

Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation in the CT and P/CVE field

What it is, why it matters and how to start

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Counter-Terrorism



M&E
Centre of Excellence

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Abstract

Many authors have deplored the scarcity of evaluations that assess the impact and effectiveness of programmes and policies in the field of Counter-Terrorism (CT) and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE). This makes it difficult to understand which efforts to address violent extremism have had positive results, and what measures and methods have been effective in identifying impact. This policy brief aims to provide policymakers and practitioners in the CT and P/CVE field with the necessary background to integrate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in their work. It explains what M&E is, why it is important, and how to start or advance M&E in your own institution. The key recommendations are: 1) to allocate five to ten percent of the budget to M&E, 2) to integrate M&E from the programme or policy design phase onwards, and 3) to create an enabling environment for M&E.

Keywords: Counter-Terrorism, Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism, Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact, Effectiveness.

Introduction

This policy brief is meant as an introductory overview of the practice of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in the field of Counter-Terrorism (CT) and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE). First, this policy brief will set the scene and describe how the field's M&E practice has developed. Afterwards, it will discuss the main reasons why the CT and P/CVE fields would benefit from more rigorous M&E efforts. Next, it will elaborate on the four phases of the M&E process, and discuss some key components of each phase. The policy brief ends with three recommendations for policymakers and practitioners who want to start or progress M&E in their own institution. Advancing M&E is important because it (im)proves effectiveness, is at the core of good management and public governance, and enhances transparency and accountability. This subsequently generates evidence-based good practices and has the potential to further the development of the CT and P/CVE field.

Setting the scene

Many authors have highlighted and deplored the scarcity of evaluations that assess the impact and effectiveness of programmes and policies in the field of CT and P/CVE.¹ Even if evaluations have been conducted, most of the reports have not been made publicly available. The restricted access is mainly related to concerns about security, confidentiality and the sensitive nature of CT and P/CVE interventions. This lack of (shared) evaluation findings makes it difficult to understand which efforts to address terrorism and violent extremism have had positive results, and what methods have been effective in identifying impact.²

This is problematic because critics have argued that P/CVE programming is dominated by a common set of narratives, beliefs and assumptions, which are often uncritically reproduced and not empirically assessed.³ John Horgan asserts that the P/CVE field⁴ is characterised by a resistance to evaluation, while programmes without an evaluation component “offer little more than smoke and mirrors.”⁵ Evaluations become especially critical as some P/CVE interventions

1 Laura Dawson, Charlie Edwards, and Calum Jeffray, *Learning and Adapting: The Use of Monitoring and Evaluation in Countering Violent Extremism: a Handbook for Practitioners* (London: RUSI, 2014); David Malet, “Countering violent extremism: assessment in theory and practice,” *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 16, no. 1 (2021): 58-74; Isabella Pistone, Erik Eriksson, Ulrika Beckman, Christer Mattson, and Morten Sager, “A scoping review of interventions for preventing and countering violent extremism: Current status and implications for future research,” *Journal for deradicalization* 19 (2019): 1-84; Ben Baruch, Tom Ling, Rich Warnes, and Joanna Hofman, “Evaluation in an emerging field: Developing a measurement framework for the field of counter-violent-extremism,” *Evaluation* 24, no. 4 (2018): 475-495; Caitlin Mastroe, and Susan Szmania, *Surveying CVE Metrics in Prevention, Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs* (College Park, MD: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2016); Matthew Davies, Richard Warnes, and Joanna Hofman, *Exploring the transferability and applicability of gang evaluation methodologies to counter violent radicalisation* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017).

2 Georgia Holmer, Ann Sutherland, and Claudia Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices: Measuring Results in Counter-Terrorism and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism* (EU and UN, 2023); Georgia Holmer, Peter Bauman, and Kateira Aryaeinejad, *Measuring up: Evaluating the impact of P/CVE programs* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2018); Lillie Ris, and Anita Ernstorfer, *Borrowing a Wheel: Applying Existing Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Strategies to Emerging Programming Approaches to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism* (Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, 2017); Amy-Jane Gielen, “Cutting through complexity: Evaluating countering violent extremism (CVE)” (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2020).

3 Arun Kundnani, and Ben Hayes, *The globalisation of countering violent extremism policies: Undermining human rights, instrumentalising civil society* (Amsterdam: Transnational Institute, 2018); Amy-Jane, Gielen, *Executive Summary. A Road Map for Monitoring and Evaluation of PVE policies in Belgium* (Brussels: Open Society Foundation, 2018).

4 Encompassing funders, project managers, implementers and researchers of CT and P/CVE programmes and policies.

5 “An Interview with Dr. John Horgan – Terrorism, Psychology, and Major Issues in the Field,” *European Eye on*

potentially have counterproductive elements and/or do not comply with human rights standards and the rule of law.⁶

This has not gone unnoticed and CT and P/CVE efforts have been widely scrutinised by parliaments, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the media. Not only because successful efforts can greatly contribute to societies' security, but also because of significant public spending on these interventions. This put the CT and P/CVE field under increased pressure to demonstrate results, and find out what works, for whom, in what circumstances and how.⁷ Hence, accumulating evidence through the consistent practice of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is crucial.⁸ M&E can be understood as the use of specific tools and methodologies to collect, analyse and assess data throughout a programme or policy cycle with the aim to measure progress and results (see chapter 4 for further elaboration on the M&E process).⁹

It seems that the need for M&E is indeed increasingly recognised by governments, CSOs and multilateral organisations, which have dedicated more resources to developing a structural and systematic approach to M&E.¹⁰ When OECD surveyed 42 governments for a comparative analysis, the results showed that governments want to conduct policy evaluations for a variety of reasons, including to advance evidence-informed policy-making, improve the quality of their work, increase transparency, and improve trust in public institutions. While there might be a willingness to conduct policy evaluations, there are quite some challenges that need to be addressed before the stated objectives can be met. These challenges include the lack of a solid M&E strategy, limited human resources and limited uptake of evaluation results.¹¹

Academics and M&E professionals have tried to make M&E for the CT and P/CVE field more advanced and accessible. In the policy and practice realm, numerous toolkits and guidelines for M&E in the P/CVE field have been developed in recent years.¹² These documents have

Radicalization, November 20, 2018, <https://eeradicalization.com/an-interview-with-dr-john-horgan-terrorism-psychology-and-major-issues-in-the-field/>.

