Applying Behavioural Science to
Support the prevention of violent extremism:
Experiences and Lessons Learned

United Nations Development Programme

Applying Behavioural Science to Support the Prevention of Violent Extremism: Experiences and Lessons Learned

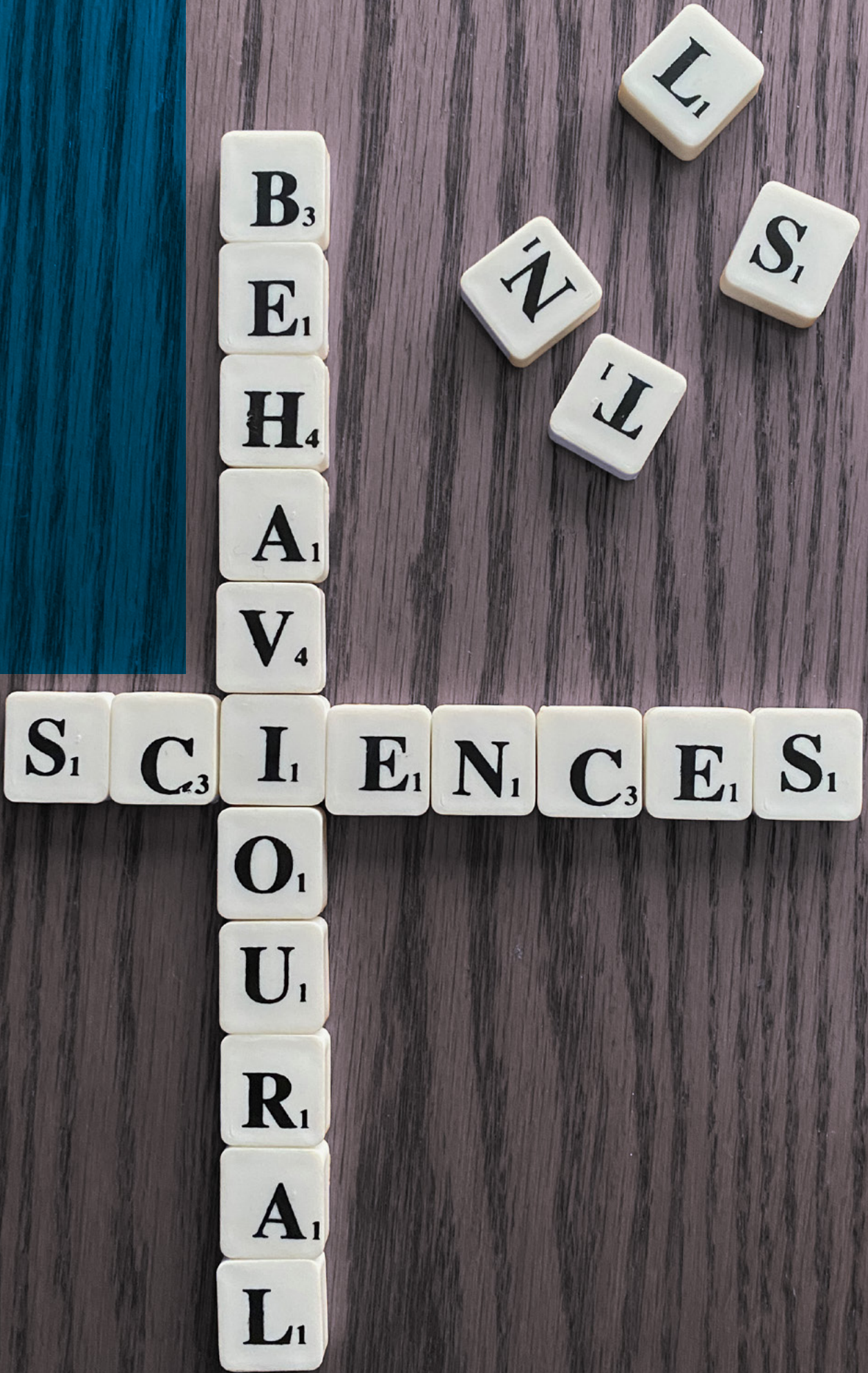Developed by
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Acknowledgements

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BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

INTRODUCTION

This document provides step-by-step suggestions for practitioners who are looking for ways to make use of findings from the behavioural sciences to address violent extremism —particularly through the strengthening of preventative measures. These suggestions are based on the experiences of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) applying behavioural methods to prevent violent extremism (PVE) in Sudan and Yemen.

There is no universally accepted definition of the term *Violent Extremism* (VE), and attempting to define it remains a challenging task for both academics and practitioners.[1] UNDP notes that whether based on religious, ethnic or political grounds, extremist ideologies glorify the supremacy of a particular group, and oppose a more tolerant and inclusive society.[2] Violent extremists are willing to support or wield violence to achieve ideological, political, religious, social, or economic goals.[3] This may occur with isolated individuals or through organized groups.

As has been well documented by researchers in this area, our understanding of the mechanisms that lead into and out of violent extremism is limited and nascent.[4] The fraction of any population that engages in violent extremism is extremely small. Even in contexts where social cohesion is strained, and governments are repressive or negligent, engaging with violent extremism is rare.[5] As such, it is difficult to understand the protective factors, risk factors, and specifically behavioural factors associated directly with engagement in violent extremism. Also, the scarcity of the phenomenon means that PVE programmes, even when focusing on populations at risk, need to reach large populations to have a better chance of being effective. It is commonly understood that a confluence of multiple factors including structural, personal, and social drivers need to come together to lead to engagement in VE.[6]

This document is primarily focused on how behavioural insights can support policies, programmes and projects that assist in building resilience by helping individuals engage in positive behaviours that could be used to address some of these drivers (especially individual and social ones) thus contributing to the prevention of violent extremism.[7]

In this document, when we speak about PVE, we have in mind a variety of efforts that can further be divided into *primary prevention* designed to enhance prevention among the broader population, *secondary prevention* tailored for specific at-risk groups of individuals, and *tertiary prevention* designed to help those who have been involved in violent extremism to disengage and remain disengaged, thus preventing recidivism into future violent extremism.[8]

3b

ACTIVE VE

Actively engaging in VE acts

While the windows for applying BI narrows with greater VE engagement, there remains room to apply behavioural science (e.g. behaviourally informed incentives to disengage violent extremists)

3a

FULLY ENGAGED IN VE

Supporting and promoting VE ideologies

BI is most effective targeting at-risk individuals before or during the early stages of VE engagement

2b

E/SOCIALLY ENGAGED

Living among friends and family promoting VE

2a

VULNERABLE

Having access to the enabling factors of VE

1

GENERAL POPULATION

FIGURE 1:

Effectiveness of Behavioural Insights on the Path to Violent Extremism (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary)

This document is for practitioners working in the area of PVE who are relatively new to the application of behavioural insights and for behavioural scientists who are looking for tools to assist them in crafting behaviourally-informed interventions that support PVE efforts (BI for PVE, or BI4PVE). It is structured in sections that represent key stages in the process of identifying, designing, and testing behaviourally-informed interventions that support the goals of PVE-related projects. The stages are depicted in Figure 2 below. Although each stage is designed to build on the previous stage in a cumulative fashion, users of this document should remember that identifying behavioural challenges and building behaviourally-informed interventions are iterative processes. They can be revised and refined continually by feeding learning back into previous stages. We have included a section on iteration at the end of this document and have added signposts at key stages at which we have found it helpful to consider revisiting early steps in the process.

Define the overall parameters:
What aspect of PVE do you hope to support?

1

Identify the target population:
What population at risk of involvement in VE will you be targeting?

2

Select entry points:
What are a PVE initiative's best entry points for a behaviourally-informed intervention?

3

Recognise the behavioural barriers and biases:
What barriers and biases limit your target population from passing through the identified entry point?

4

Choose the behavioural tools:
What behavioural insights will most likely help your population take the action desired at the selected entry point?

5

Design a measurement approach for the experiment:
How will you measure the outcome of your intervention?

6

FIGURE 2

Stages of Applying Behavioural Insights for PVE (BI4PVE)

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INTRODUCTION TO BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

Insights from the behavioural sciences, or what is commonly referred to as Behavioural Insights (BI), are the accumulation of knowledge gained from various disciplines — including psychology, economics, sociology, cognitive science and neuroscience — that challenges the notion of rationality and supports the use of more human-centered approaches to designing policies, programmes and projects. These behavioural insights have shown that we, as humans, predictably deviate from a rational model of action, and struggle to convert our own intentions into actions.

The idea that people do not always act rationally is not novel; however, the behavioural sciences have identified and developed an increasingly sophisticated number of behavioural insights that capture when and how we are motivated to act as we do. These insights capture both barriers to action and tools that can be used by policymakers, programme designers and project managers to improve the effectiveness of their efforts, often by making the desired action easier to take.

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Behavioural insights reveal, among other things, that people:
- Rely on a set of known mental shortcuts to make important decisions;
- Are susceptible to systematic and predictable errors in judgement;
- Have conflicting preferences that can be influenced by incidental factors;
- May make worse decisions when offered more information or more choices; and
- Struggle to convert their intentions into actions, even when motivated.

Behavioural insights also offer tools and levers that can be used to counter these barriers and biases that people face in order to help them to achieve their goals. Such interventions using behavioural insights are sometimes called "nudges" as popularized by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein[9]. The idea of adjusting aspects of a decision-making environment to predictably shift decisions and behaviours towards individuals' true (well-being enhancing) preferences without forcing a choice has also been presented as superior to traditional regulations and incentives because individuals retain the freedom to choose otherwise. A framework for thinking about behavioural insights and terms commonly used in the field can be found in Figure 3.

Classical Economics

- Classical economics assumes that people are **rational decision makers** who process all the available information to make the most optimal decision.

- Most policies are designed with rational people in mind.

Behavioural Sciences

- Behavioural science is the systematic study through observation and experimentation of **how and why we behave the way we do.**
- Draws on insights from psychology, economics, sociology, cognitive science, and other social science disciplines.

FIGURE 3

Framework of Behavioural Insights and Key Terms

Behavioural Economics (BE)

- BE is a discipline of economics that applies psychological insights into economic models to explain **how people actually make decisions,** as opposed to how they should.

- It rejects the assumption of rationality and proposes more realistic models of judgement and decision-making.

- In particular, BE takes into consideration that people are imperfect and **prone to making errors** (biases).

Nudging

- **A choice-preserving policy tool** that draws on insight from the behavioural sciences to steer people in a certain direction without prohibiting them from going their own way.

- The goal of nudging is to make life **simpler, safer or easier for people to navigate** (e.g., automatic enrollment in pension funds, reminder of a bill that's due or a doctor appointment, salient disclosures, road signs).

Behavioural Insights

- Behavioural insights (BI) are the **accumulations of knowledge** from multidisciplinary research in fields such as psychology, economics, sociology, cognitive science, and others.

- BI help **build an evidence base for effective public policy** designed for humans.

- They are the **cornerstone of nudges** and other forms of behaviourally-informed interventions that aim to improve the welfare of citizens and consumers.

The use of BI to inform public policies has gained prominence over the past few years, especially following the set-up of the UK's Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) in 2010. Since then, more than 200 BI units have been set up as part of governmental and non-governmental institutions as well as multilateral organizations in different parts of the world, including Australia, Germany, Japan, Lebanon, Qatar, Singapore, and the United States, to name a few. In addition to these, there are more than a hundred academic, nongovernmental and social purpose companies working in areas of BI and experimentation. The academic contributions of the founders of the modern behavioural insights movement have also been recognized through two Nobel Prizes in Economics[10] for Daniel Kahneman and Richard Thaler.

Behavioural insights are increasingly being used to enhance policies, programmes and projects in a broad range of sectors including education, employment, and criminal justice, among many others. Various public, academic, and non-profit actors are increasingly exploring the use of behavioural insights to enhance their work to prevent violent extremism (BI4PVE).

This document seeks to provide preliminary guidance for this continuing work, on the basis of UNDP's experiences in Sudan and Yemen in 2018-19. Insights and lessons from these experiences are provided throughout the document.

In **Sudan**, UNDP used BI in an intervention that sought to prevent young prisoners from relapsing into violent extremism. The intervention, which was implemented under the "Partnering Against Violent Extremism" (PAVE) project, consisted of a values affirmation exercise carried out prior to exams in the prison education system. Students were asked to fill in a questionnaire in which they reflected on values such as courage, kindness, and faith. The expected result, based on findings from values affirmation exercises carried out in other contexts[11], was that providing a moment for self-reflection would instill self-confidence in prisoners and motivate them to focus on their educational outcomes.

