

# Strengthening Community Resilience and Regional Cooperation for Prevention of Violent Extremism in Central Asia”

*A UNDP Project implemented in*

*Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan*

*Atlas award ID # 00110934*

## FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

*Author:* Thomas Vasseur, Evaluation Consultant

*An independent evaluation  
commissioned by UNDP in Kazakhstan*

*Date:* December 2020

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## Disclaimer

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## Acknowledgments

The evaluator would like to thank all interviewed stakeholders for their availability and insightful contributions. In particular, the consultant's appreciation extends to the UNDP PVE project team and UNDP focal points in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan for their outstanding administrative and logistic support in arranging remote interviews and for their country situational analysis on the topics reviewed.

# 1. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Area based Development Approaches
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AfT	Aid for Trade
ALMP CA	Active Labour Market Programmes Central Asia
CBO	Community Based Organization
CO	Country Office
CP	Community Programme
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
ECIS	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
ESC	Energy Servicing Companies
FTF	Foreign Terrorist Fighter Grant Committee
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GEN	Gender Marker
GPD	Global Programme Document
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILO	International Labour Organisation
InTerDev	Integrated Territorial Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRH	UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
LIRP	Livelihood Improvement of Rural Population
LSG	Local Self Governance
LITACA	Livelihood Improvement in Tajik–Afghan Cross-border Areas Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
NEET	Not in Employment, Education, or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRI	National Human Rights Institutions
OAI	Office of Audit and Investigations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PEER	Public Environmental Expenditure Review

PEI	Poverty- Environment Initiative
PES	Public Employment Services
RPD	Regional Programme Document
PVE	Prevention of Violent Extremism
PWD	People with Disabilities
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SC	Steering Committee
SDA	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEEA	System of Environmental Economic Accounting
TEPs	Territorial Employment Pacts
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignment from the Core
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment (Programme)
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VE	Violent Extremism
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VSD	Vocational Skills Development
YEF	Youth Employment Fund
YEM	Youth Employment and Migration

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Purpose and objectives of the Evaluation**

The UNDP Kazakhstan Country Office has commissioned an external and independent evaluation of the project entitled “Strengthening Community Resilience and Regional Cooperation for Prevention of Violent Extremism in Central Asia” over its implementation period (March 2018 – December 2020), save for the last three months (January – March 2021).

The evaluation aimed at measuring the project’s success and achievements, capturing lessons learnt, applying the OECD evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, potential impact and sustainability of the project, also using UNDP Evaluation Policy and Guidelines. Providing recommendations for the future and a possible following phase has been one important output of this assignment.

### **Brief description of the intervention**

In recent years a considerable number of people from Central Asian countries have joined violent extremist organizations, joining conflicts abroad and/or undergoing radicalization domestically and conducting terrorist attacks. Exclusion has been recognized as one of the main push factors leading to radicalization, including among young people.

The project offers a preventive response to this threat of violent extremism, aiming to mobilise youth’s energy, mobility, open-mindedness and dynamism as a potential positive force of preventing violent extremist influences and narratives in the target communities that are vulnerable to radicalization. The project has applied a group-based approach, using peer-to-peer support systems among youth from at-risk contexts in order to provide professional skills development/business counselling support, in tandem with employment interventions, psycho-social counselling and other social support services based on their needs. Community level, multi-actor dialogue and engagement platforms have been formed, utilizing existing youth councils, local governments and civil society to engage youth and implement the three project components:

- I. At-risk youth participation to ‘safe’ engagement platforms to foster positive alternative to extremist narratives and develop a greater sense of belonging and peer-to-peer support.
- II. Utilizing youth engagement platforms and support structures to deliver group-based skills- and entrepreneurship development services.
- III. Regional youth networks established and PVE knowledge sharing intensified.

### **Evaluation approach and methods**

This evaluation has used an ethical, human-rights and gender-based approach, with tools and practice integrating respect of differences, transparency and confidentiality in the treatment of information and interaction with individuals interviewed, applying UNDP/UNEG evaluation policy, principles and guidelines. This assignment has involved three phases: (1) An initial desk phase including the review and analysis of relevant document and the formulation of a detailed evaluation methodology, applying OECD evaluation criteria and using an evaluation matrix around the 41 Evaluation Questions to organise the quantitative and qualitative data collection. (2) An interview phase involving exclusively remote (47 sessions involving over 60 individuals) interviews giving the limitations of COVID-19 restricting travel to Central Asia. Interviews have been complemented with an online survey gathering the feedback from 70 youth project beneficiaries, (3) A reporting phase to process the data collected and draft the present evaluation report.

## Findings

### Relevance:

The evaluation has found the project to be of high relevance to the needs and priorities of the youth at-risk of versing into violent extremism but also to the challenges and policies priorities of the key actors in the region, be it at the local level, the national level or the priorities of Central Asian countries. The project has been unanimously praised for its appropriateness to the needs and expectations of the youth but also for the relevance of its approach in enhancing youth dialogue and participation.

The relevance has actually been built through a three-level effort: a. An understanding of challenges through continuous learning from UNDP's long term active presence in the region and knowledge of actors and topics through established relations, b. A substantial consultative approach inclusive of all relevant stakeholders and a verification of coherence with local and national policies to enhance the supportiveness of the project, c. The elaboration of an inclusive, consultative, participatory, multi-level and pluri-actors approach, built on a reality-based theory of change ensuring relevance could be monitored throughout the project implementation.

The feedback from evaluation interviews, indicating request from other locations to benefit from the project activities and the damaging impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has also made it clear that the relevance of the project is still valid today.

### Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project is assessed as strong and this has mainly verified through three aspects: (1). The project has exceeded the great majority of targeted results without major delays in a complex setting for a multi-country operation, highly activity intensive and affected by the COVID-19 crisis, unrest in the Kyrgyz Republic, among other challenges; (2) the feedback has been confirmed constantly across 47 evaluation discussions and accounts from stakeholders: there has been a deep change in the youth beneficiary attitude, engagement and demonstrated performance throughout the activities. Self-confidence has been gained, engagement has been intense and employment and business performance has been impressively demonstrated from the participating youth, (3) The shift of paradigm towards a more inclusive and participatory attitude from institutions in the region is a confirmation that the approach introduced by the project and the realisation of the empirical-based theory of change has been effective. This approach could clearly be modelled to be replicated in other regions of Central Asia where the youth is asking to take a stronger role in addressing its needs. The choice of the project approach appears to have played a central role in both the adoption of more inclusive practices by local institutions and the transformation of the youth in their relation to their environment and their shift towards a greater confidence about their capacity to shape their own future live perspectives.

The evaluation has found a monitoring and evaluation tool using indicators focusing on capturing the complexity of change, was insufficiently developed, as it would have been a welcome complement to the otherwise very operational M&E tool which allowed smooth tracking of activities.

### Efficiency

On an equally satisfactory level to effectiveness, the project's demonstration of efficiency has been understood by the evaluation as the result of the following:

- a. The combination of UNDP global expertise on the topic, sustainable/social inclusion development project experience in Central Asia combined with enjoying the excellent administrative and

operational back-up provided by the existing UNDP project infrastructure set-up in the region. This setting has allowed the project to mutualise costs and maintain a strong degree of cost-efficiency.

- b. A clear, straight forward, highly functional project management and coordination set-up across the region,
- c. A commendable team dedication and the value of individual competence, experience and knowledge of the context and actors. This efficiency has been illustrated by the impressive capacity to mobilise numerous actors across the region within a short period of time.

The project has produced an important volume of reporting and communication maintaining strong quality standards. Given the activity-intensive nature of the project, simplified, user-friendly communication products, inspired from the information made available on UNDP's websites could be used to promote further the project's convincing results.

### Sustainability

The evaluation has identified several important aspects of sustainability:

- The prevention, inclusive-oriented method introduced by the project implies a long-term commitment. The adoption and institutionalisation of practices by local institutions and the civil society, the committing acts of State institutions can be considered as important indicators of sustainability, though it is still a long path until the prevention of violent extremism systematically uses the social inclusion methodologies. Based on the accounts from interviews, the project has convinced the proposed approach was the right one and that the encouraging project results to date call for the continuation and expansion of the inclusiveness effort.
- The very strong results of the employment generation, economic development component, together with its snowball, stimulating effect at the local level are promising though the needs and expectations in terms of professional perspectives is very high among the youth and has only become more acute with the COVID-19 crisis. With a further refinement of the economic component approach, giving further space to the private sector, the positive benefits could be taken to an even further level.

### Impact:

The evaluation has identified elements of impact on several levels:

- Concentrating the violent extremism prevention efforts on the participation of youth itself and the acknowledgement that youth are the central players in the process has become a recognised priority and practice of all stakeholders involved. This means interlocutors think and act differently and have now acquired this as the way forward.
- Institutions, after the necessary time of hesitating and questioning, have demonstrated their adoption of a dialogue-based, consultative approach through practices (decision-making taken from Local Youth Action Plan process) and (financial) commitment and policy making.
- Young people have taken a pro-active stand though the level of their expectation has also increased and spread. Young entrepreneurs have convinced their employers, their clients, the private sector, local and national institutions that with the right support, they could perform beyond expectations. Their examples have sparked interest around and further their local communities.

- The gender dimension has been built in the project design with a genuine and strong intention to empower young women. The participation of women in the project activities has been substantial and the project is a model of true gender inclusiveness.
- The regional component has played an important role in the results of the project as well as in the mind-shifting influence. It has boosted the youth commitment through regional networking activities which have been experienced as stimulating for the young males and females involved in project activities. The regional meetings involving a wide panel of stakeholders has generated shared knowledge, some of which applied in other countries. These events have also materialised an awareness that the challenges and responses have a regional dimension and that solutions are to be nurtured through regional exchanges.

## **Conclusions**

The PVE project is considered across stakeholders and in the various countries of implementation, as one of the most convincing projects not only in terms of preventing (a hard-to-measure objective) violent extremism, but also for its acknowledged results in making local societies more inclusive of the youth.

The strongly positive opinions expressed by interviewed stakeholders is backed by the outstanding results achieved by the project. Thus, the concrete results combined with the elements of change provided during evaluation interviews lead to qualify the PVE project as successful. More description on the changes of stakeholder and beneficiary changes in their behaviors and attitudes would be beneficial to advocate the project offer an approach that can be replicated as similar needs of youth communities have been expressed in other areas of Central Asia.

The PVE project is activity-intensive and diverse. However, if the number of outputs and achievements is impressive, measuring the change realized against the Theory of Change is a challenge. First, the spectrum of intervention is wide (multi-country, multi-stakeholder); second, the thematic is complex and relatively new in Central Asia and the project is lacking a set of qualitative indicators which would help understanding the depth of change, as experienced by stakeholder category (changed attitudes and practices of local government, change in resilience of the youth, changed (enhanced capacity of NGOs) as well as the set-up of the “safety-net” preventing VE.

The broader economic inclusion component (professional skills, mentorship, employment, small business support) has been highly successful, not only exceeding target, but producing a multiplier effect that should be measured to appreciate the impact of this component and show its potential.

Change needs to be captured to be promoted and used for impactful advocacy on the national policy level and mobilisation of financial resources.

## **Recommendations**

1. The strategic approach promoted by the project entails a transformative process which implies a commitment which is longer than a single project phase. The convincing results obtained to date confirms the PVE is a strongly appropriate investment for social cohesion and VE prevention. The worrying socio-economic damage of COVID-19 can potentially feed VE drivers, thus reinforcing the necessity to pursue the effort: Financial support for a second phase of PVE is strongly recommended.
2. Balance the expansion of the project’s geographic scope to new locations and strengthen the outreach capacity by widening the range of local stakeholders and increasing their participation to youth community involvement.



3. Allocate an adequate level of resources in order to support the development of an M&E capacity that will improve the monitoring and understanding on the complexity of change.
4. Upgrade the project M&E system by integrating qualitative indicators of change.

While it should be acknowledged that a project-level M&E tool is no exact science, indicators of change should be formulated so they can match the follow criteria: a. the related data is already available or relatively easy to produce and access (e.g. simple electronic survey that can be regularly conducted) so that M&E data collection remains a manageable task and its results are effectively used for monitoring purposes but also for reporting, promotion and advocacy purposes , b. Indicators related to the project activities (so that recorded changes can be at least partially attributed to the intervention), c. Indicators should capture the various dimensions of changes (through Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices or Decisions made as a result of the project) and through different angles (the perspectives of beneficiaries and project stakeholders should be recorded).

5. Integrate a remote-control management modality in the project design (in order to address the issue of distancing in situation where the pandemic prevails into the next PVE project phase).
6. Make a further use of the potential offered by the regional platform and dynamics created by the PVE project.

The success of national institutions gatherings in creating synergy should be inspiring similar initiatives with youth representatives. Youth have also been participating to regional events occasionally and the possibility of youth-dedicated regional activities should be considered. Such events involving the youth could boost regional networking and could also be used to build regional advocacy events which could be organized and presented by the Youth itself to national institutions. This would provide meaningful opportunity to promote youth leaders as role models back in their local communities.

7. Scale-up the economic component of the project:

The PVE project has showed the promising potential of empowering the youth in its professional engagement into employment scheme and business development. This success calls for more involvement of and development of partnerships with local institutions and the private sector in taking lessons and modelling the economic inclusion of the youth. In the economically depressed, COVID-affected context, this component is recommended to receive appropriate resources to develop concrete perspectives for the youth.

8. Promote and advocate firmly the relation between PVE and social inclusion; underling inclusiveness as a relevant approach to the preventive approach.

# 3. INTRODUCTION

## Brief Regional Context

The number of people from Central Asian countries joining ISIS/Al Qaeda and/or other extremist groups, and/or undergoing radicalisation domestically, have been steadily increasing in the past five years. There is also a growing trend of individuals or groups originating from Central Asian countries being behind the terrorist attacks in the USA, western Europe, the Russian Federation, Turkey and elsewhere. While most young women and men remain peaceful and contribute to their societies in a positive manner, youth age 18–35 comprise the majority of the radicalised people in central Asia. Recent trends/analysis show that Isis and other terrorist groups encourage their followers to perpetrate acts of terrorism in their home countries, which may pose additional security and stability concerns for governments and people. Exclusion experienced by young people is one of the most recognised push factors leading to radicalisation which opens the space for pool factors to fill the vacuum through experience recruiter is an extremist narrative. Extremist influences may rapidly spread among youth and community is beyond political boundaries and territories through community networks. In recognition of these growing threats and the root causes of extremism this multi country project aimed to provide tangible support to at risk young woman and men and their communities through a set of integrated activities aimed at overcoming socio-economic exclusion of at-risk-youth. The country level activities targeted urban and peri-urban districts struggling with increased trends of radicalisation. The project priority is to address social and economic exclusion experienced among at risk youth in the target areas by providing specific groups of women and men with tailored decent employment/entrepreneurship support and on the mend skill development activities. All countries in the region recognise the threat of radical extremism and strongly condemn its manifestations. During the meeting in Ashgabat on May 1, 2017, the foreign ministers of the five Central Asian countries in Japan issued a joint statement expressing their commitment to combating violent extremism within Central Asia plus Japan Dialogue, and look forward to joint initiatives with international organisations in this critical development area.

## Violent Extremism among youth in Central Asia

The rise of violent extremism and its spread across national borders has become a pressing issue for all Central Asian countries, threatening to reverse the development gains made over the past twenty-five years since independence. A growing number of Central Asians have been radicalised and have joined in-country radical groups or left the region to join extremist groups abroad. The phenomena of foreign fighters traveling to Syria and Iraq to join Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/ Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS/ISIL) and perpetrating acts of violence and terrorism are the most publicised consequences of radicalisation, though by now it is well recognized that radicalisation processes start at home (Central Asia in this case) and/or host countries (the Russian Federation, EU, USA, etc.).

Estimates show that the number of foreign fighters from the former Soviet Union has increased considerably since 2014, including a significant increase in the numbers of individuals originating from the Central Asian countries. The available data suggests that at present about 3,000 individuals of the Central Asian descent have joined radical groups fighting in Syria and Iraq. This constitutes around 20% of all recorded foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq.

In accordance with available data, most of the foreign fighters stemming from the Central Asia are young male in the age of 18-35 years, although in Kyrgyz Republic women make up 25 % of the outgoing terrorist fighters. The relative figures on number of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) differ significantly between the countries of the regions. While in Kazakhstan this figure stands at 1.71 FTFs per 100,000 people, in Kyrgyz

Republic and Tajikistan it constitutes 13.38 and 12.8 FTFs per 100,000 people respectively (based on available data).<sup>1</sup> Geography of origin mainly includes cities and suburban areas.