6 Gielen, *A Road Map for Monitoring and Evaluation*; Tanya Mehra, *Beyond the Dutch Election Manifestos: What Kind of Policy Can We Expect in The Netherlands to Counter Terrorism and Radicalisation in the Coming Four Years?* (The Hague: ICCT, 2021); Christophe Paulussen, *Countering Terrorism Through the Stripping of Citizenship: Ineffective and Counterproductive* (The Hague: ICCT, 2018); Quirine Eijkman, and Bart Schuurman, "Preventive Counter-Terrorism Measures and Non-Discrimination in the European Union: The Need for Systematic Evaluation", *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - The Hague* 2, no. 5 (2011) : 1-33.

7 Amy-Jane Gielen, "Countering violent extremism: A realist review for assessing what works, for whom, in what circumstances, and how?," *Terrorism and political violence* 31, no. 6 (2019): 1149-1167; Dawson, Edwards, and Jeffray, Learning and Adapting; Ris, and Ernstorfer, Borrowing a wheel; Joshua Sinai, Jeffrey Fuller, and Tiffany Seal, "Effectiveness in Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 6 (2019); Inga Nehlsen, Janusz Biene, Marc Coester, Frank Greuel, Björn Milbradt, and Andreas Armbrorst, "Evident and effective? The challenges, potentials and limitations of evaluation research on preventing violent extremism," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* (IJCV) 14 (2020): 1-20; Asena Baykal, Sarah Bressan, Julia Friedrich, Giulia Pasquali, Philipp Rotmann, and Marie Wagner, *Evaluating P/CVE: Institutional Structures in International Comparison* (Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute, 2021); Lucy Holdaway, and Ruth Simpson, *Improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming: A toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation* (Oslo: UNDP and International Alert, 2018).

8 Baruch, Ling, Warnes, and Hofman, "Evaluation in an emerging field."

9 Holmer, Bauman, and Aryaeinejad, *Measuring up*.

10 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

11 OECD, How can governments leverage policy evaluation to improve evidence informed policy making: Highlights from an OECD comparative study (Paris: OECD, 2020).

12 Todd C. Helmus, Miriam Matthews, Rajeev Ramchand, Sina Beaghley, David Stebbins, Amanda Kadlec, Michael A. Brown, Aaron Kofner, and Joie D. Acosta, *RAND program evaluation toolkit for countering violent extremism* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017); Joanna Hofman, and Alex Sutherland, *Evaluating interventions that prevent or counter violent extremism: A practical guide* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018); Cristina Mattei, and Sara Zeiger, Evaluate your CVE results: Projecting your impact (Abu Dhabi: Hedayah Center, 2018); Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*; "An evaluation toolkit for professionals working in the counter violent extremism

helped to move towards a shared understanding of good practice, while drawing on diverse elements from the development, conflict prevention and peacebuilding sector.¹³ In the academic realm, researchers have developed new evaluation methods or frameworks, and explored the transferability of lessons and evaluation approaches of other fields like criminology and healthcare to P/CVE.¹⁴ Since CT and P/CVE evaluations are by nature multi-disciplinary, it is clear that much has been and needs to be learned from adjacent fields.¹⁵

In line with the increased awareness of the necessity to conduct M&E, Bellasio and colleagues found that there has been an increase in volume of empirically based CT and P/CVE evaluations between 2013 and 2018.¹⁶ Gielen also underscored that there has been an upsurge of academic studies and evaluations on P/CVE since 2016.¹⁷ While this is encouraging, it is recognised in the literature that more time is needed for CT and P/CVE evaluations to grow and develop to the level of other fields.¹⁸

Why M&E matters for the CT and P/CVE field

M&E as a practice existed long before CT and P/CVE gained prominence, as even the ancient Egyptians monitored their country's outputs in grain and livestock more than 5,000 years ago.¹⁹ The modern practice of M&E originated in the first half of the twentieth century and has become an integral part of various fields, including development, government and policy, education, and others.²⁰ Regarding CT and P/CVE, interest in and resources on M&E have increased, though at a much slower pace than the general development of the field.²¹ Currently, the M&E practice and investments are still considered underdeveloped compared to the overall field of CT and P/CVE.²² Therefore, this chapter elaborates on three reasons why the CT and P/CVE field should invest more in M&E.

field," IMPACT Europe, accessed July 28, 2023, <http://www.impact.itti.com.pl/index#/home>; "Toolkit evidence-based werken bij de preventie van radicalisering," Expertise-unit Sociale Stabiliteit, accessed December 2, 2022, <https://www.socialestabiliteit.nl/si-toolkit>; Sidonie Roberts, and Mohammed Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit to Support Action Plans to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism* (New York, NY: UNCCT, 2023); Heather Ann Sutherland, Mark Brown, Ashley Hollister, and Sarang Mangi, *UNODC Toolkit for Evaluating Interventions on Preventing and Countering Crime and Terrorism* (Vienna: UNODC, 2021).

13 Holmer, Bauman, and Aryaeinejad, *Measuring up*; Ris, and Ernstorfer, *Borrowing a wheel*.

14 Baruch, Ling, Warnes, and Hofman, "Evaluation in an emerging field"; Gielen, "Cutting through complexity"; Andrew Glazzard, "Violent Extremist Disengagement and Reintegration: A Framework for Planning, Design and Evaluation of Programmatic Interventions," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2022): 1-20; Andrew Glazzard, and Michael Jones, *Improving the Evaluation of Interventions to Counter and Prevent Terrorism and Violent Extremism* (London: RUSI, 2020); Jacopo Bellasio, Joanna Hofman, Antonia Ward, Fook Nederveen, Anna Knack, Arya S. Meranto, and Stijn Hoorens, *Counterterrorism evaluation: Taking stock and looking ahead* (Cambridge: RAND Corporation, 2018); Allard R. Feddes, and Marcello Gallucci, "A literature review on methodology used in evaluating effects of preventive and de-radicalisation interventions," *Journal for Deradicalization* 5 (2015): 1-27.

