INDEED

Evidence-Based Model for Evaluation of Radicalisation Prevention and Mitigation

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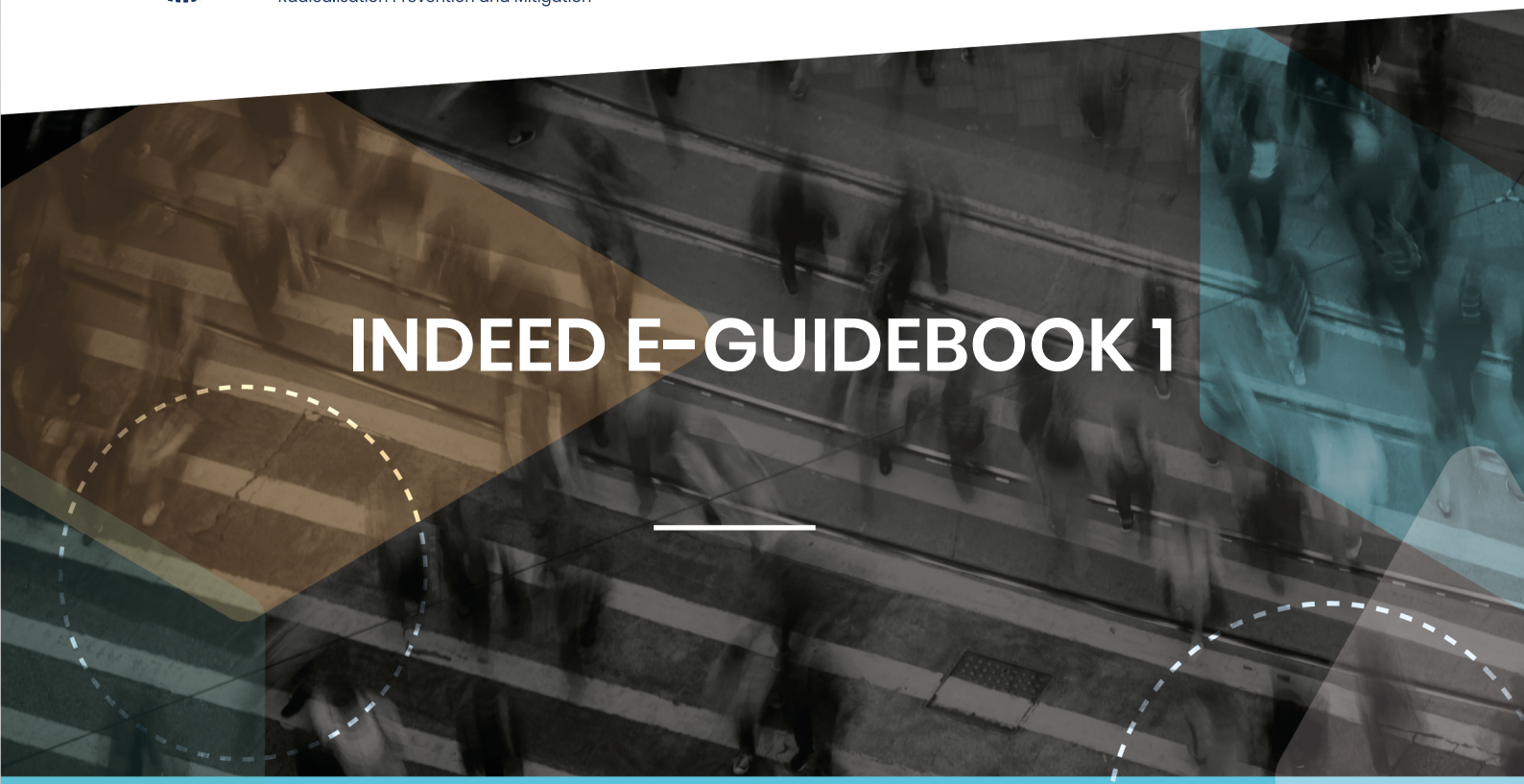

INDEED E-GUIDEBOOK 1

EVIDENCE-BASED EVALUATION OF PVE/CVE AND DE-RADICALISATION INITIATIVES

Principles, challenges and methods

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The INDEED e-guidebooks are designed to provide **a good understanding of the evidence-based approach to evaluation and how it can be applied in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism or supporting deradicalisation (PVE/CVE/Derad)**, and to provide guidance in designing such initiatives. The e-guidebooks are mainly written for the **practitioners and policymakers** working in this field. They may also be useful for professional evaluators and academics who participate in evaluating such initiatives and want to get more familiar with evidence-based evaluation or conducting evaluations specifically in the PVE/CVE/Derad field.

The INDEED e-guidebook 1 provides a concise introduction to the fundamentals of evaluation and what an evidence-based approach to evaluation means. It introduces different evaluation types, designs and methods, and provides guidance on when to do evaluations and who should do them. It includes a chapter on ethics and evaluation, as well as numerous examples of previous evaluations of PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives.

The INDEED e-guidebook 2 goes deeper into how to apply an evidence-based approach to evaluation. It provides guidance on how to build evaluation into the initiative design, as well as step-by-step instructions for designing and implementing an evidence-based evaluation. It also includes further information on how to ensure the evaluation is conducted ethically.

The main purpose of the INDEED e-guidebooks is to familiarise practitioners and policymakers with the principles and practices of evidence-based evaluation so that they can act as **well-informed stakeholders** in evaluations and know how to plan and implement PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives so that they can be effectively evaluated. Acting as an **evaluator requires more in-depth expertise** of evaluation practices, designs and methods than is included in the e-guidebooks. This should be taken into account when deciding who will act as an evaluator.

The e-guidebooks are **part of the INDEED toolkit for practitioners and policymakers developed by the EU-funded H2020 project INDEED** (2021–2024). The objective of the INDEED project was to strengthen the knowledge, capabilities and skills of PVE/CVE/Derad practitioners and policymakers in evidence-based evaluations and practice. This toolkit also includes an **INDEED evaluation tool**, which provides more detailed tips and recommendations. To access the INDEED toolkit, go to **www.indeedproject.eu.**

1. PVE/CVE/DERAD INITIATIVES

During the last two decades, many countries have developed **ways to prevent and counter radicalisation into violent extremism, and to encourage de-radicalisation** and leaving extremism behind. Such initiatives have been particularly common in Western European countries. This has led to the introduction of a large variety of policies, strategies and practices that are called **PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives** in this e-guidebook.

The PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives include a wide range of activities that differ greatly in many respects.

Several types of **actors** may be included in their implementation, including, for example, non-governmental organisations, front-line workers (educators, health professionals and social workers), security authorities (police officers and prison guards), religious communities, and researchers and other experts. It is common and recommended for such initiatives to involve some level of multi-agency cooperation.

Initiatives can take place in various **social settings,** such as schools, community and religious centres, youth centres, social services, sports clubs and prisons.

The **scope and duration** also vary. Some initiatives are small-scale while others are nation-wide. Some initiatives are long-term or even part of permanent daily activities, and others are designed to be short-term actions. Related to this, there are also differences in funding. It is common for initiatives to have relatively short-term project **funding** from the state, municipalities, charities or foundations, while some initiatives have managed to secure long-term funding. Initiatives are different in who the **instigator** is. Some are top-down initiatives developed by the state or municipality, while others are grassroots initiatives developed by an NGO or a community.

Initiatives differ in their **focus**. Some initiatives focus mostly on addressing the target group's extremist beliefs while others look instead at preventing or stopping the target group's participation in violent extremist actions. Many initiatives address both of these to some extent.

