



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
The UN Migration Agency

## Evaluation Report

### Ex-post internal evaluation of the project “Community-based Approach to Support Youth in a Targeted Municipality”

December 2020

*This full report is complemented by a **two-page “Evaluation Brief”** that presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations.*

#### Project information:

Project title	Community-based Approach to Support Youth in a Targeted Municipality
Project dates	1 January 2018 – 31 December 2018
IOM project type	Community Stabilization (CS)
IOM project codes	CS.0936
IOM Managing Mission	North Macedonia
Donor	IOM Development Fund (IDF)

#### Evaluation information:

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Evaluation field visit dates	25-28 November 2019

## Table of contents

List of Acronyms.....	3
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2. Context and purpose of the evaluation.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Evaluation context .....	8
2.2 Evaluation purpose .....	10
2.3 Evaluation scope .....	10
2.4 Evaluation criteria .....	10
<b>3. Evaluation framework and methodology.....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Data sources and collection .....	10
3.2 Sampling.....	11
3.3 Data analysis .....	11
3.4 Limitations and mitigation strategies .....	11
<b>4. Findings.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Theory of Change .....	13
4.1 Relevance .....	14
4.2 Effectiveness .....	20
4.3 Efficiency .....	30
4.4 Impact .....	32
4.5 Sustainability .....	37
<b>5. Conclusions .....</b>	<b>39</b>
Good practices .....	41
Lessons learned .....	42
<b>6. Recommendations .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>7. Annexes .....</b>	<b>44</b>

## List of acronyms

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CLP	Community Liaison Point
EU	European Union
IDF	IOM Development Fund
IC	Integrative Complexity
IOM	International Organization for Migration
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MiGOF	Migration Governance Framework
NCCVECT	National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
US	United States of America
PVE	Prevention of violent extremism
VE	Violent extremism

## Executive summary

This ex-post internal evaluation was conducted for a one-year project implemented from January-December 2018 by the North Macedonia country office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and funded by the IOM Development Fund (IDF). The evaluation was carried out by Sarah Harris, Regional M&E Officer with IOM's Regional Office in Vienna covering South-Eastern, Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. It was an independent evaluation, as the evaluator was not involved in the design or implementation of the project. The inception phase started in October 2019, the field visit completed in November 2019, and the report produced in December 2020.<sup>1</sup>

### *Evaluation context and purpose*

The project aimed to contribute to prevention of violent extremism (PVE) by building capacity of national and local institutional actors to directly engage with local communities and build their resilience against extremist influences and recruitment. The project used an institution-oriented approach that built capacities of national authorities and local community members (psychologists, social workers, teachers, community leaders) to target, through preventive activities, youth who are at risk of radicalization and, potentially, violent extremism. The indirect beneficiaries at objective level are youth within at risk of radicalization or of becoming directly engaged in violent extremism.

The evaluation was conducted for use by the donor, to get familiar with good practices, evaluate results, and assess value for money, and by IOM staff supporting similar projects by sharing lessons learned and good practices. The field visit took place in Skopje and Tetovo, where all main stakeholders were located. Debar, a target community added later in the project, could not be visited in the limited time available, though interviews still took place in Skopje with consultants who had worked in Debar. The evaluation emphasized mainly impact and sustainability, with attention also to relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Attention to gender was integrated in the list of evaluation questions below and taken into account by the Evaluator.

### *Evaluation framework and methodology*

Data collection methods included document review; review of monitoring data; semi-structured interviews; and a survey. Given the small scope of the project, with the small number of partners and direct beneficiaries, the evaluator sought to reach all identified key stakeholders, including IOM project staff, consultants and the implementing partner; national government officials and local authorities; and all available beneficiaries. Data analysis relied on qualitative analysis (deductive, theory-led thematic analysis) using NVivo software, facilitated by interview transcripts.

### *Findings and Conclusions*

Overall, the project was *well designed* in terms of intended results and Theory of Change (ToC). Though some weaknesses were found in the Results Matrix, especially at objective level, the project faces a common challenge of measuring results faced by all prevention work, and in that regard was based on a relatively strong approach based on Integrative Complexity (IC) Thinking. The IC Thinking approach is proven to lead to a measurable shift away from black-and-white thinking towards more complex ways of engaging with the world and the immediate surroundings. This, in turn, is directly connected to higher degrees of resilience against extremist influences and a lower propensity to engage in violent acts. Intended prevention activities also includes other activities that national and local actors would implement themselves as a result of this project.

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<sup>1</sup> Finalization of this report was initially delayed due to balancing immediate donor need for results of a separate evaluation conducted around the same time. It was also impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, resulting in emerging priorities delaying work on this report.

In terms of *relevance*, the project aligns well to the national strategy on PVE, which includes support community-based initiatives, as well as recommendations of the EU, US, and UN Secretary-General's PVE Plans of Action. It also responded well to the needs of the target beneficiaries, ensured through regular consultation with the National Coordinator as well as use previous assessments, community assessment in the main target community (Tetovo), and Community Liaison Points (CLPs). As for IOM strategies and frameworks, this project helped to strengthen PVE knowledge and expand IOM's national programming in this area, and it aligns to IOM's Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). Gender considerations were also overall well taken into account during design and implementation, with only a few noted areas for improvement.

As for *effectiveness*, intended outputs were achieved, though outcomes could not be fully assessed based on data available due to lack of monitoring data and inability to reach all needed stakeholders in the scope of the evaluation. For Outcome 1, related to perceived usefulness and actual use of the Tetovo assessment report by all NCCVECT members, it is clear that the recommendations were used in identifying three concrete actions to take to prevent PVE as part of the National Action Plan.

In relation to Outcome 2, the community workshops (Output 2.2) were reportedly the first ones in the country on the subject, and were well regarded by participants and other stakeholders. However, the intended outcome of active engagement by participants could not be fully assessed, as only 15 persons out of 51 responded to the survey (introduced after the evaluation visit, when it was found that none of the participants could be reached for interviews). Based on that data, though a small sample, most reported ongoing discussion in their communities (87%) and most also reported sharing learning with colleagues, friends or family (80%).

As for the Objective level, the data is even more limited. The only evidence of changes in terms of numbers of at-risk youth reached is through the IC Thinking workshops, which provide strong evidence of improved resilience immediately after the workshop but not about long-term effects. Of the total 75 participants, results showed an increase in resilience for 45 participants (62.5%) and an increase on the empathy scale for 43 (59.64%) after the IC Thinking workshops. The objective also included reaching youth through participation in 'other preventive activities', expected to be carried out by the targeted local actors. However, limited information was available on preventive activities being carried out, and no information on how many youth were being reached.

There were no major external conditions that the project had to adapt to, in terms of unexpected changes in the operating environment. The major positive factors influencing achievement of results include the use of CLPs to assess local context, facilitate activities, motivating youth to attend IC Thinking workshops, and carefully promoting the project given the sensitivity of the topic of PVE. Facilitation skills was also a crucial factor for success for both IC Thinking workshops and the community workshops. A negative factor was the limited time available, especially as some activities were delayed from the original plans, in terms of being able to identify the appropriate participants on time (especially a challenge in Debar, as it was added later).

Regarding *efficiency*, the staffing of the project team appropriately met needs. Consultants were pleased with coordination and communication with IOM staff, and there was strong communication with IOM staff working on other PVE projects. The project coordinated well with stakeholders especially the National Coordinator, which helped to identify that an NGO, the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) was carrying out similar activities. IOM then partnered with CPRM and jointly designed the community workshops.

The budget was underspent by the end (80% spent of the total 100,000 USD). This is due in part to cost savings in budget lines for consultants, and reduced costs given the partnership with CRPM. Some budget lines were added for unplanned costs of existing activities (travel expenses, translation and printing), but it was challenging to find ways to spend all remaining funds in line with objectives and donor requirements by the end of the one-year project. In the end, it was decided to use some

of the cost savings to add IC Thinking workshops in Debar, a new location identified as a priority by the National Coordinator. While activities in Debar contributed to building the resilience of youth it only minimally contributed to building institutional capacities, which was the project's main focus.

As for *impact*, this project contributed to important changes in synergy with other PVE projects carried out by IOM. However, any peacebuilding work including PVE requires several years to see real impact, at least five years according to stakeholders consulted. Still, the project contributed to changes that were already evident at the time of the evaluation. At a national level, there has been increased attention to PVE nationally but more progress is needed to reach more tangible results in terms of national efforts. The community assessment recommended three measures that were included in a National Action Plan: community action plans, key integrated task forces and a state working group for focused multi-agency activities. However, progress was observed in only one measure: community action plans were being piloted in three communities through a project by Search for Common Ground with UK funds. Also, more generally, IOM's support to the National Coordinator through this and other projects contributed to national capacity building on PVE, including shifting attention to prevention, rather only on security and law enforcement aspects.

At the community level, though there is insufficient data to reach conclusions about impact, there is evidence of ongoing active engagement by community members in Tetovo, which was the intended Outcome 2. In the longer term, the objective was for that work to lead to improved resilience to PVE among at-risk youth. On that point, that was no evidence available to the evaluator to assess how many youth may be reached nor what the long-term impacts are in terms of resilience to PVE, as there was no follow-up monitoring after IC Thinking workshops nor of other prevention activities of community workshop participants. Still, at least for IC Thinking, there is a strong likelihood of impact given the scientifically designed and tested approach that is used. The project measured an increase in resilience and empathy scores, which is strongly linked to increased resilience and is likely to lead to higher degrees of resilience against extremist influences and a lower propensity to engage in violent acts. Also, the perception of the stakeholders is that PVE work is ongoing and that this will contribute to youth resilience to PVE. It is also likely that the CLPs in Tetovo continue to have a positive impact on the community. No long-term impacts were apparent in Debar, the other target community, and there is limited impact is expected given the limited scope of activities there.

The limited data from this project cannot be supplemented with likely impacts to expect based on similar projects, since this project deviated from the model used in other community-based PVE projects in which youth are direct beneficiaries and which include other activities with youth (media literacy, community dialogues, and youth-led community projects). While not included due to donor requirement to focus on institutional strengthening, and given the more limited time and funding, those other elements would likely have helped to enhance the impact. In the other PVE projects, the greatest impacts are reportedly often seen with youth who have participated to several activities. Some youth participants in this project even suggested to consider concrete ideas for improvement in the community and to offer logistical and/or financial support for those ideas. There is also a potential for negative impacts in theory, by opening the minds of youth and leading them to see more clearly a lack of opportunities, increasing their desire to find other solutions, such as migrating.

Finally, in terms of *sustainability*, a key positive factors affecting sustainability at national level was the inclusion of three concrete PVE measures identified in the community assessment of Tetovo into the National Action Plan on PVE, though capacities to implement those measures without external support is limited, as all activities in the National Action Plan are reportedly being implemented by international organizations with donor funding. National capacities also involve coordination of PVE work by the National Coordinator, which is reportedly much improved now, along with progress in bringing more attention to PVE work. The National Coordinator's office is also in the process of restructuring because it is recognized that there are need for improvements.

Processes are also underway to integrate the community workshops on PVE into the general teacher training curricula in the country, once a working group in the Bureau of Education concludes review and revision of the program. Once included, it can be implemented without external support. There are also plans to convert it into an e-training available in an online training platform.

At community level, benefits continue among the participants of the community workshops in Tetovo. Though only 15 of the total 51 were reached through a survey, respondents confirmed that they continue to organize preventive activities, especially in schools, and have also passed on the knowledge and skills to their colleagues, friends and family. The manual provided to participants likely has contributed to this. The CLPs also became familiar with PVE work, and can integrate that into other projects and in other NGOs where they are working. The newly trained IC Thinking facilitators appears to have provided sufficient capacities, and they have continued to support IC Thinking workshops under other IOM projects.

According to the project design, benefits should also be sustained to indirect beneficiaries, the youth participants in IC Thinking workshops, by giving them tools, skills and confidence to engage with their community and resist the solutions offered by recruiters. It was not possible within the scope of this project to assess sustainability at that level. There was no follow-up monitoring with the participants, and only one participant could be consulted during the evaluation visit.

Lessons learned and good practices were also identified. *Good practices* include context monitoring with the community assessment and CLPs; consideration of gender-specific needs; and knowledge sharing and exchange among staff and consultants from similar projects. *Lessons learned* include the need to monitor outcomes by the end of each project; maintaining contact with all beneficiaries needed for eventual monitoring or evaluation; avoiding implementation delays and clearly reporting status of planned activities in the donor reports.

### ***Recommendations***

No specific recommendations were proposed, given that the purpose was to assess results of a completed project and to collect good practices and lessons learned to be applied in similar projects, and given the late finalization of this report. Instead, it is recommended that all future similar PVE projects take into account the findings, good practices and lessons learned. This will be encouraged by sharing the report with IOM staff working or providing expert support to PVE projects.

## 1. Introduction

This report presents results of an ex-post internal independent evaluation of a one-year project implemented from January-December 2018 by the North Macedonia country office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Migration Agency, and funded by the IOM Development Fund (IDF). The evaluation was carried out by Sarah Harris, Regional M&E Officer with IOM's Regional Office in Vienna covering South-Eastern, Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The evaluator was not involved in the design or implementation of the project.