15 Glazzard, and Jones, *Improving the Evaluation of Interventions*.

16 Bellasio, Hofman, Ward, Nederveen, Knack, Meranto, and Hoorens, *Counterterrorism evaluation*.

17 Gielen, "Cutting through complexity"

18 Bellasio, Hofman, Ward, Nederveen, Knack, Meranto, and Hoorens, *Counterterrorism evaluation*; Gielen, "Cutting through complexity"; Baykal, Bressan, Friedrich, Pasquali, Rotmann, and Wagner, *Evaluating P/CVE: Institutional Structures*.

19 Jody Zall Kusek, and Ray C. Rist, *A Handbook for Development Practitioners: Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2004).

20 Moses J. B. Kabeyi, "Evolution of project management, monitoring and evaluation, with historical events and projects that have shaped the development of project management as a profession," *International Journal of Science Research (IJSR)* 8, no. 12 (2019): 63-79.

21 Gielen, "Cutting through complexity."

22 Bellasio, Hofman, Ward, Nederveen, Knack, Meranto, and Hoorens, *Counterterrorism evaluation*.



M&E (IM)PROVES
EFFECTIVENESS



M&E IS PART OF
GOOD
MANAGEMENT &
PUBLIC
GOVERNANCE



M&E ENHANCES
TRANSPARENCY &
ACCOUNTABILITY

M&E (im)proves effectiveness

The CT and P/CVE field is confronted with the need to conduct evidence-based assessments that accurately demonstrate impact and effectiveness. Creating rigorous M&E frameworks for CT and P/CVE programmes and policies would address this need by enabling actual results to be measured against desired ones.²³ Comprehensive M&E frameworks also play a crucial role in identifying unintended (positive and negative) consequences of CT and P/CVE interventions. Some of these negative consequences may signal non-compliance with the rule of law and human rights, and M&E serves as a valuable tool to assess the alignment of programmes and policies with these principles.²⁴ This is not only important for the victims of violations, but also for the general effectiveness since research highlights that a CT strategy rooted in respect for the rule of law and human rights obligations is most effective in preventing and countering terrorism.²⁵

By generating evidence-based good practices – and documenting failures – true impact can be better understood. Implementing robust M&E systems bolsters effectiveness because it prompts reflection on the chosen approach and its applicability in a given setting, the accuracy of assumptions underlying the intervention logic, and avenues for further impact creation of follow-up activities.²⁶ Subsequently, the M&E findings create opportunities to improve results and apply learnings and recommendations to future work.²⁷ For example, an evaluation conducted by the UNODC Independent Evaluation Section (UNODC/IES) – assessing a programme’s contribution to the strengthening of legislative systems to implement CT measures in line with international resolutions and the rule of law – provided recommendations that were all utilised and implemented in the development of the new Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Terrorism.²⁸ Thus, M&E results have the potential to further the development of the CT and P/CVE field.²⁹

23 Dawson, Edwards, and Jeffray, *Learning and Adapting*; Ris, and Ernstorfer, *Borrowing a wheel*; Sinai, Fuller, and Seal, “Effectiveness in Counter-Terrorism”; Nehlsen, Biene, Coester, Greuel, Milbradt, and Armbrorst, “Evident and effective?”; Baykal, Bressan, Friedrich, Pasquali, Rotmann, and Wagner, *Evaluating P/CVE: Institutional Structures*; Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*.

24 Gielen, *A Road Map for Monitoring and Evaluation*; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

25 Tom Parker, *Avoiding the Terrorist Trap: Why Respect for Human Rights is the Key to Defeating Terrorism* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2019); Alex P. Schmidt, “Chapter 35: Conclusions: Terrorism Prevention – The UN Plan of Action (2015) and Beyond,” in *Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness*, ed. Alex P. Schmidt, (The Hague: ICCT, 2020), 1103-1158.

26 Dawson, Edwards, and Jeffray, *Learning and Adapting*; Ris, and Ernstorfer, *Borrowing a wheel*; Sinai, Fuller, and Seal, “Effectiveness in Counter-Terrorism”; Gielen, *A Road Map for Monitoring and Evaluation*.

27 Dawson, Edwards, and Jeffray, *Learning and Adapting*; Sinai, Fuller, and Seal, “Effectiveness in Counter-Terrorism”; Gielen, *A Road Map for Monitoring and Evaluation*.

28 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Elca Stigter, Ashley Hollister, and Ivan Calabuig, *Independent In-Depth Evaluation: Strengthening the Legal Regime Against Terrorism* (Vienna: UNODC/IES, 2021).