> *Violent Extremism is a complex challenge by nature with many (often hidden) behavioural layers. This initiative showed us that it is possible to apply behavioural solutions to sensitive issues while fully accounting for ethical considerations.*
>
> Ali Muntasir, UNDP Sudan

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In **Yemen** the aim has been to motivate the sustained participation of vulnerable youth in psychosocial support sessions provided under the Yemen Stabilisation Programme, which aimed to involve participants in community cohesion initiatives. The intervention made use of behaviourally-informed messaging in advertising the sessions. Commitment devices (e.g., pre-registration) were also used to encourage participants to continue their attendance beyond the first session. As a result, the intervention increased the likelihood of vulnerable youth attending community support sessions by 23%. The intervention was particularly effective on young male population increasing their total attendance by over 50%.

Building on the experience gained from the Arab States region, UNDP and Nudge Lebanon have recently expanded their effort into Pakistan and Central Asia (Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), whereby the two organizations are supporting UNDP Country Offices in applying BI to strengthen the delivery of their ongoing PVE projects.

> *We developed a strong design for our psychosocial support sessions and wanted to figure out innovative ways to reach more people with the programme. So we looked at ways to make it easier to register, ways to encourage participants to come back for further sessions, and ways for them to continue with other programme activities. Understanding behavioural insights and selecting the right nudge helped us to "work smart" – saving effort, time and money – and to obtain our desired results.*

Khulood Sheikh,
UNDP Yemen

DEFINE THE OVERALL PARAMETERS

Introduction

Before starting to identify specific target populations and behaviours, you will need to define some overall parameters, not least identifying an existing or planned project that can benefit from behavioural insights. We propose three steps: i) defining the challenge you want to address; ii) assessing the current situation; and iii) engaging with relevant stakeholders. In cases where there have been similar behavioural interventions in other contexts, it can be helpful to add a fourth step: benchmarking previous experiences to inform your effort. For each step, we present questions to ask yourself, tips to consider, and lessons learned from our collective experience.

Steps & Tools:
What aspects of PVE do you hope to support?

◆ **Step #1** | Define the Challenge You Want to Address

One of the first things to consider is the phase in the process of engagement with violent extremism of the population that will be targeted. Depending on the phase of engagement, your objective might revolve around reducing interest in violent extremism, reducing direct engagement in violent extremist activities and operations, or accelerating disengagement.[12] It is thought to be easier to influence the behaviour of at-risk groups in the "seeking" phase than of those who have already begun fully "engaging."

1. Developing interest in VE **2.** Seeking engagement in VE **SEEKING**	

ENGAGING

3. Conducting activities in support of VE
4. Engaging directly in VE operations

5. Disengaging from VE
6. Remaining disengaged from VE

DISENGAGING
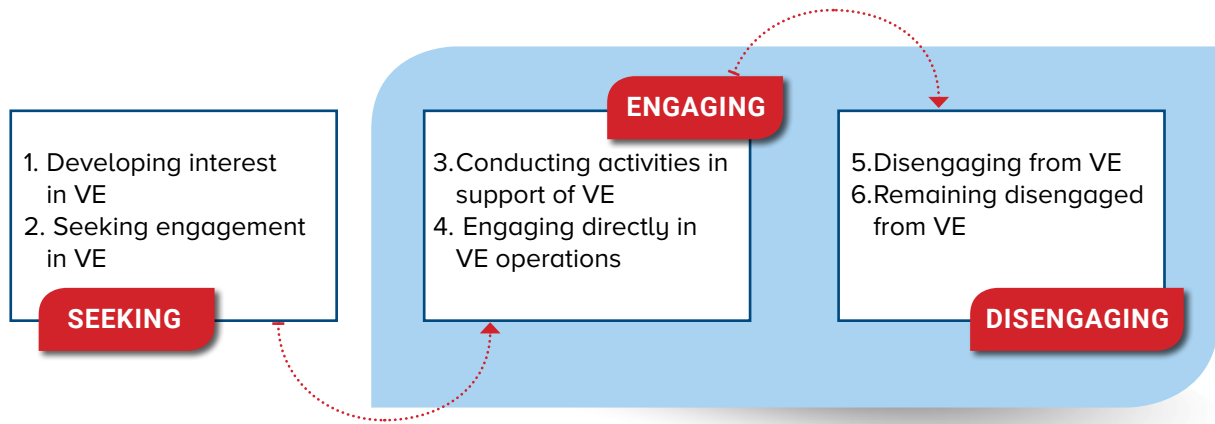
FIGURE 4

Phases of Engagement in Violent Extremism

Your decision may also depend on the type of PVE project that you choose to work through. Categories of PVE projects that might be strengthened through the inclusion of behavioural insights can be found in Figure 5 below.

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM THROUGH INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, THE PROMOTION OF TOLERANCE AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

Rule of law and human-rights based approach to PVE

Enhancing the fight against corruption

Local governments capacity for service delivery and security

Enhanced participatory decision making and civic space at national and local levels

Educating respect for human rights, diversity and global citizenship on schools and universities

Alternative socio-economic opportunities to violence for groups at risk

Working with media to promote a local narrative of tolerance, co-existence and respect for human rights and diversity

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

COMMUNITY BASED EARLY WARNING AND PREVENTION, DERADICALISATION, REINTEGRATION, RECONCILIATION

International intermediaries to promote dialogue with alienated groups & reintegration of former extremists

Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Engage youth in decision-making and building social cohesion

Working with faith-based organization and religious leaders

FIGURE 5

UNDP Proposed Areas of Intervention for PVE

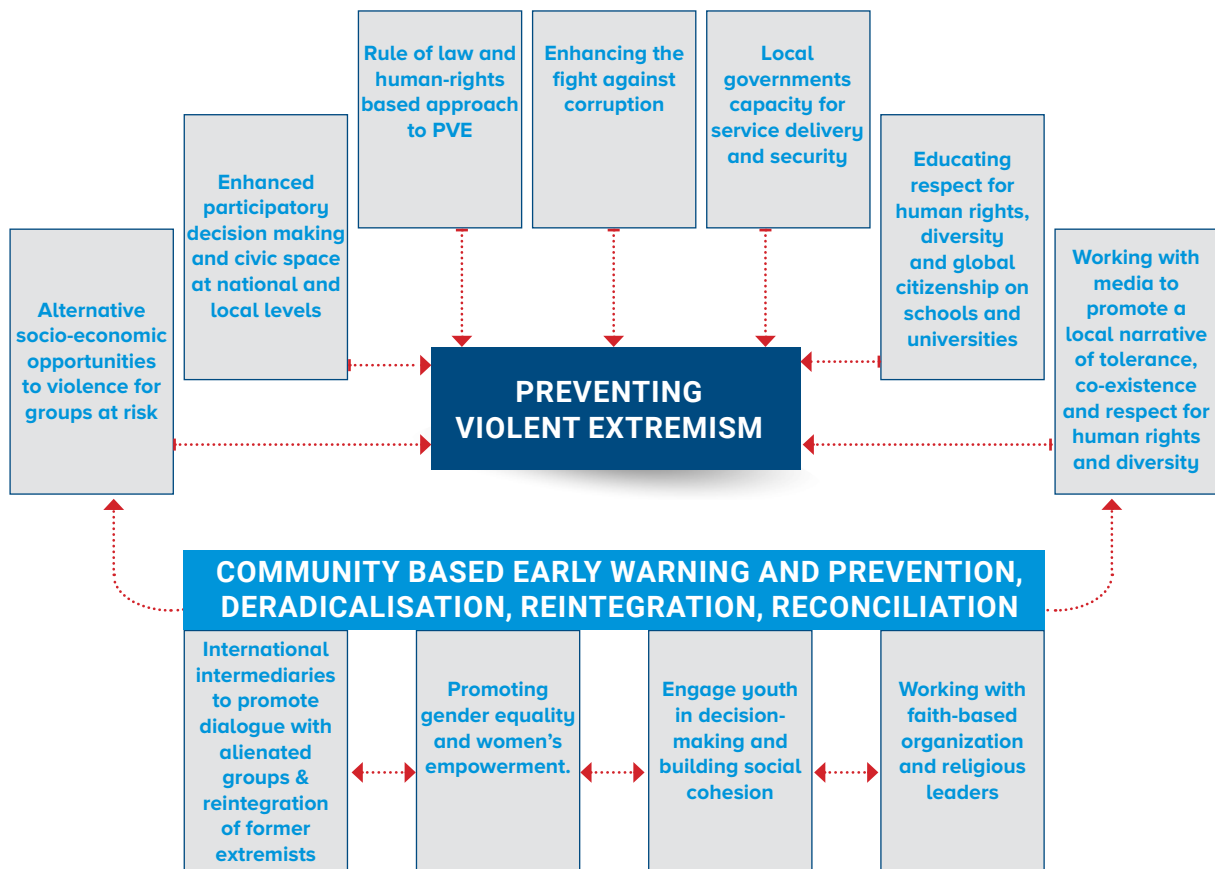As you think about your objective and what type of PVE intervention to work through, it is also useful to consider possible risk (or protective) factors at the individual level. These might include the items in the table below adapted from the work of John Horgan (2009, pp 11-12). Which of these seem to be most prominent in your context? For example, an objective might be to strengthen communities' ability to identify individuals who are seeking engagement with violent extremist groups in order to connect those at-risk individuals with supportive services or other options for non-violent actions to drive change.[13]

Risk Factors for Engaging in Violent Extremism (adapted from Horgan 2009 and UNDP 2018[14])

Category of Risk	Risk Factor	Description
Individual	*Temporary emotional states*	This might include feelings of anger, disillusionment, alienation, or disempowerment due to current or recent events.
	Individual psychological traits	These more permanent individual characteristics might include resistance to or the seeking of stress or risk.
	Dissatisfaction with current social or political activities	This can include a feeling that traditional modes of social and political pressure and engagement are ineffective or when such modes of civic action are not allowed.
	The desire to take action to enact change	Individuals may become dissatisfied with speaking about changes or engaging in political dialogue and feel that action is needed. This is related to the dissatisfaction noted above.
	Empathy with victims and a desire to help	This might be due to direct relationships with victims of the state or the identified enemies of the VE group. Such empathy for and a desire to help may also come from a feeling of a shared identity (e.g., religion or ethnicity).
	Openness to the use of violence	Those who engage in and support VE must believe that there are conditions under which violence (including violence against innocents) is acceptable and effective.
	Expectations about the benefits of personal involvement in VE	The belief that participation in a VE group will bring individual benefits often accompanies initial and increased engagement. Such potential benefits might include feelings of "heightened status, respect, [and] authority".

Category of Risk	Risk Factor	Description
Social	*Social network ties to VE members*	Those who engage in VE are often exposed to family members or friends who are also engaged. In many instances, recruitment into VE occurs through existing social networks.
	Tensions and conflicts between groups	Extremist ideologies often emerge where there are perceived tensions between social groups.
	Groups experiencing a sense of injustice, stigma	Social stigma and/or injustice can isolate groups and incite a sense of righteous indignation.
	Social acceptance of diversity	When diversity is not valued, those who do not conform to social norms may see violent extremism as an alternate way of asserting dignity.
	Gendered lenses	Socializations of gender often play a role – as one example, if a culture highly associates masculinity with employment, marriage, and/or protecting the women in their lives, and men are not able to achieve these, they may see violent extremism as an alternate path to dignity or honor.
Structural/Institutional	*State is unable or unwilling to engage marginalized groups in decision-making*	When states are unwilling or unable to engage marginalized groups, members of these groups may see VE as the only way to assert their collective voice.
	Root/historical/structural injustice	When marginalization and injustice are built into the structures of society (through laws/policies/economic exclusion, etc.), violent extremism may appear to be a way to radically alter power dynamics.