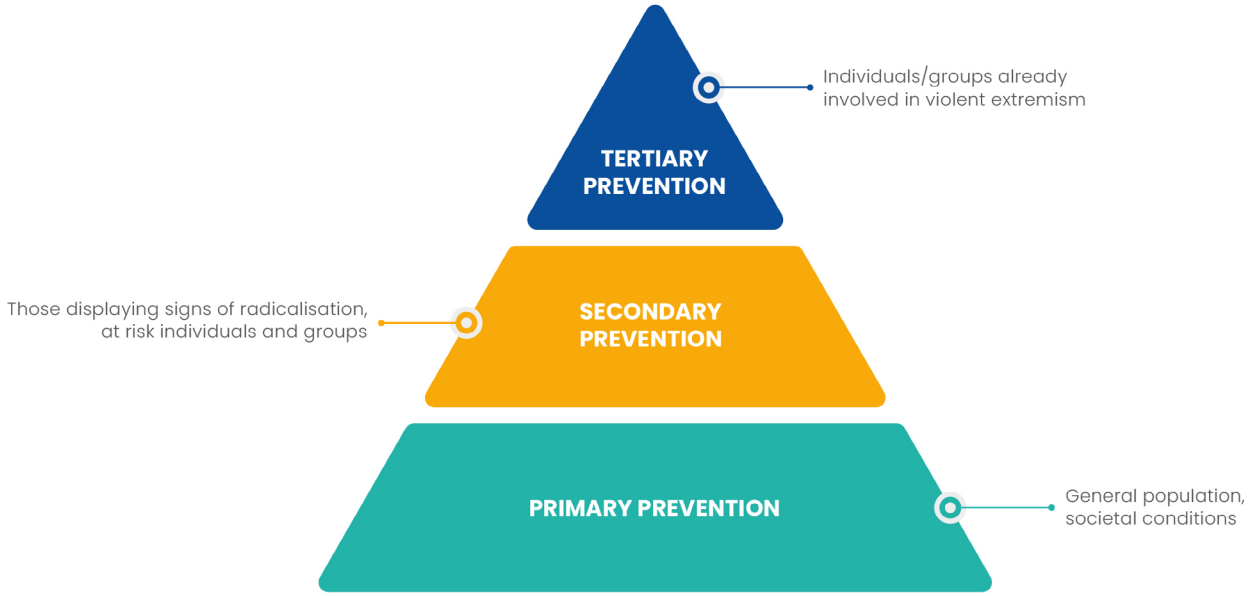
There are significant differences in **target groups** and the **stage of radicalisation** the initiatives focus on. It has become common to divide the PVE/CVE/Derad field into three areas, following the public health model:

- **Primary prevention** targets the whole society, and its main aim is to raise awareness about radicalisation and violent extremism and increase resilience against radicalisation. These initiatives typically take the form of programmes that promote participation, foster feelings of inclusion, or provide cultural and media

literacy education. They may also address social conditions and inequalities that are considered drivers of radicalisation.

- **Secondary prevention** deals with individuals or groups that already show signs of radicalisation or are identified as being at risk of radicalisation. Measures include mentoring, improving relations and communication between authorities and communities at risk, as well as building resilience within communities that are considered vulnerable.
- **Tertiary prevention** includes targeting individuals or groups who are already involved in violent extremism. The purpose is to encourage them to move away from extremist ideas and/or behaviour. The initiatives at this level are typically individual-mentoring programmes run in different contexts (prison, probation, community) and several types of actors (government, NGOs).

Figure 1: Areas of PVE/CVE/Derad activities and their target groups



Learn more

- Busher, J. Malkki, L. & Marsden, S. (eds.) (2023). *Routledge Handbook on Radicalisation and Countering Radicalisation. Routledge.*
- Koehler, D. (2017). *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism. Routledge.*
- Byrne-Diakun, R.M. (Ed.). (2016). *Countering Violent Extremism: Applying the Public Health Model.* Georgetown University, Center for Security Studies.
- *Introductory Guide: Countering Violent Extremism*. CREST: Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats..

2. WHAT IS EVIDENCE-BASED EVALUATION?

Evaluation, in general terms, means assessing the initiative's implementation or effects as systematically and impartially as possible. It is typically conducted to understand:

- How is the initiative's implementation going?
- What kind of outcomes has the initiative produced?
- Is the initiative based on sound assumptions?

Evaluation is not the same thing as monitoring, although these terms are sometimes used interchangeably. Nor is evaluation the same thing as risk assessment. Textbox 1 elaborates on how these and other related terms are understood in this e-guidebook and how they are different from evaluation.

1 EVALUATION AND OTHER RELATED TERMS

Evaluation means assessing the initiative as systematically and impartially as possible. It can analyse, for example, its outcomes, effectiveness, success of its implementation, or underlying assumptions.

Monitoring refers to the continuous and regular collection of data throughout the whole initiative. The purpose of monitoring is to document and follow up its progress. The data is typically collected by those who implement the initiative. Monitoring itself does not include evaluation, but data collected during monitoring can often be used as data for the evaluation.

Risk assessment is most often used in the PVE/CVE/Derad field to mean the assessment of an individual's risk of radicalisation. Several risk assessment tools are developed to help practitioners complete such assessments and thereby help to make decisions about the best course of action in a situation at hand.

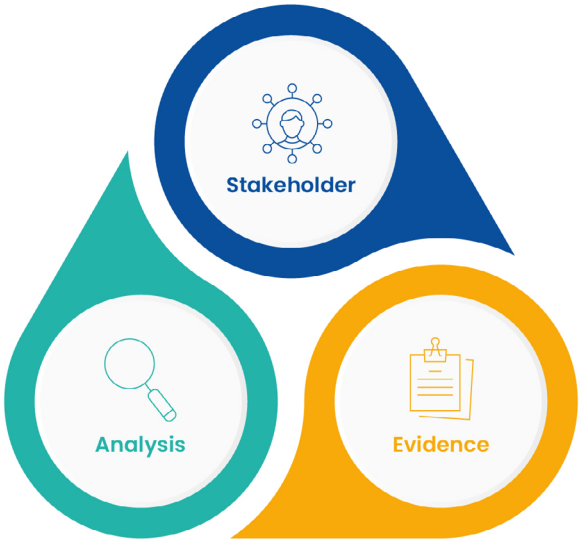
Impact assessment is a process that identifies and helps understand the possible consequences and impact of an initiative. It can be conducted to inform decision-makers about its possible negative impacts or reveal ways to enhance its positive impacts. Impact assessments are typically conducted when new laws or policies are planned or later reviewed, in order to gain more insight into what kind of impact they have (e.g. on gender issues, the environment or children).

This e-guidebook is based on the the principles of **evidence-based evaluation (EBE).**

2 INDEED DEFINITION OF EVIDENCE-BASED EVALUATION (EBE)

Evidence-based evaluation is "a process of planning and implementing evaluations which integrates available external evidence, professional expertise and stakeholder values, preferences and circumstances" (INDEED D1.2).

Evidence-based evaluation is essentially an approach to planning and conducting evaluations that builds on the principles of evidence-based practice:



Principles of evidence-based practice

Evidence – Evaluation is planned and conducted utilising knowledge about evaluation practices and methods. Furthermore, it involves analysing (and often also collecting) good-quality empirical data.

Stakeholders – Evaluation takes into account the context and key stakeholders' values, needs, preferences and circumstances. It aims at supporting learning and development of the evaluated initiative or, more generally, the PVE/CVE/Deradicalisation field.

(Professional) analysis – The evaluator has enough knowledge about both evidence-based evaluation practices and PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives to conduct a well-designed evaluation and form sound conclusions based on systematic analysis of the data. The evaluator is also well-placed to conduct the evaluation impartially and ethically.

Evidence-based evaluation is different from an opinion-based evaluation process, which is driven by convention or intuition rather than thorough consultation of relevant research on evaluation designs or systematic collection and analysis of data. It is also different from a rigid evaluation process which is planned and implemented without appropriate consideration of stakeholder preferences or the context and characteristics of the intervention under investigation. Based on these characterisations, the concept of EBE can be graphically situated in a matrix of four ideal types:

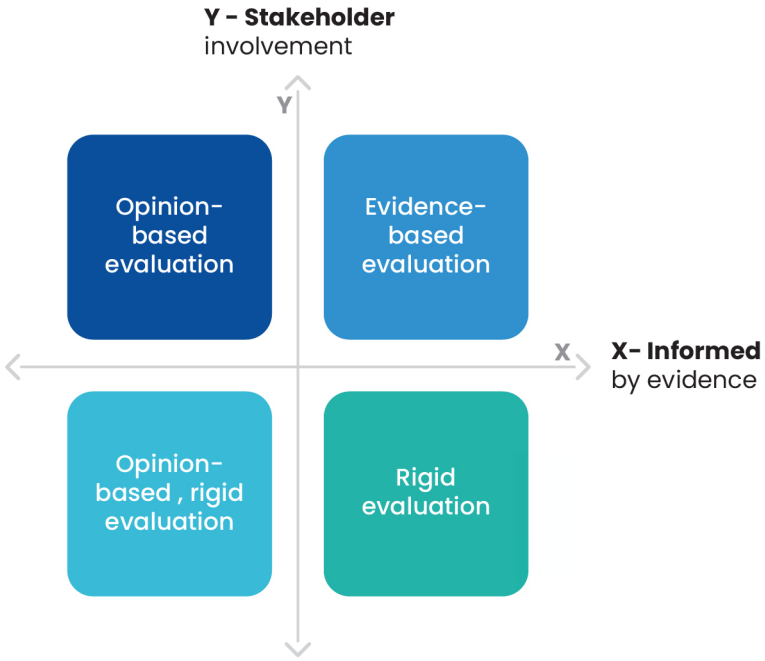


Figure 2: Four ideal types of evaluation

When the evaluation is designed and implemented using the evidence-based approach, it enhances its quality and utility. Active involvement of stakeholders helps to make sure that the evaluation is useful and relevant, as well as making it more likely that its results will be put into use. Careful attention to evidence means that it is grounded in the best possible knowledge and uses relevant, representative and reliable data. Finally, attention to professional expertise highlights the importance of ensuring that especially the evaluator but also the key stakeholders involved have a good understanding of evaluation practices, the initiative and its context.

