applicability of such data. Additionally, a range of methodologies can be applied through qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods research. However, the value of the holistic approach should be apparent when public inquiries following a successful terrorist attack are considered as a holistic example of best practice and real-world impact.

The public expects a clear understanding of what went wrong following a terrorist attack, and this is best achieved through thorough investigation of the agencies, individuals and strategies which were relied on in the response to such an attack. For this reason, it is usual for public inquiries to take place in the UK to better understand what happened and provide transparency to the event. These inquiries typically involve interviewing the individuals involved in responding to terrorist attacks as well as those involved in preventing them.

The UK's CT strategy, CONTEST, consists of four pillars (known as the four Ps): Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. A wide range of actors operate within these four pillars – first

responders, security firms, transport agencies, counter-radicalisation teams, the intelligence community to name a few – and following an attack, failings need to be identified, best practices highlighted, and lessons identified for onward learning. If this multi-faceted approach is applied to understand individual terrorist attacks, it makes sense that understanding the effectiveness of CT strategies also requires a holistic approach.



2 QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF DATA

Given the public perception that CT relies on intelligence and classified data, there is often an assumption that publicly accessible data is limited. This is not necessarily the case. A significant amount of useful, public facing data is available which can assist in the evaluation of CT strategies. However, it remains important to interrogate the quality of this data. While government reports might provide updates on progress and may include numerical data in support, this data is not always contextualised. For example, when a government states that it has prevented a certain amount of people from travelling to conflict zones as foreign terrorist fighters, they might omit the wider data relating to those who did manage to travel, which makes it difficult to know if the government figures are actually good and an indicator of effectiveness.

Questions around bias within the data and the rigorousness applied to methodological approaches also exist. Some of this is understandable given the range of policies and government departments which generate and present such data, and certainly there are also examples of good analysis and data quality in some instances. However, in areas of CT dominated by industry, the complex and sometimes unsystematic way that this data is collected and presented can make information more challenging to understand and analyse effectively.

Transparency in the data selection process is essential to address some of these issues and there needs to be a clear purpose for analysing the data in order to evaluate CT. In other words, each variable explored needs to contribute actively to an overall understanding of the effectiveness of the strategy. The challenge is in treating the various kinds of data to make it comparable and useful to the goal. Both quantitative data (numerical) and

qualitative data (text/spoken word) are equally important in creating a full picture of the issue and so a mixed methods approach is warranted. For example, numbers are measurable and useful when trying to understand increases and decreases in terrorism-related arrests and prosecutions, but without the context which can be provided in text sources, the value of the analysis and thus the evaluation itself is limited.



3 IDENTIFYING METRICS AND MEASURABLES - CAN AI HELP?

A key issue that's needed to explore the effectiveness of CT strategies relates to valid and reliable metrics. This is particularly the case when taking a whole of strategy approach to evaluation. Ensuring that metrics are measurable and meaningful is a challenge and requires the application of a variety of tools. One such approach would be the use of a research team or expert panel of researchers. Another would be to use AI to more efficiently explore the options. Using AI to identify metrics, the applicability of these metrics to the relevant topic, and the sources which might supply the data for these metrics allows the researcher to explore such a broad and complex strategy in a more effective way (this researcher is currently exploring this area). It cannot replace the final decision-making around evaluating CT strategies, but it can help support and structure the analysis.



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The criteria for appropriate metrics depends on the type of CT strategy and the overall focus of the research. Taking a thematic approach is useful where key characteristics can be identified based on qualitative analysis which may then be refined and enhanced through the use of AI. This enables the research to develop a framework for the analysis of CT at a strategy-wide level, at which point AI can help identify appropriate measurables (both direct and proxy) to best understand the issues at hand. Through such research, metrics relating to transparency, resilience and ideological principals can be identified and sources collected.

The UK's CT strategy, for example, has the overarching goal of reducing "the risk from terrorism to the UK, its citizens and interests overseas, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence." While many factors contribute to the effectiveness of CT strategies, the population's belief that a

government is working appropriately to safeguard against the risk of attack is also important and yet examples of research that combines public perspectives with hard data is elusive. Identifying useful metrics in some of these areas is challenging. However, an example of the category of 'public trust and confidence' could be measured through public opinion polls or surveys which explore public approval of CT policies or public perception of fairness in relation to CT operations.



4 CLARITY OF OUTPUTS OF THE RESEARCH: WHO WILL USE THE RESULTS AND HOW?

Finally, it is important to understand what outputs are required for the potential audiences of the evaluation. Given the complexity of CT strategies, different outputs are likely to be relevant. Academic papers and contributions to academic conferences and wider research projects are critical to ensure in-depth theoretical and methodological approaches to the topic are explored and provide enhanced understanding. At the same time, easy-to-digest reports with actionable findings in the short and medium terms, as well as presentations to key groups is another useful output. The development of frameworks for evaluating CT which can be used by practitioners and academics, datasets which can be accessed by the public and potentially a global CT index which can be produced either annually or bi-annually to explore, compare and evaluate CT strategies globally are examples of some relevant outputs for all audiences.

The research on evaluating CT strategies needs to be targeted at multiple audiences in order to have the best impact. Therefore, the research needs to have real world and tangible impacts with clear and actionable outcomes and recommendations. This approach will help ensure that not only do we understand the effectiveness of CT strategies, but that we will also be able to identify lessons to be learned and best practice going forward. Keeping the lines of communication open between what has traditionally been seen as two very different audiences and understanding the intersection points will be important in enabling this.

These key areas for consideration when evaluating CT strategies are clearly challenging but provide significant opportunities for future research. Being open about these challenges and sharing best practice will ensure that the phenomenon of counterterrorism, the terrorist threat it addresses, and the wide range of tools available to best explore this area will contribute to transparency, accountability and learning going forward.

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DANIEL KOEHLER, VERENA FIEBIG & IRINA JUGL-KUNTZSCH

QUALITY CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PROGRAMMES: A GUIDELINE

This article outlines a comprehensive framework for quality control and management in countering violent extremism programmes (particularly disengagement, deradicalisation and desistance programmes), emphasising evidence-based practices, structured workflows, and continuous improvement for effective and sustainable interventions.

INTRODUCTION

Countering violent extremism (CVE) is a complex and critical task requiring precision, adaptability, and evidence-based practices. To ensure the effectiveness of CVE programmes, robust quality control and management systems must be implemented. This article outlines a comprehensive framework for structuring and managing quality assurance within CVE efforts, drawing on the scientific and operational principles utilised by the Competence Center Against Extremism in Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany (konex) at the State Bureau in Criminal Investigation (Landeskriminalamt).

The quality assurance cycle is designed as a continuous improvement process and comprises seven key components. These components are not hierarchical but are instead parts of a dynamic and mutually reinforcing network. Components I-IV pertain to the individual counselling level, i.e., case management, while Components V-VII address structural aspects of counselling activities and the programme in general.

The following article briefly outlines the various components of the quality assurance cycle developed at konex. The foundation for quality assurance in exit counselling at konex is the handbook “*Structural quality standards for work to intervene with and counter violent extremism.*”

BUILDING A SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION

At the core of quality assurance in CVE is a solid scientific, evidence base. Ideally, a CVE programme with high structural integrity should include a dedicated research division to accompany and complement operational counselling work. Within the quality assurance cycle, the scientific evidence base forms the core of all activities of the CVE programme and ensures the continuous evolution and adaptation to the evolving evidence and threat landscape.

“Within the quality assurance cycle, the scientific evidence base forms the core of all activities of the CVE programme and ensures the continuous evolution and adaptation to the evolving evidence and threat landscape.”



The key responsibilities for the research division or scientific core of the quality assurance cycle include:

- **Research and Development:** Conducting fundamental research on radicalisation and deradicalisation processes ensures that interventions are grounded in current knowledge. This includes for example informing the theory of change that is set for each client by the responsible counsellors and highlights the importance of combining scientific expertise and evidence with the day-to-day counselling work.
- **Monitoring of the State of the Art in CVE Research and Practice:** Continuous screening of relevant high quality empirical research pertaining to CVE counselling and exchange with other practitioners or researchers keeps the programme up to date with the latest developments in academic research and practitioner experiences in other countries or programmes.
- **Staff Training:** Professional onboarding and continuing education programmes enhance the expertise of personnel, focusing on topics such as extremist ideologies and intervention methodologies.
- **Evaluation and Adaptation:** Developing new counselling methods and continuously evaluating existing approaches ensures interventions remain effective and relevant.
- **Knowledge Dissemination:** Regular updates through training sessions, dedicated scheduled meetings, and tailored workshops integrate the latest research findings into exit counselling practices.
- **Innovation:** Initiating further development or adaptation processes within exit counselling (e.g., process workflows, impact theories, development of new operational areas, or reorientation of procedures), guided by the latest evidence base.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Internal evaluations, including final interviews with clients, provide critical insights for refining practices and methods.

This scientific grounding ensures that quality control measures are not only systematic but also adaptive to emerging challenges and evidence.

MODULE I: STANDARDISED INTAKE PROCESSES

For practical CVE counselling work, the first step in ensuring quality is implementing a **standardised intake process**. This can for example be done through an interview aiming to:

- Identify risk factors, needs, radicalisation drivers, and disengagement motivations.
- Describe the client's current life situation and everyday challenges.

- Facilitate method selection and intervention planning.
- Systematise the information gathering process to feed into risk management tools.

This standardised approach ensures that each client's needs are comprehensively assessed and documented, enabling tailored and effective interventions. Furthermore, this initial intake process provides the basic information and documentation to allow smooth transition between counselling teams should this be necessary. Supporting elements, such as initial telephone interview guides and data protection declarations, further enhance this process' rigour.

“Effective CVE programmes rely on regular risk assessments to track client progress and prioritise interventions.”

MODULE II: REGULAR RISK ASSESSMENTS INFORM RISK AND CASE MANAGEMENT

Effective CVE programmes rely on **regular risk assessments** to track client progress and prioritise interventions. Used for example biannually on each client, these assessments can use one of a variety of tools (e.g., VERA-2R, TRAP-18, ERG 22+) and serve two primary purposes:

1. **Risk and Protective Factors:** Providing a standardised measure of these factors enables systematic counselling and intervention planning.
2. **High-Risk Identification:** Highlighting cases that require immediate attention and notifying relevant authorities when necessary.

To ensure accuracy, staff must receive ongoing training on using the risk assessment and management tool employed by the programme. This systematic approach ensures consistency and reliability across all cases. It is important to note that CVE programmes use risk assessment tools not primarily to predict violent behaviour, which is often the task of investigative units within the police or intelligence agencies, but rather to manage and monitor risk and protective factors for their clients in a comparable and easy to handle format. Furthermore, using these tools allows CVE counsellors to quickly identify those risk factors that need prioritised attention and to select the most appropriate counselling methods or network partners.

MODULE III: MONITORING CASE PROGRESS

Monitoring tools provide an ongoing mechanism to evaluate client progress across key life domains. **Monitoring Tools** aim to:

- Analyse clients' environments and identify potential problem areas.
- Document progress or setbacks to guide counselling priorities and goals.
- Define case-specific criteria for successful disengagement.

Employing a tool with a clear structure enhances transparency and accountability in the counselling process.

In contrast to risk assessment tools, monitoring tools focus on the positive reintegration of a client into society and the individual strength of long term protective factors, for example based on Kate Barrelle's Pro-Integration Model.



MODULE IV: STRUCTURED CONCLUSION OF COUNSELLING

A structured conclusion to the counselling process is essential for gathering insights and reinforcing long-term outcomes. Konex for example employs final voluntary interviews conducted by researchers (not the counsellors) with those clients ending the counselling process, to:

- Provide client feedback on the counselling experience.
- Enhance understanding of radicalisation and deradicalisation processes.
- Contribute anonymised data to the academic community.

This final step ensures continuous learning and improvement while respecting client confidentiality. Each client of a CVE programme should have the opportunity to provide positive or negative feedback to the programme in a safe and anonymous way.

MODULE V: STANDARDISED WORKFLOWS

Standardisation is crucial for consistency and efficiency in CVE programmes. Each programme should ideally have a permanent, ongoing and regular review between all units to identify and refine workflows, focusing on:

- Eliminating redundancies.
- Streamlining overlapping processes.
- Developing protocols for complex cases, such as clients with psychological conditions.

Standardised workflows ensure seamless case handovers and comparability of success and failure criteria, enhancing overall programme efficiency.

MODULE VI: INTERVISION AND SUPERVISION

Quality assurance extends beyond client-facing activities to include internal processes that support staff well-being and professional growth. Regular **'intervision' (internal collegial group reflection) and supervision (guided by external experts) sessions** achieve this by:

- Facilitating peer discussions to address challenges and identify solutions.
- Providing external expert-led supervision to foster accountability and reflection.
- Promoting a supportive and collaborative work environment.

This culture of reflection and continuous improvement is essential for maintaining high standards in CVE interventions.

MODULE VII: EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

Despite best efforts, crises such as a violent act perpetrated by an active or recently released client of a CVE programme may occur. A **robust emergency response plan** is vital for addressing serious incidents involving current or former clients. Such plans should focus on:

- Ensuring a professional and unified response.
- Maintaining organisational capacity during crises.
- Establishing clear communication pathways internally and externally.
- Provide all relevant information to the responsible investigation and threat management authorities in order to contain potential additional risks.

“The integration of research and practical application is a cornerstone of quality assurance in CVE programmes.”

The plans should include detailed scenarios, reporting protocols, and contact templates, ensuring that all responses are timely, coherent, and effective. The existence and regular training of all personnel in the specifics of the crisis management protocols also function to build trust with policy makers and the public, as they clearly signal that the CVE programme in question has effective contingency plans in place.