This list is adapted from Horgan 2009, pp 11-12 & UNDP and International Alert (2018). Improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming: A toolkit for design, monitoring, and evaluation. Risk factors have been reworded and summarized.
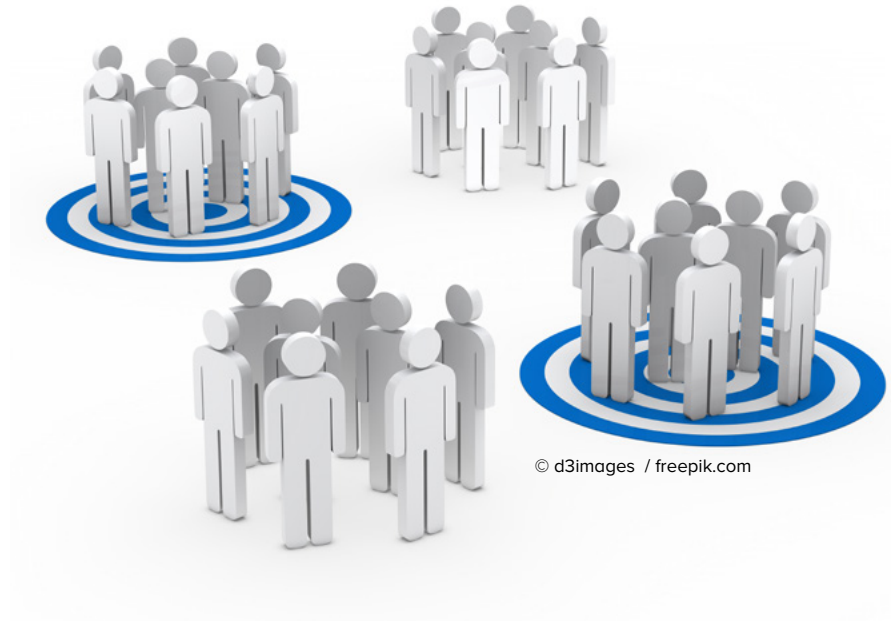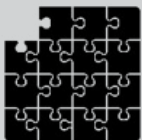
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Define the Challenge You Want to Address:
Questions and Tips

◆ **Questions to Ask Yourself**

1. Are you trying to prevent participation in VE groups, to prevent VE supportive behaviour, or to encourage behaviours that help make individuals more resilient against future participation in such groups?

2. What projects are ongoing in which behavioural insights could add value?

3. Which behaviours can be observed and measured to benchmark (baseline) the current situation and any future improvement?

◆ **Tips to Consider**

1. Use interviews, focus groups, and workshops with individuals who understand the PVE and VE landscape to assist in identifying key leverage points.

2. Don't forget that small changes in behaviour can grow to have an impact even on the most complex of challenges.

3. Pay particular attention to project activities that are experiencing challenges and to processes and procedures that may make it more difficult for individuals to access the support that they need.

◆ **Step #2** | Assess the Current Situation

Once you've narrowed down a challenge to focus on, you will need to zoom in on the situation and context. This situation assessment is not yet at the stage of gathering data for a specific intervention, but is more an exercise in understanding the issue that you wish to address.[15] This assessment can help you better understand which population(s) should be the focus of your intervention, which will help you transition to Stage 2 of the process: Identifying the target population.

Assess the Current Situation:

Questions and Tips

◆ **Questions to Ask Yourself**

1. What are existing and available data that could allow you to better understand the context?

2. What do these data tell you about the situation regarding engaging in PVE or engaging in protective behaviours at baseline (before your intervention) in terms of possible outcomes of interest?

3. What data/information do you have that could indicate which populations are most vulnerable?

◆ **Tips to Consider**

1. Make a list of all potential outcomes (key performance indicators) of interest and then proceed to finding data/references for each one.

2. Where data are unavailable, look for "proxies" — more indirect ways of measuring what you are looking for.

3. Keep an eye out for data insights that diverge from conventional wisdom. They may reveal flawed assumptions about people's behaviours.

◆ Step #3 | Engage Relevant Stakeholders

The next crucial step, which may be done in parallel with the above, is to identify and engage with key stakeholders who have a thorough understanding of the situation and context. Important stakeholders to consider may include government agencies, non-profit organizations, grassroots associations, community members or activists, and multilateral organizations working on PVE. Engaging a variety of stakeholders will increase your chances of identifying the most important behavioural challenges to be addressed.[16] This engagement with stakeholders is primarily focused on scoping the situation in more detail. If particular organizations are project partners, the level of engagement will be higher and will require ensuring that all partners are willing, able, and excited to include BI in the programme as equal partners.

Engage Relevant Stakeholders:

Questions and Tips

◆ Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Who are the active individuals/ organizations that have the most outreach, experience and insight into your area of interest?

2. What channels and networks do you have access to that could allow you to reach out to and connect with these stakeholders?

3. What kind of information, resources and/or cooperation are you looking for from them?

◆ Tips to Consider
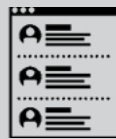
1. Start by making a list of all people and entities at stake and subsequently think of who can significantly add to your understanding of the situation, especially those closest to and most affected by the issue.

2. Find ways to make your collaboration/exchange with stakeholders mutually beneficial — i.e., make it interesting for them to ensure continued cooperation.

3. It is important to engage with multiple stakeholders, including women and marginalized groups, to avoid being overly influenced by the biases or interests of a single group or stakeholder.

◆ Optional Step #4 | Benchmark similar interventions

After assessing the situation and the context, it is helpful to explore other practices that have attempted to address the challenge of interest. This step consists of the identification of programmes and initiatives that could serve as inspiration or reference points, and the investigation of their levels of success in order to ensure the use of optimal practices in your own programme. You can look to such examples for inspiration regarding both intervention design and data collection. Since the application of behavioural insights to PVE is a new area, we recommend looking into behavioural interventions in other areas such as those aimed at reducing gang participation, increasing civic participation, decreasing domestic violence, and reducing criminal recidivism.

Stage | 1
Lessons Learned

Ensure that enough time is invested to raise awareness within UNDP and among national partners about what behavioural insights are and how they can be helpful in strengthening PVE-related policies, programmes and projects. A common understanding among all partners will improve your ability to identify where to insert behavioural insights.

Double your estimate for how long you believe the design and development of a BI intervention will take. The nature of developing BI4PVE requires iteration, the contexts of many PVE programmes present additional planning challenges, and we know from behavioural sciences that we are often far too confident when making plans.

Output:
Overall parameters

After the completion of this stage you should have a clear statement about the objective of your initiative and the need for it. You can use the following format to enter the results from this first stage of exploration:

| **OUTPUT FORM 1** | *Definition of the overall parameters* |

Step #1: Your Challenge	What is your objective, what is the project you will be working through, and how are they linked to PVE?	
Step #2: Situation Assessment	What do the data tell you about the challenge?	
Step #3: Relevant Stakeholders	Who are the relevant stakeholders?	All: Most important:
Step #4: Benchmarking (optional)	Which previous experiences could serve as inspiration?	

UNDP's Yemen Stabilisation Programme

Step #1:
Your Challenge

What is your objective, what is the project you will be working through, and how are they linked to PVE?

The Yemen Stabilisation Programme focuses on building protective skills among an at-risk population of young people in Aden affected by ongoing conflict. This is achieved through psychosocial support sessions and community cohesion initiatives.

Step #2:
Situation Assessment

What do the data tell you about the challenge?

Anecdotal experience suggests that psychosocial support sessions do not necessarily struggle with recruiting participants but do struggle with continued engagement in multiple sessions and following through with the planned community cohesion initiatives.

Step #3:
Relevant Stakeholders

Who are the relevant stakeholders?

The relevant stakeholders were the UNDP Yemen Country Office, the session implementation partner (Oxfam), and the local partner supporting the design and implementation of the behaviourally-informed intervention, Creative People Solutions (CPS).

The primary points of contact for implementing the BI intervention were the UNDP Yemen Country Office and CPS.

Step #4:
Benchmarking
(optional)

Which previous experiences could serve as inspiration?

BI interventions for increasing participation and attendance in educational interventions.

EXAMPLE

UNDP's PAVE (Partnering Against Violent Extremism) Project in Sudan

|		
Step #1: Your Challenge	What is your objective, what is the project you will be working through, and how are they linked to PVE?	The PAVE project seeks to enhance resilience to radicalization and prevent violent extremism by contributing to the stability and resilience of at-risk youth and citizens with potential to be radicalized and join violent extremist movements in Sudan. It aims to achieve this through livelihood support to at-risk youth; a sensitization campaign using film and public information materials; and trainings for stakeholders from different Sudanese states on the risks of extremism.
Step #2: Situation Assessment	What do the data tell you about the challenge?	A ground-breaking study, conducted by UNDP Sudan, the Sudan National Commission for Counter Terrorism (NCCT), and civil society, released in 2017, found that 94% of individuals who engage in violent extremism are below the age of 35[17]. 17% of all individuals interviewed for the study were women, 100% of whom joined under the age of 30. This shows that young people are at highest risk of radicalization. The study also found that the reasons youth join violent extremist groups vary. However certain emotional states, such as anger and frustration, predominantly affect behaviours and attitudes. While a wider spectrum of emotions was registered, 52% of individuals joining violent extremist groups were frustrated, and 43.8% were angry when they joined. This underscores the direct impact emotions can have on the decisions of individuals to join violent extremist groups. Economic factors and ideology can also directly relate to anger and frustration.
Step #3: Relevant Stakeholders	Who are the relevant stakeholders?	The relevant stakeholders were the UNDP Sudan Country Office, the NCCT, and prison authorities, since the behavioural intervention used the prison school system as an entry point.
Step #4: Benchmarking (optional)	Which previous experiences could serve as inspiration?	Case studies of values affirmation exercises in similar contexts.
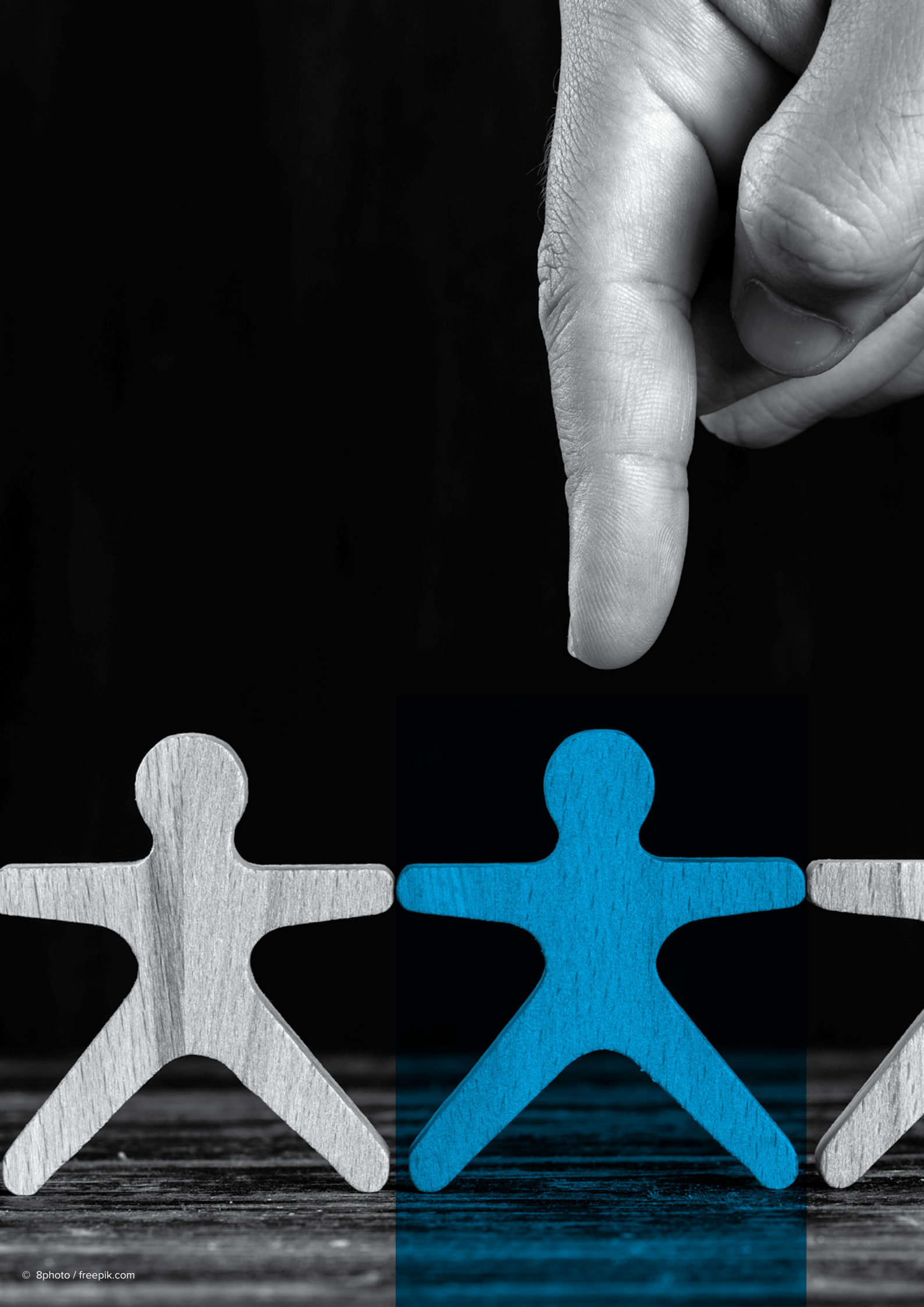
IDENTIFY THE TARGET POPULATION

Introduction

Once you have identified your overall objective and have a clear idea of the stakeholders and the baseline situation, the second stage is to identify the population that you will target in more detail. The degree of effectiveness of a behavioural intervention is often dependent upon effective targeting.[18] The behavioural barriers facing one group can be quite different from another group, and as a result the type of behavioural tool (or intervention) that is effective for each group may also differ.