Individuals of the Central Asian descent have joined radical groups not only in Syria and Iraq but also in other countries, as evidenced by the alleged participation of fighters from Central Asia in devastating attacks in Istanbul, Turkey in June 2016 and January 2017, in Stockholm, Sweden in April 2017 and in the Russian Federation's St. Petersburg, metro bombing in April 2017. The role of Central Asia in such attacks is likely evidence of a broader phenomenon and could serve as an indication that violent extremism in Central Asia has regional and global implications. Returnees that have acquired 'battle experience' pose a serious challenge to social cohesion and stability in the communities and societies they re-enter.

Case studies have shown that the returnees and experienced foreign/domestic recruiters equipped with financial resources may spread radical ideas and mobilise youth/peers to commit violent acts<sup>2</sup>, or provoke splits and animosities along religious lines. In recent years, the Central Asian countries have seen violent incidents on their home territory that resulted in deaths of security officials and/or local assailants after attacks involving the use of firearms. Vivid cases include a late September 2016 attack against the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, which was allegedly carried out by terrorists with ties to rebel groups in Syria; the shootings in Aktobe, Kazakhstan, in June 2016, which left 7 victims dead and 37 injured; and the July 2016 incident involving a 26-year-old Salafi Jihadist and ex-convict who shot and killed 10 people, including 8 police officers and 2 civilians, at a police station in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

There is a growing concern about the trends towards radicalisation among youth in Central Asia. Radicalisation is facilitated by an interplay of two sets of factors: 'push factors' - structural conditions that make the overall socio-economic environment more conducive, and individuals more vulnerable to violent extremism, and 'pull factors' - catalyst factors that exploit and interact with structural conditions to draw people into violent extremism. In many cases root causes and drivers, referred to as 'push' factors, are related to political economy realities of persistent political, social, and economic exclusion experienced by specific groups of young men and women and their immediate communities, rising inequality, shrinking civic space for engagement, and lack of inclusive development.

Various forms of deprivation, marginalisation and exclusion are the systemic 'push factors' that increase the likelihood of youth radicalisation. Although the Central Asian countries have managed to maintain economic growth, and achieve considerable reductions in absolute poverty, large sections of the population remain vulnerable to poverty. For example, in Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, over 80% of the population remain vulnerable to poverty.<sup>3</sup> This is worsened by the unequal distribution of economic benefits. The economic growth has not led to the creation of decent jobs for large sections of the population, especially for youth and those living in rural areas. Although about 60% of the working age population is employed in Central Asia, in Tajikistan, for example, 53% of the workforce is in the agricultural sector, dominated by low-pay/low-productivity and informal employment. In the Kyrgyz Republic, 32% of the workforce share similar conditions of vulnerability. In both countries, 47% of the employed are in "vulnerable" employment, i.e. either working on small agricultural plots, or are engaged in unpaid work (mostly children and women, as family members of small holder farms). This situation has led to large flows of unprotected labour migration, both internal to large urban centres, and abroad.

In the Central Asian countries youth represent a sizeable section of the population,<sup>4</sup> and significant numbers are entering the labour market each year. The so-called youth bulge can bring about 'demographic dividends'

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<sup>1</sup> Foreign fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq, The Soufan Group, December 2015; International Crisis Group, Syria Calling: Radicalisation in Central Asia, Europe and Central Asia Briefing N72, 20 January 2015, Bishkek/Brussels. Please, note that the numbers for Kyrgyz republic were updated according to the official data that UNCT received from the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>2</sup> 'How Belgium Became a Jihadist-Recruiting Hub', The Wall Street Journal, September 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-belgium-became-a-jihadist-recruiting-hub-1411958283>

<sup>3</sup> UNDP estimates.

<sup>4</sup> The 14-30-year-old age group represent 35% of the population (<https://www.unicef.org/tajikistan/overview.html>), and an average of 40,000 new entrants join the labour force each year. (World Bank 2017; Tajikistan Jobs Diagnostic).

where opportunities for decent jobs exist.<sup>5</sup> Thus, prioritising youth-focused education, skills development and employment measures could contribute to increased resilience of countries and communities. Conversely, high numbers of unemployed and/or disempowered/excluded youth may lead to significant volatilities and social tensions.<sup>6</sup> Low wages, precariousness and insecurity prevail among large sections of the working age population, and youth can experience frustrations in this situation – whether in the domestic labour market, or as migrants abroad; and regardless if they have secondary or higher education. Those who seek employment abroad are additionally exposed to discrimination and ethnically motivated persecution by the host communities. This adds to the sense of alienation and disenfranchisement.

The nascent research on patterns of radicalisation indicates that aside from the poorest and most marginalised persons, there is also a risk of radicalisation and violent extremism among youth with good levels of education and employment opportunities: these young people often feel socially alienated, although they may not always be economically deprived.

The risk of radicalisation is also present among the increasing number of migrant workers who have had to return to their home communities for a variety of reasons.<sup>7</sup> They continue experiencing social exclusion and frustration due to the lack of official or unofficial platforms to channel their concerns.

### Women and Radicalisation

Existing evidence suggests that women, including young women from traditional backgrounds, are also increasingly joining the violent extremist groups.<sup>8</sup> This trend is also becoming more prevalent in the Central Asian countries. Based on 2014 and 2015 estimates, there were around 1,000 women from Central Asia in ISIS combat zones.<sup>9</sup> According to the available data, as of 2016, over 120 Kyrgyz,<sup>10</sup> 200 Tajik and a growing number of Kazakh women have joined the ISIS ranks in Syria and Iraq. The main reasons women radicalise to the point of undertaking the perilous travel to Syria and Iraq can be found in negative life experiences or socio-economic deprivations involving restrictions on religious grounds, exclusion from state public services or opportunities for economic advancement. In some cases, women follow their husbands and become part of extremist groups, having no personal freedoms or economic choices.

Thus, the causes of radicalisation are often complex and interconnected, and the profile of the radicalised foreign fighter or domestic extremist in Central Asia has been found to range from impoverished rural youth living in big cities, university students, labour migrants in Russia, discriminated ethnic minorities, etc.<sup>11</sup> However, despite this diversity, the common thread emerging is that there is a heightened risk of radicalisation when lack of employment opportunities, unrewarding employment, limited or constrained access to quality public services and justice, coupled with inability to participate in social and civic life lead to the overall sense of discrimination, alienation and exclusion.

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<sup>5</sup> Central Asia 2050. Unleashing the region's potential. Editors: Rajat M.Nag, Johannes F.Linn, Harinder S.Kohli.

<sup>6</sup> For example, 25% of young people in Kazakhstan are self-employed, most of which is in small scale low-productivity agriculture; in Tajikistan 41% of the 15-24-year-old population is not in employment, education or training (NEET; 57% of the female population in this age group); and in Kyrgyz Republic, 78.4% of the 15-28 year old age group is in informal employment).

<sup>7</sup> According to the data of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, a total of 1,607,000 re-entry bans were issued between 2013 and 2015 and as many as 513,300 foreigners were expelled from Russia in that period.

<sup>8</sup> Research Brief: 'People, not Pawns: Women's Participation in Violent Extremism Across MENA', USAID, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> The Central Asian Women on the Frontline of Jihad, The Diplomat, January 2017, <http://thediplomat.com/2017/01/the-central-asian-women-on-the-frontline-of-jihad/>.

<sup>10</sup> 'Kyrgyz republic and Radical Islam: Facts and Figures', Slovo Kyrgyz republica (in Russian), <http://slovo.kg/?p=50829>

<sup>11</sup> Reportedly, the majority of the Kyrgyz citizens joining ISIS come from the Uzbek community in the south of the country.

## Project's Objectives

The Project's overall objective is to mobilise youth's energy, mobility, open-mindedness and dynamism as a potential positive force of countering violent extremist influences and narratives in the target communities affected by radicalisation. The project has employed a group-based approach to develop facilitated peer-to-peer support systems among at-risk youth. The target groups have been provided with professional skills development/business counselling support by integrated teams of experts from private and public sectors; in tandem with employment interventions, they have been offered psycho-social counselling and other social support services based on their needs. At the target community level, a multi-actor dialogue and engagement platforms have been formed, utilizing existing youth councils, local governments and civil society, so that youth may be encouraged to hold safe discussions on issues of deprivation and exclusion.

### The main *Components* of the project are:

1. At-risk youth have access to and actively participate in 'safe' engagement platforms to foster positive alternative to extremist narratives and develop a greater sense of belonging and peer-to-peer support.
2. Utilizing youth engagement platforms and support structures, youth will benefit from group-based skills- and entrepreneurship development services.
3. Regional youth networks established and knowledge sharing on PVE will be enhanced.

- **Project duration:** **March 2018 – December 2020**

Implementation: UNDP Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan with strategic support from UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub.

- **Project overall budget:** **M. \$ 6.4**

- **Areas targeted by the project:**

- Kazakhstan: Aktobe (Shubarkuduk, Shalkar, Kandyagash) and Karaganda oblast (Zhezkazgan, Satpayev, Balkhash)
- Kyrgyz Republic: Nariman and Check-Abad in Osh oblast, Suzak and Bazar-Korgon in Djalal-Abad oblast, Kara-Balta and Bishkek city and its suburb Archabeshik in Chui oblast, Balykchy City in Issyk-Kul oblast, Kochkor, in Naryn oblast, Karabura in Talas oblast, and Isfara City in Batken oblast
- Tajikistan: Khatlon province (Farkhor, J. Balkhi, Qabodiyon, Shahrituz, Vakhsh, Kulyab), Sughd province (Isfara, Spitamen, Khujand), GBAO (Vanj), DRS (Nurobod, Rudaki, Vahdat) and City of Dushanbe (Ismoil Somoni District)
- Turkmenistan: Ashgabat and Tedjen city in Ahal velayat, Turkmenabat city in Lebap velayat, Mary city in Mary velayat, Turkmenbashi city in Balkan velayat and Dashoguz city in Dashoguz velayat.

## **Organisational arrangements**

The Project implementation has been placed (under Direct Implementation Modality), under the full responsibility of the UNDP Kazakhstan office, which has been providing overall strategic management and fulfilling the coordination function of the project.

A Steering Committee (SC), providing strategic direction and guidance to the Project, and comprising UNDP, the Government of Kazakhstan, Embassies of the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Embassy Turkmenistan and the Embassy of Japan, had been established while the UNDP Country Offices in these countries have managed the relationships with the national and local authorities.

In terms of staffing, a UNDP Project Manager in Kazakhstan has been responsible for overall management of the Project activities while project coordinators in Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have been responsible for the Project activities in their respective countries.

## 4. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

### Evaluation purpose and objectives

The evaluation aimed at capturing effectively lessons learnt and provide information on nature, extent, relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and where possible, potential impact and sustainability of the project. The overall purpose of the evaluation involved measuring the project's success and the extent to which the project has achieved the planned results. It has gathered and analyzed lessons learnt, challenges faced and best practices obtained during implementation so as to suggest UNDP about ways improve the future intentions of the project.

The Evaluation has primarily gathered evidence of the project's impact through the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the project results. The scope under review is the overall project duration, i.e., from 2018 to 2020.

The overall objective of the Evaluation has been to measure the impact of the regional PVE project against the project Results Framework, in particular looking at whether the project outcome of strengthening the resilience of young men and women in targeted communities in Central Asia against the risk of violent extremism is achieved through the project activities led in the four countries. The Evaluation has also assessed the impact of the regional component consisting of youth exchanges, regional dialogues, and research initiatives.

The Evaluation has been undertaken in accordance with the provisions contained in the Project Document and the project Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, as consistent with the UNDP Evaluation Policy, UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, other relevant rules and procedures of UNDP and guided by UN Evaluation Group norms, principles and standards as the basis for its objectives, criteria and key questions. The Evaluation has mainly sought to assess the level of efficiency and relevance of the assisted interventions, as well as the validity of the Project components.

The specific evaluation objectives are:

- To assess overall performance against the project objective and the outcomes as set out in project document and other related documents.
- To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, value for money and client satisfaction of the project considering the findings for these criteria.
- To prepare a methodology for evaluating project through engagement with project stakeholders. Conduct remote meetings (online or phone) and gather substantive feedback from project stakeholders (Government, UNDP, local and community-based organizations, young people and project beneficiaries), building on the criteria and questions listed above but not limited to them.
- To provide recommendations for project's next phase for the donor consideration.

The primary audience of the evaluation is UNDP Country Offices in Central Asia, the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, the Government of Japan, project stakeholders including State Institutions involved in the project on national and sub-national levels.

The intended use of the evaluation is to inform the stakeholders on the outcome of the project and potentially use the results to support the decisions made in regard to the next phases of the project.

### Scope

The evaluation has been participatory, particularly with the involvement of young people as the main stakeholders of the project (mainly through an electronic survey), and has sought to be independent, credible and useful and adhere to the highest possible standards in Evaluation. This external assessment has been highly consultative, engaging the participation of a broad range of stakeholders (47 evaluation interviews, including over 60 interviewees and 70 PVE youth beneficiaries responding to an online survey). The Evaluation has been conducted independently with valuable support from UNDP Country Offices and UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub in organizing the interview phase, conducted entirely remotely.

## 5.1. EVALUATION CRITERIA, QUESTIONS AND RATING

The organisation of the data collection and the structure of the present evaluation report has followed the list of 41 evaluation questions as formulated in the terms of reference and found in the sub-sections of the findings section of the present report.

An evaluation framework and a standardized rating system were used to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the project's achievements in relation to the targets assigned to each component.

Implementation/Oversight and Execution Ratings Scale			
Code	Rubric for assigning rating		Value
HS	<b>Highly Satisfactory</b>	There were no shortcomings; quality of design/implementation/execution exceeded expectations	6
S	<b>Satisfactory</b>	There were no or minor shortcomings; quality of design/implementation/execution met expectations	5
MS	<b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>	There were some shortcomings; quality of design/implementation/execution more or less expectations	4
MU	<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>	There were significant shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution was somewhat lower than expected	3
U	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	There were major shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution was substantially lower than expected	2
HU	<b>Highly Unsatisfactory</b>	There were severe shortcomings in quality of implementation/execution	1
UA	<b>Unable to Assess</b>	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation and execution	



## 5.2. EVALUATION METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

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### Methodological approach

This evaluation has been carried out with a Theory of Change (ToC) methodology and did specifically evaluate the extent to which the project has reached its objective. To this end, the Evaluation Consultant has applied the following approaches and tools to deliver a comprehensive assessment of what has worked and why.

The ToC approach has been deployed in order to reach beyond a log frame-focused assessment, by focusing on explanatory factors underlying achievements, problems encountered, and the effectiveness of mediating measures adopted.

With regards to an analysis of UNDP contributions, the contextual challenges affecting the phenomenon of Violent Extremism in the region have been factored in. Furthermore, in assessing contribution and identification of attribution, the effects seen as a result of UNDP support, alongside those of the Government of Japan and other donors, have been considered as part of a complex evidence.

Across all modes of analysis, a gender-sensitive approach has been adopted to ensure that gender-related evidence is captured and analysed. Simultaneously, the Evaluation Consultant has ensured confidentiality, particularly those of interviewees when discussing contextual, media and civil society issues. The evaluation has been participatory, to allow for stakeholder perspectives to be reflected in the evaluation.

In the context of the Covid-19 crisis, all interviews have been conducted remotely interviewing using the Zoom application as well as an electronic survey.

To ensure validity of data following a content analysis (across descriptive, qualitative and quantitative data), and as part of the process of synthesizing information derived from different data sources and through different means of data collection, the following methods have been applied:

- Triangulation: Comparing data generated from different data sources to identify trends and/or variations;
- Complementarity: Using data generated through one method of data collection to elaborate on information generated through another, *e.g., use stakeholder consultations to explore reasons for strengths or shortcoming indicated in existing documents.*

The Evaluation Consultant has analysed all relevant information sources, such as annual reports, project documents, field reports, mission reports, surveys and research conducted during the project, strategic country development documents and other documents that provide evidence on which to form judgements. The Evaluation Consultant has made sure that the voices, opinions, and information of targeted participants of the regional PVE project are considered.

Stakeholder interviewees overview: Over 60 interviewees over 47 remote interview sessions	
Interview session by country	
Kazakhstan	12
Kyrgyz Republic	11
Tajikistan	11
Turkmenistan	11
Turkey (UNDP Regional Office)	2
Interview sessions per stakeholder category	
International implementing partner	1
National Implementing partners	11
National partner (local authorities)	20
Beneficiaries (grant recipients and participants)	5
Facilitators of activities	3
UNDP	7

## Limitations

The COVID-19 pandemic and the related travel restrictions mean no field visit and direct contact could take place for project stakeholder interviews. This limitation had been formulated explicitly in the terms of reference for this evaluation. Instead of field visits, videoconferencing was organised by the UNDP office in Kazakhstan as well as by the UNDP Country offices in the other four Central Asian countries. The evaluation acknowledges and expresses gratitude for the outstanding support provided in arranging, planning and facilitation some 47 remote video-interviewing sessions, including the translation. Though the communication technology and UNDP's commendable support has made the field interview phase possible, it is important to understand that remote virtual exchanges are an inherent limitation to grasping the human and field reality dimension that can never fully be substituted.