29 Baruch, Ling, Warnes, and Hofman, “Evaluation in an emerging field”; Nehlsen, Biene, Coester, Greuel, Milbradt,

M&E is part of good management and public governance

M&E is a fundamental component of good management and public governance for multiple reasons. First, M&E helps to improve policy or project implementation, as it shows how and when to adjust activities to achieve more and make better use of resources. Second, it helps to readjust a team or institution's strategy by testing its logic and underlying assumptions. Third, M&E helps to see where to strengthen individual or organisational capacity in order to improve performance.³⁰ In sum, M&E ensures that programmes and policies remain relevant and efficient, and eventually achieve positive results.³¹

M&E enhances transparency and accountability

M&E provides transparency for donors, taxpayers and other stakeholders by measuring the cost – time, money and other resources – invested in CT and P/CVE activities against their results.³² For funders, M&E can prove the delivery of agreed-upon plans and results, and hold recipients of (public) funds financially accountable.³³ For recipients of funds, thorough M&E frameworks and proven results that indicate progress can help to build a case for continued funding, and thus contribute to financial sustainability.³⁴ Furthermore, M&E provides transparency to stakeholders regarding the impact of certain decisions and practices.³⁵ If M&E evidence related to these decisions and practices point to non-compliance with the rule of law and human rights, this can also help initiate or support efforts to hold CT and P/CVE actors accountable for their decisions and actions.³⁶

While the three reasons above stress the importance of establishing M&E mechanisms in the field of CT and P/CVE, it is noteworthy that the quality and potential of M&E efforts depends on the implementers' capacity and resources.³⁷ The field does not only need more evaluations, but better evaluations.³⁸ As a relatively new and sensitive area of work, M&E for CT and P/CVE is often perceived as more risky than other areas. It is important that donors as well as implementers have realistic expectations and demands of what can be delivered and assessed.³⁹ But, if implemented properly, M&E has the potential to contribute to the effectiveness, transparency, accountability, efficiency and good management of CT and P/CVE interventions.⁴⁰

and Armborst, "Evident and effective?"

30 Tiina Pasanen, and Louise Shaxson, *How to design a monitoring and evaluation framework for a policy research project* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2016); OECD, *How can governments leverage policy evaluation*.

31 Dawson, Edwards, and Jeffray, *Learning and Adapting*.

32 Kundnani, and Hayes, *The globalisation of countering violent extremism*; Gielen, *A Road Map for Monitoring and Evaluation*.

33 Dawson, Edwards, and Jeffray, *Learning and Adapting*; Sinai, Fuller, and Seal, "Effectiveness in Counter-Terrorism"; Pasanen, and Shaxson, *How to design a monitoring and evaluation framework*; Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*.

34 Gielen, *A Road Map for Monitoring and Evaluation*.

35 Kundnani, and Hayes, *The globalisation of countering violent extremism*.

36 Dawson, Edwards, and Jeffray, *Learning and Adapting*; Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*; Gielen, "Cutting through complexity"; Gielen, *A Road Map for Monitoring and Evaluation*; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

37 Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*.

38 Nehlsen, Biene, Coester, Greuel, Milbradt, and Armborst, "Evident and effective?"

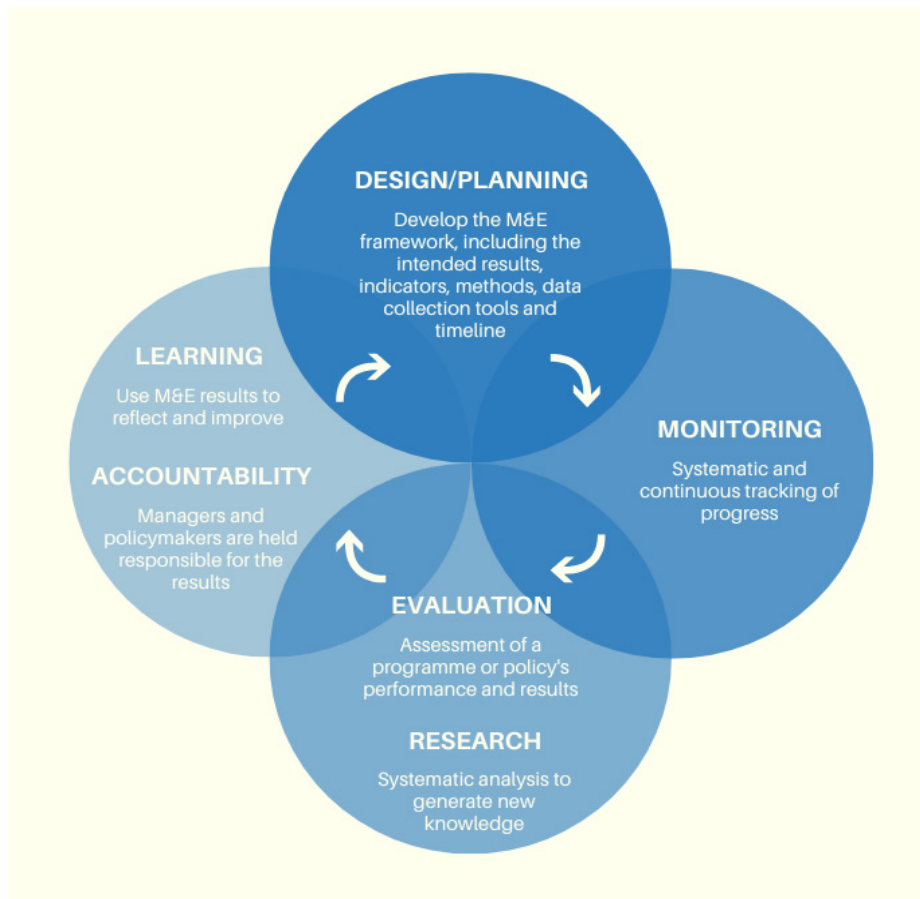
39 Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*; Ris, and Ernstorfer, *Borrowing a wheel*.

40 Dawson, Edwards, and Jeffray, *Learning and Adapting*.

The four phases of M&E

The previous section discussed the value of M&E, but what is M&E exactly and when should it be conducted? This chapter elaborates on the four phases of the M&E process, and discusses some key elements and characteristics of each phase that policymakers and practitioners can keep mind when conducting M&E or engaging with M&E material.

What is M&E?