The evaluation was carried out 11 months after the project, with the evaluation field visit during 25-28 November 2019. *Note: Finalization of this report was initially delayed due to balancing immediate donor need for results of a separate evaluation conducted around the same time. It was also impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, resulting in emerging priorities delaying work on this report.*

Section 2 presents the context, purpose, scope and criteria of the evaluation. Section 3 outlines the methodology (data collection, sampling, data analysis, and limitations). Section 4 presents the findings organized by the evaluation criteria and questions established in the evaluation terms of reference (ToR). Conclusions are summarized in Section 5 and recommendations are provided in Section 6.

Annexes include the evaluation ToR, evaluation matrix and inception report, the list of documents reviewed and persons consulted, the field visit agenda, and data collection tools.

## 2. Context and purpose of the evaluation

### Evaluation context

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), part of the UN system as a related organization, is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants. IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

The project under evaluation was designed and implemented by the IOM Mission in Skopje, which was established in 1999 with the purpose to assist in the implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, with particular emphasis on migration management. Since then, activities have expanded to address a variety of pressing migration-related issues including trafficking in human beings, technical cooperation and institutional capacity building in the field of migration, voluntary return and reintegration, economic stabilization, and activities related to prevention of violent extremism (PVE), among others.

IOM's country strategy in North Macedonia takes into consideration the European Union (EU) membership process and the need for progressive alignment with the EU migration acquis as one of the main driving elements of its activities. IOM's primary objective in the country is to act in full partnership with Government and national and international partners to promote strengthened and harmonized standards in all key migration-related areas.

IOM started engaging in prevention of violent extremism (PVE) programming in the neighbouring country of Bosnia and Herzegovina in late 2015, with support from various donors: the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Government of the United Kingdom (UK), the Embassy of the Italian Republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Sarajevo. In 2015, IOM began piloting community-based approaches aimed at reducing young peoples’ susceptibility to radicalization and violent extremist influences, increasing youth community engagement and strengthening community resiliency and capacities to respond. A UK-funded project helped to expand the scope to Kosovo\*<sup>2</sup> and North Macedonia. Since then, IOM Skopje has continued to implement various regional and national PVE projects.

This evaluation concerns “Community-based Approach to Support Youth in a Targeted Municipality,” a one-year project funded by the IOM Development Fund (IDF) and implemented by IOM Skopje from 1 January to 31 December 2018. The objective of the project was to contribute to prevention of the spread of violent extremism through building capacity of national and local institutional actors to directly engage with local communities and build their resilience against extremist influences and recruitment. The project used an institution-oriented approach that built capacities of national authorities and local community members (psychologists, social workers, teachers, and community leaders) to target, through preventive activities, youth who are at risk of radicalization and, potentially, violent extremism.

The project had the following intended results:

Results	Component 1: Central institutions	Component 2: Local actors	
Outcomes	1: Technical working group on PVE designs PVE measures based on analytical and comprehensive data	2: Teachers, local school psychologists, social workers and community leaders are actively engaged in structured discussions about VE	
Outputs	1.1: National research and recommendations on PVE on a community level in the targeted communities is distributed to national stakeholders	2.1: Psychologists capacitated to apply IC thinking methodology	2.2: Teachers, social workers and community leaders capacitated to recognize and independently respond to VE signs
Activities	1.1.1. Engage community expert and local community FPs to conduct community research and draft report 1.1.2. Present research to all relevant national stakeholders through set of national meetings 1.1.3. Distribute questionnaire to stakeholders to assess report contribution in development of policy documents + concrete PVE initiatives	2.1.1. Tailored and implemented training of local psychologists by IC Thinking experts 2.1.2. The trained psychologists implement IC thinking workshops	2.2.1. Consultations with local stakeholders to best identify and reach local actors 2.2.2. Design context-specific, workshop methodology 2.2.3. Organize workshops, including “transfer of knowledge skills” session

The project targeted stakeholders on three levels. First, there are two groups of direct beneficiaries relating to the two intended outcomes: (1) *central institutional actors* working on PVE policy development through sharing the results of the community assessment, thus influencing policy development and implementation; and (2) *local institutional level* through engagement of local community members in implementing tailored interventions to increase youth’s resilience to resist violent extremism and radicalizing influences. The indirect beneficiaries at objective level are at-risk

<sup>2</sup> IOM refers to the UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo in an abbreviated manner as “Kosovo/UNSCR 1244”. For the purpose of this document, this shall be shortened to “Kosovo\*” without prejudice to positions on the status and in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

youth i.e. individuals within the target communities who are at risk of radicalization or of becoming directly engaged in violent extremism.

The aim is for at-risk youth to be reached by the targeted institutional stakeholders through the implementation of prevention activities. These prevention activities include IC Thinking workshops, directly supported under this project. The IC Thinking approach is proven to lead to a measurable shift away from black-and-white thinking towards more complex ways of engaging with the world and the immediate surroundings. This, in turn, is directly connected to higher degrees of resilience against extremist influences and a lower propensity to engage in violent acts. Intended prevention activities also includes other activities that national and local actors would implement themselves as a result of this project.

This project is adapted from a community-based approach used in similar PVE projects carried out by IOM, in which youth are direct beneficiaries and which include other activities with youth (media literacy, community dialogues, and youth-led community projects). Those were not included in this project given the donor requirement to focus on institutional actors as the direct beneficiaries, and also given the more limited funding and time for this project.

## Evaluation purpose

This evaluation was conducted based on the requirements of the donor, the IOM Development Fund (IDF), which according to IDF guidance on evaluation should be carried out 6 to 12 months after the end of the project. The evaluation was being conducted for use primarily by IDF, to get familiar with good practices, evaluate results, and assess value for money for the results it has funded. It is also intended for IOM staff supporting similar projects by sharing lessons learned and good practices.

## Evaluation scope

This evaluation covered the entire project implementation period, from 1 January to 31 December 2018. It also covered most of the geographic coverage, with the field visit taking place in Skopje and Tetovo, where all the main stakeholders are located. The additional target community added later in the project, Debar, could not be visited in the limited time period available for the visit.

## Evaluation criteria

The evaluation emphasized mainly effectiveness, impact and sustainability, with some attention also to relevance and efficiency. Attention to gender was integrated in the list of evaluation questions below and taken into account by the Evaluator.

## Evaluation framework and methodology

### Data sources and collection

During the inception phase (see report in Annex 3), the evaluator reviewed the Terms of Reference (ToR) and gathered available project documents from PRIMA, IOM's online project management system. The evaluator compiled a list of documents available and those to request, and compiled a mapping of all stakeholders mentioned in the proposal and donor reports. The evaluator had a call

with the evaluation manager to discuss evaluability based on available data, documents and access to key stakeholders. The evaluator identified priority stakeholders to include in the agenda.

The field visit was carried out during 25-28 November 2019 that included the capital (Skopje) and a visit to the main target community (Tetovo). The other target community added later in the project (Debar) could not be included in the visit (see Limitations section below).

Data collection methods included:

- Desk review of monitoring data and project documents (see Annex 4)
- Semi-structured interviews (see Annex 5) with:
  - IOM project staff and consultants including the Project Manager, Project Assistant, community liaison points (CLPs), IC Thinking workshop trainers, community expert, consultant who did the community assessment, and consultants involved in developing the community workshops on PVE, as well as the IOM Head of Office and staff members working on other PVE projects.
  - Implementing partner, Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM).
  - National and municipal government beneficiaries: from the National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism (NCCVECT) and the Ministry of Education (a member of the NCCVECT), and Tetovo municipality representatives.
  - One youth participant of an IC Thinking workshop. *It was not possible to organize a focus group discussion with additional participants (see Limitations section below).*
- Survey of participants in the community workshops on PVE (teachers, school psychologists, social workers, and other community leaders). *It was not possible to organize a focus group discussion or otherwise meet in person, see explanation below in Limitations.*

## Sampling

Given the scope of the project, with a small number of partners and direct beneficiaries, the evaluator sought to reach all stakeholders including IOM project staff, consultants and implementing partner; national officials and local authorities; and all available beneficiaries.

## Data analysis

Data analysis relied mainly on qualitative analysis of documentation and transcribed notes from the interviews. Initial analysis began during the inception phase. A brief document review was carried out to inform the evaluation matrix (Annex 2) and clarify the theory of change, which guided further analysis of the evaluation questions. Deductive (theory-led) thematic analysis was used for documents and interview transcripts, using NVivo software and a coding scheme based on the evaluation questions and sub-questions in the evaluation matrix.

Findings were triangulated through cross-analysis of data from various sources. The Evaluator strived to ensure that assessments were objective and balanced, affirmations accurate and verifiable, and recommendations realistic, and to follow IOM standards and guidance on evaluations including the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), the IOM Project Handbook, IOM Evaluation Guidelines, and IOM Data Protection Principles.

## Limitations and mitigation strategies

A number of limitations were identified in the inception phase as challenges to evaluability, i.e. the extent to which a project can be evaluated in a reliable and credible manner. In particular, limited data was available from project monitoring and documents, and it would not be possible to meet with members of key target groups during the field visit, identified as likely to limit the ability of the evaluator to assess achievement of results, particularly at outcome and objective level. Majority of these limitations relate to the time that passed since the end of the activities.

- **Monitoring data:** Only half of the objective and outcome indicators were measured and reported on in the final report. No other monitoring data or reports existed to provide that data. In the case of the first component (central institutions), this fact coupled with lack of access to all members of the NCCVECT (for interviews or survey) made it difficult to fully assess effectiveness and impact in relation to Outcome 1 (working group designs PVE measures). For the second component (local institutions), the evaluator was able to carry out a survey of participants, though with a low response rate (29%), thus providing some but still limited data for assessment of Outcome 2. The lack of monitoring data on how to measure long-term change among at-risk youth at objective level, and no access to this group for the evaluation, also affects evaluability at that level.
- **Documents:** The main source of information is from the proposal and donor reports, and the donor reports don't provide details on results at outcome level. There was limited other documentation. The evaluator therefore aimed to meet directly with the key institutional actors in order to directly gather data (see point below on meetings).
- **Meetings:** Given the lack of outcome level monitoring data, it was deemed especially important to meet with all key stakeholder groups and a sufficient number of persons from each group. The evaluator identified a list of persons as priority to meet during the visit. The list was shared with the evaluation manager for planning the agenda. However, the evaluation manager advised that many persons requested may not be available. The following meetings could not be arranged in the end – most of which related to fact that over a year had passed since the activities were carried out, resulting in difficulties finding the participants and encouraging their participation in the evaluation:
  - Focus group discussions with teachers, school psychologists, social workers, and other community leader participants to the community workshops on PVE was not possible. Only two participants were available to meet, both community leaders working for the municipality. IOM project staff reached out directly to individuals to request them to come, but many did not answer or were unavailable, while others said they would be there but didn't show up in the end. The presumed reasons were that elections were ongoing, so everyone was politically engaged and less available, and also that time that passed since the activities and they had busy schedules. This was mitigated by instead sending out a survey to all workshop participants. Still, only 15 of the 51 participants responded to the survey; while helpful by providing at least a small sample of responses, it was a low response rate and use of a survey didn't allow for in-depth questioning as would have been possible in an interview.
  - Focus group discussion with youth participants to IC Thinking workshops. The evaluator requested to discuss how to arrange, if it will be possible (e.g. group size, who to invite). Only one meeting was arranged in the end with a participant in IC Thinking workshops in Tetovo. IOM staff requested one of the community liaison points in Tetovo to invite a group of youth who participated, and he called all of the participants but nearly all of them could not be reached. It was presumed that they

had all moved away. IOM staff also flagged that it was difficult to locate youth a year after activities were carried out.

- Access to project locations: Debar was not included in field visit. Though not the main focus of the project and with limited activities (IC Thinking workshops), the evaluator still tried to meet stakeholders from there in Skopje or via phone. In the end the evaluator met with the CLP but was not able to speak with any IC Thinking workshop participants from Debar.

## Findings

This section presents findings analysed by the evaluator according to Evaluation Questions as laid out in the TOR (Annex 1), organized by each criteria used: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability. Later sections provide a summary of conclusions and recommendations.

### *Theory of Change*

Before turning to the evaluation questions, below is an analysis of the Theory of Change (ToC) of the project. As described in the Methodology section, a theory-led approach was used based on project logic and ToC, including what was documented in the proposal and the stakeholder perceptions. This guided the analysis for each of the evaluation questions.

The design was overall quite strong in terms of the intended results and Theory of Change (ToC), with two clear project components targeting central institutions and local institutions. This helps to compensate for a few weaknesses in the results matrix and indicators in terms of evaluability.

The vertical logic of the Results Matrix is clear, and results and indicators are mostly SMART. The output and outcome levels are strong, though it is less strong at objective level. The objective uses incorrect syntax, with the word “through” that introduces multiple result levels in one statement and obscures specific intended results, with reference to multiple concepts (preventing spread of violent extremism, capacity of institutional stakeholders, building resilience). Still, though not well written, it is clear that the focus is on resilience. The indicator further illuminates by reference to ‘at-risk community members’, and according to the ToC those are more specifically ‘at-risk youth’.

The objective indicator covers only individual resilience and formulation is also weak, combining two parts that should be separate indicators: the first about a short-term change in IC thinking and the second about participation to other preventative activities. The lack of monitoring data on how to measure long-term change among at-risk youth, however, affects evaluability at that level.

