

More than 40.5 million people seek refuge within and across international borders annually due to conflict and disasters, increasingly exacerbated by violent extremism. As part of its commitment to addressing adverse drivers of displacement, and to mitigating human suffering, IOM is active in the prevention and resolution of conflict. This includes the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts, such as violent extremism.

IOM HAS UNDERTAKEN 46 PVE PROJECTS IN 20 COUNTRIES FROM 2015-2020

IOM'S APPROACH

IOM's PVE programmes are focused on identifying and proactively addressing context-specific drivers, risk factors and individual incentives for radicalization and joining violent extremist groups. Working at the institutional, community and individual levels, IOM supports a whole-of-society approach to understanding and addressing underlying vulnerabilities, and building community and individual resiliency, including among youth. This *prevention* work is complemented by efforts to support the disengagement, disassociation, reintegration and reconciliation of those exiting violent extremist groups.

Notably, these programmes are *NOT* designed to confront violent extremist groups, their messages or methods, but rather may provide positive, pro-social responses to their exclusivist ideologies.

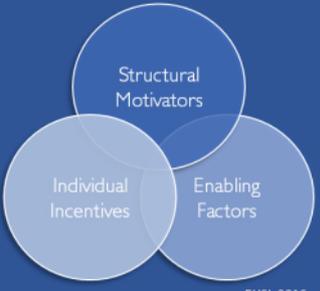
Identifying context-specific drivers of violent extremism

IOM's prevention and (re)integration programmes are tailored to mitigate context-specific drivers and individual vulnerabilities

Common sets of drivers and vulnerabilities in fragile and crisis-affected contexts:

- systematic marginalization of ethnic, sectarian, religious or cultural groups
- migrant labor bans
- human rights violations
- lack of livelihood opportunities
- lack of governance
- lack of basic services
- other longstanding grievances

The interaction and relationship between the key factors can explain why, if at all, certain individuals are recruited or radicalized into violent extremist groups.



RUSI, 2016

In order not to stigmatize beneficiaries or exacerbate underlying grievances, IOM takes a conflict and gender sensitive approach to its programming and builds its engagements attentive to context-specific political and social factors. This programming is informed by extensive institutional experience in programme areas such as community stabilization, psychosocial recovery, conflict mitigation, peacebuilding and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR).

COMPLEXITIES OF PVE — ENGAGEMENT

Violent extremism is a contested concept often equated with all expressions of extreme violence, defined narrowly as terrorism or inaccurately equated with insurgency.

IOM defines violent extremism as a *phenomenon aimed at advancing an exclusivist ideological agenda by advocating, committing or supporting acts of violence typically based on racial, religious or ethnic supremacy or an opposition to inclusive ideologies*. Violent extremism is not specific to any religion, ethnicity, ideology or group, and can emerge in diverse contexts. Violent extremism exploits grievances and aspirations to catalyze conflict, that can drive displacement and human suffering. Addressing violent extremism therefore requires a context-specific understanding of the unique constellation of contributing factors.

Xenophobia and misunderstanding are erroneously driving an increased association of migrants and refugees with violent extremism. Displacement may contribute to increased vulnerabilities to radicalization and violent extremism, when instrumentalized. Yet, despite facing similar socio-economic and political challenges, there is no evidence that those choosing to migrate are the same as those choosing to join violent extremist groups. Instead, migrants are more often taking intentional steps in search of a better life for themselves and their families. Therefore, rights-based prevention programming that addresses underlying drivers, offers an impactful approach to improve lives and prevent the spread of violent extremism.



IOM'S ACTIVE PVE PROJECTS IN 2020 — 13 PROJECTS IN 15 COUNTRIES

WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY APPROACH

Governments and Institutions

Non-securitized approach

Research on contextual drivers and individual vulnerabilities

Capacity-building and strategy at national and subnational levels for interinstitutional coordination and training

Programs incorporating research to reduce vulnerabilities and drivers, including structural and institutional inequalities and marginalization

Communities

Stabilization programming enabling community actors play prevention roles

Community-based prevention programmes for youth at risk

Building resilience

Social cohesion

Expanding socio-economic and participation opportunities

Community projects with psychosocial dimensions

Addressing grievances

Individuals

Livelihoods and education focus

Political participation

Counselling

Mobilizing and organizing positive influencers

Psychosocial assistance

Critical thinking

Livelihoods

Conflict Sensitivity and Gender Sensitivity

PROGRAMME EXAMPLE: WESTERN BALKANS

IOM has implemented multiple projects and elaborated on national PVE strategies across the countries of the Western Balkans, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to support the efforts of community members, especially youth, civil society and central and local authorities to prevent radicalization and the recruitment of individuals to violent extremist ideologies and groups. This work has included: conducting and disseminating research on drivers, vulnerabilities, and impact of violent extremism; strengthening the critical thinking skills and media literacy of youth; building the capacity of committed local actors and parents; increasing the preparedness of key actors to respond to and prevent further escalation of tensions; and promoting regional cooperation and learning. Importantly, these projects in the Western Balkans are designed to support the implementation of the countries' national PVE strategies.



COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITIES IN MOZAMBIQUE POST CYCLONE IDAI. © AMANDA NERO / IOM 2019

PROGRAMME EXAMPLE: MOROCCO

Since 2015, IOM Morocco has implemented a large-scale PVE programme “Favourable Opportunities to Reinforce Self-Advancement for Today’s Youth (FORSATY)”, reaching 25,000 youth across 9 counties, set to end in 2024. FORSATY prioritized collaborating with youth serving organizations (YSO) to establish public YSO centres and to enable youth to acquire personal assets, gain access to services, build identity and strengthen their resilience to extremist messaging. The programme is informed by an in-depth study and a contextualized driver analysis, building upon a One-Stop-Shop (OSS) model that provides educational, sports and cultural activities for youth. The OSS also supports youth-based grassroots movements, building its connections and integration into the larger neighbourhoods and communities, contributing to resilience to violent extremism. The programme includes a strong gender component to reduce gender disparities and increase the capacity of female youth by engaging them in internships and jobs (35%), increasing female participation in community activities, and engaging CSOs and female youth coaches. The programme made strides to ensure sustainability through concrete buy-in and co-ownership, capacity transfer to local CSOs, and funding diversification.

Reference:

Khalil, J. & Zeuthen, M. (2016). Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation. UK: RUSI.

For more information: <https://www.iom.int/transition-and-peacebuilding> Follow: @UNMigration Contact: TRDCoreGroupHQ@iom.int