It is important to be as concrete as possible when considering the type of individuals that you will be working to support. It is only when you have a clear picture of the individuals that you can think through the steps that they will need to take to prevent engagement with, or achieve disengagement from, violent extremism. The risks and protective factors affecting someone in prison are different from the factors affecting someone in university, those affecting young women vary from those affecting young men, those affecting people living in urban areas differ from those affecting people living in rural environments, etc. Even when behavioural barriers and biases are similar across groups, the tools you employ in an intervention may vary in important ways. For example, the social norms putting pressure on men (e.g., providing for the family) and women (e.g., getting married) will likely differ in systematic ways.

Steps & Tools:
Who will you be working with?

Here we offer key questions to ask yourself, tips to be aware of, and an exercise that can be used to help clarify the target population that you will be working with.[19]

Identify Target Population:

Questions and Tips

◆ Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Where does your target population live?

2. What do they do regularly? For example, where do they work, where do they go to school, what are their hobbies?

3. Who are they influenced by among their friends, family, and others?

◆ Tips to Consider

1. Speak with individuals from the target population. If that's not possible then speak with front-line staff who work with the target population.

2. Beware of false stereotypes, ask yourself if your assumptions are based on facts or stereotypes, especially for women.

3. Find out if the target population is also the final decision maker. For instance, in some cases the final decision regarding the wellbeing of women rests with the closest male figure (e.g., husband or father). In such cases you may need to consider both parties when designing your intervention.
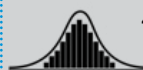
4. Focus on the most common cases first. Then, after doing so, discuss those for whom the profile does not match—these can help you identify boundaries for your population and ultimately your behavioural intervention. Make sure you develop male and female personas when possible.

Identify Target Population:
Exercise

Develop a Persona

1. **Make the personas concrete:** Draw them, give them a name, age, gender, education level etc.

2. **Make their life concrete:** Map out their average day; if there are key distinctions map different days such as a weekday and a weekend. For example, list five key activities during their typical day.

3. **Share** the persona with others for their feedback.

Stage | 2
Lessons Learned

Talk to members of the community about target populations as soon as possible and make use of existing needs assessments. Often the populations that come to mind when planning BI4PVE are driven by untested assumptions and stereotypes that are easier to overcome when grounded in data.

As is the case with other development projects, it is important to be sensitive to the fact that various organizations may have an interest in identifying (or not identifying) certain target populations based on vested interests and political sensitivities. Therefore, it is useful to get various perspectives and to bring together diverse stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental actors, for a joint discussion.

More importantly, as you build your personas, keep in mind that your description of the population will help you design a behavioural intervention. Therefore, pay close attention to the location, frequency, and types of actions that individuals would typically take.

Output:
Target Personas

After the completion of this stage you should have produced a persona—or more than one—that represents the type of individuals you will be supporting through your behavioural intervention.

OUTPUT FORM 2 *Persona*

What is your persona's name?

What are your persona's demographics?

Gender:

Age:

Education Level:

Other:

Where does your persona live?

What are your persona's hobbies?

Which places do they frequent?

What does your persona's social circle look like?

What is your persona's risk of involvement in VE?

EXAMPLE

Young Prisoner in Sudan

What is your persona's name?	Mohammed Ahmed
What are your persona's demographics?	Sex: Male
	Age: 24
	Education Level: Currently enrolled in a government-sponsored primary education programme for prisoners.
	Other: Belongs to a lower middle-class family
Where does your persona live?	Al Huda prison in Khartoum
What are your persona's hobbies?	Enjoys football and body building
Which places do they frequent?	The prison courtyard, canteen, gym, classroom and mosque
What does your persona's social circle look like?	Mohammed is surrounded by inmates charged with petty crimes like himself, as well as prisoners attending the same primary education programme.
What is your persona's risk of involvement in VE?	Mohammed is highly susceptible to VE influences due to his isolation, low self-esteem, and low level of education

STAGE 3

SELECT ENTRY POINTS

Introduction

Once you have identified your target population, it is time to select specific entry point(s) in the project you are working through that can be effectively targeted using behavioural insights. There are many ways to conceptualize the behaviours associated with a given project and population to aid in developing a behavioural intervention; we have adopted a sequential model. The model focuses on three common activities/processes that are applicable to many initiatives and are susceptible to behavioural biases and interventions. These are the processes (1) of *mobilizing* participants to be part of the project, (2) of *engaging* meaningfully with the project for its duration, and (3) of *following through* to engage in specific behaviours acquired during the project after the project ends. For brevity, these entry points are labeled *mobilize, engage, and follow-through.*

Steps & Tools:
What project "Entry Points" can BI enhance?

The tools below will help you identify which entry point(s) will be best suited for behaviourally-informed interventions. This choice may be driven by determining which entry point faces the greatest behavioural challenges, which can most feasibly incorporate a behavioural intervention, or which is most closely tied to your objective and the success of the overall PVE efforts.

Select Entry Point(s):

Questions and Tips

◆ Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Does the programme face challenges in mobilizing / recruiting participants? If so, what steps of the process could be altered with behavioural insights? (*mobilizing*)

2. Does the programme face challenges with having sustained, consistent attendance at and engagement in the required activities? If so, when, where, and with whom are these challenges concentrated? (*engaging*)

3. Is there any longer-term follow-up that is required? If so, is there steep drop-off in participation during such follow-up periods? (*following through*)

◆ Tips to Consider

1. With each entry point, it is important to determine if there is any ongoing data collection or potential for data collection that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of any change (e.g., outreach, registration, attendance records).

2. If focusing on mobilization, it is best to target mobilization for activities that have the most impact on the PVE objective.

3. These three entry points are a helpful framework, but there are other tools for thinking about where and how to conduct a behavioural intervention.[20]

Entry Point Typology

1 • Mobilize

Description
Capturing the attention of the target population and raising awareness about an existing or upcoming PVE-related programme.

Objective
Encourage your target population (e.g., at-risk youth) to register and/or participate in a PVE-related initiative.

Potential Bottlenecks
- Low awareness: information on participation in the initiative is complicated or unavailable.
- Peer pressure: participants perceive social pressure to avoid the initiative.
- Intention-Action Gap: individuals who want to attend but struggle to take action.

Example 1
Web constables[21]: In an effort to reduce crime, particularly on the internet, the Estonian Police launched a project to increase reporting of crimes and generally enhance their presence in the community. The "Web Constables" project sought to accomplish this through the creation of "virtual police stations", hosted not on the Police and Border Guard Board website, but rather on web portals attractive to and heavily frequented by young people, those most at risk of online crime. By creating an online platform for communication with the police, the Estonian Police effectively reduced the hassle of reporting crime, resulting in increased crime reporting, as well as a decrease in online offences. Moreover, the hosting of said virtual police stations on websites most relevant to young people bolstered the salience not only of the platform itself, but the presence of the Estonian Police in the community as well. Similar interventions could be used to improve communication with those at risk of engaging in violent extremism.

Example 2:
With the objective of building resistance against online extremist recruitment, Nudge Lebanon, in collaboration with B4Development and researchers from Cambridge University, designed and successfully tested a behaviourally-informed online game, Radicalise[22], that "vaccinates" social media users against manipulative messages particularly for the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE). Those who played the game were better in assessing manipulativeness of WhatsApp messages and were better at identifying the characteristics associated with vulnerability to extremist recruitment compared to a control group who played a Tetris game

Entry Point Typology

2 • Engage

Description
Promoting continuous participation in the initiative (i.e., frequent attendance), as well as interaction with the initiative facilitators and other participants.

Objective
The target population continues to engage and meaningfully (and successfully) participate in the initiative throughout its duration.

Potential Bottlenecks
- Present bias / distractions: Participants can be drawn towards other activities with immediate positive feedback instead of participating in an initiative for which the benefits are further into the future.
- Lacking a routine: The target groups for PVE-related programmes may be experiencing disruptions that result in the lack of a daily schedule. This lack of a consistent schedule can make it difficult to build a habit of consistent participation in an initiative.
- Family and social commitments: Participants can feel drawn away from participating in the initiative due to their commitments to their family and peers.

Example
- Democracy factory in the Netherlands[23]: An interactive children's exhibition employing panels with lively texts, graphics, artifacts, devices, machines, masks, riddles, mirrors, and discussions, combined with self-directing and self-correcting assignments to promote learning in children. Children visiting the exhibition interact with a colourful and dynamic environment and are encouraged to engage in exchanges on topics pertinent to their own views and ideas. Towards the end of the visit, visitors fill in answers and observations via an internet application and print a certificate with a personalized comment on their opinions and conclusions. The teachers then ask the pupils to reflect on the contents of the certificate. By utilizing an interactive approach, rather than the encyclopedic approach of most exhibitions, personalizing education, and using attractive teaching tools with immediate feedback, the project greatly bolstered the salience of its educational material, as well as learning in general, for the children visitors. The self-directing and self-correcting assignments, as well as the certificates, serve as particularly effective feedback devices. Similar interventions could be used to increase non-violent modes of civic engagement among groups at risk of engaging in violent extremism.

Entry Point Typology

3 • Follow through

Description
Ensuring that participants follow through with what they have learnt or agreed to do (e.g., implement a social cohesion project in their community).

Objective
Participants take what they gained from the programme and continue to put it into practice to increase their resilience and the resilience of their communities so that they are less likely to engage in violent extremism.

Potential Bottlenecks
- Present bias: After the programme is over it is easy for participants to focus on the immediate needs of their daily life instead of conducting follow-up activities.
- Lack of commitment: Participants' initial commitments to continue to engage in community activities, skill building, entrepreneurship, or other social activities can weaken over time.
- Forgetfulness: Participants can intend to engage in follow-up activities but simply forget—especially under stress.

Example
The "We Can" Campaign[24]: A campaign launched by Oxfam in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan to change public perceptions towards Gender Based Violence through "seeding" local change makers in target communities. The campaign paired communication strategies (street theatre, mobile vans as well as distributing booklets highlighting the importance of taking action), along with a commitment device encouraging local 'change agents' to sign a pledge to make small, incremental changes in their own behaviours toward violence, as well as, spread the campaign message to 10 people in their social circle. A long-term study was conducted on 560 change makers to determine the impact of the campaign. On average, each change maker reached 5 people in their circle. Moreover, 79% of the change makers provided concrete examples of taking action to prevent violence. By the end of the intervention, 85% of the change advocates and 81% of the people in their circle endorsed the fact that violence against women is not acceptable. The evidence suggested that seeding a social norm with influential community members and asking them to pledge to spread the message to others, can be highly effective at changing perceptions and norms within the wider society.

Stage | 3
Lessons Learned

Initiative registration procedures present a good opportunity to include behavioural insights that can contribute to continued engagement. Such registration processes are often occurring anyway, have opportunities to provide personal and paper-based behaviourally-informed interventions, and are usually linked to participation data that can help inform indicators for evaluation.

Encouraging follow-through with a behaviour is challenging for both monitoring and evaluation. Such follow-through often takes place after the completion of the initiative and therefore new systems may need to be put in place to track the outcomes of interest after the initiative's completion. Consider planning events and competitions that can be used to bring participants back together and provide an indicator as to whether participants are interested in following through on the positive behaviours inculcated through the initiative and enhanced through the addition of behavioural insights.

Output: Entry Point(s)

You should now have a clear idea of the entry point(s) in the selected PVE-related project where you can insert a behavioural intervention to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the project for your target population.