Learn more

- INDEED deliverable D2.1 on the foundations of evidence-based practice and evidence-based evaluation.
- INDEED E-Guidebook 2 - How to design PVE/CVE and de-radicalisation initiatives and evaluations according to the principles of evidence-based practice

3. WHY EVALUATE?

Evaluations can have an important role in developing successful and effective initiatives. The evaluation of individual initiatives will also strengthen the foundations of the PVE/CVE/Derad field in general.

Evaluation supports learning and development

The most valuable role of evaluations is to help those involved in the initiative learn from their successes and failures. This leads to better informed decisions and eventually better performance. An evaluation is most useful when its results can be utilised by those implementing the initiative and not connected to funding decisions that unavoidably produce pressure to show success.

Evaluation demonstrates initiative's contribution

Evaluations can help practitioners explain to their cooperation partners and funders the key factors that make their work successful, and thereby specify what kind of resources and capacities are needed to continue its activities. They can also highlight an initiative's practices, values and specific contribution to the PVE/CVE/Derad field.

Evaluation increases transparency and public accountability

Many PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives are funded by a public body, charity or foundation. It is important to be able to demonstrate what the funding has been used for and ensure that it has been used effectively. Evaluations can provide that kind of information and thereby increase an initiative's transparency and public accountability. An evaluation does not produce public accountability only because it documents what is being achieved, but also because it provides information about how to improve the initiative. Thereby it can help the resources be put to even better use in the future.

Evaluation helps to build a stronger evidence base for PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives

An evidence-based evaluation is an indispensable part of building evidence-based practices – in other words, initiatives that are designed on the basis of the best available knowledge about radicalisation and how to prevent it. At the moment, scientific knowledge about radicalisation and its prevention is still limited. It is still unclear what works and under which conditions in the PVE/CVE/Derad field. Evaluations will help us learn more about this, especially when the results are made public, allowing researchers, policymakers and practitioners to utilise them in their work.

4. WHEN TO PLAN AND CONDUCT EVALUATIONS?

It is impossible to start thinking about conducting an evaluation too early. Ideally, the evaluation plan should be developed together with the initiative itself.

The best time to start thinking about when and how to evaluate the initiative is in its planning stage. Only in this way is it possible to design the data collection and monitoring practices so that all necessary evidence will be available when it is time for evaluation. It may be possible to do evaluations that were not originally planned, but there will exist many more limitations on exactly can be evaluated and how (see INDEED E-Guidebook 2 for more about this).

TIP:
Ideally, evaluations are planned as part of the initiative design.

Another reason to start thinking about the evaluation in the initiative's planning stage is that evaluations can be done all the way from the early phases of the initiative until its end.

During the planning stage of an initiative, it is possible to evaluate the initiative's implementation plan and underlying assumptions. This type of evaluation is called a formative evaluation. If the initiative is first tried out as a pilot, it is possible to evaluate the pilot. This kind of evaluation, which is carried out before the adoption of the final version of the initiative, is sometimes called an ex-ante evaluation.

During the implementation of the initiative, it is possible to evaluate how the implementation is proceeding and whether the initiative is working as intended. This type of evaluation is called a process evaluation. Evaluations can point towards weaknesses and how to improve the initiative. When the initiative's implementation has been going on for some time, it is also possible to take a first look at its short-term outcomes.

After the initiative has ended, an evaluation can be used to find out whether it met the desired objectives and how durable its impact has been in the long-term. This type of evaluation is called an outcome evaluation. It can be helpful for planning new initiatives, and it can make a significant contribution to the still rather limited knowledge about the effectiveness of PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives.

TIP:
In the INDEED E-Guidebook 2, you can find instructions on how to include an evaluation in the initiative's planning from the beginning.

5. WHO SHOULD EVALUATE?

Evaluations require the involvement of a number of relevant people and a definition of their roles. Every evaluation obviously needs to have an evaluator, but a number of stakeholders should also be actively involved.

An evidence-based approach to evaluation requires that the evaluator is chosen carefully. It is also important to decide and specify how exactly stakeholders will be involved, what their relationship with the evaluator will be and how they will all work together.

5.1 CHOOSING THE EVALUATOR

An evaluation can be conducted either by an external evaluator or an internal evaluator. An evaluator can be a single person but there can also be a team of evaluation experts.

An external evaluator is someone who does not have a role in or a significant existing relationship with the initiative. External evaluators are typically consultants or academic researchers.

An internal evaluator is someone who is currently part of the initiative or the organisation/ institution responsible for it.

Whether it is preferable to have an external or internal evaluator depends on the situation. Key issues that should be taken into consideration are the following:

Table 1: Factors to consider when choosing an evaluator

Expertise on evaluation	The evaluator should have a good command of evaluation designs and relevant methods. Previous experience in conducting evaluations is valuable.
Knowledge of PVE/CVE/Derad field	The evaluator should have a good understanding of the PVE/ CVE/Derad as a policy field and types of initiatives.
Knowledge of initiative and its context	The evaluator should be familiar with the context in which the initiative is implemented, as well as the initiative itself.
Impartiality and conflicts of interest	The evaluator should be able to analyse the initiative in an impartial way and thus not have any conflict of interest with the evaluation or the initiative.

Access to data	The evaluator should have access to (or be able to collect) all data needed for the evaluation.
Costs/resources and availability	There should be sufficient resources and time for the evaluator to complete the task.
Trust	The evaluator should be in a position to win the trust of those people whose cooperation is needed to conduct the evaluation.
Utilisation	The evaluator should have credibility and communication skills that pave the way towards the utilisation of results.

Traditionally, using an external evaluator has been presented as the preferred option, because it is believed to make the evaluation more impartial and unbiased. There are, however, also considerations that speak in favour of an internal evaluator. For example, an internal evaluator often knows the initiative and context better, may have better access to data and may be better able to build trust with key stakeholders. It is also believed that the evaluation results are more likely to be utilised if the evaluation is conducted by an internal evaluator.

As a general rule, an external evaluator is a preferred option if the objective is to evaluate an initiative's effectiveness (outcome evaluation) and/or if the results of the evaluation will have significant implications for the initiative's future. If the purpose of the evaluation is to understand how the initiative has been implemented (process evaluation) and/or it is done for learning purposes, an internal evaluation can also be an option.

5.2. INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS

An evidence-based evaluation requires the careful integration of stakeholder needs, values and circumstances at every stage of the evaluation process. By definition, it thus promotes a stakeholder-oriented approach to evaluation. Such an approach, in turn, can take different forms, including that of a collaborative, participatory or empowerment evaluation.

In a **collaborative evaluation**, the evaluator creates an ongoing collaboration with stakeholders throughout the evaluation process while remaining in charge of proceedings. Such a collaborative evaluation can help the evaluator to better understand and respond to the needs, values and circumstances of stakeholders at different stages of the evaluation process, including in the preparation, design, implementation and utilisation phases.

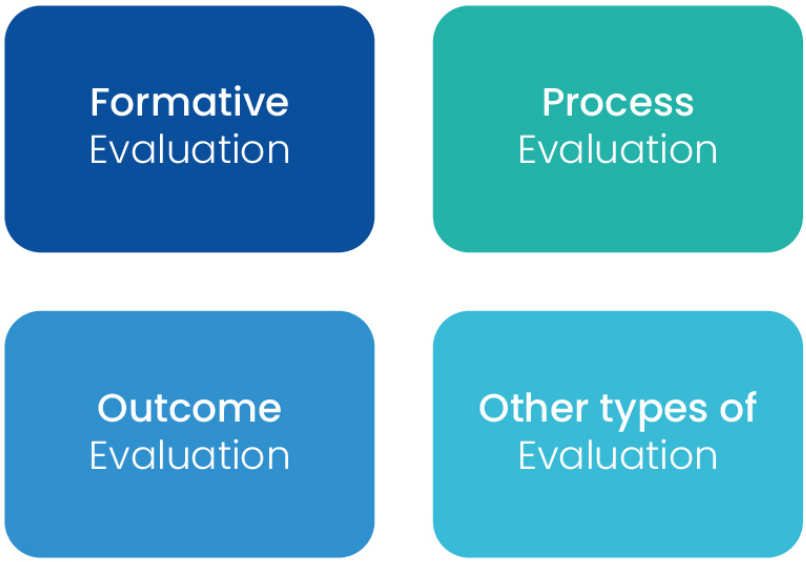
In a **participatory evaluation**, the evaluator and stakeholders jointly share control of the evaluation process. Such an approach can involve joint decision-making on the evaluation objectives, design and data collection processes, as well as the joint implementation and utilisation of an evaluation. This process allows for stakeholders

to not only voice their needs and values but also to actively integrate these in the evaluation process through co-design procedures.

