End of Project Evaluation Report: Women and Girls as Drivers of Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization

January, 2019

List of Acronyms

CPP	Crime Prevention Plan
CRRS	Center on the Religious Situation of the Kyrgyz Republic
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation
PBF	Peacebuidling Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PVE	Prevention of Violent Extremism
SCRA	State Committee on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic
UN CAT	United Nations Committee Against Torture
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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Executive Summary

The project *Women and Girls as Drivers of Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization* was jointly implemented by UNFPA (lead agency), UNICEF, UNDP, and UNODC from January 2017 to December 2018 in 16 communities of the Kyrgyz Republic. Fully funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, this was the first project focused on preventing violent extremism to be implemented by UN agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic and, as such, entailed significant learning and risk-taking in terms of project strategies and implementation. The project operated on the basis of two interlinked theories of change:

> ToC #1.1, Outcome 1, *Evaluation Matrix*, 2018: IF female religious leaders have more knowledge and awareness on women's rights and tolerance; on the presence and risks of radical groups; have strengthened critical thinking skills; feel more integrated into society and empowered to dialogue with duty bearers; and know how to recognize vulnerable individuals (women and girls) and to empower them and address their vulnerabilities: THEN girls and women in the communities will be more resilient to radicalisation and violent extremism: BECAUSE the trained female religious leaders will feel a stronger sense for and belonging to the community and will therefore raise awareness among girls and women in the communities on the presence and risks of radical groups, and will proactively aim to reduce the vulnerabilities of the vulnerable groups including through engaging them in community initiatives.

> ToC #1.2, Outcome 2, *Evaluation Matrix*, 2018: IF law enforcement institutions, local authorities, legal aid providers and social workers engage women and girls at risk to VE in inclusive, sensitized dialogue; and provide professional and effective social services and legal support to (vulnerable) girls and women: THEN girls and women in the communities will become more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism: BECAUSE women and girls will have better access to public services, will feel less discriminated against, and therefore have greater trust in the authorities (duty bearers) and connection to their communities.

As can be seen from these theories, the ultimate goal of the project was to increase women's and girls' resilience to violent extremism and radicalization through increased knowledge, skills, and sensitivity among women religious leaders and various government duty bearers, with the theory that this would increase trust, community connection, and therefore resilience to extremist ideologies.

To achieve these aims, project implementers conducted a series of activities in the target communities: (i) multi-phase trainings for women religious leaders (WRLs), covering topics such as banned extremist groups, tolerance and radicalization risk factors, and social responsibility; (ii) community initiatives led by the trained WRLs to spread knowledge among local women and girls and to support those of socio-economic disadvantage; (iii) a media campaign intended to break down stereotypes across secular and religious groups; (iv) trainings for local government officials to improve their client service capacity; (v) the development of local crime prevention plans, and (vi) the provision of legal aid services. Though varied (and of varied effectiveness during actual implementation), this complex of services was intended to both enhance local women's and girls' integration into their communities and to prime community leaders (i.e. local government officials) to be receptive to and sensitized toward these women and girls during their process of integrating more fully into local community life.

These methods - i.e. the development of community cohesion and trust as a method of preventing radicalization - have a basis in global peacebuilding and radicalization prevention efforts as well as in social cohesion literature, which indicates that dense, voluntary, and high-quality interactions among citizens can improve their mutual trust, shared values, and with it their sense of civic integration (i.e. connection to their communities and nations). Feedback from participants in the project, meanwhile, serves to further support these theories and development strategies, with the women religious leaders who were involved in the project describing an increased sense of connection to their communities, adoption of the concept of social responsibility, and greater trust that extends (in some cases) to the level of the State (ToC 1.1). Community members supported the contentions that they had achieved greater trust in their local authorities as a result of this project's efforts, and that this had also been effective in reducing tendencies toward radicalism in their communities.

Project efforts to improve the sensitivity and quality of government service provision (ToC 1.2) was largely successful and had a clear impact on citizens' sense of connection to their local authorities. Most clearly effective were efforts to enhance collaboration across doctors, teachers and social workers in supporting the most disadvantaged families - the positive outcomes of this new service model were felt by the professionals themselves and more broadly by the communities in which they work. Police, meanwhile, appear to have improved their community policing practices in some communities, again in ways that were felt by project participants. Women religious leaders who had been trained on their rights, tolerance, and leadership repeatedly described greater trust in these officials, whom they had previously feared. Many of these benefits appear to have come from relatively simple but effective dialogue processes, placing women religious leaders, police officers, and duty bearers in the same room and encouraging their interaction (with facilitation and oversight).

In terms of directly impacting violent extremism in these 16 communities, several of the project's aims and assumptions were borne out: once project participants had greater knowledge of banned and extremist ideologies, they worked actively to protect themselves and their community members from these ideologies; once religious women learned of the State's policy of non-discrimination and the equality of all religions before the law, they developed a more positive and trusting view of the State (and less interest in alternate State forms, such as a Halifat); once community members and police developed greater trust, local residents began alerting police to the presence of potential extremist activities and materials in their communities. Meanwhile, additional programming around the rule of law, duty bearer services, crime prevention, and community initiatives aimed at general human rights and gender rights topics all had positive development impacts, though their link to preventing violent extremism is more theoretical than the elements noted above, with the possible connection between such general development strategies and their PVE impact mediated by social cohesion theories.

While the project was positive and effective overall, key lessons can be integrated into future programming. Trainings for women religious leaders on core topics such as radicalization and marginalization were misunderstood by project participants, a problem that could have been prevented by more systematic literature review and careful development of training materials before implementation. These misunderstandings led in some cases to over-determinative definitions of what it means for someone to be "radicalized", equating this concept with marginalization or introversion. Other project elements, such as crime prevention planning and legal aid services, were nominally relevant to PVE but this link was lost during actual implementation, with participants and service recipients seeing little to no link to religious radicalization in the efforts undertaken. Trainings for duty bearer services, meanwhile, were both effective and clearly tailored to PVE challenges, though ongoing work is needed (and particularly with those tasked with serving the neediest families, social service workers).

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Overall project impact could have been heightened by improved coordination, monitoring, and exit planning. Indeed, though this project had better coordination than most and incorporated meaningful strategies for team learning, the impact of implementers' lack of agreement on fundamental project concepts, timelines, and methods could clearly be seen in the on-the-ground results in target communities. A lack of clear exit planning also undermines the foreseeable sustainability of the (significant) gains made, though this adverse impact is somewhat mitigated by the launch of new PVE programming in many of these same communities. None of this is to take away from the palpable improvements in the target communities, but rather to say that these improvements could have been magnified by better coordination and sustainability planning.

To be fair, some of the challenges that this project encountered are structural in nature and require more favorable legislation and institutional practices. For example, the effectiveness of both community policing trainings and crime prevention planning was negatively impacted by institutional practices such as frequent rotations of police officers out of communities and rating them purely on quantitative metrics (e.g. how many arrests, how many cases closes, etc.) Meanwhile, the lack of serious PVE conceptualization of the legal aid work is likely related to the Ministry of Justice's lack of inclusion in the national PVE strategy and, more generally, its lack of any role in the PVE process in the Kyrgyz Republic. UN agency implementers and their NGO partners may want to think about supporting their government partners (i.e. the MIA and MoJ) to improve - or at least consider changes to - these institutional barriers to effective PVE programming, especially if they intend to continue similar methods such as community policing trainings and legal assistance in future PVE work.

Core recommendations therefore include:

- Policy level: enhance the possibility of positive rule of law developments by (i) advocating for policing policies that would be more conducive to community policing and (ii) supporting the Ministry of Justice in developing a PVE strategy;
- Donor level: (i) provide funding timelines longer than 18 months, particularly to enhance sustainability of behavior changes and to allow time for synergies of multi-sectoral approaches to emerge and (ii) consider providing definitions of core concepts - such as "violent extremism" and "prevention" - to aid grant beneficiaries in thinking through their project strategies and coordinating across agencies;
- Project level: more extensive planning at all phases (literature review during project design, coordination during implementation, and exit planning at project completion) would improve both effectiveness and sustainability, as would improved coordination across UN agencies and their implementing partners.

In sum, the efforts undertaken in the project *Women and Girls as Drivers for Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization* were largely successful, supporting women and girls in the target communities to become more resilient to violent extremist ideologies. Though improvements could be made for future programming, the methods used are sound and should be continued into the future with only minor improvements made.

The Project: Women and Girls as Drivers of Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization

Women and girls as Drivers of Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization sought to improve women's and girls' resilience to religious radicalism leading to violent extremism in 16 target communities in the Kyrgyz Republic. Below, we give an overview of the project starting with its

Theories of Change, moving on to describe the context in which it was implemented, and finishing with an overview of project activities and strategies.

The Project Theory of Change

The theory of change for *Women and girls as Drivers of Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization* developed significantly over the course of implementation, changing as the project team learned from on-the-ground implementation. This is reflected primarily in the unpacking of outcome and output statements from the project document of late 2016 to the joint monitoring plan of late 2017. Though Outcome and Output statements had been reworked by 2017 to reflect the evolving project logic, no updated Theory of Change is provided in project documentation. To that end, the project implementers took part in collaboratively updating their ToCs for each of their intervention streams at the Evaluation Inception Workshop on September 4, 2018 to surface the logic that was implemented on the ground (as noted in the discussion of findings related to evaluation criterion #4 - coordination and M&E - the project could have benefited had this unpacking occurred earlier, during actual implementation). Below, we list the primary ToCs that undergirded the Project.

Original project theory of change, as included in the Project Document:

> ToC #1, Project Overall, *Project Document*, 2016: IF women and girls from conservative religious backgrounds are socially included and prevented from marginalization, and if duty bearers are able to recognize the early signs of radicalization and engage with women and girls in a sensitive manner to ensure their access to social services, THEN the resilience of communities to radicalization and violent extremism will be increased BECAUSE the root causes leading to the phenomenon will be addressed.

Updated ToCs, developed collaboratively with stakeholders during the Evaluation Inception Workshop:

> ToC #1, Outcome 1, *Evaluation Matrix*, 2018: IF female religious leaders have more knowledge and awareness on women's rights and tolerance; on the presence and risks of radical groups; have strengthened critical thinking skills; feel more integrated into society and empowered to dialogue with duty bearers; and know how to recognize vulnerable individuals (women and girls) and to empower them and address their vulnerabilities: THEN girls and women in the communities will be more resilient to radicalisation and violent extremism: BECAUSE the trained female religious leaders will feel a stronger sense for and belonging to the community and will therefore raise awareness among girls and women in the communities on the presence and risks of radical groups, and will proactively aim to reduce the vulnerabilities of the vulnerable groups including through engaging them in community initiatives.

> ToC #2, Outcome 2, *Evaluation Matrix*, 2018: IF law enforcement institutions, local authorities, legal aid providers and social workers engage women and girls at risk to VE in inclusive, sensitized dialogue; and provide professional and effective social services and legal support to (vulnerable) girls and women: THEN girls and women in the communities will become more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism: BECAUSE women and girls will have better access to public services, will feel less discriminated against, and therefore have greater trust in the authorities (duty bearers) and connection to their communities.

This evaluation was structured around the updated theories of changes presented above, seeking to assess the relevance and efficacy of the logic that was used for actual project implementation as opposed to that encapsulated in the initial Theory of Change from the Project Document.

Project Context

The Project took place from January, 2017 to December, 2018 in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The Kyrgyz Republic is a nation of approximately 6 million citizens, located in Central Asia and a prior member of the Soviet Union up until declaring independence in 1991. After becoming an independent state, Kyrgyzstan "witnessed a considerable religious revival…. the number of new madrasas and other religious educational initiatives skyrocketed, and public manifestations of religiosity became visible" (Maksutova 2017: 16). Some 80% of the country's population now identifies as Muslim, with the remaining plurality following Russian Orthodoxy and a mix of other faiths (Protestantism, Buddhism, etc).

Though the State took a relatively tolerant and laissez-faire approach to this growing religiosity on its territory over the 1990's and early 2000's, terrorist activities both foreign and domestic prompted a re-orientation of State policy and attempts at greater control, continuing into the present (Malikov 2010). Thus while freedom of religion and religious expression are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, the government takes an active role in regulating religious organizations on its territory. In 2006, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic enacted the State Policy in the Sphere of Religion, by which the Hanafi madhhab and Russian Orthodox Church were recognized as being core in state-religion relations (Maksutova 2017). In 2009, the "Law on Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations" was adopted, putting in place significant restrictions on the activities of religious organizations, including the requirement that all religious organizations register with (and be approved by) the government's State Committee on Religious Affairs (SCRA) and the explicit banning of some religious organization for extremist ideologies. Under current legislation, individuals can be imprisoned based on mere possession of materials espousing the ideology of one of these banned groups - a context that underlies much of the knowledge and awareness building of the project being evaluated here. Notably, while these banned organizations include foreign-based groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, other groups such as Jannat are Central Asian-based and focus not so much on foreign fighting but on establishing a Halifat on the territory of Central Asia.

In the time immediately preceding the drafting of the project proposal for *Women and Girls as Drivers of Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization* in 2016, significant numbers of Central Asian citizens were travelling abroad to join violent extremist organizations - with estimates ranging from 2,000 to 4,000 in the period from 2012 to 2015 (Spekhard 2017). Of particular concern to the Kyrgyzstani government was the rising portion of women joining these outflows, reaching some 23% by 2016 (ibid). The combination of a focus on preventing violent extremism and working with women specifically as presented by this project was timely, given the rising trend of Kyrgyzstani women leaving for battlegrounds.

As will be discussed more in the section on "relevance", poverty, economic inequality, and government repression have all been theorized as "push" factors - or contributing conditions - to individuals' radicalization to violent extremist ideologies. Though Kyrgyzstan has seen significant economic improvements since the crash of the Soviet Union and remains the most democratically open country in the Central Asian region, it suffers from each of these three challenges. Some 25% of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic were living below the poverty line as of 2017, with a small difference in poverty rates between women (25% living in poverty) and men (26%) (National Statistics Committee 2018b). Poverty and unemployment are higher in rural than urban areas (National Statistics Committee 2017), driving migration of working-age adults both internally to

urban centers and externally to foreign countries - most prominently Russia, Turkey, and Kazakhstan - a phenomenon that some link to youth exposure to violent extremist ideologies (see, e.g. Tucker 2015; Elshimi et. al. 2018; but see Nasritdinov 2017 for counter arguments).[1] The portion of women taking part in foreign labor migration from Kyrgyzstan has been consistently high, with 58% of labour migrants being women as of 2000 and 60% as of 2017 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2017: 26).

Though Kyrgyzstan has by and large avoided the politically-oriented repression of citizens that some of its neighbors engage in, problems of corruption and human rights violations remain - with implications for the rule of law and the prevention of violent extremism. Police torture of suspects is notoriously widespread (see e.g. OSCE 2012; UN CAT 2013; Open Society Foundations 2015), which researchers have noted is motivated not so much by political repression as by the desire for bribes and a constraining quota-based performance system for law enforcement officers - as such, arrestees are given the choice to pay a bribe, confess (thereby helping officers meet their quotas), or endure more torture (OSCE 2012; Open Society Foundations 2015; Baijumanova 2016). This phenomenon is not a mere abstraction when it comes to the project in question: during the evaluation interviews, one project participant recounted how his/her son was imprisoned and tortured for 1.5 months by local police, who requested a bribe of $10,000 for his/her son's release.[2] The participant had not joined the project's initiatives to improve local police officers' community policing practices - noting a lack of trust in their good will - though he/she did take part in other project activities.

Meanwhile, interviews for this evaluation and recent work completed by Human Rights Watch also surfaced issues of ethnically-discriminatory arrests (primarily against young male ethnic Uzbeks) and the practice of planting of extremist materials, generally with the goal of extracting a bribe for non-arrest (2018). Given that Kyrgyzstani prisons have been cited as a place where radical ideologies are spread (evaluation interview), these police practices are likely to expose previously non-radicalized individuals to violent extremist ideologies when they are at a highly vulnerable point.

The police misconduct and torture mentioned above is made possible in no small part by judicial corruption and failures in judicial oversight. Some 63% of Kyrgyzstani citizens involved in court cases admit to having paid a bribe to influence the judge's decision (OECD 2015: 86). Meanwhile, judges themselves admitted to lacking independence and partaking in "deals between chairpersons and the judges most 'loyal' to them, who usually get the most 'profitable' cases and are expected to share the bribes with their supervisors" (ibid). This corruption appears to unduly favor not only the wealthy, but also police officers accused of torture and other crimes (Baijumanova 2016), numerous of whose acquittals in Kyrgyzstani court have been found to be deeply flawed by the UN Human Rights Committee (see, for example, Akhmatov v. Kyrgyzstan (2011); Ernazarov v. Kyrgyzstan (2011); and the 20 other such cases available on the Human Rights Committee's database of jurisprudence as of January, 2019 at: http://juris.ohchr.org/).

Despite this challenging context, trendlines for all of these indicators appear to be improving. Citizens' trust in the government improved over the past five years, with government data showing

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[1] Indeed, to say that someone "went to Turkey" was sometimes used by evaluation respondents to imply that a person had joined a violent extremist group in Syria (through the gateway of Turkey). This euphemism complicated interpretation in some interviews, where it's unclear if the person being discussed in the interview went to Turkey simply as a labour migrant or instead in order to join an extremist group operating in Syria or Iraq.

[2] Though other respondents are identified in this report by code numbers, given the sensitivity of this experience and possibility of cross-checking against quotations, we do not provide the code number here and refer to the participant as both "he/she" and "his/her" so as to not indicate the interviewee's gender.

a rise in public trust in the State from -4 to 40 from 2012 to 2017 (though how exactly this is measured and on what scale is unclear) (National Statistics Committee 2018a). On this scale, trust toward the State is *highest* in Osh City (51) and Batken Province (56) and *lowest* in Talas and Bishkek (both 33) - a somewhat surprising result given that Osh was the cite of cross-ethnic violence in 2010 which the government was not able to successfully prevent. Regarding economic factors that may provide a background context for radicalization, the World Bank has predicted that economic growth will continue at roughly the same rate over the next year. Reform efforts of the judiciary and law enforcement sectors is ongoing.

Description of Project Activities and Structure

Number of components and size of population intended to be served: Each of the UN agencies involved in the project oversaw at least one sub-component of the project. UNFPA and implementing partner FTI oversaw the training of 86 women religious leaders across the 16 intervention communities on topics of radicalization, social disadvantage, rights, and tolerance. These women took part in two rounds of trainings and community initiatives under the auspices of "Women's Leadership Schools," with the goal being to extend the reach of the trainings by having women religious leaders spread their messages to their own, relatively isolated communities ("isolated" here indicating isolation from local government services and from other sub-segments of their local populations).

Echoing this work was that of UNDP and Mutakallim, who together implemented similar training programs (involving many of the same women religious leaders) and extending the community initiative model, covering more than 100 additional women in trainings. The similarity between the work of UNFPA/FTI and UNDP/Mutakallim had not originally been part of the project design, and the extent to which this similarity was beneficial or merely duplicative is discussed somewhat in the sections on "findings" and "efficiency". Regardless, the trainings and community initiatives implemented by all 4 partners reached more than 5,000 citizens.

In addition to its work with women religious leaders, UNDP oversaw the trainings of 40 journalists on sensitivity in PVE-related reporting, 35 lawyers on sensitive and competent representation of clients charged with extremist offences, the provision of free legal consultations to upwards of 700 individuals via the Bus of Solidarity and 15 cases of full representation in court (in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice), and a campaign of media materials on tolerance and rights that resulted in the generation of 65 media products (in collaboration with Mutakallim).

UNODC and Civic Union focused their efforts on improving police practices and developing PVE-relevant local Crime Prevention Plans (CPPs). In furtherance of these goals, some 231 police officers received community policing trainings, while more than 200 citizens took part in community dialogue sessions to inform the content of the CPPs. UNODC also partnered with the Ministry of the Interior (MIA) to elaborate a training programme for frontline police officers including training manuals on community policing principles, communication with the population, legislation related to prevention of violent extremism finalized with series of trainings in all regions of the country. This work led to the creation of an on a e-course on PVE that is to be introduced by the MIA to build the capacity of police officers across the country.

Last but not least, UNICEF and implementing partner Center for Research on the Religious Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic (CRRS), a government body, developed and implemented a series of training materials intended to improve the ethnic, gender, and religious-sensitivity of service provision by local government duty bearers (i.e. doctors, social workers, social welfare agents, and teachers) and provide them with frameworks and guidance for collaborative case management. Some 64 cases are currently underway, 301 duty bearers received training, and trainings of trainers are being undertake (for institutes for advanced studies and retraining under

State Personnel Service of the KR, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Healthcare). CRRS also conducted the initial baseline research that provided an implementing frame for much of the rest of the project.

Geographic context and boundaries: Project activities were conducted 16 neighborhoods located in five of the nation's seven provinces and in its two main cities, Bishkek and Osh. Below we indicate these locations, though without naming the sub-neighborhoods and villages in which project activities were based:

1. Batken Province
   a. Kyzyl Kiya city (2 sub-neighborhoods)
   b. Kadamjai district (2 sub-neighborhoods/villages)
2. Bishkek City
   a. 2 sub-neighborhoods
3. Chui Province
   a. Tokmok city (2 neighborhoods)
4. Issyk Kul Province
   a. Jeti Oguz district (1 village)
5. Jalal Abad Province
   a. Jalal-Abad city (1 neighborhood)
   b. One village
6. Osh City
   a. 2 sub-neighborhoods
7. Osh Province:
   a. Nookat city (sub-neighborhood)
   b. Aravan district (sub-village)
   c. Kara Suu city (sub-neighborhood)

These communities were selected in the early stages of project implementation based on consultation with local government representatives, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and implementing agency partners.

Organization and management: As lead agency, UNFPA oversaw the coordination and implementation of the project as a whole. Meetings were organized every two months by UNFPA for all project agencies and implementing partners to share ongoing project observations and learnings.

Total resources: The total budget for the project was $1 million, with roughly 60% of the budget split between UNFPA and UNDP and 40% split between UNICEF and UNODC (exact amounts were $296,582; $303,687; $198,143; and $201,588, respectively). Each UN agency had one staff member charged with overseeing implementation of their agency's portion of the project; these staff members had, on average, 4 other projects that they were concurrently managing along with the GPI (a range of 1 to 5 additional projects concurrently being overseen in addition to the GPI). Partner implementing organizations, in turn, had varying staffing models, from up to 5 on-the-ground coordinating staff spread across the regions to a single implementing team that travelled to each location.

Key stakeholders involved: Key stakeholders included the Peacebuilding Support Office Secretariat in the Kyrgyz Republic; the UN agency partners of UNFPA (lead agency), UNDP, UNICEF, and UNODC; implementing partners Civic Union, CRRS, FTI, the Ministry of Justice, and Mutakallim; and government partners in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State

Committee on Religious Affairs. At the local level, key partners included local self-government authorities, members of the local police (uchastkovii), duty bearers, and women religious leaders.

Implementation status: As of the writing of this report, all components of the project were completed. Work by the Center for Research on the Religious Situation of the Kyrgyz Republic (CRRS) was ongoing during the field interviews for this evaluation as was implementation of some small-grant programming being conducted under the auspices of Mutakallim, though all other components had been completed.

Evaluation Purpose, Objectives, and Scope

Notes on Terminology and Definitions

Prior to discussing the evaluation purpose, it is worthwhile to lay out a few key definitions and understandings developed by the evaluation team during the literature review, used to frame and implement field research, and deployed throughout this report.

Religious radicalization: During the evaluation and in this report we use the terms "religious radicalization" and "religious extremism". Some project partners oppose the inclusion of the word "religious" in the above terms, noting that the violent actions taken by, for example, ISIS, do not represent 'true' or 'correct' interpretations of Islam. This may be true. But the use of phrases like "religious radicalization" do not imply that the religious interpretation being proffered as a justification for violence is 'correct' - to the extent that there is any 'correct' or 'incorrect' way to understand various faith traditions or religions. Rather, it is a clarification that the "interpretive framing and narrative encoding of conflict and violence" (Brubaker 2002: 174) being deployed by the extremist groups in question is (i) based on a reference to religion, (ii) an attempt to use religion to concretize group identity, (iii) and to thereby motivate violent action.

Key here is the fact that, by definition, violent extremist groups operate by establishing an 'in' group and justifying violence against those who do not belong to the group (see, e.g. Doosje et. al. 2016). The way in which members of a violent extremist group determine who is 'in' and who is 'out' typifies the group's ideological basis, be it ethno-national, racist, religious, single-issue, political, and so on and so forth (note also that these bases often overlap, as in Nazi-fascism's intermixing of racist and political bases for 'in' group identification). To say that a group promotes religious extremism is to say that it defines its 'in' members (and 'out' members) on the basis of their adherence (or lack thereof) to the group's own religious interpretations, justifying extreme actions against those who do not believe - or at least do not externally profess belief in - the religious ideology being proffered. Whether the underlying religious interpretation is textually accurate or even whether leaders of violent extremist groups truly believe in their interpretation or are cynically deploying it for political or personal ends is, terminology-wise, beside the point. What is relevant is that the ideology being used to engender group meaning and action is framed in terms of religion.