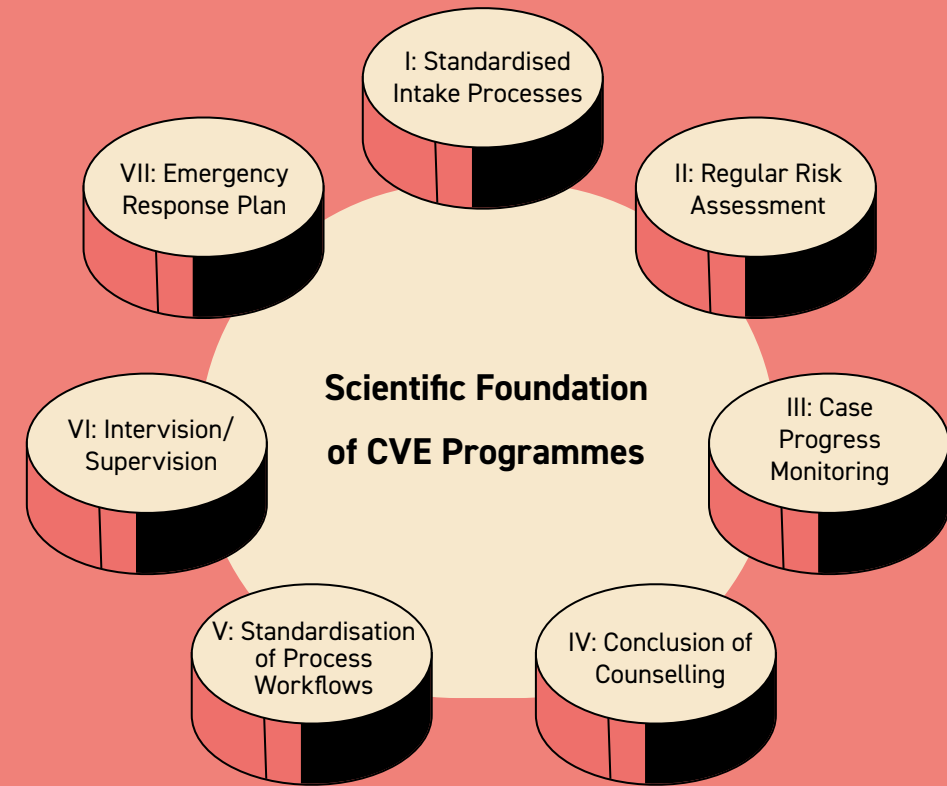


Figure 1: CVE Quality Management Cycle

KEY LESSONS

Bridging Science and Practice

The integration of research and practical application is a cornerstone of quality assurance in CVE programmes. Konex's approach demonstrates how continuous learning, structured workflows, and systematic evaluation can drive meaningful progress in countering violent extremism. The reliance on evidence-based methods ensures that interventions are not only effective but also scalable and adaptable to diverse contexts.

Practical Implications for CVE Programmes

The structured approach outlined here offers several key takeaways for other CVE programmes :

1. **Invest in Research and Training:** A scientifically grounded programme is more likely to produce sustainable results.
2. **Standardise Key and Regular Processes:** Consistency across cases enhances accountability and comparability while allowing flexibility and innovation for those components of the counselling that are individual and context dependent.
3. **Monitor and Evaluate Continuously:** Ongoing assessments provide the data needed for evidence-based decision-making.

4. **Support Staff Development:** Intervision and supervision are critical for maintaining a skilled and resilient workforce.

5. **Prepare for Emergencies:** A well-defined response plan ensures professionalism and operational continuity in crises.

CONCLUSION

The fight against violent extremism in the form of disengagement, deradicalisation and desistance counselling requires more than reactive measures; it demands a proactive, structured, and evidence-based approach to quality control and management. By embedding scientific principles, standardising processes, and fostering continuous improvement, CVE programmes can achieve meaningful and lasting impact. The quality assurance cycle outlined in this article provides a blueprint for others in the field to enhance their effectiveness and contribute to a safer, more resilient society.

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SIAN WATSON & JONATHAN KENYON

MEASURING CHANGE IN TERRORISM OFFENDERS: CHALLENGES AND WAYS FORWARD

Changes in risk and protective factors can signal disengagement, enabling risk management resources to be allocated where they are needed most.

The majority of individuals detained as a result of engagement in terrorism will be released into the community. To ensure resources are targeted where they are required most to manage this risk, we need to establish which individuals are disengaging, reducing the need for intensive risk management. This article considers how we measure the progress individuals make towards disengagement and how this can be sustained long-term. Measuring these changes also contributes to evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions for terrorist offending.

“ Measuring change enables us to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and case management approaches in supporting successful reintegration. ”

WHY IS MEASURING CHANGE IMPORTANT?

Whilst there have been individuals who have reoffended on release, there are many more success stories; the majority of people successfully disengage from terrorism and reintegrate into society. Yet, their risk assessments often remain high. Assessments of risk typically combine the likelihood of the outcome with the potential severity. In relation to terrorist offending, the outcome is so unacceptable that even where the likelihood is low, risk judgements remain high to reflect the potential severity. This creates a challenge for decision makers being asked to consider release when risk judgments are not reflective of the changes an individual has made.

Evidencing and communicating these changes is essential to avoid inflated risk assessments, and to reinforce change. Measuring change enables us to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and case management approaches in supporting successful reintegration, and to identify those individuals requiring more intensive support.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES WITH MEASURING CHANGE?

Challenges exist with how we measure change for individuals convicted of all types of offences. The most common approach is to evidence change through assessment of reoffending risk; repurposing these risk assessments as measures of change. However, outcomes such as reoffending are rare, and very few risk assessment frameworks have demonstrated responsiveness to change in research.

In the risk averse field of counterterrorism, there are high levels of controls and restrictions on individuals. These hinder demonstrations of change or may misrepresent them as adaptations to the current environment rather than as results of internal shifts. Therefore, measures of change should be built into our risk assessments and account for context.

WHAT DOES CHANGE LOOK LIKE?

Structured professional judgement protocols focus on identifying evidence of risk factors, deploying a *positive test strategy*. This leads risk assessors to seek information to confirm the presence of risk factors rather than disconfirm, potentially neglecting evidence of change. To counteract this, practitioners in HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) are guided to actively seek

counter-evidence or evidence of change through examples provided within risk assessment frameworks as to what change might look like. This encourages a more balanced assessment of risk.

Practitioners are also guided to assess the individual's strengths by recording evidence of protective or risk mitigating factors. Protective factors are not simply the opposite of risk factors. Broad composite factors identified from the literature guide practitioners as to what may be protective or risk mitigating, acknowledging these will be individualised. Whilst there is

“ ...the majority of people successfully disengage from terrorism and reintegrate into society. ”

limited empirical evidence for specific protective factors within the current literature, there is evidence that taking into account protective factors can improve the accuracy of overall risk assessments.

Protective factors can distinguish non-offending individuals from those who commit terrorist offences, even under similar stressors. Indeed, it is often the loss of protective factors that enables extremist risk to manifest as terrorism. Increasing protective factors through interventions correlates with reduced recidivism over sustained periods. Therefore, building on strengths is a focus within HMPPS interventions for the terrorist cohort. Marsden and Lee (2022) set out how strengths-based models can be applied with terrorist cases to support them in meeting their needs in pro-social ways. This can then be reflected in the risk assessment.

Risk assessments generally conclude with hypotheses as to potential risk scenarios, emphasising worst-case outcomes. However, this can obscure the more common scenario of disengagement. HMPPS risk assessments for the terrorist cohort

therefore also consider disengagement scenarios, hypothesising how protective factors, key hooks for change, and new skills may mitigate risk in the presence of potential destabilisers in the community. This scenario planning will highlight contextual changes needed to support sustained disengagement and provide a clear picture of what change looks like for an individual based on their strengths and values.

“ ...it is often the loss of protective factors that enables extremist risk to manifest as terrorism. ”

WHAT IS SUFFICIENT CHANGE?

Determining how much change is “enough” to prevent reoffending is highly context-dependent. Any decision to reduce external controls must consider the impact on others, such as the public, the individual, victims, and professionals working with them. Thresholds for change will vary by situation. However, it is important to take into account the trajectory the individual is on over time. For some, there are few risk factors present from the outset, therefore this is not indicative of change. For others, reductions in a number of risk factors alongside increases in protective factors suggests meaningful progress. This emphasises the need to establish a baseline and assess change over time, rather than relying on cross-sectional assessments.

“Determining how much change is “enough” to prevent reoffending is highly context-dependent.

Regular updates to risk assessments will communicate the trajectory of change. This is rarely linear and may include lapses along the way as changes are embedded. Where lapses occur, this is not necessarily because change was not genuine. An individual may lapse when faced with high levels of restrictions, social stigma, and destabilisers on release, therefore contextual factors may impact the sustainability of change. Sufficient change will be sustainable across time and context.

AUTHENTICITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF CHANGES

Conforming to social expectations helps people adapt to different contexts. However, within the criminal justice system this can be perceived as impression management, whether deliberate or not. Adapting to the prison environment may include presenting in a way that is conducive to release. Assessing whether changes are situationally adaptive or reflective of genuine, sustained change is challenging. Whilst deliberate deception remains a concern, it is not prevalent based on current evidence. Focusing on consistency and generalisability of behaviour informs assessments of authentic change and decisions to reduce controls.

APPROACHES TO MEASURE CHANGE

The approaches outlined focus on improving how we measure change within terrorist risk assessment in HMPPS. This includes:

- Capturing baseline levels of risk and protective factors
- Seeking evidence of change in risk and protective factors
- Examining the trajectory of change over time
- Hypothesising what disengagement may look like

These approaches require research and evaluation to establish how responsive to change risk assessments are. Research will need to identify a broader set of outcomes beyond reoffending alone to assess change.

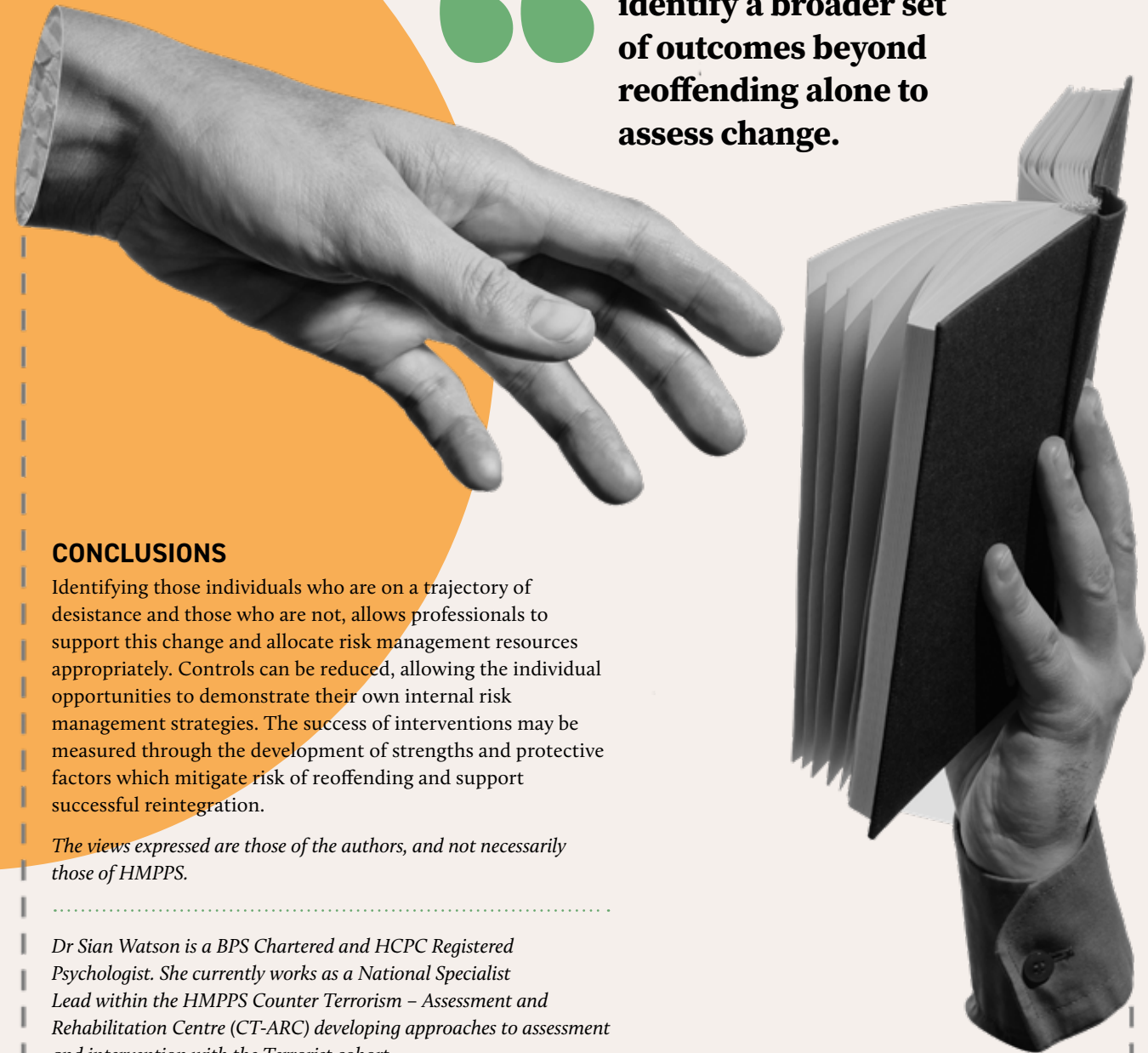
Additional approaches to measuring change within wider case management should also be considered. This may include shorter-term measures of engagement with supervision, or individualised collaborative behaviour monitoring. These can be tailored to ensure agreed goals are feasible within the constraints of the individual’s current environment.

