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INDEED

Evidence – Based Model for Evaluation of Radicalisation Prevention and Mitigation

Deliverable 4.4

D4.4 *Lessons learnt and Policy Recommendations from the planning process of evidence-based evaluation*

August 2024 (M36)

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Abstract:

Deliverable D4.4 presents the findings of T4.3 that focus on developing lessons learnt and policy recommendations from the planning process of evidence-based evaluation for P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives. The findings developed and presented in this deliverable have been defined following different methods which are explained in the document. The recommendations detailed in the deliverable D4.4 target the policy makers from the European, national and local levels. The deliverable provides a description of the methodology to formulate the policy recommendation; shares the collected lessons learnt during the INDEED project concerning the planning of evidence-based evaluation of P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives; and provides a comprehensive list of policy recommendation to improve the planning and implementation of evidence-based evaluation of such initiatives.

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
INDEED	Strengthening a comprehensive approach to preventing and counteracting radicalisation based on a universal evidence-based model for evaluation of radicalisation prevention and mitigation
PVE	Prevention of Violent Radicalisation
CVE	Countering Violent Radicalisation
DeRAD	De-radicalisation
SMART Hubs	Stakeholder Multisectoral Anti-Radicalisation Teams
DoA	Document of Action
EC	European Commission
EBEM	Evidence-based Evaluation Model

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1. ABOUT INDEED

1.1 INDEED PROJECT OVERVIEW

INDEED aims to strengthen the knowledge, capabilities and skills of PVE/CVE and De-radicalisation first-line practitioners and policy makers in designing, planning, implementation and in evaluating initiatives in the field, based on evidence-based approach. INDEED builds on the state-of-the-art, utilising the scientific and practical strengths of recent activities – enhancing them with complementary features to drive advancements and curb a growing rise of radical views and violent behaviour threatening security.

The INDEED methodological framework is based on the '5I' approach, referring to 5 distinct project phases: Identify; Involve; Innovate; Implement; Impact. At the core of INDEED's work methodology is an interdisciplinary and participatory approach, which includes the co-creation of individual project phases and implementing them with the close engagement of multi-sectoral stakeholders. The creation of SMART Hubs (Stakeholder Multisectoral Anti-Radicalisation Teams) as part of INDEED is intended to facilitate this process.

The selected results of the project are:

2. The Universal Evidence-Based Model (EBEM) for evaluation of radicalisation prevention and mitigation.
3. A practical EBEM-based Evaluation Tool.
4. A collection of user-friendly repositories (repositories of radicalisation factors and pathways into radicalisation; factors strengthening resilience to radicalisation. repositories of evidence-based practices) for practical use by practitioners and policy makers.
5. Targeted curricula and training (offline/online).
6. Lessons Learnt and Policy recommendations.

All results will be integrated and openly accessible in the INDEED multilingual Toolkit for practitioners and policy makers working on PVE/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives.

INDEED promotes the EU's values and principles, heeding multi-agency and cross-sectoral methods, including gender mainstreaming, societal dimensions and fundamental rights.

1.2 INDEED (TARGET GROUPS) STAKEHOLDERS

First line Practitioners: This category includes first line practitioners from Law Enforcement Agencies, prison and probation services, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), social and health services, youth organisations.

Policy makers: This category comprises policy makers including local, regional, and national authorities, and governmental organisations.

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Education and Research: This category includes universities, think-tanks, academic institutions, research organisations, educational institutions, training institutions, staff college, etc.

Other: This group includes all other relevant stakeholders that fall outside the above three groups; people and groups interested in the topics of the project such as citizens and youth organisations, media, social groups, and schools.

1.3 WP4 Overview

The aim of WP4 is threefold:

1. To continue and complete the mapping of PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives that began under WP1[1] of INDEED.
2. To select a representative sample of those initiative to be evaluated using the Evidence-Based Evaluation Model (EBEM) and the Evidence-Based Evaluation Tool developed under WP3[2].
3. To formulate Lessons Learnt and Policy Recommendations drawing from the pilot evaluation of the selected initiatives.

1.1.1 WP4 Objectives

1. Enhance stakeholders' skills in planning and designing evaluation of PVE/ CVE/ De-Radicalisation initiatives using the Evidence-based Evaluation Tool.
2. Gather comprehensive knowledge on the status and quality of evaluation of PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives, in order to find out what are the strengths and weaknesses of evidence-based evaluation.
3. Formulate Lessons Learnt and Policy Recommendations derived from the final results of conducted planning process of evaluation.

1.1.2 WP4 Tasks

1. Task 4.1 Mapping and selection of PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives for further evidence-based evaluation (Leader: KEMEA. Participants: All except ITTI) [M18-M25].[3]
2. Task 4.2 Conducting of Planning process of evidence-based evaluation of PVE/CVE/ De-radicalisation initiatives (Leader: CENTRIC, Participants: All) [M25-M34].
3. Task 4.3 Evidence-based practices, Lessons Learnt from the planning evidence-based evaluation and Policy Recommendations (Leader: EFUS, Participants: All) [M32-M36].

[1] WP1 Identification and analysis of the scientific concepts and approaches to the evidence-based evaluation of initiatives on PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation.
[2] WP3 Development of the Evidence-Based Evaluation Model (EBEM) for radicalisation prevention and mitigation and an Evaluation Tool dedicated to the PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives.
[3] As per the initial Document of Action (DoA), the duration of T4.1 was from M18 to M24. Following a consortium's request to the EC, the duration of T4.1 was extended by one (1) month, until M25 (September 2023).

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1.1.3 TASK 4.3 AND DELIVERABLE 4.4 SCOPE

Task Leader: Efus
Participants: All, including KEMEA (WP4 Leader) and CENTRIC (T4.2 Leader).
Duration: M32 – M36 (April 2024 – August 2024)-
Aim: The aim of T4.3, based on the 'Evidence-based evaluation and data analysis report' (D4.2), is to create a Repository of Evidence-based Practices (D4.3) that will feed into the Toolkit delivered in WP5. This task also aims to formulate a set of Lessons Learnt and Policy Recommendations resulting from the evidence-based evaluation process of selected initiatives.

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2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable compiles the lessons learnt and policy recommendations resulting from the three-year INDEED project. Through this document, the INDEED consortium presents proven ideas and provides recommendations to policy makers at the European, national, regional, and local levels, on how to plan and implement evidence-based evaluation for Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and De-radicalisation (DeRAD) initiatives. While national contexts may differ in terms of political environments, policies and available resources, the core challenges often remain consistent. This report outlines the lessons learnt and policy recommendations derived from evaluations of P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives.

Key lessons learnt include the necessity for comprehensive evaluation frameworks, early planning and inclusive stakeholder engagement. Policy recommendations focus on developing standardised frameworks, empowering lower-level stakeholders, and ensuring designated budgets for evaluations.

The deliverable maps out key challenges, obstacles, and lessons identified in the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), De-radicalisation, and other security threat prevention initiatives. These include policies and strategies, long-term programmes, short-term actions, and ad-hoc interventions implemented by consortium partners and external practitioners and policy makers.

This report is divided into three sections:

- Methodology: An overview of the methodology used to identify lessons learnt and draw policy recommendations.
- Lessons Learnt: A detailed presentation of the key lessons derived from the project and different P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives.
- Policy Recommendations: Actionable recommendations geared to maximise the effectiveness of P/CVE and DeRAD initiatives and its evaluation process.

2.1 SUMMARY OF THE APPLIED METHODOLOGY

This report employs a mixed-method, inclusive, and participatory approach, with adequate triangulation to ensure credible, reliable, and unbiased findings. The methodology encompasses a comprehensive and systematic review of existing literature, case studies related to P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives, and previous INDEED deliverables, including the developed INDEED tool. Additionally, a policy recommendations workshop was held on July 12th, involving 33 policy makers and representatives from various sectors and countries. The input from this workshop was integrated into the report. Further input and suggestions were collected from consortium work package leaders to enhance the findings.

2.2 SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNT

1	**Inclusive and sensitive evaluation:** An inclusive and sensitive approach is vital for evaluating P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives.