OUTPUT FORM 3   *Project Entry Point(s)*

Mobilize	Does the PVE-related initiative have a challenge in recruiting participants?	Yes
		No
Engage	Does the PVE-related initiative face challenges with having sustained, consistent attendance at and engagement in the required activities? If so, when, where, and with whom are these challenges concentrated?	Yes
		No
Follow-Through	Is there any longer-term follow-through that is required? If so, is there a steep drop-off in participation during such follow-through periods?	Yes
		No

EXAMPLE

UNDP's PAVE (Partnering Against Violent Extremism) Project in Sudan

Mobilize	Does the PVE-related initiative have a challenge in recruiting participants?	No, as the project worked with those already enrolled in the prison school system.
Engage	Does the PVE programme face challenges with having sustained, consistent attendance at and engagement in the required activities? If so, when, where, and with whom are these challenges concentrated?	Yes, not all inmates regularly attend class or engage adequately. Younger inmates are particularly difficult to engage in educational activities.
Follow-Through	Is there any longer-term follow-through that is required? If so, is there a steep drop-off in participation during such follow-through periods?	There was no follow-through required but participants' educational outcomes were monitored following the intervention.

What's unique about BI4PVE?

Recent years have seen nascent but expanding literature on the psychological aspects of VE and PVE. Although this work is not definitive, it can be combined with the local knowledge of those working on PVE in each context in order to identify behavioural barriers and biases that are uniquely influential in PVE. The biases listed on pgs. 43-45 ("Categories of Biases") represent a subset of biases. They have been specifically selected for their potential relevance to PVE. Examples linked to PVE are provided.

4

RECOGNISE THE BEHAVIOURAL BARRIERS & BIASES

Introduction

When thinking about behavioural challenges, it is essential to recognize that human cognition has its limitations, therefore challenging the notion of human 'rationality'. In other words, we all fall into errors in judgement and decision making. We often rely on mental shortcuts (i.e., heuristics) to make important decisions, we have trouble translating intention into action, and we have conflicting short-term and long-term preferences. In short, we are all susceptible to cognitive and behavioural biases that result in systematic errors in judgement and inconsistencies between our preferences and our actions.

Challenges that have behavioural roots can stem from these biases which can lead to flawed decision-making. As such, biases can be responsible for the behavioural bottlenecks that hinder the outcomes or successes of a PVE-related initiative at each entry point (i.e., Mobilize, Engage, and Follow-Through). Therefore, it is essential at this stage to identify the biases that could be at play for the selected entry points of the project under consideration. The identification of the biases will then enable you to more effectively select the type of behavioural tool(s) to deploy during the next stage.

Steps & Tools:
## What behavioural barriers and biases are most important?

There are numerous ways of naming and organizing behavioural biases. The biases highlighted in this report are not exhaustive, but instead represent a subset of behavioural barriers that are most readily linked to PVE-related policies, programmes and projects.[25] We have used a simplified typology to organize the biases into three categories: namely those concerned with information processing, sense-making, and fast decision-making.[26] The following table will help you identify relevant biases.

As you work through this tool it is important to keep in mind your overall objective, target population, and entry point(s). At this stage, you may consider revisiting your choices and decisions in earlier stages, if you realize that there is another entry point or sub-population that is more susceptible to behavioural barriers or biases that would be more appropriate to target. Use the questions and tips provided below to help you navigate through the biases table.

Recognise Barriers & Biases:
Questions and Tips

◆ Questions to Ask Yourself
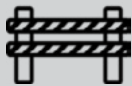
1. What are some of the behavioural bottlenecks you have identified for your selected entry point(s)?

2. Which category(ies) of biases (i.e., information processing, sense-making, fast decision-making) is that entry point more likely to be affected by?

3. Within this(these) category(ies), which biases can best explain/ account for the identified behavioural bottlenecks?

◆ Tips to Consider

1. For each entry point, think of which biases are most likely to affect your target population during different processes (engagement, mobilization, follow through). If your target population consists of both men and women, then consider whether each has different biases affecting their decisions.

2. It is often beneficial to consult with relevant stakeholders and experts in behavioural science to identify biases.

3. Note that while you might identify a list of biases, you do not need to address them all for your behavioural intervention to be successful. Sometimes addressing too many biases may weaken the effectiveness of the overall intervention.

4. Other useful tools to help identify biases include the Theoretical Domains Framework questionnaire[27] and the Cognitive bias cheat sheet.[28]

Categories of Biases

Category 1: Information processing

The brain uses simplifying procedures and shortcuts to more rapidly process information. These simplifications and shortcuts can result in missing important information or bias in the types of information that we focus on.

Example Bias	Description	Example for PVE
Availability heuristic[29]	The first thing that comes to mind is substituted for a common occurrence even if it is quite rare.	If one person who left a VE group could not find a job afterwards, this might appear to be the norm even if it is actually more normal for those who disengage from VE to find a way to make a living.
Framing effect[30]	We react differently to the same factual information depending on how it is presented.	The earnings and safety gained from avoiding engaging with VE groups may be more motivating if those potential gains are framed as something that could be lost or foregone if someone engages with a VE group.
Confirmation bias[31]	If we already believe something, we are more likely to notice, remember or look for information that confirms that belief and are more likely to try to find errors in information that disconfirms that belief.	When young people with radical tendencies read an article that is critical of their cause they will be more likely to fact check it and find errors in the logic, but propaganda in favor of their cause will be accepted with less scrutiny.
Affect heuristic[32]	Our decisions are often driven by emotions even when we think we are being motivated by logic.	Emotional anecdotes of an individual who successfully completed a PVE-related programme alongside statistics are more likely to encourage individuals to mobilize and participate than statistics alone.
Anchoring heuristic[33]	Whenever deciding on a course of action or even making a purely cognitive assessment, we are greatly affected by any initial choice or value we are exposed to—anchoring to a numerical value can even occur if the number is unrelated to the subsequent decision or assessment.	If an initiative provides participants with an example of a previous group who spent 40 hours developing a community engagement project, participants are more likely to spend more time than if the example was of a group who spent 10 hours on a project.
Representativeness heuristic[34]	When we are making a decision about the likelihood of an event under uncertainty, we may select one event as more likely because of how well it represents key characteristics of the scenario even if another option is logically more likely.	Someone may romantically believe that all members of a VE organization have similar ideological views when, in fact, there is a wide range of ideological perspectives in a VE group—including those who do not strongly believe in the "cause."

Categories of Biases

Category 2: Sense-making

In order to make sense of the world, the brain creates connections and meaning for information that it receives. While this process is often effective, it can also create meaning where there is none and can ascribe incorrect and biased interpretations of data.

Example Bias	Description	Example for PVE
Projection bias[35]	We often project our current thought patterns and attitudes onto our future selves assuming that they will remain the same even if that is unlikely.	A young person who is tempted to engage with violent extremism due to his or her ideology may assume that his ideological motivation will remain stable, when in fact disillusionment is common among VE members.
Authority bias[36]	We may be convinced by the opinion of an authority figure even when the opinion is not linked to the source of that person's authority or expertise.	A religious/political leader may make inflammatory statements about another country in order to incite violence, and those statements are trusted based on the individual's authority even if they never visited nor studied the country.
Bandwagon effect[37]	If we perceive that others are increasingly engaging in a behaviour, we become more likely to do so ourselves even if it is not something we would normally value or engage in.	As young people perceive that more of their peers are abstaining from engaging with VE groups and instead are engaging in social movements or entrepreneurial programmes, they may be less likely to engage with VE groups.
Social proof[38]	When we confront an unknown situation, we may make assumptions about the judgments and actions of others to guide our own actions—often assuming that the actions of others are motivated by more information than our own, even if no one has any additional information at all.	Small group discussions exploring options for community action are likely to converge on inferior options unless individuals are first given time to consider their own opinion and the degree to which it is supported by information or assumptions before sharing both their opinion and information sources with the group.

Categories of Biases

Category 3: Fast decision-making

Due to time and information constraints, the brain needs to be able to take fast decisions by applying rapid situation assessments and acting fast, which can lead to suboptimal decisions.

Bias Name	Description	Example for PVE
Loss aversion[39]	When making a choice we are more motivated by losses and disadvantages than by gains—even framing the same information as a loss instead of a gain can have this effect.	If participants are offered an incentive to continue to participate in an initiative, that incentive can be more effective if it is given at the beginning and then lost if they cease to participate instead of simply offering the incentive for those who complete.
Status quo bias[40]	We are more likely to continue with the current state of affairs (or status quo) than to try something new. This is why setting the default option of a choice is so powerful.	If a PVE-related initiative has planned for a follow-up event to see if participants have followed through on their plans, it is more effective to default participants into that event rather than to ask for volunteers.
Present bias[41]	We often prefer to have a smaller gain now than to wait for a large gain later.	Any incentives offered to participants of an initiative will be more effective if they are offered immediately than if they are offered after some delay.
Overconfidence effect[42]	We often think that we are more likely to succeed than the average person—of course, the problem is that we cannot all be above average. It is therefore important to benchmark plans and expectations to external data to arrive at more realistic expectations.[43]	Staff running an entrepreneurship programme to help former VE group members re-integrate into the labour market may assume that their programme will help the majority of participants start a successful business even if most businesses fail and business training programmes in general have a rather low success rate.

Stage | 4
Lessons Learned

Continuously remind yourselves and your partners of the distinction between (personal and social) behavioural barriers and biases that can be addressed using behaviourally-informed interventions and more structural barriers that must be addressed through other interventions beyond BI4PVE.

Focus on the behavioural barriers and biases that affect participation in the initiative that you are enhancing more so than general structural barriers and biases that are affecting the target population.

Output:
Behavioural Barriers & Biases

You now have identified some of the important barriers and biases that affect your target population as they engage in the initiative. These biases will help you choose appropriate behavioural tools as you develop your intervention in the next stage. The following form can be used to capture the key outputs of this stage.

OUTPUT FORM 4   *Behavioural Barriers & Biases*

#1: What is your entry point of interest? (Circle one or more and write notes)	Mobilize
	Engage
	Follow Through
	Other

#2 What is the behavioural bottleneck that you identified for that entry point?	

#3: Which category(ies) of biases is that entry point more likely to use? (Circle the primary one and write notes)	Information Processing
	Sense-Making
	Fast Decision-Making

#4: Within each category, which biases can best explain the identified behavioural bottleneck for that entry point?	

#5: What is the importance of improving this entry point for the success of the PVE programme?	

EXAMPLE

UNDP's Yemen Stabilisation Programme

#1: What is your entry point of interest?	ALL THREE (Mobilize, Engage, Follow Through)
#2 What is the behavioural bottleneck that you identified for that entry point?	**1 Mobilize:** Individuals who do not normally participate in activities provided by civil society also will not participate in this activity. **2 Engage:** Participants will register but then will not come to all sessions. **3 Follow Through:** Participants will commit to a community cohesion activity during the group sessions but will forget to follow through with it between the last session and the subsequent competition for funding (made available for implementation of community cohesion activities).
#3: Which category(ies) of biases is that entry point more likely to use?	Although each of the three categories is playing a role, the most common driver appears to be fast decision-making, with participants potentially being affected by loss aversion, status quo bias, present bias, and overconfidence.
#4: Within each category, which biases can best explain the identified behavioural bottleneck for that entry point?	**1 Mobilize:** Information processing (confirmation bias) and fast decision-making (loss aversion, status quo bias). Before committing to participate, potential beneficiaries may believe that such programmes are a waste of time and may look for examples to prove it. Potential beneficiaries may also prefer the status quo to trying something new. There may also be a fear that the location of an event is not safe: a fear for safety (loss aversion) outweighs any potential benefits. **2 Engage:** Fast decision-making (status quo bias, present bias). Participants will decide to participate but doing so is a new activity and it will be easy for them to slip back into their usual (status quo) routine. On any given day the immediate pressing needs of the moment may cause participants to forget to attend or to prefer the immediate need to the longer-term pay-off of participation. **3 Follow Through:** Sense-making (Projection bias). Participants will think they will follow through when they are in the group sessions by projecting the current level of high engagement into the future. They are also likely to be overconfident that they will succeed in following through with their plans (overconfidence effect, planning fallacy).
#5: What is the importance of improving this entry point for the success of the PVE programme?	**1 Mobilize:** Bringing in participants who normally do not engage with such activities increases the chance that the support sessions reach those who need such sessions most and have not received similar support in the past. **2 Engage:** The three sessions all cover important topics and individuals will miss out if they do not attend all of them. Psychosocial empowerment will be enhanced if we can also increase attendance in all three sessions. **3 Follow Through:** Whenever there is a gap in any activity there is a degree of drop-out. By inserting BI we hope more community cohesion activities will be developed and presented. By increasing the number of fully developed initiatives, it will also be more likely that some additional initiatives beyond those that can be funded will be implemented.

What's unique about BI4PVE?

SHAPE DIFFERENCE has been developed as a framework to design behavioural interventions in many sectors. The table on pgs. 51-2 highlights how each of the behavioural tools that make up SHAPE DIFFERENCE can be employed to strengthen a PVE project. Because BI4PVE is a new field, we encourage users of this document to test any applications and to publish their results so that as a community we can begin to identify which of these behavioural tools/levers are most effective at enhancing PVE efforts.