Output 2.1 (training IC Thinking facilitators and delivering IC Thinking workshops) links more directly to the Objective rather than through engagement by local actors (Outcome 2). The aim was to train new facilitators, who would carry out workshops as part of this project, all of that captured at the level Output 2.1, which would contribute to the Objective in terms of youth resilience. There is some limited mention of an intention that IC Thinking workshop facilitators would be able to continue with these activities in their schools and in other schools in the country generally, but this is not possible without being integrated into the official curriculum, though facilitators have been available to support other IOM projects.

The link is strong, however, between Output 2.1 and the objective-level prevention aims, given the scientifically designed IC Thinking approach (see below). However, the objective indicators capture only the immediate results of IC Thinking after each workshop, not long-term effects.

The other components are strongly linked to PVE focus at objective level: supporting the national authorities to expand prevention initiatives based on the community assessment in Tetovo (and generally through technical support provided by IOM, under this and other similar projects), and

empowering community actors to speak out and take action in this case through training them to intervene when they recognize signs of violent extremism. However, the measurement of those higher-level changes is not well considered in the results matrix. The evaluation was intended to capture those changes, but lack of monitoring data and access to stakeholders proved problematic.

The challenge to measure objective-level changes also relates to a general challenge with measuring impacts of prevention interventions. However, this project (as with other similar PVE projects that IOM carries out in the region) uses a scientifically designed Integrative Complexity (IC) Thinking approach, which was developed at the University of Cambridge and tested in the context of radicalized communities. The approach was adapted to the context of North Macedonia, including by basing the project on risks specific to the country and wider Western Balkan region using assessments from at-risk communities in BiH, Kosovo and North Macedonia. IOM experts and staff working on similar projects were consulted during design and implementation, enabling integration of learning from other projects.

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*The intensive, interactive training has proven to lead to a measurable shift away from black-and-white thinking towards more complex ways of engaging with the world and immediate surroundings. This, in turn, is directly connected to higher degrees of resilience against extremist influences and a lower propensity to engage in violent acts. These workshops enable participants to look at issues from different perspectives, as lower complexity has been determined to be one of the best predictors for whether a conflict has the potential to become violent, or be resolved peacefully. – Project proposal*

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The short time frame of the project also posed a barrier to planning any follow-up measurements of IC Thinking or other data gathering such as focus groups, which IOM includes in its other community-based PVE projects.

The project intended to also ground the approach on local risks in community through a community self-assessment carried out in each targeted community, which should have formed the basis for the development of a ‘community profile’ and ‘local theory of change’ to guide implementation. This was not done in a structured manner, but reportedly was done informally and undocumented. The community assessment was completed for Tetovo as planned, and presented to national authorities as a deliverable for Output 1.1, but it was not used to develop a community profile nor a documented local theory of change. IOM staff cited that no specific activity was included about this and they didn’t deem it necessary, as a reason why it was never documented. Still, IOM staff reported using assessment findings generally to inform design and implementation of the activities.

As for Debar, this location was added to the project after cost savings were identified in the budget, selected based on a government request. Activities in Debar do not align well with the overall focus of the project on institutional strengthening, since it involved only hiring Community Liaison Points (CLPs) and organizing IC Thinking workshops, without a community assessment (to contribute to national capacity) nor community workshops (to contribute to local capacity). (Note: The reason for no assessment or community assessments in Debar is that these activities were added very late in the project – see further details under Efficiency section. Still, this does not change the fact that approach in Debar did not fit with original intended approach and ToC.) Activities in Debar did serve to further build capacities of IC Thinking facilitators; however, it strengthened only those trained previously and not those newly trained under this project. It mainly expanded the number of youth indirect beneficiaries. Though this was in line with reaching at-risk youth, it provided limited intended results related to primary aim of this project: building institutional capacities.

## Relevance

### To what extent were project interventions relevant and appropriate in relation to national and international legal and policy frameworks?

This project aimed in its design to contribute to the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2016-2020), and also to the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism (2018-2022) that was approved during implementation of the project in February 2018. As cited in the 2018-2022 strategy, the government also seeks interinstitutional cooperation to counter or prevent violent extremism in line with recommendations of the EU, the US, and the UN Secretary-General's PVE Plans of Action.

The national strategy includes as objectives to support community-based initiatives that prevent violent extremism, a holistic approach with more engagement of a wide variety of civil society actors, including training them to identify early signs of violent radicalization and supporting social cohesion efforts. All of those aims are well aligned to this IOM project. More specifically, the activities of this project aligned to strategic priority 1 on prevention (developing programme for teachers to detect signs of VE) through the community workshops on PVE under this project, and strategic priority 2 on awareness-raising (promoting dialogue through educational programs to protect from radicalization) through the IC Thinking workshops.

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*Everything that IOM has done has contributed to our national strategy, and this has contributed in several areas. First of all, regarding preventing violent extremism, building resilience in the community and among the young people. Also to assess the specifics of each area, and where the National Coordinator should direct future activities.*

– Government stakeholder

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IOM reportedly played a key role in the development of the national strategy, which refers to “strong positive ties to international organizations” and of which IOM appears to have played the most prominent role. The development and implementation of the national strategy to counter violent extremism and terrorism has been led since August 2017 by a National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Countering Terrorism (NCCVECT), composed of representatives of national institutions, led by a National Coordinator.

IOM started working on PVE in late 2016, prior to establishment of the National Coordinator. Since establishment of that office, IOM has supported the work of National Coordinator and through him the NCCVECT, and was reportedly one of the first to do so. Under other projects, IOM supported two secondments, a national and an internal expert, who have been working with the National Coordinator. The National Coordinator worked closely with IOM in the design and implementation of this IDF-funded project, and the interventions covered in this project are also included in the Action Plan for the implementation of the national strategy.

### Has the project responded to the needs of the target beneficiaries?

The primary beneficiaries were institutional actors, both national (government ministries) and local (community leaders, teachers, school psychologists, social workers). The secondary beneficiaries were youth at-risk of influence by extremist influences and ongoing recruitment.

Needs were assessed by IOM during design and intervention in a variety of ways. IOM ensured that its PVE work as well coordinated with the National Coordinator, to ensure that projects meet needs. Assessments conducted by the Commission on International Justice and Accountability (CIJA) prior

to the design of this project found that radicalization and/or cases of violent extremism are present in each targeted community and pose a challenge to the country as a whole. Finally, IOM maintained close contact with communities through the work of Community Liaison Points (CLPs), recognized young leaders and/or young people with the potential of becoming community leaders themselves.

At the *national institutional level*, the project aligned very well with government priorities for the prevention of violent extremism. National ministries and community experts agreed that violent extremism has been and remains an important issue to be addressed at community level across the country, to build awareness and local capacities to help prevent violent extremism. There is therefore a clear need for actions such as those under this project, as well as taking it further towards integration into school curricula.

IOM ensured close coordination with the National Coordinator on PVE, to ensure that projects meet needs, efforts are not duplicated, and to promote coherence and synergies with other actors. Some stakeholders felt that as more actors entered into PVE work, there was a risk that the quality may not be as good, compared to organizations dedicated to this work, and that some of their efforts are not well coordinated (e.g. National Coordinator not made aware, lack of coordination with others). During the time of the field visit, IOM was the only organization doing work like this at community level.

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*All other organizations, they go to communities, organize one workshop for youth, and then pull out. IOM is the only organization that does research, trains and invests in CLPs, in capacity building, and organizes many workshops per community.*

– IOM staff

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At a *local institutional level*, local authorities and community members agreed that the activities were all needed. IOM staff described promoting a ‘triangle of support’ among parents, psychologists and teachers, and stakeholders consulted agreed with this approach. Parents must give consent to work with children and the community assessment in Tetovo identified family ties as the most relevant prevention factor, and yet majority of respondents in the community assessment considered parents do not know how to respond to signs of radicalization. On average, relevance of topics covered in community workshops were rated 4.4 out of 5 (average for the three workshops). Topics of multiculturalism, tolerance and peacebuilding were among top recommended areas of focus, including need for media literacy.

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*Teachers and parents both need a lot of support. They see situations and are trying to deal by themselves and they get stuck. They don't know how to respond, they don't know where to ask for help.*

– Community member

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The community workshops also proved more popular in the end than initially expected. A municipal representative in Tetovo also emphasized how the initial target of 10 participants was far surpassed, with 51 reached in the end, showing the high relevance as the word about the workshop spread. Municipal leaders attributed this to the practical approach and sustained engagement: “not just theory, not just to meet for a couple of hours and go.”

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*At the first workshop there were just women. At the last one, there that was not enough space in the room.*

– IOM staff

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As for *targeting at-risk youth*, though one activity worked with youth (IC Thinking workshops), the project’s focus was on building institutional capacities of national and local actors to engage with youth. Again in this respect, there was wide consensus that the project’s intervention strategy was aligned to needs. Activities such as IC Thinking workshops are needed in all areas of the country to prevent radicalization, and as laid out in the project document, similar conditions are exploited by

both religious and nationalist extremism: a sense of injustice due to social exclusion, unemployment, lack of opportunities and access to various services, often along ethnic lines, connected to a legacy of war and conflicts. In this respect, it is a priority to target youth and new generations, to put youth on the right track by promoting tolerance, family values, and engagement in positive activities.

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*"[IC Thinking workshops] are useful for everyone because even those that are not marginalized have faced some challenges in terms of radicalization, everybody is in touch every day on the media with radicalization."*

– CLP

*"There were many interested people who wanted to participate. This type of trainings are very rare here, both because of the topic, because it's sensitive, also the approach used."*

– IC Thinking workshop participant

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Finally, a key need was to avoid stigmatization of target communities given the sensitivity of this topic. It was suggested by one community leader to spread prevention activities to all regions in the country, to avoid any community feeling they are being singled out. Overlapping too many activities in the same communities has risk of increasing stigma in those communities, as well as duplication of work that not only reduces collective value for money but may also lead to fatigue and irritation among participants when they approached for yet another training similar to previous ones. For this reason, it is (again) important that all PVE measures are coordinated with the National Coordinator, as IOM consistently does through this and its other PVE projects.

## Is the project aligned with and supportive of IOM national, regional, and/or global strategies and the Migration Governance Framework?

In terms of *national strategy*, this project helped IOM to strengthen its PVE knowledge and expand its national programming in this area. In 2017, IOM was only working in a couple communities to strengthen local capacities and resilience of communities towards violent extremism, and this project enabled IOM to expand the number of communities covered in 2018. IOM's PVE work in the country is focused on, first of all, strengthening resilience of communities through capacitating local stakeholders, as well as direct work with communities. Secondly, IOM supports at the central government level by strengthening the capacities of the office of the National Coordinator. IOM supported the secondment an international expert to the office of the National Coordinator to provide advisory and expert support, through a separate project that was ongoing at the time of this project (and also still a year later at the time of the evaluation in late 2019). This project aligned with those efforts by providing evidence-based community assessment from Tetovo, and generally further supporting and strengthening the role of the National Coordinator and the NCCVECT.

In terms of *regional and global strategy*, this project (as with all PVE work) in IOM was closely coordinated with technical experts in IOM's Headquarters in Geneva. The project aligns also with IOM's sub-regional approach to PVE in the Western Balkans, which uses a community-based approach that includes a scientifically designed developed at the University of Cambridge for working with at-risk youth. Through this and other PVE projects, IOM Skopje also engaged in regional peer-to-peer activities, to learn from and use the experience and the advantage of different countries in this area. The project team in North Macedonia closely coordinated with colleagues in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) who are experts and certified trainers in the IC Thinking methodology, as they were trained themselves by researchers from the University of Cambridge.

Finally, in terms of global strategy, the project aligns to *IOM's Migration Governance Framework* (MiGOF). Adopted by IOM in 2015, the MiGOF seeks to present, in a consolidated, coherent and

comprehensive way, a set of three principles and three objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane, orderly, and benefits migrants and society.

MiGOF	Alignment of the project to the MiGOF
<b>Principle 2:</b> Formulating policy using evidence and a “whole-of government” approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes “whole of government” approach through National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Counter Terrorism (NCCVECT), and implements activities alongside and in coordination with other interlinked approaches, including law enforcement, CVE activities, capacity-building.</li> </ul>
<b>Principle 3:</b> Engagement with partners to address migration and related issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a multilevel approach involving experts, practitioners, youth and parents in fostering ways to effectively address the threat of VE.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 1:</b> Advance socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps identify and address underlying drivers, motivations and vulnerabilities that contribute to VE, such as social exclusion, unemployment, lack of opportunities and access to various services.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 2:</b> Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps identify and address structural motivators, enabling factors, and individual incentives that may drive radicalization and violent extremism, within the country or as foreign fighters in conflicts such as Iraq and Syria.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 3:</b> Ensure migration takes place in a safe, orderly, dignified manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brings attention to VE as a transnational phenomenon linked to local community level social challenges and drivers.</li> </ul>

The project also aligns to various targets of the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*:

SDG targets	Alignment of the project to the SDG targets
<b>10.2:</b> By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	Addresses factors that drive socio-economic exclusion at the community level.
<b>10.7:</b> Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	Promotes attention to VE as a transnational phenomenon driving migration abroad to join foreign armed groups.
<b>8.6:</b> By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.	Promotes socio-economic inclusion and reduces ethnic biases that may fuel discrimination.
<b>5.2:</b> Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.	Promotes gender balance in activities and brings attention to gender roles, as it relates to gender dimensions of factors that drive radicalization.
<b>16.1:</b> Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.	Seeks to prevent violent extremism.
<b>16.2:</b> End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.	Seeks to prevent exploitation of youth through recruitment into violent extremism.