M&E is defined as the use of specific tools and methodologies to collect, analyse and assess data throughout a programme or policy cycle with the aim to measure progress and results.⁴¹ M&E can be conceptualised as a process aimed at gathering data to support decision-making about programmes and policies. There are various acronyms that focus on different elements of this process, including MEL, DMEL, PMEL, MEAL, MERL and MERLA. These acronyms include the key terms design, planning, monitoring, evaluation, research, accountability and learning (see figure). The various acronyms have a different scope and emphasis, but the absence of a term does not mean that the approach does not include that aspect. Therefore, given the similar essence of these approaches, this policy brief chooses to refer to this overall process and practice by using the original term M&E.⁴²

41 Holmer, Bauman, and Aryaeinejad, *Measuring up*.

42 Walter Atito Onyango, "Demystifying Monitoring and Evaluation Titles and Why They Hold No Bounds," Medium (blog), July 3, 2023, <https://walteratito.medium.com/demystifying-monitoring-and-evaluation-titles-and-why-they-hold-no-bounds-39eab08cb103>.

Design and planning

The design and planning of the M&E framework should coincide with the design phase of the intervention itself. Evaluations are often unforeseen until the end of a programme or policy cycle but only initiating the M&E process then limits the options for thorough assessment and designs with pre and post measurements. Therefore, it is essential to include internal M&E staff as well as potential external evaluators from the design phase onwards.⁴³ While it is still possible to conduct M&E if it is initiated after the design stage of an intervention, M&E shortcomings can often be traced back to weak planning or not starting early enough.⁴⁴ This section will discuss several elements to consider during the M&E design phase.

To start with, it is important to get to a shared understanding of what success looks like for a particular intervention. M&E frameworks often differentiate between three different result levels: impact, outcomes and outputs (some M&E frameworks use different terms for these results, but the meaning is similar).⁴⁵ The impact is the highest level, most significant and long-term goal to which the interventions aims to contribute. It is beyond the direct control of the intervention and is often part of a broader, longer-term strategy. The outcomes are the intended short- to medium-term effects of the intervention's activities and outputs. The outputs are the availability of new products or services, while the activities are the actions to produce the outputs during the programme or policy cycle.⁴⁶

An essential element of the design phase is to clarify the intervention logic, including the problem, inputs, activities, result levels, underlying assumptions and mechanisms.⁴⁷ Two common M&E tools to develop and demonstrate the intervention logic are a Theory of Change (ToC) and a Logical Framework (logframe). These tools often complement each other, as the ToC facilitates a deeper analysis of the intervention logic and the logframe turns that into a detailed, practical planning tool.⁴⁸ A ToC can be defined as “an explanation of how and why an action is believed to be capable of bringing about its planned objectives, i.e. the changes it hopes to create through its activities, thereby revealing underlying assumptions.”⁴⁹ ToCs are usually depicted in a diagram or written down in “if...then...” statements.⁵⁰ Visual ToCs can take many shapes and forms, some examples of ToCs in the P/CVE space can be seen in the New South Wales COMPACT evaluation,⁵¹ the Shared Endeavour Fund Call Two evaluation,⁵² the Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan (2021/22 – 2024/25),⁵³ and the sample ToCs in M&E toolkits.⁵⁴ Examples of ToC statements can be found in the Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism – STRIVE (Horn

43 Gielen, “Cutting through complexity”; Baykal, Bressan, Friedrich, Pasquali, Rotmann, and Wagner, *Evaluating P/ CVE: Institutional Structures*; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; INTRAC, *Planning and M&E* (INTRAC, 2017).

44 INTRAC, *Planning and M&E*.

45 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*.

46 Mattei, and Zeiger, *Evaluate you CVE results; IOM, IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines* (Geneva: IOM, 2020).

47 Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*.

48 “The M&E Universe,” Intrac, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://embed.kumu.io/6aab003ac164bfea5f65d9a1582c676f#me-universe/>.

49 Ris, and Ernstorfer, *Borrowing a wheel*, 16.

50 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

51 Poppy Wise, Sidonie Roberts, Jake Formosa, and Abigail Chan, *Evaluation of the COMPACT Program* (Sydney: URBIS, 2018).

52 Michael Williams, and Tim Hulse, *Shared Endeavour Fund Call Two Evaluation Report* (London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2023).

53 *Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan 2021-22 – 2024-25* (London: The Commonwealth, 2021).

54 Mattei, and Zeiger, *Evaluate you CVE results*; Ris, and Ernstorfer, *Borrowing a wheel*.

of Africa) evaluation report.⁵⁵

A logframe is often used as the basis for M&E and is a practical tool in the form of a grid. It provides an overview of the three result levels and how they are related as well as indicators of change and how they will be measured.⁵⁶ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides guidance on how to develop a logframe and how to create an accompanying results monitoring framework.⁵⁷ There are examples of logframes and results frameworks being used in the CT and P/CVE field. For instance, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Policy Support – which was established by the European Commission in 2021 to inform P/CVE policymaking and facilitate exchanges among policymakers in the EU – designed a logframe as the basis for its M&E approach.⁵⁸ An example of a results framework and how it was used during an evaluation can be found in the final evaluation report of the UNDP Partnerships for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh (PTIB) to understand and prevent violence and extremism.⁵⁹ By mapping the intervention logic in a ToC and/or logframe in the design phase of an intervention, M&E activities can already be beneficial as they have the potential to identify missing links or design challenges that can be improved before implementation starts.

Another component is to plan for data collection and measurement of results. Key steps are to create indicators, select appropriate data collection methods and make a data collection plan.⁶⁰ These must be aligned with the monitoring system and the evaluation type(s) that are foreseen. The indicators should be clearly linked with the intended results, the context of the intervention, and be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound). There are several indicator banks that can be used as a resource when designing an M&E framework for a P/CVE intervention.⁶¹ If the indicators have been created during the design phase of the intervention, it is possible to gather baseline data and use this to track progress throughout the intervention.

For each indicator, it should also be specified how it will be measured. Ideally, M&E frameworks have a mixed-methods approach. Some common data collection techniques to measure results include surveys, interviews, focus groups discussions and observations, but there are also more complex methodologies like contribution analysis, outcome harvesting and the most significant change technique.⁶² An example of outcome harvesting and stories of change can be found in an evaluation conducted by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF).⁶³ The contribution analysis methodology is clearly described and applied in the PTIB evaluation mentioned earlier.⁶⁴

55 Julian Brett, and André Kahlmeyer, Evaluation report: Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism – STRIVE (Horn of Africa) (RUSI/European Commission, 2017).