This project worked with women and girls of "conservative" religious outlooks - and explicitly those of the Muslim faith (as opposed to the myriad of other faiths practiced in Kyrgyzstan) - reflecting its core goal of creating resilience to certain schools of *religious* thought and specifically to some sub-interpretations of Islam that seek to use religious texts to promote and justify violence. This is in contrast to the many other forms of radicalism and extremism that exist in Kyrgyzstan today: ethno-national, racist, political, and single issue of violent extremism, for example. A project to prevent violent extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic of 2017 could just as likely (and meaningfully) have worked to prevent dangerous currents of ethno-nationalism or single-issue anti-LGBT violence as it could have worked to prevent religiously-framed violence. As such, arguments to simply use the terms "radicalization" or "extremism" to mean "religious radicalization" or "religious

extremism" reflect an implicit assumption that the 'true' orientation of the project toward the prevention of interpretations of Islam that promote violence is so obvious that no further clarification is needed - as assumption that shows an underlying essentialization of radicalization as religious and that obfuscates the possibility that there may be other, non-religious (non-Islamic) ideologies that incite Kyrgyzstanis to violence.[3]

In sum, the descriptor "religious" is deployed throughout this report for accuracy, clarity, and to counteract the assumption that all radicalization is religious (i.e. that 'we all know what we're talking about' when we use the term 'radicalization'). We would encourage project partners to be equally forthright - at least with one another and their implementers - particularly in the early stages of future PVE work. Particularly useful would be deeper discussions at the level of the UN Country Team and RUNO leadership to clarify their views and unspoken assumptions about what, exactly, the relationship is (if any) among "religion", "radicalization", and "violent extremism" in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Violent extremism, radicalization: Somewhat surprisingly, though the UN General Assembly has enacted a *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* (2015) and the PBF has deployed millions of dollars in support of it, there is no official UN definition of "violent extremism." Indeed, the General Assembly's *Plan of Action* notes, "Violent extremism is an affront to the purposes and principles of the United Nations…. [it] is a diverse phenomenon, *without clear definition*" (2015: 1; emphasis added). Similarly, descriptions of "radicalism" and "radicalization" in UNDP publications, for example, offer little clarity of what exactly radicalization is or how it is related to violent extremism (2016; 2018). Members of at least one UN Country Team - that of Tunisia - have taken it upon themselves to define "violent extremism" for their programming purposes, an approach that seems beneficial in terms of providing an anchor around which in-country programming can be coordinated while ensuring that the definition is tailored to the national context (see Holdaway and Simpson 2018: 16). As will be noted later in this report, the lack of a shared definition of "violent extremism" and other key terms among UN agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic created challenges for coordination and impact, undermining the effectiveness of project efforts.

For the purposes of the this evaluation, we have taken violent extremism to mean "an ideology that accepts the use of violence for the pursuit of goals that are generally social, racial, religious, or political in nature" (Striegher 2015: 79), while radicalization leading to violent extremism means, "a process whereby an individual's belief system and ideology shift over a period of time in favor of a violent extremist ideology" (this is a slight reformulation of Striegher 2015). In simplified terms, the relation between the two is that while violent extremism is a descriptor of the underlying ideology, radicalization is the process of accepting that ideology. Specific *acts*- such as actual acts of violence or even terrorism - are not definitionally included here (this is in-line with the approach of Kyrgyzstani legislation and law enforcement, under which certain ideologies are banned on the basis of their violent content and their adherents may be imprisoned regardless of whether they commit or plan to commit any actual acts of violence).

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[3] Indeed, a similar criticism that has been leveled at the term "violent extremism", which is generally applied, "to Islamist violence alone, ignoring the many other forms of ideologically motivated or justified violence that affects countries" (Glazzard and Zeuthen 2016).

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Evaluation Purpose

This evaluation provides a final independent assessment of the project *Women and Girls as Drivers for Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization* at the completion of project activities. The evaluation is being conducted pursuant to the requirements of the monitoring and evaluation plan articulated in the original Project Document, approved by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in late 2016.

The observations provided herein are intended for staff of the participating UN agencies, implementing partners, the donor, and other relevant project stakeholders. For these audiences, information related to the effectiveness of their project design, theory, and implementation; their methods of coordination; and the impact of their efforts on beneficiary communities are needed to inform ongoing work and assess progress already made. Other development organizations that seek to prevent religious radicalization – and particularly that of women and girls – may also find the information in this report useful when considering the design and implementation of their own strategies.

The main findings and recommendations from this report were shared with the Kyrgyz Republic PBSO Secretariat, UN agency implementers and their implementing partners on December 18, 2018 in an initial presentation, with the first draft of this report shared on December 20, 2018. This final report provides further rationale, data, and detail on those findings and recommendations. It is intended to be read by all of the relevant audiences listed above and used to inform their ongoing work in the field of preventing religious radicalization.

Evaluation Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Identify and document lessons learned and best practices for future programming;

2. Determine the extent to which stated outputs and outcomes have been achieved;

3. Explore the extent to which the project theory (theories) of change are supported both by general literature on relevant topics and by the actual on-the-ground implementation;

4. To the greatest extent possible, determine whether progress has been made toward achieving the intended project impact (i.e. increasing women's and girls' resilience to religious radicalization in the target communities).

As suggested by the ordering of these objectives, this evaluation puts emphasis on the identification of lessons learned – including what worked, what didn't, why, and what implications this information has for ongoing and future programming. The rationale for this emphasis is twofold. First, both the UN agencies and the majority of the implementing partners who took part in this project are in the midst of launching a second PBF-funded PVE project in the Kyrgyz Republic. As such, this evaluation comes at a time when a clear and comprehensive presentation of lessons learned from *Women and Girls as Drivers for Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization* has particular relevance for ongoing programmatic work. Second, as the first PVE project undertaken by UN agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic, the project being evaluated entailed significant risk-taking, experimentation, and learning. Such risk-taking and the resultant lessons learned are most beneficial when they can serve as a knowledge base to be drawn on for future programming, and a key objective of this evaluation has been to contribute to that knowledge base.

Evaluation Scope

The scope of the evaluation is as outlined in the Terms of Reference, and follows the "key evaluation questions" listed therein, with modifications and additions as agreed upon at the evaluation inception workshop on September 4, 2018 and documented in the Evaluation Matrix. These are provided in Annexes 4 and 1, respectively. As reflected in the Evaluation Matrix, the criteria chosen for this evaluation include relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coordination, and sustainability.

Integration of Gender Equality and Human Rights Orientation: as recognition of the importance of gender equality and human rights mainstreaming has spread throughout the development community, they have gained notable importance in monitoring and evaluating UN activities (UNEG 2014). This evaluation has incorporated GE and HR principles in the following ways:

- Where possible, disaggregated data by age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religious orientation, and other identity-markers relevant for the project has been sought in project documentation, literature consulted, and via the research tools used in this evaluation. Though priority has been put on gathering such information, care has been taken to avoid the marginalization and harm that can come from labelling and targeting individuals for their membership in minority or disadvantaged groups. As such, research instruments used in this evaluation do not ask about participants' ethnicity and socio-economic status, while all questions relating to self-identification with religious beliefs are optional;

- The evaluation process has been inclusive, participatory, and has sought to incorporate and prioritize the perspectives of stakeholder and beneficiaries from marginalized and disadvantaged groups wherever possible. This has entailed careful consideration of how to find and invite respondents to take part in the evaluation, of creating conditions conducive to their participation (comfortable accommodations, meeting where and when feasible for participants, and including remote intervention communities in the evaluation).

- Specific evaluation questions related to GE and HR concerns have been incorporated into the Evaluation Matrix and were explored through all phases of the evaluation. These questions developed in reference to the guidance provided in the UN Evaluation Group's *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations* (2014: 76 – 80).

Evaluation Methodology

Description of Methodology

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to explore the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, and goals within 9 of the 16 target communities. The launch point for all of the methodology was the Evaluation Matrix, jointly agreed upon by the evaluation team and all key stakeholders, which was used both to track data sources used for each question and was also the basis for developing all field tools and research instruments. These instruments are included in the annexes as is the evaluation matrix, allowing for easy tie-out across each of the evaluation criteria, the relevant research questions, and the way that these questions were then reframed for the field work. Research instruments were originally developed in either English or Russian (depending on the original author), with final versions used for field work available in

English, Kyrgyz, and Russian. Translation of all research instruments was conducted directly by the field research team and reviewed by the Team Leader.

For field research, key respondents were identified at the national level, oblast / district level, and local level. Once key groups of respondents were identified, implementing partners and UN agencies were contacted to share relevant contacts and the field research team attempted to contact a randomly selected subset of participants from each evaluation community (to better ensure the objectivity of the evaluation). However, using this method resulted in a high number of refusals to participate while many of the provided phone numbers were either turned off or out of service. The field team subsequently reached out to local project coordinators in each of the locations for further support in identifying, contacting, and attracting participants to the evaluation. Efforts were made to attract the largest and most varied pool of respondents possible in each location to avoid

Individuals the took part in this evaluation were::

National Level:

- PBSO Secretariat - interview (1)
- Key implementing staff at UN agencies - interview (5)
- Directors and staff (as relevant) of implementing partners FTI, Mutakallim, SCRA, CRRS, Ministry of Justice, 10th Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs - 7

Oblast / District / Ayil Okmot Level:

- FTI project coordinators - interview (4)
- Lawyers, trained by UNDP - interview (3)
- Journalists, trained by UNDP - quantitative questionnaire (1)
- Police - interview (7)

Intervention Level (Village / Neighborhood):

- Women religious leader - interview (36)
- Duty bearers - focus group discussion (44 individuals)
- Community initiative participants - focus group discussion + quantitative questionnaire (64 individuals)
- Beneficiaries of duty bearer services - quantitative questionnaire (31)

Wherever possible, attempts were made to ask representatives of multiple respondent groups to comment on the same program element and to thereby gain a more holistic understanding of it (a.k.a. data triangulation). Thus, for example, not only were police asked about their participation in dialogue platforms for the generation of crime prevention plans but so too were women religious leaders and participants in community initiatives.

Methods of Collecting and Analyzing Data

Interviews were conducted by the field leader, field researcher, and project intern, who jointly travelled to all 9 of the evaluation communities over the course of November and December, 2018. All interviews and FGDs - including the informed consent process at the start of each discussion - were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed by the interviewer / FGD moderator. Transcription generally occurred in the original interview language, though interviews conducted in Uzbek were translated to Kyrgyz at the point of transcription. These transcripts were used for the analysis and quotations provided in this report.

Respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed at the outset of each interview, as was the fact that all data gathered will be used for the purposes of this evaluation alone. To that end, it is planned that all original data files - including audio files, transcripts, and hard copies of questionnaires - will be permanently deleted from the research team's computers, phones, and any other locations whether electronic or not by January 15, 2019.

Data was analyzed by the Team Leader, who entered, cleaned, and analyzed all relevant quantitative data and used the transcripts for qualitative analysis. This analytical process ran concurrent to the field research beginning in late November and running to late December, 2018. For further information on the analytical frameworks applied to the data, please see below.

Data Sources

Data sources used in this evaluation include:

Project documentation such as periodic reports to the donor; reports of implementing partners to UN agencies on progress made; research reports, training modules, and media materials developed in the course of this project; and other relevant implementing materials (a full list of project documentation consulted for this evaluation is included in Annex 2).

Interviews, focus groups, and quantitative questionnaire feedback from UN agency staff, government partners, implementing partners, project coordinators, and end beneficiaries;

Relevant academic and development literature, included in Annex 3.

Sampling Frame

Nine evaluation communities were selected from the full sixteen, with prioritization on community characteristics that were believed to be correlated with the likelihood of extremist groups being present in those communities. Specific criteria used to select the communities were:

1. At least one member of the community had travelled to Syria in order to participate in armed conflict and motivated by his or her interpretation of religion;

   For the purposes of this evaluation, this criterium is assumed to indicate a greater likelihood that radicalizing influences exist in the community in question. As such, individuals in these communities are assumed to be more likely to be exposed to these radicalizing influences, making preventative work to enhance residents' resilience more relevant and effective. For evaluation purposes, the link between the project's activities and the participants' resilience to radicalization can therefore be more meaningfully assessed, seeing as participants are (assumed to be) more likely to have been exposed to radical ideologies. Note, however, that a shortcoming of this criterium is the possible conflation of individual and communal aspects: it assumes that the individual who left for Syria either was influenced by his/her community (and therefore other members may have been exposed to the same influences) or exerted an influence on his/her community (exposing the community to his/her own radicalizing ideology). It is possible that the radicalization of the individuals in question was not linked to the community in question and did not impact the community. However, this criterium was seen as a 'best possible' approach given the limit of our knowledge and available data.

   Three project communities met this criterium and were therefore included in the evaluation.

2. At least one member of the community had been convicted of religious extremism;

The logic of this criterium is the same as that of #1, namely that if individual(s) in the community had been convicted of religious extremism, then there was a greater likelihood that the community as a whole had been exposed to extremist ideologies and would therefore be more relevant for evaluation. This assumption suffers from the same possible conflation of individual and community factors as above.

Application of the above two criteria resulted in the selection of three additional evaluation communities (with three community meeting both criteria 1 and 2). Data used came from project documentation including the *List of Pilot Communities* (UNFPA 2017), *Knowledge, Awareness of Radicalization Issues and Access to Social Services for Religious Women* (PBF, UNFPA, CRDP 2017), and *Community Profiling Report* (CRRS 2017).

3. The district in which the project intervention community is located was identified by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) as of August, 2017 as having residents who had been convicted of extremist crimes, and the number of those convicted was among the top 10 in terms of total from the list;

   In addition to applying to all of the six evaluation communities listed above, this criterium resulted in the addition of 4 communities for evaluation.

After their selection based on the three criteria noted above, these 10 evaluation communities and the 6 remaining non-evaluation communities were reviewed to ensure geographic representativeness of the chosen sample, in terms both of rural-urban representation and representation of all regions (oblasts) involved in the project. No further changes were made as a result of this second review. One of the communities was selected for piloting of evaluation materials and not included in the final evaluation sample, resulting in a total of 9 communities used as a sample for the evaluation.

Stakeholders' Consultation Process

Stakeholders were invited to take part in the Inception Workshop on September 4, 2018, where all UN agency staff, implementing partner leaders, and evaluation team members discussed the timeframe and objectives of the evaluation. During this workshop, conversations were facilitated by an international expert to surface the underlying intervention logic of the project and generate component-specific theories of change for each element of the project. These theories of change were proposed to the Stakeholder team and collaboratively improved upon, after which they were integrated into the Evaluation Matrix and used as a basis for structuring research questions and instruments.

The semi-final evaluation matrix was shared with stakeholders on September 8, 2018, with all comments and feedback incorporated into the finalized matrix by September 15, 2018.

An initial presentation of findings - and specifically findings on the criteria of effectiveness - was held for stakeholders on December 18, 2018. The first draft of this report was subsequently shared with stakeholders on December 28, 2018, who were given three weeks to provide comments and feedback on the report. The final version of the report was submitted on January 30, 2019 to the lead agency.

Data Quality Measures

Efforts to ensure data quality were taken before, during, and after field work. Pre-field preparations included joint workshop sessions with the full evaluation team to review research instruments, ensure understanding of all questions and reasons for their inclusion, and to improve translations and terms as needed. A 3-day pilot of all research instruments was conducted in a community in Bishkek in mid-November, on the basis of which key terms and translations of them were further elaborated and improved, again jointly by the full field research team in a 1-day post-pilot workshop. Field researchers were additionally provided with interviewing instructions, training on research ethics and potential challenges in the field, and handouts to provide to respondents on key terms (radicalization, marginalization, etc.) should such clarification be needed and useful. As previously described, all research instruments were structured to provide data triangulation opportunities across different components of the project.

During the field research, team members travelled together for reasons of safety and improved data quality. Field researchers were able to mutually support one another and comment on improved interviewing methods throughout the fieldwork, while communication was maintained with the team leader to discuss problems, clarify misunderstandings, and share emerging findings and impressions. Upon returning from the field, researchers provided the team leader with their audio recordings and transcripts, enabling spot-checking of the transcripts to ensure accuracy. In interviews where interviewees requested not to be audio-recorded, the transcripts were used for data collection but not for direct quotation in the report.

Data analysis entailed additional quality measures such as cleaning of quantitative questionnaire responses (including (i) the removal of illogical responses - such as a rating for a training that the respondent says he/she never attended and (ii) removal of responses where only 1 or 2 questions were answered) and comparison of qualitative responses with project documentation (to counteract mis-remembering and mis-allocation).

Limits of the Evaluation

This evaluation faced several limitations. Core among them is missing data on pre-program levels of several key indicators (such as participants' sense of social responsibility, trust in government, sympathy for various religious extremist ideologies, etc.), as well as a lack of any control group comparison for pre- and post-project assessment. As such, this evaluation relied primarily on qualitative interviews to capture participants' perceptions of their own progress, the progress of others in their communities, and the links between this project's activities and the progress they report. The results of this evaluation are thus based on qualitative self-assessment with some quantitative support, though none of the quantitative data is statistically relevant (at the same time, the mutually-supportive nature of both the qualitative and quantitative work conducted for this evaluation raises the reliability of findings based on both). Common disclaimers for such self-perceptions based research include the possibility of people misremembering or of wanting to present their current selves in the best light possible. The field team members who conducted interviews have some 20 years of experience conducting qualitative research and were able to

counteract these risks somewhat through their patient delving and digging into the content of responses during interviews and focus group discussions.

Meanwhile, the evaluation team was either not able to or had difficulty connecting with some key groups of respondents, impacting our ability to evaluate the work conducted with these groups:

- Women participants in Mutakallim's trainings and other events. A large minority of the Mutakallim-supplied phone numbers of women religious leaders and other program participants were either out of service or turned off for all of the times that the field team tried calling (generally, at least 4 call attempts were made over the course of several days before a potential interviewee was removed from the list of possible evaluation participants). Those participants who did respond to our calls were frequently those who had also taken part in FTI's programming. As such, the majority of interviewees for our evaluation of Outcome 1 results had participated both in Mutakallim's and in FTI's work (~85% of all women religious leader respondents); some 10% had take part only in FTI's work and 5% only in Mutakallim's work.

  This resulted in several evaluative limitations. First, given that Mutakallim worked with many more women than FTI, the over-representation of FTI in the evaluation sample presumably skews the data away from de facto results (e.g. we do not have particularly representative data for the relatively high number of women who took part in Mutakallim programming alone). Second, the fact that the majority of evaluation respondents had taken part in both Mutakallim's and FTI's (topically similar) programming makes it difficult to tease out which efforts were the most successful and which may need to be reconsidered. As such, the results for Outcome 1 discussed in the "Findings" section are understood by the evaluation team to represent the joint efforts of FTI and Mutakallim, though FTI's influence is likely to be somewhat over-represented.

- Journalists who took part in a UNDP training. Some 30 were invited to take part in an online questionnaire about the training they received but only 1 responded. We thus do not include an assessment of the journalism training in this report;

- Advocates (lawyers) who took part in a UNDP training. Of the 20+ lawyers involved in this training, only 3 agreed to take part in the evaluation. This seemed to be related to time limitations and busy schedules, though it's difficult to say. We include some data from the 3 interviews conducted with these advocate-trainees, though it is difficult to have a true assessment of the effectiveness of this component without higher participation;

- Police (uchastkovii) who took part in community policing trainings and dialogue platform discussions via UNODC and Civic Union's work. Though extensive efforts were made to increase participation of these policemen (multiple calls, visiting their offices in person, asking local project coordinators for help), all but 7 refused to participate - while those 7 who did participate provided only minimal information. After the evaluation was completed, it was suggested to the evaluation team that they had needed an official letter that authorized the policemen to take part in evaluation interviews. The effectiveness of the evaluation of this component would likely have been much higher had the partners

secured such a letter and provided it to the evaluation team in support of their work. As is, the data collected from police on these programming elements is thin.

Wherever possible, we tried to overcome data shortages resulting from the somewhat low participation of the groups noted above (or difficulties in contacting members of those groups) by triangulating across other respondent groups. In some cases - such as that of the journalists - this was not possible, and so no evaluation is included.

A final limitation of this evaluation is its timing: being conducted immediately after the conclusion of project activities, this evaluation cannot assess with any measure of confidence the sustainability of the project's efforts nor the project's possible impact on the long-term processes that it sought to influence. Thus while we include some brief reflections on each project element's sustainability and on the project's overall effectiveness in increasing women's and girls' resilience to religious radicalization leading to violent extremism (the overall impact sought), project implementers could benefit from a more rigorous assessment of these aspects in a 3 to 5 year timeframe.

Findings

This section details the evaluation team's findings in relation to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coordination, and sustainability of the project, *Women and Girls as Drivers for Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization*. As is covered in the sub-sections below, this project was broadly relevant to the challenge of preventing women's and girls' religious radicalization in the Kyrgyz Republic and effective in so doing. Indeed, the effectiveness of its work with women religious leaders and with local government authorities (duty bearers) should be considered as models for continued and future programming (with some tweaks and changes). At the same time, more disciplined conceptualization of the relevance of the project's sub elements could have enhanced its impact, as could improved coordination across and exit planning for all project components. The subsequent sections on conclusions and recommendations will include some ideas for how these improvements could be made.

Criterion #1: Relevance

Were the methods used in this project relevant to increasing women's and girls' resilience to religious radicalization (leading to violent extremism)? And to what extent were these methods relevant to the local context that may contribute to women's and girls' religious radicalization in the Kyrgyz Republic?

For some of the project activities, the link to VE prevention and positive impact are explicit and direct. For example, trainings to women religious leaders and their community members on which groups the Kyrgyzstani government considers to be violent extremist clearly gave them knowledge they did not have before. In numerous cases, this knowledge helped these women avoid joining VE groups or unwittingly helping VE groups spread their messages (specific examples are given in the section on the efficacy of Outcome 1 efforts). Both the effectiveness of these efforts and their relevance to the conditions on the group were demonstrated through participants' many stories of encountering such VE ideologies in their daily religious practice but, prior to project efforts, not having any frameworks for differentiating "good" religious interpretations from "bad" ones.

Other project undertakings clearly had positive development impacts, though their direct relevance to the prevention of violent extremism is not necessarily as direct. As subsequent sections of this report will discuss, efforts to improve trust, enhance the quality of some local government services, and to increase social responsibility and mutual support had measurable, positive impacts at the time of evaluation. The extent to which these efforts impacted women's and girls' resilience to radicalization is much more difficult - if not impossible - to assess (e.g. proving of a counterfactual, lack of access to relevant respondent groups, potential negative ethical implications of asking questions needed to directly tie project efforts to radicalization resilience) and so in this section on relevance we focus more on whether academic and development literature gives a basis for inferring such a connection between project activities and resilience to religious radicalization. To some extent, the ongoing debate about whether *all* development work is PVE work is relevant to this section - as will be elaborated, while there is

support for this outlook, PVE project implementers still have a responsibility to think carefully about how their work impacts violent extremism specifically, what special sensitivities they may encounter, and how they can tailor their work to heighten PVE impact given the specific factors observed in the communities where they work.

Below, we explore the relevance of the project's efforts in somewhat more depth by starting with additional details on the characteristics observed among those who have joined VE groups in the Kyrgyz Republic; then we turn to academic and development literature to consider the interplay of these characteristics, factors and drivers for religious radicalization as identified in the literature; and consider how methods chosen for this project do and do not fit with the trends discussed.

Characteristics of those who join VE groups in the Kyrgyz Republic: According to the UNODC PVE e-course for police officers that was developed jointly with the Ministry of Internal Affairs to this project, those who participate in violent extremist organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic tend to be unemployed middle-aged men.

Age of Members of Extremist Organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic

Some 86% of people found guilty for extremist crimes in the Kyrgyz Republic were men (down from 99% as of 2005). Meanwhile, 80% of those "participating in extremist groups" (i.e. groups banned by the MIA for their violent extremist ideology) in the Kyrgyz Republic were aged 30 or older as of 2017 (the chart at left provides a full age breakdown of VE group members). Seventy percent of these participants in extremist organizations were unemployed and 84% had a high school degree as their highest educational achievement (*srednee obrazovanie*). The remaining 16% had either a vocational education or higher education. The large majority of members in violent extremist groups on Kyrgyzstan's territory are thus male, middle-aged, and have a high school degree but remain unemployed.[4]

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[4] Somewhat surprisingly, though the statistics presented in these training materials strongly suggest that unemployed, high school educated men in the 30's and older are the largest risk group, these same materials subsequently state that, "if you are aged 18 to 35, single or unhappy in your relations, educated and spend lots of time on social media sites - you are at risk" (p. 11). Because it is unclear what information this assertion is based on, for the purposes of this report we rely on the statistical data which points to middle-age, unemployed men as the primary risk group.