## To what extent were gender mainstreaming issues taken into account in the project design?

The proposal is coded by the evaluator as “2a” (sufficiently includes gender<sup>3</sup>) using the *IOM Gender Marker*, a tool that assesses how well projects integrate gender considerations. Though this project was designed prior to introduction of the marker in 2018, it was assessed by the evaluator based on the below criteria as laid out in the IOM Gender Marker Guide:

Is gender sufficiently integrated in each of the following?	Yes/No	Comments	IOM Gender Marker Code
Needs assessment	Yes	Focus on needs of youth. Identifies young men as more at risk than young women. The assessment report under Output 1.1 to contain gender-based analysis.	<b>2a</b>
Outputs	Yes	While not in output itself, the indicator for Output 1.1 refers to developing gender-sensitive recommendations.	
Activities	Yes	While not mentioned in activities themselves, target for Output 2.1 refers to developing IC thinking methodology that includes gender sensitivity considerations.	

Mainstreaming of gender in design was also analysed using the “Guiding Questions for Mainstreaming Gender into the Project Cycle” from the *IOM Project Handbook* (2017):

Guiding questions	Yes/No	Comments
Has a <b>gender analysis</b> been integrated into all analyses and assessments, including the needs assessment and situation analysis?	Yes	As also stated above, the project focuses on needs of youth, identifies young men as more at risk than young women, and plans to conduct gender-based analysis in planned assessment.
Have results of this gender analysis been used to define a project scope and activities that <b>respond appropriately</b> to needs of men and women and contribute to gender equality?	Yes	While focused on male youth, given the higher prevalence of involvement in VE, the project also planned to consider the role of women and facilitate their involvement and professional development, whenever possible and appropriate.
Has <b>sex-disaggregated data</b> been used and analysed to the extent possible and available?	Yes	Results of Community Baseline Risk Assessment are broken down by sex.
Have <b>consultations</b> been undertaken with a representative sample of stakeholders to solicit diverse perspectives and understand specific needs, capacities, priorities, challenges and experiences?	Yes	The project planned to carry out in its inception phase a community-based assessment in the target community, using questionnaires to be carried out with a diverse range of stakeholders.
Was consideration given to how <b>gender roles</b> , responsibilities and	Yes	Again, gender-sensitive recommendations were planned as part of the community assessment in the inception

<sup>3</sup> Projects coded as “2a” sufficiently include gender but the main objective does *not* focus on gender inequality. Projects coded as “2b” sufficiently include gender *and* the main objective focuses on gender inequality. Both “2a” and “2b” projects are likely to make a significant contribution to gender equality. Projects coded as “1” only include gender in 1-2 areas (needs assessment, outputs and activities), and so are likely to contribute in a limited way to gender equality. Projects coded as “0” include gender in none of those areas and are therefore not expected to not expected to make a noticeable contribution to gender equality.

dynamics might play a role in the activities, in terms whether and how to tailor activities to different beneficiaries? (Considering different needs, potential impacts and barriers)		phase. The proposal planned that to collect, analyse and report on sex-disaggregated. It was also planned to give particular attention to preventing women and girls from being recruited into, joining or supporting violent extremism and radicalization, including by developing gender-sensitive IC thinking methodology.
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## Effectiveness

### To what extent were gender-based approaches integrated into the project implementation?

As with analysis of gender mainstreaming in design (see above), assessment of integration of gender-based approaches into implementation was analysed using the “Guiding Questions for Mainstreaming Gender into the Project Cycle” from the *IOM Project Handbook* (2017):

Guiding questions	Yes/No	Comments
Is there gender balance in the <b>project team</b> ? If not, has hiring of a gender-balanced project team been prioritized?	Yes	Though all IOM staff on the project team are female (project manager, project assistant), there is gender balance among consultants/experts.
Do ongoing <b>consultations</b> include a broad, representative and diverse range of stakeholders?	Yes	As planned in proposal, inception phase involved a community-based assessment that allowed a diverse range of voices to be heard. Consultations were also carried out for the planning of community workshops on PVE, through meetings local representatives from schools, municipality (education advisers), local community (social workers), and professional association of psychologists.
For activities involving research reports, manuals, handbooks or other <b>publications</b> , have gender considerations been fully integrated and specific needs, concerns, and implications for men, women, girls and boys properly incorporated?	No	The proposal states plans to conduct gender-based analysis in the community assessment. However, the assessment report has only one mention of gender, in relation to predominance of the males as being more prone to engage in VE. Reasons for this are not analysed, nor the specific needs, concerns and implications for women. It was also already stated in the proposal, based on the findings of other previous assessments. The assessment report also therefore does not include any planned gender-sensitive recommendations.
Has <b>gender-balanced participation</b> in the project’s activities been promoted, in terms of members of steering committees, trainers, beneficiaries and other stakeholders? If <b>participation</b> is significantly and/or unexpectedly lower among a particular group(s), have	To some extent	The project team worked to ensure gender balance among participants in the activities. For instance, gender-balance of <i>IC Thinking workshops</i> was promote by organizing them in a location and at times when it would be acceptable to the girls’ families for them to attend, and organized transportation to the workshops.  Mostly women attended <i>community workshops</i> with parents and teachers (86%). This was well above the target of 30% women, and a relatively lower number of men. Delays in implementation may have affected gender-balance. The three workshops were all held in December, whereas plan

possible reasons for this been explored and project adjusted accordingly?		was to hold them from October to December. More time between workshops could have allowed to assess how outreach or approach may be adjusted.
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## To what extent were intended outputs and outcomes achieved in accordance with stated plans?

The project had two intended outcomes, the first related to central institutions and the second to local institutions. The following summarizes progress in achieving intended output and outcome, based on monitoring data for indicators as well as on additional data gathered by the evaluator.

### Component 1: Central institutional actors

For the project's first component, Outcome 1 could not be fully assessed based on data available. The outcome indicators had not been measured and the evaluator was not able to gather data from all NCCVECT members. This made it difficult to fully assess Outcome 1. Still, however, it is clear that important results were achieved in terms of contribution to the National Action Plan.

#### Output 1.1: Assessment report

All output-level indicators were achieved, according to the final report:

<i>Output 1.1: National research and recommendations on PVE on a community level in targeted communities is distributed to national stakeholders</i>				
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress (Dec 2018)	Achieved (yes/no)
Assessment report on violent extremism developed for target communities which includes gender sensitive recommendations	No	Yes	<b>Yes</b>	Yes, mostly
Number of national meetings organized by IOM	0	4	<b>4</b>	Yes
Number of participants at national meetings	0	12 (20% female)	<b>53</b> (38% female)	Yes

The report was developed as planned, though with no gender-sensitive recommendations. Gender was briefly mentioned in the findings, in relation to gender breakdown of the main character in the stories collected and perceived susceptibility of each gender to violent extremism, but without any substantive gender analysis as had been mentioned in the project document.

The report was translated and disseminated to IOM's national counterparts. Multiple meetings were organized by IOM, to enable national stakeholders to build their knowledge around PVE work, based on evidence gathered through IOM-supported research and assessments.

#### Outcome 1: Use of assessment report

The first outcome indicator was not measured in the final report, and also could not be measured during the evaluation due to lack of access to data (e.g. a survey of stakeholders was not possible). However, the usefulness of the report was confirmed in part through use of the recommendations in identifying actions to take to prevent PVE as part of the National Action Plan.

<i>Outcome 1: Technical working group on PVE designs measures based on analytical and comprehensive data</i>					
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress (Dec 2018)	Progress (Nov 2019)	Achieved (yes/no)
Percentage of national stakeholders, disaggregated by gender, who received the report and that find the report and its recommendations useful	0	50% (25% female, 25% male)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Number of designed PVE measures addressing recommendations of the report <i>Note: This reflects number of measures included in the National Action Plan. The implementation of planned actions is covered under Impact section of this report.</i>	0	2	3	3	Yes

The extent to which all national stakeholders found the report useful is **unknown**. A number of persons were reported to have received the community assessment report as was indicated in the final donor report of December 2018 (45 persons, 23% women). At least 21 institutions received a copy of the report (all members of the NCCVECT). It was further shared with others that the National Coordinator thought would find it to be important for their work and useful (institutions, parties, individuals, etc.). However, perceived usefulness by all stakeholders was never measured, as was initially planned in proposal since it was later deemed to be too sensitive to assess via a survey. Instead, IOM more informally gathered feedback via the National Coordinator. The indicator was thus never measured nor reported.

For this evaluation, the evaluator was able only to meet with the National Coordinator and the Ministry of Education. The National Coordinator was pleased with the quality of the report, and local stakeholders appreciated the process as well. The findings were especially appreciated given that it is based on data gathered from community members themselves, and therefore reflects first-hand knowledge of the local factors that appear to be driving engagement in violent extremism, as well as ideas of what solutions may work best

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*“I am especially happy that I was involved with the scientific research, the surveys [for the community assessment]. I know how complicated it is to develop that process. The findings about where we are as a country should help us to invest in the future.”*

– National stakeholder

*“We heard questionnaires were planned, but we didn’t expect to have such a big response. People here are closed, they are not so open. But with the project the local communities somehow opened more. ... These activities managed to touch them in a nice, polite way, to draw information.”*

– Local stakeholder

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there. The representative of the Ministry of Education was not familiar with the report, noting that such reports are generally read by the National Coordinator.

Importantly, the recommendations of the report were integrated into the National Action Plan. It was noted in the final donor report that the NCCVECT members decided to ground the upcoming activities based on the findings in the report, and this was confirmed by the National Coordinator and document review. As of December 2018, **three recommended measures** had been included into the National Action Plan: (1) establishing action teams within communities, (2) establishing key integrated task forces and (3) establishing State working groups for focused multi-agency activities.

## Component 2: Local institutional actors

The project's second component includes two outputs aimed at capacity development of local institutional actors. The first concerns the capacities of facilitators to deliver IC Thinking workshops using a methodology developed and adapted to the local context by the University of Cambridge. The second aims to build capacities of local community members to recognize signs of violent extremism and to be able to directly intervene with youth considered to be at-risk.

### Output 2.1 – Capacities of IC Thinking workshop facilitators

Since training new facilitators was delayed until the end of the project, workshops were carried out by facilitators trained under previous projects. Indicators therefore capture progress achieved, but not the full extent of the intended result as regards building capacities to apply IC Thinking:

<i>Output 2.1: Psychologists capacitated to apply IC thinking methodology</i>				
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress (Dec 2018)	Achieved (yes/no)
Design of specific psychosocial support based upon the methodology of Integrative Complexity	Limited psychosocial methodologies tailored for youth at risk of being drawn to VE	Specific psychosocial support designed, based upon IC methodology that includes gender sensitivity considerations	Methodology developed	Yes
Number of IC Thinking workshops for training local psychologists*	0	1	1	Yes
Number of psychologists* trained	0	3 (at least 1 woman)	5 (3 women)	Yes
Number of IC Thinking workshops implemented by trained local psychologists*	0	4	5 (3 Tetovo, 2 Debar)	Yes
Number of youth targeted by the local psychologists through the IC thinking workshops	0	60** (at least 40% female)	75 (56% female)	Yes

*\*Not all were psychologists as initially planned. It was decided during implementation to include other profiles.*

*\*\* The initial plan was for three workshops for 30 persons (10 persons per workshop). However, it was realized during implementation that per the IC Thinking methodology, a group needs to consist of a minimum of 15 persons. Therefore, an amendment was made in the number of workshops and number of participants.*

All of the indicators were achieved as planned. The methodology was developed and included gender sensitive considerations, through a specific session that involved reflection on gender roles. A number of IC Thinking workshops were organized with youth, led by experienced IC Thinking facilitators that had been trained under previous projects. IOM also trained five new IC Thinking facilitators, carried out by certified trainers from IOM BiH. These are good indicators of improved local capacities.

However, while five new facilitators were trained, there was not enough time by the end of the project to complete the capacity building process nor to fully assess and report on the results. The five facilitators were trained towards the very end of the project, and only two were able to support the final two IC Thinking workshops and receive some mentorship in the process. In addition, to

complete the capacity building process, each of the five participants should co-facilitate a workshop together with an experienced facilitator. This could not be completed by the end of the project.

There was no assessment of capacities in the final donor report, which rather focused for Output 2.1 on the number of youth reached, which actually relates to the project objective. The training reports also did not reflect on the capacity of the facilitators, only impacts on the youth. However, even if the reports had given attention to assessing the IC Thinking facilitators, that may not have been an accurate reflection of their capacities. As one of the IOM certified trainers commented, the first impression from a training is not always a good indication of how well each person will be able to deliver the actual workshops on their own.