In an **empowerment evaluation**, the evaluator treats stakeholders (e.g. the initiative's staff, participants) as being in control of the evaluation process while taking on the role of a coach or critical friend. In this type of evaluation, stakeholders are ultimately in charge of making critical decisions (for example, about the evaluation objectives, design and data collection). They also conduct and remain in control of the implementation and follow-up measures. An empowerment evaluation thus not only asks stakeholders to express and integrate their needs, values and circumstances, but to take full ownership and responsibility of the evaluation process.

Together, collaborative, participatory and empowerment evaluations reflect the varying forms that stakeholder involvement in an evaluation process can take. While the approaches notably differ in the role they allocate to stakeholders, they all can be used to strengthen the integration of stakeholder needs, values and circumstances at every stage of the evaluation process. Each of them, in this regard, promises to strengthen the evaluation's inclusivity, to generate trust between evaluator and stakeholders, and to improve organisational reflection and learning. If well implemented, they can all be suitable for the implementation of an evidence-based evaluation.

6. MAIN TYPES OF EVALUATION



There are countless types of evaluations that differ from each other in terms of objectives, methods, timing and scope. Below we will introduce the three main types of evaluation. All these types can be implemented by using the evidence-based approach to evaluation described in the INDEED e-guidebook 2 and using the INDEED evaluation tool.

6.1 FORMATIVE EVALUATION

The formative evaluation is typically conducted as part of the planning process before the implementation starts, but it can also be conducted for ongoing initiatives when they are readjusted. It is a way to evaluate the design or plan of the initiative.

The formative evaluation takes a systematic look at the (planned) initiative – what it aims to do, how its objectives are to be reached and what kinds of underlying assumptions it is based on. It can show whether the implementation plan of the initiative can be expected to provide the intended results and how the plan could be improved.

The formative evaluation can also take the form of a pilot implementation of the planned initiative, which will allow testing of the programmed task and activities and checking their correctness and effectiveness.

In terms of methods and data, scientific publications on radicalisation and de-radicalisation can be used to assess whether the initiative's assumptions are supported by existing evidence. Another common method is to conduct interviews and surveys among key stakeholders to collect their views on the initiative's plan. It can also involve collecting and analysing data about the initiative's context to see whether it meets the needs it is intended to meet.

Typical questions that formative evaluations can answer are:

- Is the initiative plan based on sound assumptions about radicalisation and how to prevent it?
- What do stakeholders consider important for the initiative?
- What types of activities should be implemented?
- Does the initiative plan meet the needs the initiative is intended to meet?
- Is the pilot implementation working as it should be?

3 EXAMPLE OF FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF "UNDERSTAND=RESPECT" PROGRAMME

Initiative: "UNDERSTAND=RESPECT" is an educational programme for preventing radicalisation leading to discrimination and hate speech, developed by Dr. Marzena Kordaczuk-Wąs and implemented by the Polish Platform for Homeland Security.

Objectives and target group: The initiative's object is to promote behaviour free from all forms of radicalism, discrimination and hate speech among students and teachers in secondary schools and parents and in the local community.

Activities: Educational activities (workshops, discussions, thematic days), life-skills training (psychological and social, coping with stress and aggression, building self-control) and free-time activities.

Evaluator: External evaluator (academic researcher)

Evaluation objective: Formative evaluation was conducted during and after the initiative's pilot implementation. The objective was to find out whether the initiative had been implemented properly and effectively. The evaluation also addressed the underlying assumptions and implementation plan.

Methods: Interviews with the implementing team of the programme and school representatives

Results: The initiative was generally found to be well planned and realistic. The evaluation produced some recommendations about how its content and organisation could be further improved.

For more information: Polish Platform for Homeland Security. Understand = Respect (in Polish and English)

6.2 PROCESS EVALUATION

The process evaluation looks at how the initiative is working in practice. It is usually conducted to see if the initiative is being implemented according to the original plan and to learn how it can be improved. It can focus on various aspects of the implementation, and it can produce a lot of useful information that can help in improving the initiative in the future.

To conduct a process evaluation, it is necessary to have data about the initiative's implementation plan and the actual implementation of the initiative. The initiative's implementation plan, together with discussions with key stakeholders, determines the criteria against which the implementation should be judged. The criteria may include, for example, the number of training courses or events that were organised, or the participation rate in the training courses or events. The criteria do not need to be measurable in numbers; they may also include, for example, the participants' satisfaction with and views about the programme, or the cooperation between various partners involved in the initiative's implementation.

Typical questions that process evaluations can answer are:

- How is the implementation of the initiative going?
- Is the initiative (or some of its activities) being implemented according to the plan?
- How well has the initiative reached its target group?
- How do participants experience the initiative?
- How do key stakeholders work together to achieve the objectives?
- How much are key stakeholders involved in the initiative?
- Have there been any obstacles when implementing the initiative?

4 PROCESS EVALUATION OF MULTI AGENCY WORKING (MAW) IN BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS, AND GERMANY

Initiative: Multi Agency Working (MAW) in Belgium, Netherlands and Germany. These multi-agency platforms have been established to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism.

Evaluator: External evaluator (academic researchers at the IRCP, Ghent University)

Evaluation objective: The evaluation took the form of a (realist) process evaluation with the goal of finding out "what works under what conditions". It analysed the implementation of the multi-agency approach and how the different agencies involved cooperate. This was done to identify areas of improvement and understand how the mechanism functions.

Data collection methods:
Systematic literature review – utilised to establish indicators for the evaluation
Fieldwork in one city per country, including participatory observation in MAW meetings, semi-structured interviews with different participants and focus groups to explore missing elements.

Data analysis methods: The qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews was analysed using a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) framework to identify the internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats of the MAW. The qualitative data from both the observations and the interviews was tested against the process indicators developed during the systematic literature review.

Results: The most important factor for a good multi-agency collaboration process was trust. In all the countries that were analysed, there were problems with professional secrecy and the secrecy of the investigation, as well as a shortage of human resources. The role of the coordinator of the MAW structure turned out to be very important. The pandemic, social changes and new forms of radicalisation were seen as an external threat. As part of the results and recommendation of the evaluation, an online self-evaluation tool for local practitioners was developed (https://emmascan.eu/).

For more information: Hardyns, W., Klima, N., & Pauwels, L. (eds.). (2022). Evaluation and mentoring of the multi-agency approach to violent radicalisation in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. Antwerpen: Maklu.

6.3 OUTCOME EVALUATION

The outcome evaluation measures the **effects** of the initiative. It is a common way to determine whether the initiative has met its objectives and produced an intended outcome. Like the process evaluation, there needs to be established criteria to measure whether the initiative has been effective or not. It is often also necessary to have information about the situation before the implementation of the initiative starts.

The outcome evaluation can be conducted in several ways, depending on its objectives. If the evaluation is concerned with how the participants experience the outcome of the initiative or how much change an initiative has caused, qualitative methods (e.g. interviews, surveys) are often the best choice. If the objective is to prove that the intended outcome is caused by the initiative, quantitative methods can be used to examine what kind of effects, and how large, the intervention has had, and which feature or dimension of the intervention seems to be the most beneficial. Depending on the method used, the level of evidence of the quantitative outcome evaluation varies (i.e. how reliable the conclusions are that can be made based on it). The strongest evidence is obtained with randomised controlled trials.

It is important to note that quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods complement each other. However, one cannot replace the other. Qualitative methods cannot draw causal conclusions about the effect of the intervention. On the other hand, quantitative methods generally do not allow for studying how individuals have experienced the intervention.

Typical questions that process evaluations can answer are:

- What kind of effects has the initiative had?
- Did the initiative achieve its objectives and outcomes?
- To what extent did the target group's experience change in their knowledge, skills, attitudes, behavior after participating in the initiative? How does this compare to the change observed among those who did not participate in the initiative?
- Were there any unintended effects on the target group or context?