That unemployed middle aged men of moderate education would be susceptible to violent extremist ideologies makes sense in the context of literature on religious radicalization. As will be covered in more depth below, numerous studies have identified individuals' loss of a sense of personal meaning and a feeling of social or moral injustice as a common context for their initial turn to radical ideas. Men in their 30's, 40's, and 50's in the Kyrgyz Republic face the burdens of high expectations to provide materially for their families, a tight and rapidly changing employment market, and a high likelihood to face government corruption (or merely rudeness and lack of understanding) in the interactions they have with government employees - teachers, social welfare agents, tax authorities, doctors, etc - interactions that become more frequent once they marry and have children. In this light, broad radicalization patterns in the Kyrgyz Republic may be less a problem of youth ideologues and eye-catching online campaigns - as the problem is often portrayed - as much as an attempt of middle-aged men to find meaning in their lives in the face of socio-economic stagnation (for more on this, see Speckhard 2017: 9).

Though women and girls make up a minority of members of VE groups in the Kyrgyz Republic, their share of these group's membership rose rapidly in the past 15 years, prompting significant discussion of why they participate and what can be done about it. No detailed socio-demographic data is available on women VE group members in the Kyrgyz Republic, complicating analysis. Meanwhile, literature and prevailing discussions about them is split between portraying them as active and willing participants and as traditional wives brainwashed by their domineering husbands (Speckhard 2017: 10); much of this the literature seems to reflect the worldview of various authors more than objective assessments of data as it is gathered. Speckhard provides somewhat of a middle road between the duality of women as "active agents" versus "victims of husband", noting that,
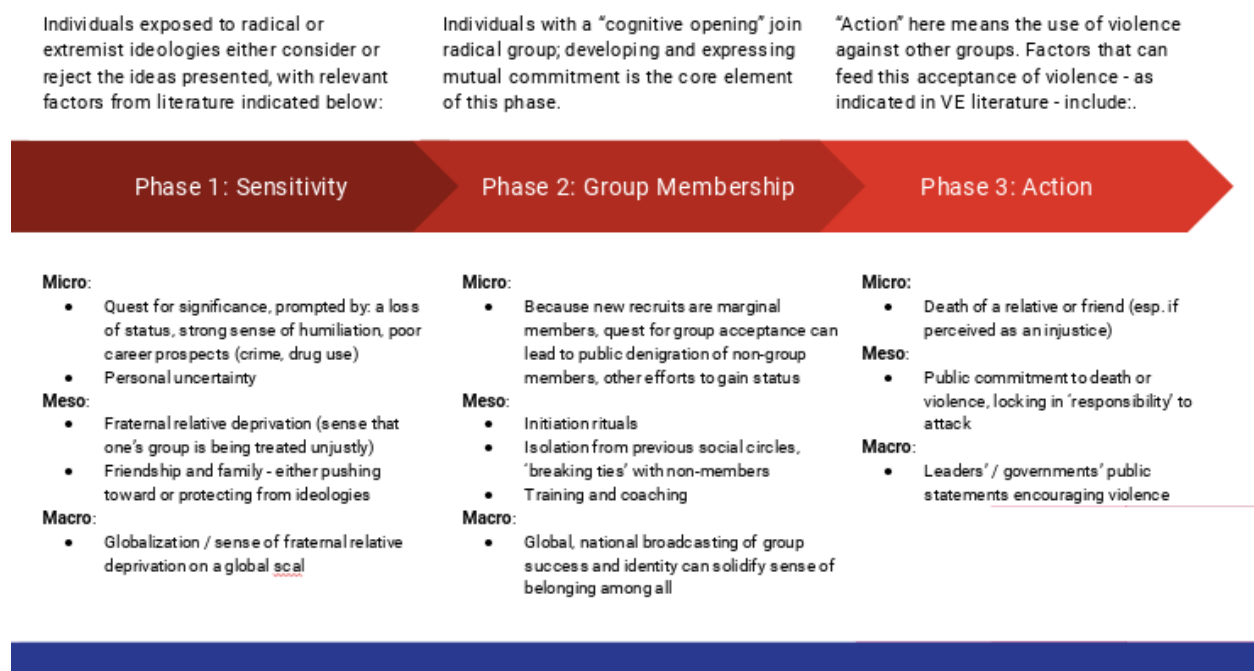
> It appeared that in all cases [of Kyrgyzstani women joining VE groups] the economic rewards of traveling to Syria for poor and rural women in particular were quite salient and equal to ideological motivations for joining, and may have helped to make them acquiesce to their husbands' demands. Financial incentives even encouraged some women to become recruiters (2017: 11).

Thus similar to their male counterparts, it appears likely that women's constrained economic opportunities (whether for their own employment or that of their husbands) may makes some of them more susceptible to extremist ideologies - or at least to joining extremist groups, whether or not they initially believe in the ideology being presented.

Academic and development literature on general radicalization processes: The general contours of women's and men's religious radicalization in the Kyrgyz Republic appears to fit patterns described by researchers of religious radicalization globally. Doosje et. al., for example, synthesize literature about recruitment to radical, terrorist groups over the 2000's to develop a three-phased understanding of radicalization and de-radicalization processes and identify relevant factors and dynamics at the micro, meso, and macro levels for each phase (2016) - with each phase oriented around how and why individuals rethink their identities in relation to the extremist group. Much of what is described in the previous section in terms of characteristics of those who have joined VE groups in the Kyrgyz Republic - unemployed, in moments of economic

necessity, looking for basic services for their families, potentially questioning their role and purpose in life - can be seen as fitting into what Doosje calls "Phase 1: Sensitivity," a period when individual hardship can lead to a loss of sense of self, recognition of and identification with others facing similar challenges ("fraternal deprivation"), and the development of a new personal identity based on this sense of deprivation and moral injustice (making such individuals susceptible to group ideology that can help explain their and their comrades' suffering and resolve this underlying anger by turning it into action). It is worth emphasizing, as almost all literature on religious radicalization does, that these *are not* predictive factors. Indeed, the vast majority of people exposed to violent extremist ideas do not adopt these ideologies even when they are in the midst of personal crisis, economic hardship, or find a social sphere generally in support of the VE concepts. Rather, these factors may be seen as making people somewhat more susceptible or sensitive to considering a violent extremist ideology and, through a long process of recruitment and mutual commitment (described in Doosje's stages 2 and 3), eventually undertaking a violent act in the name of that ideology.

Diagram 1: Model of Radicalization and De-Radicalization, based on Doosje et. al. (2016).

Individuals exposed to radical or extremist ideologies either consider or reject the ideas presented, with relevant factors from literature indicated below:

Individuals with a "cognitive opening" join radical group; developing and expressing mutual commitment is the core element of this phase.

"Action" here means the use of violence against other groups. Factors that can feed this acceptance of violence - as indicated in VE literature - include:.

Phase 1: Sensitivity ▸ **Phase 2: Group Membership** ▸ **Phase 3: Action**

Micro:
- Quest for significance, prompted by: a loss of status, strong sense of humiliation, poor career prospects (crime, drug use)
- Personal uncertainty

Meso:
- Fraternal relative deprivation (sense that one's group is being treated unjustly)
- Friendship and family - either pushing toward or protecting from ideologies

Macro:
- Globalization / sense of fraternal relative deprivation on a global scal

Micro:
- Because new recruits are marginal members, quest for group acceptance can lead to public denigration of non-group members, other efforts to gain status

Meso:
- Initiation rituals
- Isolation from previous social circles, 'breaking ties' with non-members
- Training and coaching

Macro:
- Global, national broadcasting of group success and identity can solidify sense of belonging among all

Micro:
- Death of a relative or friend (esp. if perceived as an injustice)

Meso:
- Public commitment to death or violence, locking in 'responsibility' to attack

Macro:
- Leaders' / governments' public statements encouraging violence

Meanwhile, UNDP's discussion paper, *Preventing Violent Extremism by Promoting Inclusive Development* largely reiterates the factors and processes charted above, positing that, "when socialization processes that aim to foster social cohesion fail, individuals become more vulnerable and may get attracted to more radical and violent beliefs and attitudes" - a similar restatement of Doosje's Phase 1 (2016: 17). As the UNDP paper and sources on which it is based note, radicalization to violent extremism is often a complex interplay between personal circumstances and the communal and social environment within which individuals find themselves. With this background framework in mind, UNDP recommends implementing PVE programming through a series of "building blocks" to impact conditions at the micro- and macro-levels, including efforts to

improve economic opportunity, political inclusiveness, and the rule of law - all in the hopes of creating a context where individuals can find more meaning in their lives and paths to personal success without turning to violent extremist ideologies. In its breadth and generality, UNDP's approach is to a certain extent and endorsement of "development work as usual" as a PVE model, applying long-standing strategies to the prevention of violent extremism. At the same time, its publications advocate in no uncertain terms for tailoring programming to the specific sensitivities involved in VE prevention and to understanding the unique local context in which VE occurs in a given country rather than putting a PVE label on untailored development work (ibid).

Of note for the upcoming discussion on project methods, in its 2018 stock-taking on the effectiveness of the "building block" strategy, UNDP highlighted as core learnings that there was greater need to understand "why some communities are more vulnerable than others, and the factors that contribute to resilience and *social cohesion*" (2018: 15 emphasis added). They further emphasise that development work conducted
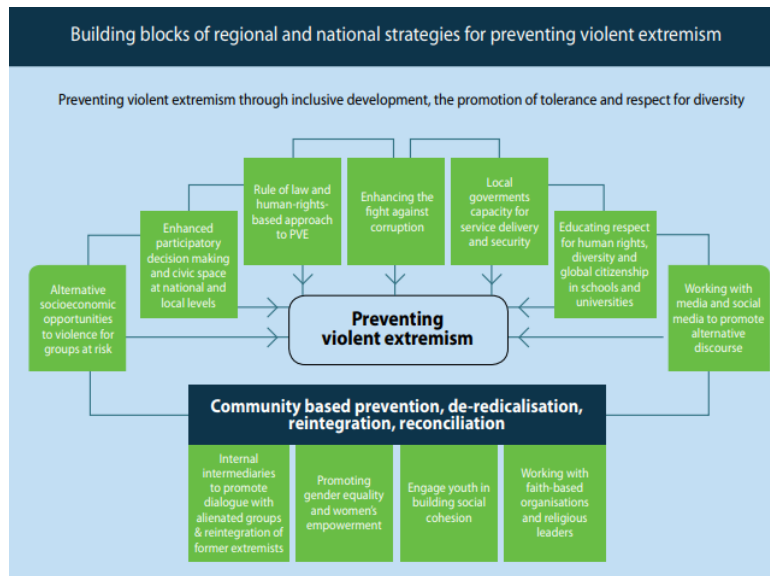
from 2016 to 2018 revealed that most violent extremism is motivated by 'positive' concepts (e.g. ending social injustice, supporting group members, etc.) rather than a self-propelled desire to do violence to others (ibid). Again, these observations appear to fit with what is known about radicalization in the Kyrgyz Republic and, as will be discussed below, to imply that social cohesion models such as the one implicitly used in this project have high relevance for the prevention of religious radicalization leading to violent extremism.

The Project: This project's focus was on the prevention of radicalization to religiously motivated violent extremist ideologies among women and girls of the Kyrgyz Republic. As a first step in assessing the project's relevance, it is worth noting that though such radicalization appears to be primarily a problem of middle-aged men in Kyrgyzstan, women do make up a meaningful minority (24%) of VE group members and appear to be active recruiters for other women. To this extent, focusing preventative efforts on women makes sense as part of an overall national strategy to prevent violent extremism that would cover both women and men. It appears that subsequent, ongoing PVE efforts being led by UN agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic have also recognized men as key participants in women's resilience to violent extremism and, as such, have incorporated male religious leaders into their PVE strategies for women and girls - a move that may have positive impacts not only on women and girls but on men sensitive to VE ideologies as well.

The project's overall strategy - based on supporting greater communal responsibility and trust - appears to implicity follow a line of development work that seeks to promote elements of **social**

cohesion to prevent conflict and violence, and specifically that focuses on social cohesion at the local level. In this project, elements of local community social cohesion explicitly aimed to enhance women religious leaders' "sense for and belonging to the community" and their willingness and capacity to support "vulnerable groups" in their communities (ToC 1), combined with improving women's and girls' "trust in the authorities" and access to government services (ToC 2). Such methods have been successfully tested in other countries and contexts, explicitly leveraging models of community engagement, trust-building among local government representatives and community members, and enhanced support to socio-economically disadvantaged groups within target communities, all with the aim of creating more cohesive, inclusive societies that insulate individuals from the sense of personal and moral injustice that can prime them to receive VE ideologies (see, e.g., Cox, Orsborn and Silk 2015; McDonnell 2015). Meanwhile, UNDP's 2018 self-review proposed social cohesion as a particularly positive model.

Social cohesion is itself a baggy and multifaceted concept, one for which there is no one definition or approach. Various UN publications have described it as the "glue" which keeps communities together, enabling community members to work together toward inclusive and mutually beneficial aims. Scholars researching what facilitates the appearance and maintenance of such "glue" have identified some key aspects, which we tie to specific project elements below:

- The promotion of voluntary associations as 'toes' or nodes of contact across multiple levels within each community, creating dense, voluntary connection across individuals and overlapping 'primary groups' of association that can work together toward communal aims (Lockwood 1999). This support for voluntary associations - and across multiple levels (i.e. citizens, local government, national government) was promoted via the project's work with women religious leaders and the subsequent expectation that they serve 'vulnerable' women and girls in their communities. Similarly, work with duty bearers to enhance their voluntary outreach to clients and with police to proactively outreach to their communities sought to transform what were fundamentally work duties into more voluntary and dense interactions serving the public good and generating cohesion between citizens and local government;

- Social cohesion theory in the post-War US (i.e. 1950's to 1970's) focused on how self-interest and social cohesion could overlap, exploring ways in which communities could be structured to channel individual interest to the group's benefit (or not). One of the core insights of this work was that the creation of "mutual-liking", i.e. sympathy and understanding, among individuals could help them overcome pure self-interest in communally beneficial ways (Homans 1958). These shared values and sympathies could overcome a propensity for potentially damaging self-interest by facilitating group identity. In this project, efforts aimed at instilling ethics of social responsibility and tolerance and of sensitizing various duty bearers in their work operated in this vein, encouraging people to rethink their treatment of one another for pragmatic ends;

- Braaten (1991) theorized that group cohesion is heightened when the group enables people to achieve their highest versions of self - a comment that women religious leaders themselves made frequently in evaluation interviews about this project. As they noted, the

learnings they gained and service they did to their communities gave them a newfound sense of meaning and purpose;

In these ways, the project could be said to embody findings from social cohesion literature on successful methods for promoting mutually beneficial cohesion.

Much of this project's work also focused on giving women and girls a shared set of values and moral compass in relation to specific rights topics - among them the rejection of extremist ideologies, prevention of early marriage, and promotion of "good" behavior as family members (community members made frequent mention of project events on being a good daughter in law and a good mother in law, i.e. training individuals on social and familial values and modes of being). This work is, on one hand, very much in line with social cohesion approaches in that it heightens in-group identification by creating shared, mutually expressed values. At the same time, Larsen's (2013) and Cheong's (2007) critiques of social cohesion approaches and the potential downsides of 'group think' are worth bearing in mind.[5] This project appears to have balanced the tension between teaching tolerance as a means of preventing violent extremism while simultaneously labelling violent extremist ideologies as wrong, but it is nevertheless a balance that needs to be constantly assessed and re-assessed through programmatic work to avoid overly-constraining conceptions of "right" values.

To the extent that enhanced social cohesion directly supports individuals' resilience to radicalization - a theory with good support - the above project methods can already be said to have positive theoretical implications for increasing resilience to radicalization in the target communities. At the same time, some additional observations can be made using Doosje's radicalization and resilience model and UNDP's "building blocks":

● Efforts to impact local level discrimination, increase the respect of service provision, enhance community policing, and to decrease socio-economic disadvantages could all be expected to decrease experiences of perceived social injustice both from direct experience and from seeing group members suffer such injustices (so-called 'fraternal relative deprivation');

● Outreach to isolated community members for inclusion in project activities could pull those already down the path of radicalization back in the other direction. A distinction should be

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[5] One of the core critiques of social cohesion as a basis for inclusive development programming is that the trust and "shared moral compass" needed to develop cohesion necessitates relatively homogenous communities with like-minded values (Larsen 2013). In this view, such trust and cohesion are premised on shared values and cultures as opposed to true acceptance or tolerance of diversity and oppositional views (Larsen 2013; Cheong et. al. 2007). Authors advancing these views have argued that rather than seeking to create like-minded, cohesive communities, development actors should promote the model of heterogeneous communities in which difference and debate are tolerated and encouraged (Cheong et. al. 2007). Though such debates have not been integrated into works where social cohesion is used as a prism for PVE programming, they do raise relevant questions such as where (and how) to draw the boundaries between "acceptable" ideologies and "non-acceptable" ideologies and what is envisioned as an ideal end-community in development programming (as well as the need to consider this vision during project design).

made here in terms of isolation not so much being a risk factor for radicalization as a sign that it is already in process;

● Providing community members - and particularly women religious leaders and duty bearers - with the information and motivation to proactively play positive roles in their communities can support them in overcoming moments of personal uncertainty and internal crisis, thereby enhancing resilience during the "sensitivity" phase.

In sum, the project activities conducted by and large have support from academic and development literature in terms of being relevant to preventing violent extremism and radicalization. The overall project approach of multi-tiered work across individual, neighborhood, and national levels has strong support from both social cohesion and anti-radicalization literature.

It should be noted, however, that the rule of law programming conducted for this project was missing strategic incorporation of PVE concepts and the localized PVE context. Officials at the Ministry of Justice noted that they had no personal interest in radicalization issues, did not see how or if their work was relevant to radicalization, and did not find the potential link (or lack thereof) as particularly important. And while the free legal aid work that they conducted via their Bus of Solidarity can be said to have increased access to justice, it is not clear how it served to prevent violent extremism: there do not appear to have been any attempts to do special outreach to other project participants about the Bus's work, nor to train the advocates and consultants working on the bus on PVE-relevant legal knowledge. The mix of cases heard by the Bus's consultants included a few cases of women complaining about being discriminatorily barred from employment due to their hijab-wearing and quite a few more about family law matters, but again no clear link to VE was elaborated nor were the one-time consultations followed up with in cases where clients had experienced grievances directly relevant to project concerns (e.g. discriminatory treatment based on religious faith, lack of key identity documents, etc.).

This is an unfortunate missed opportunity given the near-universal agreement in development literature that rule of law challenges - and in particular societal grievances against systematic rights violations - are a key contextual factor that can prompt individuals' sense of moral injustice and, with it, make them more sensitive to violent extremist ideologies (see, e.g. Robinson and Kelly 2017; UNDP 2016; UNDP 2018). As was noted in the "context" section of this report (pp. 8 - 10), the Kyrgyz Republic has its fair share of systematic and deeply damaging rule of law challenges, chief among them judicial corruption and complicity with police torture. Project partners may prefer not to work on these issues - a choice that they have full right to - but should nevertheless have a clear rationale for why they choose the specific activities they do, how those activities may be PVE-relevant, and why they choose those activities over alternatives that may be more relevant.

In the project overall, areas where future work could be conducted to improve the relevance of program design and implementation to PVE include, for example, having project staff conduct systematic ex-ante reviews of relevant literature such that they can better assess and monitor the PVE impact of their work on an ongoing basis. No systematic literature review was conducted during design of this project or actual implementation, leading to the use of some theories that are not strongly supported by research (e.g. the somewhat over-determinative linking of isolation

and vulnerability to radicalization). Similarly, while there is support from development literature for the approach of "development work as usual" as a PVE strategy, even where approaches being used are general development strategies partners should carefully consider the PVE implications and sensitivities of their work. The Ministry of Justice, for example, did not have any opinion on or particular interest in the link between their legal aid work and resilience to radicalization - an outlook that forecloses the possibility of creative thinking and program design to enhance legal aid's relevance to PVE (or to identify other areas of the justice system that have direct PVE impact and are in need of urgent reform, such as the issues of judicial corruption described earlier in this report).

Conclusion: There is a long and rich literature that supports trust-building and community cohesiveness as ways to counteract the loss of meaning and personal uncertainty that, in turn, can be one part of a complex of factors that lead some to adopt radical beliefs. The approaches used in this project embody some elements of this literature and as such can be inferred to have been relevant to increasing women's and girls' resilience to radicalization. Future programming could be enhanced by having project team members and implementers themselves review some of this literature and integrate it into their ongoing work, and to be sure to consider how their specific activities can be made more PVE-relevant.

Criterion #2: Effectiveness

This subsection assesses the effectiveness of the project, exploring to what extent stated targets were met (evaluation objective #2), what aspects of the underlying theories of change bore out in project implementation (evaluation objective #3), and identify lessons learned and best practices for future implementation (evaluation objective #1). At the end of this section, we provide a brief discussion of how effective the project as a whole in laying the groundwork for achieving its overall intended impact, i.e. to increase women's and girls' resilience to religious radicalization toward violent extremist ideologies (evaluation objective #4).

Our below discussion and analysis are organized around each project output, including a table showing achievement of output (and outcome) targets, a presentation of the theory of change undergirding each output, and an analysis of achievement of each element of the theory of change (starting with each sub-clause of the ToCs' "if" statements and then "because" sub-clauses). In the final discussion of effectiveness, we combine the observations from our analysis of each project output to assess the "then" aspect of the theories of change, i.e. that women and girls have been made more resilient to religious radicalization.

Those interested in skipping to a specific subsection of this discussion of effectiveness can find relevant page numbers below.

Effectiveness: Outcome 1

"Outcome 1: Women and girls at risk to violent extremism engage with communities in a manner compatible with the views and ideology [of the Project] as the result of PVE initiatives undertaken by non-formal and formal leaders."

UN Agency Partners: UNFPA, UNDP, UNODC
Implementing Partners: Fund for Tolerance International (FTI), Mutakallim, Civic Union
Achievement of Indicators in the Joint Monitoring Plan (JMP):

> Outcome Indicator 1a. The number of women and girls at risk to violent extremism who take preventative actions and participate in community life.

Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	● 1,320 women and girls	● 5,471 women and girls

Outcome Indicator 1b. Percentage of capacitated women and girls who provide professional advice and engage local authorities on the prevention of violent extremism.

Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	● 50% (at least 114 women and girls)	● 131 women and girls

Output 1.1. Capacitated women and girls (atyncha and other informal leaders) are able to implement PVE initiatives and engage community members

Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	● 4 training modules ● 100 trained women informal leaders	● 7 training modules ● 476 trained women informal leaders

Output Indicator 1.2. Women and girls from targeted groups are able to identify early signs of radicalization to violent extremism

Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	● 40 initiatives by capacitated women and girls to identify and prevent radicalization ● 500 women and girls participate in community development initiatives ● 10 innovative awareness raising products	● 170 initiatives to identify and prevent radicalization ● 3,410 participants in development initiatives ● 65 awareness raising products developed (50 articles, 10 short videos, 5 TV shows)

Discussion of Effectiveness - Indicators:

As reflected in the table above, all of the quantitative indicators for Outcome 1 were either met or exceeded. This data comes primarily from project documentation and was confirmed via interviews with end beneficiaries (where local government officials and women leaders were both asked, for example, how many community members had taken part in the project's community initiatives and preventative actions). While this shows a high number of participants and products produced, it does not provide insight on the qualitative impact of these efforts in achieving the project goal, namely to make women and girls more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism. For a more qualitative perspective, we turn to an exploration of the Outcome 1 Theory of Change.

Theory of Change, Outcome 1:

> IF: female religious leaders have more knowledge and awareness on women's rights and tolerance; on the presence and risks of radical groups; have strengthened critical thinking skills; feel more integrated into society and empowered to dialogue with duty bearers; and know how to recognize vulnerable individuals (women and girls) and to empower them and address their vulnerabilities:

> THEN: girls and women in the communities will be more resilient to radicalisation and violent extremism:

> BECAUSE: the trained female religious leaders will feel a stronger sense for and belonging to the community and will therefore raise awareness among girls and women in the communities on the presence and risks of radical groups, and will proactively aim to reduce the vulnerabilities of the vulnerable groups including through engaging them in community initiatives.

Part 1: Achievement of "IF" statement

Knowledge and awareness of women's rights and tolerance:

Women religious leaders gave themselves a 4.8 (out of 5) in terms of having learned concepts of women's rights and tolerance. We discuss below those women's rights and tolerance topics that were clearly internalized plus some areas where there is room for improvement.

Women's rights: The Project transformed women religious leaders' conception of their own rights as well as their perspectives on early marriage. Many women religious leaders (WRLs) described, with apparent surprise, the lesson that, "Muslim women's rights are the same as all women's rights" (A1: 1). Several were surprised that the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic both guarantees women's rights and is equally applicable to religious and non-religious women. Several women who previously had not interacted with state bodies to protect their rights were motivated by the trainings and, with the support of local project coordinators, secured their rights. In one such woman's words:

> The trainings on rights impacted my life enormously. I learned my rights, applied to get child support payments, won the case. My husband said "I can't pay, I don't have money," so we appealed to the oblast level, and I won again. I learned my rights, where I needed to go, how to make a court complaint. I called the [Project Coordinator] for help, and with her we won. (A15: 2).

Whereas this woman had not previously known her rights nor interacted with State justice institutions, she was now both comfortable protecting her rights and leveraging secular laws of the State to do so.

These lessons were passed on by WRLs to participants in their community initiatives. One woman who had participated in these community initiatives, for example, described how, "We learned about women's rights. We learned that people shouldn't think badly of us just because we cover

ourselves. We used to think that because we're Muslim, we're lower, we can't go outside" (Community AC FGD: 2). As is notable from the above quotations, the trainings were particularly helpful in supporting women who had thought that their religious beliefs were a bar to their state-guaranteed rights.

One women's rights topic stands out in terms of awareness and improvement is that of **early marriage**. Significant training time and multiple messaging forms were used to communicate the detriments of early marriage, resulting in palpable progress on this issue. These messaging platforms included organized lessons with gynecologists, doctors, and social services specialists plus interactive forum-theaters that brought out emotional, personal responses to the topic. In one of the most successful examples of women's rights work that was inspired by this Project, one woman religious leader described how in her community, "we ended early marriages. The kaziyat, police and doctors started to work together and stopped it. I wonder to myself why we didn't do this work ourselves earlier" (A1: 8). Discussions with community members confirmed her claim that they had managed to stop early marriages it this location.

Discussion of women religious leaders' community initiatives to end early marriages and their impact is included under discussion of the effectiveness of the "because" elements of the Theory of Change.

Tolerance: Women religious leaders by and large said that they had learned important lessons about the concept of tolerance. Looking more deeply into their conceptualizations of tolerance, however, reveals both meaningful progress made and the need for continued work on how they translate "tolerance" into their daily lives.

In terms of progress made, quite a few women religious leaders discussed their openness to talking with people of other faiths and backgrounds, particularly in their own communities. Highlighting a few of these comments:

> We have to be open not just to one religion, but to give space to all religions - that's what we started to believe [from the trainings]. (A8: 1).

> We had never heard the idea of tolerance before…. We were taught religious tolerance. We hadn't known that the government was tolerant of religions…. Religious tolerance, geographic tolerance, we didn't know about this. For example, sometimes people come from the village and we look down on them, "You're provincial, I'm from the city" we say; or take youth and elders, old people and young people, we need to respect one another. Treat everyone the same, be tolerant - that's what they taught us (A7: 2).

> We should be tolerant, this is what Islam says, we should all be united. The trainings taught us this. We used to have secular women, teachers sit on one side and we [covered] women sitting on the other. They used to call us a "second sort", we were below them. Those with a religious education are a second sort they'd say. But our path is one. We taught them. We are all the same. (Community AC FGD: 6).

These comments reveal marked progress from the first Women's Leadership School, after which organizers noted that:

> Tolerance is still abstract .... in discord with participants' internal beliefs (especially religious tolerance) despite their verbal agreement with the idea of tolerance. For example: they will say that they agree with the State's policy of the equality of all faiths before the law, then they immediately express a negative view of non-Muslims and even Muslims of non-traditional movements. Of course, with such mental uncertainty, the participants of the school will not be able to bring ideas of tolerance to their own communities (UNFPA and FTI 2017: 13).

Demonstrating precisely the challenge that the implementers describe in the quotation above, one woman religious leader respondent gave herself a "5" for tolerance during the evaluation interview, then described how,

> Many people have converted to other religions in our community. I follow them, call the police on them … 'Jesus is my savior' they say.... We don't have room for those types in our neighborhood, room for non-Muslims. Christians won't give up their own [followers]. Catholics won't either. We also won't give up our own (A25: 8).

Almost all of the other women religious leaders had moved past such outright intolerant statements, but nevertheless framed "tolerance" as meaning that they had enough patience to openly discuss their differences with others, with the ultimate goal of proving that they were right and the others were wrong:

> We used to go to meetings and they [secular women] would stare across the room at us with bad eyes and we [religious women] would stare at them with bad eyes. But then we had the trainings. And they started to listen to us and realize we were right. And now they see that we're right and we're not bad. (A8: 1).

> They [local government officials] used to say "you're the ones who sent everyone to Syria, you're doing this to people." But after they listened to us, they started saying "we need to work with you, our opinions are wrong," and after that they started helping us. (Community AA FGD: 1).

Though these comments reflect clear progress from respondent A25's, they nevertheless frame "tolerance" as "we were right and they were wrong," with those of other outlooks being acceptable so long as they recognize the fundamental correctness of the women religious leaders first. This is still far from "the ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behavior that one disagrees with or dislikes," a basic dictionary definition of tolerance. Their statements reveal the need for further efforts to truly transform women religious leaders' outlooks from 'us versus them' to full acceptance of and openness to people of different beliefs and opinions.

Knowledge and awareness on the presence and risks of radical groups: Women religious leaders gave themselves a 4.7 out of 5 on improved awareness on the presence and risks of radical groups. Trainings on the presence of radical groups - and on religious topics overall - appears to have been highly effective and beneficial, but those on risks of radical groups and, as stated in output 1.2 of "identifying early signs of radicalization to violent extremism" could benefit from either a different approach or from being removed from future project designs altogether.

Awareness and presence of radical groups: Positive and lasting results came from trainings on the presence of radical groups, with many women reporting that before the training they had no idea that there were banned religious groups in the Kyrgyz Republic or what it was that distinguished illegal from legal belief systems (in domestic law). Indeed, many of the women religious leaders had not been aware of the existence of different madhhab (*mazhab*) prior to the trainings, much less their relation to different sub-groups of Islam or relevance for conceptualizing legal and illegal interpretations. This information was of deep interest to the women religious leaders and, as a result, remained clear in their minds in the 1.5 years between initial trainings and evaluation interviews.

In many cases, women were able to both list the primary banned groups present in the Kyrgyz Republic and to articulate the underlying reason for their illegality, namely the goal of overthrowing the secular state and replacing it with a religious one. In one example, a woman religious leader noted that,

> The trainings changed me and my perspective. For example, I didn't used to know that banned religious groups were present in [Community AD]. For example, Hizb ut-Tahrir, what they lean towards, what they say.... I used to think, if a person prays five times a day, that's it - he's a Muslim. But now I know what to pay attention to… When I get a WhatsApp message, I can check it, I can think, 'is this really so?' (A28: 2).

This woman's response speaks not only to recognizing at least one banned group (Hizb ut-Tahrir) and realizing that it is present in her community, but also to using her critical thinking skills to question the content she sees on social media. The plurality of women religious leaders (some 40%) were able to give similarly sophisticated answers about the radical groups in their communities and reasons why these groups were banned, as well as explain the ways that they were able to use this information to prevent the spread of those banned doctrines.

As is discussed in the section on the "BECAUSE" component of the Theory of Change, women religious leaders successfully communicated these messages about banned religious groups to community initiative participants in a few locations. However, it appears that they were more apt to conduct initiatives around the "broken windows" theory, early marriages, and parenting. One way to make the project's PVE-relevant impact stronger would have been to encourage women religious leaders to be more proactive in sharing this information about religious groups with their community members, perhaps using interactive and creative methods to make the learnings stick.

Risk of radical groups: As is discussed more in the section on "identifying vulnerable women," attempts to teach women religious leaders about risk factors for radicalization appear to have had unintended results. This includes, for example, the identification of marginalization with radicalization and of various indicators of disadvantage with radicalization - a pattern of thinking that can lead to over-inclusive and stigmatizing identification of disadvantaged women as radicals (or, as will be discussed in the section on marginalization, "women who like to sit at home and read books" as radicals). Though the Project Team appears to have been careful with these concepts, future programming would benefit from avoiding any efforts around training on "risk factors" as predictive metrics to help project participant guess at other individuals' propensity to be involved in VE.

Indeed, academic and development literature suggests that there may not simply be a lack of information about what "risk factors" exist, but also that the entire conceptual framework of "risk factors" may be misguided. While there do appear to be life circumstances and characteristics that are correlated with radicalization (see, e.g., Bjorgo, 2011; Doosje et. al., 2016), the plethora of individual paths and processes to radicalization and high number of counterexamples for any and all causal theories complicate the underlying assumption that there are "risk factors" to be identified and taught (Nasser-Eddine, et. al. 2011; US Dept. of State 2016; UNODC 2018). An emerging consensus in PVE literature has thus been that there are no uniform risk factors, and that attempts to use or teach such approaches usually do more harm than good (Nasser-Eddine, et. al. 2011; Macaluso 2016; US Dept. of State 2016). As the US Department of State has noted, "the drivers of violent extremism vary across individuals, communities, and regions" (2016: 3), a complexity that may explain why no literature to date is able to explain "why some people become terrorists and not others … [and why] the majority of people who are exposed to radical ideas are not radicalized" (Nasser-Eddine et. al. 2011: 5). Given this lack of clarity about relevant processes and the complexity of them, efforts to identify and train on "risk factors" or "early signs" are fraught with challenges and seem particularly inappropriate for novice trainees such as the women religious leaders involved in this project. However, attempts to train on the risk factors of these groups ran into the traps of 'causation versus correlation', confusion in trainees' minds, and simultaneous over-determidness and under-determidness of the theories applied.

Strengthened Critical Thinking Skills: Women religious leaders rated the critical thinking skills course as a 4.7 out of 5, with several citing it as their favorite topic. Though it is difficult to assess critical thinking skills and particularly progress made on them (especially where a baseline is lacking), a few examples of creative and critical thinking stood out from the interviews. One, quoted already in the section on "knowledge and awareness of radical groups" involved a woman religious leader's more critical and reflective approach to social media messages, questioning whether the content was "indeed so". Another woman described a similar improvement in being able to question and examine received information:

> We had practice problems on critical thinking. It used to be that people would come and we would just listen, but now we understand we need to ask things like who are you, what right do you have, what are you talking about. If they actually have documents - now we investigate this (A13: 2).

These comments apply specifically to religious speech in the Kyrgyz Republic, where groups must be registered ("have documents") with the State Commission on Religious Affairs (SCRA) to have the right to spread and preach their faiths. Her comments reflect the immediate connection between the critical thinking lessons and PVE, namely greater skepticism around source materials and faith-based arguments.

A second and somewhat distinct example of critical thinking involves one woman's self-invented approach to solving both the lack of religiously-appropriate medical services and tendency in her community to withdraw young women from school:

When I go to festivals, I try to teach people what I learned. For example, I'll ask women, 'Do you refuse to go to the doctor, to show your mouth to a man, to show your body to a man? You

run from that, I think. I know I do. So why aren't you letting your daughters go to school? Why aren't you sending them to become dentists, gynecologists?' And now covered women have started sending their daughters to school. Everything starts with baby steps. (A23: 2).

This problem of religious women declining to visit doctors and dentists had indeed been noted by project implementers, who relayed to the evaluation team how some women refused to be in a room alone with a male doctor or even dentist. Though the project team approach had been sensitivity trainings for doctors - encouraging medical professionals to allow women's husbands to be nearby during medical consultations - this woman had her own, different approach to 'kill two birds with one stone'.

Other examples of critical thinking could likely be pulled from the transcripts and supplied here, though that most linked to PVE work and repeatedly mentioned by women religious leaders was the capacity to think critically about social media messages and content.

Feel More Integrated Into Society and Empowered to Dialogue with Duty Bearers: Women religious leaders appear to have gained significantly more trust in their local governments and society overall as a result of this project, with some additional gains in trust of the national government. Local coordinators for this project repeatedly noted the challenges they had in eliciting trust from potential project participants in the early phases of the project. In one case, a woman religious leader who was invited to take part in a project training in Bishkek had thought that the project leaders were themselves members of a VE group, trying to lure her to Bishkek to be brainwashed and sent to Syria. In another community, women refused/were not allowed to talk to project representatives (even those who were female) until a council of local male religious leaders conferred on the acceptability of the program and their participation. Less extreme but equally challenging roadblocks included simply motivating women to volunteer their time for a project whose goals were unclear to them and whose lessons they did not feel they needed. Project coordinators overcame these barriers primarily with persistence (calling, writing, visiting) and by going through the "proper" channels where necessary, such as the previously mentioned council of male religious leaders. As these challenges suggest, many of the women involved in this project - including those who were leaders within their religious sub-communities - had virtually no integration with their societies prior to their involvement in the project nor a particularly high interest in becoming more integrated.

Once women religious leaders had agreed to take part in the project activities, their trust and sense of integration appear to have grown markedly, and to have come from three key sources: (i) heightened communication with and connection to duty bearers - resulting in greater understanding, (ii) better treatment from the side of duty bearers, and (iii) active service to others (vulnerable or marginalized women and girls), which prompted senses of empowerment, belonging, and group meaning.

Even if my trust in government is small, it started to appear [after this project]. After we started working, giving others help, we realized that we're not indifferent…. We started to feel some patriotic spirit. And [local government officials] also started to believe in us more…. We help them with education problems [when parents stop sending their children to school]. (A23: 2).

[I learned that] we need to participate in our communities both in the interest of the people and the interest of the government…. I trust local authorities now. We started going to them after the project to ask for help, to tell them about the work we're doing. They don't discriminate against religious women - though there are problems with hiring [i.e. discriminatory non-hiring of women who wear hijab] (A13: 4).

Ultimately, the creation of a bridge between women religious leaders and local government authorities led to direct benefits of trust, social integration, and furthered goals of improving vulnerable women's and girls' access to public benefits.

Positive feelings toward the national government were somewhat more attenuated. In one indicative statement, a woman religious leader notes:

"If we're talking about State officials, I don't trust them. But on the local level, yes. There were improvements" (A3: 4).

At the same time, many women religious leaders noted improved perceptions of the national government based on their knowledge of the State policy of the equality of all religions before the law. For others, it came from the personal connections built with national officials, and most especially the trainers from the 10th Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (a department which has now been renamed as the Service on Combating Extremism and Illegal Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) who taught them about State policy on religion, topics of radicalization and extremism, banned religious groups, and general questions of theology. Women's quotations on these trainings and the impact it had on their perceptions of police effectiveness are included in the section under Outcome 2 - community policing, though they are equally applicable here.

Know how to identify vulnerable women and girls and to empower them and address their vulnerabilities: The topic of identifying "vulnerable" women and girls was one of the least understood among women religious leaders and, resultantly, by members of their community initiatives. This lack of understanding by women religious leaders seems to have resulted from problems with the training curriculum: in summarizing the second round of Women's Leadership School trainings, the project team notes that there had been, "problems … with definitions, types of marginalized people …. lack of an idea of who may be socially excluded" (UNFPA and FTI 2018: 15). As a result, the trainings on concepts of marginalization were ended after piloting in one community and instead attempted through on-the-ground learning during the second round of project-sponsored community initiatives.

Ultimately, women religious leaders seem not to have received sufficient conceptual frameworks to fully understand the concept of "marginalization," resulting in potentially damaging confusion. Among these include a misunderstanding of what "social exclusion" or "isolation" mean, the

equation of introversion with marginalization, and the equation of marginalization with radicalization. Marginalization was also often framed as the fault of the marginalized or socially excluded person (or mere introvert) as opposed to being the result of social processes that push people to the periphery. We provide below a few examples of these misunderstandings.

Equating introversion with marginalization / social exclusion:

> [Vulnerable women and girls] are people who keep to themselves, are separated from their communities, from everything. Women who just read books at home, don't do any work or anything (A1: 3).

> They're people or families who for whatever reason are poor, and then they decide not to participate in society. (A5: 1).

In answers indicative of many others, these women conceptualize "marginalization" as preferring to stay at home (the phrase "a woman who just reads books" was repeated by many respondents). Presumably, this concept of social isolation and marginalization was presented to women religious leaders based on the theory that those who experience discriminatory social processes or injustices are more likely to become radicalized, with brings us to the next point of confusion.

Equating marginalization / introversion with radicalism:

> Marginalized women are the ones who listen to their husbands, and then they go to foreign countries - like we saw a video about women who go to Turkey (A12: 1).

> [Marginalized women] are women who stay at home, don't work, don't join others… Saying radicalism, it means someone who doesn't join any activities, just sits in one place, doesn't work, just has her own opinions (A4: 1, 4).

As in the above two cases, many women seemed to have understood from their lessons the fact that if someone is marginalized (or stays at home and does not socialize with others), she is a radical. Such over-determinative classifications have the risk of further stigmatizing already disadvantaged (or merely introverted) individuals. This risk of stigmatization comes up more strongly in some interviews where marginalized people are described as being at fault for their disadvantage:

> A marginalized person - someone who tortures himself with things he can't solve. Who just makes himself sick (A6: 2).

> Vulnerable means someone who can't achieve anything; someone who's very needy and because of that they join all sorts of [religious] sects - that's what they taught us. We need to help these women, they taught us, or else they'll join other sects and start going down their own path (A24: 2).

These concepts seem to have been presented to women religious leaders in furtherance of a certain theory of radicalization, namely that social isolation is a risk factor or cause of radicalization. It is worth noting, however, that the vast majority of radicalization experiences are launched through personal connections and social networks - very rarely do "lone wolves" self-

radicalize from the impersonal screens of their computers (Swann et. al. 2012; Doosje et. al. 2016; UNDP 2018). At the same time, numerous studies have identified social isolation as a stage in the *process* of radicalization, generally once an individual has already internalized a group's radical messages - a process facilitated by personal networks - and has started cutting ties with previous social circles (e.g. Doosje et. al. 2016; Swann et. al. 2012). Individuals who isolate themselves in these ways are thus not so much at risk of being radicalized as much as they are already well down the path. In communities where radical and extremist groups have many members - including some of the intervention communities for this Project - social isolation can, on the contrary, be a protective factor from radicalization, insulating potential recruits from prevailing norms and ties that would pull them toward extremism (ibid; Macaluso 2016; Radicalization Awareness Network 2017). Of note here is the observation that radicalization rarely happens in isolation and is often associated with finding one's identity within and merged with a group, a process that usually involves at least some human contact (Moghaddam et. al., 2016; Swann et. al., 2012; Bjorgo 2011).

In sum, future work on these topics would benefit from more developed review of relevant literature and robust conceptualization prior to being deployed in project work. Key issues that need to be unpacked include understandings of "marginalization" (it is a highly contested and amorphous concept in academia, one that leaves much opportunity for reflection and adaptation to local context) and the ways in which marginalization or underlying theories of it are deployed to explain radicalization (and whether those theories have a strong basis in PVE and radicalization literature). Given their work in this project, the implementing team has the knowledge and awareness of on-the-ground conditions to think critically about existing frameworks and theories and generate meaningful insights on both of these topics.

At the same time, project implementers need to be careful when they adjust training approaches mid-course. Implementers seem to have recognized that the messages about marginalization were not being properly understood and confused by participants, and as a result to have halted similar trainings in other locations. This was no doubt an attempt to minimize harm, but it may have had the unintended consequence of leaving women religious leaders with only half-formed understandings of the underlying project logic and the role of marginalization in it, leaving them to fill in the gaps on their own.

> **Summary of "IF" statement achievement:** Women religious leaders' knowledge and awareness of key concepts was increased significantly, with almost universal gains in understandings of women's rights, the characteristics and presence of radical and extremist groups, critical thinking, and trust for local authorities. Conceptual clarity could be improved, particularly in terms of topics like tolerance and marginalization - and special care should be made to ensure that confusion across topics does not leading to stigmatizing conclusions. The most risky topics appear to be those where there are efforts to define or categorize people based on their behavioral characteristics - for example, to identify women and girls vulnerable to radicalization based on "early signs" or to categorize people as "marginalized" based on their

introverted behavior - a model that is perhaps better left out of future programming or fundamentally rethought.

> *BECAUSE: the trained female religious leaders will feel a stronger sense of belonging to the community and will therefore raise awareness among girls and women in the communities on the presence and risks of radical groups, and will proactively aim to reduce the vulnerabilities of the vulnerable groups including through engaging them in community initiatives* (Outcome 1 Theory of Change).

Women religious leaders feel a stronger sense of belonging to the community: Fundamental to Outcome 1's theory of change was the idea that women religious leaders would develop a stronger sense of connection to their communities, thereby motivating them to spread their learnings and help to other local women. In keeping with this theory, 100% of women religious leaders reported feeling a strengthened sense of connection to their local communities (80% very strong, 20% strong) and 95% felt increased social responsibility (65% very strong, 30% strong, 5% no change). Notably, one of the primary pathways through which WRLs developed a stronger sense of community was through the act of service. By supporting their community members and achieving concrete results, they began to feel a greater sense of belonging (suggesting an iterative process of community connection prompting service and service prompting community connection). As noted in the section on knowledge and awareness of women's rights, some WRLs also leveraged the trainings to improve their own life circumstances and thereby achieved a greater sense of connection.

At the same time, the path from learning one's rights to enforcing them to feeling a greater connection to the community is not one-way: as is documented in rule of law literature, citizens may feel a greater sense of *disconnect* from their communities when they fall in the middle ground of having newly learned their rights but still face discrimination and barriers to protecting those rights. One woman religious leader describes such a situation, saying:

> I don't want to complain. But I'm studying in college now and when I went there the eje told me very rudely, "take off your hijab." And I said, "This is my right. You can't say that to me...." "Don't you teach me the law," she said. "Please," I said, and so they gave permission only to me. They force other hijab-wearers to uncover themselves, I'm the only one they don't say anything to because I know my rights…. But I also realized that no one will hire me for work if I wear a hijab. Why am I studying? If I wear a hijab, they won't let me work, I can't take off my hijab - so I won't be able to work, can't do internships. I've lost interest in learning. I started questioning why I'm studying, I stopped caring. (A15: 4).

As her story suggests, one of the risks in rights knowledge and awareness campaigns is the disconnect that can arise between newly-empowered individuals and surrounding environments that are not yet ready to accept them. In these liminal stages, continued support to newly-empowered and rights-aware individuals is all the more important to maintain gains in terms of a sense of connection to their communities and trust in pre-existing social structures.

Women religious leaders will raise awareness among girls and women in the communities on the presence and risks of radical groups:

Women religious leaders gave themselves a 4.4 in terms of conducting preventative work to raise awareness among women and girls in their communities about the presence and risks of radical groups. The pitfalls of trainings on "risks" has already been discussed and will not be revisited here. In terms of raising awareness on the presence of radical groups, women religious leaders successfully communicated their learnings to members of their communities in several locations. For example, members of one FGD of community initiative participants noted that, "we didn't used to know anything about banned groups" (Community AB FGD: 1), while others from the same location described,

> They taught us not to go to madrassas from break-off sects…. Only go to [religious] places that are expressly authorized. For example, recently in T---- village they arrested all of the women and put them in jail. Those helpless women were just reading the Koran, but they didn't have permission, no documents. When we said, "they're not guilty of anything," [the trainers] said, "how are they not guilty? It's being said everywhere - don't go there [to non-licensed religious trainings]." So we learned about this. (Community AB FGD: 4).

> We learned about Hizbut, Wahabis… We didn't know the difference before, 'we're all Muslim' we used to say. But they have different goals from us. For example, members of Hizb ut-Tahrir don't recognize the State. They want to build a Halifat. Members of Jannat [presumably Jannat Oshiklari, a banned religious organization] won't get vaccinations. They told us a lot about these groups." (Community AB FGD: 3).

The above statements came from participants in community initiatives - not from women religious leaders themselves - reflecting the re-training that was being conducted by these WRLs.

Meanwhile, several women religious leaders from other communities described warning people about banned religious groups at family events, spreading the information to their friends and acquaintances, and trying to use the information to properly target "vulnerable" women and protect them from prosecution:

> We went to one woman - she had nothing, didn't even have a simple phone. Very marginalized. We went to another - she had an expensive phone, we didn't include her in the "marginalized" list. But helpless thing she goes into WhatsApp and gets messages. I can tell you: "Hey! Delete that. We have criminal articles on that," I can say. Jannat [Oshiklapi] sends messages. "They're banned," I say, "look at the Constitution - there's an article where it says so," I say (A15: 2).

Other women religious leaders used their greater knowledge of the presence of banned religious groups not so much to re-train other community members as much as to block the spread of these ideologies. This included shutting down informal religious programs and blocking lessons by banned groups:

> "Some otynchas have taught other [radical] currents …. We were able to stop otynchas from teaching classes in their homes, they don't teach anyone now. They now tell girls they need to get a secular education" (A5: 1).

> "The 10th Department taught us that there are many people joining Hizb ut-Tahrir. Hizb ut-Tahrir visited [my madrassa]. They came and said to me, "Eje, may it be blessed, you opened a madrassa. We will teach lessons in your madrassa after 4pm, we will teach the Koran if you give us space, everything we will do ourselves." … I said no and told them that 'Hizb ut-Tahrir' isn't written anywhere in the Koran, you invented it for yourselves. I

told [the local policeman] and he told me, "Eje, don't let anyone in [to teach classes in your madrassa], check everyday." They might leave a book or propaganda or a paper [in the madrassa], so I check every day [for these things].... Their goal is to break the government, to start a Halifat…. We are very strongly against them. We are Hanafi." (A25: 5).

As these quotations suggest, banned ideologies are indeed present and actively being promoted in at least some of the intervention communities and quite actively through WhatsApp. At least some women religious leaders were able to re-communicate the lessons they learned about the nature of the groups to their community members - most notably in community AB - and to use their greater understanding to prevent the spread of these doctrines. While community initiative respondents in communities other than AB did not have as developed a sense of what banned groups were and why they were banned, this seems to represent an opportunity for future project implementation: namely, pushing women leaders to more effectively communicate to their communities information on which groups are banned, why, and how to recognize messages from these groups on social media and in their daily lives.

Women religious leaders will proactively aim to reduce the vulnerabilities of the vulnerable groups [of women and girls] including through engaging them in community initiatives: Based on the interviews conducted for this evaluation, some 90% of the women religious leaders used what they learned in the project to conduct events and initiatives for their communities and to otherwise help disadvantaged women and girls. In terms of general help to disadvantaged individuals, one of the most common methods was to act as a bridge between those needing social support and the local government. As one woman describes:

> My sense of social responsibility increased enormously. For example, I learned how to fill out documents to get help for needy families, how to go to the social protection office and ask for help… I'm still doing that work (A13: 3).

While in the first round of community initiatives women religious leaders focused efforts on their closer circles - for example, their own madrassa students - the project team took active steps to extend the reach of their work in the second round of community initiatives to more "at risk" groups (UNFPA and FTI 2018). This approach resulted in WRLs working with specific subpopulations such as single mothers, divorced women, families in need of social welfare, and other groups that were disadvantaged relative to the prevailing population in broad socio-economic terms. This more hands-on, proactive approach by implementers enabled the project to continue with impactful programming despite the misunderstandings around concepts of "vulnerability" and "marginalization" that were described in the "knowledge and awareness" discussion.

Some of the most impactful events held by women religious leaders for their communities included those around early marriage, with an indicative description by community initiative participants being:

> We organized a training for girls in the 10th and 11th grades and their parents … our [woman religious leader] explained to them what harms come from early marriage and not studying. The School Director explained, "if you marry early, you become the servants of your in-laws.… You give birth early, you get sick, you can't earn any money and you can't work in the fields, no one likes you. Ok - if you can't pay to go to university, then why not study at a vocational school?" … The learnings from the project were very useful for the school girls. It was really needed. (Community AE FGD: 8).

Such trainings were one of the most frequently remembered and, according to respondents, one of the most effective types of community initiatives. Though it is admittedly unclear if the young girls and parents who attended these trainings accepted the messages being shared, the initiation of public discussions about the topic, unified message from community leaders, and willingness of community members and women religious leaders to stand up against early marriage are all indicative of progress.

It should also be noted that significant improvements were made in awareness, knowledge, and respect for **children's rights** - not an explicitly targeted output of the Project but an area where progress is palpable and that is logically related to decreasing overall vulnerability. In addition to the success in re-orienting behavior related to early marriage - a topic that straddles both women's and children's rights - the work on **childhood vaccinations, social welfare for children (*posobiya*), and positive parenting** yielded concrete results. On the topic of vaccinations, for example, one woman religious leader described how after learning about the importance of vaccinations, she joined her community's doctor to visit all of the 80+ local families that had rejected vaccination for religious reasons. After discussing the religious bases for vaccination with them, some 70% of these families (55 or so) had their children vaccinated (A3). Similar progress was made in applying for **cash welfare benefits** (*posobiya*) for families with children living in poverty. Indeed, this was the most common social service that women religious leaders helped their fellow community members access (mentioned in more than half of the interviews). Finally, a significant number of community initiatives appear to have been organized around **responsive and respectful parenting** and with high impact. To quote from members of two different communities on the effectiveness of parenting trainings:

> We organized a forum-theater. Mothers were crying, asking their children for forgiveness - saying that instead of buying their children books they had bought fancy clothes for themselves…. And then later when their kids are grown up they won't know who they're with, what groups they've joined, what their kids are doing. We showed them this and afterwards there were mothers and fathers who were crying and saying, "Please forgive us, kids, we'll be sure to get you the books and school things you need in the future" (A8: 5).

> We held an event in a school called "Generosity".... Everyone left crying. In front of everyone, one woman stood up and said, "I've misunderstood my daughter for so long, but now from today's training I understand how I should treat my children. In front of all of you I'm asking my daughter to forgive me," and she was crying and asking for forgiveness. After that everyone was asking us to have the training in their school. (Community AE FGD: 2).

Numerous respondents across different locations described their parenting events in this way. The parenting trainings appear to have hit a deep emotional chord and opened up the path to better communication between parent and child participants. As the first quotation (from woman religious leader A8) notes, an underlying theory of this parenting work appears to have been that better communication between adults and children will both prevent youth's entrance into

extremist groups and provide an early warning system, as parents will have better knowledge of "what their kids are doing."

This theory has some grounding in PVE literature (see, e.g. Pels and Doret 2012; Doosje et. al. 2015; Radicalization Awareness Network 2017), which in turn suggests that the PVE impact of such parent-child interventions could be strengthened by (i) thinking about the roles of and incorporating other family members (e.g. grandparents, brothers, sisters, and others - all of whom may play and important role in radicalization and de-radicalization processes) and (ii) providing factual information to parents, other family members, and children around laws and punishments related to extremism (Radicalization Awareness Network 2017). Given the demonstrated effectiveness of the trainings to WRLs on knowledge and awareness of the presence of radical groups - and the legal implications of joining one - implementing partners could re-work their materials for a teen audience and structure parent-child interventions around these PVE topics in addition to issues like early marriage to heighten the PVE impact of such approaches.

Discussion of Effectiveness - Media Campaign

Outcome 1 included a media campaign intended to change stereotypes between secular and religious members of society and thereby increase tolerance. As encapsulated in Output Indicator 1.2.3, these media products were intended to be "developed by capacitated women and NGO project partners" to raise awareness. At the Inception Workshop, project partners and the evaluation team elaborated the following Theory of Change to further clarify the project logic:

> IF media products related to the prevention of violent extremism – i.e. products that provide alternative narratives, question stereotypes related to religious and secular groups, and provide women and girls with positive leadership role-models – are produced and distributed to a wide audience:

> THEN girls and women in the communities will become more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism:

> BECAUSE the public – including girls and women – will better understand the risks and process of radicalization, there will more tolerance between religious and secular members of society, and sense of greater connection among women and girls of religious (and secular) backgrounds to their communities and nation.

Overall, some 65 materials were produced - 10 brief videos intended primarily for social media, 5 TV series, and 50 articles - along with a training for journalists on PVE sensitivity. Unfortunately, only 1 of the roughly 20 journalists contacted to take part in this evaluation responded. Given the small sample size, we do not include an assessment of the journalism training in this report.

In terms of the other BCC products, upwards of 65% of the women religious leaders had seen them and 95% of those who had seen them believed they were both effective and needed. Though few community initiative participants mentioned the videos, in one location a respondent noted:

> [The woman religious leader] showed us the video shorts, I downloaded them and then showed them to other parents. They show women wearing hijabs working, doing sports. It was very influential - women who wear hijabs are allowed to do sports. We understood that everyone has equal rights from this (Community AC FGD: 3).

Of note here is that while the videos were roundly described as useful by women religious leaders, that use seems to have been distinct from the one envisioned by the project team: though the media products were originally envisioned as a means to break down stereotypes across secular and religious groups of society, their distribution primarily to those of strong faith backgrounds and content focusing primarily on overcoming stereotypes about Muslim people appear to have resulted more in the breakdown of stereotypes *within* these groups of strong believers (e.g. dismantling stereotypes about what it means to be Muslim, such as the belief that women who wear hijab cannot exercise in public). While this is a beneficial outcome - particularly in terms of women's rights - some members of the project team stated in evaluation interviews that they wished there had been additional content to help people of strong faith backgrounds overcome stereotypes about secular people, thereby creating a two way street in terms of tolerance-building.

Though the evaluation team was not able to assess the effectiveness of the media campaign in changing widespread beliefs and perceptions (an assessment that would have required a baseline and a control group), we were able to see that the videos on social media (YouTube) had been viewed anywhere from a high 6,588 times - a video about a young woman wearing her hijab - to a low of 194 times - a video about being respectful of others on public transport - as of the time of drafting this report (December 23, 2018). All other videos had been viewed less than 1,000 times and all of those views had ended some 6 to 7 months ago. Given that these videos have been cited as effective and needed by women religious leaders, implementing partners should consider greater efforts to use, distribute, and raise awareness of these products in their ongoing PVE work - changes in beliefs and habits are best effectuated by repeated, sustained messaging and widespread adoption, all of which could be facilitated by greater efforts to use these media products.

Catalytic Effects: Catalytic effects were many for the Outcome 1 work, primarily arising out of the many and variegated community initiatives that women religious leaders undertook. Rather than catalog all such effects, below we describe one that stood out for its link to underlying concepts of democratic government and development, gender equality, social cohesion, and responsible citizenship: namely women's increased political participation as a result of this project.

In several locations, women-participants in the WRLs' community initiatives organized themselves into locally powerful political groups and used their newfound strength to make tangible changes to their communities. This political activity appears to have arisen out of a combination of women's newfound understanding that they had the right to participate in political processes (originating in WRL trainings and then being communicated to others via WRLs' community initiatives), a sense of social responsibility to use political processes to better their communities, a sense that they had the numbers to make their voices count, and active organizing by their women religious leaders. Quoting from a focus group with community initiative participants in location AA:

> Respondent 1: We learned that women have their own rights and responsibilities.... I used to think 'it's not important if I don't go [to vote]' and just stay [at home], but now I understand that it will make a difference if I vote. (3)

> Respondent 2: … We have the right to participate in elections. We even have the right to be politicians.... (3)

> Respondent 3: During the election campaigning, we all met up and when the local council members came out we told them - our neighborhood is muddy, dirty, help us get the mud off our street. And the candidates cleaned it up. We don't have a block leader (*kvartalnii*), so we got together and asked the candidates to put in drainage pipes, and they did. It's been really useful. ------ [the WRL] organizes us. (8)

In location AB, women community members described similar political organizing, saying,

> We organize meetings for our local deputies. Deputy ----- ----- of the national parliament has come to these meetings quite a few times, especially during Ramadan, the mayor and social worker always take part, we tell them about our challenges. We tell the social worker about women from our neighborhood who aren't working, who are having hard lives. We're doing this. (3)

This progress in women's political participation was not an explicit target of the project and is all the more remarkable in that many of the speakers are from the Uzbek ethnic minority, a group that largely withdrew from political processes in the wake of ethnic violence in 2010. These successes suggest that there is latent, untapped potential to increase women's political participation through on-the-ground programming oriented around rights-awareness, concepts of social responsibility, and network-building. While a common refrain is that local "mentality" undermines issues-based politics and local public service, these women's efforts suggest that such barriers can be overcome and in a relatively short (24 month) timeline.

Effectiveness: Outcome 2

> *Outcome 2: Law enforcement institutions, local authorities, legal aid providers, and social workers engage women and girls at risk of violent extremism in dialogue to ensure access to public services.*

Given that efforts to achieve Outcome 2 were split across 3 UN agencies and their implementing partners - and implemented in relative isolation from one another - we explore each sub-component on its own terms below.

Component 1: Duty Bearer Services

UN Agency Partner: UNICEF
Implementing Partner: Center for Research on the Religious Situation of the Kyrgyz Republic (CRRS)
Achievement of Indicators in the Joint Monitoring Plan (JMP):

Outcome Indicator 2a. Perception of women and girls from target groups on public services access in communities is improved.		
Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
See chart in discussion	Awareness, availability, and quality of duty bearer services - 10% increase	Targets appear to have been met in all relevant categories, though data

| section below		challenges do not allow for to full assessment
Outcome Indicator 2b. Number of capacitated select … local authorities … and social workers who provide social protection support and assistance.		
Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	128 social workers, local self-government bodies, teachers, school administration, healthcare workers	301
Output Indicator 2.1.1. Number of successful cases on social protection of women and girls at risk to violent extremism (e.g. obtaining social allowances and enrolling children in school).		
Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	64 (4 cases per community)	64 (4 cases per community)

Discussion of Effectiveness - Indicators:

As shown in the table above, all quantitative indicators that could accurately be assessed were achieved. To assess community members' awareness of, access to, and assessment of the quality of duty bearer services at the time of evaluation, the evaluation team distributed a quantitative survey with relevant questions to 95 individuals in the target locations. These individuals were both direct recipients of duty bearer services (31 respondents) and participants in women religious leaders' community initiatives (64 respondents). This data was compared with quantitative metrics on the awareness, access, and quality assessment of duty bearer services that had been backed out from qualitative research conducted for the baseline study in early 2017.

Based on the data generated, awareness on each of the relevant indicators appears to have increased by 10% or more (the targeted improvement). Actual use of duty-bearer services did not increase by as much, presumably because of both the exclusionary criteria for service use (i.e. even if 100 more people learn about the existence of social welfare benefits, only a subgroup of them - say 6% - will meet the relevant criteria to qualify for such social welfare benefits) and the timeframe for completing paperwork and receiving actual benefits (as is noted below, work on these topics was significantly delayed and only launched in the 2018 summer).
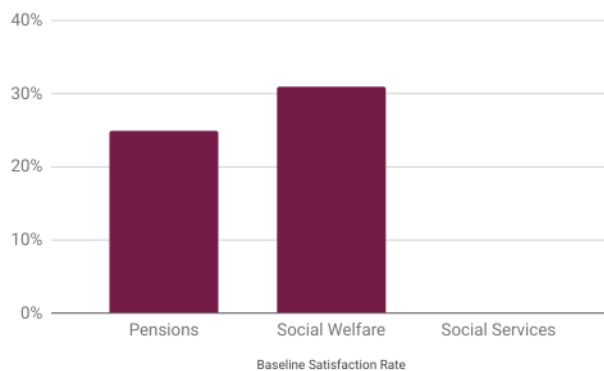
Caution is strongly advised with the numbers shown below given that (i) the sample sizes used both for the baseline and for this evaluation are too small to be statistically relevant, (ii) samples are not necessarily representative of the same professional, gender, socio-economic breakdowns as one another, and (iii) there is no control group against which to assess the changes seen.

With all of that said, quantitative gains in awareness and access are visible in the categories for which somewhat comparable data is available (pension benefits, social welfare, and social services):

Pension Benefits

■ Baseline ■ Evaluation

Social Welfare Services

■ Baseline ■ Evaluation

Social services

■ Baseline ■ Evaluation
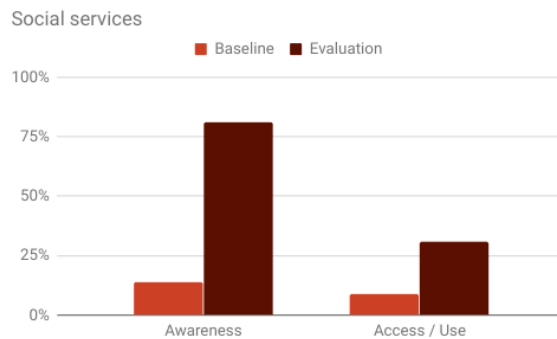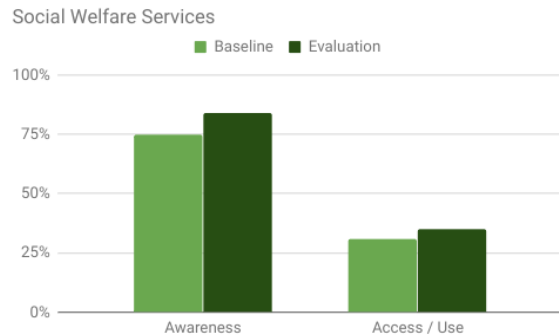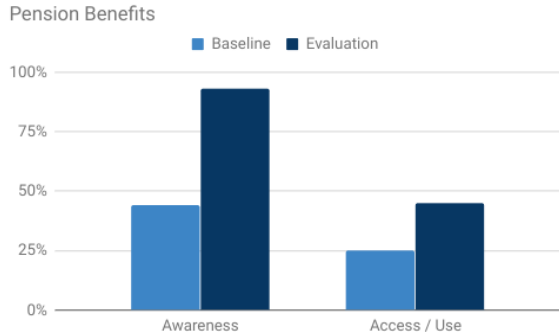
Particularly in the area of social services, evaluation participants had markedly higher awareness and access than baseline study participants.

"Satisfaction" was measured differently across the baseline and post-project evaluation, with the baseline using a general "satisfaction" percentage while the evaluation distinguished between satisfaction with the sensitivity of services and the competency of services. Because these indicators are not comparable and were measured on distinct scales, we present the information in un-combined charts. Respondents to the baseline survey had a 26% satisfaction rate with pensions and a 30% satisfaction rate with social welfare. No data on social services was generated from the baseline survey and therefore the chart at left reflects a "no data" result, not 0% satisfaction with social services.

Baseline Satisfaction Rate

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For the evaluation, satisfaction was rated on a 1 to 5 scale and asked in relation to satisfaction with relevant duty bearers and opposed to with each category of services (this was an attempt to distinguish perceptions of the professionals themselves from intervening factors such as dislike of legal frameworks or benefit requirements. For example, someone may be satisfied with their social welfare agent but dissatisfied with the legal framework on social benefits; we aimed to gage satisfaction with the former as opposed to the latter). The results of this evaluation assessment can be seen in the charts below, the first showing people's satisfaction with duty bearer sensitivity and the second showing assessments of their competency:

Sensitivity of Duty Bearer Services
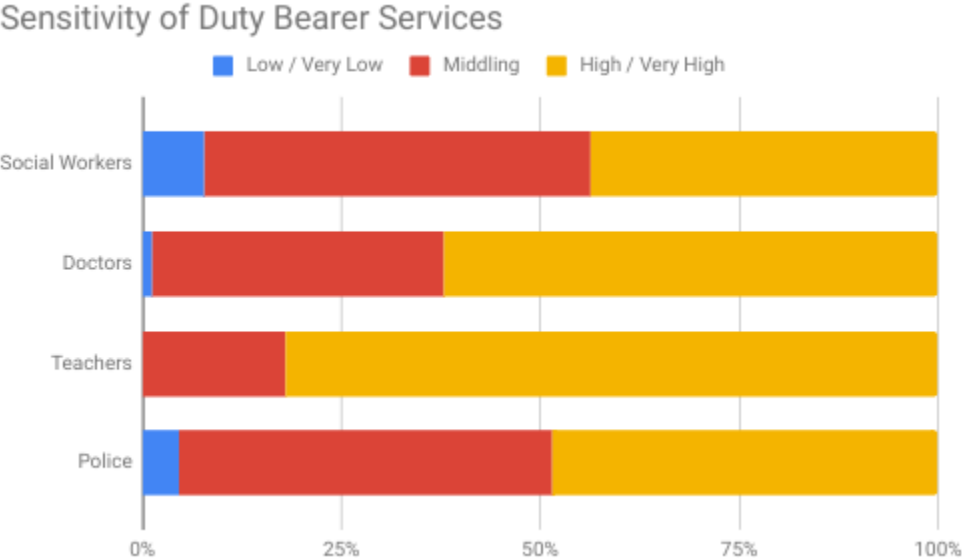
As is evident here, social workers and police officers were deemed to be the least sensitive of the four types of professionals. Social workers also received markedly low scores: some 10% of respondents rated their sensitivity as "low" or "very low" and 40% gave them "middling" scores for sensitivity. Women religious leaders also mentioned challenges with social workers and paperwork related to social services as one of the most frequent types of support that they gave to vulnerable women in their communities. It's unclear precisely what is driving these results, though they suggest that future phases of case management work should focus extra efforts on improving social workers' gender-, ethnic-, and religious-sensitivity and generate client service competence.

In contrast to these findings on the sensitivity of duty bearers, ratings of competence resulted in relatively high marks for social workers while doctors - rated quite well for sensitivity, above - received relatively low marks for competency:

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Competency of Duty Bearer Services

Legend: Low / Very Low | Middling | High / Very High
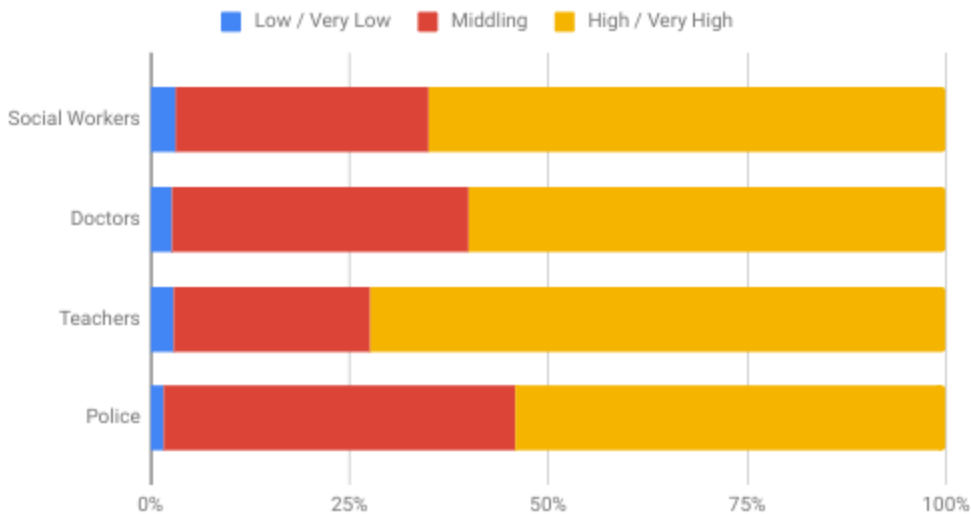
Comparing these numbers to the baseline data previously shown: given that some 45% of respondents rated the sensitivity of social workers as high or very high and more than 60% said their competency was high or very high, it seems likely that overall satisfaction with the social workers is higher than the baseline of 31% - though again much caution is needed with such comparisons. The results related to police are discussed further in the community policing section, while no baseline data was generated for doctors or teachers (both targets of the project's duty bearer interventions). The relation of these results to the theory of change are discussed more below.

Discussion of Effectiveness - Theory of Change:

Theory of Change, Outcome 2, Duty-Bearer Component:

> IF: social workers, teachers, medical professionals, and local government workers are trained on State policy related to gender-, ethnic-, and religious-sensitive approaches (i.e. awareness of moderate Islam) and on working effectively and collaboratively in addressing actual cases of requiring social protection,

> THEN: women's and girls' resilience to radicalism and violent extremism will increase,

> BECAUSE: their cases of social protection will be more effectively managed, they will not feel discriminated against by the professionals and will instead feel safe and protected by them, which will increase their trust in State authorities.

Achievement of "IF" statement elements:

The "IF" statement discusses first and foremost the completion of trainings on gender-, ethnic-, and religiously-sensitive approaches. Here, we do not explore so much the fact of the completion of these trainings as much as the impact they had on duty bearers' self-reported sensitivity and capacity to work collaboratively. To determine the lessons internalized by duty bearers, the

evaluation team conducted focus group discussions that brought together social workers, doctors, teachers, and social welfare agents (among others) to talk about what they had learned through the project trainings and how they were using their new knowledge.

Duty bearers noted that they learned new methods of building trust and communicating with local citizens, skills that they had known themselves to be lacking:

> The training was about how to help disadvantaged families, how to build trust as a government employee with people of all different ethnic backgrounds. Do they trust us? Do they not trust us? … We hadn't really done this kind of work before (Duty Bearer FGD, Location AC: 1).

> Once we started to run around, really give help [after the trainings], people started trusting us more. (Duty Bearer FGD, Location AF: 4).

In line with training goals, they began to reach out to and provide extra support to families in particularly difficult life situations or with longstanding, unresolved problems. As one duty-bearer described:

> After the training … I went back to [-----] family, told them how they need to get service, where to go, we showed them the path to getting help. They'd been trying to get welfare support (*posobiya*) for years, but with no success … there was a car in her husband's name so she couldn't get it, but it wasn't really theirs (Duty Bearer FGD, Location AC: 5).

This help extended not simply to previously underserved families, but also to tackling (along with women religious leaders) long standing social challenges in their communities:

> Our case folders are full now … we started working not only on getting children vaccines, but also on early marriage - [the training] was huge help on that (Duty Bearer FGD, Location AF: 2).

In terms of learning how to collaborate, particularly effective support mechanisms were the clear protocols and rules for collaboration plus the conceptualization of duty bearers' work as a social service (both points emphasized by the implementing partner in interviews with the evaluation team):

> The training showed us the way. I liked it that they gave us a system: how to work together, how to work with documents. I'm in the social services system. But I realized that it's good to go to a family and on one hand have the medic, on the other the teacher … I realized we have a responsibility to these families. (Duty Bearer FGD, Location AF: 1).

Indeed, duty bearers who participated in the project noted that the trainings had been "too short", that it would be better to have a week-long program, and that they wanted to "expand the team" in terms of having local clinicians (ФАП), imams, akimiyats, and others included in similar platform-building and teamwork trainings in the future. The implementing partner, CRRS, also echoed these sentiments.

To better understand the extent to which the positive changes that duty bearers felt in themselves were experienced by end beneficiaries in their communities, we asked women religious leaders about their perceptions of duty bearer services and conducted a survey with both direct beneficiaries of project-supported case management and community initiative participants. The results from this survey have already been covered to some extent in the charts above, though additional information is worth adding here:

Only 25% of women religious leaders had heard about the trainings for duty bearers. Though WRLs would not have a direct role to play in such trainings, they could nevertheless have provided support in terms of referring cases and helping vulnerable clients with their paperwork and documentation. To this end, the lack of coordination across project components - and mismatch of timing - undermined opportunities for meaningful synergies.

At the same time, community members felt the improved quality of services even if they were not necessarily aware of the underlying cause. As one woman explained:

> We used to run from local authorities, we really didn't understand them. They hate us, 'they hate women who are covered,' we used to think and avoid them. Now, if we go and tell them about our problems, they help us. (Community AA FGD: 8).

Overall, 52% of the 95 respondents to the post-project evaluation questionnaire said that teamwork among duty bearers had increased in the prior 3 months (the period immediately following the duty bearer trainings), 67% said that their trust in duty bearers had increased, and 64% said the improvement in duty bearer services had, in turn, increased their overall sense of connection to their communities. These responses lend support not only to the effectiveness of the trainings in terms of improving duty bearer services, but also to the underlying project theories that improved duty bearer services would increase trust and social cohesion at the community level.

In the past 3 months...

In terms of decreasing experiences of discrimination, of the 95 respondents to the quantitative survey, only 13 (or 14%) said that they had experienced discrimination from local duty bearers in the past. Of these respondents, 6 (47%) said that this discriminatory treatment had improved in the prior 3 months - i.e. in the period immediately following the duty bearer trainings. The sample size is too small to draw any truly meaningful conclusions, though these indicators point in the right direction.

It is worth noting that these duty bearer trainings were significantly delayed and had only just been implemented at the start of the evaluation. Given the positive initial indicators, one recommendation is to continue this programming during future PVE work and more comprehensively assess progress of relevant indicators such as quality of services, sensitivity, trust, and feelings of community connection on an ongoing basis.

Component 2: Community Policing

UN Agency Partner: UNODC
Implementing Partner: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic (MIA); Public Foundation "Civic Union for Reform and Results" (CU)
Achievement of Indicators in the Joint Monitoring Plan (JMP):

Outcome Indicator 2a. Perception of women and girls from target groups on public services access in communities is improved.		
Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
Awareness: 42% Use/access: 42%	Awareness, availability, and quality of security services - 10% increase	Awareness: 35% increase Use: 24% decrease Satisfaction: change not measurable, though by end of project 52% of respondents rate competency as high,

57

		48% rate sensitivity as high
Outcome Indicator 2b. Number of capacitated select law enforcement individuals ... who provide social protection support and assistance.	
Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	At least 250 internal affairs officers [engaged in] community policing work	235 (18 women) police officers capacitated on PVE
Output Indicator 2.1.2. Number of dialogue platforms and the number of adopted PVE action plans that engage women and girls facilitated by local administrations and law enforcement agencies.	
Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	16 plans (1 per community)[6] *No target for dialogue platforms provided*	14 CPPs drafted (1 per community) On dialogue platforms: 16 conducted with 236 participants (103 women)

As shown in the table above, all relevant quantitative metrics were achieved. To assess community members' awareness of, access to, and assessment of the quality of security services at the time of evaluation, the evaluation team distributed a quantitative survey with relevant questions to 95 individuals in the target locations. These individuals were both direct recipients of duty bearer services (31 respondents) and participants in women religious leaders' community initiatives (64 respondents). This data was compared with quantitative metrics on the awareness, access, and quality assessment of duty bearer services that had been backed out from qualitative research conducted for the baseline study in early 2017. The table below shows changes in respondent awareness and use of law enforcement services between the baseline and evaluation:

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[6] Note that this target of 16 CPPs, though included in the Joint Monitoring Plan (JMP), is higher than the number of communities in which the partners worked, which was 14. It seems that more care was needed in drafting of indicators, though given that this JMP was written a year into implementation it's surprising that the indicators are not an accurate reflection of the work planned to be conducted.

Police Services - Awareness and Use
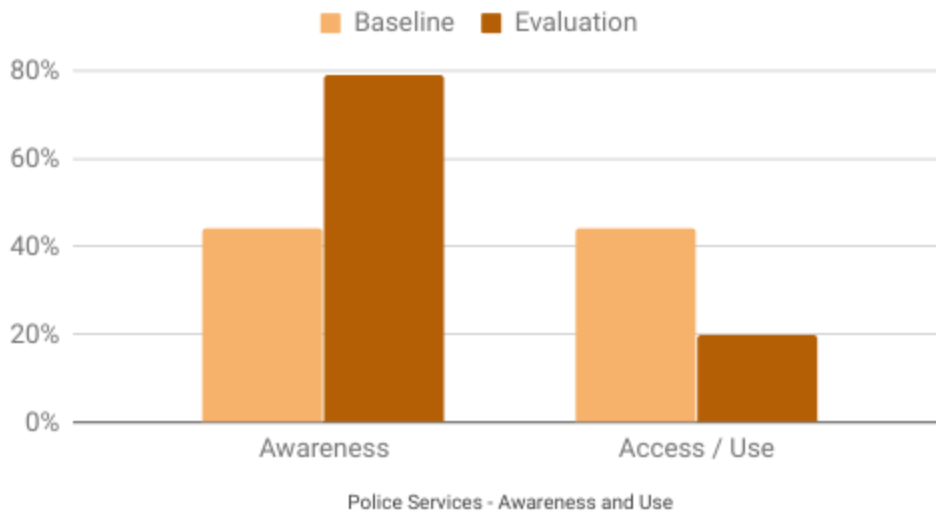
As can be seen above, awareness of police services increased by upwards of 35%. Actual use of police services decreased by 24%, a result that seems more likely to be positive than negative for these communities (the project target was a 10% increase in use of police services but it is not clear how this would be a positive indicator).

Satisfaction with the police, meanwhile, was markedly lower than that with other government representatives (teachers, social workers, etc.) but still a significant improvement over baseline indicators. The baseline survey suggests that only 6% of respondents were satisfied with law enforcement services. By the time of the evaluation, 52% of respondents rated police competency as either high or very high, while 48% rated their sensitivity as high or very high. Though the analysis of this data is complicated by the lack of a statistically relevant sample, control group, and consistent respondent group, the change is so marked that the evaluation team has confidence in overall increased rates of satisfaction with law enforcement in the target communities.

To tease out where these improvements came from as a qualitative matter, we now turn to exploration of the theory of change of the project's work with law enforcement officers.

Discussion of Effectiveness - Theory of Change:

Theory of Change, Outcome 2, Component 2:

> IF dialogue platforms are established and used effectively to collaboratively develop and implement joint plans on crime prevention and radicalization by police, local authorities and communities (including women and girls), *and*

> IF police officers apply gender and religious sensitive preventive approaches in policing and PVE, provide more accurate information to the broader public about PVE, and collaborate with communities in prevention of crime and radicalization,

> THEN girls and women will be more resilient to radicalization and VE

BECAUSE approaches of crime prevention and security are more people-centered, and the communities feel safer and better protected by police officers, they will be more willing to cooperate with police in the PVE.

Dialogue Platforms and Crime Prevention Plans:

The effectiveness of the dialogue platforms and crime prevention plans has been one of the most difficult elements to assess. In terms of actual implementation of the CPPs, this evaluation comes too early in the process to truly determine, as the CPPs are only now being shepherded through ratification by local councils. All 14 plans had been adopted and ratified by their local village councils as of the conclusion of this evaluation (January 2019), a positive indicator in terms of local council buy-in for the content and the potential for future implementation. However, since adoption of the *de jure* plan is only the first step in implementation, it's quite difficult to assess how much of an impact these plans will have on the communities in which they are used. Ongoing monitoring of actual implementation and support for local government, police, and citizens in using these plans could be highly beneficial during this early post-ratification stage.

To this end, there is reason to believe that continued work and support to local communities is needed to increase the likelihood of effective on-the-ground implementation of the CPPs. Only 30% of women religious leaders involved in the project had heard about the CPPs - under-use of a vital resource that could have contributed to the dialogue platforms and drafting of PVE content for the plans. Meanwhile, policemen themselves (*uchastkivii* and members of the 10th department) expressed confusion with the plans or did not see a link to PVE. One, for example, described his community's plan as being about family violence and not having any PVE content - and that PVE was not his responsibility. A member of the 10th department said that while PVE was his responsibility and was included in the CPP, he found the CPP unclear and did not understand how it was to be implemented or what its contents meant. Other law enforcement officers chose not to speak with the evaluation team, and so their opinions and perspectives are not known.

In its commentary on the draft version of this report, the project implementing partner rightly noted that the feedback from these two officers may be unrepresentative (the additional 6 officers who provided feedback for this evaluation gave answers that were so brief that there was no usable data related to the CPPs). As discussed in the "limits to the evaluation" section, the evaluation team made extensive efforts to include police officers in the data sample but was largely rebuffed. We agree that the comments made by the few police officers who took part may be unrepresentative, and we strongly encourage the project implementation team to leverage its personal relationships with the full pool of officers to garner more extensive feedback and insights on the CPPs.

It seems that the idea of the CPPs was well conceived, with the philosophy of open dialogue, platforms for discussion, and a sustainable CPP as a result all fitting well with the overarching project design. But actual implementation in the field was not as processually and inclusively oriented, with experts largely drafting the plans themselves after conducting focus groups and interviews with some 200+ local residents (103 of whom were women). Project documentation describes the model not so much open dialogue and join drafting as expert research and separate

drafting by project coordinators, a method that may be driving policemen's subsequent confusion and lack of buy-in on the CPPs. This may come down to the need for more intensive engagement with field coordinators and trainings for them on concepts and methods of inclusive dialogue. Indeed, in the two locations where woman religious leaders remembered having been involved in the CPP drafting hint at the positive potential of this model:

> People have become more good willed, and both people and law enforcement have become better-willed toward one another … They [law enforcement officers] used to look as us suspiciously, like, "what's with those women?", we sat on one side, they sat on the other - and they took pictures of us. "Why are you photographing us? You need to explain it to us, you don't have the right to just photograph us like that," that was the first session. The second and third times, it was clear things had gotten better. They weren't so negative toward us. (A28: 5).
> ------
> Interviewer: Have you heard about the police being involved in drafting a crime prevention plan for your community or have you taken part in any crime prevention activities with your police?
>
> Respondent: Yes, I heard. We went together. If there's a problem the Women's Committee head, village head, and policeman (*uchastkovii*) - we all go together. Because everyone's afraid if only the policeman shows up… "Don't be afraid, tell us," we say, "these are our own boys [policemen], if you tell them they'll help," we say to get them to trust. We've been working with the police ever since 2010, they used to call us traitors but ever since we've started working together that's stopped…. The police walk through the neighborhood (*mahallah*) every day now (A27: 5).

Overall, the crime prevention plans seem like a promising method but need further work both in terms of truly inclusive drafting processes and ongoing support beyond ratification to ensure effectiveness and sustainability. As the first quotation also suggests, there is a low baseline in terms of trust and sensitivity - progress is likely to be slow and arduous, important for setting realistic implementation expectations and estimates of future team involvement.

Community Policing:

Given the lack of input from police officers themselves in the evaluation process (a result of widespread refusal of police officers to take part, likely to have been prompted by the team's lack of an official letter from the Ministry of Internal Affairs) it is difficult to assess elements of the "if" statement and how they were interpreted by law enforcement officers. However, women religious leaders in particular had repeated, positive remarks on the behavior of law enforcement officers in their communities. These allow the team to assess achievement of various elements of the "because" statement of the theory of change and impute these changes to the trainings and sensitivity improvements premised as pre-conditions by the "if" statement.

People centered approaches to crime prevention and policing: Improvements in people-centered policing are most palpable from women religious leaders' comments on trainings they received from national representatives from the 10th Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

A majority of women religious leaders described the positive impression that these officials made on them, the fact that they had shared their phone numbers, and that they remained in touch though the training and programming had long since stopped.

Officials from the 10th Department, meanwhile, relayed personal stories of having heard from and helped these women religious leaders - and in particular with PVE problems. In one indicative story, a WRL called the trainers after a young man was arrested for possession of extremist materials. Though the man did indeed possess the materials - and therefore could have been imprisoned - he did not seem to understand what they were or why their possession was criminal. The trainer contacted the local police, who agreed to let the boy go with a warning. He subsequently participated in PVE trainings in another oblast and was "one of the most active participants". Though still monitored, this boy has not re-engaged with extremist materials and is living a normal life.

Communities feel safer and better protected by the police: Numerous comments from not only women religious leaders but also community initiative participants reveal improved practices and community policing efforts in several implementation communities. On one hand, this is reflected in the statistics on satisfaction with the police that were provided at the outset of this section. To give more perspective and insight on these changes, we below quote from sources in multiple intervention communities:

> We work together with the police, we tell the people the information they need to know together, and the community has started to understand that there's no need to be afraid. On the contrary, they've started to say, "the police protect me." … We learned who the police are, that they're actually people too (Community AB FGD: 1, 2).

> Things have gotten better with the police. If we see a police car in the street we stop, say hi to one another, ask how one another is doing … we used to run away from them (FGD with community initiative participants, AA: 9).

> When [our woman religious leader] prepares an event, she tells the local police and they help. We held an event at school and invited all of the local women. At first they were afraid, if we go the police will give us the evil eye, they said. But we got them to all go and the local police also went - and trust has started. [The police] really participated well. (A8: 6).

In sum, the community policing efforts appear to have made meaningful improvements, particularly in terms of building a bridge between women religious leaders and national law enforcement though also at the local, day-to-day level. At the same time, a major risk to the results of these efforts is the frequent rotation of police out of their local communities. Indeed, in the plurality of the communities visited by the evaluation team, the policeman who had taken part in the community policing trainings at the beginning of the project had already been transferred out of the target community. In some locations, the officer who underwent community policing training and the officer who took part in CPP planning were different, a factor that would logically undermine the dialogue platforms used to develop the CPPs. Overall, the frequent turnover plus

the fact that police officers in rural areas may be responsible for overseeing upwards of 4 distinct villages at a time undermine the core logic of community policing, i.e. that officers who are closer to and more integrated into their communities can more effectively prevent crime in that they will have the trust of and information-sharing from local residents.

Catalytic effects: Growing out of this project's efforts, UNODC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs have developed an e-course on PVE topics, including community policing principles, communication with population, and legislation related to prevention of violent extremism. It is hoped that this e-course will improve ongoing professional growth and understanding of law enforcement police officers on PVE issues and will be used as a training tool across the country on a constant basis by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This extra step may feed the sustainability of project efforts on these topics, provided that officers use and internalize the gained knowledge.

Component 3: Legal Support

UN Agency Partner: UNDP
Implementing Partner: Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic (MoJ)
Achievement of Indicators in the Joint Monitoring Plan (JMP):

Outcome Indicator 2a. Perception of women and girls from target groups on public services access in communities is improved.		
Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
	Legal assistance - no target identified	Not possible to assess given lack of a baseline
Outcome Indicator 2b. Number of capacitated select ... legal aid providers who provide legal protection support and assistance.		
Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	30 lawyers provide free legal aid / legal support	No data provided
Output Indicator 2.2.1 Number of women and girls at risk who received free legal aid (obtaining birth certificates, passports, representation in court, etc.)		
Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	500 women and girls	Consultations provided in more than 500 cases, 70% of which were women-clients 15 cases taken for pro bono representation in court by lawyers
Output Indicator 2.2.2 Number of lawyers trained on gender sensitive approaches to PVE		

Baseline	Target (JMP)	Achievement
0	At least 20 lawyers	35 lawyers trained

Discussion of Effectiveness - Indicators:

All indicators for which data is available were exceeded (though data is notably missing in some cases), reflecting effectiveness of this component of the work in terms of meeting its goals. No baseline data was available on perceptions of legal services (i.e. awareness, use, and satisfaction) and so measurement of this was not conducted during the evaluation either.

While it is positive that all pre-set indicators were achieved, it is unclear how much these targets were set to stretch the implementation versus to be "safe" and easily achievable. The linking of these indicators to the overall impact desired - an increase in women's and girls' resilience to radicalization - is also under-elaborated in this framework. More careful consideration of output indicator 2.2.1, for example, could have helped the implementation team think through precisely what type of legal aid support would be the most relevant for PVE and how to more effectively structure their interventions to these ends. Reflection on outcome indicator 2a may have led project implementers and designers to reflect on which members of the justice system enjoy the least trust from citizens and therefore may be the best targets for trust-building interventions from the project team (legal assistance providers may be a less ripe target for trust building as judges and prosecutors, for example). As is, the relevance of much of this work to PVE is somewhat attenuated and could have been heightened by more critical reflection on project activities, benchmarks, and targets (see the discussion on project relevance findings for further points on this topic).

Discussion of Effectiveness - Theory of Change:

Theory of Change:

> IF: legal aid services are of professional quality, delivered in a respectful manner, and easily accessible to women and girls in the communities and women and girls are aware of and demanding of these legal aid services;

> THEN: girls and women will be more resilient to radicalization and VE;

> BECAUSE: their rights are effectively protected in a sensitive way, their legal cases will be more effectively dealt with and they will not feel discriminated against by these professionals, which will increase their trust in State authorities.

Achievement of "IF" statement elements:

Given the confidentiality and sensitivity of legal consultations, the evaluation team did not attempt to contact end beneficiaries to assess whether they perceived the legal aid they had received through the Project as being professional, respectful, and easily accessible. It is worth noting, however, that though a 1-day training was provided through this project, it was only given in Osh and was not provided to the lawyer-consultants who staffed the Bus of Solidarity. Rather, this

training was given to a separate set of lawyers on the theory that it would help them more effectively represent those accused of extremist crimes. The somewhat ad hoc nature of these project activities would seem to undermine their effectiveness, with the trained lawyers' work being largely separate from any other project elements.

In terms of improvements in awareness and accessibility of legal services, certainly the presence of the Bus of Solidarity in each of these 16 communities would logically increase the accessibility of legal information and support. At the same time, only 40% of the women religious leaders involved in this project had heard about the Bus of Solidarity and its presence in their communities (90% of those who had heard about it had actively connected community members to the bus and its services). Of the lawyers who received trainings on PVE legislation, only two said that they had used the training in their casework with quite a few declining to be interviewed because they had not used any of the lessons learned beyond the day of the training. This suggests that greater coordination across project elements could have improved their effectiveness, enabling more of the targeted vulnerable women and girls to know about and access the free legal consultations. Meanwhile, better selection of advocate-trainees may have heightened the impact of their learnings and better ensured that the knowledge gained would be translated into actual client service.

Achievement of "BECAUSE" statement elements:

Again, given challenges around client confidentiality the evaluation team chose not to contact recipients of services through the Bus of Solidarity. At the same time, one general comment is worth making: interviews with staff at the Ministry of Justice showed a lack of incorporation of a PVE perspective into the work of the Bus of Solidarity, with officials noting that it's not a topic of much personal interest nor one that the Ministry works with directly (apart from maintaining a list of extremist materials which have been deemed banned by court opinion). Rather, the Bus of Solidarity is run year-round through various funding sources and under various project logics (e.g. women's rights, PVE, etc. etc.). To a certain extent this makes sense: improved legal knowledge and access to justice are widely recognized as preconditions to any number of development goals, and the Bus of Solidarity is one effective way of extending this knowledge and access to difficult-to-reach communities. At the same time, surely opportunities exist to make Bus of Solidarity services more PVE-relevant when they are leveraged for a PVE project (for example: training advocate-consultants on PVE-relevant legislation, or having them do presentations in the communities they visit on relevant PVE topics, or connecting them to local duty bearers to provide those duty bearers with PVE-relevant legal advice for their ongoing client work).

As the implementing partners noted in their comments on the draft version of this report, the Bus of Solidarity proceeded on the theory that all development work that decreases individuals' socio-legal vulnerability is PVE work (the underlying assumption being that it is such vulnerability that drives radicalization). We have discussed our misgivings with this perspective to some extent in the section on "relevance". At the same time, neither the evaluation team nor anyone else has a monopoly on the 'truth', and we can see the value of the Bus of Solidarity as a development tool. While we would strongly recommend more careful consideration of how rule of law work could be tailored to PVE concerns - and the most urgent of them - we can see the value of the Bus's work in decreasing general legal vulnerability.

The Ministry of Justice's relative disinterest in PVE topics is reflected in its minimal role in the national strategy for the prevention of violent extremism, in which the MoJ is given the single role of posting a list of banned materials on its website. This is a huge missed opportunity given the Kyrgyz Republic's systematic rule of law shortcomings, paired with worldwide findings that such rule of law shortcomings can feed individuals' sense of injustice and eventual turn to violent

extremist ideologies. In this light, the project team's failure to engage the MoJ more systematically on PVE and the rule of law and to push for ministry-wide recognition of the importance of the topic had a direct bearing on the effectiveness of their activities in this project. Future rule of law programming would benefit from incorporating direct work with MoJ staff to improve their internal policies and practices with regards to PVE rather than simply sub-contracting them to implement ad hoc project activities.

In terms of improving lawyers' capacity to effectively represent clients accused of extremist crimes, the 1-day training appears to have had positive results. Two lawyers used their learnings in post-training cases, explaining how their deeper understanding of legislation on extremism helped them in their client work. One repeated request, however, was for continued training on updated legislative frameworks (especially after January 2019) and more training on the technological elements of their clients' cases (e.g. false accounts, hacking, social media, etc.). Given the complexity of laws on these topics and the technology involved in social media, it seems unlikely that a one-day training would truly be sufficient to prepare lawyers for these cases. A more systematic training program could be beneficial, one which would incorporate ongoing changes to relevant legislation, an overview of relevant technology, and discussion of the thnic and gender sensitivities that can be involved in these cases. As a starting point, UNDP could leverage the PVE e-course developed by UNODC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs through this project, which includes information for police on how to identify and block extremist accounts, for example (the very topics that the lawyers wanted to learn more about).

Overall Project Effectiveness:

The outputs discussed above were all undertaken in furtherance of the project impact (overall objective), namely to increase women's and girls' resilience to religious radicalization towards violent extremist ideologies in the target communities. Each of the outputs enjoyed a varying range of success, with efforts to enhance citizen trust in duty bearer services and trainings for women religious leaders on topics such as social responsibility, critical thinking, and the ideologies of banned extremist groups seeing particular success. Other elements, such as legal aid services, crime prevention plans, and trainings on tolerance and radicalization risk factors were somewhat less effective, particularly when viewed through the lens of PVE relevance. Given the varying levels of success across its sub-elements, can the project be said to have achieved its overall aim or to have made progress in that direction?

Perhaps the best indicator comes from feedback from residents of the target communities themselves: 84% of respondents to the quantitative survey conducted for this evaluation said that they both agreed with the underlying logic of the project (i.e. that enhancing trust in local authorities and across members of the community was an effective way to counter religious radicalization) and that they had seen a positive change in their own communities in terms of decreased radical tendencies over the project period. This positive feedback from members of speaks well both to overall effectiveness and the soundness of the project's core theories of change.

Certainly, overall effectiveness could have been enhanced by improved coordination across project elements (a topic that will covered later in this report), more careful consideration of the relevance of planned activities to the prevention of violent extremism, and more planning around topics and trainings for women religious leaders (especially concepts likes tolerance, marginalization, and radicalization). And though the evaluation was not able to adequately assess duplication across Mutakallim's and FTI's trainings for women religious leaders (given that almost

all interviewees were participants of both) the similarity of the topics covered and methods used suggest that there may have been inefficient repetition of content.

At the same time, the project appears to have effectively decreased the likelihood of its women participants to join extremist groups (most effectively by simply telling them which groups are considered to be extremist and why) and, by motivating these women through concepts of service and social responsibility, to have increased the likelihood that women and girls in these communities will be more resilient to VE ideologies in the wake of re-training efforts by these women religious leaders. The trust-building and sensitization work undertaken with local government employees and local police have also proven largely effective, though their ongoing effectiveness is not assured (further covered in the section on sustainability).

Criterion #3: Efficiency

Summary of efficiency findings:

➔ Overall efficiency was high, with resources well-tailored to achieving the targeted project results.

➔ Financial resources were used more efficiently than originally planned, with savings being invested in additional programming to improve the project's sustainability. *However*, the timing of payments was significantly delayed in some cases, undermining project coordination and impact.

  The most detrimental delay was caused by a mismatch between PBF funding timelines and the government budgeting process. Reconsideration of PBF funding timelines and project implementation limits could mitigate similar challenges in the future, particularly when it comes to working with government partners.

➔ Staffing was sufficient, though UN staff was somewhat overworked and could have benefitted from having more topically-coherent project portfolios.

➔ Technical expertise was built through the process of project implementation. UN agencies leveraged what pre-existing expertise they had to make this learning process more efficient, while outside consulting support was provided to implementing partners where needed.

Financial resources: Staff at all UN agencies and their implementing partners said that financial resources were sufficient to achieve the activities and objectives as set out in the Project Document and their respective Terms of Reference. Indeed, UNODC noted that it was able to stretch the received financial resources to cover an online PVE course for police officers, a core element of its sustainability strategy for this project. UNICEF and implementing partner CRRS were also able to undertake more trainings than planned, thereby hopefully extending the impact of their work beyond the end of the project.

Though the total amount of money was well-tailored to achieving project objectives, the *timing* of receipt of that money could have been better managed. Payment procedures at some of the UN agencies were so delayed that their implementing partners were left without pay for 2 to 3 months at a time and had to either ask their employees to work without salaries or cover the gaps with non-project funds. Though these implementing partners continued to meet targets and deadlines, it should not be an expectation of working with the UN that implementing partners sacrifice their employees' well-being in this way.

The biggest delay in payment - and the one with the most detrimental impact of project results - came because of a mismatch between the budgeting timeline of the government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the timeline of the PBF grants process. From one side, the PBF announces grant winners in the late fall and delivers funds in January of the following year. From the other side, the government of the Kyrgyz Republic requires Ministries to submit their budgets in the late

spring and, upon approval of these budgets, releases funds in January of the following year. CRRS, a government agency and UNICEF's implementing partner, was caught between these two timelines: knowledge of the award and preparation of the related budget came too late to be integrated into KR's 2017 budget. And so CRRS had to wait until January 2018 - ⅔ rds of the way into the project - to receive its project funds through the Ministry of Finance. Though the results of CRRS's work ultimately were positive, coordination benefits and synergies across project components were lost. Moreover, UNICEF and other UN agencies were not fully aware of the positive results of CRRS's work until late in 2018 - too late to fully integrate similar methods into their subsequent PVE grant applications.

To the extent that the PBF seeks to encourage national ownership of development work - including PVE interventions - careful consideration should be given to how PBF grant deadlines, funding timelines, and short project timeframes impact the capacity of government partners to meaningfully take part in PBF-funded peacebuilding work. CRRS's involvement in the project had significant benefits in terms of capacity-building at both the national and local levels. To encourage other UN agencies to take on similarly close work with government partners - despite the headaches, particularly related to budgeting processes - PBF could consider creating rolling grant deadlines that would make it easier to tailor implementation to government budgeting processes. Alternatively, PBF could consider longer-term funding options (3, 4, 5 year options, for example) where such delays would be a relatively small set back in an overall implementation plan (or ideally could be foreseen and integrated into the 5-year project implementation plan).

Staffing and staffing structures: UN agency staff and implementing partners were generally happy with the number of staff dedicated to the project, saying that they had sufficient employees to achieve the targeted results. Of note, however, is that UN staff dedicated to this project were on average overseeing 4 to 6 additional projects at the same time. These other projects, meanwhile, came from a wide variety of topics; there was not necessarily any coherence across the staff's primary duties and their PVE-related work. Some UN agency staff members described how they had wanted to conduct field monitoring visits or think more critically about PVE topics, but hadn't been able to leave their other projects behind. To the evaluation team, this suggests that while no UN employees wanted to state outright that they were overworked or overbooked, in reality their workloads were too high for them to perform up to their own standards, logically impacting the overall quality of implementation.

The most successful staffing model appears to have been the hiring of a single UN staff member to be dedicated solely to the project. UNFPA, for example, hired a Project Manager to be dedicated to *Women and Girls as Drivers of Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization* for its first 12 months, with additional duties related to planning future PVE work and grants added on thereafter. The Project Manager was thereby able to conduct extensive field visits, monitoring, reporting, and coordination efforts across partners - with palpable results in the success of UNFPA's efforts, the work of its implementing partner FTI, and overall project management. Though in some cases this may be a more expensive model - and arguably one more appropriate for a lead agency than others - the investment of time and resources can be seen in project results and may be appropriate for other UN agencies, especially to the extent that they want to develop PVE expertise for future programming or generate coherent and sustainable PVE results.

Technical expertise: One of the primary benefits of the project - as described by UN agency partners - was the on-the-ground learning that it provided. Though none of the UN agency staff members had any dedicated PVE-experience prior to the start of this project, several noted the relevance of their prior professional experience in community development, human rights, and local organizing. They were able to leverage this technical expertise to achieve intended targets while overlaying ongoing learnings in the fields of religious radicalization and violent extremism by, for example, discussing progress with their implementing partners and participating in meetings with other RUNO partners to learn from their work. At the same time, this lack of initial PVE expertise makes these staff members' overly heavy work burden all the more relevant, in that it reduced the amount of time they had to learn from on-the-ground implementation or stay abreast of updated PVE learnings and research on their own.

Meanwhile, further expertise was provided to project implementing partners, and especially CRRS, by external consultants hired specifically (via PeaceNexus) to improve their technical skills and knowledge. This resulted in sustainable capacity improvements within the national government structure. Indeed, CRRS and UNICEF took advantage of the unforeseen delay in launching their case management work to provide extensive consulting and capacity-building to CRRS employees, training that appears to have resulted in higher quality training materials, methods, and final results.

Criterion #4: Coordination and Monitoring and Evaluation

Summary of coordination and M&E findings:

➜ Coordination among UN agencies was well organized to share project learnings and allow for ongoing improvement of implementation methods, with significant investments of time and energy going into documenting, sharing, and integrating lessons learned.

The project would have benefitted from more coordination in terms of project logic and assumptions, a process that could have been facilitated by jointly updating the project's theory of change to reflect changing project logic (as was done for the project output and outcome statements in 2017).

➜ Repeated efforts were made to coordinate UN agencies' and implementing partners' work on the ground in target communities, though improvements in information-sharing at the local level could have had a positive impact on the effectiveness of the project.

➜ Coordination with government agencies in particular appears to have been positive and generated sustainability benefits.

Coordination within the implementing team (UN agencies and implementing partners): One of the key strengths of *Women and Girls as Drivers of Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization* was the (formal and informal) system of reflective learning integrated into its ongoing implementation at the level of implementing UN agencies. This was primarily conducted at the personal initiative of the Project Manager, who organized meetings every two months with implementing agencies and partners to reflect on progress and lessons learned, conducted extensive field visits and documented lessons learned, and revisited project documentation to try to put in place more meaningful and challenging outcome and output indicators, targets, and underlying logical frameworks for the project. Further efforts were made by collaborating with external partners (e.g. PeaceNexus) and their consultants to advise on key concepts and frameworks for the project, particularly when it came to rethinking the underlying logic and improving on the frameworks provided by the Project Document. Taken together, these efforts helped the project serve on of its main (if un-articulated) underlying functions: to help staff at the UN better understand the PVE environment of the Kyrgyz Republic and design future programming to address it.

At the same time, further coordination efforts were needed in terms of generating a shared understanding of key project terminology and in surfacing the logic underlying implementers' programming initiatives (a process that could have occurred by jointly updating the project's theories of change to reflect the evolving project logic). In evaluation interviews, implementing staff expressed different understandings of "radicalization", "marginalization", "vulnerability", "violent extremism" and the role of each in relation to one another and to project implementation, including the role these concepts had in achieving outputs and outcomes. This multiplicity of opinions is not a problem in and of itself; indeed, such disagreements can be fertile ground to explore and hone assumptions. The problem arises in that such exploration apparently did not

happen, with each implementing UN agency and partner choosing its own approach to the issues at hand. Interviewees were thus able to justify their own approach and accurately identify other agencies' and organizations' approaches, but were left unable to state how these distinct approaches could be mutually supportive within a single project framework. On-the-ground project implementation reflected this somewhat piecemeal approach, as discussed further below.

To be fair, the debates encountered within the implementing team are the same being grappled with at an international level and with similarly slow progress. It's easy to say that a shared approach is needed. It's much less easy to be in the midst of project implementation and undertake a time-intensive and politically challenging process of harmonizing implementers' definitional and processual assumptions. With that in mind, one recommendation would be for project implementers to jointly define the logic underlying their actual project implementation (via, for example, joint review of project ToCs) and tackle their main assumptions - understanding that while they may not reach complete agreement, the process of voicing their beliefs and trying to determine how those distinct beliefs may be mutually compatible can be productive in and of itself.

The efforts at coordination among UN agencies led to concrete work at coordination on the ground within the target communities, such as the leveraging of women religious leaders in at least some locations to support the dialogue platforms for crime prevention plans and to connect local women to the Bus of Solidarity. At the same time - and as noted at various points in the section on effectiveness - improved coordination at the local level would have improved synergies across project components. This includes, for example:

- Assessing whether the work conducted by UNFPA-FTI and UNDP-Mutakallim was mutually supportive or rather duplicative both in terms of the participation of individual women religious leaders and in terms of the types of events held within target communities, taking steps to avoid inefficient duplication wherever possible;

- Better informing and involving women religious leaders in:
  - The process of drafting crime prevention plans and ensuring their incorporation into planning sessions and discussion groups;
  - The trainings for duty bearers on service provision and sensitivity, with WRLs supporting duty-bearers' outreach to community members;
  - The legal aid services being provided, such as the dates of the Bus of Solidarity's visits to each community and its purpose.

That only a minority of women religious leaders were aware of other project activities represents a substantial missed opportunity, given their proactive efforts to find and support vulnerable women in their communities. There appear to be three factors associated with missed coordination opportunities:

1. To a certain extent these missed opportunities appear to be related to the staff and time shortages described under criteria #3 (efficacy): staff at both UN agencies and implementing partners were too busy to systematically link participants to the outstretched hand of the women religious leaders;

2. Timing challenges undermined the planned concurrent implementation of all project components. Work on crime prevention plans, legal support, and some of the initiatives with women religious leaders were significantly delayed - by the first semi-annual report of the project only FTI's work had actually launched. The implementing agencies do not appear to have had a plan in place to "hit the ground running" once funds were received, resulting in these (significant) delays.

3. Local-level coordination across project components also appears to have been more successful where local leadership (TOC, aiyl okmot) was actively engaged in the project. Areas where local leadership was lacking - notably Bishkek novostroikii - saw significantly lower cross-component collaboration and therefore less meaningful results.

Once the project was underway, coordination with government partners appears to have yielded positive, catalytic results. As mentioned, UNODC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs were able to generate an e-course for police to improve their PVE awareness; members of the State Commission on Religious Affairs (SCRA) expressed their overall satisfaction with the project and close coordination with activities occurring on the ground; and training sessions in which government partners took a lead role were some of the best-received by end beneficiaries.

The coordination-related lessons learned from this project appear to have already been integrated into ongoing PVE work, with more extensive and sophisticated monitoring and evaluation frameworks being developed collaboratively by implementing partners and UN agencies, including plans for better cross-component coordination at the local level.

Criterion #5: Sustainability

Summary of sustainability findings:

→ The gains resulted from Outcome 1 programming appear to be highly sustainable, though not necessarily because of disciplined exit planning by project implementers. Rather, the nature of the work itself - changing women's underlying beliefs and practices - serves the goals of longterm behavior change, while the re-launch of similar PVE programming in many of the same target communities will concretize and build on the gains already made. Sustainability likely could have been nehanced by consideration of institutional structures that could carry gains forward indefinitely.

→ The majority of Outcome 2 outputs are structured toward sustainability, including institutionalization of core training programs and methods within national government structures (e.g. UNODC's PVE e-course, CRRS's trainings for Ministry leaders). However, careful monitoring and assessment will be needed to ensure that these are actively used rather than mere paper gains.

→ Legal aid work does not appear to have been conceptualized in terms of sustainability, with the longterm impact of one-off legal consultations and lawyer trainings unclear. Future rule of law work would benefit from more consideration of the sustainability of the programming being implemented.

Coming immediately after the completion of the Project, this evaluation cannot definitively say whether the project benefits will continue into the long term. Instead, we rely on the insights of project beneficiaries and implementers in terms of the impacts, changes, and programs that they believe will be sustainable over the next 2, 5, and 10 years. We also include, where relevant, insights from academic and development literature on how to enhance the likelihood of sustainable results, particularly when it comes to changing behavior patterns and community norms. These perspectives and insights allow us to make a general assessment of the likelihood of continued long-term benefits as well as ways that this probability could be increased.

Sustainability of Outcome 1 Impact

The majority of evaluation participants who had been involved in Outcome 1 activities continue to leverage their knowledge and networks to conduct activities in-line with Project goals. Both women religious leaders and the community members they organized described ongoing efforts to change, impact, and improve their communities. These continued activities are, in turn, undergirded by sustained changes in their attitudes toward one another, their communities, and their local officials.

Changes in Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors: As noted in the section on effectiveness, 100% of women religious leaders reported feeling a strengthened sense of connection to their local communities (80% very strong, 20% strong) and 95% felt increased social responsibility (65% very strong, 30% strong, 5% no change). Given that this evaluation came 1.5 years after the trainings on these topics, these high numbers suggest a lasting change in these women's

> We'll continue doing this work. This project showed us the path and we'll keep on doing it. (A1: 8)

> We keep on working. When [woman religious leader] calls us, we support her. We invite her to our meetings, our round tables. We'll still working. (Community AC FGD: 3).

Areas for Improvement: While the individual participants in Outcome 1 activities underwent meaningful personal change that is likely sustainable in their individual cases, there does not appear to have any attempts to institutionalize the progress made. The extent to which these women's community work and changed attitudes will extend beyond their immediate circles and to future generations is thus largely a matter of their personal initiative. And while some of these women are leaders of their local madrassas and Women's Committees,[7] both institutions that could logically be venues for continued programming along the lines of that conducted through this project, these does not appear to have been systematic incorporation of project methods within these institutional frameworks (note, however, that some of the community initiatives funded by Mutakallim entailed purchasing sewing machines for madrassas to launch vocational trainings or funded other madrassa-based classes. These may bring forward some project-related classwork, but this is somewhat distinct from an institutionalization of the full complex of program offerings related to reconceptualizing social responsibility, critical thinking, and the nature of religious belief and radicalism). Project implementers conducting similar work in the future may want to consider whether these or other institutional frameworks could be appropriate platforms to make their progress more sustainable.

Other areas where sustainability is unclear is in the media product and behavior change campaign. Almost all women religious leaders had seen the BCC products - and specifically the short films - though fewer among their community initiative participants had. Moreover, only one described actually using these BCC products to initiate conversations among others in her community or re-sharing them beyond her immediate circle. Thus while women religious leaders liked the films and found them to be effective, they appear to be an under-utilized resource that could be effectively leveraged in ongoing PVE work.

There does not appear to have been a comprehensive exit strategy envisioned for Outcome 1 activities. Sustainability considerations are notably missing from the Project Document and other project materials, while UN staff interviewees did not appear to have specific strategies in mind to ensure a smooth transition after the end of the project. For Outcome 1, the impact of this lack of exit planning appears to be relatively small for two main reasons: (1) the launch of a second major PVE initiative in 2018, involving many of the same women religious leaders and (2) the success of the Outcome 1 efforts in changing participants' underlying attitudes and beliefs, and with enough of a concentration in most communities that participants can reinforce one anothers' changed behaviors and practices on an ongoing basis. At the same time, a more comprehensive exit strategy would have been beneficial, particularly for those communities that were included in *Women and Girls as Drivers of Peace and the Prevention of Radicalization* but not subsequent PVE programming.

For the BCC and media products, the "exit strategy" was to place the media products on the implementing partner's website and social media. While this ensures the sustainability of the

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[7] Women's Committees are local government structures meant to serve the specific needs of a community's female members; Women's Committees are a holdover from Kyrgyzstan's Soviet period.

products' accessibility to some extent, it does little to ensure the sustainability of their *impact*. Now that these numerous resources exist, the implementing partners would do well to leverage them in ongoing PVE work and ensure their usage beyond parking them on a website.

Sustainability of Outcome 2 Impact

Outcome 2, Component 1: Duty bearers underwent meaningful behavior change and have largely adopted the new protocols and platforms for collaboration that were provided in the project trainings. DBs were enthusiastic about continuing this work into the future, suggesting a good probability that gains will continue in the long-term. Meanwhile CRRS provided similar trainings to members of the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, and State Personnel Service, all of whom expressed an interest in implementing similar trainings for their staff more broadly. CRRS is continuing to support the integration of their training methods into the broader State structure, efforts that could be highly beneficial for sustainability.

At the same time, some limitations to sustainability (and this evaluation's capacity to measure it) should be mentioned here:

- This evaluation came within 3 months of the end of DBs' trainings and was concurrent with CRRS case management implementation support. As such, the extent to which their enthusiasm and behavior changes will extend beyond the completion of all activities and support is not possible to assess (nor is it fair to compare the relative enthusiasm of the duty bearers with that of participants in other project trainings that concluded upwards of a year ago);

- CRRS cannot continue its case management support nor leverage the training materials it developed beyond the end of the Project due to a lack of national budget resources and capacity. The withdrawal of national-level support (i.e. of CRRS) is likely to undermine the sustainability of gains in the intervention communities, particularly given that long term behavior change of duty bearers requires sustained support and messaging. Project partners would have done well to plan a better exit strategy for this component and, given the strong initial results from CRRS' efforts, are encouraged to integrate them into ongoing PVE work in the country.

Outcome 2, Component 2: Community policing efforts have resulted in local-level adoption of Crime Prevention Plans in all 14 intervention communities. These CPPs institutionalize community policing work within the local regulatory framework and thereby create a sustainable basis for continued improvements. However, it is unclear to what extent they have buy-in from local police (*uchastkovii*) and citizens. Project Implementers have the opportunity to enhance both the impact and sustainability of the CPPs by building community support for them now, while they are still fresh.

Meanwhile, community policing practices appear to have changed for the better in at least some of the intervention communities - while the sustainability of these benefits is unclear, particularly as trained police rotate into communities where there is not as much local support for community policing, they are a base from which sustainable gains can be built. Implementing partners'

creation of an e-course on PVE, meanwhile, promises to save in lasting form the learnings from the project and pass them on to new law enforcement officers. Ongoing PVE work could enhance the effectiveness of this platform by spreading awareness of it and monitoring how effectively e-course trainees internalize and leverage the information being taught.

Outcome 2, Component 3: The training for advocates appears to have positive results - particularly given advocates' own incentives to incorporate the legal content into their client work. However, the gains from this 1-day training are not sustainable, especially to the extent that relevant legislation continues to be rewritten and re-adopted (especially in terms of the changes to the Criminal Code, Administrative Code, and new law "On Probation" that go into effect on January 1, 2019). Sustainability could be improved by continuing to work with these advocates as legislation changes. Meanwhile, though the Ministry of Justice continues to use the Bus of Solidarity, its is reliant on donor fundings and is not yet a self-sustaining model at the government level (though the MoJ is working to find its own funding for the bus, a positive step). The one-off consultations provided to clients via the Bus of Solidarity, meanwhile, are certainly useful in spreading basic legal knowledge but it is unclear how effect they are in truly resolving citizens' legal problems (which presumably require more extended legal counsel) and especially on a sustainable basis.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the project successfully met its planned activities and leveraged these activities to generate greater trust and mutual understanding within the target communities, thereby supporting women's and girls' resilience to radicalization. Project efforts that were particularly impactful centered around knowledge-building, empowerment, and community service as ways to enhance feelings of social responsibility and community connection. These included the work with women religious leaders, with duty bearers, and their work in supporting disadvantaged individuals in their communities. Efforts to improve community policing practices also had palpable impact at the local level, though more participatory approaches could enhance the effectiveness of this work. Legal aid work, meanwhile, was viewed as highly positive by project participants but could have been more effectively integrated into the rest of the project and conceptualized in terms of PVE topics and impact.

Areas for future improvement include collaboration and information sharing across project components, which could have significantly increased the reach of the dialogue platforms, legal aid services, and duty bearer work conducted in local communities. Meanwhile, sustainability needs to be considered earlier on and more systematically in project design - the mere adoption of paper plans or presence of online materials are not in and of themselves "sustainability plans." Similarly, the lack of an exit strategy has to some extent been counteracted by ongoing PVE work through other grants; but this does not absolve the project partners for failing to have had an ex-ante exit strategy, particularly where specific project elements and partners have not been integrated into this ongoing work.

Lessons Learned and Best Practices

1. **Multi-phased and adaptive training programs - such as the Women's Leadership Schools - proved highly effective** not merely in training on basic concepts but also in changing underlying attitudes, beliefs, and behavior in ways that logically support more tolerant communities. These successes, in turn, came from project partners' sustained contact with project participants over the entire 2 year implementation period and reflective approach, assessing strong and weak points of the trainings' results, and adapting work to address the weak points identified. The records maintained in relation to strong and weak points can serve to inform future PVE programming.

2. **Women's and girls' community service efforts combined with new attitudes of social responsibility generated a sense of greater belonging**, serving the implicit goal of social cohesion. These positive models of community belonging were more effective than negative models (e.g. "here's how you can empower others in your community" versus "don't be an extremist") in terms of creating sustained changes in behavior and senses of communal obligations. These community initiative efforts also had meaningful catalytic effects, enabling women and girls to implement programs on the issues and in the ways that they felt most pressing: early marriage, clean streets, political organizing, etc.

3. **Information about banned extremist groups and ways to identify them was both highly needed and communicated in an effective way**, helping women religious leaders protect themselves and other community members from what could be called unintentional extremism - the adoption of extremist beliefs through a mere lack of knowledge that they are extreme. Given the low level of religious knowledge demonstrated even by women religious leaders at the start of the program, such information sharing could be highly positive if implemented on a broader scale. Consideration should also be given to the incorporation of information about banned groups beyond those that are religiously oriented - for example, groups with violent ethno-national messages.

4. **Special care is needed when handling conceptual topics like radicalization, marginalization, and risk factors - especially when training them to novices.** Given that linkages among these topics are highly contested and easily subject to misunderstanding, the project team should think carefully about how (and if) it will train others on these topics. Prior to training, project implementers should conduct their own comprehensive literature reviews and assessments of the relevant evidence, thereby having a better ability to assess proposed training materials before their use (and the likelihood that the training materials could be misunderstood). The majority of trainees conceptualized these topics in ways that could lead to mis-identification of 'radicals' and 'early signs' in the future.

5. **Work with duty bearers was effective, with improvements felt not merely by direct beneficiaries but more broadly in their communities as well.** The provision of clear protocols, guidelines, and contacts were simple but effective ways of promoting better service delivery on a day-to-day basis. At the same time, the trainings appear to have instilled a greater sense of social responsibility in these duty bearers - this behavior change, if sustained, could contribute to lasting improvements in community trust and vertical cohesion from citizens to local government.

6. **Community policing work was most effective when residents and policemen had repeated opportunities to interact, exchange contact information, and develop mutual understanding.** This was exemplified by the work of members of the 10th Department to support women religious leaders both during and after their trainings, with women religious leaders repeatedly citing this as a source of their greater trust in law enforcement. Trainings by the 10th Department to local law enforcement officers also appear to have led to direct improvements in community policing practices on the ground, though the evaluation team was not able to triangulate these results across respondent groups.

7. **Legal aid work was perceived positively** by project participants and appears to have increased access to justice, though improved conceptualization is needed in terms of relevance to PVE. Moreover, stepping back to think critically about the greatest rule of law needs in the Kyrgyz Republic in relation to PVE, it is clear that reform is urgently needed of judicial practices and corruption. Given the success of, for example, the project's work to change the beliefs and practices of duty bearers, similar strategies could be developed

to impact how judges approach their work and could be expected to have a more direct, systematic, and sustainable impact on underlying drivers of radicalization than the case-by-case legal aid and consultations.

8. **Better project coordination is likely to significantly improve results, particularly at the local level.** Had local-level participants been aware of the full scope of the project and full complex of support being provided, not only could they have increased their participation in all relevant activities but also would have been more aware of the extent to which their rights and local level capacities were increased, further supporting the sustainability of results and goals of trust, social cohesion, and mutual support.

Policy Level Recommendations

1. **Support the Ministry of Justice in enhancing the rule of law for the prevention of violent extremism.** Improvement of the rule of law is the top strategy recommended by development agencies for PVE programming (Robinson 2017; UNDP 2016; UNDP 2018). To that end, the fact that the Ministry of Justice has virtually no involvement in PVE is surprising and counter-productive - especially in light of the Kyrgyz Republic's challenges with the rule of law. Project partners could support the Ministry of Justice in thinking critically about its role in PVE and in developing internal strategies and greater collaboration with other government agencies to enhance the rule of law, including countering judicial corruption and police misconduct.

2. **Advocate for policing structures and systems that are more conducive to community policing methods**. Current policies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs run counter to community policing and local accountability - from the frequent rotation schedule to its quota-based assessment system for law enforcement officers. While training programs like the one implemented in this program had promising short term results, realistically there is no chance for them to be effective so long as police officers are rotated out of their communities as soon as they have developed trusting relationships with residents.

Donor Level Recommendations

1. **Extend the timeframe for PBF-funded projects and support more robust staffing.** Eighteen to twenty-four months is simply too short of a timeframe to have a meaningful, sustainable development impact and on the scale necessary to promote long term peace. This is especially true given the inevitable delays in getting programming off the ground after funding is received and, as this project demonstrated, the potential mismatch between government partners' obligations and budgeting processes and the PBF's timelines. Were longer project implementation timeframes offered, such challenges would not be so detrimental to overall results. Meanwhile, the tight staffing of PVE projects has a clear impact on staff's ability to implement them up to their own standards. Support for

dedicating more of the grant budget to implementing staff could positively impact project outcomes.

2. **Generate a definition of "violent extremism" to guide grant decision-making, improve monitoring and evaluation, and support UN agencies and their partners during implementation.** Given the millions of dollars and years of work undertaken by the Peacebuilding Fund to prevent violent extremism, it is somewhat shocking that there is no PBF-level definition of violent extremism. This makes the bases for grant awards less clear, presents obstacles for meaningful monitoring and evaluation of the PBF portfolio of PVE work, and leads to direct implementation and coordination challenges in PVE programming on the ground. In this project, such definitional quandaries undermined UN agency coordination and arguably fed confusion by end-beneficiaries (i.e. the women religious leaders) in terms of what "radicalization" and "violent extremism" - among other terms - mean.

   The process of generating a PBF-level definition of "violent extremism" could be leveraged as a positive and inclusive learning opportunity. By bringing together leaders from the many UN agencies and NGOs that have and are implementing PBF-funded PVE programming across the globe, significant learnings, insights, challenges, and ideas could be shared - to the benefit of all and with the ultimate aim of creating a shared understanding of the meaning of "violent extremism". Of course, such efforts would need to be wary of glossing over local and national contexts in favor of a single, determinative definition - care is needed to allow for sufficient flexibility of concept while providing an foundation from which programmatic coordination and understanding can be built.

Project Level Recommendations

1. **Conduct meaningful literature review of all concepts, assumptions, and theories being used during project implementation to ensure their relevance and accuracy.** This is most relevant to the field of radicalization, given the rapid pace of reconceptualization and newly emerging trends and information. Observations from on-the-ground work can be informed by international literature, enhancing the accuracy of information shared with project participants and preventing the spread of less useful approaches and information.[8]

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[8] Though not discussed in the body of this report, many respondents described the "broken windows" theory of policing - apparently taught to women religious leaders by members of the 10th Department. This theory was prominent in American policing in the 1990's and was once credited with a "miraculous" decline in crime in New York City. However, the theory was debunked in the early 2000's - in no small part by the fact that equally large declines in crime occurred across the US over the same period and in places where "broken windows" was never implemented (see, e.g. Harcourt, Bernard (2005). *Illusion of Order: The False Promise of Broken Windows Policing.* Harvard University Press). Meanwhile, broken windows policing has been directly linked to discriminatory policing, mass incarceration, and police abuse in communities where it was implemented (ibid). Like many Americans before them, the women religious leaders in this project loved the theory for its simplicity and logic. Though it is an attractive (and attractively simple) idea, its negative impact outweighs whatever positive sides it may have.

2. **Enhance coordination across project components and set up local-level information sharing**, thereby improving awareness and use of all project elements at the local level (and supporting synergies across these components).

3. **Redouble efforts to improve the sensitivity and quality of services provided by social service workers and police, with insights based on cases of success from this project.** Social workers and police are both vitally important to serving local communities and, in that sense, to supporting trust and social cohesion. At the same time, these professionals had the lowest ratings for sensitivity and - in the case of police - competence among project participants. While the evaluation team was not able to identify what works and what doesn't in terms of sensitizing police and social workers, positive comments from women religious leaders in some communities suggest that it *is* possible. Project team members can leverage their closer connections to police and social worker participants to identify the strategies that work and replicate them in the future.

   a. Ongoing casework still being implemented by CRRS should also be supported. As noted in this report, families and individuals are often at their most vulnerable in the immediate aftermath of receiving new help and rights knowledge. The programming implemented by CRRS and families with whom it continues to work are in a liminal phase and could see maginified benefits if supported over the next 3 to 6 months at least.

4. **Develop meaningful exit strategies ex-ante to ensure continuity beyond project end and manage local participants' expectations**. Especially where gains have been made in knowledge of rights and expectations that those rights will be respected, it is vitally important to continue to support individuals - especially when and where those rights are not respected. Ending a PVE project at precisely the moment when a participant experiences a moment of social injustice has the potential to boomerang her or him back to a position of greater susceptibility to alternative ideologies. In a similar vein, 18 months is rarely enough time to support lifelong behavior change. Planning of exit strategies could be conducted inclusively at the local level to think through individualized plans for how project benefits will be maintained after the funding stops and the staff leaves. This has the benefit not only of generating an exit plan that may actually be implemented, but also of properly managing local residents' expectations of continued benefits.

Appendices

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

Research question	Sub-questions	Methods of verification
Relevance		
Relation to key drivers and vulnerabilities to radicalization and VE in Kyrgyzstan		
- To what extent has the project been based on a solid understanding of the key drivers and vulnerabilities to radicalization and VE in Kyrgyzstan? - Has the project adapted to new insights on the key drivers of radicalisation and VE in Kyrgyzstan?	- What literature research has been conducted on the specific key drivers and vulnerabilities to radicalisation and VE, especially in relation to the role of women and girls? - How strong are the linkages between this analysis and the project design?	- Desk review
	- Was any analysis of local drivers for VE conducted via the project? - If conducted, did this localized VE analysis provide new insights into the relevance of the key drivers of radicalisation and VE identified by the project?	- Collect and analyse reports from localized VE analysis
	- Has additional research been conducted on the key drivers of VE and radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan since the onset of the project? - Does this new research provide new insights into the relevance of the key drivers of and vulnerabilities to radicalisation and VE identified by the project? - If there are new insights, has the project adapted to these new insights on the key drivers of radicalisation and VE in KG?	- Collect and analyse relevant studies - Interviews with project staff - Analysis by evaluation team
	- Do the identified drivers and vulnerabilities remain relevant and/or or have other drivers become more relevant?	- Interviews with project participants and staff - Analysis of relevant studies by evaluation team
Plausibility of Theory of Change		
- What was the project's expected theory of change and to what extent was this maintained?	- What was the initial Theory of Change (in the prodoc) and to what extent was this Theory of Change maintained or changed? - If it was adapted, how solid was the analysis that led to these changes?	- Analysis by the consultant
- What are the project's actually used theories of change, how plausible are they, and to what	- What were the actual Theories of Change (intervention logics) used in the project?	- Facilitated discussion during inception workshop

| extent are they based on evidence? | - How plausible are these ToCs?
   - Compare with research findings on the plausibility of these ToCs
   - What (anecdotal or systematic) evidence has the project been able to produce on these ToCs? | - Desk review
- Interviews with project staff, survey results, progress reports |

Geographical selection of target localities

Does the geographical selection of pilot areas effectively support the programme objectives?	- On the basis of what criteria were pilot areas selected? - To what extent are these criteria based on an assessment of the relative presence of vulnerabilities to and drivers for VE and/or the incidence of VE? - Were these criteria appropriate in view of the information available on the presence of key drivers / vulnerabilities to or indications of radicalization and VE? -	- Determine criteria from project reports & interviews - Desk-analysis to compare with key drivers and vulnerabilities - Desk analysis to assess publicly available data on geographical areas with the highest presence of radicalization and VE
	- Were the criteria for selecting target communities based on consultations with different stakeholders on the national and local levels?	- Desk review, interviews with project staff, implementing partners, and national and local authorities.
	- In the view of key stakeholders: are there other areas in the country where the drivers of VE were likely to be stronger? If so, where, and what is the evidence base to support their perspective(s)?	- Interviews with key stakeholders

Effectiveness

Results achieved

| - To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels (according to the results framework)? | - What project results have been achieved in terms of indicators and milestones in the results framework? | - Analysis by evaluation team |
| - What were the most successful strategies employed in both outcome areas, and why? | - Within Outcome 1, what were the strategies that proved to be the most effective? What were the factors that contributed to this relatively high effectiveness of these strategies?
- Within Outcome 2, what were the strategies that proved to be the most effective? What were the factors that contributed to this relatively high effectiveness of these strategies? | - Interviews from project staff, key stakeholders, national and local authorities, implementing partners, and beneficiaries |

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- What were the least successful strategies employed in both outcome areas, and why?	- Within Outcome 1, what were the strategies that proved to be the least effective? What were the factors that contributed to this relatively low effectiveness of these strategies? - Within Outcome 2, what were the strategies that proved to be the least effective? What were the factors that contributed to this relatively low effectiveness of these strategies?	- Interviews from project staff, key stakeholders, national and local authorities, implementing partners, and beneficiaries
- Per outcome, what were the main obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?	- What were the main obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome? - What was learnt along the way?	-
- Per outcome, what were the main lessons learnt and good practices adopted?	- What were the good practices adopted and what was learnt along the way? -	- Desk review and interviews -
- Has the project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative?	- Has the project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? -	- Desk review and interviews
-	-	-
Effectiveness of Theory of Change		

Proposed formulation of Outcome 1 ToC:
IF female religious leaders have more knowledge and awareness on women's rights and tolerance; on the presence and risks of radical groups; have strengthened critical thinking skills; feel more integrated into society and empowered to dialogue with duty bearers; and know how to recognize vulnerable individuals (women and girls) and to empower them and address their vulnerabilities:
 	
THEN girls and women in the communities will be more resilient to radicalisation and violent extremism:
 	
BECAUSE the trained female religious leaders will feel a stronger sense for and belonging to the community and will
	- As a result of their participation in this project, did female religious leaders have:
	   o More knowledge and awareness of women's rights and tolerance
	   o More knowledge and awareness of the presence and risks of radical groups
	   o Strengthened critical thinking skills
	   o A greater sense of integration into their communities
	   o An enhanced capacity to dialogue with duty bearers
	   o Increased capacity to recognize and empower vulnerable individuals (women and girls)
	- Did the trainings instil in female religious leaders a stronger sense of social responsibility for their respective communities?
	- Did the trained female religious leaders raise awareness among girls and women in their communities on the presence and risks of radical groups?
	- Did the trained female leaders proactively aim to reduce the vulnerabilities of the vulnerable groups?
	- Did the trained female leaders engage women and girls in community initiatives?
		-

therefore raise awareness among girls and women in the communities on the presence and risks of radical groups, and will proactively aim to reduce the vulnerabilities of the vulnerable groups including through engaging them in community initiatives.	o Was women's and girls' participation in community initiatives an effective means of reducing their vulnerability? o Were any reductions in women's and girls' vulnerability that were achieved through the community initiatives effective in reducing these women's and girls' propensities toward radicalization or VE? - Was the selection of training female religious leaders effective (or plausibly effective) as compared to other possible target trainee groups in terms of redressing the vulnerabilities of women and girls in their communities? - Did the efforts made by trained female religious leaders make (vulnerable) women and girls in their communities more resilient to radicalisation and VE?	
Catalytic effect to explore: BECAUSE: … increasing their access to public services.		
	- Did the trained female leaders increase women's and girls' access to public services?	
Proposed formulation of Outcome 1 Media Interventions ToC: IF media products related to the prevention of violent extremism – i.e. products that provide alternative narratives, question stereotypes related to religious and secular groups, and provide women and girls with positive leadership role-models – are produced and distributed to a wide audience: THEN girls and women in the communities will become more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism: BECAUSE the public – including girls and women – will better understand the risks and process of radicalization, there will more tolerance between religious and secular members of society, and sense of greater connection among women and girls of religious (and secular?) backgrounds to their communities and nation.	- Does the public – including women and girls – better understand the risks and process of radicalization? - Is there more tolerance between religious and secular members of society? - Is there a greater sense of connection among women and girls of religious (and secular?) backgrounds to their communities? To their nation? - Did the efforts made by trained female religious leaders make (vulnerable) women and girls in their communities more resilient to radicalisation and VE?	-

Proposed formulation of Outcome 2 ToC: IF law enforcement institutions, local authorities, legal aid providers and social workers engage women and girls at risk to VE in inclusive, sensitized dialogue; and provide professional and effective social services and legal support to (vulnerable?) girls and women: THEN girls and women in the communities will become more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism: BECAUSE women and girls will have better access to public services, will feel less discriminated against, and therefore have greater trust in the authorities (duty bearers) and connection to their communities.	- Were the methods used (trainings, training of trainers) to enhance the capacity of law enforcement institutions, local authorities, legal aid providers and social workers to provide inclusive, sensitized dialogue effective (in terms of increasing these professionals' inclusivity and sensitivity)? - Did law enforcement institutions, local authorities, legal aid providers and social workers provide professional and sensitive social services and legal support to women and girls in their communities as a result of this project? - Did the project interventions result in women and girls having better access to public services? - Did women and girls in the target communities feel less discriminated against by law enforcement institutions, local authorities, legal aid providers and social workers as a result of this project? - Did women and girls develop greater trust in the authorities (duty bearers) as a result of this project? - Did (at-risk / vulnerable) women and girls feel a greater connection to their communities as a result of this project's work with law enforcement institutions, local authorities, legal aid providers and social workers? - If the project interventions were successful in increasing (vulnerable) women's and girls' access to (effective, professional, and respectful) public services, was this increased access effective in making those women and girls more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism? (perceptions, anecdotal evidence, any other relevant indicators)	-
UNICEF: IF social workers, teachers and medical professionals are trained on state policy related to gender-, ethnicity-, and religious-sensitive approaches (i.e. awareness of moderate Islam) and on working effectively and collaboratively in addressing actual cases of requiring social protection: THEN women's and girls' resilience to radicalization and VE will be increased: BECAUSE their cases of social protection will be more effectively managed, they will not feel discriminated by the professionals and will instead feel safe and protected by them, which will increase their trust in state authorities.	- Did the trainings on gender-, ethnicity-, and religious-sensitive approaches improve the quality of case management by social workers, teachers and medical professionals? - Did the trainings on case management improve the quality of case management by social workers, teachers and medical professionals? - Were social protection cases of women and girls in the target communities managed more effectively as a result of this project's interventions? - Did women and girls in the target communities not feel (or feel less) discriminated against by social workers, teachers, and medical professionals as a result of this project's interventions? - Did women's trust in state authorities increase as result of their improved interactions with social workers, teachers, and medical professionals (if such interactions were improved)? - If the project interventions were successful in training social workers, teachers and medical professionals on gender-, ethnicity-, and religious-sensitive approaches and on effective case management *and* these trainings resulted in more effective case management and therefore greater	-

	trust in state authorities, were these outcomes effective in making women and girls more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism? (perceptions, anecdotal evidence, any other relevant indicators)	
UNODC: IF dialogue platforms are established and used effectively to collaboratively develop and implement joint plans on crime prevention and radicalization by police, local authorities and communities (including women and girls), *and* IF police officers apply to use gender and religious sensitive preventive approaches in policing and PVE, to provide more accurate information to the broader public about PVE, collaborate with communities in prevention of crime and radicalization THEN girls and women will be more resilient to radicalization and VE BECAUSE approaches of crime prevention and security are more people-centered, and the communities feel safer and better protected by police officers, they will be more willing to cooperate with police in the PVE.	- Were dialogue platforms established between law enforcement agencies, local authorities and communities (including women and girls) and used to discuss issues related to crime prevention (including radicalization)? - Are approaches to crime prevention and security more people-centred? - Do authorities acknowledge the role of communities in prevention of crime and radicalization? - If the dialogue platforms were established, were used effectively, resulted in more people-centered crime prevention, and raised awareness of the role of communities in the prevention of crime and radicalization, did these results make women and girls more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism? (perceptions, anecdotal evidence, any other relevant indicators)	-
UNDP: IF legal aid services of professional quality are delivered in a respectful manner and easily accessible to women and girls in the communities and women and girls are aware of and demanding these legal aid services: THEN: girls and women will be more resilient to radicalization and VE BECAUSE: rights are effectively protected in a sensitive way, their legal cases will be more effectively dealt with and they will not feel discriminated by these professionals, which will increase	- Were the legal cases of women and girls in the target communities more effectively dealt with as a result of the training(s) that lawyers received? - Did women and girls feel less discriminated against by lawyers? - Did the improved service provided by lawyers to women and girls (if the service was indeed improved) increase these women's and girls' trust in state authorities? - If the trained lawyers more effectively dealt with women's and girls' legal cases and, as a result, (vulnerable?) women and girls felt less discriminated against and more trust in state authorities, did this make women and girls more resilient to radicalization and violent extremism? (perceptions, anecdotal evidence, any other relevant indicators)	-

their trust in state authorities.		
Innovative and catalytic effects		
- How unique or innovative was the project?	- To what extent did the UN agencies design activities and strategies specifically for this project? To what extent do these activities differ from their regular approaches? -	- Interviews with UN agencies & implementing partners & national and local authorities
	- Are there any strategies employed by this project that has not been tested before?	- Interviews with other key informants with knowledge of previous programmes in KG, interviews with local and national authorities, interviews with communities
- Did the project lead to financial catalytic effects?	- Did the project lead to any specific non-PBF funding commitments? - If yes, from whom and how much? - If not, have any specific attempts been made to attract additional financial contributions to the project and beyond?	- Interviews with project staff & evidence of these funding commitments
- Did the project lead to non-financial catalytic effects?	- Did the project create favourable conditions for additional peacebuilding / PVE activities by Government/ other donors? - What were these, and how did the project contribute to these conditions?	- Interviews with project staff, interviews with key stakeholders (government and donors), and evidence
Efficiency		
- Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?	- Were the financial resources allocated sufficient to implementation of this project? - Were the human resources allocated sufficient to implementation of this project? - Was there sufficient technical expertise to support the design and implementation of this project	- Interviews with project staff & PBF secretariat, and IPs, interviews with government stakeholders and other key informants.
	- Were these resources used effectively and strategically?	- *Analysis to be conducted by the* - *consultant*
- To what extent does the management structure of the intervention support efficiency	- What management systems were in place within the RUNOs and how effectively did this function?	-

for programme implementation and achievement of results?	- What project-wide management system was in place and how effectively did this function? -	
Coordination and M&E		
Effectiveness of coordination mechanisms		
- What coordination mechanisms were in place between between the RUNOs and their key government stakeholders and how effective were they?	- What were the coordination mechanisms that were in place? - What was the planned schedule of coordination meetings, and was this reached? - Were the key issues discussed during these meetings, and were key decisions taken, documented and shared with relevant actors? - What were the main challenges in relation to the effective functioning of these coordination mechanisms? - Were the right actors involved in the coordination meetings, were there key actors missing that should have been involved? - To what extent were government authorities involved in the coordination meetings? Did they perceive their degree of involvement in coordination sufficient?	-
- What coordination mechanisms were in place between the different RUNOs and how effective were they?	- What were the coordination mechanisms that were intended and were they put in place? - What was the planned schedule of coordination meetings, and was this reached? - Were the key issues discussed during these meetings, and were key decisions taken, documented and shared with relevant actors? - What were the main challenges in relation to the effective functioning of these coordination mechanisms? - Were the right actors involved in the coordination meetings, were there key actors missing that should have been involved? - What is the expected role of lead agencies, and did they perform this role effectively?	-
- What coordination mechanisms were in place between the RUNOs and their implementing partners and how effective were they?	- What were the coordination mechanisms that were in place? - What was the planned schedule of coordination meetings, and was this reached? - Were the key issues discussed during these meetings, and were key decisions taken, documented and shared with relevant actors? - What were the main challenges in relation to the effective functioning of these coordination mechanisms? - Were the right actors involved in the coordination meetings, were there key actors missing that should have been involved?	-

Synergy between project components		
- To what extent was there synergy between the project components (and UN agencies)	- To what extent were work plans jointly developed / integrated with each other? Did this lead to a strategic sequencing of activities? - What deliberate attempts / efforts were made to ensure synergy, correct sequencing of activities, avoiding of duplication and mutual reinforcement between project activities under different outputs / by different UN agencies? - Did the activities under the different outputs mutually reinforce each other – as per the logic of the ToC? - In practice, were the activities sequenced in such a way that they would build on each other and reinforce each other? What are positive examples? What are negative examples, in which sequencing and coordination was sub-optimal?	-
Oversight		
What oversight mechanisms were in place and how effective were they?	- What oversight mechanisms were intended to be put in place and were they established? - How effective were the oversight mechanisms? Did the key actors obtain a sufficiently good overview of the project? - Were the government authorities sufficiently informed about the project design and implementation?	
Monitoring & Evaluation		
- To what extent are the monitoring mechanisms in place effective in measuring and informing management of the project performance and progress towards the targets?	- Is there a monitoring and evaluation plan, and does it address all key issues related to M&E? - Are the responsibilities for M&E clearly defined and have they been carried out as planned? - Is monitoring information collected and compiled on a systematic basis? - Is there one place where all monitoring data is collected, and is this accessible to all project managers?	
- To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision-making?	- How is the monitoring information distributed and shared? - Is monitoring information used for management action and decision-making? - Are there examples of the use of monitoring information leading to programming decisions?	
Learning and Adaptation		
- What systems were in place for learning and adaptation?	- To what extent was learning about what worked and did not work discussed and shared? - To what extent were adaptations made to the design and / or implementation of the project - To what extent was the decision-making process for adaptations made documented?	

- How well did the project respond to potential negative consequences / risk of doing harm?	- How well set up was the project to detect unintended consequences? - If there were unintended results, how quickly did the project staff or IPs notice these, and how did they communicate these? - What was done to address the negative unforeseen results? How swiftly did the project respond? - Were there any barriers to responding more quickly, and what were they?	
- Was risk analysis and mitigation sufficient?	- Was a risk analysis conducted and were risk mitigation strategies developed - Were the risk mitigation strategies effectively implemented? - Was the risk analysis and risk mitigation strategies regularly reflected on and updated?	
Sustainability		
- What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period after the project phase out?	- What results are expected to be sustained after the project completion? (knowledge, attitude, practices, systems) - What (anecdotal) evidence do we have that gives an indication that changes in knowledge, attitude, practice or systems will remain?	-
- How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, established partnerships with relevant stakeholders and developed national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?	- How has the national or local government demonstrated ownership/ commitment to the project results and activities? Give specific examples. - What systems put in place have been formally institutionalized (e.g. embedded into government and intended to become permanent? What is the degree of government commitment to these, and the likelihood that it will indeed be sustained?	-
- To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?	- Was an exit strategy developed at the onset of the project? Is this exit strategy plausibly lead to sustainability of the project results? - Was the exit strategy successfully implemented? - What efforts have been made during the project to ensure institutionalization / embedding of project results into existing systems? - What other efforts have been done to ensure the sustainability of the results?	-

Annex 2: Project Documentation Referred to for Evaluation

			Comments
		1. CORE DOCUMENTS	
		The project document	Joint with UNFPA coordination
		Framework for the baseline research	
		Brief info on project target communities	
		Baseline report (indicators)	
		Baseline report – analytical	
		Community profiling report by Center for Study of Religious Affairs	
		Project semiannual report Jan-June 2017	

		Project annual report November 2017	
		Project semiannual report June 2018	
		The project brochure	
		Joint monitoring plan	
		Analysis of first round of women leadership schools/WLS (monitoring report)	U N F P A
		Analysis of first round of PVE initiatives	
		Analysis of second round of WLSs	

	Success stories of women, project participants	
	Notes from the GPI coordination meetings	Joint with UNFPA coordination
	UNFPA field monitoring reports	UNFPA
	Short videos about the project results	UNFPA
	Report on GPI workshop "Conflict sensitivity: risks and opportunities" (with support from Peace Nexus)	Joint with UNFPA coordination
	Report on GPI workshop on reflection of the results of baseline assessment	
	Report on GPI workshop "ToC and interventions"	
	FTI Analytical Report	

	IRF results framework	
	Summary of GPI project activities	
	GPI project activities coordination	
	Brief summary of activities implemented by UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UNODC_From Jan 2017-to May 2018	
	GPI Annual Report divided per agency	
	Situational analysis	
	Report on completed work for the 1st tranche 2017	

	Report on completed work September 2017	
	Information on the baseline re Outcome 2 indicator (including questions from baseline research)	
	Statistical information on number of extremists crimes etc	
	2. IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS REPORTS	
	Annual report of FTI for 2017	UNFPA
	FTI report on GPI final conference	UNFPA
	Narrative report of FTI on 2 rounds of Women Leadership Schools	UNFPA
	CRRS (UNICEF) report on completed work for the 1 period of 2017	UNICEF

CRRS (UNICEF) report on completed work for Sept. 2017	UNICEF
Mutakallim, media and community dialogue Center for religious studies, Call center on theological and psychological consultations List of community initiatives	UNDP
FTI Report for annual program reporting on realization of yearly working plan	UNFPA
UNDP first report on lawyers assistance	UNDP
UNDP second report on lawyers assistance	UNDP
UNDP LoP for lawyers' trainings	UNDP
UNDP ToR for MTK on PVE Media Aug 07	UNDP
UNDP ToR for MTK on Local PVE Initiatives March 14	UNDP

	3. HANDOUTS, MATERIALS, VIDEOS	
	Training module	UNDP
	PVE methodological recommendations report (inception report)	UNDP
	Media products (links to Video, TV shows and Articles produced)	UNDP

	PVE Handbook for women	UNDP
	Table of legal aid support provided (together with the MinJust)	UNDP
	Training module of Women Leadership School	UNFPA
	Training module to increase the potential of local authorities	UNICEF
	Training module program	UNICEF
	Training module report	UNICEF
	Training module guidelines	UNICEF

	Content of PVE e-course for police	UNODC
	Module for interior affairs organs	UNODC
	Otyncha individual interview questionnaire	
	Women and girls focus group interview questionnaire	
	Report UNODC	
	Situation analysis UNODC	
	Report on lawyer training	
	Governmental politics in regards to religion	
	Kyrgyzstan and Islam	

Annex 3: Sources Cited

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