APPROACHES TO MAINTAINING CHANGE

Maintaining change on release is a challenge. Individuals convicted of terrorist offences must navigate high levels of restrictions and stigma in the community. Cherney and Koehler (2023) suggest sustainable desistance is underpinned by changes in identity and cognitive reasoning which whilst necessary, are not sufficient. They add that the availability of viable options in the community and external support will determine whether these changes will be sustainable. The evidence regarding psychological interventions in custody indicates that those with follow up support in the community achieve the greatest reduction in reoffending rates.

His Majesty’s Inspectorate found better outcomes for individuals on Probation when practitioners support them to build on their strengths. Following changes made through interventions in custody, professional and community support will be required to overcome the barriers the individual faces to reintegration, and allow them to continue to build on their strengths to protect against future risk.

“Research will need to identify a broader set of outcomes beyond reoffending alone to assess change.



CONCLUSIONS

Identifying those individuals who are on a trajectory of desistance and those who are not, allows professionals to support this change and allocate risk management resources appropriately. Controls can be reduced, allowing the individual opportunities to demonstrate their own internal risk management strategies. The success of interventions may be measured through the development of strengths and protective factors which mitigate risk of reoffending and support successful reintegration.

The views expressed are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of HMPPS.

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KIREN VADHER

EVALUATING IN COMPLEX POLICY ENVIRONMENTS: A PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Dr Kiren Vadher offers her top-tips on the evaluation of counterterrorism and security policy and programmes to support academics, consultants, or other practitioners who are involved in this workstream.

WHY EVALUATION IS VITAL

Evaluation is no longer a nice-to-have buzzword; it is vital. Evaluation helps us to identify the risks and benefits with any chosen programme or policy, and it guides important decisions such as 'Who will get the intervention and why?', 'How will the policy be funded, measured, and implemented?'. It therefore ensures accountability and allows organisations to respond to external scrutiny.

There is lots of guidance available on evaluation types (e.g., process, impact, economic), what you should evaluate (e.g., policies, programmes, people), and the methodologies you should adopt (e.g., contribution analysis, randomised controlled trials, economic assessments). However, in my opinion, there is a non-negotiable when it comes to evaluation irrespective of what approach you take and that is developing a Theory of Change. A term that is now part and parcel of our everyday language in policy development. But what is it and why do we need one?

A THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change explains how and why a desired change is expected to occur in a specific context. It links what a programme or initiative does to its expected outcomes, addressing the 'missing middle.'

Traditionally, a Theory of Change will capture the inputs that allow delivery of a set of activities, the outputs of those activities, the short or medium term effects (outcomes) of these outputs, and the long term change or impact of achieving your strategic objective.

However, they can be criticised as being too linear and simplistic. Often used interchangeably with the idea of a 'golden thread', theories of change can be over reliant on the logic of a programme from start to finish. They often assume that one thing directly leads to another, but as is often the case in issues like homelessness, poverty, or radicalisation, it's a little more complicated.

Evaluating programmes which are highly sensitive and sit across complex areas, have many challenges:

1. It is hard to define success in counterterrorism and prevention. Measuring things like the number of prevented attacks or the reduction in radicalisation is tricky and often lacks clear standards.
2. Reliable data is often hard to access due to security concerns, and the data available can be inconsistent, making it tough to draw solid conclusions.
3. Terrorism and violence are influenced by many social, political, and economic factors, making it hard to isolate the impact of a single action or intervention.
4. Counterterrorism policies are often rushed due to public and political pressure, leading to actions based on untested assumptions and lacking thorough evaluation.
5. The effects of counterterrorism measures may take years to show, complicating the evaluation process. Short-term assessments might not capture the full impact or genuine behavioural change.

...there is a non-negotiable when it comes to evaluation irrespective of what approach you take and that is developing a Theory of Change.

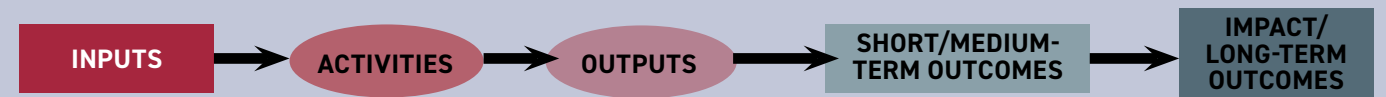


Fig 1: A Theory of Change diagram

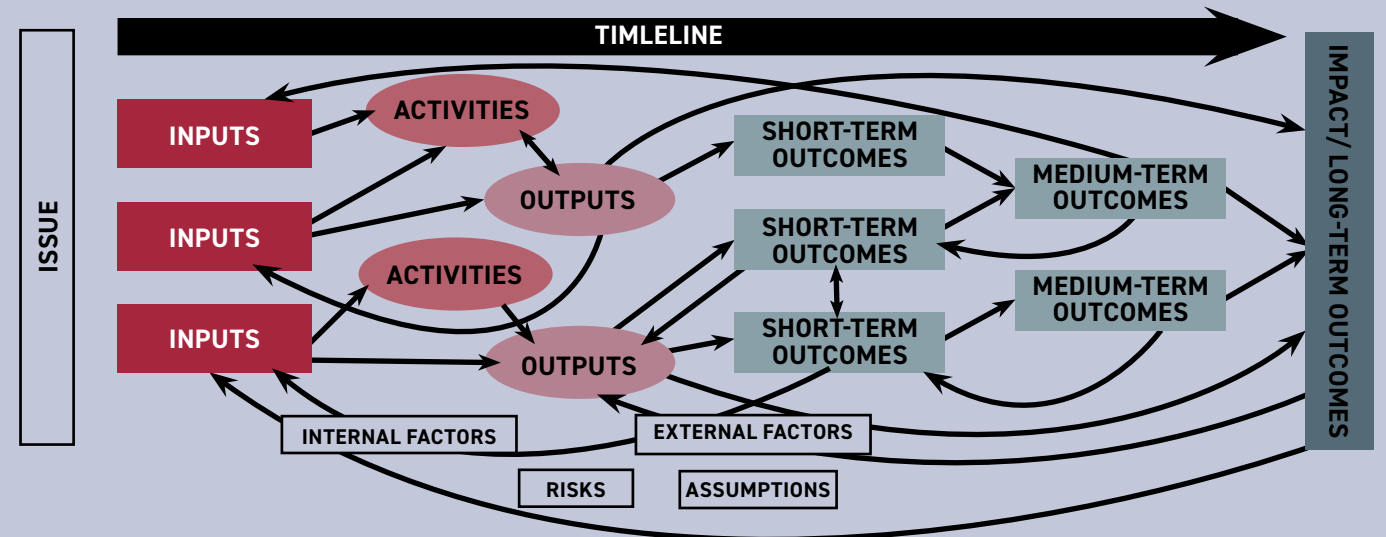


Fig 2: A more realistic Theory of Change diagram

HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS COMPLEXITY - TOP TIPS FROM A PRACTITIONER

Practitioners operating in these hard-to-measure policy areas will always need to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of their programmes and policies, and it is likely that they will continue to need independent support to do so.

Here are my top tips for individuals who are involved in evaluation projects:

1. Do not underestimate the power of a Theory of Change as a tool to help bring practitioners, academics and policy makers onto the same page.
2. Consider using a systems thinking approach. This allows us to look at the connections between different factors that could affect policy results.
3. Impact may not be defined to one area. For example, counterterrorism and security policies might also impact public safety, civil liberties, or international relations. Defining the scope and boundaries of evaluation is key to understanding the full extent of a policy's effect.
4. We need flexibility in complex policy areas. The unpredictable nature of social systems means that evaluation methods must allow for adaptation as new information becomes available or as conditions change. This is why early and continuous monitoring will help provide valuable feedback loops. Do not be afraid to go back and adapt.
5. Engaging with a range of stakeholders is essential – they provide critical insights into how policies are functioning on the ground, including whether there are any risks or unintended consequences that may be emerging.

Do not underestimate the power of a Theory of Change as a tool to help bring practitioners, academics, and policy makers onto the same page.

This is particularly important when dealing with vulnerable groups or communities. For example, a well-intended policy might inadvertently harm a particular group or sector.

6. Think like a practitioner. We will always ask the 'so what?' as well as the 'what next?'. Don't wait to be asked!

Can you help demonstrate this through a Theory of Change, articulate the complexities in evaluating, and provide options for evaluation? As a practitioner – if you give us the moon on a stick – we will take it, only to be disappointed that it was not actually feasible or realistic. So be honest. We know evaluations can be hard, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't give them a go. We need to build up our understanding of what works in these complex, hard-to-measure areas, so that we are on the front foot to develop proactive policies that have real-world impact.

The views expressed are those of the author, and not necessarily those of DSIT.

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MATT ALLEN & ANDREA WALKER

EVALUATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The field of implementation science provides insights that can inform the evaluation of community-based violence prevention programmes for long-term success.

Community-based violence prevention (CVP) programmes often receive seed funding from government bodies or philanthropic organisations, with the expectation that they will achieve long-term sustainability beyond initial funding cycles. Most discussions of sustainability focus on securing new funds.

“ While critical, funding is not the sole determinant of a programme’s enduring success.

While critical, funding is not the sole determinant of a programme’s enduring success. Insights from *implementation science*, an interdisciplinary field focused on translating evidence-based interventions into real-world practical effectiveness, reveal additional factors that increase the likelihood a programme endures. Understanding these factors has profound implications for evaluating CVP programmes.



Figure 1. Sustainability Factors

WHAT FACTORS PREDICT SUCCESSFUL SUSTAINMENT OF COMMUNITY-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES?

Sustaining CVP programmes depends on several interrelated factors that can be categorised into structural, process-related, and outcome-oriented elements. Figure 1 summarises these factors.

Structural Factors

Structurally, sustainability depends on stable funding, sound governance, and institutional support. Programmes with diverse funding sources are more resilient because they are not overly dependent on any single grant or donor. This financial diversity fosters stability, even when initial funding concludes. Programmes embedded within their communities that address unique local needs and reflect local values are more likely to garner financial and social support for sustainment. Good governance ensures programmes stay on track with their strategic goals and mission. Finally, institutional support from community groups and partners reinforces the importance of the programme long-term.

Process-Related Factors

Process-related factors include effective leadership, stakeholder engagement, community alignment, and continuous learning. Strong leadership provides vision, advocates for the programme, and ensures alignment with both community needs and best practices in violence prevention. Engagement from community leaders, law enforcement, healthcare providers, school staff and administrators, and residents enhances a programme’s credibility and relevance. These stakeholders can advocate for the programme, promoting its benefits to the broader public and influencing policy support. Continuous learning allows programme administrators and other stakeholders to monitor effectiveness, adapt to changing environments, and improve over time.

Outcome-Related factors

Outcome-related factors focus on measurable impact, adaptability, and visibility. Programmes demonstrating clear, positive outcomes, such as recidivism reduction or increased access to mental health services, are more likely to gain support from funders and policymakers. Adaptability is equally crucial—programmes must adjust to changing social, economic, or political conditions to maintain relevance and effectiveness. Programme champions within the community and among stakeholders raises awareness of the programme’s benefits, fostering a supportive environment that advocates for its continuation.

WHAT LESSONS CAN WE DRAW FROM IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE TO INFORM THE EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES?

Lesson 1: Evaluation of structures and processes is as critical to long-term sustainability as the evaluation of outcomes.

Programme evaluations are often more concerned with the effect an intervention had on an outcome of interest (outcome evaluation) than on how the programme achieved that outcome (process evaluation). Sustainability research suggests that questions typically of concern in process evaluations, such as the procedures and resources needed to achieve those outcomes, are just as important to long-term success.

“ Research suggests that adaptable programmes are more likely to be sustained.

Lesson 2: Implementation science research into sustainability can inform the collection of relevant data.

The implementation science literature provides specific process and structural dimensions empirically found to be related to programme sustainability. Thus, when evaluating CVP programmes, assessing these factors can enhance funders’ and other stakeholders’ understanding of the long-term potential of a programme. Survey-based data collection methods, common in the implementation science literature, provide an opportunity to quantitatively assess the likelihood of programme sustainment. By tracking improvements in these factors over time, funders and other stakeholders can evaluate whether a programme is on the path to achieving sustainability. A systematic review of sustainability surveys, published in the journal *Implementation Science* in 2022, provides a helpful starting point for collecting these data.

Lesson 3: Evaluating programmes for continuous improvement enhances the likelihood of sustainability.

In addition to identifying metrics, the academic literature examining sustainability suggests that the act of collecting evaluation evidence is predictive of long-term success. One mechanism is obvious—CVP programmes that produce a measurable impact on outcomes of interest to their stakeholders are more likely to receive additional funding. However, programme evaluation benefits sustainability in other, less intuitive ways. For example, data are needed to develop feedback loops for continuous learning. Collecting meaningful data as part of systematic programme evaluation creates information to inform learning, which can be used to continuously adapt the programme. Research suggests that adaptable programmes are more likely to be sustained because they create structures capable of responding to emerging challenges and shifts in community needs.

Lesson 4: Evaluation capacity is a key structural factor for long-term programme success.