## 6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1. RELEVANCE

**EQ 1.** THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVES ARE (AND CONTINUE TO BE) RELEVANT VIS-À-VIS THE PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE) PROCESS, I.E. WHETHER THEY ADDRESS THE KEY DRIVERS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM (VE) IDENTIFIED IN THE INITIAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT DOCUMENT.

RATING OF RELEVANCE			
HS	Highly Satisfactory	A substantial amount of work, combining global expertise, regional and national presence and grassroots experience has ensured the project's relevance to national institutional priorities while staying abreast of youth needs.	6

#### Findings

There are obvious challenges to ensuring the project's objectives over time that are inherent to the phenomenon of Violent Extremism as it is complex, remains only partially uncovered area and highly subject to evolution and mutation as VE is adaptive in nature. As recalled in the UNDP-IOM research, tracking changes in VE key drivers "recognized the various challenges associated with obtaining valid data" (The project, by multiplying and diversifying its efforts, through activities and multi-stakeholder engagement has not only progressed towards its objectives but collected, monitored and processed information from implementation in order to ensure it stayed close to the key drivers of VE and its possible evolution.

Among the project's inquiries into the relevance of the response to VE, the UNDP led, joint UNDP-IOM comprehensive assessment have been providing elements of understanding, confirming the project approach and its activities were purposefully designed.

UNDP-IOM research within the Regional Component of the Project is an important tool to understanding the radicalization process. The UNDP-IOM research also confirms the relevance of the PVE project approach. Indeed, the multiplicity, accumulation and interaction of factors increasing the vulnerability to resorting to violence underlines the difficulty to identify the exact combination of negative factors as much as it is complex to distinguish the positive results that can be attributed exclusively to the UNDP PVE project from the broader context, including the programmes from the national and local institutions. The PVE project has certainly recognized the multiplicity of root causes in developing a broad range of activities at different levels with various actors, ensuring all elements are in permanent interaction. Even though not all positive changes can be attributed to the Project with certainty, the behavioural changes and initiatives recorded during the many beneficiary and stakeholder interviews, could all clearly be directly related to the Project activities.

The field presence and local-level reach out of the project through its diverse activities has also provided an immense opportunity for UNDP to get a first-hand and deeper understanding of the challenges that may push youth towards radicalization pathway. The mechanisms and activities (baseline surveys, focus group discussions) introduced by the Project have also ensured a level of contact is maintained with youth (not only beneficiaries but also new comers – through Youth Centres and outreach in communities conducted by youth) have allowed the project to keep abreast of changes in trends. The permanent presence of UNDP specialists engaged by the UNDP Country Offices in the four countries for supporting the Project implementation (mostly with a UNV status) has helped fulfil the key function of maintaining a permanent link to the local youth, local actors and the local reality.

The regular exchanges with the local front-line service providers have proven crucial to grasp the nuances of the challenges and aspirations experienced by youth. In turn, this has helped to ensure activities could be adjusted to remain as close as possible to the needs and expectations of youth.

Since poverty and exclusion remains a fundamental push factor for exposure to VE (confirmed by all interviewees), crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic (push factor for labour migration), especially its economic impact can be considered as an aggravating factor of VE. Though it is yet early to have accurate estimates of the depth of the economic impact of COVID-19, it is clear from evaluation interviews that the isolation and loss of small business activities experienced by the youth is severe, with prospects of worsening even further.

The strong awareness recorded, acknowledgement and commitment expressed by local and central governments (firmly expressed during interviews) on the central role of youth in shaping their future, the absolute need to listen, consult and embark this population group in the decision-making process for youth policies is a confirmation of the project's relevance in empowering actors to understanding VE factors, thus ensuring a continued relevance to adjusting the PVE intervention.

The project objectives have also remained relevant vis-à-vis PVE primarily owing to a principled (inclusive, grass-root; consultative, participatory) approach and relying on well-deployed mechanisms (profiling survey, multi-stakeholder, multi-level, dialogue platform-based) facilitating a wide access to first-hand and wide range of information.

47 evaluation interviews have been conducted representing all types of actors including young people themselves. The evaluation has noted a high level of awareness on the relation between building a society inclusive of the youth and the prevention of violent extremism. All interviews have underlined how relevant the project has proven in relation to youth's pressing life concerns and how relevant it remained at the time of the evaluation. Actually, the need to pursue and expand the intervention to areas has been expressed recurrently.

Representatives of local institutions and NGOs have explained the project has helped them strengthen, sometimes establish formal and stable channels of communications with the youth, using Youth Centers and platforms so that they could routinely monitor and analyse youth evolving challenges, expectations and initiatives. With the project helping youth become a pro-active player (through initiatives taken by informal groups of youth in different locations), actively reaching out to more exposed youth in their communities

and voicing the concerns of those in isolation), a social fabric, both formal and informal, has expanded to areas in higher social isolation.

The feedback gathered through the project, youth beneficiaries and involved stakeholders is giving an initial idea of the depth of the damaging impact of the COVID-19 on the youth and their livelihoods (even though, several PVE grant recipients have demonstrated resilience and innovation in response to the pandemic). Interviewees have expressed deep concerns that the socio-economic destruction resulting from the COVID-19 could significantly marginalise the youth and increase their frustration. This reinforced the overall interviewees' opinion that, if the PVE type of intervention was already recommended to be continued, this new crisis situation has made the need more acute and urgent.

Ensuring relevance to PVE objectives continues during and after the project cycle, interviewees have also underlined the importance of densifying the reaching out capacity and its inclusiveness by closely involving those nearest, frontline actors to PVE-exposed youth (youth networks, religious leaders, families, service providers). This has been felt as a priority among many interviewed stakeholders who believe strengthening youth and community resilience is more important than ever, relevant, especially in light of the project achievement and the impact of COVID-19.

## **EQ 2. WHETHER IMPORTANT PVE GAPS EXIST, OR OPPORTUNITIES ARE BEING MISSED?**

### **Findings.**

The PVE project approach has been designed with an intention of identifying gaps and opportunities, relying on the involvement of a wide range of actors. The highly consultative method and attitude applied both during the design and the implementation phase seems to have greatly reduced the possibility for gaps or opportunities to be missed. The complexity of the VE phenomenon, the areas of interventions and the geographical width of the project makes it is virtually impossible to certify no single gaps or opportunities have been missed. However, the physical presence of the project staff in the project locations and the close relations developed with the wide range of local actors and the youth, the interaction between the local/sub-regional/national and Central Asian levels has formed a web leaving only little room for missed opportunities.

The participatory, consultative, and engagement principles as well as the multi-stakeholders, multi-level and regional involvement standing behind the model promoted by the PVE project has produced direct and indirect results that complement one another: It has provided the tools, model and support for institutions to formally include the youth in its policy-making and inclusive activities while the individuality and skills-building targeting the young has not just empowered them to successfully engage in project activities, it has also built pro-active personalities who have taken their own initiatives in expanding the reach out to other groups of youth, using their own methods (social networks and field reach-out in the pre-COVID period).

As mentioned in the previous EQ1 findings section, the evaluation has not identified any significant PVE gaps, but has gathered stakeholders' indications on the importance of fully involving those closest to VE at-risk youth (e.g.: religious leaders, youth networks, families to ensure deep outreach and expanding PVE project territory).

**EQ 3.** DID THE ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES FIT THE OBJECTIVES, I.E. IS THEIR INTERNAL COHERENCE BETWEEN WHAT THE PROGRAMME IS DOING AND WHAT IT IS TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

#### Findings.

Rather than transferring a ready-made conceptual model, the PVE project is the product of two important aspects: (1). a constructive process where UNDP has taken lessons learned from field practice during the agency's long-standing presence in Central Asia, from previous interventions and the trustful relationships established with local and national actors (2), a PVE approach sourced inspiration from UNDP's global PVE experience and expertise, tailored to the unique contexts of Central Asia states. The evaluation recognises a difficulty between the conceptual and operational coherence, given the complexity of VE and the transformative or mutational character of the phenomenon and translating it into programmatic coherence since VE is a complex, only partly uncovered phenomenon and developing a response requires to involve an experimental/pilot approach. The proceeding of developing the PVE project, formulating a conceptual approach that takes from UNDP's global level expertise while primarily remaining connected to the local realities and learning from UNDP's previous field interventions has strongly kept the coherence between acts and the pursuance of objectives.

This sense of coherence has been echoed widely by interviewees have reported witnessing the profound shift achieved by the project in the way PVE is now addressed thanks to the appropriateness of its strategy, approach and activities. Quite unanimously, respondents consider the project architecture and approach strongly supportive of the objective (building community resilience). To most, if not all stakeholders, the PVE "has found the right away".

**EQ 4.** TO WHAT EXTENT WERE THE INTERVENTIONS RELEVANT TO THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF THE TARGET GROUPS/BENEFICIARIES?

#### Findings

The relevance of the project enjoys a substantial basis found in a thorough project-dedicated assessment effort taking place during the design phase and pursued during implementation (project initial survey, youth profiling, continuous stakeholder consultation, joint UNDP-IOM research, etc). But the foundation to addressing the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries goes deeper as the relevance is the result of a longer effort, substantial research from dialogues with national stakeholders, lessons learned from previous UNDP field interventions, consultations, project survey, profiling and research conducted.

The appropriateness of needs and the project response has been echoed during the consultative phase of the evaluation. Consistently throughout interviews, stakeholders engaged in the project, report to have adopted the engagement approach promoted by the project, after some initial reservations and after the project tools allowed them to access to the needs expressed by the youth. The youth equally expressed their deep concerns and voices had been heard, often for the first time.

When it comes to the regional dimension, though PVE is country-driven by process, the regional component and related activities has provided a venue to verify the various activities were adequate to country and project sites needs while providing answers to the regional relevance of the PVE and especially the needs to improve and enrich country-level interventions by creating and maintaining regional dynamics, stimulating

exchanges of experiences and observed results. Thus, thanks to the regional component, the project has not developed a single, rigid model, but applied the same principles and approach to create country-specific models.

The project methodology and its activities have been focused on creating the conditions and venues for multi-stakeholder consultation, engagement in a dialogue with youth so that the beneficiary groups are encouraged and empowered to express their frustrations, needs and aspirations. The results of numerous participatory processes allowing to formalise and address youth expectations through local youth development plans has also made the local city, administration and public services (e.g., employment offices) aware of their role and responsibilities towards young females and males. Thus, the project processes have been primarily focussed on preparing and enabling the target groups to express their needs. And the key priorities (create and make life opportunities available to them locally, employment perspectives, etc.) messages (consideration of the youth expectations, venues to develop their potential and acknowledgment of youth as key actor of its future by all local actors) conveyed by the youth have been verified all across the various project activities and throughout the implementation, initiatives taken by the youth that the intervention has been relevant to the needs and priorities, identified at the design stage but also through initial surveys and consultations.

**EQ 5. TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE PROGRAMME DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

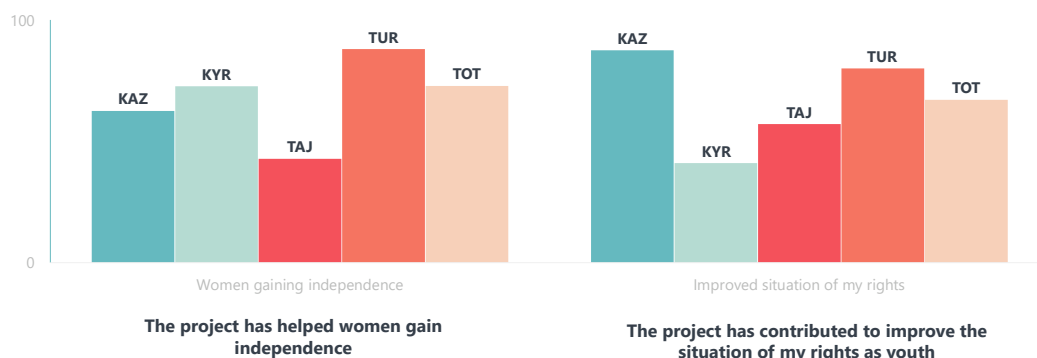
#### Findings.

Human rights and especially gender rights have been taken with a strong intention. This means the rights dimension is not a layer in the project, intended to meet minimum standards. Instead, the youth and gender rights make a systematic part of the project elaboration and its activities. The profiling, analysis and survey have provided the space for gender and human rights concerns of the youth to be heard and factored in the activities. This implies project stakeholders and the youth have been trained on gender-related and youth rights, project participation mechanisms have ensured gender equality for beneficiary access, and that gender was integrated in activities. The profiling, consultations and topics have systematically integrated gender specific criteria as well as human rights-based review of obstacles to youth integration.

The below table reflects the high degree of how the interviewed youth perceived positive changes in relation to their rights.

## PVE Youth perception

70 respondents to electronic survey (16 from Kazakhstan, 22 from Kyrgyzstan, 7 from Tajikistan, 25 from Turkmenistan)



Elements, among others, are informing on how substantially the situation of women and some of their needs was addressed by the PVE project. The various consultations and roundtables have helped better identify the specific vulnerability of women to VE, personal life's decision-making and access to labour. Gender has been mainstreamed through training courses and young women have been given an ample, often majority access to PVE activities (62% of professional trainings beneficiary have been women).

The PVE project has counter-balanced the generally observed harder access to the labour market and employment to women by tailoring skills training, job market analysis and job-creation conditions to this gender. Women participation has been strong, with a majority of women participating to project activities overall.

Engaging into violent extremism does not exclusively imply engaging into physical violence. Violent extremism involves various forms of engagement and situations into which women can happen to find themselves. In fact, there young women are particularly exposed to VE and the forms of participation that are as many as the number of drivers women can be particularly vulnerable to because of the gender-specific vulnerability of their situation. A majority of evaluation interviewees have recommended the need to address the various additional gender-based drivers (lower level of education, less control over own life, less decision-making power, higher isolation, dependence, diminished self-confidence, etc.) to be considered as a priority for future attention, repeatedly by interviewed stakeholders.



## EQ 6. TO WHAT DEGREE DID THE PROJECT CONSIDER THE NEEDS OF YOUTH, IN THEIR DIVERSITY, AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THEIR VIEWS?

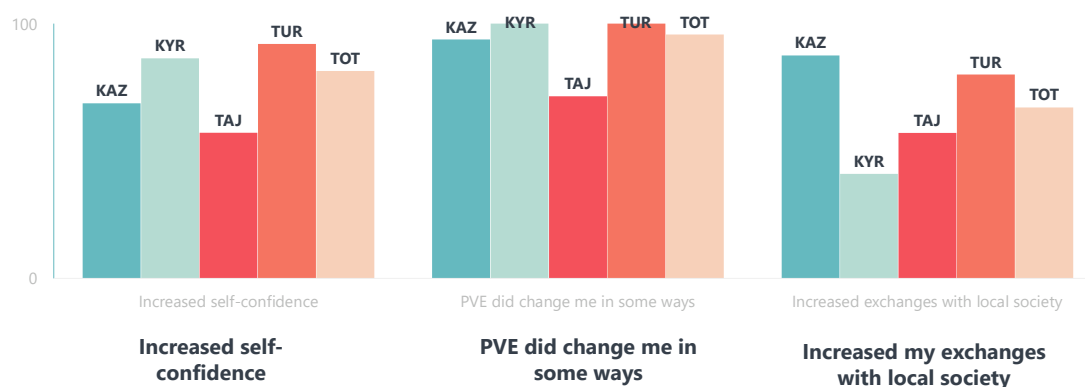
### Findings

The Project has created an environment for Youth diversity (through profiling), dialogue, engagement and role. The project mechanisms have been designed so it is needs-driven and the youth has been empowered (through skills, venues – Youth Centers/Platforms – in the pilot cities targeted by the project, the youth's self-confidence and communication skills have been enhanced so they could better express their needs. The high degree of participation and eagerness to voice their concerns has translated in numerous project activities led by or with the active participation of young males and females. But the youth have extended their desire to externalise their live challenges through diverse initiatives and forms of commitment outside the frame of the project (setting up informal networks, managing communication through social network, creating their own association).

Change in human, youth is broad and complex, and some of its characteristics, encompassing beliefs, attitudes, decision-making process are difficult to capture. The below table is illustrating only some of the several ways the youth responding to the evaluation electronic survey has experience change individually.

