Deradicalisation and Disengagement Programming in Prisons and Rehabilitation Centres

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Executive Summary

The concepts of deradicalisation and disengagement and are often applied in parallel, with the former generally interpreted in terms of attitudinal change (i.e. reducing sympathy for such violence), and the latter relating instead to behavioural change (i.e. no longer directly contributing to violence). The number of programmes aiming to achieve these objectives has increased substantially over recent years, including in locations such as Indonesia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, and Yemen. While the effects of Preventing / Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) programmes is notoriously difficult to measure, there is a strong case that such initiatives have the potential to deliver greater 'bang per buck' than other intervention types, for the reasons discussed in this paper. Of course, optimising efforts to counter this violence should clearly be of importance to the EU both on moral grounds (in relation to addressing violence in the countries in which interventions occur), and as a matter of 'enlightened self-interest' (as there is a continued threat of this violence being imported to Europe). Of course, the risks associated to such programmes are also prominent, precisely because they provide an existential threat to violent extremist organisations.

This paper covers a range of themes relating to disengagement and deradicalisation programmes, including their activities, staffing considerations, facility upgrades, segregation policies, how to determine their success (or failure), and criteria through which to assess suitable locations for such initiatives. The key recommendations are as follows:

- **Tailored interventions:** Most of these programmes converge around a similar range of services, including basic education, vocational training, religious education, civic education, psychological (or psychosocial) support, family initiatives, sports and recreational activities and reintegration support. Individuals may be drawn to violent extremism for a broad range of reasons and have distinct personal aspirations. As such, these interventions should ideally be tailored to individual circumstances and needs, rather than one-size-fits-all. Of course, the programme in its entirety will also have to comply with national, regional, and international rights standards.

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- **Sequential onset of programme activities:** Programme designers should also consider adopting a 'lowest hanging fruit' approach in which individual components of the broader initiative are sequentially added over time. This way, activities that do not require extensive specialist input during their design phase and that are likely to generate immediate buy-in from beneficiaries (e.g. sports and recreational activities), can be prioritized over those that are more complex and have the potential to provoke suspicion or hostility simply because of their sensitive nature (e.g. psychological support and religious education).

- **Staff suitability:** Many of the above activities require specialist staff, including vocational instructors, teachers, imams, social workers, and sports coaches. Irrespective of whether these roles are filled by existing facility staff, external implementing partners, or a combination of both, it is often difficult to identify suitably experienced and qualified professionals who are willing to work in such facilities. This is particularly problematic given that is also difficult to overstate the importance of personal relations between centre staff and programme beneficiaries.

- **Staff training:** Such programmes should generally include training within their budgets, both for the specialist staff and facility guards. This may include standard modules for such facilities (e.g. administrative procedures, human rights, detention centre security, vulnerable groups, complaints and procedures, and so on), as well as ones relating specifically to violent extremism (e.g. recognizing signs of radicalisation, assessing violent extremist prisoners, and so on).

- **Facility upgrades:** There is a general consensus that interventions of this nature are less likely to succeed in centres that fail to meet adequate standards in terms of physical facilities, including accommodation, educational areas, kitchen facilities, and so on. As such, there is also a strong argument for those tasked with designing these programmes to consider addressing such issues through the programme budget.

- **Segregation policies:** To the extent that those already involved in violent extremism have the potential to influence others in such facilities, there is certainly a strong argument for segregation policies that limit or prevent such interactions. Such policies also enable the authorities to concentrate scarce resources, including staff with specialist skills and training relating to violent extremism. Yet, there are also strong arguments against such policies, including that they may reinforce the notion that such organisations hold a political status, and that they may inadvertently help such groups maintain their internal structure and discipline. Such policies also have the potential to undermine the process of deradicalisation as this can occur through interactions between violent extremists and their non-ideological counterparts if the two groups are able to mix. The bottom line is that there is no 'correct' approach, and the preferred strategy will depend on a range of contextual factors.

- **Benefits to other detainees:** Irrespective of the above, programme designers must also consider that tertiary P/CVE programmes may potentially deliver adverse consequences if those detained on grounds other than violent extremism are excluded from the benefits. In particular, they may generate jealousies and hostilities that may undermine the general functioning of these facilities.

- **Programme objectives:** Debates among the community of experts often revolve around whether the objectives of such programmes should relate to the concepts of deradicalisation, disengagement or reintegration, and whether such programmes should also adopt more elevated overarching statements of purpose relating to violent extremism in the location in question more broadly. This is something that should be considered at the outset of each initiative as it is likely to influence programme design decisions.

- **Suitable locations for such programmes:** While there is no simple formula to determine environments that may be suitable for this form of initiative, at the very least policymakers should consider the extent to which key government stakeholders are likely to be willing and able to provide their support, security considerations, existing levels of community acceptance for such programmes, and (for centres designed to encourage voluntary exits from this violence) the current rates of disengagement. In the current context, decisions regarding suitable locations may also have to consider local COVID-19 situations.

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy paper provides information about deradicalisation and disengagement programmes in prisons and rehabilitation centres. To place its content in context it is worth first elaborating on public health interpretations of the Preventing / Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) framework,[2] which categorise initiatives in the following manner:

- **Primary P/CVE:** These interventions correspond to primary prevention initiatives in health care that aim to prevent disease or disorder before it occurs. In the case of P/CVE, they aim to prevent broad communities from sympathising with violent extremism, including through communications campaigns, interfaith dialogues, cultural events with a message of tolerance, and so on.
- **Secondary P/CVE:** These initiatives correspond to health initiatives targeted at individuals deemed 'at risk' of specific diseases and disorders. In the context of P/CVE, this relates to those 'at risk' of becoming involved in violent extremism (according to their age, gender, affiliations, behaviours, etc.), with initiatives attempting to channel them in alternative directions through mentorship, vocational training and a range of other tailored interventions.
- **Tertiary P/CVE:** This corresponds to health initiatives that aim to lessen the impact of existing diseases and disorders. In the case of P/CVE, this refers to initiatives that aim to positively influence the attitudes and/or behaviours of individuals currently or previously involved in violent extremism through basic education, vocational training, religious education, and so on.

The disengagement and deradicalisation programmes considered in this paper fall under the third of these categories. The number of such programmes has increased substantially over recent years, with prison-based initiatives in the global south occurring in countries such as Indonesia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, and Yemen. While each of these programmes is unique, many converge around a similar range of services, including basic education, vocational training, religious education, civic education, psychological (or psychosocial) support, family initiatives, sports and recreational activities and reintegration support. Semi-open rehabilitation centres for former violent extremists deemed to be at 'low risk' of returning to violence, including those in Nigeria and Somalia, also qualify as tertiary P/CVE. Aside from offering a similar range of basic services, these initiatives also attempt to directly encourage disengagement through outreach initiatives and other 'upstream' activities.