In the year since the project ended, however, the capacity building process was reportedly for all five of the persons trained. In each case, IOM staff reported that the trained staff under the IDF project were able to support delivery of IC Thinking workshops under other projects. In each case, determination of whether the new facilitators were sufficiently ready was checked by IOM based on discussion with the experienced facilitator, self-assessment by the new facilitator, and feedback from youth participants. IOM staff reports that all were assessed well, and plans to continue to use all five of the persons trained under this IDF project for IC Thinking workshops under other projects.

#### Output 2.2 – Capacities of teachers, social workers, and community leaders

All indicators were reported as achieved. However, the last two indicators were not understood nor reported as intended in the proposal, which was for consultations with local stakeholders to best identify and reach participants for the community workshops. Instead, it was reported that four consultations were held – including the three workshops themselves as consultations, as well as an additional ‘follow-up’ consultation. This final consultation appears to be the ‘final meeting’ for the workshops, during which certificates were presented to the participants.

<i>Output 2.2: Teachers, social workers and community leaders capacitated to recognize and independently respond to VE signs</i>				
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress (Dec 2018)	Achieved (yes/no)
Number of workshops organized for identification of signs of radicalism and violent extremism	0	3	3	Yes
Number of teachers, social workers, and community leaders participating in the workshops	0	30 (30% women)	51 (86% women)	Yes
Number of consultations organized with local stakeholders*	0	2		Yes
Number of participants in the consultations*	0	10 (30% women)	Exact data not available	Yes

All of the indicators were achieved as planned. While the project team did not keep data on the number of consultations held nor the number of attendees, four meetings were reportedly carried out before the workshops to consult with local stakeholders (meeting target) from schools, municipality (education advisers), local community (social workers), and professional association of psychologists. The workshops organized were reportedly the first ones in the country on the subject. The methodology was developed by four experts, one working for IOM and three working for a partner, the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), and in coordination with the NCCVECT. It was also peer reviewed within CRPM and by the Hedayah Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, which is CRPM’s counterpart for implementation of their EU-funded project.

The methodology was compiled into a manual involving three groups of early warning signs to identify, as well as specific activities that could be implemented during classes. The approach was practical rather than just theory, giving participants ideas of how to take action. The manual was translated to Macedonian and Albanian and printed.

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*“I was amazed with the workshops, and I would definitely continue with this. I saw the feedback of the participants. They were there, they were present, they were not there just to come and spend time and leave. I saw that they were really enjoying the material that was presented, they were satisfied with the discussions and with being able to share their opinion.”*

– Municipality representative

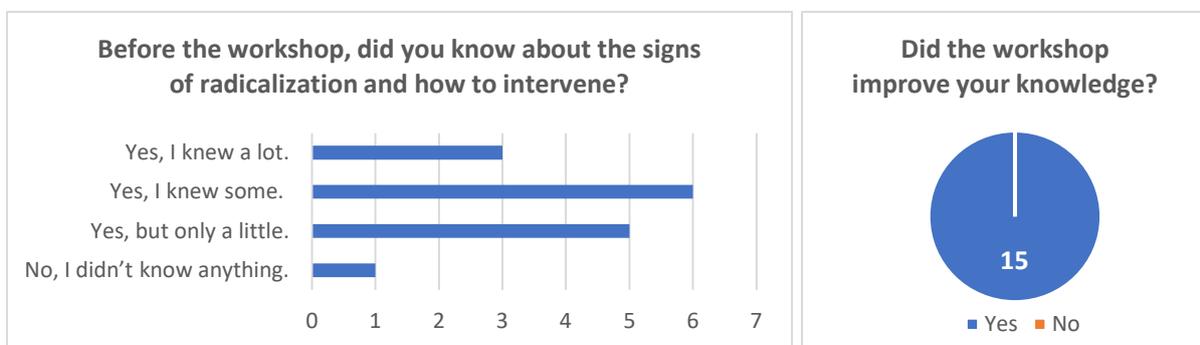
*“I saw from their faces that they were seeing something different with this workshop. After the first coffee break, I was approached by a couple of women who told me: “Oh, thank God it was not like the previous time!” They explained that in a workshop they attended before, they felt immediately attacked as a community, and felt stigmatized already at the beginning, and they were afraid that they were going to hear the same things this time.”*

– Consultant

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Workshops were well received according to the final donor report: 84.53% responded that themes covered were relevant for further work and discussion. Nearly all (48 participants) took part in the final meeting during which the certificates were presented.

A survey was carried out of participants as part of this evaluation in November 2019 (15 out of 51 participants responded, a 29% response rate). All participants surveyed felt that the workshop had improved their knowledge, including those that felt they already knew a lot at the start about the signs of radicalization and how to intervene when someone is at risk:



The workshops were mostly attended by women. As noted already in the section above on gender, this was well above the target of 30% women, thus resulting a relatively low number of men, to which delays in implementation may have contributed. All workshops were held in December, whereas the plan was to hold them from October to December. More time between workshops could have allowed to assess how to adjust outreach or approach.

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*“I noticed there were also men, but not many. I hope that also men would like to attend. Maybe we needed an approach that would attract their attention, so that they come and see that they can also learn something which will be of their benefit. Maybe there was not enough time to have male participants, or maybe the information didn't reach them.”*

– Consultant

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## Outcome 2 – Active engagement in structured discussions on violent extremism

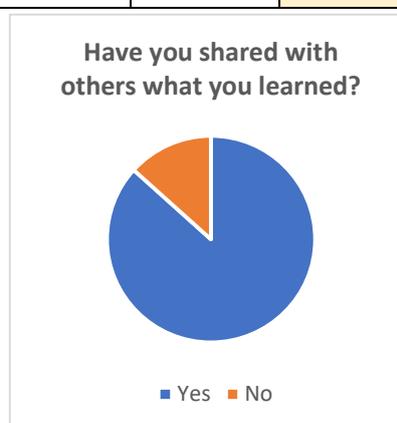
There was no monitoring data gathered on the two indicators for Outcome 2. The evaluator was able, however, to gather data through interview and a survey of community members, providing additional data for assessment of this outcome, but still not sufficient data (including due to the low response rate on the survey; only 15 out of 51 participants responded, a 29% response rate).

<i>Outcome 2: Teachers, local school psychologists, social workers and community leaders are actively engaged in structured discussions about VE</i>					
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress (Dec 2018)	Progress (Nov 2019)	Achieved (yes/no)
% of participants that report having discussed VE issues within community	TBD	75% (of which 40% women)	Unknown	87% (based on sample)	Yes
Structured parent’s mechanism to discuss and seek assistance on VE related issues in place at community level	No	Yes	Unknown	Yes, to some extent	Yes, to some extent

The participants in community workshops were expected to pass on knowledge learned to other community members, about what to look for and how to address signs of violent extremism. The manual was intended to support in this as well, by giving them material to refer back to.

According to the survey of 15 participants, 87% reported sharing what they learned with others (13 out of 15).

Most participants reporting sharing the learning with colleagues (12 participants) and some also reported sharing with friends and family (5 participants).



### Examples of how knowledge was shared:

- *We shared almost all contents of the workshop with our colleagues in the school (the teaching staff).*
- *I exchanged knowledge with my co-workers and informed them about early signs of radicalization and how we can prevent it.*
- *With my colleagues and professionals, I exchanged information like: the Blob Tree technique, signs of radicalization, how to deal with teenagers in different situations (depending on the situations offered during the training) and other personal experience I gained.*
- *In one of the meetings with my colleagues, we discussed the early signs of radicalization, as well as with my family, and how to prevent them in case we suspect an individual involved in radicalization.*
- *I exchanged information with my friends in relation with the media, that is, how to spot fake news in different media.*
- *With my colleagues, at a Teaching Council meeting, information on how to recognize when someone is at risk of radicalization or risk of joining an extremist group was shared. The Action Plan prepared by the training participants was also presented to the same meeting.*

The community workshops followed a manual that was developed, which included exercises that they could do with students. Participants worked through exercises themselves in the workshop,

thereby learned by doing about how they could replicate it with their students. Participants were also asked to develop an action plan, but it wasn't shared with IOM. Facilitators received these but provided no summary of what was planned, just tracked that a plan was made. Still, all reportedly completed an Action Plan since these were part of the "homework", a task received to be completed by participants and assessed by the trainers. It was the final criteria to receive a certificate. The responses from a few participants in the survey included reference to the Action Plans, which is a good indication that they were used since those references were shared without specifically asking about it.

According to the survey of 15 participants, as noted above, all surveyed felt that the workshop improved their knowledge and all indicated they knew how to intervene. However, only one respondent reported having actually intervened in a specific instance: *"In my everyday work as a school pedagogue, we face issues of physical, psychological violence, and based on the workshop delivered by IOM and previous workshops on the same topic, we overcome much more easily the problems emerging in the education process and the social setting."*

Putting in place a structured parent's mechanism to discuss and seek assistance on VE-related issues at community level was achieved to some extent. The project intended that a structured parent's mechanism would be put in place to facilitate ongoing discussion on PVE and identification of actions to take. By the end of the project, IOM reported that informal networks consisting of schools' staff, parents and municipality employees had developed in Tetovo, and were capable of implementing PVE activities. Participants also reportedly showed signs of taking over and continuing to host dialogues as a way of addressing challenges.

As of November 2019, municipal representatives confirmed that participants remained in contact and prevention efforts continued among participants informally, though not in a 'structured' mechanism as foreseen. According to the survey of 15 participants, 60% of participants (9 out of 15) reported having continued discussions with other participants.

Still, some indications of ongoing work were provided by the municipal representatives in Tetovo, including working with mothers on how to communicate with children, the role of the mother to keep the family together, how to involve the father, and how to recognize VE signs. That is in line with the knowledge promoted through the community workshops under the IDF project, and thus likely that this project contributed, but not possible to confirm.

In any case, it is evidence of ongoing prevention efforts at the community level, which is a good sign of continued active engagement as was intended for this Outcome 2.



Survey participants were also asked to identify challenges to discussing and addressing the topic of violent extremism in your community. The most common challenge cited was stigma, stereotypes and prejudices (4 respondents). Many also mentioned a need for more personal training and understanding (2 respondents), or to wider understanding in the community on the importance of the topic and the need to discuss openly (3 respondents). Others cited the challenge of detecting at-risk cases, the need for systemic change, and ensuring productive ways for youth to feel involved.

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*“The challenges include finding the right ways to change different systems, including the education system. Teenagers, youth and adults should all be involved in productive tasks, as well as to offer them more choices. Normally, teenagers are considered too young by the society and that frustrates them. In my opinion, it is a difficult challenge but a useful one, for the society to be sensitized to make teenagers feel independent and useful, and to discuss with them how they feel (because they are in a critical period due to their physiological and psychological changes). If they start feeling useful/valuable in their families and society, they will be less subject to different forms of violent extremism and radicalization (which they see as an option when they feel frustrated).”*

– Community workshop participant

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### Objective – At-risk youth are resilient to violent extremism

Finally, the objective of the project was to contribute to preventing the further spread of violent extremism through enhancing capacities of institutional actors to directly engage with local communities and thereby build resilience against extremist influences and ongoing recruitment.

<i>Objective 1: To contribute to preventing the further spread of violent extremism through capacitating the institutional stakeholders to directly engage with local communities and build their resilience against extremist influences and ongoing recruitment.</i>					
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress (Dec 2018)	Progress (Nov 2019)	Achieved (yes/no)
Percentage of at-risk youth that enhanced their IC thinking abilities.	0	30%	60%	60%	Yes
Number of at-risk youth participated at the other preventive activities.	Not established	Not established	Not available	Not available	Unknown

This included reaching youth through the IC Thinking workshops. In this regards, there is strong evidence of changes in IC Thinking based on the methodology developed in coordination with the University of Cambridge researchers under previous PVE projects in the sub-region. A total of five IC Thinking workshops were organized in 2 communities, for 75 total participants.

The ultimate goal of the IC Thinking workshops was to improve the ability of at-risk youth to recognize and integrate multiple perspectives and possibilities in their thinking, thus reducing their susceptibility to black-and-white narratives used by recruiters and other radicalization actors. The results show an increase in resilience for 45 participants (62.5%) and an increase on the empathy scale for 43 (59.64%) after the IC Thinking workshops. For Tetovo, the average increase in resilience is 3.75%, for Debar 2.21%. For Tetovo, the average increase on the empathy scale is 1.14%, and for Debar the increase is 3.91%. Since the focus of the objective statement is on building resilience, that score was used by the evaluator for the indicator above for the 45 participants (60%). The other part of the original indicator is separated and reformulated above, to highlight lack of data available.

The objective also included reaching youth through participation in ‘other preventive activities’, expected to be carried out by the targeted local actors. However, limited information was available

on the preventive activities being carried out, and no information on how many youth were being reached through those. Thus the progress at the time of the evaluation stands still at 45 total (60%)

## To what extent did the project adapt to changing external conditions to ensure project outcomes?

There were no major external conditions that the project had to adapt to, in terms of unexpected changes in the operating environment. Mainly, the obstacles to implementing activities as planned related to aspects that were overlooked during proposal develop and required some adaptations. This included revising the plan for training IC Thinking facilitators, as it was realized that it must be delivered by certified trainers, of which there are only two IOM staff in BiH. It also included revising number and size of IC Thinking workshops, as it was realized that per the IC Thinking methodology there should be at least 15 participants in each group (rather than originally planned 10).

The profile of IC Thinking facilitators was also adapted. It was first planned to hire psychologists, but in consultation with the IOM staff from BiH who supported the hiring process, it was determined that criteria were too high (psychologists with experience in cognitive behavioural therapy, as well as proven and previous experience in conducting workshops). It was discussed with the University of Cambridge, who helped design the criteria, and agreed that the key criteria was facilitation skills and to have at least a basic knowledge of CBT, which would also be explained during the training.

## What are the major factors influencing the achievement of the project's expected outcomes?

Community liaison points (CLPs) played a crucial role in facilitating the community assessment, identifying participants, follow-up and support to participants, and providing context monitoring. The sensitivity of the topic of prevention of violence extremism was a key concern, including a need to avoid any stigmatization of the target communities. In this regard, the project worked closely with the National Coordinator to select communities and consulted throughout implementation. It also meant that the project and its objectives could not be widely advertising, requiring careful work especially by CLPs in each community when identifying participants for the activities. The selection of CLPs themselves also required attention to political affiliations and views, which can affect the way they are able to communicate with and encourage participation from the community members.

Identifying and engaging the most at-risk youth in the IC Thinking workshops is one key challenge, and where CLPs play a key role. The target group is youth aged 17-27 who are socially excluded, in communities with limited activities available to youth. Care was also taken to promote gender and language balance. However, it was reportedly tricky in practice, especially given the sensitivity of the topic. For example, as one CLP noted, the easiest to find for the first workshops are mainly those working on NGOs or already doing other youth activities, or those most engaged in the municipality. However, the target is to find also the more youth at-risk that would tend to be also less engaged and more socially excluded. While the most engaged one are likely to come at first, it is important to continue finding enough participants for later workshops.

It was also important to have sufficient time for CLPs to organize and gather participants for IC Thinking workshops, for which the minimum number is 15 per the methodology. This can be seen in comparing participant numbers in Tetovo and Debar. It is possible that CLPs in Debar didn't have sufficient time to reach out to participants, as the workshops

Location	Dates	Participants
Tetovo	11-14 Jun 2018	21
Tetovo	27-30 Aug 2018	17
Tetovo	29 Oct – 1 Nov 2018	14
Debar	22-25 Nov 2018	14
Debar	1-4 Dec 2018	9

were carried out close together and soon after the CLPs were hired. IOM generally in its PVE projects takes a flexible approach, following up to see if the dates should be delayed until a full group is ready. However, this was not possible in the case of Debar, since workshops were planned at the very end of the project. Respondents noted that it is harder to motivate the participation in North Macedonia compared for example to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where there is a higher interest among youth to participate. It may also be related to shorter timelines for this project compared to for example a referenced three-year PVE project in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, more time between workshops enables participants to tell their friends and promote the next workshop.

Another challenge for organizing IC Thinking workshops was to keep attention of participants and ensure they were present for the four days. For example, interviewees also highlighted a cultural practice in Debar where everyone attends an afternoon coffee breaks every Sunday, which made it challenging to get participants to stay the entire time that day. CLPs facilitated by informing everyone ahead of time, following up through multiple phone calls to all participants, and identifying barriers to participation. For instance, for female participants, workshops were organized in a location and at times when it would be acceptable to their families for them to attend, and also organized transportation. If they were in school, the CLPs also facilitated talking to the school to obtain permission.

The IC Thinking facilitator role was also crucial in promoting a positive environment where youth would feel comfortable to open up about their feelings and viewpoints. Similarly, building trust and creating a positive environment was also a key factor in success of the community workshops with teachers, parents, social workers and community leaders. As with the IC Thinking, these workshops also required participants to open up and engage in the methodology.

Language pose another challenge, given that some areas in North Macedonia have large populations of Albanian speakers, including Tetovo. This means that the language of facilitators and CLPs had to be kept in mind, for proper communication with potential participants and during the workshops. Sometimes they had mixed group, in which case they needed facilitators speaking both languages. The materials were thus provided in both languages, such as the manual for community members.

## Efficiency

### Was the management of the project appropriately carried out?

Staffing of the project appropriately met the needs. The project team included a project manager (Biljana Simeonova) and project assistant (Aleksandra Lazarova). The project hired consultants including least two community liaison points (CLPs) in each target community, and various consultants for the IC Thinking workshops and the community workshops. The project team also consulted regularly with a community expert (costs covered in the end under a separate project).

Project consultants were pleased with the coordination and communication with IOM staff, and said that issues were promptly resolved. The project team also had strong internal communication with other IOM staff working on PVE projects, including one staff member in North Macedonia in particular supporting a regional PVE project (Erda Qazim), and two staff in Bosnia and Herzegovina who are trained trainers on IC Thinking (Alena Velagic and Danijela Torbica). This included sharing updates and asking for advice when challenges arose in implementation, and exchanging on lessons learned from similar activities. For example, two CLPs from a sub-regional PVE project in Western Balkans were invited to meet with the CLPs from this project to share tips and lessons learned. The Head of Office (Sonja Bozinovska) and the staff member working on the regional PVE project (Erda Qazim) facilitated coordination with the National Coordinator on PVE. There was also regular

exchange with other staff working on PVE in the Western Balkans, and with specialists in community stabilization from IOM's Regional Office in Vienna (Dragan Aleksoski) and IOM's expert on PVE in the Headquarters in Geneva (Jason Aplan).

Externally, as of the start of the project, IOM was already a recognized partner and key actor in sub-regional and national coordination mechanisms established around PVE. As planned, the project team worked closely with relevant stakeholders in co-leading and monitoring the project activities, including coordinating closely with the National Coordinator. As a result of the good communication, it was identified that a local NGO, the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) was carrying out similar activities, and so IOM partnered with CRPM and jointly delivered community workshops.

As regards visibility of the project, IOM staff explained that the project kept a low profile given the sensitive nature of the PVE work. For this reason, the assessment report was shared only with the NCCVECT through the National Coordinator, rather than widely publicized.

## How well were the resources (funds, expertise, and time) converted into results?

The budget was underspent by the end (only 80% spent of the total 100,000 USD). This is due in part to cost savings in budget lines for consultants on short-term assignments and the community expert. IOM was able to use services of a community expert engaged in another PVE project. Also, a consultancy was planned with the Commission on International Justice and Accountability (CIJA), as in other PVE projects, but their service was not deemed to be worth the value based on more recent work. Instead, a local call was issued for the consultancy.

One other positive reason for cost savings was the partnership with CRPM to design and implement the community workshops on PVE. CRPM had been planning similar activities with the same target group, and were already working in Tetovo. Therefore, to avoid duplication and maximize use of efforts and funds for the benefit of the beneficiaries, IOM hired a consultant under this IDF project and CRPM hired consultants, who worked together the community workshops.

As a result of the cost savings, budget lines were added to other cover costs of existing activities: travel of CLPs while carrying out research for the assessment and organizing events, travel expenses for IC Thinking workshop participants, and translation and printing for community workshops (which aimed to improve the sustainability by ensuring materials were available afterwards). A new budget line for travel for the participants of IC Thinking workshops was introduced due to difficulties they encountered to find appropriate bus lines during later hours. Those that lived further away reported that they might not be able stay during the last sessions each day, especially girls that cannot travel by themselves if there is no public transport available during afternoon hours.

The underspending also appears due to the short time period of the project, and an inability to find relevant other ways to spend funds in line with objectives and donor requirements. For example, IOM staff explored to purchase a vehicle for the National Coordinator's office since they needed it to carry out their work, but that cost was not approved by the donor.

In the end, it was decided to use also cost savings to add additional activities in Debar, a new location identified as a priority by the National Coordinator. There wasn't enough time to carry out the assessment as done in Tetovo, and as called for in the project design, which would have taken 1.5 months. Rather, only IC Thinking Workshops were organized with support of new CLPs there and already trained IC Thinking facilitators. Even so, it was difficult for IOM to organize activities in time, as hiring local CLPs involved reaching out to local NGOs to identify candidates, and time was also needed for the CLPs to identify participants. The last workshop had only 9 youth, which is below the 15 minimum according to the IC Thinking methodology. While activities in Debar directly contributed

to building the resilience of youth, which is the objective, it only minimally contributed to building institutional capacities, which was the focus of the project and its outputs and outcomes.

Activity	Plans vs actual	Months												Evaluator Comments
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1.1.1. Engage community expert and local community focal points to conduct community level <b>research</b> and draft <b>report</b> with conclusions and recommendations	Planned													Completed on time
	Actual													
1.1.2. <b>Present</b> the research to all relevant national stakeholders in the country through a set of national meetings	Planned													Completed with delay (exact dates unknown)
	Actual													
1.1.3. Distribute <b>questionnaire</b> to relevant stakeholders to assess contribution of the inception phase report in development of policy documents and concrete PVE initiatives	Planned													Not completed
	Actual													
2.1.1. Tailored and implemented capacity building <b>training</b> of local psychologists, including a session of “transfer of knowledge skills” by IC Thinking experts	Planned													Completed with delay
	Actual													
2.1.2. The trained psychologists implement IC thinking <b>workshops</b> for 30 at-risk youth (3 workshops x 10 youth)	Planned													Completed with delay
	Actual													
2.2.1. <b>Consultations</b> with local stakeholders to best identify and reach teachers, social workers and community leaders	Planned													Completed with delay (exact dates unknown)
	Actual													
2.2.2. <b>Design</b> context-specific, workshop methodology, particularly addressing the dangers of VE and radicalization dynamics	Planned													Completed with delay
	Actual													
2.2.3. Organize <b>workshops</b> , including a session on “transfer of knowledge skills” for teachers, social workers and community leaders	Planned													Completed with delay
	Actual													

Activity 1.1.3 – This was **not completed** in the end, due to confusing it with the questionnaires for the community assessment. It was incorrectly charged to this budget line and reported as completed in the donor report. As a result of this misunderstanding, the first indicator for Outcome 1 wasn't measured (% of national stakeholders, disaggregated by gender, who received the report and that find the report and its recommendations useful). Activity 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 – The project initially planned for three IC Thinking workshops with 10 participants each, but it was later realized that there should be at least 15 participants were workshop. It was also realized that the persons already trained in IC Thinking in the country were not qualified to train others, only to carry out workshops. This delayed the training of new facilitators until the end of the project in November, as the schedule needed to be coordinated with the two trained trainer IOM staff members in BiH. It also took more time than expected to find qualified participants for the training program for future facilitators (deadline extended twice). Still, a couple of the facilitators newly trained under this project were able to contribute to the workshops in Debar in December.

## Impact

### To what extent can long-term changes be observed (intended or unintended, positive or negative)?

It is clear that this project contributed to important changes, in synergy with other PVE projects carried out by IOM. However, any peacebuilding work including PVE requires several years to see real impact, at least five years according to the stakeholders consulted for this evaluation. Therefore, even if more data could have been available at the time of evaluation, likely more time would still have been needed to see long-term changes.

The National Coordinator noted that the main medium term changes that we should focus on are to raise awareness among people “that these are serious issues that can lead to even more serious problems, we must cut them in the root and we must work together – the state and the non-government structures.” And appears that this project made a good contribution to that relative to the scope of the interventions.

The below presents the changes observed, divided according to national level, community level, and impacts on youth resilience.

#### *National level*

The project aimed to contribute to national institutional capacities by providing evidence-based assessment of the target communities that could be used to design PVE measures. As covered under the Effectiveness section, it is unclear how many members of the NCCVECT found the assessment of Tetovo useful. Still, in terms of impact, the assessment report contributed to design of measures included in the National Action Plan (an achievement at outcome level, a result of recommendations from the assessment report). IOM staff noted that the multiple meetings held, during which IOM referred to assessment findings from Tetovo and to the results of other IOM activities, contributed to the design of the PVE measures in the National Action Plan. The National Coordinator agreed that the local community assessment approach was very useful and appreciated, and should be replicated in other communities where PVE work is done.

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*“What you did with this project may be a good basis. The research you did, I like it. The problems are detected, because they live in this area, they are the main people, they know their problems and the reasons for violent extremism and what motivates it, and they also know the solution best.”*

– National Coordinator on PVE

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During the project implementation period, as noted under Relevance already, the activities of this project aligned to the national strategy’s priority 1 on prevention (developing programme for teachers to detect signs of VE) through the community workshops on PVE under this project, and priority 2 on awareness-raising (promoting dialogue through educational programs to protect from radicalization) through the IC Thinking workshops.

The following longer-term changes could also be observed, in particular, in terms of three new measures that were reportedly designed based on recommendations from the Tetovo assessment and were included in the National Action Plan:

- **Community action teams:** These are being promoted but there was limited progress to date. As of November 2019, community action teams were established in three pilot communities (Gostivar, Kichevo and Chair) through a project by Search for Common Ground with UK funds. Each was established with permission of the mayor and municipal council. Work was

underway to ensure proper people are appointed to the teams and that their work is understood, as it is a new concept. It includes members and deputy members from different institutions. These teams developed action plans, supported by each municipality, and they have many preventive activities, and also other activities “in favour of unity and culture.” Some municipalities have had local prevention councils, but those deal with a range of issues such as delinquency and robbery. The idea of the community action teams was to focus on violent extremism only, and also intended to support creation of a referral mechanism. Due to the current political climate, the National Coordinator and the donor community agreed that it was not an appropriate timing to promote further work on the referral mechanism.

- Key integrated task forces: No progress in establishment of task forces was reported, in part due to timing. Any new task force has to be approved by the government. With transition to a technical government coming up in January 2020 and elections in April 2020, it was not deemed timely to promote establishment of new tasks forces. Even if it could have been approved in 2019, its work would likely have been slowed in 2020. Instead, IOM supported the establishment of a working group, which has the same members and institutions as a task force would have, to enable work with that group to start immediately.
- State working group for focused multiagency activities: The idea was to establish a working group on PVE, similar to other ad hoc working groups formed to work on various issues (e.g. reintegration, PVE and education, counter terrorism). There was some progress reported in setting up a working group on reintegration, but limited information was available to assess.

IOM support, including through this project, may have had an influence on building understanding among other members of the NCCVECT on PVE approaches and design of PVE measures. However, again, this could not be confirmed by the evaluator based on data available.

IOM’s support to the National Coordinator generally through this and other projects contributed also to national capacity building. IOM was the first partner of the National Coordinator, established in August 2017 just prior to the start of this IDF-funded project.

This included shifting attention to prevention, rather than as before focused only on the security and law enforcement aspects. Support through this project helped to encourage this shift, including the findings of the assessment report. In discussing this shift during the evaluation visit, the National Coordinator referred to a specific finding of the Tetovo report, that the activities of state structures are not always the most desired in terms of getting results in preventing radicalization.

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*“Everything that IOM has done has contributed to our national strategy, and this has contributed in several areas. First of all, regarding preventing violent extremism among young people, building resilience in the community and among the young people. And also to perceive the specifics of each area, and assessing where we as a coordinating body should direct our future activities.”*

– National Coordinator on PVE

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The National Coordinator reported that an analysis of work they carried out in 2018 indicated that 70% of the planned activities were completed.

IOM staff agreed that the national work on PVE has improved dramatically over recent years, but there are still areas for improvement. There is definitely progress, especially since they started only in recent years to invest more in PVE nationally, but more progress is needed in order to actually see more tangible results in terms of national efforts on PVE. IOM through this project, and through its ongoing projects, has contributed to drawing attention to the need for improved national capacities.

This project has also been beneficial in terms of support to IOM's own learning and ongoing work on PVE in North Macedonia. Since the end of this project, it was reported that ongoing programming by IOM has spread into more communities.

### *Community level*

Though there is insufficient data to reach conclusions about the current impact at community level, there is evidence of ongoing PVE work in Tetovo to which the project contributed.

As was explained in the Effectiveness section, local capacities were in place in Tetovo to continue to carry out prevention activities and there was evidence of ongoing PVE efforts at community level, which is a good sign of continued active engagement as intended at outcome level.

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*"We have implemented many activities, and we continue. For example, on Friday with an NGO and with youth association, we will organize a debate about visible and non-visible violence in the municipality. It is an ongoing project for two months now with mothers, and we are working mainly with psychologists to improve communication with children."*

– Municipal representative

*"The people trained have become leaders in their communities and will spread positive values."*

– National Coordinator

*"Maybe other actors have similar projects, but the final result shows that IOM's methodology is better. You have a different approach to local population, schools, the whole target group. Unlike other organizations, when we make analysis, I think that activities of IOM projects are two times better than the rest."*

– Ministry of Education

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In terms of long-term impacts of that work, the aim was for those efforts to lead to improved community and youth resilience to PVE. On that point, that was no evidence available to the evaluator to assess how many youth may be reached. Still, the perception of the stakeholders is that PVE work is ongoing and that this will contribute to youth resilience to PVE.

In Tetovo, it was highlighted also that future activities can also build on the results of the assessment. Since the assessment was not made widely available, this impact would need to come through more local actions in Tetovo promoted by National Coordinator or IOM. At the time of the evaluation, no further activities were planned.

It is also likely that the CLPs in Tetovo continue to have a positive impact on the community. They were part of the local capacity building under this project, and IOM staff report seeing significant changes in the CLPs. They appear now to be very engaged and interested in continuing activities to for PVE. The impacts extend through the NGOs or other projects where the CLPs now work, where they spread what they've learned and share more about the activities that IOM has supported. This is particularly useful since IOM did not widely publicize its activities.

There is a perceived contribution of this IOM project to all of these changes, though data was unavailable to assess contribution compared to other factors. It was mentioned by the stakeholders that several similar workshops on the same topic were organized both before and since the IOM workshops, which may have also contributed to changes. The partner CRPM also worked in Tetovo municipality before and during the project on related activities. However, IOM's workshop reportedly stood out in terms of relevance, approach, and practical focus, increasingly the likelihood of contribution to the changes.

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*"The teachers from were saying "Oh what is now this?" They are calling me on the phone, asking "Is this your project continuing or is it something else?" They want to know because there are so many organizations, so many other people coming around and asking the same things we have already said."*

– Consultant

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No long-term impacts were demonstrated in Debar according to the data available, and there is limited expected impact. No assessment was carried out in Debar upon which future activities could build. No local capacities were strengthened that could continue to have an impact in after the end of the project. No participants of the IC Thinking workshops there could be reached for interviews. The CLPs that were hired in Debar may continue to have some impact on their community, since these were selected on basis of being recognized young leaders and/or young people with the potential of becoming community leaders themselves. However, they were only part of this project for a short period of time, and so the contribution of this project to their capacities was minimal.

### *Youth resilience*

As explained in the Effectiveness section regarding the objective, there is evidence of impact on the youth supported through the IC Thinking workshops under this project, but no evidence of impact of community-led prevention efforts on youth resilience.

As stated at the start of this Findings section, the long-term intended impact on youth as a result of IC Thinking workshops is clear and supported in the theory of change. The project measured an increase in resilience and empathy scores, and this is strongly linked in the theory to increased resilience. Workshop reported also documented various changes that the youth themselves expected as a result of their participation:

- Applying learning firstly with their families, but also with their friends, schoolmates and others.
- Change in behaviours, in terms of media and communications, as they aware of the tricks that some people or institutions use to manipulate.
- Increased tolerance and acceptance of difference opinions, as some reported changes in the way they think and viewpoints on certain topics.
- Impact on peacebuilding because they have learned how to see the bigger picture, and how to understand others and how to forgive.

Facilitators also reported that youth from different ages, genders, and groups now feel closer to each other, and many have started hanging out. Youth also reportedly think now more of the similar values they share with others, and stereotype and prejudices are lower than before the training.

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*"The youth will help others to respect each other, to have critical opinions, to differentiate between what is good and what is bad, to respect religious and ethnic differences, and have better social cohesion, less violence. And peaceful resolutions in cases where might be incidences that may lead to violence."*

– National Coordinator

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The impact among youth was also just the increase of resilience measured by the end of the project, immediately after each workshop. There were no follow-up focus groups as done in other projects.

Also, the short-term impact observed so far is only through IOM-supported IC Thinking workshops; there was no evidence available in the data gathered of impact achieved in the long-term after completion of the project through other prevention activities.

The youth reached may continue to have an impact on their communities based on what they learned and their enhanced IC thinking abilities. However, the evaluator was not able to meet with any participants, apart from one youth participant who is herself an NGO leader. It also appears that a large number of the youth may have moved within the country, such as to Skopje to study which is common, or migrated abroad since the end of the project.

If the trained IC Thinking facilitators could continue to carry out workshops without IOM-support (e.g. integrated into school curricula), then longer term impacts in terms of youth resilience may be envisioned. However, there was no evidence that any facilitators were even considering to carry out workshops without IOM support.

The limited data from this project cannot be supplemented with likely impacts to expect based on similar projects, since this project deviated from the model used in other community-based PVE projects in which youth are direct beneficiaries and which include other activities with youth (media literacy, community dialogues, and youth-led community projects), not included in this project given limited funding and time, and the focus on institutional strengthening.

However, some of those other elements would likely have helped to enhance the impact. In other similar PVE projects, which have the full range of interventions with youth according to the community-based model used by IOM, the greatest impacts are often seen with youth who have participated to several activities including community dialogues and youth-led projects. As one IOM staff member noted, "I know that when you give them something to do in the community, this is when they feel the most valuable and they feel like they are doing something."

Some youth participants in this project even suggested to consider concrete ideas for improvement in the community and to offer logistical and/or financial support for those ideas. Youth often face frustration when they receive new ideas but have no opportunity to act on them, as one stakeholder consulted recognized: there is a danger to opening the minds of youth, as it may lead them to see more clearly a lack of opportunities and increase their desire to find other solutions, such as migrating. As noted in one of the IC Thinking workshop reports, most participants were university students or youth who finished secondary school who were unemployed or volunteering in some NGO, and the worry for their future employment possibilities in the country was evident.

## Sustainability

### What are the major factors affecting sustainability, including any identified challenges faced by the implementing organization?

According to the project document, sustainability should be guaranteed by building institutional capacities to act and respond to violent extremism, which would remain in place after the end of the project. At a national level, benefits are sustained through inclusion of recommended prevention measures into the National Action Plan. However, capacities of national institutions to implement those measures appears limited, without external support. All activities included in the National

Action Plan are reportedly being implemented by international organizations with donor funding, with the national institutions unable and/or unwilling yet to implement PVE efforts on their own.

Previously, there was reportedly an insufficient government budget provided to the National Coordinator's office. For instance, the salaries of the two other staff were still being covered by IOM under another project. IOM had also bought laptops under another project to enable the work of the National Coordinator's office, and they still lack a vehicle to travel to other cities to carry out their work. Issues of prioritization of use of funds may be part of the issue, as reportedly there are funds to travel abroad for meetings and conferences but not for purchasing a vehicle.

Still, progress is being made to bring more attention to PVE work and to promote coordination at the national level, with signs of increasing ownership. For example, a conference was recently organized by the National Coordinator with the Ministry of Defence without any donor support. The National Coordinator also reported calling on each Ministry to allocate funds for PVE in early 2019, and most responded that they would allocate some amount. It is not clear how much was allocated so far, but as of the time of the visit, there were no problems reported getting funds and support requested.

The National Coordinator's office is also in the process of restructuring because it is recognized that there are need for improvements. The National Coordinator's analysis of work carried out in 2018 indicated that 70% of the planned activities were completed. However, he also identified reforms needed to further enhance the capacities of his office based on an analysis of work during 2018-2019, which indicates challenges to overcome including limited staffing, so he is requesting budget to support 2-3 more full-time staff. Due to elections at the time of the evaluation visit, that may be postponed, but they received consent to draw people from other institutions to work with them.

## Are necessary structures, resources and processes in place to ensure benefits generated by the project continue without external support?

As noted above, the benefits of national capacity building continue to require external support to implement activities including in the National Action Plan. However, the improved coordination supported by this and other IOM projects appears to continue. For instance, IOM coordinates closely with the National Coordinator to take on activities that are needed and that won't duplicate work already being done by others. It is assumed that this benefit is experienced by other partners as well, though the evaluation visit did not involve consultations with others involved in PVE, besides CRPM.

Processes are underway to integrate the community workshops on PVE into the general teacher training curricula in the country, and it is therefore likely that workshops will be implemented in future nationally across the country without external support. To become an official part of the teachers curriculum and therefore the work in schools, it needs to pass the Bureau of Education permission. The Ministry of Education asked for it to go through a quality checking process in the Bureau of Education. They have checked and approved the quality, and were establishing a working group to institutionalize the program. Once the working group reviews and makes any revisions (few expected, given that the institutions were consulted during the development process), then the program can be introduced into the teacher training curriculum. The Bureau for Education already has the legal authority and funding to deliver those trainings. There are also plans to convert it into an e-training that will be also made available in the teachers' online training platform.

In the meantime, the implementing partner CRPM applied the methodology in at least two other communities where they hadn't worked before. With introduction of this program into the teacher training, it will be available to all teachers with no need for IOM, CRPM or others to implement it.

The benefits of local institutional capacity building in Tetovo reportedly continues. The manual and methodology developed for the community workshops likely has had continued benefits, as it can be

used and promoted by the 51 participants of the workshops in their own work and schools, without further external support.

Also, as planned, the funding appears to have a multiplying effect, as trained community members continue to organize preventive activities in their communities, especially in the schools. It is not possible to judge precisely to what degree this is occurring, as only 15 of the 51 participants were reached through the survey, and that did not enable gathering of detailed information. However, it does appear that they have the knowledge and skills needed to do this, and the manual has facilitated this. Also, for the sample, there was a high degree of passing on knowledge: 87% reported sharing what they learned with colleagues, friends or family (13 out of 15).

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*“Everybody talks about how IOM is the only one investing in sustainability, because we are there longer, we invest and train local people. One workshop alone does not change anything.”*

– IOM staff

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The CLPs also became familiar with PVE work, and can integrate that into other projects that they work on, and into the work of local NGOs that they are involved in.

As for the trained IC Thinking facilitators, it was planned that they would continue to support IC Thinking workshops under future IOM projects, which indeed has continued. The training provided under this IDF project appeared to provide sufficient capacities for the facilitators, although there was a suggestion by IOM staff to offer some refresher trainings a couple times a year in terms of facilitation skills, including use of IT and other methods to keep participants’ attention.