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2	**Cross-sector collaboration:** Effective evaluation relies on collaboration and coordination across sectors.
3	**Evaluation capacity building:** Developing evaluation capacity is crucial for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of initiatives.
4	**Supportive evaluation environment:** A conducive environment valuing evaluation and opting a clear understanding of evaluation is essential.
5	**Evidence-based design:** Initiatives should be grounded in a well-defined Theory of Change and clear objectives.
6	**Adequate funding and resources:** Securing necessary funding and resources is critical for successful evaluation.
7	**Participatory approach:** Engaging stakeholders through a participatory approach enhances evaluation outcomes.
8	**Positive communication:** Building trust and engagement among stakeholders through positive communication is key.
9	**Data collection and sharing:** Effective data collection and sharing are crucial for informed evaluation.
10	**Utilizing results and assessing Impact:** It is important to use evaluation results and assess long-term impacts.
11	**Overcoming politicization and control mechanisms:** Address challenges related to politicization and control mechanisms to ensure unbiased evaluations.

2.3 Summary of Policy Recommendations

1	**Adopt an inclusive and flexible evaluation approach:** Promote the implementation of evaluation methods that are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and adaptable to the unique challenges of P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives. This ensures that evaluations are fair, ethical, context-aware, and responsive to the needs of diverse communities.
2	**Strengthen multi-sector collaboration:** Facilitate robust collaboration and coordination among various sectors and stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, community groups, and international partners. This integrated approach leverages diverse expertise and perspectives, leading to more comprehensive and effective evaluations.
3	**Invest in evaluation capacity building:** Prioritize continuous professional development for evaluation practitioners. This includes providing regular training, resources, and consultation opportunities to enhance their skills and ensure that they are equipped to conduct thorough and impactful evaluations.
4	**Plan and customize evaluation processes:** Encourage the proactive planning of evaluation activities. Develop tailored evaluation frameworks that are specifically designed to address the objectives, challenges, and contexts of P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives, ensuring that evaluations are relevant and actionable.
5	**Cultivate a supportive evaluation environment:** Foster an organizational and policy environment that values and supports evaluation efforts. This includes promoting a culture that views evaluation as essential for learning, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making.
6	**Design initiatives with evidence-based foundations:** Support the development of P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives that are rooted in a well-

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	articulated theory of change and clearly defined, measurable objectives. This ensures that initiatives are strategically aligned with desired outcomes and can be effectively evaluated.
7	**Ensure adequate funding and resources:** Advocate for the allocation of sufficient financial and human resources dedicated to the evaluation of P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives. Adequate funding is critical to conducting rigorous and comprehensive evaluations.
8	**Foster stakeholder engagement through positive communication:** Promote active and meaningful engagement of all relevant stakeholders by maintaining open, transparent, and constructive communication channels. This helps build trust, encourages collaboration, and enhances the overall effectiveness of evaluation processes.
9	**Prioritize the utilization of evaluation results:** Emphasize the importance of not only conducting evaluations but also effectively utilizing the results to inform policy and practice. Encourage the assessment of long-term impacts to ensure that initiatives are sustainable and produce lasting positive outcomes.
10	**Mitigate politicization and control mechanisms:** Address the challenges posed by politicization and control mechanisms that may hinder objective evaluation. Ensure that evaluations are conducted independently and free from undue influence, allowing for unbiased and credible findings.
11	**Integrate evaluation into strategic action plans:** Advocate for the incorporation of evaluation processes into national, regional, and local P/CVE and De-radicalisation action plans. This integration ensures that evaluation is a fundamental component of strategic planning and implementation, leading to more effective and accountable initiatives.

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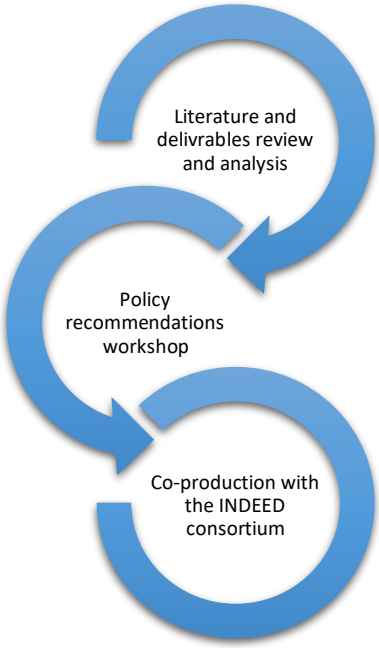
3 THE METHODOLOGY

This report development followed a mixed-method, inclusive and participatory approach with adequate triangulation to arrive at credible, reliable, and unbiased findings to the extent possible. The methodology employed in this report involves a comprehensive and systematic approach to identify lessons learnt and formulate policy recommendations.



The process began with an **extensive review** of existing literature, case studies related to P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives, and also the previous INDEED deliverables, with a focus on deliverable 4.2 "Evidence-based evaluation planning process and data analysis report". This review provided a foundation of knowledge and contextual understanding.

Subsequently, a **policy recommendations workshop** was conducted on July 12, 2024, with 33 policy makers and representatives of different institutions from different sectors and countries.

In addition, a **collection of input and suggestions from the consortium** (WP Leaders) was conducted.

By triangulating data from multiple sources and methodologies, a robust and nuanced understanding of the challenges, successes, and areas for improvement within P/CVE and De-radicalisation efforts is ensured.

This multi-faceted approach enabled the identification of practical solutions and best practices that inform the policy recommendations presented in this report.

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3.1 LITERATURE AND PREVIOUS INDEED PUBLICATIONS REVIEW

To develop this report, it was essential to review the developed reports, results and other elements since the beginning of the project. This mainly include:

- D2.4 Practice and Evaluation Gap Analysis Report
- D2.5 Training and Evaluation Tool Requirements Report
- D6.4 Report on Gender, Ethical, Legal and Social Aspects Practitioners' and Policy makers' Awareness
- D1.2 Report outlining identified, analysed and recommended research approaches, methods and tools for evidence-based evaluation coming from the area of PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation and other selected disciplines
- D2.6 Baseline Report of Gaps, Needs and Solutions
- D5.1 Comprehensive Analysis Report on trainings, learning tools, gaps and needs for evaluation and initiatives' design
- D3.1 Developed Evidence-Based Evaluation Model (EBEM) for radicalisation prevention and mitigation
- D 3.5 Professional e-Guidebook on Evidence-based Evaluation' available in 10 languages
- D3.6 Professional e-Guidebook on designing, planning and implementing evidence-based practices' available in 10 languages
- D4.1 Compilation report of PVE / CVE / and De-radicalisation initiatives with selected initiatives to be evaluated
- D4.2 Evidence-based evaluation planning process and data analysis report

The review and analysis were mainly conducted with a focus on Deliverable 4.2 "Evidence-based evaluation planning process and data analysis report".
T4.2 focused on helping the relevant stakeholders to plan, conduct, and utilise evidence-based evaluation of PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives, using the EBEM-based Evaluation Tool developed in WP3 and following the steps prepared in the e-Guidebook (WP3). T4.2 used the initiatives selected in T4.1.

The task was accomplished by the consortium partners using The INDEED Tool based on the Evidence-Based Evaluation Model. T4.2 used a clear method, technique and uniform criteria for planning, conducting and utilising Evidence-Based Evaluation (EBE) by relevant stakeholders in their respective fields.

For an efficient completion of the task, an evaluation team, determined by their expertise, was formed and led the task in collaboration with the contact points of the corresponding initiatives, as well as other stakeholders.

Deliverable 4.2 (D4.2) provides the results of T4.2 through a succinct document, enriched with input from the beneficiaries of the initiatives, whenever it was considered feasible.

The report was constructed in different sections of the EBE planning outcomes, outlining each of the selected initiatives 'expected achievements and their actual results. D4.2 also contains reflections on the process, the challenges encountered, and the initial lessons learnt by the participants, that will be used further in T4.3.
The report also provides comments related to the EBEM-based Evaluation Tool, which may have emerged during the EBE planning process, and will be reviewed and implemented into the tool under T3.4.

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Thus D4.4 will be informed by the previously mentioned reports, specifically the D4.1 and the D4.2, based on the selected initiatives for the evidence-based evaluation planning process. In addition, this report D4.4 will be also based on the INDEED Tool.