Building capacity for evaluation is a precondition for systematically collecting data to support continuous improvement. Evaluation capacity involves creating policies, processes, and resources that support data collection, analysis, and use of findings. A critical aspect of this capacity is staff that have the relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Training staff in evidence-based practices, securing resources for evaluation, ensuring available technical assistance, and establishing robust data collection methods are all ways to build evaluation capacity.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR PRACTITIONERS TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY

- Diversify funding to achieve programme resilience.
- Root your programme in local needs and values to keep people invested.
- Regularly gather and review data to spot what is working and where you need to pivot, and to demonstrate results.
- Build evaluation into your programme from the start by building capacity—make it part of everyday operations, not an afterthought.

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JESSICA WHITE & ISABELLA VOGEL

OPERATIONALISING THE WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY AGENDA

Gender equality and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda are essential to sustainable peace. However, despite progress, it often remains difficult to turn gender mainstreaming policy into practice.

WPS COMMITMENTS

The WPS agenda was born in the time of security cooperation against international terrorism. UN Security Council Resolution 1325, passed in 2000, emphasises that women must be meaningfully and equally included in efforts to build peace and security, including decision-making responsibilities for conflict resolution. The agenda evolved over the following years to encompass additional aspects, such as protection of women and girls in conflict environments, as well as consideration of where they can be perpetrators of violence. National military actors as well as international military alliances, such as NATO, have been increasingly engaged with WPS over the past 25 years. However, some see a fundamental challenge between WPS priorities, such as the pacifist approach to reducing the impacts of conflict on women and girls, and the approach of utilising a gender lens to improve the capacities and operating procedures of militaries engaging in counterterrorism (CT) operations and wider conflicts.

Some of these challenges are apparent because of the staunchly gender-blind nature of security institutions, especially militaries. This gender-blindness is a product of the realist international relations environment in which these institutions were established, which only considered able-bodied males as citizens of the state and capable of its protection. Other challenges are apparent because of the lack of capacity and clarity around how to implement WPS principles in operational and strategic planning. These challenges are linked.

WPS AND HUMAN SECURITY

CT taskforces, military institutions and military alliances such as NATO must figure out how to relate WPS to the demands of operational planning and relevant civilian harms protection and human security goals. Understanding the societal impact of CT and military operations on all individuals through an intersectional gender lens is fundamental to successfully implementing the WPS agenda. Intersectionality ensures consideration of an individual's multiple identity factors, including gender, age, ability, race, etc. Capturing how these factors intersect, including how inequalities based upon these

can compound upon each other, helps operators to consider different experiences of insecurity and security responses. A 360 degree framework that takes into account cultural and contextual sensitivities is necessary to ensure the integration and sustainability of WPS efforts. Additionally, any operationalisation of the WPS agenda must be inclusive of civil society.

“ **Understanding the societal impact of CT and military operations on all individuals through an intersectional gender lens is fundamental to successfully implementing the WPS agenda.** ”

At the same time, true gender mainstreaming with an intersectional approach must be internalised institutionally to reap the positive momentum of commitment across roles and ranks to the principles of WPS, thus enhancing strategic planning and policymaking in a way that can improve the effectiveness and impact of military operations.

APPROACHES TO INTEGRATING WPS

The UK's approach to subsuming WPS commitments under their Human Security policy seeks to ensure that WPS principles – including gender analysis – are carried through all Human Security efforts, with the WPS National Action Plan directly contributing to the operationalisation of the UK MOD's Joint Service Publication 985 on Human Security in Defence. This provides an interesting comparison to NATO's approach of having distinct but complimentary WPS and Human Security policies. Both approaches present challenges and opportunities.

Having WPS under Human Security policy can allow for easier buy-in across military forces, where a majority are often more



aware and convinced of their responsibilities around civilian harms protection than the need to consider women and girls specifically. It also reduces the number of policies addressing various forms of harm by consolidating them, perhaps garnering more buy-in when time and resources are limited. Additionally, under human security policy there might be more scope for an intersectional lens to be applied to operational planning, capturing individual experiences across the range of identity factors rather than focusing solely on gender or just women and girls.

However, having WPS and Human Security separate but connected allows a clear set of commitments to WPS, which can keep the focus on gender from disappearing behind the focus on individuals. Additionally, WPS commitments are often connected to more comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies. This can help ensure coordination of the needs for gender analysis in operational planning and the mainstreaming of gender throughout internal force policy. Overcoming institutional resistance to, including lack of resourcing for, gender-responsive operational and strategic planning requires both building capacity and addressing the internal gender inequalities of security services.

OPERATIONALISING WPS

Operationalising WPS with clear actionable steps that are culturally and contextually tailored to the different environments in which militaries and security forces respond to terrorism concerns, can improve the effectiveness and impact of CT. As a global leader on WPS, the UK has an opportunity to lead by example and foster greater buy-in for sustainable operationalisation of WPS. This is particularly pertinent at a time when there is a perception of a wavering commitment from the international community, and global North in particular, to universally upholding human rights and gender commitments.

Furthermore, in the face of the ever-evolving threat landscape, responding to emerging threats, including in the cyber and disruptive technology domains, as well as security risks

associated with climate-change, provides an opportunity to reassess institutional approaches to operationalising WPS in practice. Integrating WPS strategically and systematically is essential to supporting the sustainability of twenty-first century deterrence and defence efforts.

In the face of the most complex security environment since the Cold War, swift adaptability in all domains, including CT, is essential and should be aligned with WPS commitments. The current context demands reassessment of what modern CT and warfare should look like and how militaries must adapt. This presents an opportunity to reemphasise the benefits of increasing diversity within the services and the additional perspective and skills this brings. However, the need remains to continue building the evidence base on how WPS improves operational effectiveness and strategic impact to support these arguments.

Ultimately, there is still often a lack of understanding of how to operationalise WPS, which remains an abstract commitment for many. This in turn contributes to a lack of robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the real-world successes and failures of operationalising the WPS agenda. Thus, defining actionable steps with accompanying monitoring and evaluation frameworks would not only help nations track their progress against WPS commitments but also improve global peace and security with gender-responsive, intersectional, and human-rights compliant CT responses in today's increasingly complex security environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Contextualisation:** there is a need for WPS commitments to be adaptive and address cultural and contextual specificities to respond to threats effectively.
- **Integration:** there is a need for WPS to be integrated across deterrence and defence efforts to respond to threats strategically by understanding possible gendered impacts of said threats on society and how these can be countered efficiently.
- **Learning:** there is a need for a robust M&E framework to be developed to enhance deterrence and defence efforts comprehensively by understanding the impact of WPS policies on the ground, and how they can be operationalised effectively. This will allow methodologies to be improved based on best practices and reinforce the Alliance's security.

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IRINA VAN DER VET & LEENA MALKKI

Five steps for building evaluation culture in the P/CVE field. Lessons learnt from the INDEED project and beyond

The importance of evaluation in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) practice is widely recognised. While things are moving to the right direction, more work is needed to make evidence-based evaluations an integral and standard part of P/CVE field. The Horizon 2020 funded INDEED project (2021-2024) sought to address this need.

One objective of INDEED was to outline what evidence-based evaluation means in P/CVE. Numerous focus groups, interviews, stakeholder meetings, and events demonstrated great interest in evaluation but also a lack of knowledge and experience.

The project found that the key to successful and productive evaluations is not to see it as a one-time event but rather as a systemic part of organisational processes. Evaluations are most useful and reliable when they are supported by a well-developed evaluation culture where evaluation is seen as an instrument for learning, and where evaluation is actively sought to improve processes and practices.

Developing this kind of evaluation culture can alleviate fears around evaluation, increase knowledge and motivation to design more evidence-based programmes, and nurture a willingness to improve one's own work.

The results of the INDEED project suggest five steps that can be taken to foster evaluation culture in the P/CVE field.

1. BUILD A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT EVALUATION MEANS

Practitioners and policymakers have varied understandings of what evaluation and evidence mean and what evaluation involves. For the law enforcement sector, "evidence" is mainly understood in the context of forensics, and evaluation is associated with top-down discussions about assessing operations and interventions. Practitioners can also conflate evaluation with risk assessment (of individuals), instead of P/CVE programming.

To create a shared understanding of the principles and processes of evaluation, INDEED developed the INDEED evidence-based evaluation model. It provides a good starting point for practitioners and policymakers from all sectors. This model captures the main principles behind evidence-based evaluation, such as stakeholder and community orientation, evidence

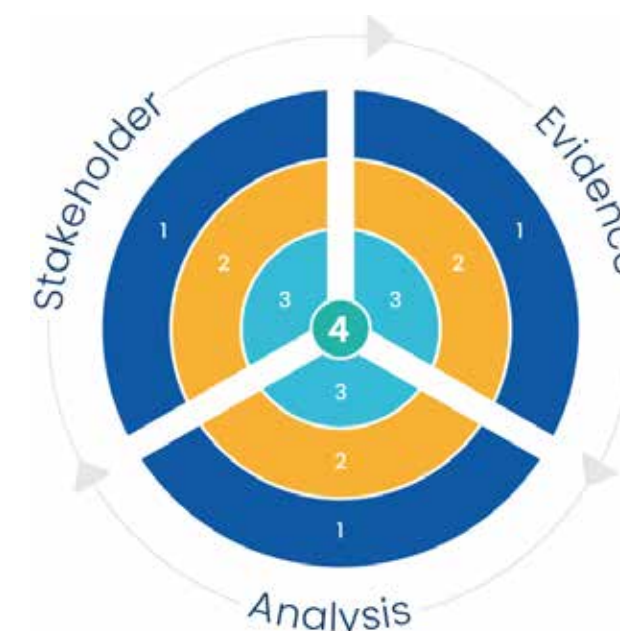
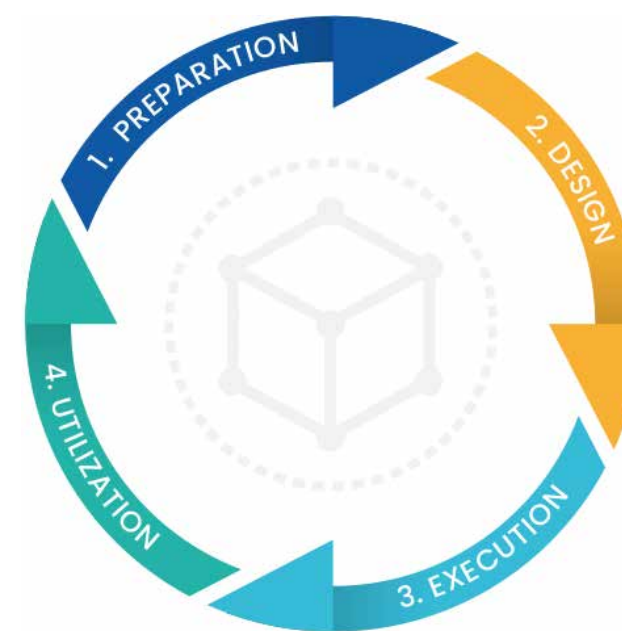
collections and professional judgement. It also covers the main iterative steps of the evaluation process defined by the INDEED project, such as preparation, design, execution and utilisation.

“The key to successful and productive evaluations is not to see it as a one-time event but rather as a systemic part of organisational processes.”

2. PLAN EARLY AND DO IT TOGETHER

It is never too early to think about evaluation. Evidence-based evaluation often requires data to be collected at different stages, and benefits from an evaluation strategy that is developed as part of the programme's implementation plan. This plan should not be dictated top-down, but developed with key stakeholders, especially those implementing the initiative. This usually significantly increases their commitment to evaluation and makes the results more useful for their work.

Evaluation is almost always possible, but its depth and rigour will depend on organisational resources, time and willingness to find solutions to problems that emerge. Advance planning is particularly important if evaluation requires handing over sensitive data. This can be addressed by, for example, having an independent, internal evaluator or using a traffic light system to indicate what data can be shared with an external evaluator.



From the INDEED Evidence-Based Evaluation Model (www.toolkit.indeedproject.eu/)

3. BUILD KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EVALUATION

Evidence-based evaluation should involve those who plan and implement the P/CVE initiative and not just external evaluators. Staff should have a basic understanding of evaluation so they can contribute to building a productive evaluation culture.

To support practitioners with evaluations, INDEED developed, tested, and validated an evidence-based evaluation tool to give practitioners the information necessary to plan and implement their evaluations, and design new programmes with evaluation in mind.

Increasing and upgrading knowledge of evaluation processes is key to successful P/CVE practise. The P/CVE field needs more systematic, robust, affordable training. The INDEED project created online self-paced trainings and a training curriculum for P/CVE practitioners, but much more needs to be done, including better opportunities for in-person training which allow more effective experimental simulation methods to be used.

4. POLICYMAKERS AND FUNDERS SHOULD PROVIDE STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EVALUATION

A common reason for resisting evaluation is the fear of negative consequences. Evaluations tend to be more successful and useful when they are planned and implemented with learning and not control in mind, and when they are not attached to funding decisions.

Policymakers and funders can help overcome practical obstacles for evaluation. Both by allocating funding for evaluation when financing projects, and having funding available to evaluate existing P/CVE initiatives without an evaluation budget.

Some funders have recommended evaluation is carried out in the middle of the project so that results can be incorporated into practice more quickly. Bringing in knowledgeable evaluators early on can provide support for programme implementors. Academic researchers can also support practitioners with the development of an evaluation plan by bringing their state-of-the-art perspectives from the P/CVE research and recommending evaluation designs.

5. SHARE STORIES, ENCOURAGE AND MOTIVATE OTHERS

It became clear in INDEED from the start just how important sharing evaluation results is for building evaluation culture and applying evidence-based approaches in the P/CVE field. Planning evaluations and evidence-based initiatives is much easier if it is possible to learn from what others have done.