56 Anne Garbutt, and Nigel Simister, *The Logical Framework* (England: INTRAC, 2017); International Organization for Migration, *IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines* (Geneva: IOM, 2020).

57 International Organization for Migration, *IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines*.

58 “RAN Policy Support,” European Commission, accessed August 16, 2023, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/ran-policy-support_en; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

59 Jim Della-Giacoma, and Shikhty Sunny, UNDP Partnership for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh (PTIB) Final Evaluation Report (NY: UNDP, 2020).

60 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*.

61 “PVE Indicator Bank,” UNDP, accessed August 2, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/policy-centre/oslo/publications/pve-indicator-bank>; Adrian Cherney, Jennifer Bell, Ellen Leslie, Lorraine Cherney, and Lorraine Mazerolle, *Countering Violent Extremism Indicator Document* (Brisbane: Australian and New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee, 2018); *Sector Indicator Guidance: Countering Violent Extremism* (Brussels: European Commission, n.d.).

62 “The M&E Universe,” Intrac; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

63 *Final report for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) funded project: “A” implemented by Organisation A* (London: Almizran Advisors, 2022); Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

64 Della-Giacoma, and Sunny, UNDP Partnership for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh (PTIB); Holmer, Sutherland,

In the design phase, it is important to ensure that CT and P/CVE interventions as well as their M&E do no harm.⁶⁵ M&E should be carried out ethically and with sensitivity. Applying conflict sensitive frameworks to M&E design, effectively mainstreaming gender in the M&E process, and integrating a human rights lens all contribute to an overall do no harm approach as well as a better understanding and assessment of the intervention.⁶⁶ There are various toolkits and guidelines on the integration of conflict sensitivity, and meaningful gender and human rights mainstreaming in M&E.⁶⁷ For example, UNODC’s toolkit for evaluating interventions on preventing and countering crime and terrorism includes a checklist for conflict-sensitive evaluations per phase of the evaluation process.⁶⁸ There are also some good examples of evaluations in the CT and P/CVE space that have explicitly taken these considerations into account and reported on them.⁶⁹

Finally, the M&E framework must also include a realistic timeline, and clear M&E roles and responsibilities. Whether M&E is conducted by an internal or external person or team depends on the institution’s capacity and resources as well as the M&E activity and its purpose. Monitoring is generally carried out by internal staff, while evaluations are often conducted by an external person or team. However, evaluations can also be carried out by internal staff or (semi-) independent evaluation units that are part of larger institutions, such as the UN or governments.⁷⁰ When the internal capacity for M&E is low, institutions can train or mentor staff, or attract external M&E consultants to support the team.⁷¹ Generally, it is good practice to embed M&E within the institution, rather than making one person or group responsible for the entire approach.⁷²

and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

65 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*.

66 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Jessica White, “Gender in Countering Violent Extremism Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation: Beyond Instrumentalism,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2020): 1-24; Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*; Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*.

67 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Elca Stigter, *Guidance Note for Evaluators: Human Rights Mainstreaming in UNODC Independent Evaluations* (Vienna: UNODC/IES, 2023); Sutherland, Brown, Hollister, and Mangi, *UNODC Toolkit*; Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*; Anke van Gorp, “Ethical considerations,” in *Evaluating interventions that prevent or counter violent extremism: A practical guide*, eds. Joanna Hofman, and Alex Sutherland (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), 17-22; Franziska Praxl-Tabuchi, Matthew Schwartz, Adele Westerhuis, and Jacqui True, *Gender and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Policy Toolkit* (Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2022); *UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation* (New York, NY: UN Women Independent Evaluation Service, 2022); Pauline Massart, and Florence Ferrando, *Promoting the Role of Women in Security and Counterterrorism: Guidelines for the Criminal Justice Response to Terrorism* (Brussels: WIIS Brussels, 2023).

68 Sutherland, Brown, Hollister, and Mangi, *UNODC Toolkit*.

69 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Lawrence Robertson, and Philippe Assale, *Final Evaluation of the Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach Project* (Addis Ababa: UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa, 2022); Nina Retzlaff, Chinara Esengul, and Paul English, *Final Independent Project Evaluation: Support to the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons and Probation Settings in the Kyrgyz Republic* (Vienna: UNODC and UNDP, 2021); Sarah Wood, Christine Kamau, Suleiman Abdullahi, Diana Ndung’u, Aisha Abdullahi, *Final Performance Evaluation: USAID/Kenya and East Africa (USAID/KEA) Kenya NiWajibu Wetu (NIWETU) Program* (Bethesda, MD: ME&A, 2022); Conor Foley, and Bjorn Pettersson, *Evaluation of OHCHR’s Support to Legislation in Conformity with International Standards* (Geneva: OHCHR, 2018).

70 Nigel Simister, and Vera Scholz, *Types of Evaluation* (England: INTRAC, 2017); Lotte Levelt, and Nicky Pouw, “Speaking truth to power: Exploring a Ministry’s evaluation department through evaluators’ and policymakers’ eyes,” *Evaluation* 28, no. 3 (2022): 379-395.

71 Mattei, and Zeiger, *Evaluate you CVE results*; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

72 Jo Carpenter, *Monitoring inclusion in crises* (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2022); Gielen, “Cutting through complexity.”