5

CHOOSE THE BEHAVIOURAL TOOLS

Introduction

This stage helps you choose behavioural tools that can be deployed as a solution that strengthens the mobilization, engagement, and follow-through of individuals in a PVE-related initiative.

The inclusion of these behavioural tools can contribute to your overall objective of decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors that help protect and prevent individuals from engaging in violent extremism. Each tool can be conceptualized as a behavioural lever that can be integrated into a variety of delivery modes to increase the outcome of interest.

Steps & Tools:
What behavioural tools / interventions can help?

This section begins with key questions and tips that lead you through the use of the SHAPE DIFFERENCE framework that was developed by Nudge Lebanon to plan behavioural interventions. The following questions and the tables provide a detailed overview of the SHAPE DIFFERENCE tool. The framework has also been adapted to provide examples of how each behavioural tool can be linked to PVE. Please see the tools on the next few pages.
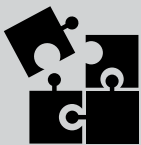
Choose Behavioural Tools:

Questions and Tips

◆ Questions to Ask Yourself

1. What behavioural tools from SHAPE DIFFERENCE do you think would be most powerful for helping your population overcome the barriers and biases identified at the entry point(s)?

2. Which behavioural tools from SHAPE DIFFERENCE could be merged with an existing part of the initiative to limit the need for new systems or processes?
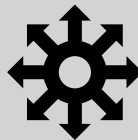
3. Which behavioural tools from SHAPE DIFFERENCE have been successfully used with similar populations or initiatives?

◆ Tips to Consider

1. Avoid tools that trigger cultural or organizational sensitivities.

2. When developing an intervention to test, consider if it can potentially be scaled up sustainably if successful.

3. If you can implement the tool at an individual level (not at a group / classroom level) it will be much easier to evaluate the impact.

4. If you need assistance in determining which type of behavioural tool to use, other frameworks can be useful, such as EAST[44] and SIMPLER[45]. When in doubt seek input from an expert in designing behavioural interventions.

SHAPE DIFFERENCE

Tools	Tool Description	Bias Category	Link to PVE
Salience	Drawing people's attention to stimuli that are novel, accessible, attractive and simple.	Information Processing	Highlighting and increasing the appeal of the existence, benefits, and messages of PVE programmes or initiatives to draw people's attention.
Hassle Factor	Modifying features of the environment to make a behaviour easier or harder to accomplish.	Fast Decision-Making	Making it easy to register, attend, or continue attending PVE programmes by providing easier access and simplifying required steps.
Active Choice	Requiring individuals to affirmatively choose between options.	Fast Decision-Making	Increasing the quantity and quality of engagement with PVE programmes by having participants make active decisions.
Priming	Exposing people to certain stimuli, words, sensations, or sights to trigger a positive action.	Information Processing, Fast Decision-Making	Priming potential participants in PVE programmes with positive messages about participation and civic engagement at the start of the programme to increase uptake.
Emotions	Provoking affective reactions that are automatic and unconscious to influence people's decisions.	Sense Making, Fast Decision-Making	Evoking the target population's emotions through messages about helping friends or family through attendance and participation in PVE programmes to elicit desired behaviours.
Default	Providing a default option that will come into force if no active choice is made.	Fast Decision-Making	Defaulting people into participating in PVE programmes or into enrolling in follow-up initiatives as the likelihood of opting-out is lower than that of actively opting-in.
Incentive	Designing behaviourally-informed cost-effective incentive schemes that make use of non-financial incentives and adjust their timing to take advantage of present bias.	Information processing, Fast Decision-Making	To encourage participation, list the benefits of the PVE programme, making them feel imminent, and highlighting non-financial incentives (certificates, friendship, pride, skills, helping others, impact etc.).
Framing	Changing the way information is framed to affect people's behaviour and perception.	Information Processing, Fast Decision-Making	Framing the participation in PVE programmes as a way to avoid losses rather than to seek gains to appeal to people's loss aversion. Other frames can also be effective, for example framing participation in the PVE programme as a fresh start or as something earned.
Feedback	Giving clear feedback information on how people behaved in certain circumstances.	Information Processing, Sense Making	Giving participants in PVE programmes clear feedback about desired behaviours and their own progress in knowledge and skills to improve their motivation and participation in the programmes.
Ego	Using cues and words that support a consistent and positive self-image.	Fast Decision-Making	Using messages that appeal to a person's ego by associating the participation and engagement in PVE programmes with a positive self-image (such as being an active citizen, good friend, honest person, responsible family member etc.).

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Tools	Tool Description	Bias Category	Link to PVE
Reminder	Providing cues to remind people to perform a certain action.	Fast Decision-Making	Providing timely reminders to PVE programme participants to maintain participation and improve their uptake of new messages and behaviours. For example, by sending SMS messages.
Effect of Messenger	Selecting who communicates the information to influence the automatic reaction of people.	Sense Making, Fast Decision-Making	Delivering PVE messages to target populations through relatable peers, popular, or highly-regarded messengers to impact how the information is received. The use of peers can be particularly helpful.
Norm	Providing descriptive (or injunctive), factually accurate information about how peers behave (or how they believe they should behave) in a similar situation.	Information Processing, Fast Decision-Making	Presenting information about the social norms of participation, engagement and follow-through with PVE activities to increase conformity and compliance.
Commitment	Using commitment to increase the intangible cost of failure to act according to one's public pledges.	Sense Making, Fast Decision-Making	Having participants make public commitments to engage with PVE programmes and to follow-through on learned behaviours and action plans in order to increase compliance.
Equivalent Reciprocity	Responding to others' positive actions with a similar one.	Fast Decision-Making	Stating the positive actions/initiatives that have been done for the benefit of the target population to evoke reciprocal positive actions.

Examples:
Use of Behavioural Solutions

For each entry point there are behavioural tools that are commonly useful across entry points and some that are often particularly useful with specific entry points. We present illustrative examples below for both *common* tools and *particular* tools.

Mobilize

a. Commonly effective:

i. Active Choice: For example, you can find a place where your target population is already interacting with a person or process and prompt them to make an active choice about whether or not they want to participate in the PVE initiative.
ii. Ego: For example, when advertising participation in the PVE initiative, you can begin the advertising by activating a part of their personal identity that would be aligned with participation in the initiative ("As a future leader of your community, come help your community by participating in Initiative X").

iii. Loss aversion: For example, instead of framing participation in terms of what is gained, warn against losing out on the opportunity to participate in the initiative and therefore losing other benefits that can accrue from participation. Scarcity can also be used here (e.g., "There are limited spaces, don't regret missing out on your chance to participate").

iv. Norm: For example, use a social norm to show how desirable participation in the initiative is. This could be a descriptive norm about how many people participated last time or an injunctive norm that states that most people think it is important to participate in the initiative.

b. Particularly effective:

i. Messenger: For example, it is better to conduct outreach and design advertising that is from either a peer or a respected member of the community than to have the messenger be someone unknown to the potential participants.

ii. Incentives: Non-monetary incentives such as snacks, transportation, and public recognition can encourage people to participate in an initiative. These incentives should be made clear, simple, and salient in any mobilization efforts.

Engage

a. Commonly effective:

i. Active Choice: For example, you can have participants in a PVE-related initiative make an active choice about whether and how to participate to increase the quality and quantity of engagement.

ii. Ego: For example, making it clear to participants that you are counting on their input and active participation to ensure the success and quality of the initiative ("We need you to help us make this initiative a success!" or "We are counting on you to X!").

iii. Loss aversion: For example, if the initiative requires participation in multiple sessions, you can frame the importance of their continued participation in terms of avoiding the loss of all the benefits associated with the participation in the following session.

iv. Norm: For example, you can use social norms by providing the proportion (as long as it is high) of people who actively engaged with a previous initiative, so as to create social pressure to stick to such a high proportion.

b. Particularly effective:

i. Commitment: For example, at the beginning of the initiative, you can have participants publicly pledge to actively engage with the content of the programme and/or to continue attending the sessions, and potentially display the pledge somewhere visible.

ii. Reciprocity: For example, you can inform participants of how much time, effort, or financial resources have been allocated for this programme for their benefit, to evoke reciprocal positive behaviours.

Follow-through

a. Commonly effective:

i. Active Choice: For example, you can have your participants make an active choice about whether to enroll in post-initiative activities to take what they learnt to the application step.

ii. Ego: For example, when telling programme participants about why it is important to apply what they learnt in the initiative after it is concluded, you can appeal to the relevant part of their social identity ("As a future leader of your community, your community is counting on you to X" or "Your siblings look to you as an example of someone who does good in your neighborhood, set a good example by doing X.").

iii. Loss aversion: For example, you can tell participants what their communities will lose out on if they do not follow through with the activity.

iv. Norm: For example, you can inform participants about the proportion of people (as long as it is high) who did the desired follow-through actions in previous programmes to create a social norm that they will feel inclined to conform to.

b. Particularly effective:

i. Reminders: For example, you can send text messages to participants after the end of the programme, reminding them to follow through on the post-programme objectives.

ii. Implementation intention: For example, at the end of the programme, you can ask participants to reflect on and write down an action plan on how they intend to follow through on the desired behaviours. Such an action plan should include triggers (such as specific times, or specific habits) that will remind them to do the action (for example, "After prayer on Fridays, I will do X").

Stage | 5
Lessons Learned

Initial brainstorming sessions for the use of behavioural interventions are most effective when guided and supplemented by behavioural experts. They can offer valuable ideas based on their experience running behavioural interventions.

It is tempting to use as many behavioural tools as possible; however, it is important to limit the complexity of the intervention so that it does not lose effectiveness by triggering information overload or using tools that work via opposing mechanisms that may counter-act each other.

Output:
Behavioural Tools

Congratulations! After completing this stage, you should now have an outline of your behavioural intervention. The following form will help you capture an overview of your conclusions from this stage. Of course, depending on your intervention design, and the mode of delivery, you will need to do additional work to design, create, or write the actual nudges and behavioural interventions that will be used, and how they will be connected to the existing processes and procedures of the programme at the particular entry point. This additional refinement will be specific to your context and programme.

OUTPUT FORM 5 *Behavioural Tools*

	Mobilize	Engage	Follow-through
#1 Which SHAPE DIFFERENCE tools will most likely help your population take up the desired behaviour at the identified entry point?			
#2 Which of these tools could be most easily incorporated within the existing project that you identified while limiting the need for new systems or processes?			
#3 Which tools have been successfully used for similar populations or objectives?			
#4 What are the three next steps for designing the intervention content?			
#5 Who is responsible for implementing the intervention?			
#6 How will the BI intervention help achieve your overall objective?			

EXAMPLE

UNDP's Yemen Stabilisation Programme

#1 Which SHAPE DIFFERENCE tools were most likely to help your population take up the desired behaviour at the identified entry point?	**1. Mobilize:** Salience, Loss aversion, Social norm, Reminder **2. Engage:** Commitment, Reminder **3. Follow-through:** Commitment
#2 Which of these tools could most easily be incorporated within the existing project that you identified while limiting the need for new systems or processes?	They can easily be implemented via the following delivery modes that are already planned or can easily be added to project activities without any major changes. **1. Mobilize:** Add the behavioural tools to recruitment flyers handed out to households. **2. Engage:** Add commitment-setting to the registration process and include SMS reminders. **3 Follow-through:** Add the commitment to an attendance poster.

#3 Which tools have been successfully used for similar populations or objectives?	**1. Mobilize:**
	  - Behaviourally-informed flyers, letters and emails have been successfully used for programme sign-up and participation in non-PVE programmes.
	2. Engage:
	  - Commitments have been used successfully in savings groups.
	  - SMS reminders have been successfully used for healthcare appointments.
	3. Follow-through:
	  - Commitments have been used successfully in education interventions.

#4 What were the three next steps for designing the intervention content?	1. Determine behaviourally-informed messages 2. Determine distribution locations 3. Determine data collection mechanisms
#5 Who was responsible for implementing the intervention?	The psychosocial support sessions were the responsibility of Oxfam while the behavioural interventions were the responsibility of Creative People Solutions (CPS). This enabled the organizations to focus on their separate responsibilities and enabled the inclusion of BI without diverting resources from the base programme of psychosocial support sessions. CPS was also responsible for collecting data to be used in the evaluation of the project.
#6 How did the BI intervention help achieve your overall objective?	The BI intervention aims to increase (and broaden) participation in the psychosocial support sessions which directly tackle topics such as psychological trauma, community safety, violent extremism, armed conflict, the consequences of conflict, proliferation of weapons, small arms, disputes and administrative deadlocks. Furthermore, to the extent that the BI intervention increases the creation of social cohesion projects, this can contribute to building communities' resilience to VE.