## PVE effect on Youth

70 respondents to electronic survey (16 from Kazakhstan, 22 from Kyrgyzstan, 7 from Tajikistan, 25 from Turkmenistan)



## EQ 7. DOES THE PROJECT OBJECTIVE REMAIN RELEVANT THROUGHOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE?

### Findings

The PVE project has primarily been country-driven and has thus ensured its overall objectives and as well its country-tailored interventions, targeting beneficiary groups defined according to specifically identified VE drivers, were aligned and supportive of each country national priorities.

Existing national and local institutional policy contexts have also been taken into account during project so as to ensure the intervention was aligned with but also supportive of national and local strategic plans.

Thus, the project contributed to various sectoral national priorities. In Kazakhstan, it did support the implementation of the State Programme on combatting religious extremism and terrorism (2018-2022), the 'Concept of the State Youth Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020 'Kazakhstan 2020: the way to the future' and 'Employment Road Map 2020. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the PVE project has contributed to the State Programme and Action Plan for countering Religious Extremisms and Terrorism (2017-2022). The project was also aligned to the national objectives of Tajikistan's National Strategy on Countering Extremism and Terrorism while backing the priorities of the National Development Strategy (2016-2030) and the Medium-Term Development Programme (2016-2020).

In Turkmenistan, the project objectives have been coherent with the Concept of Foreign Policy of Turkmenistan (2017-2023) in relation to peace and security while it also supported the implementation of the State Youth Policy enacted by the relevant 2013 Law.

The PVE project has also brought many concrete contributions at the local level, including, among others, several territorial development programmes (e.g., Territorial Development Programs for Karaganda and Aktoobe oblasts) and employment plans such as the National Employment Roadmap of Kazakhstan.)

The above is for the design stage but the relevance to local priorities was further applied as all Youth Action Plans and proposed activities have been directly supporting the municipal sectoral priorities as expressively confirm by the interviewed staff of municipal administrative management in the various project locations.

Relevance to the youth needs and priorities was maintained throughout the implementation phase as the project has been equipped with mechanisms purposely designed to allow for continuous learning of youth's evolving needs. As a matter of fact, the youth beneficiary has been consulted and involved in the process of expressing their priorities. Youth profiling initially taking place has helped ensured a closer understanding of the concerns and priorities of this population group. Youth Local Action Plans, providing space for the youth to voice their concerns did open the channels to verify the project overall objective remained coherent to effective youth inclusion.

The vast majority of interviewees have expressed their concerns over the current and further expected impact of COVID-19 on the situation of the youth. The space and platforms created by the project have been providing for a continuous dialogue with young males and females until today. Through regular consultations with local authorities, frontline service providers, employment and small business monitoring, youth formal and non-formal initiatives, the project has built the channels to keep abreast of the challenges. The statements of the local actors directly interacting with the youth are converging towards an increasingly challenging context for the younger generation especially. While the beneficiaries of small business grants have demonstrated a capacity to adjust to COVID-19 challenges (by reshaping their businesses); the majority of the age group 18-35 are reported to have been further deprived from, mostly professional opportunities, to fulfil their livelihood and live expectations. All respondents have stressed the need to further build the resilience of this population and also to expand the project coverage to include more of the unattended youth.

## 6.2. EFFECTIVENESS

**EQ 8.** TO ASSESS THE DEGREE TO WHICH ENVISAGED OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED AND REPORTED ACHIEVEMENTS, AND WHETHER THE PROJECT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO A REDUCTION OF THE DRIVERS OF VE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL.

RATING OF EFFECTIVENESS			
HS	Highly Satisfactory	The project not only reached but exceeded all of the expected results while also achieving quality and the key stake of shifting stakeholder's supportive attitude towards inclusiveness as a response to preventing violent extremism.	6

### Findings.

In accordance with the latest consolidated Progress Report, dated December 2020, the PVE project has reached all of its outputs and did actually exceed its quantitative targets in the majority of cases. The below table presents a summary of the project results against its initial targets. This performance reflects the strong effectiveness of the project in its capacity to deliver a great diversity of results involving substantial preparation work in a complex, multi-layered approach (regional, multi-country, multi-stakeholder and pluri-levels) through the patient construction of trustful relations. Thus, effectiveness also involves discreet and patient advocacy with local stakeholders and communities without which the activities leading to the below results could not even get started.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS VS PROJECT TARGETS		
OUTCOME INDICATORS (units of activities or individuals)	Target	Achieved
<b>Outcome 1 - Safe Engagement Platforms</b>		
Assessment of barriers to youth integration in local labour markets	1	1
Local youth initiatives supported through small grants scheme and implemented by youth	18	18
Youth Action platforms created	2	2
social support counsellors trained	120	278
District policemen, school administrations, teachers and social service providers trained and equipped	144	
Self-made youth opinion leaders trained to work with at-risk youth	20	20
Youth Action Groups formed	10	10
Youth trainings on civic participation, leadership and participatory assessment	1000	3800
Conducted analysis of gaps, challenges and opportunities for youth participation and inclusion in decision making process	10	12
Local self-government Youth Action Plans institutionalised and small grants provided for implementation	8	8
Youth-led needs assessment reports for targeted localities	8	11
Local youth involved in regional policy dialogues and local development planning	900	951
Youth-focused social infrastructure initiatives implemented	8	8
Potential young migrants made aware of VE-related risk	3000	50000
Number of young people who benefited from a rehabilitation initiative supported by the project	150	151
Young people trained on peace and security issues, conflict prevention and conflict mediation	1000	1525
Young people raised awareness about the national policy and law-making process;	1000	1101
Sample surveys to identify employment inspirations to be conducted	10	12
Youth Centres with enhanced capacity to provide social services to at risk groups	6	6
<b>Outcome 2 - Group -based skills &amp; entrepreneur development services</b>		
youth benefitted from subsidised apprenticeships	500	576
youth benefitted from applied trainings	500	576
sustainable jobs created through small grants scheme and specialised training and licensing to provide technical support to introduction of energy efficiency/ saving measures	60	101
Number of young people benefited from specialised trainings	60	79
Analysis on potential employment and youth entrepreneurship opportunities to be conducted	1	3
Training courses, mentorship programmes and/or curriculums	6	15
Youth benefitted from training, mentorship and apprenticeship programmes and business start-up weekends	500	1000
Sustainable jobs created through small grants programme	100	225
Job fairs, business forums and other networking events	6	14
Youth-at-risk with enhanced employment-related risks	500	506
Youth with enhanced entrepreneurial skills	100	212
Youth involved into apprenticeship programme	75	75
Jobs created through small grants programme	100	183
Young people employed by local municipalities for public works	500	1023
Former prisoners employed by local municipalities for public works	370	102
Young people engaged in entrepreneurship/self-employment	500	512
PES staff trained	40	42
Local labour market assessment and government specialists trained	yes	Yes
<b>Outcome 3 - Regional Youth Networks and PVE Knowledge Sharing</b>		
Training tools and materials for awareness raising and counselling on early signs of the radicalisation	4	4
Regional dialogues to elicit, critically assess and summarize lessons learned on PVE	5	5
Regional youth initiatives and exchanges on implementation of SDGs, especially SDG16	5	5
Analytical reports on the drivers of PVE and the linkages with employment and social inclusion	7	4
High level regional meetings for exchange of knowledge and experience on PVE	2	1

The evaluation has interviewed Stakeholders operating at the local level, encompassing, NGOs, the city administrations, Youth Center directors, mentors, professional trainers all of whom have praised the effectiveness of the project approach, the consultative and participatory mechanisms such as Local Youth Actions Plans.

The data collected and conclusions from the thorough analysis of underlying factors and drivers leading to violent extremisms presented in the UNDP-IOM study are providing elements confirming the PVE project is effectively aiming at the multiple drivers of violent extremism employing. The effectiveness also lies in the inclusive method used by the project to address these drivers: while requiring a long-term, constructive effort, this effectiveness has brought results by “investing” into the youth rather using confrontation, which can be seen a potential additional driver of marginalization.

Measure quantitatively the extent to which VE drivers have been reduced is a challenge since accurate information is lacking (for instance on the estimated number of the local youth population being highly vulnerable to VE). The evaluation has sought to capture through interviews, a sense of how much drivers have been diminished as well as relevant indicators contributing to measuring the depth of reduction. The accounts expressed to the evaluation from local actors and beneficiaries in the cities selected by the project are unequivocal: the various activities initiated by the project have received a very positive support from the youth involved while local institutions and the civil society have experienced much improved relations between local actors and the youth involved in the project. This change is admittedly challenging to quantify, however, the discussions held with interviewees do provide information that can be use as elements indicating change. The evaluation has formulated a recommendation at the end of the present report as a potential contribution to measuring the extent of the change induced by the project.

#### **EQ 9. WAS THE THEORY OF CHANGE BASED ON VALID ASSUMPTIONS?**

##### **Findings.**

The Theory of Change is based on assumptions which can be considered as valid, to the extent the VE phenomenon and its preventions are well-documented, practiced (Prevention), researched and analysed.

Since understanding, researching and addressing of VE in Central Asia from a prevention perspective is relatively recent, the assumptions formulated in the project proposal appear to be based on the most current state of knowledge to date on the phenomenon.

The evaluation recognised the depth of assumptions has been limited to the level of acquired knowledge on VE in Central Asia, as a relatively recent subject of research. However, UNDP has produced an additional research effort in mobilising knowledge to consolidate the project assumption: taking advantage of UNDP’s Global expertise on Peace Building and PVE, UNDP’s presence, expertise, practice-based understanding of the sources of young people vulnerability to radicalization in Central Asia, as well as partnering with organisations (IOM, INGOs) engaged in youth dialogues and peace building, contracting international and national experts (from countries of the regions). The assumptions emerging for these knowledge mobilisation efforts have then been further verified locally through the several research and studies commissioned by the project during implementation.

The rationale of intervention is clearly articulated from the objective to the outcome down to the output level.

**EQ 10. TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COORDINATION AND CO-IMPLEMENTATION BETWEEN COUNTRY OFFICES.**

**Findings.**

Despite the complexity of the project, demanding in terms of coordination, given its multi-country plus regional dimension characteristics, the mechanisms in place are assessed as effective. Indeed, despite the activity-intensive nature of the project, and several challenges encountered – among which COVID-19 as the most impactful – all outputs have been reached, with a majority of them exceeded. To this understanding of the evaluation, this can be attributed to (1) clearly defined project roles among UNDP Country Offices, (2). A simple and straightforward project coordination set-up with clear description of tasks, (3). Country-driven project implementation process, granting a level of autonomy to UNDP Country PVE Project staff, (4). UNDP PVE staff enjoy long-standing in-country experience and established relationship with national stakeholders. The project team has been reported as deeply committed and supportive by project stakeholders, (5). Supportive UNDP Country Offices with an interest in the regional dimension and experience of the project.

**EQ 11. TO ASSESS THE DEGREE OF COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES.**

**Findings.**

The selection of pilot locations has been established in consultation and with the agreement of national partners. One of the criteria of the Ministry which gave the list of ‘hot-spots’ was the number of citizens who left to join the Foreign Fighters’ Groups. However, the socio-economic development of municipalities appears to have been considered. A number of pilot cities have actually been selected in the relation to the negative impact of its geographical remoteness from the economic centers or its heavy dependence on a single economic sector. Such was the case in Zhezkazgan from the Karaganda oblast, where beside the local industrial copper plant, job opportunities were extremely scarce. On the other hand, there are a lot of requests from national partners to expand geographical coverage if possible.

The degree of coordination is assessed as effective, given the number and diversity of stakeholders involved, the multi-layered interventions and the highly-centralised government contexts in the countries of Central Asia, requiring systematic validation of proposed activities.

The “proximity” and attitude of supportiveness and flexibility have been repeatedly mentioned by stakeholders across categories and countries. A great deal of the coordination has taken place informally, besides the project coordination mechanisms. The flexibility and availability of the PVE project staff has been highly appreciated and is considered to have ensured a smooth implementation despite various challenges.

The project’s ability to adjust modalities of activities in coping with the COVID-19 challenge provides an example of effective close coordination, where output targets have been exceeded in a timely manner, despite the project complexity and the COVID-19 constraint.

UNDP’s ability to mobilise an important number of stakeholders for the evaluation interview phase in a short time is also an indicator of close coordination with authorities. Throughout the live exchanges, interlocutors have expressed a vibrant interest for the project and an attachment to its results, more than limiting

themselves to minimal answers. A strong deal of enthusiasm in relation to the changes brought by the project has been perceived by the evaluation.

**EQ 12.** TO ASSESS THE DEGREE TO WHICH PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WAS FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE TO THE CONTEXT.

### Findings

The project has demonstrated a strong degree of flexibility and adaptiveness in delivering an overall excess of outputs in comparison to the initial targets. The degree of autonomy of country project coordinators; a strong knowledge of the context an individual commitment, as reactivity of the project management and support of country offices have helped tackle several substantial constraints: (1). Building a supportive attitude of authorities towards a preventive, highly inclusive approach during the inception of the project, before convincing results could be produced, (2). Managing country-driven, community-based activities in differing contexts while ensuring a regional dynamic throughout the project, (3). Adjusting to the impactful constraints and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to some operational challenges.

**EQ 13.** THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROJECT MAINSTREAMED A GENDER DIMENSION AND SUPPORTED GENDER-RESPONSIVE PVE.

### Findings

The gender dimension is fully developed as it has been built-in the project design and translates substantial, evidence-based intention to ensure women have a fair access to the project and that gender-specific challenges are tackled in the approach, methodology (beneficiary profiling and activities. The project is equipped with gender-specific targets, has produced gender-disaggregated data. Gender was also integrated into profiling of youth as beneficiaries and beneficiary outreach efforts have been conducted with a gender-inclusive intention (households have been approached and its awareness raised on the rights an interest of women to engage in activities). With the project phase to an end, the project has exceeded its gender targets in the vast majority of activities, providing a large participation of young women to engagement activities, professional trainings, employment and small business creation.

Young female participation has sparked further interest among various local communities with young women having expressed interest in joining the project activities, occasionally exceeding the number of males approaching youth platforms.

**EQ 14.** THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROJECT COMPLEMENTED WORK WITH DIFFERENT ENTITIES AND HAD A STRATEGIC COHERENCE OF APPROACH.

### Findings

The core principles of engagement (of the youth) by local governments vested to stimulate a joint dialogue and define solutions where the youth participation is encouraged stand behind the PVE project. Thus, the project design incorporates the consultation with central and local authorities, their policies, as well as frontline service providers, the civil society, not to mention the youth, so that the national policy contexts and the local institutional, cultural and socio-economic realities are taken into account into the project's mode of intervention.

In each country, the project interventions have been supportive of and contributing to national-level youth policies. A wide range of institutions interacting with the youth (Youth Organisations, National Committee on Religious Affairs...) have been consulted and involved. At the field level, the community-level activities have been developed as result of a consultative process of local actors, which capacities were built to then engage in a dialogue with the youth.

To the accounts of interviewees, this method of intervention has been effective in ensuring complementary with national level policies and local priorities. The strongly positive opinions, effective participation and tangible support witnessed at the city level. The heads of various (social, culture, youth) units of city administration engaged in the project has acknowledge the dialogue has significantly improved the relevant of the municipal response to the concerns of the youth. Youth local action plans are also received a strong approval as a modality for identifying needs and formulating policy response at the local level. All interviewed heads of administrative units have confirmed their decisions to establish youth priorities, using the consultative process introduced by the project.

#### **EQ 15. HOW HAVE STAKEHOLDERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAMME'S DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION?**

##### **Findings**

Prior to its design, the project has benefited from UNDP's previous initiatives in relation to the prevention of violent extremism. A regional coordinated approach among Central Asian countries had been prioritised by representatives of the youth of the region. Through its presence in the countries and lessons learned from earlier projects, the UNDP have also been maintained a consultative process with State institutions of the countries targeted by the project.

The project has been designed with stakeholder participation and involvement as central elements of its approach with results greatly depending on the degree of the involvement of the local government and institutions, public services, the civil society and obviously, the youth of the local community. Besides initial consultations, initial surveys of the youth situations, challenges and priorities have been systematically conducted. The local actors, including the relevant units of the local administration have further been trained on defining their own involvement in the project as well as involving the youth into a dialogue where they could express their expectations.

Although, it initially took some time to stimulate their interest, the involvement of stakeholders has augmented progressively as the project move into concrete activities. Across the diversity of the organisations engaged in the project, respondents to evaluation interviews have felt they were given the space to fully engaged in activities.

#### **EQ 16. WHAT REAL DIFFERENCE HAVE THE ACTIVITIES MADE TO THE BENEFICIARIES?**

##### **Findings**

Across the countries, the pilot cities and stakeholder categories, the depth of change within the youth beneficiaries has been consistently expressed as a progressive, but significant and profound change. When interviewed, the project stakeholders have explained from their perspectives, their perceptions as relevant elements of change within the youth, beyond the facts. Much of the difference the project has made to the



life of young participants requires observing and analysis various tangible and less tangible aspects: Youth actions, Attitudes, Knowledge, Expression/Communication.