There are good reasons why not all results can be shared, but it is highly recommended to do so whenever possible. Extracting lessons learnt and analysing their transferability to P/CVE in other contexts is crucial for strengthening the evidence base. Sharing evaluation results and experiences with planning and implementing evaluations will motivate and encourage other P/CVE stakeholders to design better programmes and perform more rigorous evaluations.

The INDEED project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No. 101021701.

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ADRIAN CHERNEY

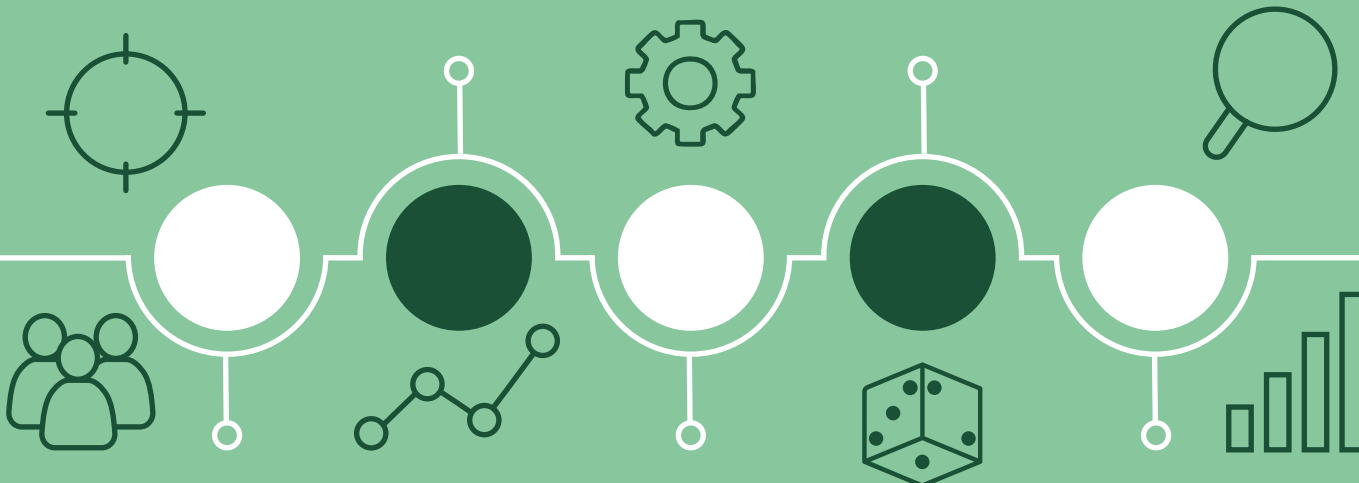
EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF PROGRAMMES TO COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM: WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

Adrian Cherney outlines five methods of outcome evaluation of countering violent extremism (CVE) programmes.

One consistent argument made in the literature is the need for more investment in the evaluation of CVE programmes (Braddock 2019; Sydes, et al 2023). While it is inaccurate to state that few CVE programmes have been evaluated – see the section on Read More – the main focus by governments and agencies has been to implement and deliver programmes, with evaluation often an afterthought. It needs to be acknowledged though that the evaluation of CVE programmes is not without its challenges and while we might want to use the most rigorous methods (like randomised control trials – see below), it may not always be possible to evaluate CVE initiatives according to the “gold standard” for programme evaluation (Braddock 2019; Cherney et al 2018). Some type of evaluation is better than no evaluation at all, and a range of pragmatic decisions need to be made on the feasibility of adopting a particular method of evaluation (funding; expertise; time; data access). While a range of different approaches and terminology have been proposed in the literature there are two main approaches to programme evaluation:

- **Outcome evaluation:** identifying the impact of an intervention.
- **Process evaluation:** assessing whether an intervention was delivered/ implemented as designed and recommended.

This review is concerned with outlining options for outcome evaluation.



“...the evaluation of CVE programmes is not without its challenges and while we might want to use the most rigorous methods, it may not always be possible.”

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR AN OUTCOME EVALUATION?

Any criteria chosen to measure programme outcomes should reflect the objectives of an initiative. This will be determined by the type of programme being implemented such as whether it is a CVE programme concerned with primary, secondary or tertiary prevention. The approach chosen to evaluate the impact of a programme, for example assessing outcomes relating to changes in violent extremist attitudes and behaviours, needs to consider the associated strengths and weaknesses of adopting a particular method. These methods are summarised below.

OUTCOME EVALUATION

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

PROS



CONS

Post-intervention evaluation

- Straightforward approach to evaluation.

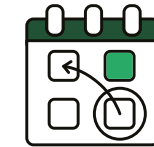


Post-intervention evaluation

- No pre or baseline data collection or a comparison group.

Pre-/post-intervention evaluation

- Better than option one, in that you can demonstrate change by having a before and after measure.



Pre-/post-intervention evaluation

- No comparison or control group, so claims about impact and causation need to be made with some caution.

Longitudinal comparative case analysis

- A more rigorous approach compared to option one and two.

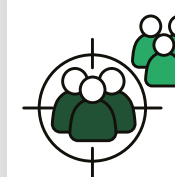


Longitudinal comparative case analysis

- Need to be mindful about making claims of causation as it is very narrow in focus.

Pre-/post-intervention evaluation with a comparison group

- A more rigorous approach compared to option one, two, and three.
- Can provide some confidence in concluding whether the intervention has had an impact or not.

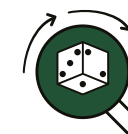


Pre-/post-intervention evaluation with a comparison group

- One challenge is ensuring the non-intervention group is sufficiently similar to individuals who received the program so meaningful comparisons can be made.

Pre-/post-intervention evaluation with a control group

- RCTs are regarded as more robust in demonstrating causation between the intervention and observed outcomes.



Pre-/post-intervention evaluation with a control group

- Challenges in logistics around random assignment.
- Agencies may not feel comfortable with having an individual assessed as a violent extremist or terrorist risk being allocated to a control group where no intervention occurs.

1. Post-intervention evaluation



This method involves collecting data from programme participants at a single point in time. For example, this might involve interviewing programme participants about whether their skills, knowledge and behaviour has changed or altered since participating in a programme or surveying target groups about their awareness or exposure to a publicity campaign since its launch.

This is a straightforward approach to evaluation. However, given data collection only occurs at a single point in time, one must be careful about making claims relating to effectiveness and that the intervention being evaluated was the cause of any observed change (referred to as causation). This is because there is no pre or baseline data collection or a comparison group.

“ No matter which approach is adopted to assess programme outcomes, planning is central to good evaluation practice. ”

2. Pre-/post-intervention evaluation



This method entails collecting data from a single intervention group at two points in time: before the programme starts and after the programme finishes or is completed. The base-line data (pre-programme implementation) and the post intervention data should measure the same problem, behaviour or attitude the intervention is aiming to change.

This method is better than option one above, in that you can demonstrate change by having a before and after measure but given there is no comparison or control group claims about impact and causation need to be made with some caution.

3. Longitudinal comparative case analysis



This method involves examining individual client progress over time (i.e., across multiple dated observations of participation in an intervention) and is particularly applicable to case managed interventions aimed at risk individuals and convicted terrorists.

It involves examining data concerned with individual progress as it pertains to specific clients (cases) and their intervention goals and comparing markers of change overtime and across clients. This can involve various indicators of change such as those relating to risk factors and prosocial behaviours, compliance to intervention activities, non-compliance and setbacks. It can be used when it is not possible to have a control or comparison group. While specific to case managed interventions, it is a more rigorous approach compared to option one and two above, however one still needs to be mindful about making claims of causation as it is very narrow in focus.

4. Pre-/post-intervention evaluation with a comparison group



Similar to the pre-/post intervention design (i.e., there is the collection of base-line data and post intervention measures), the key difference here is that you have a comparison group. For instance, many CVE programmes target the behaviours or beliefs of individuals or groups of people e.g., youth.

This approach would involve the collection of data on the behaviour or beliefs from the target group who are subject to the intervention prior to and following its implementation and also from a group who does not receive the intervention but is similar in key attributes or characteristics in background (ethnicity, race, age, gender and socio-economic status) to the intervention target group. Then you compare outcomes between the two groups (behaviours /experiences), and this method can provide some confidence in concluding whether the intervention has had an impact or not. Ideally you want to see a change in the intervention group and no change in the comparison group. This option is more rigorous than options one, two and three above, but the one challenge is ensuring the non-intervention group is sufficiently similar to individuals who received the programme so meaningful comparisons can be made.

5. Pre-/post-intervention evaluation with a control group



This method involves randomly assigning your pool of programme participants to either participate in the programme (referred to as the treatment group) or to not participate in the programme (referred to as the control group). This is often termed the experimental method or randomised control trial (RCT).

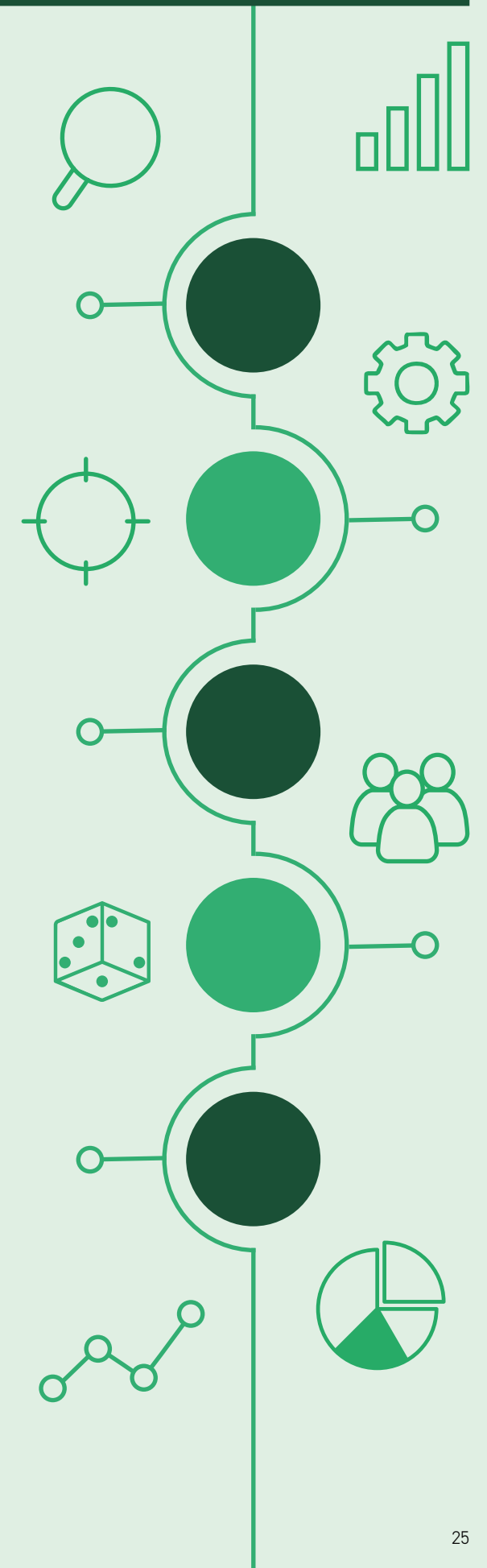
Data on outcome measures (behaviours and attitudes to be changed) is collected prior, during and after the programme is completed or ends from the treatment and control group. This method is regarded as more robust compared to options one to four above. This is because the treatment and control group are selected from the applicable targets of the intervention, and allocation to either group is random, so individuals have equal chance of being assigned, thus helping to reduce any possible bias in allocation to the intervention and non-intervention sample.

However, there are challenges in adopting this type of approach such as the logistics around random assignment, and agencies may not feel comfortable with having an individual assessed as a violent extremist or terrorist risk being allocated to a control group where no intervention occurs. Ideally you want to see change in the treatment group and no change in the control group. RCTs are regarded as more robust in demonstrating causation between the intervention and observed outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The five methods of outcome evaluation outlined here all have their pros and cons. Ideally evaluation should be planned ahead of the task of programme implementation so methods and processes can be put in place for the collection of data on outcome measures before an intervention is delivered. No matter which approach is adopted to assess programme outcomes, planning is central to good evaluation practice.

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MICHAEL J. WILLIAMS & TIM HULSE

GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS: Using Shared Metrics to Compare Prevention Projects

When assessing a portfolio of prevention projects, how can we know which projects are having the greatest impact? Shared measurement approaches offer a solution to the challenge of aggregating and comparing outcomes across diverse projects.

How can we compare a one-off awareness-raising workshop in a school with a multi-session bystander intervention training for professionals? Efforts to measure P/CVE outcomes have long been hampered by disparate metrics and frameworks that prohibit cross-project and portfolio-level evaluation. Researchers and practitioners have repeatedly lamented this problem, as long ago as the 2013 *Symposium on Measuring the Effectiveness of CVE Programming*, hosted by the Government of Canada.

Shared metrics represent an effective mechanism for resolving this problem of comparing 'apples to oranges,' and have been recognised as good practice for cross-project and portfolio-level evaluations. The use of shared metrics has also been tested in both the UK and New Zealand, through the present authors' evaluations of the Mayor of London's Shared Endeavour Fund and the New Zealand Government's P/CVE Fund.

This article illustrates the advantages of a shared metrics approach and describes their ongoing use in the Shared Endeavour Fund since 2021.

“Shared metrics provide a tailored yet replicable approach to evaluation: offering local relevance while enabling both cross-project comparisons and portfolio-level insights.

COMPARING 'APPLES TO APPLES': THE BENEFITS OF SHARED METRICS

The primary advantage of a shared metrics approach is that similar project types, within a broader portfolio of projects, utilise the same set of measurement instruments. This allows comparisons between projects that have common objectives, as well as aggregation of their results, to determine the overall impact of a portfolio.

By employing a well-formulated shared set of measurement instruments, portfolio managers can ensure that rigorous, consistent, and independent evaluation is conducted at both the project- and portfolio-level regardless of the evaluation capacity and expertise of individual project implementers. However, to avoid a 'cookie cutter' approach to evaluation, such instruments must be assigned to projects from a suite of prospective options based on:

- A. Their relevance and appropriateness per project.
- B. Consensus between evaluators and project implementers.
- C. Sufficiently customisable instruments that can be tailored to each initiative (e.g., referring to the specific threats addressed by a given project).

Equally, when comparing the results of these metrics, evaluators must take project fidelity into account, as differences between programming scope and delivery can significantly influence outcomes.

Another advantage of collecting aggregable data is that it inherently lends itself to mapping the composition of a project portfolio and identifying which areas of programming are adequately represented and where gaps remain. Metrics can be developed to track a wide range of factors, including extremist ideologies, identity-based harms, prevention approaches, target

audiences, geographic locations and outcomes. By building a comprehensive picture of these factors, managers can make targeted adjustments to ensure that a portfolio aligns with their strategic priorities and the evolving threat landscape.

“...shared metrics can help overcome limitations in implementers' evaluation capacity and expertise.

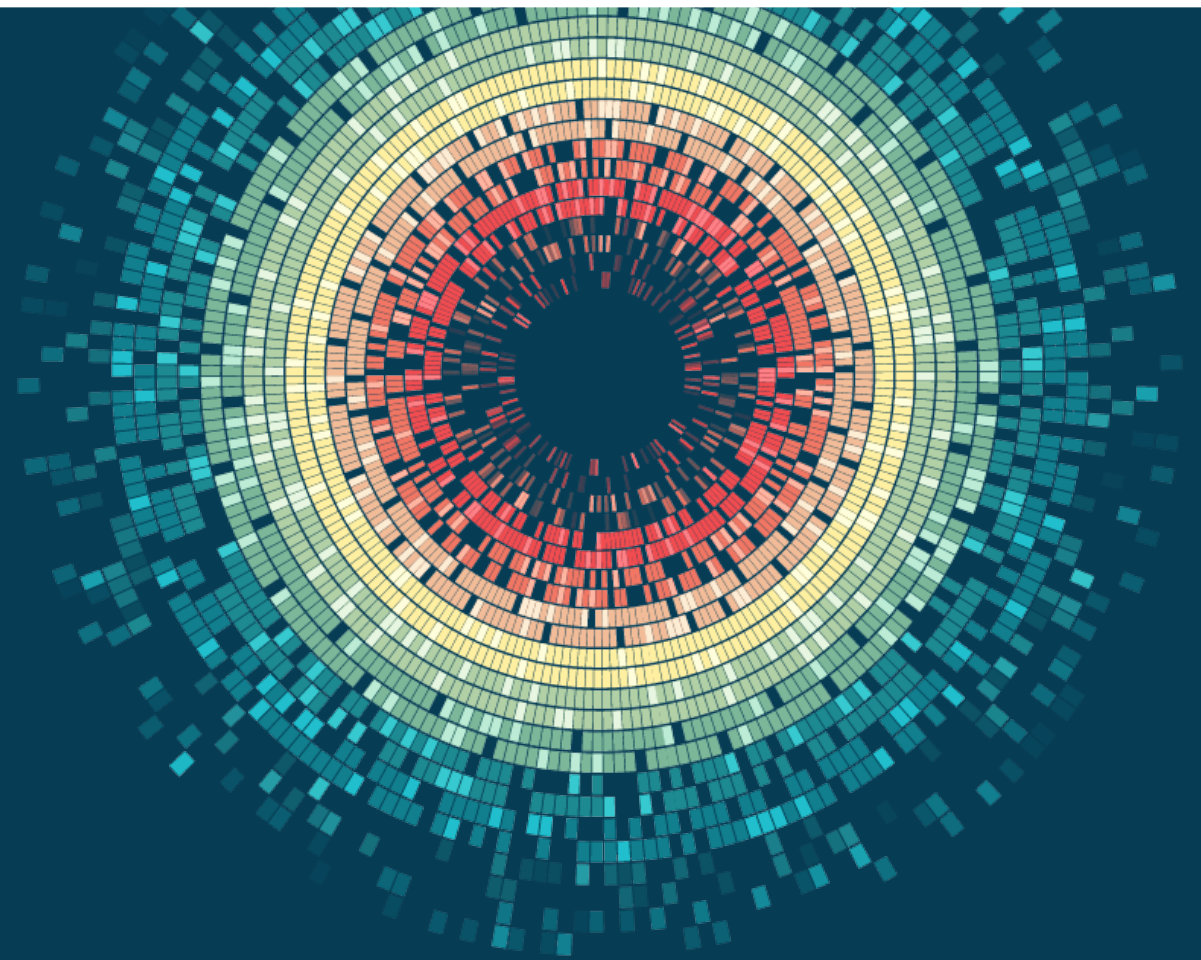
Finally, by streamlining evaluation processes and providing project implementers with rigorous, easy-to-use data collection tools, shared metrics can help overcome limitations in implementers' evaluation capacity and expertise. In turn, this allows project implementers to focus their efforts on delivery while enhancing their ability to demonstrate their effectiveness both to funders and other key stakeholders. Over time, this approach can serve to build a culture of evaluation among implementers by strengthening their confidence and capacity in this area.

SHARED METRICS IN PRACTICE: THE SHARED ENDEAVOUR FUND

The Mayor of London's Shared Endeavour Fund is a prevention funding scheme for civil society organisations managed by the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and administered by Groundwork London. It offers grants of £25,000 to £100,000 for seven-month primary and secondary prevention projects addressing intolerance, hate, extremism or terrorism in London.

The Fund is designed to fill an increasingly recognised gap in whole-of-society approaches to preventing extremism: funding and support for civil society. By providing such resources, the Fund seeks to empower civil society organisations to act as more effective prevention partners for government: leveraging their unique access to, knowledge of, and credibility among local communities.

Shared Endeavour Fund projects are expected to contribute towards one or more of the Fund's four priority themes: raising awareness; building psychosocial resilience; promoting prosocial behaviours; and strengthening prevention capabilities. First launched in 2020, the Shared Endeavour Fund began its fifth round of funding in September 2024. Over the past four years, the Fund has delivered more than £3,000,000 in grants, for 96 projects, reaching over 147,000 Londoners. During this time, the portfolio has covered a wide range of extremist ideologies, identity-based harms and related prevention topic areas.



SHARED METRICS METHODOLOGY

Since 2021, the Shared Endeavour Fund has employed a shared metrics methodology using a mixed method approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate project implementation (i.e., fidelity) and both project- and portfolio-level outcomes (i.e., effectiveness). This dual strategy ensures a robust and consistent assessment of project activities while accommodating a diversity of project types and providing greater understanding of overall portfolio impact.

Fidelity

Project fidelity is assessed independently by two evaluators and compares project plans and reporting against a bespoke rating rubric covering the four domains bulleted below. The information produced by this process is designed not only to assess implementation quality and consistency with planned outputs, but also to provide a comprehensive overview of the portfolio's composition year to year.

- **Project activities and reach:** Compares actual versus planned beneficiary numbers and outputs.
- **Beneficiary targeting and selection:** Evaluates the appropriateness and evidence-based selection of target groups.

- **Quality of implementation:** Measures beneficiaries' attitudes towards the activities in which they participate.
- **Data collection and reporting:** Assesses adherence to sampling and survey administration protocols, with a focus on identifying and addressing inconsistencies.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is assessed using a suite of survey instruments that measure key outcomes in beneficiaries' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. These instruments include bespoke but theoretically informed tools such as a 'Bystander Intervention Readiness' scale and a 'Message Inoculation' scale, along with peer-reviewed, 'off-the-shelf' instruments such as the 'Measure of Tolerance' and the 'Brief Resilient Coping Scale.'

Surveys are administered using a retrospective pre-post design. This approach simplifies implementation for project teams by requiring administration of only a single survey at the end of the project, instead of separate pre- and post-surveys (before and after project activities). A retrospective design also helps to mitigate some of the response biases associated with typical pre-post-surveys, thus improving the accuracy of the evaluation.*

OUTCOMES MEASURED BY THE SHARED ENDEAVOUR FUND EVALUATION			
Raise Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremism awareness and concern • Message inoculation • Digital literacy 	Promote Prosocial Behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic engagement and responsibility • On- and offline hate incident reporting • Bystander intervention 	Build Psychosocial Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional resilience • Self-esteem • Sense of meaning and purpose • Sense of belonging • Empathy and perspective-taking • Tolerance of difference 	Strengthen P/CVE Capabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention capacity and expertise • Radicalisation reporting • Value of resources and tools

Survey instruments are assigned to each project based on their stated aims and content, in consultation with the implementing organisation. This encourages buy-in and provides a second opportunity to verify the appropriateness of a given set of instruments. Project implementers are subsequently expected to administer those surveys to a predetermined sample size of their beneficiaries.

All surveys include quality control items to screen out inattentive responders prior to data analysis. Additionally, each survey instrument is tested for measurement reliability. Subsequently, statistical analyses are performed to test for significant differences between the pre- and post-survey responses: to track how beneficiaries' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours have changed and to provide an overview of portfolio impact.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN APPLYING SHARED METRICS

While shared metrics provide a useful and innovative approach for evaluating P/CVE portfolios, there are some factors that need to be considered when selecting this methodology. Most importantly, is there sufficient budget, lead time and expertise to establish the required evaluation systems?

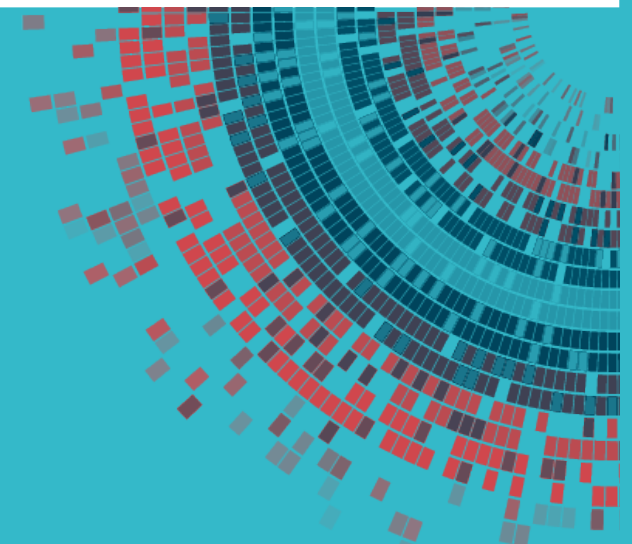
Implementing a shared metrics approach across a portfolio of prevention projects requires a dedicated evaluation budget. This might not be immediately feasible for portfolio managers with limited financial flexibility, though much of the initial cost can be recouped by reallocating evaluation budgets otherwise earmarked for individual projects. Similarly, for optimal effectiveness, it is crucial that evaluation systems are established in advance of project delivery and embedded within the portfolio's existing grant management and reporting structures. If these systems need to be retrofitted onto a portfolio cycle that is already in progress, it can hamper the evaluation's ability to accurately track outcomes, thus reducing the reliability and comparability of its findings.

“...it's crucial that evaluation systems are established in advance of project delivery and embedded within the portfolio's existing grant management and reporting structures.”

Project implementers may also be hesitant to adopt a shared metrics approach, especially if they belong to grassroots organisations that are not accustomed to rigorously evaluating their own initiatives. To overcome this reluctance, shared metrics should be tactfully introduced, and evaluators will likely need to be available throughout delivery to provide project implementers with guidance and support.

Beyond these standard considerations, there are also two limitations specific to the shared metrics approach employed to evaluate the Shared Endeavour Fund:

1. Due to time and resource constraints this methodology is primarily geared towards assessing relatively short-term outcomes. However, that is not to say that longer-term data collection cannot be integrated into this approach to determine the extent to which observed effects endure over time. Assuming beneficiaries still can be accessed, survey instruments could be readministered at a later date to assess the trajectories of initial outcomes.



2. Shared metric approaches tend to be inherently outcome-oriented: focusing on the magnitude of changes, rather than explaining how or why such changes occur. To achieve a deeper understanding of a portfolio's impact and improve knowledge of the factors that drive or impede project results, this approach may be supplemented with qualitative methods such as observations, focus group discussions and interviews.

CONCLUSION

More than ever there is a need for governments and communities to come together to take an active role in P/CVE, but—to derive the greatest benefit from available funding—we need to know which projects are worth supporting. By utilising shared metrics, portfolio managers can more easily compare the fidelity and effectiveness of projects that they support and use those insights to make informed funding decisions. Likewise, supplying project implementers with easy-to-use data collection tools can aid them to refine their initiatives and communicate their impact to donors and other key stakeholders.

**Although response biases associated with typical pre-post surveys are well-documented, retrospective pre-post surveys are also susceptible to various forms of bias, including recall and social desirability biases. Such factors can influence respondents' ability to reflect accurately on the prior state of their knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours, etc., potentially leading to over- or underestimation of programme outcomes. Typical pre-post designs may be most appropriate when both a potentially conservative estimate of programme outcomes is sought and a given measure (or set of measures) can be assessed objectively. (For a detailed discussion see Geldhof et al., 2018).*

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JAMES LEWIS & SARAH MARSDEN

EVALUATING TERRORISM AND TARGETED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES: From What Works to How Programmes Work

Greater emphasis on evaluating ‘how’ countering violent extremism (CVE) and targeted violence and terrorism prevention (TVTP) programmes work can help overcome the challenges facing efforts to understand ‘what works’.

Despite a growing body of research evaluating CVE programmes, practical and ethical challenges mean that it is rarely possible to use experimental and quasi-experimental methods that demonstrate programme effectiveness. Realist evaluation provides a way of addressing these challenges by reorienting evaluation away from ‘what works’ to focus more clearly on ‘how’ CVE programmes work.

REALIST EVALUATION

Realist evaluation makes the mechanisms by which programmes influence change more explicit and more open to evaluation. In doing so, they make it possible to assess a programme’s contribution to a desired outcome by testing assumptions about how programmes work. Realist evaluation also takes greater account of the contexts within which programmes are delivered than many other approaches to evaluation. Doing so helps programme managers and funders determine whether programmes might be transferred or scaled up across contexts and answer the question of ‘will it work for us’ in ways which, for example, randomised control trials cannot.

By developing and testing ‘context-mechanism-outcome’ configurations, realist evaluation makes it possible to determine whether and how programmes are contributing to outcomes by identifying:

- Outcomes produced by a programme - both intended and unintended.
- Mechanisms through which programme activities produce these outcomes.
- Contextual factors that impact how these mechanisms function.

This type of analysis can be operationalised at the individual level, to understand a specific client’s progress; at the programme level to determine if a particular intervention is working as intended; or at the strategic level to assess whether a series of projects are contributing to broader counterterrorism goals.

“Realist evaluation also takes greater account of the contexts within which programmes are delivered than many other approaches to evaluation.”

CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Assessing whether a programme can meet its ambitions is supported by breaking down the case management process into its constituent parts (see Table 1). Our Campbell systematic review of the implementation and effectiveness of case-management tools and approaches used in secondary and tertiary CVE intervention provides a way of organising this process.

REALIST EVALUATION AND CASE MANAGEMENT

Combining the structure of the case management process and a realist evaluation approach has a number of advantages that can help address the challenges facing efforts to evaluate CVE/ TVTP programmes including by:

- Providing a holistic way of understanding both how individual stages of the case management process function and assessing how the programme works as a whole.
- Identifying gaps in provision and gaps in evidence across the case management system.
- Specifying how outcomes from one stage of the case management process can become contextual factors for subsequent stages.
- Clarifying the contribution a programme makes to observed outcomes by specifying the causal mechanisms at work.







STAGE 1  Identification Eligible clients identified by programme.	STAGE 4  Delivery Fidelity of delivery to original case plan.
STAGE 2  Client assessment Accurate and comprehensive assessment of need.	STAGE 5  Monitoring Accurate assessment of client change captured.
STAGE 3  Case planning Comprehensive plan targeting all identified needs.	STAGE 6  Exit and Transition Individual leaves programme once risk has reduced.

Table 1. Stages of the case management process (based on NCMN, 2009)

SPECIFYING MECHANISMS

The evidence we synthesised in the systematic review on what facilitates or creates barriers to the effective delivery of case managed interventions can help identify those mechanisms which have attracted sufficient evidence to warrant their inclusion in an evaluation design. This helps address the challenge of identifying which measures and metrics are most important to evaluate; something which is a perennial problem in CVE evaluation.

Breaking down the mechanisms that are at work across the case management system draws attention to the different types of mechanism that are relevant to effective interventions. These include:

1. **Relational mechanisms:** Covering the relationships between the intervention provider or case worker and their client, and amongst members of the multi-agency teams and programme partners that help deliver the intervention.
2. **Knowledge-based mechanisms:** Relating to the knowledge that those delivering, managing or interacting with the case management system hold, for example, about how to refer someone to a programme.
3. **Systems-based mechanisms:** Referring to the availability of relevant tools, systems and structures to support the case management process, for example, whether validated risk assessment tools are available in a given context.

4. **Methodological mechanisms:** Concerning the methods that are used to undertake different aspects of the process, for example, whether data is triangulated from different sources to develop a more holistic understanding of an individual’s progress.

NEXT STEPS

In research funded by National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center (NCITE), we’re developing a realist evaluation framework and toolkit that will provide a means of evaluating CVE/ TVTP programmes. The framework specifies the context-mechanism-outcome configurations at work across the case management system and at each stage of the process. In doing so, it will provide a holistic approach to evaluating how programmes work that aims to overcome the persistent challenges associated with understanding what works in CVE and TVTP practice.

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GORDON CLUBB

TRANSPARENCY, EVALUATION, AND STANDARDS: AVOIDING PITFALLS

Evaluation increases transparency and has the potential to build trust. However, transparent communication in the fields of counterterrorism (CT) and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) can be counter-productive, reducing public support for these policies.

Instead, the P/CVE sector would benefit from supplementing evaluation efforts with mechanisms to establish transparency through oversight, regulation and standardisation.

EVALUATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Evaluation enhances transparency and accountability: it provides clarity to funders and taxpayers on costings and supports financial sustainability, and stakeholders can see the impact of decisions and practices and hold CT and P/CVE actors to account. Transparency and communication with the public and stakeholders about the rationale and methodology behind evaluations is therefore considered beneficial for P/CVE. Transparent communication has also been linked to the aim of fostering public trust and support for P/CVE efforts. This is a common assumption: a lack of transparency is often argued to lead to low trust, and increased transparency is believed to improve trust and support for P/CVE.

It is important to distinguish between the legal/normative motivations for increased transparency and the instrumental motivations for increased transparency. CT and P/CVE programmes should aim to be transparent a) to comply with legal requirements (typically associated with state programmes); and b) as an important value for governing a challenging field of practice. However, the instrumental function of transparent communication is far from clear. It should not be assumed that transparency will have positive effects, and it should not be the main motivation for prioritising transparency in P/CVE.

TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION, TRUST, AND POLICY SUPPORT

A robust body of literature challenges this linear positive assumption and shows that in some cases transparency can decrease support and trust. Our study on increased transparency in Prevent communications found that increased information about the policy (policy information transparency) had a negative effect on behavioural support for Prevent and a negative effect on trust in Prevent.

Whether transparency increases policy support and trust is influenced by three factors:

1. Policy type: Transparency tends to have a null or negative effect on support and trust in controversial policy areas. Areas that involve decisions on matters of life-or-death may provoke taboo trade-offs between sacred values, which reduces the effects of transparency.

In CT and P/CVE, this can be complicated because it often involves trade-offs between values (e.g., civil liberties, freedom of space). While our research did not empirically test this point, the implication is that transparency may have conflicting effects for prevention or rehabilitation programmes, and different effects among audiences that prioritise certain values invoked by CT and P/CVE.

2. Transparency type: A key assumption around transparent communication is that increasing an audiences' understanding of a policy area through more transparent information will increase support and trust. A number of studies, including our own research on Prevent communications, has shown this type of transparency does not increase support and trust. Exposing audiences to increased information about Prevent decreased their trust in Prevent and decreased their behavioural support for Prevent.

One form of transparency that has been shown to increase support and trust is *decision rationale transparency*. This involves providing the rationale behind policy decisions, such as a brief statement saying why it was taken, and has small but positive effects on trust and support by addressing the psychological mechanism of motivated scepticism. Our study on Prevent showed that providing decision rationale transparency on a mistaken referral case – similar to controversial cases covered in the media – made audiences less likely to protest decisions, more willing to accept decisions, and more trusting in Prevent.



3. Context: The way an audience responds to transparent communication varies by country. In nations with a lower history of transparency, or where transparency is not valued, increased policy transparency can have a negative effect on trust and support. Hofstede's Power-Distance index can help predict which contexts will have a more or less favourable view of transparency.

“ Explaining why policy decisions are taken can make the public more willing to accept Prevent referral decisions, and increase trust in Prevent.

It is worthwhile considering these contextual factors given the tendency for 'best-practices' in CT and P/CVE, including in relation to transparency, to be pushed internationally. While greater transparency in programme design is important, the use of transparent communication in an effort to generate support and trust among communities may provoke a negative response in countries where there are greater expectations that power and decision-making should be centralised.

TRANSPARENCY, STANDARDS, AND REGULATORY APPROACHES

Taking lessons from other sectors on the influence of transparency can inform CT and P/CVE policy. This includes insights from industry oversight and regulatory processes. Trust in firms is highly dependent on the existence of a regulatory agency, and state-controlled regulators tend to generate more trust than self-regulatory regimes. Regulators can encourage compliance of standards and build trust in a sector through targeted transparency, revealing information about the performance of stakeholders within the sector. The success of targeted transparency in building trust in a regulator, the sector, or its stakeholders is shaped by:

- A historical positive reputation.
- Whether the sector is relatively risky (e.g., the nuclear sector).
- The extent targeted transparency messaging avoids 'naming and shaming'.

A regulatory agency that consults stakeholders can increase decision acceptance among those opposed to regulations. Sanctions by a regulatory agency can increase trust in a regulator, though this is dependent on the sector and whether the regulator is considered politicised.

Promoting transparency through a regulatory agency can have benefits for a sector, however there is little regulation of the P/CVE sector. The UK government's response to the Independent Review of Prevent included a commitment to greater transparency. This led to the establishment of the Standards and Compliance Unit (StaCu) situated within the Commission for Counter-Extremism. StaCu is not a regulator, however it seeks to build trust by providing greater transparency of Prevent's referral system and processes, and addressing complaints from the public.

For the international P/CVE sector, while stakeholders have identified the benefits of standardisation of practice, regulation has typically manifested itself through informal self-regulation of sharing best practices and dialogue. The new INDEX network is a promising effort at establishing a self-regulatory mechanism by establishing and promoting unified quality standards in tertiary interventions.

CONCLUSION

Transparency is an important aspect of P/CVE evaluation, however the sector should avoid the pitfalls of relying on transparent communication to build trust. Instead, regulatory transparency can help to build trust. Establishing an organisation to provide oversight of P/CVE has the potential to improve trust, supplement internal evaluation, and establish a baseline of expected practices for all stakeholders in the sector.

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BIANCA SLOCOMBE & RACHEL MONAGHAN

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FOR TERRORIST TARGETING FRAMEWORKS

Terrorist targeting frameworks set out factors in the decision-making processes of terrorists. We lack evidence of the capacity of the frameworks to predict which potential targets will be most attractive.

With infinite time and resources available, all potential targets for significant terrorist activity could be protected from harm as far as is practically possible. Given real world time and resource limitations, it is necessary to prioritise some locations over others.

EXISTING FRAMEWORKS

To better understand the locations that might be at greatest risk, we have risk assessment frameworks for assessing the desirability of targets to terrorists. These are based on principles of situational crime prevention (SCP). For proponents of SCP, the offender always has a choice, and action can be impeded by factors such as increasing the effort (e.g., target hardening), increasing the risk (e.g., strengthening surveillance), or reducing the rewards available.

The terrorist targeting frameworks are typically lists of criteria thought to make a location more desirable to an offender. Two well-known frameworks (with very handy acronyms) are EVIL DONE and TRACK.

The least self-explanatory of the criteria may be legitimate, tolerable, and relevant. Legitimate refers to the targeting of victims who are ‘most deserving’ (e.g., military personnel or government, rather than the general public). Tolerable refers to pre-attack detection (including whether the individual can reach the point of attack without being overcome by fear). Relevant refers to fit with the ideology of the offender.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

At first glance, these frameworks are made up of sensible factors that we might expect to inform decision-making (an actor might target a location with a large number of potential victims that also has little security etc.). However, nearly two decades since the release of EVIL DONE, we find it surprising that there has been little evaluation or empirical investigation about the capacity for these frameworks to actually inform target selection.

For the most part, the frameworks have been used in descriptive exercises. For example, in 2006, Clarke and Newman illustrated only that the components apply to well-known sites in Washington DC that one might imagine are potential targets.

“...there has been little evaluation or empirical investigation about the capacity for these frameworks to actually inform target selection.”

We lack empirical insight in the UK context, and in the limited cases where data has been used in an attempt to evaluate utility using cases overseas, results tend to diverge from expectations of the frameworks.

OUR FINDINGS

In light of this, we responded to a call from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office to examine the relevance of the ‘EVIL DONE’ framework (plus some additional components from ‘TRACK’) to terrorism cases in the UK between 2015 and 2021. By looking back at 184 available cases, we investigated which of the components were consistently present or absent across cases (i.e., attractive to, or avoided by, offenders).

Of course, most cases of terrorism in the UK are based in Northern Ireland. Many of these incidents are localised and do not fit with the kind of international terrorism the frameworks were designed for. Therefore, many of the components didn’t map well onto UK cases, with some being absent on almost all occasions.

For the 22 cases from Great Britain, we found that the components fit somewhat better. For GB, it seems that offenders tend to avoid locations that are relatively indestructible, unoccupied, far away, highly secure, likely to expose them pre-attack, or irrelevant to their ideological motivation. A greater spread of scores for the other components (exposed, vital, iconic, and legitimate) indicate that they may be less helpful in determining attractiveness.



(Clarke & Newman, 2006)

However, there were also obvious limitations of utilising retrospective rating techniques to make determinations, like trying to deduce motivation and intent of an offender after the fact, and without all the relevant information. To overcome some of these limitations, we have been working with NaCTSO on a red-team approach to better understand the decision-making process.

“...we investigated which of the components were consistently present or absent across cases (i.e., attractive to, or avoided by, offenders).”



(Marchment & Gill, 2022)

HOW MUCH CAN WE UNDERSTAND?

There is an overarching question about the extent to which target selection can actually be predicted. A predictive model of targeting behaviour (and a response rooted in situational crime prevention) relies on an assumption of ‘rational’ decision-making processes and struggles to account for elements of chance and unforeseen opportunity. We have seen that decisions can change at the last minute or even during the course of an attack.

These frameworks also do not account for value-based decision-making. We know that, particularly people who act in the name of sacred values, utilise rule-bound logic rather than weighing up costs and benefits in a way that might be conducive to the principles of situational crime prevention.

So, can these frameworks really reflect hostile decision-making with the necessary complexity to be informative? We hope that this series of studies will contribute to a better understanding of these questions, and an evidence-based approach to understanding and mitigating the threat.

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ARDI JANJEVA

THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF AI EVALUATION IN ADDRESSING SECURITY RISKS

As generative AI (GenAI) systems evolve, the discourse on AI safety is increasingly emphasising evaluation as a critical tool for mitigating risks.

These evaluations encompass methods such as red-teaming, automated assessments, and human-participant studies. Establishing best practices in AI evaluation has become a pressing concern in the context of the global emergence of AI safety hubs. A comprehensive understanding of the AI threat landscape is essential for addressing prominent risks effectively.

“ This sociotechnical lens prompts crucial questions, such as who interacts with AI systems, for what purposes, and how these systems perform for a diverse range of users.

UNDERSTANDING THE THREAT LANDSCAPE

CETaS research (July 2024) has highlighted how GenAI systems can enhance the capabilities of malicious actors across three critical domains: malicious code generation, radicalisation, and weapon instruction and attack planning. The research makes the case for evaluative approaches which centre on malicious actors' preferences, readiness to adopt technologies, group dynamics, and systemic factors that shape the broader operational environment.

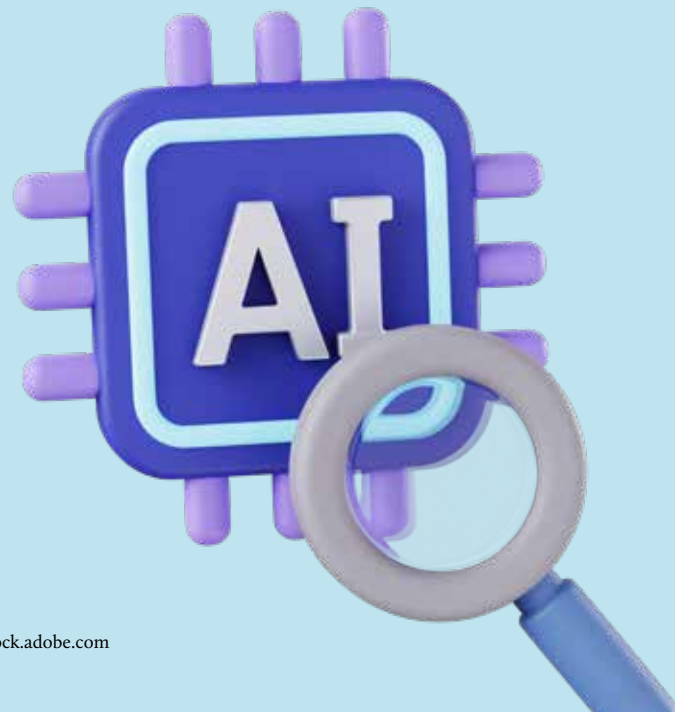
To address risks across these domains, collaboration among AI developers, evaluators, and the national security community is vital. Recent conferences and summits, such as the Conference on Frontier AI Safety Frameworks in San Francisco and AI Action Summit in Paris, have aimed to continue pushing these goals forward. A shared approach is essential to tackle these challenges effectively.

SOCIOTECHNICAL APPROACHES TO AI EVALUATION

As per research by Weidinger et al. (2023), sociotechnical approaches to AI evaluation consider the following layers:

1. **Capability Layer:** evaluating the level of risk from the *technical components and system behaviours of generative AI models*.
2. **Human Interaction Layer:** evaluating the level of risk from the *interactions between the technical systems and human users*.
3. **Systemic and Structural Layer:** evaluating the level of risk from *systemic and structural factors that will interact with the model capability and human interactions*.

This sociotechnical lens prompts crucial questions, such as who interacts with AI systems, for what purposes, and how these systems perform for a diverse range of users. These considerations are key to understanding failure modes and unintended consequences.



METHODS FOR EVALUATING AI SYSTEMS

AI evaluation can be divided into goals and methods. Weidinger et al. outline some approaches:

Goal	Method
'Hill-climbing' (making small adjustments iteratively, to optimise performance based on feedback from evaluation metrics)	Benchmarks are a useful performance metric for AI capabilities
Exploring likely failure modes	AI red-teaming identifies a model's weak points so they can be patched
Understanding inner workings of an AI model	Mechanistic interpretability (although still much to learn about science of machine behaviour)
Providing assurance regarding assessments of model safety	Sociotechnical approaches are good at accounting for context

Despite progress, significant gaps remain in evaluating interaction harms and multi-modal systems. Moreover, while 85.6% of evaluations focus on model capabilities, only 5.3% and 9.1% address human interaction and systemic impact, respectively. This imbalance highlights the need for broader adoption of sociotechnical approaches.

INFLECTION POINTS AND RISK AMPLIFICATION

The concept of inflection points is a useful way of understanding how GenAI systems may heighten risks. These points can represent moments where risk levels rise non-linearly due to technological breakthroughs, regulatory changes, or new applications. By identifying and addressing inflection points, stakeholders can better anticipate and mitigate potential harms.

Across the respective areas of malicious code generation, radicalisation and weapon instruction/attack planning:

1. Inflection points may include AI systems' ability to generate sophisticated malware autonomously, cooperate in malicious teams, or leverage advanced programming tools.
2. Improved social awareness and persuasiveness in AI systems could make them valuable tools for extremist messaging. Enhanced retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) capabilities could enable more tailored radicalisation efforts.
3. Contextual adaptability, integration with narrow AI tools, and automated targeting systems could enable GenAI to aid in weapon development and attack planning.

Systemic factors, such as demographic shifts, decentralised training, and human overreliance on AI, could further compound these risks. For instance, future generations' increasing dependence on GenAI systems may alter patterns of use and gradually affect technical competence, while decentralised learning could accelerate AI development beyond centralised oversight.

It is important to note that AI inflection points often have dual-use implications, presenting both risks and opportunities. For example, advancements in GenAI systems' social awareness

may aid radicalisation efforts but could also benefit commercial applications like marketing and fundraising. Risk assessments must balance identifying malicious uses against recognising benign, innovative applications.

“ No single community can tackle these challenges alone. Collaborative, cross-disciplinary efforts must continue to broaden the coalition of stakeholders involved in AI evaluation.

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION ECOSYSTEM

CETaS research has underscored the importance of addressing the interplay between technical, organisational, and societal factors that amplify AI risks. While capability-focused evaluations are valuable, they should be complemented by intelligence-led assessments of malicious actors' tradecraft and operations.

No single community can tackle these challenges alone. Collaborative, cross-disciplinary efforts must continue to broaden the coalition of stakeholders involved in AI evaluation. As technical and sociocultural shifts continue, these efforts must remain adaptable, integrating diverse approaches to mitigate the risks posed by advanced AI systems.

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NICK DALE

A NEW ERA OF TRUST IN POLICING?

A national rollout of Continuous Integrity Screening (CIS) would mark a pivotal shift in police accountability, ensuring officers and staff uphold the highest standards of integrity.

THE SECURITY CHALLENGE: INTEGRITY GAPS IN POLICING

Public trust in policing has been shattered by high-profile cases, such as the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer. These incidents have exposed systematic failures in integrity vetting processes that rely on periodic checks, leaving long gaps where integrity risks can go undetected. CIS is an evidence-based, peer-reviewed solution that enables constant integrity monitoring, ensuring misconduct is identified and addressed before it escalates.

Traditional reactive vetting in law enforcement is infrequent, often occurring only every three to ten years following an officer's initial screening. Once cleared, there is no automated mechanism to monitor their conduct until the next scheduled review. This creates significant blind spots, where officers engaging in criminal associations or unethical behaviour can operate undetected.

The current system also relies on self-reporting, expecting officers to disclose misconduct, victimisation, or criminal involvement. However, research shows that many do not—whether through fear, oversight, or deliberate concealment (a red flag and misconduct in and of itself). Without a proactive, intelligence-led approach, misconduct often only comes to light after serious incidents, by which point public trust has already been damaged. There is potential for CIS to become a deterrent.

THE SOLUTION: CONTINUOUS INTEGRITY SCREENING (CIS)

CIS is a proactive, data-driven system that continuously monitors police employees against a national intelligence database. Rather than waiting for misconduct to surface through periodic vetting or reactive investigations, CIS provides real-time screening to identify potential integrity risks, reducing the reliance on periodic vetting.

An evidence-based pilot conducted by North Yorkshire Police (NYP) screened 3,000 employees over six months, revealing:

- 18 cases were referred for further investigation, the majority linked to intelligence from other forces—previously unknown to NYP's Professional Standards Department (PSD).
- A refined system to reduce false positives, ensuring only actionable intelligence is flagged.

- The ability to enhance workforce safeguarding, identifying officers who were victims of crime and enabling welfare support.
- The pilot showed that NYP had robust vetting practices, but, also highlighted the added value of continuous screening in identifying undetected risks.

Following ongoing concerns over police misconduct and the arrest and conviction of David Carrick, this pilot study led to an 'Historic Datawash' commissioned in 2023 with over 307,000 officers, staff and volunteers checked. This datawash revealed 461 individuals were referred to an appropriate authority and of these:

- 9 triggered further criminal investigation
- 88 triggered disciplinary investigation
- 139 triggered vetting clearance
- 128 triggered management intervention
- 97 required no further action

WHY CONTINUOUS INTEGRITY SCREENING IS CRITICAL FOR SECURITY

CIS directly addresses a core security challenge: the lack of constant monitoring within policing. The ability to detect misconduct early has far-reaching implications for law enforcement and national security:

1. **Proactive risk management** – CIS identifies integrity risks before they escalate, preventing potential corruption, abuse of power, and criminal associations within police ranks.
2. **Rebuilding public trust** – transparency and accountability are central to police legitimacy. CIS demonstrates a commitment to ethical policing, reassuring the public and increasing Chief Officer confidence.
3. **Eliminating selection bias** – unlike targeted investigations, which can be reactive and inconsistent, CIS applies universal screening, ensuring fairness across all personnel.
4. **Workforce safeguarding** – the system can identify employees who are victims of crime, enabling timely welfare support.
5. **Scalability beyond Policing** – the model can be expanded nationally and applied to other sectors requiring high-security vetting, including aviation security, intelligence and civil service, where trust and integrity are critical.



“While ethical concerns and resource challenges must be addressed, the benefits of real-time integrity monitoring far outweigh the limitations.”

6. **Leverages existing technology** – CIS integrates with existing policing systems, reducing implementation costs and reducing the need for new infrastructure and the associated costs of these.

While Continuous Integrity Screening strengthens police accountability, its implementation must be carefully managed. False positives can place extra pressure on Professional Standards Departments, requiring time and resources to investigate. Privacy concerns have also been raised, with some staff fearing the impact of continuous monitoring on morale. The system's effectiveness depends on strong data sharing between police forces—without it, critical intelligence could be missed. While CIS uses existing technology, human oversight must remain central to decision-making. These challenges don't outweigh the benefits but highlight the need for a balanced approach that strengthens security while protecting employee rights.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

The implementation of CIS raises important ethical and legal questions, and balancing security with privacy is critical.

- **Transparency is key** – with officers and staff being informed about how CIS works, and what data is reviewed regarding flagged intelligence.
- **Strict data governance** – access to flagged information should be limited to vetted personnel within PSD to prevent misuse.
- **Proportionality and fairness** – the system should ensure that minor or irrelevant intelligence does not unfairly impact employees' careers.

Despite its success and other forces showing interest in implementing it, CIS is not yet standard practice across UK policing. Currently, NYP is the only force to have integrated CIS into its operating model. For CIS to deliver full security benefits, the following steps are needed:

- **National Implementation** – backed by appropriate regulatory bodies and law enforcement agencies by standardising

CIS across all UK police forces, ensuring a consistent and intelligence-led approach to integrity screening.

- **Data-Sharing Consistency** – cross-force intelligence sharing must be strengthened, as CIS is only as effective as the data it can access.
- **Ethical Governance** – while CIS enhances security, it must be implemented with transparency and accountability to ensure data privacy and workforce trust.

Beyond policing, CIS has potential applications in other high-risk sectors. Public sector organisations, including border security, counterterrorism, aviation security and government agencies could all adopt similar models to enhance vetting, and security protocols and increase public safety.

CONCLUSION

The pilot study demonstrates that CIS is feasible and valuable in strengthening police integrity. It represents a step-change in police accountability and security. By leveraging existing available data rather than waiting for scheduled vetting, CIS closes integrity gaps, safeguards officers, and rebuilds public trust and confidence in policing. While ethical concerns and resource challenges must be addressed, the benefits of real-time integrity monitoring far outweigh the limitations.

For law enforcement to remain effective and credible, a national rollout of CIS is essential and would mark a pivotal shift in police accountability, ensuring officers and staff uphold the highest standards of professional integrity – which will quickly increase public confidence in the police service.

Expanding this evidence-based model beyond policing to other high-security sectors will further strengthen national security.

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CSR is produced by the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST). CREST is funded by the UK's Home Office to identify and produce social science that enhances their understanding of security threats and capacity to counter them. Its funding is administered by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC Award ES/V002775/1).

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