5 OUTCOME EVALUATION OF AGGREDI IN HELSINKI, FINLAND

Initiative: Aggredi

Initiative's objectives and target group: Aggredi is an initiative run by an NGO (HelsinkiMissio) that aims at reducing recidivism among 18–49-year-old offenders convicted of street violence. It offers mentoring and practical help, with the aim of supporting reintegration to society.

Evaluator: Researchers at the National Research Institute of Legal Policy in Finland.

Evaluation objective: To find out whether the initiative had managed to reduce recidivism of its clients.

Method: A quantitative study that compared recidivism between 1) clients who completed the Aggredi programme, 2) clients who participated but quit, 3) offenders who had been offered participation but declined, and 4) a comparison group of similar offenders with no contact with Aggredi.

Results: The evaluation showed much lower recidivism among those who completed the programme, compared to those who quit. It also showed that the longer one participated in the programme, the lower the level of recidivism. Methodological difficulties made it difficult to conclusively prove that the observed lower level of recidivism was due to programme participation.

For more information: Evaluation report of Aggredi Programme (in Finnish).

6.4 OTHER EVALUATION TYPES

Besides the aforementioned three general evaluation types, many more specific evaluation types are often mentioned. Below are some examples:

Economic evaluation

The economic evaluation is useful for examining the relationship between the **costs** and the **effectiveness** of the initiative. For example, a very effective initiative might be very costly and therefore impractical to implement, or an initiative may have low cost but ineffective.

This form of evaluation is mostly used by funders to see what financial value the initiative has and for policymakers to identify and compare the costs of different initiatives. Also, the administrators and implementers of the initiative can modify the intervention if it is generating too many expenses.

Typical questions that economic evaluations can answer are:

- What are the resources used for the initiative?
- How are the resources being used?
- How are costs turned into outcomes?

Realist evaluation

The realist evaluation is a type of evaluation that focuses on the "how" and "why" of initiative outcomes by identifying the **underlying mechanisms that cause initiatives to produce certain outcomes**. It is particularly useful for understanding how an initiative works in different contexts and under what conditions, as it seeks to explain why an initiative works for some but not for others.

Typical questions that realist evaluations can answer are:

- What are the contextual factors that influence the initiative's effectiveness?
- What are the initiative strategies that are the most effective?
- What activities have the most impact?
- What factors make the initiative successful in certain contexts and not in others?

Utilisation evaluation

The utilisation-focused evaluation is based on the idea that the evaluation **results need to be useful for its primary intended users** and the findings should be utilised. For this reason, this type of evaluation should be designed so that the findings are utilised, and engagement of users of the evaluation is required from the planning stage of the evaluation.

The utilisation evaluation can be used in combination with the previously described formative, process and outcome evaluations and different methods depending on the needs of the intended users. The method will depend on the data that is needed for responding to the key evaluation questions and the most appropriate method to deliver these findings.

Goals-based evaluation

The goals-based evaluation measures if the initiative is progressing **towards a set of targets** that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely). This evaluation is used for funders or implementers of the initiative to show that the initiative is moving towards the goals that were agreed upon at the planning stage of the initiative. The set goals are not questioned.

Typical questions that goal-based evaluations can answer are:

- Has the initiative achieved its targets and goals?
- Were the goals achieved as a result of the initiative or because of other external factors?

Goals-free evaluation

The goals-free evaluation examines the results of the initiative without focusing on any single goal. The evaluator does not even know the goals and objectives of the initiative. The evaluation analyses the outcomes and effects of the initiative without being directed by any specific pre-determined focus. In this way, the evaluator is neither biased nor affected by any expectations. The evaluator needs to be external and not familiar with the organisation or the initiative.

The goals-free evaluation looks at the unintended results and changes caused by the initiative, and it can identify the positive and negative side-effects. It is used when the initiative requires working in a complex environment and the goals are unclear.

Typical questions that goals-free evaluations can answer are:

- What outcomes has the initiative produced?
- Can the outcomes be attributed to the initiative?
- Are the effects positive or negative?

6.5. COMBINING TYPES OF EVALUATION

It is possible to combine different types of evaluation in a single evaluation. It requires more resources, but it can also produce more useful and richer results. It is rather common to combine outcome and process evaluation, and this may be helpful especially when looking for an explanation for why the initiative did or did not achieve the desired effect. A combination of process and outcome evaluation may help in identifying, for example, to what extent the failure to reach the desired outcome was because of poor implementation or weaknesses in its design.

Learn more

More information about formative, process and outcome evaluation:

- Evaluation toolbox. Types of evaluation. Types of evaluation
- BetterEvaluation. What is evaluation?
- James Bell Associates. (2018). *Formative evaluation toolkit: A step-by-step guide and resources for evaluating program implementation and early outcomes.* Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Thompson, S. & Leroux, E. (2022). Lessons learned from dual site formative evaluations of Countering violent extremism (CVE) programming coiled by Canadian police. Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism, 18(1).

For more information about other types of evaluation:

- MEASURE Evaluation: Economic Evaluation
- WHO: Economic Evaluations
  https://www.unodc.org/docs/treatment/economic_evaluation.pdf
- Realist evaluation | BetterEvaluation
- Utilisation-focused evaluation | BetterEvaluation
- Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation* (4th. Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Youker, B. W., & Ingraham, A. (2014). Goal-free evaluation: *An orientation for foundations' evaluations. The Foundation Review*, 5(4).

7. EVALUATION DESIGNS AND METHODS

Evaluations involve making multiple decisions and choices. One key decision in doing an evaluation is to choose the suitable evaluation design and methods. The evaluation type gives direction to the evaluation, but it does not yet define how the evaluation will be conducted. The evaluation design sets the overall structure and scope of the evaluation. Evaluation methods supplement it by defining how the data will be collected and analysed (see Table 1).

Table 1: Key decisions in evaluation planning

Evaluation type	
Chosen based on the objectives of the evaluation Formative, process, outcome, etc.	
Evaluation design	
Sets the scope and structure of the evaluation	
Methods of data collection	**Methods of data analysis**
What kind of data will be used and how it will be collected	How the collected data is analysed to develop conclusions

Which evaluation design and methods are the most suitable depends on what the objectives, scope and resources available for the evaluation are. This chapter provides a brief overview of some common evaluation designs and methods for data collection and analysis.

7.1 EVALUATION DESIGNS

The evaluation design clarifies the **basic structure of the evaluation.** It defines, for example, whether the evaluation will focus on analysing the situation at one point in time or involve a comparison over different time periods. Another key decision is whether the evaluation will focus only on the initiative itself or whether comparison groups will be used.

Some evaluation designs are rather easy to implement while others require more professional expertise and in-depth knowledge of scientific methods. This section introduces some of the most-used evaluation designs, from less demanding to more demanding ones.

Case study design

An evaluation using a case study design collects **in-depth information on a small number of cases**, for example, a few participants of an initiative. They can provide detailed and rich knowledge about the workings and (unintended) consequences of an initiative. It is important to recognise that case studies also have some notable limitations. **Findings generated through a case study are not usually representative and generalisable.** It is seldom possible to know whether the experiences of a small number of participants interviewed for the evaluation reflect the experiences of initiatives' participants in general.

The case study design is **particularly useful when access to data is limited**. Sometimes case studies can be the only available evaluation design. Case studies are also very useful for formulating hypotheses and evaluation questions to later be studied with more complex evaluation designs. By offering deeper insights into the workings of the initiative, they can also be a good addition to evaluations that otherwise use quantitative methods and numerical indicators.

6 EXAMPLE OF CASE STUDY DESIGN

Cherney and Belton (2020) opted for a case-study design to study the social reintegration programme (PRISM). They focused on only three clients, for whom sufficient data was available to study progression over time.

The evaluation assessed the impact of PRISM by collecting information about the individuals' views at different time points. The necessary information was collected through several data collection methods, including interviews with the PRISM staff and individuals themselves, review of progress reports completed by PRISM psychologists, and client case notes compiled by the PRISM staff. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings showed where progress had been made by each client and where improvements needed to occur.

For more information: Cherney, A., & Belton, E. (2020). Assessing intervention outcomes targeting radicalised offenders: Testing the pro integration model of extremist disengagement as an evaluation tool. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 13(3), 193–211.

Cross-sectional designs

An evaluation using a cross-sectional design collects data from as many people as possible (for example, people implementing or participating in an initiative) at one particular point in time and typically using a survey. Using such a design allows collection of data from a large pool of subjects and the comparison of differences between groups. For example, it is possible to analyse whether the individuals who participated in the initiative differ from the other participants in the study with regard to some aspect related to the initiative's objectives (e.g. attitudes or behaviour).

Therefore, a cross-sectional design can **create a useful "snapshot" of the initiative's operation, reception or potential effects.** It is particularly suitable for process evaluations. When it comes to outcome evaluations, it is not an ideal option. This is because the short time frame makes it challenging to evaluate effects, and the lack

of a control group places limitations on an evaluation's ability to establish a causal relationship between an initiative and its effects. In addition, the differences between those exposed to the initiative and other participants in the study may also be due to factors other than the initiative and its effects (i.e. selection bias). The individuals participating in the initiative probably differ from others in many ways, and this may be impossible to take into account in the research.

7 EXAMPLE OF CROSS-SECTIONAL DESIGN

Dunn et al. evaluated an Australian NSW Police Force's Counter Radicalisation Strategy, which included a community engagement initiative with Muslim communities in Sydney. The evaluators were academic researchers who worked together with internal staff of the NSW Police. The initiative was evaluated by analysing the data of a one-time survey conducted among members of communities targeted by the initiative. Through the survey, data was collected about Sydney Muslims' awareness of the NSW Police's community engagement initiative and their exposure to the initiative, as well as trust, cooperation and perceptions of the NSW Police.

The study showed that the initiative managed to establish direct contact with the community, lasting relations and strong community awareness. The respondents recommended increasing contact, improving visibility and strengthening partnerships.

For more information: Dunn, K. M., Atie, R., Kennedy, M., Ali, J. A., O'Reilly, J., & Rogerson, L. (2016). Can you use community policing for counter terrorism? Evidence from NSW, Australia. Police Practice and Research, 17(3), 196–211.

Longitudinal design

The longitudinal design is typically used to **evaluate the effects of an initiative over time.** In the most common type of a longitudinal study, the evaluator collects data from participants at two or multiple points in time before and after the start of an initiative. The adoption of such a longitudinal design can be a powerful tool for evaluating the short-term and long-term effects of an initiative, as well as its proper functioning. Because it requires data collected at different points in time, its completion requires a longer time frame. However, no causal conclusions about the effectiveness of the initiative can be made on the basis of such longitudinal designs. The key limitation relates to the lack of a counterfactual dimension (the inability to know what would have happened if the individual had not participated in the initiative).

TIP:
Ideally, the evaluation using a longitudinal design is planned together with the initiative itself. This ensures that the required data will be collected at the correct time and the initiative's monitoring practices support evaluation.

8 EXAMPLE OF LONGITUDINAL DESIGN

Academic researchers Feddes, Mann and Doosje used a longitudinal design to evaluate a Dutch resilience-training programme. A total of 46 young Muslims with a migrant background participated in the training. For the evaluation, data were collected from programme participants through a questionnaire at four points in time: 1) before the start of the training, 2) after completion of the first module, 3) immediately after the completion of the training and 4) three months after the training.

The results of the evaluation show that the training had a positive effect on the participants, increasing their self-esteem, empathy and ability to anticipate the behaviour and reactions of other people. Also, the participants reported lower violent intentions and attitudes towards ideology-based violence. However, the results showed that the participants showed higher levels of narcissism. Overall, the results showed that empowering participants and especially enhancing their empathy make for successful resilience training.

For more information: Feddes, A. R., Mann, L., & Doosje, B. (2015). Increasing self-esteem and empathy to prevent violent radicalization: a longitudinal quantitative evaluation of a resilience training focused on adolescents with a dual identity. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 45(7), 400–411.

(Quasi) experimental designs

An evaluation using a (quasi)experimental design **compares a group of people (or schools, prisons, cities, etc.) to which an initiative has been applied to a control group to which that initiative was not applied**. The use of a control group makes it possible to analyse whether the observed change in the participants is really due to the initiative and not some other factors.

A control group can be created in different ways. In an experimental study (also called **randomised controlled trial**, RCT), participants are randomly allocated to a treatment and control group. In the field of PVE/CVE, such random allocation is difficult for both practical and ethical reasons. From the point of view of causal inferences, randomized experiments provide the strongest evidence of the initiative's effectiveness.

9 EXAMPLE OF A RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL

A randomised controlled trial was used in an evaluation of a Danish government project to counter extremist narratives among youths. The evaluation was conducted by academic researchers Parker and Lindekilde. They created a survey experiment that used control and treatment groups. The control group had no exposure to the project and the treatment group had exposure to the project. Participants in the control group answered a survey before attending a workshop with former extremists, while the participants in the treatment group answered the questions right after attending the same workshop. To evaluate how effective the initiative was in terms of reducing support of political violence, the evaluators asked indirect questions about political violence.

For more information: Parker, D., & Lindekilde, L. (2020). Preventing Extremism with Extremists: A Double-Edged Sword? An Analysis of the Impact of Using Former Extremists in Danish Schools. Education Sciences, 10(4).

Another alternative is a **quasi-experimental design** in which the control group is created by other means than random allocation. For example, an evaluator may create a control group by comparing a population within a specific setting (a school, town, prison) to which an initiative has been applied, to a population within a comparable setting to which the initiative was not applied (e.g. a nearby school, town or prison with similar characteristics).

10 EXAMPLE OF A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The evaluation of the Aggredi programme was conducted to find out whether the initiative had managed to reduce recidivism of its clients. The main goal of using a quasi-experimental design was to determine whether the initiative had managed to reduce recidivism by estimating what would have happened to the people who participated in the treatment if they had not belonged to the Aggredi programme.

For this purpose, a quantitative study that compared recidivism between three treatment groups and a control group was conducted. The treatment groups were: 1) clients who completed the Aggredi programme, 2) clients who participated but quit, and 3) offenders who had been offered participation. For all three groups there was a comparison group of similar offenders with no contact to Aggredi.

The basic idea of creating a comparison group to gauge the recidivism of the treatment group against the recidivism of the comparison group, which consisted of individuals who were similar to Aggredi participants in terms of their age, gender and criminal background. The comparison group was formed based on data from the Research Register of Crimes and Sanctions of the Legal Policy Research Institute.

For more information: Evaluation report of Aggredi Programme (in Finnish).

7.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Evaluation designs generally do not prescribe particular data collection methods and can be combined with a range of methods. This section goes through some key data collection methods which can be used in evaluations.

Systematic review of existing documentation

A good starting point for data collection is to review **what kind of data is already available about the initiative**. Relevant existing data include the initiative's implementation plans, progress reports and any documents that explain its objectives and theory of change. They may also include project monitoring data, such as records of activities and participants.

Existing documents are helpful for understanding the initiative's objectives and plans. Monitoring data can be a great source for longitudinal studies, in which it is important to have data from different points in time to observe change diachronically. Ideally, the initiative's monitoring practices are designed from the beginning to produce the necessary data for the evaluation.

Interviews

Interviews are a commonly used data collection method in the evaluation of PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives. They are particularly helpful for gaining **in-depth information and insights** into the implementation of the initiative. They are often used also for **assessing specific effects** of the initiative (such as effects on the views and attitudes of participants).

Interviews can be conducted in different ways. They can be structured, which means that all respondents answer the same questions. Another alternative is a semi-structured interview, where respondents are asked about the same topics but the order of questions may change and the interviewer can ask follow-up questions. Finally, interviews can be unstructured and take the form of a free-flowing conversation.

Each type of interview has its own advantages and disadvantages. Structured interviews are at their best when it is important to generate easily comparable answers. If it is important to form a deep understanding of an interviewee's perceptions, it is usually better to use a semi-structured or unstructured interviews, because they give more space for the interviewee to explain their views in their own terms.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are discussions with a group of (typically five to ten) people about a chosen topic. They can serve as an **alternative to interviews or complement them**. Focus group participants can represent a specific group of people (such as participants in an initiative) or consist of a diverse set of stakeholders (like practitioners who implement an initiative at different levels).

Focus groups can be a cost-effective and time-efficient alternative to individual in-depth interviews. They are also a good way to tease out similarities and differences in experiences of an initiative's implementation and effects.

Surveys

A survey is another alternative for collecting information from multiple respondents. In a survey, a number of people are asked to complete a standardised questionnaire.

Surveys offer a **resource-efficient way of gathering data from a large group of people within a short time span**, in order to assess, for instance, the impact of an initiative on participants. The survey questionnaire can be filled in independently or as a guided activity in an in-person or online setting.

While surveys are an efficient way to gather data, they also have notable **limitations**. A very common challenge is a low response rate (only a limited number of respondents complete the questionnaire). Also, the usefulness of the survey highly depends on how well the questions are constructed. It is important that questions are unambiguous and easy for respondents to understand. It is highly recommended to invest considerably in developing the questionnaire and to test it before it is put into use.

Finally, what is gained in efficiency and the number of respondents is lost in detail and depth. Data collected through a questionnaire is often rather limited and superficial, so if it is important to gather in-depth knowledge, interviews or focus groups are usually a better alternative.

Participant and non-participant observation

Participant observation refers to a data collection process in which the evaluator directly engages with the initiative and takes part in its daily activities. Non-participant observation involves observing the activities of the initiative without actively taking part in them.

Participant and non-participant observation **enables the evaluator to experience the implementation of the initiative first-hand**. They allow for creation of a detailed understanding of the day-to-day operations of an initiative, including its challenges and (unintended) consequences. They can be especially useful when used in combination with other data collection methods, and they can provide a basis for the informed preparation of in-depth interviews or survey questionnaires.

11 EXAMPLE: Data collection methods used in the evaluation of the Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE) II, 2017-2020

The STRIVE II initiative, implemented by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), aims at reducing recruitment and support for violent extremist groups and overall radicalisation in hotspots in Kenya. The initiative focuses on tackling structural factors, group-based dynamics, and individual factors that create the conditions for and contribute to radicalisation and recruitment.

The evaluation was commissioned by RUSI and carried out by external evaluators who were academic researchers. The evaluation combined an outcome evaluation of the initiative's impact up until that time and a formative evaluation to assess its future actions.

Several data collection methods were used in the evaluation:
Existing documents – 40 background documents such as management reports, policy documents, published research and programme guidelines, monitoring and evaluation data, evaluation and monitoring guidelines, as well as documents outlining the theory of change of the initiative (how it was supposed to produce the intended outcomes).

Interviews and focus groups – more than 50 semi-structured interviews and five focus groups with the initiative's staff, participants and representatives of its funders and partners.

Non-participant observation – observation of different activities of the initiative, including training sessions, internal meetings and public events.

For more information: Fisher, T., Range, D., & Cuddihy, J. (2020). *Evaluation of ' Violent Extremism Strengthening Resilience (STRIVE II) in Kenya: Final report.*

(Academic) literature

Another important data source for evaluation is the existing (academic) literature, which is almost always useful for identifying evaluations of similar initiatives and to identify suitable analytical methods and indicators. It is indispensable when the objective is to evaluate to what extent the initiative's theory of change and working methods are consistent with the existing scientific knowledge. This is a common objective in formative evaluations.

12 EXAMPLE OF USING ACADEMIC LITERATURE

The Flemish action plan for prevention of violent radicalisation and polarisation was evaluated by the Flemish Peace Institute. The evaluation analysed the action plan in general, with a specific focus on several project funded through the action plan. The Flemish Peace Institute conducted an in-depth analysis of concrete action areas within the action plan. In order to evaluate whether the objectives and policy choices in the action plan were adequately formulated, academic literature on the measures to prevent (violent) radicalisation was reviewed and contrasted with the action plan.

For more information: Hardyns, W., Pauwels, L. and Thys, J. (2020) Een transversale programmascan van het Vlaamseactieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering. In Cops, D., Pauwels, L. and Van Alstein, M. (eds) Gewelddadige radicalisering & polarisering: Beleid & preventive in Vlaanderen: Evaluatie en uitdagingen.

Mixed methods (combining several types of data)

The data collection methods described above can be used on their own, but they can also be combined. This is called a mixed-methods approach. The use of mixed methods has become increasingly popular in the evaluation of PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives.
A mixed-methods approach, if carefully planned, has several advantages. Notably, it can offset the limitations of individual data collection methods and provide much richer data on the initiative. Using mixed methods is not automatically better than using only one data collection method. It is important to think carefully about what the added value of each data collection method will be.

13 EXAMPLE 1 OF MIXED METHODS

Johns et al. used a mixed methodology to evaluate the impact of a sports-based mentoring programme in Melbourne that addressed issues of identity, belonging and cultural isolation of young Muslim men. In their evaluation, the researchers conducted participant observation during the second half of the programme. After the programme was completed, data was collected from participants and stakeholders through qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) and quantitative methods (exit surveys), which were later used to compare with the qualitative data.

For more information: Johns, A., Grossman, M., & McDonald, K. (2014). "More Than a Game": The Impact of Sport-Based Youth Mentoring Schemes on Developing Resilience toward Violent Extremism. *Social Inclusion* 2(2), 57–70.

14 EXAMPLE 2 OF MIXED METHODS

Academic researchers conducted an evaluation of the Prevent Strategy aimed to prevent radicalisation of young people in the UK. The researchers used a mixed-methods approach combining the following methods:

- a systematic review of the research literature,
- interviews with practitioners across all 48 project sites during the early stages of project implementation ,
- the collection of 194 diary sheets to map project interventions and activity nationally,
- an analysis of projects' quarterly returns, and
- in-depth case studies conducted at 12 project sites.

For more information: Hirschfield, A., Christmann, K., Wilcox, A., Rogerson, M., & Sharratt, K. (2012). Process Evaluation of Preventing Violent Extremism: Programmes for Young People. Youth Justice Board.

7.3 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

After the data is collected, it needs to be analysed to form conclusions. The methods of data analysis include techniques for sorting, interpreting and processing collected data. There is again a wide variety of available options. Which options are the most suitable depends on what kinds of data has been collected, what kinds of questions need to be answered and what kind of professional expertise the evaluator has. Below are some of the most commonly used data analysis methods.

Qualitative content analysis

This method is widely used for analysing documents, as well as transcripts from interviews and focus groups. It can also be used for analysing notes from participant/non-participant observation.

This method essentially involves structuring and organising text by identifying those parts that are relevant for the evaluation and coding them with particular themes or keywords. In this way, it becomes possible to filter all parts of the data that deal with a particular theme. When the data is structured and organised through coding, it becomes easier to analyse the data and determine what kinds of conclusions can be drawn from it.

The codes used to organise the data are developed by the evaluator. There are two general strategies of how to do this. Deductive coding is a top-down strategy where codes are developed based on the evaluation's objectives and key questions. Inductive coding is a bottom-up strategy where the codes are developed based on a close reading of the data and identifying the topics and themes in it. Usually both of these strategies are used together.

Coding becomes particularly helpful when there is a lot of textual data. There are various types of software that can be used for coding (for example, NVivo and Atlas.ti).

Quantitative analysis

Quantitative (numerical) data, which may be collected and produced through a survey or the review of project data, can be analysed through several statistical methods. These methods include basic descriptive statistics aimed at describing a data set, for instance, by calculating its range and average value (the mean, mode or median value). Descriptive statistics can be performed with software programmes such as Excel or SPSS. It may serve as a first step towards a more complex analysis of the data set, which may involve the creation of a linear regression model. A linear regression model analyses the statistical significance of the correlation and relationship between two variables, which can be illustrated in a graph. This model can be a powerful tool for assessing the impact of an initiative, provided that it draws on a carefully collected data set.

Learn more

- Hofman, J. and Sutherland, A. (2017). Different evaluation designs and methods: *Evaluating interventions that prevent or counter violent extremism.* RAND Europe.
- Impact Europe. Database of data collection methods and evaluation designs.
- Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Saldana, J. (2013). The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. London. Sage Publications.
- Peersman, G. (2014) *Overview: Data Collection and Analysis Methods in Impact Evaluation, Methodological Briefs: Impact Evaluation 10.* Florence: UNICEF Office of Research.
- Trochum, W. (2006). Research Methods Knowledge Base. Descriptive statistics.
- Woodley, A., (2004). *Getting and analysing of quantitative data.* The PREST training resources. Commonwealth of Learning.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO EVALUATION

An important part of any evaluation is to make sure that it complies with ethical and legal standards. This is even more important in the case of PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives that deal with sensitive topics and often target vulnerable and stigmatised individuals and communities. An evaluation can also be one way to assess to what extent the initiative itself is living up to ethical and legal standards.

A good framework for thinking about ethics in PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives and evaluations is the Human Rights-Based Approach. This chapter briefly introduces the fundamentals of this framework and what it means in practice. Detailed instructions for how to appropriately include ethical, gender, legal and societal aspects in the evaluation are provided in the INDEED Guidebook 2.

Human Rights Based Approach

The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) is a conceptual framework that can be applied to any policy or practice to ensure that it is normatively based on internal human rights standards and operationally directed to protecting human rights.

The HRBA is grounded on five key human rights principles:

Participation	Everyone is entitled to active participation in decision-making processes that affect the enjoyment of their rights.
Accountability	Practitioners and managers of PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives and evaluations are held accountable for failing to fulfil their obligations towards the target groups. There should be effective remedies in place when human rights breaches occur.
Non-discrimination and equality	All individuals are entitled to their rights without discrimination of any kind. All types of discrimination should be prohibited, prevented and eliminated.
Empowerment	Everyone is entitled to claim and exercise their rights. Individuals and communities need to understand their rights and participate in the development of policies that affect their lives.
Legality	Initiatives and their evaluations should be in line with the legal rights set out in domestic and international laws.