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Summary of the lessons learnt derived from the evidence-based evaluation planning of the selected PVE/CVE/ De-radicalisation initiatives (The D4.2)

Initiative 1- Finn Norgaard Initiative

The Finn Norgaard Initiative aims to facilitate the prevention of radicalisation in the community by securing the rights of terror victims. Its evaluation objective is to understand participant experiences to enhance the project's design and implementation through a process evaluation. The main challenges include difficulty in defining target groups and their needs, unclear and realistic goals due to an initial lack of experience, the absence of specific success indicators, and potential bias in internal evaluation.

To address these, it is recommended to further define and differentiate target groups, elaborate on the link between activities and objectives, set more specific goals based on past experiences, and develop clear success indicators. For the evaluation plan, considering an external evaluator can mitigate bias, ensure participants' confidentiality to improve data accuracy, and define a clear evaluation timeline and scope.

Initiative 2- Fundatia Noi Orizonturi Strategy 2030 (Romania)

The Fundatia Noi Orizonturi Strategy 2030 initiative aims to achieve organisational strategic objectives through evidence-based decisions and holistic evaluation. Its evaluation objectives include monitoring progress to inform decision-making, ensuring program alignment with strategic objectives, supporting program improvement and learning, and fostering a learning organisation through evidence-based evaluation. This initiative employs formative evaluation, outcome and impact evaluation, and most significant change techniques.

Challenges faced include an early stage of a culture of evidence-based evaluation, an overwhelming workload for a single evaluator, perception of the Theory of Change as excessive, and lack of consistent evidence-based design and evaluation. Recommendations to overcome these challenges include encouraging organisation-wide participation in evaluation, increasing donor support for evaluation, developing a strategy for communication and utilisation of evaluation results, subcontracting external evaluators under supervision, standardising monitoring and mid-term evaluation procedures, and involving stakeholders in all evaluation steps. Utilising the INDEED tool for developing evaluation plans, solidifying existing EBE data, and incorporating evaluation plans and necessary resources from the initiative's design phase are also suggested.

Initiative 3- "I am the Fan"

The "I am the Fan" Initiative aims to evaluate the effects and outcomes to determine its success, with a focus on whether it met its objectives and produced the intended outcomes. This involves an evaluation of the outcomes. The main recommendations include clearly defining outcomes and success indicators, conducting thorough outcome evaluations to identify effective strategies, ensuring continuous monitoring to track progress and impact, involving stakeholders in planning and evaluating to gain comprehensive insights, and regularly communicating evaluation findings to stakeholders for transparency and feedback.

Initiative 4- Ad Hoc Intervention for De-Radicalisation (Greece)

The Ad Hoc Intervention for De-Radicalisation in Greece aims to deeply analyse how and why the intervention worked or didn't through a case-based evaluation. Recommendations include conducting in-depth case studies to understand specific outcomes, identifying factors contributing to success or failure in each phase, developing a clear theory of change for similar future interventions, using lessons learned to refine de-radicalisation strategies and policies, ensuring proper resources and funding for comprehensive evaluation, and collaborating with

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external experts for unbiased analysis.

Key Learnings Across Initiatives

To improve design, implementation, and evaluation processes, it is essential to integrate evaluation into the organisational culture, strengthen donor support for evaluations, and develop strategies to disseminate evaluation findings widely. Considering subcontracting evaluation to external experts, standardising monitoring and mid-term evaluations, engaging stakeholders in all evaluation steps, leveraging tools like INDEED for effective evaluation planning, incorporating evaluation plans and necessary resources from the outset, and developing clear monitoring procedures and objectives before implementation are also crucial. These recommendations aim to ensure initiatives are well-aligned with their objectives and effectively contribute to their intended outcomes.

3.2 THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT WORKSHOP

A "Lessons learnt and policy recommendations workshop on planning and designing process of PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives and their evidence-based evaluation" was conducted on July 12th, 2024, in Riga, Latvia.

The workshop rationale and background:
In recent years, Europe has recognized the pressing need to address issues related to the rise of radicalisation leading to violent extremism. These issues pose significant challenges to the stability, security, and social cohesion of cities and regions in Europe.

Consequently, there has been a proliferation of initiatives aimed at tackling these challenges at various levels, including local, national, European and international.
However, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends crucially on evidence-based evaluation and its planning. Without robust evaluation mechanisms in place, it becomes challenging to assess the impact, efficacy, and efficiency of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives. Moreover, inadequate planning and designing of evaluation can lead to resource misallocation, duplication of efforts, and ineffective outcomes. Hence, there is a clear imperative for stakeholders involved in these initiatives to engage in evidence-based evaluation and its planning processes.

Thus, the INDEED project aims to use evidence-based approaches to strengthen first-line practitioners' and policy makers' knowledge, capabilities, and skills for designing, planning, implementing and evaluating PVE/CVE and De-radicalisation or other crime prevention initiatives, such as policies and strategies, long-term programmes, short-term actions, and ad-hoc interventions, in an effective and proven manner.

Drawing on the comprehensive work conducted within the project initiated in 2021, encompassing all results, resources, publications, including the INDEED Toolkit, and the meticulous planning for evaluation process of four selected initiatives, a Workshop aimed at informing Policy recommendations for the importance of evidence-based design and evaluation for PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives.

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The workshop's main objectives:

- To present INDEED outcomes and lessons learned from the planning process of evidence-based evaluation of the selected initiatives as a foundation for discussion and reflection.
- To formulate policy recommendations grounded in evidence and focused on planning, designing, implementation, and evaluation of future effective PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives.
- To promote continuous improvement in evaluation within the field of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation and crime prevention initiatives.
- To facilitate knowledge, experiences, challenges and lessons learnt exchange: between stakeholders from diverse backgrounds working in the field of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation.

In summary, the workshop addressed a critical shortcoming in the field of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation by providing a space for evidence-based decision-making, knowledge and lesson learnt exchange, and formulating further policy recommendations on planning and designing evaluation. By leveraging the collective expertise and insights of diverse stakeholders, the workshop aims to advance the effectiveness and impact of initiatives aimed at PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation.

Participants:

The selection process:

The call for participation was processed via two ways. First, there were direct invitation letters sent to specific policy makers. Additionally, a registration call form for participation was published in the INDEED website and social media and shared via different partner's channels.

The targeted participants were:

- The representatives of the selected initiatives in T4.1. (4 initiatives).
- The consortium's representatives and their Smart Hubs members.
- Practitioners and policy makers involved in designing and implementing evaluation, including LEAs, public institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations, representatives of local and national European cities and institutions.

The confirmed participants to participate were 33, ensuring gender balance between women and men, and with a diversity of city-country they represent, in addition to institution they work (representing the local level with municipalities and local/regional authorities, the national level with some ministries and the European level with regional organisations covering the European level).

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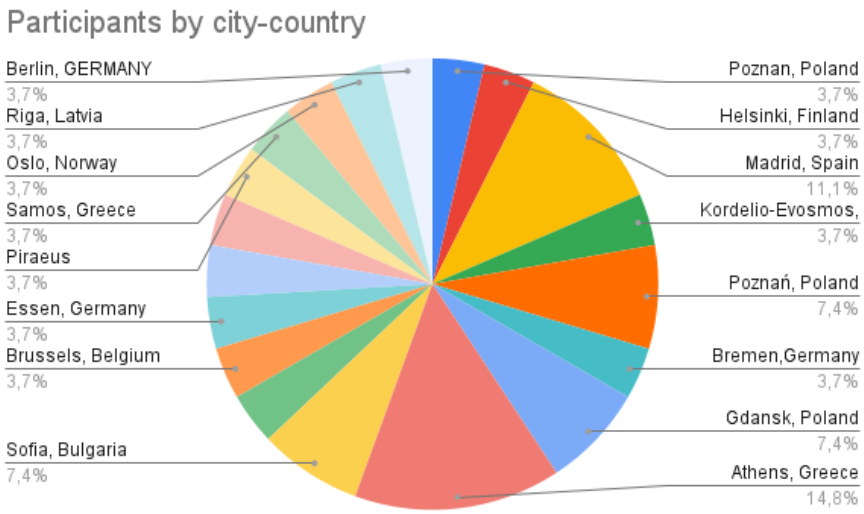