EXAMPLE

The PAVE (Partnering Against Violent Extremism) Project in Sudan

#1 Which SHAPE DIFFERENCE tools were most likely to help your population take up the desired behaviour at the entry point identified?	Priming, Ego.
#2 Which of these tools could most easily be incorporated within the existing project that you identified while limiting the need for new systems or processes?	Both were easily integrated into existing PAVE project activities through a values affirmation exercise within the existing prison school curriculum.
#3 Which tools have been successfully used for similar populations or objectives?	In the US, values affirmation has successfully been used in schools, particularly with Hispanic and African American communities.
#4 What were the three next steps for designing the intervention content?	Identifying key values in Sudanese society at large, identifying the specific values that emerge in prison, and translating these into a values-affirming questionnaire.
#5 Who was responsible for implementing the intervention?	The content of the training was designed by Nudge Lebanon. UNDP Sudan delivered the training, while the Sudanese National Commission for Combatting Terrorism was an essential partner in facilitating interaction with the prison.
#6 How did the BI intervention help achieve your overall objective?	The BI intervention aimed to contribute to PVE efforts by creating resilience in the prison community, providing opportunities for alternative livelihoods, creating social cohesion, and preventing violent extremist tendencies from simmering in the community.

What's unique about BI4PVE?

Collecting data on outcomes related to PVE programming is uniquely challenging given the sensitive nature of VE. As a result, unique monitoring and evaluation resources have been developed by UNDP for use in PVE. We recommend users take advantage of these resources as they develop evaluations of their BI4PVE projects. See footnotes 44 & 45.

Much remains to be learned in the area of BI4PVE, therefore it is particularly important that users of this document conduct rigorous testing and evaluation of their efforts. This should be done to ensure that the community can begin to develop an evidence base and that interventions do not have negative unintended consequences.

DESIGN A MEASUREMENT APPROACH FOR THE EXPERIMENT

Introduction

The key to the success of the application of behavioural insights has been the use of rigorous experimentation to identify biases and evaluate the effectiveness of behavioural interventions and tools. Experimentation has helped generate the behavioural insights we have inherited from psychology and behavioural economics.[46] In addition, the rigorous evaluation of behavioural interventions provides the opportunity to learn from implementation and improve future efforts. Without rigorous evaluation, each new policy, programme, or project is a missed opportunity to learn. As such, although this step is last, it is crucial that learning and planning for the evaluation start from the first stage onwards.

What do we mean by rigorous evaluation? For our purposes, it is an evaluation that enables you to compare what happened with your behavioural intervention to what would have happened without it. A rigorous evaluation seeks to create as realistic comparison as possible.

Steps & Tools:
How will you measure the outcome?

◆ **Step #1** ❙ Determine Timing and Sample Size

The first step is to determine the timing of your implementation and the total sample size that the intervention will reach. This will help you determine which method of evaluation is suitable. As you plan your evaluation you should make use of the PVE monitoring and evaluation guide developed by UNDP that is available online.[47] UNDP has also developed a list of indicators that can be used when designing monitoring and evaluation frameworks for PVE. Some of these indicators can also serve as outcome variables when evaluating the added value of your BI4PVE solution.[48]

◆ **Step #2** ❙ Select Method for Evaluation

The second step is to choose which method should be used for your evaluation. The two preferred methods of evaluation in the application of behavioural insights are either randomized controlled trials (RCTs) or quasi-experimental design (QED). The former involves randomly assigning individuals, time slots, or locations to receive the behavioural intervention while randomly assigning others to receive a different intervention, 'business as usual', or nothing at all. With a large enough sample, the method of using random assignment prior to implementation allows for all known and unknown differences between groups to be similar on average. This method requires careful planning and a sufficiently large number of individuals, time slots, or locations that can be randomly allocated. Many guides for conducting an RCT have been developed and you can find several helpful guides and references to learn more about conducting an RCT below.

Guides for conducting Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)

- For a guide on the use of RCTs when evaluating behavioural interventions see the Behavioural Insights Team guide, **Test, Learn, Adapt**

- For a general introduction to the use of RCTs see J-PAL's **Introduction to Evaluations**

- For complex projects we recommend the MRC's **Developing and evaluating complex interventions guidance**

The second preferred method of evaluation is the use of a quasi-experimental design (QED). In fact, this second method is a family of different methods. The family includes various non-randomized methods of creating a point of comparison. One common approach is to match the intervention individuals, times, or locations with others that you did not intervene with. Ideally this matching is done before the intervention begins and uses as much data as possible for the matching to ensure that the two groups are indeed comparable. If the comparison group is chosen before the start of implementation, then the change in the intervention group can be compared to the change in the matched comparison group. If the comparison group is chosen after you have begun implementation, then the two groups can be compared after the intervention has ended. A second common approach, that is less rigorous than the first, is to compare the behaviour of your intervention group before starting the BI4PVE initiative to their behaviour afterwards (aka a pre-post or cohort design). Although QEDs are more likely to be affected by self-selection bias, they enable you to conduct evaluations where randomization is not possible, can enable a more precise evaluation of how the intervention works for a particular group of interest,[49] and are useful for testing approaches or evaluating them with smaller samples.[50]

Guide for Quasi-Experimental Design

- A concise introduction by Howard White and Shagun Sabarwal on **Quasi-Experimental Design and Methods**

◆ **Step #3 |** Conduct an Ethics Review

The third step is to submit the research design to an ethical institutional review board. This involves writing up the intervention and evaluation design and submitting it to a board of experts who ensure that the intervention follows ethical guidelines. This step has two key advantages: (a) it provides an external safeguard against potential abuse of behavioural interventions and (b) it ensures that the evaluation handles both privacy and ethical concerns appropriately. This step must be built into any planning as it can take anywhere from days to months depending on the potential risks of the intervention or evaluation. If changes are being made to existing procedures with existing governmental programmes it is sometimes possible to receive an exemption from those government ministries. The procedure for ethical approval differs per country; however, the United States' regulations and guidelines serve as the reference for many other countries.[51] We recommend that staff working on BI4PVE receive ethics training through the online certification programmes offered by either CITI or NIH.[52]

Finally, if you encounter resistance to the use of rigorous evaluation work in social interventions to aid in PVE, it is important to remember that such randomized methods were first developed in the medical sciences and not the social sciences and have been practiced for a century.[53]

Pilot the Experiment:

Questions and Tips

◆ **Questions to Ask Yourself**

1. How many individuals or groups will you be working with? This will be your maximum potential sample for the intervention group.

2. Can you randomly select who will receive the intervention and who will not?

3. Are there data that you can collect before and after the intervention? If so, can you collect it from both the intervention group and a control/comparison group?

◆ **Tips to Consider**

1. If your intervention happens at a group level, the most important part of your sample size is the number of groups (or clusters).

2. If you have a very small sample size, you might be able to randomize the time at which the intervention occurs instead of simply whether it occurs or not. For example, you can randomize when a sign is or is not posted in front of a few locations rather than simply randomizing the locations.

3. When identifying data for measuring your outcome, try to find data that are linked to a behaviour that will be collected by the programme anyway (for example, attendance).

4. When analyzing the collected data, make sure to look at the impact on subgroups, especially by gender, age, and disability. For a more robust evaluation, ensure that such subgroups are taken into account during the evaluation design (i.e., use stratified sampling)[54].

5. Make sure to monitor what actually happens with your intervention and your evaluation. As with any other project, the plan does not always translate into reality.

Output:
Evaluation Framework

The following form provides a simple format to enter your evaluation framework. The population is where you will put information on both the type of individuals (or groups) you are targeting as well as the sample size. The intervention is where you can write a short summary of your behavioural intervention, especially its content, its mode of delivery, and its timing. The comparison contains information on what you are comparing the results of your intervention group to (this could be a randomized control group, a matched comparison group, or data from the same group at a different time). The outcome row is where you can enter the key outcome you will collect and use to evaluate the success of your intervention at changing a behaviour. Finally, the time row is where you can specify when you will collect data, bearing in mind that results might differ after different periods of time.

OUTPUT FORM 6 *Evaluation*

Population	Description:
	Numbers:
Intervention	Content (behavioural tool):
	Mode of delivery:
	Timing:
Comparison	Type:
	When and how it was created:
Outcome	Primary outcome (measurement):
	Associated behaviour:
Time	Baseline data collection:
	Midline data collection:
	Endline data collection:
	Follow-up data collection:

Stage | 6
Lessons Learned

Many PVE programme activities have relatively small sample sizes that make it difficult to design a rigorous randomized controlled trial.

It is important to get the organizations and staff in charge of entry point activities involved early so that the intervention / activities can be designed with any evaluation needs in mind and vice-versa.
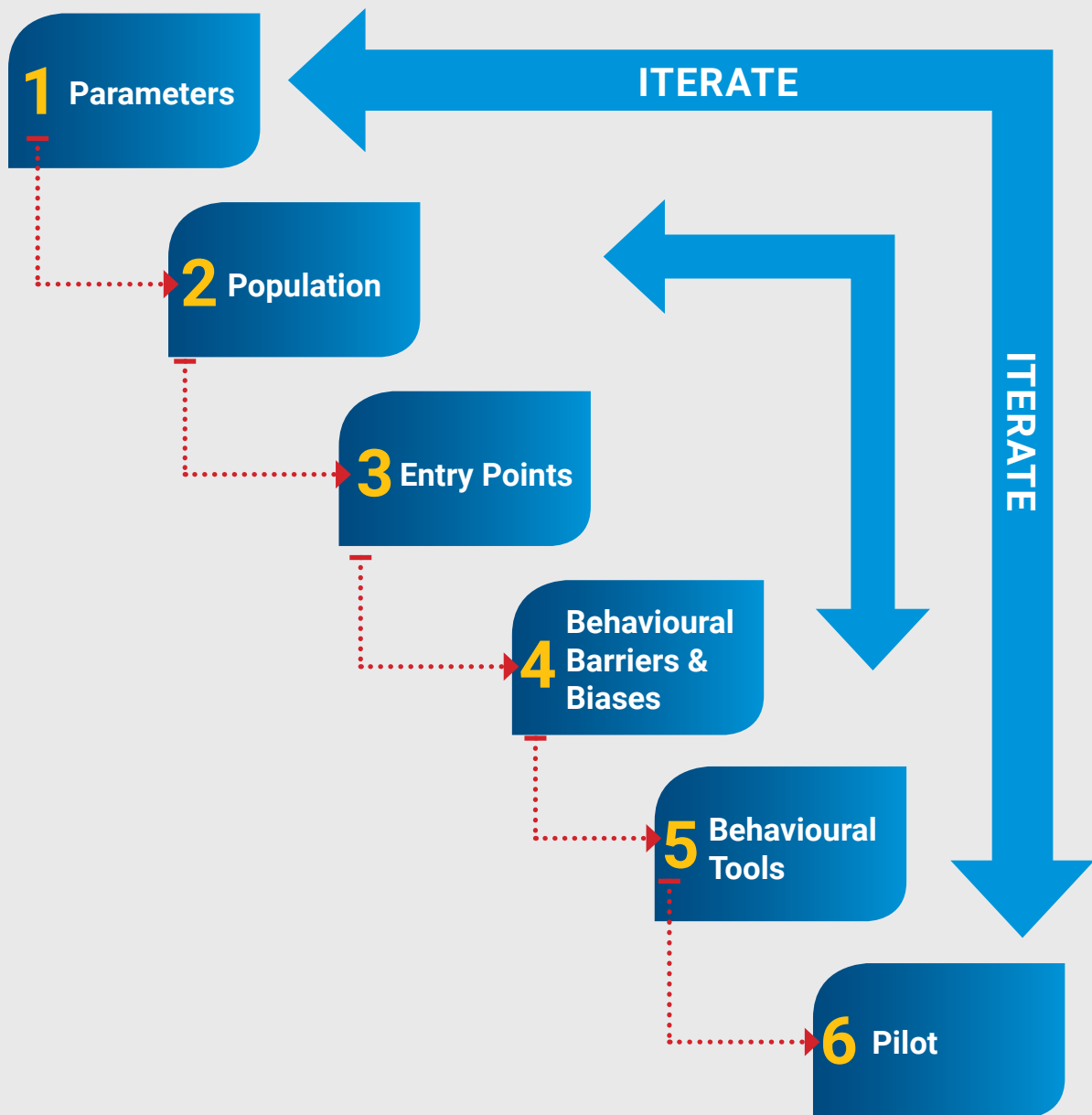
EXAMPLE

UNDP's PAVE (Partnering Against Violent Extremism) Project in Sudan

Population	Description: Adults ages 18 to 45 in Al Huda Prison, Khartoum, Sudan. • Numbers: 265 male prisoners enrolled in the prison educational system, of which 190 signed a consent form to participate in the BI intervention
Intervention	**Content (behavioural tool):** A Values Affirmation Exercise in which participants would rank 10 values from the most important to the least important, and then write a few sentences about the value that is most important to them. **Mode of delivery:** 1. Mobilize: N/A 2. Engage: 35-minute session prior to their exams 3. Follow Through: N/A **Timing:** 1. Mobilize: N/A 2. Engage: 1 day 3. Follow Through: None
Comparison	Type: Prisoners were randomly assigned to complete the values affirmation task. Participants who were assigned to the comparison group were asked to complete a placebo exercise in which they ranked the activities they completed throughout the day, and to briefly write about their daily routine. When and how it was created: The prisoners were randomly assigned prospectively, after receiving their consent.
Outcome	Primary outcome (measurement): midterm exam and final exam test scores.
Time	Midline: midterm exam results Endline data collection: final exam results

EXAMPLE

UNDP's Yemen Stabilisation Programme

Population

Description: Adults aged 18 to 45 in Aden, Yemen.
Numbers:
- 500 households in 41 blocks for the mobilize stage
- 240 from the engage to the follow-through stage

Intervention

Content (behavioural tool):
1. Mobilize: salience, loss aversion, social norms, and reminders.
2. Engage: public commitment and SMS reminders.
3. Follow Through: public commitment.