It was also foreseen that IC Thinking facilitators would be able to continue with these activities in their schools and in other schools in the country. Based on interviews, there is still much capacity building needed in order to reach such a point. Organization of IC Thinking workshops don’t require many resources but they require commitment and dedication, for identifying participants and for the four days of the workshop itself. An IOM staff member doubted whether teachers, for instance, would be able and willing to dedicate that much time without a project or other funding to cover it. Therefore, it is unlikely that IC Thinking workshops can be implemented without external support, specifically under other IOM programmes.

According to the project design, benefits should also be sustained to indirect beneficiaries, the youth participants in IC Thinking workshops, by giving them tools, skills and confidence to engage with their community and resist the solutions offered by recruiters. It was not possible within the scope of this project to assess sustainability at that level. There was no follow-up monitoring with the participants, and only one participant could be consulted during the evaluation visit.

## 5. Conclusions

Overall, the project was *well designed* in terms of intended results and Theory of Change (ToC). Though some weaknesses were found in the Results Matrix, especially at objective level, the project faces a common challenge of measuring results faced by all prevention work, and in that regard was based on a relatively strong approach based on Integrative Complexity (IC) Thinking.

In terms of *relevance*, the project aligns well to the national strategy on PVE, and recommendations of the EU, US, and UN Secretary-General's PVE Plans of Action. It also responded well to the needs of the target beneficiaries, ensured through regular consultation with the National Coordinator as well as use previous assessments, community assessment in the main target community (Tetovo), and Community Liaison Points (CLPs). As for IOM strategies and frameworks, this project helped to strengthen PVE knowledge and expand IOM’s national programming in this area, and it aligns to

IOM's Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). Gender considerations were also overall well taken into account during design and implementation, with only a few noted areas for improvement.

As for *effectiveness*, intended outputs were achieved, though outcomes could not be fully assessed based on data available due to lack of monitoring data and inability to reach all needed stakeholders in the scope of the evaluation. For Outcome 1, it is clear that the recommendations were used in identifying three concrete actions to take to prevent PVE as part of the National Action Plan. In relation to Outcome 2, the intended outcome of active engagement by participants could not be fully assessed, as only 15 persons out of 51 responded to the survey. Of those, most reported ongoing discussions (87%) and sharing learning with colleagues, friends or family (80%).

As for the Objective level, the data was even more limited. The only evidence of changes in terms of numbers of at-risk youth reached is through IC Thinking workshops, which provide strong evidence of improved resilience immediately after the workshop but not about long-term effects. As for youth 'other preventive activities', limited information was available on activities being carried out by community members and no information on how many youth were being reached.

There were no major external conditions that the project had to adapt to. The major positive factors influencing achievement of results include the use of CLPs to assess local context, facilitate activities, motivating youth to attend IC Thinking workshops, and carefully promoting the project given the sensitivity of the topic of PVE. Facilitation skills was also a crucial factor for success for both IC Thinking workshops and the community workshops. A negative factor was the limited time available, especially as some activities were delayed from the original plans, in terms of being able to identify the appropriate participants on time (especially a challenge in Debar, as it was added later).

Regarding *efficiency*, the staffing of the project team appropriately met needs. Consultants were pleased with communication with IOM staff, and there was strong communication as well with IOM staff working on other PVE projects. The project coordinated well with stakeholders especially the National Coordinator, which helped to identify that an NGO, the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) was carrying out similar activities. IOM then partnered with CPRM and jointly designed the community workshops.

The budget was underspent by the end (80% spent of the total 100,000 USD), due in large part to cost savings for consultants. Some budget lines were added for unplanned costs of existing activities (travel expenses, translation and printing), but it was challenging to find ways to spend remaining funds in line with objectives and donor requirements. In the end, IC Thinking workshops were added in Debar, a new location identified as a priority by the National Coordinator. While activities in Debar contributed to building the resilience of youth it minimally contributed to institutional capacities, the main project focus.

As for *impact*, this project contributed to important changes in synergy with other PVE projects carried out by IOM. However, any peacebuilding work including PVE requires several years to see real impact, at least five years according to stakeholders consulted. Still, the project contributed to changes that were already evident at the time of the evaluation. At a national level, there has been increased attention to PVE nationally but more progress is needed to reach more tangible results in terms of national efforts. The community assessment recommended three measures that were included in a National Action Plan: community action plans, key integrated task forces and a state working group for focused multi-agency activities. However, progress was observed in only one measure: community action plans were being piloted in three communities through a project by Search for Common Ground with UK funds. Also, more generally, IOM's support to the National Coordinator through this and other projects contributed to national capacity building on PVE, including shifting attention to prevention, rather only on security and law enforcement aspects.

At the community level, though there is insufficient data to reach conclusions about impact, there is evidence of ongoing active engagement by community members in Tetovo, which was the intended Outcome 2. In the longer term, the objective was for that work to lead to improved resilience to PVE among at-risk youth. On that point, that was no evidence available to the evaluator to assess how many youth may be reached nor what the long-term impacts are in terms of resilience to PVE, as there was no follow-up monitoring after IC Thinking workshops nor of other prevention activities of community workshop participants. Still, at least for IC Thinking, there is a strong likelihood of impact given the scientifically designed and tested approach that is used. The project measured an increase in resilience and empathy scores, which is strongly linked to increased resilience and is likely to lead to higher degrees of resilience against extremist influences and a lower propensity to engage in violent acts. Also, the perception of the stakeholders is that PVE work is ongoing and that this will contribute to youth resilience to PVE. It is also likely that the CLPs in Tetovo continue to have a positive impact on the community. No long-term impacts were apparent in Debar, the other target community, and there is limited impact is expected given the limited scope of activities there.

The limited data from this project cannot be supplemented with likely impacts to expect based on similar projects, since this project deviated from the model used in other community-based PVE projects in which youth are direct beneficiaries and which include other activities with youth (media literacy, community dialogues, and youth-led community projects). While not included due to donor requirement to focus on institutional strengthening, and given the more limited time and funding, those other elements would likely have helped to enhance the impact. In the other PVE projects, the greatest impacts are reportedly often seen with youth who have participated to several activities. Some youth participants in this project even suggested to consider concrete ideas for improvement in the community and to offer logistical and/or financial support for those ideas. There is also a potential for negative impacts in theory, by opening the minds of youth and leading them to see more clearly a lack of opportunities, increasing their desire to find other solutions, such as migrating.

Finally, in terms of *sustainability*, a key positive factors affecting sustainability at national level was the inclusion of three concrete PVE measures identified in the community assessment of Tetovo into the National Action Plan on PVE, though capacities to implement those measures without external support is limited, as all activities in the National Action Plan are reportedly being implemented by international organizations with donor funding. National capacities also involve coordination of PVE work by the National Coordinator, which is reportedly much improved now, along with progress in bringing more attention to PVE work. The National Coordinator's office is also in the process of restructuring because it is recognized that there are need for improvements.

Processes are also underway to integrate the community workshops on PVE into the general teacher training curricula in the country, once a working group in the Bureau of Education concludes review and revision of the program. Once included, it can be implemented without external support. There are also plans to convert it into an e-training available in an online training platform.

At community level, benefits continue among the participants of the community workshops in Tetovo. Though only 15 of the total 51 were reached through a survey, respondents confirmed that they continue to organize preventive activities, especially in schools, and have also passed on the knowledge and skills to their colleagues, friends and family. The manual provided to participants likely has contributed to this. The CLPs also became familiar with PVE work, and can integrate that into other projects and in other NGOs where they are working. The newly trained IC Thinking facilitators appears to have provided sufficient capacities, and they have continued to support IC Thinking workshops under other IOM projects.

According to the project design, benefits should also be sustained to indirect beneficiaries, the youth participants in IC Thinking workshops, by giving them tools, skills and confidence to engage with their community and resist the solutions offered by recruiters. It was not possible within the

scope of this project to assess sustainability at that level. There was no follow-up monitoring with the participants, and only one participant could be consulted during the evaluation visit.

The following good practices and lessons learned were also identified, which should be taken into account in the design and implementation of future similar projects:

## Good practices

*Local context monitoring* was a strength of this project. Community assessment during the inception phase in Tetovo was essential to understand the local context and factors that are driving violent extremism. There is a need also to take into account the different local traditions and cultures. However, it was only carried out in Tetovo, and not in Debar as that location was added too late in the project. In future PVE projects using a community-based approach, it is recommended to ensure that the community assessment is carried out in each new target community and to develop a documented local theory of change for each.

The community liaison points (CLPs) also proved essential in continued local context monitoring and in engaging directly to promote the project and support its activities. CLPs facilitated liaison with authorities and schools, identifying participants, and organizing activities. In future, given their high value and relatively low cost, one IOM staff suggested hiring more CLPs: “I would personally go with more CLPs in the field because they work as a pair, but still you need to have more people in the field, to get participants and also to get people much more introduced to the activities.”

*Gender-specific needs were well considered*, for example when planning the IC Thinking workshops, by consulting for example with the girls and women themselves, as well as with their families. This was also facilitated by the CLPs present in the community and directly engaging the participants, to be able to flag and address these types of potential barriers to participation.

*Knowledge sharing and exchange* among staff and with consultants from similar ongoing projects, in order to pass on lessons learned and experiences, proved a very useful practice. This included staff working on PVE projects within IOM, in the country and the sub-region, as well as from IOM’s regional office and Headquarters. In particular, the project team worked closely with IC Thinking expert staff in IOM BiH. Knowledge exchange was built into the design for IC Thinking activities, as new facilities worked alongside and received support from more experienced facilitators. Also, IOM brought in CLPs under another IOM project in the country to provide orientation to the new CLPs hired under this project, such as about how much time it takes to organize workshops, what to pay attention to, and how to engage and keep participants for all four days.

## Lessons learned

*Explanation and understanding of project design*: Often, the eventual Project Manager is not involved in the design of the project, and it is therefore important that the proposal is clearly written in the first place, and is carefully reviewed by the Project Manager. In particular, any novel elements in the proposal should be explained. In this case, the proposal had planned for development of a “local theory of change” was included in the proposal but never carried out due in part to lack of understanding and to not being listed in the workplan.

This project also deviated from the community-based model used in similar PVE projects. This also meant that it had a more limited scope of activities directly implemented with youth (IC Thinking), from the range of activities usually also implemented (media literacy, community dialogues, and youth-led community initiatives). It is recommended to consider planning other activities with youth that can build on and increase the impact of IC Thinking workshops whenever possible.

*Monitoring outcomes:* All outputs and outcomes should be achieved by the end of a project, and all IOM projects should monitor and report on achievement of intended outcomes by the end of the implementation period. If outcomes can't be fully achieved, at least preliminary progress should be reported by the end of the project. In this project, some outcome indicators were never measured. The lack of monitoring data affected also evaluability for this ex-post evaluation, given the difficulty in reaching beneficiaries one year after the project had ended (see next point below).

*Maintaining contact with beneficiaries:* Contact should be maintained with beneficiaries as part of plans for follow-up monitoring and for any eventual evaluation. The project team should plan for how to maintain contact and consider any related logistics/budgetary needs. This may include informing participants at the end of each activity that IOM will be reaching out in future, and keeping a contact list.

*Avoid delays in activity implementation, which may impact other activities or the ability to analyse and adjust activities as needed:* Work planning during the proposal stage is important in terms of scheduling support that will be needed from other IOM offices, requiring coordination among relevant IOM staff. In this project, delays in scheduling the training of IC Thinking facilitators relating to the availability of IOM staff from BiH had implications for result achievement. Also, community workshops were delayed to the very end of the project, which didn't allow time to consider why few men were attending and to readjust the outreach strategy or approach to ensure a more balanced gender participation.

*Ensure clear, correct reporting of activities and results:* In this project, one activity was mistakenly reported as completed, but was never carried out, and results of another activity were not included in the related indicator. In case of changes to the work plan, recommend to document this with an updated work plan that is approved with the donor and by explaining changes in donor reports.

Finally, though beyond the specific scope of this project, some concerns were expressed by external stakeholders concerning the National Coordinator's Office and staff for whom IOM helps to fund the salaries through other projects, which could be kept in mind in other similar projects on PVE in North Macedonia. Specifically, there was a perception that some organizations are being endorsed over others based on their connections or how well they are known. On the other hand, IOM staff felt that perhaps too many organizations were moving into PVE work. IOM may assess in future how it may be contributing to those dynamics, and additional actions that could be taken to promote more transparent decision-making about which national organizations are supported and why (e.g. linked to avoiding duplication, demonstrated capacity in PVE, etc.)

## 6. Recommendations

No recommendations were proposed by the evaluator, given that the main purpose was to assess results of a completed project and to collect good practices and lessons learned to be applied in similar projects, and given the late finalization of this report.

Instead, it is recommended that all future similar PVE projects take into account the findings, good practices and lessons learned. This will be encouraged by sharing the report with IOM staff working or providing expert support to PVE projects.

## 7. Annexes

Annex 1 – Evaluation terms of reference (ToR)

Annex 2 – Evaluation matrix

Annex 3 – Inception report

Annex 4 – Documents reviewed

Annex 5 – Persons interviewed or consulted

Annex 6 – Field visit agenda