Figure 1 - A chart showing the participants per city

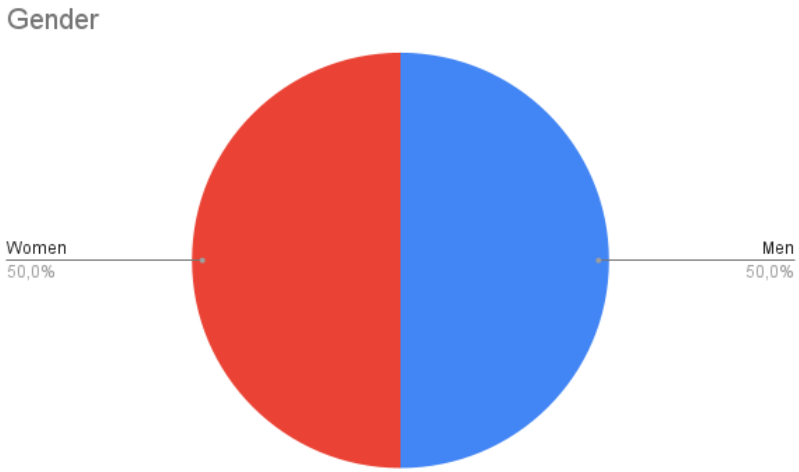

Figure 2 - A chart showing the participants per gender

The agenda of the workshop

The detailed agenda is attached in the annex. Here are the main parts of the day:

- Welcome & Arrival
- Opening speech and presentation of the workshop objectives
- Participants' introductions
- Presentation of the INDEED project and its results
- Presentation of the report on the evidence-based evaluation planning process
- Spotlight on selected initiatives
- Participatory group sessions: Lessons Learned and Policy Recommendations
- Presentation of group session conclusions
- Closing remarks

The methodology of the workshop: The workshop employed an interactive and participatory methodology. It began with an overview of the project, highlighting key findings from previous tasks, and then showcasing the selected PVE/CVE De-radicalisation initiatives.

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Following the principles of the **World Café Methodology**, participants were divided into four groups of six individuals, with each group focusing on one of the selected initiatives. Tailored questions guided discussions at each table. Importantly, each group contributed to the production of lessons learned, insights and recommendations for all four initiatives based on the morning's presentations but also on their experiences and expertise.

The day culminated in a presentation of the main recommendations and lessons learned, highlighting the importance of evaluation for PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives.

Figure 3 - The World Café Methodology

The World café sessions were divided into:

Breakout session 1: Lessons Learnt Café

This session was to develop the lessons learnt, and for that the participants had these questions guiding them:

- What were the key challenges faced during the planning, conducting, and utilising of evidence-based evaluation in PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives?
- Who are the involved stakeholders in the evaluation process, and what difficulties were faced in engaging them throughout the process?
- How were resources (financial, human...) allocated and managed, and how were data collected, processed, and analysed?

Breakout session 2: Policy Recommendations Café

This session was to develop the policy recommendations, and for that the participants had these questions guiding them:

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- Based on the identified challenges, what key considerations should policy makers take into account when planning, conducting, and utilising an evidence-based evaluation of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives?
- Who are the key stakeholders for implementing these recommendations, and what do they need?
- What practices ensure these recommendations will be effectively integrated into policies to improve future PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives?

3.3 Challenges and Limitations

Some challenges were encountered during the organisation of the workshop, and here is a summary of them:

- **Engagement and participation:** Ensuring active participation from all attendees despite the summer vacations.
- **Contextual variations:** Addressing the different contexts and challenges faced by initiatives in various countries and regions.
- **Diverse stakeholder interests:** Balancing the varying interests and perspectives of participants from different sectors, including policy makers, practitioners, NGOs, and academic researchers.
- **Integration of input:** Synthesising diverse inputs and perspectives into coherent and actionable recommendations.

3.4 Collection of input from the INDEED consortium's partners.

In addition to the literature review and workshop insights, the report integrates input and suggestions from INDEED consortium members. An online document was shared with INDEED WP leaders, who provided their input on lessons learnt and policy recommendations. These inputs were collected, analysed, and incorporated into the report.
In conclusion, by triangulating data from multiple sources and methodologies, this report provides a nuanced understanding of the challenges, successes, and areas for improvement in PVE/CVE and De-radicalisation efforts. This multi-faceted approach enabled the identification of practical solutions and best practices that inform the policy recommendations presented in this report.

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4 LESSONS LEARNT

Lessons learnt are general conclusions with potential for broader application and use. These represent documented information on the positive and negative experiences from various evaluations of P/CVE (Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism) and De-radicalisation initiatives. They enable implementers to learn from specific experiences, benefiting the wider community of practitioners. Lessons learnt are important for many reasons, mainly:

- To capture and disseminate knowledge gained from specific initiatives, ensuring that successful strategies are replicated, and failures are avoided.
- To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of future P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives by integrating lessons from past experiences.
- To foster innovation and adaptation by using past insights to inform new approaches and methodologies.
- To ensure that successful initiatives have lasting impacts by embedding lessons learnt into ongoing practices and policies.

The lessons learnt developed in this report and intended to be shared with:

- Policy makers at all levels (Local, national and EU levels): To inform and guide policy decisions with evidence-based insights.
- Practitioners: To improve the implementation of P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives through practical guidance.
- Researchers: To provide data and case studies for further academic and applied research.
- Donors: To ensure that their investments are effective and efficient by learning from past experiences.
- Community leaders: To engage and support local communities in P/CVE efforts by sharing relevant and impactful lessons.

The development of these lessons learnt was based on a cross-cutting approach, taking into consideration gender equality and the "leaving no one behind" strategy. This inclusive approach ensures that diverse perspectives and needs are addressed, enhancing the overall effectiveness and equity of initiatives.

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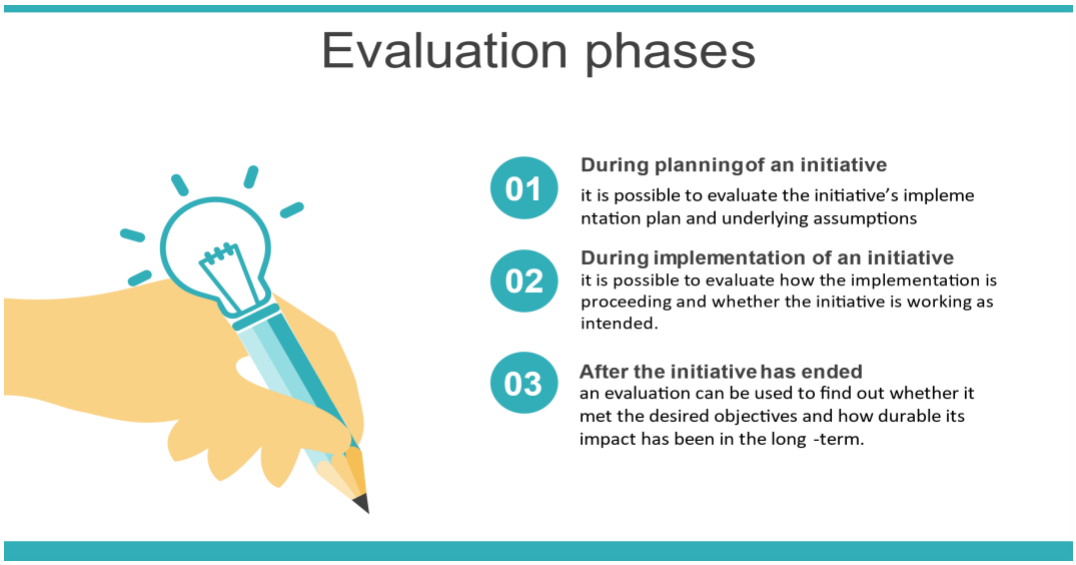

Figure 4 - An illustration of evaluation phases, based on INDEED e-Guidebook 1

The lessons learnt will be presented according to INDEED's evaluation phases: During planning of an initiative, during the implementation of an initiative, and after the initiative has ended. In addition, some lessons learnt are transversal and will be mentioned as general lessons learnt.

4.1 General Cross-cutting lessons learnt

Lesson Learnt 1: An inclusive, Gender-sensitive and flexible approach is essential for the evaluation of P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives.

The evaluation of an issue such as violent extremism requires specific approaches that are inclusive and sensitive to differences within an institution that respects differences and views them as a source of strength. When assessing these programs, it is crucial to consider diverse perspectives and adapt to varying cultural contexts. (D2.6)
Essential considerations:

- **The need to opt for more flexibility** which allows for adjustments based on real-time feedback, ensuring that the initiatives remain relevant and effective. Sensitivity to the unique experiences and needs of participants, including gender-sensitivity fosters trust and engagement, which are fundamental for achieving meaningful outcomes in preventing and countering violent extremism and De-radicalisation efforts.
- **The need to not exercise rigidity in evaluation processes as it denies an opportunity to change practices and sustain change results**, by undermining the culture of trust grounded in team spirit.

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LESSON LEARNT 2: CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION IS CRUCIAL FOR EFFECTIVE EVIDENCE-BASED EVALUATION OF P/CVE/DE-RADICALISATION INITIATIVES.

There is a notable lack of coordination in evaluating P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives across different sectors and stakeholders. The evaluation requires the collaboration between different intervening persons.
Essential considerations:

- The responsibility for developing and implementing evaluation of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives is often spread across various sectors.
- **The need to improve collaboration and coordination between different sectors and stakeholders.** As there is a lack of collaboration and coordination in the planning and implementation of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives across different sectors. Similarly, the evaluations of these initiatives are not coordinated either between sectors or even within institutions of the same sector.

LESSON LEARNT 3: EVALUATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IS NECESSARY SUPPORT THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF P/CVE/DE-RADICALISATION INITIATIVES

PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives are hindered by a significant lack of evaluation capacities among staff within program and project organisations. Additionally, the importance of developing evaluation capacity is frequently overlooked. This shortfall affects the effectiveness and efficiency of these initiatives.
Essential considerations:

- **The need to have open access to training materials and opportunities**, particularly for field workers. Ensuring that all staff have access to comprehensive and relevant training is crucial for developing robust evaluation skills.
- **The need to have tailored evaluation Training programs to meet the specific needs** of different sectors and contexts. Thus, the content is not always relevant and applicable to the diverse environments in which these initiatives operate.

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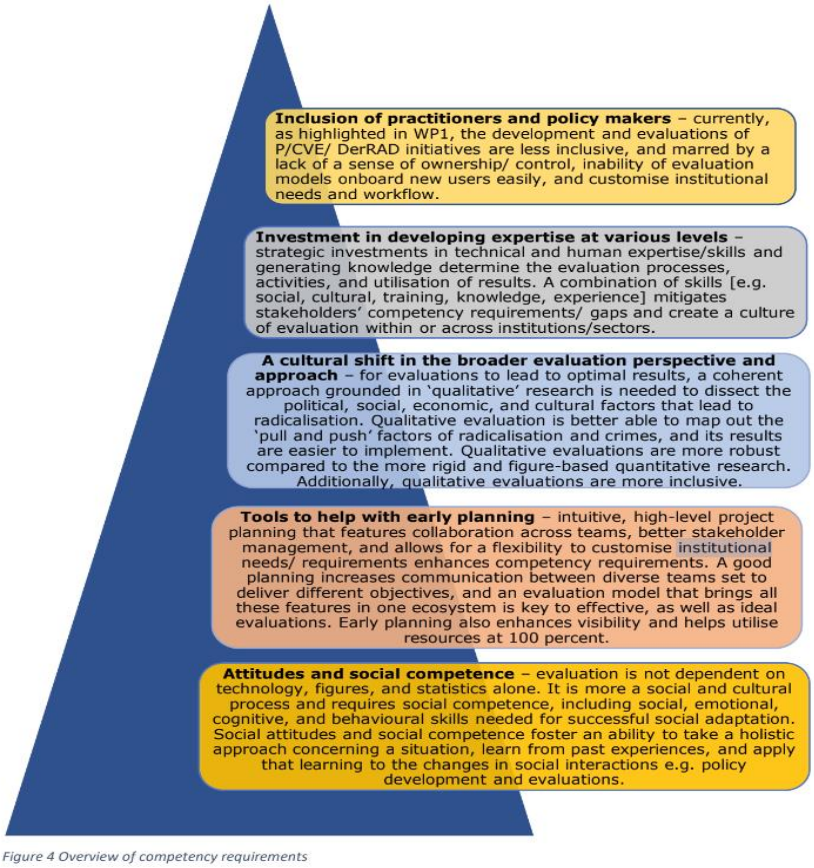

Figure 5 - Overview of competency requirements taken from the Baseline report of Gaps, Needs and Solutions (D2.6)

4.2 During Planning an Initiative

Before launching the initiative, the first factor to consider for an evidence-based evaluation is the environment in which it will be implemented.

Lesson Learnt 4: The importance of the Environment for Evaluation and include a proper understanding/ concept of evaluation

The evidence-based evaluation of P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives requires a supportive environment for evaluation. When it comes to evaluation, there is often hesitancy and even neglect due to uncertainty, scepticism, fear of judgement, or resistance to change.
Essential considerations:

- **The need to foster an organisational culture** that values and recognizes evaluation as essential and key function for accountability, learning, and evidence-based decision-making.
- **The need to ensure a firm commitment and support** from organisational/political leadership to have an evidence-based evaluation process.

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Evaluation requires an enabling environment that includes an organisational culture that values evaluation as a basis for accountability, learning and evidence-based decision-making; a firm commitment from organisational leadership to use, publicise and follow up on evaluation outcomes; and recognition of evaluation as a key corporate function for achieving results and public accountability. Creating an enabling environment also entails providing predictable and adequate resources to the evaluation function." [Norm 11, UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016]

LESSON LEARNT 5: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EVIDENCE-BASED INITIATIVE DESIGN - THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The initiative's design is a crucial factor in planning the evaluation, serving as the cornerstone of the entire process. If the evaluation design is not based on a well-defined theory of change, the entire process may be compromised. Developing theories of change can sometimes be overly technocratic, focusing more on wording than on actual desired and achievable changes on the ground. In addition, many initiatives do not have an articulated theory of change.
Essential considerations:

- **The need to develop PVE/CVE/ De-radicalisation theories of change** that are context-specific, nuanced, and realistic.
- **The need to co-develop theories of change** jointly with donors, policy makers, implementers, and local partners.
- **The need to continuously test, update, and inform theories of change** by emerging research and practice.

LESSON LEARNT 6: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EVIDENCE-BASED INITIATIVE DESIGN - THE OBJECTIVES DEFINITION

The initiative's design is a crucial factor in planning the evaluation, serving as the cornerstone of the entire process. If the evaluation design is not based on measurable objectives, the entire process may be compromised.
Many PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives have unrealistic expectations regarding the specific types and levels of change that can be realistically achieved by individual initiatives with short timeframes and limited funding. There is often a sense of urgency, leading to pressure for immediate results.
Essential considerations:

- **The need to define SMART objectives** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) since the beginning of the design of the initiatives, and to clearly define the dimension and levels on which change will be affected from the beginning.
- **The need to adopt an inclusive participatory approach** in defining goals jointly with funders and local partners that indicate an aspirational direction while clearly articulating what the program can achieve within the given timeframe and resources.
- **The need to recognize a possible hierarchy of objectives** in multi-layered engagements and be aware of what can be achieved in the short, medium, and long term.

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"Early planning – effective planning, early in the evaluation process leads to improved performance in terms of cost, operations, balancing the competing needs of the process. Additionally, early planning helps stakeholders to identify their needs, draw a roadmap for a timely implementation of their activities, and allocate their resources accurately." INDEED D2.6 Baseline report of Gaps, Needs and Solutions.

LESSON LEARNT 7: THE IMPORTANCE OF ENSURING THE NEEDED FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Once the initiative is well-designed and clearly defined, it is essential to ensure sufficient resources are available for its implementation, including the evidence-based evaluation process.
The project-based funding model is a significant challenge. Funding of PVE/CVE/ De-radicalisation initiatives is often dependent on donors' interests, favouring short-term security issues over long-term sustainable solutions.
Essential considerations:

- **The need to advocate for more institutionalised and multi-year funding** mechanisms that support long-term structural approaches to P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives and programs.
- **The need to educate funders** on the importance of sustainable solutions and the limitations of short-term funding.
- **The need to incorporate the "evaluation costs"** in the institutional budgetary planning process, including the Human resources costs.

4.3 DURING IMPLEMENTING AN INITIATIVE

LESSON LEARNT 8: THE IMPORTANCE OF ADOPTING A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Involving relevant stakeholders throughout the process can be challenging due to power dynamics, conflicting interests, or sensitivities linked to P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives.
In addition, evaluation within the PVE/CVE and De-radicalisation domains lacks a communicative process to enable all stakeholders to engage with the evaluation processes and activities, where expectations and resources are matched feasibly.
Essential considerations:

- **The need to involve targeted beneficiaries as co-creators** from design to follow-up monitoring and evaluation. This genuine partnership model enables immediate adaptation and course correction, ensuring initiatives are more relevant and impactful.
- **The need to ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the evaluation process**, including its goals, timelines, and resource requirements. This alignment helps manage expectations and fosters cooperation.

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LESSON LEARNT 9: A POSITIVE COMMUNICATION TO FOSTER TRUST AND ENGAGEMENT

A major hurdle in evaluation across different sectors is the lack of effective communication mechanisms, undermining aspirations for change, impact, and collaboration.
Essential considerations:

- **The need to develop a robust communication strategy** to foster ownership, trust, and meaningful engagement among all stakeholders. This should include clear channels for ongoing dialogue and feedback throughout the initiative.
- **For an evaluation of a PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiative to achieve its objectives**, it must function as the fabric of belonging, foster a feeling of belonging, and must be able to weave an inclusive culture. The evaluation process should be based on inclusive open communication.

LESSON LEARNT 10: THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA COLLECTION AND SHARING BETWEEN DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

A significant challenge has been identified related to data collection. In the context of violent extremism, some data is deemed sensitive and difficult to share. The evaluation process itself is sensitive, involving various stakeholders and types of data, and is often hindered by a lack of trust.

Essential considerations:

- **The need for a mechanism for secure information sharing at all stages** of evaluation and implementing its results is crucial for improving evaluation. A more robust data circulation/sharing system leads to stronger partnerships with agencies and actors responsible for change within the field.
- **Encourage increased triangulation** by incorporating quantitative and qualitative data and methodologies to validate findings.

4.4 AFTER THE INITIATIVE HAS ENDED

LESSON LEARNT 11: THE IMPORTANCE OF UTILISATION OF RESULTS AND ASSESSING LONG-TERM IMPACT

Assessing the long-term impact of P/CVE/ De-radicalisation initiatives is challenging due to the evolving nature of terrorism and extremism. Many of these P/CVE/DeRad initiatives or organisations struggle to foster a culture of understanding, dissemination of results, and long-term change, leading to poor utilisation of evaluation outcomes. Additionally, dissemination of these evaluation findings can be restricted by security concerns and sensitivities.

Essential considerations:

- **The need to establish mechanisms to ensure that evaluation results are understood, disseminated, and utilised for long-term change**. This includes creating platforms for sharing findings and integrating lessons learned into future initiatives.

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- **The need to develop mechanisms for long-term impact assessments** that consider the evolving nature of violent extremism.
- **The need to ensure transparency and accountability** by balancing the need for sharing knowledge with the imperative of safeguarding sensitive information.
- **The need to prepare and share evaluation reports** in a way that encourages uptake beyond institutional boundaries, ensuring lessons learned are widely disseminated and utilised.

LESSON LEARNT 12: THE IMPORTANCE OF OVERCOMING POLITICIZATION AND CONTROL MECHANISMS

When evaluation processes are used as control mechanisms or become politicised, their core principles of neutrality, independence, and fairness are compromised. This undermines the credibility of the evaluation, leading to skewed or biased results that may reflect the interests of certain parties rather than an objective assessment. As a result, the true value of the evaluation is diminished, potentially distorting decision-making and eroding trust among stakeholders.

Essential considerations:

- **The need to advocate for evaluation processes that are neutral, independent, and free from political influence.** This includes establishing clear guidelines and standards for evaluation to ensure fairness and objectivity.
- **The need to promote collaborative evaluation processes that involve all stakeholders equally,** ensuring that power asymmetry does not affect the evaluation outcomes.

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5 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy recommendations are essential for guiding the effective planning, implementation, and evaluation of P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiatives. These recommendations serve as strategic tools that help stakeholders navigate the complexities of countering violent extremism, ensuring that initiatives are grounded in evidence-based practices and are adaptable to evolving challenges. Developing policy recommendations enables organisations to establish clear frameworks and guidelines that promote accountability, foster continuous improvement, and maximise the impact of their efforts. These recommendations are crucial for a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, international organisations, civil society groups, and local communities. By aligning policies with best practices and lessons learned, we can enhance coordination, optimise resource allocation, and ultimately contribute to a more effective and sustainable approach to preventing violent extremism and fostering peace and security.

Importance of Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendations are pivotal in translating the insights gained from evaluations of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives into actionable strategies. They serve as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that lessons learned are not only documented but also implemented effectively. The importance of policy recommendations lies in their ability to provide:

- **Strategic direction**: By offering clear guidance on best practices and evidence-based strategies, policy recommendations help stakeholders design and implement initiatives that are more likely to succeed in achieving their objectives.
- **Consistency and standardisation**: Recommendations promote consistency in approach across different programs and regions, ensuring that initiatives adhere to recognized standards and are aligned with overarching goals.
- **Accountability**: They establish benchmarks and frameworks for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives, holding stakeholders accountable for their actions and outcomes.
- **Adaptability and resilience**: By integrating insights from past experiences, policy recommendations help create flexible strategies that can adapt to changing circumstances and emerging challenges.
- **Efficiency**: Recommendations help streamline processes, optimise resource allocation, and reduce redundancy, making initiatives more cost-effective and impactful.

Why We Develop Policy Recommendations

The development of policy recommendations is driven by the need to:

- **Address gaps and challenges:** Identifying and addressing gaps in existing practices and methodologies ensures that initiatives are comprehensive and effective.
- **Incorporate lessons learned**: By analysing past experiences and integrating lessons learned, policy recommendations facilitate continuous improvement and the refinement of strategies.
- **Ensure evidence-based practices**: Recommendations based on rigorous evaluation and research ensure that initiatives are grounded in solid evidence and are more likely to yield positive outcomes.

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- **Promote sustainability**: Long-term success in P/CVE/DeRad initiatives requires sustainable approaches. Policy recommendations help create strategies that are not only effective in the short term but also sustainable over the long term.
- **Foster collaboration**: Developing recommendations involves input from diverse stakeholders, promoting collaboration and ensuring that multiple perspectives are considered in the formulation of strategies.

For Whom Policy Recommendations Are Developed
Policy recommendations are designed for a broad range of policy makers in involved in P/CVE and De-radicalisation field, including:

- **European Commission**: To inform the development of EU-wide strategies, policies and programs ensuring they are robust, coherent, and effective.
- **Government Institutions**: To provide a framework for national policies and programs, ensuring they align with international standards and best practices, thus fostering a unified approach to P/CVE.
- **Local and Regional Authorities**: To ensure initiatives are relevant, culturally sensitive, and address the specific needs and challenges faced by communities affected by violent extremism. This local focus helps tailor approaches to the unique contexts of different regions.
- **International Organisations**: To guide the creation and execution of global and regional initiatives, promoting coherence and collaboration across borders, and enhancing the overall impact of P/CVE efforts.
- **Funders and Donors**: To ensure resources are allocated efficiently and effectively, maximising the impact of funding on P/CVE initiatives, and providing transparency and accountability in the use of financial resources.

The policy recommendations will be presented according to INDEED's evaluation phases: During planning of an initiative, during implementation of an initiative, and after the initiative has ended.
The recommendations have been elaborated according to the lessons learnt defined above.

General Cross-cutting Recommendations

Recommendation 1: To promote an ethical, inclusive, Gender-sensitive and flexible approach to evaluation

Evaluation processes need to be thought of before the implementation of an initiative to permit flexibility and to ensure more consistent results.
Essential considerations for the implementation of this recommendation:

- **To encourage ethical and gender-sensitive evaluations** by raising awareness of ethical and gender aspects of evaluation based on the human-rights-based approach, as well as international, national, and internal organisational legal standards. Promote the principles of transparent, inclusive, sensitive research as well as the principles of inclusion, non-discrimination (by age, sex, religion etc), and gender diversity. **Promote gender-sensitive approaches** by incorporating more gender analysis, engaging diverse stakeholders, and developing gender-sensitive indicators. Involve data protection

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officers (DPOs) in the evaluation process and assign accountable parties for the legal and ethical side of the evaluation process. Include ethical aspects in the evaluation and initiative designs early on.

