



Final Internal Evaluation

Young Leaders for Online Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) in Southeast Asia

Location of intervention: Virtual and Thailand

Timeframe of intervention: June 2023 to June 2024

Funders: Australia

Implementing partners: N/A

Date of evaluation: July to August 2024

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URL for evaluation report: <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/publications>

Background and Context

The subject of this evaluation was a project implemented by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), under the Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), from June 2023 to June 2024. The Project aimed to equip 16 young people from Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia to develop locally-tailored online strategic communication campaigns focusing on PCVE. Additionally, the project aimed to empower these young people to build the capacity of their peers in PCVE strategic communications, beyond the project's duration.

The Project responded to growing concerns about violent extremism conducive to terrorism in the region, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Project activities included: online training introducing key concepts of PCVE and strategic communications; in-person training focusing on skill development in PCVE strategic communication campaign development and training-of-trainers, as well as excursion visits; and follow-up coaching support. The evaluation aims to support continuous improvement of the Global Programme on PCVE's youth/strategic communications work; demonstrate project success to key stakeholders; and share best practice with other PCVE practitioners delivering youth/strategic communications work.



Key Findings

Overall, the evaluation found the Project to have been well-designed and implemented, to have engaged the desired number and profile of young people, and to have achieved all four of its intended outcomes. It has been a successful pilot project which, taking into account the identified opportunities for improvement, could be expanded and enhanced in future.

Effectiveness

Finding 1: The Project met its reach target, and successfully engaged young women and men from the four intended countries	The Project met its reach target, engaging 16 young people in both the online and in-person training (nine women; seven men). This included five people from Indonesia, three from Malaysia, five from the Philippines and three from Thailand.
Finding 2: Beneficiaries now have enhanced capacity to deliver online PCVE strategic communications	An uplift in knowledge and skills in strategic communications has been observed, and there is evidence that beneficiaries have been utilising these skills in their everyday lives. There is limited evidence of new PCVE strategic communication campaigns being implemented by beneficiaries at six months following the Project, due to a lack of resources.
Finding 3: Beneficiaries now feel empowered to contribute to PCVE efforts	An uplift in knowledge of PCVE and increased confidence to speak about PCVE in a range of contexts has been observed.
Finding 4: Beneficiaries have positively influenced their peers to become involved in PCVE efforts	Six months following the Project, nine beneficiaries reported having reached approximately 200 young people in their communities with training on PCVE.
Finding 5: Beneficiaries made new connections and have continued engaging with each other	All beneficiaries reported remaining in contact with at least two other beneficiaries, and, on average, with four other beneficiaries.

Impact story: Young woman from Indonesia

A young woman who participated in the Project is a Program Management Officer at Kumpul, an organisation supporting entrepreneurs, where she leads a scholarship program initiated by Bank Central Asia (BCA). During the Project, she also worked at WriteHaus Asia as Strategic Partnership Developer, delivering communication campaigns for young journalists and activists on women’s empowerment. This young woman found the topics on strategic communications most relevant to her work and reported that the training enhanced her skills in strategic communications and supported her to make more meaningful contributions to PCVE efforts.

After the program, I [could] write better campaign strategies that I implemented. Not only [for] my professional work but also my advocacy work...my style in targeting audiences and how to operationalize have shifted. Now I would say I have better outcomes, and I am more satisfied with the work I have been working on.



Relevance

Finding 1: The focus of the training was relevant to the needs of young people in the beneficiary countries	The focus of the training was found to be highly relevant given the context of violent extremism conducive to terrorism in Southeast Asia.
Finding 2: The regional approach was a key success factor	Bringing together young people from four different countries in Southeast Asia enriched beneficiaries' learning.
Finding 3: The project structure supported positive outcomes	The online training offered a foundation in PCVE concepts and networking, while the excursion visits provided insights into key PCVE actors, and the follow-up support was crucial for advancing beneficiaries' campaigns.
Finding 4: The training was pitched at the right level; however the curriculum was overly ambitious	While the training difficulty was appropriate, there was not enough time to cover all modules as planned. The curriculum should be revised.
Finding 5: The trainers were highly engaging and created a safe space for learning	The highly engaging facilitation style adopted by the trainers, and their efforts to create a safe space for engagement, clearly facilitated learning outcomes.

Human rights, gender equality, leave no one behind, and disability inclusion

Finding 1: The Project proactively incorporated do no harm principles; however there are opportunities to further incorporate human rights considerations	Do no harm principles were well incorporated into project design, however, there are opportunities to further incorporate human rights considerations in the curriculum.
Finding 2: The Project proactively addressed disability inclusion	Disability inclusion measures enabled safe and meaningful participation of one beneficiary.
Finding 3: The Project reached young women; however there are opportunities to further incorporate gender considerations into design and delivery	Incorporating gender considerations into the curriculum and involving more women representatives in training delivery and/or including women-led CSOs in the excursion visits would strengthen the Project.
Finding 4: The excursion visits provided insights into local PCVE work; however the project would benefit from further tailoring to the local context	Partnering with local experts would support local challenges to be highlighted more strongly throughout the training and help to ensure inclusive project design based on the local socio-cultural context.
Finding 5: The Project risked privileging participation by socio-economically advantaged young people	Future projects should consider how to reach young people from all socio-economic backgrounds, including through minimising travel and/or increasing peer-to-peer elements.



Key Lessons

The evaluation identified the three key success factors for the Project:

- The regional approach – bringing together young people from four different countries in Southeast Asia, each with different perspectives and experiences, enriched beneficiaries’ learning.
- The structure of the Project – using the online training to build a foundation in PCVE concepts and create opportunities for beneficiaries to start building connections with each other, created momentum for the in-person training. Further, those who accessed the follow-up support, after the in-person training, reported this was instrumental in progressing their campaign.
- The trainers’ facilitation approach – adopting a highly engaging and active facilitation style, while purposefully creating a safe space for young people to discuss complex topics, facilitated learning outcomes.

Recommendations

1. **Recommendation No. # 1: Making resources available to support campaign implementation** – When implementing future capacity-building with young people on strategic communications, allocate financial resources to support campaign implementation.
2. **Recommendation No. # 2: Ensuring training curricula can be realistically delivered** – When implementing future capacity-building with young people, ensure training curricula can be realistically delivered within the available training days.
3. **Recommendation No. # 3: Incorporating human rights and gender considerations into training design** – Engage UNOCT’s Human Rights and Gender Section to conduct a holistic review of the training curriculum, with a focus on strengthening the incorporation of human rights and gender (including intersectionality) considerations.
4. **Recommendation No. # 4: Incorporating gender considerations into training delivery** – When implementing future capacity-building with young people, ensure both women and men are involved in delivering the training.
5. **Recommendation No. # 5: Tailoring the training further to the local context** – When implementing future capacity-building, partner with local experts to further tailor the training more to the local context.
6. **Recommendation No. # 6: Revisiting project design with a view to promoting participation among young people from all socio-economic backgrounds** – When implementing future capacity-building with young people, consider alternative project design options, such as minimising the need for beneficiaries to travel, **and/or** look to increase the reach of the Project through strengthening the peer-to-peer element of the Project.

Methodology

The internal evaluation was conducted by UNOCT between July and August 2024. It focused on all project activities (virtual and in-person) and the entire project duration (June 2023 to June 2024). The evaluation examined two criteria: effectiveness (with a focus on reach and outcomes) and relevance (with a focus on appropriateness and process). The evaluation also examined considerations relating to human rights, gender, leave no one behind and disability inclusion. The evaluation adopted a mixed method approach, incorporating two feedback surveys and interviews with beneficiaries, and a reflection session with project staff.