Besides the great motivation and enthusiasm demonstrated by the young participants to the project activities, the impressive performance of those involved in the employment scheme, the transformation of the youth has also happened outside the context of the project. This is a significant indicator as those external activities have not been directly supported by the project but are the sole action of the youth. Among the few examples mentioned in the present report, evaluation interviewees have reported a number of youth gatherings leading to deciding on community initiatives, such as reaching out to other youth residing in neighbourhoods that had not been included in the project.

An electronic survey has been conducted with the intention of capturing the changes brought by the project as experienced by the youth which has been involved in project activities. A few selected tables inserted in the report to illustrate the feedback from the polled young males and females. Below is a table indicating the respondent profile by country.

## 6.3. EFFICIENCY

RATING OF EFFICIENCY			
HS	Highly Satisfactory	Efficiency is highly satisfactory owing to a combination of the following: Straightforward project governance and structure, strong project team competence and dedication, use of flexibility, experience and analysis in adjusting to the complexity of the regional context and its challenges, use of UNDP's regional project infrastructure to keep costs at low level	6

**EQ 17.** TO ASSESS WHETHER THE PROJECT HAS UTILIZED PROJECT FUNDING AS PER THE AGREED WORK PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE PROJECTED TARGETS.

### Findings

Overall, the project funds have been utilised in accordance with the Project Document. The evaluation understands some adjustments were required when the project was constrained to adjust to the remote management of some activities, in order to comply with the restrictive measures imposed in each country. The distribution of resources among countries and the regional component seems to reflect a fair and logical balance, reflecting the country level activities as well as the additional costs related to the project manager based in Kazakhstan as well as the costs related to the coordination and support services functions, also based in this country.

Given the number and diversity of the activities, some including substantial construction/renovation of physical buildings (Youth Centers), the wide geographical coverage and the costs associated to holding regional events, the evaluation considers the funds have been used efficiently and maintained at relative low administrative costs, owing to the fact that the project could benefit from the existing UNDP project infrastructure in the region. When extending the use of funds to the question of value for money, the results and the change of stakeholders' attitude and commitment to youth inclusion do provide a positive indicator that the project has offered good for value for money or, in other words, a meaningful social investment in the Central Asia societies.

**EQ 18.** TO ANALYZE THE ROLE OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC) AND WHETHER THIS FORUM IS OPTIMALLY BEING USED FOR DECISION MAKING.

### Findings

The role of the project Steering Committee appears to have been adequately defined, composed and structured. The appointment of Government (of Kazakhstan) and Embassy (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic) representatives of the countries involved in the project, besides UNDP and the Government of Japan, is obviously a legitimate and logical composition for the Steering Committee, as it has ensured concerned governments were kept abreast of the project development and informed about its results along implementation, as well as changes. This forum also offered opportunities for government feedback and support of the results, in parallel to the regional component. Reflecting the regional dimension of the project in the structure of the Steering Committee has also been relevant to keeping countries with the same level of information and involvement in the project. Overall, the role of the Steering Committee appears to have been efficient in that it did approve smoothly the project annual workplans and key decisions of the project.

**EQ 19.** TO ASSESS THE TIMELINE AND QUALITY OF THE REPORTING FOLLOWED BY THE PROJECT.

### Findings

The project has been effective in meeting timely the delivery of its activities, given a number of challenging circumstances. The six-month extension required by the project is unsurprising and well justified in light of the project ambition and context. First, the introduction of the youth-engagement approach, shifting the paradigm of the perception of the youth and addressing its specific challenges, has proven a demanding and long initial effort and absorbed several months initially. Setting-up the project mechanisms at the regional level, and entering into collaboration with State Institutions also meant an elevated pace of implementation with a significant preparatory phase, followed by a high density of activities. One of the international non-governmental implementing partners noted that the partnership contract timeframe was tight even though UNDP showed flexibility and objectives were reached. The project also experienced minor delays as a result of several activity-level challenges, ranging from the weak capacities of some local NGOs to harsh weather conditions slowing some interventions. However, the constraints imposed by the risk-management of the COVID-19 pandemic is to be retained as the principal obstacle during the project cycle. Nonetheless, in this case again, the project team and partner promptly reacted and developed alternative modalities, quite often using technology to remotely conduct community-level activities.

The reporting effort of the project is considered as appropriate to the needs of the project management, UNDP and the donor. Annual country reports and a consolidated regional annual report was produced and submitted to the donor. Contracted project partners also did provide a level of report, adequate to the project reporting needs. Detailed attention was paid to reporting on regional events, its preparation, implementation and conclusions.

The annual reports have represented the core of the project reporting, providing a great level of details on the numerous activities engaged. Given the length of those written documents, a more user-friendly short version of those reports, featuring key figures and achievements with visuals could be a helpful too to reach out a potential wider audience, or as a minimum, a wider range of central level institutions.

**EQ 20.** TO ANALYZE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE M&E MECHANISM OF THE PROJECT AND THE USE OF VARIOUS M&E TOOLS.

### Findings

The PVE thematic, especially in Central Asia, is recent and the understanding of the phenomenon, while improving is still limited. Consequently, the M&E challenge of a preventive-based intervention is placed at the outcome level, so as to measure the change produced by the project in strengthening community resilience and advancing the prevention of violent extremism. If the project has indeed been equipped with a very detailed, activity-level results framework, the project seems to be lacking outcome-level indicators that would allow to measure and understand better the extent to which the three outcomes are contributing to the prevention of Violent Extremism and the expected changes. The evaluation has formulated a recommendation towards better capturing change in order to highlight and advocate on the positive effects of the project, beyond the attainment of results.

The M&E Summary table is very exhaustive and provides a relevant dashboard to track progress towards results of all activities. However, this monitoring tool is limited to the output level as indicators referred to as “outcome indicators” are indeed output indicators. Thus, it is insufficient to informing on the degree of change realised as a result of the intervention. The evaluation interviews have provided an opportunity to hear from the youth and stakeholders on their perception of the change and somehow compared it to the expectations formulated in the Theory of Change. UNDP and its project team are also well aware on the depth of change, and it is also recorded in the progress, field monitoring and related reports produced by the project. The description of the changes in attitude, knowledge, actions, speech or decisions of the beneficiaries and local actors has been clearly and strongly underlined in interviews and these facts do provide a rich soil to identify indicators of change. The project is equipped with a detailed monitoring format allowing to collect systematically outcome-level information, that serving very well the implementation progress monitoring purpose. However, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, an additional tool, using standardized indicators design to grasp and explain change (or measure it against the Theory of Change) would be a welcome addition to evaluate the depth of change and promote it with national institutions. The evaluation recognizes this involves some thorough work and research so as to come up with acceptable, recognized and meaningful “indicators of change”.

**EQ 21.** TO ASSESS THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT AND OTHER INPUTS (SUCH AS EQUIPMENT, MONITORING AND REVIEW AND OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BUDGETARY INPUTS) PROVIDED BY THE PROJECT VIS-À-VIS ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTPUTS AND TARGETS.

### Findings

The management of the project has delivered a strong performance, which appears to be the result of supportive team management, personal staff dedication, relevant professional profiles. The results framework is densely populated with activities, indicating that the project is labour-intensive and involves the interaction with multiple stakeholders.

Clear project management rules, combined with supportive countries offices and a smooth coordination among UNDP project colleagues and UNDP offices have been strong elements to ensuring the timely delivery of activities, despite a number of challenges and the COVID-19 impacted activities.

Interviewees have overwhelmingly praised the quality of the activities as well as the external expertise mobilized by UNDP. The training and capacity-building interventions have been experienced as very impactful by the youth but also by local institutions and youth organisation personnel. The motivation,

commitments and initiatives taken by the youth within or outside the project provides a strong indication on the relevance and effectiveness of the content of knowledge products as well as the appropriateness of the engagement approach with stakeholders. While some international and national NGOs partners have found the project administrative procedures a bit on the heavy, it has been compensated by a very supportive attitude of UNDP project staff and a demonstration of flexibility so that the implementation, though occasionally delivered on tight timeframes, was not heavily conditioned by the project administrative rules.

The UNDP project team as well as partners did promptly react to the constraints dictated by preventive measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alternative modalities were quickly set-up so as to minimize the interruption of activities. The organisation of remotely and technologically managed trainings, courses and communication has showed both some opportunities and limitations. Opportunities to reach out a wider young audience but limitations to the necessity of maintaining a physical presence and contact with the youth, essential for self-confidence building.

**EQ 22.** TO IDENTIFY FACTORS AND CONSTRAINTS, WHICH HAVE AFFECTED PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION INCLUDING TECHNICAL, MANAGERIAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY ISSUES IN ADDITION TO OTHER EXTERNAL FACTORS UNFORESEEN DURING THE PROJECT DESIGN.

### Findings

UNDP's long-standing presence and implementation experience in Central Asian countries has been capitalised to identify potential challenges known to exist at the design stage of the proposal. This includes the awareness of operating in highly centralised and traditionally-minded institutions and the challenge of introducing new perspectives involving participatory, consultative approaches, not yet mainstreamed and the length of the process for institutions to understand the benefits of shifting conceptual approaches. Country-specific characteristics and associated constraints, such as the varying level of development and capacities of the civil society, have also been reflected in the design of the intervention, supporting country-driven and tailored activities.

The model and concepts, suggesting to consider the potential and aspiration of the youth, upon which the modalities and activities were designed have required patience and efforts to get a genuine interest and willingness of institutions before they committed to the project. With the first visible results and observable changes in the efficiency of local administration to engage in a dialogue with the youth, leading to tangible results, the project has turned institutional reluctance into a facilitating factor.

The COVID-19 pandemic has unsurprisingly been the unexpected unforeseen factor, severely affecting the implementation of the many activities involving youth group involvement as well as stakeholder meetings, including the last Regional High-level meeting. The project team and partners reacted rapidly in transferring many of the training gatherings to online contents. The employment, especially the small business development component experienced a challenging time with the closure of physical business activities. However, the young business-owners demonstrated resourcefulness and creativity in transforming their activities to reach out clients.

However, the fact that almost all output targets have been exceeded in a timely manner, while the project did manage to change institutions' approach towards the youth, is an indicator that both identified and unforeseen constraints have been overcome.

**EQ 23.** HOW EFFICIENT IS THE OVERALL STAFFING, PLANNING AND COORDINATION WITHIN THE PROJECT (INCLUDING BETWEEN THE IMPLEMENTING COs AND WITH STAKEHOLDERS)? HAVE PROJECT FUNDS AND ACTIVITIES BEEN DELIVERED IN A TIMELY MANNER?

#### Findings

The project is considered as adequately staffed as, despite the rich content of activities. The country-driven approach and the autonomy conferred by their job description has given the Country Project Officers and the project to tailor the activities to the specific needs as well as the institutional and civil society situation particular to each national and local context.

The project decision to outsource expertise has proven an efficient choice as it also gave country-level interventions the autonomy, the flexibility and the relevance of the technical expertise, based on the specific needs of each pilot location.

Country Project Officers have received strongly supportive regional project management support, in addition to UNDP Country Office and UNDP Kazakhstan regional project support.

Even though the project has experienced some delays though they can be considered as minor in relation the number of challenges (ranging from operational processes taking longer than expected, limiting weather conditions, slow reactivity of some employment agencies...) and especially the challenge of coping with the COVID-19 constraint. A note of special attention is to be mentioned in relation to the political events that have occurred in Kyrgyzstan.

It is to be noted, as echoed by the project stakeholders in the countries of intervention, that the quality and dedication of the project team has played a crucial role in ensuring the funds and activities have been disbursed and delivered in a timely manner.

**EQ 24.** HOW EFFICIENT AND SUCCESSFUL ARE THE PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH, INCLUDING PROCUREMENT AND OTHER ACTIVITIES?

#### Findings

The project's implementation approach has proven to be efficient, relying a fine balance of clearly defined operational regulations and a flexible and supportive attitude in dealing with the reality of implementation (weak capacity of NGOs, short implementation timeframe of some activities).

More detailed description and analysis explaining why the evaluation believes the implementation approach has been both successful and efficient in exceeding target results, getting stakeholder commitment and project ownership – or even more so approach ownership, is made in several other sections of the present report.

**EQ 25.** HOW EFFICIENTLY DOES THE PROJECT USE THE STEERING COMMITTEE?

#### Findings

The role of the Steering Committee has been given a clear role from the start of the project and the project has used this body accordingly. The Steering Committee has played a smooth role as it has validated all project annual plans and decisions.

**EQ 26.** HOW WELL DOES THE PROJECT COLLECT AND USE DATA TO MONITOR RESULTS? HOW WELL DOES IT COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECT BENEFICIARIES ON ITS PROGRESS? DOES IT USE DATA TO INFORM ITS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY?

### Findings

The project has been collecting systematically data on the delivery of activities and the results obtained.

Output-level quantitative data is gathered in one Results framework table, allowing for an easy tracking of implementation progress against objectives. Updated project results per country are also available on UNDP Kazakhstan's website.

The project has generated an important volume of information in various forms reflecting the impressive number of activities conducted during the project cycle.

Donor reporting is substantial as annual reports provide a detailed overview of the activities and key achievements of the project.

Interviewed stakeholders were well informed and able to provide detailed results for the activities conducted under their responsibility. Overall, they have felt the level of information and support provided by the UNDP project team was satisfactory and appropriate for level of involvement into the project.

Lessons learned and best practices have been regularly collected and communicated in donor reports. The challenges faced by the project have found flexibility and a rapid response, based on the feedback from stakeholders. The adaptative measures to the COVID-19 pandemic are a strong example of the project's reactivity. Challenges and solutions devised by the project have been included in a specific section of donor progress reporting.

**EQ 27.** HOW WELL DOES THE PROJECT COMMUNICATE ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS?

### Findings

Numerous reporting and communications products from UNDP as well as local authorities, youth centres and youth themselves. Strong coverage by the local media and informal promotion by the youth through the social networks.

There is an inherent difficulty to content-rich, multi-layered and complex projects such as the PVE project, in conveying an overall picture of the contribution of the project. The implementation progress reports are lengthy as a matter of donor reporting obligations. The multiplicity of communication products can sometimes act against a lighter communication where strong messages can be absorbed and retained. Obviously, PVE is a complex response to a complex phenomenon that should not be versed into simplified messages. The presentation available on the various UNDP websites is actually user friendly and is a good model of promotion for the project.

**EQ 28. OVERALL, DOES THE PROJECT PROVIDE VALUE FOR MONEY? HAVE RESOURCES BEEN USED EFFICIENTLY?**

**Findings**

The project offers strong value for money in terms of costs of activities and produced results (quantitative and qualitative), though the qualitative dimension must be better and more systematically reported. The employment component has demonstrated strong value for money, especially when considering the indirect positive, stimulative effects these activities have created. Stronger communication on those beneficial secondary effects do provide valuable indicators of impact and change.

The answer to the Evaluation Question 17 in the Efficiency section of the present provides additional information on value for money.

The youth and project stakeholders have shifted a great deal in their perspective and interaction in the way youth issues are addressed. A sense of cost-effectiveness of the project should also analyse in relation to the impact and changes induced by the project. And while the number of examples in the change of attitudes, the number of youth initiatives is indicative on the depth of change, measuring the cost-effectiveness is complex and only meaningful if new approach of stakeholders is sustainable.

**EQ 29. TO ASSESS WHETHER M&E SYSTEM OF THE PROJECT FACILITATED TIMELY TRACKING OF PROGRESS TOWARDS PROJECT OBJECTIVES BY COLLECTING INFORMATION ON CHOSEN INDICATORS CONTINUALLY; AND THAT ANNUAL PROJECTS REPORTS ARE COMPLETE, ACCURATE.**

**Findings**

A full-fledge M&E results table has been developed for the project, allowing to track output-level progress against objectives. This comes in addition to country-level M&E tracking tables. Those are relevant tools to track progress while progress reports do provide a great deal of details on achievements and activities. A deeper level of information details is available through filed visit reports performed by the UNDP project team as well as activity reports submitted by project partners.

Given the volume of activities, the M&E Results Framework is an essential and practical, user-friendly tool, especially for a regional-level monitoring overview. In contrast, the progress reports are very detailed though less reader-friendly because of its length and narrative mode. A more summative visual format, in the form of a dashboard could have provided a practical complement offering a brief alternative to lengthy progress reports.