Adapted from: European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, Human Rights-Based Approach

What does implementing these values and principles in PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives and evaluations entail? In the INDEED project, we have organised the key issues into four dimensions: gender aspects, ethical aspects, legal aspects and societal aspects (GELSA).

Gender aspects

It is recommended that PVE/CVE/Derad evaluations adopt a gender-sensitive approach. This is especially the case when the initiative under evaluation is not gender-sensitive in its design. Radicalisation processes are not gender-neutral, and neither are PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives, even when they do not explicitly engage with gender. This is because gender unavoidably has an impact on an individual's experiences and conditions. It is also known that there may be gender-based differences in radicalisation processes.

A gender-sensitive approach to evaluation takes into account the potential gender-based differences, and it is designed to be able to capture them. This can mean, for example, making sure that there is gender balance among those who are interviewed and included in the focus groups and that the collected data is analysed also from the gender perspective, taking into account and assessing implications for people of all genders.

Ethical aspects

PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives and their evaluations often engage with individuals and groups that are stigmatised and hold controversial political or religious views. It is important to make sure that initiatives in this field are **non-discriminatory** in their practices or assumptions. There are negative examples of PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives within the EU, where individuals and communities have felt targeted because of their religious, ethnic or social identity and the initiative presented an extension of societal biases and prejudices.

An evaluation provides a good opportunity to carefully assess the underlying and overt assumptions of the PVE/CVE/Derad initiative regarding its target groups, as well as how these assumptions manifest themselves in the initiative's objectives, guidelines and practices.

An evaluation also addresses how the initiative has taken into account the various freedoms that are associated with the right to non-discrimination, such as freedoms of thought, expression, assembly and association. An evaluation can assess how these rights and freedoms have been balanced with the needs of the PVE/CVE/Derad work to address radicalisation and extremism and how well the initiative has managed to avoid reinforcing mechanisms of exclusion that put people at risk of radicalisation.

Good guidelines for ethically conducting an evaluation are also based on common principles of responsible research. The research ethics guidelines include good guidance for how to engage with interviewees and focus groups and how to write an evaluation report that takes their rights and integrity into account.

Legal Aspects

Besides the Fundamental Rights provisions already discussed, national legislation needs to be taken into account. Sector-specific professional regulations may also have an impact, for instance, on the possibilities for data collection and sharing. Consequently, it is important to ensure that both the initiative and its evaluation have an appropriate legal basis.

One key issue is that almost all initiatives and evaluations encounter concerns regarding personal data. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) sets requirements for how personal data can be processed (that is, collected, stored, analysed or shared). Processing personal data always requires a specific legal basis if not allowed by the explicit and informed consent of the person in question.

Besides following GDPR regulations and other legislation, PVE/CVE/Derad evaluations can also assess the initiative in terms of whether its practices are in line with them. It is important that these regulations are followed closely, as data infringement, abuses and breaches can put individuals at risk and destroy trust in PVE/CVE/Derad practitioners and their work. Such breaches can also reinforce fears of surveillance, profiling and prejudiced practices.

Societal Aspects

An evaluation can also provide an opportunity to look beyond the initiative itself and evaluate how well it addresses and takes into account the wider societal context it operates in and what kinds of effects it has in relation to this context. This kind of sensitivity to the societal context is often a key for the success of PVE/CVE/Derad interventions and avoiding any unintended detrimental effects.

The evaluation can focus on how (and whether) the initiative has addressed the risk of unintended consequences of its work on communities and society, such as stigmatisation, inclusion/exclusion, prevailing prejudices and stereotypes, and feelings of security within certain communities and society in general.

Learn more

- European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, Human Rights-Based Approach.
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- RAN. Gender-Specific Approaches in PVE: Preventive Work for Girls in and around Schools. RAN working group meeting conclusion paper.
- Lloyd, M. Ethical Guidelines for Working on P/CVE in Mental Health Care. RAN publication.
- United Nations Evaluation Group. Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.

9. EIGHT TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL EVIDENCE-BASED EVALUATIONS

Previous studies and evaluations have shown that certain challenges have often presented themselves in PVE/CVE/Derad evaluations. Below we have compiled a list of tips for how to avoid or mitigate them:

1

Integrate evaluation to the initiative plan

Many challenges in evaluation can be avoided when the evaluation is planned together with the initiative itself. This means that the initiative's plan also details how it will be evaluated. The first evaluation can take place already in this planning stage. Many decisions taken in the early days of the initiative's lifespan determine what kind of evaluation designs, methods and data can be used in later evaluations.

2

Secure funding and resources for evaluation

One common challenge for evaluation is that there is no funding for it. This seems to be particularly common with long-term programmes and short-term actions that rely on limited-term project funding. In these cases, the funder may require that the initiative is evaluated, but there are no extra resources allocated for this purpose.

An evaluation, even in its more simple forms, requires rather significant resources. It should be clearly planned where these resources will come from. It is recommended that funding for PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives have a dedicated budget for evaluation on top of the funding for implementing the initiative itself.

3

Define the initiative's design and objectives clearly

The starting point for virtually any type of evaluation is a clear understanding of its objectives, implementation plan and the underlying assumption about how the planned actions are supposed to produce the intended outcomes (theory of change). Ideally, the objectives and theory of change are carefully developed in the planning stage of the initiative. If objectives have not been properly defined, it is difficult to conduct a high-quality evaluation.

4 Develop initiative's data monitoring practices with evaluation in mind

The kind of evaluation it is possible to conduct depends strongly on what kind of data is available. There are many kinds of data that can be collected during the evaluation, but some evaluation designs require data that can only be collected at a specific point in time. For instance, in order to reliably evaluate an initiative's impact on participants, there should be some information about their situation at the time when they started. Evaluation almost always requires good documentation of the initiative's activities.

When the initiative has systematic monitoring and record-keeping practices that are informed by the needs of future evaluations, the necessary data will exist when needed. Insufficient monitoring practices do not make evaluation impossible, but they significantly limit the available options and can have a negative impact on the reliability of its results.

5 Focus on learning

An evaluation is at its most useful when it is planned and conducted for learning purposes. This means that the evaluation is designed to support further development of the initiative and it includes a clear plan for how its results will be used. It is recommended that the evaluation not be connected to funding decisions but instead be conducted in the middle of a funding period. This provides the most constructive environment for conducting the evaluation without pressure to show success, providing a genuine opportunity to use the results for the initiative's improvement.

6 Involve key stakeholders in evaluation planning

Evaluations often tend to be a top-down process in which the objective and design are set by the funder. Experience has shown that this is not a very productive strategy. Instead, it is usually better to take a more participatory approach and involve key stakeholders, especially those implementing the initiative, in the evaluation process from its very beginning.

Including stakeholders allows for creating the ownership and trust necessary to achieve reliable results. When stakeholders are actively included in the planning process, it shows that their views, knowledge and experience are valued. When the evaluation responds to the needs of those involved in implementing the initiative, the evaluation no longer presents itself as an extra task that is required by someone else; instead it is seen as something beneficial for developing their own work. This provides further motivation to cooperate in producing the data needed for the evaluation and being honest about possible weaknesses and failures.

7 Make sure the evaluator has a good understanding of the PVE/CVE/Derad field

When the evaluation is conducted by an external evaluator, it is good to make sure that the evaluator is familiar with the PVE/CVE/Derad field and its specific characteristics. While many common evaluation types and methods can be applied to the evaluation of PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives, it is rather difficult to make sense of any data or observations without having a good general understanding of the field.

8 Think early about ethics and ways to ensure data availability

One common challenge in evaluations of PVE/CVE/Derad initiatives is that ethical and security concerns can limit access to data. Government authorities and those implementing the initiative can be hesitant to share information, especially when it includes details about an individual's political opinions or personal matters. Security aspects can limit access to sites where interviews or observations could be conducted. It is recommended to find out early on what kinds of ethical, security and legal limitations there are for data sharing, and to think about ways to reach the best possible results within these limits.

Another set of challenges derives from the sensitive and stigmatised nature of violent extremism. An initiative's target groups and individuals can be difficult to reach and build trust with because of the fragile situation and relations with people involved in extremism. They may also be unwilling to share their true views, as those may be perceived as socially undesirable and stigmatised. Therefore, it is recommended to think carefully about whom to choose as an evaluator, to win the trust necessary for collecting the data – and do it in a way that does not jeopardise the individuals' trust in the initiative itself.

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