- **To develop a flexible and agile approach to evaluation activities**: by favouring the design and implementation of evaluation when designing and implementing the initiative itself, it gives the flexibility to the stakeholders to be more flexible and adapt the evaluation process at the different stages of the implementation of the initiative.
- **To ensure comprehensive and understandable evaluation results**: it is important to understand and adapt any evaluation activities to the local context of the PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiative. The result should be delivered in a simple way and readable for any stakeholders to encourage them to develop evaluation activities and make them feel concerned and understand how evaluation may help them in their work.

RECOMMENDATION 2: TO ENCOURAGE THE INTEGRATION OF EVALUATION IN THE NATIONAL/REGIONAL/LOCAL ACTIONS PLAN ON P/CVE/DE-RADICALISATION

To encourage and develop a solid culture of evaluation, it is important to ensure a strong and official political backing.
Essential considerations for the implementation of this recommendation:

- **To ensure the integration of evaluation activities in the different political level's action plan** on P/CVE/De-Radicalisation.
- **To facilitate the establishment of national/regional/local evaluation cells or networks** for evaluation services and exchange of good practices, resources and providing support to EU, regional, local authorities.

RECOMMENDATION 3: TO FACILITATE MULTI SECTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS' COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

One of the keys for a successful evaluation is to involve the diverse stakeholders who took part in the design and/ implementation of the P/CVE/De-radicalisation initiative. Thus, the multi sectors and stakeholders' collaborations should be based on agreement about the evaluation's objectives and commonly used terms.
Essential considerations for the implementation of this recommendation:

- **To promote a multi-stakeholders' approach**: connect public and private sectors as well as different actors that could have been involved in the design and implementation of the initiative.
- **To establish a common evaluation culture** among the different stakeholders but also share it with policy makers to ensure the political backing for evaluation activities.

RECOMMENDATION 4: TO PROMOTE FOR EVALUATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Based on the observation that there is a lack of experience and expertise on evaluation processes, it is crucial to develop and increase knowledge and skills and to develop evaluation competencies.
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- **To Promote the access to capacity building programs:** Implement policies that support ongoing training and capacity building for evaluation personnel within P/CVE programs. This includes developing a cadre of skilled evaluators who are proficient in evidence-based evaluation.
- **To provide more Tailor-made training programs adapted to the needs and contexts of stakeholders**: to overcome the lack of understanding of what evaluation could be used for and the difficulties in planning an evaluation process.

RECOMMENDATION 5: TO ANTICIPATE EVALUATION AND ELABORATE TAILORED EVALUATION PROCESS AND ACTIVITIES

Evaluation is too often equated with outcome and impact evaluation, focusing on the effects of the implemented initiative. However, it is important to keep in mind that evaluation should be tailored according to the information needed to be collected, the available resources and the level of expertise in evaluation.
Essential considerations for the implementation of this recommendation:

- **To define the goal of evaluation beforehand** (do we want to improve the quality of P/CVE and De-radicalisation initiative and learn from experience (process evaluation), do we want to capitalise on the result of evaluation (outcomes and impact evaluation) etc.)
- **To define the available budget for evaluation and the necessary human resources** and expertise (either internal or external) to prepare evaluation activities accordingly.

5.1 DURING PLANNING AN INITIATIVE

RECOMMENDATION 6: TO PROMOTE AND ENABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR EVALUATION

Evaluation should be normalised and systematic. Thus, it is important to establish an evaluation culture and promote leadership commitment for evidence-based evaluation for P/CVE/DeRad initiatives.
Essential considerations for the implementation of this recommendation:

- **To establish an evaluation culture:** Policy makers should foster an organisational culture that values and priorities evaluation. This can be achieved by integrating evaluation as a core component of all P/CVE/ and De-radicalisation initiatives and ensuring it is recognized as essential for accountability and learning.
- **To promote leadership commitment**: Encourage organisational leaders to publicly commit to using evaluation findings to guide decision-making. This can be institutionalised through policies that require leaders to follow up on and publicise evaluation outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 7: TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF PVE/CVE/ DE-RADICALISATION INITIATIVES BASED ON AN ARTICULATED THEORY OF CHANGE AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Policy makers should promote and support the development of initiatives that indicate clear and well-defined theory of change processes and objectives.

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Essential considerations for implementing this recommendation:

- **To adopt a collaborative process of creation of a solid theory of change at the stage of the initiative design:** to develop policies that require the collaborative creation of theories of change involving donors, policy makers, implementers, and local partners. This ensures a shared understanding of the drivers of violent extremism and the strategic approach and actions to address them.
- **To promote continuous learning:** To adopt and implement policies that mandate the ongoing testing and updating of theories of change based on emerging research and evaluation findings. This promotes adaptive and evidence-based program design.
- **To provide a clear objectives framework:** to establish a standardised framework for defining clear and realistic objectives at the outset of any PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiative. This framework should guide program designers to set targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). This framework could be derived from/or based on the INDEED toolkit.
- **To facilitate the expectation management:** to create guidelines for different organisations working in the PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation field to engage in open dialogue about realistic expectations and achievable outcomes. Policies should require joint development of goals and objectives between funders, implementers, and local stakeholders.

5.2 Evaluation Methodologies

Recommendation 8: To ensure sufficient funding and resources for evidence-based evaluation of P/CVE/DeRad initiatives

Evidence-based evaluation requires additional fundings and resources (time, financial, human resources). It is then imperative to integrate the planning of evaluation when designing an initiative.
Essential considerations for the implementation of this recommendation:

- **To promote institutionalised funding:** to advocate for the institutionalisation of evaluation funding within government budgets and international donor frameworks. Policies should support long-term, sustainable funding models that prioritise both immediate and structural initiatives.
- **To provide multi-year funding for the evaluation mechanisms and process:** to advocate for multi-year funding mechanisms that support long-term structural approaches to P/CVE evidence-based evaluation, recognising the limitations of short-term funding and the need for sustainable impact and continuous learning.
- **To allocate required Human resources**: Governments and funding bodies should allocate optimal Human resources specifically for evaluation purposes. This includes skilled (in evaluation and in the subject domain of the evaluation) personnel and time to ensure comprehensive and high-quality evidence-based evaluations.

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5.3 During Implementing an Initiative

Recommendation 9: To ensure the engagement of different stakeholders based on an open positive communication

To have a strong and consistent evidence-based evaluation for the PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiative, it is important to engage different stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of the evaluated initiative while establishing a strong communication between all of them during the evaluation process.
Essential considerations for the implementation of this recommendation:

- **To promote inclusive participation in the evaluation process:** To develop policies that mandate the inclusion of targeted beneficiaries in the design and implementation of evaluation stages of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives. This ensures that programs are responsive to the needs and insights of those most affected by violent extremism, and that they are inclusively engaged in the evaluation stages. This fosters ownership and enhances the relevance and impact of initiatives and evaluation's findings.
- **To develop local partnership policies:** To develop policies that mandate the involvement of local partners in the evidence-based design and implementation of evaluation of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives. This includes building trust and ensuring that local insights and needs are incorporated into program objectives and strategies.
- **To develop effective communication strategies:** To establish policies that require the development of robust communication strategies for the evaluation of all PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives since its planning phase. These strategies should facilitate ongoing dialogue, feedback, and transparency among all stakeholders, building trust and ensuring meaningful engagement.
- **To ensure feedback mechanisms:** To implement policies that create formal feedback mechanisms where stakeholders, including local communities and implementers, can provide input and receive updates on the progress and outcomes of initiatives.

5.4 After the Initiative has Ended

Recommendation 10: To promote the utilisation of results and assessing long-term impact

When designing and implementing a policy or an initiative, it is necessary to promote and plan the utilisation of evaluation results and conduct long-term impact assessment.
Essential considerations for the implementation of this recommendation:

- **To disseminate the evaluation's results:** Create policies that mandate the dissemination of evaluation results to all relevant stakeholders. This includes developing accessible formats for sharing findings and integrating lessons learnt into future policy and program design.

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- **To foster a learning culture:** Promote policies that foster a culture of learning within organisations and among stakeholders. This includes incentivising the use of evaluation findings to drive continuous improvement and long-term change.
- **To create long-Term evaluation frameworks:** Develop policies that support long-term evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of P/CVE initiatives over extended periods. This includes establishing mechanisms for tracking and evaluating long-term outcomes.
- **To promote transparency and accountability:** Implement policies that ensure transparency and accountability in the dissemination of evaluation findings. This involves balancing the need for knowledge sharing with the protection of sensitive information.

RECOMMENDATION 11: TO OVERCOME POLITICISATION AND CONTROL MECHANISMS

To lead consistent and relevant evaluation, it is crucial to implement a neutral evaluation process and push for having a multi-stakeholder's approach. The neutrality is especially important in the situation of governmental change.
Essential considerations for the implementation of this recommendation:

- **To develop a neutral evaluation process:** Advocate for policies that ensure evaluation processes are neutral, independent, and free from political influence. This includes establishing clear guidelines and standards for conducting fair and objective evaluations.
- **To foster collaborative evaluation practices:** Promote policies that encourage collaborative evaluation practices, involving all stakeholders equally. This ensures that power asymmetry does not influence evaluation outcomes and that the findings are unbiased and credible.

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6 CONCLUSION

The evaluation of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation initiatives stands as a pivotal element in shaping effective and sustainable strategies against the growing threat of violent extremism. This report, a result of three years of the INDEED project, has systematically explored the various dimensions of the evaluation of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives, identifying key challenges and proposing targeted recommendations to enhance their effectiveness.

The policy recommendations provided in this report are designed to guide stakeholders — EU commission, government agencies, local and regional authorities, international organisations, implementing partners, donors, local communities, and civil society groups — in enhancing the effectiveness and impact of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives. By addressing these recommendations, stakeholders can create a more accountable, transparent, and effective framework for tackling violent extremism and terrorism. These recommendations provide a comprehensive framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating initiatives in a way that promotes continuous learning and evidence-based decision-making.

One of the central themes of this report is the indispensable role of a **supportive environment for evaluation**. Successful evaluation efforts require more than just technical know-how; they necessitate an organizational culture that prioritizes and values evidence-based decision-making. This involves cultivating an environment where evaluation is seen as an integral part of the organizational mission, rather than as a peripheral or optional activity. Leadership must actively endorse and invest in evaluation, ensuring that it is adequately resourced and positioned as a key driver of accountability and learning.

The importance of **clearly defined objectives and a robust theory of change cannot be overstated**. These elements serve as the strategic backbone of any PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiative, providing the necessary focus and direction to guide both implementation and evaluation. By articulating clear goals and mapping out how specific initiatives are expected to lead to desired outcomes, stakeholders can ensure that initiatives are grounded and responsive to the specific contexts in which they operate. This clarity also enhances the evaluability of initiatives, making it easier to measure progress and assess impact.

Collaboration across sectors and among diverse stakeholders is another cornerstone of effective PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives. Violent extremism is a complex and multifaceted problem that requires a coordinated response. By fostering partnerships between government agencies, local and regional authorities, civil society, local communities, international organizations, and other relevant actors, stakeholders can leverage complementary strengths and resources. This collaborative approach not only enriches the evaluation process but also ensures that the initiatives are comprehensive and inclusive, addressing the root causes of violent extremism from multiple angles.

Engaging these stakeholders through transparent and effective communication is vital for building trust and ensuring the success of the evaluation of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives. Trust is the bedrock of any collaborative effort, and it is particularly important in sensitive areas such as countering violent extremism. Open

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channels of communication, where stakeholders feel heard and valued, can foster greater participation and buy-in, leading to more effective and sustainable evaluation initiatives. This engagement must also be inclusive, considering the perspectives of all relevant groups, including those most affected by violent extremism.

Securing sustainable funding is critical to the long-term success of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives. Evaluation requires consistent and adequate financial support to be effective. This report emphasizes the need for long-term funding commitments that are aligned with the strategic goals of the initiatives. Diversified funding sources can also provide a buffer against financial uncertainties, ensuring that evaluation activities can continue uninterrupted and that their findings can be acted upon.

The implementation of robust evaluation methodologies is essential for generating credible, reliable, and actionable insights. The report advocates for the use of mixed-method approaches, which combine quantitative and qualitative data to provide a fuller picture of the impact of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives. Additionally, continuous capacity building for evaluation practitioners is necessary to keep pace with evolving challenges and to maintain high standards of methodological rigour. Innovation in evaluation practices, tailored to the specific contexts of these initiatives, can further enhance the relevance and utility of evaluation findings.

Another key focus of this report is the **utilization of evaluation results**. Evaluation is only valuable if its findings are used to inform decision-making and improve practice. This requires a strategic approach to dissemination, ensuring that results are communicated effectively to all relevant stakeholders and that there are mechanisms in place for integrating feedback into future iterations of the initiatives. A culture of continuous learning and adaptation is essential for ensuring that PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives remain relevant and effective in the face of changing circumstances.

Finally, the report addresses **the challenges of politicization and control mechanisms** that can undermine the objectivity and credibility of evaluations. It is crucial that evaluations are conducted independently and free from undue influence, ensuring that their findings are trusted and can serve as a solid foundation for policy and practice. Overcoming these challenges requires a commitment to transparency, accountability, and the highest ethical standards in the conduct of evaluations.

In conclusion, **the evaluation of PVE/CVE/De-radicalisation initiatives is not merely a technical exercise but a strategic necessity for achieving long-term success** in preventing and countering violent extremism. By fostering a supportive environment, defining clear objectives, promoting cross-sector collaboration, securing sustainable funding, implementing robust methodologies, engaging stakeholders, and ensuring the effective utilization of results, stakeholders can significantly enhance the impact and sustainability of their efforts. This comprehensive approach to evaluation will be key to building more resilient communities and promoting lasting peace and security in the face of the ongoing threat of violent extremism.

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7 ANNEXES

7.1 ANNEX 1: AGENDA OF THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS WORKSHOP, 12 JULY 2024, RIGA

Agenda

Day 1 | 12 July 2024	
09:00 09:30	**Welcome & Arrival | Coffee & Connecting**
09:30 09:50	**Opening speech and presentation of the objective and the agenda of the workshop** ● Vice-President of the Riga City Council. ● INDEED project coordinator | PPHS. ● Senior programmes manager | Efus.
09:50 10:00	**Participants Introductions** Moderation | Efus
10:00 10:30	**The INDEED project and its results in a nutshell.** PPHS **The evaluation of PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives: Main gaps, needs and challenges and the INDEED tool.** ● VUB - University of Helsinki.
10:30 11:30	**Presentation of the report "Conducting planning process of evidence-based evaluation of four PVE / CVE / De-radicalisation initiatives": the purpose, the selection process of the initiatives, and the key findings.** ● CENTRIC **Spotlight on the selected initiatives: 5' per initiatives** ● long-term programme| Denmark. ● Short-term action | Poland. ● Long term programme | Romania. ● Ad-hoc intervention | Greece. **Q&A** 15'
11h30 11h40	**Coffee Break**
11h40 11h45	**Presentation of the participatory group sessions outline and methodology** ● Efus.
11h45 12h45	**First session of a participatory group exercise: Lessons Learnt.** Formulating lessons learnt based on experienced difficulties and challenges in the planning and evaluation design process of the selected initiatives.
12h45 13h15	**Presentation of the conclusion of the discussion of the first session by each leader of the group.**
13h15 14h30	**Lunch break**

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14h30 **15h30**	**Second session of the participatory group exercise: Policy Recommendations.** Formulating policy recommendations on what is important for evidence-based designing and evaluation planning processes (based on the four initiatives).
15h30 **16h00**	**Presentation of the conclusion of the discussion of the second session by each leader of the group.**
16h00 **16h30**	**Coffee break**
16h30 **17h00**	**Presentation of the conclusions of the two working groups sessions** ● Efus. **Q&A and Discussion**
17:00 **17h30**	**Closing Remarks** ● PPHS. ● Efus. ● Riga City Council.

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