The project has also gathered an impressive stock of visibility supports and media coverage on the project results across the targeted pilot areas. This provides useful material to capture and report how beneficiaries and local institutions have changes attitudes and demonstrated engagement jointly with the youth. The volume of such material by the project, in addition the various the various profiling and survey reports produced by local experts, is such that it justifies the need for a knowledge management function to illustrate how the outputs have contributed qualitatively to the project outcomes. For instance, a summary of the changes of practice observed within local and central governments could have served that purpose.



## 6.4. SUSTAINABILITY

**EQ 30.** THE ASSESS PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS OF THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE PROJECT RESULTS ARE LIKELY TO BE SUSTAINABLE BEYOND THE PROJECT'S LIFETIME (BOTH AT THE COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT LEVEL) AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING SUSTAINABILITY.

### Findings

The project has realised strong achievements in terms of sustainability in the following areas:

- A cultural change in the perception of youth leading to a change in the conceptual, policy and operational approach in interacting with the youth
- Change of speech and beliefs owing to the project creating the conditions for youth to demonstrate its potential and willingness. This has led for the private and public sector to not only consider but also raise interest in the youth as a human capital.
- Changes of practice of local governments: consultation, youth action plans, resources
- A successfully small business supportive environment, delivery convincing results and stimulating beyond the local community level.

**EQ 31.** DOES THE INTERVENTION DESIGN INCLUDE AN APPROPRIATE SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT STRATEGY? HAS FOLLOW UP SUPPORT AFTER THE END OF THE PROJECT BEEN DISCUSSED AND FORMALIZED?

### Findings

The project document does not formulate a specific exit strategy though it appears to be embedded in the sustainability section of the document as it refers to the expectation that capacities and institutional mechanisms developed by the Project will be scaled up/replicated by the government.

Preventing violent extremism obviously requires an engagement on the long-term, which timeline exceeds the duration of a single project phase. The local and central institutional mechanisms the project has built provide a strong legacy, clearly acknowledged by stakeholders, together with the observed shift from repression to prevention does provide some sustainability in the consultative and inclusive process of addressing youth's exposure to the risk of extremism.

However, the long-term and wider strategy of preventing violent extremism of the UN and UNDP implies the long-term and the fact that UNDP will pursue its efforts beyond the end of the project.

The evaluation also understands the donor (the Government of Japan) strategy is also long-term-oriented and consultations about a follow-up phase had been initiated during the course of implementation. The recent submission of a concept note for the upcoming period conveys the intention of UNDP not to exit from its commitment to PVE.

There are at least two elements acting in favour of the continuation of the project over a withdrawal:

- All stakeholders have adopted the consultative and inclusive project's approach toward the youth so a favourable institutional foundation has been established, opening the perspective to pursue the main strategic direction.
- The dialogue opened with the youth and the convincing results have established a window where the youth have expressed an acute need for concrete life perspectives to be created for them. The dissemination of results has also raised a very strong interest among the young from areas, stretching far beyond the locations targeted by the project. Overall, the project implementation has created a momentum for the positive shifts in youth behaviours, producing results and changes in attitudes, convincing enough to pursue the effort in developing and scaling up the project intervention.

**EQ 32.** TO ASSESS TO WHAT EXTENT UNDP AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS HAVE UNDERTAKEN THE NECESSARY DECISIONS AND COURSE OF ACTIONS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY. THIS ASSESSMENT SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE EXTERNAL AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS AND RISKS THAT MAY IMPACT PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY.

### Findings

The PVE project is sustainability-driven, its underlying strategic promotes inclusiveness, while its approach is seeking to building mechanisms promoting youth inclusion via an open dialogue with institutions. The project objectives and outcomes clearly indicated that the proposed mechanisms enhancing community resilience are intended to be institutionalised and also reflected and backed at the national policy level.

The commitments and statements made through interviews clearly indicate that consultative practices have already been adopted (regular and formal consultations with the youth, Youth centres utilised as venues for a dialogue with institutions, multi-stakeholder referrals mechanisms to address youth concerns are established), though some aspects are fully institutionalised (youth actions plans, youth profiling) and remain practice, and other activities (employment solutions and small business development through) still rely on external funding to continue.

**EQ 33.** HOW STRONG IS THE COMMITMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO SUSTAINING THE RESULTS OF PROJECT'S SUPPORT AND CONTINUING INITIATIVES?

### Findings

Overall, there is general and clear support of all stakeholders of the project approach as, not only relevant but necessary, recognizing that the youth must be heard and their concerns and expectations understood. Engaging in a dialogue with the youth and recognising the youth as an actor in the prevention of violent extremism is now mainstream across stakeholder categories. This mainstreaming has been translated to some extent at the central Government level, implying a clear recognition and support to the inclusion effort towards the youth. The commitment is even stronger at the local level to the local administration that has

played an active part of the consultative process and a witness of successful youth realisations when an empowering and supportive environment is created around this population group.

The multi-year youth action plans supported by the targeted municipalities, among other initiatives, is a sign of willingness to pursue the commitment in the future. Local institutions and the civil society have clearly expressed their intention to further their commitment to youth inclusion.

## 6.5. IMPACT

RATING OF IMPACT			
HS	Highly Satisfactory	The approach of the project has been highly appropriate in creating a strong impact. Based on the accounts of interviewees, the project's impact is strongly felt at the project location levels and the economic component has showed impressive results and generate strong secondary impact.	6

### EQ 34. HOW HAS THE PROJECT ENHANCED AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL CAPACITY?

#### Findings

Local NGOs have grown in capacity as most were starting with a very limited experience. The effect of the training provided could be progressively observed in the quality of the reporting, external communication, and organisational development.

The City administration units involved in the project have also built new capacities and demonstrated this newly acquired competences in leading successfully the development of local youth action plans as well as establishing social priorities in line with the expectations expressed by the youth.

### EQ 35. TO WHAT EXTENT DOES UN PROJECT SUPPORT ACHIEVE THE RESULTS IN ITS PROPOSED TIMELINE?

#### Findings

The project is strategically supported by a UN framework recommending a preventive approach when addressing violent extremism. The SDG and especially the SDG 16 are also permitting to link the preventive approach of the project to inclusiveness as a mean to achieve peace.

The UNDP has tapped in its global PVE experience, using exchanges with other UNDP programmes elsewhere (e.g., in the Western Balkans) and taken the lessons from its long-standing presence in the Central Asia region to become a major contributor in the region in relation to migration and the risk of violent extremism. Equally importantly, UNDP's expertise in social inclusion has also strongly benefited to the project's ability to deploy a relevant grassroots, community and stakeholder inclusive approach.

### EQ 36. THE ASSESS THE DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT OF NATIONAL PARTNERS AND ALIGNING TO EXISTING PRIORITIES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN TARGETED AREAS.

#### Findings

Changes could be observed as a result of the project approach promoting dialogue with the youth: Institution have become more opened, reactive, committed (decisions taken, adoption of project practices) and more pro-active (formulating request to the project).

Youth Programme Internship schemes developed by the project is under current consideration by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population in Kazakhstan.

The project has been highly relevant and support of Local Government's effort towards more inclusive practices with the youth communities (city administration involved in the design of youth action plan, in consultation with youth and local actors). Important indicators contribute to providing evidence of the participation of the various city administration governments in all target pilot districts: Facilitation and formalisation of the youth development action plans, allocation of resources to implement related activities, integration of the Youth Resource Centre staff salary into the city budget as well as running cost of the centers. In Turkmenistan, a Presidential decree for the creation of a Youth Agency. Development of a national PVE strategy.

In Kyrgyz Republic, the government is currently working on the formulation of its youth policy for the 5 years to come (2021-2026) and the youth engagement approach promoted by the project is expected to be reflected in the formulation of this policy document.

**EQ 37. AN ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN LESSONS LEARNT IN RELATION TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FORESEEN STRATEGIES AND THEORIES OF CHANGE TO ACHIEVE A PVE AND PEACEBUILDING IMPACT.**

### Findings.

- A clear theory of change formulation and detailed project approach is essential to guiding and providing a framework where creativity and flexibility can be exerted as a way to maintain a strategic direction when navigating in a very complex environment. The effectiveness of the strategy can be measured through the degree and the nature of change. Capturing the change sought by the project is complex as it is expressed in multiple forms (change in stakeholders' attitudes, practices...), yet, the change needs to be defined using indicators so a measurement, or at least an assessment of this change can be described and the effectiveness of the strategy can also be better assessed.
- Change needs to be "told" as telling about changes is the most efficient way to advocate for further continued support from national level institutions. The lesson learned from this is that for change to be told in a convincing manner, it needs to be explained and measured with appropriate, well-chosen indicators of change.
- UNDP field presence in project location is crucial to the success of the project as it enables the project to develop relationships with stakeholders and beneficiaries as essential elements of understanding of the evolution of situations, needs, impact and changes resulting from the project.
- When providing a supportive environment (right tools, mentorship...), young female and male can deliver very convincing performance, spanning beyond the spectrum of economic performance by becoming an example and model of inspiration and stimulation to the local community.
- The partnerships established through the project with the private sector is a lesson that the potential of the contribution of this sector can be much more impactful if further exploring these partnerships.
- The project can generate meaningful impact on promoting gender when gender is built substantially, with a genuine intention in the project design and allocated an appropriate level of resources.

- The research-action approach of the project (joint research, profiling of youth, other research and analysis documents) provides a strong lesson that any interventions aiming at addressing a complex situation can hardly report on the change and impact it produces when deprived of an investment aimed at producing knowledge from its own intervention.
- The regional component provides a lesson that building a regional dynamic through exchanges produces much more knowledge, impactful advocacy offers much more than the sum of the national interventions taken separately.

**EQ 38.** WHAT ARE THE MAJOR LESSONS LEARNT (POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE) LEARNED THROUGH THE PROJECT? ARE THERE CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT COULD INCREASE THE SUCCESS OF FUTURE PROJECTS?

### Findings

The changes produced by the project invite to relate PVE to social inclusion efforts while distinguishing what is specific to PVE. To the difference of an inclusive society, PVE cannot be labelled as a concept, though the preventive approach promoted by UNDP is inspired by the principles of inclusion. PVE is calling for a closer interaction between the inclusion and enforcement dimensions of the phenomenon. Most of the project activities are actually relevant to social inclusion, more specifically to the socio-economic inclusion of the youth. Target-groups centred social inclusion policies and models are available, whether it is focused on migration, or other factors of exclusion of specific populations, exposing them to radical solutions in the absence of institutional or any other alternatives.

A question of importance to the sustainability of the Prevention of Violent Extremism is to determine the long-term objective of the preventive, inclusion-focused orientation of the project so it can be considered that the approach promoted by the project is sustainable. The results obtained by the project and the changes produced beyond the results seem to have convinced local and national governments in all 4 countries. The promotion of these achievements may provide an opportunity to lobby further the inclusive model standing behind the PVE project so as to also drive the policy level in support of this model.

The youth involved in the project has also expressed changes in their attitude and behaviour outside the context of the project. Small-businesses have continued to expand (before some suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic impact), generating more employment, virtual and physical civic initiatives have been taken, youth got organised formally and informally (with a very powerful indicator of change that can be identified through youth self-mobilisation to reaching to more vulnerable youth in their communities), the project has sparked interest among young adults outside pilot cities. This “bouncing” effect occurring outside of the project activities is crucial as it answers to original impact sought by the project: a more committed, energetic, participative youth, paving its own way. While this is monitored informally by local authorities, the project does not seem to have captured enough of these changes, while it does contain much substance to identify substantial indicators of change. This is leading to suggest the project to invest more time and resources into knowledge management to turn this information into knowledge to be used for the next phase (M&E, measuring and promoting impact).

Youth involvement has sparked a sense of commitment as many young individuals did volunteer in a number of civic activities (awareness campaign on issues of public and community interest). National strategies on PVE have integrated the youth engagement modality introduced by the project).

**EQ 39.** WHAT, IF ANY, SIGNIFICANT UNINTENDED IMPACTS/OUTCOMES (POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE) WERE THERE BEYOND THE ORIGINAL PROJECT PLANS?

### Findings

Even though, the impact of small-business and start-up grants ranges among the intended benefits, its success (even though it has partly been affected by COVID-19) can be considered as unintendedly positive because of the extent of its results. Among other indicators, the impact includes the following: The expansion business has further experienced, several months after its creation, the number of jobs created by the businesses, the stimulating effect of business success, motivating the youth and others to develop their own businesses. The role model played by young business owners as their inspired the local youth community and the influence of the positive example and leading voice of those entrepreneurs (through media coverage and the mentorship role they have fulfilled).

**EQ 40.** WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND WHAT MITIGATION MEASURES WERE TAKEN? DID MITIGATION MEASURES RESOLVE THE CHALLENGES?

### Findings

The participatory approach promoted by the project has made addressing challenges smooth as mitigations measures have been the results of consultation with the project partners. The evaluation has retained the following situations illustrating the project's adaptative response to some of the experienced challenges:

- Stakeholder engagement and buy-in: The open dialogue and consultative approach introduced by the project represented a substantial obstacle as it involved a cultural change, affecting deeply-rooted practices. Equally, a distrustful youth, both affected with life frustrations and feeling of marginalisation, was long to be convinced of the benefits of engaging into a dialogue with local authorities. This challenge had clearly been identified even prior to the project design, raising the interest and the buy-in of communities and stakeholder, has required perseverance from the UNDP project team. While it was rewarded with transforming institutions 'attitude in support of the dialogue
- COVID-19: Activities adjusted to the various preventive measures established by the governments. Trainings, monitoring, communications with partners switched to a remote mode (videoconferencing, online trainings).
- The most socio-economically marginalized categories of the targeted groups, including former-prisoners or returning labour migrants can be considered a category of its own as their integration has required further support, as compared to the local youth.

**EQ 41.** TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE PROGRESS HAVE CATALYTIC EFFECT ON NATIONAL ACTORS TO ENGAGE IN FURTHER PVE-RELEVANT ACTIVITIES AND DONOR SUPPORT?

### Findings

The various demonstrations of achievement by the youth, ranging from civic initiatives to the successful professional performance of youth employed in the public, private sector or business creation, has produced a deep impact from the community to the national level. The quality of the multi-stakeholder dialogue has positively impressed those involved in the process and who had been hard to convince initially.

The catalytic impact also comes from the secondary or indirect impact. Mediatized youth initiatives, demonstrating an unexpected sense of initiative and dynamic has spread interest and stimulated the youth community to the extent of a digital territory reaching region remote from the sites of intervention. The small businesses capable of thriving, generating employment, stimulating the local economy has seen the youth actively engaged informally conferred the role of ambassadors and inspiring models to the local youth community.

Requests for the project to provide similar assistance has come from the youth in numbers but also from local governments from regions outside the project coverage.



## 7. CONCLUSIONS

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The PVE project is considered across stakeholders and in the various countries of implementation, as one of the most convincing projects not only in terms of preventing (a hard-to-measure objective) violent extremism, but also for its acknowledged results in making local societies more inclusive of the youth.

The strongly positive opinions expressed by interviewed stakeholders is backed by the outstanding results achieved by the project. Thus, the concrete results combined with the elements of change provided during evaluation interviews lead to qualify the PVE project as successful. More description on the changes of stakeholder and beneficiary changes in their behaviors and attitudes would be beneficial to advocate the project offer an approach that can be replicated as similar needs of youth communities have been expressed in other areas of Central Asia.

The PVE project is activity-intensive and diverse. However, if the number of outputs and achievements is impressive, measuring the change realized against the Theory of Change is a challenge. First, the spectrum of intervention is wide (multi-country, multi-stakeholder); second, the thematic is complex is relatively new in Central Asia and the project is lacking a set of qualitative indicators which would help understanding the depth of change, as experienced by stakeholder category (changed attitudes and practices of local government, change in resilience of the youth, changed (enhanced capacity of NGOs) as well as the set-up of the “safety-net” preventing VE.

The broader economic inclusion component (professional skills, mentorship, employment, small business support) has been highly successful, not only exceeding its original target, but producing a strong, indirect, multiplier effect.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The strategic approach promoted by the project entails a transformative process which implies a commitment which is longer than a single project phase. The convincing results obtained to date confirms the PVE is a strongly appropriate investment for social cohesion and VE prevention. The worrying socio-economic damage of COVID-19 can potentially feed VE drivers, thus reinforcing the necessity to continue PVE efforts in the region.**

UNDP's strategic orientation on understanding and addressing root-causes of Violent Extremism rather than its consequences, building the resilience and developing the human potential of most exposed communities entails a long-term intervention. Indeed, empowering the youth, creating an environment offering alternatives to fragile perspectives, and embarking institutions to enable an inclusive ecosystem is synonym to an ambitious, long transformative process. The project has produced convincing results, a strong local dynamic with an active involvement of actors in the targeted locations, helped turn youth into local actors, and demonstrated success for its employment component. However, converting the project results into an institutionalized preventive and inclusive response requires a longer-term commitment and intervention, especially considering increased isolation of youth due to the COVID-19 and its damaging effect on the economy.

- 2. Scale up the project by expanding the project's geographic scope to new locations. The existing approach should be maintained with an emphasis on strengthening the outreach capacity by widening the range of local stakeholders and increasing their participation to youth community engagement.**

While answering the needs related to VE-drivers across Central Asia requires more than a project-level ambition. There is a need to strike a balance between pursuing efforts in the current project locations while including additional locations with high exposure of vulnerable youth to radicalization. Bridges could be established between current and possible/potential project locations where experiences could be transferred in the form of twinning between municipalities.

Based on interviewee's repeated advice to include stakeholders that are the closest in their interaction with communities exposed to VE drivers, the evaluation recommends to increase the reach out to those communities by adjusting the current project approach in two ways:

- Identify ways of involving further those local (grassroot, formal, informal) stakeholders enjoying trust and proximity to marginalized youth. The religious leaders, already involved in the current project could be further reviewed to be more actively engaged in the reach out.

- Broaden the beneficiary targeted population in order to include those with a strong potential leverage on the marginalized youth (family, household members, other community members). Also consider other population groups who can also be affected by VE drivers (including the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic).

### **3. Allocate financial and human resources to enhance an M&E capacity that will improve the monitoring and understanding on the complexity of change (e.g., by integrating qualitative indicators of change.)**

PVE is complex, involving a wide range of activities and dimensions and much of change in youth resilience is immaterial and expressed through attitudes and behaviors. There is a need for indicators to measure, understand and communicate on change. Enhance the capacity to capture the qualitative change achieved by the project by developing a set of KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, Practice) indicators. Indicators of change could be organized in sets to cover the various dimensions of change (e.g.: Youth participation to the life of the local communities; Outreach channels and mechanisms to youth potentially exposed to VE, Intensity of VE drivers (unemployment, unattended claims/expectation of the youth...). Track the initiatives taken by youth outside the project (network, community initiatives...) in order to measure the change outside the frame of the project.

The complexity of Violent Extremism and the density and diversity of the levels of intervention requires substantial work and an adequate investment in developing an M&E system that enable the monitoring of project results but that can also capture the changes induced by possible continuation of activities. The M&E should be realistic in its objective and implementation. The expected change as formulated in the project is too complex for its attribution to the project to be fully measured. However, a number of indicators of change must be identified so as to illustrate and promote the fact that foreseen changes are achieved. While it should be acknowledged that a project-level M&E tool is no exact science, indicators of change should be formulated so they can match the follow criteria: a. the related data is already available or relatively easy to produce and access (e.g. simple electronic survey that can be regularly conducted) so that M&E data collection remains a manageable task and its results are effectively used for monitoring purposes but also for reporting, promotion and advocacy purposes, b. Indicators related to the project activities (so that recorded changes can be at least partially attributed to the intervention), c. Indicators should capture the various dimensions of changes (through Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices or decisions made as a result of the project) and through different angles (the perspectives of beneficiaries and project stakeholders should be recorded). Adequate resources should be dedicated to developing the M&E framework and tools while project staff should receive a short training on the purpose and handling of the M&E tools. The development of the M&E should involve the consultation of the project team and selected stakeholders to the extent possible.

#### **4. Integrate a remote-control management approach into future PVE work.**

The project has demonstrated its capacity to react and rapidly adjust to the teleworking constraints due to the COVID-19 restrictive measures. While the project did adjust rapidly and efficiently to COVID-19 restrictions, the project management has to take responsive actions. Given the need to continue the PVE effort in the region, the Evaluation Consultant invites the PVE focal points in the UNDP Country Offices to consider integrating further the distancing constraints in its design. Communication technology has already been used by the Project since it is an obvious part of the solution, and which use can only be recommended in the future. However, since nothing can truly substitute direct human contact, as a key dimension to the impact of any social inclusion project; the evaluation is inviting PVE focal points to search alternatives for situation when technology is not an appropriate solution to youth and stakeholder involvement.

#### **5. Make a further use of the potential offered by the regional platform and dynamics created by the PVE project.**

The regional component has demonstrated the project capacity to create regional dynamics and synergy among stakeholders and, in turn, its contribution to national contexts. While the evaluation recognizes the high financial costs inherent to any physical (obviously less so in case of virtual) regional event, the success of national institutions gatherings in creating synergy should be inspiring similar initiatives with youth representatives. Youth have also been participating to regional events and the possibility of youth-dedicated regional activities should be considered. Such events involving the youth could boost regional networking and could also be used to build regional advocacy events which could be organized and presented by the Youth itself to national institutions. This would provide meaningful opportunity to promote youth leaders as role models back in their local communities.

#### **6. Scale-up the economic component of the project.**

The PVE project has shown the promising potential of empowering the youth in its professional engagement into employment scheme and business development. The direct results of the various employment creation activities have been very successful. But the indirect positive and stimulating impact, allowing to generate further employment or stimulate other individuals in engaging into private businesses is even more impressive. This success calls for more involvement of more actors and development of partnerships with local institutions and the private sector in taking lessons and modelling the economic inclusion of the youth. If some the small business activities have taken its toll from the pandemic, youth have also shown resilience, creative and self-confidence. In the economically depressed, COVID-affected context, this component is recommended to receive appropriate resources to develop concrete perspectives for the youth.

**7. Now that the project appears to have successfully shifted stakeholders ‘perspective from a repressive to a preventive approach’ and that an inclusive approach has produced widely acknowledged results, the evaluation suggests UNDP to take the inclusiveness advocacy effort to a higher level, especially with State Institutions and relating it to UNDP’s social inclusion agenda.**

The strong results and effects of the PVE intervention have been its best advocate in changing minds that the preventive approach to violent extremism was overall appropriate and efficient. This intervention has also raised the issue of inclusiveness in the debate among stakeholders, thus allowing to highlight the relation between Prevention and Inclusion. The evaluation understands that the solution to ending violent extremism may not be reduced to building socially inclusive societies, there is a need to promote further and mainstream inclusiveness across all sectors. Thus, the success of the project could be used for systematic advocacy efforts from UNDP and other international organisations, preferably jointly; on the State institutions of the countries in the region. This will allow to promote a more inclusive society as well as to raise additional funds and raise the advocacy effort in this direction vis-à-vis State institutions.

## 9. ANNEXES

## 9.1 LIST OF EVALUATION INTERVIEWEES

LIST OF EVALUATION INTERVIEWEES (excluding UNDP staff)				
#	NAME	Occupation	Implementing partner	Country
1	Gulnur Idigeyeva	NGO Daris	Partner within RPA	Kazakhstan
2	Assem Assankhanova	NGO Zaman Zhargysy	grant receiver	Kazakhstan
3	Mereke Batyrbekovna Myrzabekova	Head of the Department of Internal Policy	national partner	Kazakhstan
4	Daur Koishygariyevich Zhunisbekov	Deputy Mayor of Satpayev city	national partner	Kazakhstan
5	Zhanna Duisenbayevna Abdenova	Head of Youth Resource Center	national partner	Kazakhstan
6	Meruyert Kumashova	NGO ECOCENTER	Partner within RPA	Kazakhstan
7	Makhabbat Yespenova / Zhazira Stankulova	NGO KAMEDA	Partner within RPA	Kazakhstan
8	Irene Belmonte	Program Manager at Hedayah	Service Provider	Turkmenistan
9	Alena Eberman	IE Eberman	grant receiver	Kazakhstan
10	Nauryzbek Otarbek	Head of Youth Resource Center	national partner	Kazakhstan
11	Assemgul Kaumbayeva	Specialist of Youth Resource Center	mentor of the Apprenticeship Programme	Kazakhstan
12	Jadyra Balabasova	PF "Institute for youth development"	Partner within RPA	Kyrgyz Republic
13	Daniel Abdylidaev	"John Galt" Company	Service Provider	Kyrgyz Republic
14	Gulnaz Isaeva	State committee on religious affairs	NP	Kyrgyz Republic
15	Mirlan Parhanov	State youth agency	NP	Kyrgyz Republic
16	Jarkynai Derkembayeva	"Sary Kyz" start-up project	Youth beneficiary	Kyrgyz Republic
17	Ulan Usoun	Mentor, trainer	Service Provider	Kyrgyz Republic
18	Daniyar Emilov	Mentor, trainer	Service Provider	Kyrgyz Republic
19	Begaim Algojoeva	Balykchy city LSG	NP	Kyrgyz Republic
20	Ziyadullo Habibulaev	Isfana city LSG	NP	Kyrgyz Republic
21	Tohir Mirzaahmedov	Bazar-Korgon LSG	NP	Kyrgyz Republic
22	Khurshed Dodikhudoev	PVE Expert from Centre for Strategic Studies under the President of RT	NP	Tajikistan
23	Alisher Faromuz	Head of Vocational Training Institute	Service Provider	Tajikistan
24	Shahribonu Shonasimova	Country Manager, International Alert	RD participant	Tajikistan
25	Iqbol Haidarov	Head of PO Harakat	Grant recipient	Tajikistan
26	Rukhshona Shobudinova	Head of PO Mumtoz	Grant recipient	Tajikistan
27	Jahongir Rajabov	Executive director, Business School "55 GROUP"	Service Provider	Tajikistan
28	Khiraad Kargasov	Country Director, INGO SafeWorld	Service Provider	Tajikistan
29	Rustam Azizi	Deputy of Centre for Islamic Studies	RD participant	Tajikistan
30	Odilov Abdusattor	Head of Community Committee	Service Provider	Tajikistan
31	Haidarov Nasrullo	Former Head of Youth Committee of Shartuz distr	NP	Tajikistan
32	Batyr Gurbannazarov	Head of Employment Department, Ministry of Labor	national partner, central level	Turkmenistan
33	Mayagozel Babayeva	Deputy Head of Employment Department, Ministry of Labor	national partner, central level	Turkmenistan
34	Begmuhammet Meredov	Head of International Relations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	national partner, central level	Turkmenistan
35	Ahmet Gurbanyazov	Youth organization, Mary pilot city	national partner	Turkmenistan
36	Merdan Rejepnazarov	Employment Center, Dashoguz pilot city	national partner, pilot city	Turkmenistan
37	Muhammetaly Miraliyev	Employment Center, Turkmenbashi pilot city	national partner, pilot city	Turkmenistan
38	Begench Gurbanov	Youth organization, Tejen pilot city	national partner, pilot city	Turkmenistan
39	Yusup Babakulov	Youth organization, Turkmenabat pilot city	national partner, pilot city	Turkmenistan
40	Gulshat Annadurdyeva	Hakimlik, Turkmenbashi pilot city	national partner, pilot city	Turkmenistan

## LIST OF PVE STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED BY THE EVALUATION

#	NAME	Position
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>		
1	Konstantin Sokulskiy	Programme Specialist / Head of Governance Unit
2	Dana Oraz	Project Manager
<b>KYRGYZ REPUBLIC</b>		
1	Mukash Kaldarov	Peace adviser \ Project coordinator
2	Artur Bukalaev	Programme specialist
<b>TAJIKISTAN</b>		
1	Zarina Juraeva	Youth Engagement & Social Cohesion Officer
2	Alisher Karimov	Team Leader/Governance
3	Daler Shodiev	Project coordinator/Governance
4	Yusufjon Kholov	Programme Associate/Governance
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>		
1	Mehri Karakulova	PVE Project Coordinator
2	Akmyrat Danatarov	Governance Portfolio Manager
<b>UZBEKISTAN</b>		
1	Kamila Mukhamedkhanova	Cluster Leader on Good Governance, Policy and Communications
2	Azizkhon Bakhadirov	Programme Analyst on Rule of Law
3	Afzal Yodgorov	Task Manager, 'Youth for Social Harmony in the Fergana Valley'
<b>IRH</b>		
1	Susanna Dakash	Youth, Peace and Security Specialist
2	Doruk Ergun	Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Analyst



## 9.2 LIST OF REVIEWED DOCUMENTATION

LIST OF REVIEWED DOCUMENTATION	
Document Title	Author and date
Annual Progress Report	UNDP Kazakhstan, 2018
Annual Progress Report	UNDP Kazakhstan, 2019
Project Progress Report	UNDP Kazakhstan, 2020
Final Project Progress Report	UNDP Kazakhstan, 2020
Project field monitoring reports	UNDP Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, 2020
PVE Project Document	UNDP Kazakhstan, March 2018
Project Annual Workplans	UNDP Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, 2020
Socioeconomic vulnerabilities as a factor in long-term risk of radicalization: prevention potential of local communities and official assistance in selected Central Asian countries	UNDP, IOM, 2020
Development of Community and Family-based Integrated Social Services for the Most Vulnerable Children in Azerbaijan. Progress narrative report.	IOM, 2016
Frontlines: socioeconomic vulnerabilities as a factor in long-term risk of radicalization: prevention potential of local communities and official assistance in selected central Asian countries	UNDP, UNDP Global Report, May 2019
Violent extremism and insurgency in Uzbekistan: a risk assessment	Management Systems International (USAID), August 2013
A survey of young people in Central Asia, Final Report	PPMI, 03 July 2020
Causes and motives of radicalisation among Central Asian Labor Migrants in the Russian Federation, A country report for the Republic of Uzbekistan	Search for Common Ground, 2018
UNEG Standards: <a href="http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22">http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22</a>	UNEG

## 9.3 TERMS OF REFERENCES

### TERMS OF REFERENCES

<b>Location :</b>	Home-based
<b>Application Deadline :</b>	04-Aug-20 ( <b>Midnight New York, USA</b> )
<b>Type of Contract :</b>	Individual Contract
<b>Post Level :</b>	International Consultant
<b>Languages Required :</b>	English
<b>Duration of Initial Contract :</b>	35 working days
<b>Expected Duration of Assignment :</b>	August - October 2020

**UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.**

**UNDP does not tolerate sexual exploitation and abuse, any kind of harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination. All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks.**

#### Background

##### Important notice to the Applicants!

Only those applications/offers will be considered that have been submitted to the following e-mail address: [procurement.kz@undp.org](mailto:procurement.kz@undp.org) with the indication of **Ref.2020-103** in the subject line. The application deadline is **4 PM (Nur-Sultan time) 4 August 2020**. For detailed information on the position, required documents to be sent and evaluation procedure please refer to the [Terms of Reference](#).

##### Background:

The 'Strengthening Community Resilience and Regional Cooperation for Prevention of Violent Extremism in Central Asia' project (2018-2020), supported by the Government of Japan and implemented by UNDP, is a regional project that aims to contribute to resilience to violent extremism in vulnerable communities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan through improving the socio-economic inclusion and participation of young men and women in their societies. The project activities at the country level focus on a) promoting safe and positive engagement platforms for youth to foster a greater sense of belonging and peer-to-peer support, and b) utilizing youth engagement platforms and support structures to provide young people with group-based skills and entrepreneurship development services and schemes. The project also comprises a regional component, that includes Uzbekistan and is co-led by UNDP Kazakhstan and UNDP's Istanbul Regional Hub (IRH). The regional component is geared at fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration across the region's stakeholders at different levels in Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), by generating evidence base on PVE through research, and building networks among youth, regional institutions, civil society, governments, and the international community around PVE.

## Duties and Responsibilities

- To assess overall performance against the project objective and the outcomes as set out in project document and other related documents.
- To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, value for money and client satisfaction of the project considering the findings for these criteria.
- To prepare a methodology for evaluating project through engagement with project stakeholders. Conduct remote meetings (online or phone) and gather substantive feedback from project stakeholders (Government, UNDP, local and community-based organizations, young people and project beneficiaries), building on the criteria and questions listed above but not limited to them.
- To provide recommendations for project's next phase for the donor consideration.

In all above assessment points, gender equality, human rights and conflict sensitivity have to be reflected as crosscutting issues.

The questions listed above are not considered final and it is expected that the Evaluation Consultant will develop an Evaluation matrix, which will relate to the above questions (and refine them as needed), the areas they refer to, the criteria for evaluating them, the indicators and the means for verification as a tool for the Evaluation. Final Evaluation matrix will be approved in the Evaluation inception report.

The Evaluation Consultant is expected to work with UNDP offices involved in the project, key national stakeholders, key local leaders and focal points, implementing partners, young people and project beneficiaries.

**\*Scope of evaluation:** The Evaluation will primarily address the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the project results. Where discernible changes have occurred as a result of project interventions, the Evaluation should document evidence of this impact where it exists. The illustrative questions below examine the main planned areas of programmatic achievement as described in the Project Document, the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Global Performance Monitoring Framework. Questions are organized around each Evaluation criteria.

The evaluation will, to the greatest possible extent, be participatory, particularly with the involvement of young people as the main stakeholders of the project, but seek to be independent, credible and useful and adhere to the highest possible standards in Evaluation. It will be responsive to the needs and priorities of the region and serve as a mechanism for accountability and learning for UNDP. Moreover, the Evaluation will be consultative and engage the participation of a broad range of stakeholders. The Evaluation Consultant will be expected to work independently on the Evaluation although some organizational and technical support will be available from UNDP Country Offices and UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub.

For detailed SOW please refer to the TOR ([https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view\\_notice.cfm?notice\\_id=68039](https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=68039))

## Competencies

### Functional Competencies:

- Understand conflict sensitive and human rights-based approaches and gender mainstreaming in programming;
- Understand results-based management principles, logic modeling/logical framework analysis;
- Demonstrate ability to communicate with various partners including government, civil society, private sector, UN Agencies and other development donors;
- Excellent organizational and time management skills;
- Strong analytical and research skills and experience in undertaking of similar assignments;
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to work with people from different backgrounds to deliver quality products within a short timeframe;
- Excellent report writing skills as well as communication and interviewing skills;
- Be flexible and responsive to changes and demands;
- Be client oriented.

### Corporate Competencies:

- Sound knowledge of the UNDP programming principles and procedures; the UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework, norms and standards; UNDP Evaluation Policy; conflict sensitivity and human rights-based approach (HRBA);
- Demonstrate integrity by modeling the UNDP's values and ethical standards;
- Promote the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP;
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to work in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity;
- Fulfill all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

## Required Skills and Experience

### Education:

- At least MA in international affairs, political science, development studies, conflict resolution, economics, statistics, sociology, or a related social science.

### Experience:

- 5 or more years of relevant professional experience is required, including previous substantive research experience and involvement in monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, result-based management (evaluations in PVE, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and other relevant fields);
- Experience with quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis; participatory approaches;
- Prior monitoring and evaluation experience in Central Asia (especially Central Asian countries) is an asset;
- Knowledge of the social and political situation and regional development trends in Central Asian countries is an advantage.

**Language Requirements:**

- Proficiency in English language and proven report writing skills (in English) is required;
- Russian language is an asset.

***Recommended Presentation of Offer:***

The following documents only in PDF should be attached to the application (proposal) and sent by e-mail to the following address: [procurement.kz@undp.org](mailto:procurement.kz@undp.org) indicating **Ref.2020-103** in the e-mail subject no later than **16.00 (Nur-Sultan time zone) 4 August 2020:**

- Duly accomplished Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability and Financial Proposal that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs, as per UNDP template provided;
- Detailed personal CV, indicating all past experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number);
- Copies of higher education diplomas and other relevant documents;
- A list of provided services in the field of the evaluation, monitoring and social studies in public policy, development studies, sociology or a related social science for the last three years;
- Proposed methodology of final evaluation;
- Evaluation Budget.

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## 9.4 EVALUATION MATRIX

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	Evaluation Questions	Specific sub-questions	Indicators	Data sources Data collection tools Data Analysis Method
<b>RELEVANCE</b>  The extent to which the activities undertaken as part of the regional PVE project are suited to the project outcome, priorities of the UNDP, Government of Japan, Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and project beneficiaries. These include, but are not limited to.				
<b>EQ 1</b>	The degree to which the objectives are (and continue to be) relevant vis-à-vis the preventing violent extremism (PVE) process, i.e. whether they address the key drivers of Violent Extremism (VE) identified in the initial analysis of the Project Document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have VE key drivers changed since project began?</li> <li>- Has PVE process evolved since project began?</li> <li>- Extent to which the project has remained relevant (objectives, approach, modelling, activities adjusted) to any change?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Evidence of VE Key Drivers change</li> <li>- Evidence of PVE process evolution.</li> <li>- Evidence of project acknowledging and adjusting to changes</li> </ul>	<b><u>Data sources:</u></b>  Project documentation and written production, external relevant study & publications.  <b><u>Data collection tools:</u></b>

<b>EQ 2</b>	Whether important PVE gaps exist, or opportunities are being missed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have PVE gaps been identified during project assessment/design/implementation?</li> <li>- Opportunities identified? Missed?</li> <li>- Have all opportunities identified been addressed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identified gaps and opportunities</li> <li>- Responses to identified gaps and opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Document review, Remote interview, Beneficiary Survey.</p> <p><b>Data Analysis</b></p> <p><b>Method:</b></p> <p>Data source &amp; reliability verification, Beneficiary Survey Data Processing, Data comparison, triangulation &amp; analysis.</p>
<b>EQ 3</b>	Did the activities and strategies fit the objectives, i.e. is there internal coherence between what the programme is doing and what it is trying to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of clear, evidenced rationale of intervention from objective, to outcome and activity level?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear rational and causal links between goal, objectives, outcomes, outputs &amp; activities</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 4</b>	To what extent were the interventions relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries being assessed?</li> <li>- Availability of key relevant stakeholders consulted?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of assessment</li> <li>- Evidence of Needs clearly identified</li> <li>- Evidence of Stakeholder consultation</li> </ul>	



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of existing legal frameworks being reviewed?</li> <li>- Availability of needs-based intervention rationale?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of Legal framework analysis</li> <li>- Evidence of Needs-based strategic response</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 5</b>	To what extent have gender and human rights considerations been integrated into the programme design and implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification/assessment of gender and human rights issues?</li> <li>- Review of existing response mechanisms conducted?</li> <li>- Needs-based project response with tangible gender and HR objectives, results, indicators and activities specific to both issues?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specific HR and gender-related needs identified</li> <li>- Strategic response formulation</li> <li>- HR and gender-related strategy, objectives, results and activities formulated</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 6</b>	To what degree did the project consider the needs of youth, in their diversity, and take into account their views?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of needs of youth, their diversity, and views have been assessed, consulted?</li> <li>- Availability of assessment/consultation results being addressed and integrated into project response and activities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Youth needs assessed &amp; clearly identified.</li> <li>- Youth views recorded and utilised.</li> </ul>	

<b>EQ 7</b>	Does the project objective remain relevant throughout the implementation phase?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of major changes, events, facts in PVE in the area of intervention?</li> <li>- Availability of the project objective and activities adjusting to identified changes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changes impacting PVE identified.</li> <li>- Decisions to maintain relevance of objectives effectively made &amp; recorded.</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EFFECTIVENESS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The extent to which the objectives of the regional PVE project are achieved. These include, but are not limited to:</p>				
<b>EQ 8</b>	To assess the degree to which envisaged outputs and outcomes have been achieved and reported achievements, and whether the project has contributed to a reduction of the drivers of VE at the community level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How much of outputs and outcomes have been achieved and reported achievements (quantitatively and qualitatively)?</li> <li>- Availability of evidence of reduction of the drivers of VE at the community level?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reported results and achievements match initial plans</li> <li>- Records of drivers reduction as a evidenced results of the project intervention.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Data sources:</u></b></p> <p>Project documentation and written production, external relevant study &amp; publications.</p> <p><b><u>Data collection tools:</u></b></p> <p>Document review, Remote interview, Beneficiary Survey.</p>
<b>EQ 9</b>	Was the theory of change based on valid assumptions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and comparison of ToC and its causal links against verifiable,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of clear rationale of ToC</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Data Analysis Method:</u></b></p>

		<p>tangible realisation of intended effects and changes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of situation where changes/effects have been different from the ToC?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of results and relevant elements allowing to verify expected changes have occurred.</li> </ul>	<p>Data source &amp; reliability verification, Beneficiary Survey Data Processing, Data comparison ,triangulation &amp; analysis.</p>
<b>EQ 10</b>	To assess the effectiveness of coordination and co-implementation between Country Offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of coordination mechanisms established, including between COs?</li> <li>- <i>Availability of</i> coordination mechanisms implemented and results?</li> <li>- Identification of challenges arising from inefficient coordination, if any?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Records of coordination mechanisms and coordination meetings/exchanges</li> <li>- Records of Outcomes, decision resulting from coordination meetings</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 11</b>	To assess the degree of coordination and collaboration with the authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Availability of</i> coordination mechanisms with authorities established?</li> <li>- <i>Availability of coordination mechanisms with authorities</i> implemented and results?</li> <li>- <i>Availability of</i> smooth collaboration and outcomes (project agreements, MoUs, formal commitment and support) ?</li> <li>- Identification of challenges arising from inefficient coordination <i>and collaboration with the authorities</i>, if any?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Records of feedback from authorities during coordination, collaboration events.</li> <li>- Decisions, actions taken based on consultations/coordination with authorities</li> </ul>	

<b>EQ 12</b>	To assess the degree to which project implementation was flexible and adaptive to the context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of situation changes/events affecting PVE in the region?</li> <li>- Availability of PVE project management identifying and adjusting to changes through concrete decisions and actions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Records of changes/events affecting PVE in the region.</li> <li>- Records of decision-makings and actions taken, effects of those actions as a response to possible changes</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 13</b>	The extent to which the project mainstreamed a gender dimension and supported gender-responsive PVE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of a specific gender-strategy, gender-specific results &amp; indicators and approach in project design?</li> <li>- Availability of gender-specific results contributing to improving the gender situation and mainstreaming?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability and logic of specific gender-strategy, gender-specific results &amp; indicators and approach in project design.</li> <li>- Availability of results and effects on gender</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 14</b>	The extent to which the project complemented work with different entities and had a strategic coherence of approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of the project assessing on-going related actions and consulting relevant stakeholder at design stage and reflected in project strategy?</li> <li>- Availability of coordination/consultation with on-going actions. (any duplication of efforts or gaps identified) ?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Records of complementary projects identification</li> <li>- Project design takes into account any other complementary project and consulted stakeholder feedback.</li> <li>- Examples of such above instances</li> </ul>	

<b>EQ 15</b>	How have stakeholders have been involved in the programme's design and implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of stakeholder consultation and role identification at design stage?</li> <li>- Availability of consultation results effectively integrated in project design and implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder have been approached &amp; expressed substantiated, constructive views informing the project design.</li> <li>- Project design refers to consultation and explains how it is reflected in project document.</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 16</b>	What real difference have the activities made to the beneficiaries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expected changes to beneficiary lives as a direct result of project activities feature in project document?</li> <li>- Tangible (positive or negative) changes to beneficiary lives as a direct result of project activities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of expected changes to beneficiary lives as a direct result of project activities feature in project document.</li> <li>- Evidence of tangible (positive or negative) changes to beneficiary lives as a direct result of project activities.</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EFFICIENCY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The measure of how economically resources/inputs were used to achieve results. These include, but are not limited to:</p>				
				<b><u>Data sources:</u></b>

<b>EQ 17</b>	To assess whether the project has utilized Project funding as per the agreed work plan to achieve the projected targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funds utilised as per the plans?</li> <li>- Clear justification in case of funds allocation different from original plan/budget?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of funds utilised as per the plans.</li> <li>- Clear justification in case of funds allocation different from original plan/budget.</li> </ul>	<p>Project documentation and written production, external relevant study &amp; publications.</p> <p><b><u>Data collection tools:</u></b></p>
<b>EQ 18</b>	To analyze the role of the project Steering Committee (PSC) and whether this forum is optimally being used for decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability for clearly defined roles and responsibilities of PSC?</li> <li>- Availability of PSC decision-making is an informed and efficient process, contributing to timely implementation?</li> <li>- Identification of situations where PSC decision-making process and decisions have hindered project efficiency?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of clearly defined roles and responsibilities of PSC?</li> <li>- <i>Evidence of PSC</i> decision-making is an informed and efficient process, contributing to timely implementation?</li> <li>- <i>Evidence of situations</i> where PSC decision-making process and decisions have hindered project efficiency?</li> </ul>	<p>Document review, Remote interview, Beneficiary Survey.</p> <p><b><u>Data Analysis Method:</u></b></p> <p>Data source &amp; reliability verification, Beneficiary Survey Data Processing, Data comparison, triangulation &amp; analysis</p>
<b>EQ 19</b>	To assess the timeline and quality of the reporting followed by the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extent to which the project has been implemented as per the original plan?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of the project has been implemented as per the original plan?</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instances of delays and justifications.</li> <li>- Extent to which reporting has been timely, standardised and qualitative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of Instances of delays and justifications.</li> <li>- Evidence of reporting has been timely, standardised and qualitative</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 20</b>	To analyze the performance of the M&E mechanism of the project and the use of various M&E tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of a Results Framework based M&amp;E system.</li> <li>- Availability of appropriate M&amp;E tools</li> <li>- Evidence of M&amp;E data regularly collected and used in project management and decision-making/corrective measures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of a Results Framework based M&amp;E system.</li> <li>- Availability of appropriate M&amp;E tools</li> <li>- Evidence of M&amp;E data regularly collected and used in project management and decision-making/corrective measures.</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 21</b>	To assess the qualitative and quantitative aspects of management and other inputs (such as equipment, monitoring and review and other technical assistance and	- Availability of project (staff, finance, equipment, external communication...) management set-	- Evidence of project (staff, finance, equipment, external communication...) management set-up with clear	

	budgetary inputs) provided by the project vis-à-vis achievement of outputs and targets.	up with clear staff Terms of References and management lines.  - Availability of achievement progress monitoring and solution-oriented, supportive role in addressing tasks and challenges.	staff Terms of References and management lines.  - Evidence of achievement progress monitoring and solution-oriented, supportive role in addressing tasks and challenges	
<b>EQ 22</b>	To identify factors and constraints, which have affected project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues in addition to other external factors unforeseen during the project design.	- Identified factors and constraints, which have affected project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues in addition to other external factors unforeseen during the project design?  - Identified factors and constraints effectively addressed?	- Evidence of factors and constraints, which have affected project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues in addition to other external factors unforeseen during the project design.  - Evidence of Identified factors and constraints effectively addressed	
<b>EQ 23</b>	How efficient is the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the project (including between the implementing COs and with stakeholders? Have project funds	- Availability of a clear staffing, planning and coordination set-up and mechanisms.	- Evidence of a clear staffing, planning and coordination set-up and mechanisms.	



	and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any identified challenges arising from inefficient mechanism or poor performance.</li> <li>- Identified delays or issues in activities delivery and spending?</li> <li>- Availability of explanation for such issues, if any.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of identified challenges arising from inefficient mechanism or poor performance.</li> <li>- Evidence of Identified delays or issues in activities delivery and spending?</li> <li>- Evidence of explanation for such issues, if any.</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 24</b>	How efficient and successful are the project's implementation approach, including procurement and other activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of clear, logic project implementation mechanisms established at project design stage.</li> <li>- Identification of challenges arising from either poorly developed mechanisms, poor performance or external factors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of clear, logic project implementation mechanisms established at project design stage.</li> <li>- Evidence n of challenges arising from either poorly developed mechanisms, poor performance or external factors.</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 25</b>	How efficiently does the project use the Steering Committee?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of the extent to which the project is using the SC.</li> <li>- Identification of implementation challenges originating from incorrect use of SC.</li> </ul>		

<b>EQ 26</b>	How well does the project collect and use data to monitor results? How well does it communicate with stakeholders and project beneficiaries on its progress? Does it use data to inform its implementation strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of M&amp;E data being regularly collected.</li> <li>- Availability of M&amp;E data included in reports and communication (internal &amp; external).</li> <li>- Availability of use of M&amp;E data for management decision-making, strategy monitoring and lessons learned feeding future plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of M&amp;E data being regularly collected.</li> <li>- Evidence of M&amp;E data included in reports and communication (internal &amp; external).</li> <li>- Evidence of use of M&amp;E data for management decision-making, strategy monitoring and lessons learned feeding future plans.</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 27</b>	How well does the project communicate on its implementation and results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of a project communication plan</li> <li>- Extent to which communication plan is implemented (products, events...).</li> <li>- Availability of impact of communication products, events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of a project communication plan</li> <li>- Evidence of communication plan implemented (products, events...).</li> <li>- Evidence of impact of communication products, events</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 28</b>	Overall, does the project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of Value For Money defined in the context of PVE (long-term strategy, goals and changes sought).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of Value For Money defined in the context of PVE (long-term strategy, goals and changes sought).</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of alternatives offering better Value For Money while maintaining quality and sustainability of results.</li> <li>- Extent to which resources have been used as per the plan and producing expected results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of alternatives offering better Value For Money while maintaining quality and sustainability of results.</li> <li>- Evidence of resources that have been used as per the plan and producing expected results.</li> </ul>	
<b>EQ 29</b>	To assess whether M&E system of the project facilitated timely tracking of progress towards project objectives by collecting information on chosen indicators continually; and that annual projects reports are complete, accurate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is M&amp;E framework based on Results Framework and indicators?</li> <li>- Is data collected exhaustively, and reported and used regularly?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of M&amp;E framework based on Results Framework and indicators</li> <li>- Evidence of data collected exhaustively, and reported and used regularly</li> </ul>	