Mode of delivery:
1. Mobilize: Paper Flyers
2. Engage: Paper Posters and SMS
3. Follow Through: Paper Posters

Timing:
1. Mobilize: several days
2. Engage: 1 week (3 sessions)
3. Follow Through: ca. 1 month

Comparison

Type:
1. Mobilize: Randomly allocated street 'blocks' receive a basic flyer (Cluster randomized active control group)
2. Engage: Every even number registrant will receive the business as usual registration form, group sessions, and no SMS reminders. (Quasi-experimental comparison group outcome #1)
3. Follow Through: The same even numbered registrants as in the engage stage will be analyzed for their follow-through (Quasi-experimental comparison group outcome #2)

When and how it was created:
- The blocks were randomly assigned prospectively.
- The alternating assignment occurred at registration and was blocked by gender and whether or not individuals signed up as a group.

Outcome

Primary outcome (measurement):
1. Mobilize: Average number of individuals per street 'block' registering for the psychosocial support sessions.
2. Engage:
   a. Average number of sessions attended.
   b. Percentage of individuals attending each session.
3. Follow Through: Proportion of individuals attending the community cohesion presentations and competition.

Associated behaviour: active, continued engagement in the programme's activities.

Time

Endline data collection: For each outcome there will only be data collection at one point in time representing if they are participating in that given activity at that given moment.

1 Parameters

ITERATE

2 Population

3 Entry Points

4 Behavioural Barriers & Biases

ITERATE

5 Behavioural Tools

6 Pilot

ITERATE

When developing a behavioural intervention, it is important to use an iterative process. The process outlined above is never perfectly linear in practice. As you progress through each stage, you will learn new information that might prompt you to revisit previous decisions. In many cases you may explore more than one stage in parallel. To ensure that new information feeds into previous decisions and enriches the success of your work, we recommend that you pause after completing each stage and ask yourself if you have learned anything new in this stage that could inform and adjust the information gathered and decisions made at previous stages.

LESSONS LEARNED

This document has been informed by the lessons learned in conducting BI4PVE interventions in Yemen and Sudan during 2018-19. We have drawn from these examples to illustrate each stage of the intervention process above. Here we summarise the lessons learned from these initiatives.

- **Programme & Objective:** Ensure that enough time is invested to raise awareness internally about behavioural insights and how they can be helpful in strengthening PVE programmes. Improved understanding among all partners will help you better identify where to insert behavioural insights.
- **Size matters - working to scale:** VE behaviours are dangerous but rare, so PVE efforts need to reach large populations in order to impact their small target groups. Similarly, substantial sample sizes are required in order to carry out adequate measurement of BI interventions. This requirement should be factored in planning — pre-existing, large, multi-year projects might make the best entry points for a behavioural intervention.

- **Work long term with multiple iterations:** for BI to be really useful for PVE programmes, the stage 'iterate and learn' needs to be used for a second phase of the programme that fully integrates the learning on which nudges work and which do not. As such BI cannot usefully be applied in the absence of iteration, which should also be planned for and funded.
- **Population:** As is the case with other development projects it is important to be sensitive to the fact that various organizations have vested interests in identifying (or not identifying) certain target populations. Therefore, it is useful to get various perspectives and to bring diverse stakeholders together in a joint discussion. It is useful to bring together both governmental and non-governmental actors.
- **Entry Points:** Programme registration procedures present a good opportunity to include behavioural insights that can contribute to continued engagement. Such registration processes are often occurring anyway and provide opportunities to inject personalised and paper-based behaviourally-informed interventions, and are usually linked to participation data that can help inform indicators for evaluation.
- **Barriers & Biases:** Continuously remind yourselves and your partners of the distinction between (personal) behavioural barriers/biases that can be addressed using behaviourally-informed interventions and more structural barriers that must be addressed through other interventions beyond BI4PVE.
- **Focus:** The focus needs to be squarely on the PVE objective. However effective and important to test, different BI nudges are just tools that should not distract from the implementation of PVE, including traditional methods.
- **Agility:** While BI requires careful planning and minute execution and measurement, just like with more classic approaches some flexibility needs to be factored at key junctures in order to be able to change gear when needed, without losing the benefit of BI.
- **Behavioural Tools:** Initial brainstorming sessions for the use of behavioural interventions are most effective when guided and supplemented by behavioural experts. They can offer valuable ideas based on their experience running behavioural interventions.
- **Measurement design:** It is important to get the organizations and staff in charge of entry point activities involved early on so that the intervention / activities can be designed with any evaluation needs in mind and vice-versa.

CONCLUSION

Behavioural insights for the prevention of violent extremism have the potential to strengthen efforts that both prevent engagement and reduce re-engagement with violent extremism. The use of behavioural insights serves as one tool in a broader toolbox to prevent and reduce violent extremism and their use should not be seen as a silver bullet. A broader range of reforms and interventions are needed ranging from international and geopolitical reforms to non-behavioural interventions at the individual level (such as educational interventions), and behavioural insights should therefore be properly perceived as complementary tools for policymakers, not alternatives.

Much remains to be discovered regarding what is effective in PVE. In this document, we propose that the use of Behavioural Insights for PVE (BI4PVE) will be most effective when used to strengthen existing PVE projects that are known to have positive impacts on risk and protective factors associated with reduced VE or increased resilience against future participation. To aid this use of BI4PVE we propose focusing on three key entry points in programmes: mobilize, engage, and follow-through. However, we also recognize that the field of PVE programming is itself nascent, and as such we strongly recommend that any efforts to use BI4PVE embed rigorous testing and evaluation of both the behavioural intervention and the overall PVE effort so that, as a field, we can learn what works and under what conditions.

NOTES

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3. USAID (2011). The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency. USAID. Washington DC. p. 2. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacs400.pdf. Nasser-Eddine et al. (2011). Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review. Counter Terrorism and Security Technology Centre. Edinburgh, Australia. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Countering-Violent-Extremism-%28CVE%29-Literature-Nasser-Eddine-Garnham/95dad85c776bd3eb17c47fcebc5bad6f7b99789f?p2df
4. Horgan, J. G., & Horgan, J. (2004). The psychology of terrorism. Routledge. Horgan, J. G. (2009). Walking away from terrorism: Accounts of disengagement from radical and extremist movements. Routledge. Allan et al. (2015). Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review. Royal United Services Institute. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf.
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    Khalil, J., & Zeuthen, M. (2016). Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction. A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation, Whitehall Report 2-16. London: Royal United Services Institute.
7. While some organizations and writers distinguish between countering violent extremism (CVE) and preventing violent extremism (PVE) this report does not do so given the fact that "counter-terrorism policies generally are attempts at preventing radicalisation" (Horgan 2009, p 152).
8. See for example Figure 1 in Williams, M. J., Horgan, J. G., & Evans, W. P. (2016). Evaluation of a multi-faceted, US community-based, Muslim-led CVE programme. National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programmes, US Department of Justice. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/249936.pdf
9. Thaler, R.H. and Sunstein, C. (2008). Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness. Yale University Press.

10. The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

11. A similar experiment conducted by Nudge Lebanon in 2018 helped increase the performance of disadvantaged students enrolled in a Youth Literacy and Numeracy program by 11% on an Arabic test, using an intervention that incorporated a values affirmation task designed to alleviate the psychological stress that results from stereotype threat.

12. As you begin thinking about the use of behavioural insights for the prevention of violent extremism (BI4PVE) it is important to keep a key distinction in mind: the difference between attitudes and behaviours. While radicalization is used to refer to an internal transformation of beliefs and attitudes towards extremist views, engagement is concerned with changes in behaviour towards the support of and contribution to acts of violence (such as assisting in the tasks needed to manage and operate a VE organization, providing material support to members of a VE group, or conducting violent acts directly). Several scholars have argued that the more useful concept is that of engagement because it has more conceptual clarity and is linked to what most PVE efforts seek to prevent: the engagement in behaviours related to violent extremism [Horgan, J. G. (2009). Walking away from terrorism: Accounts of disengagement from radical and extremist movements. Routledge]. From the standpoint of this guide, the distinction is important as it provides a point of focus that is more closely tied to behaviour (engaging or not) as opposed to attitudes (radicalized or not).

13. See for example, Williams et al. (2016). Evaluation of a Multi-Faceted, U.S. Community-Based, Muslim-Led CVE Programme. United States Department of Justice.

14. UNDP and International Alert (2018). Improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming: A toolkit for design, monitoring, and evaluation.

15. For example, the number of individuals participating in PVE initiatives, where such PVE initiatives are located, the type of data collected by those PVE initiatives on individual behaviour, which VE groups are active in the area, the type of individuals being recruited into VE groups, where they are recruited.

16. It is important to continuously engage with stakeholders at subsequent stages to ensure that your intervention is relevant, appropriate, and ultimately successful.

17. UNDP (2017), Violent Extremism in Sudan: An evidence-based study. https://www.sd.undp.org/content/dam/sudan/docs/Violent%20Extremism%20in%20Sudan%20-%20UNDP%20SNCCT%202017%20(1).pdf

18. See for example: SBST (2016). Annual Report. Washington DC: Executive Office of the President National Science and Technology Council. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/2016%20Social%20and%20Behavioral%20Sciences%20Team%20Annual%20Report.pdf

19. We have found the following simplified tool useful in developing behavioural interventions; however, there are many other persona tools that can be utilized such as UNDP's Project Cycle Hackers Toolkit and Nesta's Development, Impact & You toolkit.

20. Refer for instance to the COM-B Model for Behaviour (Michie, van Stralen and West, 2011) or process mapping tools available in the UNDP's Design Thinking: A Guide for Prototyping and Testing Solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals

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24. Ara, Joana, Francois & Emanuele. Almeida, Sousa & Dessart (2016), Insights from Behavioral Sciences to prevent and Combat Violence Against Women, European Commission, JRC Science for Policy Report.

25. We have also included citations that provide more details on the biases and more extensive lists of biases under Tip 4 below for those who are interested in moving beyond the simplified, practical presentation used here.

26. This categorization is one of many, is not meant to be exhaustive, nor are the three categories mutually exclusive; however, we have found it useful and it is derived in part from Benson, B. (2016). Cognitive Bias Codex. Retrieved from https://betterhumans.coach.me/cognitive-bias-cheat-sheet-55a472476b18.

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28. Benson, B. (2016). Cognitive bias cheat sheet. Better Humans. https://medium.com/better-humans/cognitive-bias-cheat-sheet-55a472476b18.

29. Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1973). Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability. Cognitive psychology, 5(2), 207-232.

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Additional Resources

Behavioural Insights

- UN Innovation Network Behavioural Sciences Group
- Behavioural Insights at the United Nations: Achieving Agenda 2030
- Behavioural Science Around the World: Volume II – Profiles of 17 International Organizations

Preventing Violent Extremism

- Improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming
- Preventing Violent Extremism
- UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism