Countering Violent Extremism through Education

Hedayah

WITH THE LAUNCH of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), "an international forum of 29 countries and the European Union (EU) with an overarching mission of reducing the vulnerability of people worldwide to terrorism" in September 2011, the Members and the wider international community expressed the need for the establishment of a center dedicated to countering violent extremism (CVE) independently and multilaterally.

As one of the co-chairs of the CVE Working Group during this ministerial-level launch in New York, the U.A.E. offered to host the first-ever International Center of Excellence for CVE. In December 2012, the idea came to life with the inauguration of Hedayah in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. Hedayah's location allowed it to reflect a neutral, apolitical and non-ideological center welcoming diverse perspectives in addressing the issue of violent extremism in all of its forms and manifestations.

Hedayah is seen as thought leader in the field of CVE through its dialogue and communications, capacity building programs, and research and analysis departments. It offers long-term, sustainable solutions through its areas of expertise, holistic CVE programs, and collaborative efforts with local partners, practitioners and subject matter experts.

As part of the follow-up action plan to the Abu Dhabi Memorandum on Good Practices for Education and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), Hedayah continues its efforts to further understand and strengthen the relationship between education and CVE. There are opportunities to leverage and include both formal and informal education in CVE strategies and programs to prevent radicalization leading to violent extremism (RLVE) and build resilience among communities most vulnerable to violent extremism.

Hedayah takes on opportunities to leverage and include both formal and informal education in CVE strategies. To stay up-to-date with the most recent research in CVE, it regularly engages with world-renowned CVE partners and experts by participating in various activities, including conferences, workshops and trainings.

Furthermore, Hedayah aims to expand the CVE and Education Program through tailored capacity-building activities for a variety of education practitioners in several regions. Notably, Hedayah developed an activities' guide for education practitioners, teachers and informal educators to include preventive approaches in school curricula and informal settings. It also seeks to investigate the most successful approaches in creating an impact on the ground through robust monitoring and evaluation of this program.

In recognition of the multi-faceted solutions to violent extremism, it is crucial to ensure the threat is approached in a comprehensive manner. To do this, government entities must share the burden of countering violent extremism with community actors. Accordingly, Hedayah prioritizes community engagement with multiple actors among its key expertise. Existing CVE efforts have begun to integrate perspectives of various local actors including youth, gender, families, police officers, community and religious leaders. Under community engagement, this also includes building the capacities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, semi-government organizations and international organizations to effectively implement CVE activities.

Hedayah focuses on taking these initiatives further by ensuring that local actors and practitioners are well equipped with the tools and knowledge through a variety of trainings and funding opportunities. It works to develop specific and tailored capacity building curricula to guide a wide range of practitioners, including social workers and law enforcement agencies in supporting families through the CVE-cycle.

For example, Hedayah engages with Police Academies in priority countries to embed culturally-literate CVE approaches into their training curricula. This program offers a considered process of curriculum development, aided by a train-the-trainers approach. Importantly, this offers a sustainable alternative to "one off" international trainings for on the ground police officers.[1]

Hedayah also conducts overarching programs that touch on various elements of its expertise. These include programs, such as the STRIVE Global Program, as well as activities, such as the Annual International CVE Research Conference.

Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism

The Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (strive) Global program was developed in 2015 by Hedayah and the EU and launched in May 2015. It concluded in May 2021.[2]

The overall purpose of strive is to build the capacity of state and non-state actors to effectively challenge radicalization and recruitment to terrorism while continuing to respect human rights and international law. Further objectives include the promotion of non-coercive responses to terrorism, considering that traditional coercive responses can be ineffective or even counter-productive, and the widening of the pool of people involved in cve by raising the awareness of state and non-state actors and building the capacity of credible voices within local communities. Hedayah's program is based on four different strands and focusses on eleven target countries, which were defined through twelve preliminary scoping missions on the ground, and where credible civil society organizations (csos) with access to key target groups were identified.

Four Strands

Strand Number One: Development of a culturally literate cve curriculum

Search for Common Ground (sfcg) and Hedayah jointly developed this curriculum. The purpose of this cve curriculum is to raise awareness on collaborative cve approaches, while enabling and training government officials and csos to be better equipped to prevent and counter violent extremism through ten modules, ten webinars, seventeen handouts and twenty-four videos. These ten modules introduce the field of cve, help explain the drivers of violent extremism in a contextualized manner focusing on the mena region and Central Asia, and offer guidance on how to design, implement and monitor constructive responses to violent extremism. It is available in English, Arabic, and Russian.[3] This curriculum can also be taught at a country-level, as Hedayah previously did in Turkmenistan, where a total of thirty government officials have been trained on two occasions.

Strand Number Two: Empowerment of Civil Society Organizations

This strand focuses on raising the awareness of and building support for cve among csos and public officials and helping csos design, implement,

monitor, and fund localized projects on CVE. Hedayah provides constant capacity-building to the grantees. This starts from the inception phase and the proposal writing and goes until the end of the project implementation. This not only gives the grantees the opportunity for developing actions on CVE, but also helps them improve their project management skills and prepare them for future projects in this field. The same logic of intervention is also true for strands three and four.

Csos are encouraged to adapt existing materials on the topic to their local context where possible. The goal is to develop approaches that have a demonstrable impact on the threat posed by radicalization and recruitment to terrorism and to build the capacities and reinforce the role of csos in CVE, while encouraging collaborative approaches between csos and governments. To achieve this, interventions that are embedded in the national CVE strategy are encouraged, in order to promote cooperation between csos and governmental agencies. To ensure a participatory approach, csos also request supporting letters from local authorities or sign memoranda of understanding with them. Where possible, Hedayah also tries to build synergies between csos of different countries to increase their impact and for them to share their expertise and material. The final impact of the projects is measured through baseline and end-line reports. In total, the STRIVE Global program has already concluded seven different projects throughout the target countries and is currently implementing eleven more projects.

Strand Number Three: Improvement of media coverage

The purpose of this strand is to address the challenge of media coverage on terrorism, as well as foster the capacity of state and media actors, in order to improve the quality of reporting, build the capacity of recognizing fake news and conspiracy theories, and reduce the use of hate speech and violations of privacy in the media. Furthermore, a voluntary code of conduct suitable for different locations has been developed by Hedayah. In this strand, Hedayah is currently supporting the implementation of seven journalism projects in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia, Georgia, Tajikistan, and Jordan. To verify the outcomes and ensure the quality of the projects from the different strands, Hedayah has so far concluded twelve monitoring missions on the ground, adding to the monitoring of the projects done online on a monthly basis.

Strand Number Four: Development of research resources

The goal of this final strand is to develop resources that provide an evidence base for CVE interventions. For this, the STRIVE Global program has already concluded nine research projects and is currently implementing four more. Through this program Hedayah has also elaborated two research pieces on the impact of journalism on violent extremism. Furthermore, Hedayah and the Institute of Strategic Dialogue created a global CVE web portal, The Counter Extremism Hub, to collate CVE publications, as available per country. Its goal is to bring together all relevant actors working in the field of CVE, providing an opportunity for practitioners, researchers, governments, and policymakers to showcase their work, practices, and knowledge. Furthermore, users can create their own profiles and connect with other individuals and organizations through the Hub's global directory and engage in forum discussions on related topics. The website already contains around 2,000 resources in its library.[4]

Finally, the STRIVE Global program already resulted in some unexpected and positive outcomes. SFCG used the CVE curriculum developed under strand one in Iraq and Guinea, where it trained a total of four hundred eighty-nine local actors. A local CSO also further adapted the curriculum to the local context of Georgia. There have also been synergies created between governments of different countries, as shown by the visit of an official government delegation of Turkmenistan to Albania. Furthermore, local governments or international organizations have also adopted several documents developed by CSOs, such as in the case of a CSO from Kyrgyzstan that developed a media literacy curriculum which the Krygyz government is now using to conduct media literacy trainings at schools. Another example is in the case of a CSO from North Macedonia that developed a referral mechanism which the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in the country are now using.

Throughout the four different strands, in total thirty-six organizations have been supported through this program. The STRIVE Global program selected these organizations through seven different calls for proposals, where innovative or original ideas were especially valued, as well as through direct awards. The geographic focus is on the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia), Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan), the MENA region (Jordan), the

South Caucasus (Georgia), and Turkey, which have been defined as target regions for this program.

Annual International CVE Research Conference

The Annual International CVE Research Conference convenes CVE researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share the most current, up-to-date research and analysis of CVE on an international scale, and provides a platform for network members to meet and share good practices on drivers of radicalization and effective solutions. It provides a platform for the latest, cutting-edge CVE research, and to facilitate a discussion around CVE policy, programming and research.[5]

Education for Preventing Violent Extremism (EPVE)[6]

Education and the education sector can contribute to PVE efforts by:

- Mitigating feelings of isolation or exclusion by establishing positive connections between students' own worlds and the worlds of others, building respect for diversity and providing young people with the skills to cooperate based on shared interests and commonalities and/or to negotiate or mediate differences;
- Promoting media and information literacy skills that enable students to challenge ideologies that foster feelings of division and difference, including prejudice, hate speech and violent extremist messages. By incorporating concepts of acceptance, multi-culturalism, diversity, and civic responsibility, into as much of the existing curriculum, it is possible to make these concepts pervasive and normal, rather than an effort to add them as additions to the regular learning agenda;
- Providing alternatives to violence and violent extremism by cultivating attitudes and values that encourage students to participate as active citizens in their communities, their nations, regionally and globally to address challenges in a nonviolent manner;
- Facilitating intercultural exchanges and encouraging students to feel anchored in their own beliefs and practices. Educational institutions can be a safe space where students feel confident to share and debate their beliefs with others;

- Equipping students with the skills, knowledge and resources necessary to develop a sense of civic responsibility and to positively engage with institutions and organizations and are empowered to make decisions related to their lives and communities;
- Raising awareness among educators and school communities about violent extremism, and, where appropriate, equipping them with relevant tools for responding to violent extremism, such as being able to properly identify those who may be most vulnerable or susceptible to violent extremist ideologies;
- Structuring education systems and classrooms appropriately to prevent situations in which educational institutions inadvertently reinforces differences or stigmatizes students.

Working Paper[7]

The Working Group for "Education for Preventing Violent Extremism" (EPVE)[8] led by Hedayah under the umbrella of the Education for Shared Societies (E4SS) initiative developed a working paper on preventing violent extremism (PVE). It presents key recommendations, challenges, actionable solutions, and practical examples for policymakers to implement appropriate educational approaches to PVE in the formal education setting. It also seeks to integrate informal education, and suggests ways in which the formal education sector and informal education overlap with respect to EPVE.

It should be noted that as part of the E4SS initiative, two other Working Groups were formed that tackled issues related to education in emergency situations (e.g., refugee camps and displacement), and education as it relates to digital resilience. In this respect, the present policy paper has a "light touch" on these issues, although it should be stressed that EPVE should be part and parcel of these subjects in their contributions to building Shared Societies.

This paper is premised on the idea that access to quality education for all students, regardless of gender, culture, faith, nationality or ethnicity, is the starting point for PVE. However, access to quality education alone is not sufficient for PVE—school systems that do not provide quality education can also be counter-productive [and support] violent extremism [as a result]. Examples include school systems that may encourage classroom discrimination or provide unequal access to education based on ethnicity or religion lines, which could further polarize societies and fuel violent extremism.

At the same time, education can be a positive tool to build resilience against violent extremism, especially if the quality education incorporates appropriate pedagogies and teaching approaches that build global competencies in students that are not only good for PVE, but are also supportive of traits of global citizens and qualities employers are looking for in the job market. Appropriate quality education has the potential to tackle underlying factors of violent extremism, including feelings of exclusion, discrimination, lack of recognition of equal rights, prejudices towards diversity. In addition, quality education can also shape attitudes and behaviors that are either more susceptible towards violence, or more resilient against it. In this regard, EPVE requires the promotion and nurturing from an early age of a combination of values that are at the core of this initiative—building Shared Societies.

EPVE is a multi-stakeholder approach and involves engagement with different fields of practices, including development, human rights, peacebuilding, and counterterrorism. EPVE can contribute to and help support the implementation of a number of regional and international frameworks and existing programs that have emerged from these different areas. For example, EPVE supports UNESCO's work, which includes providing assistance to states in shaping their PVE policies and recently released a guide on PVE through education.[9] UNESCO is also working with UNODC on an Education for Justice (E4J) initiative to prevent crime and promote a culture of lawfulness through education activities designed for primary, second, and tertiary levels, which includes a module series on terrorism and violent extremism.[10] Within the development sector, EPVE supports Goal 4 on providing quality education and Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, including equal access to justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[11]

Within the UN counterterrorism architecture, the Secretary General's Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), identifies the education sector as a key stakeholder in PVE strategies and action plans and Security Council Resolutions such as UNSCR 2250 (2015) closely link security solutions to youth and education. Additionally, The Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) recognized education as playing a vital role in CVE through its framework document the *Abu Dhabi Memorandum on Good Practices for Education and Countering Violent Extremism* and subsequent *Abu Dhabi Plan of Action*[12] on the subject. Moreover, the

Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) supported the adoption of the *Manifesto for Education - Empowering Educators and Schools*, endorsed by EU education ministries in 2015.[13]

Despite increased attention to the subject by multiple stakeholders, much work is still needed to determine what is working and what is not working in the overlap between education and PVE. Moreover, senior policymakers and world leaders need to be made aware of how EPVE approaches, strategies, and policies can be implemented in a practical way, while avoiding instrumentalization of the education sector and adhering to "do no harm" principles. This paper seeks to outline several of these strategies through five key recommendations, along with challenges and potential solutions to overcome those challenges.

A guiding principle in the implementation of these recommendations is that they should not be considered universal, but rather guidelines that should be tailored to fit local needs and contexts. In other words, while the recommendations in this paper are broad, implementation will manifest differently across countries and contexts. Care should be taken to ensure that EPVE is implemented in a way that is appropriate for the communities it is influencing, and that policies and programmes follow relevant international standards, such as those related to human rights and education. Recognizing the sensitivity around the language of "preventing violent extremism," the approaches described in this paper may not be (and sometimes should not be) labelled as "PVE," but can utilize less controversial language, such as reinforcing values of Shared Societies.

Recommendation 1

Incorporate, where appropriate, EPVE approaches into policy, legislation, funding mechanisms, and institutional structures.

Challenges: Actors within the education and development sectors do not always view PVE as their responsibility or priority and are concerned about instrumentalizing, securitizing, or stigmatizing the education system for national security or intelligence purposes. At the same time, it is often a challenge to convince counterterrorism policymakers and practitioners to invest in long-term solutions to prevent violent extremism, as they usually prefer short-term, kinetic and military responses. While these approaches may achieve measurable results in the short-term, the underlying factors contributing to an enabling environment for radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism are often missed.

Given this complexity, there is often a lack of sufficient funding for educational approaches to PVE from any appropriate ministry or agency. In addition, while there is a small body of research supporting EPVE approaches, long-term and longitudinal studies evaluating the effectiveness of approaches on attitudes and behavior are lacking, making it even more difficult to justify to national and international donors that funding these activities has the intended effect on building resilient communities and reducing violent extremism.

Solutions: It is important at the outset that all sectors involved define their own roles and limits to educational approaches to preventing violent extremism. Senior change-makers, such as those involved in WLA-CdM [World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid Members], can advocate for EPVE approaches to be integrated across the education sector. This includes supporting appropriate legislative bodies to make necessary changes, encouraging, where appropriate, the changing of curriculum requirements at the national level, and supporting and advising ministries of education interested in implementing EPVE. At the same time, those bodies developing PVE strategies at the national level (typically ministries of interior, foreign affairs and justice) should include and incorporate a diversity of actors from the education sector in the development process.

In addition, there is a pressing need to collect data, as well as present sufficient data to policymakers to emphasize the importance of, and potential positive impact of, EPVE approaches both inside and outside the classroom. This means that the organizations working on EPVE need to prioritize the collection of appropriate data and research to support their case to policymakers.

EPVE in the classroom could involve investments in reforms to textbooks and national curriculum and appropriate training and resources to be provided to teachers and teacher-trainers. Funding for these activities could come from the educational ministries, but also from the development or counter-terrorism sector that may be interested in supporting longer term goals of preventing violent extremism.

Practical Examples:
- Evaluate current education policies to see if and how EPVE can fit into existing structures;

- Establish working groups between the education sector, development and security institutions to discuss EPVE;
- Establish regular channels of communication between EPVE actors, including within the education sector;
- Mapping existing initiatives on EPVE and collecting good practices;
- Write policy papers on the importance of getting the education sector involved in EPVE approaches where needed;
- Draft new education policies to include EPVE approaches in the national level curriculum;
- Fund research and evaluation of EPVE programs to investigate the effects of EPVE in the long term;
- Present research and evaluation of EPVE programs to skeptical policymakers in the education, development and/or counterterrorism sectors;
- Fund programs to evaluate and revise teaching materials with an EPVE lens at the national level.

Recommendation 2

Promote education that emphasizes open-mindedness, inclusiveness, and respect and understanding of different religions, cultures, ethnicities and other identities.

Challenges: On one hand, each nation seeks to reinforce their own values and culture as unique and different than others through their education system. This means that education can become highly politicized, and dependent on the values and culture of the society at the time. This is also important in creating a sense of national identity and inclusion within a society—and the lack of a strong national identity or feeling excluded from the national identity can be something that violent extremist groups prey upon for recruitment purposes. On the other hand, there are also benefits to supporting curriculum that emphasizes global citizenship—breaking down national boundaries and supporting inclusive approaches to all nationalities, ethnicities, religions, cultures and genders. This is where the tension lies—between being a citizen at the local, national and global levels.

In terms of the content taught in schools and present in textbooks, this recommendation is also difficult to carry out. Countries have different understandings of diversity based on their own context. Diversity can be physical or cultural—in one country, religious differences may be core to

individual identities, whereas in another country, ethnic heritage may be more important. Sometimes it is the omission of diverse perspectives that contributes to someone feeling excluded – for example, when the curriculum omits major historical events that are highly relevant to a portion of students (even those in the minority). Thus, the representation of diversity in textbooks and lesson plans will manifest differently as it applies to each context.

Moreover, private or non-formal educational institutions, such as religious institutions, may not be integrated into the national education system. In these circumstances, different policy requirements may be needed to advocate for certain pedagogies relevant for EPVE, or to bring private educational institutions into the conversation.

In addition, lessons to equip young people with intercultural understanding are sometimes perceived to be taking up classroom time at the expense of other core skills, such as reading and writing. Subjects where EPVE approaches are easily integrated, such as history or social studies, are also not always prioritized by teachers and parents, and math and science may be seen as more important in a students' educational process.

Solutions: Encourage, where appropriate, national curriculum reforms and educational programs that reinforce concepts of global citizenship that emphasize diversity, connect students' worlds to the worlds of others, build on shared interests and commonalities, and negotiate or mediate differences. Diversity here means respect towards and acceptance of other values, cultures and religions. Each context and country may have issues and tensions that are divisive in their communities, and textbooks and content of curricula should take care not to divide societies further through examples given or conspicuously omitted in the classroom. Education can also be a space to discuss contentious issues, which if unresolved, can contribute to underlying factors leading to radicalization to violent extremism such as marginalization/discrimination, racism, personal frustrations and personal or community failures. Appropriate education can enhance students' coping strategies, encourage personal development, provide job orientation, include civic education and encourage young people to take action. All of these approaches can be integrated into national and local curriculum in ways that are appropriate to the ages and development of the child.

Where private institutions do not follow national curriculum, or when local authorities have more control over the curriculum development than

national governments, national ministries of education should take care to raise awareness of EPVE approaches, their benefits, and options of steps that can be taken to implement EPVE in the classroom. Generating buy-in and enthusiasm from private stakeholders is important to ensuring these approaches reach educational institutions of all varieties.

Finally, when subjects pertaining to EPVE are not highly valued by teachers and parents, a case needs to be made for how the skills and values attributed to EPVE approaches are vital components of education that shapes a student into a productive and valuable member of the national society and as a global citizen.

Practical Examples:
- Include requirements and facilitate trainings for teachers to implement teaching pedagogies that encourage open-mindedness, critical thinking, and self-reflection;
- Evaluate teachers based on the pedagogies listed above;
- Encourage teachers to include discussions around contentious issues to enhance students coping skills;
- Provide training for teachers on how to facilitate classroom dialogue;
- Evaluate teachers on their facilitation methods;
- Prioritize changes to textbooks and curriculum that emphasize diversity, for example:
    ◊ Recognize responsibility for past negative government influences in history textbooks (e.g. slave trade or colonization), and point out consequences on current affairs;
    ◊ Avoid underlying misogyny in textbook language, as this is sometimes the method utilized by VE groups;
    ◊ Include diverse voices in curriculum—for example authors contributing to literature from a migrant background;
    ◊ Include field trips and excursions where students experience different culture, food, religion, or art.

Recommendation 3
Put students' needs at the center of any intervention for preventing violent extremism, and avoid securitizing youth and students.

Challenges: Students can be susceptible to many influences—both positive and negative—and EPVE approaches should avoid the underlying assumption that all students are susceptible to radicalization leading to violent extremism. Approaching education through the lens of PVE can potentially create bias amongst teachers towards their students, or raise their concerns of radicalization where there may not yet be a concern.

Early warning mechanisms where teachers detect potentially radicalized students can be harmful if not implemented appropriately. This can lead to stigmatization of students, and possibly further alienation that could exacerbate the radicalization process or lead to other adverse outcomes, such as withdrawal from school. Teachers identifying potential warning signs should take care that their actions do not contribute to the radicalization process, but instead are focussed on protecting the student and the community from harm.

Educational practices that separate students from different cultural backgrounds can be harmful if they perpetuate segregation between communities or enhance feelings of mistrust. For example, separation due to language competency for extended periods of time could be problematic if language is also linked to ethnic, cultural or religious disputes.

Solutions: A do-no-harm approach should be at the core of any strategy to leverage educational institutions to prevent violent extremism. This can be done by contextualizing violent extremism at a local level, and situating violent extremism as one subject to address within the needs of the community or school. EPVE approaches can help build resilience against violent extremism, among other vulnerabilities leading to deviant behavior.

This may include combating gang culture or gun culture in the community, preventing students' from being involved in organized crime or drug trafficking, or drawing specific attention to domestic abuse, gender-based violence or sexual violence in the community.

EPVE approaches also support building stronger, more effective national and global citizens with skills and competencies that can be harnessed for positive change. These include competencies of civic responsibility and civic engagement. Involving students in their own educational processes, and encouraging peer-to-peer learning opportunities can also support building more resilient students and constructive classrooms. This may mean providing opportunities for students to think creatively on how they can take action and contribute to positive change in their communities in a construc-

tive and non-violent way, or for addressing differences and disagreements through a lens of complexity rather than conflict.

For those schools where violent extremism is a significant problem, early warning mechanisms for teachers should be accompanied by sufficient training for teachers to detect potential warning signs, as well as appropriate solutions—both within and outside the school structure—for the teacher to follow if he/she identifies any of these signs.

Emphasizing the student-focused approach, the early warning mechanisms should provide clear guidance for the teacher on how to first intervene within the school system (e.g., referring to a school counselor, [talking] to the parents) before securitizing the situation and reporting to local authorities.

Integrated school systems that still provide options to address students' different learning needs, rather than segregated learning systems, have been shown to be more effective in building tolerant, open societies. For example, in a community where ethnic divisions are coupled with linguistic differences, an integrated schooling system with adequate support to address language inadequacies can support more tolerant communities as well as encourage students to apply newly acquired linguistic skills faster. Where integrated schooling systems are not possible, solutions can also be made in the informal sector—bringing together divided communities in after school activities.

Practical Examples:
- Train teachers and school counsellors to identify "signs of vulnerability" to deviant behavior in the classroom and on how to develop effective EPVE responses;
- Develop an in-school response to vulnerabilities through social and psychological support from teachers, counsellors and parents;
- Establish protocol for reporting serious vulnerabilities of students through appropriate channels, both within and outside the school;
- Where possible, involve students in the discussion around what topics related to EPVE of relevance to them—applying the "do no harm" principle in this regard;
- Re-structure schooling systems to avoid segregating communities (e.g., by ethnicity or religion).

Recommendation 4

Work with teachers to change the culture of schools and education systems incorporate interactive learning styles and pedagogies conducive to building resilient students, rather than rote learning styles.

Challenges: Teachers may see EPVE activities in the classroom as an "additional burden" to implement, on top of the national curriculum they have to teach.

They may feel the pressure to meet certain local, regional or national standards for their students' scores, and may be punished for their students not achieving these scores. Teachers may not feel that PVE is their priority or responsibility, or that addressing PVE-related issues is too high of a risk.

Teachers may experience rhetoric in the classroom that encourages conflict or hate speech. In some circumstances, teachers may be directly facing narratives of violent extremist and terrorist groups in the classroom. However, teachers may be able to play a role in refuting the ideology and narratives of violent extremism or undermining misinformation of terrorist groups, but they may not feel adequately prepared to address those narratives. This may particularly be the case when faced with teaching on the subject of religion, or when presented with ideological arguments about which they are not familiar.

Teachers may also face other challenges in the classroom, such as large classroom sizes, students of different ethnic, cultural or linguistic backgrounds, or even direct threats of violence or violent extremism in their communities. They may lack basic resources for teaching such as desks, writing utensils, computers, access to internet, or textbooks. They also may face inadequate training, low or inconsistent pay, or lack of respect for their profession from the community.

Teachers may also feel a sense of hopelessness or disempowerment, and the sense that they do not have control over what happens both inside and outside the classroom. All of these challenges may be de-motivating for teachers to switch their teaching styles away from rote learning to more interactive approaches, partially because they are looking for "quick fixes" to broader, structural problems.

Solutions: There are four main elements critical to changing the culture of schools to incorporate EPVE:

1. Raising awareness of the need for EPVE in the classroom amongst educators,

2. Revising national curricula and textbooks,

3. Training teachers on interactive pedagogies for EPVE, and

4. Incorporating EPVE measures into educational evaluation frameworks.

Raising awareness of EPVE approaches should emphasize that how a student learns is just as important as what a student learns. Research has shown that certain teaching methods, such as those that incorporate social and emotional learning strategies, have a positive effect on school performance (including standardized tests)[14] as well as can contribute to PVE.[15] There are also studies that have shown that alternative techniques applied in a school setting, such as mindfulness, can help reduce school violence, assist students in overcoming trauma, and increase students' abilities to manage anger and stress.[16]

EPVE approaches could also examine national curricula, to include textbooks, to ensure that it at very least does not exacerbate community grievances or conflict, but at best teaches global competencies in students. Recommendations could then be made on how to improve or reform these curricula. Additional supplementary resources, including practical suggestions of EPVE-related activities, may also be needed to ensure that appropriate EPVE activities are integrated and implemented in the classroom. It may also be useful to create networks of educators, both within and outside a country, that are working on implementing EPVE approaches to share resources and knowledge.

Teachers who incorporate EPVE approaches should be appropriately trained. Some effective teaching approaches for EPVE include those that encourage open-mindedness, discourage black-and-white thinking, teach respect for diversity and inclusiveness, build independent identities for individuals as well as respectful approaches to other identities and the capacity to navigate differences productively, encourage classrooms to be safe spaces for dialogue, and cultivate skills of critical thinking and critical assessment of materials. Examples of existing teaching approaches may be in alignment with, for example, "Rights Respecting Schools" programs encouraged by UNICEF, or through implementing Global Citizenship Education (GCED). Pedagogies that incorporate games and activities that are student-led are often the most effective. These pedagogies involve a shift in approach to the classroom—from the teacher as a "dictator" with all the answers, to the

teacher as a "facilitator" that guides students towards finding out answers on their own. Teachers are often not taught facilitation methods or social and emotional learning techniques in their basic training, but ongoing teacher education can help to support the lack of skills.

In addition to training on skills related to EPVE, teachers may also be trained on knowledge of how to combat ideologies related to violent extremism that may manifest in the classroom. This may include methods to counter a range of potentially violent language, including hate speech and terrorist propaganda. Teachers may also be encouraged to leverage local connections to experts, such as religious leaders, who can address difficult topics with their students as guest lecturers or on field trips outside the school.

From the national policy level, it is also important to integrate EPVE measures into the evaluation of teachers themselves, as well as in the evaluation of students. If teachers are expected to cultivate competencies in their students, there needs to be some level of accountability (and rewards) for leveraging methodologies that build those competencies. At the same time, teachers should be rewarded for integrating more interactive styles into their classroom learning. Thus, any effective policy on EPVE at the national level needs to include a relevant and regular feedback system from schools to the policy level, and set measurable goals for how changes to the curricula to support EPVE have been achieved.

Practical Examples:
- Encourage teaching styles that are interactive and activity-based;
- Revise national curricula and textbooks to include active learning styles;
- Provide practical resources for teachers (including activities) that incorporate EPVE styles;
- Create networks of teachers, nationally and internationally, that are working on EPVE to enable peer-to-peer capacity-building and sharing of knowledge and techniques;
- Include requirements for teachers on utilizing social and emotional learning techniques;
- Provide training for teachers on social and emotional learning;
- Evaluate teachers based on social and emotional learning techniques;

- Provide training and resources for teachers (when contextually relevant) to counter the messages and ideologies of violent extremist groups (to include countering hate speech).

Recommendation 5

Connect to and involve the broader community, particularly civil society, in EPVE, where contextually relevant and possible.

Challenges: The broader community may not be invested in efforts to prevent violent extremism, or may promote values that are counterproductive to building resilient students. For example, there may not be community support for girls' education, or even negative criticism of the existence of a girls' school; or hateful narratives against immigration or refugee populations may prevail in a particular setting.

Schools may also be physically separated from the community, remote or isolated. For example, in rural settings, students may need to travel far from their homes to access education—meaning the involvement of parents or other community members in educational activities may be more challenging.

Discussion of difficult topics in the classroom can also be challenging—teachers may feel they do not know enough, or do not have sufficient resources to open certain topics—and may close down the discussion of those issues that may be grievances in the community (push factors).

The local community itself, particularly the job market, may not feel education is preparing employable students, or students may not feel they are employable after schooling. Notably, in some cases, access to higher education in combination with not sufficient jobs for that education level can lead to more frustrations and grievances that are preyed upon by violent extremist groups.