Given that they target individuals with existing connections to violent extremism, tertiary initiatives occur at the 'sharp end' of the P/CVE framework, and this is reflected by greater potential rewards and risks. Considering these in turn, it is worth first observing that those tasked with designing P/CVE programmes must answer a variety of key questions, including the following:

[2] On this framework, see for instance Shandon Harris-Hogan, Kate Barrelle, and Andrew Zammit, "What is Countering Violent Extremism? Exploring CVE Policy and Practice in Australia", *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8/1 (2016), 6-24.

- **Who should the beneficiaries be?** Programme designers must consider whether their initiatives should target entire communities or specific population subsets, and in the latter case they must establish suitable criteria (location, age, gender, and so on) through which to determine the beneficiaries.
- **What form should the interventions take?** P/CVE initiatives take a multitude of forms (as indicated above), and programme designers must consider which of these are most likely to deliver the desired objectives, financial costs of different intervention types, whether they are likely to generate 'buy-in' from local officials, and so on.

Such questions tend to be more easily answerable for those tasked with designing tertiary programmes, and as such there is a strong case that they have greater 'bang per buck' potential than other P/CVE intervention types. Put simply, the beneficiaries are identified as those with a background of involvement in this violence, and this helps avoid inadvertently targeting individuals never genuinely likely to become involved (as occurs with secondary initiatives). In addition, the most suitable forms of intervention can be determined through simply interviewing these beneficiaries to determine their prior motives for involvement in violence, future aspirations, and so on. Of course, optimising efforts to counter this violence should clearly be of importance to the EU both on moral grounds (i.e. in relation to addressing violence in the countries in which interventions occur), and as a matter of 'enlightened self-interest' (i.e. as there is a continued threat of this violence being imported to Europe).

Of course, **the risks associated to such programmes are also prominent, precisely because these interventions provide an existential threat to violent extremist organisations.** On this basis, policymakers should be prepared to allocate a substantial proportion of their budget to security measures, at least in the case of rehabilitation centres. Given the sensitive nature of this programming, issues with local stakeholders are also likely to be more prominent. One consequence may be that they limit access to these beneficiaries, which raises obvious questions about transparency. It may also be that key local stakeholders fail to 'buy-in' to the notion that those previously involved in this violence can genuinely reform. It is worth adding that tertiary programmes are multidisciplinary in nature, and this also may be problematic in certain locations. For instance, it may be problematic if there are gaps in local capacity in certain programmatic areas, or if cooperation between the different departments proves to be challenging for whatever reason.

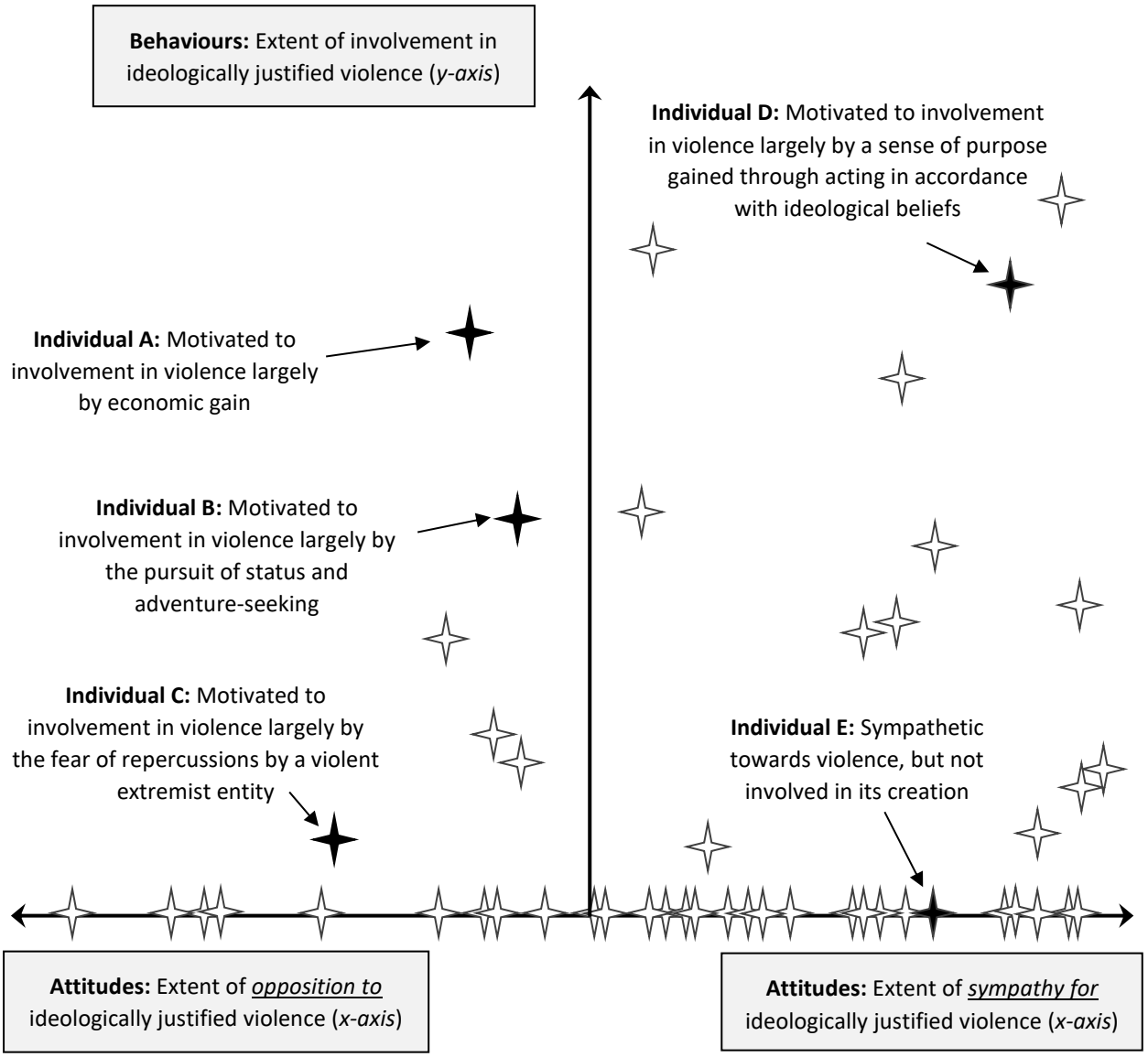
2. KEY CONCEPTS

Before elaborating on the dual concepts of deradicalisation and disengagement, it is first necessary to briefly discuss the prominent disconnect between sympathy for violent extremism and actual involvement in this violence.[3] On the one hand, individuals who sympathize with this violence often

[3] This section draws heavily from James Khalil, John Horgan and Martine Zeuthen, "The Attitudes-Behaviours Corrective (ABC) Model of Violent Extremism", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546553.2019.1699793

remain uninvolved in its production (as represented by *Individual E* in *Figure 1*). Conversely, and more importantly for the purposes of this paper, many of those actually involved in this violence are unsympathetic or indifferent to its ideology and objectives. Instead, they often act in pursuit of a salary, vengeance, adventure, status, and other personal incentives, or as they are simply coerced into involvement (as represented by *Individuals A*, *B* and *C* in *Figure 1*). As discussed in the subsequent sections, tertiary initiatives must incorporate a range of different services in an attempt to address these varied motives.

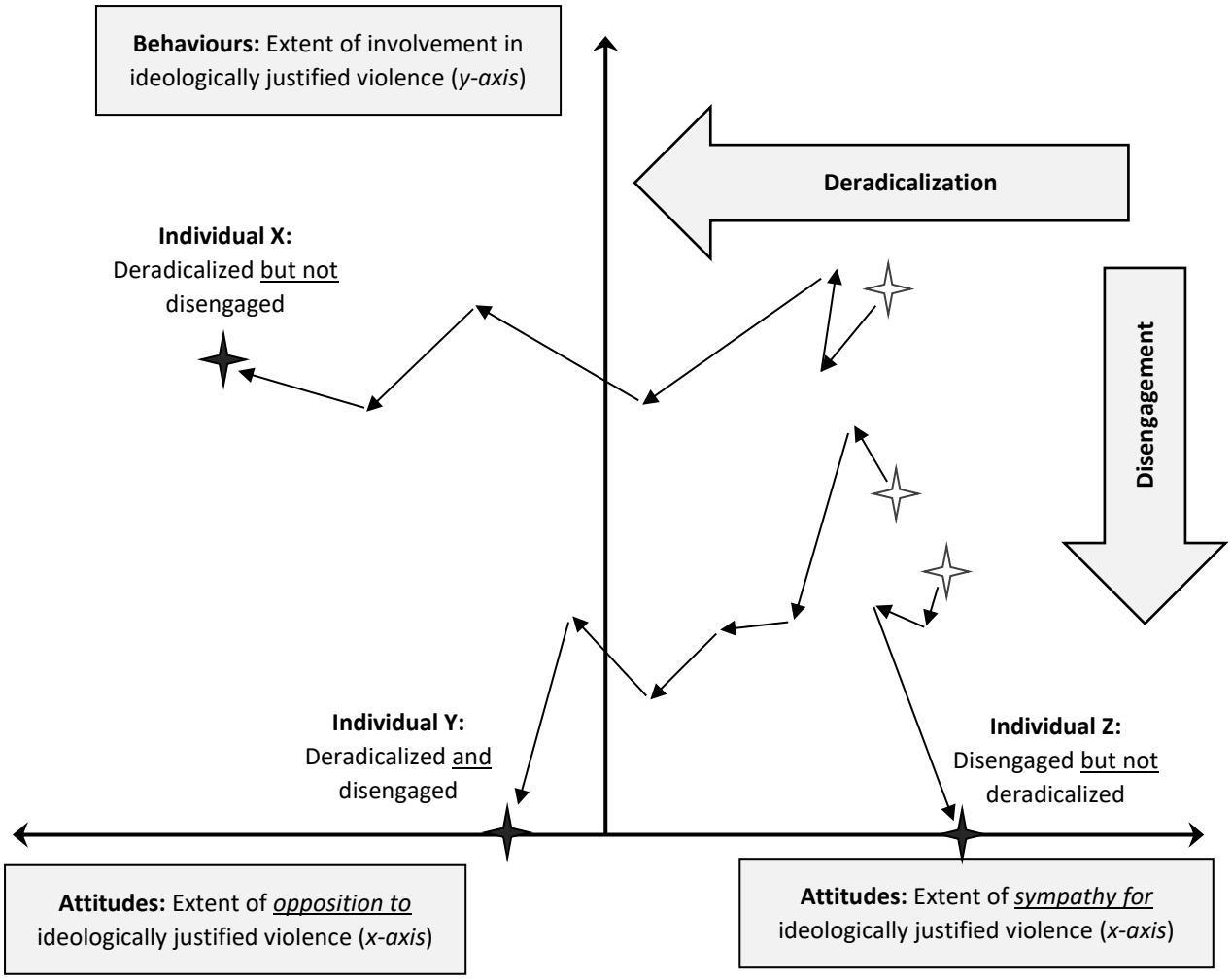
Figure 1: The Partial Disconnect between Attitudes and Behaviours[4]



[4] The figures in this paper are adapted from James Khalil, Rory Brown, Chris Chant, Peter Olowo and Nick Wood, "Deradicalisation and Disengagement in Somalia: Evidence from a Rehabilitation Programme with Former Members of al-Shabaab" (Whitehall Report 4-18, Royal United Services Institute, UK, 2019), 9, 11.

With this critical disconnect in mind, **the term deradicalisation is most often applied to refer to positive attitudinal change in relation to violent extremism** (as demonstrated schematically in *Figure 2*).[5] By contrast, the concept of **disengagement is invariably defined in behavioural terms**, **either in relation to individuals exiting violent extremist organisation, or to them ending their involvement in this violence.** It is important to consider these to be distinct (although obviously interrelated) processes as attitudinal change often occurs without a corresponding behavioural change (as represented by *Individual X*), and *vice versa* (*Individual Z*). For instance, the former transpires in cases where individuals are prevented from exiting by the threat of retaliation by the violent extremist group in question. The latter often occurs where individuals elect to dedicate more time to their families rather than violence, if they 'burn out' due to their clandestine and dangerous lifestyle, and so on.

Figure 2: Deradicalization and Disengagement Pathways



[5] For more on these concepts, see for instance Mary Beth Altier, Christian Thoroughgood and John Horgan, "Turning away from Terrorism: Lessons from Psychology, Sociology and Criminology," *Journal of Peace Studies* 51, no. 5 (2014): 648; Shane Bryans, *Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons* (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, New York, 2016), 141; Sarah Marsden, *Reintegrating Extremists: Deradicalisation and Desistance* (Lancaster: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 8; and Bart Schuurman and Edwin Bakker, "Reintegrating Jihadist Extremists: Evaluating a Dutch Initiative, 2013-2014," *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8, No. 1, (2015), 3.

The third key concept of relevance to this paper is **reintegration, which is often broken down into social, economic, and political components**.[6] The first of these is usually interpreted in terms of former violent extremists ending their association with violent extremists and enhancing their connections to 'positive influences' among their family and community members. It is important to recall that tribal and clan authorities can help facilitate this process in many parts of the global south. Without overlooking that unemployment and underemployment levels are also frequently high in locations that experience this violence, economic reintegration is usually interpreted in terms of these individuals obtaining livelihoods opportunities that meet their financial needs (and those of their dependants, where relevant), or in certain cases pursuing additional education. These first two components are often closely interlinked, in that supportive family or community members are frequently the gatekeepers to work. As expressed by Stina Torjesen, the political component of reintegration 'involves ending efforts to achieve political goals through violent means.'[7] Although widely applied, this third element is problematic as many do not become involved in this violence in pursuit of political goals (as discussed in relation to *Figure 1*), and as those that did pursue such objectives may simply decide to forfeit these aims for a low-key life following disengagement.

3. PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

As discussed in the previous section, individuals become involved in violent extremism for a variety of different reasons, and to address this tertiary P/CVE programmes tend to provide a broad range of services, including: basic education, vocational training, religious education, civic education, psychological (or psychosocial) support, family initiatives, sports and recreational activities and reintegration support.[8] Before discussing these in turn, it is worth first highlighting the following four overarching points:

- **Gap analysis and local stakeholder priorities:** Some of the initiatives listed below are likely to already be provided in certain facilities, and it is necessary to ensure that the support is not redundant in such cases. Not all tertiary programmes include all of these elements, and the support provided will also often have to align with the priorities of local stakeholders.

[6] See, for instance, Marsden, *Reintegrating Extremists*; and Stina Torjesen, "Towards a Theory of Ex-Combatant Reintegration", *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 2, No. 3, (2013), 1-13.

[7] Torjesen, "Towards a Theory", 4.

[8] For more on these activities in a variety of different contexts, see for instance Atta Barkindo and Shane Bryans, "De-Radicalising Prisoners in Nigeria: Developing a Basic Prison Based De-Radicalisation Programme," *Journal of Deradicalization* 7, (2016); Adrian Cherney, 'Evaluating Interventions to Disengage Extremist Offenders: A Study of the Proactive Integrated Support Model (PRISM), *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, in print; Hamed El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalization Programs* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Hamed El-Said and Jane Harrigan, *Deradicalizing Violent Extremists: Counter-Radicalization and Deradicalization Programmes and their Impact in Muslim Majority States* (Oxon; Routledge, 2013); and Malkanthi Hettiarachchi, 'Sri Lanka's Rehabilitation Program: A New Frontier in Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency', *PRISM: Journal for the Center of Complex Operations* 4/2 (2013); Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement".

- **Tailored to the needs of beneficiaries:** The provisions should be tailored to the needs of each beneficiary, rather than one-size-fits-all, to the extent that this is possible in each location given the resource constraints.[9]
- **Human rights compliant:** The programme in its entirety will have to comply with national, regional, and international human rights standards. While the specifics will reflect the nature of each initiative in question, it is worth adding that in the case of the Serendi centre in Mogadishu this covered the adequacy of living and learning facilities, disciplinary procedures, complaints mechanisms, entrance and exit processes, and so on.
- **COVID-19 implications:** While the impact of COVID-19 on future tertiary programmes is difficult to predict at this stage, it may also influence the nature of the activities. For instance, certain activities (perhaps sports) may be deemed excessively risky, it may impact on the availability of suitably experienced and qualified professionals, and so on.

It is also worth observing that **in many contexts there is a strong case for adopting a 'lowest hanging fruit' approach in which implementers sequentially add new components of the programme over time.**[10] Through this approach, elements that do not require extensive specialist input for design (e.g. sports and recreational activities) can be prioritised over those that do (e.g. religious education and psychological support). Additionally, implementers can prioritise elements that are most likely to generate 'buy-in' from beneficiaries (e.g. again, sports and recreational activities) over those that may provoke suspicion simply because the programme is new and being implemented by an external agency (e.g. psychological support and religious education).

Basic education

Basic education provisions are common to many tertiary P/CVE programmes, including those in Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, and Sri Lanka. For instance, at the Serendi rehabilitation centre in Mogadishu, the education provisions cover 'standard school subjects such as maths, Somali, Arabic, English, science, history and social studies,' with the classes aligned to the national curriculum.[11] Of course, such classes should ideally cover a range of levels to ensure that they are relevant to each individual, and to allow beneficiaries to progress. Aside from offering a key life skill, part of the logic of providing basic education is that it may help beneficiaries find work at a later date, thereby encouraging them away from violent extremism. As with all of the interventions listed in this section, it also provides an important communication effect by demonstrating that the state is genuinely interested in the wellbeing of the beneficiaries, in contradiction to the message of many violent extremist groups.

[9] See, for instance, Christopher Dean, 'The Healthy Identity Intervention: The UK's Development of a Psychologically Informed Intervention to Address Extremist Offending', in Silke (ed.), *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*, 94; and Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 23-25.

[10] This would replicate the approach adopted by an UN-funded prison deradicalisation initiative in Somalia, as described in James Khalil, 'Pilot Rehabilitation Project for High Risk Prisoners in the Baidoa Prison', 2017, at: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/somalia_january_2017_-_evaluation_of_rehabilitation_project_in_baidoa_prison.pdf

[11] Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 23.

Vocational training

Vocational training is also common to many programmes, including those in Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, and Sri Lanka. Even more so than basic education, vocational training is provided specifically with future livelihoods prospects in mind, thus relating primarily to disengagement (rather than deradicalisation) aims. To place this service in context, it is worth observing that the promise of a salary and other material benefits are often key motives for involvement in violent extremism in many locations.[12] Of course, the vocational options must be appropriate to local contexts, as ideally revealed by recent livelihoods surveys, with these potentially including trades such as carpentry, metalwork, printing, electronics, hairdressing and painting.[13] Given that the prospects for employment are poor in many locations experiencing violent extremism, implementers should certainly also consider supplementing these provisions with 'build your own business' and entrepreneurship training.

Religious education

Religious education is also regularly provided through such programmes, including in Australia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Somalia. With many motivated into involvement in violence by religious and political ideologies, this intervention relates specifically to deradicalisation (rather than disengagement) aims. Unsurprisingly, religious elements are invariably identified as being among the most problematic component of tertiary interventions. While perhaps generally more applicable in 'the West', a first key issue relates to the right of freedom of religion, and concerns that the state may be acting as 'thought police'.[14] A second is that religious leaders involved in such initiatives are often viewed as being little more than 'captured' state agents, with this often reportedly impacting of their ability to influence the beneficiaries.[15] Nevertheless, there remain strong arguments in favour of religious education initiatives given the central role that ideological motives often play.

Civic education

Civic education is seemingly less frequently provided through such programmes, and as with religious education is principally associated with deradicalisation (rather than disengagement) objectives. As observed by Shane Bryans, 'space should be provided within the wider education curriculum for learning about citizenship, reinforcing the values, rights, duties and responsibilities of individuals towards each other and in relation to the State.'[16] Bryans adds that 'learning about law, justice, fairness, human rights and ethics in public life, democracy, the role of government, critical thinking

[12] See, for instance, Khalil et al "The Attitudes-Behaviours Corrective (ABC) Model"
[13] Bryans, "Handbook on the Management", 83.
[14] See, for instance, Daniel Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017) 201.
[15] Although relating specifically to the UK, this point is perhaps best expressed by Douglas Weeks, 'Doing Derad: An Analysis of the UK System', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 41, No. 7 (2018), 529-30.
[16] Bryans, "Handbook on the Management", 80.

and constructive debate is essential in countering subjective interpretations of the world propagated by violent extremists', and that 'civic responsibility and citizenship may also build a shared sense of culture within a society that consists of a diverse mix of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.'[17] In the case of the Serendi centre in Somalia, such efforts contributed to positive attitudinal change regarding political leaders, the Somali National Army (SNA), and elections and broader democratic principles.[18]

Psychological (or psychosocial) support

Psychological (or psychosocial) support takes many different forms and is implemented with many differing objectives in mind. For instance, in the case of the Serendi centre in Mogadishu, the provisions include both psychosocial support (involving solution-focused counselling and group-work to address conditions such as anxiety and PTSD) and psychiatric treatment, with cases that require institutional care referred to external mental-health service providers. [19] This support is provided primarily on ethical grounds, rather than to encourage individuals away from violent extremism. By contrast, psychological interventions through the Healthy Identity Intervention (HII) in the UK do specifically aim to influence attitudes and behaviours. Specifically, the purpose of these efforts is to encourage beneficiaries to fulfil their needs legitimately, increase their emotional tolerance and acceptance, reduce their offense-supportive attitudes, beliefs and thinking, increase their personal agency, and express their values and pursue their goals legitimately.[20]

Also under the umbrella of psychology, creative activities (including painting, poetry, and so on) are also often provided for therapeutic value, as a means of self-expression, and to provide a safe avenue for beneficiaries to learn about their own motivations for involvement in violent extremism, social issues, and so on. This umbrella also incorporates cognitive training, which often involve approaches that are 'rooted in addressing the structure of thinking rather than the content of the ideas believed to support violence.'[21] More than the other forms of intervention, psychological support represents a specialist thematic area, and so it is critical that such initiatives are designed by suitably qualified and experienced individuals, ideally with prior experience in the country in question. While many of the interventions discussed in this section should be tailored to individual needs, this is particularly the case with psychological initiatives.

Family support

Efforts to reconnect beneficiaries to their families are also often incorporated into tertiary initiatives, including in Australia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, and Sri Lanka. While families are most often viewed in relation to their potential role during aftercare and reintegration (as discussed

[17] Bryans, "Handbook on the Management", 80.
[18] Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 24.
[19] Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 24.
[20] Dean, 'The Healthy Identity Intervention', 98-100.
[21] As discussed in Marsden, *Reintegrating Extremists*, 75.

shortly), they can also have an important influence over violent extremists while they are still in facilities.[22] This issue is discussed at length by Shane Bryans:

> Violent extremist prisoners retain, within certain limits, their right to family life and not to be totally isolated from society, even though they may be prevented from physical interaction with the outside world. Prisoners' ability to maintain contacts with the outside world, in particular their families, is also fundamental to their prospects of successful social reintegration … As appropriate prison facilities may be located far from prisoners' families in some countries, prison administrations should make special efforts to prevent the breakdown of family ties, with visits, letters and phone calls being allowed to the maximum possible extent, while ensuring that the requisite security precautions are in place.[23]

Sports and recreational activities

Sports and recreational activities are also often included in tertiary programmes, including in locations such as Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Sri Lanka. While certain commentators primarily emphasise the physical benefits of such initiatives, they are also important in that they may encourage pro-social thinking and behaviour.[24] As already observed, sports and recreational activities may provide a 'low-hanging fruit' option for implementers keen to generate buy-in to such programmes during their initial phases. In the words of Shane Bryans, 'sport will often be the first point of entry into the prison regime – an initial engagement in an activity which is likely to be regarded as providing fun and escape from everyday routine and less likely to be a public statement of conformity.'[25]

Reintegration support

Reintegration support refers to aftercare services offered to beneficiaries, with provisions tending to include family support, assistance with connecting to the community, various forms of financial support (including relocation support in certain cases), and the facilitation of work and education opportunities. As with psychological support, these provisions tend to vary notably between contexts. For instance, in the case of Saudi Arabia:

> Officials consider three elements for re-socialisation and successful reintegration: a detainees' willingness to get married and re-join his wife and family; his participation in university or other continuing education; and his re-joining the workforce. With this in mind, the Ministry of Interior activity helps former detainees on all these fronts by providing financial assistance, helping him find a job, or providing other necessary social services. Prince Mohammed bin Nayef has even attended ex-detainees' weddings in order to show support for their post-release life and to encourage their settling down with a family.[26]

[22] Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 25.
[23] Bryans, "Handbook on the Management", 13.
[24] For instance, as observed by Barkindo and Bryans, 'De-Radicalising Prisons in Nigeria', 16.
[25] Bryans, "Handbook on the Management", 93.
[26] Marisa Porges, 'Saudi Arabia's "Soft" Approach to Terrorist Prisoners: A Model for Others?', in Andrew Silke, (ed.) *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*, 176.

By contrast, the Serendi programme in Mogadishu offers more limited support,[27] with this partly reflecting the fact that resources are more constrained in this case. However, a conscious decision was also made by stakeholders to channel more resources to other aspects of the initiative on the grounds that the objectives of the Serendi programme are to incentivise voluntarily disengagements from al-Shabaab, rather than to help beneficiaries reintegrate *per se*.

4. STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

Many of the programme activities listed in the previous section require specialist staff, including vocational instructors, teachers, imams, social workers, and sports coaches. Irrespective of whether these roles are filled by existing facility staff (as occurs in the Nigerian prison programme), external implementing partners (as is the case in the Somali prison programme), or a combination of both (as occurs in the Serendi centre), **it is often difficult to identify suitably experienced and qualified professionals who are willing to work in such environments** (a problem potentially exacerbated by COVID-19, if a critical mass of qualified professionals choose to avoid working in crowded locations such as these). As expressed by Shane Bryans:

> Not every faith professional will be well suited for a therapeutic function. Faith professionals who are incredibly knowledgeable and experienced in their pastoral work may find it difficult to operate in the prison environment, as the rehabilitation of violent extremists requires a different set of skills and aptitudes. Assessing the faith professional's willingness and ability to work in the therapeutic environment should therefore be a key factor in the selection process.[28]

This is of key importance as it is difficult to overstate the relevance of personal relations between centre staff and programme beneficiaries. Research conducted at the Serendi centre in Mogadishu revealed that the attitudes of staff was a key driver of deradicalisation in many cases.[29] Focusing on the Nigerian prison programme, Atta Barkindo and Shane Bryans similarly observed that:

> When Treatment Team members work with violent extremists with transparency, empathy and decency, this can have a positive impact on the way the prisoners view government and its institutions. In the Nigerian de-radicalisation programme, Team members had very few resources to attend to the immediate needs of prisoners (such as health, legal issues, family contact, diet etc.), but they worked with the prisoners and the prison authorities to try and resolve such issues when possible. Beyond meeting immediate needs, the Treatment Team gave time; they empathised with prisoners and were neither harsh nor judgemental in their interaction and treatment. The prisoners stated to independent observers that this was the first time in their direct experience that government had showed an interest and they were treated with dignity and humanely.[30]

[27] Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 27-31.
[28] Bryans, "Handbook on the Management", 35.
[29] Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 25.
[30] Barkindo and Bryans, 'De-Radicalising Prisons in Nigeria', 21.

In any case, **the designers of these programmes should certainly consider the potential need for training within their budget, both for specialist staff and facility guards.** This may include standard modules for such facilities (e.g. administrative procedures, human rights, detention centre security, vulnerable groups, complaints and procedures, and so on), as well as ones relating specifically to violent extremism (e.g. recognising signs of radicalization, assessing violent extremist prisoners, and so on).

5. FACILITY UPGRADES

There is a general consensus that **tertiary interventions are less likely to succeed in centres that fail to meet adequate standards in terms of physical facilities, including accommodation, educational areas, kitchen facilities, and so on.** As such, there is a strong argument for those tasked with designing such initiatives to consider addressing applicable issues of this nature through the programme budget. To place this suggestion in context, it is worth highlighting the following upgrades that began at the Serendi centre in Mogadishu in 2016:

> Having previously been furnished with only basic mattresses, sheets and mosquito nets, the dormitories were equipped with new bunk beds and lockable personal storage boxes. The vocational skills workshops also underwent comprehensive renovations, and a barbershop was constructed to establish an additional livelihood option. The residents additionally benefited from a refurbished medical centre, a new canteen, kitchen block, games and television room, and football and basketball courts.[31]

With this in mind, it is worth observing that several Serendi beneficiaries reported that they were surprised by the quality of conditions on arrival, and that this provoked them to reconsider prior negative opinions of the Somali government, which in turn contributed to their deradicalisation.[32]

6. OTHER DETAINEES

Regarding prison contexts in particular, it is worth briefly considering the debate surrounding policies that segregate violent extremist inmates from those detained on other grounds, even though international stakeholders may ultimately have limited influence over such decisions. While the core premise of tertiary programmes is that they can encourage certain individuals to deradicalise and disengage, prisons are also widely considered to be 'breeding grounds' of violent extremism. It is certainly not implausible that these opposing processes occur simultaneously to different individuals within the same facility. While several notable commentators have cautioned against an uncritical acceptance of the supposed 'breeding ground' phenomenon,[33] to the extent that those already

[31] Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 20.
[32] Khalil et al, "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 25.
[33] See, for instance, Peter Neumann, "Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in Fifteen Countries" (International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, London, 2018), 25-27; Andrew Silke and Tinka Veldhuis, 'Countering

involved in violent extremism have the potential to influence others, there is certainly a strong argument for segregation policies that limit or prevent such interactions. Variants of this approach having been adopted within prison contexts in locations such as Australia, Malaysia, Nigeria, the Netherlands and the UK. Such policies also enable the authorities to concentrate scarce resources, including staff with specialist skills and training relating to violent extremism.

However, there are also strong arguments against such policies, including firstly that they may reinforce the notion that such organisations hold a political status, as was notoriously the case in Northern Ireland. Secondly, they may also inadvertently help such groups maintain their internal structure and discipline, as well as plan and orchestrate activities. In the words of Andrew Silke and Tinka Veldhuis, these may include 'mass escapes, riots, weapon smuggling, coordinated hunger strikes, the intimidation and assassination of prison staff, and sophisticated campaigns of political protest.'[34] Third, such policies have the potential to undermine the process of deradicalisation as this process can occur through interactions between violent extremists and their non-ideological counterparts if the two groups are able to mix. Finally, under certain circumstances such policies may exacerbate overcrowding issues. The bottom line is that there is no 'correct' approach, and to again quote Silke and Veldhuis 'the preferred strategy is likely to depend on a range of contextual factors, such as background and size of the inmate population, available resources and staff, levels of violence and gang activity, and inmate culture.'[35]

Irrespective of the above, **programme designers must also consider that tertiary initiatives may inadvertently deliver deleterious consequences if those detained on grounds other than violent extremism are excluded from the benefits**. To be more specific, they may generate jealousies and hostilities that may undermine the general functioning of these facilities. While the literature is relatively silent regarding solutions to this problem, the below quote from a prison programme in Baidoa, Somalia, is worth considering:

> To complicate matters further, there is seemingly a threat that the benefits received by the former al-Shabaab prisoners may provoke hostility the others –which in turn may undermine the functioning or security of the prisons. While the Prison Commander downplayed his concerns about this issue, the project team highlighted their apprehensions over such possible negative effects. Indeed, the provision of goats to the entire prison population was specifically designed to address this threat.[36]

7. DETERMINING PROGRAMME SUCCESS (OR FAILURE)

While it is notoriously difficult to determine the success of P/CVE programmes generally, this issue is arguably somewhat less pronounced for tertiary interventions simply because of their proximity to

Violent Extremism in Prisons: A Review of Key Recent Research and Critical Research Gaps', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, No. 5 (2017), 1-10.

[34] Silke and Veldhuis, 'Countering Violent Extremism in Prisons', 4.

[35] Silke and Veldhuis, 'Countering Violent Extremism in Prisons', 5.

[36] Khalil, 'Pilot Rehabilitation Project', 5.

beneficiaries. In any case, this section sequentially considers programme objectives, Theories of Change (TOC), and indicators, relying on the terminology outlined in *Box 1*. As is always the case, determining programme success (or failure) requires the team to articulate suitable objectives at the outset, with budgetary and time constraints in mind.

Programme Objectives[37]

Debates among the community of experts often revolve around whether the objectives of tertiary programmes should relate to attitudinal (i.e. deradicalisation) or behavioural (i.e. disengagement) change. Some favour the former, simply as they interpret the ultimate purpose of such initiatives to relate to a reduction in the rate of recidivism.[38] Viewed in this manner, an appropriate objective statement may be articulated along the following lines:

- *To prevent beneficiaries returning to involvement in violent extremism.*

Other experts instead promote the notion of deradicalisation on the grounds that individuals are often motivated to exit violence in the first place by attitudinal change, and as sustained disengagement may also be more likely if underpinned by deradicalisation. In other words, there are strong counterarguments for treating deradicalisation as being a parallel program objective, at least on a par with disengagement. This is the approach explicitly adopted by the Nigerian Prison Service and at the Serendi program in Somalia. Depending on circumstances, a potential objective statement along these lines may be:

- *To prevent beneficiaries returning to involvement in violent extremism, and to help them become (or remain) unsympathetic to such violence.*

Of course, it is worth recalling that not all of those involved in this violence are sympathetic to its ideology (as discussed in relation to *Figure 1*), and thus the deradicalisation objective is not necessarily applicable to all beneficiaries. This aside, empirical evidence regarding the relationship between deradicalisation and disengagement (see *Figure 2*) in the context of such programmes remains scarce, and this is perhaps an additional argument for explicitly aiming for both, at least until more evidence becomes available.

Shifting attention to the final concept discussed in *Section 2* of this paper, programme designers may choose instead to view their objectives in terms of reintegration,[39] with a suitable statement perhaps expressed as follows:

[37] This section draws heavily from Khalil et al, "The Attitudes-Behaviours Corrective (ABC) Model".

[38] For instance, this stance is advocated by Andrew Silke, "Disengagement or Deradicalization: A Look at Prison Programs for Jailed Terrorists," *CTC Sentinel* 4, no. 1 (2011), 20.

[39] An increasingly number of experts are advocating for this approach, including Marsden, *Reintegrating Extremists,* 3, 10-11.

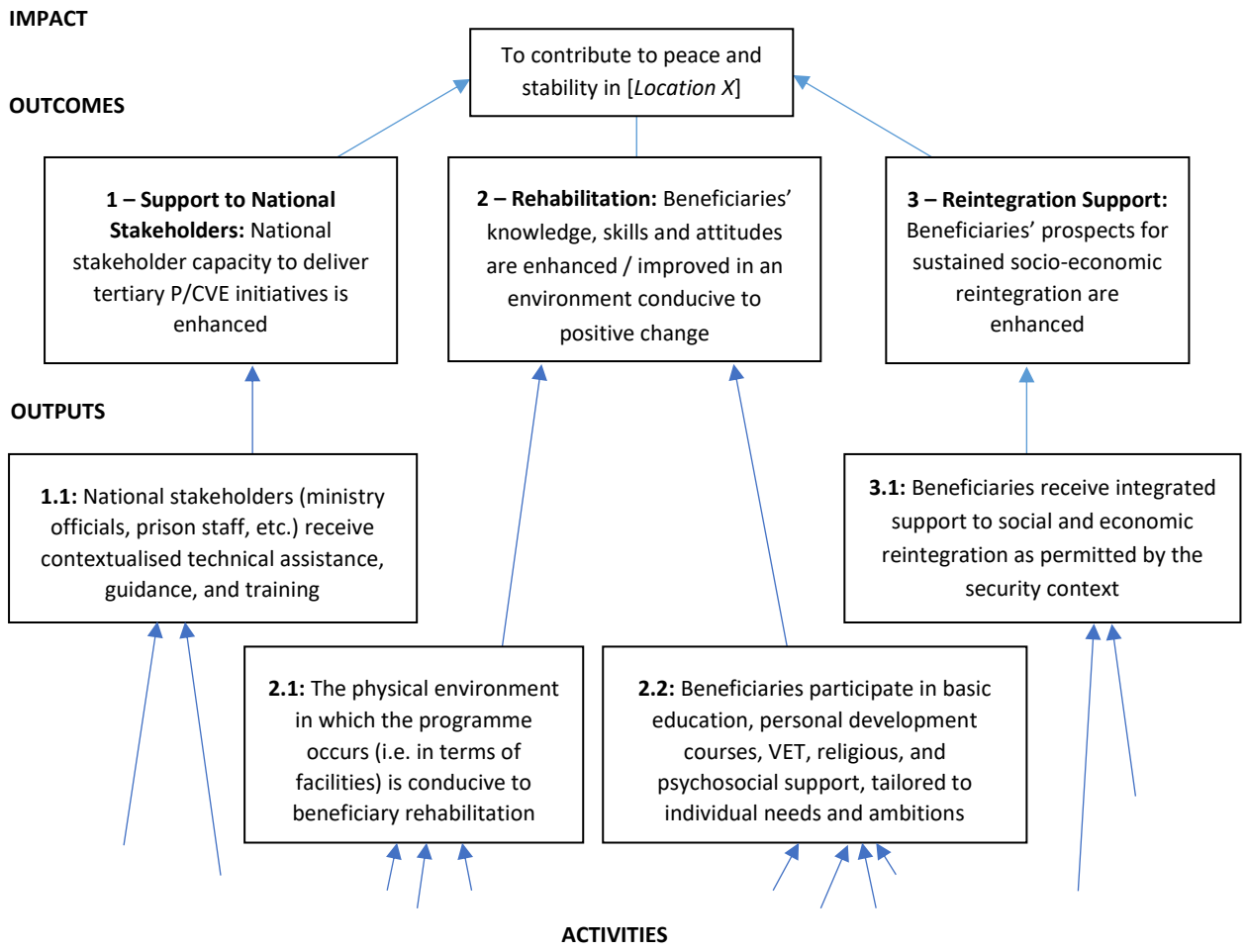
- *To help enable and facilitate beneficiaries reintegrate (socially, economically, and politically) into communities.*

Of course, certain donors may argue that while these three statements are perhaps adequate at the programme 'outcome' level, they are insufficiently elevated to qualify as 'impact' statements in the context of broader campaigns of violent extremism. As such, the following uppermost objective statements may be more suitable:

- *To contribute to peace and stability in [Location X]*
- *To undermine [Violent Extremist Group X]*

Theory of change (TOC)[40]

Figure 3: Template Results Framework



[40] This section draws heavily from James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen, "Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation" (Whitehall Report 2–16, Royal United Services Institute, UK, 2016).

TOCs serve primarily to articulate the intended pathways from activities to the desired impact of programmes, and to identify the key assumptions associated with these pathways. To do so, it is necessary to establish a results framework (or equivalent), such as *Figure 3*. The purpose of listing assumptions is to help identify aspects of programme design that may be problematic. For instance, these may relate to the security context remaining suitable for such an initiative, key national stakeholders buying-in to the programme and offering genuine support, beneficiaries being willing and able to participate, all materials and equipment (e.g. for vocational training) being available at a suitable cost, local communities being sufficiently sympathetic towards reintegration, and so on. Of course, the point is that entire 'branches' of the programme may entirely fail to contribute to the intended impact if even only one assumption is misguided. In this scenario it may be necessary to redesign certain aspects of the initiative, with this potentially involving anything from subtle alterations to the removal of entire programme branches.

Candidate Indicators

In line with best practice, suitable indicators should be linked to each Impact, Outcome and Output statement of the results framework. Potential indicators for the intentionally 'elevated' impact statement in *Figure 3* may include:

- Violent incidents in *Location X* during *Period Y* (#)
- Population in *Location X* who claim that violent extremism is justifiable (%)

Of course, there is a strong case that such indicators would fail to provide meaningful information about specific tertiary programmes given the so-called 'attribution problem'. The point is that while a reduction in violent extremism or sympathy for such acts in any given location *may* be driven by a specific P/CVE intervention, such a change may alternatively be a consequence of lower levels of violence in neighbouring locations, political accommodations, an economic boost offering increased employment, a decrease in the availability of arms and other equipment, and so on. Such issues may essentially be insurmountable, but elevated impact statements are nevertheless useful at the very least as they remind stakeholders and implementers of the intended purpose of the programme, helping to ensure that all parties are aligned.

The following top-level indicators are worth considering for rehabilitation facilities where the overarching objective is understood in terms of incentivising voluntary disengagements:

- New arrivals at the centre (#)
- Proportion of new arrivals claiming they were partly incentivised to disengage by a prior knowledge of the available rehabilitation and reintegration support (%)

The former again does not fare well against the attribution problem as it is subject to changes beyond the control of the programme team, including battlefield momentum, and so on. By contrast, the latter seemingly offers greater potential as a means to determine whether the programme is achieving

success. Increases in the percentage figure would suggest that knowledge of the programme is spreading, and that its reputation is sufficient to incentivise at least certain individuals to exit violence.

Shifting attention to the outcome level of *Figure 3*, much of the measurement can revolve around the three core concepts discussed in *Section 2* of this paper. While recidivism rates should in principle provide an ideal measure for sustained disengagement, in practice this metric is notoriously problematic.[41] Among the various issues often identified, the relevant security agencies may simply be unaware of former beneficiaries returning to violence, or may elect not pass this sensitive information on to the implementing agencies. These rates may also be misleadingly deflated in cases where former residents return to violence only after the relevant reporting periods. With this in mind, and in the context of Islamist violent extremism specifically, it may be helpful instead to consider the following proxy measures relating to the beneficiaries' period of residence:

- Beneficiaries attending a 'moderate' prison mosque (%)
- Beneficiaries interacting with 'moderate' imams (%)
- Beneficiaries interacting with female staff (%)
- Beneficiaries interacting with other residents / staff of different faiths (%)
- Beneficiaries taking part in art / sport (where this may be deemed haram) (%)

Periodic questionnaires may also provide an avenue to directly measure deradicalisation, although the reliability of such data is open to debate. These may include questions that deliver data for the following indicators:

- Beneficiaries claiming that they would vote at the next elections (if applicable) (%)
- Beneficiaries claiming to be willing to befriend individuals from other religions (%)

It is also worth considering data from risk assessments, which typically aggregate metrics relating to both disengagement and deradicalisation.[42] Shifting attention to reintegration, one option may be again to rely on questionnaires, in this case administered after residency, to deliver data for the following indicators:

- Beneficiaries (excluding those who have chosen to return to education) claiming to 'generally' earn an income sufficient to cover their basic needs and (where applicable) that of their dependents twelve months after exit (%)

[41] On this issue, see for instance Barkindo and Bryans, "De-Radicalising Prisoners in Nigeria", 19–20; Khalil et al "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 5; Porges, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Approach", and Michael Williams and Steven Kleinman, "A Utilization-Focused Guide for Conducting Terrorism Risk Reduction Program Evaluations", *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 6, No. 2 (2014), 3.

[42] On the subject of risk assessments, see for instance Elaine Pressman and John Flockton, 'Violent Extremist Risk Assessment: Issues and Applications of the VERA-2 in a High-Security Correctional Facility', in Silke, ed., *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*; Joanne Richards, 'High Risk or Low Risk: Screening for Violent Extremists in DDR Programmes', *International Peacekeeping* 25, No. 3 (2018); Kiran M Sarma, 'Risk Assessment and the Prevention of Radicalization from Nonviolence into Terrorism', *American Psychologist* 72, No. 3 (2017), 278-288.

- Beneficiaries claiming to 'have been accepted' by their family one year after exit (%)
- Beneficiaries claiming to 'have been accepted' by their community one year after exit (%)

8. INTERVENTION LOCATIONS[43]

While there is no simple formula to determine environments that may be suitable for the initiatives discussed in this paper, the following should be considered:

- **State support:** Key government stakeholders may be unwilling or unable to support such programmes, for instance as they oppose 'rewarding' the perpetrators of violence, as they are sceptical about the prospects of genuine rehabilitation and reintegration, as they need to satisfy public opposition to such interventions, as they lack the technical capacity, and so on. Of course, donors should favour locations where these issues are limited, as this will greatly enhance the prospects of programme success.
- **Security considerations:** The beneficiaries and staff associated with such programmes may be vulnerable to intentional targeting by violent extremist groups, and the facilities in which these initiatives occur may also be attacked. Indeed, the more successful the programme, the more likely it is that such groups will be incentivised to target what could amount to an existential threat to their survival. With this in mind, policymakers must consider whether it is possible to identify locations that are sufficiently secure for such programmes.
- **Community acceptance:** Many communities are the immediate victims of violent extremism, and thus certain members outright reject the idea of living alongside those who were previously involved in such violence. While government stakeholders may have some influence over the level of support for the tertiary programmes (for instance, via community consultations, messaging campaigns, and so on), donors should consider that public opposition may be sufficiently strong to make such initiatives unfeasible in certain locations.
- **Disengagement rates:** In certain locations there may be factors that limit the rate of disengagement to an extent that initiatives designed to incentivise such acts would be essentially be destined to fail. For instance, this may be the case where the relevant violent extremist groups maintain battlefield momentum and/or elevated levels of territorial control.
- **COVID-19 considerations:** It is difficult to predict the extent to which COVID-19 will continue to influence everyday life over the coming years, and which specific geographies may be most affected. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to assume that the virus may render certain locations unsuitable, at least temporarily, either as the risk of such programmes exacerbating the spread of the virus is excessively high, or as it is not possible to identity suitably qualified professionals willing to work in such crowded environments.

[43] This section draws heavily on Khalil et al "Deradicalization and Disengagement", 33-35.