Monitoring

The Monitoring is the second phase in the cycle depicted at the beginning of the chapter. It entails the systematic and continuous collection and analysis of data to track the progress of a programme or policy.⁷³ It is different from evaluation as it is an ongoing effort rather than a one-off exercise, and the focus is more heavily on activities and outputs than on outcomes and impact. There are different types of monitoring, such as financial monitoring of budgets or process monitoring of implementation. Monitoring can have different purposes, depending on the type, but the main purpose is to help inform everyone involved in the programme or policy, and to ensure that decisions can be taken in a timely matter. The monitoring data can capture expected as well as unexpected changes, which can subsequently inform programme or policy adjustments and management.⁷⁴ Monitoring is often conducted by internal staff but, if data needs to be collected remotely or among target groups that are difficult to reach, institutions can consider Third Party Monitoring (TPM)^{75,76}

Evaluation and research

The The third component of the cycle refers to evaluation and research to the assess a programme or policy's performance and results at a specific point in time.⁷⁷ There are various types of evaluations. For example, an impact or effect evaluation assesses the impact and outcomes of an intervention, and to what extent this matches the intended results.⁷⁸ As described by Hayman and Simister, "Once you go beyond a certain level of complexity, research and M&E may begin to look remarkably similar."⁷⁹ This type of evaluation often adopts scientific research methods and standards, and can be performed by academics and/or M&E professionals. Another common type of evaluation is a process evaluation. This examines an intervention's implementation and whether it succeeded as planned. In contrast to impact evaluations, it is often carried out during the implementation phase to inform the ongoing process. Project plans can also be evaluated to assess how well a proposed solution addresses the given problem, incorporates existing knowledge, and considers planning for the intervention's process and/or impact evaluation. As such, plan evaluations help refine and justify the intervention plan.⁸⁰ The type of evaluation often determines how and when it is carried out and who does it.⁸¹

Most evaluations are conducted by an external or mixed (internal and external) team to increase impartiality and independence.⁸² When selecting evaluation teams it is relevant to consider the balance between external, internal and local team members.⁸³ Including local evaluators is especially important when there are language or cultural barriers that influence the data

73 Nigel Simister, *Monitoring* (England: INTRAC, 2017); Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*.

74 Simister, *Monitoring*.

75 The data collection will be conducted by a third party, meaning neither the donor nor the implementer.

76 Simister, and Scholz, *Types of Evaluation*; Richard Harrison, *Study on best practices in Third Party Monitoring* (Brussels: ICE, 2020); Ris, and Ernstorfer, *Borrowing a wheel*; Holdaway, and Simpson; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

77 Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

78 "Toolkit evidence-based werken," Expertise-unit Sociale Stabiliteit; Simister, and Scholz, *Types of Evaluation*; Gielen, "Cutting through complexity".

79 Rachel Hayman, and Nigel Simister, "Research" (England: INTRAC, 2017), 2.

80 "Toolkit evidence-based werken," Expertise-unit Sociale Stabiliteit; "Toolkit evidence-based werken," Expertise-unit Sociale Stabiliteit; Simister, and Scholz, *Types of Evaluation*; Gielen, "Cutting through complexity".

81 Simister, and Scholz, *Types of Evaluation*.

82 Simister, and Scholz, *Types of Evaluation*; Baykal, Bressan, Friedrich, Pasquali, Rotmann, and Wagner, *Evaluating P/CVE: Institutional Structures*.

83 Simister, and Scholz, *Types of Evaluation*.

collection process. It also helps ensure a culturally- and contextually sensitive analysis of the data. Furthermore, it is considered good practice to have at least one team member with expertise on human rights, gender and social inclusion.⁸⁴ This helps to effectively mainstream human rights in the M&E process as well as more meaningfully understand and measure gender-sensitivity of CT and P/CVE interventions.⁸⁵

External evaluators can be recruited directly or through a bid solicitation process. Developing a clear and comprehensive Terms of Reference (ToR) is key to producing successful evaluations.⁸⁶ As Nehlsen and colleagues put it: “The client commissioning an evaluation (usually policymakers, donors or practitioners themselves) should clearly articulate which type of evaluation they are requesting and what they intend to find out. Simply commissioning an ‘evaluation’ is akin to requesting ‘something to eat’ at a restaurant.”⁸⁷ It starts with establishing a common understanding among all stakeholders about the evaluation’s expectations and the ToR. Key components of the ToR include the intervention’s background information as well as the evaluation’s objectives, scope, methodology, main evaluation criteria and questions, special considerations, management structure, deliverables, timelines, and required evaluator expertise. To illustrate, the UNDP provides a good ToR example for an external evaluation of a P/CVE project.⁸⁸ The UNODC/IES also has publicly available ToR templates for external evaluations.⁸⁹

Learning and accountability

Conducting M&E is not only a tick-box exercise, it is important to facilitate lesson-learning, ensure accountability and enable uptake of the recommendations – this is all part of the fourth component of the M&E process.⁹⁰ CT and P/CVE interventions do not always have a sufficiently flexible and adaptable design that allows for continuous improvement. What could help at the project level is to define clear learning objectives and implement an iterative improvement process. Adaptive management, guided by regular M&E efforts, facilitates responsive adjustments and encourages flexibility.⁹¹ Additionally, CT and P/CVE actors can install a steering group and establish formal requirements for a management response to evaluations. A dedicated steering group can maintain communication between the evaluators and stakeholders, facilitating a learning process during the evaluation process and not only once the result has been produced. Through a formal management response, the recipient of the evaluation commits itself to voluntary follow-up actions and publicly holds itself accountable. For evaluations to accomplish these learning and accountability goals, there should be sufficient organisational capacity to manage and use the results and recommendations.⁹²

Disseminating evaluation findings beyond the direct stakeholders has many benefits, including learning, accountability, transparency and sharing of successes in a compelling way.⁹³ In the CT

84 Simister, and Scholz, *Types of Evaluation*; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

85 White, “Gender in Countering Violent Extremism Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation”; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*; Carpenter, *Monitoring inclusion in crises*.

86 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

87 Nehlsen, Biene, Coester, Greuel, Milbradt, and Armbrorst, “Evident and effective?” 16.

88 Karin Takeuchi, Terms of Reference for Individual Contract, UNDP Terms of Reference (Bangkok: UNDP Regional Hub, 2021), accessed August 11, 2023, <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/20001>.