Solutions: Where relevant and possible, schools should involve parents and the local community in prevention efforts. It is important that skills and knowledge leading to more resilient students are reinforced also at home. Parents can also help to aide teachers in identifying vulnerabilities in their children, and provide suggestions for solutions for the education system.

The community can be leveraged in a number of ways. In cases where teachers may not feel comfortable discussing certain topics, they should be able to bring in verified experts, practitioners, or others (such as survivors and formers) who can speak to their students. In cases where religion is

misrepresented and misinterpreted and used as a justification to perpetrate terrorist and violent acts, credible religious leaders and actors can play an influential role in reinforcing ideals of human rights and respect for all. Moreover, students can visit local sites, such as memorials of victims of terrorism, as a way to trigger a conversation around the subject (if contextually relevant).

Extracurricular activities such as sports, arts, culture programs can also be leveraged to incorporate resilience-building measures that are also part of the formal education system. For example, coaches can be taught social and emotional learning strategies that can be applied in the informal setting of teaching a sport, which is naturally more interactive.

Culture and arts programs can emphasize diversity and respect for others, while cultivating knowledge about subjects that are supplemental to what is being taught in schools.

Finally, the private sector can be leveraged with respect to ensuring [that] appropriate jobs are available on the market based on skill level; offering vocational training and life skills as part of the formal education process or extracurricular activities; and investing in building students' competencies that match with global citizenship and employability.

Practical Examples:
- Set up meetings between parents and teachers to explain new teaching methods related to EPVE;
- Inform and communicate with parents on EPVE approaches;
- Involve outside experts (invite as guests) in classroom teaching, especially when teachers are not comfortable addressing specific topics;
- Visit a variety of local religious sites to show diversity and encourage questions about other religions;
- Encourage EPVE approaches with religious institutions that may support education;
- Train coaches on social and emotional learning techniques;
- Create clubs that link the private sector to secondary schools where unemployment is a major risk for radicalization and recruitment;
- Involve the private sector in decision-making around cultivating certain skills in students.

Endnotes

1 Community Engagement, www.hedayahcenter.org/expertise/community-engagement/.

2 David Ludescher, STRIVE Global program, www.hedayahcenter.org/media-center/latest-news/strive-global-in-focus-hedayah-presents-the-strive-global-program/.

3 CVE Training Curriculum – The MENA Edition (www.hedayahcenter.org/resources/interactive_cve_apps/cve-training-curriculum-the-mena-edition/), CVE Training Curriculum – The Central Asian Edition (www.hedayahcenter.org/resources/interactive_cve_apps/cve-training-curriculum-the-central-asian-edition/).

4 The Counter Extremism Hub, https://counterextremismhub.org/login/?redirect_to=%2F.

5 Annual International CVE Research Conference, www.hedayahcenter.org/resources/interactive_cve_apps/annual-international-cve-research-conference/

6 "Education for Preventing Violent Extremism (EPVE): Working Group Paper," www.hedayahcenter.org/resources/reports_and_publications/education-for-preventing-violent-extremism-epve-working-group-paper/.

7 This section is drawn from "Education for Preventing Violent Extremism" (EPVE), ibid.

8 The working group was led by Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism. Working Group members: ICAN, Kofi Annan Foundation, Anna Lindh Foundation, Global Center on Cooperative Security, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, Extremely Together, Ilwad Peace and Human Rights Centre.

9 Preventing violent extremism through education: a guide for policy-makers, UNESDOC Digital Library, UNESCO, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002477/247764e.pdf.

10 University Module Series - Counter-Terrorism, The Doha Declaration: Promoting Culture of Lawfulness, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, www.unodc.org/e4j/en/tertiary/counter-terrorism.html.

11 Sustainable Development Goal 16, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16.

12 Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (2014). Abu Dhabi Memorandum on Good Practices for Education and Countering Violent Extremism. https://hedayahcenter.org/app/uploads/2021/09/File-23201675331.pdf. See also Appendices of this volume, pages 297-303.

13 Manifesto for Education - Empowering Educators and Schools, Radicalisation Awareness Network, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2016-12/manifesto-for-education-empowering-educators-and-schools_en.pdf.

14 Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D. & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. Child Development, 82(1): 405–432, https://casel.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/meta-analysis-child-development-1.pdf.

15 Jonathan Doney and Rupert Wegerif, Measuring Open-Mindedness, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, https://institute.global/sites/default/files/inline-files/Measuring%20Open-mindedness_29.06.17.pdf.

16 Respira en Colombia, www.respira.co/.