89 “Evaluation step by step,” UNODC/IES, accessed July 27, 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/evaluation-step-by-step.html>.

90 Baykal, Bressan, Friedrich, Pasquali, Rotmann, and Wagner, *Evaluating P/CVE: Institutional Structures*; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*.

91 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

92 Baykal, Bressan, Friedrich, Pasquali, Rotmann, and Wagner, *Evaluating P/CVE: Institutional Structures*.

93 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation*

and P/CVE field, actors have to balance the need of sharing lessons and knowledge with the potential risks of publishing sensitive information. To minimise these risks, institutions should apply anonymisation and confidentiality protocols, follow regulations on secure storage and the use of sensitive data, can share summaries of the reports or can consider publishing them one year or later after the intervention was finished.⁹⁴ The GCERF evaluation mentioned earlier provides an example of an anonymised, public evaluation summary.⁹⁵ To assist learning for the readers, it is important to present the findings and recommendations in an accessible way – for example, through a clear report structure, infographic snapshots and visuals. To advance reach, institutions can also think through impactful dissemination strategies.⁹⁶

Finally, it is beneficial for learning to facilitate knowledge-sharing and organise regular exchanges between academics, policymakers, practitioners, donors and M&E professionals. This would contribute to the sharing of good practices, challenges and experiences, and can foster collaboration and innovation regarding M&E for the CT and P/CVE field.⁹⁷

Recommendations

As shown in this policy brief, M&E is a good practice to implement across programmes and policies on CT and P/CVE. This policy brief ends with three recommendations for policymakers and practitioners who want to start or advance M&E in their own institution.

1. Allocate five to ten percent of the budget to M&E. It all starts with adequate funding, so both programme managers and funders must press for allocating five to ten percent of the budget to M&E.⁹⁸ For a more precise calculation, programme managers can use the UNODC/IES' evaluation budget calculator.⁹⁹ Longer term outcomes and impact can often only be measured after the project, and its financing, have ended. Funders should take this into account and provide M&E funding during as well as after the implementation period.¹⁰⁰

2. Start integrating M&E from the programme or policy design phase onwards. To improve the quality of the evaluation, it is essential to include M&E professionals in the design phase. If M&E activities are only initiated towards the end, this limits the options for thorough assessment and designs with pre and post measurements. Therefore, it is crucial to include evaluators from the outset of the programme so that M&E activities can be planned efficiently and effectively.¹⁰¹

3. Create an enabling environment for M&E. This includes institutional commitment to and sufficient resources for M&E as well as creating an organisational culture that embraces M&E as a basis for learning, evidence-based decision-making, accountability and transparency.¹⁰² Even if organisations have limited resources, they can start with establishing clear procedures

and Learning Toolkit; Peter Romaniuk, *Does CVE work? Lessons learned from the global effort to counter violent extremism* (Goshen, IN: Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2015).

94 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

95 GCERF, *Final report for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) funded project*.

96 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Roberts, and Elshimi, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*.

97 Gielen, "Cutting through complexity"; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

98 Gielen, "Cutting through complexity"; Nehlsen, Biene, Coester, Greuel, Milbradt, and Armbrorst, "Evident and effective?"

99 "Evaluation Step by Step," UNODC/IES; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

100 Nehlsen, Biene, Coester, Greuel, Milbradt, and Armbrorst, "Evident and effective?"

101 Gielen, "Cutting through complexity"; Baykal, Bressan, Friedrich, Pasquali, Rotmann, and Wagner, *Evaluating P/CVE: Institutional Structures*; Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

102 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*; Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*; Carpenter, *Monitoring inclusion in crises*; United Nations Evaluation Group, *Norms and standards for evaluation* (New York, NY: UNEG, 2016).

and expectations for M&E.¹⁰³ Additionally, institutions can organise regular reflection meetings, disseminate M&E findings within as well as outside the institution, and encourage sharing successes and failures.¹⁰⁴ Funders have a particularly important role in creating a culture of trust by providing a minimum level of financial security, protect beneficiaries from undue consequences when owning up to mistakes, and pave the way by sharing their own lessons.¹⁰⁵

This policy brief reiterated that the CT and P/CVE field needs to implement rigorous M&E frameworks that accurately measure impact and effectiveness. This way, M&E can contribute to the field's continuous learning and improvement, good management and public governance, and enhanced transparency and accountability. Combined, the M&E efforts can generate evidence-based good practices and have the potential to further the development of the CT and P/CVE field.

103 Holmer, Sutherland, and Wallner, *Compendium of Good Practices*.

104 Holdaway, and Simpson, *Improving the impact*; Carpenter, *Monitoring inclusion in crises*.

105 Baykal, Bressan, Friedrich, Pasquali, Rotmann, and Wagner, *Evaluating P/CVE: Institutional Structures*.

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About the Author

Aileen van Leeuwen

Aileen van Leeuwen joined ICCT in 2022. Her focus is on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the impact and implementation of CT and P/CVE programmes, policies and strategies. In this position, Aileen combines her thematic knowledge on CT and P/CVE and the M&E experience she gained at various international NGOs.

Previously, Aileen provided policy research, advice and evaluations to Dutch professionals concerned with (violent) extremism, radicalisation, polarisation and reintegration. She also supported risk assessments of potential (violent) extremists. Additionally, she worked on designing and implementing M&E frameworks for the exiled, Sudanese media house Dabanga, and supported political dialogues between armed groups, governments and international organisations at the Dialogue Advisory Group (DAG). She also co-founded the start-up Acume, which brings academic insights to policy-makers and practitioners, facilitating innovative and evidence-based decision-making. On the side, she is a photographer and founder of the photography project Portraits for People.

Aileen holds an MA in Conflict Studies and Human Rights and a BSc in Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (with honours) from Utrecht University in The Netherlands. Her MA thesis (published as a peer-reviewed article) focused on the reintegration process of ex-paramilitaries in Medellín, Colombia, and was based on 3-month field research and interviews with ex-paramilitaries.



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